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AND USES OF THE PAST

N.º 16 (2023)





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Editorial

Usos políticos do passado: memória pública da escravidão e do colonialismo II

Ana Lucia Araujo* e Ynaê Lopes dos Santos**

O verão de 2020 transformou a memória pública da escravidão e do colonialismo nos Estados Unidos. As repercussões da transformação dos últimos três anos atingiram vários países europeus, como Inglaterra, França e Portugal. Mas, apesar desses impactos transnacionais recentes, cada uma dessas nações e suas ex-colônias têm lidado de maneiras diferentes com seus passados associados à escravidão e ao colonialismo nas últimas décadas. Por um lado, os protestos que se seguiram ao assassinio de George Floyd em março de 2020 contribuíram para expor publicamente as desigualdades raciais e a onipresença de símbolos pró-escravidão muito além dos Estados Unidos. Por outro lado, os afro-americanos e as populações negras nas Américas, Europa e África começaram a lutar de maneira individual e coletivamente para derrubar estruturas sociais, econômicas e simbólicas que historicamente excluíram as antigas populações escravizadas e colonizadas das narrativas oficiais nacionais bem antes desses protestos recentes.

Partindo deste contexto que continua a desenrolar-se três anos após o histórico verão de 2020, esta segunda parte do número “Political Uses of the Past: Public Memory of Slavery and Colonialism” inclui

* Ana Lucia Araujo (aaraújo@howard.edu). Howard University, 2400 Sixth Street NW Washington, DC 20059, Estados Unidos da América.

** Ynaê Lopes dos Santos (ynae.lopes.santos@gmail.com). Instituto de História da Universidade Federal Fluminense, Campus do Gragoatá, Rua Prof. Marcos Waldemar de Freitas Reis Bloco O, sala 205, Niterói 24210-201, Brasil.

quatro artigos e um ensaio que debatem a ascensão da memória pública da escravidão e do colonialismo nos Estados Unidos, Brasil, Moçambique e Portugal. Os dois primeiros artigos discutem a memória pública pró-escravidão da Confederação nos Estados Unidos e no Brasil. Os outros dois artigos examinam como a memória pública e oficial da escravidão e do colonialismo opera no sistema escolar do Brasil e de Moçambique. Estas duas ex-colônias portuguesas estiveram profundamente envolvidas na longa história do comércio transatlântico de escravos, embora as suas posições fossem diferentes. Por um lado, Moçambique forneceu cativos para o comércio atlântico de africanos escravizados, tornando-se mais tarde uma colônia portuguesa. Por outro lado, o Brasil importou cativos de Moçambique e só aboliu a escravidão em 1888. A história da escravidão e do colonialismo deixou marcas profundas em ambas as nações. No Brasil, racismo e desigualdades raciais profundas ainda prevalecem hoje.

Esse número especial começa com o artigo “From Minnesota to Mississippi: The Murder of George Floyd and the Retirement and Replacement of the State Flag of Mississippi”, de Caleb Smith, Stan Brunn e Byron D’Andra Orey. O artigo explora a história do design da bandeira do Mississippi durante o período após o final da Guerra Civil Americana e a abolição da escravidão, em 1865, até o período presente. Os autores concentram suas análises no desenho de 1894 que apresentava uma bandeira de batalha confederada e que permaneceu vigente por mais de um século, mas se tornou cada vez mais contestada nos últimos setenta anos. Smith, Brunn e Orey mostram como os movimentos sociais liderados por atores sociais afro-americanos, que se intensificaram grandemente após o assassinio de George Floyd no verão de 2020, acabaram levando à remoção da bandeira estado de Mississippi que ainda exibia o símbolo pró-escravidão da Confederação.

Em “Irreconcilable Differences? A Reckoning with *Confederado* History in Brazil”, Mary Kenny explora a história dos confederados que, após o fim da Guerra Civil Americana, se mudaram para o Brasil, onde puderam reconstruir suas vidas adquirindo terras e pessoas escravizadas. Os confederados brasileiros, conhecidos como “confederados”,

mantiveram uma memória coletiva, cultural e pública da escravidão em solo brasileiro, por meio de diversos dispositivos como cemitérios e festas públicas. Embora vários estudiosos, como Gerald Horne, Luciana da Cruz Brito, Maria Clara Sales Carneiro Sampaio, Jordan Brasher e Alan P. Marcus, tenham examinado a história e a memória pública dos confederados americanos no Brasil, seus trabalhos enfocaram a presença dos confederados no estado de São Paulo, no sudeste brasileiro. Em contraste, o artigo de Kenny examina a memória dos confederados em Santarém, no estado do Pará, uma região marcada por uma grande concentração de terras e onde populações indígenas brasileiras e comunidades de quilombos lutam pelo direito à terra há várias décadas num ambiente muito hostil.

“Negações e silêncios: a memória da escravidão entre o manual escolar e o parlamento brasileiro”, de Alex Andrade Costa, examina a forma como os manuais escolares brasileiros falharam em abordar a história e a memória da escravidão e as questões raciais nos últimos dois séculos. Costa argumenta que, por meio de silêncios sobre essas atrocidades humanas passadas, os livros didáticos brasileiros minaram possíveis políticas de reparação. Na mesma linha, “Nó Górdio e relações entre Moçambique e Portugal: futuro inventado nas escolas moçambicanas da província de Sofala”, de Armindo Armando, Augusto Alberto e Martins JC-Mapera discute os resultados de um projeto de pesquisa com alunos de escolas da província de Sofala, em Moçambique. A partir de grupos focais com alunos de escolas, o projeto e o artigo exploram as percepções sobre a operação Nó Górdio, episódio central da violência colonial que marcou a luta pela libertação de Moçambique em 1970. Os autores discutem como essa atrocidade permaneceu viva na memória coletiva dos cidadãos de Moçambique e na memória oficial da nação através de reportagens e manuais escolares. Os autores defendem que o reconhecimento da história e da memória desta atrocidade pode contribuir para um futuro mais positivo das relações bilaterais entre Moçambique e Portugal.

O número especial inclui ainda o ensaio “White Innocence, Black Erasure: Reviewing *Alcindo* (2020) Against the Fictions of Portuguese

Colonial Bonhomie”, da historiadora Patrícia Martins Marcos, que resenha o documentário *Alcindo* (2020) de Miguel Dores. O número conclui com uma entrevista ao historiador Jochen Hellbeck, da Rutgers University, pelo historiador José Neves. Como editoras desta edição, sabemos que os debates e ações que surgiram e se intensificaram durante o verão de 2020 não terminaram, e muitos números especiais serão necessários para compreender plenamente as transformações iniciadas há três anos.

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Editorial

Political Uses of the Past: Public Memory of Slavery and Colonialism II

Ana Lucia Araujo* and Ynaê Lopes dos Santos**

The summer 2020 transformed the public memory of slavery and colonialism in the United States. The aftershocks of the transformation of the past three years reached several European countries such as England, France, and Portugal. But despite these recent transnational impacts, each of these nations and their former colonies have been reckoning in different ways with their pasts associated with slavery and colonialism in the past several decades. On the one hand, the protests that followed the assassination of George Floyd in March 2020 contributed to publicly expose racial inequalities and the omnipresence of pro-slavery symbols far beyond the United States. On the other hand, African Americans and Black populations across the Americas, Europe, and Africa have individually and collectively began fighting to take down social, economic, and symbolic structures that have historically excluded formerly enslaved and colonized populations from national official narratives earlier before the rise of these recent protests.

Drawing on this context that continues to unfold three years after the historic summer 2020, this second part of the issue “Political Uses

* Ana Lucia Araujo (aaraujo@howard.edu). Howard University, 2400 Sixth Street NW Washington, DC 20059, United States of America.

** Ynaê Lopes dos Santos (ynaee.lope.santos@gmail.com). Instituto de História da Universidade Federal Fluminense, Campus do Gragoatá, Rua Prof. Marcos Waldemar de Freitas Reis Bloco O, sala 205, Niterói 24210-201, Brazil.

of the Past: Public Memory of Slavery and Colonialism” includes four articles and one essay debating the rise of the public memory of slavery and colonialism in the United States, Brazil, Mozambique, and Portugal. The first two articles discuss the pro-slavery public memory of US Confederacy in the United States and Brazil. The two other articles examine how the public and official memory of slavery and colonialism operates in the school system of Brazil and Mozambique. These two former Portuguese colonies were deeply involved in the long history of the transatlantic slave trade, even though their positions differed. On the one hand, Mozambique provided African captives to the Atlantic slave trade, and later became a Portuguese colony. On the other hand, Brazil imported captive Africans from Mozambique and only abolished slavery in 1888. The history of slavery and colonialism left deep scars in both nations. In Brazil, racism and deep racial inequalities prevail still today.

This special issue opens with the article “From Minnesota to Mississippi: The Murder of George Floyd and the Retirement and Replacement of the State Flag of Mississippi” by Caleb Smith, Stan Brunn, and Byron D’Andra Orey. The paper explores the history of the Mississippi flag design following the period after the end of the Civil War and the abolition of slavery, in 1865, until the present. The authors focus their analysis on the 1894 design that featured a Confederate battle flag, which remained in place for more than one century, but was increasingly challenged in the past seventy years. Smith, Brunn, and Orey show how social movements led by Black actors that greatly intensified with the murder of George Floyd in the summer 2020, eventually led to the removal of the Mississippi state flag that displayed the Confederacy pro-slavery symbol.

In “Irreconcilable Differences? A Reckoning with *Confederado* history in Brazil,” Mary Kenny explores the history of Confederates who, after the end of the US Civil War, moved to Brazil, where they were able to reconstruct their lives by acquiring land and enslaved people. The Brazilian Confederates, known as “*Confederados*”, maintained a collective, cultural, and public memory of slavery in Brazil-

ian soil, through various devices such as cemeteries and public festivals. Although several scholars such as Gerald Horne, Luciana da Cruz Brito, Maria Clara Sales Carneiro Sampaio, Jordan Brasher, and Alan P. Marcus have examined the history and the public memory of US Confederates in Brazil, their works have focused on the presence of *Confederados* in the state of São Paulo, in the Brazilian southeast. In contrast, Kenny's article examines the memory of the *Confederados* in Santarém, in the Brazilian northern state of Pará, a region marked by great land concentration, and where Brazilian Indigenous populations and *quilombo* communities have been fighting for land rights for several decades in a very hostile environment.

“Negações e silêncios: a memória da escravidão entre o manual escolar e o parlamento brasileiro,” by Alex Andrade Costa, examines how Brazilian textbooks failed to address the history and memory of slavery and racial questions over the past two centuries. Costa argues that, through silences regarding these past human atrocities, Brazilian textbooks have undermined possible reparation policies. In the same vein, the article “Nó Górdio e relações entre Moçambique e Portugal: futuro inventado nas escolas moçambicanas da província de Sofala,” by Armindo Armando, Augusto Alberto, and Martins JC-Mapera, discusses the results of a research project with school students of Mozambique's Sofala province. Drawing on focus groups with school students, the project and the article explore the perceptions about the Nó Górdio operation, a central episode of colonial violence that marked the fight for Mozambique liberation in 1970. The authors discuss how this atrocity remained alive in the collective memory of Mozambique's citizens and in the nation's official memory through news reports and existing history textbooks. The authors argue that coming to terms with the history and memory of this atrocity can contribute for a more positive future of bilateral relations between Mozambique and Portugal.

This special number also includes the essay “White Innocence, Black Erasure: Reviewing *Alcindo* (2020) Against the Fictions of Portuguese Colonial Bonhomie,” by historian Patrícia Martins Marcos,

who reviews the documentary film *Alcindo* (2020) by Miguel Dores. Finally, the number includes an interview with Rutgers University historian Jochen Hellbeck by historian José Neves. As editors of this issue, we know that the debates and actions that emerged and intensified during the summer 2020 are not finished, and many special numbers will be needed to fully grasp the transformations initiated three years ago.

Referência para citação:

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Caleb Smith, Stan Brunn, and Byron D’Andra Orey

**From Minnesota to Mississippi: The Murder of George
Floyd and the Retirement and Replacement
of the State Flag of Mississippi**

When voters make decisions about social issues, factors including cultural heritage, religion, race/ethnicity and recent events can intersect. However, the significance of visual images, historical narratives, media presentation, and future planning should not be overlooked. This article explores the importance of state flag histories and designs in Mississippi, specifically examining the 1894 flag design that became central to the state’s identity until voters approved a new design in 2020. The state’s flag politics are discussed within a prolonged national discourse with emphasis on recent racial attacks across the U.S. This study highlights calls for reform emanating from grassroots, media, religious, athletic, economic, social, and political groups in and outside the state. The article notes that racial tragedies such as the murder of George Floyd can serve as persistent inspiration of Mississippi voters and lawmakers to address inequalities and advance democracies.

Keywords: history of racism, white supremacy, Mississippi politics, Black Lives Matter, flag politics, ongoing challenges.

**Do Minnesota ao Mississípi: o assassinato de George Floyd e a
retirada e substituição da bandeira do Estado do Mississípi**

Quando os eleitores tomam decisões sobre problemas sociais, vários fatores como o património cultural, a religião, a raça/etnicidade e acontecimentos recentes podem-se intersectar. Porém, a relevância de imagens visuais, narrativas históricas, formas de apresentação e o planeamento do futuro não devem ser também subestimados. Este artigo explora a importância das histórias e designs das bandeiras no estado do Mississípi, examinando especialmente o design da bandeira de 1894 que se tornou central para a identidade deste estado até os eleitores aprovarem um novo design em 2020. As políticas sobre as bandeiras deste estado são discutidas no âmbito de um discurso nacional prolongado, com ênfase nos recentes ataques raciais nos EUA. O estudo enfatiza os apelos a reformas por parte de grupos de base, mediáticos, religiosos, desportivos, económicos, sociais e políticos dentro e fora do Mississípi. O artigo realça que tragédias raciais como o assassinato de George Floyd podem servir de inspiração permanente para os eleitores e legisladores do Mississípi abordarem desigualdades e fazerem avançar as suas democracias.

Palavras-chave: história do racismo, supremacia branca, políticas do Mississípi, Black Lives Matter, políticas de bandeiras, desafios atuais.

From Minnesota to Mississippi: The Murder of George Floyd and the Retirement and Replacement of the State Flag of Mississippi

Caleb Smith, Stan Brunn, and Byron D'Andra Orey*

On June 27, 2020, the state senate of Mississippi initiated the final legislative phase of removing the 1894 State Flag of Mississippi, which featured a Confederate Battle Flag in its top left corner, or canton. House Bill 1763 had already passed the state's House of Representatives earlier that day, but the responsibility of debating and voting on the bill rested with the senators. In his introduction of the bill, the senate's Pro Tempore, Briggs Hopson, acknowledged the historic nature of the moment and emphasized that the flag debate would be a recurring issue if not remedied at that moment. He stated, "Whether you like the fact that a movement is going on or hate the fact that a movement is going on, it doesn't matter. This [the flag] will continue to come up again and again".¹ Hopson did not address the origins of this movement but later in the speech noted that a similar movement occurred in 2015 but did not gain enough traction to effect change.

* Caleb Smith (caleb.smith@jcc.edu) Jones College, 900 South Court Street, Ellisville, MS 39437, United States of America; Stan Brunn (stan.brunn@uky.edu) College of Arts & Sciences, University of Kentucky, 202 Patterson Office Tower Lexington, KY 40506-0027, United States of America; Byron D'Andra Orey (byron.d.orey@jsums.edu) Jackson State University, 1400 John R. Lynch Street, Jackson, MS 39217, United States of America. Original article: 4-7-2022; Revised version: 19-4-2023. Accepted: 19-4-2023.

¹ Speech from Mississippi Senate floor by Briggs Hopson, streamed live on the Mississippi Legislature YouTube Channel at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1yRUagTaWT4&list=PLfk-c4ctYmTaKw8QnRnH65jNha7vXmE0SA&index=70> on June 27, 2020.

Interestingly, there was no significant movement or active legislation in the Mississippi legislature to remove the 1894 Flag thirty days prior to the June debate. However, the murder of George Floyd had a profound effect on the public discourse leading to a swift legislative process that retired the controversial flag. After the debate on June 27, which featured many legislators professing support for a new flag while also citing faith and economics as motivations for change, the bill to change the flag cleared the senate and was signed by the governor days later.

Passage of the bill to change the flag was the culmination of nearly four decades of public debate that featured legal challenges regarding the validity of the flag and a special election in 2001 where Mississippians overwhelmingly supported keeping the 1894 Flag.² After the massacre at Mother Emanuel A.M.E. Church in Charleston, SC, a growing force of support inside the state to change the flag occurred.³ But as Hopson stated, that movement died down and could not win enough support to change the flag in 2015. The murder of George Floyd in May 2020 changed the movement once again, leading to a quick month of legislation that retired the 1894 flag.

This article aims to examine the complex intersection of politics, race, and religion that led to the removal of the Confederate Battle Flag from the state flag of Mississippi and how motivations for removal originated from national debates concerning the state's continual endorsement of Confederate iconography after the death of George Floyd. Specifically, the article delves into the history of the 1894 flag, the iconography associated with the flag, and the historical context that informed its design. This flag, and flags in general, we argue, shape ideologies and social practices around the role of material culture in racial formation. This article also explores the opposition to the flag

2 Jonathan Leib and Gerald R. Webster, "Black, White or Green?: The Confederate Battle Flag Emblem and the 2001 Mississippi State Flag Referendum", *Southeastern Geographer* 52, no. 3 (2012): 299-326, doi:10.1353/sgo.2012.0029.

3 Briggs Hopson's speech mentions the 2015 movement in the state that followed the Charleston shooting at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1yRUagTaWT4&list=PLfk4ctYmTaK-w8QnRnH65jNha7vXmE0SA&index=70> on June 27, 2020.

that grew in the 1980s and 1990s. It also examines the 2001 referendum where Mississippians supported the flag's retention, and the subsequent shift in public opinion that emerged after the Charleston shooting. These additional voices and new perspectives challenged the status quo and began revealing the flag's historical context. Furthermore, the article discusses the national focus on change that arose after the death of Floyd along with the framing arguments and the roles of internal and external stakeholders in the process of changing the state flag. We highlight the slow and protracted nature of the effort to remove the 1894 flag while acknowledging the significant impact societal tragedies had in bringing about change.

History of the Flag

Mississippi attained statehood in 1817 but did not adopt a state flag until 1861. In late 1860 the state voted to secede from the Union and selected a new flag to symbolize Mississippi prior to the official formation of the Confederacy.⁴ The flag featured a white background with a blooming magnolia tree in the center. The tree symbolized the state as Mississippi is nicknamed "The Magnolia State." In the canton, or top left corner, was a blue field with a large single white star.⁵ From 1861 to 1865, the flag was used in battle alongside the standard flags of the Confederacy. After the defeat of the Confederacy in 1865, the flag displaying the magnolia tree flag was retired from use and Mississippi went without a state flag for the next three decades.

4 John Coski and David Sansing, "Flag, State", in *The New Mississippi Encyclopedia*, ed. Ted Ownby and Charles Regan Wilson (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press 2017), 436-37.

5 In this case the canton is the Bonnie Blue Flag that was first used by the short-lived Republic of West Florida but later became a symbol of independence utilized by some in the Confederacy. The Bonnie Blue is still used today by neo-Confederates as a symbol of resistance, White supremacy, and Confederate sympathy that is less recognizable than the Confederate Battle Flag. The flag serves as an understood symbol, or "dog-whistle", to other neo-Confederates.



Figure 1. 1860 Magnolia Flag and 1894 Flag. Photo by the authors.

Between 1865 and the 1890s, southern states began adopting state flags, but Mississippi was occupied with rebuilding the economic and political infrastructure that had been dismantled during the war. The Hayes-Tilden Compromise of 1876 marked the end of Reconstruction in Mississippi and the transfer of state power back to the White people who ran the state during the Civil War, many of whom were former Confederate soldiers.⁶ The self-stylized “Bourbons” were former soldiers who seized control of the state after Reconstruction, establishing laws and political structures that were similar to those of the state prior to the Civil War. State leaders, fearing political unity of free Black men and yeoman White farmers, passed laws that hardened lines of race, restricting the movement of Black persons and Black access to the ballot box through a series of Black Codes. These laws were enforced through clandestine measures from groups who claimed to protect

⁶ Westley Busbee, *Mississippi: A History* (Wheeling, IL: Harland Publishing, 2008), 379-81.

White supremacy in the name of political unity among White people. These restrictive laws culminated in the racially restrictive codes of the 1890 Constitution of Mississippi, which proved extremely effective in suppressing Black resistance and Black political power. The success of these measures led other southern states to emulate the Mississippi constitution, which is known as “the Second Mississippi Plan.”⁷

Leaders of Mississippi followed these new restrictive laws with the adoption of symbolic measures to reinforce White hegemony over the Magnolia State. Agrarian uprisings by poor farmers, both Black and White, challenged the political monopoly of the Democratic Party in Mississippi, revealing political fissures along lines of class.⁸ The 1890 Constitution further exposed these rifts by including a literacy test for voters that disenfranchised Blacks and uneducated Whites. In 1894, Governor John Stone sought to retain poor Whites in the Democratic Party by adopting measures that reinforced White racial unity by honoring the Confederacy – supporting a veteran’s home for Confederate veterans, as well as requesting the state legislature to adopt a new flag.⁹

The legislative committee, headed by Senator E. N. Scudder, proposed a flag with three large horizontal stripes of blue, white, and red from top to bottom.¹⁰ The canton of the flag was described as a red field with a blue “X” outlined in white. The “X” had thirteen white stars – one in the center and three on each arm. The thirteen stars were described in the legislation to correspond to the thirteen original states of

7 The first Mississippi Plan was an attempt to negate the 14th and 15th Amendments by Mississippi’s leadership immediately after the Civil War. That plan was upended when Republicans were appointed by the federal government to restructure the state’s governance and prevent a reinstitution of antebellum conditions for Black people.

8 Stephanie Rolph, “The History of Mississippi’s State Flag”, part of Mississippi’s History Now series from the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 2021. Accessed June 8, 2022 at <https://www.mshistorynow.mdah.ms.gov/issue/the-history-of-mississippi%27s-state-flag>.

9 Coski and Sansing, “Flag, State”, 436.

10 In the editorial by J. Ronald Parrish entitled “An Ignorant Display of Cowardice”, *Laurel Leader Call*, June 30, 2020, A4, the author attempts to defend the 1894 flag by correctly stating that the legislation never mentions the Confederacy nor the Confederate Battle Flag but fails to recognize the similarities of the 1894 flag and the Confederate Battle Flag. The author of that article also ignores the context of when the flag was adopted – a high tide of racially restrictive legislation in the state.

the union.¹¹ Nowhere in the bill did the terms “Confederate” or “rebel” appear, but the design of the flag unmistakably displayed the Confederate Battle Flag. Two decades later, Scudder’s daughter acknowledged that her father held pro-Confederate sentiments and sought to create a lasting tribute to soldiers who defended the state. Adoption of the 1894 Flag containing the Confederate Battle Flag followed the hegemonic model of that time established by Confederate monuments and new counties named for Jefferson Davis and Robert E. Lee – White domination while restricting challenges to the state’s Democratic leadership through racial unity.

State flags are unique because they are official symbols of the state representing all the people of that state in official government presentations through a form of symbolic messaging. These flags are located in courthouses, on school grounds, and in all state institutions as reminders of the entity in power and the themed message of that power, which under the 1894 flag was devotion to the Confederacy and the Lost Cause.¹² This continual tie to the Confederacy became a nationalistic cudgel to unite White people against Black civil rights and federal intervention that attempted to create racial equality. Representation of the flag involves the three parts of the system of symbolism discussed by Deleuze and Guattari: message, symbol, and interpretation.¹³ The message of the flag in 1894 was White power using a symbol implemented by those who attempted to defend a state’s right to protect the institution of slavery.¹⁴ The interpretation was a dual reminder of the Confederate states and a symbol of the vigilantes who defended White

11 The specific union in question was never clarified, but the irony of stating that the flag symbolized the Union of the United States but looked like the flag of the Confederate States is not lost.

12 James C. Cobb. *Away Down South: A History of Southern Identity* (Oxford: University of Oxford Press, 2005), 62-189. Cobb defines the Lost Cause as a civic religion that was formed after the Civil War to validate the Confederacy’s attempted rebellion from the United States while hiding the reason for the rebellion – slavery.

13 Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, translated by Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).

14 The act of secession by South Carolina maintained that non-slaving states were threatening slavery. Two weeks later, the State of Mississippi’s declaration of secession argued that secession was necessary as the state needed to protect slavery.

supremacy. These groups terrorized Black people with intimidating visits, symbolic meetings, and public lynchings that served as reminders that Black people were treated as second-class citizens, lacking the rights and freedoms that White people of that time enjoyed.¹⁵ This interpretation of the state flag of Mississippi did not need an additional narrative attached because it was understood inside and out of the state – White power reigned.

The next phase of public Confederate flag iconography presented itself in the mid-1900s as the Lost Cause and the Mississippi Plan faced new challenges. President Truman's integration of the United States military led to the 1948 rise of the Dixiecrat Party and the resurrection of the Confederate Battle Flag as a symbol of resistance to federal integrative efforts via state's rights as well as a symbol of maintaining White hegemony over southern states.¹⁶ The Supreme Court's 1954 decision of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* led to a new round of Confederate Battle Flags being displayed as symbolic resistance to federal attempts to enforce integration. In 1955 Alabama added "Heart of Dixie" to its license plates as a reminder of the Confederacy and resistance.¹⁷ The following year Georgia became the second state to add a Confederate Battle symbol to its state flag as a soliloquy opposing the Brown case.¹⁸ Georgia's flag was changed with very little debate, much like that of Mississippi, as the intention of the symbol was widely understood and required no debate because the people selecting it were White. Over the next decade the Confederate Battle Flag began to shift interpretation from the Confederacy and maintaining Whiteness

15 Rolph speaks of "whitecapping" as clandestine groups in the 1880s and 1890s dressed in white caps and used violence to force Black people off their own land. Rolph, "The History".

16 Gerald R. Webster and Jonathan Leib, "Religion, Murder, and the Confederate Battle Flag in South Carolina", *Southeastern Geographer* 26, no. 1 (2016): 29-37 reminds that all these adoptions of Confederate Battle flags as symbols of the state were through legislative means. No ballot initiative or vote by the populace was held to determine if these symbols should be adopted. In doing this, the state legislatures determined that they were better suited to select and install the best symbol for the people of their states.

17 Jonathan Leib, "Identity, Banal Nationalism, Contestation, and North American License Plates", *Geographical Review* 101, no. 1 (2011): 45.

18 Jonathan Leib, "Heritage versus Hate: A Geographical Analysis of Georgia's Confederate Battle Flag debate", *Southeastern Geographer* 35, no. 1 (1995): 42.

to an antagonizing symbol of defiance and opposition toward outside interference that challenged White dominion. Federal intervention pertaining to the integration of public spaces became more evident. As a result, South Carolina and Alabama both opted to fly the flag atop their state capitols in continual rebellion against integration.¹⁹ By the mid-1960s, the Confederate Battle Flag became a symbol of resistance and a tool of hate by individuals and states attempting to defy federal attempts to legislate racial equality.

By 1975 the civil rights movement had been effective in integrating schools, water fountains, ballot boxes, and workplaces to a degree, and as such, opposition to the flag began to slowly grow across the country.²⁰ In 1992 state legislators in Alabama utilized courts to have the Confederate Battle Flag removed from the state capitol.²¹

That same year the state of Georgia began the process of altering its state flag, a process that would involve two new iterations of the flag and a decade of debate. The following year South Carolina, seething from the loss of a Mercedes Benz manufacturing plant to Alabama, cited the Confederate Flag over the state capitol as the reason for the inability to land the plant. Racially charged and publicly off-putting debates erupted over the next seven years leading to economic boycotts, political incumbents voted out of office, a series of Black church burnings, and Klan rallies. In May 2000 the flag was finally removed from the capitol dome and placed with a memorial on capitol grounds.

19 Webster and Leib, "Religion, Murder", 33.

20 Karen Cox, *No Common Ground: Confederate Monuments and the Ongoing Fight for Racial Justice* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2021), 78, states that during the 1960s and 1970s civil rights protests often included addressing Confederate symbols and monuments that were prevalent across the Southern landscape. Often leaders would gather around Confederate monuments because they were on public grounds near a courthouse or other centrally located building. On occasion, protestors would vandalize these monuments finally giving voice to the sentiments they had possessed for decades but had been too afraid to make public for fear of retribution.

21 Jonathan Leib, Gerald R. Webster, and Roberta H. Webster, 2001. "Rebel with a Cause? Iconography and Public Memory in the Southern United States", *GeoJournal* 52, no. 4 (2001): 303-10. A Black legislator found a loophole in state code stating that only the state flag of Alabama was permitted to fly over the capitol. Renovations to the capitol in the late 1980s forced crews to remove all flags, and a lawsuit filed by the legislator prevented the battle flag from being placed atop the dome of the capital again.

2001: A Flag Odyssey

In 2001, Mississippi voters faced a decision regarding a possible change to their state flag. The 1894 Flag of Mississippi was still unchanged as other states in the 1980s and 1990s continued the process of removing the Confederate Battle Flag from state insignia and state buildings. However, in the 1980s there was growing outcry against the flag in Mississippi led by Aaron Henry, president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in Mississippi and state legislator from the northern Delta city of Clarksdale.²² In 1988 Henry became the first legislator to file a bill aimed at changing the Mississippi flag with the hope of eliminating the Confederate Battle Flag from the official state banner. He was a pioneering voice in protesting against the symbol of hate and White power. Senator Henry Kirksey also joined Henry in his efforts referring to the flag as “the Confederate Slave Flag.” Prior to this, Black individuals who opposed the flag may have existed, but fear of the state’s governing entities had silenced their voices in the public arena.²³ Despite Senator Henry’s continued efforts to remove the symbol, filing further motions over the next six years, none of his motions moved advanced beyond preliminary committee and none made it to the senate floor.

In 1994 the NAACP filed a motion stating that the state flag was a violation of free speech and equal protection under the law because it was a symbol of slavery. The Sons of Confederate Veterans served as defendants in the case that was heard and appealed through multiple levels of court. In May 2000 the case reached the Supreme Court of Mississippi, which ruled that the flag did not violate free speech nor was it in violation of equal protection of the law. However, the court also discovered that the 1894 Flag was not official because of an oversight in a 1906 revision in the state code that failed to renew the 1894

²² Coski and Sansing, “Flag, State”, 437.

²³ Mississippi’s long history of racial hatred made the state a place where voices in support of Black equality were silenced. Medgar Evers, Mack Charles Parker, Clyde Kennard, James Chaney, Vernon Dahmer, and Emmet Till are just a few of the Black people who were martyrs for the cause of civil rights in Mississippi.

legislation of adoption. Subsequently, Governor Ronnie Musgrove established a flag advisory board to investigate the issue of the flag and held listening sessions across the state that, at times, degraded into racially charged arguments that created negative perceptions of the people of Mississippi.²⁴

These public debates were also reported outside of the state, revealing again that racism in Mississippi was not dead in 2000 but very much alive and well. The commission determined that a vote would be held in April 2001 to allow Mississippians to resolve if they wanted to maintain the 1894 Flag or adopt a new flag. The proposed 2001 Flag retained the same background as the 1894 Flag with only an alteration to the canton, removing the Confederate flag. The 2001 Flag's canton possessed a white field containing nineteen small blue stars and one large star. The nineteen stars were arranged with thirteen on an outside circle to represent the thirteen original states of the union, six in an intermediate circle to symbolize the six entities that historically ruled Mississippi and one large star in the middle to represent Mississippi as the twentieth state in the Union.²⁵



Figure 2. Proposed 2001 Flag on Bumper Sticker. Photo by the authors.

²⁴ Current Insurance Commissioner Mike Chaney tweeted in 2020 that he was a state senator in 2000 and a member of the flag listening committee. He stated that he did not want to pull the state through such a process as that again. Chaney reiterated that those meetings brought out the worst in people as many hurled racial epithets and hurtful comments toward others as well as death threats pointed at him. He was the first statewide elected Republican in the state to come forward calling for immediate change. Tweeted June 20, 2020 @MSInsuranceDept on Twitter.

²⁵ Native Americans, France, Spain, the United Kingdom, the Confederate States, and the United States.

Debates concerning the flag vote revealed a split populous where some Mississippians were advocating for change while others still held deeply entrenched Lost Cause beliefs. For instance, Michael Kelley, from the coastal city of Pascagoula, argued that the American flag was the flag flown on slave ships, not the Confederate flag.²⁶ He defended the 1894 Flag and later cited that the results of the 2001 vote proved that the democratic process worked. Similarly, Tommy Muirhead, expressed a similar view in a letter to the editor of *The Clarion-Ledger*, the state's largest newspaper, echoing Kelley's stance on slave ships and lauding Robert E. Lee's service record.²⁷ Oxford resident Jimmy Reed stated that getting rid of the 1894 Flag would only deepen divisions within the state and cater to "spoiled brats."²⁸ Former University of Southern Mississippi history professor William Scarborough stated that the attempt to remove the Confederate banner was a tactic by the NAACP and that changing a flag would not address real social issues.²⁹

Several individuals advocated for change, like a man attending the Tupelo listening session of the 2001 Flag Commission who only identified himself as Mr. Jones. He insisted that the flag was a symbol that was detrimental to the state.³⁰ An opinion written by Legislator David Bowen posited correctly that debates surrounding flag change would be injurious to the state but then proceeded to blame affirmative action and questioned what Black people had to compromise if a new flag was adopted.³¹ Gregory Kane, writer for the *Baltimore Sun* presented an outsiders' view of the situation most succinctly. Kane stated that race was at the root of this issue and that change was needed to move on. He continues: "Black and White Mississippians will continue to fight the old battles, not realizing that, if they win the old ones, they haven't won much and haven't even begun to fight the new ones."³²

26 Bradley Bond, *Mississippi: A Documentary History* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2003), 298-316.

27 Bond, *Mississippi*, 316.

28 Bond, *Mississippi*, 301.

29 Bond, *Mississippi*, 301-02.

30 Bond, *Mississippi*, 298.

31 Bond, *Mississippi*, 302-04.

32 Bond, *Mississippi*, 313

The vote for the flag was held on April 17, 2001, with two-thirds of voters selecting the 1894 Flag as the official flag of the state. Post-mortem of the election revealed several key internal findings. First the flag vote was almost directly tied to racial identity of the voters.³³ Geographers Leib and Webster found a statistical correlation between Black population and votes for the 1894 Flag was -0.92. A number this close to -1 means that the vote for the 1894 Flag was nearly inverse to the voter being from a precinct with a predominantly Black population. This suggests that a vote for the 1894 Flag was largely opposed by voters from precincts with majority Black populations. Another factor that caused failure to change the flag in 2001 was what researchers labeled as plain “old-fashioned racism”.³⁴ A survey after the election found that 60 percent of White people from Mississippi felt resentment toward Blacks and the NAACP for bringing up the issue of the flag. White people saw the NAACP as outsiders who instituted the lawsuit for change in an attempt to stir trouble in the state.³⁵ The election was also held as a single ballot initiative in April, lending to low turnout as it was neither during primaries in June nor general elections in November.³⁶ Some complained that the flag was not visually pleasing and lacked unique identity that was desired in a state flag, leading some to vote to maintain the 1894 Flag instead. Mississippians who wanted to retain the 1894 flag voted because they were fighting for something

33 Leib and Webster, “Black, White or Green?”, 299-326. The authors found that flag vote and race correlated to 0.92 with Black people voting for the 2001 option and Whites voting to keep the 1894 flag. Those who identified as conservative also voted for the old flag with a correlation of 0.72.

34 Byron D. Orey *et al.*, “Accounting for ‘Racism’: Responses to Political Predicaments in Two States”, *State Politics & Policy Quarterly* 7, no. 3 (September 2007): 235-55.

35 Byron D. Orey. “White Racial Attitudes and Support for the Mississippi State Flag”, *American Politics Research* 32, no. 1 (2004): 102-16. The constant theme of Mississippians labeling people pushing for change in the state as “outside agitators” has been used since the earliest days of the civil rights movement and still utilized by staunch conservatives who feel threatened by challenges to their authority. The preconceived notion of these conservatives is that things inside the state are acceptable and only those outside the state desire to make the state look bad by dragging it through such controversy.

36 Eric Clark, Mississippi Official Statistical Register, 2000-2004, State of Mississippi: Jackson, 2005. Reveals that only 767,682 people cast votes in the special election concerning the 2001 flag vote while 1,004,926 had voted the previous November in the state’s general election.

that was viewed as a threat.³⁷ The most adamant in preserving the 1894 Flag, considered conservative “traditionalists,” wished to maintain the status quo and limit perceived threats against their heritage and way of life.³⁸ The initiative itself posed another challenge to the adoption of a new flag, as other states had made changes to their flags through legislative means, but at the cost of some incumbents not being re-elected. In contrast, Mississippi’s leadership chose to leave the decision in the hands of voters to avoid being voted out of office, so they left the decision in the hands of the voters to avoid being held responsible for changing the flag and risking loss of their seats. Finally, from an internal perspective the proposed flag with twenty stars was not viewed as memorable or culturally resonant with Mississippi unlike other state flags.³⁹

The respective campaigns advocating for each flag option were instrumental in shaping the outcome of the election. The Sons of Confederate Veterans spearheaded a robust ad campaign in defense of the 1894, employing the heritage angle of preserving the Confederate Battle Flag.⁴⁰ On the other hand, the campaign for the alternative flag option was relatively less prominent and focused on economic development. The 2001 Alternative campaign avoided explicit references to race and racism related to the 1894 Flag for fear of galvanizing the conservative base of Lost Cause adherents who were not willing to part with the Confederate Battle Flag. Instead, the economic argument attempted to focus on the flag as hindrance to economic growth due to the negative messaging that it conveyed. Governor Kirk Fordice, a conservative Republican, publicly refuted the economic argument against the flag, citing the recent deal to build a new Nissan automobile plant in the state as evidence that the flag had no bearing on economics. The previous governor, Ronnie Musgrove acknowledged that Nissan had raised

37 Orey, et. al, “Accounting for ‘Racism’”, 242

38 Leib and Webster, “Black, White or Green?”, 316.

39 Some states have very generic state flags that do not make the connection to a state. Yet the flags of states like New Mexico and Texas are both identifiable and have a deep cultural connection that many outside of these states can identify as belonging to them.

40 Leib and Webster, “Black, White or Green?”, 312.

concerns about the flag, and he pledged to bring the issue before the state to appease the company.⁴¹ Finally, religious denominations had differing stances on the flag issue. The Catholic, Episcopal and United Methodist churches in the state supported changing the flag, while the Southern Baptist denomination, which is the largest in the state, did not support change efforts.

From 2001 until the mid 2010s, more Mississippians joined the chorus of people who still pushed for change of the flag. In 2012, Laurin Stennis, granddaughter of former U.S. Senator John C. Stennis, created an alternative flag and began a campaign to get her flag on a ballot as a new option for the state.⁴² The flag featured small vertical red stripes on the edge with a large field of white in the middle. The white field contained nineteen small blue stars in a circle around a large twentieth star. Stennis's campaign gained traction and prompted several unsuccessful attempts by the legislature to change the state flag through statute.⁴³ Despite not being officially adopted, the Stennis flag gained recognition among progressive groups and was even featured as a theme on state license plates, serving as a *de facto* alternative to the 1894 Flag.

The Shift After Charleston and Charlottesville

On June 17, 2015 a White supremacist gunman attended a Wednesday night Bible study at Mother Emanuel A.M.E. Church in Charleston, South Carolina, and murdered nine parishioners. His actions raised questions of motive and further investigation unveiled the gunman's

41 Many Mississippi political observers maintain that Musgrove lost his re-election campaign to Fordice because he put the flag to a vote, challenging the long-held status quo of the flag in the state. Musgrove's gubernatorial loss in 1995 has served as a reminder to other candidates in Mississippi that the flag should be treated as a non-issue that should not be mentioned or placed under threat of removal for fear of loss of incumbency.

42 John C. Stennis was a staunch segregationist from Eastern Mississippi who campaigned on a platform of segregation and nullification of federal integrative efforts from the 1950s until the 1970s. Critics of Laurin Stennis's campaign stated that she was using the flag as a way to amply the Stennis name while attempting to wash over her grandfather's racist past.

43 Coski and Sansing, "Flag, State", 437.

long history of White supremacy and racist sentiments.⁴⁴ The aftermath of the shooting sparked nationwide conversations about the presence of Confederate monuments and the Confederate Battle Flag in various parts of the country. The fact that this tragic event occurred at a church added a layer of dissonance, as it brought to the forefront the intersection of religion and racism.⁴⁵ It prompted many Americans to reevaluate their loyalties and allegiances, forcing them to choose between the racial heritage associated with the continued presence of the Confederate flag as part of the civic religion of the Lost Cause, and the Christian faith exemplified by those who were martyred at Mother Emanuel, a historic site of Black faith in Charleston.⁴⁶ The immediate reaction to the Charleston massacre led to the removal of the Confederate Battle Flag from the grounds of the state capitol in Columbia, SC and the removal of multiple Confederate monuments across the country.

The event spurred a widespread reevaluation of the significance and appropriateness of Confederate symbols in public spaces, and it marked a significant turning point in the ongoing national conversation about race, heritage, and the place of Confederate iconography in American society. Two years later, these considerations led to a proposal to remove a statue dedicated to Confederate General Robert E. Lee in Charlottesville, Virginia. Response to the proposal led to protests by White supremacist, neo-Confederates, and neo-Nazi groups. The protestors carried torches and shouted epithets and other hate speech creating imagery that harkened back to Klan rallies of the early-1900s.⁴⁷ Protests at Charlottesville revealed that the Charleston shooter was not alone in his racist ideology but was accompanied in thought by

44 Joshua Inwood and Derek Alderman, "Taking Down the Flag Is Just a Start: Toward the Memory-Work of Racial Reconciliation in White Supremacist America", *Southeastern Geographer* 56, no. 1 (2016): 9-15.

45 Webster and Leib, "Religion, Murder", 35-37.

46 Latoya Eaves, "We Wear the Mask", *Southeastern Geographer* 56, no. 1 (2016): 22-28.

47 Richard H. Schein, "After Charlottesville: Reflections on Landscape, White Supremacy, and White Hegemony", *Southeastern Geographer* 58, no. 1 (2018): 10-13.

thousands of others who also held sentiments of White supremacy.⁴⁸ This visceral presentation of White hatred accelerated efforts to remove Confederate iconography under the principle that these images may not shoot people or attack them, but they do reinforce an ideology that glorifies the Confederacy, which was founded on slavery and later revered under the label of White supremacy.

Inside Mississippi tectonic shifts were occurring due to the nationwide re-evaluation of Confederate iconography. After Charleston, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Philip Gunn, publicly announced that he would support a change of flag if the legislation came across his desk.⁴⁹ Response by far-right conservatives led to a campaign entitled “Change the Speaker, Keep the Flag.” The state also loosened its guidelines pertaining to insignia on Mississippi Highway Patrol vehicles, giving officers the option to use the 1894 Flag or the shield of the highway department instead. Dozens of cities and colleges across the state also stopped flying the 1894 Flag citing the flag as not inclusive for all the people that the entities serve.⁵⁰ The following year, a three-fold grassroots rally led by young people was held in Jackson to call for fully funding public education in the state through an initiative on the November ballot; support for investigating the death of Philando Castile at the hands of police in Minnesota; and the removal of the Confederate Flag from the state flag of Mississippi.⁵¹ In 2018, Governor Phil Bryant entertained a proposal for a new flag that featured the

48 Cox, *No Common Ground*, 162.

49 Adam Ganucheau. “Bipartisan Group of Lawmakers, with Speaker Gunn’s Blessing, Pushes to Change Mississippi State Flag”, *Greene County Herald*, June 11, 2020, 4. Gunn was the first prominent Republican to come forward in support of flag change. Gunn is also the most powerful legislator in the state as he assigns bills to committees. He is also head of the Republican legislative caucus, hosting multiple closed-door Republican meetings that determine legislative policy for the super-majority Republicans of the state legislature. Gunn cited his Christian faith as the main influence that led him to the decision to publically state that he favored changing the flag. [Verificar. A frase não termina.]

50 Emily W. Pettus, “Mississippi Governor Might Not Block Campaign to Change Rebel Themed flag”, Associated Press. June 24, 2020, <https://apnews.com/article/jackson-us-news-ap-top-news-bills-tate-reeves-7c5b7c7ed97b8073320c9f9bcee4f3f6>. Some conservatives pushed back against colleges and cities not flying the state flag, declaring that state funds should be pulled from these entities until they begin to fly the 1894 flag again.

51 Justin Cordon, “Joshua Mannery and Maisie Brown”, *Jackson Free Press*, July 29, 2016, 2.

state seal as part of centennial celebration without calling for removal of the 1894 Flag.



Figure 3. Change the Speaker Sign. Photo by the authors.

George Floyd’s Murder: The Spark of Change

Minneapolis Police killed George Floyd on May 25, 2020 as part of an arrest following allegations of passing a fake twenty-dollar bill. The incident gained widespread attention when footage of the officers kneeling on Floyd’s neck for nine minutes circulated online, sparking renewed discussions about racial injustice in the United States. Subsequently, the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement organized protests in cities across the United States and around the world, including dozens of cities in Mississippi. The largest protest in the state was held in the capital city of Jackson on Saturday, June 5th, 2020.⁵² The protest had

⁵² Emily Wagster Pettus, “Mississippi Faces Reckoning on Confederate Emblem on Flag”, Associated Press, June 13, 2020, accessed 15 September, 2020, <https://apnews.com/article/us-news-ap-top-news-tate-reeves-mississippi-ms-state-wire-9b68eacdfb1c24d97adf64757c1fde4f>.

two main focuses: addressing systemic racism in American society and responding to Mississippi's Attorney General's decision to drop charges against a White officer in Columbus, MS, who had killed Ricky Ball, a Black man.⁵³ Additionally, the protest called for the removal of all Confederate symbols and memorabilia from the state flag, as highlighted by march organizer Maisie Brown, who emphasized justice, the reopening of the Ricky Ball case, and the removal of Confederate symbols in her speech to the crowd.⁵⁴

Following the BLM march, discussions were again initiated across the state regarding the possibility of changing the flag of Mississippi. Legislators began closed-door meetings to address potential avenues for flag change.⁵⁵ Representative Chris Bell of Jackson reported that meetings were active and showed promise in dealing with the flag issue. Three major hurdles hindered immediate action: garnering sufficient support to pass legislation, addressing the intricate details of proposed change, and the deadline for new bills in the 2020 session had passed. *Mississippi Today*, a newspaper based out of the capital city, followed-up the BLM march to motivate change by sharing legislators' stances on flag change, compelling elected officials to state their opinions and informing their peers about the diversity of opinions on the issue.⁵⁶ Several proposals were submitted in the house the following week including one suggesting replacing the 1894 Flag with the Stennis Flag.⁵⁷ The Speaker expressed a desire to avoid another public vote

53 Alex Rozier, "Slap in the Face: Columbus DA Rips AG Lynn Fitch for Dropping Charges against White Officer Who Killed Black Man", *Mississippi Today*, June 2, 2020, A1. The incident occurred in 2015 and possessed several inconsistencies in the timeline of the events, evidence not matching narratives, and malfunctioning body cameras that forced Attorney General Jim Hood to launch an investigation. Hood pursued the governor's seat in 2019, leaving a vacancy that was filled by Lynn Fitch in early 2020. In a moment of poor timing, Fitch dropped the investigation six days after the death of George Floyd.

54 Pettus, "Mississippi Faces Reckoning".

55 Ganuchau, "Bipartisan Group", 4.

56 Kayleigh Skinner, Geoff Pender, Bubby Harvison, and Adam Ganuchau, "Here's Where House Members Stand on Changing the Mississippi State Flag", *Mississippi Today*, June 12, 2020, A3. The staff of *Mississippi Today* duplicated a method used in 1984 by another Jackson newspaper in tracking Governor William Winter's education reform bill through the legislature. In publicizing opinions on the state flag, *Mississippi Today* now had legislators on record with their intentions regarding the state flag.

57 Ganuchau, "Bipartisan Group", 4.

with the 1894 Flag as an option, citing concerns about a contentious process similar to the one in 2001.

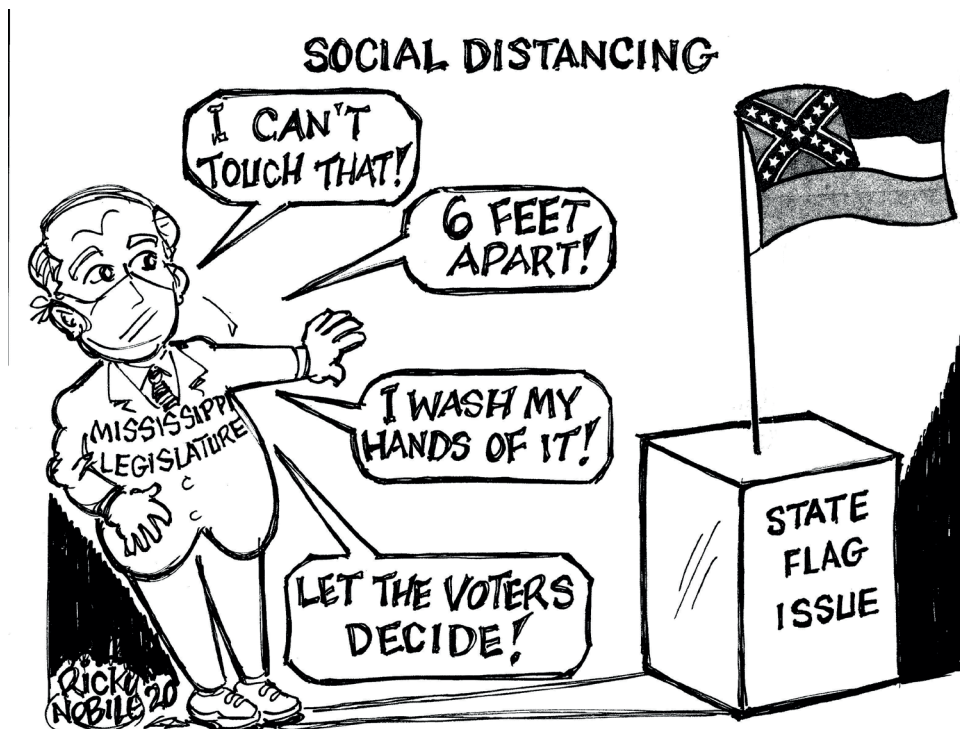


Figure 4. Political Cartoon During 2020 Session, by Ricky Nobile.

The most immediate hurdle facing the state legislature in attempting to change the flag was that the deadline for new legislation had passed. This meant that to submit a flag change bill, the legislature would require a suspension of House of Representative rules that needed a two-thirds majority vote. The week following the Jackson BLM march, the Speaker of the House and the Lieutenant Governor, head of the Senate, polled members privately and lacked the votes to suspend the rules that would permit submission of a late-session bill to change the flag.⁵⁸ There were two prominent obstacles preventing suspension of rules: first, the statewide elected officials like the Secretary of State, State Auditor, and Governor, all Republicans, who were pub-

⁵⁸ Adam Ganucheau, "Lacking Legislative Votes to Change State Flag, Gunn and Hosemann Turn To Religious Leaders for Help", *Mississippi Today*, June 23, 2020.

licly ambivalent toward flag change for fear of losing incumbency; second, a faction of far-right Republicans in the legislature who attributed this movement to “American leftists (who were) waging a war against Mississippi”.⁵⁹ In the week that followed, Speaker Gunn held several private meetings to garner support for flag change, including one held at a small college in the Speaker’s home district, just outside Jackson. As a result, several state officials left the meeting and immediately began publicly voicing support for change.⁶⁰

In addition to the efforts within the capitol building, there was a notable shift in support for changing the state flag among various groups outside of the capitol building. On June 11, a group of interfaith leaders from Jackson, the Legislative Black Caucus, and House Democrats collectively called for a new flag.⁶¹ The following week, prominent economic development groups Delta Council and the Mississippi Economic Council voiced public support for an immediate alteration to the state flag.⁶² In the days that followed the largest public teachers’ lobby in the state also called for change. On June 17, thirty-one former collegiate athletes from Mississippi penned an open letter urging the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) to prevent post-season events from occurring in the state until the flag was changed.⁶³ The next day, the Southeastern Conference and Conference USA warned that they were entertaining the notion of not hosting conference championship events in the state due to the flag. The NCAA later issued a statement indicating that it would no longer allow post-season play in states that flew the Confederate Battle Flag.⁶⁴ The following week

59 Pettus, “Mississippi Governor Might Not Block”.

60 Ganuchau, “Lacking Legislative Votes”.

61 Giacomo Bologna, “Time for a New Flag”, *Clarion Ledger*, A1.

62 Luke Ramseth, “Key Moments Led up to Final Vote”, *Hattiesburg American*, July 1, 2020. A1.

63 Adam Ganuchau, “Athletes Ask NCAA to Ban College Baseball Regionals in Mississippi until Lawmakers Change State Flag”, *Mississippi Today*, June 18, 2020. The author noted that even though support outside the capitol building was growing, any flag change bill still looked dead on arrival in senate committees unless something drastic occurred.

64 The Southeastern Conference has two member institutions in Mississippi: Mississippi State University and the University of Mississippi. Conference USA has one member institution in the state, the University of Southern Mississippi. Previously the state had been forbidden by the NCAA to host pre-determined post-season events because of its flag. The new 2020 ban

individual athletes from the state’s universities voiced their displeasure with the state flag and Wal-Mart announced that it would no longer fly the state flag in its stores.⁶⁵ The same religious groups that called for change during the 2001 vote once again voiced their support for changing the state flag in 2020, with new support from the Mississippi Southern Baptist Convention, the largest denomination in the state.

Business leaders in the state began to express their opinions on the state flag in the days that followed. The CEO of the largest bank on the Mississippi Gulf Coast called for immediate change because “[if the issue goes to the polls, it will be covered by every major network. Any business considering locating here will pause, not wanting to take the risk of locating here until resolution.”⁶⁶

On June 24, the Mississippi Economic Council (MEC) published a full-page advertisement in the state’s most widely circulated newspaper, the *Clarion-Ledger*. The page detailed, “The flag is offensive to many and perpetuates negative stereotypes.” It continued: “The battle flag is a symbol of hate,” and the best way to make positive change and improve the image of the state would be the immediate removal of the Confederate Battle flag from the state flag of Mississippi.⁶⁷ The document was then signed by dozens of CEOs from across the state, who made it clear that their companies did not want to be associated with the 1894 Flag. Additionally, the MEC released a poll in the last week of June that revealed overwhelming support for a new flag.⁶⁸ These shifts in public opinion, with significant support from businesses and internal stakeholders in Mississippi, provided leverage that influenced lawmakers in the state to consider changing the state flag.

forbade the state from hosting any post-season sanctioned NCAA events. The state’s three largest Division I institutions had hosted regional post-season play in baseball and basketball in the previous decade.

65 Ganuchean, “Key Moments”, A1.

66 Adam Ganuchean, “Top Executive: Send State Flag Issue to Ballot, and Any Business Considering Locating Here Will Pause”, *Mississippi Today*, June 23, 2020.

67 The page was published June 24, 2020 on page six of the first section of the *Clarion-Ledger*.

68 Frank Corder, “MEC releases poll showing more Mississippi voters favor state seal flag”, *Y’all Politics*, June 24, 2020. *Y’all Politics* serves as a mouthpiece of the Republican Party of Mississippi, but the publication of the Mississippi Economic Council’s poll demonstrated a shift in mainline Republican ideology in the state that now favored an option for state flag that was not the 1894 Flag.

Various options for changing the state flag were considered by the Speaker and Lieutenant Governor in their effort to gather sufficient support for removal. One initial proposal was the Stennis Flag, but the creator of the flag withdrew due to public pressure.⁶⁹ Former Governor Phil Bryant also attempted to promote his “State Seal” flag as an option after he joined the supporters for change.⁷⁰ The State Seal flag would resemble the flag of the State of Missouri, with horizontal stripes of red, white, and blue and the state seal featured in the middle. Proposals were also filed for an interim flag to be used until an official flag could be selected. However, the predominant narrative that emerged after the off-capitol meeting hosted by Speaker Gunn was a referendum with the incorporation of the phrase “In God We Trust.”⁷¹

Opposition to change again was characterized by expressions of defiance, ignorance, and prejudice. State Representative Jarvis Dortch shared on social media an anonymous letter sent to him and all other legislators that highlighted the opposition to changing the 1894 Flag.⁷² The letter made no mention of the pressing racial issues of the day such as the recent murder of George Floyd, but instead it stated that “Mississippi has stood strong as a last stronghold of Southern heritage and history.” It further asked legislators to “Stand guard with us to protect our state, our future, and our historical relevance.” Another individual, in a letter to the editor of the *Laurel-Leader Call*, minced no words in defending the 1894 Flag flatly stating: “I am empathetic with the Blacks concerning slavery. It was evil... although a necessary evil.”⁷³ Outside the capitol protestors marched and drove around the capitol

69 Alan Lange, “Op-Ed- So the Goal Is to Get a New Flag, Right? Here’s How to Do It Fast”, *Y’all Politics*, June 11, 2020. Opponents of the Stennis Flag believed that Stennis was attempting to use the flag as a symbol of racial unity to reshape her family name.

70 His tweet from @PhilBryantMS was published on June 25th and stated, “The state seal would make a good flag”.

71 Kayleigh Skinner, Geoff Pender and Bobby Harvison, “As Leaders Continue to Count Votes to Change State Flag, Hosemann Throws Support behind Legislative Action”, *Mississippi Today*, June 24, 2020.

72 The letter “Anonymous letter to senators and representatives” was published on his Twitter account @jarvisdortch on June 23, 2020.

73 David A. Wade, “Flag Never Hurt Anyone – Opinion Letter to the Editor”, *Laurel-Leader Call*, July 18, 2020, A4.

with the 1894 Flag, Confederate Flags and other flags of right-wing causes like gun rights. On social media and in email communications to legislators, constituents berated representatives as cowards and traitors, accusing them of disenfranchising voters by seeking to change the flag without a public vote.⁷⁴ Some legislators voiced their opposition to the flag change, insisting on a public vote or defending the 2001 vote that retained the flag, without addressing the racial implications of maintaining a symbol associated with the Confederacy. This opposition revealed a persistent resistance to acknowledging the need for progress and addressing the systemic racism associated with the current flag.⁷⁵

In the latter half of June, state leaders outside of the legislative sphere began expressing support for changing the flag. On June 22, Republican Insurance Commissioner Mike Chaney became the first statewide elected official to call for change stating, “Now is the time.”⁷⁶ Chaney who had previously served on the 2001 Flag Committee revealed he faced death threats in 2001 from supporters of the 1894 Flag. Two days later the state auditor, state attorney general, and many other statewide elected officials joined the list of Republicans and Democrats across the state in calling for change.⁷⁷ Senator Cindy-Hyde Smith, who was in a closely contested re-election campaign against Mike Espy, also joined the group several days later. Two days later, the presidents of the state’s eight public universities and many of the schools’ athletic coaches gave a joint press conference from inside the capitol building lobbying for a new flag. The convergence of support from prominent Republican and Democratic officials, as well as leaders from high education demonstrated a growing consensus among diverse stakeholders for changing the flag.

Absent from this group was Governor Tate Reeves. The governor was the most notable voice of uncertainty toward the whole process.

74 Russell Turner, “Traitors and Cowards: The Really Troubling Side of the State Flag Debate”, *The Richton Dispatch*, July 2, 2020, 4.

75 Mississippi Legislature, MS House Floor, June 28, 2020. Streamed live on YouTube at https://youtu.be/JFwOL8_eSC8.

76 Ramseth, “Key moments”, A1.

77 Ramseth, “Key Moments”, A1. The state did not have any Democratic politicians in statewide offices in 2020.

As other prominent Republicans agreed to modification, Reeves opted to not voice an opinion on the flag, instead passing the decision to the voters of the state.⁷⁸ In a statement on June 16, he again declined to offer his own perspective, instead remarking: “I see a flag that the vast majority of Mississippians voted in 2001 to maintain as Mississippi’s state flag.”⁷⁹

A day after that statement Reeves reiterated his belief that the decision should be in the hands of the voters of the state instead of the politicians in Jackson.⁸⁰ The following day he proposed a possible two-flag solution where each city, county, or school would choose from the two options provided.⁸¹ Critics swiftly ridiculed this proposal labeling it as “separate but equal” and reminiscent of the era of segregation when schools and bathrooms were segregated. People responded that the notion of two flags was insensitive due to the racial implications of the proposal in the time following the death of George Floyd. On June 25 Reeves held a closed-door meeting after which he agreed that he would not veto a flag change bill if it came across his desk.⁸²

After the governor gave his approval, legislation quickly gained momentum through the capitol. During the earlier stages of the 2020 legislative session, Democratic legislators had filed ten separate bills to change the flag, but all died in committee.⁸³ Once Republican leadership agreed to change the flag, the bill was fast-tracked through com-

78 Emily W. Pettus, “Baptists and Wal-Mart Criticize Rebel-themed Mississippi Flag”, Associated Press, June 23, 2020. Reeves was accused of not having an opinion because of his concern of losing support from the large Conservative wing of the state’s Republican base when his bid for re-election comes forth in 2023.

79 Giacomo Bologna, “A Tipping Point? State Voted to Keep Flag in 2001, a Lot Has Changed since Then”, *Clarion Ledger*, June 10, 2020, A1.

80 Ganuchau, “Bipartisan Group”, 4.

81 Sarah Ulmer, “Governor Reeves Indicates He Might Entertain a Legislative Two Flag Solution”, *Y’all Politics*, June 18, 2020.

82 Bobby Harvison, “As Lawmakers near Votes to Change State Flag, Reeves Meets with Statewide Officials and Voices His Opposition”, *Mississippi Today*, June 27, 2020. This meeting occurred shortly after the Speaker of the House’s off-site meeting that changed the messaging of many of the state’s leaders. Several of those leaders attended both meetings, relaying the message of the Speaker of the House directly to the Governor.

83 Sarah Ulmer, “Votes Not Likely There to Pass Mississippi Flag Resolution Out of Senate Constitution Committee”, *Y’all Politics*, June 18, 2020.

mittees. On June 27, the house passed House Resolution 79 to suspend rules on filing so that House Bill 1796 could be read and sent to committee.⁸⁴ The bill removed the current state flag and created a nine-member committee that would be tasked with creating a new flag. The nine members would be from various parts of the state with three selected by the governor, three by the lieutenant governor, and three by the speaker. The new design would not possess any Confederate iconography and would have the phrase “In God We Trust.” The flag committee would actively seek suggestions from the people of the state, and a singular proposed flag would be put a vote during the November 2020 general election.

Debate over the final vote garnered national and international attention, and the debate in the legislature remained civil. Many lawmakers, both Democrats and Republicans, wore decals that prominently stated, “It’s Time!”⁸⁵ There were some attempts by a few legislators to block the vote by appealing to the far-right side of the Republican base, claiming that they had enough votes to prevent passage of the bill. The Lieutenant Governor responded that the group was, “Knowledgeable but not accurate.”⁸⁶ Some Republicans attempted to distance themselves from the 1894 Flag, labeling it “The Democrat Flag” as Democratic politicians had adopted it in 1894. These Republicans asked their fellow legislators to vote for a new flag that represented all Mississippians.⁸⁷ Representative Robert Johnson, a Black politician from Natchez, found the process cathartic as White members of the house expressed empathy and shared in his pain. Another Black representative, Ed Blackmon from Canton, said it was ironic that the flag that was being debated was not actually flown over Mississippi during most of the war but was: “Adopted to control Black folk (telling them) you haven’t made it yet.”

84 Luke Ramseth and Giacomo Bologna, “Flag Change a Step Closer”, *Clarion Ledger*, June 28, 2020, A1.

85 Ramseth and Bologna, “Flag Change”, A1.

86 Luke Ramseth and Giacomo Bologna, “Nation Is Watching: Pressure Mounts, but Are There Enough Votes to Change Flag?”, *Clarion Ledger*, June 26, 2020, A1.

87 The Democratic Party was basically the only part in the state in 1894. Those who adopted the 1894 flag were all Democratic.

Both the house and senate passed the bill on June 28, 2020 to thunderous applause in both houses. Governor Reeves signed it into law two days later giving the state fifteen days to officially remove the old flag. House Speaker Gunn referred to the passage, “A significant day”.⁸⁸ Lieutenant Governor Hosemann praised the passage as a bipartisan effort, transcending party lines. The Mississippi Economic Council released a statement, “Perceptions of our state will change around the nation and around the world.” Even President Joe Biden noted the change as: “The arc of the moral universe bent a little more today”. Senator Hillman Frazier, who was on the 2001 Flag Commission, compared this change to the 2001 attempt, declaring that it was definitely different this time.⁸⁹

Results and Conclusions

The new 2020 flag committee was formed in August and commenced its work with a diverse composition of four women and five men, six White, two Black, and one Native American.⁹⁰ The committee was hosted by the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, which sought expertise from a vexillologist to outline the basics of flag design. Suggestions for a new flag included a limited number of colors, a meaningful symbol, and a design simple enough for an elementary student to duplicate. In the subsequent month the committee received nearly three thousand designs that it narrowed down to two hundred. To further involve the public, a web-based voting system was implemented to further trim the number of options. After multiple rounds of elimination, the commission selected a single design on September second that would appear on the November General Election ballot.

The proposed design of the new flag was a combination of several elements and designs that had been proposed. Rocky Vaughn, Hunter Jones,

⁸⁸ Sarah Ulmer, “Reactions Roll In after Mississippi’s Legislature Votes to Change Flag”, *Y’all Politics*, June 30, 2020.

⁸⁹ Hillman Frazier, personal interview via e-mail, September 25, 2021.

⁹⁰ Emily W. Pettus, “Choctaw Chief Chosen to Help Design New Mississippi Flag”, Associated Press, July 24, 2020. [Apnews.com](https://www.apnews.com).

Sue Anna Joe, Dominique Pugh, and Kara Giles were all credited on the project as their designs were melded into a singular proposal.⁹¹ The recommended flag featured vertical red stripes on either end with a blue field in the middle. The blue was separated from the red by small gold stripes. Inside the blue field was a magnolia bloom encircled by the words “In God We Trust” and twenty small white stars. At the top of the encircled stars was a singular gold star that was composed of diamond shapes. The magnolia was chosen for the flag as Mississippi’s nickname is “The Magnolia State.” The twenty small stars symbolize Mississippi as the twentieth state to join the union and the gold star represents the Native American people who have historically and presently inhabit the land that is Mississippi.



Figure 5. Image of 2020 Flag, provided by Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

Opposition to the removal of the 1894 Flag was expressed by a vocal minority. One opined that the death of George Floyd allowed Democrats in the state to seize “low hanging fruit” in removing the

⁹¹ Alissa Zhu, “Shield or Magnolia”, *Clarion Ledger*, August 26, 2020, A1.

flag.⁹² The Sons of Confederate Veterans responded to the flag’s removal, as well as potential efforts to remove Confederate general names from military bases at the federal level, by labeling these actions as: “Unprovoked nationwide attacks against Confederate memorials by Marxist agitators.”⁹³ A few state senators and representatives, especially those from rural and predominantly White districts combined efforts with far-right Republicans across the state in an attempt to place an initiative on the 2020 ballot with the aim of reviving the 1894 Flag and placing the flag decision in the hands of the voters of the state. The proposal, which appeared to be more of a symbolic cause for the leaders of the movement rather than a substantive campaign for a flag, sought to gain enough signatures to place an initiative on the 2020 ballot that would give people of the state four flags from which to decide: the 1894 Flag, the Stennis Flag, the Great Seal Flag, and the 2020 In God We Trust Flag.⁹⁴ The initiative failed to make it onto the 2020 ballot and is currently mired in legal gridlock, as courts have declared the general public initiative process in Mississippi null.⁹⁵

Voting turnout in November was high due the November ballot containing races for President, U.S. Senate, and U.S. House and initiatives related to electoral votes in the selection of governor of the

92 Alan Lange, “Op-Ed- so the Goal Is to Get a New Flag, right? Here’s How to Do It Fast”, *Y’all Politics*, June 11, 2020.

93 Staff reports, “SCV Forms Military Committee to Attack Misinformation”, *Laurel-Leader Call*, July 30, 2020, A11.

94 At one of the meetings of this group that was broadcast on Facebook Live, the most vociferous state senator in attendance told an audience of a two dozen that this movement was, “Not about a flag at all”. That senator would later attempt to use the action of the legislature taking away the power of voters to determine the fate of the 1894 Flag as a springboard for a campaign for Lieutenant Governor in 2023. Rallies of this group included a handful of state legislators, the far-right militia Oath Keepers, and the Sons of Confederate Veterans.

95 The null ruling of the initiative process was caused by one of the issues on the 2020 ballot, an initiative to legalize medical marijuana. The initiative surprisingly passed, giving authority to the Mississippi Department of Health to certify dispensaries. The mayor of an upper-class Jackson exurb, Madison, did not wish to cede such authority as certification to the state, so she found an issue in the initial process that prevented the medical marijuana bill from becoming law. The initiative process as passed in the 1990s set baseline requirements of the number of signatures required statewide and from each of the five federal congressional districts to place any initiative on a ballot. Since the initial bill in the 1990s, the state has lost one congressional seat rendering the initiative process unable to follow the letter of the law.

state, medical marijuana, and the proposed new state flag.⁹⁶ Nearly seventy percent of voters approved the new flag, a direct inverse of the 2001 vote. Voting data was retrieved from the Mississippi Secretary of State's website and inputted into ARC-GIS mapping software with Census data provided by the Mississippi Automated Resource Information System (MARIS).⁹⁷ The data was scaled to the precinct level, the lowest level that voting data can be publicly presented and analyzed through statistical software to determine correlations between the flag vote, voting trends, and demographics.

Analysis of the vote found that race was still a determining factor as those who voted against the new flag were perceived as proxy voters in favor of the 1894 Flag. Race and flag vote had a correlation coefficient of .78 meaning that White people were more likely to vote against the new flag and Black people were more likely to vote for it. However, comparison of votes reveals that political affiliation was a greater influence in the decision of whether to support the new flag.⁹⁸ A comparison of votes for 2020 presidential candidates found that those against the new flag had a correlation of .87 compared to Republican voters in the same election. Opposition to the new flag and Republican vote were not a one-to-one relationship but precincts that voted in heavier percentages for Republicans in 2020 were also precincts that were more likely to oppose the new flag. Only two counties, George and Greene, had a majority of voters who voted against the new flag. Both are rural, predominantly White counties that have long been Republican strongholds.⁹⁹ Wording of the initial flag-change law stated that

96 According to the Mississippi Secretary of State's Office, nearly 1.4 million people voted in the 2020 election at <http://sos.ms.gov>.

97 Election results were from <https://www.sos.ms.gov/index.php/elections-voting/election-results/2020-election-results>. Geospatial data was retrieved from <https://maris.mississippi.edu/HTML/Data.html#gsc.tab=0>.

98 These findings are based on the authors' comparisons of 2020 election data regarding votes for presidential candidates at the precinct level compared to racial composition and result of the flag vote. Data was provided by the Mississippi Secretary of State's Office and the Mississippi Automated Resource Information System (www.maris.state.ms.us).

99 Greene County is also the mailing address of the most public Ku Klux Klan chapter in the southern part of the state as evidenced by flyers dropped in one of the author's lawns that had a Greene County mailing address.

the legislature had to certify votes in January, after which the governor would officially approve the new flag. As per this requirement, the legislature certified votes at its 2021 opening session, and the governor signed the new flag into effect in January 2021.

The issue of the 1894 Flag was that it was a symbol of a country and time that have long passed. Geographers Webster and Leib reviewed the 2001 flag vote and deemed the core of those who wished to retain the 1894 Flag as “Traditionalists,” conservative-minded people who embraced heritage and feared change.¹⁰⁰ Historically, traditionalist have dictated policy in the state by utilizing history, namely White history, as a source of unity to blur lines of class and maintain the hegemonic structure present in state politics. In the 2020 vote, leadership approached the issue differently, not focusing inwardly on heritage but an outsider’s perspective of perception. The 2001 Flag Listening Sessions were at times contentious and divisive, and they did not present that best image of the state.¹⁰¹ In the 2020 debate over the flag, Representative Ed Blackmon retold of his personal experiences on the 2001 Flag Commission and reminded the legislature that “The world is watching”.¹⁰² Others in the legislature addressed the external perception of the state removing their own personal attachment from the issue, similar to John Rawls’s “Veil of Ignorance.”¹⁰³ Rawls proposed that for decision-making to be fair, the decision-maker must remove their own personal biases and personal identity to make an informed decision from an unbiased state. The racial implications of the events in Charleston and Charlottesville formed visceral images of racist identities in America, and leaders of the state viewed flag change as an opportunity to distance the state from these images.

100 Leib and Webster, “Black, White or Green?”, 322-24.

101 Representative Ed Blackmon was on the 2001 committee and stated in the 2020 House debate on the bill that the 2001 vote was a “pretty bad experience” and there were times when, “our lives appeared to be in jeopardy”. Mississippi Legislature YouTube Channel, 2020 Session, <https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLfk4ctYmTaKw8QnRnH65jNha7vXmE0SA>.

102 June 27, 2020 session to suspend the rules of bill introduction, <https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLfk4ctYmTaKw8QnRnH65jNha7vXmE0SA>.

103 John Rawls. *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1971).

Mississippi also has a demographic issue that has become more evident over the three years since the flag change. The state is losing population.¹⁰⁴ According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the state had its first loss of total population in history between 2010 and 2020. Historically the African American population of the state declined between 1910 and 1990, but the growth of White population had kept the state's rate of growth positive. The most recent Census in 2020 reveals that the state lost population, especially young people who are finishing college in the state then moving away. A 2022 article published by the Mississippi State Auditor found that nearly half of all recent college graduates from Mississippi's eight public universities leave the state within five years of completing college. The auditor does not give specifics of how to solve the issue, but a thesis by a student at the University of Mississippi found that college graduates in Mississippi were looking for more diversity and social events to attend.¹⁰⁵ They were leaving the state for larger cities that offered better-paying jobs and opportunities. The Mississippi Economic Council in June 2020 dictated in its open letter that the state needed to retire the flag and develop a better climate for future business.¹⁰⁶

Change agents were key to the eventual retirement of the 1894 Flag. Maisie Brown, organizer of the initial BLM march in Jackson credits the people of Mississippi for advocating for change. She states: "It is really important to realize that nothing can be changed if it isn't faced."¹⁰⁷ State Senator Hillman Frazier credits the Jackson BLM march and the young people who organized it as the entities that deserves the most credit.¹⁰⁸ Their use of social media and the prominent yet peaceful march gives him solace in our future. Syndicated statewide sports columnist, Rick Cleveland, stated that

104 Office of the State Auditor of Mississippi, "Money Down the Brain Drain: Are Taxpayers Getting Their Money's Worth?" (Jackson, MS: State of Mississippi, April 2022). https://www.osa.ms.gov/documents/Special_Reports/Brain%20Drain%20Report.pdf. The publication highlights the loss of college graduates in the state but fails to provide solutions.

105 Savannah Smith. "Brain Drain in Mississippi: Why Some of the State's Best and Brightest Are Leaving" (Honors Thesis, Barksdale Honors College, University of Mississippi, 2018).

106 Published June 24, 2020 on page six of the first section of the *Clarion Ledger*.

107 Wilton Jackson, "We Are Going to See a Shift", *Clarion Ledger*, August 23, 2020, A1.

108 Frazier, personal interview.

athletic entities inside and outside the state combined and deserve credit as drivers of change.¹⁰⁹ Cleveland acknowledges the SEC, Conference-USA, and the NCAA as well as former and current athletes from Mississippi. One prominent feature that has connected athletics and image has been the long history of Confederate iconography of the University of Mississippi Rebels. Former chancellor of the university, Robert Khayat, states that the reason he led the university through the process of changing the image of the Confederate mascot and the banning of Confederate flags was that the iconography was damaging the image of the institution and limited the university's ability to recruit students.¹¹⁰

Individuals can make calls for change, but structures needed to be involved to create the shift that occurred in Mississippi. Closed doors meetings in Jackson were frequently held in June 2020, and individuals left those meetings encouraging flag alteration. The theme of "It's Time" motivated the Republicans who held a super-majority in the legislature to reshape the narrative of the state, and leaders of both houses encouraged dialogue that encouraged change. Beyond individuals, the wave of support for a new flag grew from businesses, religious organizations, athletic groups, and media outlets and leaders took notice of the spotlight that the state was placed under. As the Senate Pro Tempe stated from the senate floor, the issue of the flag will come up again and again. The state would be unable to shake this debate over the flag until it is removed.

Another theme of change was economics and capital. Early in June 2020 several economic councils were among the first organizations to widely call for change. They believed that the Confederate Battle Flag did not convey a welcoming message to potential investors. Darren Purcell and Cayton Moore's article on selling Southern destinations says, "Mississippi deals with the shadow of presenting the state in a flattering light, a shadow that has to be contained, controlled, or ignored".¹¹¹

109 Rick Cleveland, "No Doubt about It: Sports Sparked Successful Mississippi Campaign for a New Flag", *Mississippi Today*, July 20, 2020.

110 Robert Khayat, *Education of a Lifetime* (Oxford, MS: Nautilus Press, 2013), 160-210.

111 Darren Purcell and Cayton Moore, "Selling Southern Places: An Examination of Delta's Sky Magazine City Profiles", *Southeastern Geographer* 59, no. 3 (2019): 248-67.

This history and messaging of a flag tied to a racist past places Mississippi at a disadvantage in its attempts to attract new investors and retain some of the college graduates who are quickly leaving the state. This argument of economics was one of the motivators behind removal of Confederate monuments in Tampa in 2017. Some supporters of removal in Tampa failed to address the racism of the monuments, instead supporting removal because it was good for business.¹¹² Kirk Savage articulates that change or lack of change always possesses a cost.¹¹³ Change may cost some incumbents their seats, but the cost of retaining Confederate iconography is much more costly. To move forward as a state, both socially and economically, people have to embrace change and reject complacency in the past.¹¹⁴

Religion was another theme that served as a catalyst for change in Mississippi. The 2001 vote to change the flag had the support of several religious organizations, but since the 2015 Charleston Massacre, religious organizations have become more vocal in their opposition to racist iconography. Faith has now become a driver of addressing if not slowly eroding racial prejudice across the country.¹¹⁵ New endorsements by more religious organizations in the state in 2020 allowed state leadership to address some of the issues of the past and attempt a form of racial reconciliation. The Mississippi (Southern) Baptist Convention endorsement of a new flag included the statement, “The racial overtones of this flag’s appearance make this discussion a moral issue”.¹¹⁶ Mandated use of national motto “In God We Trust” on the new flag is also a union of faith and state. Mississippi followed the example of Georgia in placing the phrase on the new flag, duplicating the process

112 Stephen McFarland, Samantha Bowden, and Martin Bosman, “Take ‘Em Down Hillsborough: Race, Space, and the 2017 Struggle Over Confederate Iconography in Neoliberal Tampa”, *Southeastern Geographer*, 59 no. 2 (2019): 174-82.

113 Kirk Savage, “Iconoclasm and the Confederacy: The Challenge of White Supremacy in the Memorial Landscape”, lecture hosted by *Southern Spaces* at Emory University, October 30, 2017.

114 David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country Revisited* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 86-122.

115 Priscilla McCutcheon, “The Radical Welcome Table: Faith, Social Justice and the Spiritual Geography of Mother Emanuel in Charleston, South Carolina”, *Southeastern Geographer* 56, no. 1 (2016): 16-21.

116 Pettus, “Baptists and Wal-Mart”.

of removing a Confederate symbol and replacing it with a statement tied to religion. This change forced some social actors to make a decision on what they valued most and whether they would choose faith over heritage.

Finally, the thread that ties these debates together is race. The flag was selected in 1894 as a unifier of White power and a reminder that Black people were to be subservient. White people dictated narratives attached to the flag, though Mississippi is more than just a state of White people. When calls for change started in the 1980s, Black voices were the ones who overtly pushed for change. These voices were not enough as it took more than three decades for the requests to come to fruition. Black voices were emboldened by continual occurrences of racial violence. Protests and marches grew as Black residents became more vocal and non-Black people became more cognizant of the struggle that Black people endured. These voices eventually gained enough White attention in the state to force the flag's retirement. In 2020, the murder of George Floyd in Minnesota spurred protests in the capital city of Mississippi. Those protests led to conversations in the chambers of the state legislature forcing it to address the symbolism of a state's official symbol of a state that implicated racism.

Race, religion, and the state all overlapped in the debate over the state flag of Mississippi. This combination forced Mississippians and state leaders to confront the issue of racialized messaging as an official proclamation of a state. Dealing with these histories is uncomfortable but ignoring them is costly. The process in Mississippi lasted nearly forty years and involved moments of joy and times of unpleasantness. Public opinion and hegemony over that time shifted and many people are to credit for this alteration. The death of George Floyd sparked the eventual retirement of the 1894 Flag. Although Floyd was not directly tied to Mississippi, his death influenced the removal of a symbol that represented three million residents in a southern state.

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Mary Lorena Kenny
Irreconcilable Differences?
A Reckoning with *Confederado*
History in Brazil

Confederados are descendants of U.S. southerners who emigrated to southern Brazil and the Amazon region after the Civil War, where slavery was still legal. The Brazilian government covered their transportation costs and provided subsidies and land grants in exchange for developing “empty” land. Much of the material written about *Confederados* is by descendants where discussions of slavery, slave ownership (prior to emigration or in Brazil), or the “draw” to Brazil receives little or no mention. This article threads the troubled history of *Confederados* in Santarém, Pará, to a global context demanding a reckoning with systemic and institutionalized racism and police violence through protests, petitions, and demands of removal of symbols of slavery, racism, and oppression and of reparations. I examine the debates and tensions concerning collective and public memory about slavery, settler colonialism and the display of the Confederate flag.

Keywords: Brazil, *Confederados*, Santarém, Heritage.

**Diferenças inconciliáveis? Um acerto de contas
com a história *Confederada* no Brasil**

Confederados são descendentes de sulistas estadunidenses que emigraram para o Sul do Brasil e a região amazônica após a Guerra Civil, onde a escravidão ainda era legal. O governo cobria seus custos de transporte, fornecia subsídios e doava terras em troca do desenvolvimento de terras “vazias”. Grande parte do material escrito sobre os *Confederados* é de descendentes, onde as discussões sobre escravidão, posse de escravos (antes da emigração ou no Brasil) ou o que os “impulsionou” a emigrar para o Brasil recebem pouca ou nenhuma menção. Este artigo traça a conturbada história dos *Confederados* em Santarém, Pará, num contexto global que exige um ajuste de contas com o racismo sistêmico e institucionalizado e a violência policial por meio de protestos, petições e pedidos de remoção de símbolos de escravidão, racismo e opressão e também de reparação. Examinamos os debates e as tensões em torno da memória coletiva e pública sobre a escravidão, o colonialismo e a ostentação da bandeira confederada.

Palavras-chave: Brasil, *Confederados*, Santarém, patrimônio.

Irreconcilable Differences? A Reckoning with *Confederado* History in Brazil

Mary Lorena Kenny*

Fleeing the defeat of the Confederacy after the Civil War (1861-1865), the nightmare of federal control, and apprehension about the loss of racial, political, economic, and cultural power during the Reconstruction (1865-1877), approximately 8-20,000 Confederates migrated to Central and South America, one of the largest out-migration streams from the United States in the nineteenth century.¹ Slavery was legal in Brazil until 1888. Consequently, for these Confederates (called *Confederados* in Brazil), Brazil offered economic opportunity, adventure, cheap or enslaved labor, and religious freedom.² Between 3,000 and 10,000 Confederates emigrated to the southeastern region in the present-day state

* Mary Lorena Kenny (kennym@easternct.edu). Eastern Connecticut State University, 83 Windham Street, Willimantic, Connecticut 06226, United States of America. Original article: 4-7-2022; Revised version: 14-3-2023. Accepted: 14-3-2023.

1 Célio Antonio Alcantara Silva, “Confederates and Yankees under the Southern Cross”, *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 34, no. 3 (2015): 371, <https://doi.org/10.1111/blar.12202>; Lawrence F. Hill, *The Confederate Exodus to Latin America* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1936). Harter estimates that 20,000 confederates headed to Mexico, Cuba, Jamaica and other locations in South America (Argentina, Honduras). Eugene C. Harter, *The Lost Colony of the Confederacy* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1985). Estimates to Brazil vary with the source, with estimates from 4-30,000. Alan P. Marcus, *Confederate Exodus: Social and Environmental Forces in the Migration of U.S. Southerners to Brazil* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2021), 11.

2 Maria Clara Sales Carneiro Sampaio, “A Amazônia no olhar imperialista: a história ainda pouco explorada do projeto do norte-americano Matthew Fontaine Maury para a Amazônia na década dos 1850”, *Revista Canoa do Tempo* 11, no. 1 (2019): 4-24, <https://doi.org/10.38047/rct.v11i01.5947>; Edwin McDowell, “Confederate Outpost in Brazil”, *Wall Street Journal*, August 22, 1975, 11.

of São Paulo, where they formed small agricultural colonies. In 1867, 200 *Confederados* also migrated to the city of Santarém, Pará, in the Amazon region.

Emperor Dom Pedro II of Brazil offered generous resettlement assistance in the form of land grants and subsidies to *Confederados* (also referred to as exiles and refugees), in exchange for developing “empty” public lands, introducing innovative agricultural techniques, and integrating into (whitening) Brazilian society.³ For most *Confederados*, however, visions of a Brazilian El Dorado and reversing the outcome of Civil War clashed with reality, and their settlements failed. Many *Confederados* lacked the capital to buy slaves.⁴ They found life in the tropics unbearable.⁵ They also failed to learn Portuguese and were repelled by the social proximity of Brazilian free Blacks, lack of Black subservience, and widespread miscegenation. Except for a few notable plantation (and slave) owners, elite Brazilians viewed the *Confederados* as *mal educados* (badly behaved) dregs of antebellum society and a shiftless group of adventurers.⁶ Most of them ended up living in destitution and returning to the United States.⁷

Two long-lasting *Confederado* settlements were in Americana and Santa Bárbara d’Oeste, both in São Paulo. Since 1980, the Fraternity of American Descendants (Fraternidade Descendência Americana) hosts a very popular annual cultural heritage festival which draws up

3 Luciana da Cruz Brito, “Um paraíso escravagista na América do Sul: raça e escravidão sob o olhar de imigrantes Confederados no Brasil oitocentista”, *Revista de História Comparada* 9, no. 1 (2015): 145-73, <https://revistas.ufrj.br/index.php/RevistaHistoriaComparada/article/view/2354/1982>; Denise Ferreira da Silva, *Toward a Global Idea of Race* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2007).

4 Alessandra F. Zorzetto, “Propostas imigrantistas em meados da década de 1860: a organização de associações de apoio à imigração de pequenos proprietários norte-americanos – análise de uma colônia” (Master’s thesis, Universidade Estadual de Campinas, 2000), 21-23, and 35; Marcus, *Confederate Exodus*, 129.

5 Sarah Bellona Smith Ferguson, “The American Colonies Emigrating to Brazil”, *Times of Brazil*, December 18, 1936, 18-41.

6 Nelson Papavero *et al.*, “The Travels of Joseph Beal Steere in Brazil, Peru and Ecuador (1870-1873)”, *Arquivos de Zoologia* 39, no. 2 (2008): 137, <https://doi.org/10.11606/issn.2176-7793.v39i2p87-269>; *História Mundi*, “Os Confederados na Amazônia”, January 9, 2016, <https://histormundi.blogspot.com/2016/01/os-confederados-na-amazonia.html>.

7 Ana Maria Costa de Oliveira, *O destino (não) manifesto: os imigrantes norte-americanos no Brasil* (São Paulo: União Cultural Brasil-Estados Unidos, 1995), 120.

to 2,000 participants.⁸ The festival celebrates a selective version of the antebellum south that includes dressing in antebellum clothing (hoop skirts), picnicking on traditional southern U.S. cuisine, and hoisting the Confederate flag, while the soundtrack from *Gone with the Wind* plays in the background. The Confederate flag is also emblazoned on trinkets sold at the festival such as hats, mouse pads, coffee cups, and T-shirts, and displayed on jackets and cars at other motorcycle and beer festivals.⁹ Other markers of *Confederado* history on the landscape include a chapel with a portrait of Robert E. Lee, and the Cemitério do Campo (Field Cemetery), where 430 Protestant Confederates are buried, as by the time they died, they were prohibited from being buried in the public cemetery.¹⁰ Overall, the festival and other representations of *Confederado* history honor the trials, tribulations, and successes of *Confederados*.

In 2019, Afro-Brazilian activists of UNEGRO (Union of Black People for Equality) and their allies staged protests at the *Confederado* heritage festival, receiving widespread media coverage.¹¹ Their protests centered on the display of the Confederate flag, a symbol used by those who fought to maintain slavery and segregation in the United States, which after the end of the war continued to be embraced by White nationalist White supremacist groups. In 2021, protests also took place over 3,000 miles from Santa Bárbara and Americana, in Santarém, Pará, nestled between the Tapajós and Amazon rivers. These protests opposed the public honoring of *Confederados* and their descendants, as well as the display of

8 Jordan Brasher, "Brazil's Long, Strange Love Affair with the Confederacy Ignites Racial Tension", *The Conversation*, May 6, 2019, <https://theconversation.com/brazils-long-strange-love-affair-with-the-confederacy-ignites-racial-tension-115548>; John Cowart Dawsey, "O espelho americano: americanos para brasileiro ver e Brazilians for american to see", *Revista de Antropologia*, 37 (1994): 228.

9 The Fraternidade Descendência Americana (FDA) website sells Confederate paraphernalia www.confederados.com.br; Jordan Brasher, "The Crisis of Confederate Memory in the Interior of São Paulo, Brazil", *Memory Studies* 14, no. 6 (2021): 1315, <https://doi.org/10.1177/17506980211054336>; Leonardo Libando, "Uso de bandeira dos Estados Confederados em evento cervejeiro causa polêmica em Petrópolis, no RJ", *g1*, February 13, 2022, <https://g1.globo.com/rj/regiao-serrana/noticia/2022/02/13/uso-de-bandeira-dos-estados-confederados-em-evento-cervejeiro-causa-polemica-em-petropolis-no-rj.ghtml>.

10 Marcus, *Confederate Exodus*, xi.

11 Portal Geledés, "Mais de 100 entidades protestam contra bandeira racista em festa de Santa Bárbara d'Oeste", May 3, 2019, <https://www.geledes.org.br/mais-de-100-entidades-protestam-contra-bandeira-racista-em-festa-de-santa-barbara-doeste>.

the Confederate flag. These actions are emblematic of the transnational social justice and anti-racist movements that seek to reckon with systemic and institutionalized racism and police violence through protests and petitions demanding the removal of symbols of slavery, racism, and oppression, and sometimes reparations for past atrocities.¹²

This article focuses on the tensions over *Confederado* public memory in Santarém, Pará. This focus is justified because Santarém received fewer Confederates after the Civil War and there has been less media and critical scholarly attention than *Confederados* in southern Brazil. As a case study, this article provides a snapshot of the efforts by local, grassroots social justice movements to challenge public memory or officially acknowledged histories. To explore this topic, I carried out ethnographic research in Santarém between January and June 2022. I spoke with *Confederado* descendants, people aligned with the Brazilian Black movement, other researchers, journalists, lawyers, educators, students, and landowners. Moreover, I visited sites associated with *Confederados*, including cemeteries, museums, private homes, and historical landmarks in and around Santarém. I also draw from the historiography of *Confederados*, memoirs, reports by anthropologists submitted to the Ministério Público Federal (Public Prosecutor Office) for *quilombolas*, federally recognized traditional Black communities seeking land titles, maps, art, private libraries and archives, as well as social media pages and websites, such as Facebook.

I apply a “critical heritage studies” (CHS) approach to this data. CHS examines how personal, cultural and collective memories reinforce, shape and recreate a sense of identity and cultural affinity that is communicated through heritage (public memory). CHS views all heritage, including material heritage, as continually created and recreated, contested and negotiated, as people reassess the meaning of the past through the social, cultural, and political needs of the present. Rather than a static form of cultural expression, heritage is viewed as a dynamic process of cultural production that gives attention to the socio-political world of remembering.¹³

12 Mano Brown, *Mano Brown recebe Sueli Carneiro*, em *Mano a Mano*, Spotify podcast, 2022, audio 2:19:06; Sueli Carneiro, *Racismo, sexismo e desigualdade no Brasil* (São Paulo: Selo Negro, 2011).

13 CHS view all heritage as a culturally produced process of understanding the past and the present. Its meaning is contingent upon the lived experiences and the shifting ideological, polit-

Confederado descendant memoirs are important sources for understanding the contours of *Confederados* shared values, ideals, memories, and identities. Collective memories highlight sacrifice, grit and resilience, the difficulties of migration and assimilation, and innovative ways in adapting to a new country.¹⁴ References and images abound of *Confederados* as robust and courageous pioneers, and as refugees from a war-torn nation seeking freedom. There is disagreement among scholars concerning the legality of slavery as “push” factor for emigrants, but the evidence seems to point to its potency in decision-making for emigrants¹⁵. *Confederado* Frank McMullen, in a letter to the *New Orleans Times*, made it clear that emigrates would have to prove their “southernness” and “give satisfactory references that they are Southern in feeling, and pro-slavery in sentiment.”¹⁶ McMullen convinced over 150 people to relocate to Brazil, with the intension of creating a “New South where the principles of the one just lost might be continued, where slavery was still a vital institution, where agriculture was the principal industry, and where land was cheap.”¹⁷ Many *Confederados* intermarried, and continue to be linked by kinship, economic relationships, and intergenerational land ownership. *Confederados* also assert that the

ical, racial and discursive interests and needs of the present. Laura Jane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (London: Routledge, 2006), 83. “Memory studies” is a discipline unto itself, and beyond the scope of this paper. In *Slavery in the Age of Memory: Engaging the Past* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020), historian Ana Lucia Araujo unpacks the social, cultural, and political uses of different types of memory (official, personal and cultural, collective and public).

14 Julia Louisa Hentz Keyes, *Our Life in Brazil* (Montgomery, Alabama: The University of Alabama Libraries Special Collections, 1874); Laura Jarnagin, *A Confluence of Transatlantic Networks: Elites, Capitalism and Confederate Immigration to Brazil* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2008); Harter, *The Lost Colony*; William Clark Griggs, *The Elusive Eden: Frank McMullen’s Confederate Colony in Brazil* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987); C. B. Dawsey and J. M. Dawsey, eds. *The Confederados: Old South Immigrants in Brazil* (Tuscaloosa, University of Alabama Press, 1998); Frank P. Goldman, *Os pioneiros americanos no Brasil* (Philadelphia: King and Bird, 1972); Oliveira, *O destino (não) manifesto*. On the experiences of those marginalized in these memoirs see Gerald Horne, *The Deepest South: The United States, Brazil, and the African Slave Trade* (New York: New York University Press, 2007); Hill, *The Confederate Exodus*.

15 Samantha Payne, “‘A General Insurrection in the Countries with Slaves’: The US Civil War and the Origins of an Atlantic Revolution, 1861–1866”, *Past & Present* (2021): 1-33.

16 Frank McMullen, “Brazil Still Alive!” *New Orleans Times*, 1867. Cited from Justin Horton, “The Second Lost Cause: Post-national Confederate Imperialism in the Americas” (Master’s thesis, East Tennessee State University, 2007), 43.

17 Griggs, “The Elusive Eden”, 13-14. Six months after arriving, McMullen died from tuberculosis and the settlement fell apart.

Confederate flag flown in Brazil has been disassociated from the racist meaning it holds in the United States. Rather, it has become “Brazilianized” and embraces family, and cultural and racial unity. Yet, this argument is flawed, as many individuals who display the Confederate flag in the United States also claim that they are just celebrating their heritage, by not necessarily affirming themselves as White supremacists.

This article begins by revisiting the history of Confederate emigration to Brazil, followed by an analysis of the polarized interpretations of *Confederado* history. I argue that although social justice and anti-racist actions have not toppled the pillars of *Confederado* public memory, they are generating a new story by grappling with the gaps in how *Confederado* memory is represented. I argue that closing the gaps can only occur by acknowledging the historical and contemporary terror associated with the Confederate flag and other symbols of Confederate ideology and by linking the legacies of the ideological, racial, economic, and political agenda of *Confederados* with contemporary *non-Confederados* in the region. In the conclusion, I summarize the implications of unsettling *Confederado* public memory. I suggest that, although these efforts do not eliminate the root causes of injustice, they are important social, cultural and political starting points for rescripting or recalibrating dominant renderings of the past.



Figure 1. Map of Santarém, Pará. Source: Encyclopædia Britannica, “Santarém”. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Santarem-Brazil>.

Confederados in Santarém

Santarém (see Figure 1) and its environs, nestled between the Tapajós and Amazon rivers, is a vibrant, multicultural mosaic of overlapping historical, cultural, and geographical processes.¹⁸ Indigenous groups have been warding off or have been enslaved by missionaries and European colonizers since the sixteenth century. People in the region today express varied identities in relation to their labor and the land they occupy, intertwined with national, regional, and international policies and social movements. It is home to vast Indigenous reserves, *seringueiros* (rubber tappers), *ribeirinhos* (river people), as well as illegal *garimpeiros* (gold miners), large soy and cattle ranches, loggers and *grileiros*, who falsify documents to claim land ownership. Its 300,000 inhabitants share overlapping identities as Indigenous, *caboclo(a)*, *quilombolas* and peasants.¹⁹ More recent residents have relocated from the states of São Paulo and Mato Grosso and are involved in the lucrative, expansive and expanding soy and cattle ranching industries.

Extensive commercial and political circuits were forged with Brazil prior to and during the “theatre of operation of the American Civil War,” which paved the way for *Confederado* settlements.²⁰ The Amazon region was long viewed by U.S. politicians and slaveowners as a blank slate for commercial exploitation using enslaved or cheap labor, as well as a destination for the “deportation of free Black people.”²¹ In 1866, Reverend Ballard Smith Dunn, an episcopal preacher from New Orleans,

18 Oscar de la Torre, *The People of the River: Nature and Identity in Black Amazonia, 1835–1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018).

19 *Caboclo(a)* identity in Santarém draws from a mixture of Indigenous, African and riverine/forest identity. Pará also has the highest percentage of people who identify as Black and brown (*pardo*) of any Brazilian state.

20 Isadora Moura Mota, “On the Imminence of Emancipation: Black Geopolitical Literacy and Anglo-American Abolitionism in Nineteenth-Century Brazil” (PhD dissertation, Brown University, 2017), 91.

21 Abraham Lincoln, John Nicolay and John Hay, *Abraham Lincoln: Complete Works, Comprising His Speeches, Letters, State Papers, and Miscellaneous Writings*, vol. 2 (New York: Century Company, 1907 [1894]), 274–75; Andrew N. Clevon, “Some Plans for Colonizing Liberated Negro Slaves in Hispanic America”, *Journal of Negro History*, 11, no. 1 (1926): 35–49, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2714022>, cited in Whitfield J. Bell, “The Relation of Herndon and Gibbon’s Exploration of the Amazon to North American Slavery, 1850–1855”, *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 19, no. 4 (1939): 503.

Louisiana, published *Brazil, a Home for Southerners*, which outlined the possibility of creating a new Confederate nation in Brazil.²² Confederate Matthew Fontaine Maury, a Virginian, oceanographer, inventor of the underwater telegraph, and Commander of the Confederate States Navy during the Civil War, believed that a southern empire could be created by linking southern ports in the United States to the Amazon region.²³ He advocated for the relocation of freedpeople in the United States and scoping out the conditions for relocation of southern planters and their slaves to the Amazon region.²⁴ The pushback, however, centered on this backdoor route to expand slavery beyond U.S. borders.²⁵

Confederate emigrants to Santarém followed the encouragement of Major Lansford Warren Hastings, who promised them that their sugarcane, cotton, tobacco, watermelon, and rice would be cultivated by enslaved laborers on fertile land, and “would yield profits surpassing what they had prior to the Civil War.”²⁶ In 1867 he wrote the *Emigrant’s Guide to Brazil* after the President of the Province of Pará offered to help in relocating Confederates. In return, Hastings promised to recruit up to 400 settlers with agricultural experience to develop the area.²⁷ By 1868, the emerging *Confederado* colony numbered ap-

22 Dunn, Ballard Smith, *Brazil, the Home for Southerners; or, A Practical Account of What the Author, and Others, Who Visited That Country, for the Same Objects, Saw and Did while in That Empire* (New York: George S. Richardson, 1866).

23 In 2020, the monument to Maury in Richmond, Virginia was vandalized and removed due to his pro-slavery views.

24 Maria Clara Sales Carneiro Sampaio, “Não diga que não somos brancos: os projetos de colonização para Afro-Americanos do governo Lincoln na perspectiva do Caribe, América Latina e Brasil dos 1860” (PhD dissertation, University of São Paulo, 2013), 94-128; Sampaio, *A Amazônia no olhar imperialista*, 4-24; Nícia Villela Luz, *A Amazônia para os negros americanos: as origens de uma controvérsia internacional* (Rio de Janeiro: Saga, 1968); Matthew Fontaine Maury, *The Amazon and the Atlantic Slopes of South America: A Series of Letters Published in the National Intelligencer and Union Newspapers, under the Signature of “Inca”* (Washington, D.C.: F. Taylor, 1853); Walter Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017), 394.

25 William Lewis Herdon, *Exploration of the Valley of the Amazon, 1851-1852* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1952), 379.

26 Bell, *The Relation of Herndon and Gibbon’s Exploration*, 495; Silva, “Confederates and Yankees”, 371; Hill, *Confederate Exodus*.

27 Initial emigrants included the Vaughan-Jennings family (also spelled as Vaughon, Wanghon, Waughan, Von), Pitts, Henry and Craig Steele, Emmett, Mendenhall and Pichowski families. The Henningtons, Rikers, Wallaces and Rhomes were not part of the original Hastings group.

proximately 192-200 people. To facilitate their relocation, the Brazilian government paid their transportation to Brazil, provided land grants south of Santarém, and provisions for six months, with the understanding that this loan would be repaid when they got on their feet and sold their first crops.²⁸

Confederado collective memories, based on *Confederado* memoirs, focus on their industriousness in overcoming the difficulties of migration after a devastating war, cultural dislocation, and adapting to a new environment, language, and climate. From the outset, the emigrants in and around Santarém had difficulty with lack of provisions, exposure to disease and inexperience with agricultural labor.²⁹ They complained to the U.S. consul in Belém about the quality of the food and the dire housing. Few were able to establish or maintain any type of subsistence, and they passed the time drinking and roaming about town. The naturalist Herbert Smith described them as “a rabble of lazy vagabonds, offscourings of the army, and vagrants of Mobile, who looked upon the affair as an adventure.”³⁰ For the initial settlers, their situation deteriorated substantially after Hastings passed away, which resulted in all future government financial support being cut off. Without land titles and in debt to the Brazilian government, many settlers requested assistance from the U.S. government to return to the United States.³¹

Interrogating *Confederado* heritage

Should a different *Confederado* story be told, and if so, what should it say? In 2021, 154 years after their arrival in Santarém, city councilman Carlos Silva submitted proposal no. 140 to Santarém’s municipal cham-

28 Papavero, *et al.*, “The Travels of Joseph Beal Steere”, 153; Célio Antonio Alcântara Silva, “Capitalismo e escravidão: a imigração Confederada para o Brasil” (PhD dissertation, Instituto de Economia, UNICAMP, 2011), 257.

29 Thomas Griffin, “Confederate Colonies along the Amazon River”, *Brazil Herald*, March 28, 1981.

30 Herbert H. Smith, *Brazil: The Amazons and the Coast* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1879), 136.]

31 Silva, “Capitalismo e escravidão”, 264.

ber requesting the creation of an annual special session on September 14 to honor *Confederados* and their contributions to the growth and development of the region. The proposal was unanimously approved by the chamber in August 2021.

Council member Biga Kalahare, who was not present at the time of the vote, later voiced opposition to the special session. Kalahare spoke as representative of a constituency of 15 groups in and around the area who support anti-oppression, anti-racist, and other social justice issues. The coalition included NGOs representing Black activists, quilombolas, Indigenous groups, educators, the unhoused, Black women's associations and businesses, and scholars, as well as representatives of those who are threatened with or forcibly relocated due to agro-industrial expansion. For them, *Confederado* public memory elides the voices of Afro-Brazilians and Indigenous people, while the legacies of slavery and settler colonialism linger in the spatial, class, racial, gendered, and religious ideologies of Confederates and their descendants. The Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT, Workers' Party) posted on their Facebook page:

We, members of the Workers' Party – PT, (Santarém) oppose anyone who is racist, was slaveholding, and a White supremacist. We are against this ideology which was held by the American southerners who lost the Civil War ... are opposed to giving support to anything or anyone that supports this ideology... this group perpetuated violence both in the United States and in the places where they migrated.³²

The coalition then sent a petition to the city council expressing their opposition to a special session for *Confederados*. They did not target specific individuals or disparage those who are engaged in humanitarian or educational endeavors. However, some did comment in

32 (1) PT - Santarém | Facebook, September 13, 2021.

conversation that the inequities initiated at the time of their arrival, such as the acquisition of large tracks of land, persist today. Benedito, one of the coalition members, shared that

The day to honor their arrival in the city fails to acknowledge why they left the United States in the first place. They opposed abolition, or any kind of social and economic justice for the formerly enslaved. The continued public denial of this fact is what prompted those who signed the document to come together, because we have a different way of looking at their history, at their trajectory here.³³

Following the media attention the petition received, the president of the municipal chamber, Ronan Liberal Jr., felt it best to cancel the special session “to avoid any conflict or embarrassment for descendants”. In an online statement, he points to his arm and declares “I’m Black too”, and that *Confederado* descendants “hold no responsibility for what their forbearers did.”³⁴

The reassessment of *Confederado* public memory did not end with the petition. Coalition members created an online public panel that included two historians, one anthropologist and one local activist who each spoke about the history of *Confederados* and their migration to the region. The goal of the public forum was to “strengthen a culture of democracy, peace and anti-racism” by questioning the veracity of *Confederado* history based on a singular, White narrative. “Where is the history of the enslaved or Indigenous people in their story? We, too, want to be a part of producing that history”. Ciro Brito, a social justice lawyer, introduced the class by noting that “It is unfortunate that council members would want to celebrate terror, racism and...

³³ Conversation with Benedito, May 2022.

³⁴ Rogério Almeida, “Após polêmica, Câmara de Santarém cancela homenagem a Confederados, supremacistas estadunidenses que chegaram em Santarém/PA há 153 anos”, *FURO*, September 13, 2021, <http://rogerioalmeidafuro.blogspot.com/2021/09/apos-polemica-camara-de-santarém.html>.

White supremacy... in the twenty-first century... in a city that was constructed by Black and Indigenous peoples”. According to social justice lawyers who signed the letter, “Article 4, item VIII, of the Constitution repudiates terrorism and racism. Therefore, this proposition is considered unconstitutional, due to the history of slavery and the supremacist and consequently racist character of the ‘celebrated’ group.”³⁵

Panelists contextualized *Confederado* racial and political ideology by covering the history of U.S. imperialism in the north of Brazil, scientific racism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the ‘one-drop’ paradigm (to determine African ancestry), Jim Crow laws (state sanctioned segregation) as well as post-abolition labor practices in Pará. History professor Luana Bagarrão who specializes in the history of Africa and Afro-Brazilian Culture at the UFOPA (Universidade Federal do Oeste do Pará, Federal University of Western Pará), spoke about the Confederate migrants not only seeking a better life, but

bringing their ideas and culture with them. Whether they were slaveowners or not, their attitudes were shaped by the scientific racism of the day. They attempted to reproduce their lives in other places, not only Brazil. They carried their notions of White supremacy, and of racial purity. Mixture was seen as a form of degeneration of the race. They were defeated in the war, and feared post-abolition violence, the rise of Black power, retaliation and persecution, and many opted for asylum.³⁶

Panelists challenged the notion that *Confederados* were pioneers who survived against the odds questioning the narrative that White

³⁵ *Tapajós de Fato*, “Aula Pública – Confederados na Amazônia: O exílio disfarçado de progresso”, *Tapajós de Fato*, September 23, 2021, https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&v=560085551965976. All material cited from this panel in Portuguese was translated by the author.

³⁶ *Tapajós de Fato*, “Aula Pública”, https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&v=560085551965976, 38:00-55:00.

foreigners brought progress, development, and uplift to the region. Professor Bagarrão continued:

This narrative continues to associate a group of people with bringing order and progress. But we have to ask, progress for whom? From whose point of view? History must be interpreted from all points of view. Principally from those on the margins, common people, who have little written in the newspapers and other historical sources, but are still there producing knowledge, working, building this local economy.³⁷

They addressed the gaps in *Confederado* public memory that elides or mentions only briefly the issue of owning slaves prior to or after emigrating to Brazil³⁸. *Confederado* memoirs tend to dismiss slavery as a motive for emigration, noting that slavery was waning, and emancipation was imminent in Brazil.³⁹ It is unclear how much of the heavy lifting *Confederados* did in clearing, cultivating, and harvesting crops, or carrying out domestic chores. Memoirs reinforce an overarching narrative of *Confederado* hard work and accomplishment and much of the scholarly research that relies on these memoirs corroborates this narrative.⁴⁰ Scholars have questioned whether the legality of slave labor in Brazil was a primary factor in their decision to migrate. Historians James Roark in *Masters without Slaves: Southern Planters in the Civ-*

37 *Tapajós de Fato*, “Aula Pública”, https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&v=560085551965976, 38:00-55:00.

38 *Confederado* descendant Harter claims that free Black laborers migrated with their former owners. These “loyal and willing servants” included ‘Aunty Silvy’, who preferred service to the Cole family from Mississippi, ‘Rainey’ from South Carolina, who became a riverboat pilot in Brazil, and ‘Steve Watson’, formerly enslaved by Judge Dyer of Texas. After financial failure, the Dyers left all their property to him. Harter, “The Lost Colony”, 54-55; Goldman, *Os pioneiros americanos*, 123; Alcides Fernando Gussi, “Identidades no contexto transnacional: lembranças e esquecimentos de ser Brasileiro, Norte-americano e Confederado de Santa Bárbara d’Oeste e Americana” (Masters thesis, Universidade Estadual de Campinas, 1996); Brito, “Um paraíso escravagista na América do Sul”.

39 Payne, “‘A General Insurrection’”, 169, and 177-185.

40 Silva, “Capitalismo e escravidão”, 39.

il War and Reconstruction, and Gerald Horne in *The Deepest South: The United States, Brazil, and the African Slave Trade* note that the opportunity to legally obtain slaves in Brazil was a key “push” factor in Confederate emigration.⁴¹ Marcus counters this view by noting that only one potential migrant to Brazil (out of 75 letters of inquiry) asked about slave labor.⁴² However, Mota’s research shows numerous letters of inquiry (from Alabama, Texas, Kentucky) about both the price of slaves and the possibility of bringing Black freedpeople with them to Brazil.⁴³ Others acquired slaves as part of a package deal when they purchased plantations (*fazendas*).⁴⁴ Dr. James McFadden Gaston, a former Confederate army surgeon from South Carolina, arrived in Brazil in 1865 and noted that slaves could be purchased for half of the price in the United States.⁴⁵ Seventy-five percent of those migrated to Brazil were slaveowners in the United States and owned more than 1,000 slaves prior to emigration. Fifty-four Confederate families acquired a total of 536 slaves during the twenty-three-year period between the abolition of slavery in the U.S. and its abolition in Brazil.⁴⁶ One author describes slavery as the “glue” of the community.⁴⁷ Overall, the possibility of acquiring slaves most likely configured as one of many factors in the decision to emigrate.⁴⁸

41 James L. Roark, *Masters without Slaves: Southern Planters in the Civil War and Reconstruction* (New York: Norton, 1977), 124; Horne, *The Deepest South*; Marcus, *Confederate Exodus*, 66.

42 In *Confederate Exodus: Social and Environmental Forces in the Migration of U.S. Southerners to Brazil*, geographer Alan Marcus examines the backgrounds of *confederados*, and offers reasons why, with whom, and under what conditions they emigrated, the circumstances of acquiring land, and reasons for the longevity or failure of different settlements, and provides an overview of the scholarly and biographical publications on *confederados*. See also Harter, *The Lost Colony*, 35-53. Keyes diary includes passages about the difficulty in purchasing slaves or hiring freed slaves as laborers.

43 Mota, *On the Imminence of Emancipation*, 212.

44 Steven Phillip Lownes, “Johnny ‘Joãozinho’ Reb: The Creation and Evolution of Confederate Identity in Brazil” (PhD dissertation, Ohio State University, 2018), 162; Horne, *The Deepest South*, 203. Harter, *The Lost Colony*, 53.

45 In 1867 he published a travelogue and resettlement guide, *Hunting a Home in Brazil: The Agricultural Resources and other Characteristics of the Country. Also, the Manners and Customs of the Inhabitants* (Philadelphia: King and Baird, 1867).

46 Silva, “Confederates and Yankees”, 380. Gussi reports a lower number (66). Gussi, “Identidades”, 237.

47 Silva, “Confederates and Yankees”, 379-380. Horne, *Deepest South*, and Brito, “Um paraíso escravagista”, also discusses *confederado* slave ownership.

48 Mota, “On the Imminence of Emancipation”, 212.

Historian Célio Silva research on the Santarém *Confederados* notes slave ownership prior to and after emigration to Brazil. Between 1870-1878, the Santarém immigrants (that included the Hall, Rhome, Jennings, Riker, and Emmett families) bought 33 slaves. He compares this to slave ownership in 1860, and notes that the Rhome, Riker and Jennings owned slaves in both in the United States and in Brazil.⁴⁹ Rhome had the largest number of enslaved laborers (twenty-seven), which allowed the Taperinha plantation (sixty miles east of Santarém) to become one of the most profitable settlements in the area.⁵⁰ Its fertile soil produced cacao, fruits, corn, cotton, rice, and sugarcane, distilled into high-quality and much sought-after Brazilian sugarcane brandy (*cachaça*). Their high-quality tobacco even had its own stamp: TAPERINHA. There was a sawmill and watermill, and Rhome is widely known for having built the first steamboat in the Amazon. Some visitors to Taperinha (which is now privately owned) expressed to me their uneasiness knowing that enslaved labor was the engine of Taperinha's success. At different times Taperinha had up to 80 enslaved laborers.⁵¹ Historian Eurípedes Funes mentions 56, and provides a rich history of the local quilombos, descendants of the fugitive slaves from the Taperinha plantation, that continue to shape the cultural life of the region. On estate inventories from 1865-1872, Benedito and Manuel, Miquelina and Raimunda are listed, with ages from "recently born" to 62. Alongside their names is their "value," aligned with age and health status, with two persons listed as "old" and "without value". By 1872 Jerônimo, a carpenter, age 23, had fled, leaving behind two infant children. So had Belchior, age 29, and Maria Ignácia, age 60. An 1872 advertise-

49 Silva, "Capitalismo e escravidão", 275-82. In the United States Jennings owned eleven slaves, in Brazil one slave; Rhome owned five and in Brazil twenty-seven, Riker owned thirteen and in Brazil one, Vaughn owned forty-eight and in Brazil none.

50 The plantation was owned by Colonel Miguel Antônio Pinto Guimarães, vice-President (Governor) of the Province of Pará and future Barão de Santarém. In 1872, in an attempt to modernize the plantation, Guimarães entered into a partnership with confederado Rômulo John Rhome, from Texas, creating the firm *Pinto and Rhome*. Rhome purchased half the plantation and half the slaves, and became resident manager. Guimarães was the son-in-law of Maria Macambira, a large landowner in the Lower Amazon region, with had a reputation for extreme cruelty towards her enslaved laborers. Silva, "Capitalismo e escravidão", 283-84.

51 Reports vary about the number of slaves at Taperinha, from 30-80. See Smith, *Brazil: The Amazons and the Coast*, 171-74.

ment also notes 3-4 enslaved men (in their 20s) who fled Taperinha.⁵² It is this silence or disregard concerning slavery in *Confederado* public memory that perpetuates a dishonest narrative and marginalizes the history of Afro-Brazilians in the region.

Panelist and history professor Luis Lourindo (UFOPA), who specializes in the history of the lower Amazon (*Baixo Amazonas*), noted that:

Even if they did not buy slaves here, they carried with them the intent or expectation to continue their way of life here... those who did not or could not afford to buy slaves applied the same exploitative labor conditions to those they hired: the freed slaves, the Indigenous people, or those fleeing penury, such as the Cearense... where are their voices in the stories about *Confederados*?... We have to invert the perspective about the *Confederados* bringing their entrepreneurial ways to the city, their saintliness and talk about who really built this city... to understand this story better... to include the Indigenous culture and African culture as well.⁵³

Panelists also linked *Confederado* history to the entrenched, hierarchical power structure that has held their public memory in place “by those who are linked by kinship, money, political power, and land. They still benefit from what happened in the past.”⁵⁴ And “they (*Confederados*) are still part of the elite class here, and behind the scenes are protecting their interests.”⁵⁵ Panelists emphasized that there needs to be more trans-

52 The Barão de Santarém was the slaveowner. Estimates cited from Eurípedes Funes, “Bom Jardim, Murumurutuba, Murumuru, Tingu, Ituqui, Saracura, Arapemã. Terras de Afro-amazônidas – ‘Nós já somos a reserva, somos os filhos deles’” (1995): 4, 21. Author paper based on Eurípedes A. Funes, “Nasci nas matas nunca tive senhor: História e Memória dos Mocambos no Baixo Amazonas” (PhD dissertation, University of São Paulo, 1995).

53 *Tapajós de Fato*, “Aula Pública”, https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&v=560085551965976, 30:00-37:07.

54 Conversation with coalition member April 2022.

55 *Tapajós de Fato*, “Aula Pública”, https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&v=560085551965976, 16:07-16:10.

parency about the purchase of “empty” public land, and the cartography of intergenerational land concentration, dispossession of Indigenous peoples, and the precarious status of quilombos near a *Confederado* plantation. They also spoke extensively about the “new colonizers”, reconstructed versions of *Confederados* that include agribusinesses, such as soy and cattle ranchers, and those engaged in illegal deforestation and mining, whose practices destroy the environment and livelihoods of local peoples.⁵⁶

The Confederate flag was discussed by Carla Ramos Munzanzu, an Afro-Brazilian Anthropology Professor at UFOPA who specializes in African and African diaspora studies. She emphasized that the pain and trauma associated with the Confederate flag for Black people cannot be excised by superimposing the flag with a screen of family and unity. While studying in Texas she witnessed first-hand the violent backlash over the removal of the Confederate flag from public buildings, and gave a warning about the implications of “dangerous inattention.” “A Confederate flag is painted on the wall of a small condominium in the center of Santarém. This is a warning sign... that communicates its meaning very well to a more attentive audience.”⁵⁷ It is part of the cultural work that broadcasts a message about “who the heroes are,” despite the disquiet experienced by Black and brown residents who have to pass the image daily. It should alarm people, Professor Munzanzu added, that this and other White supremacist, racist and fascist symbols are displayed by members of the former President Bolsonaro’s administration and his supporters:

The proposal to honor *Confederados* forces us to ask,
what is going on here? What are they (*Confederados*) do-

56 These “new colonizers” are also tied to the harassment and murder of environmental activists who speak out against deforestation, illegal mining, and the expansion of soy and cattle farms.

57 “Vereador homenageará a chegada de supremacistas brancos em Santarém”, *Tapajós de Fato*, September 13, 2021, <https://www.tapajosdefato.com.br/noticia/397/vereador-homenageara-a-chegada-de-supremacistas-brancos-em-santarém>; “Partidos Políticos posicionam-se sobre a tentativa da Câmara em homenagear ex-confederados”, *Tapajós de Fato*, September 15, 2021, <https://www.tapajosdefato.com.br/noticia/405/partidos-politicos-posicionam-se-sobre-a-tentativa-da-camara-em-homenagear-ex-confederados>.

ing by expressing these memories, wanting a celebration at this moment? In bringing up to the surface a past that is so difficult for us, and it is still, unfortunately, connected to our daily lives. At what point did ‘American settlements’ become ‘*Confederados*’? What are we dealing with now in Santarém that we have to come together to debate this? How can we tie this or compare it to what is happening globally, to things that are happening now?⁵⁸

The “dangerous inattention” to what is happening now points to the widespread support for Bolsonaro, whose uncensored racist, misogynist, homophobic, anti-Indigenous, anti-science, militaristic and xenophobic comments tap into these beliefs among his supporters. Impunity for police officers who murder suspected criminals and civilian gun ownership was sanctioned by the now former President, as was the violation of environmental laws, criminalization of activists and journalists, and withdrawal of financial support for minorities and universities.⁵⁹

The Confederate flag painted on a building in the center of the city in the twenty-first century is evidence of the distorted *Confederado* historical narrative that fails to recognize the cultural trauma that blankets the quotidian world of Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous peoples in the area. In order to disrupt the traditional *Confederado* narrative,

58 *Tapajós de Fato*, “Aula Pública”, https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&v=560085551965976, 58:00-1:19:00; “Do ‘white power’ ao copo de leite, entenda símbolos ligados à extrema direita”. *Folha de São Paulo*, March 25, 2021; <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/mundo/2021/03/do-white-power-ao-copo-de-leite-entenda-simbolos-ligados-a-extrema-direita.shtml>; *A Tribuna*, “Apoiador de Jair Bolsonaro se veste de Ku Klux Klan durante manifestação”, *A Tribuna*, April 23, 2021, <https://www.tribuna.com.br/noticias/atualidades/apoiador-de-jair-bolsonaro-se-veste-de-ku-klux-klan-durante-manifestacao>; *G1*, “Professor usa roupa semelhante à da Ku Klux Klan, grupo de supremacia branca, em escola estadual de SP; VÍDEO”, December 12, 2021, <https://g1.globo.com/sp/sao-paulo/noticia/2021/12/21/professor-de-escola-em-santo-andre-se-veste-com-fantasia-que-remete-a-supremacia-branca.ghtml>.

59 The former president, Jair Bolsonaro, is often called the “Trump of the Tropics”. See “Who Is Jair Bolsonaro? Brazil’s Far-Right President in His Own Words”, *The Guardian*, October 29, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/sep/06/jair-bolsonaro-brazil-tropical-trump-who-hankers-for-days-of-dictatorship>; Antônio José Bacelar da Silva, and E. R. Larkins, “The Bolsonaro Election, Antiracism, and Changing Race Relations in Brazil”, *The Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology* 24, no. 4 (2019): 900.

a “new narrative” should tie the systemic conditions that created *Confederados* to present day social justice issues:

We know that racist and White supremacist groups use the Confederate flag as a symbol of their ideology, why don't they seem to know that? But the reckoning with *Confederado* history goes beyond whether they owned slaves, display of the flag on buildings or motorcycles or accepting that they are not racist because they married a Brazilian.⁶⁰

In the period of questions that followed the public forum, an audience member spoke about the importance of “not being afraid to speak out... we have to speak on behalf of ourselves and not delude ourselves with these lies that are not ours.” Another noted that the pushback to the special session “showed that our city is a Black and Indigenous city, that we need to tell a different story besides the one celebrating White supremacy, one that will raise awareness about the struggles of Black activists (Movimento Negro), and Indigenous activists.” Audience member Araujo reiterated that we:

have to see how this issue is connected to the present, how the racism and prejudices that they (*Confederados*) held continue to structure our daily life. Yes, they have their own memories, but we have to problematize those memories, connect them to what is happening with the current [presidential] administration, and in the same way our ancestors resisted and fought back we are going to resist this narrative through forums like this, raise our voices, against this history they want to pass along to us, the history of White people, Confederates.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Conversation with coalition member April 2022.

⁶¹ *Tapajós de Fato*, “Aula Pública”, https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&v=560085551965976, 1:45:00-1:46:00.

The topic of racism continued with audience member Bruno telling a story about when he was stopped by police at age sixteen because they suspected he had robbed a bank. “They put a revolver to my head and took me to the police precinct. The bank manager did not identify me as the robber, but this is the kind of racism that kills us.” His story echoed other recent, brutal examples, captured on smartphones and posted on social media by witnesses, of the fatal encounters between police or *vigilantes* (private security guards), and Black youth in Brazil.⁶² Although Brazil does not have death penalty, the police, *vigilantes*, and guns for hire routinely act as judge, jury, and executioner. In May 2022, Genivaldo de Jesus Santos died from asphyxiation after police officers detained him in the police car’s trunk, in which the police had thrown a gas bomb. A few months earlier, Congolese refugee Moïse Kabagambea was lynched by his employer after he requested his wages to be paid. In 2020, João Alberto Silveira Freitas (“Beto”) was killed by a security guard at the Carrefour department store in Porto Alegre, and five-year-old Miguel Otávio Santana da Silva, the son of a Black housekeeper, died after he fell from the ninth floor of a building while under the watch of his mother’s white employer.⁶³ In these cases, Black comportment and behavior was criminalized in advance, judged

62 *Tapajós de Fato*, “Aula Pública”, https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&v=560085551965976, 1:52:00-1:53:00. Of the 6,145 killed by police in 2021 in Brazil, 84% were Black. This is 9 times the rate of US law enforcement. Approximately seventeen Black youth are killed per day, which is a threefold increase since 2013. Kate Linthicum, “‘The Police Come Here to Hunt’: Brazilian Cops Kill at 9 Times the Rate of U.S. Law Enforcement”, *Los Angeles Times*, October 1, 2022, <https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2022-10-01/brazil-police-killings>.

63 Constance Malleret, “Outrage in Brazil as Mentally Ill Black Man Dies in Police Car ‘Gas Chamber’”, *The Guardian*, May 26, 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/26/brazil-mentally-ill-black-man-dies-gas-police-car>. See also “Protests Erupt in Brazil after Black Man Dies after Being Beaten Outside Supermarket”, *The Guardian*, November 21, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov/21/protests-erupt-in-brazil-after-black-man-dies-after-being-beaten-outside-supermarket>. According to Douglas Belchior, from the Coalizão Negra por Direitos network, “Here we have a George Floyd every 23 minutes”, Caio Baretto Briso and Tom Phillips, “A George Floyd every 23 Minutes’: Fury at Refugee’s Brutal Murder at Rio Beach”, *The Guardian*, February 4, 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/feb/04/brazil-congolese-refugee-murder-racism>, and Terrence McCoy, “In Brazil, The Death of a Poor Black Child in the Care of Rich White Woman Brings a Racial Reckoning”, *Washington Post*, June 28, 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/the-americas/brazil-racism-black-lives-matter-miguel-otavio-santana/2020/06/26/236a2944-b58b-11ea-a510-55bf26485c93_story.html. June 28.

as threatening, or violating social norms, because they are Black. The young man who spoke earlier went on to say that:

We need to see how today there are people raising the Confederate flag together in support of Bolsonaro and to honor *Confederados* as creators and innovators, you can be sure that everything they constructed relied on the sweat and suffering of Black and Indigenous people, so we have to retell the story, to stop telling the same narrative that is affixed to their story.⁶⁴

Although *Confederado* cultural memory approaches the Confederate flag as unifying rather than divisive, it is not supported by scholarly evidence or aligned with the collective memory of African Americans. Professor Munzanzu's reference to "dangerous inattention" suggests that the display the Confederate flag in the twenty-first century is intentional, and its meaning far from benign. The flag was never a harmless symbol of southern resistance, which helps to understand why it is viewed transnationally as a symbol of oppression. Its display was meant to send a threatening message, condoned by White institutions. In the United States the flag was displayed with Black persons lynched by the Klu Klux Klan as early as 1866, and later flew at segregated locations such as bus stops, stores, movie houses, restaurants, and court houses, where Jim Crow laws eroded the social and political gains made during Reconstruction. Its use gained momentum again during the civil rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s to symbolize opposition to desegregation. More recently it is used by White supremacists and nationalists as a symbol of the political and social dominance of White people, and opposition to immigration.⁶⁵ It is also displayed by

⁶⁴ *Tapajós de Fato*, "Aula Pública", https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&v=560085551965976, 1:58:00-2:00:00.

⁶⁵ White supremacy is the notion that Whiteness is inherently superior both biologically and culturally to all other identities, which supports the notion that White people have a natural right to control non-White persons, considered inferior. It extends beyond just an attitude or

those who advocate for White ethnostates and as a battlefield symbol for a RAHOWA (racial holy war).⁶⁶ According to Professor Munzanzu, it is a statement about power, and the fact that it is still displayed in the middle of town points to who is in control of the narrative. It does not matter if it is displayed at a festival or on a building or jacket or mouse pad, or by neo-Nazi groups in Brazil.⁶⁷ Its intent is to naturalize a racist ideology.

At the conclusion of the public forum, Professor Bagarrão noted that

As a society we are still honoring racist symbols of a slave past. Again, at what point did they stop being immigrants, and became ‘*Confederados*’? You cannot separate that identity as *Confederados* with White supremacy. We are not naming names. We are just saying we are not going to celebrate their past. We have to occupy these spaces, spaces of memory, spaces of resistance.⁶⁸

In a conversation with João, a social justice lawyer who signed the petition and works on behalf of marginalized communities, he pointed to the social and material impact of *Confederado* migration in creating a “landscape of displacement.” He noted:

perspective, as it relies on a system of exploitation to maintain the wealth, power and status associated with White privilege.

⁶⁶ Jordan Brasher provides a summary of international locations where self-ascribed rebels, xenophobes, and freedom fighters have displayed the Confederate flag, including Ireland, the UK, and Germany, see Brasher, “The Crisis of Confederate Memory”, 1327.

⁶⁷ According to the late Adriana Dias, there are over 500 cells and fifty-two neo-Nazi groups in Brazil. See Lucas Vasques, “Quase 1 milhão de pessoas leram material neonazista em 2021, diz pesquisadora”, *Forum*, January 18, 2022, <https://revistaforum.com.br/politica/2022/1/18/quase-milho-de-pessoas-leram-material-neonazista-em-2021-diz-pesquisadora-108905.html>. See also Leandro Demori, “Pesquisadora encontra carta de Bolsonaro publicada em sites neonazistas em 2004”, *The Intercept Brasil*, July 28, 2021, <https://theintercept.com/2021/07/28/carta-bolsonaro-neonazismo/>.

⁶⁸ *Tapajós de Fato*, “Aula Pública”, https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&v=560085551965976, 2:05:00-2:08:00.

The day to honor *Confederados* and their descendants is just what broke the camel's back. One more public acknowledgement to honor power, colonialism, and its legacies, in carving out control over the territory. A 'Confederate day' and opposition at this moment was just to expose what is already happening with this [presidential] administration, which is a form of fascism. The honoring of Confederates just seems to align with all of that. So, the response was, really? To honor people who fled where they were because they opposed the end of slavery and Black political and economic power on top of everything else? As I said, the *Confederados* or their descendants are not the real issue. I don't think most people really know or care about them; it is just what they symbolize. The arrogance, the violence. A "Confederate day" is just one more example of taking control of space, no concern for local people, which is what the original settlers did.

Tomás, another social justice lawyer who opposed the special session shared a similar perspective:

There is this narrative that *Confederados* had this benign past and only contributed to development in the region, but that glosses over the legacies and contemporary inequities, such as the huge tracks of land they own that were given to them, that they still benefit from. The resistance to land distribution and conflicts with Indigenous and quilombola peoples today. It is not just a resistance to *Confederados* day. It is a call to shift social and economic relations they have with people here. A reckoning with the narrative. It is about making public their economic and historical relationship with this region. In the past most people would just keep quiet about it, or ignore it, but this

time we felt that the time had come to decolonize this history, to resist a special day or session set aside for them, to highlight the power they still hold here. It is not just about our city or region. It is part of a global history of control and expansion.⁶⁹

Zé, a local resident who did not sign the petition but opposed a special day for *Confederados* provided a stark assessment of what happens to those who challenge the local power structure, which includes upper-class *Confederados*:

If someone gets in their way, they just hire a thug to take them out. The encroaching soy farmers are ignorant of any local concerns. Their only involvement is knowing who to talk to at the bank. They don't even know, or care, who the mayor is, or local politicians. They are irrelevant.

He then connected them to *Confederados*.

They (*Confederados*) benefited, were given land grants. And they still are benefitting. They own huge tracks of land⁷⁰. They are in cahoots with local politicians. They have their own association⁷¹, and fund politicians who support agro-industrial development. They cannot see or admit that they are part of the power structure, even if they married a person of color, or hire them as a housekeeper or nan-

69 Conversation with Tomás, March, 2023.

70 There was extensive intermarriage and buying and selling of property among about a dozen families (between fifty to eighty-seven persons) in Santarem. *História Mundi*, "Os confederados na Amazônia", 2016, <https://histormundi.blogspot.com/2016/01/os-confederados-na-amazonia.html>; See Betty Antunes de Oliveira, *Alguns Dados Históricos da Vinda de Norte-Americanos ao Brasil no Século XIX*, Mimeo, 2012, <http://bettyoliveira.com.br/historia/documentos.htm>.

71 Associação dos Descendentes de Confederados Americanos na Amazônia. Associação dos Descendentes dos Confederados Americanos na Amazônia, asdecon.blogspot.com.

ny. When you listen to the patronizing rhetoric, that when they (wealthy light-skinned Brazilians from the south) purchase land here, like *Confederados* did, and forcibly remove, displace or deny Indigenous peoples and quilombolas land, they couch it in terms of something inevitable and modern, that agro-industrial expansion will create jobs, but this is not the case. Do you know that Cargill built a plant on top of an archaeological site?⁷²

Confederados in Santarém never mentioned opposition to the abolition of slavery or policies and laws to support equality for the formally enslaved peoples as a motive for emigration, or that they carry any lingering White privilege. For them, racism and prejudice are individual attitudes, excised from any structural or systemic conditions. In addition, the Confederate flag should not be interpreted as harmful or oppressive to Black people in Brazil.

The opposition and subsequent cancellation of a special day to honoring them and their ancestors was unexpected. Open discussions about this issue are thwarted by the fear (and anger) that they are being judged or condemned by the actions of their ancestors. What happened 155 years ago and has nothing to do with who they are today. Craig, a *Confederado* descendant, said:

[He] knew my ancestors were elites in South Carolina, and here as well. But my family was not given land here, they bought it. Overall, I feel proud. They left everything behind. They lost everything. But I did not grow up hearing the term *Confederados*.⁷³ Whenever I asked anyone in my

72 Conversation with Zé, May 2023. The site was leased to the Cargill soy processing company. “Sítio do Porto: um local sagrado indígena destruído pela Cargill em Santarém (PA)”, Terra de Direitos e Conselho Indígena Tapajós Arapiuns, August 10, 2021, <https://terradedireitos.org.br/acervo/videos/sitio-do-porto-um-local-sagrado-indigena-destruido-pela-cargill-em-santarem-pa/23630>.

73 They were referred to as “American settlers” or settlements. Due to the negative media attention about *Confederados* and the association with White supremacy and violence, pseud-

family about why my ancestors left the U.S., the response was “because of the war”. Otherwise, it was never spoken about at home. It was only after Norma’s book was published in 1983 that it became a thing, an identity, more pronounced.⁷⁴ [After the book came out,] A journalist came here and wanted to interview me and the first thing they asked, quite aggressively, was “are you a racist”? “Are people in your family racist”? How do you respond to a question like that?

He also was adamant about distinguishing himself from *Confederados* in southern Brazil, who are invested in publicly maintaining antebellum White southern iconography as an expression of their cultural identity and heritage:

They have their museum and cemetery and festival and carry a proud stance about being a *Confederado*. Certainly, there are historical threads, but we in Santarém are different. We are a riverine people, mixed. My heart and soul are here. I consider myself a caboclo. I married a mixed-race person. The people who migrated here after the Civil War ended up mixing with the locals. They learned the language. They intermarried. I can only describe it like the coming together of the Tapajós and Amazon rivers. On the surface it appears they do not meet. But underneath there is mixture and exchange. We are different from those who identify as *mestiço*, as that type of mixture edges towards wanting to be White or European.

onyms are used protect the privacy of those who prefer to remain anonymous. All conversations took place in Santarém between March and June 2022. These are not one-time interviews. Rather, ethnography allows for multiple encounters, conversations and meetings over time. From these conversations, patterns, themes and core issues repeat themselves, which can point to central concepts that shape identity, memory and heritage. All conversations were in Portuguese and translated by the author.

⁷⁴ *Confederado* descendant Norma de Azevedo Guilhon, *Confederados em Santarém: saga Americana na Amazônia* (Rio de Janeiro: Presença, 1983).

He also distanced himself from the “new colonizers” identified by activists as being the modern version of *Confederados*, who live up in the highlands, do not mix with the locals, and disparage local residents as lazy, lacking in initiative, and an obstacle to progress. They “just keep expanding and dispossessing people from their land, even engaging in modern day slavery”. He also made note that “White supremacy is not native to who we are”, that it is “something the more recent arrivals have brought with them and attach to the flag.”⁷⁵

Clifford, another *Confederado* descendant and a well-respected local doctor, noted that “people in those groups don’t even know us. Many of them don’t even live here.” Clifford “embraced by the city”, known internationally for his humane and culturally appropriate treatment of indigenous peoples, and “valuable contributions to the socially and economically development of Santarém.”⁷⁶ He is one of five neurosurgeons serving more than one million people spread over an area of over 193,000 square miles and founder of the first public service of neurosurgery in the interior of the Brazilian Amazon. For over 20 years he has overcome logistical and cultural barriers and provided health care to people living in remote areas by flying his small plane into the area, and landing on make-shift airstrips in the forest. He operates on patients with neurological diseases contracted in the forest, such as hematomas caused by snake bites and TBIs caused by large, falling nuts, is fluent in Tupi-Guarani, and was appointed health coordinator of the Zo’ê, an indigenous group living in the Amazon rain forest. His vocal support for the protection of Indigenous habitats has made him the target of death threats and harassment. He reiterated that:

The story of the *Confederados* is one of acceptance, of multiculturalism, tolerance. It is a story of memory, of family. We use the Confederate flag here as a symbol of tol-

⁷⁵ All conversations with Craig took place between March-May 2023.

⁷⁶ “Cancelamento de homenagem a confederados: presidente da Câmara e vereadores se pronunciam sobre caso”, TV Impacto, September 15, 2021.

erance and multiculturalism, as a symbol of a new direction in life, which is totally different than the United States. There it represents everything that is awful, racism.

Like Craig, he emphasized intermarriage and integration. “I know where my ancestors came from, but their migration was not to recreate the social setting that existed in the antebellum south. That was over”. He found the rejection of a *Confederado* heritage day perplexing and frustrating. As noted by other *Confederados* “they [coalition members] don’t know us. Don’t talk with us. We asked for a dialogue, and it was turned down. We would welcome an open, public debate about this issue.”

When asked about the meaning of the Confederate flag as an expression of cultural identity, *Confederados* consistently disassociated it from its racist U.S. history and “Brazilianize” it with narratives of family, and cultural and racial unity, excised from any political movement or agenda, support for slavery, Jim Crow, or White supremacy.⁷⁷ Together with other symbols of their heritage, the flag is just a benign expression of southern iconography (White southern antebellum cultural heritage), nothing more.⁷⁸

Despite the emphasis on distancing themselves from those in the south, this perspective aligns with Marcus’ research on *Confederados*, which touches briefly on the recent protests over the display of flag at their heritage festival in Santa Bárbara. According to interviews conducted with members of the FDA (Fraternidade Descendência Americana, Fraternity of American Descent), an association representing the

77 Conversation with Craig, May 2023. See also “Interview with Dr. Erik Jennings”, *Café Chic*, February 6, 2020. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hbvpSD7i3qo>.

78 There is significant scholarship on the historical and contemporary meaning of the Confederate flag in the United States. Despite my own anti-flag biases, and political and ethical dilemmas with this topic, I withheld from judging or correcting perspectives in order to try to understand the meaning it holds for *Confederados* in the twenty-first century and how this aligns with their social world. See L. Esposito, “Confederate Flag Controversy”, in *Race and Racism in the United States: An Encyclopedia of the American Mosaic*, eds. C. Gallagher and C. Lippard (Denver: Greenwood Press, 2014), 294-96, and R. E. Bonner, *Colors and Blood: Flag Passions of the Confederate South* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

Confederados, and their statements posted on social media, protesters do not understand the complex roots of *Confederado* history and are trying to impose a presentist lens from a chapter of U.S. history onto a radically different Brazilian reality. Members of the FDA dismiss protesters' grievances as trivial and their presence disruptive at what should be an entertaining event and blame external agitators aligned with the Black Lives Matter movement as instigating the conflict. They allege that by making parallels between race relations in the U.S., with its history of lynching and legal racial segregation in the form of Jim Crow laws, with conditions in Brazil, protesters are fomenting racial polarity where racial divisions are non-existent.⁷⁹ Opinion pieces in the press, on TV, and various online social media sites reflect a variety of opinions, including those who support how *Confederado* heritage is currently expressed. They note the presence of Black Brazilians at the festival as well, suggesting it has been given their stamp of approval or does not make them uncomfortable.

Geographer Jordan Brasher, who has conducted research on memory and place in Americana and Santa Bárbara and who is a Confederate descendant, provides a scathing critique of *Confederados* lack of acknowledgement of the role of slavery in the lives of Confederates, their motive for emigrating to Brazil, and the amnesia (or erasure) in their representation of their heritage. Having attended the festival, Brasher noted that the majority of Blacks in attendance were working as security guards, or as waiters serving attendees.⁸⁰ Therefore, he makes a heart-wrenching plea to recognize the implicit harm and disquiet that display of the confederate flag ignites. Yet, overall, *Confederados* believe that Black and brown Brazilians have no reason to find the Confederate flag offensive, as they were not (and are not) oppressed or victimized by what the flag symbolizes.⁸¹

79 Marcus, *Confederate Exodus*, 178-86.

80 Jordan Brasher, "A questão dos símbolos confederados em espaço público", personal communication, April 8, 2022.

81 Due to the extensive international negative attention the heritage festival in Santa Bárbara received over the past few years, the local municipal chamber voted to prohibit any display of the racist symbols in public, including the Confederate flag in 2022. They have also canceled

I asked John, a *Confederado* from the southeastern city of Americana who relocated to Santarém, his thoughts about the Confederate flag, and what its removal would mean in terms of changing or threatening their history, culture and identity. He responded:

Look. Awhile back money began to take over. The festival (in Santa Bárbara) became a big extravaganza, a money-maker with lots of vendors and promoters. That's when things began to change, took on a different tone. First of all, I'm Brazilian. Period. That's my first identity. But I grew up speaking English at home and spoke English as well with my kids. I just thought that was important. Once I visited Georgia and was surprised at how at home I felt, but basically, I'm Brazilian.⁸²

I returned to the issue of the flag, sensing it was a topic to be avoided, but according to him: “If there is a substitution for the flag, show it to me. The flag is about our history in coming here, not what happened after that (Reconstruction).”

Conclusion: Telling a New Story

What, then, is the story of *Confederados* in the twenty-first century? Is it possible to hold multiple viewpoints about the meaning of the confederate flag? Or are the different ways of understanding the past, and experiencing the present, irreconcilable? Although most *Confederado* settlements failed, the implications, or perhaps the baggage, of nineteenth century history persists in heritage festivals, flags, ruins, former plantations and the landscapes of former settlements. As Professor Munzanzu noted in her presentation, some may consider *Con-*

lled the festival for 2023. *Novo Momento*, “Exibição de símbolos racistas é proibida em Santa Bárbara”, June 14, 2022. <https://novomomento.com.br/vereadores-approvam-retirada-de-simbolo-racista-em-bandeira/>.

⁸² Conversation with John, April 2023.

federado history a rusty, dead issue, as Santarém and Brazil are vastly different than they were 150 years ago. But she also noted the urgency of unpacking the past, especially when past practices and policies are intertwined with contemporary issues such as structural violence, land disputes, land invasions and racialized violence. As expressions of cultural memory, they have become critical arenas for engaging in social justice and anti-racist activism in Santarém and in other locations reckoning with the legacies of slavery and settler colonialism.

A critical approach to heritage starts with an interrogation of stories, including previous untold stories. The disruption of *Confederado* public memory in Santarém was set in motion when the city council approved a proposal to create an annual commemoration to honor *Confederados*. A coalition of local, grassroots, social justice and anti-racist activists and their allies then submitted a petition opposing this measure. They further challenged the “given past” by interrogating *Confederado* history in a public forum. For them, *Confederado* heritage is incomplete because it relies on collective memories that perpetuate a “heritage that hurts,” a heritage anchored and naturalized as consensual even though it obviously excludes the cultural and collective memories of Black and Indigenous peoples⁸³. Speakers outlined how the “values they carried with them”, were shaped by nineteenth century notions about slavery, race, White supremacy, and settler colonialism. Rather than resilient, courageous refugees from a war-torn country who brought progress and development to the region, they mapped how nineteenth century ideologies and practices were foundational to understanding systemic racism, the criminalization of Black and Indigenous peoples, and ecological devastation in the present. They noted the contradictions in the “scripts” that are used to create their heritage, ques-

83 Araujo, *Slavery in the Age of Memory*; Tania Andrade Lima, “Arqueologia como ação sociopolítica: o caso do Cais do Valongo, Rio de Janeiro, século XIX”, *Vestígios – Revista Latino-Americana de Arqueologia Histórica* 7, no. 1 (2013): 179-207; Tania Andrade Lima, “Valongo: An Uncomfortable Legacy”, *Current Anthropology* 61, no. 22 (2020): 317-27, <https://doi.org/10.1086/709820>. See also Kenneth Foote, *Shadowed Ground America’s Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997), 5. ‘Difficult heritage’ also includes cemeteries of the enslaved and residents of Indigenous boarding schools, and lynching sites in the United States.

tioning, for example, the importance of the “push” factors for migration (legal slavery in Brazil) and the alleged positive impact of *Confederados* in the region. They pointed to a lack of an honest acknowledgement about *Confederados* as slave owners, and their role in land dispossession among Indigenous and Quilombo communities. In addition, the cultural tropes used to revamp the meaning of the Confederate flag in Brazil, such as family, racial and ethnic affinity manifested in a shared Brazilian culture, and the dismissal of racially distinct experiences, was punctured by testimonies focusing on the “open wound” and historical patterns of racial and ethnic disparities, exclusion, and harassment in the region.⁸⁴ Overall, from the vantage point of Black and Indigenous persons whose perspective has for centuries been muted, *Confederado* history is deeply implicated with contemporary inequities shaped by color and race, class and land ownership and continues to be supported by transnational engines of colonization, and White supremacy, not neutral folklore.

Confederado narratives vary geographically and are multi-layered. In southern Brazil, *Confederado* public memory is reflected in festivals, cemeteries, railroad depots, historical exhibits and tours of renown *Confederados* and their homes. Notably absent or obscured in debates about *Confederado* public memory are the voices of Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous peoples. The town where the annual heritage festival takes place, Santa Bárbara, does not officially recognize Black Consciousness Day (November 20), nor are Afro-Brazilians included in the local museum which focuses on immigrants to the area. There is neither recognition of Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous influence on the economy, architecture, and culture, nor markers of their ritual spaces, cemeteries, homes, and businesses.⁸⁵

For *Confederados* in Santarém, cultural identity is shaped by narratives of sacrifice and resilience, of pioneers and their contributions.

84 Vinícius Bonifácio, “one of the biggest open wounds of racism in Brazil is denying the problem”, and Vinícius Bonifácio, “Professor avalia estruturação do racismo no Brasil: “Pele alva e pele alvo”, *Portal Geledés*, November 24, 2019, <https://www.geledes.org.br/professor-avalia-estruturação-do-racismo-no-brasil-pele-alva-e-pele-alvo/>.

85 Brasher, “Crisis of Confederate Memory”, 1321.

When asked about thoughts on the formal opposition to a day dedicated to honoring their ancestors, the response was “People in those group don’t know us. Many don’t even live here.” Open discussions about this issue are couched in fear (and anger) that they are being judged or condemned by the actions of their ancestors, and that what happened 155 years ago and has nothing to do with who they are today. But for social justice and anti-racist activists, *Confederado* history excludes the voices, experiences, and intergenerational trauma of Black social actors who suffered at the hands of the Confederates who left the United States because they opposed abolition of slavery and held a racist ideology. The alarming socio-political climate in Brazil and its threats to lives and livelihoods also demanded an urgent response to the council’s proposal. Although surprising and upsetting to *Confederados*, their memories clashed with a new generation that has come of age engaged with transnational advocacy for land rights and against police violence directed at Black youth, affirmative action, a more inclusive school curriculum that includes African, Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous history and culture, as well as images of anti-Black, anti-Indigenous violence and environment crimes shared in real time via social media platforms.⁸⁶ Rap and hip-hop music expressing the raw, quotidian reality of racism and discrimination faced by Black youth blasts from mobile phones and portable sound systems. Under these socio-political conditions, continuing to assert that a “Brazilianized” version of the Confederate flag carries a more benign, unifying, meaning than it does in the U.S. ignores, for the most part, the charged meaning that has been sutured to the flag for at least the last fifty years. If one follows the logic of a softer version of the flag, the same could be applied, for example, to the display of the swastika, or other Nazi symbols, or the dissemination of Nazi propaganda, which is a crime in Brazil.

Confederados have multiple opportunities to remember “who they were” in memoirs, festivals, in tangible artifacts that express the “southern way of life,” as well as racial and class privilege. For Afro-Brazilian

⁸⁶ Sueli Carneiro, *Mano Brown recebe Sueli Carneiro*, Interview by Mano Brown, Mano a Mano, Spotify podcast, 2022, audio 2:19:06; Sueli Carneiro, *Racismo, sexismo*.

and Indigenous activists and their allies, *Confederados* need to recognize and acknowledge how their history is linked to present-day conditions as they plan their annual heritage party, create museum displays, display the Confederate flag, or accept awards for their contributions to society. When *Confederados* dismiss these demands as incited by non-Brazilians, it excludes voices who are calling to action a reckoning with Brazil's history, an accounting for past atrocities, and discussion about links to present day social justice issues. These include the land concentration and displacement of Indigenous peoples and Quilombos caused by the settlement of *Confederados*, the legacies of plantations that relied on enslaved laborers, and muted (or non-existent) Black and brown memory in *Confederado* narratives.

In June 2022, the city council in Santa Bárbara voted to prohibit the public display of racist symbols, which includes the Confederate flag⁸⁷. In Santarém, the proposal to set aside a special day to honor *Confederados* and their descendants was rescinded. However, the city of Santarém has yet to officially acknowledge or commemorate through public rituals or ceremonies the memory of the groups impacted by these practices, which perpetuates invisibility, erasure, and violence. Although protests against the display of the Confederate flag and opposition to special days honoring *Confederados* do not dismantle the historical injustices in the founding of *Confederado* settlements, they are starting points for rescripting or recalibrating dominant renderings of the past with less sentimental, more inclusive, interpretations. It remains to be seen whether this recalibration also enhances social justice.

87 *Novo Momento*, June 14, 2022, <https://novomomento.com.br/vereadores-aprovam-retirada-de-simbolo-racista-em-bandeira/>.

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Alex Andrade Costa

**Negações e silêncios: a memória da escravidão
entre o manual escolar e o parlamento brasileiro**

O artigo evidencia como os manuais escolares mantiveram ao longo de dois séculos uma narrativa com pouca variação no que tange à escravidão e à questão racial no Brasil, ao tempo que analisa as múltiplas influências recebidas e impostas, especialmente no campo político, no que se refere à constituição de uma memória da escravidão. O artigo questiona os efeitos da memória da escravidão transmitida nos manuais escolares sobre a consciência histórica das pessoas.

Palavras-chave: Memória da escravidão; Consciência histórica; Reparação; Manual escolar; Racialização.

**Denials and Silences: The Memory of Slavery
Between Textbooks and Parliament**

This article shows how the textbooks maintained over two centuries a narrative with little variation regarding slavery and the racial issue in Brazil, while analyzing the multiple influences received and imposed, especially in the political field, about the constitution of a memory of slavery. The article questions the effects of the memory of slavery transmitted in textbooks on people's historical consciousness.

Keywords: Memory of Slavery; History Consciousness; Reparation; Textbooks; Racialization.

Negações e silêncios: a memória da escravidão entre o manual escolar e o parlamento brasileiro

Alex Andrade Costa*

Introdução

Em artigo originalmente publicado em 1966, onde analisa as causas da abolição da escravatura no Brasil, Richard Graham chamou a atenção para o silenciamento imposto pelos manuais de história sobre a agência dos escravizados durante o processo abolicionista¹. Segundo Graham, a interpretação que prevalecia nos manuais era de que a abolição teria sido uma decisão da elite imperial com interesses humanitários e estimulada por setores restritos do parlamento, ignorando a ampla mobilização de diferentes atores sociais, mais destacadamente os escravizados, libertos e negros livres². Essa narrativa que cultuava a imagem do imperador Pedro II e, principalmente, da princesa Isabel, cujo cognome “a Redentora” – já usado pela imprensa e setores políticos no contexto imediatamente após a lei – tinha a finalidade de criar uma memória positivada da monarquia, mas, também, tentar garantir o controle social

* Alex Andrade Costa (alex.costa@ufba.br). Universidade Federal da Bahia – UFBA (PPGH-UFBA e DMMDC-UFBA), Av. Reitor Miguel Calmon, s/n - Canela, Salvador – BA, 40110-100, Brasil. Artigo original: 11-07-2022; artigo revisto: 24-03-2023; aceite para publicação: 24-03-2023.

1 Richard Graham, *Escravidão, reforma e imperialismo* (São Paulo: Editora Perspectiva, 1979), 60.

2 Diversas pesquisas evidenciam como a mobilização popular e de sociedades abolicionistas atuou em parceria com coiteiros africanos e escravos fugidos, entre outros atores, numa ampla rede de alianças e acordos: Wlamyra Albuquerque, *O jogo da dissimulação: abolição e cidadania negra no Brasil* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2009), 45-93; Angela Alonso, *Flores, votos e balas: o movimento abolicionista brasileiro, 1868-88* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2015); Maria Helena P. T. Machado, *O plano e o pânico: os movimentos sociais na década da abolição* (São Paulo: Edusp, 2010); Walter Fraga Filho, *Encruzilhadas da liberdade: histórias de escravos e libertos na Bahia (1870-1910)* (Campinas, SP: Editora da Unicamp, 2006).

dos emancipados pelo paternalismo que a realeza ainda buscava representar. Fato é que a memória redentora da princesa ecoou na sociedade brasileira, incluindo parte da comunidade afrodescendente, por décadas.

Longe de serem interpretadas como uma gratidão pela abolição, as homenagens e culto prestados à princesa Isabel e Pedro II por ex-escravizados e seus descendentes podem ser entendidas como uma reação à República pela ausência de políticas públicas e combate às desigualdades para as pessoas negras³. De outro modo, também são concebidas como recriações a partir de uma memória de África, cuja ideia de realeza se encarnava na família real do Brasil⁴. As diferentes formas de entender e explicar o passado se definem como consciência histórica e são resultado das condições reais de vida das pessoas, suas experiências sociais, valores e todo um repertório de informações recebidas por diversos meios e em vários tempos, capazes de criar um nexos significativo entre passado e presente, mas em uma expectativa de futuro⁵. De qualquer forma, o modo como se construiu o papel da princesa Isabel no processo abolicionista contribuiu fortemente para a produção e circulação de uma memória monarquista do fim do cativeiro que teve nos manuais escolares um forte veículo de difusão, como observou Graham.

Quando Graham escreveu esse artigo, o Brasil vivia sob uma Ditadura Militar que se arrastou por vinte longos anos. No contexto de um governo autoritário e repressor, o silenciamento dos subalternizados é exercido de diversos modos, dentre eles a manipulação da memória nacional e da história ensinada, o que passava pelos manuais escolares. Contudo, nesse quesito, pouco precisou ser feito: os manuais então em vigor conservavam o perfil dos anos 1930/1940, igualmente autoritário, quando, sob a influência do Estado Novo, enfatizava-se a hierarquização da sociedade, tanto na forma do ensino quanto no seu conteúdo. Além

3 Petrônio José Domingues, “A redenção de nossa raça: as comemorações da abolição da escravatura no Brasil”, *Revista Brasileira de História* 31, n.º 62 (2011): 19-48, <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0102-01882011000200004>, acessado 14 maio 2022.

4 Lilia Moritz Schwarcz, *As barbas do imperador: D. Pedro II, um monarca nos trópicos* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1998).

5 Luis Fernando Cerri, *Ensino de história e consciência histórica* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora FGV, 2011), 120.

disso, mantinha-se uma forte propaganda nacionalista permeada pelas ideologias raciais vigentes na época, aspirando acomodar as divergências e buscar a conciliação social pelo silenciamento das desigualdades⁶.

Os manuais escolares não são apenas recursos para o ensino, mas importantes difusores de informação, cuja influência se prolonga para além da escola. No caso dos manuais de história, as informações ali contidas impactam na interpretação que seus leitores dão ao passado e como, a partir dessas interpretações, tomam decisões, emitem juízos, opiniões e comportam-se em sociedade. A isso dá-se o nome de consciência histórica: a capacidade das pessoas constituírem sentido histórico, com o qual organizam temporalmente e orientam as suas vidas, interpretando o mundo e a si mesmos⁷.

O estudo dos manuais escolares permite compreendê-los como poderosos instrumentos de difusão de uma cultura histórica e de formação de identidades. Este artigo evidencia como os manuais de história serviram ao longo do tempo para formar uma memória da escravidão capaz de aceitar e, não raro, defender a sua existência, justificada a partir de argumentos de hierarquização racial⁸. Nesse caso, os manuais brasileiros não são casos isolados, sendo que diversos estudos têm mostrado como eles servem a interesses colonialistas e em favor de uma superioridade racial. Nos Estados Unidos, no início dos anos 1940, o manual escolar era utilizado como difusor do racismo, com descrições que inferiorizavam e acentuavam o desprezo em relação aos aborígenes australianos, justificando os projetos colonizadores⁹. Os manuais escolares israelenses se valem da desumanização dos palestinos, tanto

6 Katia Maria Abud, “Formação da alma e do caráter nacional: ensino de história na era Vargas”, *Revista Brasileira de História* 18, n.º 36 (1998): 103-114, <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0102-01881998000200006> Acedido 15 julho 2022.

7 Jorn Rusen, *História viva: teoria da história: formas e funções do conhecimento histórico* (Brasília: Editora UNB, 2007).

8 Nos últimos vinte anos, no Brasil, diversas pesquisas se debruçaram para analisar os manuais didáticos, especialmente no contexto posterior à Lei 10.639/03, formando um extenso e importante repertório crítico impossível de ser aqui incluído. Contudo, dentre tantos estudos, é preciso ressaltar o pioneirismo de Ana Célia da Silva, *A discriminação do negro no livro didático* (Salvador: CEAO/CED, 1995), do qual este trabalho é tributário.

9 Karl Monsma, *A reprodução do racismo: fazendeiros, negros e imigrantes no Oeste paulista, 1880-1914* (São Carlos: Edufscar, 2021), 53.

em texto quanto em imagem, com o objetivo de também difundir uma ideia de inferioridade, atraso, violência e barbárie, de forma que se crie entre os estudantes israelenses uma consciência em defesa das ocupações territoriais e da violência sobre os palestinos¹⁰. Em Portugal não é diferente: embora tenha se beneficiado dos lucros exorbitantes com o tráfico de africanos, seus manuais de história ainda conservam uma abordagem eurocêntrica ao tratar da escravidão e do colonialismo, e as autoridades públicas continuam a não reconhecer a necessidade de repensar o ensino de história dando a devida ênfase ao papel de Portugal no contexto da exploração da mão de obra escrava e dos lucros obtidos com esse negócio¹¹.

Obviamente, os manuais não são os únicos instrumentos de formação da cultura histórica, posto que até mesmo não escolarizados e analfabetos possuem uma consciência histórica¹². Outros mediadores e difusores das informações também cumprem esse papel: religião, cinema, redes sociais, museus, espaço público, mas, de modo mais destacado, sobressaem as manifestações e os discursos de autoridades públicas. Pelo largo alcance e legitimação que a sociedade lhes dá através do voto, as falas de deputados, senadores e governantes se tornam poderosas fontes de difusão de informações, especialmente em tempos de redes sociais que ampliam o alcance desses discursos. Assim, interpretações equivocadas, distorções intencionais, silenciamentos e negacionismos influenciam as pessoas, podendo resultar na formação de identidades não-razoáveis, ou seja, aquelas posturas que se esperava não mais terem espaço na contemporaneidade pelo fato de já terem sido amplamente expostas e combatidas, como a relativização ou a defesa da escravidão e o não reconhecimento da existência do racismo¹³.

10 Nurit Peled-Elhanan, *Ideologia e propaganda na educação: a Palestina nos livros didáticos israelenses* (São Paulo: Boitempo e Editora Unifesp, 2019), 15-47.

11 Marta Araújo e Anabela Rodrigues, “História e memória em movimento: escravatura, educação e (anti)racismo em Portugal”, *Revista História Hoje* 7, n.º 14 (2018): 107-132, <https://doi.org/10.20949/rhhj.v7i14.468>.

12 Cerri, *Ensino de história*, 57-83.

13 Sobre as identidades não-razoáveis, ver mais em: Luis Fernando Cerri, “Didática da História: uma leitura teórica sobre a História na prática”, *Revista de História Regional* 15, n.º 2 (2010): 264-278, <https://doi.org/10.5212/Rev.Hist.Reg.v.15i2.264278>.

Por outro lado, as memórias da escravidão podem ter um forte impacto na geração de traumas de ordem cultural. Recentemente, dando aulas em uma universidade pública para uma turma com cerca de vinte alunas autodeclaradas como afrodescendentes, que já atuavam como professoras, mas que não possuíam ainda a formação universitária, fui questionado sobre a validade de se falar de escravidão na escola básica, especialmente para estudantes negros e moradores da periferia. Uma das alunas, professora em uma escola no subúrbio da cidade de Salvador, afirmou que, mesmo sendo um conteúdo obrigatório e presente no livro didático, ela sentia profundo desconforto com o tema e percebia o mesmo entre os estudantes, por isso não tratava da escravidão em suas aulas, invertendo a abordagem e preferindo falar das conquistas e da contribuição das populações negras para o Brasil.

As memórias que enfatizam a violência e a brutalidade da escravidão, como textos ou representações imagéticas presentes nos manuais, podem confrontar o passado histórico com as experiências de vida de muitas pessoas negras no presente, marcadas pelo racismo, violência e pobreza, impondo a elas o que foi definido como um trauma de ordem cultural, que é um conceito empírico, sugerindo novas relações significativas e causais entre eventos, estruturas, percepções e ações anteriormente não relacionadas. O trauma cultural ocorre quando membros de uma coletividade sentem que foram submetidos no passado a uma violência que, embora não as atingindo pessoalmente, deixou marcas indeléveis em seu grupo, marcando suas memórias e moldando suas identidades¹⁴. Tanto na África quanto nas Américas, o comércio de escravos e a escravidão legaram um rastro de sangue, morte, doença, violência sexual e trauma. Experiências difíceis de serem mensuradas, mas que foram inquestionavelmente transmitidas para gerações posteriores, deixando esse legado na memória coletiva das várias populações que se reconhecem vítimas dessa violência¹⁵.

14 Jeffrey C. Alexander *et al.*, *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004).

15 Ana Lucia Araujo, *Reparations for Slavery and the Slave Trade: A Transnational and Comparative History* (Londres: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), 42-43.

Nas próximas páginas, este estudo apontará como os parlamentares brasileiros operaram com a memória da escravidão e a temática racial no contexto dos debates sobre políticas emancipacionistas no século XIX e políticas reparatórias do século XXI. Mais do que opiniões político-partidárias, ou mesmo posições consideradas irracionais e desarrazoadas, concebo esses discursos como manifestações da consciência histórica dos políticos que, por sua vez, influenciam quem é alcançado por elas. Operando o conceito de “trauma cultural”, o texto analisa como a escravidão é apresentada nos manuais escolares e como essas memórias podem produzir identidades não-razoáveis que no passado atuaram em pautas antiabolicionistas e na contemporaneidade agem para impedir ou limitar as políticas reparatórias.

Este trabalho argumenta que as narrativas distorcidas ou negacionistas sobre a memória da escravidão e os problemas raciais do Brasil não são discursos de grupos isolados ou restritos a um momento histórico-político, mas partem da cultura histórica de seus autores, difundidas, entre outras coisas, pelos manuais didáticos e pelos discursos de autoridades públicas.

Os manuais escolares: memória da escravidão e difusão da consciência histórica

Robert Southey, historiador britânico, escreveu e publicou originalmente em Londres, entre 1810 e 1819, e sem jamais ter posto os pés no Brasil, os três volumes de *History of Brazil*, obra que tinha por objetivo se tornar referência para ensinar a história do país. A importância de Southey se deve ao fato de, possivelmente, ter sido o primeiro a delinear em manuais a tese que mais tarde faria muito sucesso: a de que a mistura racial foi condição essencial para a formação do Brasil, considerando que resultaria num sujeito “aclimatado” às diversas regiões e resistente às doenças locais¹⁶. Embora fosse contrário à escravidão e ao

16 Flávia Florentino Varela, “Novas raças, novas doenças: a possibilidade colonizadora por meio da mistura racial em *History of Brazil* 1810-1819 de Robert Southey”, *História, Ciências, Saúde-Manguinhos* 23 (2016): 15-32, <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0104-59702016000500002>. Acesso a 23 maio 2022.

tráfico, um outro argumento usado por Southey também influenciou manuais posteriores: a colonização era um “empreendimento de regeneração moral e cultural”, no qual o africano poderia ser introduzido à civilização ocidental através da mestiçagem¹⁷. Quando, a partir do século XX, intelectuais como Euclides da Cunha e Gilberto Freyre defenderam as vantagens da mestiçagem para o Brasil, em substituição às teses que viam a mistura racial como degeneração e que defendiam o branqueamento, há um evidente retorno aos argumentos de Southey.

Contudo, é do naturalista Carl Friedrich Philipp von Martius a principal referência para a escrita de manuais de história a partir do século XIX até boa parte do XX. Vencedor do concurso “sobre o melhor plano de se escrever a história antiga e moderna do Brasil”, realizado pelo Instituto Histórico Geográfico Brasileiro (IHGB), na obra publicada em 1845 ele escreveu mais do que um plano metodológico sobre como redigir um livro de história, como era a proposta do concurso, mas elaborou um manual para ser usado nas aulas de história. Ali ele descreveu a formação da população brasileira e sustentou uma explicação que se repete até hoje, tanto em materiais didáticos e outros meios de divulgação histórica quanto na consciência histórica das pessoas: a ideia de que três raças “contribuíram” para a formação do Brasil e que essa mistura “original e única” harmoniza a população e elimina possíveis conflitos e divisões raciais. Essa é uma interpretação que encontrou eco no espaço público como, por exemplo, nas manifestações de parlamentares contrários a Lei de Cotas no Brasil, como veremos mais à frente.

Nas palavras de Martius:

São, porém, estes elementos de natureza muito diversa, tendo para a formação do homem convergido de um modo particular três raças, a saber: a de cor de cobre ou americana, a branca ou caucasiana, e enfim a preta ou etiópica. Do encontro, da mescla, das relações mútuas e mu-

17 Maria Odila Leite da Silva Dias, *O fardo do homem branco, Southey, historiador do Brasil: um estudo dos valores ideológicos do império do comércio livre* (São Paulo: CEN, 1974), 161.

danças dessas três raças, formou-se a atual população, cuja história por isso mesmo tem um cunho muito particular¹⁸.

Ainda no contexto do século XIX, Francisco Adolfo de Varnhagen, o visconde de Porto Seguro, também sob encomenda do IGHB, escreveu entre 1854 e 1857 a obra *História Geral do Brasil*, cuja influência na produção de manuais escolares se estendeu até a década de 1970, antes do movimento de renovação da historiografia dos anos 1980. Embora Varnhagen defendesse a miscigenação como um processo necessário para integrar o indígena e o negro à civilização, eram os brancos e cristãos os condutores do processo civilizatório, tudo sob a tutela do Estado monárquico¹⁹. Mas a principal influência de Varnhagen para a escrita e o ensino da história – e conseqüentemente a formação da consciência histórica – está no fato de ele, como ferrenho monarquista, ter enfaticamente defendido no livro o tráfico de escravizados como condição necessária para os negros melhorarem de vida. Nesse sentido, Varnhagen escreveu:

Ao passar tais gentes ao Brasil, como escravos, na verdade melhoraram de sorte. A escravidão é injusta, por não ser filantrópica, é um insulto à humanidade, por ser um ataque ao indivíduo, à família e ao Estado de onde foram arrancados. Mesmo assim, os negros melhoraram de sorte ao entrar em contato com gente mais polida, com a civilização e o cristianismo. Por causa desse encontro, os negros da América são melhores do que os africanos. Eles se distinguem pela força física, o gênio alegre para suportar a sua sorte, pela capacidade de trabalho. Com o seu canto sempre melodioso e afinado, embora monótono, disfarçavam as

18 Karl Friedrich Von Martius e José Honório Rodrigues. “Como Se Deve Escrever a História Do Brasil”. *Revista de História de América*, n.º 42 (1956): 441. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20137096>, acessado 12 maio 2023.

19 Roberto Ventura, *Estilo tropical: história cultural e polêmicas literárias no Brasil, 1870-1914*. (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1991), 51.

maiores penas. Entretanto, fizeram mal ao Brasil com os seus costumes pervertidos, seus hábitos menos decorosos, despudorados. Escravos, viviam alheios à ternura da família, tinham o coração endurecido²⁰.

Deve-se notar que Varnhagen escreveu o livro nos anos posteriores à lei de 1850 – Lei Eusébio de Queirós – que decretou o fim do tráfico atlântico de escravizados para o Brasil. Nesse sentido, inteligentemente e como bom monarquista, o autor procurou escrever uma obra que registrasse e propagasse uma memória positiva sobre o tráfico de escravizados para que a imagem do Império se mantivesse preservada. Na visão do historiador oitocentista, o cativo era um mal necessário à conversão dos africanos, sendo que a escravidão, segundo ele, teria deixado efeitos mais nocivos entre os senhores brancos por terem, em convívio com os negros, adquirido hábitos e costumes maléficos²¹. Os discursos de Varnhagen, repetidos nos manuais subsequentes, estiveram presentes em gerações inteiras, as quais defenderam uma certa “vantagem” da escravidão para os próprios africanos.

É importante entender o papel desempenhado pelo IHGB e demais institutos congêneres na criação de uma identidade nacional sistematizada pela escrita da história oficial através dos manuais escolares. Criado na conjuntura imediatamente decorrente da Independência, o IHGB incumbiu-se de “construir uma história da nação, recriar um passado, solidificar mitos de fundação, ordenar fatos, buscando homogeneidades em personagens e eventos até então dispersos”²².

Ao tempo em que o IHGB se constituía, difundiu-se entre parlamentares, intelectuais e outros agentes uma “política da escravidão”, a partir de uma rede de alianças políticas e sociais em favor da estabilidade institucional da escravidão, de modo que “Estado e tráfico negreiro, assim na

20 José Carlos Reis, *As identidades do Brasil: de Varnhagen a FHC*. 9.^a ed. ampl. (Rio de Janeiro: Editora FGV, 2007), 43.

21 Ventura, *Estilo tropical*, 52.

22 Lília Moritz Schwarcz, *O espetáculo das raças. Cientistas, instituições e questão racial no Brasil, 1870-1930* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1993), 99.

época legal como na do contrabando, são duas variáveis que sempre andaram juntas²³. Nesse ponto não se pode deixar de considerar as influências daqueles que transitavam em dois mundos que também se confundiam: o intelectual e o político. É o que se pode depreender de figuras como Azevedo Coutinho, senhor de engenho e bispo em Pernambuco, que escreveu a obra *Análise sobre a justiça do comércio do resgate dos escravos da costa da África*, onde justificava a existência da escravidão no Brasil. Para o bispo, o fato de já haver a escravidão em território africano e, segundo ele, mal aproveitada, podia resultar num bem se trouxesse os escravizados para desenvolver a agricultura no Brasil. Mas é um outro argumento de Coutinho que chama mais atenção: a existência da escravidão na África antes mesmo dos portugueses, os quais, em sua pena, “longe de serem responsáveis pelos males ou pela implementação de tal instituição, pelo contrário, agiam como beneficentes daquelas pobres almas condenadas à servidão eterna”²⁴. Considerando que o livro de Coutinho foi escrito no início do século XIX, é interessante notar como seus argumentos prevalecem na memória pública da escravidão, em outras obras e em discursos de políticos do século XX afora, como veremos na segunda parte deste artigo.

Cerca de trinta anos depois de Coutinho, o senador Bernardo Pereira de Vasconcelos, uma das vozes mais influentes no sentido de justificar a continuidade do tráfico de africanos em meio às fortes pressões inglesas pelo seu fim, repetia, embora com outras palavras, as ideias do bispo de que a “África tinha civilizado o Brasil com o tráfico negreiro”, como expressão das vantagens do modelo de trabalho forçado para o desenvolvimento agrícola do país²⁵.

Outro argumento que tem sua raiz no contexto da elite conservadora do século XIX, mas que perdura nos manuais escolares e no discurso público, é o da brandura da escravidão brasileira. O senador Holanda Cavalcanti discursou nesses termos:

23 Tâmis Parron, *A política da escravidão no império do Brasil, 1826-1865* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2011), 61.

24 João Carlos Escosteguy Filho, “Tráfico de escravos e direção Saquarema no Senado do Império do Brasil” (Dissertação de Mestrado, Universidade Federal Fluminense, 2010), 54-55.

25 José Murilo de Carvalho, *Bernardo Pereira de Vasconcelos* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora 34, 1999), 268.

Devo acrescentar que o escravo no Brasil é mais feliz do que o escravo na África: não digo por teoria; passei anos na África, corri todas as possessões portuguesas, achei-me em circunstâncias de ter um perfeito conhecimento disto. Não me constou, enquanto estive na África, que um indivíduo forrasses um negro; e quereis ver quais os negros no Brasil que têm tido alforria? Ide ao mercado do peixe, das aves, das frutas e hortaliças e aí vereis que a maior parte dos que têm esses mercados são negros ainda talhados com as marcas de sua nação; [...] e lhes direi que esses africanos que foram importados como escravos no Brasil são mais felizes que a maior parte dos seus concidadãos. Quereis ver mais como no Brasil se trata aos escravos? Ide a esses cartórios onde existem testamentos e vereis quanto a generosidade para com eles se pratica; ide às pias batismais e aí vereis quantos não são libertados; ide às nossas fazendas, às nossas plantações, onde achareis libertos em recompensa aos bons serviços prestados aos seus senhores²⁶.

Não faltando outros tantos exemplos nesse contexto de justificativas para a escravidão, o romancista e importante político do Império, José de Alencar, ocupa posição privilegiada, uma vez que suas ideias foram manifestadas tanto em discursos políticos quanto em suas obras literárias. Para Alencar, a escravidão era justificada como caridade cristã, enquanto meio de salvar a alma da danação, pois “o cativo teria sido benéfico para o cativo, ao livrá-lo da guerra e do fetichismo da África. Escravidão como civilização, corroborada pela ‘mais sã doutrina do Evangelho’”²⁷.

Por fim, destaca-se que, no âmbito do parlamento, a preocupação existente com a provável abolição se concentrava nas perdas financeiras dos senhores e “como em outras partes das Américas, as propostas de

26 Escosteguy Filho, “Tráfico de escravos”, 155-156.

27 Alonso, *Flores, votos e balas*, 57.

reparações à futura população liberta estavam ausentes de seus discursos²⁸.

O conservadorismo político vigente em grande parte do reinado de Pedro II, liderado pelo grupo saquarema, do qual participava a alta burocracia do Estado e os grandes proprietários rurais, mas que incluía, entre outros segmentos, os professores, unia a todos “pela adesão aos princípios de Ordem e Civilização quanto pela ação visando a sua difusão”²⁹. Assim, não se deve estranhar como o discurso antiemancipacionista dos manuais da época, antes de ser consequência, foi uma demanda desse grupo no intuito de difundir suas narrativas. Isso ajuda a entender como no pós-abolição os agentes do Estado e dos setores conservadores passaram a evitar o tema da escravidão, reelaborando a memória sobre o, então recente, passado escravista.

Velhas ideias, antigos manuais e um novo século

Os discursos de intelectuais e parlamentares brasileiros que ocuparam lugar de destaque na cena pública no século XIX não impactaram apenas os manuais escritos na época, especificamente Von Martius e Varnhagen, mas alcançaram o século XX e tiveram espaço, principalmente, no contexto de governos autoritários. O manual *Crestomatia cívica: uma só pátria, uma só bandeira: o Brasil novo e seus problemas, por meio de excertos de escritores da atualidade, apresentado a consideração e carinho da juventude das escolas*, de autoria do professor gaúcho Radagásio Taborda, foi uma obra publicada em 1931 no contexto do governo provisório de Getúlio Vargas, mas que circulou por décadas no Brasil, com amplo uso nas escolas, inclusive servindo para ensinar não apenas História, mas Língua Portuguesa, o que ampliou sua influência. Na parte intitulada “Os escravos no Brasil”, lia-se o seguinte:

Não é nosso intento fazer a apologia da escravidão,
cujos horrores principalmente macularam o homem branco

28 Araujo, *Reparations for Slavery*, 74.

29 Ilmar Rohloff de Mattos, *O tempo Saquarema* (São Paulo: Hucitec, 2017), 15.

e sobre ele recaíram. Mas a escravidão no Brasil foi para os negros a reabilitação deles próprios e trouxe para a descendência deles uma pátria, a paz e a liberdade e outros bens que pais e filhos jamais logriam gozar ou sequer entrever no seio bárbaro da África³⁰.

Tanto durante o Estado Novo – época em que o Brasil também viveu o auge das teorias eugênicas, as quais tiveram forte aplicação no espaço escolar – quanto durante o período mais repressor da Ditadura Militar iniciada em 1964, muitos manuais de história instituíram uma memória nacional vinculada às ideias de “ordem e civilização”, exaltando a hierarquização social, o que implicava explicitar o papel das elites e do Estado de um lado e das “classes perigosas”, especialmente os descendentes dos egressos do cativeiro, de outro. Por isso era fundamental que se construísse uma memória do passado escravista que responsabilizasse os próprios africanos pela instituição da escravidão e justificasse sua continuidade no Brasil como fator de civilização para os negros a partir do trabalho, numa espécie de resignação pelo “privilégio” de a condição servil desenvolver o Brasil.

Mesmo quando o livro abordava o tema da escravidão, por vezes, o que prevalecia era o silêncio sobre o papel do Estado e seus agentes como legalizador, organizador e beneficiário. É desta forma que o tema aparece na obra de Theobaldo Miranda Santos, professor catedrático do Instituto de Educação do Estado da Guanabara, autor do livro de história *Brasil, minha pátria*, destinado ao terceiro ano primário. O livro foi editado pelo menos vinte e nove vezes até a década de 1970, demonstrando sua ampla inserção nas escolas. A narrativa escolhida pelo autor transmite a falsa ideia de que a escravidão não possuía sujeitos concretos como seus agentes, silenciando sobre a ação humana no processo de escravização. Ao contrário disso, no livro, Theobaldo escreve que os brasileiros “bondosos lutavam pela libertação dos escla-

30 Radagasio Taborda, *Crestomatia cívica: uma só pátria, uma só bandeira!* (Porto Alegre: Livraria do Globo, 1938), 97.

vos”, referindo-se aos políticos do império, insinuando o Estado como responsável pelo fim do tráfico, mas não pela escravização³¹.

Na mesma linha, no *Compêndio de história do Brasil*, de autoria do professor Borges Hermida, que circulou pelas escolas brasileiras no mesmo período que o livro de Theobaldo, embora apresente considerações sobre a escravidão e o tráfico um pouco mais amplas do que os seus contemporâneos, o conteúdo é superficial e descontextualizado, exaltando os políticos brasileiros como protagonistas do processo de emancipação escrava e relegando os escravizados ao lugar de sujeitos passivos e vítimas.³² Esse livro alcançou mais de 53 edições, influenciando a formação de milhares de leitores e estudantes.

Ainda que o manual de Borges Hermida tenha tratado a escravidão como um mal, ele também repete a ideia de que no Brasil ela teria sido mais amena do que em outros lugares. Hermida, assim como Theobaldo, constrói uma narrativa sobre o suposto papel conciliador e benévolo das instituições, em especial a Igreja católica, como responsável pelo suposto tratamento humanitário dado aos escravizados: “O tratamento que no Brasil se dispensava aos negros era em geral mais humano que nos outros países. A prática da religião católica pelos proprietários muito contribuiu para esse tratamento, evitando que os escravos sofressem castigos cruéis”³³. O papel da religião e do bom trato dos senhores, segundo Hermida, tornou a escravidão branda ao ponto de que, depois da abolição, “muitos escravos preferiram ficar nas fazendas trabalhando com seus antigos senhores”³⁴. Remontando aos discursos dos parlamentares do século XIX, discutidos anteriormente, Hermida defendeu que escravidão e tráfico foram males necessários para o desenvolvimento do país.

Os manuais escritos por Theobaldo e Hermida propagaram uma memória da escravidão que anulava a culpabilidade das instituições –

31 Theobaldo Miranda Santos, *Brasil, minha pátria*, 29.^a ed. (Editora Agir: Rio de Janeiro, 1967), 225.

32 Antônio José Borges Hermida, *Compêndio de história do Brasil, para a primeira e segundas séries do curso médio*, 53.^a ed. (São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1968), 266.

33 Hermida. *Compêndio de história do Brasil*, 266.

34 Hermida. *Compêndio de história do Brasil*, 266.

Estado e Igreja – e que justificava a longevidade da escravidão sob o argumento da imprescindibilidade econômica³⁵. A ampla e prolongada circulação desses manuais nas escolas difundiu uma cultura histórica de negação da violência da escravidão.

Por último, Alfredo Taunay e Roberto Accioli, ambos professores de história do Colégio Pedro II, instituição que era tida como referência na educação brasileira, escreveram um manual de história destinado à preparação dos estudantes que queriam ingressar naquela escola. Com ampla circulação nos anos 1960, o manual era lacônico no que dizia respeito às explicações sobre o tráfico de africanos, considerando a extinção daquele comércio como um ato de soberania do Brasil diante das pressões inglesas, mas silenciando os longos séculos em que o Estado não só aceitou como direcionou e lucrou com a escravidão. Assim como outros manuais do período, a obra abordava o fim da escravidão como dádiva, determinando aos escravizados um lugar de passividade no processo³⁶. Como se sabe, mas não é de mais insistir, a ação abolicionista, longe de ter sido conduzida pela elite política e senhorial, só teve sucesso justamente por ter mobilizado amplos setores da sociedade, incluindo escravizados, libertos e livres³⁷.

No reforço da narrativa que justificava a existência da escravidão, os manuais incluíam a temática racial para fortalecer argumentos relacionados com a inferioridade dos negros, inclusive no que diz respeito à necessidade de serem sujeitados a outrem. Ressaltando os padrões de comportamento que seriam inerentes à raça negra, classificavam os escravizados como afeitos ao ócio que se somava à falta de ambição:

Podendo satisfazer sua subsistência com dois ou três dias de trabalho semanais, que lhe dariam o suficiente “para

35 Alex Andrade Costa, “‘Que dívida? Eu nunca escravizei ninguém!’: escravidão, trauma cultural e consciência histórica”, *Revista História Hoje* 10, n.º 19 (2021): 140-60.

36 Alfredo d’Escagnolle Taunay e Roberto Bandeira Accioli, *História do Brasil para exame de admissão*, 3.ª ed. (São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1961), 95.

37 Ana Flávia Magalhães Pinto, *Escritos de liberdade: literatos negros, racismo e cidadania no Brasil oitocentista* (Campinas, SP: Editora da Unicamp, 2018), 240.

viver”, não trocaria uma pequena acumulação de bens pelo direito de não trabalhar. Seu baixo nível de renda, seu entorpecimento, dificultaram-lhe a assimilação. Nessas condições não poderia a antiga população escrava deixar de representar um papel puramente passivo nas transformações econômicas surgidas nos começos do Brasil republicano³⁸.

Ao tratar da mestiçagem, Souto Maior considerava que a população negra “sofreu, é claro, mais influências do que provocou, pois estava em posição de inferioridade em relação ao branco civilizado e dominador”³⁹. Como a maioria de seus contemporâneos, Souto Maior se inspirou nas obras de Antonil e Gilberto Freyre, os quais são constantemente citados no seu manual, transmitindo para seus leitores a ideia de uma sociedade sem conflitos raciais devido à ampla mestiçagem biológica: “Todo brasileiro, mesmo o alvo, de cabelo louro, traz na alma, quando não na alma e no corpo... a sombra ou, pelo menos, a pinta do indígena e do negro”⁴⁰.

Durante a Ditadura Militar, período em que boa parte dos manuais aqui estudados foram editados ou tiveram maior inserção nas escolas, os movimentos negros eram considerados “fatores adversos”, tidos como ameaça à ordem e bastante vigiados e reprimidos, de forma que suas vozes não se sobrepusessem à ênfase que o regime buscava dar à “democracia racial”. Nessa ação de silenciamento, a ditadura suprimiu o quesito “raça” do censo de 1970 e não só: através do Serviço Nacional de Informação – SNI, buscou culpabilizar os movimentos negros por “criarem um problema racial”, procurando instituir um “racismo negro” no Brasil⁴¹. Dessa forma, a ideologia do regime, de exaltação da mestiçagem como forma de silenciamento das diferenças e tensões sociais, encontrou nos manuais escolares um importante meio de difusão.

38 Armando Souto Maior, *História do Brasil, para o colegial e vestibulares*, 6.^a ed. (São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1968), 341.

39 Maior, *História do Brasil*, 106.

40 Maior, *História do Brasil*, 106.

41 Gabrielle Oliveira de Abreu, “O negro na ditadura: um estudo acerca da invisibilidade das experiências negras nas narrativas sobre o regime” (Dissertação de mestrado, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, 2021), 23-24.

Contudo, vozes contrárias aos discursos dos manuais didáticos da segunda metade do século XX foram fundamentais no processo de construção de uma política educacional antirracista. O Teatro Experimental Negro, surgido ainda na década de 1950, foi o principal espaço de questionamento em torno da inclusão da história da África e dos africanos, da luta dos negros no Brasil e da sua participação na formação da sociedade e da cultura brasileiras nos programas e manuais escolares⁴². O próprio Abdias do Nascimento alguns anos depois voltaria ao tema, questionando o papel da escola e de seu currículo numa educação que acentuava o racismo:

O sistema educacional é usado como aparelhamento de controle nesta estrutura de discriminação cultural. Em todos os níveis do ensino brasileiro – elementar, secundário, universitário – o elenco das matérias ensinadas, como se se executasse o que havia predito a frase de Sílvio Romero, constitui um ritual da formalidade e da ostentação da Europa, e, mais recentemente, dos Estados Unidos. Se consciência é memória e futuro, quando e onde está a memória africana parte inalienável da consciência brasileira⁴³?

Ao propor a criação do “ensino compulsório da História e da Cultura da África e dos africanos na diáspora em todos os níveis da educação: elementar, secundária e superior”, Abdias do Nascimento pretendia que se preservasse e ampliasse “a consciência histórica nos descendentes africanos da população do Brasil”⁴⁴. Nascimento entendia que parte do sentimento de conformação pela condição de subalternidade presente na população negra se devia às narrativas que circulavam em diversas

42 Sales Augusto dos Santos, “A Lei nº10.639/03 como fruto da luta anti-racista do Movimento Negro”, em *Educação anti-racista: caminhos abertos pela Lei Federal nº 10.639/03* (Brasília: Ministério da Educação, Secretaria de Educação Continuada, Alfabetização e Diversidade, 2005), 23.

43 Abdias Nascimento, *O genocídio do negro brasileiro: processo de um racismo mascarado* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Paz e Terra, 1978), 95.

44 Nascimento, *O genocídio*, 33-34.

esferas, especialmente nos manuais escolares, o que contribuía para uma consciência histórica em que a população – inclusive os negros – negava as desigualdades raciais e, simultaneamente, naturalizava a condição de inferioridade.

Foi somente nos anos 1980, com a distensão da Ditadura e em torno dos debates pela nova constituição, que os movimentos negros tiveram novos arranjos e começaram a implementar uma agenda pública mais efetiva das lutas antirracistas, com a realização de marchas reivindicatórias, celebrações públicas e uma ação no parlamento mais incisiva. Porém, no contexto dos manuais didáticos, a mudança mais significativa em quase duzentos anos de livros impressos no Brasil só veio com a aprovação da Lei 10.639/03, que alterou a Lei de Diretrizes de Bases da Educação Nacional, incorporando os estudos sobre história e cultura africana e afro-brasileira na educação básica⁴⁵. Este foi um dos principais avanços educacionais de caráter reparatório da história do país, somado à Lei de Cotas Universitárias sobre a qual falaremos mais à frente.

Embora este artigo não permita uma análise mais detalhada da lei e de seus efeitos, importa salientar que, se até o início dos anos 2000, a história da África e dos africanos no Brasil, ensinada na educação básica, era bastante limitada e factual, carregada de estereótipos e com traços dos manuais anteriores, a partir da lei, os materiais didáticos passaram por uma profunda revisão e reconfiguração, ainda que omissões e silenciamentos continuem sendo percebidos em menor escala.

No que tange aos afro-brasileiros não é diferente: parte considerável dos manuais mais recentes ainda concentra a história desses grupos no contexto da escravidão. Mesmo quando se propõem a discutir aspectos das religiões, culturas e artes, o mundo da escravidão ocupa um lugar central nas discussões. Na intenção de se apresentar como um material didático adequado à Lei 10.639/03, muitos livros criaram

45 Alex Andrade Costa e Jacob Lussento Cupata, “O ensino de história da África no sistema educacional angolano e brasileiro: avanços e limites”, *África[s] – Revista do Programa de Pós-Graduação em Estudos Africanos e Representações da África* 8, n.º 15 (2021): 142-63, <https://revistas.uneb.br/index.php/africanas/article/view/13214>.

capítulos específicos para tratar da escravidão de africanos e seus descendentes, levando muitos autores a deslocarem todas as discussões que remetem à presença escrava e negra para aquele espaço restrito. O que, a princípio, parece ser positivo pela ampliação da abordagem, gera uma espécie de isolamento temático no livro, dificultando o entendimento histórico de maneira sistêmica por parte do estudante⁴⁶.

Ao tratar das transformações sociais e culturais no universo mineiro do século XVIII, por exemplo, o livro afirma que “havia um reduzido grupo de homens ricos e uma grande população escravizada” – única referência às populações negras – e complementa: “Havia uma população livre e produtiva formada por trabalhadores especializados (feitores, artesãos, etc.), [...], profissionais liberais (advogados, cirurgiões, etc.), comerciantes, intelectuais e clérigos”, silenciando sobre a cor dos sujeitos que se ocupavam dessas funções e atividades⁴⁷. No livro destinado ao 8.º ano, ao abordar o “império do café”, a única referência aos trabalhadores negros é uma fotografia de Marc Ferrez que mostra um grupo de escravizados enfileirados na frente de um galpão em alguma fazenda do interior paulista. A não ser para alguém que conheça a origem e o contexto da imagem, nada mais no manual indica que ali era um grupo de escravizados⁴⁸. Os capítulos que discutem sobre a pecuária, revoltas coloniais e tantos outros aspectos negligenciam a participação ativa de negros livres e escravizados⁴⁹.

Quanto mais os conteúdos avançam em direção aos tempos históricos posteriores a 1888, mais difícil é perceber o protagonismo das populações negras. A reversão desse discurso só é possível se houver um esforço pessoal do professor no sentido de trazer à superfície da história esses povos. Esse cenário é ainda mais desolador quando os manuais didáticos são produzidos pelas próprias escolas ou redes no formato de

46 Aqui a pesquisa se debruça sobre dois manuais publicados em 2018: Cláudio Vicentino, *Teláris História, 7.º ano: Ensino Fundamental, anos finais* (São Paulo: Ática, 2018); Patrícia Ramos Braick e Anna Barreto, *Estudar História: das origens do homem à era digital*, 3.ª ed (São Paulo: Moderna, 2018).

47 Vicentino, *Teláris História*, 243.

48 Vicentino, *Teláris História*, 206.

49 Braick e Barreto, *Estudar História*.

módulos que, quase sempre, reproduzem um modelo de história factual e profundamente reducionista em suas análises. Vê-se, então, que, passados mais de 130 anos da Abolição e, não obstante a implementação de uma agenda reparatória sobre a memória da escravidão nos manuais didáticos, a narrativa que prevalece, inclusive no espaço público, ainda remonta aos discursos do século XIX.

Consciência histórica do século XIX para uma lei antirracista no século XXI

No ano de 2022, em meio aos debates eleitorais, esteve em pauta no parlamento brasileiro a continuidade ou não da Lei 12.711/2012, também chamada de Lei de Cotas, que estabelece a política de reserva de vagas para pessoas negras em universidades e institutos federais brasileiros. Naquele ano, a lei completou dez anos e deveria passar por um processo avaliativo da sua eficácia com o objetivo de validar sua continuidade. Como o texto legal é vago sobre os procedimentos da avaliação, setores que sempre se mostraram contrários às cotas reforçaram o movimento para, aproveitando-se da ocasião, diminuir a abrangência da lei ou mesmo revogá-la. Aqui nos interessa verificar os usos da memória da escravidão nos argumentos utilizados pelos parlamentares em torno das discussões que embasaram a criação da lei, em 2012, e nos debates sobre sua continuidade em 2022. Muitos desses argumentos retomam interpretações presentes no parlamento do século XIX e nos manuais didáticos usados durante a Ditadura.

Dentre os argumentos que mais se repetem nos discursos dos parlamentares está o mito da democracia racial, fundamentado na fábula das três raças, o que alude à obra de Von Martius, da qual já se falou páginas atrás. Quando dos debates para a criação da lei, o deputado Edio Lopes (PMDB) discursou no dia 25 de junho de 2009 afirmando que “na formação do povo brasileiro, não há europeu, se pensarmos em mulher e homem, mas apenas e tão somente o espermatozoide do português”⁵⁰. De todo modo, “o espermatozoide” português, o índio e o ne-

50 Câmara dos Deputados, Brasil, Sessão 159.3.53.O, 25/06/2009, <https://m5.gs/eEJXVk>, acessado a 01/07/2022.

gro, de acordo com o deputado, deram origem a “um povo ímpar, que faz com que o mundo inteiro não compreenda como, numa nação com tamanha dimensão e com formações tão distintas, não haja guerras étnicas ou religiosas nem conflitos de línguas”⁵¹. O deputado Lael Varella (DEM), em discurso no dia 12 de agosto de 2009, também insistiu em argumento parecido, afirmando que a política de cotas induziria a uma “luta de raças” isso, segundo ele, “num país universalmente reconhecido como modelo de miscigenação e de harmonia racial! [O que] acabará com a beleza e a alegria de nosso povo, que tem uma originalidade que encanta os estrangeiros, pois é formado por um verdadeiro caldeirão de culturas”⁵².

Embora possa chamar a atenção o fato de o falso discurso da democracia racial ainda se sustentar em pleno século XXI, não se deve entender como mostra de desconhecimento da história ou uma opinião desvairada por parte de seus autores, mas sim como resultado da cultura histórica desses sujeitos, constituída ao longo do tempo com interferência de diversos mediadores da informação histórica, entre eles, talvez os manuais escolares aqui analisados. Ainda que esses discursos (como outros que veremos mais a frente) possam ser distorções feitas de forma deliberada por seus autores, a fim de conservarem uma base eleitoral radical, eles estão a difundir uma cultura histórica.

Também é importante entender por que especificamente o mito do Brasil como país harmônico do ponto de vista racial se manteve em voga, com aceitação de sua teoria ao longo do século XX e XXI, não obstante o surgimento de outras interpretações validadas pelos pesquisadores. Ele surge, como vimos anteriormente, nos livros e no debate público do parlamento do século XIX, mas foi nos governos autoritários que seus argumentos foram incorporados com mais ênfase na cena pública, incluindo os manuais de história. Uma explicação possível é que, como o mito da democracia racial exalta a ideia de convivência harmo-

51 Câmara dos Deputados, Brasil, Sessão 159.3.53.O, 25/06/2009, <https://m5.gs/eEJXVk>, acessado a 01/07/2022.

52 Câmara dos Deputados, Brasil, Sessão 200.3.53.O, 12/08/2009, <https://m5.gs/dDlvZT>, acessado a 01/07/2022.

niosa entre os indivíduos de todas as camadas sociais e grupos étnicos, isso permite “às elites dominantes dissimular as desigualdades impedindo os membros das comunidades não brancas de terem consciência dos sutis mecanismos de exclusão da qual são vítimas na sociedade”⁵³. A ênfase na negritude, ao contrário, exigiria “uma denúncia veemente das condições de vida precárias e sempre desiguais, enfrentadas pela população negra no país da suposta democracia racial”⁵⁴.

Ainda no contexto das discussões sobre as cotas raciais, o tema da escravidão e da reparação aparece com bastante frequência. Quando o Supremo Tribunal Federal – STF julgou a improcedência de uma ação movida pelo Partido Democratas (à época um partido de direita, atualmente denominado de União Brasil e mais alinhado com a extrema-direita do ex-presidente Jair Bolsonaro) contra a Universidade de Brasília-UNB – primeira instituição federal de ensino superior a implantar o programa, antes, portanto, da obrigatoriedade prevista pela lei de 2012 –, o partido alegou que a lei não poderia ter caráter reparatório pois “as desigualdades entre brancos e negros não têm origem na cor, e mais, que a opção pela escravidão destes ocorreu em razão dos lucros auferidos com o tráfico negreiro e não por qualquer outro motivo de cunho racial”, negando que a escravidão tenha deixado heranças nas estruturas sociais e econômicas do país⁵⁵. Contrário a tal argumento, o ministro do STF, Luiz Fux, proferiu seu voto nos seguintes termos:

Não se trata, como afirmou o partido requerente da ADPF, de uma “infeliz correlação entre a cor do indivíduo, pobreza e a qualidade do estudo”, fazendo crer que tudo não passaria de obra inescapável do destino, uma triste coincidência. As estatísticas de hoje são produto de ações pre-

53 Kabengele Munanga, *Rediscutindo a mestiçagem no Brasil* (Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2004), 89.

54 José Jorge de Carvalho, “Ações afirmativas para negros na pós-graduação, nas bolsas de pesquisa e nos concursos para professores universitários como resposta ao racismo acadêmico endêmico”, em *Educação e ações afirmativas: entre a injustiça simbólica e a injustiça econômica*, org. Petronilha B. G. Silva e Valter Roberto Silvério (Brasília: INEP, 2003), 175.

55 Supremo Tribunal Federal, Brasil, *ADPF: 186 DF, Relator: Min.º Ricardo Lewandowski*, Data de Julgamento: 26/04/2012, Data de Publicação: DJe Public 20/10/2014, 5.

téritas. Revelam com objetividade as cicatrizes profundas deixadas pela opressão racial de anos de escravidão negra no Brasil⁵⁶.

Enquanto o partido procurou questionar a lei a partir da narrativa de que pobreza e baixos níveis de estudo se associam à cor das pessoas apenas por uma infeliz coincidência, o ministro Luiz Fux desmontou a interpretação, utilizando a escravidão como referência para as estatísticas sociais de hoje. O historiador Luiz Felipe de Alencastro, que no julgamento foi um dos oradores a emitir um parecer favorável às cotas, concluiu que “trata-se, sobretudo, de inscrever a discussão sobre a política afirmativa no aperfeiçoamento da democracia, no vir a ser da nação”⁵⁷. Destaca-se, ainda, o discurso de parlamentares como o deputado Sibá Machado (PT) que afirmou: “Eu considero essa lei muito mais forte do que a Lei Áurea, de 13 de maio de 1888”⁵⁸. Já a deputada Janete Pietá (PT) considerou que a aprovação das cotas raciais era uma reparação histórica à população negra brasileira pelos danos causados por 350 anos de escravidão, “após a abolição da escravatura, em 1888, o Estado brasileiro não tomou qualquer atitude de promover a inserção dos escravos libertos. Durante esse tempo foram aprovadas algumas leis que visavam proteger os negros, porém não promoviam a igualdade”⁵⁹. Há, nesses discursos, por um lado, a compreensão de uma abolição incompleta em 1888 e, por outro, o reconhecimento da Lei de Cotas como uma política de reparação. Desta forma, mais do que uma lógica indenizatória, que poderia levar a uma concepção de que, uma vez quitada a indenização o caso está superado e pode ser esquecido, a

56 Supremo Tribunal Federal, Brasil, *ADPF: 186 DF*, Relator: Min.^o Ricardo Lewandowski, Data de Julgamento: 26/04/2012, Data de Publicação: DJe Public 20/10/2014, 4.

57 Luiz Felipe de Alencastro, “Parecer sobre a Arguição de Descumprimento de Preceito Fundamental, ADPF/186, apresentada ao Supremo Tribunal Federal em 4 de março de 2010” (Fundação Perseu Abramo, 2010), <https://fpabramo.org.br/2010/03/24/cotas-parecer-de-luiz-felipe-de-alencastro/>, acessado a 22/08/2022.

58 Câmara dos Deputados, Brasil, Sessão 112.2.54.O, 08/05/2012, <https://m5.gs/Mm1qVD>, acessado a 01/07/2022.

59 Câmara dos Deputados, Brasil, Sessão 212.2.54.O, 08/08/2012, <https://m5.gs/RGVxSm>, acessado a 01/07/2022.

reparação pelas cotas é uma resposta civilizatória às condições impostas aos descendentes dos escravizados e libertos, relegados à infracidadania, e a sua existência deve ser entendida como instrumento de manutenção da memória em torno das lutas dessa população. Assim, a Lei de Cotas cumpre um papel objetivo de abrir espaço no ensino superior a uma parcela majoritária da população que antes não era assistida e outro papel de caráter subjetivo de não deixar esquecer os motivos que justificaram a sua criação, ou seja, servir de instrumento de memória. Ambos os papéis são igualmente importantes no processo de reparação.

Por fim, é importante ressaltar o agravamento de discursos e de pautas antirreparatórias por parlamentares e apoiadores do governo do ex-presidente Jair Bolsonaro durante o exercício daquele governo. Ele próprio, quando ainda era deputado federal, já havia se manifestado contra as cotas inúmeras vezes, mas durante a campanha para seu primeiro mandato, em 2018, foi novamente questionado se, caso eleito, manteria a lei. Em resposta ele negou a existência de tensões raciais no país e minimizou o peso da escravidão e suas consequências. Retomando a narrativa da miscigenação como fator de acomodação das tensões raciais ele afirmou: “Somos misturados no Brasil [...] para que cotas?”⁶⁰. Um dos debatedores, então, questionou se a manutenção das cotas não representaria uma reparação à dívida histórica do Brasil para com a população afrodescendente devido à escravidão, no que o então candidato respondeu: “Que dívida? Eu nunca escravizei ninguém na minha vida?” e emendou usando argumentos dos manuais escolares dos anos 1960 com a justificativa: “O português nem pisava na África. Foram os próprios negros que entregavam seus escravos”⁶¹.

Mais recentemente, em audiência na Câmara dos Deputados no dia 17 de novembro de 2021, o ministro da Educação Milton Riberio foi perguntado sobre a posição do ministério diante da revisão da Lei de Cotas, no que respondeu “[ter] lido alguns livros recentemente sobre a questão da escravidão no Brasil e tal...”, mas que considerava a merito-

60 Roda Viva, “Jair Bolsonaro”, *Youtube*, 30/07/2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l-DL59dkeTi0>, acessado a 15/12/2019.

61 Costa, “Que dívida?”, 140-160.

cracia mais importante do que as cotas raciais, no que foi interrompido pelo deputado Bira do Pindaré (PT), o qual afirmou que, desta forma, o ministro negava a escravidão no Brasil⁶². Na sequência, a deputada Talíria Petrone (PSOL) afirmou que a fala do ministro “explicita o racismo que está na cara do governo brasileiro. ‘Tá na cara, e deveria estar na cara do ministro da Educação, que desconhece o papel das cotas raciais: reparação histórica’⁶³. Para a deputada, as desigualdades do país são consequência de “mais de três séculos de escravidão, um país que ainda não deu a negras e negros a reparação histórica sobre o que foi o trabalho forçado, sobre o que foi o sequestro de milhões de pessoas da África para cá”⁶⁴.

De modo geral os discursos, tanto no período da criação da Lei de Cotas quanto em 2022, sobre sua possível revisão, podem ser reunidos em dois grupos: aqueles que foram contrários às cotas racializaram o discurso, utilizando argumentos baseados na harmonia racial ou na inexistência de diferentes “raças”, e silenciando quase que completamente o tema da escravidão. É visível o esforço de não evocar as memórias da escravidão, posto que poderia estimular a recordação da violência da instituição; já o segundo grupo, daqueles que apoiavam a lei, mobilizaram de forma enfática as memórias da escravidão, suas violências e arbitrariedades como principal justificativa, além de conceber essas ações como práticas reparatórias, num nexos explicativo que relaciona passado e presente da população negra.

Considerações finais

Desde a colônia até quase o fim do império, por mais de três séculos, o Brasil viveu ancorado no regime escravocrata: “Leis, relações de produção, hierarquia social, conflitualidade, exercício do poder, tudo teve, no

62 Câmara dos Deputados, Brasil, 3.^a Sessão Legislativa Ordinária da 56.^a Legislatura, Comissão de Educação, Notas taquigráficas, 17/11/2021, <https://escriba.camara.leg.br/escriba-servicosweb/html/64055>, acessado a 01/07/2022.

63 Câmara dos Deputados, Brasil, Sessão 138.2021, 17/11/2021, <https://m5.gs/dVVMaX>, acessado a 01/07/2022.

64 Câmara dos Deputados, Brasil, Sessão 138.2021, 17/11/2021, <https://m5.gs/dVVMaX>, acessado a 01/07/2022.

Brasil, que se medir com o escravismo⁶⁵. Com uma instituição que se perpetuou por tão longo tempo e que estendeu suas malhas em variados espectros da sociedade compreende-se que, mesmo após a abolição legal, o regime tenha imposto um legado danoso àqueles que, a contragosto das elites econômicas e políticas, foram emancipados, bem como a seus descendentes.

Se na vigência da escravidão havia um esforço de políticos e senhores em negar a violência do processo, a partir dos mais variados argumentos, sobretudo os de distinção racial, com o objetivo de estender sua duração ao máximo, no pós-abolição em diante pouco mudou, a não ser o fato de que os argumentos visavam eximir o Estado e os ex-senhores de qualquer culpa. Ali, a elite agiu, usando a expressão de Jacques Le Goff, “como senhores da memória e do esquecimento”, tentando implementar uma memória favorável a si mesmos e ao Estado⁶⁶. A bem da verdade, esses setores estavam interessados que a névoa do esquecimento pairasse nessa história. Impossível não incluir nesse contexto a tentativa de Ruy Barbosa de apagar o passado recente às custas da queima dos registros que materializavam suas memórias. Ou, ainda, do ponto de vista simbólico, não dá para desconsiderar a tentativa de impor uma nova memória pelo hino nacional, composto dois anos após a Abolição, mas que já pretendia vê-la pelas costas, afirmando no refrão: “Nós nem cremos que escravos outrora/Tenha havido em tão nobre País...”⁶⁷.

A manipulação do passado, construindo uma memória da escravidão adequada aos interesses dos grupos de poder, encontrou nos manuais escolares um meio fundamental de difusão, especialmente considerando a sua importância na formação escolar e como as elites e o Estado sempre detiveram o controle sobre sua produção e circulação. Embora não seja o único meio de difusão histórica e nem o único res-

65 Laura de Melo e Souza, *O sol e a sombra: política e administração na América portuguesa do século XVIII* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2006), 56-57.

66 Jacques Le Goff, *História e memória* (Campinas: Editora da UNICAMP, 2003), 422.

67 José Joaquim de Campos da Costa de Medeiros e Albuquerque, “Hino da República”, *Diário Oficial*, 21/01/1890.

ponsável pela formação da consciência não se pode desprezar a influência desse material.

O artigo mostrou como os discursos de parlamentares e os manuais escolares têm repetido argumentos semelhantes desde o século XIX, quando a intenção é negar as pautas reparatorias, não obstante as intensas e constantes ações de diversos segmentos, em especial dos movimentos negros, no sentido de alterar os rumos, reivindicando uma agenda pública de política antirracista. Em linhas gerais, os argumentos de autoridades públicas e dos manuais escolares, minimizando a violência da escravidão, a responsabilidade do Estado e o quanto se lucrou em cima das vidas exploradas, se repetem há, no mínimo, duzentos anos.

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**Armindo Armando, Augusto Alberto
e Martins JC-Mapera**

Nó Górdio e relações entre Moçambique e Portugal: futuro inventado nas escolas moçambicanas da província de Sofala

“Nó Górdio” foi uma operação militar violenta, comandada por Kaúlza de Arriaga, em 1970, para frustrar a luta armada de libertação de Moçambique. Este artigo estuda as memórias desse acto como pretexto para uma reflexão sobre as relações político-diplomáticas e socioculturais entre Moçambique e Portugal. O artigo resulta da pesquisa feita nas escolas secundárias moçambicanas através de grupos focais e da análise da reportagem da RTP, realizada por Alexandrina Pereira e Rui Pinto Almeida em 2006, sobre este acontecimento histórico. Apesar da aparente existência de memórias que estimulam o desassossego como reflexo dos acontecimentos do passado, as relações de amizade são cada vez mais fortalecidas, manifestando-se em diferentes esferas do desenvolvimento dos dois povos que partilham a língua portuguesa, enquanto interface do progresso científico, cultural e económico.

Palavras-chave: Nó Górdio; Interculturalidade; Moçambique e Portugal.

Nó Górdio and relations between Mozambique and Portugal: an invented future in Mozambican schools in Sofala Province

“Nó Górdio” was a violent military campaign, commanded by Kaúlza de Arriaga in 1970, with the aim of defeating the armed struggle for the liberation of Mozambique. This article examines the memories of this event as a pretext for a reflection on the political, diplomatic, and socioeconomic relations between Mozambique and Portugal. The article results from research conducted in Mozambican secondary schools and the analysis of a RTP report directed by Alexandrina Pereira and Rui Pinto Almeida in 2006 about this historical event. Despite the apparent existence of memories that stimulate restlessness as a reflection of past events, relations of friendship are increasingly strengthened and find expression in different spheres of development in two nations that share the Portuguese language as an interface of scientific, cultural and economic progress.

Keywords: Nó Górdio; Interculturality; Mozambique and Portugal.

Nó Górdio e relações entre Moçambique e Portugal: futuro inventado nas escolas moçambicanas da província de Sofala

Armindo Armando, Augusto Alberto
e Martins JC-Mapera*

Introdução

A operação “Nó Górdio” foi o mais violento acontecimento da luta de libertação nacional em Moçambique, considerado como o mais importante e determinante para a consolidação da vitória e descolonização em Moçambique, cujas consequências influenciaram as relações bilaterais entre Moçambique e Portugal, num período de reparações históricas, de mudança ideológica, administrativa e geográfica; de criação de memórias colectivas, locais, nacionais e transnacionais.

Apesar de as narrativas serem construídas e socializadas sobre princípios de relações de poder (vencedor e vencido), num cenário caracterizado por violência, agressões e mortes, é possível extrair lições sobre as actuais relações e construir uma memória do futuro sobre a cooperação social, económica, política e cultural entre Moçambique e Portugal.

* Armindo Armando (armandoarmindo21@gmail.com), Faculdade de Letras e Humanidades (FLH) da Universidade Licungo (UniLicungo), Bairro da Ponta-Gêa, Beira, Moçambique, Centro de Estudos de Comunicação e Sociedade (CECS) da Universidade do Minho, Edifício 15 – Campus de Gualtar, Braga, Portugal; Augusto Alberto (augustoalberto26@gmail.com) FLH – UniLicungo, CECS – Universidade do Minho; Martins JC-Mapera (jose.mapera@ua.pt) FLH – UniLicungo, CECS – Universidade do Minho. Artigo original: 11-07-2022; artigo revisto: 15-03-2023; aceite para publicação: 15-03-2023.

É neste contexto que se desenvolveu o presente estudo no âmbito do projecto “Memórias, culturas e identidades: o passado e o presente das relações interculturais em Moçambique e Portugal”. Metodologicamente, o estudo foi feito com recurso a grupos focais para compreender como os alunos moçambicanos encaram e interpretam diversos acontecimentos da história nacional, nomeadamente a “Operação Nó Górdio”. Como criam e reconstroem memórias e imaginações sobre o passado e o presente e, sobretudo, que perspectivas orientam o futuro das relações entre Moçambique e Portugal?

O estudo empírico foi realizado na província de Sofala, em seis distritos, nomeadamente, Caia, Chemba, Gorongosa, Chibabava, Búzi e Nhamatanda. Foram constituídos sete grupos focais, envolvendo alunos da 11.^a classe e 12.^a classe das áreas de Letras que estudam a disciplina de História.

A criação de grupos focais foi precedida pelos contactos e manifestação de apoio das direcções das escolas, e pelos professores de História e de Português. Os trabalhos com os grupos focais duraram, em média, uma hora e meia em cada escola. O grupo focal pode funcionar com grupos homogéneos e heterogéneos. Portanto, nos grupos focais aplicados neste estudo, foram considerados os dois tipos, isto é, os grupos focais formados apenas por alunos e o grupo focal heterogéneo, concebido nos distritos de Chemba e Chibabava integrando alunos e professores. Apesar desta heterogeneidade pouco habitual, estes dois modelos não condicionaram a resposta dos alunos pela presença de professores, dado que o seu nível de liberdade foi similar aos grupos homogéneos.

A escolha da província de Sofala como caso de estudo deveu-se ao facto de, por um lado, ser a província que se localiza na zona Centro do país, centro de acção de vários acontecimentos históricos e de, por outro, haver registo de importantes acontecimentos históricos de guerra colonial e pós-colonial: Massacre de Inhaminga (1973-1974); instalação da base da RENAMO (Resistência Nacional de Moçambique) no distrito de Gorongosa, na sequência da guerra de 16 anos; palco de conflito político militar (2012-2019). Por outro lado ainda, pelo facto dos investigadores que conduziram este estudo estarem radicados em

Sofala e terem o domínio do contexto sociocultural, histórico, político e económico da região.

A província de Sofala desempenha um papel importante na política de memória do país, influenciando, de forma significativa, os processos de tomada de decisões diplomáticas e económicas, pelo facto de ser a segunda cidade do país e ter o porto que liga o comércio internacional com o *hinterland*.

O artigo está estruturado em três áreas: percurso bibliográfico sobre o Nó Górdio; análise das construções sociais sobre o Nó Górdio; e análise do acontecimento Nó Górdio no manual escolar da 12.^a classe, de autoria de Mussa (2015), actualmente em uso no ensino secundário em Moçambique.

Nó Górdio: reivindicações contraditórias sobre a memória

Ao estudar, crítica e analiticamente, a história da luta de libertação de Moçambique, não pretendemos politizar o conhecimento teórico ou inventariar as pesquisas feitas sobre esse evento que marcou as décadas de 60 e 70 do século passado. Pretendemos, pelo contrário, aproximar as discussões teóricas da visão pragmática sobre “o Nó Górdio”, e dela construir um corpo literário e uma realidade reflexiva no presente artigo.

Para consolidar o debate sobre reivindicações contraditórias de memória, consideramos importante discutir o seu conceito e as suas classificações. O termo “memória” tem origem etimológica no latim, significando a habilidade de armazenar e utilizar as informações desde as visuais, auditivas e escritas.

A memória está estruturada em três categorias – histórica, colectiva e individual. A memória histórica é aquela que envolve a reconstrução de dados fornecidos pelo presente da vida social projectados sobre um passado reinventado. Por sua vez, a memória colectiva refere-se àquela que recompõe o passado através das experiências que se transmitem a um grupo ou indivíduo; enquanto a memória individual é a consciência individual do passado, que se opõe à memória colectiva¹¹.

1 Cf. Darío Betancourt Echeverry, “Memoria individual, memoria colectiva y memoria históri-

A memória colectiva é feita justamente pela memória afectiva, pelas recordações de cada indivíduo, que permitem memorizar e reter substratos significativos do conteúdo comum². A memória da pessoa está intrinsecamente ligada à memória de grupo, à memória colectiva e nacional, com a capacidade de ser partilhada.

Collective memory as the organic of the individual, which operates within the framework of a sociocultural environment. Collective memory as the creation of the shared version of the past with results through interaction, communication, media, and institution within small social groups as well as large cultural communities³.

A “memória colectiva distingue-se da história dado que é uma corrente de pensamento contínuo que nada tem de artificial já que retém do passado somente aquilo que ainda está vivo ou que é capaz de viver e manter na consciência do grupo”⁴.

Segundo Mariana Carneiro em “1 de julho de 1970: Início da Operação Nó Górdio”, a operação “Nó Górdio” realizou-se no período que vai de 1 de Julho a 6 de Agosto de 1970, altura da intensificação da luta armada de libertação de Moçambique⁵. Carneiro confirma que essa

ca: lo secreto y lo escondido em la narración y el recuerdo”, em *La práctica investigativa en ciencias sociales*, ed. Alfonso Torres Carillo e Absalón Jiménez Becerra (Bogotá: Universidad Pedagógica Nacional, 2004), 124-34.

2 Cf. Maria Immacolata Vassalo de Lopes, “Narrativas da Lusofonia: memórias e identidade da telenovela brasileira”, em *Lusofonia e Interculturalidade: Promessa e Travessia*, coord. Moisés de Lemos Martins (Braga: Universidade do Minho: Centro de Estudos de Comunicação e Sociedade/Húmus, 2015), 57-74.

3 Cf. Astrid Erll, *Memory in Culture*, trad. Sara B. Young (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 15. “Memória colectiva como o orgânico do indivíduo, que opera dentro do trabalho de enquadramento de um ambiente sociocultural. A memória colectiva como a criação da versão partilhada do passado com resultados através da interacção, comunicação, meios de comunicação e instituição dentro de pequenos grupos sociais, bem como de grandes comunicações culturais” [tradução livre].

4 Cf. Maurice Halbwachs, *La mémoire collective* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1969), 88.

5 Cf. Mariana Carneiro, “1 de julho de 1970: Início da Operação Nó Górdio”, *Esquerda*, 1 de Julho de 2021, <https://www.esquerda.net/artigo/1-de-julho-de-1970-inicio-da-operacao-no-gordio/75355>, consultado a 20 de Fevereiro de 2023.

operação configurou uma estratégia militar portuguesa para aniquilar a frente da guerrilha dos moçambicanos. No entanto, diferentemente do manual escolar da 12.^a classe da autoria de Mussa (2015), a autora diz que a operação “No Górdio” integrava cerca de 8000 militares.

O manual escolar da 12.^a classe⁶, que intitula a operação como “o fim da guerra da independência”, narra a história da operação da seguinte forma:

A progressão e extensão da guerra em Moçambique obrigou Portugal a repensar numa nova estratégia, que visava acabar com as acções dos guerrilheiros da FRELIMO. Assim, em 1970, foi lançada uma grande ofensiva militar designada operação “Nó Górdio”. Esta operação foi dirigida pelo grande estratega militar português, o general Kaúlza de Arriaga. O epicentro das ofensivas militares foi o planalto dos Makondes, em Cabo Delgado, e na região Norte-Este da província do Niassa.

No início, esta operação envolveu cerca de 10 000 militares portugueses. À medida que a guerra se intensificava, Portugal mobilizou mais de 70 000 soldados, dos quais 40 000 eram africanos, recrutados localmente.

Outro objectivo da operação “No Górdio” era isolar a FRELIMO e fragilizá-la de modo a terminar com as suas infiltrações e operações militares. No entanto, a FRELIMO saiu vitoriosa, uma vez que movimentava grupos compostos por poucos guerrilheiros, obrigando os portugueses a dispersarem, sem sucesso, as suas forças.

6 Cf. Carlos Mussa, *H12 História 12.^a Classe* (Maputo: Texto Editores, 2015), 141.

A derrota das forças portuguesas nesta operação origina um ambiente de instabilidade nas colónias portuguesas e em Portugal, onde emerge um movimento de constetação, constituído por capitães que promovem o golpe de Estado, colocando António de Spínola como Presidente da República.

Em seguida, o Movimento das Forças Armadas e o governo de Portugal iniciam negociações que permitiram terminar a guerra, depois da assinatura dos Acordos de Lusaka, a 7 de Setembro de 1974, dia da Vitória.

Nestes acordos, assinados entre os representantes da FRELIMO e o governo de Portugal, ficou acertado que a independência de Moçambique seria em 25 de Junho de 1975, depois da tomada de posse de um Governo de transição misto, composto por representantes da FRELIMO e de Portugal.

O Governo de transição teve Joaquim Chissano como primeiro-ministro, que entrou em função no dia 20 de Setembro de 1974, tendo sido o seu termo anunciado com a proclamação da independência, em 25 de Junho de 1975.

Pereira e Almeida (2006) afirmam que a operação “Nó Górdio” prolongou-se por um período de sete meses, tendo causado 130 mortos e um total de 80 feridos. Segundo os autores, como consequência da operação, o exército português capturou 1800 guerrilheiros da Frente da Libertação de Moçambique.

Numa tese de especialização intitulada “Estudo da luta de libertação nacional”⁷, a operação “Nó Górdio” é descrita como um movimento

7 Cf. Emílio Mário Januário, “Estudo da luta de libertação nacional de Moçambique” (Trabalho de conclusão de curso, Escola de Comando e Estado-Maior do Exército Escola Marechal Castello Branco, 2019), 42. <https://bdex.eb.mil.br/jspui/bitstream/123456789/5625/1/MO%206073%20-%20EM%C3%8DLIO.pdf>.

motivado pela morte de Eduardo Mondlane (1969), projectada para derrotar a guerrilha da FRELIMO. Tratou-se, portanto, de uma grande ofensiva, mas que não alcançou os objectivos, apesar de ter contribuído para provocar fissuras na organização, no que respeita à concepção da linha política da luta.

Nas imagens visíveis no site “Veteranos da Guerra do Ultramar”⁸, é possível compreender que a história do “Nó Górdio” foi representada em fotografia na perspectiva da portugalidade, pois são apenas apresentados os protagonistas da operação, omitindo o espaço das personagens do exército da Frente de Libertação de Moçambique. Esta estratégia visa evidenciar a superioridade da força militar portuguesa sobre os guerrilheiros e subverte, de certa forma, a versão real dos acontecimentos.

Apesar desta aparente vitória dos portugueses e de toda disponibilidade bélica, não foi alcançado o objectivo da operação militar portuguesa:

Além de ter inviabilizado a Operação Nó Górdio, a FRELIMO voltou a infligir, mais uma vez, uma derrota militar vergonhosa ao Exército Colonial Português em 1 de agosto de 1974, em Cabo Delgado, no distrito de Mueda [...]. Num combate planificado até ao mínimo detalhe, os guerrilheiros da FRELIMO atacaram e assaltaram Namatili, capturando cento e trinta e sete (137) soldados portugueses, com as suas respectivas armas sem disparar um único tiro⁹.

As datas mencionadas para esta captura coincidem com o fim da operação “Nó Górdio”. E as razões de a operação ter ocorrido sem mortes podem explicar o início de uma espécie de racionalidade e de

8 António Pires, *Operação “Nó Górdio”*. Imagem. <http://ultramar.terraweb.biz/nogordio.jpg>.

9 Cf. Janeiro, “Estudo da luta de libertação nacional de Moçambique”.

compreensão sobre a importância do respeito pelos Direitos Humanos e, sobretudo, sobre a necessidade do fim da guerra que durava já muitos anos.

O “Nó Górdio”, enquanto acontecimento histórico, constituiu-se num momento de disputa pelos protagonismos entre Portugal e Moçambique, visto que textos e narrativas moçambicanos proclamam a vitória moçambicana, acontecendo o mesmo com as tropas portuguesas, criando, desta forma, um espaço de omissões e de apagamento da história, num contexto em que as relações hegemónicas se sobrepõem à verdade subjectiva e à razão.

As narrativas sobre a operação “Nó Górdio”, para além de subverterem as verdades da história, reforçam as contradições hegemónicas, construindo assimetrias à volta da retórica do poder, em que a categorização do Outro, enquanto parte da narrativa, é marcada pelos contrastes que, várias vezes, não são pacíficos entre os dois países (Moçambique e Portugal). O manual escolar, por exemplo, não narra os impactos desta operação no seio da FRELIMO. As consequências desse factor são visíveis. Tal como refere Carneiro no seu artigo *online* intitulado “1 de julho de 1970: início da Operação Nó Górdio”¹⁰,

a 3 de fevereiro, o fundador e então líder da FRELIMO, Eduardo Mondlane, é assassinado nos escritórios do movimento em Dar-es-Salam, com recurso a uma encomenda armadilhada. A liderança desta Frente de Libertação será assumida, numa primeira fase, pelo triunvirato Uria Simango, Marcelino dos Santos e Samora Machel. No entanto, a 10 de maio de 1970, este último é nomeado presidente. Marcelino dos Santos assume, por sua vez, a vice-presidência da FRELIMO e os elementos mais moderados afastam-se do movimento¹¹.

10 Carneiro, “1 de julho de 1970”.

11 Carneiro, “1 de julho de 1970”.

A narrativa portuguesa não explica sobre os impactos da operação. Mas foram registados impactos negativos, como a intensificação da violência contra as populações civis, destruição dos meios de subsistência das populações, uso de herbicidas (tornando os solos estéreis), torturas, castrações e mutilações, revoltas e massacres¹² (os mais destacados são os de Mukumbura, Chaworha, Juawu e Wiriyamu)¹³.

Na análise de fenómenos históricos, ressalta a ideia de que a comparação social é um dos processos-chave da teoria das representações sociais, na medida em que através dela é possível estabelecer comparações entre o grupo internamente tal como externamente. Portanto, por representação social deve ser entendido um conhecimento que é elaborado e socialmente partilhado¹⁴. Por sua vez, as representações sociais são construídas com base no conhecimento de senso comum, conhecimento do quotidiano e pré-teórico, através das dimensões conceitual, metodológica e epistemológica¹⁵.

As representações sociais intervêm em processos tão variados como a difusão e compreensão de conhecimento científico, a construção de identidades pessoais e sociais, as relações interpessoais e intergrupais, acções de resistência e acções de mudança social¹⁶. É nestes contextos conceptuais que se compreende que o acto de imaginar o futuro das relações entre povos e Estados é baseado na construção de identidades e nas suas respectivas mudanças que operam ao longo do tempo histórico.

Neste âmbito, as “representações sociais são uma alternativa importante ao conhecimento da realidade socio-histórica no contexto da construção das identidades nacionais”¹⁷, dado que elas influenciam no processo de formação do homem e das sociedades.

12 Carneiro, “1 de julho de 1970”.

13 Massacre da população civil em Wiriyamu, província de Tete, que aconteceu a 16 de Dezembro de 1972.

14 Cf. Denise Jodelet (org.), *As Representações Sociais* (Rio de Janeiro: Ed. UERJ, 2001).

15 Cf. Serge Moscovici, *A Representação Social sobre a Psicanálise* (Rio de Janeiro: Zahar Editores, 1978), 291.

16 Rosa Cabecinhas, “Investigar representações sociais: metodologias e níveis de análise”, em *Cultura: Metodologias e Investigação*, ed. Maria Mamel Baptista (Lisboa: Ver o Verso, 2009), 51-66.

17 Armindo Armando e José Chelene Martins Mapera, “Representações socioculturais veiculadas pelas capas de manuais de história em Moçambique”, em *Portugal e Moçambique – Travessias Identitárias e Imaginários do Passado e do Presente*, ed. Moisés de Lemos *et al.* (Braga: Húmus, 2022), 151-70.

Desta feita, a narrativa sobre a alteridade, enquanto factor do acontecimento e fonte das relações entre povos e Estados (Moçambique e Portugal), é baseada nas linhas da teoria das representações sociais, através de comparações em que várias vezes o Outro é avaliado com preconceito e de forma estereotipada, com negatividade e superficialidade, com o objectivo de lhe atribuir características de inferioridade, ignorando, muitas vezes, o real fenómeno dos grupos sociais.

Neste contexto, foi feita uma denúncia de marcas de etnocentrismo, entre Portugal e Moçambique, na abordagem relativa à operação “Nó Górdio”¹⁸:

Apesar de Kaúlza de Arriaga ter considerado a operação Nó Górdio um grande sucesso, ela sofreu numerosas críticas. O principal crítico foi o General Costa Gomes que considerou que a alteração da situação militar em Moçambique e o seu agravamento se tinha ficado a dever a dois factores. Em primeiro lugar, à Operação Nó Górdio, que fora muito negativa para Portugal, do ponto de vista da contra-subversão – foi um erro, uma aplicação dos conceitos de guerra clássica à guerra subversiva. E, em segundo lugar, pelo desvio que se teve de fazer das forças militares, sobretudo do Norte, para a protecção da construção de Cabora Bassa. A Operação Nó Górdio foi um erro porque em guerra subversiva – a não ser quando há uma superioridade de meios e mesmo assim as guerras não se ganham, o que ficou provado no Vietname e na Coreia – se não se ganharem as populações, a guerra continua sempre, com mais ou menos intensidade¹⁹.

A consideração da operação Nó Górdio como um erro simboliza a rejeição das atrocidades, através de discursos que promovem o reco-

18 Cf. Amélia Malta de Matos Pacheco Neves de Souto, “Administração colonial portuguesa em Moçambique no período de Marcelo Caetano (1968-1974): mecanismos e relações de poder” (Tese de doutoramento, Universidade de Lisboa, 2003).

19 Cf. Souto, “Administração colonial portuguesa em Moçambique”, 500.

nhecimento, pois a constatação da “não existência de superioridade” e o “afastamento de vitória sobre uma guerra subversiva” estabelecem fronteiras discursivas dicotómicas e de supremacia, e constrói-se a partir dela uma narrativa que promove a reconstrução histórica num prisma igualitário. Não obstante os estereótipos criados pela “guerra subversiva” e também pelo facto de a parte moçambicana usar estratégias modernas e eficientes, como refere Cândido Jeremias Mondlane:

A maior guerra que fizemos no “Nó-Górdio” foi a guerra das minas; nós introduzimos a guerra de canhões, emboscávamos na estrada com canhões à entrada de Muidumbe para Chai para amedrontar a tropa portuguesa, os helicópteros para nós não eram coisa que amedrontasse, a população também estava armada, havia força local²⁰.

A narrativa construída e socializada sobre a operação estimula assimetrias entre Moçambique e Portugal, estando, desta forma, desajustada dos interesses contemporâneos, na medida em que promove incidentes diplomáticos em sociedades cada vez mais orientadas para o entendimento, a cooperação e a promoção dos Direitos Humanos.

Nó Górdio: dor e cura, perdão e esquecimento; violência e reconhecimento

Para a análise dos contrastes das representações sobre o “Nó Górdio” foi exibido um texto que narra o acontecimento, extraído do manual escolar da disciplina de História, de autoria de Mussa (2015), em uso nas escolas secundárias moçambicanas, manual escolar da 12.^a classe. O texto sobre o “Nó Górdio” foi distribuído aos grupos focais e, simultaneamente, projectado através de *Datashow* para a leitura reflexiva e

20 Cf. Ana Bouene Mussanhane, *Protagonistas da Luta de Libertação Nacional* (Maputo: Marimbique, 2012).

discussão colectiva. Terminada a leitura, foi distribuído um questionário para orientar o debate dos grupos focais.

As características dos participantes estão descritas na tabela seguinte e, como se poderá notar, apesar de em certos grupos focais as sessões de debate terem sido realizadas com a presença de professores, é importante sublinhar que a discussão foi feita olhando o estatuto e o nível dos alunos.

Tabela 1 – Participantes nos grupos focais

Local	Data(s)	Faixa-etária	Ocupação	Nº participantes		
				M	F	M/F
Escola Secundária Mathias Manuel Kapesse de Caia (Grupo Focal 1)	16.08.2021	16-21	Estudante	3	3	6
		25-40	Professor	4	0	4
Escola Secundária de Chemba (Grupo Focal 2)	17.08.2021	16-23	Estudante	4	4	8
		25-45	Professor	3	1	4
Escola Secundária Eduardo Mondlane – Gorongosa (Grupo Focal 3)	18.08.2021	16-22	Estudante	0	0	0
		29-40	Professor	10	0	10
Escola Secundária de Chibabava (Grupo Focal 4)	19.08.2021	16-19	Estudante	4	4	8
		30-48	Professor	3	1	4
Escola Secundária de Búzi (Grupo Focal 5)	02.09.2021	16-19	Estudante	4	4	8
		30-45	Professor	4	0	4
Escola Secundária de Nhamatanda (Grupo Focal 6)	03.09.2021	17-21	Estudante	6	6	12
		30-45	Professor	3	0	3

Fonte: Autores (2021).

Um aspecto importante a reter dos dados referentes aos grupos focais tem que ver com o facto de as idades dos professores e alunos oscilarem entre 16 e 48 anos. Quer isto dizer que o mais velho dos elementos dos grupos focais nasceu em 1972, dois anos após a deflagração da campanha militar na “província ultramarina de Moçambique”. O mais novo nasceu em 2005, trinta e cinco anos depois. Estes dados são importantes para aferir os níveis de compreensão e experiência dos membros dos grupos focais no domínio dos conteúdos históricos relacionados com a guerra de libertação de Moçambique.

A capa do manual escolar *H12 História 12.ª classe*, apresenta de forma destacada as personalidades de Moçambique: Filipe Jacinto Nyusi, actual Presidente da República de Moçambique, desde 2014; Armando Emílio Guebuza, antigo presidente da República de Moçambique (2004-2014) e Joaquim Chissano, antigo Presidente da República de Moçambique (1986-2003). Por outro lado, é ilustrada uma arma, uma enxada e um livro aberto.

Estruturalmente, o manual em referência apresenta cinco unidades temáticas, nomeadamente: (i) “periodização da história de Moçambique”; (ii) “Moçambique: da comunidade primitiva ao surgimento das sociedades de exploração”; (iii) “os estados de Moçambique e a penetração mercantil estrangeira”; (iv) “o período da dominação colonial em Moçambique e o movimento de libertação nacional” e (v) “independência nacional”²¹.

A partir do excerto textual da página 141 do manual escolar de autoria de Mussa (2015), foram formuladas três questões para o debate a nível dos grupos focais, nos seguintes termos: “O que vos chamou mais atenção nesta página?”; “Qual é a vossa opinião sobre este acontecimento? Está bem explicado no manual?” e “Acham que este acontecimento influencia o presente, no que se refere às relações interculturais, desenvolvimento e economia entre Moçambique e Portugal?”. Embora não sejam de natureza judicativa, estas formulações são reflexivas, analíticas e avaliativas, exigindo, portanto, uma tomada de posição em relação aos conteúdos apresentados.

21 Cf. Carlos Mussa, *H12 História 12.ª Classe* (Maputo: Texto Editores, 2015).

No que se refere à primeira questão, foram evocados sentimentos de dor e cura, perdão e esquecimento; violência e reconhecimento. Os participantes referiram que estes acontecimentos fortaleceram a criação de uma sociedade cada vez mais solidária entre si enquanto grupo social.

Samantha (nome fictício), do Grupo Focal 1 (GF1), entende que o texto chama mais a atenção pelas imagens: “Vejo aí imagem que chama mais atenção: helicóptero militar; militares fardados e altamente preparados para massacres ao povo moçambicano”; por sua vez, Cármen (GF1) procura interpretar o texto escrito nos seguintes termos: “Para mim, não são fotos que me chamam atenção; há, aqui, informações referentes à unidade e traição, veja só, há informações sobre a participação de moçambicanos que aceitaram se juntar do lado do opressor, isso é trair a pátria”. Para Zunguze (GF2),

Aqui, chama mais atenção a união dos moçambicanos em lutar contra o colonialismo, a resistência do povo moçambicano em prol da independência em Moçambique e a criação de uma experiência muito importante sobre a importância da determinação. Mas também mostra que se mediram forças, se criaram stresses de lutos e depois se reconciliaram. Então, acho que devemos esquecer.

Numa outra perspectiva, os participantes consideraram que as imagens chamam a atenção para um processo rápido de saída da derrota para uma realidade orientada ao reconhecimento, ou seja, a forma breve como a operação terminou e o desencadeamento das negociações que deram lugar à assinatura do Acordo de Lusaka: Amina (GF4) entende que:

Os colegas não se devem ater aos mecanismos de guerra, mas também tentar ver como ela se desenvolveu e como terminou; houve reconhecimento entre as partes para se entenderem e construir uma sociedade através de um mo-

delo específico de reconhecimento; a nossa independência é resultado deste reconhecimento.

No geral, os participantes consideram que os contextos históricos são lembrados, mas é importante que se pense no acontecimento, enquanto memória social que sirva para fortalecer a nossa relação com a sociedade e construir um modelo para robustecer o reconhecimento que deu espaço às negociações entre Moçambique e Portugal e, conseqüentemente, à independência total e completa de Moçambique.

Desta feita, os discursos académicos e políticos sobre o “No Górdio” em Moçambique e Portugal fazem compreender que as duas nações procuram preservar as memórias nacionais sobre a guerra colonial. Esta perspectiva histórica remete-nos para um olhar antagónico sobre o mesmo fenómeno, criando espaço para a conflitualidade de memória. “As memórias estão sempre em conflitos umas com as outras”. À luz deste entendimento, poder-se-á aferir que não só está patente na comparação da narrativa histórica em Moçambique e Portugal sobre o fenómeno “No Górdio”²², mas também se verificou, nos grupos focais, a subsistência da conflitualidade na sua interpretação. Esta dissemelhança ocorre igualmente no “Documentário sobre o Nó Górdio”²³, em termos de conteúdo em relação ao que está registado no manual escolar.

Nesta abordagem é importante que haja uma narrativa que permita estabelecer o ponto de partida para fazer os devidos arranjos históricos, havendo indícios de existência de memórias manipuladas, cujo discurso parece ser selectivo, na medida em que procura alicerçar plataformas de reconstrução histórica do fenómeno.

Perante a questão “qual é a vossa opinião sobre este acontecimento?”, os participantes afirmaram que se tratava de uma acção que deveria ser evitada através do diálogo, visto que o fim deste aconteci-

22 Cf. Andreas Huyssen, *Políticas de Memória no Nosso Tempo* (Lisboa: Centro de Estudos de Comunicação e Cultura, Universidade Católica Editora, 2014).

23 Cf. Alexandrina Pereira e Rui Pinto Almeida, “Grandes batalhas de Portugal – Operação Nó Górdio”, *RTP Ensina*, 2006, <https://ensina.rtp.pt/artigo/operacao-no-gordio>.

mento culminou com as negociações. Alguns participantes, no entanto, referiram que se tratava de acontecimentos que influenciaram o início do entendimento para facilitar o diálogo produtivo e cujo resultado viria a estabelecer realidades diferentes através das quais se constroem imaginações sociais igualmente diferenciadas.

No GF5, Anita refere:

Para mim, este acontecimento significa que as lutas não produzem entendimento, mas sim decisões e determinações sociais que possam influenciar o bem-estar social, o diálogo e o reconhecimento sempre foram prioridades na nossa sociedade. Várias vezes não se deve buscar valorizar a guerra para a vitória, mas sim uma realidade construída.

Na mesma senda, no GF6, Alfredo concebe a ideia de guerra, de unidade e de determinação como factores principais, onde refere que:

Este acontecimento, para mim, significa que a violência foi intensa e que havia uma decisão mesmo de acabar com o outro usando material bélico. É muito triste esta situação, apesar de que não há entendimento mesmo entre as partes interessadas em desenvolver diálogo, até acho que o diálogo não foi por causa da vitória de alguma parte, mas sim era conveniência de acabar com as violências.

Os sentimentos dos participantes estão relacionados a memórias de violência e à valorização do diálogo como arquétipo de construção social e do mecanismo de reparação histórica. Trata-se de um diálogo que não consolida a hegemonia nacional quer de Portugal, quer de Moçambique, mas sim o do desenvolvimento de uma diplomacia comercial orientada ao futuro comum e à concórdia social.

Os participantes entendem que o acontecimento está bem explicado no manual escolar, mas carece de certos elementos que permitam a reflexão acerca das suas motivações e do seu impacto. Há, em nossa opinião, um destaque à crueldade das tropas portuguesas e, em contraposição, a acção dos soldados do movimento independentista moçambicano não é representada em termos de acção, ideologia e estratégias aplicadas.

Questionados os participantes se “acham que este acontecimento influencia o presente?” a resposta é, de certa forma, surpreendente, na medida em que evidencia o aspecto de simpatia pelos conceitos de interculturalidade, desenvolvimento e economia. No geral, há uma percepção positiva sobre a pertinência da reestruturação das relações entre Portugal e Moçambique para que a abordagem histórica dos acontecimentos seja orientada para o desenvolvimento dos dois países.

Por conseguinte, a reconstrução histórica torna-se vital para uma perspectiva intercultural, em que o olhar do “eu” e do “outro” seja de forma recíproca e justa. Tal concepção pode ser compreendida através das abordagens, no GF5, dos participantes Zimane e Ndauca:

Na minha opinião, se este acontecimento é falado como competição para mostrar que alguém ganhou, isto pode não trazer boas relações entre os membros. É importante criar um ambiente e uma história que mostrem a parte positiva. Assim como está, a mostrar que o conflito ainda pode ser recordado para olhar o outro nos dias de hoje como inimigo, isso pode não ajudar muito para uma sociedade que procura se entender, trocar economias e outras coisas mais.

Eu até concordo com a minha colega, mas não tem como negar que hoje em dia nos relacionamos bem com nosso antigo colonizador, mas este relacionamento passa por um processo de esquecer tudo que aconteceu e não correu bem para nós como país e é importante ver essa situação como uma forma de perdão.

Os participantes constroem a ideia do quotidiano baseada na representação social do sofrimento e de construção de memória coletiva propondo, através das suas intervenções, o que deve ser esquecido e o que não deve ser esquecido. Portanto, as relações interculturais são concebidas como uma construção social que exigem o esquecimento da memória da violência, dando ênfase às negociações para a independência de Moçambique.

No entanto, a memória coletiva é concebida como criadora da versão partilhada do passado com resultados através da interação, comunicação, meios de comunicação e instituição dentro de pequenos grupos sociais, bem como de grandes comunicações culturais²⁴.

Por outro lado, o presente é caracterizado, no contexto económico e político, como resultado das trocas comerciais que os dois países partilham e constroem, com vista a desenvolver espaços de uma economia global e de integração, através dos países de língua oficial portuguesa, influenciando, desta forma, a ideia de partilha e de boa convivência.

Para a construção de relações entre Moçambique e Portugal é importante a construção de uma sociedade cada vez mais intercultural, numa dimensão em que a memória remete para o conflito de identidades, guerras e violências sociais.

Para o fortalecimento das relações interculturais entre os dois países é crucial que a história oriente as suas abordagens, conteúdos e reflexões para uma memória positiva e para a reconstrução do entendimento baseado na interculturalidade, na superação das atrocidades passadas e na visão histórica.

Nota-se, porém, a desvalorização ou a negligência sobre valores que anteciparam a operação, embora o faça de forma negativa, dado que tiveram o carácter negocial, acções que não estão presentes e nem são valorizadas nos manuais escolares de História sobre a matéria em referência, tal como se pode ler na transcrição seguinte:

24 Cf. Erll, *Memory in Culture*.

No dia do seu desencadeamento, Kaúlza de Arriaga transmitiu uma mensagem pessoal que foi lançada por um avião da Força Aérea Portuguesa, sobre o planalto maconde [...]. A mensagem referia-se ao respeito que Kaúlza tinha pelo “povo maconde”, que admirava as suas qualidades guerreiras, mas que eles se encontravam “do lado errado”, que tinham sido enganados e traídos, que os “estrangeiros” que eles apoiavam eram “pagãos e racistas” e que a Frelimo apenas lhes podia levar a desgraça e o sofrimento. Pedia-lhes, pois, que reconsiderassem a sua posição e oferecia-lhes a paz, a amizade e uma oportunidade que deviam aproveitar pois podia “ser a última”²⁵.

É fundamental que os manuais escolares e as reportagens sobre a operação “Nó Górdio” esclareçam, para além de exercerem o papel de ensinar, os momentos conflituais; é importante que o aspectos da comunicação estejam presentes, para que os alunos compreendam os valores que foram defendidos neste período, mesmo que de forma estereotipada.

A ideia de “acabar com a guerra através do lançamento de uma operação; a admiração que tinha pela parte dos macondes”, o fundamento “contra o paganismo e o racismo, a rejeição da desgraça e do sofrimento”; desejo de “paz e amizade”, embora as promessas ironizem ou desarticulem o desiderato dos moçambicanos, permitem imaginar a realidade actual e inventar o futuro das relações entre Portugal e Moçambique de forma equilibrada²⁶.

A imaginação que procuramos representar no presente artigo não se refere a uma viagem memorial desprovida de contexto, mas sim alinhada e teorizada na obra *Comunidades Imaginadas: Reflexão sobre a Origem do Nacionalismo*, que reforça a importância da imaginação cujo imaginário deve ser entendido como aquilo que se apresenta como

25 Cf. Souto, “Administração colonial portuguesa em Moçambique”, 498.

26 Cf. Souto, “Administração colonial portuguesa em Moçambique”.

dado que irrompe espontaneamente; tentativa que serve para identificar a experiência entre si, ela se coloca no centro das nossas preocupações ocultas, das nossas possibilidades e do nosso passado²⁷. Portanto, o imaginário tem funções de apresentar elementos do imaginário e o conjunto de condutas contemporâneas, condutas passadas, as tendências e os objectivos do sujeito e as adaptações concretas que estabelece enquanto factor de produção da realidade, visto que ela explora as possibilidades conferidas por um universo cultural simbólico²⁸.

Conclusão

A operação Nó Górdio é construída pelas narrativas sociais através dos manuais escolares e de reportagens como um acontecimento que deu fim à Guerra de Libertação Nacional em Moçambique, mas caracterizada de forma díspar por quem constrói a narrativa, numa reportagem da RTP²⁹. O discurso reivindica a vitória da operação. Pelo contrário, o manual escolar do ensino secundário moçambicano ensina-nos que a operação foi um fracasso. Estas duas posições demonstram o papel do poder hegemónico na configuração das narrativas históricas.

Estas constatações permitem-nos concluir que as relações interculturais entre Moçambique e Portugal são muito influenciadas pelo passado histórico que marcou a vida dos dois países. Estes factos inspiram a história contemporânea baseada nos valores da paz, desenvolvimento e cooperação, evitando a eclosão de novos focos de violência ou de incidentes diplomáticos.

Nas escolas secundárias moçambicanas (província de Sofala), os alunos entendem que o “Nó Górdio”, enquanto conteúdo escolar na disciplina de História, abre uma visão importante para que se promova o espírito de concórdia com base na compreensão do fenómeno da alte-

27 Cf. Philippe Malrieu, *A Construção do Imaginário*, trad. Susana Sousa e Silva (Lisboa: Instituto Piaget, 1996).

28 Cf. Benedict Anderson, *Comunidades Imaginadas: Reflexões sobre a Origem e a Expansão do Nacionalismo* (Lisboa: Edições 70, 2021).

29 Cf. Alexandrina Pereira e Rui Pinto Almeida, “Grandes batalhas de Portugal – Operação Nó Górdio”, RTP Ensina, 2006, <https://ensina.rtp.pt/artigo/operacao-no-gordio>.

ridade e tolerância nas relações bilaterais nos domínios de cultura, da economia e da construção social.

Por isso, parece que o futuro das relações interculturais, económicas e políticas entre Portugal e Moçambique depende da estabilidade recíproca das memórias e dos mecanismos de conserto do passado e da reparação histórica permanente, onde as clivagens históricas servem de ponto de partida para o interdiálogo, a intercooperação e o interdesenvolvimento.

O futuro inventado pelos alunos das escolas secundárias moçambicanas representa valores de moralidade que devem ser cultivados entre os dois povos, considerando o passado cruel como um fenómeno que deve constituir um aprendizagem, sem, contudo, se repetirem no futuro os males causados pela guerra. Isso quer dizer que a diplomacia contemporânea é igualmente indispensável para se desvanecerem conceitos belicistas como o de “inimigo”, usado no período da guerra de libertação nacional de Moçambique.

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Patrícia Martins Marcos

White Innocence, Black Erasure: Reviewing *Alcindo* (2020) Against the Fictions of Portuguese Colonial Bonhomie

This essay uses Miguel Dores' documentary *Alcindo* (2020) to propose a critique of whiteness in Portugal. It is argued that the endorsement of narratives of *lusotropicalismo*, Portuguese colonial exceptionalism, forms a line of continuity between Portugal's colonial-fascist regime and the liberal democracy implanted after the 1974 revolution. The murder of Alcindo Monteiro in 1995, the fulcrum of Dores' intervention, offers a microcosm into these paradoxes of Portuguese self-representation. By rendering race into an inexistence, *lusotropicalismo* plays an instrumental role in Portugal's delusions of colonial innocence. The whitening of the history of the 1974 revolution matters, too. In need of new narratives, the new regime forged an image of future Portugal by excising Africa from accounts of its past and confining national history to the European nation-state. This deliberate amnesia, it is argued, rendered centuries of colonial domination "forgettable," while denaturalizing race, and therefore Black subjecthood, from the imaginary of modern Portugal.

Keywords: Whiteness, Race in Portugal, *Lusotropicalism*, Black History, Blackness in Portugal.

White Innocence, Black Erasure: Reviewing *Alcindo* (2020) Against the Fictions of Portuguese Colonial Bonhomie

Este ensaio usa o documentário de Miguel Dores, *Alcindo* (2020) para propor uma crítica do conceito de "branquitude" em Portugal. O ensaio defende que a insistência em narrativas de excecionalismo lusotropical e colonial em Portugal forma um veículo de continuidade entre o regime "colonial-fascista" português e a democracia liberal implantada depois da revolução de 1974. O assassinato de Alcindo Monteiro (1995), o centro da intervenção fílmica e etnográfica de Dores, oferece um microcosmo destes paradoxos da autorrepresentação portuguesa. Ao tornar a raça num factor inexistente, o lusotropicalismo cumpre um papel instrumental para a sustentação de ficções da inocência colonial portuguesa. O branqueamento da história da revolução de 1974 é, aqui, particularmente significativo. Em busca de novas narrativas, o novo regime forjou a imagem de um país futuro através excisão de África das suas narrativas sobre o passado, assim confinando a história nacional ao estado-nação estritamente europeu. Esta amnésia deliberada tornou séculos de dominação colonial "esquecíveis," deste modo desnaturalizando o conceito de raça e a subalternização negra do imaginário do Portugal contemporâneo.

Palavras-chave: Branquitude; Raça em Portugal; Lusotropicalismo; História Negra; Negritude em Portugal.

**White Innocence, Black Erasure:
Reviewing *Alcindo* (2020) Against
the Fictions of Portuguese Colonial
Bonhomie**

Patrícia Martins Marcos*

“Até que vê a ponte Salazar
Ali ao lado esquerdo
Ou 25 de Abril
Como agora é bom dizer
E percebe que mesmo
Que façam pontes sobre o rio
[...]
Ela é só mais uma preta
Só mais uma emigrante
Empregada da limpeza
Só mais uma que de longe vê a imponência imperial
Do tal terreiro do paço da Lisboa capital
[...]

* Patrícia Martins Marcos (pmarcos@g.ucla.edu). Department of History and Bunche Center of African American Studies, UCLA. Bunche Hall, 11282 Portola Plaza, Los Angeles, CA, 90095, USA I would like to thank the director, Miguel Dores, for kindly providing access to his film. Original essay: 3-2-2023; Revised version: 3-5-2023. Accepted: 4-5-2023.

São os outros cacilheiros
 Outras pontes do povo
 Porque a grande sobre o rio
 Mesmo se o estado é novo
 Tem nome de um grande herói da história colonial
 E ela mais uma heroína que não interessa a Portugal”
 Capicua, *Mulher do Cacilheiro* (2014)

One summer, in the midst of my dissertation research, I began a fellowship supporting work in Portuguese archives for scholars based abroad. On the first day, as I arrived at my host institution, the liaison person rejoiced at the realization that I, too, was Portuguese. After an initial exchange of niceties and a long disquisition on her institution’s history, my interlocutor paused. “You know,” she noted with a weighty demeanor, “I am so happy to see you are Portuguese.” Looking me straight in the eye, she concluded with a somber countenance: “It is just very hard for foreigners to understand the universality of the Portuguese soul.”

Over the years, reactions to this vignette have ranged anywhere between disbelief, sarcasm, familiarity, or laughter. This array of responses was not entirely fortuitous. Awareness of the Luso-Brazilian ideology of *lusotropicalismo* became a reliable predictor of the response garnered.¹

1 A theory articulated by the Brazilian social scientist Gilberto Freyre, purported that Brazilian “racial democracy” was a historical byproduct of Portugal’s propensity to promote racial mixing between colonizer and colonized. Between the 1930s and 1980s, Freyre sought to counter US eugenicist theories of racial realism with an essentialized view of Portuguese culture premised on rurality, ecumenic Catholicism, and the purported anti-racism inherent to sexual intercourse between “masters and slaves.” Such theories were, of course, entirely oblivious to problems of power, sexual abuse, and the violence inherent to colonial domination. Rather, for Freyre, racial and cultural mixing, both emblematic of the Portuguese “unique way of existing in the world,” produced “racial democracy” in Brazil while also promising to concretize “new Brazils in Africa.” In the post-war period, the Portuguese dictatorship (1928-1974) used Freyre’s work to reinvent a colonial policy capable of enduring the decolonial tides pushing through Africa from the 1950s, through the wars of African Liberation of the 1960s and 1970s. Gilberto Freyre, *O Mundo Que o Português Criou* (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria José Olympio Editora, 1940); Gilberto Freyre, *Aventura e Rotina* (Lisbon: Livros do Brasil, 1953); Gilberto Freyre, *O Luso e o Trópico. Sugestões em torno dos Métodos Portugueses de Integração de Povos Autóctones e de Culturas Diferentes da Europeia num Complexo Novo de Civilização: o Luso-Tropical* (Lisbon: Comissão Executiva das Comemorações do V Centenário da Morte do Infante D. Henrique, 1961); Gilberto Freyre, *Portuguese Integration in the Tropics* (Lisbon:

Those unfamiliar with the Portuguese myth that racial admixture — and the historical existence of mixed-race people — emblemized a regime of colonial domination operating without an inkling of racial animus, reacted with irony to Portugal’s paradox of self-representation.² Conversely, those accustomed to Portuguese fables of white innocence, saw this episode as another instantiation of the universalist fable of benign colonialism.³ On either case, universalism lay at the heart of Portugal’s denialist complex of Black elision and “color blindness.”⁴ Miguel Dores’ documentary *Alcindo* (2021), the subject of this essay, not only exposed the conundrum of a soul *so universal* its exceptional nature can only be grasped by those born within its embrace; but in doing so, identified in Portugal’s presumptions of a racial vacuum, a line of narrative continuity between the “colonial-fascist” regime of the past and present-day liberal democracy.⁵

Realização Gráfica, 1961). For a discussion of Freyre’s importance to Portuguese colonial ideologies see: Cláudia Castelo, *“O Modo Português de Estar No Mundo”: O Luso-Tropicalismo e a Ideologia Colonial Portuguesa (1933-1961)* (Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 1998); Cristiana Bastos, “Aventura e rotina: um livro de meio de percurso revisitado,” in *Gilberto Freyre. Novas Leituras do Outro Lado do Atlântico*, ed. Marcos Cardão and Cláudia Castelo (São Paulo: Edusp, 2015), 35-48; Cristiana Bastos, “Luso-Tropicalism Debunked, Again. Race, Racism, and Racialism in Three Portuguese-Speaking Societies,” in *Luso-Tropicalism and Its Discontents: The Making and Unmaking of Racial Exceptionalism*, ed. Warwick Anderson, Ricardo Roque and Ricardo Ventura Santos (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2019), 243-264.

² Paradox of self-representation is drawn from Gloria Wekker’s analytic: “paradoxes of white Dutch self-representation.” It articulates incoherences such as that expressed by my interlocutor: a soul so universal only a Portuguese citizen could grasp its meaning and significance. By definition, the elevation of one nation as universal excludes all “non-nationals” from universality. See Gloria Wekker, *White Innocence: Paradoxes of Colonialism and Race* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016).

³ For Gloria Wekker “white innocence” expresses an “unacknowledged reservoir of knowledge and affects based on four hundred years of imperial rule [designating how it] plays a vital and acknowledged part in dominant meaning-making processes, including the making of the self, taking place in Dutch society.” It expresses how, despite enforcing regimes of racial subjection based on “gendered, sexualized, and classed meanings” the cultural archive of colonial domination was nonetheless “excised” from Europe/the Netherlands. As a “regime of truth,” white innocence enacts the “forgetting” of colonialism from Europe by presenting it as space “free from race.” Gloria Wekker, “On White Innocence,” in *Living with Ghosts: Legacies of Colonialism and Fascism*, ed. Nick Aikens, Jyoti Mistry and Corina Oprea (Copenhagen: L’Internationale, 2019), 49-68, https://www.internationaleonline.org/library/#living_with_ghosts_legacy_of_colonialism_and_fascism; Wekker, *White Innocence*.

⁴ Black elision refers to the erasure of Black political agency from the imaginary of the Portuguese body politic. See Patrícia Martins Marcos, “Blackness out of Place: Black Countervisuality in Portugal and Its Former Empire,” *Radical History Review* 2022, no. 144 (October 1, 2022): 106-130, <https://doi.org/10.1215/01636545-9847830>.

⁵ The analytic “racial vacuum” expresses how race was presented as constituting neither a viable analytical tool nor a valid actor’s category in Portuguese national history. Despite centuries of imperial domination, colonial extraction, and millions of enslaved people, race remains unfit for examination. Both in the aftermath of Alcindo’s death and in subsequent decades, this ra-

The exceptional soul evoked by my interlocutor, as Dores shows in *Alcindo*, was hardly an epiphenomenon.⁶ Its roots were woven to a past of deep silences enforced by “the managers of history” — a phrase Michel-Rolph Trouillot used precisely in and about Lisbon.⁷ The documentary, which premiered in 2021 in Doclisboa, was named after Alcindo Monteiro (1967-1995). Alcindo was a 27-year-old Black man of Cape Verdean roots who, on June 10 of 1995, Portugal’s national day, was murdered by neo-Nazi skinheads at the heart of Lisbon’s busiest commercial and nightlife districts (the areas of Chiado and Bairro Alto).⁸ Throughout the film, Dores reveals how the aftermath of Alcindo’s murder exposed the willful denialism that informed decades of Portuguese fables of colonial bonhomie.⁹

On June 11, when the brutal nature of the lynching became public, Portuguese authorities rushed to classify the case as an isolated and abnormal incident. Alcindo’s death was seemingly at odds with the Portuguese “lusotropical” *modus vivendi* theorized by the Brazilian social scientist Gilberto Freyre (1900-1986).¹⁰ In reality, as Dores’ shows, racism (and its denial) was so normalized in postcolonial Portugal that

cial vacuum returned in the phrase “Portugal não é um país racista.” “Colonial-Fascismo” was a term used in Mozambique by anti-colonial forces, especially FRELIMO. For the origins of the term see Hélio Jaguaribe, “Brasil: estabilidade social pelo colonial-fascismo?,” in *Brasil: Tempos Modernos*, ed. Celso Furtado (Rio de Janeiro: Paz & Terra, 1968), 49-76.

6 *Alcindo*, Documentary (Maus da Fita, 2021), <https://vimeo.com/662242892>.

7 “In the few square miles of Belém, the managers of history had tried repeatedly to impose a narrative. Perhaps they had tried too much. For in the monumental efforts of the Portuguese state to catch up with a history now eclipsed by nostalgia, I saw the nostalgia of the entire West for a history that it never lived, its constant longing for a place that exists only in its mind.” Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 109-110.

8 Media coverage tends to emphasize the location of Bairro Alto because that was where the violence started. Prior to Alcindo’s death, the group of skinheads moved swiftly across the streets of Bairro Alto, mostly taking aim at Black people and an interracial couple. They then descended on a fairly empty Rua Garrett, in Chiado, where Alcindo Monteiro, who was walking alone, was lynched. There were 11 victims, overall.

9 June 10, Portugal’s national day, was first instituted in 1924, in the penultimate year of Portugal’s First Republic (1910-1926). It became a particularly important ceremony during Portugal’s dictatorship (1926-1974), as a day of exhortation of “the race” (“dia da raça”). It was marked by military parades celebrating the nation in its physical, cultural, and military prowess. Colonial bonhomie is an analytic alluding to the Portuguese myth of *lusotropicalismo*, i.e., the notion that because Portuguese colonialism was based on miscegenation, there was a peaceful and harmonious relationship between the races.

10 See footnote 1.

Alcindo's death became all too predictable. Forewarning signs appear in the contextual set-up to Alcindo's last day — used by Dores to expose why anti-Black racism could hide in plain sight.¹¹ Mapping the repeated rejections that racism could exist in the everyday lives of Black subjects onto the growth of neo-Nazi groups in the suburbs of Lisbon, Dores identifies white innocence's most defining incoherence: confusing negation for absence. How else could race continue to “not exist” even as public walls increasingly bore hate speech and anti-Black physical attacks grew? Whiteness was so indelibly identified as innocent that the rise in neo-Nazi assaults targeting queer and Black subjects across the 1980s seemingly warranted no public concern.

Framed by Dores' — a trained anthropologist — as “the ethnography of a long night,” *Alcindo* carefully peels the palimpsestic layers of contradictions sustaining the Portuguese fiction of white innocence.¹² Put bluntly, the idea that despite five centuries of colonial domination in Asia, Africa, and the Americas race and colonial violence left no imprimatur on the Portuguese national self-imaginary became a pillar of Portuguese democracy. Hence, any examination of Portugal's role in the transatlantic slave trade — through the enforcement of regimes of commodification, sexual violence, and forced labor — could be excised from the modern retelling of the national past.

The post-revolutionary impulse to exonerate and elide by confining history to the modern nation (thereby separating it from its centuries-old empire) is not unique to Portugal. Indeed, it is precisely this phenomenon that Gloria Wekker coins as “white innocence.” In her analysis of the Dutch empire, Wekker notes how the categorical disappearance of race rested on the removal of colonial spaces from the nation's history. This sleight of hand confined the past to Europe; and, as race vanished, the imperial nation could suddenly disappear.¹³ Along

11 Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 45.

12 Miguel Fonseca Dores, “Caso Alcindo Monteiro. Etnografia audiovisual de uma noite longa” (Master's thesis, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2022).16/06/1995 For the phrase “reservoir of knowledge and affects,” see Wekker, *White Innocence*, 2.

13 Wekker, *White Innocence*.

similar lines, scholars of Blackness in France also debated how republican notions of universal citizenship remain riddled with exclusions. Mame-Fatou Niang, for instance, explored how Blackness was placed outside of the universal, thus ultimately calling for the “democratization of universalism.”¹⁴ Tyler Stovall, in addition, used French universalism to write a larger Western, modern history of the identification between freedom and whiteness.¹⁵

The crux of Portugal’s fabrications of racial blindness start, as Dores insists, with the history of June 10 itself. The loaded past poured into the *Dia de Portugal* — or “the day of the race,” as former President of the Republic, Aníbal Cavaco Silva, and Portugal’s Prime Minister at the time of Alcindo’s death, once referred to the June 10 celebrations — is revealed in the film.¹⁶ Indeed, the fact that the “*dia da raça*” remained an operable phrase in the mind of Portugal’s President in 2008, more than three decades after the Portuguese revolution, exposed how the genealogy of June 10th lay steeped in nationalistic and colonial legacies.

More than a mere throwback to fascism, Dores recovers the moment when, following two turbulent years during Portugal’s post-revolutionary history (1974-1976), the country of the future was interwoven with that of the past through the recovery of June 10 celebrations.¹⁷ This syncretic amalgam lay the ground for the elevation of Portugal’s “color-blind” liberal democracy; a regime where both the category race and Blackness became incommensurate with the national imaginary of

14 Mame-Fatou Niang, *Identités françaises. Banlieues, féminités et universalisme* (Leiden: Brill, 2020); Julien Suaudeau and Mame-Fatou Niang, *Universalisme*, Collection Le Mot est faible (Paris: Anamosa, 2022).

15 Tyler Edward Stovall, *White Freedom: The Racial History of an Idea* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021). For other comparative literature, see Sue Peabody and Tyler Edward Stovall, eds., *The Color of Liberty: Histories of Race in France* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003); Edward E. Telles, *Race in Another America: The Significance of Skin Color in Brazil* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006); Devin J. Vartija, *The Color of Equality: Race and Common Humanity in Enlightenment Thought* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021).2003

16 Cavaco Silva was Portugal’s Liberal Democrat Prime-Minister between 1985 and 1995, and President between 2006 and 2016.

17 Because of how June 10 was linked to Salazar’s dictatorship and more than a decade of wars against the self-determination of Portugal’s African colonies, all celebrations were suspended in 1974, the year of the revolution, until 1976.

the body politic. Dores symbolically stresses the liberal accommodation of the legacies of the past to the country of the future through the use of both black-and-white as well as color technologies in the 1977 broadcast of the first “democratic” June 10th national ceremony. Rhetorically effective, Dores relies on the simultaneous use of both technologies to mark how a country recently orphaned of its empire inscribed the “universal vocation of its people” into its democratic regime.¹⁸ Ultimately, Dores sees the return of June 10 as a compromise of a liberal democratic yet to come. The accommodation of the past to the present is signaled through the persistency of colonial narratives of *lusotropical* racial harmony “between black and white” and their democratic “reincorporation into the discourse of the nation” on June 10 on 1977.¹⁹

For Dores, the 1977 “reform” of the Day of Portugal marked Portugal’s revolutionary deluge. It signaled a desire to redeem the nation through a new self-image aligned with European liberal democracy. This yearning for the future meant moving past fascism. Hence, Portugal’s confrontation with the realities of life under colonial domination in Africa became verboten. Unwilling to let go of empire, Portugal’s elites opted to recapitulate old tropes about cultural *mestiçagem* and racial harmony. It seems that erasing the recent past demanded turning empire into a distant, early modern reality.²⁰

Yet, the lines of continuity between fascism and democracy remained. This point was made in an especially poignant manner through a montage linking Salazar’s 1963 speech on “overseas policy” to a vox populi repetition of the motto “Portugal is not a racist country,” common in the aftermath of Alcindo Monteiro’s murder.²¹ Salazar’s speech of August 12, 1963, was a noteworthy starting point. Delivered two years into the war opposing Angolan self-determination, Salazar reacted against the spread of anti-co-

18 Dores, *Alcindo*, min. 15:42.

19 Dores, *Alcindo*, loc. 14:03.

20 Dores, *Alcindo*, loc. 14:31.

21 António de Oliveira Salazar, “Declaração sobre política ultramarina,” August 12, 1963, APAT/Cx081/016, Museu da Presidência da República, <https://www.arquivo.museu.presidencia.pt/details?id=69347>; “Política ultramarina,” <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/politica-ultramarina/>, accessed February 3, 2023.

lonial armed resistance to Guinea-Bissau (1963) and Mozambique (1964) by stressing how “the multiracialism, which today begins to be cited and admitted by those [other countries and empires] who practically never accepted it [until now], can be said to be a Portuguese creation.”²²

Beyond the specific segment of the speech highlighted in *Alcindo*, Salazar’s full statements demonstrate the centrality of Freyre’s thesis of *lusotropicalismo* to the production of a mythology of colonial domination marked by the absence of racial discrimination.²³ The cornerstone of Freyre’s “Lusotropical civilization” and what he named the “unique Portuguese way of existing in the world” was defined by a capacity to surpass one’s “ethnic condition” (i.e., race) through culture. For, as Freyre put it, a “social [...] or cultural Portuguese could [...] be either yellow, dark, red, black, or white.”²⁴ Not by accident, these theories gained traction in Portugal and among Estado Novo elites precisely when Portugal faced a rising tide of anti-colonial resistance in the 1950s and 1960s. Thus, *lusotropicalismo* served the instrumental purpose of upholding white innocence and legitimate colonial domination, from its very inception.

Powerfully, Dores exhibits the *lusotropical* line of rhetorical continuity by exposing the echoes of Salazar’s words in the statements of

22 In a speech drawing on Freyre’s words, Salazar spoke about Portugal as “a multiracial society [which] is not a juridical construction [positing] a conventional regime for minorities but, above all else, a way of life and a disposition of the soul [*estado de alma*] that can only [...] be maintained by a long tradition.” Portugal’s dictator then went on to describe the unique cultural traits that rendered the Portuguese civilizing mission into a benign and peaceful form of assimilation of Africa into the Portuguese Nation. Indeed, Salazar goes as far as accusing anti-colonial African resistance of “Black racism” (*racismo negro*) and a rejection of the “mixed societies — *luso-tropical* — historically established” by the Portuguese. He then concludes by paraphrasing Freyre by stressing that “the great difficulty in a multiracial society is not in its juridical constitution [...] but above all, it is its way of life and the disposition of its soul.” Concluding with a direct reference to Freyre’s work: “Such is our way of existing in the world, as it has already been affirmed by others.” Salazar, “Declaração sobre política ultramarina,” 8-9. See also *Alcindo*, loc. 18:00-18:13.

23 For more on this, see Patrícia Ferraz de Matos, *The Colours of the Empire: Racialized Representations during Portuguese Colonialism* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012); Cláudia Castelo, “‘Novos Brasis’ em África: desenvolvimento e colonialismo português tardio,” *Varia Historia* 30 (August 2014): 507-532, <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0104-87752014000200009>; Castelo, *O Modo Português de Estar no Mundo*; Maria do Carmo Piçarra, “O império contra-ataca: a produção secreta de propaganda feita por estrangeiros para projecção internacional de ‘Portugal do Ultramar’,” *Media & Jornalismo* 16, no. 29 (2016): 44-59, https://doi.org/10.14195/2183-5462_29_3.

24 Freyre, *Portuguese Integration in the Tropics*, 46-47.

several figures of Portuguese democratic regime. From Mário Soares', president during Alcindo's murder, June 10th exultation of a long history of "*communion* with all the peoples and nations who speak Portuguese"; to members of parliament emphasizing a long and peaceful "tradition of *contact* with peoples of other races and cultures"; to a police spokesperson evocation of "a tradition of *hospitality* here [as well as] in other parts of the world"; to finally, a common citizen's confident affirmation that "racism has *ended* in Portugal."²⁵ While the innocence of these statements weaves a line of rhetorical continuity capable of transcending class — a variable often identified as more important than race for Portugal — the documentary effectively shows how the "colorblindness" of its agents remained unequivocally coded as white.

Given this genealogy, and once the transversal continuity from fascism to democracy was established, Dores noted how the re-integration of a day of national exultation stood at the onset of a deeper amnesia. Portuguese democracy proved unable to reinvent new imaginaries devoid of the old tropes of maritime bravery, adventurous seafaring, and a ecumenic brotherhood with all of humanity. "Colonial aphasia" hid in this mythology.²⁶ And the 1977 decision to reintroduce the *Dia de Portugal* proved just that. The imaginary of imperial exceptionalism formed a *habitus* so deeply ingrained in the collective psyche that not even a revolution could either extricate or alter this *lusotropical* mode of thought.

In the deluge of compromise, the universalist promise of the new, liberal democratic republic was assumed to naturally produce a society operating in a racial vacuum. Hence, despite its colonial past, seemingly no operable concept of racial difference existed in Portugal's colorblind republic. It was as if democracy and African self-determination alone could produce a clean

25 *Alcindo*, loc. 18:00-19:13.

26 "In aphasia, an occlusion of knowledge is the issue. It is not a matter of ignorance or absence. Aphasia is a dismembering, a difficulty speaking, a difficulty generating a vocabulary that associates appropriate words and concepts with appropriate things. Aphasia in its many forms describes a difficulty retrieving both conceptual and lexical vocabularies and, most important, a difficulty comprehending what is spoken." Ann Laura Stoler, "Colonial Aphasia: Race and Disabled Histories in France," *Public Culture* 23, no. 1 (2011): 125, <https://doi.org/10.1215/08992363-2010-018>.

slate by erasing five centuries of colonial domination. The (illusion) of a restart—which, after all, represented a recapitulation of *lusotropical* fables—was poignantly captured in a speech by António Ramalho Eanes, Portugal’s President on June 10, 1977, and recovered in Dores’ documentary:

What distinguishes the Portuguese man from other men is his exceptional ability to turn the whole world into *his* land, and of [turning] any human being his into brother without ever losing the traits of his *Lusiad* root. Today, like yesterday, our grandeur lies in the *universal dimension of our people*. Wherever they live, [be it] in Europe, in Asia, Africa, in the Americas, or Oceania, the Portuguese have been, and always will be, protagonists of the History of their Fatherland [*pátria*].²⁷

Why, five decades after Eanes’ speech, I could still hear its unblemished echoes of Eanes’ self-assured countenance in my Lisbon interlocutor? Answering this question constitutes the crux of Dores’ agenda for *Alcindo*. After introducing the night of racist violence leading up to Alcindo Monteiro’s lynching, Dores’ explores the genealogy of June 10 — and its post-revolutionary return — thus offering the viewer an important point of historical contextualization.²⁸ On the surface, the reincorporation of the *Dia de Portugal* by a democratic regime searching for stability reflected the assuaging of the most radical revolutionary impulses of previous years. However, lingering deeper underneath the surface, this gesture emblemized the extent to which the new country remained unable to part with the *lusotropical* mythos assimilated into Portugal’s imperialist discourse in the 1950s and 60s.²⁹ Such *lusotropical* fables served the redemptive purpose of rendering centuries

27 Speech by President Ramalho Eanes (mandate: 1976-1986). Reproduced in Miguel Dores, *Alcindo*, loc. 14:41-15:17. emphasis my own.

28 Nationalist fervor was heightened by Sporting’s victory of the final football match of the Portuguese cup.

29 Through the work of Brazilian social scientist Gilberto Freyre and Adriano Moreira’s tenure as professor and director of the Institute of Overseas Studies (Instituto Superior de Estudos Ultramarinos) and Minister of the Overseas Colonies (1961-1962). See Castelo, *O Modo Português de Estar no Mundo*.

of racial discrimination and colonial violence into unthinkable facts.³⁰ This silence critically allowed the illusion of normalcy. Both because of the tense reassimilation of half a million settler colonists (“*retornados*”) who departed from Africa in the aftermath of decolonization, as well as the return to civilian life of an entire generation conscripted to fight in wars against African self-determination (1961-1974), silence and the sublimation of the recent past offered alluring solutions for the immediate present.

Hence, neither the revolution which toppled fascism and colonialism in 1974, nor the subsequent years of a turbulent “ongoing revolutionary process” — i.e., the moment when June 10 celebrations were suspended — had the power to alter Portugal’s commitment to a collective narrative of maritime bravery and colorblind, racial harmony.³¹ If anything, the influence of French republican universalism among figures of the Portuguese anti-fascist resistance (turned influential leaders in Portugal’s post-revolutionary political parties), left an indelible imprimatur upon the new nation.³² Republicanism offered a vocabulary capable of reinventing the myth of Portugal’s “universal vocation.”

The promise of a new political regime with the same racial politics and no more colonies created a convention of knowledge based on the mutual exclusion between republic and empire. Thus, the same ecumenical discourses about universal assimilation into the faith mobilized since the 1400s to legitimate Portuguese imperialism and justify African slavery, re-emerged in 1974 under a secular and democratic veneer. Yet, much like in France, where racial data is not collected on account of the purported colorblindness of the category “citizen,” the same can be said of Portugal. In the Portuguese case, however, the

³⁰ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 45.

³¹ Also known as PREC, *Processo Revolucionário em Curso*. One of the epitomes of PREC was the “hot summer of 1975” (*verão quente de 1975*), when forces aligned with the Soviet Union and forces wishing to reinstate a right-wing dictatorship fought for political primacy. The process ended in 1976, with the approval of the 1976 Portuguese Constitution.

³² Many leaders of what became the Socialist Party, such as Mário Soares or Manuel Alegre, for example, lived in exile in France.

equation between the mere recognition of race and the praxis of racial discrimination has come to hinge less on overtly republican terms and more on the persistency of a secularized *lusotropical* grammar. This key point of “national incoherence” is captured by Dores in *Alcindo’s* opening scenes. Through its celebration of the nation, the country of colorblind colonialism crafted the fiction of its very own “race-free” European “racial democracy.”³³ These incoherences both nourished Portugal’s paradoxes of racial exclusion and fostered their oblivion. Dores marks them in the way democratic Portugal demanded Afrodiasporic labor force for its modern projects of “development,” while enforcing border regimes and citizenship laws where Black disenfranchisement became par for the course.³⁴

The opening scene of the film marks the first contradiction of Portugal’s narrative of hospitality. Dores captures the Atlantic Ocean mythologized over centuries in the Portuguese imaginary but, importantly, inverts the trajectory of the journey. Instead of mariners departing on adventures, Dores brings into view the postcolonial migratory flux used by Alcindo to arrive in (postcolonial) Portugal. Such an upturn exposes the colonial logic of the “white possessive” to which *lusotropicalism* is calibrated: Europeans can freely move to Africa, but Africans find very different fortunes when journeying towards Europe.³⁵ Through the

33 The idea of racial democracy is most traditionally identified with Brazil. However, given Freyre’s role in defining the concept and his important role to late Portuguese colonialism, it is key to consider its reverberations in Portugal too. See also Paulina L. Alberto and Jesse Hoffnung-Garskof, “‘Racial Democracy’ and Racial Inclusion: Hemispheric Histories,” in *Afro-Latin American Studies: An Introduction*, ed. Alejandro de la Fuente and George Reid Andrews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 264-316; George Reid Andrews, “Brazilian Racial Democracy, 1900-90: An American Counterpoint,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 31, no. 3 (July 1996): 483-507; Maria Lúcia Pallares-Burke, “Gilberto Freyre and Brazilian Self-Perception,” in *Racism and Ethnic Relations in the Portuguese-Speaking World*, ed. Francisco Bethencourt and Adrian Pearce (Oxford: Oxford University Press and British Academy, 2012), 113-132; João Alberto da Costa Pinto, “Gilberto Freyre e a intelligentsia salazarista em defesa do império colonial português (1951-1974),” *História* (São Paulo) 28, no. 1 (2009): 445-482, <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0101-90742009000100016>; Alberto Luiz Schneider, “Iberismo e luso-tropicalismo na obra de Gilberto Freyre,” *História da Historiografia: International Journal of Theory and History of Historiography* 5, no. 10 (2012): 75-93, <https://doi.org/10.15848/hh.v0i10.438>.

34 Marcos, “Blackness out of Place.”

35 Aileen Moreton-Robinson, *The White Possessive: Property, Power, and Indigenous Sovereignty* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015).

inversion of hegemonic imperialist narratives, Dores highlights the impossibility of Black subjecthood in a country whose self-image hinges on racial mixture despite its investment in keeping it tacitly white.

Black incommensurability with Europe and the postcolonial nation-state was visible in the 1970s and 80s. As the story of the 1974 revolution congealed around the triumph of democracy and European civilization, African resistance was erased through a recentering of the narrative of “reconquered freedom” became centered on the “April Captains.”³⁶ This retelling was riddled with silences. The desire to re-define Portugal as a European nation-state informed a commitment to the teleology of liberal democracy — which, in turn, erased the vital role that anti-colonial African resistance played in the struggle against fascism during the 1960s and 70s. This whitening of democracy, both reinforced the illusion of *lusotropical* innocence and extricated African agency from the realm of Eurocentric civilization.³⁷ As a consequence, democracy became a story for the consumption of a European-facing Portugal; the “colonial wars” an African problem; Blackness an unnatural presence; and race a reality entirely foreign to either the past or present of the Portuguese nation-state.

This great pact of silence, as Dores shows, endures through the fantasy of white innocence that culminated in Alcindo Monteiro’s bludgeoning in 1995. Dores documents how the perpetuation of *lusotropical* tropes allowed Portuguese authorities to ignore the rise of “racialist” neo-Nazi groups in the Lisbon suburbs, while police forces and gov-

36 For a discussion of the problem of Black incommensurability with the Portuguese national imaginary of the liberal, democratic citizen, see Martins Marcos, “Blackness out of Place.” April Captains, or *Capitães de Abril*, refers to the field rank officials of the Portuguese army who led the coup in Lisbon against the Estado Novo regime on April 25, 1974. The centering of these mid-rank officials, however, tends to elide the role of African anti-colonial resistance and the enduring wars of African self-determination in Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau (1961-1974).

37 In part, because Portugal struggled to assimilate a large contingent of “returnees” (*retornados*, i.e., former settler colonists), in the aftermath of African decolonization. On the other, the physical and mental wounds endured by a generation conscripted to fight for the regime in Africa and who had since returned home, made the war and fascism a difficult topic for public debate. The trauma elicited by both factors combined, produced an imperative of silence. Christoph Kalter, *Postcolonial People: The Return from Africa and the Remaking of Portugal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022); Ângela Campos, *An Oral History of the Portuguese Colonial War: Conscripted Generation* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

ernment authorities assured the public that real danger lay in “black gangsterism.” Here, Dores recovers the words of Dias Loureiro, who was Minister of Internal Affairs at the time of Alcindo’s death. In a televised interview, this key cabinet member in a government led by Cavaço Silva linked the problem of public insecurity to Portugal’s asylum legislation and the need to “contain” the growth of Lisbon’s “peripheries.”³⁸ Unlike the United States, where words like “inner cities” and “urban” act as metonyms for Black, the term “periphery” or “suburb” produces the same effect in Portugal. As Dores stresses in his narration of the interview, without realizing, Loureiro offered “the best definition of racialism.” By attaching the problem of public insecurity to the rise of drug consumption in the peripheries, Loureiro argued more legislation targeting migratory fluxes and controlling the growth of suburban areas — both identified with the presence of Black and Afrodiasporic people.³⁹ To Loureiro’s mind, danger came only from without and never from within. In his view, Blackness inherently marked the threat of a foreign presence while whiteness was only legible as innocent.

It was in this contradiction between the unfounded fear of “black gangsterism” and Portugal’s affair with the safety of its white spaces (i.e., its borders and city centers), that Alcindo’s death was explained as an abnormality by authorities and politicians alike. Dores ethnographic sensibility comes to fruition in this section of the documentary, as exemplified in his reconstruction of the day of the murder through a series of simultaneous events. While on morning of the murder Alcindo Monteiro asked his mother to make *cachupa*, a traditional Cape Verdean dish, for Sunday meal; a crowd of veterans from the Portuguese wars against African self-determination gathered by the “Monument to Overseas Combatants.” The gathering evoked the military genealogy of June 10 as a day of nationalist and fascist elation. General Kaúlza de Arriaga, the military handmaiden behind operation Gordian Knot (1970) and a man responsible for countless deaths in Mozambique, was one of its protagonists.

38 *Alcindo*, loc. 43:04.

39 *Alcindo*, loc. 24:08-24:36.

In recovering this moment, Dores locates the complex of white innocence at the heart of Portuguese delusions of racial blindness in the respectability endowed to war crimes and their manufacturers. For those still lamenting the lost empire — those, that is, who were not conscripted but willingly fought to uphold the colonial domination of Africans — June 10 of 1995 elicited both indignant rage and nostalgia. Accompanied by other high-ranking officers, Arriaga waxed poetic about the “colonial war.” Longing for the “glorious empire” they pursued until the very end, Arriaga made veiled accusations of treason against the then President of the Portuguese Republic, Mário Soares. Soares, who was founder of the Socialist Party, had been an active anti-fascist resistant and lived exiled in Paris at the time of the revolution — for, among other reasons, refusing to fight in the wars in Africa. On the day of Alcindo’s death, one part of the country continued to cry out for empire with great fanfare and naturalized impunity.

The willingness to normalize imperial nostalgia and to grant respectability to figures from within Salazar’s inner circle, was integral to democratic Portugal. In exposing these scenes, Dores also reveals the hubris of liberal democracy.⁴⁰ Emphasis on democratic moderation and pluralism is seen by Dores both as symptom and cause. Namely, it explains why white citizens and Portugal’s political elites so easily turned a blind eye to anti-Black violence. By framing racist speech as a problem of difference of opinion — one to be naturally expected in a pluralistic society — threats against the lives of Portuguese Afrodescendants

40 In 2022, this normalization and reintegration became especially visible when Adriano Moreira (1922-2022), who was Salazar’s Minister of Overseas Affairs (1961-1962), died. Moreira, who re-opened the prisoner camp of Tarrafal where political prisoners were tortured, remained an adamant defender of *lusotropicalismo* until the very end of his life. He was also minister during the beginning of the war between Portugal and Angolan forces. Upon his death, Moreira was celebrated as a key figure to Portuguese democracy. See, for example Lusa, “Adriano Moreira, o político da história democrática com a maior longevidade,” *Público*, September 5, 2022, <https://www.publico.pt/2022/09/05/politica/noticia/adriano-moreira-politico-historia-democratica-maior-longevidade-2019406>. For recent writings by Adriano Moreira where he continues to express a *lusotropical* line of thought see: Adriano Moreira, “A lenta marcha para a igualdade,” in *Senhores e Escravos nas Sociedades Ibero-Atlânticas*, ed. Maria do Rosário Pimentel and Maria do Rosário Monteiro (Lisbon: CHAM and Húmus, 2019), 17.24, <https://run.unl.pt/handle/10362/89763>; Adriano Moreira, *A Espuma do Tempo: Memórias do Tempo de Vésperas* (Coimbra: Almedina, 2009).

become either normal or altogether unimportant. Such a framing posits hate speech as natural to democratic life. By the same token racism and anti-racism appear as symmetrical stances; two sides of the same coin.

This complex of *lusotropical* white innocence was fully visible in 2019, in an incident mentioned by anti-racist activist Lúcia Furtado. Mário Machado, one of the skinheads sentenced to prison for his involvement in the assassination of Alcindo Monteiro, featured as guest in Portugal's top rated morning show.⁴¹ The host, Manuel Luís Goucha, not only neglected to inform his audience of Monteiro's long history of racial violence (never naming Alcindo), but invited the neo-Nazi to comment on the prompt: do "we need a new Salazar" in Portugal? Faced with public critiques, Goucha exhibited a parade of arguments reminiscent of 1995, treating anti-Black hate speech as a normal by-product of a pluralist democracy and decrying the dangers of "political correctness" against freedom of speech.⁴²

Building on this point, Dores shows how how, following Alcindo's death, Portugal sunk in a paranoid preoccupation with "anti-white racism." This point is illustrated in the film by the way journalists rushed to Lisbon's "peripheries" to record exoticizing accounts of Black life. In one particular case, a journalist tellingly rephrases a suggestion made by one young Black interviewee. The journalist frames the call for better public infrastructures to practice sports, organize social gatherings, and create spaces that "promote creativity" mentioned by the Black youth as a deterrent against Black "invasion." Without flinching, the young man calmly explained: "We don't invade; we are not invaders; those [spaces]

41 Recently, Mário Machado was found to have standing in a defamation suit against the anti-racist activist Mamadou Ba. Ba was made defendant in trial for stating that Machado "was one of the main figures of Alcindo Monteiro's assassination." This statement was factually corroborated by Machado's conviction as an accessory to the murder. Ana Naomi de Sousa, "Anti-Racist Faces Trial for Defaming Neo-Nazi in Portugal," *Aljazeera*, December 21, 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2022/12/21/anti-racist-faces-trial-for-defaming-neo-nazi-in-portugal>.

42 Inês Chaíça, "Manuel Luís Goucha: 'Não branqueio ditaduras nem ditadores, mas o politicamente correcto é perigoso'," *Público*, January 4, 2019, <https://www.publico.pt/2019/01/04/sociedade/noticia/goucha-1856620>, accessed February 2, 2023; "Racismo: ERC investiga acusações a programa de Goucha," *Público*, January 3, 2019, <https://www.publico.pt/2019/01/03/sociedade/noticia/racismo-erc-investiga-acusacoes-programa-goucha-1856581>, accessed February 2, 2023.

are public and we go there because the Earth is free.”⁴³ Through a slip of the tongue, the journalist subliminally exposed white Portugal’s limited imaginaries for Black life.⁴⁴ Invasion marked foreignness.

Throughout the film, Dores demonstrates a steadfast commitment to elaborating on his central thesis: “The denial of violence is the very flesh of the Portuguese colonial project.”⁴⁵ Over and over, the case for denial — which I equated with a commitment to white innocence — is reiterated through the portrayal of anti-Black, white supremacist violence as abnormal, unnatural, and as a mere isolated incident. Rejecting racism, an attitude tied to the denial of colonial violence and concretized in the silence surrounding Portugal’s role in the transatlantic slave trade, remains a knee-jerk reflex of the present. For this reason, Dores ties the political silence surrounding Alcindo’s death for 25 years, to the murders Bruno Candé (2020) and Luís Giovanni (2020).⁴⁶ Dores recounts how the first day of filming, in January of 2020, coincided with a demonstration protesting the murder of 21-year-old Cape Verdean student Luís Giovanni. After listing the name of other victims of racial hatred in Portugal, Dores admits that such “a documentary about memory could only become a document about the present.” With this phrase, Dores marks his political commitment. *Alcindo* excavates the depths of structural racism in Portugal, but, most importantly, it retells how denying its existence constitutes Portugal’s most veritable “way of life.”

In extremis, centuries of tacitly inflicted racial hierarchies became so normal that in the 1990s, Portugal’s white supremacist groups were perceived with apathy while Black people were presented as threats.⁴⁷

43 *Alcindo*, loc. 43:40-44:18.

44 Katherine McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006); Martins Marcos, “Blackness out of Place.”

45 *Alcindo*, loc. 17:56.

46 Bruno Candé was murdered with four gunshots to the chest by a veteran of the Portuguese “colonial war.” Luís Giovanni was lynched by five young men. On both instances, the police rejected any racial motivation despite the overt anti-Black language used by the perpetrators.

47 This incoherence was immediately visible on June 10 of 1995, the day of Alcindo’s murder. Bolstered by Sporting of Lisbon’s victory in the final match of the Portuguese Cup in soccer,

While whiteness was equated the absence of race itself, — the embodiment of a default setting of virtue and belonging — Blackness marked the threat of foreign “contagion” through its very existence. Hence, Black subjecthood had to either be extricated through border regimes or exterminated through assimilation. In either case, it was vital to ensure a steady access to Afrodiasporic labor force, thereby perpetuating Black subalternization through the vectors of race, class, and gender. In modern Portugal (both pre- and post-revolutionary), the tokenization of Blackness in *lusotropical* discourses cohered precisely with the political disenfranchisement of Afrodescendants via their ineligibility for citizenship. Herein lays Portugal’s nexus of white innocence and Black erasure. In 2023 —much like in 1963, 1977, or 1995 — hegemonic views of Portugal’s collective identity proved unable to transcend the imaginary of its once “glorious empire.” For that reason, political power and its representatives remain unable to see the struggles of Black, Afrodescendant and Afrodiasporic citizens as problems of collective life. For them the nation meant something (and someone) altogether different. Herein, too, lies the key to Portugal’s lusotropical paradox. Models of uniform assimilation inevitably negate the promise of equality and universal belonging. Instead of endorsing the dillution of all into one; concretizing the promise of democracy entails, as shown in *Alcindo*, intolerance towards the intolerant and a readiness to let go of the Portuguese soul.

the violent rampage that culminated in Alcindo’s death was led by a group of neo-Nazis with ties to the club’s hooligan ultras, Juve Leo. Mário Machado, one of the men convicted in the case of Alcindo’s murder, has since been released and ran in 2018 to become president of Juve Leo, something he announced after “a patriotic lunch.” Liliana Borges, “Mário Machado quer presidir à Juve Leo. E diz que vai anunciar a sua candidatura num clube... que desmente,” *Público*, June 7, 2018, <https://www.publico.pt/2018/06/07/desporto/noticia/clube-escolhido-por-mario-machado-para-candidatura-a-juve-leo-desmente-evento-1833630>.

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From the Writing of Diaries under Stalin to the German and Soviet Experience of the Eastern Front. A Conversation with Jochen Hellbeck

by José Neves*

Jochen Hellbeck is particularly interested in autobiographical accounts and people's self-understanding in historical perspective. He is a Russian specialist by background and a Distinguished Professor of History at Rutgers University in the United States. His book *Revolution on My Mind. Writing a Diary under Stalin* was published by Harvard in 2009 and explores personal diaries written in the Soviet Union under Stalin, addressing the paradox of self-expression in an overtly repressive political system. More recently he has explored in comparative and transnational ways how the Soviet, German, and British states mobilised their citizens to fight the World War II. *Stalingrad – The City that Defeated the III Reich* was first published in Germany in 2015 and it is the first western study to probe the meaning of the Battle of Stalingrad for the Soviet soldiers and civilians who defended the city, in that key moment of World War II. This conversation is divided in three parts. The first

* José Neves (jneves@fch.unl.pt). Instituto de História Contemporânea, Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas da Universidade NOVA de Lisboa / IN2PAST – Laboratório Associado para a Investigação e Inovação em Património, Artes, Sustentabilidade e Território, Av. Berna 26C, 1069-061, Lisboa, Portugal.

one mainly deals with the research done by Hellbeck in the context of the book *Revolution in My Mind*. The second part considers the work related to the book *Stalingrad*. And the third part focus mainly on Jochen's current book project.

José Neves (JN): How did you become interested in the history of the USSR?

Jochen Hellbeck (JH): There is a specific time and specific place that brought me to the study of the Soviet Union. I'm West German by background. My father worked as a West German diplomat, and he transferred from Paris to East Berlin in the early 1980s. And I was a kid then and that is how I became exposed to the Eastern Bloc for the first time in my life. I actually straddled both the Western and Eastern worlds, crossing through the Berlin Wall on a daily basis. We lived as diplomats in East Berlin, but I went to school and later to university in West Berlin. When Perestroika happened, it filled me – and millions of other Germans and Europeans – with enormous enthusiasm. This was the ground for my entering Soviet studies. I did not have a pre-existing political affiliation that brought me to the study of the Soviet Union. Neither did I sympathize with the Communist Party, nor was I ardently anti-Soviet. It was mostly curiosity about a very different world that opened up in front of eyes that took me in.

JN: And after your graduation, when you started thinking about your post graduate studies and research, was that the moment when you specifically decided that the Soviet Union would become your main topic?

JH: At the time I was not thinking of becoming a historian. My goal was to join the foreign service. And so I wanted to become a Russian or a Soviet hat as it were. I also realised that my English was pretty

deficient at the time. I was more French-leaning, and we had lived in France, and so I took advantage of a direct exchange scholarship to go to study at Indiana University for a year. The university was wonderful, but southern Indiana was a shock. I managed to get into the Ph.D. program at Columbia University in New York. Looking back, there were many contingent factors along that made me become a historian. Columbia was the most important factor, for it was there that I joined an extremely strong cohort of Russian and Soviet historians, all of them fellow graduate students who are now leading professors in the field: Peter Holquist at the University of Pennsylvania, Igal Halfin at Tel Aviv University, Yanni Kotsonis at NYU, Amir Weiner at Stanford, and many more. This forcefield had a strong shaping effect.

Analysing Soviet Diaries

JN: And what about your specific interest in diaries, as a kind of a material or source?

JH: Again, a chance discovery. I was interested at the time in rural to urban migration processes and had just scoured some archives in Moscow, where I was visiting for a long summer in 1990, and I just walked into a newly created archive that I never heard of before, it was called the Peoples Archive. I told the archival workers of my interest in this theme, and they pulled from their shelf a box filled with diary notebooks; it had been deposited there just a few months before. This happened to be the diary of Stepan Podlubny, a seventeen-year-old boy from Vinnytsia, in Ukraine. Podlubny was Ukrainian-speaking, and he used his diary to master two new languages: the Russian literary language and the Soviet political language. Podlubny's problem, one that he concealed from the world and revealed only to the diary was that he was the son of a kulak peasant and that during collectivization his father had been deported as a "class enemy." Stepan and his mother fled to Moscow where they lived a life in disguise. He acted like a model

proletarian worker. The diary of course mesmerized me. My first reading of it was a decidedly liberal one: the diary as a vessel of a private identity in contradistinction to the public sphere, to the interests of the state. I approached Podlubny's diary like a historian, rather than a literary scholar, seeing in it a reflection of an individual's "true" thoughts in opposition to his to outward public attitudes.

JN: So I guess that topics such as the performative dimension of language and the context of the linguistic turn played a role in this, somehow...

JH: Absolutely! 1990 was when I came from Indiana to Columbia, just having discovered the diary. And Columbia was a hotbed of the linguistic turn, with a whole informal working group on Foucault and post-structuralism that decisively shaped my views of the source material. I became more attuned to the political context of the Soviet Revolution. In March 1917, just as the revolution in Russia had started, Maxim Gorky made a famous declaration, saying, that "the new structure of our political life demands a new structure of the soul". The project of creating interiority was thus really a political project of the day. The central challenge that Gorky and other revolutionaries grappled with was how to create a new type of person who would create the new civilization. This question became very important for many of us at Columbia.

JN: So the diaries worked a little bit as a kind of observatory or a kind of a tool or even a dispositive of this new structure of the soul.

JH: Absolutely. But perhaps this is also bringing a liberal lens to the problem in so far as liberal scholarship stresses the diary as the unfettered domain of an autonomous subject. What I came to realize after many years of studying Podlubny's diary, and the diaries of many other

Soviet people that I subsequently found, is that in a socialist setting the diary may not have played as central a role. It clearly served as construction site of the Soviet soul, but it's certainly not the only or the most important construction site. The elaboration of a Soviet subjectivity was to happen clearly in schools and at workplaces, in the Red Army and other institutions. And what you find when you look at diaries written by ordinary Soviet people – in as far as they were not professional writers who keep diaries for professional reasons –, if you are looking at ordinary people, their diaries materialize and assume a concreteness and real tangible forms in times of personal crisis: it is when these people feel cast out from the collective that they take up the writing of diaries. The diary is to resolve this urgent question of where they stand vis-à-vis the collective. So I think it is maybe a mistake to privilege the diary as if it had an epistemological standing that was unique in Soviet society. Clearly there are wonderful diaries that flesh out processes of rationalizing Soviet ideology, of aligning the individual vis-à-vis that ideology, that other sources do not show with such concreteness. But nonetheless, we need to understand that the diary itself was not the central training ground that the Soviet state conceived of to produce this new subjectivity. We should not forget that the private journal in Soviet eyes was tainted with bourgeois subjectivity. It could not be fully controlled and that is why state authorities treated it with great ambivalence.

JN: So, in your book, you mention that the hypothesis you were elaborating somehow positioned you against much of the historiography of the Stalinist period, namely against the relevance of State power in the period, and also the use of the concept of totalitarianism, right?

JH: Yes. At the risk of simplifying, there were two dominant schools of thought at the time, and I located my work between their poles (as did Igal Halfin with whom I pursued much of this work together at the time). There was a totalitarian school that foregrounded the workings

of ideology, in the absence of any kind of social agency. Individuals were supposedly brainwashed, or they retreated into a position of hidden resistance against the State. Hence the enormous interest proponents of totalitarian theory hold in the diary: it must be the place of hidden resistance. Consider Winston Smith in George Orwell's *1984*. The first line in his secret diary is a message defying the Big Brother State. Nikolai Rubashov in Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* is brainwashed at first, but as his thinking clears up, his diary too become a vessel of autonomous thought. Responding to the totalitarian school, a cohort of social historians who called themselves revisionists foregrounded social agency and social mobility as key markers of the Stalin period. Curiously, this school did not conceptualize ideology any way. The individuals in their studies are driven by a notion of "self-interest" – material gain and prestige, supposedly – that is not theorized or situated in the context of dominant values of the time. The challenge I saw was how to bring ideology back into the picture while linking it up with agency.

JN: Ok. But in your book you also point out one reference that is outside this two schools, or these two traditions, which is Stephen Kotkin's book the *Magnetic Mountain*. And you both identify and distance yourself from his work. Can you explain us this double move?

JH: Stephen Kotkin's *Magnetic Mountain. Stalinism as a Civilization* (1995) was a huge intervention, and it remains a monumental work. To conceive of Stalinism not as primarily a system of mass murder, but as a civilization is daring. Kotkin moreover locates the Soviet revolution within a European-wide frame, and he points to the welfare state as a central aspect of the Stalinist civilization. The one term from Kotkin's book that has become instantly famous is the notion of "speaking Bolshevik". For Kotkin, to master the Bolshevik discourse, to know what is expected of you, is essential to the functioning of Stalinism as a civilization. The book very skilfully parses the rules of the game that determine success or failure in this society. My one problem with the

book is that it lays out a compelling framework, while also remaining ambivalent about its functioning. There are places in the book where “speaking Bolshevik” appears to hold merely instrumental value, while in other places Kotkin is very careful to chisel out Stalinism as a mental universe. So the question remains unresolved whether people merely adopted the rules of the game in their outward behaviour, but in fact retained hidden reservoirs of individuality that did not conform to their outward behaviour. While working on this book, Kotkin had no access to personal diaries, and I assume that he dealt with a layer of unknowability that led him to hypothesize the presence of layers of interiority that his work with public records just couldn't access.

Facing Stalingrad

JN: Let's talk about your work on the Second World War, starting with the book *Stalingrad*. So, if you could also just tell us how the idea of the book emerged...

JH: I had for a long time wanted to study the Second World War as an encounter between Soviet and German subjectivities. I initially thought about this more in terms of a history of ideas, entangling, say, Ernst Jünger conception of the stormtrooper in the trenches with Gorky's ideas on the socialist personality, such kind of lineages. But this proved too disembodied for my taste. At one point I had a conversation with Omer Bartov, and he just said: “Why don't you do Stalingrad?” And the idea was born. Stalingrad as a prolonged cultural encounter in what would become the defining battle of the Second World War. I started doing the very same thing I had started earlier: I looked for diaries. While looking for first-person accounts of the battle, Russian colleagues who knew about my interest in diaries, informed me about a huge collection of interview transcripts from the war that were being stored in the archive of the Institute of Russian History of the Russian Academy of Sciences, and were awaiting their historian. My jaw dropped when

I first saw these transcripts. They were written out stenographic accounts of prolonged interviews with Red Army defenders of Stalingrad, and they were so rich and variegated, an unbelievable body of sources. I found out about the terms of their creation: the interviews were the brainchild of Soviet Jewish historian Isaak Mintz, who was a veteran of the Russian Civil War. Mintz also happened to be an assistant to Maxim Gorky at one point, and Gorky's influence on the interview project is palpable. During the 1930s Mintz curated an oral history project about the Civil War. When Germany invaded in 1941, he essentially redirected his entire staff to collect documents about the new war. In some ways, Ukrainian historians today have also instantly reverted all available resources to study Russia's invasion, and to amass a body of documents that will service scholarly work after the war. That is exactly what Mintz did. He began in late 1941, focusing on the defence of Moscow. Then the project became bigger and bigger, covering more and more areas of the Soviet war effort. In December 1942 Mintz sent a small group of historians, just two historians and two stenographers, to cover the battle of Stalingrad, this was before the battle was over. They came back in early January, before the Red Army started the final rout of the German forces and came back for a second trip just after the battle had concluded. The historians produced a total of more than 200 interviews with participants of the battle. Mostly soldiers, but also some civilians. I quickly realized that this project was so vast it had to become a stand-alone publication. This is how *Stalingrad*, the book, appeared, which is mostly about the Soviet side, Soviet understandings of the battle. The book edition also seeks to do justice to the documentary ethos of Mintz and his co-workers. I call what they practiced "revolutionary documentarism" – a form of chronicling the revolution that involved the observing scholar-intellectual as a participating operative. The task is not just to record reality but to also shape it in the act of recording. This is how I read the questions that the commission members brought to the soldiers whom they interviewed. The interviews clearly pursued the goal of moulding the consciousness of their interviewees, they did performative work. Interestingly, this is the

only project I know of in the entire history of the Second World War, by any warfaring country, that privileges the first-person account. Not only privileges, but also preserves the first-person interview. The US Army collected so called “after action reviews,” interviews with a group of soldiers after they had been in combat. Historian and journalist SLA Marshall introduced this oral history technique for the US Army. Marshall wanted to know how many soldiers used their guns and actually shot from their guns, so as to enhance the military performance of men in combat. On the basis of the interviews, he produced third-person accounts of the debriefing. He did not preserve the scraps of paper which noted what soldiers actually said in response to his questions. What’s so interesting in the Soviet context is that the first-person, the subjective position of the individual soldier, is the point of both origin and destination of the interview project. This once more speaks to the voluntarist, interior dimension of the Soviet revolution, which has fascinated me all along. There emerges an ark extending from 1917, via the Civil War and the 1930s to the Second World War. The Soviet soldiers in Stalingrad were conditioned into battle in ways that are reminiscent of how Kotkin discusses the conditioning of industrial workers in *Magnetic Mountain*.

JN: Has your research helped clarify, for instance, the debate on the motivations of Soviet soldiers in Stalingrad and World War II? There is the debate about how constrained or self-motivated they were. And were their motivations patriotic, nationalist, or more ideological, in the sense of anti-Nazi or anti-fascist? Or both together?

JH: The first thing to note is that these interviews were produced in a moment of victory – the first decisive victory over the Germans. The successful counteroffensive near Moscow in December 1941 was important, but the destruction of German weapons and German soldiers at Stalingrad had no precedent. The interview records this moment of victory and pride. And this overall mood conceivably allows for some of

the interviewed officers and soldiers to talk about deficiencies and problems on their side (most of them safely banished to the past). Soldiers in fact often criticized the military leadership, even though no one ever criticized Stalin. The overall mood in early 1943 is very different from the summer and fall of 1941, when the Red Army had great morale problems. In fact, virtually the whole generation of soldiers who fought in 1941 would be wiped out by the end of the year. So, we are talking about a new Red Army at Stalingrad. A Red Army with a surprisingly strong shaping presence of the communist, not in the sense of dispensing short reads of Marxism-Leninism, but in the sense of grooming soldiers into communists based on how they perform against the Germans. Take Vasily Zaytsev, the famed sniper. He, too, spoke with the historians from the Mints commission. Zaytsev relates how officials asked him to join the Communist Party after hearing of his first exploits as a sniper. I have no right to join the party, he says. I don't even know the party history. You have every right to join the party, the official responds: you have killed 48 Germans. It was this fighting and killing record that recommended Zaytsev as a communist, not his knowledge of the scholastics of Marxism-Leninism. Over the course of the war, the Communist Party increasingly attunes itself to the situation on the battleground. And soldiers flock into the party, so that by the end of the war most party members are actually soldiers and the Red Army is a predominantly communist entity, if you add to the number of party members also those soldiers who were enrolled in the Communist Youth League.

JN: Can you talk a bit about the website you've created, *Facing Stalingrad*? In this website you include not only Soviet memories of the battle, but also German memories. These interviews that you have done, did you record them in audio or on film? The website shows photos in addition to transcripts. What's the reason for this option?

JH: Contingencies, I guess. Full disclosure, the project could be called: "Please share your diary with me." The reason that brought me to the

doorsteps of the veterans was that I needed more written first-person accounts from the battle, and I was hoping to talk with the veterans and gain access to their personal archives. I also happened to be friends with a fantastic photographer, Emma Dodge Hanson from Saratoga Springs. Emma pays her rent by working as a wedding photographer. It's good income, but artistically not satisfying. So, she plans one *pro bono* project per year to do something else. She heard about my interest in Stalingrad, and we decided on a spur, "we are going to do this together, we are going to visit German and Soviet veterans of the battle". The initial idea was that she would photograph the veterans why I would focus on the archive side. But as we met the first veterans, we realized that for the portraits to light up I needed to converse with the veterans and help to make the past come alive. I pretty much posed the questions and worked out the methodology on the go. Emma took hundreds of photos. These photos themselves can be mounted into a film, that's how many photos there are. We received wonderful help for the project. On the German side, we were helped by the production team that created what I think is the best Stalingrad film to date – a three-part documentary *Stalingrad: Attack, In the Cauldron, Annihilation* (2002). They shared with me their database of veterans and I just called them on the phone. On the Soviet side, veterans' organizations provided me with many phone numbers. The rapport with the Soviet veterans was very easy. They invited Emma and me to their homes, treated us like royalty, and talked and talked. When I called the German veterans, they were often distrustful: "Who is speaking? Who are you?" This was because of the relatively recent exhibition about the Crimes of the German Army, the *Wehrmacht*, that had travelled all through Germany. It was maybe the most formative exhibition of the last 30 years, which has shaped millions of Germans. And put the veterans on guard, because they feel unduly vilified and cast as war criminals, on account of that exhibition. As a rule it took much longer to get the German veterans to open up. These inequal conditions of access also became reflected in the transcripts of the interviews.

Third part

JN: Let's move on to your current book project. You have a title already?

JH: The working title is "A War Like No Other". This is a book that, in a way, goes back to the *Historikerstreit*, the debate of historians in Germany, that was started in the mid-1980s, which saw this provocation by Ernst Nolte, well known for his work on fascism, that the Soviet terror encapsulated in the Gulag was prior to Nazi terror and progenitor to Auschwitz. Nolte claimed that the violent excesses threatened by the Bolsheviks since the 1917 Revolution spurred into action Nazism as a kind of collective defence of the German and European bourgeoisie. This was what he called the European Civil War, from 1917 to 1945. My book operates on the same terrain, but in ways critical of Nolte and also his unacknowledged grandson, Timothy Snyder, who is very careful not to reference Nolte anywhere in his own work. But *Bloodlands* shares the anti-communist thrust of *The European Civil War*; like Nolte, Snyder sees communist violence as primal, taking right-wing propaganda at its word, which concealed its own aggressiveness by casting itself as a defence of order against "Bolshevik chaos." One aim of my work is exposing the annihilatory thrust of anticommunism throughout the 20th century – against the Soviet project, and later against the memory of the Soviet project. What the Nazis were doing in the 1920s to the mid-1940s almost seamlessly carries over into the post-war, Cold War era. The Soviet Union in my view is the elephant in the room in the Second World War. It's the central arena where Nazi mass violence actually forms, formed as it was against Communism and against Soviet Jews as the perceived most dangerous of all communists. I view the Nazi-occupied areas of the Soviet Union as Ground Zero of what we usually refer to as the Holocaust (except that the Western concept of the Holocaust makes hardly any allowances for communist victims of Nazis). From 1941, after the invasion of the Soviet Union,

from this centre, the annihilatory project fans out, further West, to engulf the Jews of Germany, France, and other parts of Europe. To give an example, the yellow star in Germany was introduced as a mandatory marking in September 1941, three months after the beginning of the German invasion of the Soviet Union. When you read the commentaries about the decree in the Nazi press, they talk about all the gruesome discoveries that German soldiers made in the Soviet Union, when they entered the Western borderlands and saw all the bodies of the political opponents of the Soviet state, the nationalist insurgents in Western Ukraine or in Lithuania. These nationalist insurgents, the Nazis proclaimed, were killed by the Jewish-led Soviet secret police. There was thus an intimate relationship between Bolshevism and German Jews that surfaced in 1941 and served as the justification for the deportation and mass murder of Germany and Western European Jews in just the same ways Germans had begun their campaign to annihilate all Soviet Jews. I talk about the “Bolshevisation” of the Jews in Europe. Prior to Germany’s attack on the Soviet Union, Jews in Germany were conceived of as a racial alien, but not a political enemy. This political hatred was reserved for Soviet communism, and it was extended to all Jews of Europe after the invasion.

My book also follows how communists, and particularly Soviet communists, responded to Nazi anti-Bolshevism. My central Soviet protagonist is Ilya Ehrenburg. Ehrenburg conceptualizes the fight against German fascism as early as in the mid-1930s. He conducts his first interviews with fascist soldiers in Spain in 1936. Many more such interviews would follow starting in 1941. Like Isaak Mints, Ehrenburg treasures the documentary form. After the beginning of the German invasion, he publishes document-saturated exposés of German fascism on a nearly daily basis: German letters, diaries, or military orders found on the battlefield. Many historians view Ehrenburg as a shrill Stalinist propagandist, few scholars have paid attention to his work as a documentarist. Ehrenburg’s archive in the Russian State Archive for Literature and the Arts abounds with such documents. They were essential for his understanding of Germans and of fascism.

I have had some friendly polemical debates with liberal Russian historians from Russia, who say: “Yes, Ehrenburg is an interesting figure, but the documentary stuff in his editorials is all made up. This is propaganda. You have to understand, he created these people.” One of Ehrenburg’s editorials is devoted to the diary of a German field gendarmerie policeman (an organization equivalent to the Gestapo) by the name of Friedrich Schmidt. Schmidt was stationed in southern Ukraine, near Melitopol, where over the frozen Taganrog Bay, on a daily basis, young partisans were coming over the ice to commit acts of sabotage. Schmidt routinely arrested these young fighters, many of them girls from the Communist Youth movement, and he discusses in his diary the hard work of flogging these partisans. He talks about his admiration for these devoted young communists. And he talks about the beautiful sunset in Melitopol, and his indigestion, brought about by the torture he has to inflict. Then he switches to the subject of French cognac. The diary, as presented by Ehrenburg, is filled with clichés about the cruel and sentimental German, and some scholars basically sniff, “this is made up”. Except that the original diary is in the FSB archive, in German, and notes on it reveal how it came into Ehrenburg’s hands. After a raid that kills Schmidt, political officers in Ukraine send the diary to secret police headquarters in Moscow, following instructions to deliver all “trophy material” to the NKVD. Secret police chief Abakumov added a note on the cover of the diary: “Comrade Ehrenburg might find this useful.” Ehrenburg gets the diary the next day, and one day later Ehrenburg’s 2300-word piece is published in the Red Army’s daily newspaper. This gives an idea of how quick the turnaround is. I cannot prove for every single editorial written by Ehrenburg, that the documentary material on which it is built is genuine. These documents have not been preserved. But Ehrenburg complained time and again when Soviet officials presented German documents in altered form. There is no need to alter German documents, he would say – they speak for themselves.

JN: There is number of overlaps going on here... You have someone who is producing memory and archival documents identify him as kind

of a proto-historian. Simultaneously, someone who works in-between journalism and literature, but also as a kind of press officer for the army. But there is also a juridical context, right? That will play a role in Nuremberg...

JH: Absolutely. And in all those aspects, Ehrenburg plays a pivotal role. Ehrenburg essentially redirected the lenses of Soviet people early in the wartime, from class to nation. He taught them not to look at ordinary German soldiers as comrades, but as Germans who had been poisoned by Nazism. Ehrenburg diagnoses especially among young Germans (the soldiers he kept interviewing) a broad deformation of society brought about by Nazism. Some people say, “Ehrenburg is a racist, he racializes the Germans”. I think the problem is more complicated. In his editorials, Ehrenburg is very careful to show voices from different units – not only the SS, but also the Field Gendermarie, ordinary Wehrmacht soldiers. In some sense he does the work that the exhibition about the Crimes of the German Army, which I mentioned earlier, would take on only in the 1990s, with a delay of 50 years. Ehrenburg also includes German housewives and other civilians in his shattering diagnosis, to reveal the comprehensive deformation in German society, especially vis-à-vis Soviet people. And I think his diagnosis is compelling. Even Germany’s war in Poland did not match the war against the Soviet Union in its comprehensive cruelty. In Poland, multiple German officers objected to the work of the SS death squads, complaining that it contravened international legal norms and conventions. There is virtually no German officer or soldier, no would say the same who vis-à-vis Bolshevism. And so I see a collective forsaking of conscience vis-à-vis that enemy in the East. That is, for me, the defining aspect of this war, as opposed to any other war.

JN: We will now open the floor to anyone who wants to make a question.

Ricardo Noronha: Good afternoon. How does the tension between the racial understanding of humankind, amongst the Nazi ideologues, and this anticommunism worked? I was under the impression that Bolshevism was read as Jews commanding over Slavs and that was the main problem there. But you seem to bring a more complex reading of the matter. I would like to understand a little bit more how that racialization and anticommunism are put into tension. The second question is how did this work during the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact? Because it was an old hatred, anti-Bolshevism was this foundational thing, and also anti-Fascism was also a foundational thing, but apparently during these two years they actually made a lot of compliments on the other side, if I understood correctly, and Stalin was of course very sceptical that the Germans actually wanted to invade. The third question is about Ehrenburg. I had always read Ehrenburg's phrase "go and rape the German women" as a true thing, whereas here you apparently state that it's not, it was a manipulation. So, I'm curious about it, how did that work? How did he react to it? A last question, the Wehrmacht and the SS, themselves, always singled out among the Slavs particular people who were more Aryan. Was that genuine? Or was it just an instrumental approach to having auxiliaries, namely in Ukraine, or in Croatia, or in Bosnia. The Muslim population in the Caucasus and in Crimea. How genuine was it?

JH: Those are excellent questions, thank you. Difficult questions too. The racial understanding of Nazis and how they racialized the enemy. As you pointed out, I think you are right, essentially the understanding in 1941, or all the way from the 1930s to 1941, is that Soviet Union is effectively run by Jews. The argument would go: You know, Stalin may not be Jewish, but Kaganovich is Jewish. This was a staple of Nazi propaganda during the Nuremberg party congresses, where they reminded their followers about what was at stake and provided seemingly exact statistics: "NKVD, 98% Jewish", "Foreign Ministry, 95% Jewish", and so on. It was axiomatic in the Nazi German understanding that the commissar in the Red Army was a Jew. Essentially, the decisive agency

in the Soviet Union is Jewish agency. That's an axiom in Nazi thinking. And Slavs, or Russians, are considered a docile inferior race doing their master's bidding. But there are also interesting shifts in this thinking. By the battle of Stalingrad, in October 1942, an SS paper no longer writes about Soviet resistance in this mould. The paper no longer distinguishes between the Jewish commissar and the dull Slavic soldier: so many commissars had been shot by the Germans, but the Red Army did not stop fighting. The problem must therefore lie elsewhere. And so it is the Bolshevik soldier who is now deemed extremely dangerous, on account of his inferiority. His presumed inferiority precludes the Bolshevik soldier from actually cherishing life and culture. But it also means that he will fight to his death, precisely because he has no appreciation for life. The Germans by contrast cherish life and that's why they have built up a civilization. But they are also fragile in their humanity vis-à-vis the "subhuman" Bolshevik creature.

Hitler never conceived of Jews as subhumans, he described them as strong and diabolical. Other Germans however called Jews subhuman; so Nazi thinking on this subject is quite inconsistent. But Slavs were clearly conceived as subhuman across the board, including the Eastern workers who were brought to Germany by the millions. The racialization, actually, especially to people diagnosed as "Russians," as opposed to, say, Ukrainians. A good example is Himmler's Posen speech of October 1943. The speech is often cited, but most scholars focus only on the passage in which Himmler swears his SS audience into silence about their mass murder of Jews. This is about 1/10 of the speech. Himmler's speech is a very long and starts with a moment of silence for a Waffen SS general, who had earlier served as chief inspector of the German concentration camps. He was killed in an airplane accident in Kharkov, and there is a minute of silence for this general. And then Himmler begins his rambling speech which keeps coming back to the Russian problem. Russians, he says, are extremely deceptive by nature, you always have to look a Russian firmly in the eye, because he is like an animal. He will attack you from behind as soon as you turn your back on him. Himmler talks about General Vlasov and calls

crazy the idea of a Russian Liberation Army. Vlasov should never be allowed to recruit Russians. Russians are pigs. In the concluding part of his speech, Himmler predicts that Germany will have to engage with this Russian Asiatic force for the foreseeable future, the next 200 or 300 years. These skirmishes against Asiatic Russian will be the decisive battleground for the hardening of the German race. And so the enemy is no longer principally Jews, in Himmler's dictum, because the Jews have been killed. The enemy is now hundreds of millions of Slavs, especially Russians. Over the course of the war, we thus observe a gradual shift in tonality from Judeo-Bolshevism to Russian Bolshevism. This does not mean that everyone espouses this shift. Hitler, in his last writings remains faithful to the idea of the Judeo-Bolshevik enemy. But you can see that the diagnosis about who is fighting on account of what is a diagnosis that takes into view, more and more, the Russianness of Bolshevism, instead of its Jewish identity.

The Pact is an awkward interlude. My analysis focuses on the deeper level interconnections between the 1930s and the period of the war, on the German as well as on the Soviet side. In Germany, the Nuremberg party rallies of the 1930s play an important role: millions of Nazi followers attended them. Starting in 1935, and four consecutive years, Nazi leaders at the party rally singled out Bolshevism as the greatest menace – “World enemy n^o 1”, they called it. In Nuremberg, the Nazis also staged “anti-Bolshevik exhibitions” which toured dozens of cities and drew in millions of more Germans. As soon as Germany invades the Soviet Union in 1941, more such visual displays inciting hatred against Jewish Bolshevism are rolled out. The perhaps best known one is the Berlin exhibition, “The Soviet Paradise”. The exhibition planners brought a decapitated Lenin statue from Minsk, they brought plaster from some official buildings in Minsk, and they also claimed they recreated primitive earth-dwellings in which supposedly ordinary Soviet people dwelled, to expose the “paradise of workers and peasants” as a living hell. All this was put on display in the centre of Berlin, to show the working of Bolshevism in practice. The centrepiece of this exhibition was a supposedly authentic NKVD prison cell in

which, the exhibition guide noted, NKVD officers killed their unsuspecting prisoners, administering a shot in the nape of the neck. The exhibition organizers referred to the artefact as the “Shot-in-the-nape-cell” (*Genickschusszelle*). This Berlin exhibit ran in May and June 1942. But already in fall 1941, acting on their own, SS guards in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp near Berlin came up with a contraption to kill suspected Soviet commissars who were being brought to Sachsenhausen by the thousands in fall 1941. The SS devised a killing form where the unsuspecting Soviet prisoners were brought into a room, supposedly for a medical examination. They had to stand against a ruler that measured their height. There were holes in the wall behind the ruler through which a killer hiding in the room behind could follow the scene and shoot the prisoner in the nape of the neck. It’s a gruesome episode, and one that shows how the lethal workings of the Nazi German imaginary of Bolshevism which is fed by the Nuremberg rallies, anti-Bolshevik exhibits, and other forms of propaganda and becomes an unquestioned reality for many soldiers on the ground. “This is how Bolshevism kills,” they say. “We are merely engaged in revenge killing We are going to do that in exactly the same fashion.” Similarly, for the Soviet side, I investigate the social imaginary of the Germans, of “German-fascists,” and of Soviets as antifascists, as a living and creative force. This becomes a particularly important theme when the Red Army enters Germany in 1944 and 1945.

Ehrenburg, how he responded? He responded to that German accusation, which he read about in the interrogations of captured German soldiers. He responded in his typical way: by writing another editorial. Ehrenburg’s editorials were his ammunition. They had lethal power.

On the question of Nazi pragmatism vs. ideological convictions regarding race. My contention is that race was an unquestioned entity at the time, and there was way of avoiding it. Even Nazis who advocated for enlisting Indian troops, or Turkmens, had to justify this proposition in racial terms. The real issue is that Nazis disagreed about the “nature” and “merits” of different “races.” Alfred Rosenberg harboured certain sympathies toward Ukrainians as opposed to Russians. Erich

Koch, Reichskommissar in Ukraine, thought and acted very differently. There were Nazis who thought that the Vlasov army was a good idea. But they were overruled by Hitler and Himmler who could not envision fighting shoulder to shoulder with “Asiatic” Russians.

Yuri Slezkine (YS): Thank you for your presentation. How do you think the diaries compare to the public letters that Sheila Fitzpatrick studied in the end of the 1990s? They also express problems, griefs, and also confessions, and opinions. As a source, how do you compare both of these sources?

JH: Can you give me an example of a letter that you have in mind? I’m blanking right now about which letters you are referring to.

YS: There were a lot of letters that the Soviet citizens wrote to the Soviet officials.

JH: Petitions, grievances.

YS: Yes, but also self-accusations, not in a Christian way of confession, but a confession that they thought they were doing something counterrevolutionary or something that they didn’t like about their neighbours, accusations.

JH: Right. I think they are related documents. The diary is not interpersonal, so there is a different source of communication that opens up in a letter. Of course, the letter is addressed explicitly to institutions of power, there is a political vector that is not as immediately in play in a diary, necessarily. But they should be compared, by all means. I think the broader field of enunciating yourself and of stating your subject position should be studied as a broader context for locating where the diary fits in there. I have studied a few cases where someone kept

a diary and also left behind a body of correspondence with a friend. Malte Griesse and Anatoly Pinsky have performed similar studies. This constellation reveals how the correspondence does work that is related to the diary, but in interpersonal ways: it monitors the mental and political development of both correspondents. So, I would not necessarily conceive of a diary and letters as standing in contradistinction to one another.

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Caroline Dodds Pennock

***On Savage Shores. How Indigenous
Americans Discovered Europe***

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Felipe Garcia de Oliveira*

Há pelo menos 30 anos que os estudos historiográficos, antropológicos e etnográficos têm focado a agência, as formas de resistência, negociações e a participação política indígena em todas as Américas desde antes da chegada dos europeus, sem deixarem de lado a opressão e a violência por estes sofrida¹. Porém, menos estudada é a atuação das populações ameríndias que foram para o espaço europeu no período moderno, e é essa a lacuna que a historiadora Caroline Doods Pennock, especialista em história asteca, pretende sanar no presente livro.

O livro aqui resenhado se debruça sobre a agência dos ameríndios das Américas no século XVI, tendo como objetivo estudar e analisar

* Felipe Garcia de Oliveira (felipeoliveira@fcsh.unl.pt), Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas da Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Avenida de Berna 26 C, 1069-061 Lisboa, Portugal. Receção da revisão original: 23-06-2023. Receção da versão revista: 27-06-2023. Aceitação: 29-06-2023.

1 Só para mencionar algumas publicações: John Manuel Monteiro, *Negros da Terra: Índios e Bandeirantes nas Origens de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1994); Alcida Rita Ramos, *Indigenism. Ethnic Politics in Brazil* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1998); Juan Carlos Caravaglia e Juan Marchena, “Sometime and resistance. El mundo americano frente a la Conquista”, em *América Latina. De los orígenes a la independencia*, vol. 1 (Barcelona: Crítica, 2003), 219-246; Manuela Carneiro da Cunha, org., *História dos Índios no Brasil* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2008); Gabriela Ramos e Yanna Yannakakis, orgs., *Indigenous Intellectuals, Knowledges, Power and Colonial Culture in México and the Andes* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014). Uma excelente análise e apanhado destes estudos para o mundo ibérico pode ser consultado em: Pedro Cardim, “Os povos indígenas, a dominação colonial e as instâncias de justiça na América portuguesa e espanhola”, em *Os Índios e as Justiças no Mundo Ibero-Americano (Sécs. XVI-XIX)*, org. Ângela Domingues, Maria Leônia Resende e Pedro Cardim (Lisboa: Centro de História da Universidade de Lisboa, 2019), 29-84.

como estes sujeitos, que viajaram de forma forçada ou não para a Europa, compreenderam este continente e os seus habitantes. Propondo uma análise ao reverse da ideia de que os europeus “descobriram” o Novo Mundo, tal como o título do livro evidencia, o foco é entender como os indígenas “descobriram” a Europa e que impactos tiveram na definição da sua identidade e história posteriores.

Com a emergência atual dos questionamentos sobre os termos e a linguagem como instrumentos de opressão e de exclusão social, a autora, atenta ao debate, se preocupa em discutir a importância do modo como nos referimos aos sujeitos. Ressalta que as palavras, longe de serem neutras, carregam as concepções e as potencialidades de como enxergamos e somos enxergados pelo outro. Defende que não é papel do historiador reforçar o processo de exclusão e apagamento das identidades e culturas ao qual os indígenas foram submetidos de forma intensa e intencional durante o passado e o presente.

Assim, rejeita os termos como “índio(s)”, “primeiros povos”, “selvagem” e os termos que não respeitaram as etnias. A autora escolhe utilizar os termos “indígenas” e “nativos” por compreender que são mais neutros, ainda que questionáveis. Atentando-se, contudo, aos nomes das populações e à sua grande diversidade cultural e identitária. Sem hesitar em se posicionar recorre a termos como “invasores”, “invasão” e “genocídio” para descrever o momento do encontro. Neste sentido, ao utilizar o termo “invasão” e “invasores” o livro assume um posicionamento político e histórico sobre o que alguns ainda insistem em chamar de “descobrimento”, narrativa onde muitas vezes está subjacente a ideia de este ter sido um encontro pacífico e sem recurso à violência. Nesta senda, o livro estabelece um paralelismo entre as violências coloniais e a atual discriminação sofrida pelos povos indígenas, e sua exclusão de direitos de cidadania plena. Essa vinculação também ocorre na afirmação de que estes sujeitos seguem lutando por seus direitos, uma vez que a “colonização continua”. O termo “savage shore” é usado como uma referência ao espaço europeu na visão nativa, pois estes também acharam a vivência dos europeus estranha.

Na introdução, discutindo como as fontes do período esconderam ou quase não abordaram a presença ameríndia durante as viagens para

a Europa, uma vez que foram escritas por europeus, a autora foca nas margens dos documentos para vislumbrar a história desses “indígenas viajantes”. Os vestígios e as fontes são esparsos e nem sempre dão conta de um conhecimento profundo da visão ou da “voz” destes viajantes que, longe de serem meros receptores em um mundo que estava cada vez mais conectado e globalizado, carregavam consigo concepções próprias de mundo, de política, de direito, de astronomia, de agronomia e de medicina, e, justamente por isso, podiam com algum limite também tomar alguma vantagem ou resistir na medida do possível ao novo ambiente a que se encontravam expostos.

O primeiro capítulo, em diálogo com estudos recentes, assinala que os indígenas foram escravizados e tiveram sua mão de obra explorada por um largo período, abrindo espaço para pensarmos em uma história compartilhada das experiências de escravização dos africanos e dos indígenas. Neste seguimento, as noções de liberdade e de escravidão são questionadas e as fronteiras entre essas condições nuançadas. Explica a historiadora que, já em um primeiro contato, os nativos foram vistos como potenciais sujeitos a escravizar, dando origem a normativas criadas pelos europeus para a legitimação da escravização nos casos de “canibalismo”, “guerra justa” e “resgates”. Para a autora, muitos enquadramentos jurídicos acabaram por se tornar um instrumento e um eufemismo para potenciar a escravização de determinados indivíduos, principalmente porque a integração dos nativos deu-se por meio da concepção de vassalos do rei, o que fortalecia e legitimava a colonização, mas também gerava uma suposta proteção jurídica e social. Embora o livro não enverede por uma perceptiva jurídica, os nativos foram integrados e inseridos dentro da lógica corporativa do período na condição de menoridade, como *miserabile persona*².

2 Eduardo Cebreiros-Álvarez, “La condición jurídica de los indios y el derecho común: un ejemplo del *favor protectionis*”, em *Panta rei: studi dedicati a Manlio Bellomo* (Roma: Il Cigno GG Edizioni, 2004), 469-489; Thomas Duve, “La condición jurídica del indio y su consideración como *persona miserabilis* en el derecho indiano”, em *Un giudice e due leggi. Pluralismo normativo e conflitti agrari in Sud America*, ed. Mario G. Losano (Milão: Giuffrè, 2004), 3-33; António Manuel Hespanha, *Imbecillitas: As Bem-Aventuranças da Inferioridade nas Sociedades de Antigo Regime* (São Paulo: Annablume, 2010); e Ângela Domingues, Maria Leônia Resende e Pedro Cardim, orgs., *Os Indígenas e as Justiças no Mundo Ibero-Americano (Sécs. XVI-XIX)* (Lisboa: Centro de História da Universidade de Lisboa, 2019).

Ainda no primeiro capítulo, a autora narra o contato e os impactos dos primeiros povos que foram até à Europa com Colombo, os Lucayan Taínos. A narrativa sugere que alguns podem ter ido de forma voluntária. É importante ressaltar, entretanto, que os dados apresentados pela autora dão conta de que a maioria dos traficados foram crianças e mulheres indígenas, enviados para o trabalho doméstico. Ou seja, a maioria foi de forma forçada e violenta. O capítulo em si foca-se especificamente no caso dos escravizados, por compreender que o estatuto jurídico de escravo tinha um impacto direto na vivência e experiência destes indivíduos. Assim, analisando algumas histórias e narrando de forma detalhada dois processos judiciais de indígenas, na primeira metade do século XVI, que alegavam que não poderiam ser escravizados, a autora defende que na prática a questão era se a condição de escravização era legítima ou não. A escravidão, enquanto prática social, era normalizada; cabia saber se estes sujeitos, bem ou mal protegidos por inúmeras normativas, estavam dentro do que se entendia como legítimo. Neste ponto, o livro quase não discute ou apresenta uma série de normativas que foram publicadas no mundo ibérico sobre a proibição da escravidão e a tutela de indígenas na segunda metade do século XVI. Apoiada na ideia de que a escravidão indígena nunca foi formalmente abolida como sucedeu com a escravidão africana, a autora defende que talvez a inexistência de uma abolição formal explique como o trabalho forçado e as várias formas de exploração permaneceram até o século XIX e XX. No entanto, é importante dizer que, mesmo com a abolição formal aos africanos, a exploração permaneceu.

O capítulo 2 trata dos intermediários e do seu papel enquanto tradutores, não apenas da linguagem oral, rica e diversificada das populações ameríndias trazidas para a Europa, linguagem essa que foi forçada a adequar-se às grafias limitadas pelo alfabeto latino, mas também de um universo religioso, político e cultural específico. Narrando algumas histórias como as de Diego Colón, que estabeleceu vínculos de parentesco com Colombo (por meio do ritual *guatiao*); do famoso padre mestiço Diego Valadés, passando pelas histórias de Manteo e Wanchese e sua participação na criação de um alfabeto algonquino, o capítulo preenche

um quadro mais amplo e diversificado do papel relevante desses sujeitos nos espaços da Espanha, Inglaterra, França e, em menor medida, em Portugal. Nele se salienta, contudo, que havia uma infinidade de intermediários aos quais não se tem acesso pela falta de registro das fontes, sobretudo porque a sua atuação era de forma oral. Os intermediários, de forma voluntária ou não, foram fundamentais para a comunicação e para o conhecimento mútuo entre os dois universos, agenciando esse papel em benefício próprio ou coletivo. Conforme sugere a autora, os dois lados estavam tentando se compreender e, nesse processo, produziram conhecimento (por vezes de forma colaborativa).

O capítulo 3 desvenda as relações de parentesco e a formação de famílias transatlânticas formais e informais para lançar luz às experiências dos indígenas e seus descendentes. Partindo da história, ainda controversa, do Guarani Içá-Mirim, que teria sido levado para a França, e onde teria chegado a fazer parte da nobreza; do mito de fundação da América Portuguesa através do casamento da indígena Guaibimpará (mais conhecida como Paraguaçu) com o português Diogo Álvares Correia (Caramuru); do mestiço Martín (filho de Cortés) e de casos de famílias na Espanha, a autora elucida como as experiências foram distintas, dependendo das condições socioculturais a que estes sujeitos foram submetidos. Para os indígenas ou mestiços que eram filhos de europeus nobres, a integração podia ser facilitada, mas no caso das pessoas comuns o cenário mais provável era o da extrema pobreza, violência e exploração do seu trabalho. Assim, mulheres indígenas viram seus filhos serem arrancados de seus braços, viveram forçadamente uma infinidade de relações familiares informais e diferentes gerações de nativos se estabeleceram na Europa de forma precária.

O capítulo 4 apresenta um quadro interessante para pensar como a agricultura e o conhecimento indígena contribuíram para uma profunda transformação da dieta alimentar em vários contextos europeus. Ela analisa como alimentos amplamente difundidos na atualidade têm sua origem no espaço das Américas e eram cultivados pelas suas populações, focando especificamente na novidade do cacau, da batata e do uso do tabaco. Em sua análise, a visão dos europeus sobre os povos

indígenas foi moldada por suas concepções de propriedade e de mercado, noções que não eram partilhadas por estes sujeitos, uma vez que sua relação com a terra e com a natureza era marcada pela reciprocidade e pela ideia de pertencimento. Um dos pontos altos do capítulo é o questionamento de explicações focadas na ascensão do capitalismo e da “economia-mundo” sem se compreender a noção indígena de economia, pois assumem uma lógica eurocêntrica do que foi o desenvolvimento das relações de troca e de comércio. Para a autora, os nativos também comercializaram e criaram redes, ainda que por vezes isso fosse fruto de uma obrigação. Entretanto, essas trocas e vendas estavam mais marcadas por ideias de reciprocidade e obrigações mediante as relações que estabeleciam.

O capítulo 5 se propõe a destringir e desvendar as relações de diplomacia que estes viajantes exerceram na Europa. Analisando casos de mestiços e de caciques, principalmente na Espanha e na Inglaterra, a autora demonstra que havia uma cultura peticionária ao rei. Estes sujeitos, inteirados de seus direitos e tomados de conhecimento e formação entre os dois universos, ou representados por advogados e clérigos, buscaram o que concebiam ser seu de direito, como os possíveis privilégios por descenderem de uma elite indígena e da nobreza europeia. Sejam eles diplomatas por necessidade ou por voluntariedade, não podem ser vistos como pessoas que ocasionalmente viajavam para a Europa; pelo contrário, eram sujeitos que discutiam política, interesses locais e buscavam garantir e/ou ampliar algum benefício.

O sexto e último capítulo apresenta o modo como os ameríndios – sua forma de viver e os seus bens sagrados – foram vistos como objetos de curiosidade, sendo fetichizados e expostos em espetáculos. Narrando de forma detalhada a vila indígena reproduzida na França, em Rouen, passando pela análise de nativos que foram obrigados a performar seus rituais para a corte espanhola e a exposição acrítica dos seus bens nos museus da atualidade, a autora discute a participação dos nativos nestes espetáculos e o quanto o olhar europeu tentou limitar e enquadrar as suas formas de existir. Tanto os relatos das performances forçadas quanto os dos roubos de objetos, muitas vezes chamados de aquisições

para uma suposta preservação, foram ferramentas da etnografia que, ao classificarem e hierarquizarem os nativos, deram bases de sustentação ao racismo científico do século XIX, contribuindo para a construção e consolidação da ideia de supremacia branca.

A terminar o livro, a autora recupera e discute as demandas contemporâneas de alguns povos, que hoje pedem o retorno dos seus bens sagrados e os restos mortais daqueles que não puderam voltar ao seu lar e foram expostos em museus – ela faz referência aos casos particulares de Kalicho, Arnaq e Nutaaq, por exemplo. Assim, reforça, mais uma vez, que os indígenas são povos da atualidade e que seguem lutando por seus direitos, direitos esses que continuam a ser negados por um processo contínuo de colonização. A autora finaliza o livro pedindo que a voz dos descendentes dos nativos seja ouvida e que a sua importância histórica seja respeitada.

Mediante tudo o que foi mencionado, o livro merece ser amplamente lido e discutido, uma vez que fornece uma pesquisa vasta em fontes: relatos, crônicas, processos judiciais, cartas, registros e *cantares*. Sua publicação preenche e impulsiona estudos sobre uma lacuna histórica ainda pouco investigada e quase desconhecida socialmente: a viagem e a vida de inúmeros indígenas para a Europa no século XVI.

Alguns apontamentos parecem ser necessários. O primeiro deles diz respeito à forma como a autora, que tem uma preocupação com os termos empregados, mobiliza de forma pouco precisa os termos “brasileiro” e “Brasil” para referir-se ao espaço colonizado por Portugal e os seus habitantes. As pesquisas ressaltam que a colonização era um processo em curso, principalmente nos primórdios do século XVI. Portanto, fazer referência ao espaço que hoje é o Brasil, e aos seus habitantes antes da chegada dos portugueses como brasileiros, mina com as lutas contra a colonização em curso encampada pelos indígenas, pois traz a ideia de que o projeto colonial estava finalizando³. Portanto, estes termos são problemáticos e imprecisos. Um segundo apontamento refere-se ao fato

3 Luiz Felipe de Alencastro, *O Trato dos Viventes – Formação do Brasil no Atlântico Sul* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2000).

de que o livro considera o mundo Europeu como um espaço geográfico, o que eu concordo, mas apenas em parte. Até porque – ou sobretudo por isso –, propondo-se o livro a pensar como os nativos participaram na formação de identidades múltiplas, inclusive europeias, uma discussão sobre o que é a “Europa” merecia algum espaço. A “Europa” ou o “mundo europeu” são noções que têm sido alvo de inúmeras análises e interpretações que demonstram que mais do que um espaço geográfico estes são conceitos históricos e construções sociais que operam como forma de imposição cultural, política e social. Portanto, é importante perguntar: o que era o mundo europeu e a Europa no século XVI?

Por fim, ressaltar-se-ia ainda o seguinte aspecto: ao preocupar-se com dar a conhecer uma outra perspectiva sobre como os nativos das Américas “descobriram” e influenciaram o espaço “do” colonizador, seria crucial que a autora empreendesse uma descentralização dos estudos citados e mobilizados na obra. Sabemos o quanto, além de descentralizar as fontes e os arquivos, há que se valorizar a bibliografia que é produzida pelos espaços não-hegemônicos estudados. Não se trata de essencializar as produções feitas no Sul Global, mas sim de ampliar e compreender os estudos para além do Norte Global. É importante dizer que desde que os europeus chegaram às Américas e ainda no presente, seus habitantes produziram e produzem conhecimento e, como defende o livro, possuem uma visão a respeito da Europa de grande valor e impacto.

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**Juniele Râbelo de Almeida e Rogério
Rosa Rodrigues (orgs.)**

História pública em movimento

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Igor Lemos Moreira*

Em 2011, na Universidade de São Paulo (Brasil), um grupo de pesquisadores(as) brasileiros(as) se reuniu para o *1.º Curso de Introdução à História Pública*. Naquele contexto, a academia brasileira vivia um período de debate acerca das reservas de mercado (ou da sua falta), da necessidade de a universidade que começava a receber seus primeiros ataques extrapolar seus “muros” e, especialmente, dos desafios que viriam pela frente quando a profissão de historiador(a) fosse regulamentada pelo Congresso Nacional do Brasil. O conjunto de fatores citados, os debates realizados nos Estados Unidos e na Europa acerca da função social do historiador, sua atuação no mercado privado e, principalmente, a necessidade de repensar a formação profissional, influenciaram diretamente na construção do programa do curso e, posteriormente, nos passos seguintes desses pesquisadores que se reuniram na Rede Brasileira de História Pública.

* Igor Lemos Moreira (igorlemoreira@gmail.com), Universidade do Estado de Santa Catarina, Campus Florianópolis, Avenida Madre Benvenuta, 2007 – Itacorubi, Florianópolis – Santa Catarina, Brasil. Receção da recensão original: 12-05-2023. Receção da versão revista: 29-05-2023. Aceitação: 30-05-2023.

Desde então, a história pública no Brasil tem promovido debates sobre sua configuração. Enquanto, em algumas perspectivas, a história pública poderia ser definida a partir da ideia de campo profissional, voltada especialmente para a redefinição do mercado de trabalho e dialogando particularmente com as abordagens estadunidenses da *public history* dos anos 1970/1980,¹ outros defendem que se trata de uma prática que envolve principalmente a divulgação científica. No entanto, em texto recente, Ricardo Santhiago² apresentou uma síntese ampliada dessas definições, defendendo que a história pública pode ser compreendida a partir de suas diferentes frentes (campo, disciplina, abordagem etc.), mas sempre na relação com diferentes agentes, retomando o espírito público, dialógico e participativo da operação historiográfica.

Nesta acepção, a história pública em sua perspectiva brasileira é entendida enquanto um *movimento* e um *espaço de experimentação e debate*, muito mais do que um campo disciplinar (mesmo que este se configure e exista como dimensão intrínseca). A defesa realizada por esse grupo de historiadores brasileiros e historiadoras brasileiras é que a história pública deve ser um movimento de autorreflexividade pautado no caráter polissêmico do termo que compreende o fazer, o pensar e o campo.

Foi a partir dessa chave interpretativa e de compreensão que Juniele Râbello de Almeida e Rogério Rosa Rodrigues organizaram a coletânea *História pública em movimento*, publicado pela editora Letra e Voz, em 2021. Assim como *Introdução à história pública*,³ publicado em 2011 pela mesma editora, o livro recém-lançado promove um debate intenso, fecundo e importante, fruto das atividades do 2.^o *Curso de Introdução à História Pública* (Brasil). A hipótese defendida pelos(as) autores(as) é bastante simples de ser descrita, impactante no ser apresentada e renovadora quando aplicada: a história pública não é apenas

1 Thomas Cauvin, *Public History: A Textbook of Practice* (Nova Iorque: Routledge, 2016).

2 Ricardo Santhiago, "História pública e autorreflexividade: da prescrição ao processo", *Revista Tempo e Argumento* 10, n.º 23 (2018): 286-309.

3 Juniele Râbello de Almeida e Marta Gouveia de Oliveira Rovai (orgs.), *Introdução à história pública* (São Paulo: Letra e Voz, 2011).

um dispositivo ou um campo, mas um movimento de renovação epistêmica ao provocar a frequente reflexão e redefinição da função social da história e do(a) historiador(a) a partir da relação com a sociedade.

No entanto, *História pública em movimento* está longe de ser uma espécie de anais de congresso ou de atas de eventos científicos. Enquanto *Introdução à história pública*, organizado por Juniele Râbello de Almeida e Marta Gouveia de Oliveira Rovai, foi uma obra seminal, provavelmente a primeira com esse escopo na América Latina, que reuniu diferentes pesquisadores que estiveram no 1.^o Curso de *Introdução à História Pública* (Brasil) visando consolidar um conjunto de reflexões iniciais sobre o campo, *História pública em movimento* impressiona ao demonstrar o avançar e, principalmente, os novos dilemas a serem enfrentados pela história pública produzida no Brasil.

A ideia de *movimento* atravessa a obra desde sua elaboração quando se optou por, ao invés de apresentar um conjunto de capítulos individuais acerca de pesquisas e projetos em andamento, os organizadores da coletânea propuseram questões provocativas⁴ a pesquisadores/as que, em conjunto, elaboraram textos a duas, quatro, seis ou mais mãos. Neste sentido, *História pública em movimento* apresenta uma reunião de textos frutos de debates, diálogos, tensões e, principalmente, experiências dialógicas entre pesquisadores(as) de diferentes perspectivas teóricas e espacialidades geográficas.

Ao todo, dos dez capítulos, oito seguem a proposta na qual mais de um(a) autor(a) foi convidado(a) a responder a questões como as seguintes: “Como fazer a história local se tornar pública, e para quem?” ou “Quais os desafios do trabalho com narrativas de dor no ensino de história?”. Vale destacar ainda, nessa proposta, que a redação dos textos ocorreu durante a pandemia de covid-19, fator presente tanto na escrita quanto em alguns dos temas. Neste sentido, para além de um mapeamento, o livro é uma evidência de como o movimento da história

4 É importante destacar que essa tem sido uma proposta interessante das coletâneas de história pública no Brasil, estratégia que pode ser identificada na publicação de Ana Maria Mauad, Ricardo Santhiago e Viviane Trindade Borges (orgs.), *Que história pública queremos? / What Public History do We Want?* (São Paulo: Letra e Voz, 2018).

pública se pensa, articula e assumiu uma posição singular na área durante um dos traumas globais mais recentes.

Assumindo o desafio de não apenas elaborar uma crítica acadêmica da obra em questão, a intenção dessa resenha é operacionalizar também a matriz reflexiva que atravessa *História pública em movimento*. Desta forma, se optou por elaborar um conjunto de reflexões que são suscitadas a partir do livro. Para isso, ao invés dos capítulos, debatemos as principais hipóteses e discussões da coletânea a partir dos eixos centrais que atravessam os textos.

O primeiro capítulo de *História pública em movimento* debate a atuação profissional do historiador. No Brasil, esse campo se volta especialmente ao ensino escolar, mas após a publicação da Lei 14.038/2020, que regulamentou a profissão no país, tal área tem se expandido ao possibilitar a pressão em órgãos de governo pela abertura de postos de trabalho. Neste sentido, o capítulo procura sustentar uma relação dicotômica desse debate. Para os autores e as autoras, um campo para atuação profissional do(a) historiador(a) poderia ser definido como existente e inexistente, haja visto que, para além da sala de aula, as demais esferas devem ser construídas, afirmadas e defendidas, desafio complexo em tempos neoliberais e de negacionismos. Neste sentido, os(as) autores(as) defendem que a história pública pode ser pensada não apenas enquanto dimensão capaz de fornecer ferramentas para essa atuação, mas como parte de uma construção de identidade profissional que auxilie historiadores(as) a garantirem sua presença em espaços que vão desde museus e arquivos até canais televisivos e empresas privadas.

O desafio da autoafirmação e da identidade profissional do(a) historiador(a) reverbera nos dois capítulos seguintes, nos quais os(as) autores(as) são convidados a refletir sobre os desafios da pesquisa participativa e o papel da história pública no combate aos negacionismos. Chama a atenção, nos textos, não apenas a discussão sobre a necessidade de reafirmação constante dos(as) historiadores(as) em sociedade como os desafios presentes e o imperativo da autorreflexividade como instrumento frequente e constitutivo da profissão. Em ambos os capítulos, os(as) autores(as) procuram analisar e promover reflexões sobre

como a história acadêmica e disciplinar, ao se abrir para o diálogo e a participação de outros sujeitos, é confrontada, mas também estimulada. Neste sentido, a discussão sobre os negacionismos ocupa lugar central. Para o efetivo enfrentamento ao negacionismo é preciso a observação da realidade na qual o(a) historiador(a) está inserido, assumindo uma postura dialógica, participativa e apurada que reconheça e reforce o papel de “expert”, e uma escuta atenta e sensível ao contexto do(a) pesquisador(a), de forma a direcionar, enfrentar e reafirmar a função social, política e cultural da história.

Os dois capítulos seguintes lançam perguntas conectadas com as anteriores. Convidando os(as) autores(as) a refletirem sobre os desafios de uma história pública digital em países marcados pela exclusão e as questões que envolvem a construção de histórias locais, os organizadores estimularam o debate acerca de um ponto central da história pública: a constante atenção ao meio social no qual os saberes históricos são elaborados. No capítulo destinado à história digital em um país socialmente desigual, os(a) autores(as) apontam os desafios existentes, mas indicam uma tendência crescente a contornar esses problemas por meio da inventividade, dimensão presente a partir do diálogo e da construção coletiva. Neste sentido, o debate se volta principalmente ao entendimento a respeito do Brasil e das suas condições sociais, políticas, culturais e econômicas, sendo este central para uma história digital, tanto nas questões estruturais, como na organização das cidadanias sociodigitais.

O capítulo seguinte dá continuidade a estas temáticas e convoca os leitores a compreenderem que uma história local ou regionalizada não é necessariamente próxima da dimensão cotidiana e da experiência dos sujeitos que compõem esse “local”. Por isso, o capítulo reconhece que a história pública pode ser um instrumento de mudança social que envolveria desde a construção de políticas públicas até à elaboração de identidades regionalizadas. No entanto, o capítulo provoca e deixa em aberto uma questão central: de que forma é possível repensar as fronteiras entre o local, o regional, o nacional e o global? O texto deixa essa como talvez uma das principais dimensões a serem enfrentadas pela história pública, na qual reside um potencial do movimento.

O conjunto de dois capítulos seguintes (os únicos individuais) tensiona o problema levantado anteriormente, mesmo que não aborde a questão local. O primeiro destes capítulos trata das iniciativas de um núcleo de história pública fundado na região amazônica que procura redimensionar o locus de produção de saberes geralmente emanados de grandes centros e as potencialidades de regiões tradicionais em fazê-lo. Seu texto, que ecoa os impactos da pandemia na região amazônica, demonstra os desafios de uma história pública em regiões cujo debate, experiência e perspectiva são diferentes daqueles nos quais o campo está consolidado (região sul e sudeste do Brasil). O capítulo seguinte complementa tal discussão ao promover um debate potente sobre o papel dos movimentos LGBTQ+ e feministas no debate interseccional e no combate a desigualdades sociais no norte do Brasil. Articulado empiria e subjetividade, o texto demonstra o potencial da história pública na formação de uma nova geração de pesquisadores(as), preocupada com uma história que seja social, política e, principalmente, (in)disciplinada.

Os três últimos capítulos da coletânea se agrupam em torno de um dos espaços considerados por excelência como locais de história pública: a sala de aula e a educação básica. Enquanto um primeiro capítulo apresenta projetos de pesquisas e ações de divulgação/comunicação sobre como os(as) professores(as) da Educação Básica lidaram com a pandemia no Brasil, um segundo texto traz os docentes para o centro das narrativas, momento em que sete profissionais narram os desafios enfrentados durante o ensino remoto, o distanciamento social e a insegurança laboral. O segundo capítulo é relevante para demonstrar que o(a) docente atuante em escolas básicas é, em si, um historiador público não apenas por sua formação ou papel de mediação, mas enquanto sujeito de escuta, inserção, acompanhamento e parceria entre instituição educacional, jovens e comunidade. O professor ocupa, desta forma, uma posição central na sociedade, ao mediar e estar no centro das negociações sobre o passado, atuando como produtor e mediador, não sendo apenas um transmissor de conhecimentos.

Partindo da influência da covid-19 e dos seus impactos na reflexão sobre a dor e o sofrimento em escala global, os(as) autores(as) do últi-

mo capítulo analisam experiências de ensino após traumas coletivos, a exemplo do assassinato de Marielle Franco, vereadora do município do Rio de Janeiro, trauma que levou a debates sobre a situação da população negra e periférica, e sobre o luto, para as salas de aula. A principal questão, no tocante à história pública, foi a reflexão sobre o papel da escuta sensível na historiografia e a noção da escola como um locus de produção de saberes para além do ambiente educacional. O conjunto dos três textos voltados ao ensino de história aponta para a necessidade de se pensar a escola não somente enquanto espaço educacional restrito à sua própria realidade, mas como palco de produções e mediações acerca do passado e do presente com impactos diretos na sociedade. É neste sentido que a história pública transforma a escola, que passa a não ser mais entendida como instituição para pensar a reprodução de saberes acadêmicos em forma de transposição, mas como lugar de produção e construção de saberes a partir da mediação.

O posfácio de Ricardo Santhiago retoma a proposta central do livro para afirmar que a história pública não é um campo de certezas, mas de reflexão, compartilhamento e redescoberta. Sua análise converge diretamente para o eixo central da coletânea: a história pública é um movimento aberto ao contraditório, à renovação, à mediação e ao diálogo. É neste sentido que tal proposta se inscreve e detém um grande potencial de renovação epistêmica.

Ao se propor refletir a respeito de questões que vão desde o engajamento e as dificuldades sociais ao papel do historiador em diferentes espaços sociais, os(as) autores(as) tensionam a construção de uma identidade profissional de historiadores(as) que, apesar de nunca virarem as costas para o meio social, parecem ter, em dado momento, se voltado mais para uma empiria e uma discussão interna do que ao diálogo com aqueles que mais são os agentes do tempo: os sujeitos.

É neste sentido que *História pública em movimento* defende que a história pública deve ser incorporada à prática historiográfica enquanto uma perspectiva de ação e atuação, ou seja, enquanto parte da identidade do(a) historiador(a). Não é possível separar o que seria um “historiador” de um “historiador público”, afinal, a atuação em socie-

dade, no coletivo e na relação com sujeitos, espaços e contextos deve ser vista enquanto um imperativo nas diferentes esferas. A defesa por um movimento, e não um campo, da história pública é central e contagiante, demonstrando que não apenas a história deve constantemente se colocar à prova, mas que os historiadores são indivíduos em ação no meio social, cultural, político e econômico.

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Miguel Cardina

***O Atrito da Memória. Colonialismo,
Guerra e Descolonização no Portugal
Contemporâneo***

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Carlos Maurício*

O 25 de Abril e a descolonização constituem duas ruturas profundas na história longa de Portugal. Se a segunda pôs fim a uma existência quase sempre alicerçada num império colonial multiseular, a primeira trouxe-nos uma sociedade democrática e de bem-estar, nos moldes em que esta se foi afirmando no semi-hemisfério norte-ocidental a partir de 1945. Nas vésperas do cinquentenário destes dois acontecimentos, a memória do colonialismo, da guerra colonial e da descolonização é uma realidade viva que, com diferentes modulações, se tem revelado um contínuo campo de batalha. Em *O Atrito da Memória. Colonialismo, Guerra e Descolonização no Portugal Contemporâneo*, Miguel Cardina entende que é chegada a hora de aprofundar o debate sobre estas questões, pois esse passado tem sido muitas vezes “enterrado vivo”. Ao não ser enfrentado, ele constitui um peso do qual não nos libertamos e que nos impede de prosseguir. Este é, pois, um livro escrito por um historiador que não pretende ser “uma obra estritamente académica”. Nascido das preocupações

* Carlos Maurício (carlos.mauricio@iscte-iul.pt), CIES-Iscte – Centro de Investigação e Estudos de Sociologia, Avenida das Forças Armadas, 1649-026 Lisboa, Portugal. Receção da recensão original: 21-06-2023. Receção da versão revista: 04-07-2023. Aceitação: 04-07-2023.

do presente, em lugar de conclusões sobre o passado examinado, o livro propõe caminhos para enfrentar os desafios abertos pela persistência na sociedade portuguesa do “imaginário de um colonialismo benigno”.

O livro está organizado em duas partes, que não se sucedem cronologicamente, antes tematicamente. A primeira, multiforme, examina a contínua associação entre os descobrimentos, a experiência colonial, “as performances de redefinição identitária” e os efeitos do passado colonial na sociedade pós-1974. A segunda concede uma particular atenção às dinâmicas entre memória e esquecimento relativas à guerra colonial e a certos impactos da descolonização.

A primeira parte descreve a traços largos a construção do colonialismo em África e a sua inscrição no imaginário nacional nos séculos XIX e XX. Especial atenção é dada ao papel do Estado Novo e à sua adoção do lusotropicalismo enquanto ideologia oficial. Tal adoção, formalizada na década de 1950, envolveu passar da “mística imperial”, das primeiras duas décadas do regime, à “mística luso-cristã da integração”. Uma preocupação que percorre todo o livro é a de perceber como e por que motivos esta “mística”, geradora de uma “boa consciência colonial”, permaneceu na sociedade portuguesa após a descolonização, silenciando o racismo, a escravatura, a violência da guerra colonial e a dominação económica e cultural. O que é tanto mais intrigante quanto, seguindo a lição de Boaventura de Sousa Santos, Portugal transitou do sentimento de ser rejeitado pela Europa – por não ser um “colonizador competente” (1890-1930) – para um sentimento de exaltação nacionalista – do país orgulhosamente só, contra os ventos descolonizadores da história (1930-1974) –, para finalmente ser aceite pela Europa pós-colonial, mediante a descolonização¹. Esta aparente incompatibilidade, entre a persistência de um imaginário de traços lusotropicalizantes e um espaço-tempo cosmopolita e pós-colonial, merece ser examinada.

Numa cronologia fina, o autor nota como a ambiência militantemente anticolonial da segunda metade dos anos 1970 começou lenta-

¹ Boaventura de Sousa Santos, *Portugal. Ensaios contra a Autoflagelação* (Coimbra: Almedina, 2011).

mente a ceder o passo a um clima político e cultural onde essa memória recente foi sendo apagada e substituída por uma nova exaltação da epopeia dos descobrimentos. Principais marcas desta reconfiguração: a “XVII Exposição Europeia de Arte, Ciência e Cultura: Os Descobrimientos Portugueses e a Europa do Renascimento”, a criação da Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Descobrimientos Portugueses, com um ciclo comemorativo abarcando de 1987 a 2003, e a “Expo 98: Os Oceanos, Um Património para o Futuro”. Em todas estas celebrações, a tónica incidia sobre os descobrimentos, mais do que sobre a colonização. A Expo 98, que atraiu 11 milhões de visitantes, permitiu conectar “o novo Portugal a uma ideia de modernidade europeia que se inspirava num passado grandioso”². Esta exaltação pós-imperial da epopeia descobridora procurava representar Portugal não como pioneiro da missão civilizadora, mas enquanto pioneiro da globalização.

O livro mergulha, então, num estudo de caso: as elocuições proferidas pelo Presidente da República, Aníbal Cavaco Silva, entre 2006 e 2016, com referência à temática colonial. Identifica nelas alguns tópicos fundamentais. A colonização essencialmente descrita como um “encontro de culturas”, em que se praticou o convívio e a miscigenação, e de onde se evapora a escravatura, a violência sobre as populações nativas e a luta anticolonial – essa sim, a verdadeira criadora das nações africanas. Também a “evocação do excecionalismo da presença portuguesa no mundo”³. E, ligada a isto, a conceção da língua – “forjada e concedida a partir do antigo centro imperial” – enquanto geradora de uma irmandade imaginada, escamoteando realidades sociais extremamente distintas e estatutos sociais incomparáveis. Por último, a representação de um Portugal enquanto farol e agente dos valores universalistas da civilização europeia no mundo.

O último capítulo da primeira parte debruça-se sobre as batalhas políticas e culturais de hoje em torno do passado colonial e das suas sequelas. São aqui analisadas as polémicas em torno da estátua do Padre

² Miguel Cardina, *O Atrito da Memória. Colonialismo, Guerra e Descolonização no Portugal Contemporâneo* (Lisboa: Tinta-da-china, 2023), 39.

³ Cardina, *O Atrito da Memória*, 51.

António Vieira (2017) e da proposta de criação de um Museu das Descobertas (2018) – polémicas em que se distinguiram particularmente os historiadores –, sem esquecer a proposta de criação de um Memorial de Homenagem às Pessoas Escravizadas (2017). São também referidos os recentes episódios de racismo, xenofobia e de violência policial contra pessoas racializadas, a contramanifestação do partido político Chega, na capital, sob o lema “Portugal não é racista”, a (re)implantação dos brasões coloniais na Praça do Império, em Lisboa, e subsequente polémica e, por último, a realização, no edifício do parlamento português, do colóquio internacional “Amílcar Cabral e a História do Futuro”, antecedendo a exposição “Cabral Ka Mori”, instalada, entre março e junho de 2023, no Palácio Baldaya, no bairro de Benfica, também em Lisboa. São, finalmente, convocadas as deslocações do presidente português, Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, ao monumento evocativo do massacre de Batepá (2018), ocorrido em São Tomé e Príncipe, em 1953, e o pronunciamento do primeiro-ministro português, António Costa, em Moçambique, relativo ao massacre de Wiriamu (2022), ocorrido em 1972. Esses dois eventos parecem sugerir que o “centro político” começa a romper com o “silêncio institucional” neste domínio. Mas, se isto é o início de um caminho em direção à superação do estado de denegação em que o Estado português tem vivido, o desafio será agora “desenhar medidas que acionem modos efetivos de reparar o peso desse passado e dos seus prolongamentos”⁴. A criação de comissões de verdade e reconciliação, para lidar com os acontecimentos de violência e destruição associados ao colonialismo, é uma das vias. Outra é a devolução das obras de arte ilegítimamente trazidas das ex-colónias. Vários países estão a enfrentar os legados deixados pelos seus passados coloniais violentos. Portugal não deve alhear-se deste movimento internacional.

A segunda parte está centrada nas vias pelas quais a narrativa da guerra colonial no Portugal democrático foi selecionando certos conteúdos e omitindo outros. O exame desta narrativa é fundamental por duas razões. Por um lado, porque foi a guerra o mais poderoso “des-

4 Cardina, *O Atrito da Memória*, 81.

mentido da ideia de salutar convivência entre povos irmãos”. Por outro lado, porque com o 25 de Abril foram os próprios militares que fizeram a guerra a virar armas contra o regime autoritário que sustentava o império e, desse modo, a abrir caminho à transferência de soberania para os povos colonizados e à democratização do país. Esta trajetória, algo incomum, ajuda a explicar a forma peculiar como a guerra colonial e a descolonização têm sido evocadas nas últimas cinco décadas.

Durante o Estado Novo, nunca existiu um movimento contestatário da colonização africana. Só com a guerra colonial adiantada, o antifascismo português se recobriu de tonalidades anticoloniais e, mesmo assim, de forma parcial. O Partido Comunista Português (PCP) esteve na vanguarda desse posicionamento, mas, mercê da sua política unitária de alianças, o seu anticolonialismo ficou-se pela proclamação retórica. Uma das características da dissidência ocorrida no seu seio, em 1963-64, foi exatamente a denúncia do profundo chauvinismo entranhado nas massas populares, com que o partido tinha dificuldade em lidar. Não admira, então, que tenham sido as organizações maoístas a empunhar a bandeira do anticapitalismo anticolonial. Diferença que era também visível em matéria de deserção. Se, inicialmente, o PCP começou por advogar a deserção, passou depois a desaconselhá-la porque feita a título individual. Só a extrema-esquerda defendeu uma deserção ativa e, por vezes, com armas. Simultaneamente, outras forças em campo, como os socialistas ou os católicos progressistas, se alinharam na denúncia e no combate contra a guerra já não se revelaram tão enfáticas no combate ao colonialismo, suas práticas e consequências.

Neste contexto, e ante o papel libertador desempenhado pelas Forças Armadas no 25 de Abril, a sociedade e os agentes políticos preferiram não ajustar contas com o papel repressivo exercido pelos militares durante a guerra. Este “pacto de esquecimento” fez com que a instituição militar não fosse “alvo de qualquer processo de responsabilização e muito menos de reconciliação e reparação para com as vítimas”⁵. Verificou-se, assim, uma dissociação cognitiva entre a ditadura que fazia a

5 Cardina, *O Atrito da Memória*, 115.

guerra e os militares que a executavam. E o autor aponta vários casos que mostram como este dispositivo de esquecimento estava já em marcha poucos anos após o 25 de Abril, sob a direção do Estado-Maior-General das Forças Armadas (EMGFA), e se materializava por intermédio da censura (e, na memorialística de guerra, pela autocensura). Não eram só os militares que se sentiam incomodados com a revelação das passadas cumplicidades com a violência, mas também a Igreja Católica. É, aliás, possível que a vinda para Portugal de meio milhão de deslocados das ex-colónias, carregados de uma “memória infeliz”, fruto de vidas e quotidianos abruptamente interrompidos, mas, quase sempre, longe do teatro da guerra, tenha ajudado, no Portugal democrático, a “suprimir ou secundarizar a violência, a desigualdade e a discriminação racial” no espaço ultramarino⁶. Perante isto, só a literatura e o cinema conseguiram proporcionar inicialmente um instrumento anamnésico.

O autor analisa, então, mais detidamente o modo como as próprias Forças Armadas discursaram e evocaram a guerra. Ora o título de *Resenha Histórico-Militar das Campanhas de África (1961-1974)*, dado à obra principiada a publicar em 1988, não podia ser mais eloquente. Ele permitia esquivar a discussão “colonial” *versus* “ultramar”, para além de evitar a utilização do termo “guerra”. Em 1994, vinte anos cumpridos sobre o 25 de Abril, a recordação da guerra tomou conta inevitavelmente do espaço público. A entrada das televisões privadas no mercado e a guerra de audiências vai fazer dos vigésimos aniversários do 25 de Abril e da descolonização um espetáculo mediático dotado de um profundo efeito catártico. A guerra colonial, recalcada durante duas décadas, adquire então uma grande visibilidade. A qual gira, contudo, em torno da rememoração dos “nossos” mortos e dos traumas dos “nossos” soldados. Data precisamente de 1994 a inauguração, em Belém, do Monumento aos Combatentes do Ultramar. Ato que dará início, através de uma associação entre a Liga dos Combatentes e o poder local, à propagação pelo país de réplicas locais evocativas que, em 2020, somavam já 415 unidades.

6 Cardina, *O Atrito da Memória*, 116.

O livro termina com o exame de uma “contramemória” – a da deserção. Esta não seria reivindicada por nenhum grande partido, depois do 25 de Abril, e só tardiamente seriam criadas estruturas associativas reclamando essa memória. Sendo um tema pouco estudado, é já claro que ele provoca uma deslocação do entendimento da guerra – que deixa de ser vista como um desígnio nacional para poder passar a ser entendida como uma empresa fundada nos interesses das classes dominantes. Ao mesmo tempo, mobiliza dois grandes binómios, resignificando-os: patriotismo/antipatriotismo e coragem/cobardia. Deste modo, a memória da deserção acaba por “fornecer um padrão mnemónico alternativo, com base na denúncia da violência e injustiça da guerra e reivindicando formas distintas de considerar agencialidade, heroísmo e sacrifício pessoal”⁷.

O livro enumera então os principais desafios que enfrentam as memórias que vem estudando. É necessário criar condições para que académicos de todo o mundo possam aceder aos materiais de arquivo. O tema dos massacres e das violências de guerra, que tem permanecido na sombra, necessita de ser explorado. Este enorme silêncio pesando sobre as vítimas africanas é por igual patente na ausência de qualquer monumento a elas. Continuam a fazer falta mecanismos de musealização sobre a guerra e o colonialismo que permitam refletir sobre esses passados difíceis. Com efeito, a evocação da guerra tem estado muito centrada nos “nossos” feridos e mortos, esquecendo os feridos e mortos que eles provocaram. Ora, enfrentar “essa nacionalização do sofrimento é um caminho necessário para desbloquear diálogos e desencadear modos de reparação de reconhecimento”⁸. Peça central neste processo serão os diálogos cruzados com a produção académica, intelectual e artística feita nos países africanos sobre estes temas. Tal como o contributo das pessoas racializadas, nacionais ou imigrantes, é fundamental para enfrentar o racismo e a xenofobia.

Duas breves considerações para terminar.

7 Cardina, *O Atrito da Memória*, 163.

8 Cardina, *O Atrito da Memória*, 141.

O livro tem como subtítulo “Colonialismo, Guerra e Descolonização no Portugal Contemporâneo”. Todavia, a segunda parte da obra é inteiramente dedicada à guerra colonial. A análise das memórias da descolonização ficou por fazer. Esta análise é importante pelo que poderia revelar. Acerca da guerra colonial – seja, ou não, assim designada – existe um razoável consenso, plasmado pela dupla negativa: não deveria ter sido prolongada e não se tratou de uma guerra justa, como seria o caso da autodefesa. É essa a principal razão para o Monumento aos Combatentes do Ultramar só ter sido proposto em 1984 e inaugurado apenas 20 anos após o termo do conflito. Veja-se, por exemplo, como o Monumento aos Mortos da Grande Guerra, em Lisboa, proposto logo em 1920, foi inaugurado 13 anos depois do fim do conflito. Veja-se também como o *Vietnam Veterans Memorial*, em Washington, começou a ser pensado quatro anos após a queda de Saigão, para ser inaugurado três anos depois.

A análise das memórias da descolonização iria revelar que o consenso anterior não existe aqui – e isso seria matéria de reflexão histórica. Desde 1975 que a avaliação da descolonização está encerrada num debate, o qual, nas suas linhas gerais, tem obedecido à clivagem esquerda-direita. Se, entre as posições à esquerda, predomina a ideia de que a responsabilidade da retirada dramática dos civis cabe ao Estado Novo, por não ter optado, no seu devido tempo, por uma transferência negociada da soberania, sendo o caminho que foi trilhado o único possível, do outro lado é comum encontrar a ideia de que uma descolonização diferente teria sido possível. A fomentar esta opinião estão não só as vicissitudes do “retorno”, como a forma como o Estado português não soube garantir os seus interesses nas antigas colónias. Uma ideia minoritária que por vezes assoma também é a de que os povos coloniais estariam hoje melhor se o plano de uma confederação lusófona tivesse sido aceite. O “saudosismo” que hoje perpassa na sociedade portuguesa busca alento não tanto no Estado Novo como no império extinto em 1975. Seria também interessante ver de que modo esta avaliação negativa da descolonização se articula com o racismo sistémico na sociedade portuguesa.

Por último, um olhar comparativo seria enriquecedor a vários níveis. A gênese do lusotropicalismo, e a sua receção, em dois tempos, em território nacional está relativamente estudada. Até que ponto, porém, esta ideologia não é uma declinação local de um fenómeno mais global? A descrição das experiências coloniais próprias enquanto colonizações benignas parece ter sido uma constante do fenómeno colonizador. A “boa consciência” colonial está longe de ser um exclusivo português. Seria, pois, interessante comparar o caso português com, pelo menos, outras experiências coloniais que tivessem conhecido lutas de libertação nacional e movimentos de repatriamento no processo da independência, como é o caso da França ou da Holanda.

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