

PART I

THE INDEPENDENCE AND EARLY IMPERIAL GENERATIONS (1800–1869)

Napoleon's threats and eventual moves to invade Portugal in 1808 prompted Dom João VI to relocate his court to Rio de Janeiro with the British navy's assistance. To please his allies in London, the king opened Brazil's ports to international trade, a great boon to British merchants whose access to many European markets had been cut off by the French emperor's blockade. Even after Napoleon's final defeat in 1815, João VI continued to rule from Rio. Powerful merchants and leaders in Portugal, however, wanted their king back in Lisbon where they would have his ear. They also hoped to restrict Brazilian trade to Portuguese ports to reestablish Lisbon's control over the empire's most profitable colonial commerce. In 1820 the Parliament (Cortes) called on João VI to return, and he reluctantly agreed. He left his son, Prince Pedro, behind in Brazil, and he warned his son that it might be necessary to establish Brazil as an independent nation if the political climate in Portugal did not change. Pedro heeded his father's advice in 1822 when reactionary forces in Portugal continued to threaten the rights of merchants in Brazil to trade directly with other nations.

Traditionally, historians have portrayed Brazil's transition from a colonial to a national government in 1822 as one where continuities triumphed over transitions. The relatively peaceful secession from the mother country pleased most major landholders and merchants because plantation agriculture did not tolerate political instability well. The cultivation of sugarcane, coffee, and cotton were highly specialized capital- and labor-intensive enterprises that depended heavily on foreign markets, goods, and credit. The slave labor that worked the plantations constituted about one-third of Brazil's population at the time of Independence. It is hard to exaggerate the importance of African slavery to the development of Brazilian society. Two in every five blacks in the Atlantic slave trade went to Brazil; and today, according to some estimates, only Nigeria has a larger population of people of African descent than Brazil. While slavery was certainly concentrated in some regions more than others, it was a ubiquitous institution in Brazil that was found in every province. Fears of slave rebellion made most members of the master class cautious about resolving factional disputes with their peers through the force of arms.

Monarchy also survived Independence in Brazil, unlike in most of Spanish America, where republics and political instability predominated. While many supporters of Independence had been inspired by republican ideals, the fact that the central government's leader was of royal blood lent his rule legitimacy in the eyes of most Brazilians, rich and poor. Pedro oversaw the writing of a charter that guaranteed the emperor the preponderance of power within the framework of a constitutional monarchy. Although a variety of regional rebellions threatened to undermine the central government and to divide Brazilian territory into separate nations in the

1830s and 1840s, none succeeded. Still, the monarch himself was not immune to challenges. Popular protests and parliamentary pressure forced the heavy-handed Pedro to abdicate his throne in 1831 in favor of his five-year-old son. Pedro II became emperor in 1840, and his forty-nine-year rule would see the consolidation of imperial power in Rio. During his reign, two mature political parties emerged: the Conservatives and the Liberals. Most politicians came from the privileged landowning and merchant families, but members of both parties knew that the success of their political careers depended on the emperor's patronage.

The Roman Catholic faith continued to be the official religion of Brazil, even though national law gave Protestant merchants and settlers the right to practice their beliefs discreetly. Brazil's emperors retained the right claimed by Portugal's kings to name clerics to the highest posts in the Church hierarchy within the national territory. Thus, there was no separation of Church and state, and the Brazilian Catholic hierarchy was not nearly as independent or powerful as its counterpart in Mexico.

Pedro I took a keen interest in military matters, and he strove to develop a national military loyal to his rule. After his abdication in 1831, however, Parliament cut the size of the army's ranks in half and established a more decentralized National Guard as a means of counterbalancing the military might of the army and navy. Local political bosses across Brazil sought out officer posts in the National Guard in order to enhance their prestige and their local autonomy and to facilitate the mobilization of clients for elections. So many political bosses came to hold the rank of *coronel* (colonel) in the National Guard that the most basic unit of local political organization came to be called *coronelismo*. The merchants and landowners linked to the agro-export plantation system along with the institutions of slavery, the monarchy, the Catholic Church, and the military formed the pillars that supported Brazil's imperial order.

The largest part of Brazil's population was neither master nor slave, but free poor men and women of all races. Since colonial times, Indians, Africans, and Europeans (mostly Portuguese men) coupled and formed a population characterized by race mixture. Indeed, most of Brazil's free poor were people of mixed race. A mostly "white" minority negotiated a wary rule over a nonwhite majority of slaves and free people. This white elite envisioned themselves at the top of a natural racial hierarchy. At the bottom of the ladder, they placed African-born slaves and located Brazilian-born slaves one rung above them. Free people of mixed race occupied a middle rung, but the idea of hierarchy tended to privilege those of lighter skin. Visible traces of African lineage implied that one's ancestors had been slaves whom the master class stereotyped as degraded, debauched, and dangerous individuals who lived outside the moralizing Christian influence of the nuclear family. Although rife with contradictions and exceptions, this idea of racial hierarchy attempted to divide the nonwhite majority along lines of color and ethnicity by giving some nonwhites privileges and status over others. Some nonwhites endowed with talent and favored with elite patronage became respected and wealthy members of Brazilian society to the point that they came to be considered "white." Prejudiced attitudes and practices related to Brazilian pragmatism and ideas of racial hierarchy encouraged individuals to think not only in terms of black and white but also in terms of black and brown with myriad gradations. We should not assume that all Brazilians accepted this racial hierarchy uncritically, but most came to associate "whiteness" with prestige and

influence.

Regardless of their race, Brazil's free poor continued to depend on powerful patrons for protection and support after Independence. At election time or in periods of factional disputes they were expected to demonstrate their loyalty and deference to their patrons. While the constitution granted most poor free men suffrage and rights, their ability to take advantage of these legal guarantees freely and independently remained limited.



The two chapters in Part I challenge in different ways the traditional emphasis on continuities outlined above in the half-century after Independence. Daniel Gomes de Freitas conspired and fought to implement liberal ideals that would expand opportunities for Brazilian-born free men, but he and many of his co-conspirators balked at expanding these rights to slaves and former slaves, especially those born in Africa. Conceptions of racial hierarchy proved difficult for most Brazilians to jettison. The black free man Agostinho José Pereira combined education with Protestant religious revelation to promote an alternative view of liberation and independence for his followers, mostly black women in the city of Recife. Authorities feared that his activities were part of a broader conspiracy among Brazilians of color to overthrow white rule. The life stories of Daniel and Agostinho reveal the racial tensions that continued to permeate Brazilian society after Independence.

CHAPTER I

Daniel Gomes de Freitas

Liberal Conspiracy in the Early National Period

HENDRIK KRAAY

In part because of Portuguese military weakness and British diplomatic support for an independent Brazilian state, the battles to liberate Brazil from Portuguese rule were not nearly as bloody or as drawn out as those fought in Spanish America for independence. But as Professor Hendrik Kraay argues, battles and conspiracies to shape the nature of Brazil's independence continued for decades after 1822. The preservation of the monarchy certainly helped to smooth the transition, and the monarchy lent legitimacy to the authority of the central government, but this authority, was strenuously contested by Brazilians influenced by liberal ideals that called for greater equality, at least for respectable free men. Still, no regional revolt succeeded in toppling the central government in Rio de Janeiro, although Pedro I was impelled to abdicate his throne in favor of his young son in 1831. Only an army coup in 1889 brought an end to the Brazilian Empire and the monarchy by promulgating the Republic. The relative stability of Brazil's government contrasts starkly to most Spanish American nations, where rebel factions succeeded in toppling regimes repeatedly in the decades after Independence. But as Professor Kraay points out, historians too often overlook the many changes that independence wrought in Brazilian society by stressing instead continuities with the colonial period.

Brazil's separation from Portugal in 1822 meant different things to different participants and onlookers, and many conflicting visions of what society in an independent Brazil would be like. Professor Kraay explores these different perspectives by focusing on the life story of Daniel Gomes de Freitas, a man of middling social status who made his career as an army officer in Bahia's provincial capital, Salvador: Like some other men of his times and his background, Daniel was inspired by leveling liberal ideals that sought to guarantee advancement based on merit rather than on birth or connections.

For Daniel and others, they wanted equal access with the landed elite to government jobs and political posts. They also sought to limit the rights of the Portuguese-born living in Brazil to participate in retail and overseas commerce (sectors of the economy that they dominated) as well as in government jobs. Still, the vision of how inclusive the new Brazilian national community would be was limited in the minds of Daniel and many others like him, who sought to distinguish themselves from freedmen and slaves. The type of leveling that Daniel envisioned excluded these members of Brazilian society, but many freedmen and slaves had found inspiration in the news of the successful slave revolt that founded the first black republic of Haiti in 1804 and abolished slavery. Also, the liberating rhetoric of Brazil's rebel conspirators encouraged their active participation in the conspiracies and insurgencies that occurred from the 1820s through the 1840s. Daniel Gomes de Freitas's life demonstrates the many contradictions that rebels with limited views of liberation faced in the slave society of postcolonial Brazil.

Hendrik Kraay, an associate professor of history at the University of Calgary, is a specialist on the history of nineteenth-century Bahia. His book, Race, State, and Armed Forces in Independence-Era Brazil: Bahia, 1790s—1840s (2001), explores the changing role of military institutions in this important province from colonial times through the early decades of Independence. He is currently working on an analysis of the annual commemorative parades and celebrations of Bahian Independence Day in the nineteenth century.

Brazilian independence is often presented as a peaceful process, in sharp contrast to the violent struggles that wracked Spanish America, and many historians stress that very little changed as a result. Brazil remained a monarchy—the son of the king of Portugal proclaimed independence on September 7, 1822—and major features of the colonial regime persisted long after Independence. Slavery lasted until 1888, while racial discrimination, latifundia, and economic dependence still endure. However, people who lived through the independence years in Brazil would likely have perceived many changes in their lives, although some felt that the changes did not go far enough. Certainly this must have been the case for Daniel Gomes de Freitas, who, as a young army cadet, played a part in the fighting for independence in the province of Bahia and deeply embroiled himself in the violent struggle for liberal reform after Independence.

Daniel Gomes de Freitas was born on September 15, 1806, in Santana, a downtown parish of Salvador. A city of perhaps 50,000 people, it was then one of the largest in the Americas. It was a bustling commercial and bureaucratic center, the capital of the Portuguese captaincy (colonial province) of Bahia, the seat of the archbishop and the appeals court, and the principal entrepôt for trade with its sugar-plantation hinterland, the Recôncavo. There, tens of thousands of mostly African slaves cut and processed sugarcane, as they had done for 250

years, to supply sugar to European markets. Their owners, the *senhores de engenho* (literally, “lords of the sugar mills” but more commonly translated as “sugar planters”), constituted Bahia’s aristocracy. The Recôncavo also produced tobacco, which found a ready market in West Africa, where it was traded for the 6,000 or so slaves brought each year to Salvador. Somewhat more than one-third of the city’s population consisted of slaves, who worked in every conceivable occupation. In the year after Daniel’s birth, African slaves led the first of dozens of rebellions that wracked Salvador and its hinterland until 1835, when African Muslims staged the largest urban slave revolt in the Americas.

The existence of slavery profoundly shaped the rest of the society into which Daniel was born. Complex racial hierarchies structured this society, with the minority of creole (American-born) slaves generally having privileges over Africans. By 1800, the number of free Afro-Brazilians almost equalled the number of slaves, and only a minority of the population was classed as “white” in the scattered censuses taken during these years. The latter dominated Bahian society, but some of them were becoming concerned about the rise of the “classes of color,” as they sometimes put it. Not only did the slave revolts threaten to turn Bahia into another Haiti, the French sugar plantation colony devastated by a slave rebellion in the 1790s, but free blacks and mulattoes also had been involved in a 1798 conspiracy whose stated goals included the ending of racial discrimination among the free. (The plotters did not actually call for an end to slavery.) Moreover, in 1808, Britain ended the slave trade to its colonies and began putting pressure on other countries, including Portugal, to end the trade, which would have devastated Brazil’s economy. Living and working conditions on sugar plantations were so harsh that slave populations failed to reproduce themselves and had to be sustained by imports.

Less than two years after Daniel’s birth, the city of Salvador hosted Queen Maria I (by then completely insane) and João, her son and the prince regent, along with the entire court. They had fled from Lisbon in late 1807, just ahead of the French invaders. During his stay in Salvador, João issued an important decree opening Brazil’s trade to all friendly nations, which effectively ended the Portuguese commercial monopoly (and a key element of Brazil’s colonial status). Unfortunately for the Bahian elite, João resolved to move on to the viceregal capital of Rio de Janeiro, where he established a full government apparatus for the entire Portuguese Empire. In 1815 he raised Brazil to a political status equal to that of Portugal. On the death of his mother in 1816, he finally became King João VI.

Little Daniel knew nothing about these larger changes taking place around him, and his parents were probably more preoccupied with his poor health. Fearing for his life, Luiz José Gomes and Rosa Maria do Espírito Santo had the boy baptized at home, rather than in the parish church. They were unmarried, which meant that Daniel was a “natural” child, a condition halfway between legitimate and bastard. That he bore neither his mother’s nor his father’s surname is not surprising, for Brazilian naming practices were highly flexible. His parents probably married subsequently, by which he became “legitimated.” This status can be inferred from the fact that he later became an army cadet, for which legitimacy or legitimation was required. We know little else about his father or mother, except that they had many children. In 1826, for example, Daniel referred to two sisters and three brothers whom he

helped support, along with his mother, grandmother, and by then elderly father. The copy of his baptismal certificate in the army archive omits one piece of information usually included in such documents: an indication of his race. He may well have had some African ancestry, for the custom of using devotional surnames (his mother's last name means "Holy Spirit") was common among Afro-Brazilians, but the army never kept racial information on its officers and treated them all as unmarked white men.

On August 1, 1821, claiming to be fifteen years old, Daniel volunteered to join the army. He enlisted in Salvador's artillery regiment; sometime in September he was recognized as a second cadet. This clue tells us about his father because, according to the law that revised the requirements for cadetship in 1820, the rank of second cadet was awarded to sons of militia officers or army officers up to the rank of major. (Sons of nobles and more senior army officers became first cadets.) Unfortunately, I have located no army or militia officer by the name of Luiz José Gomes in Salvador during this time, but he may have held a commission in the suburban militia. That Daniel became a cadet also indicates that he had learned to read and write and that he had mastered basic arithmetic. Few children received primary schooling at the time, and his literacy suggests that Daniel's family might be classed as members of Salvador's small middle class (although they probably ranked near the bottom of it).

Daniel likely chose the artillery because of its educational opportunities. Since the mideighteenth century, engineering (fortifications) and mathematics courses were offered in that regiment so that its cadets and noncommissioned officers could acquire the technical training needed to operate artillery. Some historians thus see the artillery as a branch of the army that facilitated upward social mobility. Daniel probably did not have much time to study in the 1820s, but he did attend class in the mid-1830s, and he claims in his memoir to have taken the qualifying examination for promotion to first lieutenant. Having enlisted in the local garrison, Daniel expected to stay close to his family. In the previous 150 years, Salvador's troops had only left Bahia once, for a brief stint in Rio de Janeiro to reinforce the viceregal capital during a war scare with Spain. In many ways, regular officers and enlisted men were, for lack of a better word, part-time soldiers. They worked in artisanal trades during their spare time, while officers often had business ventures on the side. Indeed, Daniel probably lived at home and only stayed in the barracks when he was assigned to specific duties.

When Daniel joined the army, dramatic political changes were sweeping through the Luso-Brazilian world. In late 1820 a liberal revolution in the city of Porto, Portugal, ended the absolute rule of João VI. The liberals' ideals of constitutional rule, press freedom, and equality of rights (for free men) appealed to many in Brazil, and in February 1821 artillery officers led a rebellion that overthrew the governor and the garrison commander, proclaiming Bahia's loyalty to the Portuguese liberal regime. The new junta pledged to send deputies to the parliament, or Cortes, that would write a new constitution for the Portuguese nation, seen as consisting of all of the king's subjects, whether they lived in Portugal, Brazil, or any of the colonies in Africa and Asia. Both the locally raised troops (which included the artillery) and a Portuguese infantry regiment stationed in Salvador since 1819 strongly supported the liberal regime, but by the time that Daniel enlisted, relations between Bahians and Portuguese were deteriorating rapidly.

The larger context for this state of affairs was set by the many interests in Portugal who thought that the mother country had been reduced to the status of a colony of Brazil. The liberals ordered João to return to Lisbon, which he did, and they envisaged a unitary government for the entire Portuguese Empire, which meant that many of the institutions of government established in Brazil since 1808 would be dismantled. Because most of these were in Rio de Janeiro (and not Salvador), those Bahians who sought local autonomy were not initially concerned. But relations between Bahian and Portuguese troops, the latter reinforced by contingents from Lisbon during 1821, were increasingly tense. Portuguese troops snubbed their Brazilian counterparts, often insulting them with racial slurs, which Brazilians reciprocated by mocking the Portuguese soldiers' high opinion of their whiteness. A key figure in the garrison's politics at this time was Lieutenant Colonel Manoel Pedro de Freitas Guimarães. He had been the artillery's second-in-command in February 1821, but because of his key role in the coup, he was catapulted into the post of garrison commander by popular acclamation. Freitas Guimaraes (no relation to Daniel) was a charismatic figure who reportedly encouraged enlistments into the artillery from men who shared his political views, particularly his dislike of the Portuguese and his advocacy of greater autonomy for Bahia (or Brazil). But Freitas Guimaraes suffered from periodic bouts of mental illness (he was in fact declared legally insane in the 1820s), and this handicap hampered his political activism.

Matters came to a head in February 1822, when the liberal government in Lisbon, consistent with its goal of establishing a single government for the Portuguese world, exercised its power to name garrison commanders and ordered Freitas Guimarães to be replaced by the commander of the Portuguese regiment, Inácio Luiz Madeira de Melo. The many supporters of Freitas Guimaraes would have none of this, and efforts to conciliate the two parties failed. On February 19, 1822, fighting broke out between Bahian and Portuguese troops in Salvador. Civilian patriots joined the artillery regiment, quartered in Fort São Pedro, where they held out for two days. Before the fort capitulated, most of the patriots, Daniel included, escaped into the Recôncavo. Freitas Guimarães was captured and shipped in chains to Lisbon.

Little is known about what happened during the next five months. The patriots carried their anti-Portuguese struggle to the countryside, while Madeira fortified himself in Salvador. For sugar planters, this conflict was deeply worrisome, given the potential for disorder. In late June and early July 1822 a group of planters organized a provisional Council of Government, pledged their loyalty to Pedro I (who by then was about to turn himself into emperor of Brazil), and organized what they called the Pacification Army to besiege Salvador and, judging by the name, to bring order to the countryside. The soldiers and officers who had dispersed in February soon congregated in Cachoeira, where the Council met, and Daniel reported there on July 7. The creation of the Pacification Army was a difficult task because the patriots had few arms and equipment, for which no amount of enthusiasm could compensate. They won an early victory by preventing a Portuguese naval force from landing at Cachoeira and gradually tightened the siege lines around Salvador. Pedro I sent weapons, a contingent of troops, and a French general, Pierre Labatut, to command the patriots. Shortly after Labatut and the Rio de Janeiro troops took up their position outside of Salvador, Madeira launched an attack. The Battle of Pirajá (November 8, 1821) was a close-run affair, and the tide only turned, according

to a widely repeated story, when a bugler on the patriot side incorrectly played the signal for a cavalry charge. The Portuguese, fearing the worst, hastily retreated to their fortifications. About 300 men died in the battle—insignificant casualties by European standards, but a shocking loss of life to Brazilians who had never experienced war on this scale. Daniel must have distinguished himself that day because eight days later, he was commissioned a second lieutenant by Labatut, who liberally handed out promotions in late November.

For the rest of the war, Daniel dropped out of sight, but he must have witnessed all of the changes that the conflict brought. It involved a popular mobilization on a scale hitherto unknown in Bahia, as some 15,000 men came under arms by July 1823. There was much talk of fighting for freedom, which, of course, meant different things to different people. Numerous slaves took advantage of the confusion to flee from their masters, and some found their way into the patriot forces. Labatut took it upon himself to draft slaves confiscated from Portuguese owners into the army (much to the annoyance of the Council, which considered this highly dangerous); after the war, the Brazilian government arranged for the freeing of these men by paying compensation to their masters. Anti-Portuguese rhetoric reached extreme levels during the war, and there was much loose talk of radical reform in the patriot camps, focusing on buzzwords of equality before the law and the rights of citizenship. For the sugar planters who dominated the Council, all of this wrangling was worrisome, and occasionally they ordered the arrest of whomever they perceived to be troublemakers, including an army surgeon, Francisco Sabino Álvares da Rocha Vieira. Labatut's imperiousness and his failure to respect the prerogatives of Bahia's sugar planters led to his overthrow at the hands of senior officers in May 1823, and he was replaced by the commander of troops from Rio de Janeiro

On July 2, 1823, the Portuguese were down to just enough food to stock their ships for the voyage to Lisbon, and they evacuated Salvador. The bedraggled patriots marched into the city that afternoon, and in September, officials demobilized the Pacification Army and organized a peacetime force. Daniel was assigned to the artillery where, as a second lieutenant, he must have busied himself with the routine tasks of running his company and overseeing garrison duties, which mostly involved manning guard posts throughout the city. By many measures, the seventeen-year-old Daniel had done well for himself. He had survived the war and had won an officer's commission, which meant that he would be paid a salary for the rest of his life. Back in the 1810s, it had taken an average of seven to ten years to rise through the noncommissioned ranks to second lieutenant. But Daniel and many of the other officers in the garrison who had received battlefield promotions were not satisfied with their relative good fortune.

To be sure, independence had been won, but this success marked only the beginning of a struggle to define the nature of the new state and the new society that many envisaged. Most of the important issues had not been addressed in 1822 and 1823. What, for example, would be the nature of Emperor Pedro I's relationship to the Brazilian people? Who should be part of the nation? And what rights should citizens have? Pedro convened a constitutional convention but abruptly closed it in late 1823 when it appeared to be producing a draft not to his liking. In March 1824 he granted his own constitution, a document that upheld many of his prerogatives, including a so-called moderating power that gave the monarch the right to close the parliament and call new elections. But the charter also contained an extensive bill of rights for the

country's free citizens, including provisions for equality before the law and equal access to government posts on the basis of merit alone—two provisions that were extremely rare in contemporary constitutions elsewhere. Of course, such provisions did not apply to slaves, and the document almost entirely ignored the existence of slavery, except in a few clauses that restricted the political rights of freedmen. Despite having granted the constitution, Pedro proved himself to be a poor constitutional monarch and continually squabbled with the parliament.

Many of the more arcane details of the constitution mattered little to ordinary Brazilians, but the clauses granting equality before the law and equal access to government jobs became something of a touchstone for a sector of upwardly mobile free nonwhite men who used these clauses to challenge the discrimination that they faced. Other issues addressed by the constitution also figured in popular politics. The charter granted Brazilian citizenship to all Portuguese who had not fought against independence, but many Brazilian patriots wanted to rid the country of residents of the former mother country. In the army, many of Daniel's junior-officer cohort, most of whom had been promoted during the war, wanted to remove Portuguese-born officers from the corporation, which would have made promotion more rapid.

Anti-Portuguese feeling also had a more mundane but very important source: natives of Portugal dominated the retail trades and they gained a reputation as gouging shopkeepers, becoming the targets of food rioters during periods of unrest. The constitution had established a centralized system of government, but many people believed that a more decentralized or, as Brazilians called it, federal system of government would be more responsive to local interests, not to mention offer greater opportunities for Bahians not connected to court elites. Complaints about taxation that only served to support courtiers in Rio de Janeiro also figured in radical liberal discourse. After Independence, slave unrest continued in Bahia, with periodic major rebellions led by Africans. Many observers reported that all of the talk about gaining freedom from Portuguese rule had been interpreted by slaves to mean that they should be free of their masters. A worried Spaniard calculated that within three years, "the white race will be finished off at the hands of the other castes and the province of Bahia will disappear from the civilized world."¹

Where Daniel stood in the political ferment of the early 1820s is difficult to determine. His name does not turn up in the principal chronicles of the political events of these years; perhaps because of his youth, he was more a follower than a leader at this time. He avoided the fate of about a half-dozen lieutenants who were expelled from the army in 1824 on the grounds that they were too undisciplined and too politicized. The garrison commander, Colonel Felisberto Gomes Caldeira, made himself unpopular by such measures, and on October 25, 1824, the soldiers and junior officers of one infantry battalion mutinied. This battalion, the so-called Periquitos ("Parakeets," after the yellow and green trim on their uniforms), included a significant number of the slaves who had been freed after the war for their military service. Their principal demand was for the return of a popular commander, a man who had a reputation for radical political ideas, but the brutal murder of Caldeira may have unnerved the conspirators, and the mutiny degenerated into a standoff between the Periquitos and a growing contingent of regulars who retreated from Salvador. After about a month, the mutineers gave up

and the government quickly removed the troublesome soldiers from Bahia.

Daniel was sufficiently associated with the mutineers that military authorities had him court-martialed, but he claimed that the charges were due mostly to the dislike that some officers and cadets nurtured for him. Two infantry officers—a major and a second lieutenant—served as scapegoats and were publicly executed in early 1825. Daniel avoided their fate but his case dragged on through military and civilian courts until February 29, 1828, when he was finally acquitted, as were most of those officers arrested. At this time, Brazil was at war with the Argentine Confederation over control of what eventually became the independent republic of Uruguay. Daniel hastened to join his unit, now designated the Seventh Artillery, but he did not see combat (much later, another officer insulted Daniel by saying that he had only served in “prison ships [*presigangas*] and fortress dungeons [*abóbadas*]” during the war).² Judging by his personnel file, Daniel had other pressing professional concerns. Back in 1826, while he had been in prison, Emperor Pedro I had visited Bahia where he issued a general promotion of one-half grade to all of the province’s officers (except those who were in jail). Because of his acquittal, Daniel judged that he also deserved this promotion, with the appropriate retroactive seniority. Without it, he would rank behind his entire cohort when it came to promotion, given the importance of seniority in the Brazilian army. Some officers received retroactive promotions in the 1820s, but Daniel’s case dragged on until 1831, when a special commission charged with investigating all such outstanding cases ruled that he should get the promotion.

Meanwhile, the war went badly for Brazil, and late in 1828 the British government brokered a peace that resulted in the creation of Uruguay. The Bahian troops likely looked forward to returning home, but Pedro I retained them in Rio de Janeiro and other garrisons in the south of the country, while Salvador received contingents of troops from other provinces. He apparently hoped that this move would weaken officers’ ties to their home provinces and make them more loyal to the imperial regime, but it may well have had the opposite effect. Officers and their families suffered considerable hardship and many complained that they could not properly manage their households while stationed away from Bahia. Since the war was over, they could not see any reason to be kept away from home.

The year 1831 brought sudden changes to Brazilian and Bahian politics. Facing increasing opposition from moderate liberals in the parliament and radical liberals who occasionally took to the streets in Rio de Janeiro, Emperor Pedro I abruptly abdicated on April 7, 1831. A moderately liberal parliamentary government took power in Rio de Janeiro in the name of Emperor Pedro II, then only five years old, and instituted numerous changes in Brazilian society, among them an important devolution of power to the provincial governments and significant reforms to army organization. The liberal Regency government reduced the size of the army, returned its battalions to their home provinces, and created a civilian militia, the National Guard, as a way to empower citizens and to replace the army-controlled militia. Sometime in the middle of 1831, Daniel and the artillery arrived back in Salvador, a city going through a period of unrest. Around the time of the abdication, there had been large-scale anti-Portuguese riots, which had forced the provincial president (governor) and garrison commander to resign. Several radical liberal newspapers had appeared in the city, fanning the anti-Portuguese flames and calling for federalism and equality before the law. Cipriano José

Barata de Almeida, one of Brazil's best-known advocates of liberal reform, had just been arrested on trumped-up charges of fomenting African slave revolt.

The return of Bahia's troops and particularly officers like Daniel, still under suspicion because of their role in 1824, worried provincial authorities. They kept the artillery in its traditional quarters in Fort São Pedro and tried to limit the soldiers' contact with civilian society. This treatment greatly upset enlisted men, who naturally wanted to see their friends and family in the city, and on the night of August 31, 1831, they mutinied, declaring that they no longer would sleep in the barracks, eat in the mess, or wear leather uniform collars, adding that they wanted to be discharged. Apparently, Daniel sympathized with his soldiers' demands, for he was arrested the next day for complicity in the mutiny. Daniel's timing could not have been worse. On that very day, the commission investigating disputes about seniority and promotions had ruled that Daniel should be promoted and regain the seniority that he had lost during his imprisonment in the 1820s. When this good news reached Salvador, Daniel was in jail facing a court-martial and thus could not be promoted. While in prison, Daniel no doubt heard about two other radical liberal rebellions, an abortive rising of an infantry battalion in October 1831 and a short-lived federalist revolt that briefly held the town of Cachoeira in early 1832. Eventually, all of those arrested for complicity in the various liberal and federalist revolts, including Daniel, were transferred to the round fort located in Salvador's harbor, the most secure prison in the province.

In early 1833, Daniel appeared for the first time as one of the leaders of a revolt when the prisoners took over the fort, apparently as part of a larger liberal-federalist plot to gain control of Salvador. For three days the prisoners exchanged artillery fire with land batteries; few men were killed but there was considerable property damage. When they realized that their position was hopeless, they raised a white flag of surrender to replace the blue and white banner of federalism that they had designed. The detailed rebel proclamation found afterward indicates that the insurrectionists had given much thought to the new society that they envisioned. The elderly Cipriano Barata likely had a hand in this document, for he was by far the most intellectual of the radical leaders. (He did not, however, take part in the fighting.) Speaking in the name of the people against the aristocrats, they called for the establishment of a provisional government, the election of the provincial president, the release of political prisoners, and full freedom of the press. Like previous radical liberal manifestoes, this one contained anti-Portuguese clauses seeking to exclude them from retail commerce and civil service jobs. It also pledged to improve food supply to Salvador and to eradicate the counterfeit currency and black marketeering that particularly hurt the poor.

The rebels also envisioned more fundamental economic reform, calling for the end of entails (rare in Brazil) and the redistribution of land to Brazilian patriots who would put it to productive use. Perhaps because they had experienced prison conditions firsthand, penal reform figured prominently in the manifesto, as did judicial reform, in which they stressed the importance of eliminating favoritism, instituting equality before the law, and making courts accessible to the poor by eliminating the fees and emoluments that plaintiffs paid. But Pedro I, should he dare to return to Brazil, would receive no due process from the rebels, who authorized any Brazilian to kill him on the spot. The manifesto, however, had its limits.

Nowhere did it mention slavery, and racial discrimination was only addressed implicitly in the calls for equality before the law. In this sense, Daniel and his companions spoke for the free, not for slaves; by stressing the importance of equality and due process, they were seeking to consolidate and extend the opportunities that the 1824 constitution had offered them.

Within two and one-half years, Daniel was out of prison and being considered for assignment to one of the vacant posts in Bahia's artillery battalion. In this case, the garrison commander named a more junior officer to the post, but in 1836, as the most senior unemployed second lieutenant, Daniel was assigned to another vacancy in the Third Artillery. This sudden reversal of fortune was due both to the lax legal system, which almost always acquitted "middle-class" conspirators like Daniel after they had spent a few years in prison, and to army officers' corporate loyalty to one another. No officer wished to set a precedent for cashiering his colleagues, for under different political circumstances, such a precedent might be turned against him. Daniel's difficulty in finding employment after his release from prison also reflected another feature of officers' life in the 1830s. Given the army cutbacks early in the decade, there was a great surplus of officers; while these men were paid, they had little to do, and they did not gain the salary supplements that officers serving in battalions received. Moreover, given the surplus of officers and tight budgets, the government suspended promotions. Not surprisingly, army officers complained a great deal about these cutbacks and came to nurture deep grievances against the regency government. The civilian National Guard added insult to injury, especially since the old militia had been under army control and a place where many army officers spent part of their career. Earlier in the decade (while Daniel was still in prison), they formed the Sociedade Militar (Officers' Club) to lobby for their interests and published a newspaper, *O Militar* (The Officer), that expressed their concerns. By the time that Daniel was released, both the club and the newspaper were moribund, but officers' professional concerns remained.

Army officers' grievances and the long tradition of radical liberal and federalist agitation merged in the Sabinada Rebellion that, for a brief time, catapulted Daniel to prominence. The origins of this rebellion, which broke out on the night of November 6—7, 1837, remain obscure. Moreover, Daniel's memoir of the rebellion is missing its beginning pages, removed in all likelihood to destroy incriminating evidence. As a result, we know nothing of Daniel's role in the preparations, but it must have been significant, for he took the post of war minister in the rebellion's government. The Sabinada officially justified itself as a response to the Regresso, the conservative turn of the imperial government in September 1837, promising to address radical liberals' concerns. Both of Salvador's army battalions supported the movement, while the National Guard mounted only ineffective opposition. Once in control of the city, the rebels convened a meeting of the city council at which they proclaimed a republic and declared Bahia to be completely independent of Rio de Janeiro. Like the federalists of 1833, they promised elections and a constituent assembly. That day, the rebels also addressed military grievances, promoting the principal conspirators (Daniel vaulted four grades from second lieutenant to lieutenant colonel) and promoting all officers by two ranks. Generous salary increases were awarded to officers and men. They also established a civilian government, which was dominated by Francisco Sabino Álvares da Rocha Vieira, who

officially held the post of government secretary. Like Daniel and Sabino (who lent his name to the movement), other members of the rebel cabinet had long histories of involvement in radical politics, including a briefly lucid Manoel Pedro de Freitas Guimaraes, who served as navy minister.

Four days later, the rebels had a change of heart and revised their declaration of independence to limit it to the remaining period of Pedro II's minority, expected to end in 1844 when he turned eighteen. This curious decision, which drew much mockery from the rebellion's enemies, reflects the durability of the monarchy, its symbolic importance, and perhaps also a hope that Pedro II would reverse the Regresso when he came to rule directly. For the rest of November, the rebels gradually defined their political aims. They talked a great deal, condemning the domination of Brazil by the imperial government in Rio de Janeiro and stressing their love of order and their determination to protect private property. Anti-Portuguese rhetoric once again came to the fore. The government abolished the National Guard and called up officers and men of the old army-controlled militias.

Although the Sabinada had triumphed in Salvador, it failed to carry the Recôncavo. There, much as they had in 1822, sugar planters mobilized their forces and laid siege to the city. The imperial government, already facing rebellions in two other provinces, sent the troops that could be spared and imposed a naval blockade on Salvador. As war minister, Daniel had overall responsibility for the defense of Salvador and, more important, for offensive operations, for he and other rebel leaders recognized that if they were confined to the city, they would share the fate of the Portuguese troops in 1823. Unfortunately, the rebel forces were singularly unsuccessful in extending the rebellion's reach. An attack on Itaparica island, opposite Salvador, failed. Only late in the war did they manage to launch a significant expeditionary force into the Recôncavo, but it was soon dispersed. Both the besiegers and the rebels dug themselves in, and the war quickly turned into a stalemate that the rebels could not win.

Early in the rebellion, Daniel suffered from erysipelas, an unpleasant skin inflammation, which made it difficult for him to inspect the front lines. Rather, he busied himself with overseeing the all-important production of ammunition. The city's arsenals were well equipped for the manufacture of cartridges, and large quantities of supplies were on hand. According to Daniel, he managed to increase output so that the rebels' troops never suffered shortages. Daniel's memoir also hints at disagreements among the rebel leadership over military strategy, squabbles over seniority, and disputes over policy toward those who wished to flee the city and toward those who wanted to continue trade with the Recôncavo. Looking at these problems from a tactical and strategic angle, Daniel was willing to permit the emigration of women, children, and the elderly, but not that of able-bodied men and slaves who could be put to use. He complained bitterly about the issuance of licenses to export food from the besieged city.

Two major problems bedeviled Daniel in early 1838. As the city's position became increasingly hopeless, the lower classes became more and more restive, with violent attacks on individual Portuguese taking place and sporadic attempts to burn the properties of Sabinada

enemies or those who (worse yet for the plebeians) deserted the cause. Daniel was horrified by these outbursts of popular violence by what an English doctor called the “infuriated black and mulatto mob,”³ and he repeatedly detached troops to keep order and to protect property.

Slavery posed a more complex problem for Daniel and the rest of the rebel leadership. Initially, they gave it little thought, except to declare that they considered abolition to be “supine stupidity,” possibly an attempt to deflect the inevitable accusations that they were fostering slave rebellion.⁴ They hired the slave porters who usually worked on the docks to carry supplies to the trenches and likely intended nothing more than using slaves in such support roles. By the end of December, it became clear from masters’ complaints that some rebel commanders were admitting slaves into their units. Daniel repeatedly ordered that such slaves be returned to their owners, especially since their enlistment was causing problems in the ranks because some free men refused to serve alongside them. Daniel opposed the solution that the civilian government found in early January—the creation of a battalion of Brazilian-born black freedmen, whose owners would be compensated by the receipt of half of their former slaves’ salary. Late in February the rebel government went one step further, proclaiming the freedom of all Brazilian-born slaves who would take up arms in the Sabinada’s defense. Daniel vigorously protested this measure as well, declaring that he took no responsibility for the outcome and implementing it with extreme reluctance.

The refusal of free soldiers to associate with slaves and freedmen reflects one of the major fissures in nineteenth-century Brazilian society, as does the Sabinada government’s decision to free only creole slaves. Creoles were only a minority of Salvador’s slaves, two-thirds of whom were Africans. While the rebels could conceive of Creoles as part of their defense forces, they did not see Africans as even potentially part of the Brazilian community. The great 1835 slave rebellion, led by African Muslims, reinforced this view, and when the Sabinada’s enemies accused the rebels of enlisting Africans, one of its newspapers declared that “the simple fact that we are Bahians, and free Bahians,” belied the imputation.⁵ Africans were simply not part of the “nation” as the rebels envisaged it, and many had doubts about creole slaves as well.

While Daniel’s memoir of the Sabinada is an invaluable historical source, it is strikingly devoid of political content. He did not, for instance, comment on the racial politics of the revolt. As the white upper classes fled Salvador in November and December, outside observers came to see the Sabinada as a race war: “Appearances are materially changed since the commencement of the insurrection and . . . are at present more those of a war of color than anything else,” wrote the British vice consul in January 1838.⁶ Rebel newspapers expressed the frustrations of upwardly mobile men of color for whom the constitution’s provisions of equality were insufficient protection against discrimination. One declared of the Sabinada’s enemies: “They are warring against us because they are whites, and in Bahia there must be no blacks and mulattoes, especially in office, unless they are very rich and change their liberal opinions.”⁷ Supporters of the Sabinada were also divided over racial questions, with some calling for radical solutions. Late in the revolt, a black militia officer, José de Santa Eufrása, declared “that he was [all too] used to being ruled by whites” and that “blacks should govern

the Republic.”⁸ Where Daniel stood on these issues is impossible to determine from his memoir, but his silence about race is consistent with army policy toward officers—they were assumed to be white men—and with the views of an upwardly mobile elite of “men of color” who sought integration into the upper class on the basis of full equality, which meant that they avoided explicit discussions of race.

Daniel’s memoir resembles, as Paulo Cesar Souza has put it, the report of a “zealous functionary” rather than that of an ideologically motivated rebel leader.⁹ He once noted that enthusiastic civilians took out a field gun amid shouts of “Long live liberty!” and “Death to the [Portuguese] rogues!” but most of the passage is devoted to criticism of the officer who permitted them to take the weapon that they did not know how to use.¹⁰ In another passage, he expresses his disgust at fellow officers who continued to accept slaves in their units, despite explicit orders to the contrary, wondering what would happen to a government “whose orders were mocked at every turn by those who called themselves leaders of the Revolution fighting for equality and [proper] execution of the law.”¹¹ By contrast, Daniel considered himself to be an exemplary and upright servant of the republic: “I resolved never to tolerate immorality and crime, having delinquents punished with the sanctions that were within my competence, as soon as they were convicted of their evildoing, as is well-known [and evidenced] by the numerous decrees and orders transcribed in the newspapers.”¹² For Daniel, adherence to law, due process, and correct procedure constituted the way to a better society.

On the morning of March 13, 1838, Daniel and another officer set out in a launch to inspect the escarpment along the city’s west side with an eye to improving the defenses against seaborne assault. When they returned to the docks, disastrous news greeted them. Enemy forces had breached the city’s defenses on the north side and were rapidly advancing toward the downtown, with Sabinada troops retreating even faster. At this point, the focus of Daniel’s memoir narrows to that which he experienced personally, as soldiers’ recollections of combat typically do. He hastened to Fort São Pedro, on the city’s south end and close to the arsenal, where he oversaw the supply of munitions to those rebel troops still under discipline. Perhaps because of his distance from the fighting, he reported nothing about the massacres of defenders. However, the official report by the commander of imperial forces put the number of rebel dead at 1,091 against only 40 government soldiers, and there were later numerous allegations of murders and atrocities committed by the victorious soldiers, especially against black defenders of the Sabinada.

From the fort’s parapets, Daniel saw many downtown buildings ablaze, as the arsonists whom he could not contain took revenge on their enemies. Much to his disgust, he witnessed the breakdown of discipline, as retreating soldiers broke into stores and got thoroughly drunk instead of facing the enemy. Worse yet, he saw rebel officers in civilian dress abandoning their posts, and watched another wander around the fort in a stupor, perhaps because he had tried to poison himself (the man eventually recovered). By March 15, the situation around the fort was desperate, with government troops only a few blocks away. Daniel and a few other officers considered organizing a retreat up the coast, hoping to break through thinly held enemy lines, but they found that they had insufficient slaves to carry their supplies. (That they might carry

their own supplies apparently did not occur to them!) Finally, at 4:00 P.M., Daniel and a small party, including a few officers and soldiers, abandoned the fort, successfully eluding the government forces closing in from the south and east.

At this point, Daniel's narrative ends abruptly, giving no indication of how he managed to avoid arrest for three years. He only resurfaced in 1840, after the prematurely crowned Pedro II issued an amnesty to all those who had taken part in rebellions against his reign. Rumors occasionally placed him in other provinces, but none was confirmed. During that time, authorities charged him with numerous offenses. No court-martial records from the Sabinada have come to light, but civilian authorities threw the book at him, charging him with everything from destroying the independence and integrity of the Empire, offending the constitution and the royal family, and attacking the regent to fraud, piracy, murder, bribery, and assault. Probably the most serious indictment was that of fomenting slave insurrection, defined as participating in a violent movement of twenty or more slaves to win their freedom. This crime carried the death penalty (as did the murder charge). But the wheels of justice turned slowly in imperial Brazil, and in 1840 the charges against those of Daniel's companions who had been captured were still being appealed. All of them survived to claim the benefits of the amnesty in 1840.

Little is known about the rest of Daniel's life. By the amnesty's terms, he was ordered to reside in São Paulo, where he again tried to resume his army career. He had the nerve to request back pay for the time that he had been in hiding, noting that he had already reimbursed the salary that he had illegally drawn during the Sabinada (since he had been acquitted of all crimes, he judged that he had the right to the salary that he would have otherwise received). This argument had little legal merit and was rejected out of hand. In 1842, Daniel apparently took part in the brief liberal rebellion in São Paulo, after which he disappeared, reportedly joining the remnants of the Farroupilha Rebellion, a republican movement in the extreme south of Brazil.

Second Lieutenant Daniel Gomes de Freitas was only thirty-six when he dropped out of sight. In his short life (or at least the part of it that we know about), he experienced all of the complex and difficult issues that Brazilians struggled with after Independence. The numerous rebellions in which he participated clearly demonstrate that Independence was not a peaceful, consensual process and underscore the fact that Brazilians were deeply divided over fundamental issues. Independence, as far as Daniel was concerned, settled little or nothing; rather, it opened up Brazilian society to a broad debate over the form of the state and the nature of society. His adherence to liberal ideals may seem naive to us today, but it highlights just how powerful and attractive concepts of equality before the law were at that time. Of course, slavery was always a stumbling block for liberals, and it was difficult for them to envisage slaves (and especially Africans) as part of the nation. Effective liberal reform would have opened Brazilian society and satisfied many of the aspirations of men like Daniel, for whom Independence offered the prospect of social mobility and a greater say in the organization of their state and their nation.

NOTES

1 Francisco de Sierra y Mariscal, "Idéas geraes sobre a revolução do Brasil e suas

consequências,” *Anais da Biblioteca Nacional* 43–44 (1920–21): 65.

2 Daniel Gomes de Freitas, “Narrativa dos sucessos da Sabinada,” *Publicações do Arquivo do Estado da Bahia* 1 (1937): 275.

3 Robert Dundas, *Sketches of Brazil . . .* (London: John Churchill, 1852), 395.

4 Proclamation, November 14, 1837, *Jornal do Comércio* (Rio de Janeiro), November 27, 1837.

5 *O Sete de Novembro* (Salvador), November 25, 1837.

6 Vice consul to minister to Brazil, Salvador, January 13, 1838, Great Britain, Public Record Office, Foreign Office 13, vol. 143, vol. 187v.

7 *Novo Diário da Bahia*, December 26, 1837.

8 Freitas, “Narrativa,” 341.

9 Paulo Cesar Souza, *A Sabinada: A revolta separatista da Bahia (1837)* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1987), 49.

10 Freitas, “Narrativa,” 269.

11 *Ibid.*, 277.

12 *Ibid.*, 286.

SUGGESTED READINGS

The principal sources on Daniel Gomes de Freitas are his petitions file in Rio de Janeiro’s Arquivo Histórico do Exército (D-5-135) and his memoir of the Sabinada Rebellion, “Narrativa dos sucessos da Sabinada,” in *Publicações do Arquivo do Estado da Bahia* 1 (1937): 261–333. There are numerous additional references to him scattered through archives in Rio de Janeiro and Salvador and the contemporary press. On the Sabinada see Paulo Cesar Souza, *A Sabinada: A revolta separatista da Bahia (1837)* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1987); and Hendrik Kraay, “‘As Terrifying as Unexpected’: The Bahian Sabinada, 1837–38,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 72:4 (November 1992): 501–27. Three English-language monographs provide the essential context for the society in which Daniel lived: Hendrik Kraay, *Race, State, and Armed Forces in Independence-Era Brazil: Bahia, 1790s–1840s* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001); João José Reis, *Slave Rebellion in Brazil: The Muslim Uprising of 1835 in Bahia*, trans. Arthur Brakel (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993); and Roderick J. Barman, *Brazil: The Forging of a Nation, 1798–1852* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988). Hebe Maria Mattos’s suggestive essay, *Escravidão e cidadania no Brasil monárquico* (Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar Editor, 2000),

also influenced this chapter.

CHAPTER 2

Agostinho José Pereira

The Divine Teacher^a

MARCUS J. M. DE CARVALHO

The story of the Divine Teacher (Divino Mestre), Agostinho José Pereira, pairs well with the preceding biography of Daniel Gomes de Freitas. Whereas Daniel might have been a light-skinned mulatto and was from a relatively privileged family, authorities described Agostinho as “black” and, even though he was a freeman, from more humble social origins. Whereas Daniel represented the aspirations of many Brazilians from the middle sectors of urban society, Agostinho gives us a rare glimpse of how some Brazilians of African descent understood events and the language of liberty, equality, and brotherhood that Independence, regional rebellions, and late-eighteenth-century revolutions had evoked. It should be emphasized that the views of these individuals and their compatriots should not be construed as typical of all free poor Afro-Brazilians or middle-class “whites,” but they probably did reflect the sentiments of many who shared their backgrounds. Although a variety of viewpoints existed in these communities, certain events or issues could galvanize or split them. For instance, fear of the Portuguese, or Lusophobia (an important component of early Brazilian national identity, much like fear of the British in the United States), could unite the Brazilian-born across racial lines. Fear of slave rebellion or a race war, however, tended to bring Portuguese- and Brazilian-born whites together.

*Marcus J. M. de Carvalho, associate professor of history at the Universidade Federal de Pernambuco in Recife, Brazil, has published on a broad array of issues related to the history of Pernambuco. He has analyzed the political transition from the colonial period through the first decades of Independence and the role that Pernambucan Indians played in political violence between rival elite factions. His book *Liberdade: Rotinas e rupturas do escravismo no Recife, 1822—1850* (2001) explores slavery in one of Brazil’s most important urban centers. In this chapter, he highlights the*

hybrid and varied nature of religious practices and beliefs and how they were deeply interconnected with post-Independence political struggles for many Afro-Brazilians.

In 1846 police jailed the free black man Agostinho José Pereira in the streets of Recife, Pernambuco, along with six other black men and six black women who referred to Agostinho as the Divino Mestre (Divine Teacher). Despite their black skin, none of the prisoners was a slave, and in a nation where most whites were illiterate, they all knew how to read. At least one of the detainees went to jail of his own free will because he did not want to leave Agostinho's side in his moment of misfortune. The provincial chief of police said that Agostinho had preached for five years in Recife, but he suspected that his "sect" was a front for an organization plotting a black uprising, and that the detainees were in contact with secret societies established in other provinces that also planned similar insurrections. This suspicion was a damning one. If proved, it would likely lead to Agostinho's execution as well as to sentences of *galés* (life at hard labor in fetters, a punishment often reserved for slave convicts) for his principal followers. The Divino Mestre's adversaries wrote almost all that we now know about him. Court authorities preserved his only chance to speak for himself in the testimony he gave during his trial. In Brazil, very few blacks were literate and they left behind few written accounts of their own perceptions. This lack of documentation contrasts with the relative abundance of slave and free black narratives and memoirs published by abolitionists in the United States. Thus, the testimonies of the spiritual leader Agostinho and his followers are of particular value because they shed light on how some of the mostly nonwhite free population made sense of Brazil's political independence in Recife, the country's third largest city in the mid-1800s.

After Agostinho's imprisonment, the authorities detained nine more suspects, but the press speculated that there were about 300 members of the Divine Teacher's sect in Recife, the majority of whom were women. Pernambuco's highest court interrogated seven black men and seven black women about their relationship with the Divine Teacher. They learned that Agostinho had taught them all how to read and write, a fact that in itself made the authorities suspicious because it was so uncommon. Agostinho's testimony confirmed that he had taught many black men and women how to read and write to better instruct them in the Holy Scriptures. He also admitted that he believed that images and statues of the saints had no spiritual value, but he denied the rumor that he had symbolically drowned an image of Christ to make this point. For Agostinho, what really mattered was the Word of God, which he claimed to have come to know through "divine inspiration" by way of a holy "vision." The court's judges openly laughed at this assertion. But the black pastor was not shaken, and he argued that it was among the simple folk that God chose His prophets.

For Recife's officials, it was difficult to place the Divine Teacher within more run-of-the-mill popular religious practices that they had come to tolerate, even though they found most of them distasteful. For instance, there were many spiritual leaders of religions imported from Africa in makeshift religious houses, known as *terreiros*, on Recife's outskirts. As in other

parts of Brazil, Recife's blacks crowned their kings of Congo, gave parties, organized impromptu drumming sessions, and practiced their cults at the margin of Catholicism. Outsiders tended to view these religious rituals with suspicion, and from time to time the authorities repressed them. There was also "black" Catholicism, sometimes insincere but often real, even fervent. One of Recife's principal churches was the headquarters of the lay black sisterhood of Rosário dos Pretos, one of the oldest in Brazil. This church tended to the Catholic religious needs of blacks, primarily slaves, who donated most of the resources and labor for its construction. The Divine Teacher, however, did not fit these religious categories. Brazilian authorities, most of whom saw themselves as defenders of Catholicism, the nation's official religion, found it distressing that a poor free black man was preaching a different kind of Christianity, namely, Protestantism, in Recife's streets. That the judges of Pernambuco's highest court and not lower-level justices of the peace interrogated Agostinho makes it clear how disquieting his activities were to the province's most powerful leaders.

Agostinho's arrest, however, contradicted Brazilian law that had established limited tolerance for Protestant religious observances since 1810. It is important to recall that when Brazil was still a Portuguese colony, the Napoleonic invasion of Iberia forced Portugal's royal family to flee Lisbon and establish the headquarters of their empire in Rio de Janeiro in 1808. The British provided protection and transportation to the beleaguered Portuguese crown, which in return opened Brazil's ports to free trade. Treaties signed in 1810 between Lisbon and London mandated religious tolerance for British merchants who sought to practice their religion while resident in Brazil. The law allowed for the construction of Protestant churches, as long as their exteriors gave no indication that they were places of religious worship, and forbade public proselytizing of the Protestant faith. If these rules were disobeyed, the criminal code directed that the offending church's membership be dispersed and fined. Their church's religious objects would be destroyed, but no one would be imprisoned for this crime.

The Protestants who came to Brazil after 1810 practiced their faith without incident. The Reverend John Penny signed the first baptismal certificate of Recife's Anglican Church in 1822, the same year that Brazil became an independent nation with Britain's crucial support. In 1823 an American pastor distributed more than fifty Protestant Bibles in Pernambuco. Ten years later an Englishman left a box full of Scriptures for whoever desired to take them. At the end of 1830 an American pastor named Kidder commented that the religious tolerance for his faith in Recife contrasted greatly with other parts of the world. In 1839 the Anglican Church inaugurated its place of worship in Recife, an imposing building of neoclassical design on the Capibaribe River and upscale Aurora Street adjacent to Recife's city center. Despite the 1810 treaty, the building had all the exterior appearances of a religious temple.

Britain also had the world's largest abolitionist movement, whose leaders had often been influenced by Protestant ideas of the dignity of physical labor. The British government had been pressuring Brazil to end the international slave trade since the 1810s, and it abolished slavery in its Caribbean colonies in 1833. Given this pressure, one can better see why Protestantism might appeal to members of Recife's nonwhite population.

The Padroado Régio (a treaty with the Vatican) conferred on the Brazilian state the right to

directly influence the Catholic Church's administration in Brazil in return for the state's financial aid and support of Catholicism as the official national religion. The limits of the state's intervention in the business of the Church, and vice versa, were motives for disputes between the imperial government and the Vatican. During the Regency (1831—1840), when Pedro II was too young to assume his throne, the head regent Father Diogo Antonio Feijó, who was himself a Catholic priest, considered the possibility of forming a Brazilian church like England's Anglican Church—that is, a national church independent from the pope's authority. Brazilian priests openly disobeyed the Catholic Church's celibacy requirement, and some, like Feijó, called for its abolition. Priests in Brazil and much of Latin America often played important roles in public life in the 1800s, and many became influential politicians. The sons and daughters of many clergymen took their fathers' surnames with pride, like the descendants of one of the martyrs of Brazil's struggle for Independence, Padre Roma. His heirs have continued to pass down his name across the generations.

One could accurately say that Brazilian Catholicism was much more Brazilian than Roman. Catholicism in Portuguese America had developed in relative isolation from direct Vatican oversight for three centuries, and it was shaped by a variety of native and transplanted religious traditions and cosmologies. In Brazil, after all, traditional Portuguese Catholics lived alongside and interacted with Indians, forcibly converted Moors and Jews, Africans, gypsies, and a host of Catholic religious orders from different parts of Europe that congregated in novel combinations across Portuguese America's vast territory. The interpenetrating conflicts, inquisitions, compromises, adaptations, and resistance that occurred as these different traditions jostled against one another in the New World gave Brazilian culture a creole flexibility. Thus, the Christianity that Brazilian "Catholics" practiced in Recife had its own unique traditions, which up to the 1840s had been little influenced by attempts to bring greater cohesion and conformity to Catholicism in Europe since at least the sixteenth century.

One of the great strengths of Catholicism historically has been its ability to incorporate aspects of pagan religious practices. An example of this adaptability is the marriage of a black Brazilian-born groom to a brown bride in the respectable "white" Church of Our Lady of Penha on the last day of Carnival to the music of African and indigenous instruments. Another example is the celebration of All Saints Day, when women sway their hips sensually to the sound of *lundum*, a rhythm and dance of African origin whose seeming lewdness shocked many devout European Catholics. But, despite the disapproval of more orthodox Catholics, there was much faith invested in the gods, goddesses, saints, *mestres*, and other entities and divinities whom Brazilians worshipped according to their preferences. The joy of religious processions, the parallel devotions to entities and divinities of diverse religious traditions, their messianic and millenarian beliefs, and the contracts believed to exist between divinities and humans were all manifestations of the intense religiousness that pulsed through the tension-ridden streets of Recife in the post-Independence period. These beliefs could turn at times against the slavocratic regime supported by formal Catholicism just as it could against the followers of Agostinho.

If there was a certain tradition of religious tolerance, even within Catholicism, in Recife and other parts of Brazil in the mid-1800s, why did Agostinho make authorities so nervous? Why

did the suspicion that he was furtively organizing a rebellion among Recife's black population exist? A wider view of the historical context makes this inquiry more understandable.

The city of Recife (literally, reef) grew out of the settlement of an isthmus between the Capibaribe River and the ocean that was protected by a line of reefs that formed a natural harbor for commerce. In 1836 the British naturalist Charles Darwin marveled at the extent and straightness of Recife's reefs. After its port opened in 1537, Recife became one of the most important centers of transatlantic trade because of the natural harbor and because of Pernambuco's rich coastal soils that were ideal for sugarcane. After riding the crest of an economic boom in the seventeenth century, the fortunes of one of the oldest commercial ports in the Americas began to waver in the eighteenth century due to increased competition in sugar production from the Caribbean. Even though Pernambuco would never again attain the commercial heights it once enjoyed, sugar production continued to rise through the end of the 1800s. As long as shipping depended on the sail, Recife enjoyed economic advantages that secured its continued, if somewhat sluggish, growth. Recife's port and its position on the easternmost part of the South American continent, favored by trade winds, gave it privileged access to markets in Africa and Europe.

After 1808, Recife grew more rapidly when the Portuguese crown allowed for free trade in Brazil's ports. With Independence in 1822, Pernambucan men of property who wanted to play a role in politics built houses in Recife, the center of regional and provincial politics and soon to be home to one of two national law schools that trained most of Brazil's politicians and bureaucrats. This influx of well-to-do families called for a small army of slave and free servants. The expansion of trade and the creation of a provincial bureaucracy offered new opportunities in Recife for rich and poor citizens, and it led to a growth in urban population. By 1840, a census showed that Recife was home to some 40,000 residents, about one-fifth of whom were slaves. Even though slaves constituted a minority of the urban community, most of the city's population was nonwhite. Brazilian masters manumitted slaves at much higher rates than did their counterparts in the United States, and Recife's population had practiced more than three centuries of race mixture. In 1842 a census that included parishes outside the urban boundaries of the city indicated that browns and blacks accounted for 58 percent of the population. Of the some 18,443 slaves counted in 1842, 52 percent were African-born. This high percentage of African slaves reflected the ongoing international slave trade to Brazil that only came to an end in 1850, and also the fact that the slave labor force depended on importation rather than natural reproduction to sustain itself. The census likely minimized the nonwhite population's size. Slaves were the most important measure of wealth in Brazil, where land was abundant and relatively cheap, and many masters sought to hide the actual numbers of slaves they owned from census takers to evade taxes. Also, many wealthy Brazilians with swarthy skin and African features (some of whom owned slaves) were counted as "whites" because, in a race-based slave society, to be characterized as brown or black held a stigma that most social climbers sought to avoid. As a popular Brazilian expression notes, "money whitens."

The large number of free black and brown Brazilians in Recife made it easier for runaway slaves to pose as free men or women and to find work in the growing anonymity of the city's

urban labor market. Even though most of these fugitive slaves would eventually be discovered and returned to their owners, Recife's multiracial labor market made it difficult for the authorities to distinguish between slaves and free people of color and frustrated those who wanted to enforce the discipline of the slave regime. The political turbulence that rocked Recife in the first half of the 1800s redoubled these frustrations. Historians refer to this period as the "cycle of liberal insurrections of Brazil's northeast." These uprisings included the Pernambucan Insurrection in 1817, the Equator Confederation in 1824, and the Praieira Revolt in 1848; each centered in Recife. These political insurgencies began as conflicts between factions of powerful, mostly "white" Brazilians, but the instability they generated made it possible for expressions of black rebellion to surface. After all, liberal rhetoric of equality, liberty, and natural rights must have appealed to the slaves and free people of color whose opportunities and freedom were severely limited by law and custom. Men of color and slaves who joined liberal insurrectionary factions often had very different visions of what they were fighting for.

In 1846, at the time of his trial, Pastor Agostinho testified that he was born in 1799 in the Recife borough of Boa Vista, the son of a Brazilian-born slave mother. In Recife, Agostinho would have witnessed many of the bloody struggles fueled by liberal rhetoric. He was fifteen when officials publicly whipped a large number of bondsmen suspected of plotting a revolt rumored to be planned for June 29, 1814—the day of the Holy Spirit, an important religious holiday. To ensure public order, officials transferred the province's principal army battalion from nearby Olinda to Recife. The travel writer Louis François Tollenare wrote that some of these conspirators were executed for their parts in the plot. Among those implicated were the freed slaves Domingos do Carmo, the "king of Congo and of all the nations of Guine," and Joaquim Barbosa, the "captain of the *ganhadores*." *Ganhadores*, or *escravos de ganho*, were most often urban slaves who lived on their own and worked for wages, a large share of which they regularly paid to their owners.

Soon thereafter, the Insurrection of 1817 began with a barracks putsch led by local army officers in Recife who were supported by most of the city's merchants, lawyers, priests, and rural property owners linked to the city's Masonic lodges, the hothouses of liberal thought in the Americas and Europe. These rebel factions took over the local government, and they instituted a provisional republic that governed Pernambuco for seventy-one days until they were defeated by royal troops. The short-lived republic did not advocate the abolition of slavery, but its need for well-trained soldiers led it to entrust the defense of two of the city's principal forts to the Henrique Battalion, a militia composed of free black men who were reinforced by slaves owned by the rebellion's supporters. To further protect the "republic," the rebel government armed several hundred slaves to patrol the city. The Henrique Battalion's barracks were located in the borough of Boa Vista, where Agostinho had been born.

The forces that ultimately defeated the liberal rebels included many local property owners, who armed their paramilitary retinues of black troops in defense of the Portuguese monarchy. During the confusion of battle, many slaves took advantage of the disorder to run away and to hide in the forests outside of Recife. Mopping-up operations by royal forces included hunting down slaves who had fled, some of whom had fought with the rebels. Royal troops publicly

whipped any slaves found with arms and then returned the injured bondsmen to their owners.

Brazil's course toward independence was accelerated by an 1820 revolt in Porto, Portugal, whose leaders demanded that their king, João VI, leave Brazil and return to rule in Portugal. Dom João VI preferred living in Brazil, and he had happily ruled his far-flung kingdom from Rio de Janeiro long after Napoleon's ultimate defeat in 1815. The Porto accords gave Brazilian provinces the right to form their own local governments and to select representatives for a constitutional assembly that would meet in Portugal. The competition for public offices that this agreement instigated sometimes led to conflicts. Local elites often mobilized their black and brown clients to support their political ambitions and to intimidate their opponents. Amid these local conflicts, Pedro I, the son of Dom João VI, who had remained in Brazil after his father returned to Portugal, declared Brazil's independence. Pedro assumed the title of emperor and called for the election of a constitutional assembly to draft a charter for the new nation in Rio de Janeiro. In February 1823 disputes over these elections led the black and brown militia forces of Recife to impose martial rule over the city for a week under the command of the brown officer Pedro Pedroso. The racial and ethnic tensions that marked this week were apparent in the lyrics sung by many of Pedro Pedroso's supporters:

Portuguese and Brazilians who paint themselves white	Marinheiros e caiados
All have to go	Todos vão se acabar
Because only blacks and browns	Porque só pardos e pretos
Are bound to inhabit Brazil.	O Brasil hão de habitar.

At the end of 1823, Pedro I summarily closed the constitutional assembly that he had called together months earlier. Many representatives thought that Pedro had acted illegally in disbanding an assembly that drew its authority from the electorate (a liberal ideal of the social contract that gives government legitimacy) rather than the monarch (whose legitimacy is assumed to be divine). Pernambuco's assembly representatives returned to Recife at the same time as the Pernambucan troops who had fought for Brazil's independence against Portuguese loyalists in Bahia. These forces brought to power a faction in Recife sympathetic to federalism (which favored greater powers for local government) and liberal constitutionalism that was critical of Pedro, who desired a strong central government based in Rio de Janeiro. Since the emperor would not recognize the legitimacy of this local government, its leaders declared their secession from the rest of Brazil in July 1824. They called their new state the Equator Confederation, but it was destined to be short-lived. When Pedro's imperial navy blockaded Recife, throngs of mostly black and brown Recifenses took to the streets and threatened to sack the stores and warehouses of Portuguese merchants. The city's police and militia forces contained the riotous mob. Ironically, those on the front lines of the forces of public order were the brown and black militia. Oral tradition has preserved protest songs sung in the streets

during those heady days of disorder:

I will imitate [Henri] Christophe	Qual eu imito a Cristovao
That immortal Haitian leader	Esse imortal haitiano
Hurrah! We will imitate his people	Eia! Imitai a seu povo
Oh, my sovereign people!	Oh, meu povo soberano!

Henri Christophe, the famous emperor of Haiti, was already dead in 1824, but the news of the Haitian Revolution had spread throughout the Americas. Haiti had become an internationally recognized independent government in 1804 after a long struggle fought mostly by Haitian slaves had liberated the former French colony. Haiti was the first nation in the Americas to abolish slavery and the first black republic. Slaveowners throughout the Americas feared the example set by Haitian slaves, but many black and brown Brazilians, slave and free, obviously drew inspiration from it.

In his 1846 testimony, Agostinho admitted that he had defended the Equator Confederation as a militia officer, but he qualified his support by stating that he had done so because of his commander's orders. This experience must have influenced Agostinho's views. The Equator Confederation included radical liberals, and in its final days it declared an end to the international slave trade. The victorious imperial forces executed the movement's leaders and flogged lesser supporters. As further punishment, some were pressed into the imperial army as common soldiers; many of them were soon transferred to Brazil's southernmost reaches to fight in the Cisplatine War of 1825–1828 against Argentina. What happened to Agostinho as a result of his involvement in this rebellion is uncertain. But his testimony revealed that he was on duty outside of Pernambuco in Rio de Janeiro and Bahia in the years after the conspiracy. The judges suspected that the Divine Teacher was an army deserter.

Whether Agostinho was an army deserter or only a militia officer, as he alleged, he had served outside of Pernambuco. His military training and his experience with other men from different regions who shared similar social origins, hopes, and ambitions must have been a transformative experience for him. During his travels, Agostinho must have acquired a larger vision of the world than that permitted by the limited everyday lives of most poor Brazilian-born men and women. Many impoverished Brazilians lived and died in the same province, the same town, and some even on the same street or plantation.

The Divine Teacher claimed to have learned how to read and write from his slave mother's mistress. Literacy likely made it possible for him to advance to an officer's rank in the colored militia at a young age. Who knows if he had already begun to teach literacy to his counterparts at that time? Captain Pedro Pedroso, who led the barracks revolt of the nonwhite militias in

1823, taught algebra to his cellmates when he was imprisoned for his role in the uprising of 1817. A black man who knew how to read and write had additional arms to deploy: the capacity to transmit information and the authority that knowledge of the Holy Scriptures gave to religious Christians.

One can only speculate about what happened to Agostinho after the Equator Confederation revolt was crushed in 1824. Perhaps he fought in the Cisplatine War against Argentina. If he had, Agostinho would have witnessed the mobilization of the Brazilian army to fight a war against republican adversaries who advocated the abolition of slavery. If he had stayed in Pernambuco in the 1820s, he would have witnessed other creative combinations of political struggle and religiosity. The golden days of the runaway slave community called Catucá began in the wooded suburbs of Recife and then snaked its way north in between sugar plantations. In 1827 the Pernambucan government suspected that Catucá's leader, Malunguinho, planned to attack the city. Officials thought that this bold plan had been inspired by a rebellion in Salvador, Bahia, that had seen cooperation between slaves and members of runaway or maroon communities. It was yet one more indication that Brazilian slaves had developed complex channels of communication that kept them abreast of the news of slaves in other parts of the Americas. Undoubtedly, black sailors, slave and free, spread news of the revolt in Recife's port because officials did their best to censor public accounts of these events.

The controversy and struggle with the maroon community of Catucá had an impact on the spiritual life of blacks in Pernambuco. The Pernambucan Cult of the Sacred Jurema (a small sweet fruit, sometimes used to make wine) combined Catholic, indigenous, and African religious practices and beliefs. As in most Afro-spiritist religions, different divine spirits were invoked during religious rituals. Some of these divinities were African in origin, such as Ogun and Exu, but in Brazil new divinities based on local archetypes became part of popular religion, such as the *mestre* and the *caboclo* (backwoodsman). But in Pernambuco, Catucá's maroon leader, Malunguinho, became a sacred entity still invoked to this day before the altars of the Sacred Jurema. Perhaps this cult of Malunguinho already existed in the 1840s when Agostinho was arrested. While other historical leaders of maroon communities became part of Afro-spiritist cults in other parts of the Americas, as Makandal did in Haitian Vodun, this was not common. Thus, Malunguinho had achieved a distinct place in popular memory and religion. Apparently, the Divino Mestre was not the only one to combine religious fervor and political struggle.

The limited information we have about Agostinho forces us to speculate about possible influences in his life because we know little for certain about his activities between 1824 and his arrest in 1846. We do know that if he served in the army or the militia in the latter half of the 1820s, he would have witnessed intense agitation in the barracks in almost any part of Brazil. The lengthy delays in the payment of soldiers' wages, the poor quality of mess food, coercive recruitment practices, and the floggings to which privates were subject heightened tensions in the ranks across Brazil. In 1827 and 1828, German and Irish mercenaries hired by Pedro I in the wake of the Cisplatine War rioted in a number of provinces to complain about the lack of pay and Spartan conditions. Among Brazilian-born soldiers and officers, there was the impression that their emperor favored the Portuguese-born for promotions and plum

postings. The hostility between Portuguese- and Brazilian-born officers and soldiers also had a latent racial underpinning that fueled suspicions. More courts-martial sentenced officers and soldiers for insubordination, disseminating political pamphlets, and inciting riots. In 1830, Pernambuco's army commander reported to the war minister in Rio that among his troops and officers, there were men with very different and strongly held political views: conservative monarchists who supported Pedro I's right to rule as an absolutist, liberal constitutionalists, and even republicans. He concluded that these political divisions made it impossible to maintain order among the men.

These growing tensions became more aggravated in the following year when a parliamentary crisis led Pedro I to renounce his throne in favor of his five-year-old son. Riotous protests in the streets of Rio surrounding the imperial palace precipitated Pedro's 1831 abdication. Enlisted soldiers and the city's mostly nonwhite poor played the most prominent roles in these disturbances. The radical liberal politician, journalist, lawyer, and native of Pernambuco, Borges da Fonseca, had been a key player in inspiring and orchestrating these effective acts of popular protest in Rio. Fonseca himself reported that troops from Pernambuco stationed in Rio had been among the most active participants in the protests that forced Pedro's abdication. Coincidentally, Fonseca, who later returned to his native Pernambuco, would serve as Agostinho's defense attorney in 1846.

In Pernambuco, agitation in the barracks reached its height in September 1831 when soldiers once again took over Recife's streets and promoted looting and loud protest marches. Many of Recife's poor black, brown, and white citizens joined the soldiers. Not one army officer, however, supported this uprising. Enlisted men had abandoned their appointed posts and duties en masse but repression came swiftly. Army officers along with militia and the irregular forces of prominent plantation owners surrounded and then massacred several hundred protestors in the streets. Those who survived and were apprehended were sent as prisoners to other provinces.

It is possible that Agostinho had not witnessed any of these events and had somehow managed to distance himself from these tumultuous episodes that shook the public institutions and ruptured the political stability of imperial Brazil. Interestingly, the judges of Pernambuco's highest court in 1846 seemed to worry most about the uncertainty that surrounded Agostinho's activities since 1824. During his interrogation, they asked Agostinho repeatedly if he had participated in the Sabinada Rebellion in Salvador, Bahia, in 1837—38—yet another liberal rebellion in the northeast that probably posed a more serious threat to Brazil's unity than any other. Agostinho denied that he had taken part. When asked if he knew the leader of the Sabinada, a brown radical liberal by the name of Sabino, Agostinho replied that he did. But, he added, he had met Sabino when the brown rebel was imprisoned in a Rio de Janeiro cell that Agostinho guarded.

The suspicion that Agostinho was a *sabino* had grave implications. The Sabinada began with a barracks revolt led by military officers and other local leaders dissatisfied with Bahia's provincial leaders and the Conservative policies put in place by the new Regency government in Rio de Janeiro in 1837. Under siege by imperial troops, the rebels who dominated Salvador

recruited, armed, and mobilized Brazilian-born slaves to defend the “nation.” The exclusion of slaves of African birth demonstrated the fragility of the alliances that rebel leaders hoped to sustain to defend their uprising. Soon enough the rebellion’s initial leaders lost control of those whom they hoped to mobilize. Salvador’s mostly nonwhite poor took to the streets and sacked properties owned by Portuguese merchants. The repression of this revolt was particularly violent, complete with executions and whippings, but three years later the government, seeking to quell regional rebellions, offered amnesty to all Sabinada participants. Even if the judges could prove that Agostinho had taken part in the Sabinada, they could not legally prosecute him for it. However, if they knew that the Divine Teacher had been involved in the Sabinada, there would be little doubt about the dangers he potentially posed because of his contacts with black and brown radicals in other provinces.

The attention of the Pernambucan authorities, though informed by the broader historical context, was riveted by events in 1846. Recife had been peaceful for some time, but tensions underlay this placid surface. In 1845 a liberal opposition political party called Praieiro won provincial elections over Pernambuco’s Conservative government. The electoral disputes between Liberals and Conservatives had been far from peaceful. Between 1844 and 1848, elections for justices of the peace, provincial deputies, and senators produced brawls at polling places across the province. In 1845 the most popular plank in the Praieiro Party’s electoral platform was a proposal to “nationalize,” or to prohibit the Portuguese and other foreigners from participating in retail trade. A similar nativist policy had been espoused during the Sabinada Revolt years earlier and in other regional rebellions. The nativist discourse of Liberals emphasized that Brazil’s independence from Portugal remained partial because its commerce was still dominated by Portuguese businessmen who preferred to hire, train, and promote their fellow countrymen over the Brazilian-born. Relatively poor Portuguese immigrants to Brazil stood a much better chance of upward social mobility in the world of commerce in which the ladder of ascent stood blocked to most Brazilians. In truth, few of these Portuguese immigrants rose notably, and their fellow countrymen in the Brazilian retail trade often exploited them ruthlessly, but the perception was that Brazilians remained locked out of commerce.

Resentment toward retailers was especially harsh because of the inflation that had its roots in the national government’s monetary policies. For Brazil’s mostly nonwhite poor, however, it was the local retailer who seemed to be arbitrarily raising prices and profiting from the misery of the workers. Ambitious Brazilians of modest means often saw humble Portuguese immigrants as direct competitors. These ethnic and racial resentments encouraged violence during elections, as noted. Between 1844 and 1848, there were at least seven instances where Recife’s popular classes, stirred up by anti-Portuguese rhetoric, went on looting sprees against Portuguese stores and warehouses, shouting, “Mata marinheiro!” (Death to the Portuguese).

The most violent of the *mata marinheiro* disturbances would occur in 1847 and 1848, but there had already been similar nativist attacks of lesser intensity in Recife during the elections of 1845. Nonwhites and their poor white compatriots took advantage of the agitation that elections produced to defy public authority. One episode in 1845 is symptomatic of this climate. As two professional runaway bounty hunters returned a fugitive slave to his owner in

Recife, a crowd of blacks attacked them. The assailants almost succeeded in liberating the fugitive before a number of army soldiers who happened to be nearby intervened.

In October 1846, when a petition of habeas corpus was entered for Agostinho, the Conservative and Liberal parties disputed a senatorial election. As noted earlier, Agostinho's lawyer, the radical liberal Borges da Fonseca, had made a political career as a street agitator who had promoted *mata marinho* riots that had precipitated Pedro I's abdication in 1831. In the 1840s, Fonseca became a member of Brazil's as-yet small movement to abolish slavery. He did not refrain from producing political tracts that informed "men of color" about their constitutional rights. In defense of Agostinho, Fonseca, a member of the white elite, criticized the racism of the authorities who arrested his client. He probably sought to use Agostinho's persecution to remind nonwhite voters in Recife to vote for the Liberal Party candidate he supported. The trial was thus something of a showcase for political posturing and vote mongering. With this background, it is possible to address the central question of this essay: Why did Recife's authorities find Agostinho's ideas and preaching so threatening? The answer seems to be distilled in a verse found on the person of Agostinho's wife and entitled *The Source of the ABCs*." Unfortunately, the police did not transcribe the exact words of the verse for us to analyze, but its contents are mentioned. It was a poem that spoke about liberty; and, worse still, its verses alluded to Haiti.

The police also confiscated the Divine Teacher's personal Bible in which passages that referred to "liberty" and the end of slavery had been highlighted. In defense of his client, Borges da Fonseca asked, "What crime is it to be a *cismático* [Protestant]?" But the judges believed that Agostinho was not a run-of-the-mill Protestant. His reading of the Bible was not the same as that of white priests and pastors. After all, religious texts can serve just as well to justify domination as they can rebellion. Agostinho had made his choice, and therein lay his interpretation of the Scriptures. In his analysis of slavery in the United States, the historian Eugene Genovese demonstrated how black pastors contributed to the creation of a unique religious and social culture among slaves. In Brazil the rigidity of the Catholic hierarchy and the cooperation between Church and state made it difficult for a black man to become a priest. Besides, it would have been difficult for any Catholic priest to preach a message of rebellion to slaves without breaking with the Church hierarchy and thereby with Catholicism itself. Agostinho broke with the Church by attributing his ministry to a divine revelation unmediated by priestly authority.

One cannot know how aware Agostinho was of the political implications of his ministry. He may have calculated that his confident responses would mask his seditious intentions, but perhaps it is wrong to impute such a political consciousness to Agostinho. It is possible that he did not see himself as a rebel who transgressed the order of the slave regime. He himself claimed to follow "the law of Jesus Christ" and could have seen himself as a simple preacher, but the authorities did not share this view. They feared the implications of Agostinho's interpretation of Christianity that seemed to contain elements of millenarianism (the belief that the Second Coming of Christ was at hand in which God would smite the wicked and exalt the poor and oppressed). According to his followers, Agostinho's wife had been pregnant for five years, and she would give birth only when the Messiah returned to Earth. Millenarianism had

manifested itself periodically in Brazil in conjunction with violent political rebellion. The Cabanos Revolt (1832—1835), centered in Pernambuco, had been the post-Independence rebellion that proved the most difficult local insurgency to repress in part because of its millenarian impulses. Like the Romans before them, Portuguese authorities knew that religious fervor could add a wild-card element to rebellion that could prove difficult to contain, especially in a slave society.

The notion of God that Agostinho espoused also had novel elements. Under interrogation, the literate Magdalene of the sect claimed that she had also come to know God through a vision. She was seated when the clouds descended and then opened to reveal Him in a purple robe as the Master of the Martyrs. When asked whether God was black or white she responded that He was *acaboclado* (a brown mix of Indian and European)—a mestizo God much more in keeping with Brazilian racial realities than the lily-white portraits and statues of Christ found in churches throughout Brazil. Upon hearing this testimony, the judges of the tribunal once again laughed. But the Divino Mestre’s followers remained confident in their convictions despite the derision of these powerful and learned men. Nothing seemed to shake their faith. When asked if he knew why he and his fellow believers had been jailed, one follower of the Divino Mestre answered simply, “because they imprisoned us!”

Clearly, even in slave societies where Protestantism predominated, both masters and the authorities limited the autonomy of black Christianity by subordinating black religious community to white pastors. The tension between a master’s assumed responsibility to civilize Africans by Christianizing them and maintaining the discipline of slave labor was great. In an attempt to limit the free interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, laws and practices in slave societies across the Americas generally discouraged literacy among slaves and free blacks. By addressing Agostinho as the Divino Mestre, his followers highlighted his mission of religious liberation and salvation through teaching literacy. That the verse found on Agostinho’s wife mentioned Haiti and the “ABCs” was an especially damning association in the eyes of the authorities who were investigating the rumors surrounding this black pastor. Agostinho was not the only social reformer interested in education as a means of liberation. When Agostinho’s lawyer and republican agitator, Borges da Fonseca, had been imprisoned by Pedro I in 1829, the white radical’s lawyer certified that his client worked in Paraíba do Norte as a teacher of mutual education as outlined by the Lancastrian method (whereby students are taught and supervised by other students).

Among Agostinho’s followers there was no one whose race was recorded by court authorities as brown or mixed, only “black” men and women. We know little else about the hundreds of followers of Agostinho who the authorities claimed existed in Recife other than that most of them were women. When asked about his flock, the Divino Mestre declared that there were more women than men in his sect because men were more morally lax. Men had a harder time accepting the asceticism he demanded from his followers. As noted earlier, the seven women arrested with Agostinho knew how to read. Courageously, his wife affirmed that she carried the verses to the poem about the origins of the ABCs because she thought that they were beautiful. Even though the followers of Agostinho all claimed to be free, at least one master placed an ad in a Recife newspaper in 1847 that described his fugitive slave, the “black

Joaquina,” as one who had attended the “Divino Mestre’s clubs.” Obviously, Agostinho’s ministry provided a space for slave and free blacks to congregate, which disturbed authorities.

One year later, Agostinho had returned to preaching. Why would officials allow such a potentially dangerous religious leader to go free? Perhaps because they had no legal foundation on which to prosecute him or perhaps they hoped his arrest and interrogation would intimidate him and his followers. In any case, Recife’s priests must have taken precautions and possibly turned to the leaders of the black and white Catholic lay brotherhoods to warn against the Protestant preaching of Agostinho and his followers. A newspaper article of October 1847 reported that each time one of the Divino Mestre’s followers was arrested in Recife, a pack of unruly adolescent black boys appeared and physically attacked the victims of police persecution. The journalist feared that these gangs could turn against “any honest man” and disrupt public order. In truth, this had already started happening, because in June and then in September 1847 there were *mata marinheiro* riots in Recife during which various Portuguese citizens were injured by the furious multitude of young, mostly nonwhite, adolescents.

The participation of mostly nonwhite adolescents in attacks against the followers of the Divino Mestre confirms that the black population of Recife was not united by a single worldview or cosmology. Many black Recifenses maintained the religious practices of their African forebears and only adopted the outward forms of Christianity. But other poor Brazilians of all races were devout “Catholics.”

The last time Agostinho and his followers appear in the sources is in late 1847, when the authorities coercively recruited a number of his adherents into the army as enlisted men. Even though their occupations and their positions as household heads should have legally exempted these men from military impressment, sometimes the authorities ignored the legal rights of poor men. After their induction, those who could not prove their legal exemption from military service in a timely fashion were likely to be transferred to other provinces.

Agostinho disappeared from sources just when the last of the post-Independence liberal insurrections, the Praieira Revolt of 1848—49, broke out in Pernambuco. It seems that no space was left in newspaper columns to worry about the Divino Mestre’s doings. In the only case of its kind, two different senatorial elections that favored candidates of the Pernambucan Liberal Party, more popularly known as the Praieiro Party, were annulled in the late 1840s; then elections brought the Conservative Party back to power in 1848. When a new party came to power, it removed officials nominated by the previous administration and appointed its own cronies. When the Conservatives began this process, a number of prominent Praieiro Party members refused to surrender their political posts as justices of the peace, National Guard officers, and police commanders. As a result, an armed struggle began in November 1848. Praieiro forces attempted to take control of Recife, and rumors flew of new conspiracies led by Brazilians of African descent. For example, two freed slaves born in Africa were imprisoned for plotting just such a revolt. One of them was popularly known as Benedito, “the governor of the blacks from the African Gold Coast.” Another man imprisoned under the same accusation was a militant Liberal, Francisco Borges Mendes, who was probably white because court records almost always stated the race of suspects when they were men of color.

Mendes had been born and raised in Bahia, but he had lived for six years in Recife. He is not the only example of links between insurrectionary forces in Bahia and Pernambuco. The scrivener Francisco José do Rego, a supposed “seducer of the people,” was arrested in Recife and accused of belonging to radical clubs in Bahia that plotted rebellion.

Most of the individuals arrested in the wake of the Praieira Revolt did not undergo a separate inquiry and trial. They were caught up in the typical steamroller of repression aimed at the political opposition in general. Imperial army troops allied with local forces loyal to the provincial government crushed rebel forces. The authorities pressed some of the defeated rebel troops that they captured and transferred them to other provinces as punishment. Unlike previous revolts, however, there were no executions. The very last Praieiro to be granted amnesty was Agostinho’s former lawyer, the radical liberal leader Borges da Fonseca, who was freed in 1852.

The attempted invasion of Recife by Praieiro forces in February 1849 produced hundreds of casualties on both sides. In this battle, tailors formed the group of artisans who were the most prominent in the rebel army. In a city where tradesmen often interacted in social and professional organizations, it is perhaps not surprising to note that Agostinho was a tailor. Perhaps his contacts within this group and his brush with the law the previous year led Agostinho to steer well clear of involvement in this rebellion. His name does not appear on the list of tailors, five of whom were captured, named in the inquiry that investigated the revolt. Three witnesses accused the tailor Manoel Joaquim da Costa of holding seditious rebel meetings in his shop. When the Praieiro army invaded Recife, witnesses testified that gunfire at government troops came from his residence. The same accusations were leveled against the tailors Manoel do Amparo Caju, whose nickname was Pardo Caju or Brown Cashew, and José Romão de Freitas. Both these men were also accused of “seducing men” to join the rebel fight, but it was clearly Borges da Fonseca who was known to be the main recruiter of supporters for the Praieiro army in Recife and the surrounding countryside.

Even though little is known about the Divino Mestre, the stories generated about him by the press and the courts permit rare glimpses of how black and brown Recifenses responded to Independence and the struggle to build a national state. The liberal rhetoric that accompanied Independence preached lessons of equality, liberty, and natural rights that were contradictory in a slave society whose order was predicated on ideals of racial and ethnic hierarchy. The cases examined in this essay suggest the numerous connections that likely existed between black and brown men from different parts of Brazil who participated in radical politics. Sometimes in alliance with more radical white men, these nonwhite Brazilians dreamed of creating a new political and social order in Brazil for which some were willing to fight and die. The connections between men of color in Bahia and Pernambuco seem particularly striking even though the ethnic origins of their bondsmen were distinct for the most part (the Gulf of Benin in the case of the former, and Angola and the Congo in the latter).

The hybrid nature of Brazil’s cultural and genetic makeup made possible solidarities and divisions among its populace. Fragile webs of information were woven by a variety of actors who sought to form secret organizations and conspiracies. The numerous black sailors who

regularly traveled up and down Brazil's coast transporting goods, slaves, prisoners, soldiers, and government officials were undoubtedly key sources of information for these underground networks. The domestic servants of politicians could provide intelligence about the plans of the rich and powerful whose private conversations they overheard from time to time. Even prisons became schools where radicals sought to educate and to indoctrinate converts to their cause.

As this essay has shown, rebel troops were most commonly punished with service as enlisted men in the regular army in distant provinces. In theory, the authorities sought to avoid inducting black (particularly African-born men) into the regular military forces up to the 1860s, but in practice, these rules were disregarded. In truth, perceptions of race could change from observer to observer according to circumstances. The suspicions about networks of secret societies that linked black men and radical liberal abolitionists, such as Borges da Fonseca, from different provinces was not so farfetched as to be dismissed as the collective paranoia of a master class who feared the example of Haiti. Even though documentation does not give us explicit information about these alternative political and religious visions, officials seemed ready to believe in their existence and their danger.

SUGGESTED READINGS

For an overview of Brazilian politics and the challenges to national unity in the early Independence period, see Roderick Barman, *Brazil: The Forging of a Nation, 1798–1852* (Stanford, 1988). For an excellent collection of documents, see Robert Edgar Conrad, *Children of God's Fire: A Documentary History of Black Slavery in Brazil* (Princeton, 1983). On Pernambuco's economy in the 1800s and its place within Brazil, see Peter Eisenberg, *The Sugar Industry in Pernambuco: Modernization without Change, 1840–1910* (Berkeley, 1974). For the classic interpretation and apology for Brazil's heritage of African and Indian slavery, see Gilberto Freyre, *The Mansions and the Shanties: The Making of Modern Brazil* (New York, 1963). On Lusophobia and Pernambuco's place in early national struggles, see Jeffrey C. Mosher, "Pernambuco and the Construction of the Brazilian Nation-State, 1831–1850" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Florida at Gainesville, 1996); and idem, "Political Mobilization, Party Ideology, and Lusophobia in Nineteenth-Century Brazil: Pernambuco, 1822–1850," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 80:4 (2000): 881–912. Also see the author of this chapter, Marcus J. M. De Carvalho, *Liberdade: Rotinas e rupturas do escravismo no Recife, 1822–1850* (Recife, 1995); and idem, "Hegemony and Rebellion in Pernambuco, Brazil, 1821–1835" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana, 1989).