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# Introduction: The Millenarian Tradition

Until not long ago, Brazilian histories of the decade following the 1889 collapse of the Brazilian monarchy were dominated by a republican viewpoint hostile to groups and influences considered obstacles to what the elite hoped would lead to a new social order patterned after European accomplishments. When a conflict in the remote backlands of Brazil's Northeast erupted and could not be quelled by conventional means, contemporary observers reacted with alarm, offering memorable and comprehensive impressions of the events in language that reflected their anxiety over what they perceived to be their nation's backwardness.

The most influential of these tormented writers was Euclides da Cunha. His book *Rebellion in the Backlands*, published in 1902 in Portuguese as *Os sertões*, is almost universally considered Brazil's greatest sociohistorical document. It was the first book to convey a detailed sense of the complexity and paradoxical nature of rural Brazilian life.<sup>1</sup> Stefan Zweig, the Austrian writer who found refuge in Brazil in the early 1940s, called *Os sertões* "a great national epic" that offered "a complete psychological picture of the Brazilian soil, the people, and the country, such as has never been achieved with equal insight and psychological comprehension."<sup>2</sup> José Maria Bello proclaimed it a "magisterial" work, one that on first reading seems "florid, pompous, [and] obscure," but on closer examination, "great, rare, of extraordinary merit."<sup>3</sup>

Da Cunha's contribution to Brazilian self-perception was based on two distinctive circumstances: he was one of the few members of the coastal elite to achieve firsthand knowledge of the land and people of the hinterland, and he filtered his observations through the perspective of European social science, including Lambrosian theory about the size and shape of human skulls, Friedrich Ratzel's racist anthropogeography,

Gustave Le Bon's determinism, and especially the racial theories of the Pole Ludwig Gumplowicz. By reporting his findings to an avid Brazilian audience terrified by prospects of backland atavism, da Cunha dispelled some myths about the shadowy, racially mixed men and women of the *sertão*, but at the same time he created new myths portraying the miscegenated *caboço* as the backbone of a new Brazilian race.<sup>4</sup>

Da Cunha related the tragic history of Antônio Vicente Mendes Maciel, known as Antônio Conselheiro (a name derived from the backland way of addressing lay missionaries), a religious mystic and penitent. Conselheiro wandered the rural Brazilian Northeast for twenty years, preaching against ungodly behavior and rebuilding rural churches and cemeteries that had fallen into disrepair in the forbidding, semiarid interior—a landscape later described as “corroded” by its austere climate.<sup>5</sup> In 1893, Conselheiro led a pious group of disciples to Canudos, and in an inaccessible mountain valley in the Bahian *sertão*, on the site of an abandoned ranch, he founded a community. Although outsiders termed the community “bizarre,”<sup>6</sup> thousands came to it, attracted by Conselheiro's charismatic madness. He promised only sacrifice and hard work and asked the residents to live according to God's commandments and await the coming of the millennium, when would come redemption, the Day of Judgment.

Conselheiro's vision inverted the harsh reality of the impoverished backlands: the weak, strengthened by their faith, would inherit the earth. Nature would be transformed: rains would come, bringing forth the earth's bounty. So many men and women streamed out of the settlements of the *sertão* region and to Conselheiro's community that within two years the settlement, known by residents as Belo Monte or Canudos, had become the second largest city in Bahia, which in the late nineteenth century was Brazil's second most populous state. Indeed, Canudos's size was staggering for a backland religious refuge: at its height the population was more than one-tenth that of the city of São Paulo in the mid-1890s.

In reaction, patriarchal backland property owners, stung by the loss of their usually docile labor force, demanded government intervention. After fighters loyal to Conselheiro defeated two successive columns of soldiers sent to capture Canudos's holy leader and disperse the settlement, the Brazilian army itself was ordered to attack Canudos and destroy it. The military assault lasted nearly two years, for it was met with tenacious defiance. Finally, though, Canudos was circled and, in October 1897, bombarded into submission by heavy artillery. For the first time in Brazilian history, aided by the new telegraph lines that linked the North with the more prosperous South, newspapers sent war correspondents to the front. Their daily dispatches fascinated and alarmed the reading

public: it seemed as if the very republic was on the verge of collapse. The inhabitants of Canudos were portrayed as primitive fanatics, "miserable and superstitious," superhuman in their resistance, and dedicated to the destruction of the paternalistic, civilizing arm of government authority.<sup>7</sup>

Euclides da Cunha was a disenchanting military officer who in the early 1890s had resigned his commission to pursue a second career as a civil and geological engineer. He was a positivist, a disciple of the French philosopher Auguste Comte. In Latin America—especially in Mexico and in Argentina—positivism had acquired an immense following among elites seeking to modernize their nations under the leadership of the ablest members of society. Comtean positivists rejected religion as superstitious and advocated universal public education. Their doctrine was related to the Benthamism of the 1820s and to social Darwinism, but it also was distinct, rooted in a vision of civilization evolving through three distinct stages: the theological, the metaphysical, and the positive. They rejected the concepts both of aristocracy through birth and of democracy based on equal status, and they believed passionately in reason and in science. Society should, they thought, rely on enlightened leadership by the most capable for the general good. This platonic ideal strongly influenced the creators of the new Brazilian Republic that replaced the monarchy after the 1889 military coup. The Brazilian positivists advocated a moral social policy that would elevate the urban lower classes through social welfare programs—a blueprint for development without social mobilization. Rural problems were another matter, however, and the positivists tended to ignore them. In this sphere, Herbert Spencer's paternalistic social Darwinism more thoroughly influenced da Cunha and the other intellectuals who, as members of a "fragment" society of Europe, chose from among several imported European models those that best fit their needs.<sup>8</sup>

Da Cunha was so much a captive of imported European attitudes that he embraced them even when they ensnared him in contradiction.<sup>9</sup> He accepted European racial doctrines, even though his own observations showed them to be wrong. In *Os sertões*, he esteems the backland mestizos, lauds them for their adaptability, tenacity, and independence, and designates backland existence as "the vigorous core of our national life." At the same time, however, parroting European theory, he chastises the mestizo's mixed-race origins and considers the mestizo "degenerate . . . lacking the physical energy of his savage ancestors and without the intellectual elevation of his ancestors on the other side."<sup>10</sup> Yet as E. Bradford Burns reminds us, da Cunha was himself a mestizo.<sup>11</sup> Like Raimundo Nina Rodrigues, Machado de Assis, Lima Barreto, and other mixed-race writers and intellectuals who shaped Brazil's self-image dur-

ing and after the turn of the century, he refused to acknowledge that his own achievements negated the central argument of his disparaging view of the legacy of miscegenation.<sup>12</sup>

Terrified by the specter of rural revolt, da Cunha reported the events of the Canudos conflict as a battle between the forces of civilization and darkness. Canudos tormented him.<sup>13</sup> Although he considered the racially mixed inhabitants of Conselheiro's community to be atavistic and hostile to progress, he also admired their tenacity and bodily strength. This reference to the backlanders' physical prowess touched a nerve, since Brazil's population in 1890 was approximately 15 percent *preto* (black) and 40 percent mestizo or mulatto. Some observers, including Bahia's Raimundo Nina Rodrigues and such visitors as the American naturalist Louis Agassiz, despaired over the fact that such a high percentage of Brazilians were nonwhite, but Euclides remained optimistic, believing that immigrants from Europe and modern technologies and ideas would allow Brazil to overcome its predisposition to primitivism.<sup>14</sup>

Da Cunha struggled to rise above his ambivalence. He despised the *sertanejos'* seeming aversion to civilization, but because of the Canudenses' strength and endurance, he called them "the bedrock of our race."<sup>15</sup> His experiences at the front were so unsettling to him that after the destruction of Canudos he spent the next five years writing a book based on his field notes and observations. When it was published, *Os sertões* electrified the nation because it shattered the elite's comfortable myth about Brazilian reality.

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of da Cunha's ideas was that, in the final analysis, he accepted the prevailing concepts about biological determinism only in part. In this sense he was similar to Mexico's Justo Sierra, who also wrestled with the realization that Mexico's mixed-race heritage was a principal aspect of its "autonomous personality." Sierra, in fact, refuted Le Bon's theories on the debilitating quality of miscegenation, though he did argue that up to 1889 miscegenation had been the "dynamic [political] factor in our history" and pleaded for European immigrants to Mexico "so as to obtain a cross with the indigenous race, for only European blood can keep the level of civilization . . . from sinking, which would mean regression, not evolution."<sup>16</sup>

Readers of *Os sertões* were shown that the new symbols of Brazilian progress—the burgeoning cities of the coast with their artifacts of material culture imported from abroad—masked the primitive and antisocial impulses still resident in the rural interior. The shock of the Canudos conflict and fears that rebellion would spread to Brazil's cities led politicians to contrive tighter social controls and to reject reforms that might lead the country toward meaningful democracy. Canudos caused those sympathetic to the vision of its leader to fear the ominous combi-

nation of church and state working in unison to suppress unorthodox popular expression. Knowingly or not, writers later continued to choose sides, either abiding by da Cunha's negative prescriptions or, more frequently, casting the Canudenses in the role of utopian heroes.<sup>17</sup>

The author of *Rebellion in the Backlands* never answered questions that seem most central: Why did Conselheiro and his followers seek refuge in a remote sanctuary? What led them to risk such extreme deprivation, or to follow a leader whom many called a madman? For da Cunha, a chronicling of the appalling Canudos affair was sufficient, and subsequent writers on Canudos have elected to preserve his romantic emphasis. One, the Englishman R. B. Cunningham Graham, simply appropriated da Cunha's entire story, though without making a single reference to *Os sertões*, which had not yet been translated into English (and would not be until 1944).<sup>18</sup> Mario Vargas Llosa's fictionalized account (published in Portuguese in 1982) was far more literary and original, but it, too, tended toward romanticization.<sup>19</sup>

#### SOURCES AND DEFINITIONS

As Eric Van Young has wisely observed, there are almost insuperable obstacles to any meaningful analysis of Latin American rural social conflict and rebellion, especially when the events occurred in earlier times.<sup>20</sup> Much of the problem centers on the sources available to the historian. Moreover, when we generalize about rural folk, we tend to use composite definitions not derived from place-specific data. In my study, I will attempt to avoid this practice as much as possible, drawing instead from available primary and secondary documentation.

Conventional archival materials and other documentation, however, are sparse and in some cases suspect. Surviving records include Conselheiro's two prayer books, written in a flowing, practiced hand and style; about nine-tenths of their texts interpolate prayers and homilies taken directly from the Bible or other liturgical sources. Noemi Soares, Father Alexandre Otten, and others are examining these books in depth to determine exactly what sections were penned by Conselheiro himself (or dictated to his assistant who wrote them out).

A few of the early (pre-*Os sertões*) chronicles about Conselheiro mention letters sent by him or by other Canudos residents to outsiders, but only one source—Favilla Nunes—reproduces or cites any of them.<sup>21</sup> Unfortunately, his commentaries were published serially in *fascículos* (short pamphlets), and only one of them, the third, has survived; although he said he was going to publish at least fifty, none has surfaced to date, despite painstaking efforts to locate them. The army's decision to incinerate Canudos ruined any chance of finding artifacts on the site,

and the military records for the campaign (made available only recently by the commander of the Sixth Military Region in Salvador and by the director of the state Military Police) are limited largely to technical specifics about troop supply.

The correspondence and other records stored in the archive of the archdiocese of Salvador, located in the Cúria on the Praça da Sé in that capital city, offer invaluable detail. Documents include parish registers of baptisms and weddings for the backland regions from which most of the *conselheiristas* came, containing data that someday will permit diligent researchers to construct a demographic map of the region: information on family names, legitimacy, skin color, and sometimes places of origin. Other primary materials largely unused by historians heretofore are the letters of the baron of Jeremoabo, which give a comprehensive overview of events, as do the annual reports of Bahia's chief executive and reports of many of the provincial (pre-1889) and state (post-1889) cabinet ministries. Contemporary newspapers offer extensive detail and a sense of the settlement's impact on the region.

A large body of published chronicles, narratives, and studied explanations of Canudos appeared in the first years after the conflagration—capped by *Os sertões* in 1902—but only a few eyewitnesses who actually heard Conselheiro speak described their reactions. Most were predisposed to see in him what they wanted to see: signs of mental imbalance and fanaticism. Almost all of the early sources reflect what I call the *visão do litoral*, a dismissal of the backlanders as primitive fanatics.

Few comprehensive analyses of the actual participants in Conselheiro's religious community have appeared, although some scholars, notably José Calasans, have devoted their careers to piecing together fragments of the puzzle. Only a handful of the authors who have written about Canudos interviewed eyewitnesses, and then mostly much later when memories had dimmed. Because the residents of Canudos and the surrounding area were largely illiterate and lacked knowledge of the world beyond the *sertão*, precise data about the community are hard to come by. In any case, it lasted only four years, in contrast to Padre Cícero's Cariri Valley community in Ceará, which survived intact until his death in the 1930s. Nevertheless, Conselheiro and the bloody military campaigns left an indelible mark on the region: as recently as the early 1980s, when Mario Vargas Llosa visited the region to conduct research for his novel *The War of the End of the World*, many local residents confessed that they were afraid to talk about the "santo Conselheiro"—eight decades after his death in 1897.

In what follows, citations from da Cunha are taken from the masterful English translation of *Os sertões, Rebellion in the Backlands*, by Samuel Putnam.<sup>22</sup> Yet I do provide cross-references to the original, using the

“didactic” edition published by Editora Cultrix, a useful edition because it reproduces the original maps and illustrations and includes the author’s notes as well as a glossary.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, although recent studies tend to rely almost exclusively on da Cunha’s account, my study both weighs the contributions of *Os sertões* and examines the evidence provided by other early chroniclers such as José Aras, Dantas Barreto, Manoel Benício, Souza Dantas, Opato Gueiros, Alvim Martins Horcades, Aristides A. Milton, Frei João Evangelista Monte Marciano, Favilla Nunes, Lélis Piedade, Henrique Duque-Estrada de Macedo Soares, José Américo Camillo Souza Velho, and César Gama.

Another difficulty with which researchers must deal involves the significant lack of microstudies on the backland region. On occasion, therefore, I do cite studies written about rural or small-town life elsewhere in the region or even in another part of the country—not to suggest that conditions were the same but to allow for valuable parallels and suggest continuities.

*Millenarianism* refers to the quest for total, imminent, ultimate, this-worldly, collective salvation. The term as used in this study refers to social movements seeking massive and radical change in accord with a predetermined divine plan. Members often reject the existing social order and withdraw from it. At times, violence erupts in the form of assaults by believers on established authorities—or, as in Canudos, by the established authorities on the millenarian community. In the Christian millenarian tradition, which in turn is rooted in Persian Zoroastrianism, Jewish apocalyptic literature, and the New Testament writings of Saint John, Christ is expected to reappear in the guise of a warrior, establish his kingdom, and reign for a thousand years. *Messianic* movements predict that universal salvation will occur through the enthroning of a messiah. In Christianity, then, millenarian movements are by definition messianic as well.<sup>24</sup>

Most histories of the Canudos conflict preserve Euclides da Cunha’s *visão do litoral*, his assumption that the Canudenses refused to accept the republic because they feared progress. Exaggeration and hysteria shaped the way Brazilians viewed events at that time. The young republic craved a Manichaeic explanation of Canudos in order to build national unity and deflect embarrassment from the armed forces, who displayed flagrant ineptitude at all levels during the four campaigns against Conselheiro’s followers. As a result, some claim that the topic of Canudos has become sacrosanct because Brazilians needed to reassure themselves that the assault and eventual massacre were necessary for the preservation of the realm. Da Cunha and his contemporaries unconsciously (or perhaps deliberately) cloaked their accounts in patriotic colors, just as writers on the left in later decades portrayed Canudos as a



heroic cell of political resistance against oppression. Neither interpretation contributes much to an understanding of the lives and motivations of the men and women who followed Conselheiro to his holy site. Nor does either permit analysis of Canudos as a dynamic phenomenon both religious and political in nature.

My aim in this book is twofold: to penetrate the worldview of Canudos in its broadest dimensions—at the local, state, regional, and national levels; and to understand Conselheiro's movement and his vision on their own terms. To the extent possible, my study reconstructs the cultural, economic, and political meaning of Canudos from the perspective of its actors: the Canudenses themselves, the region's and nation's traditional elites, the representatives of the state political apparatus, the officers and soldiers sent to disperse and destroy Conselheiro's community, and the regular and secular Catholic clergy who found themselves trapped in the web of Conselheiro's life and influence.

My study employs a wide spectrum of archival and other sources and, as well, draws on the work of specialists who have broken new ground on questions ranging from peasant societies and culture (Clifford Geertz, Shepard Forman, Candace Slater, Ronald H. Chilcote) to Catholic theology (Alexandre Otten) to literary criticism (Walnice Galvão, Marlisse Meyer, Flora Sússekind) to millenarianism and messianism (René Ribeiro, Janaina Amado). The title, *Vale of Tears*, is borrowed with permission from José Carlos Sebe Bom Meihy's *livre docência* thesis at the University of São Paulo, which explores the fate of the underprivileged during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Taubaté in the state of São Paulo's Paraíba Valley.

A final comment. I have come to believe that, on certain occasions, both sides in a conflict are right, from each side's perspective. This occurs especially in cases of prolonged hostilities where each belligerent act is interpreted by the adversary as evidence of its own righteousness and the other's malevolence. Combatants inevitably see everything—from the history of the conflict, to its conduct, to all questions of right and wrong—through unique lenses, shaped by how they have been taught to see. Each side denigrates the other's view and rationalizes its own prejudices, especially if the conflict is fueled by nationalism or by other emotionally charged issues. The action of the enemy cannot help but yield self-fulfilled prophecies, simply because the reasons for the friction can be viewed from only one side: the perspective of the adversary remains inevitably unfathomable. As examples, I would point to many electoral campaigns, to the American Civil War, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and, unquestionably, Canudos.

Antônio Conselheiro scorned and distrusted those who did not hold his moral and religious principles, just as, on the other side, Jeremoabo

and his compatriots in the agro-commercial elite despised and feared Conselheiro's unyielding stubbornness. The tendency to hold obdurately to one's position is reinforced, of course, by life experience and cannot be dismissed casually, especially when large issues are at stake. In the case of Canudos, the elite's predisposition to disparage rural behavior was exacerbated by the political usefulness of interpreting events in exaggerated terms. To coastal observers, Conselheiro represented fanaticism, dissidence, and manipulation of rural folk for whom they felt pity mixed with disgust. Because the *conselheiristas* were attacked and not vice versa, our compassion tends to extend to them (perhaps also because we romanticize the courage they showed in choosing life in Canudos), but the heroic-nationalist cloak in which Canudos as an event has been wrapped has not permitted this sympathy officially. It is telling, therefore, that Brazil will mark the centenary of Canudos in 1997, the anniversary of its annihilation, and not in 1993, the anniversary of the settlement's birth.

Conselheiro's four-year ascendancy between 1893 and 1897 brought major social upheaval to the *sertão*. It caused economic dislocation, profoundly disturbed the Catholic hierarchy, and created political turmoil. His movement—its mystical spirituality combined with a commitment to the needy and to the faithful—like other movements of messianic figures in history, created polarities: true Catholicism and the Antichrist; the moral and immoral; the humble, faithful, and austere against the rich and cynically powerful. Conselheiro proposed no less than a return to the austerity, antieroticism, and the patriarchal mentality of what he imagined to be the heritage of the original church.<sup>25</sup>

Conselheiro's striking appeal to backlanders is explainable in part by the fact that, historically, Luso-Brazilian culture frequently embraced eruptions of messianic expression, but the appeal of Canudos was not exclusively, or even primarily, messianic. Rather, the faithful backlanders who moved their belongings to Canudos to live under the special guidance of Conselheiro had a variety of motivations. Foremost, perhaps, they saw in him a powerful lay religious leader in the folk-Catholic tradition of the region. Indeed, in some ways the missionary priests of France who, following the publication in 1891 of the encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, devoted their energies to working among the poor can be regarded as Conselheiro's counterparts. Although, unlike Conselheiro, these priests were never personally persecuted, their activities were curtailed in 1901, repudiated by the Vatican.<sup>26</sup>

#### GOALS

This study is an attempt to interpret Canudos in several ways: by reexamining the causes and consequences of its settlement; by analyzing the

events in the backlands both as a local phenomenon and in terms of state and national perceptions; by exploring the motives of the participants and of those threatened by its success; by seeking to comprehend the collective world of Canudos and the role of its leader, Antônio Conselheiro, his theology, and his motivation. As much as possible, my goal is to examine Canudos from the perspective of those caught up in its élan. This study is not calculatedly revisionist; instead, drawing upon a broader resource base than most previous studies, it reinterprets Canudos and its place in Brazilian history.

Six chapters follow. The first situates Canudos as an event within a national context and examines the outlook of Brazil's coastal urban elites, that is, the *visão do litoral*. Euclides da Cunha came out of this milieu; his eloquent writings on Canudos helped reshape how Brazilians perceived the faceless residents of the hinterland and how they interpreted the implications of a country divided (in the elite view) into backward and modern populations. Chapter 2, in counterpoint, looks at the world of the rural backlands: its landscape, social structure, and economic institutions. Chapter 3 examines in detail the city of Belo Monte (Canudos) and the man who created it, Antônio Conselheiro. Chapter 4 reexamines the story of the armed conflict and Canudos's destruction. Chapter 5 probes Conselheiro's theology and his vision of man's worldly role. The sixth and concluding chapter considers Canudos as a millenarian movement, thus closing the circle of inquiry.

## NOTES

### PREFACE

1. "Backlands" will be used in this book as a synonym for *sertão*. (See glossary entry.)

2. See Roderick J. Barman, *Brazil: The Forging of a Nation, 1798–1852* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 25–30.

3. Michael A. Mullett, *Popular Culture and Popular Protest in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (London: Croom Helm, 1987), 64.

### INTRODUCTION

1. See Gilberto Freyre, *Order and Progress: Brazil from Monarchy to Republic*, ed. and trans. Rod W. Horton (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), 164. Western readers, however, did not always come away enlightened about Brazil; instead they tended to see the country through a lens of condescension and racism. See Susan Sontag, "Afterlives: The Case of Machado de Assis," *New Yorker*, May 7, 1990, 102–8; Augusto Tamayo Vargas, "Interpretaciones de América latina," in *América latina en su literatura*, ed. César Fernández Moreno (Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1977), 457; Maria Tai Wolff, "Estas páginas sem brilhos: o texto-sertão de Euclides da Cunha," *Revista iberoamericana* 50, no. 126 (January–March 1984): 47–61.

2. Stefan Zweig, *Brazil: Land of the Future* (New York: Viking Press, 1942), 159–60, quoted in Samuel Putnam, "Translator's Introduction" to *Rebellion in the Backlands (Os sertões)*, by Euclides da Cunha (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944), iii.

3. José Maria Bello, *Inteligência do Brasil: ensaios sobre Machado de Assis, Joaquim Nabuco, Euclides da Cunha e Rui Barbosa*, 3d ed. (São Paulo: Editora Nacional, 1938), 153.

4. See Thomas E. Skidmore, "Racial Ideas and Social Policy in Brazil, 1870–

1940," in *The Idea of Race in Latin America, 1870-1940*, ed. Richard Graham (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), 11.

5. Josué de Castro, *Death in the Northeast* (New York: Random House, 1966), 23.

6. Bello, *Inteligência do Brasil*, 178.

7. João Cruz Costa, *Pequena história da república* (São Paulo: Editora Brasiliense, 1968), 72. Writing two generations later, Cruz Costa indicates that he agreed with da Cunha's assessment.

8. Joseph L. Love, "Latin America and Romania, 1860-1950," in *Guiding the Invisible Hand: Economic Liberalism and the State in Latin American History*, ed. Joseph L. Love and Nils Jacobsen (New York: Praeger, 1988), 10-12.

9. Other nineteenth-century Latin American intellectuals also debated the struggle, as they saw it, between civilization and barbarism—for example, the Argentine Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, in *Civilización y barbarie: vida de Juan Facundo Quiroga* (Buenos Aires, 1845); and the Peruvian novelist Clorinda Matto de Turner, in his *Aves sin nido* (1889; reprinted Cuzco: Universidad Nacional del Cuzco, 1948). See E. Bradford Burns, "The Destruction of a Folk Past: Euclides da Cunha and Cataclysmic Cultural Clash," *Review of Latin American Studies* 3, no. 1 (1990): 29-30.

10. Euclides da Cunha, *Rebellion in the Backlands*, 78, 85.

11. Burns, "Destruction of a Folk Past," 27.

12. Marshall Berman finds this trait to be characteristic of underdeveloped societies, calling it the "Faustian split"; see *All That Is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1982), 43, cited by Burns, "Destruction of a Folk Past," 27.

13. For a view of fears of rural revolt in earlier days, see Yves-Marie Bercé, "Rural Unrest," in *Our Forgotten Past*, ed. Jerome Blum (London: Thames & Hudson, 1982), 133-56.

14. Charles A. Hale, "Political and Social Ideas in Latin America, 1870-1930," in *The Cambridge History of Latin America*, vol. 4: *Ca. 1870 to 1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 402.

15. I am indebted to Charles A. Hale for this observation. Da Cunha explained his bedrock simile in the 1905 edition of *Os sertões (Rebellion in the Backlands)*, 481, in which he writes: "I did encounter in the backlands (sertanejo) type an ethnic subcategory already formed and one which, as a result of historical conditions, had been freed of the exigencies of a borrowed civilization such as would have hindered its definitive evolution. This is equivalent to saying that in that indefinable compound—the Brazilian—I came upon something that was stable, a point of resistance reminiscent of the integrating molecule in the initial stage of crystallizations. And it was natural enough that, once having admitted the bold and inspiring conjecture that we are destined to national unity, I should have seen in those sturdy caboclos the hardy nucleus of our future, the bedrock of our race."

16. Justo Sierra, "México social y político: apuntes para un libro" (1889), in *Obras*, 9:128-31, citing Le Bon's article published in 1888 in the *Revue scientifique*; Justo Sierra, *The Political Evolution of the Mexican People*, trans. Charles Ramsdell (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1969), 368, quoted by Alan Knight,

"Racism, Revolution, and Indigenismo: Mexico, 1910-1940," in *The Idea of Race in Latin America, 1870-1940*, ed. Richard Graham (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), 78. See also Hale, "Political and Social Ideas," 404.

17. See, for example, the short-story writer Elias José's "O Salvador," in *Um pássaro em pânico* (São Paulo: Editora Ática, 1977); and Malcolm Silverman, "Alienation and the Fiction of Brazil's Elias José," in *Los Ensayistas: Brazil in the Eighties*, ed. Carmen Chaves McClendon and M. Elizabeth Ginway, nos. 28-29 (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990), 199-216. The Canudenses are depicted as heroes in José Antonio Sola's *Canudos: uma utopia no sertão* (São Paulo: Editora Contexto, 1989).

18. R. B. Cunningham Graham, *A Brazilian Mystic: Being the Life and Miracles of Antonio Conselheiro* (London: William Heinemann, 1920).

19. Mario Vargas Llosa, *A guerra do fim do mundo* (Rio de Janeiro: Francisco Alves, 1982); published in English as *The War of the End of the World*, trans. Helen R. Lane (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1984). See also the hostile response by Edmundo Moniz, "Canudos: o suicídio literário de Vargas Llosa," *Encontros com a civilização brasileira* 29 (1982): 7-20; Edmundo Moniz, *A guerra social de Canudos* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1978); and Alfred MacAdam, "Euclides da Cunha y Mario Vargas Llosa: meditaciones intertextuales," *Revista iberoamericana* 50, no. 126 (January-March 1984): 157-64.

20. See Eric Van Young, "To See Someone Not Seeing: Historical Studies of Peasants and Politics in Mexico," *Mexican Studies/Estudios mexicanos* 6, no. 1 (Winter 1990): 133-59.

21. See J. P. Favilla Nunes, "Population, territoire, électorat," in *Le Brésil en 1889 avec une carte de l'empire en chromolithographie*, ed. Frederico José de Santa-Anna Nery (Paris: Librairie Charles Delagrave, 1889).

22. My decision to use this translation was based on the necessity to quote from da Cunha extensively, and if I were to use the original Portuguese-language edition for my study, I would have to retranslate; Putnam's masterful prose is preferable.

23. Euclides da Cunha, *Os sertões: edição didática*, ed. Alfredo Bosi (São Paulo: Editora Cultrix, 1985).

24. See Yonina Talmon, "Millenarianism," in *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, ed. David L. Sills (New York: Macmillan/Free Press, 1979), 10: 349-60.

25. See Mullett, *Popular Culture and Popular Protest*, 131, 135, 147.

26. See Alfred Cobban, *A History of Modern France*. Vol. 3: 1871-1962 (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1965), 39.

## CHAPTER 1

1. Steven C. Topik, "Brazil's Bourgeois Revolution?" (ms., 1990), 1. For an informed assessment of the republic's origins, see José Murilo de Carvalho, *A formação das almas: o imaginário da república no Brasil* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1990). On the characterization of common folk as "beastlike," see José