

# “The Redemption of Our Race:” the commemorations of the abolition of slavery<sup>1</sup>

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## RESUMO

São Paulo, primeiras décadas do século XX. Era comum, nesse período, estratos da população negra saírem às ruas todo ano para comemorar o 13 de Maio – data da abolição da escravidão no Brasil –, por meio de romarias, missas, conferências cívicas, discursos solenes, festivais artístico-culturais, bailes, música, dança, teatro e embalados, na maior parte das vezes, por um clima de emoção e alegria. Apoiando-se em registros diversos, especialmente jornalísticos, o artigo tem a finalidade de descrever e examinar essas comemorações, procurando demonstrar os seus múltiplos sentidos e diferentes significados.

Palavras-chave: negros; diáspora africana; abolição; escravidão e liberdade; comemorações.

## ABSTRACT

São Paulo, the first decades of the twentieth century. It was common at this time for part of the black population to take to the streets every year to celebrate 13 May – date of the abolition of slavery in Brazil –, with pilgrimages, masses, civic conferences, solemn discourses, artistic and cultural festivals, dances, music, dance, theater and festivities, most often in a climate of emotion and joy. Drawing on various registers, especially journalistic, the article aims to describe and examine these commemorations, seeking to demonstrate their multiple meanings and different significances.

Keywords: blacks; African Diaspora; abolition; slavery and liberty; commemorations.

On 13 May 1924, the black São Paulo newspaper *O Clarim d’Alvorada*, published a long editorial to commemorate the suppression of captivity in Brazil. Entitled “The redemption of our race,” the editorial began by stating: “Commemorated today in all corners of our Brazil so dear to us is one more anniversary of the extinction of slavery; thirty-six years have passed since the

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great day when our beloved Patria sang the beautiful hymn of liberty before the civilized nations, becoming even more happy” and entered “the list of great powers.” Captivity had to be extinguished forever, after all, “what use is forced labor?” How could one work with care, receiving punishments in payment; “if labor needs spontaneity and application to be the basis of production?” For labor to be performed with all the fundamental dispositions, its executor needs to be well paid. “Our grandparents,” warns the author of the editorial, “received in payment for their hard work whipping and flagellation and other terrible punishments.” Often worn out from so much suffering, some committed suicide in order to no longer suffer, though many put up with these torments and were “resigned to them,” until there appeared some “men of sense and of charity” who understood very well the suffering of those “misfortunate ones who came from the Old Continent, misled by tyrants;” they came to destroy forests, build numerous plantations, here they formed a new generation and “to them and all their descendants Brazil owes its foundations.” Standing out among these “men of sense” was a “Noble Lady” to whom we should give the title of mother of all the captives: Princes Isabel, “the redeemer,” who also knew the many injustices. “We implore Jesus for her blessed soul and for all those who took part in the campaign of our redemption.”<sup>2</sup>

In 1926 the *Clube 13 de Maio dos Homens de Cor* (the 13 May Club of Men of Color) decided to organize various activities to commemorate the “great day of the emancipation of our race.” At 9 a.m. its members and associates went to mass in the church of *Nossa Senhora do Rosário dos Homens Pretos*, in suffrage of the slaves and abolitionists; shortly afterwards they went to the cemetery to leave wreaths at the mausoleums of Luis Gama and Antônio Bento, “paying them homage of gratitude.” At night in its head office, located on 5 Rua Conceição there was a “solemn session, a speech about the date by its official orator, followed by a pompous ball until daybreak.”<sup>3</sup> As can be observed, in the initial decades of the twentieth century parts of the black population of São Paulo gave significant value to 13 May and occupied public space to commemorate the date. How were these commemorative rituals held in terms of configurations, ideas, discourses, images and representations? Were newspaper and associations of ‘men of color’ the only productive arenas of the events? And why did these arenas circulate laudatory narratives of abolitionists and Princess Isabel? These are the principal questions that guide this article. My proposal is to unveil the multiple meanings and different significations that the agents of this history attributed to their actions, through “their own rituals, their own pleasures and their vision of the world.”<sup>4</sup>

During the 1970s the organized black movement started an implacable campaign against 13 May. Their leaders argued that Abolition was a ‘lie’ and a ‘farce’ – two words used numerous times –, since it did not guarantee the inclusion of blacks in Brazilian society, especially not in the labor market. Instead of a ‘Redeemer,’ Princess Isabel should have been seen as an ‘impostor.’ Simultaneously, these arguments were reinforced by the studies of Brazilian intellectuals. For Clóvis Moura no commemorative meaning could be justified for 13 May. In fact, if an objective balance was to be drawn up the sociologist from Piauí argued, it could be concluded that this was a date “to be commemorated by the dominant classes and not by the black segments of *favelas*, tenements, *alagados*, invasions.” The ‘marginalized’ black had nothing to do “with this day which marked the beginning of a hateful process of disguised segregation, compulsorily placing it on the highest levels of Brazilian society.”<sup>5</sup> From Florestan Fernandes’ perspective, “13 May historically delimits the outbreak of the only social revolution that occurred in Brazil,” however blacks were not only ‘passive spectators’ of this revolution, but were also ‘banished’ from it. In the 1930s and 1940s the ‘black sector’ had become aware that Abolition was nothing other than a ‘social fallacy,’ so that later, the *Paulista* sociologist states, “the episode is shown as something ephemeral from the privileged classes of the dominant race. It is a historic date of the *senhores*, the white bosses, of indirect interest to blacks.”<sup>6</sup> Under so many attacks the anniversary of Abolition was undermined, if not actually banished from the calendar. In its place 20 November – presumed date of the death of Zumbi, leader of Palmares *quilombo* (eighteenth century) – was chosen as the national day of protest and black consciousness.<sup>7</sup> Does this reading of history by contemporary social movements do justice to the complexity of the facts? In other words, was 13 May just a big lure, and the thousands of blacks who commemorated the date for decades at the beginning of the twentieth century all deluded, or even alienated?

## THE CUSTOMARY RITUALS

The so-called *Lei Áurea* (Golden Law) was signed on 13 May 1888. It was a sunny Sunday afternoon. Rio de Janeiro, capital of Brazil, was overtaken by a feeling of exultation. The poorer classes – former slaves, *forros* (freed slaves), freemen, Africans, *Crioulos*, blacks and whites – took over the streets and commemorated in an explosion of joy never before seen in the history of the nation. Despite his peculiar timidity, Machado de Assis could not contain

himself in light of such an extraordinary event and made a point of entering his impetuous feelings in his chronicle: “Everyone took to the street. Yes, I also took to the street, I, the most hidden of snails, I also joined in the procession in an open carriage. [...] Truly, this was the only day of public delirium that I remember having seen.”<sup>8</sup> In his autobiographic novel *Coelho Neto*, another writer who witnessed 13 May, drew a burning picture of the commemorations. In the adjacencies of the Senate, the people ‘triumphantly’ waved and more than ‘twenty thousand mouths’ proclaimed in unison; hats went into the air, handkerchiefs waved and with impulsive jolts fireworks tore through the air ‘flaring in the heights.’ The time went by in hallucinating agitation. On the windows of some house flags bobbed. “Bands marched through the streets, singing. Marching around serenading were groups of blacks with their maracas and their *reco-recos* and under the light of torches carpenters began to hammer building gazebos or setting up posts for ornamentation.”<sup>9</sup>

People paraded, applauded, waved, shouted enthusiastic words, cheered the heroes of the new time, recited poetry, sang various songs, danced, drank, in a single word, enjoyed themselves. Popular support was total, joyful and dramatic. The festivities continued through the night and, even in the rain, continued for the next eight days. Until 20 May Rio de Janeiro appeared ‘upside down,’ in Eduardo Silva’s expression. “The port, cargo trains, public offices, postal service, banks, public and private schools were paralyzed, everything stopped to see and participate in the festivities, until total exhaustion.”<sup>10</sup> In the countryside towns the reception of the emancipation decree was surprising. ‘Freedom’ was the cry that spread among the slaves from one plantation to another; a son of a plantation owner in Vassouras is reported to have rushed through plantations shouting: “Now we are all equal, we are all one.” For three days and nights the echo of drums could be heard while the newly freed slaves went to get retribution with their *caxambu* drums. These were held next to stalls and taverns, where clothes could be bought that symbolized the change in status: hats, suits, shoes and umbrellas were anxiously sought after. According to Stanley Stein, *jongueiros* put 13 May into their compositions, referring to the vacillating attitude of the Emperor (‘stone’) in relation to abolition and praising the act of his daughter (‘queen’):

*Eu pisei na pedra, pedra balanceou*  
*Mundo ’tava torto, rainha endireitou*  
*[I step on the stone, the stone wobbled*  
*The world was crooked, the queen fixed it.]*

Or:

*Eu ’tava dormindo, Ngoma me chamou  
Levanta povo, cativo já acabou  
[I was sleeping, Ngoma called me  
Rise up people, captivity has ended]*<sup>11</sup>

Through the electric telegraph the news that ‘captivity had ended’ spread through the provinces, contaminating a large part of the Empire. In São Paulo the reaction of the public was overwhelming. Defying the cold temperatures of 13 May, a crowd met to commemorate on the streets and public squares. Euphoric writers described this as follows: “never was there seen in this capital, a multitude of such a size and so unanimously enthusiastic.”<sup>12</sup> In a statement given to Gilberto Freyre, Maria Vicentina de Azevedo Pereira de Queirós – from an aristocratic family and born in 1868 –, confessed that she that she had received the news of Abolition with immense ‘joy’ and that in São Paulo, where she lived, she had watched “the great festivities held on 13 May. Large gazebos had been set up on the principal streets and to the sound of bands slaves danced and sang, cheering and cheering again Princess Isabel, the Redeemer, José do Patrocínio, Antonio Bento and other defenders of their race.”<sup>13</sup> Curiously, the testimony of the aristocrat from the Pereira de Queirós family coincides com o de Maria Chatinha, a former slave. Living on a plantation in Tremembé, in São Paulo, she remembered how the new of the *Lei Áurea* caused an explosion among her companions in the *Senzala* (slave quarters): “when they shouted freedom... Ah! My God! How the blacks screamed, how they sang! How they danced *baile, caxambu, caqueretê, mazuca, baile*, this ... played... and sang, I remember the day, even what they sang.”<sup>14</sup>

The Abolition decree set alight the social life of various Paulista cities. In Campinas many ‘blacks’ with *zabumbas* ran through the streets cheering for liberty, the press, the abolitionists, etc., playing a syncopated samba until late at night.<sup>15</sup> In the Minas Gerais city of Juiz de Fora and its surrounding region, 13 May was welcomed with festivities and expectations of better days; “many rockets went up into the sky” and a popular manifestation was organized with music, lights, and lots of high spirits. The Portuguese colony scheduled a “pompous festival,” there were masses and processions. In these festivities “there participated numerous poor people and famous locals.”<sup>16</sup> In the cities of Rio Grande and Pelotas, in the province of Rio Grande do Sul, the commemorations alluding to 13 May “had an expressive presence of the existing worker

associations and also the associations of different nationalities, especially the German, Italian and Portuguese associations in the two cities.”<sup>17</sup>

In Bahia the population was in a state of rapture: *bordões*, songs with cheers for liberty; processions, fireworks, dances, impromptu music and drumming marked the tone of the Abolition commemorations. In Salvador businesses closed, the fronts of buildings were decorated with flags and for around a week the city was in a festival. In the march organized by *Diário da Bahia*, what predominated were the banners of emancipation associations, platoons honoring the abolitionists and students, poor people and former slaves, enjoying themselves to the “sound of the musical bands from the military platoons during the day and to the sound of the drums at night.”<sup>18</sup> A few days later there was a great pilgrimage to Bonfim Church in gratitude for the liberation of the slaves. In Cachoeira, in the Recôncavo Baiano region, a newspaper from the city stated that on 13 May, “the people flowed into the streets” accompanied by music bands. From the balconies of *sobrados* (a type of house), there were many speeches and the chanting of slogans. The following week, “after the Council received the official notification of Abolition, around 4,000 people paraded festively through the streets of Cachoeira and the neighboring settlement of São Félix.”<sup>19</sup>

In Sergipe 13 May was an atypical day. The mood of excitement and happiness took over the last *assenzalados* (slaves) when they heard that the ‘Law of Liberation’ had been enacted. In the city of Laranjeiras – enrooted in the most opulent region of the province –, the streets were decorated, serving as a *locus* for the commemorative acts: processions, musical bands, recitals of poetry and public speeches by “well known orators.”<sup>20</sup> In São Luís do Maranhão for three days and night “the slave population, and with it the abolitionist group, did not sleep.” The dawn of the ‘day of liberty’ was radiant. A blue, cloudless sky. The sun showed its grace. Songs, laughter and happy shouts were everywhere. In a memoir Dunshee de Abranches tells how he had the ‘honor’ of announcing in a rally at Largo de Palácio and in the name of the governor of the province, “the great news to the Maranhense people,” which caused frantic vibrations among the ‘groups.’ An immense (and noisy) procession marched to the barracks of the Public Force in order to invite the army to join in the festivities. At night the popular agitation became even more intense. In the hall of the Municipal Council there is a solemn session in which the ‘great event’ was commemorated. According to Abranches, the solemnity had monarchical characteristics. The names of the “Emperor and the Princess Regent were on everyone’s lips in the most sincere acclamations of happiness and recognition.”

<sup>21</sup> In Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Minas Gerais, Rio Grande do Sul, Bahia, Sergipe, and Maranhão, in urban and rural areas, in short in the most different corners of the country, the former slave and the popular groups were awestruck. More than going into ecstasy their dreams and hopes were felt strongly.

The first anniversary of Abolition occurred between the fall of the Monarchy and the establishment of the Republic, and was commemorated in Court and in the main provinces. There was a civic march in Rio de Janeiro, in which there appeared soldiers, teachers, students, civilian workers and minors; all swaying to the sound of the band, the cornets and drums. The signatory of the *Lei Áurea* was honored. After having been saluted with military honors, Princess Isabel received from ‘poor children’ a bouquet of flowers. Present at in the commemorations, she went to the solemn mass in the Church of *Nossa Senhora do Rosário* and *São Benedito dos Homens Pretos*. Next, with all her entourage, she went to the Church of *São Francisco de Paula*, “where a *Te-Deum* was sung, with a huge congregation and in the presence of civilian, military and ecclesiastic authorities.” Princess Isabel also participated in the Festival of the Abolitionist Confederation, which consisted of a discourse and a concert. The Emperor D. Pedro II, in turn pardoned “many who had been condemned to the ‘galleys,’ in other words, many criminals were saved from forced labor wearing chains around their feet” (Santos, 1991, p.44).

In January 1890 13 May was decreed a national holiday, “dedicated to the commemoration of the fraternity of Brazilians” and so became part of the official calendar. In the following years the event continued being celebrated with gusto and enthusiasm by various agents: the armed forces, public authorities, parliamentarians, journalists, political parties, religious and philanthropic institutions, both Christian and non-Christian, teaching establishments, non-government organizations, trade unions, cultural associations and literary groups. “Brazil commemorates today,” reported the morning paper *A Notícia* on 13 May 1899, “the most popular and one of the most brilliant dates of its history.” Of all the national festivals, “it is the commemoration of abolition that fills the hearts of the people with the greatest jubilation, a powerful and assiduous collaborator on the side to the propagandists of the holy cause, which was the most just of national aspirations.” <sup>22</sup> Ten years later, *Correio da Manhã* boasted on the front page: “There is no greater date in Brazil than that of today. Not even that of Independence. The 13 May decree made a free nation emerge.” For the 1888 generation, “there is still in their ears the sounds of the incomparable joy of the festivities in the *quilombos* and still in their eyes the wonderment of the

apotheoses of those triumphant in the sacred cause,”<sup>23</sup> *Treze de Maio* (13 May) was evoked in its civic aspect as a ‘national festival,’ ‘a glorious date’ and ‘a luxurious event’ which sealed “a new period in Brazilian life, a new dawn, another day, another life.”<sup>24</sup> However, what did the so-called ‘men of color’ think of the ephemeris?

In Rio de Janeiro the Brotherhood of Our Lady of the Rosary and St. Benedict of Black Men (*Irmandade de Nossa Senhora do Rosário e de São Benedito dos Homens Pretos*) gave 13 May great distinction, commemorating the date with great pomp and devotion. It was usual to go to a solemn thanksgiving mass accompanied by an orchestra and in the afternoon to hold a *magna* session in the consistory of the brotherhood, with the right to speeches and lyrical recollections. Here the figure of the abolitionist José do Patrocínio was highlighted, who in his involving orations did not miss any opportunity to celebrate the ‘black race’ and to weave praises for Princess Isabel (Santos, 1991). In São Paulo the scenario was no different. The black population praised the anniversary of Abolition with care, ardor and enthusiasm. *Clube 13 de Maio dos Homens Pretos*, founded in the state capital on 20 July 1902 and bringing together almost one hundred people, alluded to the *Lei Áurea* in the choice of its own name and stated in the first article of its statutes that its aim was to “celebrate annually, with as brilliantly as possible, the glorious date of 13 May 1888.”<sup>25</sup> It was sought to obey the statutes to the letter, since on 22 June 1924, *O Clarim d’Alvorada* reported that the ‘veteran’ Clube 13 de Maio “commemorated with great brilliance, as in previous years, the *Lei Áurea*, giving its members and guests an excellent party.” It consisted of a solemn session in which various black leaders spoke, though the moment of greatest emotion was when the “official orator made a brief payer in rejoicing at the great date.” When the session was over, they began the dances which continued until dawn.<sup>26</sup> It is interesting to know that *Clube 13 de Maio* was not an isolated case. The *Sociedade Beneficente dos Homens de Cor* – created in 16 May 1906 and concerned with promoted mutual assistance among its members –, *Sociedade Beneficente Grupo 13 de Maio*, founded in 1915, *Centro da Federação dos Homens de Cor*, created in 1914, in summary the dozens of supportive associations for ‘men of color’ which emerged in the first decades of the twentieth century devoted special attention to the anniversary of Abolition.<sup>27</sup>

The associations planned in advance: they mobilized human and financial resources, defined a wide-ranging and diversified agenda, with civic, cultural and recreational activities; they invested in publicity, inviting representatives from the state and civil society, and used members bonds’ of solidarity and



union. Nevertheless, the commemoration were ritualized and almost always followed the same rhythm. Around 9 in the morning, mass in the Church of Nossa Senhora dos Remédios (where Praça João Mendes is nowadays) and/or in the Church of Nossa Senhora do Rosário dos Homens Pretos (in Largo do Paçandu), on behalf of the souls of slaves and abolitionists. Shortly afterwards a pilgrimage to the Cemetery of Consolação, bringing flowers to the tombs of the “immortal winner of the fight against slavery,”<sup>28</sup> with Luís Gama and Antônio Bento being the most praised abolitionists. At night the associations held gala sessions with theatrical performances, recitals of poetry and, above all, inflamed speeches by various orators. In the end, a very much in demand dancing *soirée* lasting till daybreak.<sup>29</sup> In Campinas the black associations also prepared special activities to commemorate the ‘glorious’ date of 13 May. In 1908 the *Federação Paulista dos Homens de Cor*, the *Centro Cívico 13 de Maio* and the *Sociedade Beneficente Isabel a Redentora* established an agenda with mass, a procession, a band and speeches during the day. At night a lecture about slavery – ancient and modern, American and African; “as well as a summary of the abolitionist heroes, finalizing with the approach of the political and social consequences of the slave-holding regime” (Maciel, 1997 [1987], p.91-93).

The newspapers and magazines of the black press usually reserved copious space – when they did not publish special editions – to report the date when the extinction of captivity was decreed in Brazil. However, not only in their clubs and means of communication did those who were freed and their descendants recollect every year the day of the “fraternity of Brazilians.”<sup>30</sup> In the streets, the squares, the nooks, corners and suburbs of São Paulo, the *Lei Áurea* was sustained with joy, energy and fervor, especially with drumming, samba and *jongos*. The drumming circuit of the state was concentrated in the cities of Tietê, Campinas, Porto Feliz, Limeira, Rio Claro, Piracicaba, São Pedro, Itu, Tatuí, and São Carlos, amongst others.<sup>31</sup> In the state capital, the sambas of *Treze de Maio* were held in various black redoubts. One of the most popular (and joyful) was that of Tia Olímpia in the Barra Funda neighborhood, very close to the train line. Another famous black redoubt was the *terreiro* of Zé Soldado in the Jabaquara district, where the anniversary of Abolition was acclaimed with euphoria and vibration in the rhythm of samba and *jongo* both day and night, without forgetting the *quentão*.<sup>32</sup> The mother of Odilon, a renowned staunch supporter of the Campos Elíseos carnival group, animated the event “in Vila Santa Maria, in a festival which included *tambu*, *samba-lenço*, *cururu*, *craviola*, *samba de roda* and many typical foods.”<sup>33</sup> According to *O Clarim d’Alvorada*, “the deceased Tatu [probably a freed slave] and many

others” used to walk along the principal streets of the center of São Paulo, to the sound of *bumbos* and tambourines, “singing and dancing the traditional samba.”<sup>34</sup> For the magazine *Evolução*, “Pai Thimoteo – an old slave from other times” – spoke of how the ‘parties’ of the ‘great day of race’ were held in Liberdade (the central region in the city), where the ‘*patrícios*’ appeared in their ‘gala clothes’ and ‘*patricias*’ with their “frilly skirts and their shawls around their necks.” Everything was ‘enchanting,’ since “they entertain themselves and do not let this great date go by unnoticed.”<sup>35</sup> In the neighborhood of Bexiga, the main area was Rua 13 de Maio, where there were various shacks and tenements inhabited by former slaves.

### POLYSEMIC MEANINGS

After looking at how the blacks in São Paulo commemorated the anniversary of the abolition of slavery in the initial decades of the twentieth century, it should be asked what were the expectations, motivations, representations and narratives present in these events. Relevant sources for analyzing this question are statements for former slaves and their descendants, the oral traditions, the blocks, the statutes of groups, the texts of memorial writers and chroniclers, especially newspapers from the black press, to the extent that these allow the reconstitution of aspects of the manner of thinking, feeling, behaving and acting of Afro-Paulistas in their own perspective. This does not mean to say that these publication assumed a univocal or monolithic standard. Their editorial line and racial rhetoric, for example, was characterized by a plural and multifarious dimension. They constitute a fruitful (and valuable) source to document the Afro-Diaspora experience on the Piratininga Plateau.<sup>36</sup>

In the special edition of 13 May 1923, *O Kosmos* magazine had an editorial on the first page “dedicated to the commemoration of the fraternity of Brazilians.” Thirty-five years had passed since the date of the ‘redemption of the captives.’ According to the editorial the existence of ‘human slavery’ was degrading for the formation of ‘our nationality.’ Public opinion wanted an ‘absolute law.’ As a result a great ‘abolitionist party’ grew with ramifications in all the provinces, in which journalists, lawyers, literati, politicians took part (such as José do Patrocínio, Luiz Gama, Antonio Bento, Perdigão Malheiros, Joaquim Nabuco, Ferreira de Menezes, Tavares Bastos e João Cordeiro), preaching in the press, the court, books, the idea of the immediate liberation of slavery, as well as agitating “all the classes of society, including the army, which refused the role of hunting fugitive slaves.” After this the victory of

‘liberty was close.’ According to the editorial, “some partial projects were presented, without success,” until the ‘free womb law’ was approved on 28 September 1871. This gave a “mortal blow to slavery.”

Princess Isabel thus embraced the national cause, charging Senator João Alfredo with organizing a new ministry, more sympathetic to the new ideas. In a few days the law abolishing slavery was approved in the legislatures and presented to the Princess Regent to sign on 13 May 1888 with the applause and rejoicing of all the nation, who gave the Princess, who had met the great national aspiration, the epithet – Isabel the Redeemer. At this epoch all the blacks in Brazil were declared free.<sup>37</sup>

The editorial of *O Kosmos* shows various aspects of how *Treze de Maio* was perceived and represented by strata of the black population. The abolition of slavery was celebrated as a symbol of liberty which was fused with the idea of equality in various ways. “Brothers,” proclaimed Luís de Souza, “today [13 May] is the day that the day of liberation is commemorated.”<sup>38</sup> For the former slave Mariano dos Santos, “after the charity of Princess Isabel with *Dão Pedrinho*,” “we are now in glory. Both myself and all the people.”<sup>39</sup> A final point in that “criminal attack on all the rights of man,” stated *A Voz da Raça*, “brought equality to all Brazilians who, thus, strengthened by the most solid fraternal union,” came to work “confident in the grandeur of the patria.”<sup>40</sup>

It was believed that slavery constituted a “stain on our nationality,” which was a “terrible scarecrow” preventing Brazil from becoming a nation, leaving “stationary the progress of our agriculture and our industry.”<sup>41</sup> The *Lei Áurea* broke the chains that weighed upon the blacks and as this was seen as the “major bulwark in the formation of the Patria,” the suppression of captivity signified the definitive triumph of our nationality, allowing Brazil to develop all of its potential. “Today,” declared *O Clarim d’Alvorada*, “we are commemorating with grandiose enthusiasm the thirty-ninth anniversary of this law which established our nationality.”<sup>42</sup> While the slave-holding regime divided Brazilians, Abolition unified ‘our nationality,’ consolidating it and propelling it along the path of progress and civilization. 13 May was thus a conquest of all Brazilians, and not just blacks, this was the reason why the date should be celebrated in an atmosphere of fraternity, reconciliation, and above everything, national unity.<sup>43</sup> The date highlighted the “most beautiful journey which the tempered combativeness of nationality employed”<sup>44</sup> or more simply it was “the greatest date in the history of this great patria.”<sup>45</sup>

The *Lei Áurea* had only been possible thanks to the action of Abolitionists and Princess Isabel. “We raise our hearts,” the leaders of the ‘race’ said in ‘profound recognition’ of the “tireless fighters, abolitionists,” as well as “Her Majesty Princess Isabel.”<sup>46</sup> The gratitude to the abolitionists was due to the fact that, due to reasons of a sense of humanity, justice and charity, they extended their hands to the ‘suffering,’ ‘resigned’ and ‘poor unfortunate’ slaves. According to *O Clarim d’Alvorada*, it was the abolitionists who “did not measure sacrifices, nor spare any efforts to achieve their ideal.” They fought “with intrepidity, with courage, to see the day of the liberation of the black captive. To these heroics we should offer up the day of our tributes, honoring their names and deeds worthy of applause.”<sup>47</sup> What calls attention in this interpretation of the history which led to the end of captivity is the absence of slave resistance. In recent decades Brazilian historiography has shown that the captives, despite all the adversities and limitations, sought to be the protagonists of their destinies. Definitively they did not wait with folded arms for liberty, nor did they depend on the call of abolitionists. From the middle of the 1860s until 13 May 1888, slaves enacted various methods of resistance and struggle to break the ‘chains of oppression.’ Among these methods what were most common were cases of liberty in the courts and escapes – individual or collective, spontaneous or planned –, which caused nightmares to the ‘owners of power.’ In addition, in this period new forms of organization of *mocambos* and *quilombos* come into play. Instead of the traditional flights to distant places – very often inhospitable, such as the dense forests –, slaves started to take refuge in cities and their adjacencies, or even decided to occupy the land of the plantation they were on. In this set of action – which involved both legal and illegal means, without dispensing, in some cases, with violence –, the ‘I refuse’ of slaves was obvious; “their refusal to recognize the right of ownership of one human over another.”<sup>48</sup>

Did the Afro-Paulistas in the first decades of the twentieth century not know the paths and misleading paths trodden by the slave-holding agency? Everything indicates the opposite. Their choice to worship the abolitionists and in contrast omit the autonomous actions of slaves in the struggle for the conquest of liberty was not something fortuitous. Described as ‘tireless fighters,’ ‘immortal soldiers’ and ‘saviors of the patria,’ the abolitionists – whether they were black or white, such as José do Patrocínio, Luiz Gama, Antonio Bento, Visconde do Rio Branco, Joaquim Nabuco and Rui Barbosa – were worshipped for their devotion to courage, their abnegation and above all the nature of their emancipatory project: to defend the slaves they had

catalyzed an ample (and victorious) patriotic movement, of national union – of which people of all colors, classes and geographical locations were part – without taking advantage of antagonisms, nor feeding hatred and resentment.<sup>49</sup> While the ‘I refuse’ of the slaves, with their posture of opposition to and conflict with the system needed to be minimized if not silenced, since it was not in harmony, according to the Afro-Paulista perspective at the beginning of the twentieth century, with the ideal of integration with the national community. The fact is that the freed slaves and their descendants in the commemorations of 13 May emphasized patriotic narratives of national unity and concealed slave resistance.

As, or even more, important than the abolitionists for the approval of *Lei Áurea* was the role played by Princess Isabel. In various editions of newspapers from the black press, the presumptive heir to the Brazilian throne was given the adjective the ‘redeemer,’ ‘the glorious lady,’ ‘benefactor angel,’ ‘Brazilian angelic,’ ‘the sublime and holy woman,’ ‘lady mother of the slaves,’ or ‘mother of the captives.’ The name Djá was also sung in verse and prose by the ‘blacks’ of Bexiga. José Correia Leite reported that in 1908 he went to a party in the neighborhood dedicated to the anniversary of Abolition in the house of Sr. Ângelo. It was in an “old house, painted with very badly scratched bricks, on Rua 13 de Maio.” The small room was completely decorated with green and yellow flags; the lighting came from three oil lamps and the room was full of chairs; at the back there was a little table covered with a green cloth embroidered in yellow. On one of the walls there was a large picture of the abolitionist Antonio Bento, adorned with flowers and covered with a small national flag. On the main door there was a ‘tall blackman’ looking everywhere; suddenly he jumped and ran into the house shouting: “– *Seu Ângelo*, the people are coming!” Sr. Ângelo, who had just finished painting a placard, climbed up on a chair and hung the placard on a nail. It read: Welcome to the temple of liberty... He had barely got down from the chair when a deep voice echoed in the room: “– a very good night master, can your beloved disciples enter?” “– Of course,” said Sr. Ângelo. Moments later the room was full of guests. Sr. Ângelo, full of enthusiasm was seated in a chair in the middle of the room, surrounded by various gentlemen; he got up and said: “Ladies and gentlemen, before opening the solemn session, I have to tell you that the dance will be on the veranda and the samba in the yard.” Not having anything more to say, the host handed over to Sr. Tibúrcio Ramos, an ‘old sympathetic black,’ who stood up, put his hands on the tables and began to speak:

Dear *patrícios* and *patricias*. I still have in my mind the atrocious sufferings through which I have passed, alongside our brothers, when we were slaves. I should not and I cannot describe the sufferings to you, because I do not want to torment your spirits. Dear *patrícios* ... this solemn session, now being held, represents gigantic steps we are making for the progress of our race.

Sr. Tibúrcio's speech lasted almost an hour; afterwards various other orators spoke and the session ended at more or less midnight. This was when, according to Correia Leite, "the preferred festivities began: the dance and the samba, which went until the following day, when they were called for lunch. The dance was good, though the samba was much better," with *umbigadas*, challenges and many nostalgic pieces. Leite remembered that in one of these everyone sang:

*Nois somos bão brasileiro  
Todos de bão coração  
Djá findô o desespero;  
Viva a lei da abolição!...<sup>50</sup>  
[We are good Brazilians  
All with good hearts  
Djá ending the despair;  
Viva the abolition law!]*

As can be seen the abolition anniversary groups acquired for the 'blacks' of Bexiga a nationalist, or even patriotic, meaning, for confirming or reaffirming the feeling (or anxiety) of belonging to the 'imagined community.'<sup>51</sup> In this group, Djá, a metaphor for Princess Isabel, was sung and praised as a heroine for "having ended the despair." Why was Isabel so exalted by part of the Afro-Paulista population – i.e., whether the 'men of color' of the black press, or the 'blacks' of Bexiga –, and portrayed with such positive images and attributes? As various authors have emphasized, the monarchy was overthrown at a moment when it was enjoying high levels of popularity, especially among the lower classes and people of color.<sup>52</sup> D. Pedro II skillfully constructed the image of a paternalist emperor, whose social concern was made clear when he commuted death penalties for perpetual imprisonment and gave liberty to those who had been enslaved. Although many of D. Pedro II's actions had been symbolic, since he had an ambiguous posture towards slavery,<sup>53</sup> the representation of him which spread was that of a balanced monarch, just and sensitive to men of color, as well as sympathetic to the abolitionist cause.

The popular acceptance of D. Pedro II is clear, but it was his daughter Princess Isabel who most attracted the admiration of the freed slaves and their descendants. “It is 40 years today,” stated the newspaper *Auriverde*, “when Princess Isabel signed the decree abolishing slavery in Brazil. For this reason, we, Brazilians, pay her this tribute together.”<sup>54</sup> More than being honored almost every 13 May, the Regent of the Empire was sanctified and even venerated, for being considered providential for the freeing of the slaves. In the signing ceremony of the *Lei Áurea*, the black abolitionist José do Patrocínio had thrown himself to her feet “seeking to kiss them.” On his knees and with a convulsive voice, he said some words “full of gratitude”<sup>55</sup> and gave her the same day the epithet of redeemer, an epithet which was crystallized in the popular imagination for generations (Schwarcz, 1998, p.438). “D. Isabel de Orleans is a Brazilian saint,” stressed the gazette *Progresso*, “and should be venerated as a saint.”<sup>56</sup> As the signatory of the *Lei Áurea*, the Princess capitalized for herself the image of praiseworthy, redeemer and ‘saint.’ Her organic connection with the institutional debate which culminated with the ending of slavery, put her into evidence in Brazilian society, guaranteeing her high levels of approval in public opinion and a captive seat in the pantheon of the Brazilian greats.

However, the cult of the imperial family by freed slaves and their descendants in São Paulo in the first decades of the twentieth century should not be interpreted as the sole result of gratitude for an act in the past – the suppression of captivity on 13 May 1888. The intolerance on the part of the first republican government of Afro-Diaspora cultural practices, the absence of public policies aimed at attacking racial inequalities and particularly the neglect of the authorities of the new regime of the needs of the ‘colored population’ did not go unperceived by journalists and opinion makers in the black press: “In this long space of time, the Republic did nothing in our favor.”<sup>57</sup> From another explanatory angle, Lilia Moritz Schwarcz argues that the Africans did not abandon their cultural references in crossing of the Atlantic, so that kings and nobles, sold as slaves for reasons of war, or simple disaffected persons, sought in Brazil “to reconstruct the political and religious structure of their distant lands.” In addition to their kings and nobles, seen as the supreme leaders, the Africans transplanted to *terra brasilis* the tradition of symbolically crowning kings in festive ceremonies of *Nossa Senhora do Rosário* (Our Lady of the Rosary). On these occasions, their old leaders were recollected and glorified since the allegoric kings, with *congadas*, dressed as knights and with drumming “within the space of the festivals represent the maximum authority then

constituted.” This experience with so many kings – imaginary or not – “allowed the emergence of different understandings of royalty and even a certain positive reception of the monarchy” (Schwarcz, 1998, p.14-15).

Following the interpretative trail of Schwarcz, Robert Daibert Júnior postulates that by commemorating abolition, saluting and extolling Princess Isabel, the blacks were expressing their conception of royalty inherited from the other side of the Atlantic and re-semanticized in their Disaporic experience. Reaching Brazil Africans did not throw away their roots. Instead they began to render obedience to the Portuguese kings and princes and after independence to the Emperor of Brazil. The creation of African monarchs was connected to a process of military conquests, through which the victorious king, through the crown, changed from being a usurper to a king with a divine nature, accepted as the legitimate representative of the defeated community. According to Daibert Jr., this was the logic which informed the perception of blacks in relation to the monarchy and their representatives in Brazil: “‘Defeated’ in Africa, they were enslaved and brought to Brazil. They became subjects of a new king, who they had to identify with and pay obedience to.”<sup>58</sup> For whatever reasons many blacks saw Emperor D. Pedro II and Princess Isabel as sacred persons: gods of the Brazilian nation.<sup>59</sup> Through the intermediation of the veneration of the figure of Isabel, various loyalties were galvanized around the figure of a protector mother. Seen as a saint, the Regent of the Empire was regarded as responsible for the victory of the blacks and the incorporation of the different segments within the heart of the nation. Under her mantle (and in communion), whites, blacks, and Indians were sheltered. The building of the nation was completed in this glorious moment of patriotism. “The task started on 7 September 1822 by D. Pedro I was now completed by Princess Isabel, on 13 May 1888. Both were healing and liberating acts. They became important moments in the formation of the nation” (Daibert Júnior, 2004, p.225).

However, not all the freed slaves fell under the spell of the monarchist ‘siren’s song’ after being freed. For example, 600 of them meeting in a ‘popular assembly’ in Largo São Benedito, in the center of Campinas in 1889, produced a manifesto declaring that emancipation was a work of the “Brazilian people and army,” for which reason they did not deem themselves “obliged to defend the throne of Sra. Princesa Da. Isabel.” Months later, on the occasion of the advent of the Republic, the ‘men of color’ of the city wrote another forceful document, showing their support “in an absolute form for the government of the Federative republic of the United States of Brazil” (Maciel, 1997 [1987], p.201-202). While it is true that some sectors of the black population



manifested their support for the new form of government, it is no less true that a large part of this population continued to be attracted by the monarchy.<sup>60</sup> Evidence of this is the creation of groups of the *Guarda Negra* (Black Guard),<sup>61</sup> in various parts of the country; the inflamed discourses of José do Patrocínio in support of the Imperial family and the tributes made to Princess Isabel by the fraternities of *Nossa Senhora do Rosário* and *São Benedito dos Homens Pretos*. She was also even praised by Lima Barreto, one of the bitterest critics of the First Republic. In an article published in the magazine *Careta* on 26 November 1921, the Afro-Brazilian writer harshly attacked the Republic – accusing it of being a “closed regime, of being ostentatious, with the false shine and luxury of the *parvenu*” –, and admitting his sympathy with Princess Isabel. “Although I do not enthusiastically judge the enthusiasm of the panegyric of newspapers, I must confess I sympathize with this eminent lady.”<sup>62</sup>

In São Paulo the memorialist Jorge Americano mentioned Preto Leôncio who had been a slave of Councilor Leôncio de Carvalho. Following the abolition of slavery and the death of the Councilor, Preto remained “there drinking.” He was called by whatever name, though when he was drinking he had “crises of enthusiasm and ran through the streets cheering the monarchy.”<sup>63</sup> Even in the 1920s it was possible to find manifestations of esteem for the monarchy. “The form of government only changed in relation to the political consequences and the public order,” asserted *Progresso*, “in the spontaneous sentimentality and incoherence of all the most simple Brazilians, the worthy figures of the monarchy continue to reign sovereign. The more years go past, the more there grows in the hidden part of the popular soul the recognition of the hierarchies who were devoted to their people.”<sup>64</sup>

Commemorating signifies reviving in a collective form the memory of an event regarded as a founding act. Its principal objective is the “sacralization of the great values and ideas of a community.” In the words of Helenice Rodrigues da Silva the aim of the commemoration is demonstrating “that the ‘remembered’ act, due to its symbolic value, can be connected to what will come.”<sup>65</sup> The commemorations of the anniversary of the *Lei Áurea* were not only cloaked in a civic meaning that was nationalist and praised the abolitionists and Princess Isabel. A singular moment in the construction of a collective memory, the concomitant event served to keep alive the memories of slavery in Brazilian society. For this reason when Getúlio Vargas extinguished the 13 May holiday at the end of 1930 black leaders protested: “The October Republic has been well advised, passing the sponge of forgetfulness over the disconcerting fact which the data records for the majority of people,” Lino Guedes ironically

cried. Ending the holiday meant passing the ‘sponge of forgetfulness,’ in other words a rubber on a neuralgic chapter of national memory, relegating the discussion of slavery to “the pages of consultative compendiums about the history of Brazil.” Continuing to distill his irony, Guedes forcefully wrote:

It seems incredible that they want through pomp and festivities ... to remember the generations who in Brazil sold captive people, that in Brazil there was the horror of the *senzala*; that in Brazil the black was robbed of his labor, his maternal milk, his life; that in Brazil the trunk was bleached with the sweat of captives; that the whip was dyed with the blood of slaves, that harvests of human herds were budgeted while still on the breast of their black mothers. It seems incredible that that these unconfessable things are said to the peoples of the world, and if it has by [gesture] of great clemency having put an end to such an ignominy...<sup>66</sup>

Commemorating the anniversary of Abolition also had the moral, if not pedagogical, role of reflecting on injustices, plunder and atrocities (violence, bad treatment and humiliations of all sorts) committed against thousands of people who were torn in a compulsory manner from their lands to build, under the heavy hand of the lash, the material and symbolic wealth of this country. Rubbing out this chapter of national formation would be an error, principally for the development of a collective memory and ethical conscience in new generations of Brazilian citizens. Instead of this the question of slavery – when not the horrors of captivity – needed to be remembered and recollected, both ritually and publically. It is true that an ignominious and inhumane page in history had been turned, but it could never be forgotten. Remembering thereby signified a striking scream of alert raising awareness in Brazilian society.

In a similar manner, the ‘civic’ festivities of 13 May were appropriated for political purposes, constituting a space of racial mobilization: of rhetoric for rights and demands for the expansion of citizenship. In these events Afro-Paulists did not exclusively refer to the ‘martyrs’ of the past, but also dealt with the dilemmas and challenges of the present. “Free of humiliating fetters,” asked *O Clarim d’Alvorada*, exempt from the “atrocities on the so-called ‘trunks;’ the remote scaffold where the anger of the *senhores* (slave owners) and the rancor of those inflicting punishment could prod meat and shatter bodies? Is this enough?” The newspaper itself answered: “No!” The true liberty of the blacks had started to shine in the “decisive and loyal combat,” eradicating illiteracy and preparing a new generation for the clashes of the future.<sup>67</sup> In his speech in front of the ‘necropolis’ of Luiz Gama, on the occasion of the 13 may pilgrimage

of 1929, Benedito do Nascimento spoke of the missed abolitionist and “ended by appealing to the youth to continue in the struggle to demand rights in a free patria.”<sup>68</sup> Parts of the ‘colored populations’ had an idea that Abolition – which represented a democratic advance, perhaps without precedent in national history – did not imply a panacea for every problem. Complementary measures needed to be taken to guarantee their dignified insertion in Brazilian society: “To those who helped build the patrimony of Brazil, the government owes much. Certainly the blacks have liberty, laws, but this is not enough. More is needed. Law 3.533 [*Lei Áurea*] needs to be complemented.”<sup>69</sup>

It was possibly in the 13 May manifestations – through the ‘civic’ festivities, the public processions, the speeches of black leaders, the narratives of equality conjugating ‘race’ and ‘nation’ and the expectations of citizenship – that many freed slaves and their descendants became aware that the government ‘owed’ them, and need to get rid of this debt to adopt complementary measures. One of the measures raised was the creation of the ‘House for Slaves.’ According to *Progresso* it was not rare to meet in the streets “sick blacks who dragged themselves along at great cost,” abandoned in their invalidity after having been ‘exploited’ in their youth for ‘plantation work.’ Given this situation the newspaper demanded the foundation of a ‘House for Slaves,’ a “home where those freed by Isabel who had been shipwrecked by life could comfortably end their days. To finance it “it was just, since of the much that agriculture produced, a small part could be taken to maintain the House for Slaves.”<sup>70</sup>

As can be inferred, there was much different political rhetoric and various racial propositions related to 13 May, including some voices weaving a critical balance of the situation of blacks in Brazilian society. From this viewpoint, the ephemeris had to be seen a space for the production and circulation of ideas: the discussion of projects, fermentation of utopias and demands for rights. Investigating the ‘commemorations of liberty’ in Porto Alegre (RS) in the last decade of the nineteenth century, Maria Angélica Zubaran found something similar: Afro-Gauchos “pointing to the continuities between the epoch of slave and the post-abolition period,” began to represent liberty as ‘incomplete’ and after this they used 13 May as an instrument (and language) to spread their demands for rights and to oppose prejudice and discriminatory practices them in force.<sup>71</sup>

In a no less important manner, the anniversary of Abolition sheltered a ludic connotation, translated into the daily life of many Afro-Paulistas through festivities. Without any greater theoretical prevarication, it is worth saying that the festivities were collective actions connected with a *leitmotiv*, which could

be a real or imaginary entity, an event, an aspiration or a treat: a commemoration or a celebration. The festivities were characterized by the production of identities between the participants, to the extent that these shared affections and emotions in relation to the symbol being commemorated and produced a collective memory.<sup>72</sup> 13 May festivities were palpating, providing participants with intense pleasure by bringing together food, drink, music, dance and Afro-Diasporic cultural manifestations.

In a detailed report, the chronicler Jacob Penteado discussed a live (and surprising) account of one of these festivities in the neighborhood of Belenzinho. Blacks, many of whom were former slaves, lived on Rua Conselheiro Cotegipe in huts at the bottom of a vast plot of land. On the afternoon of 12 May, on the eve, ‘blacks’ began to arrive, alone or in groups, carrying many different musical instruments: “*bombos*, rattles, tambourines, drums, triangles, maracas, *reque-reques*, *puítas*, *urucungos*, marimbas, *adufes* and others inherited perhaps from their African ancestors.” According to Penteado there were so many people there that “it seemed incredible that they would fit in that place,” led by Barnabé, a “huge man more than two meters tall.” After eating and drinking, lots of *cachaça* or *quentão*, the ‘blacks’ became agitated and the *samba de roda* started. The chronicle emphasized that the samba then was very different, consisting of an “exotic amalgam” of regional dances, “*capoeira*, *lundu*, *jongo*, drumming, *cateretê*, etc”. Under the “infernal rhythm of percussion instruments, in which the deafening beat of the drums was the worst, the night began.” A circle was formed in the yard, one of them jumped into the center and began to sing, “shaking” all over:

*Oi embaré, oi embará!*  
*Balança que pesa ora não pode pesá metá!*  
*[Hi embaré, hi, embará!*  
*Scale that weighs hours cannot weigh metal!*

The group then repeated the verses as a chorus and the soloist continued:

*Oi, Itararé, oi Itararé!*  
*Mataram todo zome,*  
*Coitadinha das muié!*  
*[Hi, Itararé, hi Itararé!*  
*They killed all men,*  
*Poor women!]*

The drumming heated up. Shortly afterwards various pairs jumped to the center of the ring, while the others clapped their hands in rhythm. The movements were “dizzying, riotous, with grotesque contortions, without rhythm nor grace, in a primitive choreography, where the black women with big asses wildly moved the chairs, lewd and lascivious, between slaps and pinches on the parts that most stood out.” The “choir continued through the night. Within the circle tiredness began to inflict punishments, but some still resisted, in an unsupportable exchange of smells.” The samba went until “day broke.”<sup>73</sup> Notwithstanding the ethnocentrism of Jacob Penteadó, his report is a pungent witness that 13 May commemorations had become a black tradition, achieving public visibility and impact on the demarcating experience, whether of the ethno-racial frontiers, or the narratives of slavery and liberty. Generally the freed slaves and their descendants anxiously awaited the date, since they also saw it as a synonym of parties, leisure and diversion. It was during the 13 May parties that the Afro-Paulistas expressed the allergy the overflowing joy they felt on the day of ‘liberation.’ It was during these festivities that they relaxed (with music, dancing and drink), mingled (with friends, neighbors and relatives), exchanged experiences (in dialogues, flirting, and in games), created solidarity networks, invented (and reinvented) Afro-Diaspora rites, styles, symbols and cultural artifacts; updated (and re-updated) memories, forged and negotiated identities, ventilated questions of rights and sewed expectations of equality.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Abolition brought an end to the institution on which Brazilian civilization had been based for more than 300 years. It was a product of a notable mass movement and social and political pressure, consubstantiating “a victory of the people and – we can add – a victory of free and enslaved blacks” (Andrews, 1998, p.75). While there may not be consensus that it was a, or the only, ‘social revolution’ – as argued by Florestan Fernandes –, certainly the event represented a mark, a real watershed, in terms of the democratic advance.<sup>74</sup> In the lapidary metaphor of Dunshee de Abranches, the ‘Bastille’ had fallen (Abranches, 1992 [1941], p.195). For the first time in Brazilian history, a mass movement had triumphed over oligarchic interests. For the first time in the history of the nation, all Brazilians were considered equal before the law, in their condition of liberty. This is not something small. As anyone who had felt at first hand the horrors of captivity would say. Mariano dos Santos, for example, had no doubt about the difference between being a slave and a free person:

As I have explained, you want to go to a party, you go; you want to go for a walk, you go; you want to go to a place, you go; if you go during the day, it is ok; you can sleep when you want, you sleep; you want to get up early, you get up; if you want to get up later, you do; and you can go, if you want to go for a walk, you can do what you want. If it is during the day, it is ok; the time to eat; if you want to spend the whole day eating, there is no one to tell you not to eat, or that you cannot enjoy yourself, or not to go to a certain place. So it is as I say, as I speak: that both myself and this new people now, after liberation, we are in glory. (Maestri Filho, 1988, p.31)

The former slaves knew what it was to have their movements constrained by a *senhor*, whether he was generous or not. This was an aspect that could not be neglected. The blacks commemorated 13 May as liberation, in other words as a moment of the acquisition of an elementary right of citizenship: the right to move, to walk, to celebrate, in summary the right to come and go.<sup>75</sup> For this premise, they were not mistaken, nor did they lie in profound alienation. There was much at play in these commemorations. Restricting the analysis of 13 May to only one form of alienation hinders the observation of how blacks appropriated the date, with its nuances, ambivalences and multiplicities of conceptions. For some Afro-Paulistas, the event had a nationalist meaning. With the abolition of slavery the patria was no longer divided, as “we were used to seeing it. The nation was now composed of everyone – former *senhores*, former freemen, former slaves and former freed slaves – and from them on we needed to be united in the construction of a new Brazil” (Silva, 2007, p.40).

Although the *Lei Áurea* had not assured the full integration of blacks in the ‘imagined community,’ this was its ideal. “Brazil,” *O Clarim d’Alvorada* proclaimed on 13 May 1924, “our dear Patria! You who have progressed so much, despite the past facts, of thirty-six years ago, answer you dear children, what we ask with all our hearts!...”<sup>76</sup> The triumphalist words of the black press underlay Paul Gilroy’s assertion: in the history of the African diaspora, the construction of racial identities is a tortuous process, heterogeneous, plural and dynamic, with permanent contingent combinations and re-combinations. Far from pure or essentialist, the black diaspora identity was characterized by its hybrid, multifaceted and relational character.<sup>77</sup> The freed slaves and their descendants developed (and negotiated) a racial identity in connection with national identity. As well as blacks, they were Brazilians. And they would not give this up. To the contrary, they spread their patriotism with pride, avid that the ‘imagined community’ would recognize their value and incorporate them as

the most authentic son. Since the “race which was the trunk of our nationality” was the black “to whom we owe the grandeur of our beloved patria.”<sup>78</sup>

Nevertheless, 13 May was a moment of celebrating the icons whose actions were concerned with the defense of the liberation of slaves in Brazil. Who gained fame were abolitionists (such as José do Patrocínio, Luiz Gama and Antonio Bento) and the members of the Imperial family, especially Princess Isabel, who was given the nickname the redeemer. Schwarcz argues that Abolition was the “most popular act of the empire,” and allowed the ‘political royalty’ to be associated with ‘mystical royalty,’ – the lady of ‘justice’ and ‘security’ (Schwarcz, 1998, p.438). For whatever reason, the way blacks, with their cultural roots inherited from Africa, experienced Abolition and interpreted the role of Princess Isabel contributed to the production (and circulation) of a monarchist image of the end of captivity. What for many contemporary Afro-Brazilian activists appears as evidenced of submission or evidence, was actually the specific way of the “colored population to feed and live the dream of liberty” (Daibert Júnior, 2004, p.225). The presumptive heir to the Brazilian throne was not a saint nor a devil, as activists have recently been suggesting. This Manichean vision of history is problematic, since, in addition to not being able to explain a complex (and ambiguous) personality, it tends to be anachronistic, as it obliterates black traditions and the cultural policy of the context.

13 May commemorations, in turn, assumed different political meanings and shapes, whether to prevent the collective memory of slavery from falling into ostracism, to place the debate about the racial question on the national agenda, or to give visibility to the demands for rights.<sup>79</sup> Sectors of the black population did not lose sight of the fact that the suppression of captivity needed to be complemented with ‘redistributive’ policies and concrete measures to benefit the freed slaves and their descendants. With critical positions and striped of illusions, they used the 13 May commemorations to raise awareness among their ‘brothers of color,’ as well as to dialogue with civil society and the state. Finally, the cultural and recreational meaning of the event has to be highlighted. In order to vent the daily tensions and emotions, during 13 May activities artistic and cultural and dancing activities were held, making that data a great festival, in which what was most important were the fancy *soirées* of the clubs of the ‘men of color’ and the contagious (and effervescent) drumming, *sambas*, *jongos* and *congadas* of the freed slaves, which were held in houses, on streets and in public squares of the *pauliceia desvairada*.

Nowadays many social movements have repudiated *Lei Áurea*, arguing that

the legal device did not guarantee an effective equalization of the former slaves and their descendants with the other citizens of the nation. This article sought to summarize the black experience from the perspective of the agents of this history, without resorting to sectarian approaches. A fallacious conspiracy was talked about in which the elites plotted to throw blacks to their own luck (or bad luck!), though 13 May was much more than this. Definitively the agents of this history had an idea that the abolition of slavery did not involve the resolution of all the difficulties they faced in society though it was a *sui generis* victory. For this it had to be commemorated every year, so that such a ‘nefarious’ institution would not be forgotten. Mariano dos Santos’ statement – “now we are in glory” is thus very eloquent. Wanting 13 May to go unmarked – this was the expression used in *O Clarim d’Alvorada*<sup>80</sup> – because it was a ‘social fallacy’ is throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

The agents of this history were polysemic, imprinting multiple and distinct meanings on the commemorations of the anniversary of Abolition. In a tactical and versatile manner, they used the date to produce (and re-signify) narratives of ‘race’ and ‘nation,’ revere their heroes, make public opinion aware of its ‘flagellations’ (from the past and the present), inscribe (and re-inscribe) fluid Afro-Diasporic identities, give resonance to their rhetoric of equality, and at the same time proactively insert themselves in the arena of disputes for national projects. While emancipation did not guarantee citizenship for those emerging from captivity, it orientated the actions of many blacks, giving meaning to their daily lives, their myths, rites and ideals. From this perspective, emancipation was learned as an ideal to reach and 13 May was an unequalled date for the renovation of this ideal, with all its symbolic load of faith and hope in the Brazilian nation. Inspired by the pun of Célia Maria Marinho de Azevedo, here is a reflexive question to close this article: instead of 20 November (Zumbi dos Palmares) in opposition to 13 May, why not 20 November in complement to 13 May?

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The author would like to thank Ruan Reis and Jacqueline dos Santos, Pibic/CNPq scientific initiation grantees, for their help in the compilation of newspaper sources.

<sup>2</sup> *O Clarim d’Alvorada*, São Paulo, 13 maio 1924, p.1.

<sup>3</sup> *O Clarim d’Alvorada*, São Paulo, 13 maio 1926, p.8.

<sup>4</sup> THOMPSON, E. P. *Costumes em comum: estudos sobre a cultura popular tradicional*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1998. p.78.



<sup>5</sup> MOURA, Clóvis. Cem anos de Abolição do escravismo no Brasil. *Princípios*, São Paulo, n.15, p.3-9, 1988.

<sup>6</sup> FERNANDES, Florestan. *Significado do protesto negro*. São Paulo: Cortez; Autores Associados, 1989. p.32-33.

<sup>7</sup> MAUÉS, Maria Angélica Motta. Da ‘branca senhora’ ao ‘negro herói’: a trajetória de um discurso racial. *Estudos Afro-Asiáticos*, Rio de Janeiro, n.21, 1991. p.126.

<sup>8</sup> ASSIS, Machado de. *A Semana*, 14 maio 1893. *Obra completa*. Rio de Janeiro: Nova Aguilar, 1960. v.III, p.583.

<sup>9</sup> COELHO NETTO, Henrique. *A conquista*. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1985 [1899], cap. XXVII.

<sup>10</sup> SILVA, Eduardo. Sobre versos, bandeiras e flores. In: VENÂNCIO, Renato Pinto (Org.). *Panfletos abolicionistas: o 13 de maio em versos*. Belo Horizonte: Secretaria do Estado de Cultura de Minas Gerais/ Arquivo Público Mineiro, 2007. p.17.

<sup>11</sup> STEIN, Stanley Julian. *Vassouras: um município brasileiro do café (1850-1900)*. Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira, 1990. p.302-303. In relation to the commemorations of 13 May in Rio de Janeiro, see also CONRAD, Robert. *Os últimos anos da escravatura no Brasil (1850-1888)*. 2.ed. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1978. p.332-333; SANTOS, Micênio. *13 de Maio, 20 de Novembro: uma descrição da construção de símbolos nacionais e raciais*. Dissertação (Mestrado) – Programa de Ciências Sociais, UFRJ. Rio de Janeiro, 1991. p.33-42; MORAES, Renata Figueiredo. *Os Maios de 1888: história e memória na escrita da História da Abolição*. Thesis (Masters) – Departamento de História, UFF, Niterói (RJ), 2007; VENÂNCIO (Org.), 2007; for a memorialistic tr, ver DUQUE-ESTRADA, Osório. *A Abolição: esboço histórico, 1831-1888*. Rio de Janeiro: Leite Ribeiro & Murillo, 1918; já um romance histórico, ver GRIECO, Donatello. *Domingo, 13 de maio de 1888*. Rio de Janeiro: Record, 1988.

<sup>12</sup> ANDREWS, George Reid. *Negros e brancos em São Paulo (1888-1988)*. Bauru (SP): Edusc, 1998. p.75-76.

<sup>13</sup> FREYRE, Gilberto. *Ordem e Progresso: processo de desintegração das sociedades patriarcal e semipatriarcal no Brasil sob o regime de trabalho livre*. 6.ed. São Paulo: Global, 2004. p.595.

<sup>14</sup> MAESTRI FILHO, Mário José. *Depoimentos de escravos brasileiros*. São Paulo: Ícone, 1988. p.51.

<sup>15</sup> MACIEL, Cleber da Silva. *Discriminações raciais: negros em Campinas (1888-1926)*. 2. ed. Campinas (SP): CMU/Unicamp, 1997 [1987]. p.84-85.

<sup>16</sup> GUIMARÃES, Elione Silva. *Múltiplos viveres de afrodescendentes na escravidão e no pós-emancipação: família, trabalho, terra e conflito* (Juiz de Fora, MG, 1828-1928). São Paulo: Annablume; Juiz de Fora: Funalfa, 2006. p.143.

<sup>17</sup> LONER, Beatriz Ana. *Classe operária: mobilização e organização em Pelotas e Rio*

Grande (1888-1937). v.1. Dissertation (Doctorate in Sociology) – Instituto de Filosofia e Ciências Humanas, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul. Porto Alegre, 1999. p.322.

<sup>18</sup> ALBUQUERQUE, Wlamyra R. *O jogo da dissimulação: abolição e cidadania negra no Brasil*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2009. p.126.

<sup>19</sup> FRAGA FILHO, Walter. *Encruzilhadas da liberdade: histórias de escravos e libertos na Bahia (1870-1910)*. Campinas (SP): Ed. Unicamp, 2006. p.124.

<sup>20</sup> AMARAL, Sharyse Piroupo. *Escravidão, liberdade e resistência em Sergipe: Cotinguiba (1860-1888)*. Dissertation (Doctorate in History) – UFBA. Salvador, 2007. p.255-258.

<sup>21</sup> ABRANCHES, Dunshee de. *O cativoiro (memórias)*. 2.ed. São Luís: Alumar, 1992 [1941]. p.194-195.

<sup>22</sup> *A Notícia*, Rio de Janeiro, 13 maio 1899, p.1; 13 maio 1909, p.1.

<sup>23</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, Rio de Janeiro, 13 maio 1899, p.1.

<sup>24</sup> *A Notícia*, Rio de Janeiro, 13 maio 1909, p.1.

<sup>25</sup> Estatutos do Club 13 de Maio dos Homens Pretos. *Diário Oficial do Estado de São Paulo*, n.234, 22 out. 1902, p.2245.

<sup>26</sup> *O Clarim d'Alvorada*, São Paulo, 22 jun. 1924, p.4.

<sup>27</sup> In relation to back associations in São Paulo in the post-emancipation periods, see SILVA, José Carlos Gomes da. *Os sub urbanos e a outra face da cidade. Negros em São Paulo: cotidiano, lazer e cidadania (1900-1930)*. Thesis (Masters in History) – Unicamp. Campinas (SP), 1990. p.102-147; PINTO, Regina Pahim. *O movimento negro em São Paulo: luta e identidade*. Dissertation (Doctorate) – Faculdade de Filosofia, Letras e Ciências Humanas, USP. São Paulo, 1993. p.74-87; BUTLER, Kim D. *Freedoms given, freedoms won: Afro-Brazilians in post-abolition São Paulo and Salvador*. New Brunswick (NJ): Rutgers University Press, 1998. p.88-128; GOMES, Flávio. *Negros e política (1888-1937)*. Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar, 2005. p.27-44.

<sup>28</sup> *O Clarim d'Alvorada*, São Paulo, 1 abr. 1928, p.1.

<sup>29</sup> *Diário de S. Paulo*, São Paulo, 13 maio 1931, p.5. In a memorialist text, Jaime de Aguiar – one of the founders of *O Clarim d'Alvorada* – praised how the commemoration in the Afro-Paulista environment, especially “the revelries of the *Lei Áurea* were commenced with solemn sessions” in the black associations – such as Clube 13 de Maio, 28 de Setembro, Paraíso and São Paulo –, for whom there were lectures from the “leaders of the race” and ostentatious dances. “The *patrícios* and *patricias* dress during these days in character and it was common for some old men to wear an overcoat or tails. Thus the picturesque epithet of calling certain types 13 May.” AGUIAR, Jaime de. Depoimento. *Revista do Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros*, São Paulo, n.20, 1978. p.132.

<sup>30</sup> *O Kosmos*, São Paulo, 13 maio 1923, p.1.

<sup>31</sup> In a statement given to the project Memories of Slavery in Black Families in de São Paulo, Benedicto Pereira de Castro remembered that his father, a descendant of slaves, participated

every year in the popular games (‘*trança-fita*’, ‘*congada*’ and ‘*moçambique*’) which were held every year to celebrate the anniversary of abolition in the city of São Luís do Paraitinga. CASTRO, Benedicto Pereira de. Depoimento prestado entre 23 maio 1987 e 25 jun. 1987. *Memórias da Escravidão em Famílias Negras de São Paulo*, v.3, cx.1, p.3.

<sup>32</sup> BRITTO, Ieda Marques. *Samba na cidade de São Paulo (1900-1930): um exercício de resistência cultural*. São Paulo: FFLCH-USP, 1986 (Antropologia, 14). p.69-70.

<sup>33</sup> SIMSON, Olga Rodrigues de Moraes von. *Carnaval em branco e negro: carnaval popular paulistano (1914-1988)*. Campinas (SP): Ed. Unicamp; São Paulo: Edusp; Imprensa Oficial do Estado de São Paulo, 2007. p.101.

<sup>34</sup> *O Clarim d’Alvorada*, São Paulo, 13 maio 1924, p.2.

<sup>35</sup> *Evolução*, São Paulo, 13 maio 1933, p.24. *Clarim d’Alvorada* had already reported how the freed slaves and their descendants commemorated the termination of forced labor in the center of São Paulo: “Largo da Liberdade was the place chosen for the *samba*, *caipós* and *congadas*, where there could then be seen old people curved by past Januaries, with their white hairs, and the smiling grannies with their starched dresses and their little pipes, enjoying with great pleasure the smoke of the pipes which drifted in gentles gulps in the blue of the evening of the greatest festivity for our ancestors, to the sound of the *bumbos*, *urucungos*, cheers for Princess Isabé, *quentões*, etc.” *O Clarim d’Alvorada*, São Paulo, 13 maio 1930, p.2.

<sup>36</sup> In relation to the black press, see BASTIDE, Roger. A imprensa negra do Estado de São Paulo. *Boletim da Faculdade de Filosofia, Ciências e Letras da Universidade de São Paulo. Sociologia*, São Paulo, v.CXXI, n.2, p.50-78, 1951; FERRARA, Miriam Nicolau. *A imprensa negra paulista (1915-1963)*. São Paulo: Ed. FFLCH-USP, 1986 (Série Antropologia, 13); DOMINGUES, Petrônio. Os jornais dos filhos e netos de escravos (1889-1930). In: \_\_\_\_\_. *A nova abolição*. São Paulo: Selo Negro, 2008. p.19-58; SEIGEL, Micol. *Uneven encounters: making race and nation in Brazil and The United States*. Durham (NC): Duke University Press, 2009. p.179-205.

<sup>37</sup> *O Kosmos*, São Paulo, 18 maio 1923, p.1.

<sup>38</sup> *O Clarim d’Alvorada*, São Paulo, 13 maio 1927, p.4.

<sup>39</sup> MAESTRI FILHO, 1988, p.31. In the statements of Mariano dos Santos and Maria Chatinha, these two former slaves never used any other terms except ‘liberation’ or ‘liberty’ to refer to the end of captivity. Mariano refer numerous times to ‘liberation.’ Maria Chatinha spoke of ‘liberty.’ This can suggest that “while for Brazilian historiography slavery was abolished, for the enslaved, to the contrary, the liberation of captives is shouted out.” *Ibidem*, p.25.

<sup>40</sup> *A Voz da Raça*, São Paulo, n.5, 1936, p.1.

<sup>41</sup> *O Clarim d’Alvorada*, São Paulo, 13 maio 1927, p.4.

<sup>42</sup> *O Clarim d’Alvorada*, São Paulo, 13 maio 1927, p.2-3.

<sup>43</sup> The idea of the national fraternity was (re)alimented every year during the

commemorations of *Treze de Maio*, even serving as the motto for sporting manifestations, such as games of football between ‘blacks’ and ‘whites.’ From 1927 onwards some associations of ‘men of color,’ with the consent of the athletic clubs of the capital, took the initiative of holding games between teams of blacks and whites to be played on Abolition day. At a time when the former were trying to join more important teams, formed exclusively by the latter, the match had a nationalist and patriotic feeling – of communion, brotherhood and reconciliation of Brazilians, above the color line. The ‘meeting’ of the ‘black field’ and the ‘white field’ had ‘already become famous among us,’ stated the newspaper *Progresso* in 1930. “Every year we have the passage of the glorious date which marked the victory of a cause for which the most exuberant mentalities of the Empire of Brazil fought, in an incessant struggle which answered the appeal of all the noble and patriotic souls of the time. It is impossible that the attention of our athletes will not turn to this, which always carried within it the idea of the grandeur of the patria. I hope that this tradition will remain for years and years, which in the aridity of the commemoration remembers one of the facts of our history.” *Progresso*, São Paulo, 31 maio 1931, p.3. See also *Progresso*, São Paulo, 20 abr. 1930, p.4 and *Diário de S. Paulo*, São Paulo, 13 maio 1931, p.8.

<sup>44</sup> *O Clarim d’Alvorada*, São Paulo, 13 maio 1932, p.1.

<sup>45</sup> *O Clarim d’Alvorada*, São Paulo, 09 jun. 1929, p.4.

<sup>46</sup> *O Clarim d’Alvorada*, São Paulo, 13 maio 1927, p.2-3.

<sup>47</sup> *O Clarim d’Alvorada*, São Paulo, 13 maio 1927, p.13.

<sup>48</sup> AZEVEDO, Célia Maria Marinho de. 13 de Maio e anti-racismo. In: \_\_\_\_\_. *Anti-racismo e seus paradoxos*. São Paulo: Annablume, 2004. p.88. See also CARDOSO, Ciro Flamarion (Org.). *Escravidão e abolição no Brasil: novas perspectivas*. Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar, 1988; AZEVEDO, Célia Maria Marinho de. *Onda negra, medo branco: o negro no imaginário das elites – século XIX*. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1987; MACHADO, Maria Helena Pereira Toledo. *O plano e o pânico: os movimentos sociais na década da Abolição*. Rio de Janeiro: Ed. UFRJ; São Paulo: Edusp, 1994; GOMES, Flávio dos Santos. *Histórias de quilombolas: mocambos e comunidade de senzalas no Rio de Janeiro, século XIX*. Rio de Janeiro: Arquivo Nacional, 1995; MENDONÇA, Joseli Nunes. *Cenas da Abolição: escravos e senhores no Parlamento e na Justiça*. São Paulo: Ed. Fundação Perseu Abramo, 2001.

<sup>49</sup> “We forgive with our heart those who were the cause of the slavery of our ancestors! ... We are [now] all equal” and this was what mattered. *O Clarim d’Alvorada*, São Paulo, 13 maio 1924, p.1.

<sup>50</sup> *O Clarim d’Alvorada*, São Paulo, 13 maio 1924, p.2.

<sup>51</sup> ANDERSON, Benedict R. *Comunidades imaginadas: reflexões sobre a origem e a difusão do nacionalismo*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2008.

<sup>52</sup> See CARVALHO, José Murilo de. *Os bestializados: o Rio de Janeiro e a República que não foi*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1987. p.29; CHALHOUB, Sidney. *Visões da liberdade: uma história das últimas décadas da escravidão na Corte*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1990. p.179. For research which relativizes the assumption of the great popularity of the monarchy among the ‘common people,’ see JESUS, Ronaldo Pereira de. *Visões da*

*Monarquia: escravos, operários e abolicionismo na Corte*. Belo Horizonte: Argumentvm, 2009.

<sup>53</sup> SCHWARCZ, Lilia Moritz. *As barbas do imperador: D. Pedro II, um monarca nos trópicos*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1998. p.324.

<sup>54</sup> *Auriverde*, São Paulo, 13 maio 1928, p.1.

<sup>55</sup> MORAES, Evaristo de. *A campanha abolicionista (1879-1888)*. 2.ed. Brasília: Ed. UnB, 1986. p.282.

<sup>56</sup> *Progresso*, São Paulo, 15 nov. 1928, p.3.

<sup>57</sup> *O Clarim d'Alvorada*, São Paulo, 13 abr. 1930, p.4.

<sup>58</sup> DAIBERT JÚNIOR, Robert. *Isabel, a “Redentora” dos escravos: uma história da Princesa entre olhares negros e brancos (1846-1988)*. Bauru (SP): Edusc, 2004. p.217.

<sup>59</sup> SILVA, Eduardo. *Dom Obá D'África, o príncipe do povo: vida, tempo e pensamento de um homem livre de cor*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1997. p.133.

<sup>60</sup> ANDREWS, 1998, p.331; RIO, João do. *A alma encantadora das ruas: crônicas*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2008. p.64.

<sup>61</sup> The Black Guard was an organization of freed slaves, many of whom were *capoeiras*, created in Rio de Janeiro in the second half of 1888, i.e., after 13 May. Its intention was to protect the monarchy, especially the figure of Princess Isabel, from the attacks of the growing republican movement. In the assessment of these freed slaves, defending the monarchy and the princess in an extremely polarized context meant defending abolition. In relation to the Black Guard, see TROCHIM, Michael. The Brazilian Black Guard: racial conflict in post-abolition Brazil. *The Americas*, n.3, p.120-143, 1988; GOMES, Flávio. No meio das águas turvas – racismo e cidadania no alvorecer da República: a Guarda Negra na Corte (1888-89). *Estudos Afro-Asiáticos*, n.21, p.75-96, 1991; SOARES, Carlos Eugênio Líbano. Da Flor da Gente à Guarda Negra: os capoeiras na política imperial. *A negregada instituição: os capoeiras na Corte Imperial*. Rio de Janeiro: Access, 1999, p.185-245.

<sup>62</sup> BARRETO, Lima. *Careta*, 26 nov. 1921. *Marginália: artigos e crônicas*. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1956. p.35.

<sup>63</sup> AMERICANO, Jorge. *São Paulo naquele tempo (1895-1915)*. 2.ed. São Paulo: Carrenho Ed.; Narrativa Um; Carbono 14, 2004. p.149.

<sup>64</sup> *Progresso*, São Paulo, 19 ago. 1928, p.2. See also *O Clarim d'Alvorada*, São Paulo, 13 abr. 1930, p.3.

<sup>65</sup> SILVA, Helenice Rodrigues da. Rememoração/comemoração: as utilizações sociais da memória. *Revista Brasileira de História*, São Paulo, v.22, n.44, p.436, 2002.

<sup>66</sup> *Progresso*, São Paulo, 31 maio 1931, p.1.

<sup>67</sup> *O Clarim d'Alvorada*, São Paulo, 27 dez. 1925, p.1.

<sup>68</sup> *O Clarim d'Alvorada*, São Paulo, 9 jun. 1929, p.4.

<sup>69</sup> *Progresso*, São Paulo, 31 out. 1929, p.1.

<sup>70</sup> *Progresso*, São Paulo, 31 out. 1929, p.1.

<sup>71</sup> ZUBARAN, Maria Angélica. Comemorações da liberdade: lugares de memórias negras diaspóricas. *Anos 90*, Porto Alegre, v.15, n.27, p.179-182, jul. 2008; for the commemorations of *Treze de Maio* in Rio Grande do Sul, see also MAGALHÃES, Magna Lima. Crônicas e notas: a imprensa hamburguesa e o 13 de Maio. *História Unisinos*, São Leopoldo, v.12, n.1, p.60-66, 2008.

<sup>72</sup> GUARINELLO, Norberto Luiz. Festa, trabalho e cotidiano. In: JANCSÓ, István; KANTOR, Íris. *Festa, cultura e sociabilidade na América portuguesa*. São Paulo: Edusp, 2001. p.971-972.

<sup>73</sup> PENTEADO, Jacob. *Belenzinho, 1910: retrato de uma época*. 2.ed. São Paulo: Carrenho Ed.; Narrativa Um, 2003. p.195-199.

<sup>74</sup> Robert Conrad (1978, p.337) refers to Abolition as “a great victory for Brazilians,” which gave them a “measure of pride and a sense of grandeur.” In the opinion of Luiz Felipe de Alencastro, the 13 May, “late or inconsequent,” continued to be “the most thunderous tidal wave which swept through troubled Brazilian society.” ALENCASTRO, Luiz Felipe de. De Nabuco a Nabuco. *Folha de S. Paulo*, São Paulo, 8 maio 1987, Folhetim, caderno B, p.6-8.

<sup>75</sup> AZEVEDO, 2004, p.90. In relation to 13 May and the feeling of ‘liberation’ for captives in Brazilian literature, see the classic REGO, José Lins do. *Fogo morto*. 65.ed. Rio de Janeiro: J. Olympio, 2006.

<sup>76</sup> *O Clarim d’Alvorada*, São Paulo, 13 maio 1924, p.1.

<sup>77</sup> GILROY, Paul. *O Atlântico negro: modernidade e dupla consciência*. São Paulo: Ed. 34, 2001.

<sup>78</sup> *O Clarim d’Alvorada*, São Paulo, 3 jun. 1928, p.2.

<sup>79</sup> For *Progresso* we should always take pride in the emancipation of slaves, without, however, distorting the meaning of the facts: “13 May 1888 was no gift: it was a duty we fulfilled, an obligation that civilization demanded of us in light of humanity. After this deed, nothing more was done in Brazil for the black race. The majority live completely abandoned, without any government taking on the responsibility for promoting their intellectual advancement. So true is this, when we find in a university a black, a doctor, a lawyer, a teacher, a talented teacher, we stand open mouthed. Why? Because no one ever bothered to reach out a hand to the descendants of those who extended their arms to support our elders. This is ingratitude.” *Progresso*, São Paulo, 19 ago. 1928, p.1.

<sup>80</sup> *O Clarim d’Alvorada*, São Paulo, 9 jun. 1929, p.3.