

PROFILE OF RESISTANCE

Zumbi dos Palmares

Afro-Brazilian military strategist, abolitionist, King of Palmares

“Let your motto be resistance! resistance! resistance! No oppressed people have ever secured their liberty without resistance.”

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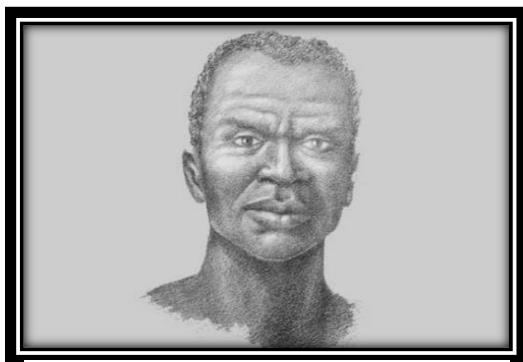


FIGURE 1 COURTESY OF RADICAL TEA TOWEL

Background Information

Born: 1655; Died: November 20, 1695

Zumbi dos Palmares was born in Serra da Barriga, Palmares. He was born free into a quilombo, or a community in Brazil established by people who had escaped slavery.ⁱ At age six, he was captured and sold into slavery by the Portuguese army. During his enslavement, his captors changed his name to Francisco and attempted to convert him to Catholicism.

Palmares' Resistance

At age fifteen, Zumbi ran away from his captors. He returned to Palmares and soon aided the military against Portuguese army violence. Zumbi's goal was to combat oppressive Portuguese rule and reject its brutal institution of slavery. With the help of people in the quilombos, Zumbi was instrumental in assisting other escaped people from oppression and unfair treatment. The Portuguese viewed quilombos as a threat because they served as areas of freedom for Afro-Brazilians who had escaped. For many years the government had several unsuccessful attempts to destroy them. In a possible peace treaty, Zumbi's uncle, King Ganga-Zumba, agreed to return some of the runaway enslaved population living in Palmares.ⁱⁱ The Palmares would become independent without Portuguese rule or interference in exchange for the runaways. Zumbi revolted against his uncle, who was later poisoned and died. After assuming the role of King of Palmares, Zumbi waged fierce resistance against various Portuguese rulers' military attacks. King Zumbi was successful in defending Palmares for many years. In 1694 the kingdom was penetrated and eventually fell to a new group of Portuguese colonizers. King Zumbi was injured in battle but survived in the forests for about two years before his capture.

Portuguese officials executed Zumbi dos Palmares on November 20, 1695

Achievements

In some areas of Brazil, November 20th is acknowledged as “Dia Nacional da Consciência Negra”, or Black Conscious Day, in honor of Zumbi dos Palmares.ⁱⁱⁱ The Zumbi dos Palmares International Airport in Maceió, Alagoas, Brazil is named after Zumbi.

Essential Questions

1. How did Zumbi dos Palmares resist Portuguese rule as a teenager?
2. Why were the quilombo's an important area for Afro-Brazilians?
3. How did the possible peace treaty between King Ganga-Zumba and the Portuguese government impact Zumbi?
4. What words would you use to describe King Zumbi dos Palmares as a leader?
5. ***“Let your motto be resistance! resistance! resistance! No oppressed people have ever secured their liberty without resistance.”—Henry Highland Garnet***
 - a. How did Zumbi dos Palmares represent this quote during his lifetime?

ⁱ <https://atlantablackstar.com/2013/11/15/afro-brazilian-story-black-november-zumbi-dos-palmares/>

ⁱⁱ <https://reference.jrank.org/biography-2/Zumbi.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.blackhistoryheroes.com/2010/05/zumbi-dos-palmares.html>