

Hidden History

The Unsung Saga of the Black Man



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(Last week, in the first of a series of articles on John VI, King of Portugal, Algarves and Brazil, we related how a new era of Portuguese development emerged due to the dedicated energies of the young sovereign. Caught, however, in the middle between England and France in the Napoleonic Wars, King John, whose proudest title was "Prince of Brazil" left the mother country for South America with his court, servants and 13,000 of his leading subjects. We continue the fascinating saga of the Negroid King as chronicled by historian-anthropologist J. A. Rogers in Volume II of "World's Great Men of Color").

"AFTER A difficult voyage of three months, John arrived in Brazil, and received a very warm welcome. But he had come to a land that was primitive. Up to this time, Brazil had largely been a goal for European adventurers who exploited the natives, accumulated wealth as rapidly as possible, and returned to Europe to enjoy it.

"Economically and in nearly every other way, Brazil was also in virtual bondage to the mother-country. All manufacture, save that of sugar and rum, was illegal. Learning, of any kind, was forbidden to all save a select few. Except for approved religious books, the importation of literature was strictly prohibited.

"It also suffered from under-population. The immense region had, exclusive of the Indians, only 3,600,000 souls, most of whom were Negro slaves. As for the remainder, they were largely of mixed European, Negro, and Indian strain.

"John began by giving Brazil a government such as no other colony in the New World then enjoyed. De Santarem has summarized his activities there as follows:

"Having given the Brazilians permission to exercise all kinds of industrial manufacture, he established military and civil tribunals, councils of administration and a prefecture of police; a police force, a treasury, a council of finance, a bank, a royal printery; a powder factory. Then he instituted at Minaes Geraes, under the presidency of the Captain-General, a council for the civilizing of the Indians.

"HE GAVE PRIZES to those who introduced useful plants into Brazil; established a military hospital, and schools of anatomy, surgery and medicine. He created a Royal Academy for the instruction of mathematics, physics, chemistry and metallurgy, natural history and military sciences. He opened to the public his own library and founded a public library at Rio de Janeiro. He improved the Botanical Garden at Lagoa and sent there a large number of plants brought from Cayenne and Asia.

"To this ruler was indebted the large number of tea trees planted in this garden and at Santa Cruz. Through funds provided by him the learned mineralogist, Napion, was able to do research and write the first essays on the resistance, elasticity and hardness of metals as well as those of the principal woods of Brazil.

"A liberal in the matter of religion and trade, he proclaimed religious freedom in Brazil and created a free port at Goa. He encouraged immigration and brought in colonists from the Azores to whom he gave lands, money and im-

Editor's MAIL BOX THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN

In the foregoing letter to the VOICE I am speaking not only for myself but, I hope, for the majority of those engaged in the Barber profession.

In a recent editorial of this newspaper "The Negro Barbers" were taken to task by the VOICE because the price of haircuts was raised from \$2.50 to \$2.75. This was the scale that was voted on and passed by the Barbers' International Union of America.

To be honest about this raise, the Negro Barbers did not initiate this measure. However, because of the constant rise in the costs of living in this city, and elsewhere, we felt this was a necessary measure that had to be accepted so that we could at least be able to meet some of our financial obligations. Most of us are family men. We must pay the same price for the bare necessities of life such as bread, milk, meat, clothes and shelter.

Why is it that no one beats the drum when the bricklayers, carpenters, plumbers and con-

plements for agriculture.

"HE ESTABLISHED towns in the interior which contributed much to the civilizing of the Indians and brought out one hundred Swiss families to settle giving them land free from taxation.

"To encourage the farmers, he ordered that estates, and especially the sugar plantations and the crops, should not be seized in totality for debt, but only a part of their incomes. He developed interior communications by opening great routes into the interior and finishing those that had been begun. He ordered renewed exploration of the great rivers, Madeira, Tapajoz, Kingu, and Arinoz, and by so doing, opened navigation from Villa Bella by the rivers, Guadapore, Mamore and Madeira and by this great river as far as Para. The navigation of the Cuiaba through the Arinoz and through the Tapajoz were also opened and couriers established on these routes. In this region he founded thirty-one new towns.

"He also encouraged mining and established a fine iron foundry at Morro de Pilar, under the direction of the learned metallurgist, Ferreira de Cama and another at Ipanema. To encourage the building of houses at Rio de Janeiro, he exempted those of more than one floor from taxes for twenty years; and those of one floor for ten years.

"He built the superb theatre of St. John; an immense building to house the treasury and the mint; and magnificent barracks. In Bahal, he built beautiful gardens; public promenades; a Stock Exchange; and a library. At Pernambuco he erected breakwaters to protect the port of Recife. He encouraged manufacture by suppressing all duties on raw materials.

"Passionately fond of music he brought fifty singers from Lisbon, nearly all Italians and increased the number of musicians in his palace orchestra to one hundred.

"He invited novelists, dramatists, and musical composers to Brazil, one of whom was the celebrated Marcus Portugal, thus aiding in developing the natural talent of the Brazilians for these arts.

"To encourage painting he brought from France in 1816, a colony of artists, headed by Lebreton of the Academy of Fine Arts; Debret, historical painter; and Taunay, landscape artist.

"ALL OF THIS was not accomplished without friction, however, John had to contend with rivalry that had long existed between Portuguese and the native Brazilians. The former, being from the mother country, regarded themselves superior; whilst the latter regarded the newcomers as intruders.

"In John's wake had also come a host of needy adventurers, eager to exploit anyone. John also had marital and political quarrels with his wife, Charlotte Joachine de Bourbon, sister of Ferdinand VII of Spain. She was unfaithful to him. 'The morals of the Court,' says Armitage, 'were at the lowest ebb. The private character of the Regent (John VI) was unimpeachable, but the infidelities of his consort were so notorious that her Royal Spouse lived apart from her in consequence.' Nevertheless, while the rulers of Europe were engaged in ruinous wars, John VI was building in Brazil a kingdom that was to give him such prestige that he was able to win nearly all of his demands at the Vienna Peace Conference in 1815.'

struction workers, through their Unions, are given pay raises?

DO BARBERS PAY LESS for beans and rice than people of other trades and professions? We have been called "Clip Joints," etc. Well, for the information of the public let me state the following: The State of Nevada has set forth certain requirements for anyone who desires to operate a Barber Shop legally in this State. He must comply with the State Law by having certain educational and professional requirements before he is allowed to apply for a license. He must then pass a thorough written and practical examination before the State Board before he is granted a license. After this, he must obtain a City License before he can open his shop or business to the public for service.

The outlay in cash is another problem. Equipment, plumbing, fixtures, lighting and many other items are a must before the Barber can operate a shop and give the public adequate service.

Rents for most shops are way over \$100 per month. No one sells the barber anything cheaper.

When the price of a haircut was 25¢ the laborer was earning \$1.22 per hour. Therefore he was obliged to work at least two hours to pay the barber or get "clipped". Today, most laboring men can pay for the same services with one hour's work. Who has received the most benefit from the labor movement? The laboring man or the barber?

Now let us see what happens when a customer comes into a shop for a haircut and see what happens to the fee he pays for this service.

1. Rent takes a big bite. 2. electricity, 3. water, 4. gas, 5. laundry, 6. sewage, 7. disposal and janitorial services, 8. city and county taxes, 9. chemicals, 10. accounts with comb and clipper supply houses, 11. maintenance of razor and clippers.

To break these expenses down in dollars and cents you will admit that quite a few people are in business because of the barber. As a matter of fact, the barber collects less than \$2 net profit for each customer.

I am not aware of any Negro barber that has sought employment in any white establishment. However, I sincerely believe that in an event there was an opening for a barber, and a Negro member of the Union applied, he would be employed, notwithstanding the fact that customers and ownership of such place were white.

This is a Union State and a Union City. Just about every craft and trade has been unionized, so why not the Barbers.

Even the Doctors have their societies and associations. The attorneys--the Bar Association. Why should we be left out to bargain individually when others are doing it collectively.

The Negro barber wants the same equal rights and the same opportunity to progress with the rest of his community. He is as interested in the Negro community as the most militant brother and has given of his time, money and talents.

Why should he charge the Negro less? Others do not charge less for equal services. The Negro does not pay less for a good suite, shoes or automobile. Yet, look at the abundance of Cadillacs, Lincolns and Imperials in our midst. Seems to me that \$3 or \$2.75 is not taking food away from anyone.

Do the Negro professionals charge less than their white counterpart? I do not think so.

In conclusion, let us be reasonable about the whole picture as it presents itself. Try to put (See MAILBOX, page 10)

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Voice

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