THE CALABASH
THE PEOPLE'S VOICE
TOOLS OF RESISTANCE

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DEMOLISHED: A THRIVING BLACK COMMUNITY IN CHARLOTTESVILLE

SINCE YOU BECAME A BLACK MILITANT, IT'S VERY DIFFICULT TO TALK TO YOU!

SILVER STILL : CELEBRATING GREATNESS AND CHANNELING THE ENERGIES OF THE AFRICAN DIASPORA

THE ABOLITIONIST FIGHTING TO FREE MAURITANIA'S SLAVES

THE ART OF RAS RAVIN-I





CALABASH E-MAGAZINE
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EDITOR NEWS & NOTES

"The free exchange of support and ideas is an essential condition to world understanding and equally to world progress."
- Haile Selassie I

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HMM, WELL DIS MONT SEEM PRETTY GOOD, AH NICE REVIEW FROM SISTA IJAHNYA ON BONGO JOE POETRY BOOK NAME 'SILVER STILL'... AN DEN AH SEE HERE IT HAVE SOMETING BOUT A DEMOLISHED BLACK COMMUNITY IN CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA!
WOAH! AN SOME AH RAVIN-I ARTWORK NICE!

WELL! DIS IS INTERESTING... "SINCE YOU BECAME A BLACK MILITANT ITS VERY DIFFICULT TO TALK TO YOU"... AH BEEN DEALIN WID DAT MEH WHOLE LIFE... AN IT HA SOME NICE HISTORY HERE TOO BOUT 18 BLACK OOMAN IN BRAZIL FIGHTIN 'GAINST MASSA.

AN IT ALSO HA SOME GOOD NEWS BOUT
WE PEOPLE FIGHTING IN MAURITANIA,
WE NAH GOIN TUH GIVE UP, ALL FOR ONE, AN ONE FOR ALL!

AH HOPE ALL YUH GOIN TUH ENJOY DIS MONT ISSUE.



THE ART OF RAS RAVIN-I

CALABASH : Where did you learn this stuff?

RAVIN-I : Yuh mean where I learn tuh draw? Well, I just learn tuh do it because ah like it… simple as dat.

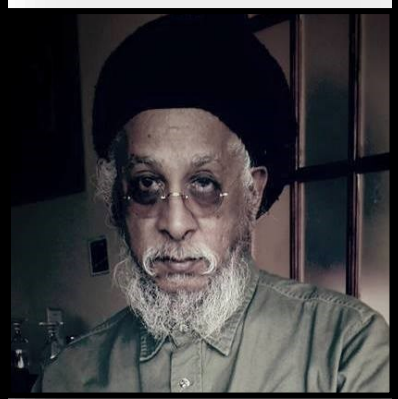
CALABASH : I mean, did you have formal training?

RAVIN-I : Formal training? Ah doh know what dat is, dat sound like some kinda Babylon ting yes, kinda make it sound like if ah didn't go tuh school, ah cyar be ah real artist, buh tuh answer yuh question in ah Babylon term… De answer is no.

CALABASH : You know you don't answer straight.

RAVIN-I : Ok ok, lemme tell yuh, my fadder an modder used tuh read ah lot ah comic books wen we was little, we always had a lot of comics around, so ah get into reading comics, dat is how ah learn tuh read an write an draw… So dat was meh training basically. Yuh see, art mus reveal de artist mindset and habits an customs. Plus drawing is not de only ting dat I do, I do a lot of other kind of artwork. I make jewelry as well, among other things, though ah haven't done a lot of other things of late… As a young man growing up in the 70's in Trinidad, ah youth dem days had to do something to survive, I didn't have a lot of opportunities to do other things, like wuk in ah office or something like dat. Anyway, around dat time ah lot of young man took to de street and developed ah ting call "de drag"- just basically being on de street doing artwork… Like making leather slippers and hand painted t-shirts and tings like dat… Dat was how I survived and developed. Basically I learn by watching odder artists and getting pointers, dat era turned out ah lot of good artists… So dat was my training.





RAS RAVIN-I



THE ART OF RAS RAVIN-I











SILVER STILL

CELEBRATING GREATNESS AND CHANNELING THE ENERGIES OF THE AFRICAN DIASPORA



MAMA IJAHYNA CHRISTIAN

It is the season of Emancipation with themes of Reparations and Repatriation flowing in the air. It is Mosiahmonth and the Garvey blueprint remains relevant in the realm of Pan-African development. For many Caribbean people, August is also the month of carnival and cultural festivities. And in Anguilla, the highlight of the daily festival is the island's national sport, boat racing in seaworthy craft, built by the finely honed skills handed down by generations.

In this context, it is my pleasure to review *Silver Still*, an anthology of 30 poems, named after a boat. This body of work is infused with Ras Tafari spirituality that bridges the space between the tiny East Caribbean island of Anguilla and the African Motherland.

***Silver Still* — Front image of Publication**



***Silver Still* — Back image of Publication**





Little did Raymond Conrad Connor and the late Viola Winnifred Connor know when they birthed, their son Kevin, a.k.a. Miller, a.k.a. Bongo Joe, that he would be the poet celebrating Anguilla's boat building prowess in this part of the African Diaspora. The book is livicated to them.

The poet's intention is made clear from the very first poem, entitled 'The Builder'. Raymond Connor's boats were built for fishing, for trading goods through the Caribbean, and one, The Rambler, was used in one of the most dramatic moments of the Anguilla Revolution in 1967. Another became the Jolly Roger, sailing the waters of Indonesia. Anguilla's boat builders have therefore facilitated the island's connection with the world. Silver Still was one of the many boats built by Mr. Connor that included the word silver in their names. Perhaps he knew of the healing and metaphysical qualities of this 'metal of the moon'. In several cultures, silver is thought to be reflective, mirroring '…the soul and bringing people calm and balance…giving the wearer use of the moon's energy and protecting them from negativity.'

Not only is the boat builder recognized, so too is the James 'Tubbers' Connor at the helm of the Silver Still, along with other crew, Ralph and Erin. Thus, is the extra-ordinary skill of simple working folk is highlighted and honored:

'When come to steering a boat, Tubber Foots knew how to do his work
Humble as a lamb, he never did any talking
Boat-Handling was his way of communicating.'

IF YOU ARE NOT THEIR SLAVES, YOU ARE REBELS.

C.L.R. JAMES

ONE OF THE MOST SERIOUS ERRORS, IF NOT THE MOST SERIOUS ERROR, COMMITTED BY COLONIAL POWERS IN AFRICA, MAY HAVE BEEN TO IGNORE OR UNDERESTIMATE THE CULTURAL STRENGTH OF AFRICAN PEOPLES.

AMILCAR CABRAL



From his father's boats, the writer goes immediately to the royal beauty of the African woman. Though Bongo Joe writes of 'The African Empress [who]… embraces Jah Rastafari, the poem could be a tribute to his mother, remembered as a well-loved pillar of the Blowing Point and Methodist Church communities. However, his Ethiopian wife comes to mind. She is again evoked in 'African Woman'.

'We shall honor you
All 13 months of the year
African woman
Beautiful African woman…
Nurturing African woman…
Highly intelligent African woman…
Mother of creation'

In 'Dis Festival, the poet once again reminds us of the worth and value of women.

'So rather than tell de woman to move it fast
And tell de woman to shake her rarse
And tell de woman to spin it round
And tell de woman to go right down…
Dis festival time we come to awaken de slumbered mentality
And do de dance with pride and dignity
And dis festival time we come to conscious up
Dis festival time we come to royal up
And as we celebrate our history, we gon make we ancestors proud of we.'

NATIONAL LIBERATION, NATIONAL RENAISSANCE,
THE RESTORATION OF NATIONHOOD TO THE PEOPLE,
COMMONWEALTH: WHATEVER MAY BE THE HEADINGS USED
OR THE NEW FORMULAS INTRODUCED,
DECOLONIZATION IS ALWAYS A VIOLENT PHENOMENON.

FRANTZ FANON



Bongo Joe also pays tribute to his Teacher Althea, from whom the title of that poem is derived, letting her know that '*Even though you weren't born in Africa, Africa was surely born in you.*'

But the poet's eye is also turned on the 'Little Black Boy' and the pre-emptive strikes against him'

'In every field this Negro kicks ass
Come on, hurry up!
We can't waste time
We gotta do something before he develops his mind…'

And his gaze is nationwide with regard to the scenario in his country of residence. In 'Arise', it is an admonition to:

Grow from a Negro into a strong African
Grow from a democrat into a strong Black Man
Grow from a Bernie-ite into a conscious Black Woman
Grow from a republican into an awakened African
Grow from a head scratcher into a Black Panther
Grow from an Omarosa into a Sista SoulJah
Grow up fast and realize there is no salvation in their system for you.'

Several of the pieces are praise poems. In praise to Emperor Haile Selassie I and Empress Menen, Babylon is fallen and Africans in the Diaspora are going home. And we are overdue, so in the poet's vision:

'The Emperor said, go unto the ruling power
And tell them to free all Africans in the Diaspora
Last Night…
And Empress Menen
With tears of joy flowing…
Saying, my children shall be home by first light
My children shall be home by first light.'



The last lines loop back to the rock, echoing the refrain of Anguillian families, anxiously awaiting the return of their menfolk at sea. The sea – a source of livelihood, the sea, carrying memory of the greatest crime against humanity and the persistent trauma of the Maafa. Several of the other poems bear warnings for the African Diaspora in the Caribbean to get off the plantation, and Bongo Joe is real about the sacrifice involved in embracing the sovereign African self, even in the 21st Century.

'Oh, shit! I see blood dripping from a razor
Man, I warned you not to mention Africa
I warned you not to mention Africa.'

Bongo Joe is a serious poet but this volume is not devoid of humor and the best example can be found in 'Ode to Calypso', which though a bit lengthy, shows that writer has mastery over this genre also. The poem is about a philandering Caribbean man, who finds out the hard way that women can play the same game just as well. We reflect that this ability did not begin with him, as his dear departed mother, composed one of Anguilla's most endearing and enjoyable calypsos, made popular by the Mighty Springer, who delivered a slowed down version of the song at her send off ceremony.

'Silver Still' has been immortalized in this reiterative integrated theme of love for the island in which African values were instilled, from which we must repatriate – go home – and the challenge of mental shift to emancipation that will make such a departure possible. There is a necessary distinction, made for the sake of African Redemption but there is no dichotomy. So with recurring themes of Black beauty, dreadlocks Rastafari, African royalty, the traps of colonization and the imperative to return home, Anguilla remains a central place as summed up in the final poem,

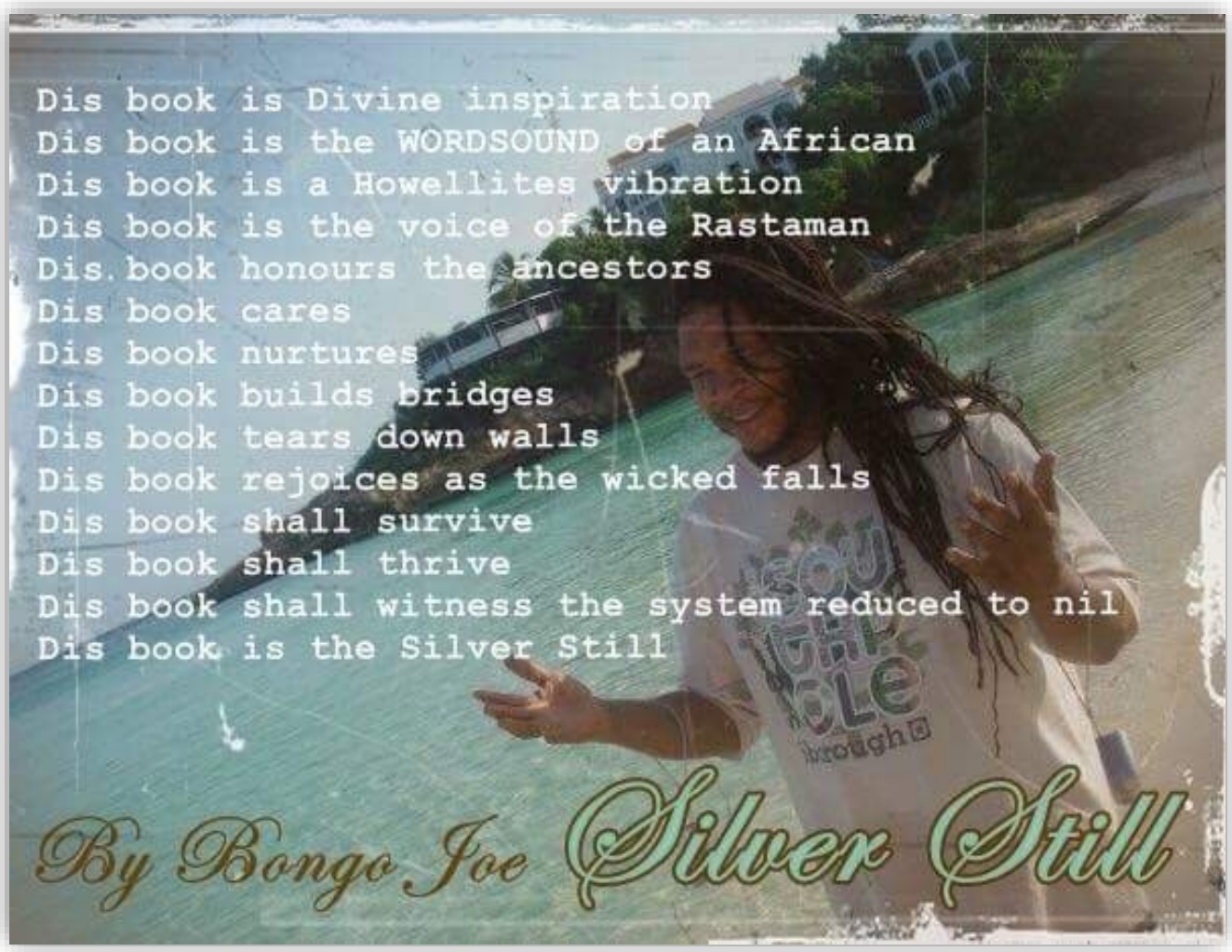
'*This is the Land'.*
'This is the land of the boat builder
This is the land of the highly skilled sailor
This is the land of the awesome sunset
This is the land I'll never forget
Passed down to me by the foremothers hand
Anguilla is that land.'



'This is the land of the boat builder
This is the land of the highly skilled sailor
This is the land of the awesome sunset
This is the land I'll never forget
Passed down to me by the foremothers hand
Anguilla is that land.'

Marcus Garvey was right, the people of the small islands do indeed have pivotal role to play in our reconnection with the African continent from which we were wrested not so long ago.

- IJAHNYA CHRISTIAN
AUGUST 10, 2017



18 BLACK BRAZILIAN WOMEN WHO FOUGHT AGAINST THE INSTITUTION OF SLAVERY THAT YOU WON'T FIND IN HISTORY TEXTBOOKS

NOTE FROM BW OF BRAZIL:
HERE AT THE BLACK WOMEN OF BRAZIL BLOG, WE FEATURE MANY STORIES, PAST AND PRESENT THAT FOCUS ON THE STRUGGLE OF BLACK OVER THE YEARS, WE'VE FEATURED A NUMBER OF EXCELLENT POSTS, INTERVIEWS AND PERSONAL ESSAYS THAT HAVE EXPOUNDED ON THE EXPERIENCES OF BEING BLACK AND FEMALE IN A COUNTRY SUCH AS BRAZIL. BRAZILIANS, SPECIFICALLY BLACK WOMEN. THE WOMEN PRESENTED HERE, MANY OF WHOM BARE THEIR HEARTS AND SOULS THROUGH THEIR WRITINGS, ARE THE DESCENDANTS OF A LONG LINE OF WARRIOR BLACK WOMEN, SOME KNOWN, OTHERS UNKNOWN, WHO FORGED A PATH IN AN ONGOING STRUGGLE FOR THE RECOGNITION OF NOT ONLY THEIR WOMANHOOD BUT THEIR VERY HUMANITY. IN THIS, THE MONTH IN WHICH WE CELEBRATE THE LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN BLACK WOMAN, I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE VERY TIMELY TO MAKE READERS AWARE OF SOME OF THESE TRAILBLAZING WOMEN WARRIORS OF BRAZIL'S SLAVE PAST, MOST OF WHO ARE NOT FEATURED IN SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS. THIS LIST IS BY NO MEANS DEFINITIVE BUT REPRESENTS JUST A SMALL CONTRIBUTION TO BREAKING DOWN THE WALLS OF INVISIBILITY OF BLACK WOMEN IN THE CONSTRUCTION, HISTORY AND STRUGGLE THAT IS BRAZIL.



18 BLACK BRAZILIAN WOMEN WHO FOUGHT AGAINST SLAVERY BY PATRÍCIA GONÇALVES

How women who were enslaved in Brazil contributed, much, to end slavery in the country. Whoever thinks that Princess Isabel was responsible for the liberation of the enslaved has been deceived. As the singer Yzalú would say, "a Lei Áurea não passa de um texto morto" (the Golden Law is only a dead text), after all, after May 13th, 1888, women fought and still fight against racism and machismo.

The footsteps of black women come from afar, really. Therefore, we separated 17 mulheres negras (black women) who are part of Brazilian quilombos and so many at a time for a black community.

The stories are told in the cordéis of Jarid Arraes and the Mural Memória das Mulheres Negras (Mural Memory of the Black Women), collection of the Instituto Políticas Alternativas para o Cone Sul, Rio de Janeiro.

Source: Catraca Livre
https://catracalivre.com.br/geral/cidadania/indicacao/17-mulheres-negras-brasileiras-que-lutaram-contra-escravidao/



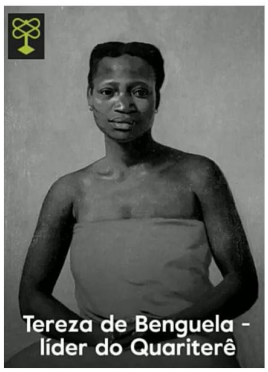
1. Dandara dos Palmares
She is one of the most known leaders in Brazil. She fought against slavery in the Palmares quilombo. She was against a proposal of the Portuguese Crown to stipulate the demands of the quilombolas (inhabitants of fugitive slave communities). The warrior died during a dispute in the Quilombo dos Macacos belonging to Quilombo de Palmares, where her husband, Zumbi of Palmares, also lived.



2. Anastácia
She helped slaves when they are punished, or facilitating an escape. She once fought against the physical and sexual violence of a white man, so the declaration of punishment was wearing a gag of tinplate and an iron choker. Although living in Bahia and Minas Gerais she was taken to Rio de Janeiro at the end of her life, and there several miracles were attributed to her stay.



3. Luiza Mahín
She spent a lot of time in Bahia and participated in the slave uprising in the Revolt of the Malês in 1835 and the Sabinada in 1837. She worked as a ganhadeira (Defined as a person who does anything to survive ie- washing, sewing, cooking, etc.)



4. Tereza of Benguela
In Brazil, on July 25th, Tereza de Benguela Day was celebrated in honor of the quilombola leader. She was the wife of the leader of Quilombo de Quarterê or of Piolho, in the state of Mato Grosso. There, they were sheltered until Bolivian Indians disturbed authorities of the Spanish and Portuguese Crowns. Tereza was arrested in one of the clashes and as she didn't accept a condition of enslavement she committed suicide.



5. Aqualtune
She was the daughter of the King of the Congo and was sold to Brazil. Pregnant in Quilombo dos Palmares she organized her first escape. She was known to be close to Ganga Zumba, the predecessor of Zumbi, his grandson. The warrior woman died incinerated.



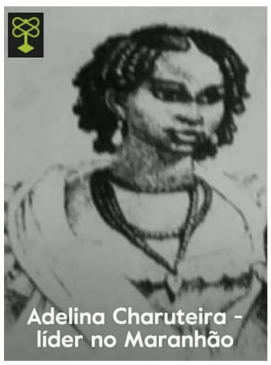
6. Zeferina
Leader in the quilombo of Urubu, in Bahia. She was Angolan and was brought as a child to Brazil. Stories relate that she confronted the capitães do mato (captains of the forest) with bow and arrow. During the slavery era, the duty of the captain of the forest was to hunt down fugitive slaves and return them to their masters.



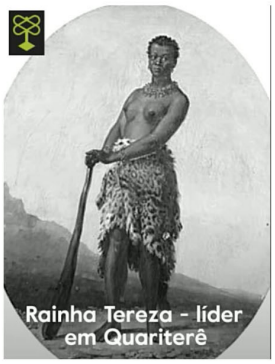
7. Maria Felipa de Oliveira
She was leader on the Island of Itaparica, Bahia. She learned to play capoeira to defend herself. Her main mission was to free her descendants and grandparents. She was hidden in Fazenda 27, in Gameleira (Itaparica), to accompany, during the night, a movement of the Lusitanian caravels. She took a raft and went to Salvador, passing information to the Command of the Liberation Movement.



8. Acotireno
She was considered the matriarch in Quilombo dos Palmarés and counselor of the first black refugees in the Cerca Real dos Macacos. One of the mocambos (houses) was christened with her name.



9. Adelina Charuteira
She was one of the leaders in the state of Maranhão. She was the daughter of a slave girl with a master, so she knew how to write. Despite her father, she was not released at the age of seventeen but was actively part of the young people's abolitionist society, the Clube dos Mortos (Club of the Dead). To raise money she sold cigars made by her father, with this articulation she discovered several plans of persecution for the slaves.



10. Rainha (Queen) Tereza of Quariterê
She was a warrior in Quilombo do Quariterê, in Cuiabá. She commanded the whole political, economic and administrative structure of the quilombo. She even maintained a defense system with weapons exchanged with white men or recovered by the enslaved.



11. Mariana Crioula
She was a mucama (female slave) in Vila das Vassouras, Rio de Janeiro. He joined with the enslaved in the largest escape of slaves in the history of Rio de Janeiro on November 5, 1838. She led the escape and a quilombo with Manuel Congo.



12. Esperança Garcia
She dared to write a letter to the president of the Province of São José do Piauí, Gonçalo Lourenço Botelho de Castro, denouncing the physical ill-treatment of which she was a victim, she and her son, on the part of overseer of the Algodões Fazenda (plantation).



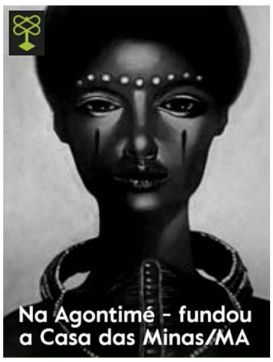
13. Maria Firmina dos Reis
She was considered a romantic novelist, in addition to writing the first abolitionist novel, Ursula, which narrates a condition of the black population of Brazil with elements of the African tradition. She dedicated her life to reading and writing.



14. Eva Maria de Bonsucesso
She was a freed slave who sold fruits and vegetables in Rio de Janeiro. She was beaten by a white man and got him arrested, and convicted of assault.



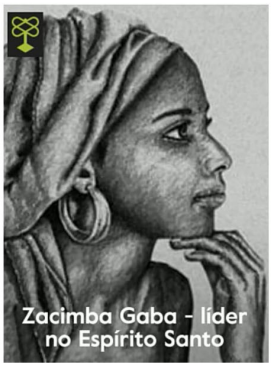
15. Maria Aranha
She was leader of Quilombo de Mola, in the state of Tocantins. She defeated all enslavement attacks and organized the whole society of the location.



16. Na Agontimé
She was queen of Benin and was sold as a slave to (the state of) Maranhão, until she got a new name, Maria Jesuína. She founded the Casa das Minas (House of Mines) and reconstructed it into a house for the worship of the ancestorS.



17. Tia (Aunt) Simoa
She led the fight against slavery in (the state of) Ceará. She was from the Grupo de Mulheres Negras do Cariri (Black Women's Group of Cariri), the Pretas Simoa.



18. Zacimba Gaba
She was an Angolan princess and ended up in (the state of) Espírito Santo. She provoked a revolt of the enslaved people against the Casa Grande (Big House) and led a quilombo where she was queen. She commanded for years the attacks on the ships, appearing in the middle of the night in precarious pipes to rescue the black slaves, the reference to her death is in one of these confrontations.

SINCE YOU BECAME A BLACK MILITANT, IT'S VERY DIFFICULT TO TALK TO YOU!

NOTE FROM BW OF BRAZIL:

IT'S ACTUALLY A VERY COMMON STORY. ACCORDING TO THE THOROUGHLY INGRAINED RHETORIC, BRAZIL BEING A MULTIRACIAL NATION SIMILAR TO OTHERS AROUND THE WORLD, MANAGED TO ESCAPE RACIAL ANTAGONISMS BECAUSE ITS CITIZENS BELIEVED THEMSELVES TO BE "ALL EQUAL" AND SIMPLY BRAZILIANS RATHER THAN WHITE, BLACK, ASIAN, OTHER OR WHAT HAVE YOU.

INCREDIBLY, EVEN THOSE WHO ARE OFTEN ON THE RECEIVING END OF SOMETIMES SUBTLELY (OR BLATANT) RACIST COMMENTS OR JOKES DECEIVE THEMSELVES OR ARE DECEIVED INTO BELIEVING THAT SUCH THINGS THAT PEOPLE SAY ARE IN FACT NOT RACIST. AFTER ALL, "WE BRAZILIANS AREN'T RACISTS", RIGHT? IT IS ONLY WITH THE TAKING OF A CERTAIN LEVEL OF RACIAL CONSCIOUSNESS THAT PEOPLE COME TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT SOME BRAZILIANS CAN BE AS RACIST AS PEOPLE FROM ANY OTHER COUNTRY. AND WHILE SOME WOULD HAVE US BELIEVE THAT RACIAL PROBLEMS ONLY BEGAN WITH THE INTRODUCTION OF THE SYSTEM OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION, THE FACT IS THAT THE WORLD OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES HAVE DEBUNKED THE IDEA THAT BRAZIL IS A "RACIAL DEMOCRACY" SINCE THE 1940S.

NO, RACISM IS NOTHING NEW; WHAT IS NEW IS THE WAY THAT BLACK BRAZILIANS ARE REACTING TO IT.

SINCE YOU BECAME A BLACK MILITANT, IT'S VERY DIFFICULT TO TALK TO YOU!



BY VIVIANA SANTIAGO

I remember that then in the years 2006 and 2007 I began to take more knowledge of the racial issue, access to black movements and the privileged opportunity to know and be invited to be part of black women's organizations.

At that time I experienced consciousness of the racial question like someone who got her first-degree glasses: I was a very near-sighted child, and I still remember today the sensation of only with glasses starting to perceive the detail of things …Those blots? They were the leaves of the trees. That stain on the wall that I saw from inside the bus? It was such a cute drawing … And it was like that: from the details on a wall to the precision in the colors, everything changed; and racial consciousness operates in much the same way.

Having a racial conscience and understanding the mechanisms by which racism and racial discrimination are operated, causes black people to enter into this same movement: Facts of everyday life, phrases, comments, postures are seen in another way, or I would say: they become fully perceived.

For a long time black women hear, see, feel…they experience a set of situations that, at the limit, were the attempt of subordination, of exercising control over their lives and bodies: We are invited to laugh at the jokes that said "quando nêgo não caga na entrada, caga na saída" (when a black doesn't shit coming in, he shits on the way out), we were summoned to accept the compliments that said we were "nêgas, but very intelligent", we had to accept the indiscreet looks, and the service filled with ill will when we needed to use some service. And for each of these episodes of violence there was the prompt response: "It's just a joke, why did you get upset?" "It's a compliment!" "No, it's not ill will, it's that you were also wearing these clothes"! And my favorite: "It's that you black women are hypersensitive."

Obviously, we understood that we were being passed over, we perceived a level of contempt, and yes, you could feel uncomfortable in all these situations. Only at that moment, it was a nuisance that many of us still didn't know how to name, or maybe we didn't dare say the name.

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

SINCE YOU BECAME A BLACK MILITANT, IT'S VERY DIFFICULT TO TALK TO YOU!

And so, perhaps for some time now, many of us have been troubled but silent interlocutors who didn't have the tools to act under this violence to which we were subjected.

Experiencing a process of taking racial consciousness, by understanding the dynamics of racism and the structures of domination, subordination, and oppression in society, each of us black women begins to change this game. From troubled silent interlocutors, we become people who can identify and name each of the situations experienced: Everything comes to be pointed out, criticized, problematized. Every joke, compliment, and racist attitude will be immediately exposed. Today in a racist society, black activists are people who survive racist violence and actively face it.

Faced with this change in our behavior, it has been increasingly common to hear from pessoas brancas (white people): "Now it's getting difficult to talk to you, we have to think well before we say anything!"

We need to think about the real meaning of this phrase, as the black militants would say in Recife: we need to unpack this present: The phrase is about the annoyance of some racist people who would like to continue provoking, offending, humiliating and deposing black people. In a permanence of the slave-owning mentality, racists not only want the right to continue racist domination, but are firmly convinced that the população negra (black population) can't react.

I'm used to hearing this argument from more varied people, some of them known for their education, politeness, some who have dedicated and dedicate their lives to building a better world.

But it seems that this better world, education and politeness are not intended for pessoas negras (black people).

Stop to think: Are you really accustomed to seeing these people who accuse black women of aggressiveness and hysteria, really saying everything that comes to their heads, the way it comes to mind when you talk to everyone else in society? Would it not be true that we perceive that these people usually take a few seconds to organize ideas, identify what they are talking about, and try to express themselves in the justest way possible?



SINCE YOU BECAME A BLACK MILITANT, IT'S VERY DIFFICULT TO TALK TO YOU!

Unsurprisingly, racist people, even those who fought for rights, have never recognized the black population as humans of human rights, our humanity is constantly denied, but we won't accept less.

When I hear these sentences, I perceive two very clear movements: the search to expose injustice and racism on the level of hysteria and aggression and the intention to turn racist people into a victim of intolerance, and radically changing the logic of history, invites the interlocutor to feel very sorry for the racist person who, in order to avoid having problems with coexisting with black women, now faces the necessity of spending time thinking about what is said in order not to be offensive to black women.

But the question to ask is: Why should it be any different? Could it be that this is not what people really should do? Revisit themselves in search of repressing offensive and discriminatory content and in the relation of otherness with the other always treating in order to respect their integrality and wholeness?

We black women deserve respect, or rather demand it! And let's fight for it. The anti-racist struggle is constituted of consciousness and of daily positioning, in several moments of our day, because it is in every fucking moment of our day that tries to vilify us. And we fight against this system, on which our survival depends.

You can't do the fight in any other way, you can't face racism without radicalism, which makes us take consciousness and make it clear that it is impossible to fight the anti-racist struggle without making racist people uncomfortable.

So my word to racist people would be: Don't ask us to be soft and moderate in the denunciation of racism and in the fight for the construction of our well-being, what we are dealing with is understanding that we deserve the respect that we are, we will continue demanding the respect; and you racist person: Measure your words, attitudes, and postures, if you don't measure, you will be confronted and the idea that we leave is: Turn this nuisance into lesson. Revisit yourself.

Source: Palavra de Preta
https://blackwomenofbrazil.co/2017/07/17/since-you-became-a-black-militant-its-very-difficult-to-talk-to-you-how-racial-consciousness-changes-the-way-one-sees-the-world/
https://palavradepreta.wordpress.com/2017/07/14/depois-que-voce-virou-uma-militante-negra-e-muito-dificil-falar-com-voce/

DEMOLISHED: A THRIVING BLACK NEIGHBORHOOD IN CHARLOTTESVILLE

In 1965, the city of Charlottesville demolished a thriving black neighborhood
By Laura Smith



CHILDREN PLAYING IN VINEGAR HILL BEFORE DEMOLITION.
(RIP PAYNE COLLECTION/ALBEMARLE CHARLOTTESVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY)

On a Saturday morning in 1965, movers came to the Johnson home. Kathy Johnson and her three-year-old sister listened at the breakfast table, as their mother, Elsie, gave the movers instructions. The family was heartbroken. They didn't want to leave their modest, two-story clapboard home, which often smelled of Elsie's famous dinner rolls. But the house was slated to be bulldozed by the city of Charlottesville, as were 139 other black families' homes, 30 black-owned businesses, and a church in the Vinegar Hill neighborhood. This "urban renewal project" would be done in the name of "progress."

But as Mindy Thompson Fullilove, a research psychiatrist studying the effect of so-called urban renewal projects on black communities, would later ask, "Progress for whom?" It certainly wasn't for residents of Charlottesville's largest black neighborhood, or any of the other more than 800 black communities that had already been displaced by 1962.

Stories differ on how Vinegar Hill got its name. Some suggest that it originated from the time when a vinegar keg fell off a horse cart, leaving behind a pungent odor. Former slaves began settling there after the Civil War, hopeful that home ownership would guarantee progress for them and their families. During Jim Crow years, the neighborhood burgeoned into a bustling community of black business owners serving black clients. It was, according to the documentary on the neighborhood, That World is Gone, a hub for Charlottesville's black social life.

There was a school, insurance agencies, restaurants, clothing and drug stores, a barber shop, a fish market, a tailor, and a popular jazz nightclub, among many other venues. One resident would later remark that the neighborhood wasn't "terribly beautiful, but those were good sturdy businesses."

DEMOLISHED: A THRIVING BLACK NEIGHBORHOOD IN CHARLOTTESVILLE



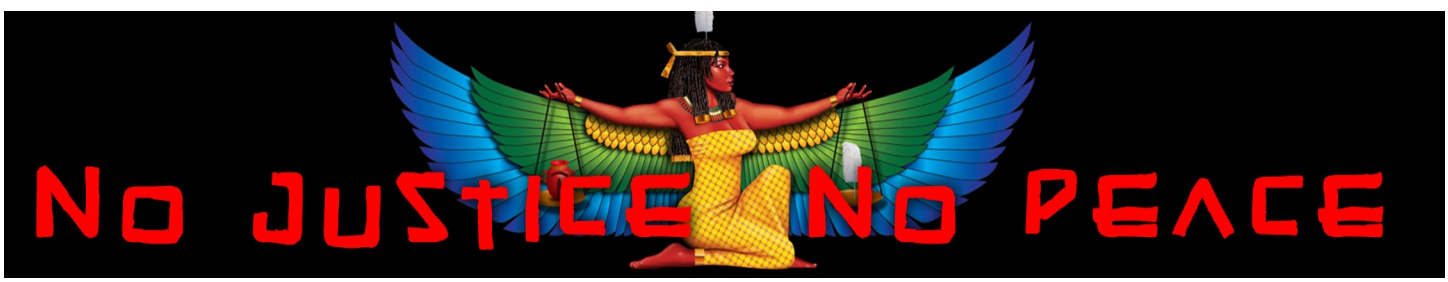
LOOKING EAST ON MAIN STREET FROM THE BASE OF VINEGAR HILL, 1930S.
(CHARLOTTESVILLE DTM)

n 1954, Charlottesville was growing. Vinegar Hill's land was valuable. Comprising about 20 acres, the neighborhood fell between the downtown shopping district and the University of Virginia's campus — the city's crown jewels. The city council passed a measure that allowed "unsanitary and unsafe" houses to be taken over by a newly established housing authority. Newspaper articles ran arguing that demolishing Vinegar Hill would make way for better shops and apartments, and wider streets. In 1964, it was announced that the entire neighbor-

Many of the Vinegar Hill residents were blocked from voting on their own homes destruction because of a hefty poll tax. A newspaper from the time read, "Vinegar Hill is related closely with the rest of the downtown Charlottesville area which seriously needs room for expansion." Kathy's father met with residents to try to halt the razing, but the people he talked to seemed too worn out, or they just didn't know how to fight city hall. In 1965, bulldozers rumbled down the street, leveling homes into piles of rubble. It looked like the aftermath of a tornado.

The federal government had rules about this though, so the city of Charlottesville had to be careful. They were required to provide public housing for those who had been displaced if the residents were in need. But one displaced resident recalled that by 1985, the public housing had entirely deteriorated. And as the film points out, swapping a privately owned stand-alone house for a unit in a multi-family public housing complex is not a fair trade

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DEMOLISHED: A THRIVING BLACK NEIGHBORHOOD IN CHARLOTTESVILLE

The trauma of losing their community and homes was enormous and the financial toll would follow them for the rest of their lives. As Mindy Thomas Fullilove wrote in the *Journal of Urban Health*, such relocations "caused a profound shift in the political and social engagement of the African American community." By dismantling their homes, businesses, and gathering places, the city of Charlottesville left black families isolated and alienated. Social and political institutions withered. Dispersed, they could not organize in their interests or support one an other on a wider scale.



THE WESTHAVEN HOUSING PROJECT, COMPLETED IN 1964, HOUSED MANY OF THE DISPLACED VINEGAR HILL RESIDENTS.
(RIP PAYNE COLLECTION/ALBEMARLE CHARLOTTESVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY)

When looked at from this perspective, "urban renewal projects" are more palatable branding for what is really the seizure of black-owned property and the hamstringing of black communities. Kathy Johnson reported that her friends and siblings moved away from Charlottesville. "There are just no opportunities for African American people," she said. As James Robert Saunders and Renae Nadine wrote in their book, *Urban Renewal and the End of Black Culture in Charlottesville, Virginia,* Vinegar Hill marked "an era of black prosperity that neither hitherto nor henceforth has been achieved by the black citizens of Charlottesville."

Despite all the talk about better stores and new apartment buildings, after Vinegar Hill was demolished, the land remained empty for years. The children who lived there would visit the empty lots where their houses used to be. "It was the eeriest," one said. Eventually, much of the property would become parking lots. While many argued that that the real purpose of razing Vinegar Hill was to free the flow of traffic between the downtown mall and UVA, the city's failure to do anything meaningful with the land makes it hard not to see the move as the deliberate disintegration of a thriving black community.

Source: https://timeline.com/charlottesville-vinegar-hill-demolished-ba27b6ea69e1





THE ABOLITIONIST FIGHTING TO FREE MAURITANIA'S SLAVES

By Eoghan Macguire



Story highlights

- *Biram Dah Abeid is a prominent anti-slavery activist in Mauritania*
- *Mauritania was the last country in the world to officially abolish slavery, in 1981*
- *He ran for Mauritania's presidency in 2014 and plans to do so again in 2019*

London (CNN) A modest office block squeezed between a doctor's surgery and a south London housing project is an unlikely setting to find a man described on Time's most recent 100 List as "an inspiration to thousands."

Yet there is much about Biram Dah Abeid, a prominent anti-slavery activist from the North African nation of Mauritania, that confounds convention.

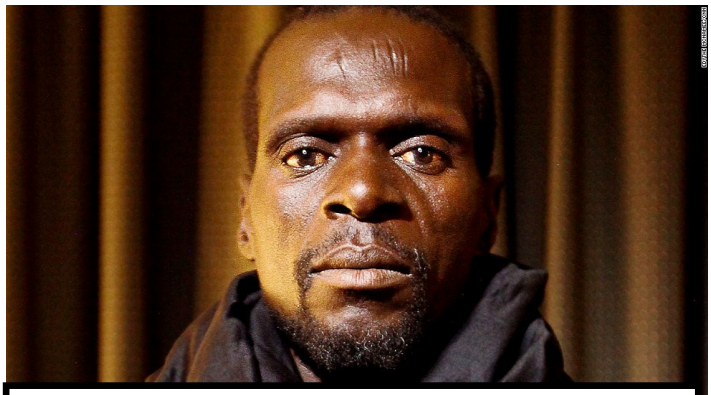
In recent years Abeid has run for president of his home nation, founded a mass anti-slavery movement and been feted internationally for his work as an abolitionist.

Last year, former US Secretary of State John Kerry presented Abeid and fellow activist Brahim Ramdhane with a Trafficking in Persons Report Heroes Award. Abeid also received the UN Human Rights Prize in 2013, an honor previously bestowed upon the likes of Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King.

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A FORMER SLAVE OWNER, ABDEL NASSER OULD ETHMANE, CO-FOUNDED THE ABOLITIONIST GROUP. HE PARTNERED WITH BOUBACAR MASSAOUD, WHOSE FAMILY WAS ENSLAVED.



YEBAWA OULD KEIHEL WAS LIBERATED FROM SLAVERY YEARS AGO BUT STILL REFERS TO HIS FORMER MASTERS AS FAMILY.

THE ABOLITIONIST FIGHTING TO FREE MAURITANIA'S SLAVES

In Mauritania, however, Abeid's protests have seen him jailed on three separate occasions, become a hero to his supporters and a thorn in the side of those he says refuse to address the slavery issue.

SLAVERY'S LAST STRONGHOLD?

Etched into the vast sands of the Sahara Desert, Mauritania was the last country in the world to officially abolish slavery, doing so only in 1981.

The government there regularly insists that slavery no longer exists within its borders and points to new laws and courts it has created to deal with the issue.

However, a raft of NGOs, the US State Department and the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights say that ancient slave owning practices remain.

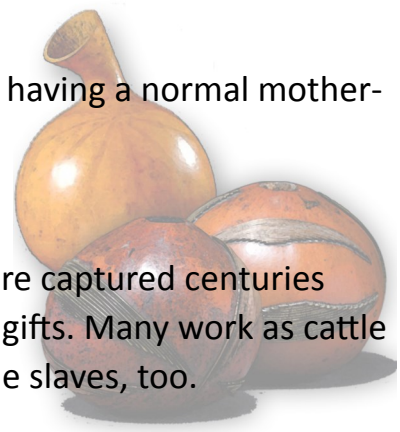
To put it mildly, Abeid is on the opposite side of the argument to the Mauritanian government.

"[Slaves] are treated as if they're not human, they are not recognized and registered as citizens," Abeid continues. "In addition to not having papers and a civil state, they are consigned to forced labor."



"Many children, women and men [in Mauritania] are born slaves," Abied states through a translator at the offices of Anti-Slavery International, a London based non-profit that shares his abolitionist goals and has worked on slavery in Mauritania for over 20 years.

"They have no salary, they have no healthcare, they have no food or clothes. The children are prevented from going t



o school because they have to work. The women are prevented from having a normal motherhood, sexuality and family life," he adds.

CENTURIES-OLD PRACTICE

Most slaves in Mauritania are the descendants of individuals who were captured centuries ago. They typically are not bought and sold but can be given away as gifts. Many work as cattle herders or as domestic servants. Their offspring automatically become slaves, too.

THE ABOLITIONIST FIGHTING TO FREE MAURITANIA'S SLAVES

According to Anti-Slavery International, the majority of enslaved Mauritanians belong to the primarily dark skinned Haratine group and have been owned by lighter skinned white Moors.

Slaves that remain with their masters are unregistered, uneducated and socially isolated. While they are not in chains, most do not attempt to leave their masters as life beyond slavery is unimaginable, Anti-Slavery states.

Although there are no official slavery figures, the CIA World Factbook says that up to 20% of Mauritania's 3.67 million population is estimated to be enslaved.

However, a 2016 study from the Walk Free Foundation estimated far fewer remained enslaved at 43,000 people -- representing 1.06% of the population.

Professor Jeremy Keenan, a regional expert at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London, says one of the reasons the Mauritanian government is reticent to tackle the slavery issue is because it is so historically complex and "traditionally deeply entrenched." Many slave owners and slaves would not see themselves as such even though most of the outside world would, he says.

On top of this, fully addressing the issue would create a number of new problems such as figuring out what to do with freed slaves who have known nothing else but dependency on their owners, Keenan adds.

Abeid says his organization, the Initiative for the Resurgence of the Abolitionist Movement (IRA), which is not recognized by the Mauritanian government, has rescued many from slavery since it was formed in 2008.

He tells how his home is always bustling with activists and slaves freed by the group. Providing support for those who have been rescued is vital as they seek to build their lives as free men and women, he says.

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MOULKHEIR MINT YARBA ESCAPED SLAVERY IN 2010. SHE SAYS ALL HER CHILDREN ARE THE RESULT OF RAPE BY HER MASTER.



"THIS IS ANOTHER WAY TO LIBERATE THEM," SAYS THE CENTER'S DIRECTOR.

THE ABOLITIONIST FIGHTING TO FREE MAURITANIA'S SLAVES

CHILDHOOD PLEDGE

Abeid first committed to the abolitionist cause when he was just eight years old.
After witnessing a slave being beaten by his master, he asked his father why such brutality was allowed to happen. It was then his father told him that Abeid himself was the descendent of slaves.

Abeid's grandmother had been a slave and his father was only freed as an act of charity by her master. His father later married and had two children with a female slave but was separated from them when they were given away by their owner. Abeid says he made a promise there and then that he would dedicate his life to the cause. It's a pledge that continues to shape his destiny many years later.

While far from the only anti-slavery group operating in Mauritania, IRA's methods set it apart. Mass rallies, road tours of the country to meet rural slaves and occupations outside the residences of those suspected of being slave owners have all been employed.

Abeid says those occupations have become an effective way of forcing the hitherto uninterested authorities act.

"[The] people we send to the house come out and compel the police to do their job. When the police come and takes the slave owner into prison, we will wait and sleep outside the police station for a week or two, a month or two, and talk to the media," he says.

Abeid believes the noise caused by these tactics has pushed many slave owners to release their slaves out of fear of being publicly exposed.



SOS Slaves, the abolitionist group, runs the school with funding from international agencies.



Biram Dah Abeid runs an abolitionist group called IRA Mauritania.
He says he's been arrested & tortured for speaking out.

THE ABOLITIONIST FIGHTING TO FREE MAURITANIA'S SLAVES

"Before us, these anti-slavery organizations were elite-led, a few people who fought against slavery by using the voice of the media," Abeid says. "For us, the fight against slavery can't be reduced to solely writing a denunciation. There must also be acts."

PRICE OF PROTEST

While attention grabbing, these tactics have come at a cost. Abeid and his fellow IRA activists have faced arrest and time behind bars. Abeid has also been painted by his opponents as violent and anti-Islam, charges he and most outside observers reject. Abeid was most recently detained on charges of illegal assembly and rebellion, encouraging rebellion and refusing to comply with the orders of administrative authorities.

Seventeen human rights groups called for his immediate release and for charges to be dropped but Abeid remained imprisoned for 18 months. "Mauritania must stop targeting anti-slavery activists, including convicting them solely for participating in a peaceful rally," a statement from Amnesty International read.

Others accused the police of using violence to break up a peaceful protest.



ABEID IS WELCOMED BY SUPPORTERS AS HE LEAVES JAIL ON MAY 17, 2016, AFTER MAURITANIA'S SUPREME COURT DOWNGRADED THE CRIMES HE WAS CONVICTED OF AND ORDERED HIS RELEASE.

THE ABOLITIONIST FIGHTING TO FREE MAURITANIA'S SLAVES

CNN sought comment from the Mauritanian government for this article through its embassy in London. The embassy's media and public relations counselor, Pieter Tesch, said in an email that "civil society NGOs are free to operate and can work undisturbed within the law.

"However, those who break the law and are held responsible for instigating violence can expect to be held accountable in the courts."

Abeid was also previously imprisoned after publicly burning a series of religious texts he said justified slavery and offered a false interpretation of Islam.



FOREIGN JOURNALISTS AREN'T ALLOWED TO TALK ABOUT SLAVERY, & REPORTERS HAD TO CONDUCT MANY INTERVIEWS AT NIGHT & IN SECRET.

That action even led to calls for him to face the death penalty for blasphemy, Abeid says. Yet he remains adamant his purpose was served -- to reach out to slaves and make them aware that a life outside servitude was possible.

> *"For the hope that I stirred up in people, I [have to take] responsibility for the fight and continue to go back there."* **Biram Dah Abeid, anti-slavery activist**

Even though most of his audience may be illiterate they maintain the ability to "read an act," he posits. "Denouncing slavery isn't the reserve of an elite. All people must denounce it," he adds.

ENFORCING THE LAW

Mauritania officially criminalized slavery in 2007 & established special courts for hearing cases in 2015.

We asked Tesch, from the Mauritanian embassy, whether slavery still exists in Mauritania. He said that within "the constitution of the Republic it is stated that all its citizens, men, women and children, are free. Subsequently the law and the criminal code has been tightened to deal with specific issues."

LIFE IN MAURITANIA IS HARD FOR BOTH SLAVES & SOME SLAVE MASTERS. 44% OF PEOPLE LIVE ON LESS THAN $2 PER DAY



THE ABOLITIONIST FIGHTING TO FREE MAURITANIA'S SLAVES

Yet critics, including the US State Department say anti-slavery laws aren't seriously enforced and the courts are underfunded. There have only ever been two successful prosecutions against slave owners.



SUPPORTERS OF ABEID'S RUN FOR PRESIDENT, IN NOUACKCHOTT, JUNE 2014.

Abeid points to the more frequent arrests of members of IRA. "The prisons are filled with anti-slavery activists," he says.

Although he sees positives in that more people are demonstrating against slavery, Abeid believes that continuing to draw attention to the issue whether inside Mauritania or outside is the most effective way to move forward. That in part helps explain his ambition to run for president in 2019. Abeid finished a distant second behind President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz after most opposition parties boycotted the 2014 election over concerns about the fairness of the vote.

Keenan from SOAS believes the Mauritanian government sees Abeid as a potential political threat. He points to Mauritania's demographic make up, in which there is a large Haratine minority, that has the potential to provide a solid support base for Abeid.

CONTINUING THE FIGHT

After a long period on the frontline of the slavery fight, Abeid says his ideal scenario would be to win the 2019 election, have one full term where he could enact the relevant changes to end slavery before retiring from public life.

However, he remains wary such a scenario may not be as appealing to some within the Mauritanian establishment. He has spent much of his time since being released from prison last year outside Mauritania, rallying support for his cause and meeting with members of the Mauritanian diaspora.

When asked if he worries about going back to Mauritania, he pauses before answering.

"In order to be consistent in my support for victims, I have no other choice. For the hope that I stirred up in people, I [have to take] responsibility for the fight and continue to go back there."

Source: http://edition.cnn.com/2017/06/21/africa/mauritania-slavery-biram-dah-abeid/index.html

Paula Erizanu contributed to this report


Ravin-I
ARTS
Empress Jewelry
tricesbaby.com