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"BANDEIRANTES": WHAT ARE THEY?

The "Bandeirantes" are to Brazilian history what the Pioneers are to the history of the United States.

Their deeds, if taken to the screen, could bring about a whole new national movie cycle as important to us as the farwest was to the Hollywood industry.

The 16th and 17th centuries faced Brazil under three different cultural types:

- a) Latifundium, in the Northwest, with the sugar industry growing progressively. During this time, a slavocrat relationship stood out among the social facts;
- b) Pasturing - The Southeast was supported by large cattle raisers and the feudal relationship was predominant;
- c) Finally, we had a peculiar nomad culture in the South. The mountain range was favorable neither to cattle raising nor to planting; thus this region was forced to increase its trading activities.

As a social phenomenon, the "Entradas" and "Bandeiras" took place during this cultural situation, in the South.

We will not go into details concerning the "Entradas", military organizations supported by the Portuguese government - discoverer and, virtually, owner of Brazil, at that time - this government had a single purpose: geographic acknowledgement of the new conquered land.

Shortly after the Crown had given up this expensive enterprise, facts like, the Eldorado legend, and the indian slavery trade, influenced private people to support expeditions westward.

These legends, full of economical meaning, stimulated the inhabitants of the land to organize their "Bandeiras" following the Spanish way to colonize - "through the land", since the Spanish colonization

had enriched the Iberian treasury.

On the other hand, although the King of Portugal wanted gold, he had his own peculiar way of colonization. He wanted gold, indeed, but he had no conditions to go against those who were born on Brazilian land and who were also looking for gold.

The King was obliged to ask for the Bandeirantes' help to discover new lands, although he did not trust them.

They were capable to become, according to statements at that time, "virtual owners, what surely would be discovered".

The Portuguese reaction against the "Bandeirantes" would only be eased after Portugal and Spain joined their royal power.

Since then, the fever for expeditions grew greatly. And, at that specific time, the action described in the movie takes place.

The "Bandeira" was the enterprise responsible for the Portuguese violation of the Tordesilhas Agreement (imaginary line drawn by the Vatican in order to separate Portuguese and Spanish dominions), a fact which would result in the reduction of Brazil's present extension.

Among other occurrences, we can also point out:

- a) frequent racial cross-breeding, since people of all origins followed the "Bandeiras" (Indians, Negroes and white people)
- b) relationship among all colonial groups (cattle raisers and farmers) from the North, Northeast and Southeast, that influenced the Brazilian unity by their own dynamism.
- c) gradual formation of the cities, fact that still continues to happen, such as Brasília (Brazil's federal capital) or any other city that comes up during a highway opening. According to various historians, the "Bandeiras" are defined as a little live state always on the march.

d) peculiar social formation which has been influencing Brazil's social formation.

Everything we pointed out in the script is based upon documents and evidences which were submitted to a necessary selection of historical events. The matter is romantic in itself and therefore there is no need to surround it with fancy.

However, until today, Brazil resents the effects of its coastal colonization, and the foundation of Brasília as well as Marechal Rondon's expedition are modern versions of the "Bandeiras" directed toward a better distribution of national demography.

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