

SOURCES ON THE HISTORY OF FAVELAS IN RIO DE JANEIRO*

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The favelas of Rio de Janeiro, with their teeming masses trapped in misery, constitute the perfect site for investigating how social inequality is reproduced in Brazil. The latest survey of the shantytowns, conducted by the Instituto de Planejamento in Rio de Janeiro (IPLAN-Rio) reported that as of 1991, the city contained 661 favelas housing 962,793 persons in 239,678 shacks.¹ The squatter settlements recreate in miniature but distorted form the entire history of modern Rio de Janeiro. The first squatter settlement was built in 1898 in Rio by Bahian veterans of the military campaign against mystic rebel Antonio Conselheiro. Yet only when the housing crisis of the 1940s forced the urban poor to erect hundreds of shantytowns in the suburbs did favelas replace tenements as the main type of residence for destitute Cariocas (residents of Rio). The explosive era of favela growth dates from 1940, when Getúlio Vargas's industrialization drive pulled hundreds of thousands of migrants into the Federal District, until 1970, when shantytowns expanded beyond urban Rio and into the metropolitan periphery.² Even today, the favelas remain an officially unrecognized and illegal part of city. For this reason, many researchers assume that the shantytowns have no written history and

*My investigation was supported by a Fulbright-Hays Fellowship for Dissertation Research Abroad. Heartfelt thanks go to Dr. Hélio Aguiamaga and Doracy; Ricardo, and Laisinha of the Instituto Brasileiro de Administração Municipal; Gilda Blank and Olga Bronstein; Vera Campello and Dona Flora of the Fundação Leão XIII; José Artur Rios for providing access to his newspaper collection; Vitor Valla for use of his exhaustive bibliography on favelas; and Maria Coeli de Moura. This research note is dedicated to the late E. Bradford Burns, amigo e maestro.

1. "Crece población de favelas de Rio de Janeiro," *Diario Las Américas*, 22 May 1994, p. 2 (published in Miami).

2. During the Brazilian Empire (1822–1889), the city of Rio de Janeiro was detached from the state of Rio de Janeiro and converted into a "neutral municipality" to serve as the national capital. Following the proclamation of the first republic in 1889, this municipality was renamed the Federal District and was administered separately from the other states. Rio retained the function of national capital until 1960, when President Juscelino Kubitschek inaugurated the new capital in Brasília. The city of Rio de Janeiro then became the state of Guanabara, maintaining that status until 1975, when it was once again fused with the state of Rio de Janeiro.

that historians must rely on anecdotal evidence from residents for information on squatter life.³

The political history of the favelas has been recounted by several Brazilian and foreign sociologists, political scientists, and criminologists.⁴ But the social history of the squatter settlements—how the favelas were built and who lived there—remains a largely untold story. A fairly significant amount of unpublished primary sources exists on this subject. The favelas themselves contain birth, marriage, and death records that reveal the structure of the favela family. The employment history of *favelados* provides evidence for determining whether the urban poor were marginals or an integral part of the economy. Health reports attest to the physical condition of the labor force and the special problems of women and children. Land deeds can be used to reconstruct the process of building and expanding shanties. Handbills passed out by candidates for election indicate the political concerns of the squatter.

The most important outside sources on the favelas are the files of individuals who were involved in supervising the squatter settlements. The archives of city agencies and those of the Catholic Church that dealt with the squatters contain valuable statistical information on family organization, employment, and housing. The papers of engineers and urban planners involved in favela renewal projects attest to the ability of *favelados* to demand housing that fit their needs. Records of welfare and charity organizations reveal how far down the social ladder government and private services reached.⁵

Those investigating the favelas should keep in mind historian R. H. Tawney's dictum, "What the historian needs most are strong boots." The collections of documents listed here are archives only in the loosest sense. Few are catalogued, many have pages missing, others are housed in their original condition and cannot be photocopied without damage. A

3. Bibliographies of the published sources on favelas include Comitê Brasileiro de Conferência Internacional de Serviço Social, "Levantamento Bibliográfico-Favela," mimeo, Rio de Janeiro, 1979; Lucien Parisse, "Bibliografia cronológica sobre a favela do Rio de Janeiro a partir de 1940," *América Latina* 12, no. 3 (July–Sept. 1969):221–32 (published in Rio de Janeiro); Lícia do Prado Valladares, "Estudos recentes sobre a habitação no Brasil: Resenha da literatura," in *Repensando a habitação no Brasil*, edited by Lícia do Prado Valladares (Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, 1982), 25–77.

4. See Robert Gay, *Popular Organization and Democracy in Rio de Janeiro: A Tale of Two Favelas* (Philadelphia, Pa.: Temple University Press, 1994); Janice Perlman, *The Myth of Marginality: Urban Poverty and Politics in Rio de Janeiro* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973); Victor Valla, *Educação e favela: Políticas para as favelas do Rio de Janeiro* (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1986).

5. Studies of shantytown life outside Rio de Janeiro before 1970 are few. See Daniel Cavalcanti Bezerra, *Alagados, mocambos e mocambeiros* (Recife: Imprensa Universitária, 1965); *Levantamento da população favelada de Belo Horizonte* (Belo Horizonte: Secretaria de Estado do Trabalho e Cultura Popular, Minas Gerais, 1966); and Celine Sachs, "Croissance urbaine et favelisation des metropoles: São Paulo et Rio de Janeiro," *Economie et Humanisme*, no. 260 (July–Aug. 1981).

strong will is also a prerequisite. Because the subject of the favelas is so sensitive in touching on the profound class and racial divisions of Brazil, access to certain files may depend entirely on the social skills and political contacts of the individual researcher.

ARCHIVES AND LIBRARY COLLECTIONS

An identity card must be presented to the proper authorities each day before entry is permitted.

Arquivo da Fundação Leão XIII
 Rua Senador Dantas, 76-Centro
 Archive located on the sixteenth floor
 Telephone 220-1095
 Hours 9 to 12, 1 to 6

The Fundação Leão XIII was founded in 1947 by Cardinal Jaime Câmara to provide financial assistance and political counseling to favela residents and thereby prevent infiltration of the shantytowns by the Partido Comunista do Brasil (PCB). The foundation linked squatters to the two most important public institutions in their lives: the municipal government and the Catholic Church.⁶ Because the Fundação was subsumed under the city government of Rio de Janeiro in 1962, the archive contains several hard-to-find censuses and surveys of squatter settlements conducted by the Guanabara Secretaria de Serviços Sociais. Among them are the last census of Praia do Pinto (1969), the largest favela in Rio de Janeiro in the 1940s, and surveys of two housing projects built for favela residents under the auspices of the Alliance for Progress in 1962–1964, Vila Aliança and Vila Kennedy. These surveys contain statistical information on where each favela population originated, family organization, employment, salaries, education, housing, and the rates of acquisition of consumer products like radios, television sets, and refrigerators by second-generation squatters. The “archive room” located on the sixteenth floor is actually a storage facility, and the material is not catalogued. Permission to rummage through the documents must be sought from the Fundação Secretariat. A letter of introduction from a Brazilian academic authority is de riguer.

6. See two publications of the Fundação Leão XIII, *Morros e favelas: Como trabalha a Fundação Leão XIII; Notas e relatórios de 1947 a 1954* (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Naval, 1955); and *Favelas: Um compromisso que vamos resgatar* (Rio de Janeiro: Fundação Leão XIII, 1962).

Instituto Brasileiro de Administração Municipal (IBAM)

Rua Visconde Silva, 157-Botafogo

Telephone 266-6622

Hours 9 to 12, 1 to 6

The Instituto Brasileiro de Administração Municipal (IBAM) is the most important research center currently working on favelas and their problems. Architects, engineers, and urban planners, many of them veterans of the campaigns of the 1960s to “urbanize the favelas” by providing them with specific housing and public services, run the institute today. The IBAM Library also contains the private papers of the late Carlos Nelson Ferreira dos Santos, the architect who headed a much-publicized attempt in 1967 to urbanize the favela of Brás de Pina, located along Avenida Brasil. The Carlos Nelson collection, which is currently being catalogued, contains over two thousand books, magazines, and original manuscripts dealing with Brazilian urban life and the problems of housing the poor.⁷ Papers relating to the Brás de Pina urbanization project include studies of energy distribution and the dangers of flooding as well as sketches made by the residents of the kind of housing they would have liked to request from the city. The IBAM Library also houses studies made by its own urban planners of the nearby favela of Santa Marta in Botafogo (for example, Paulo Oscar Saad’s 1989 study, “O desafio do Santa Marta”). Photocopying is permitted on the premises. Permission must be obtained from the director of IBAM to consult the Carlos Nelson deposit.

Comitê Brasileiro da Conferência Internacional de Serviço Social (CBISS)

Biblioteca Zeny Miranda located on the second floor

Rua Santa Luzia, 685-Centro

No telephone listed

Hours 9 to 12, 1 to 6

In 1955 Dom Hélder Câmara, the Bishop of Recife and Auxiliary Bishop of Rio de Janeiro, launched the Cruzada São Sebastião, a federally financed project to build an apartment complex in the favela of Praia do Pinto that would house only those squatters willing to give up the vices associated with favela life. The Cruzada is an excellent showcase of an attempt by the Brazilian government and the Catholic Church to remold the favelados into “useful citizens.”⁸

Dom Hélder prophesied optimistically that the Cruzada would spread throughout the city and would result in one dedicated apartment building in each favela. In fact, only two such projects ever became fully functional, one in Praia do Pinto and the other in the favela of Rádio

7. “Acervo de arquiteto fica com o IBAM,” *Jornal do Brasil*, 28 June 1990, p. 6.

8. See “Uma cruzada e um paladino,” *Visão*, 27 Dec. 1957, pp. 20–23.

Nacional in Parada de Lucas. The Biblioteca Zeny Miranda of the Brazilian Committee of the Conferência Internacional de Serviço Social (CBISS) contains all the documents relating to the Cruzada not in the possession of Dom Hélder himself. Social workers who volunteered for the Cruzada wrote up their experiences, accounts located in Congresso Brasileiro de Serviço Social, vol. 3, "Cruzada São Sebastião: Duas experiências de promoção humana, bairro São Sebastião e favela de Rádio Nacional" (1965); and in Enny Guarnieri, "Uma experiência de promoção social: Cruzada São Sebastião" (1963). The Biblioteca does not own equipment for photocopying, but permission may be granted to remove material from the premises for this purpose.

Escola de Serviço Social

Pontífica Universidade Católica (PUC)
Rua São Vicente, 225-Gávea
Prédio de Ciências Físicas
Telephone 529-9398
Hours 9 to 12, 1 to 6

Throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, students from the Escola de Serviço Social of the Pontífica Universidade Católica of Rio de Janeiro worked in the favelas as part of the requirements for completing their degrees. All the studies that survived were written by women. These reports, now cataloged in the university's main library, serve as testimonies to the prevalence of domestic abuse and male abandonment and to the concomitant rise of matrifocal families. See Isaura Lembruger Portugal, "Favelas: Problema administrativo" (1952) dealing with the favela of Rocinha; Irmã Helena Siqueira, "O Centro Nossa Senhora das Graças como solução da favela de Esqueleto" (1959); Laura Torres Bogado, "Parque Proletário Provisório No. 1: Planejamento de um serviço social" (1953); Adelaide Margarida Manso Silva, "Estudo sobre um inquérito social realizado no Parque Proletário Provisório No. 1" (1953); Maria Stella Bezzerro Pacheco, "Uma experiência de desenvolvimento e organização de comunidade no Parque Proletário Provisório No. 3 do Estado da Guanabara" (1962); and Sílvia Baptista Pereira, "O serviço social e a urbanização da favela de Jacarézinho" (1965). The library staff will photocopy material on request.

Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE)

Rua Presidente Roosevelt, 146-Centro
Library located on the second floor
Telephone 297-3911, Ramal 85
Hours 9 to 12, 1 to 6

The holdings at the IBGE of interest to researchers investigating favelas are specialized studies conducted on behalf of the city in the 1960s

that document the symbiotic relationship between industry and the favelas, and the gradual shift of the squatter population away from the hills and toward the suburbs of Rio. See Guanabara, Comissão Executiva para o Desenvolvimento Urbano (CEDUG) and Doxiades Associates, "Guanabara: A Plan for Urban Development" (1965); Guanabara, Secretaria de Estado do Governo, Coordenação de Planos e Orçamentos, "Aspectos da geografia das indústrias no Rio de Janeiro" (1969); and Centro de Coordenação Industrial para o Plano Habitacional, "A interpenetração das áreas faveladas e áreas industriais no Estado da Guanabara" (1968).

IBGE will photocopy material, usually with a delay of one day.

Biblioteca da Caixa Econômica (formerly Banco Nacional de Habitação)

Avenida Presidente Vargas, 84-Centro

Library located on the second floor

Telephone 292-3133

Hours 12 to 6

The Caixa Econômica channels federal monies to finance housing for the poor. The library contains a survey of the housing shortage in Rio de Janeiro that caused the explosion in shantytown construction after 1940, "Favelas e habitação popular," conducted by the Comissão Nacional de Bem-Estar Social in 1954. The library also holds several rare censuses of favela life that document the correlation between family size and household salary. These include Guanabara, Secretaria de Serviços Sociais, Fundação Leão XIII-USAID Projeto-Piloto Bemdoc, "Vila Proletária da Penha: Levantamento sócio-econômico," Rio de Janeiro, Dec. 1965; Comissão Executiva de Projetos Específicos, Serviço de Estatística, "Dados estatísticos referentes à favela Praia do Pinto, Ilha das Dragas, CHS-1, CHS-3" (referring to Conjuntos Habitacionais Sociais), Rio de Janeiro, 1967.

Photocopying must be done on the premises by the researcher.

Liga Brasileira de Assistência (LBA)

Diretoria Nacional

Library located on the ninth floor

Avenida General Justo, 275-Centro

No telephone listed

Hours 9 to 12, 1 to 6

The LBA is the nation's leading charity institution, traditionally presided over by the first lady of Brazil. Located here are *relatórios* (annual reports) covering LBA fieldwork in the favelas from 1964–1967 and 1969–1970, particularly those located in the Zona Sul (the southern part of the city, including Leblon, Copacabana, and Ipanema). The library also houses a great deal of anti-favela literature, such as the memoirs of

Sandra Cavalcanti, former aide for social services to Guanabara Governor Carlos Lacerda (1961–1964), the *bête noire* of the favelados.

Photocopying must be done on the premises by the researcher.

Arquivo Geral da Cidade do Rio de Janeiro

Rua Amoroso Lima, 15-Cidade Nova

Telephone 273-4582, 273-3141, or 273-3191

Hours 8:30 to 4:30

Because the city of Rio de Janeiro does not legally recognize the existence of the favelas, it is not surprising that the Arquivo Geral contains little documentation on the subject. Valuable to historians are original photographs (made by an unidentified photographer) of three of the most famous favelas of Rio in their prime. Packets 234 and 235 are labeled "Favela Praia do Pinto circa 1948." Two unnumbered packets contain "Favela Esqueleto circa 1964" and "Favela Rocinha circa 1960."

Photographs can be reproduced by the house photographer for a nominal fee once permission is obtained from the director of the Arquivo.

Biblioteca Nacional

Centro de Informação e Divulgação

Avenida Rio Branco, 219/239-Centro

Telephone 240-8429

Hours 9 to 12, 1 to 6

The National Library contains microfilms of newspapers with a special interest in the favelas. These periodicals fall into three groups: *Tribuna da Imprensa* (1950–1960), mouthpiece of right-wing journalist and eventual governor of Guanabara, Carlos Lacerda, who made it his mission to eradicate the shantytowns; *A Voz Trabalhista* (1950–1954), house organ of Getúlio Vargas's Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro (PTB), which counted on favelado votes to sweep Vargas back into the presidency in 1950; and two small-circulation journals of the independent left, *Vanguarda* (1949–1951) and *O Radical* (1951–1952), which featured polemics on the best solution to the favela problem.

Photocopying is not allowed, and therefore researchers must come prepared to take copious notes.

Companhia Estadual de Habitação (CEHAB)

Praia de Botafogo

480-Botafogo

Telephone 286-4522

Hours 9 to 12, 1 to 6

The housing agency of the state of Guanabara, Companhia de Habitação Popular do Estado da Guanabara (COHAB), published sporadic reports on living conditions in favelas during the 1960s. Today some of its files are held by the housing agency of the state of Rio de Janeiro, Companhia Estadual de Habitação (CEHAB). Researchers will want to consult Companhia de Habitação Popular do Estado da Guanabara, "A COHAB através de números e imagens" (1965), which features tables and charts on where favelados found employment in the city and the importance of the *biscate* (informal labor market) in generating income for women who lived in the shantytowns.

Ação Comunitária do Brasil—Rio de Janeiro

Rua Aureliano 205-Rio Comprido

Telephone 293-4112

Hours 9 to 12, 1 to 6

This agency coordinates private charitable activities to benefit poor communities. A reference list, "Ação Comunitária do Brasil: Catálogo de obras e recursos assistenciais do Estado da Guanabara" (1968) enumerates the financial resources at the disposal of the favelado during the 1960s. In the Zona Sul, for example, squatters could turn to Ação Social da Paroquia de São Lucas (an outpost of the Anglican Church serving the favelas) and to Ambulatório da Praia do Pinto, which provided prenatal care to mothers and taught arts and crafts to women of all ages. A booklet summarizing the activities of Ação Comunitária is also available in English: *Community Action in the 'Favelas' of Rio de Janeiro* (Rio de Janeiro: Ação Comunitária do Brasil, n.d.).

PRIVATE PAPERS

Fundação Leão XIII, Posto Carmela Dutra, Jacarézinho

Administrative Center in Região Administrativa 28

Praça da Concórdia, 2

Telephone 280-2169

Hours 9 to 12, 1 to 6

After obtaining permission from the local outpost of the Fundação Leão XIII and the Associação de Moradores of Jacarézinho, investigators may wade through mountains of documents dating back to 1960, when

this favela ranked as the largest in the city (it is currently second to Rocinha in size).⁹ Sample documents include “Reuniões de moradores,” 27 Apr. 1967–12 June 67, detailing the formation of a *mutirão* (a collective work unit for making street repairs); minutes of the Associação Pro-Melhoramento do Jacarézinho, the first informal political organization started within the favela (original notes, plus two typewritten copies); “Livro de atas de reuniões da Comissão Provisória,” minutes of the provisional residents’ association; flyers from the competing political slates that ran in the first elections to the Associação de Moradores in 1967; a proclamation from the city explaining to favelados the prerequisites for voting and places to vote; a notice from the Secretaria de Serviços Sociais, Estado da Guanabara, setting the date for the election; statutes of the Associação de Moradores; notes on duties of membership in the association; and letters from favelados soliciting help from the association.

Dr. Vitor Tavares de Moura Papers

Executor, Sra. Maria Coeli de Moura

Rua Sá Ferreira 120/903

Copacabana

Telephone 227-1249

Getúlio Vargas’s appointed intendant in Rio de Janeiro, Mayor Henrique Dodsworth (1937–1945), hoped to capture the allegiance of the favelados by resettling them in housing projects dubbed “Parques Proletários Provisórios.” The only two such parks that ever became operational were in the vicinity of Praia do Pinto, and even those projects had failed by the start of the 1950s. Information on household structure, economic activity, health, and housing in the favelas can be gleaned from the papers of the city commissioner charged with overseeing the construction of the proletarian parks, physician Vitor Tavares Moura. Included in the Moura Papers are unpublished essays by Dr. Moura summarizing the prevailing political attitudes toward the favelas in the early 1940s, “O problema das habitações pobres no Rio de Janeiro” (n.d.) and “Esboço de um plano para estudo e solução do problema das favelas do Rio de Janeiro” (Nov. 1940); the transcript of a Moura speech, “Reunião de 8 de Janeiro: Tema—Favela” (n.d., presumably 1943); censuses of the favelas of the Zona Sul conducted in 1941–1943, “Resumo dos censos de 14 favelas da Zona Sul da cidade”; an essay by Mayor Dodsworth, “Favelas,” calling for stricter police measures to stop the flow of migrants into the shanty-

9. The history of Rocinha, currently the largest shantytown in Latin America, has yet to be written. The residents themselves have composed a volume of reminiscences collected by the União Pro-Melhoramentos dos Moradores da Rocinha, *Varal de lembranças: Histórias da Rocinha* (Rio de Janeiro: Tempo e Presença, 1983). A copy was made available to me by the residents’ association of Rocinha.

towns; Moura's private notes and letters relating to the proletarian parks project; a census of the first park built, with information broken into age categories, "Estatística do Parque Proletário Provisório No. 1"; a proposal on how to educate the children who would grow up in the parks, "Plano para a reintegração social do menor nos Parques Proletários"; a talk by Moura on the efficacy of the project, "Aspectos sociais das habitações conjuntas"; *desenhos* showing what housing in the parks should look like; official rules for living in the parks; and instructions from Moura to the favelados on how they should vote in local and national elections, "Proclamação do Dr. Vitor Moura, Diretor do Departamento de Assistência Social, aos moradores do P.P.P. 1 e aos moradores dos outros parques."

Permission to peruse and photocopy Dr. Moura's papers must be sought from his daughter and executor, Sra. Maria Coeli de Moura. A letter of introduction would be helpful from a city agency working in the favelas, such as the Fundação Leão XIII.

José Artur Rios Papers

Located on the seventeenth floor
Rua Mexico 31, Centro
Telephone 240-1276

José Arthur Rios oversaw the first definitive study of all the favelas of Rio de Janeiro, conducted by the Sociedade de Análises Gráficas e Mecanográficas Aplicadas aos Complexos Sociais (SAGMACS): "Aspectos humanos da favela carioca."¹⁰ In Rios's private office located in downtown Rio, the researcher will find the first city census of the squatter settlements, "Censo das favelas: aspectos gerais," conducted by the Prefeitura of the Distrito Federal in 1949; the first survey of the social and political attitudes of the favelados, "A vida mental dos favelados do Distrito Federal," made in 1958 by the Instituto de Pesquisas e Estudos de Mercado; the manuscript of a full-length novel by Dilermando Duarte Cox on the favelas in the Zona Sul, "Os párias da cidade maravilhosa" (1950); and two thick collections of clippings on the favelas extracted from every newspaper published in Rio de Janeiro from 1949 through 1969, including *O Dia* (1951), *Diário Carioca* (1949, 1950, 1964), *Diário de Notícias* (1950, 1951), *Diário da Noite* (1949, 1951), *Diário Popular* (1951), *Diário do Povo* (1951), *Diretrizes* (1949), *Folha Carioca* (1949, 1951), *Gazeta de Notícias* (1951), *O Globo* (1948, 1951, 1957, 1964), *O Jornal* (1949, 1950, 1951), *Jornal do Brasil* (1949, 1951, 1964, 1969), *O Jornal do Comércio* (1965), *A Manhã* (1948, 1949, 1951), *O Metropolitano* (1959), *O Mundo* (1949), and *A Notícia* (1951).

A letter of introduction from a U.S. or Brazilian academic is neces-

10. See two special supplements to *O Estado de São Paulo*, Parte Geral, 13 Apr. 1960, suplemento especial, pp. 1-40; and Parte Específica, 15 Apr. 1960, suplemento especial, pp. 1-48.

sary for an interview with Sr. Rios's secretaries before permission may be granted to use the office facilities. Photocopying of material is permitted off the premises.

TWO PROBLEMATICAL SOURCES

Two institutions involved in the lives of the favelados would seem obvious fountains of information on the favelas. In practice, both can stymie the efforts of researchers, who must use great diplomatic skill to elicit any written material from these organizations. They are included to warn but not necessarily to dissuade investigators from consulting them.

Federação de Associações de Favelas do Estado de Rio de Janeiro (FAFERJ)
Rua República do Líbano 54 (sobrado)
Andaraí
Telephone 224-6026

In 1963 the residents' associations of the favelas of Rio de Janeiro joined together to form the Federação das Associações de Favelas do Estado da Guanabara (FAFEG) in order to prevent demolition of the shantytowns. Today the organization is known as the Federação de Associações de Favelas do Estado de Rio de Janeiro (FAFERJ), and it is courted by every politician in the city. Because of the sensitive political nature of its work, FAFERJ staff members are reluctant to discuss any topic dealing with favela life. At best they will guide a researcher to current and former favela residents who might prove to be more forthcoming.

Pastoral da Favela, Curia do Rio de Janeiro
Arquidiocese do Rio de Janeiro, Curia do Rio de Janeiro
Rua Benjamin Constant, 23-Gloria
Telephone 292-3132

The topic of religion in the favelas has been explored by a few investigators, notably by Carlos Medina and Lícia do Prados Valladares, but the subject still awaits definitive treatment.¹¹ In the 1970s, the Catholic Church created the Pastoral da Favela to administer to the spiritual and material needs of the favelados. The written sources available at its headquarters, mostly in the form of pamphlets, say little about the social conditions inside the squatter settlements but might be useful to someone interested in the favelas as a doctrinal issue.

11. Carlos Medina e Lícia do Prado Valladares, "Favela e religião," in-house document, CNBB, CERIS, Rio de Janeiro, 1968.

The favelas are not likely to vanish from the Rio scene anytime soon, unfortunately. Three generations have grown up in them since migrants began arriving in the shantytowns in large numbers in the late 1930s, and still no solution to the favela problem is in sight. Perhaps in a small way, historians can contribute to the debate over the future of the favelas by assembling their rich history—the struggle of hundreds of thousands of human beings to carve out a portion of Rio de Janeiro for themselves. The city might join this venture by preserving the material that already exists and creating a central archive where the collective memory of the favelados can be consulted and passed on to future generations.