



SPD



**Associação Protetora
dos Desvalidos**

[@spd.sociedadeprotetora](https://www.instagram.com/spd.sociedadeprotetora)

Protective Society for the Underprivileged in History

This bulletin aims to share a part of the history of the Sociedade Protetora dos Desvalidos (SPD – Protective Society for the Underprivileged), an organization conceived and built to carry forward the struggle of Black people—men who never bowed to the abuses of slavery.

Confronting social inequality, religious imposition, and racism were the banners of resistance that ignited the Revolta dos Búzios, inspired the ideals of the SPD, and fueled the goals of the Revolta dos Malês. This document also seeks to present the history of an institution that, in 2025, celebrates 193 years of uninterrupted activity, now renewing its mission in alignment with contemporary issues that demand equal rights for all Brazilian citizens.

Founded in 1832, and today renamed Associação Protetora dos Desvalidos (Protective Association for the Underprivileged) due to updates in Brazil's civil code, the institution continues to uphold its founding principles and mission—fighting for equal rights for Black people in our city.

Mission

To promote equity, racial reparation, and representation of Black people.

Vision

To be a reference in sociopolitical strategies for ensuring Black populations access to various spheres of power.

Values

Antiracist commitment; defense of human rights; intergenerational dialogue; loyalty, ethics, and integrity; and respect for diversity.

Between the Revolta dos Búzios and the Revolta dos Malês, the SPD is born

The strength and yearning for freedom never succumbed to the injustices rooted in Bahia since the onset of slavery. The Búzios Revolt (1798), the uprising of Black men and women, echoed across Bahia, calling for what we now call racial and social equity. From this legacy, the Associação Protetora dos Desvalidos – SPD was born in 1832, as a convergence of intelligence, economic strategy, emancipation, and cultural preservation.

The Malês Revolt (1835) continued the wave of resistance, driven by unbound thought. Thus, all stories of struggle and resistance for the freedom of women and men pass through these historic milestones.

CREATION AND STRATEGY

The SPD was founded by Manoel Victor Serra with the primary goal of restoring freedom to enslaved Black men and women. He joined forces with 18 other free Black men, and through mutual support and other collaborative strategies, they purchased manumission letters and provided the freed individuals with the means to live autonomously—including vocational training for the trades of the time.

One key resistance strategy of the organization was the support network developed by Black communities.

At the time, Black people were not allowed to form associations outside of religious ones. To navigate this, they adopted the name Irmandade de Nossa Senhora Soledade Amparo dos Desvalidos and held meetings at the Church of the Fifteen Mysteries. Later, they moved briefly to the Church of Carmo, and then remained for many years at the Igreja do Rosário dos Pretos. From 1869 to 1882, they operated from a rented house on Rua do Bispo. In 1876, they acquired a building at 17 Largo do São Francisco, which, after renovation, became the SPD's permanent headquarters—still operating today under the name Associação Protetora dos Desvalidos.



ACTS OF RESISTANCE, QUILOMBISMO, AND EMPOWERMENT

Founded by Manoel Victor Serra—a free African man who earned a living selling water near Ladeira da Preguiça—the SPD was the first Black civil organization in Brazil.

Today, the institution supports numerous projects focused on Black empowerment, including the **Instituto Renascer Mulher** and **Quilombo Mulungu**. It maintains the Casa Carolina de Jesus, a refuge for Africans and quilombolas; supports street vendors in the Historic Center; and develops sociopolitical actions with the Coletivo Agbara Dudu, promoting Black political leadership.



MAIN OBJECTIVES

To raise funds from members for the purchase of manumission letters, training programs, and social services for members and their families—as well as for those still enslaved—the SPD implemented several initiatives.

The Association preceded Brazil's national savings bank by creating lotteries, a benefit fund, and member loan systems. The collected funds were kept in a triple-key safe and invested in manumissions and property acquisitions, thereby restarting the investment cycle.



THINKERS AND INTELLECTUALS

Many thinkers and intellectuals contributed to SPD's legacy. One prominent figure was Manoel Raimundo Quirino, born in Santo Amaro da Purificação, Bahia.

He was a draftsman, journalist, historian, ethnographer, and a captain of the Bahia National Guard. He taught at the School of Fine Arts at UFBA and was one of SPD's most active members, fighting for a political project aimed at securing equal rights for all citizens.

He was the first Black man to hold a city council seat for four terms, and a benefactor of several philanthropic institutions. He was also active in both the abolitionist and republican movements.

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION

Although SPD historically carried out many social support activities, there is no documented record of direct actions targeting women. However, historical documents reveal that *ganhadeiras*—women who sold food and goods—benefited from the loan system created by the organization to support small Black entrepreneurs. This system provided a means for economic survival and equality.

Today, the SPD continues to promote the development and empowerment of Black communities, especially quilombola groups and marginalized neighborhoods in Salvador.



From Búzios to the Malês and the SPD's founding, the core mission has always been resistance to religious imposition, social inequality, and racism. A political project with defined actions was drawn:

- i) occupation of public spaces through uprisings;
- ii) confrontation with police forces;
- iii) quiet, strategic organization aiming for autonomy.

In this ongoing fight for equal social rights, SPD elected its first female president of the Administrative Board, who served from 2015 to 2018.

Currently, resuming the same position, Ligia Margarida Gomes has committed herself to continuing the initial objectives; raising the banner of contemporary struggles, where equality of rights includes gender equity in a respectful and dignified manner.

HISTORIC SAFE OF THE HEADQUARTERS



The three-key safe is a symbol of the effort and solidarity of Black men in their struggle for social rights at the time. It safeguarded the funds resulting from the collective efforts of all those involved.

A practice was adopted where each key was held by a different board member, and only in the presence of all three could access be granted to the funds and donations, which were allocated to strengthening the cause.

All contributions from members were directed toward the purchase of freedom (manumission), professional training so that individuals could sustain themselves with dignity, and care in cases of illness or death.

In the latter case, members were entitled to a dignified funeral and support for widows and children.

BANNER OF STRUGGLE

For the Associação Protetora dos Desvalidos (Society for the Protection of the Needy), social justice is not just a slogan—it is its banner of struggle. A symbol of the protection of the rights of Black people, it drives the construction of strategies to preserve the legacy of this institution, which, for 192 years, has upheld the commitment to fight for the rights of this population, grounded in the mission, vision, and values that define us as an institution.

Mission – To promote equity, racial reparation, and representation of Black people.

Vision – To be a reference in sociopolitical strategies for the access of the Black population to various spheres of power.

Values – Commitment to anti-racism; defense of human rights; intergenerational dialogue; loyalty, ethics, and integrity; and respect for diversity.



CONTEMPORARY ACTIONS

Currently, the Sociedade Protetora dos Desvalidos carries out actions aimed at the development and empowerment of the Black population, engaging in advocacy for quilombola communities and the peripheral neighborhoods of Salvador, and defending the rights of Black people.

Moreover, SPD remains firmly committed to the pursuit of reparation through the promotion and implementation of policies focused on women's empowerment, anti-racism efforts, social and racial equity, among other initiatives that honor our ancestry and contribute to preserving the legacy left by our forebears.

Reparation now!



**Donate to SPD and help
transform lives**

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**@spd.sociedadeprotetora
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Largo do Cruzeiro de São Francisco, 17