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Race and Black Mobilization in Colonial and Early Independent Cuba: A Comparative Perspective

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Abstract. This article questions the validity of racial studies that separate Anglo-America from Latin America by comparing Cuba's racial system and postslavery black mobilization with those of Jamaica, Venezuela, Colombia, and Brazil. Unlike these countries, Cuba had a two-tier racial system close to, but not identical to, that of the United States, and it helped Afro-Cubans mobilize on a scale unrivaled elsewhere in Latin America. Conversely, their mobilization prompted white-elite repression parallel to the repression in Anglo-America.

The comparative literature on postslavery societies in the Western Hemisphere tends to divide them into two main groups: the Anglo-Protestant and the Iberian Catholic societies. No doubt Frank Tannenbaum's thesis has been revised since the publication of *Slave and Citizen* in 1946, but his basic division remains valid to some authors.¹ In particular, H. Hoetink separates the Hispanic Caribbean from the non-Hispanic Caribbean. He argues that the Hispanic Caribbean is characterized by "a racial continuum in which . . . the higher social prestige of 'light' color has not disappeared," whereas in the non-Hispanic Caribbean "'racial' divisions . . . were generally more clear-cut."² According to Hoetink, the existence of both the Hispanic racial continuum and the non-Hispanic tri-tier racial system in the whole region might explain why people of African descent had more difficulty in organizing along color lines there than in the United States.

This article challenges part of Hoetink's argument by comparing Cuba's racial system and black political mobilization after emancipation with those of four countries in which slavery was also an important form of labor and in which people of African descent make up the majority or

a significant minority of the population: non-Hispanic Jamaica, Hispanic Venezuela and Colombia, and Brazil.³ Unlike these countries, Cuba had a two-tier racial system close to, but not identical to, that of the United States, and it helped Afro-Cubans mobilize on a scale unrivaled in other regions of Latin America. Conversely, their mobilization prompted white-elite repression unmatched in other Latin American societies and in many ways parallel to the repression in Anglo-America. In other words, this article broadly agrees with Hoetink's view that in a two-tier racial system, people of African descent are more likely to organize and challenge the racial order than in less dichotomous societies; however, it disputes the racial continuum that Hoetink posits for Hispanic Caribbean societies.

The Racial System

Cuba's racial system, which since the 1840s has included whites and a *raza de color* (race of color) or *clase de color* (class of color) encompassing blacks and mulattoes, had no parallel in Latin America and the Caribbean at that time. Similarly unique in this context is the continuing Cuban use, for 150 years, of the collective *los negros* or *negro* to qualify both *pardos* (mulattoes) and *morenos* (blacks), a use not questioned by the 1959 socialist revolution.⁴

In many other Latin American or Caribbean countries, a tri-tier or multi-tier racial system prevailed. In Venezuela, for example, the category *pardo* comprised all people of mixed African, European, and Indian ancestry (i.e., the majority of the population), while only those of supposedly full African ancestry were labeled *negros*.⁵ Similarly, in neighboring Colombia *negros* were those of apparently unmixed African origin, but Peter Wade has convincingly argued that the regionalization of race in their country has led Colombians to equate the dwellers of the Pacific coast and of certain enclaves on the Atlantic coast and in the Valle del Cauca with *negros*. Unlike in Venezuela, however, those of mixed African, European, and Indian ancestry identified themselves in regional rather than in racial terms. The mostly mulatto dwellers of the Atlantic coast, in particular, referred to themselves as *costeños* and generally played down their African roots.⁶

In Jamaica's racial system, coloured referred only to mulattoes—the bulk of the free population during slavery —whom planters hoped to transform into a buffer against free blacks and slaves. When free Afro-Jamaicans were conceded equal rights with whites in 1830, the gap between free mulattoes and blacks had narrowed; both groups had begun to see the link between their cause and slave emancipation.⁷ Studies of post-1945 Jamaica, however, indicate the endurance of its tri-tier system, comprising, in ascending order, blacks, “coloureds,” and whites (as well as Middle Easterners and Chinese).⁸

As for Brazil, since the early colonial period its racial system had included a general category of *peçoas de côr* (persons of color, a concept less definitive than Cuba's *raza de color*) and more commonly used subcategories referring to color (*preto* [black] or *pardo* [mulatto]), origin (African or Brazilian-born), and status (slave or free).⁹ Following the end of Brazilian slavery in 1888, the categories of *preto*, *pardo*, and *branco* (white) predominated, but some historical studies have shown that the line dividing *pretos* and *pardos* from whites was much clearer than the one separating *pretos* from *pardos*. Since the late 1950s several contemporary studies have challenged the idea of Brazil's tri-tier racial system and have argued that Brazil has evolved into a rather dichotomous society, with whites at the top and blacks and mulattoes at the bottom, often jointly labeled *negros*.¹⁰

Cuba's category of *raza de color* can be traced back to the alleged conspiracy of La Escalera in 1844, in which thousands of slaves and free persons of color were accused of secretly organizing to end slavery and Spanish colonialism.¹¹ Although the existence of such a conspiracy is difficult to establish, La Escalera revealed that extensive networks linked urban free mulattoes and blacks to plantation slaves. Moreover, the conspiracy's bloody repression and the racist legislation it prompted, which dramatically limited the rights of free people of color, drew them nearer to the slaves under the single label of *raza de color*. As a result, Cuba shows a two-tier racial system that is close to that of the United States but that not only preexisted U.S. influence in Cuba but was founded on a different principle from the U.S. "one drop rule": in Cuba the barrier separating blacks and mulattoes from whites was based on "visible" African ancestry (e.g., skin color, hair texture, and facial features). Moreover, the collective classification of people of African descent in the *raza de color* was accompanied by the classification of individuals in subcategories of color, physical traits, and ethnicity.¹²

Nevertheless, after 1844 the eventuality of a Cuban "mulatto escape hatch," to use Carl N. Degler's famous expression for Brazil, disappeared.¹³ Although a few free mulattoes—not blacks—enjoyed some upward mobility in preemancipation Cuba, there was no Cuban equivalent of the Venezuelan *pardos* who held high government and military positions or distinguished themselves in the professions. Nor were there Cuban equivalents of the Brazilian mulattoes Francisco de Sales Torres Homem and Mauricio and Antônio Pereira Rebouças, among others, who had doctoral degrees in medicine or law and became top government officials, or of the free "coloured" lawyers, merchants, and large landowners in colonial Jamaica.¹⁴ Indeed, unlike other Latin American and Caribbean slave societies, Cuba was divided by a racial barrier too inflexible to allow some highly educated mulattoes to be absorbed into the white planter-dominated

elite.¹⁵ This helps explain the relative cohesion of the Cuban population of color and its mobilization after the abolition of slavery in 1886.

Black Participation in Nationalist Wars

A second Cuban characteristic is its high level of voluntary military participation by blacks in nationalist wars. The association of Cuba's independence struggle with abolition, first, and with social reform, after the end of slavery, gave Afro-Cubans—approximately one-third of the population—a rare opportunity to push their own cause in arms within the nationalist agenda. This legacy also made their subsequent mobilization easier.

In fact, the fear of Cuba's becoming another Haiti had delayed the island's struggle for independence until 1868, when depressed planters of eastern Cuba rose up against Spain. As slaves and free people of color rapidly joined the insurrection, they were able to force its leadership to proclaim the emancipation of all slaves in the insurgent territory. However, black participation in the Liberation Army and the issue of abolition prevented the insurrection from spreading to central and western Cuba, strongholds of Cuban sugar planters. Moreover, the transformation of the insurgent army from a white planter force to a popular multiracial army in which free men of color could rise to military power deeply influenced the white leadership's decision to negotiate with Spain the Pact of Zanjón, which ended the war in 1878.

Not surprisingly, many Afro-Cubans rejected the armistice, which granted neither independence nor emancipation, and took up arms against Spain again in 1879, in the short-lived *Guerra Chiquita*. The launching of final war for independence in 1895 fully succeeded only in Oriente, a region with a high proportion of people of African descent and a tradition of struggle against Spain. It had become evident that Cuba could not achieve independence without the military participation of Afro-Cubans. Furthermore, blacks were overrepresented in the Liberation Army throughout the island and joined the insurgency *en masse* for a variety of reasons, ranging from the possibility of contributing to the making of an egalitarian Cuba or of improving their personal lives to the need to flee from Spanish repression. In the process, the expectations of many rose regarding their position once independence had been achieved, despite racism's persistence among the rebels.¹⁶

Few people of African origin in the hemisphere shared with Afro-Cubans the opportunity to fight for their own cause during nationalist wars. The Haitians were an outstanding exception.¹⁷ So, too, were the Venezuelan free *pardos*, who in the 1810s outnumbered whites to such an

extent that they held the balance of power during their country's war for independence and were able to insist on equality with whites and to demand abolition. In fact, pardos in the llanos armies first supported Spain against a pro-independence white creole elite of strongly conservative social views; only after Simón Bolívar had committed himself to freeing the slaves did they join the rebel army, securing both Venezuela's independence and their own share of military and political power. Although slavery outlived independence, it had disintegrated long before abolition in 1854.¹⁸ In Colombia as well, men of African descent were overrepresented in the armies that fought for independence. At stake for them were individual goals, such as personal advancement, but also collective issues, such as the end of slavery, racial equality, and integration with society as a whole. Quite likely, these very issues, together with a dominant ideology promoting both *mestizaje* (intermarriage with Europeans) and "whitening" (the disappearance of blacks and Indians in the long term), kept the Colombians from openly advocating "black causes."¹⁹

Afro-Brazilians, on the contrary, had few opportunities to advance their specific agenda by fighting a nationalist war. After the failure of local conspiracies and revolts often led by blacks, Brazilian independence was won in 1822 by white elites, who used a liberal rhetoric to defend slavery, the plantation system, and elite suffrage. In the 1830s the elite project for independent Brazil was violently challenged by excluded groups, among them free Afro-Brazilians and slaves, in several local revolts, but these movements failed to present a coherent national program. Moreover, after 1822 the Brazilian army remained an instrument manipulated by the elite to maintain the status quo. Though composed principally of unpaid conscripts of African descent, the army afforded such people no possibility of organizing for their collective interests.²⁰

Black Mobilization after Emancipation

The conjunction of Cuba's racial system and black military participation helps explain why Afro-Cubans' level of organization and mobilization was high compared with that of populations of African descent in other Latin American societies. After 1886 many who had mobilized for abolition or had fought in the Ten Years' War and the Guerra Chiquita continued to struggle for equal rights and against racial segregation.

The existence of a two-tier racial system in Cuba brought people of African descent closer to each other by giving them a common identity. Some Afro-Cuban individuals, often from the middle class and with some formal education but frustrated by racial discrimination, identified with

the *raza de color*. They established new criteria for social distribution based on racial equality. Several, especially Juan Gualberto Gómez and Rafael Serra, published newspapers and used them to undermine the ideology of white superiority. In 1887 Gómez and others organized already existing all-black clubs and societies into a federation, led by the Directorio Central de las Sociedades de la Raza de Color, that successfully coordinated antidiscriminatory actions across the island and challenged Spanish authority.²¹

In fact, Afro-Cuban leaders used the Spanish-imposed concept of *raza de color* or *clase de color* to unite blacks and mulattoes, Cuban-born and African-born, free blacks and former slaves alike and to foster racial pride.²² Although it is difficult to document whether the rank and file identified with the concept of *raza de color*, the letters to the editors of Afro-Cuban newspapers show that their authors indifferently referred to people of African descent as the *raza de color*, the *pueblo de color*, *hombres de color*, *negros*, and *negros cubanos*. Whereas they often specified the color or ethnic origin of individuals, they commonly qualified Gómez, who was a mulatto, as a *martir negro* or a *negro*, because he represented the whole *raza de color*.²³ Evidently, Afro-Cubans shared a collective identity that transcended personal color or ethnic distinctions.²⁴ Thus, by the end of the nineteenth century Cuban blacks could count on deeply rooted urban-rural networks that transcended ethnicity, color, and status and on new networks, built in the wars for independence, that placed their level of organization close to that of U.S. and Jamaican blacks.

The contrast with Brazil, where slavery ended at the same time, is striking. Afro-Brazilian organizations continued to be disconnected and divided along color, status, and ethnic lines. Only after 1880, perhaps as a result of increasing discrimination against all people of African descent, did urban free blacks create some abolitionist clubs and underground networks to protect runaway slaves. These efforts, however, were isolated. Although plantation slaves actively contributed to the collapse of slavery, Brazilian blacks had no formal organization after emancipation to defend their interests at the national or regional level.²⁵

Moreover, many Afro-Brazilians identified freedom and reform with the monarchy that had decreed abolition, to which they attached their fate. For example, the mulatto André Rebouças, a leading abolitionist, lost faith in Brazil's future after the advent of the republic in 1889 and accompanied the emperor into exile. The Black Guard, a semisecret society founded shortly after abolition by urban blacks and mulattoes in Rio de Janeiro, attempted to organize Afro-Brazilians politically but failed to formulate concrete postslavery policies. Instead, it supported the reformist monarchy

in power and violently attacked Republicans representing the former slavocrat planters. Increasingly isolated, the Black Guard disappeared with the monarchy in 1889.²⁶ At the advent of the first republic (1889–1930), only black brotherhoods and centers of syncretic worship, as well as extended family networks, provided protection to Afro-Brazilians. In the early 1900s urban class-oriented associations were created in some cities to offer the recreational activities from which blacks were banned by white clubs. But open struggle for equality began only in the mid-1920s, especially in São Paulo, where one black club publicly protested state discrimination.²⁷

Venezuelan blacks, for their part, did not have formal associations to advance their cause, though informal networks did link predominantly black enclaves to emigrant relatives. In fact, during the fighting that continued after independence, partisan armies represented the principal arena in which to struggle for equality. In particular, the Federal War of 1859–63, which pitted Federalists against Centralists, was to some extent a war for equal rights and allowed the many *pardo*, black, and *zambo* peasants and laborers voluntarily enrolled in the Federalist ranks to take up arms against the oligarchy of white hacendados and merchants who exploited them.²⁸ Ironically, however, the Federalist victory corresponded to the growing influence of positivism and “scientific” racism in Venezuela.²⁹

Similarly, during the troubled decades of civil war that followed independence in Colombia, black and mulatto officers and soldiers launched short-lived local revolts to push for social advancement. Afro-Colombians also influenced grassroots politics by giving special meanings to the words *liberty*, *democracy*, *equality*, and *fraternity* that affected political propaganda and benefited the Liberal Party, which had championed and presided over the end of slavery, to the detriment of the Conservative Party. Beyond these manifestations, however, Colombians of African descent did not organize independently to promote a specific agenda.³⁰

In reality, Afro-Cubans’ high level of organization was closer to, though different from, that of blacks in Jamaica and the United States.³¹ This again highlights the limitations of classifying American societies as Iberian Catholic or Anglo-Protestant. In Jamaica black churches were the predominant form of black association in the nineteenth century. Their importance sprang from the official promotion of Protestant evangelism among slaves before abolition, when Christian religious gatherings were among the few authorized forms of assembly. But the gospel did not teach all slaves resignation; it showed many the injustice of their condition. Some missionaries overstepped their role and served as links between slaves and abolitionist associations in Great Britain. Many black ministers and followers reinterpreted Protestantism to fit their needs. As a result, black

churches in postslavery Jamaica brought local communities together and provided alternative institutions, such as schools, political meeting houses, and centers of entertainment. Moreover, they offered an islandwide structure for political or equal rights mobilization that paralleled Afro-Cuban organizations in extent.³²

Black Political Parties

Despite a two-tier racial system and/or broad black mobilization, neither U.S. nor Jamaica blacks organized their own political parties until the 1960s. In fact, Cuba's Partido Independiente de Color, founded by war veterans in 1908, stands out as the first black party in the hemisphere. Following U.S. intervention in 1898 and Cuban independence in 1902, many Afro-Cubans were frustrated in their expectation of full participation in the new nation by the policies of U.S. military occupation and Cuban government and by massive subsidized Spanish immigration, which dramatically weakened their position in the labor market. Therefore they mobilized again, and many joined the Partido Independiente de Color, which demanded real equality for Afro-Cubans, proportional representation for them in public service, and social reform to improve the conditions of all lower-class Cubans.

By 1910 the Partido Independiente de Color counted between ten and twenty thousand members, impressive figures for an organization in existence for less than two years.³³ It had achieved nationwide membership, linking the countryside to the cities and including day laborers, peasants, workers, artisans, and a few middle-class individuals mobilized by the party's message of black racial pride and its virulent condemnation of white racism.³⁴ In addition, the party represented blacks as well as mulattoes and thus clearly demonstrated that its members identified themselves with a *raza de color*.³⁵ A politicoracial consciousness was emerging, built on the common experience of racism and forged in the struggle against slavery and in the wars for independence.

The organization of a political party by Afro-Cubans, the culmination of a century-long process, contains far-reaching lessons for the history of the African diaspora. In most of the hemisphere, enfranchised blacks generally conformed to white-dominated multiparty systems and entrusted their representation to the less elitist party.³⁶ In the United States, African Americans sided with the Republican Party from the 1850s to the 1920s because of its antislavery stand. During Reconstruction, when southern black men could vote, they supported the GOP en masse rather than start an independent party from scratch, even in the states where they were

in the majority.³⁷ In Jamaica, from the 1840s to the 1860s the minority of enfranchised Afro-Jamaicans were not organized in a formal political party, but most black and “coloured” assemblymen formed coalitions with urban whites in the Town Party (the urban political faction opposed to the planters). Nevertheless, race permeated politics. The Town Party was often labeled the “Coloured Party” because most members were of African descent, and some Afro-Jamaican assemblymen used race to mobilize black voters, especially freeholders.³⁸ In postslavery Venezuela blacks traditionally associated themselves with the Liberal (formerly the Federalist) Party. Only following the end of Juan Vicente Gómez’s dictatorship in 1935 did new political forces begin to effectively tackle racial discrimination. Most pardos, blacks, and Indians joined the Acción Democrática, a party that advocated racial and class equality.³⁹ In Colombia as well, regions with a large population of blacks and/or mulattoes and limited Catholic Church presence were the traditional strongholds of the Liberal Party, whereas regions with a mostly mestizo population and significant church influence were more likely to follow the Conservative Party.⁴⁰ As for Afro-Brazilians, they had little political say in the first republic; only a small fraction of the population could vote, and single parties in each state dominated politics.

Nevertheless, it was in Brazil that, for the second time in the hemisphere, men of African descent organized an all-black party. In São Paulo in 1931, the Frente Negra Brasileira was founded by a group of Afro-Brazilians taking advantage of the end of the planter republic and of Getulio Vargas’s broadening of the urban electorate. At first, the Frente Negra focused on protesting racial discrimination and massive European immigration, which jeopardized Afro-Brazilian chances for employment. After its membership had grown to several thousand and extended to other cities, the Frente Negra entered electoral politics. Its leaders believed, as their Cuban predecessors had, that the shared experience of racism by persons of African descent would unite them in a black party, which would then challenge the white-dominated parties. Unlike the Partido Independiente de Color, however, the Frente Negra did not achieve mass membership and nationwide organization, partly because it could not build on extensive Afro-Brazilian networks of organization and experience in mobilization, and partly because Brazil’s still-limited franchise prevented the party from recruiting a large black constituency. Thus the black vote was insignificant in the competition between mainstream parties. Unlike the Partido Independiente de Color in Cuba, the Frente Negra did not truly challenge the political system in Brazil, and so it was allowed to continue until Vargas’s ban on all political parties in 1937. During its existence it achieved a few victories for equal rights in São Paulo, such as black admission to some previously segregated

public entertainment venues and the enlistment of the first Afro-Brazilian recruits in the Civil Guard.⁴¹

No doubt the extraordinary success of the Partido Independiente de Color can be explained in part by Cuba's 1901 adoption of universal male suffrage, which gave power balance to the Afro-Cuban vote. Up to that time only Venezuelan men had been granted that right, but successive dictatorships until 1935 had made universal male suffrage rather nominal. In Colombia all adult men could vote from 1853 to 1886 and after 1934, but the Afro-Colombian vote was fragmented and neutralized by the forces of regionalism. Jamaica's restricted male franchise particularly penalized blacks until the adoption of universal suffrage in 1944. In Brazil, where women could vote after 1937, literacy requirements disqualified numerous blacks from voting until the adoption of universal suffrage in 1985. In the United States, although women could vote after 1920, southern blacks (except for men from Reconstruction to the turn of the century) were disfranchised until 1965. Therefore the chances of electoral victory for any black party outside Cuba in the early twentieth century were slim. Nevertheless, the exceptional success of the Partido Independiente de Color was not entirely due to universal male suffrage. It also resulted from the closeness of leaders to the rank and file. The independiente leaders were of modest means and moderately educated, and their demands, such as an end to racial discrimination and proportional state employment for blacks, corresponded with the expectations of their followers.⁴²

By comparison, most other black leaders of that time, in Cuba and elsewhere, endorsed white-elite judgments that stressed the cultural and educational problems of people of African origin (who allegedly needed to be uplifted to become full citizens) rather than the problems of white economic control and white racism. As a result, black leaders in general lacked the grounds on which to justify rights for their constituencies, and they could not effectively challenge the social structure.⁴³ The Frente Negra Brasileira was also considerably weakened by a leadership busier with factional disputes and arguments whether or not to support Vargas's dictatorship than with the real problems of the rank and file.⁴⁴ As for Afro-Jamaicans in the Town Party, their middle-class interests often clashed with those of the black peasantry. Indeed, confusion and class contradiction explained the "act of political suicide" by the Afro-Jamaican assemblymen who in 1859 voted for a new franchise decimating the freeholder vote, and thus Afro-Jamaican representation in the Assembly, and who in 1865 approved the Assembly's abolition and the imposition of Crown colony government.⁴⁵

Official Antiblack Violence

The unique success of Cuba's Partido Independiente de Color prompted a terrible response by the Cuban white elite: the slaughter of thousands of Afro-Cubans in 1912. Government massacre to annihilate social protest is not exceptional in the history of the Americas. However, after slave emancipation it was seldom used specifically against blacks, because they rarely organized or demonstrated en masse to demand their rights, especially in Latin America. This official mass slaughter of blacks should thus be analyzed as a window into Cuba's race relations.

Immediately perceived as a threat to the social status quo, the leadership of the Partido Independiente de Color, along with dozens of followers, was arrested and prosecuted in 1910 for allegedly conspiring to impose a black dictatorship in Cuba; simultaneously, the black party was outlawed, despite the fact that its members were acquitted.⁴⁶ When in 1912 leaders and supporters of the party organized an armed protest in the province of Oriente to force the relegalization of their party,⁴⁷ the Cuban government sent the army and zealous volunteers to exterminate them, together with hundreds of Afro-Cuban men, women, and children, who were killed simply because of their skin color. The massacre, in which between three and six thousand blacks lost their lives, had a long-lasting impact on Afro-Cubans and signified, up to the present, their last attempt to organize on a large scale independently of white-controlled parties.⁴⁸

In several respects the 1912 massacre of Afro-Cubans resembled the 1865 repression of the Morant Bay rebellion in Jamaica, in which 439 Afro-Jamaicans were killed or executed and many more were punished by British forces for violently protesting unequal justice, reduced access to land, and deteriorating working conditions on plantations. The Morant Bay rebellion led to the abolition of the Jamaican Assembly and the imposition of Crown colony government.⁴⁹

In Jamaica as in Cuba, protest was ignited by biased legislation. In Cuba, the Congress had defied the constitutional right to freedom of thought and association and had banned the Partido Independiente de Color on the grounds that, by representing only the interests of blacks, it violated the equality between Cubans guaranteed by the Cuban constitution.⁵⁰ In Jamaica land-tenure and franchise reforms had decimated Afro-Jamaican electors proportionally to whites. Before the new franchise act in 1859, "coloureds" and blacks had been so well represented in the Jamaican Assembly (they were almost on a par with their proportion in the tiny electorate) that whites and the British authorities had feared a "coloured oligarchy."⁵¹ Moreover, many among the Afro-Jamaican electorate were

Native Baptist freedmen who had become freeholders, able to maintain their economic independence by combining plantation wage labor with market production on their lands.

Both cases showed that equality and freedom were malleable concepts that the whites in power could redefine at will through legal reform in order to repress any challenges to the socioracial hierarchy. In Jamaica protesters threatened the planter order, already in crisis, by asserting their economic independence and rights to landownership and equal justice. In Cuba, where little free land was available and public employment was one of the few avenues of social mobility, the Partido Independiente de Color's real possibility of electoral success and its demand that Afro-Cubans have a proportional share in public jobs challenged the socioracial structure. The party's electoral gains would have considerably changed the makeup of the Congress, where black representation was disproportionately low, by creating new networks of patronage and increasing Afro-Cuban access to public employment, and in the long term would have affected socioracial hierarchies.

In Morant Bay as in Oriente, the government used massive violence to crush the black threat to the white-dominated social structure. In Jamaica as in Cuba, the massacre of blacks by government forces aimed not only at annihilating leaders and followers of movements that challenged the social order but at terrifying the entire population of African descent into lasting conformity. Although the repression at Morant Bay was less random than in Oriente, the travesty of justice that led to the immediate execution of the presumed leaders of the Jamaican rebellion did not differ fundamentally from the killing of some captive independent leaders when they allegedly attempted to escape.⁵² However, official repression at Morant Bay did prompt protest, followed by a thorough investigation, in England, whereas in Cuba the mass killings of Oriente went unopposed and were never investigated.

The Ideology of White Superiority and the Myth of Racial Equality

The Jamaican and Cuban cases show that apparently democratic legislation could be supplemented with official white violence. More broadly, most postslavery societies reveal a fundamental ideological contradiction between liberal democratic principles, positing the equality of all individuals, and "scientific" racism.⁵³ Everywhere, this contradiction was resolved by a series of ideological artifices.

In Cuba and elsewhere, the official ideology promoted white su-

periority and black inferiority, together with stereotypes that denigrated blacks. People of African descent were collectively portrayed as former slaves, unfit for democracy, and predisposed to crime. Each time they mobilized to defend themselves, their move was qualified as dangerous or “barbarian.” Scientific racism was backed by subsidized European immigration, aimed at “whitening” the population and further marginalizing blacks.⁵⁴ But the recipe for whitening depended on the racial system. As in the United States, the two-tier system in Cuba was reflected in an ideal founded on massive European immigration, which would eventually make the *raza de color* proportionally insignificant. By comparison, in the tri-tier racial systems of Brazil, Venezuela, and Colombia, elites hoped to whiten their countries’ populations through intermarriage with European immigrants, which was supposed to eliminate full blacks in the long term.⁵⁵

Simultaneously, ruling elites throughout the hemisphere concealed discriminatory policies behind a rhetoric of liberalism and equality. Accordingly, equality was “based on merits,” even though all individuals, for historical reasons depending on their race, were born and lived under unequal conditions. Moreover, this definition of equality masked the fact that the dominant ideology of white superiority made the fair assessment of individual merits impossible.⁵⁶

As in many other Latin American countries, such as Brazil and Venezuela, the white elite in Cuba cleverly invoked the myth of racial equality in the nation to justify the social order. In general, Latin American myths of racial equality promoted images of milder slavery (compared with slavery in the United States), mulatto (not black) upward mobility, and sexual promiscuity (between white men and mulatto or black women) that transformed blacks into the passive recipients of whites’ generosity. Ultimately, the myths placed the blame for blacks’ lower social position after the end of slavery entirely on them: if most blacks were still poor, despite legal equality, it was because they were *racially* inferior.⁵⁷ Although Cuba’s myth of racial equality roughly followed this Latin American model, its two-tier racial system manifested itself in the theme of black and white male fraternity in the wars for independence rather than in the theme of sexual promiscuity.⁵⁸

The myths of racial equality placed Latin American blacks on the horns of a dilemma. If they subscribed to the myths, they had to conform to negative views of blacks. If they opposed the myths, they were accused of antiwhite racism and antipatriotism. In fact, the myths transformed any attempt by people of African descent to assert their racial pride, along with their nationalism, into a threat to the unity of the nation. Whereas several black movements in the United States and Jamaica overtly

asserted the value of ancient Africa and praised the African contributions to their countries, only a handful of blacks in Latin America dared take such public stands. Moreover, hardly any advocated black separatism, pan-Africanism, or the return of blacks to Africa, which would have signified separating themselves from their nationalities.⁵⁹ The fact that in many regards Cuba's race relations were midway between those of Anglo-America and Latin America meant that Afro-Cubans had to confront both forms of white racism simultaneously. Furthermore, their decisive participation in Cuba's wars for independence and their tradition of mobilizing to defend their rights made them all the more threatening to the white elite, who repeatedly used the dogma of national unity against the United States and the scarecrow of Cuba's becoming another Haiti to force Afro-Cubans to comply with white superiority and to be absorbed into white-dominated organizations.⁶⁰

Conclusion

Unlike other Latin American countries at the turn of the century, Cuba had a two-tier racial system that clearly differentiated between whites, on the one hand, and people of full or partial African descent, on the other. Though not segregated, Cuban society could not have been characterized as a racial continuum. No doubt the Cuban socioracial dichotomy, which dated back to the 1840s, helped Afro-Cubans organize separately from whites to defend their rights. After the end of slavery in 1886, the war for independence and independence itself did not close the gap between the two groups; although interracial relations increased and some Afro-Cubans enjoyed limited social mobility, black overrepresentation in the anticolonial army intensified fears among the white elite that a revolution along Haitian lines would take place in Cuba. To silence blacks' demands for full equality in the republic and to prevent their mobilization, the Cuban elite used the myth that racial discrimination had disappeared with independence. However, when Afro-Cubans democratically challenged that myth by organizing a political party to defend their rights in 1908-12, the Cuban government did not hesitate to amend the constitution or to use military violence to crush their resistance. Thus, just as the two-tier racial system helped Afro-Cubans organize, so it permitted islandwide white repression of them.

A comparative discussion of race and black mobilization in Cuba and other former slave societies in the Western Hemisphere exemplifies the difficulty of classifying these societies according to valid criteria. Cuba's two-tier racial system paralleled that of the United States, and in both countries

people of African descent showed a high level of autonomous organization and mobilization. Yet the differences in the definition of *black*, *colored*, or *of color* in these dichotomous racial systems echoed in different forms of racial discrimination: socioeconomic and political in Cuba, inclusive and backed by legal segregation in many parts of the United States. Whereas autonomous black organization was tolerated in the United States (as long as it kept African Americans apart from white society and did not challenge white dominance), it was perceived as a threat to the nation in Cuba.

In fact, when considering the ideological aspect of the white-elite response to black mobilization against racial discrimination, Cubans followed other white elites in Latin America. They hoped to deter black protest by banning legal segregation and promoting national myths of racial equality. In tri-tier or multi-tier Latin American societies these myths, backed by an ideology of whitening through intermarriage, tended to prevent the mobilization of people of African descent; however, Cuba's racial dichotomy, made official in public documents and corresponding to well-established social practices, directly challenged the myth. As a result, Afro-Cubans mobilized politically to demand real equality, which prompted military repression.

In fact, early-twentieth-century Cuba compares best with Jamaica of the 1860s, despite the latter's tri-tier racial system and Anglo-Protestant dominant culture. Both the Cuban and the British colonial governments used legislation and army violence to annihilate black challenges to the socioracial order. As Hoetink hypothesized, societies with a two-tier racial system are most likely to witness autonomous black mobilization. However, when faced with real challenges from below, ruling elites in the Western Hemisphere seem to have resorted to similar means to maintain their domination, regardless of their societies' racial systems and Iberian Catholic or Anglo-Protestant roots.⁶¹

Notes

I would like to thank Michael G. Hanchard, Susan R. Parker, and four anonymous reviewers for their comments on a previous version of this article. I would also like to thank Franklin W. Knight for suggesting the comparison between Cuba and Jamaica.

- 1 Frank Tannenbaum, *Slave and Citizen: The Negro in the Americas* (New York, 1946). Cf. Carl N. Degler, *Neither Black nor White: Slavery and Race Relations in Brazil and the United States* (1971; rpt. Madison, WI, 1986); and Michael Mullin, *Africa in America: Slave Acculturation and Resistance in the American South and the British Caribbean, 1736-1831*, Blacks in the New World (Urbana, IL, 1992). For a discussion of Tannenbaum's thesis see Eugene D. Genovese, *The*

- World the Slaveholders Made: Two Essays in Interpretation*, 2d ed. (Middletown, CT, 1988), 8–16.
- 2 H. Hoetink, “‘Race’ and Color in the Caribbean,” in *Caribbean Contours*, ed. Sidney W. Mintz and Sally Price, Johns Hopkins Studies in Atlantic History and Culture (Baltimore, MD, 1985), 58–59.
 - 3 The United States will occasionally be brought into the comparison.
 - 4 Few studies on race have been published in Cuba since 1959, because the official Marxist ideology does not view race as a relevant social category with which to examine the past and the present. Pedro Serviat lumps mulattoes and blacks together as “negros” without questioning these racial concepts and continues the century-long tradition in Cuban social analyses that Afro-Cubans, not whites or racism, are Cuba’s problem (*El problema negro en Cuba y su solución definitiva* [Havana, 1986]). According to Serviat, the 1959 socialist revolution, by ending capitalism and dependency on the United States, brought about the “final solution” to the island’s “black problem” by creating a raceless and classless society. Tomás Fernández Robaina also includes mulattoes and blacks in the same category of “negros” without a discussion; inspired by both Marxism and José Martí’s writings, however, he acknowledges the relevance of race to analyses of pre-1959 Cuba (*El negro en Cuba, 1902–1958: Apuntes para la historia de la lucha contra la discriminación racial* [Havana, 1990]). For such analyses see José Antonio Saco, *Colección póstuma de papeles científicos, históricos, políticos y otros ramos sobre la isla de Cuba*, 3 vols. (Havana, 1962); José Martí and Máximo Gómez, “Manifiesto de Montecristi” (El Partido Revolucionario Cubano a Cuba, 25 March 1895), in José Martí, *Obras completas*, 28 vols. (Havana, 1963), 4: 91–101; Manuel de la Cruz, *La revolución cubana y la raza de color (Apuntes y datos)* (Key West, FL, 1895); Fernando Ortiz, *Entre cubanos: Psicología tropical* (1914 [?]; rpt. Havana, 1987); and David Grillo, *El problema del negro cubano* (Havana, 1953).
 - 5 Winthrop R. Wright, *Café con leche: Race, Class, and National Image in Venezuela* (Austin, TX, 1990), 2–5.
 - 6 Peter Wade, *Blackness and Race Mixture: The Dynamics of Racial Identity in Colombia*, Johns Hopkins Studies in Atlantic History and Culture (Baltimore, MD, 1993), 58, 64.
 - 7 Gad J. Heuman, *Between Black and White: Race, Politics, and the Free Coloreds in Jamaica, 1792–1865*, Contributions in Comparative Colonial Studies, No. 5 (Westport, CT, 1981), 28–35, 46–49, 85, 94.
 - 8 Walter Rodney, *The Groundings with My Brothers* (London, 1969); Raymond T. Smith, “Race and Class in the Post-Emancipation Caribbean,” in *Racism and Colonialism: Essays on Ideology and Social Structure*, ed. Robert Ross, Comparative Studies in Overseas History, No. 4 (The Hague, 1982), 93–119.
 - 9 Mieko Nishida, “Gender, Ethnicity, and Kinship in the Urban African Diaspora: Salvador, Brazil, 1808–1888” (Ph.D. diss., Johns Hopkins University, 1991), 35–42.
 - 10 George Reid Andrews, *Blacks and Whites in São Paulo, Brazil, 1888–1988* (Madison, WI, 1991), 249–58.
 - 11 See Robert L. Paquette, *Sugar Is Made with Blood: The Conspiracy of La Escalera and the Conflict between Empires over Slavery in Cuba* (Middletown, CT, 1988).
 - 12 The most common subcategories were negro or moreno for persons of pre-

- dominantly African phenotype; pardo, mulato, or *mestizo* for persons of mixed African and European descent; and *Lucumí* or *Congo* for the African-born. See Esteban Montejo, *Biografía de un cimarrón*, ed. Miguel Barnet, Etnología (1966; rpt. Havana, 1986).
- 13 Degler, *Neither Black nor White*, 107.
 - 14 Wright, *Café con leche*, 48, 66–67, 70; Leo Spitzer, *Lives in Between: Assimilation and Marginality in Austria, Brazil, West Africa, 1780–1945*, Studies in Comparative World History (Cambridge, 1989), 112–18; Herbert S. Klein, “Nineteenth-Century Brazil,” in *Neither Slave nor Free: The Freedman of African Descent in the Slave Societies of the New World*, ed. David W. Cohen and Jack P. Greene, Johns Hopkins Symposia in Comparative History, No. 3 (Baltimore, MD, 1972), 328–29; Heuman, *Between Black and White*, 7, 13.
 - 15 See Pedro Deschamps Chapeaux, *El negro en la economía habanera del siglo XIX* (Havana, 1971); José L. Franco, *Antonio Maceo: Apuntes para una historia de su vida*, 3d ed., 3 vols., Hombre y época (Havana, 1975); Leopoldo Horrego Estuch, *Juan Gualberto Gómez: Un gran inconforme* (Havana, 1949); and Horrego, *Martín Morúa Delgado: Vida y mensaje* (Havana, 1957).
 - 16 See Dirección Política de las FAR, ed., *Historia de Cuba* (1967; rpt. Havana, 1971), 334–513; Philip S. Foner, *Antonio Maceo: The “Bronze Titan” of Cuba’s Struggle for Independence* (New York, 1977); Aline Helg, *Our Rightful Share: The Afro-Cuban Struggle for Equality, 1886–1912* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1995), 49, 55–90; Jorge Ibarra, *Ideología mambisa*, 2d ed., Nuevos ensayistas cubanos (Havana, 1972), 54–55, 111–12, 115–20; and Rebecca J. Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba: The Transition to Free Labor, 1860–1899* (Princeton, NJ, 1985), 45–62, 287–93.
 - 17 See Carolyn E. Fick, *The Making of Haiti: The Saint Domingue Revolution from Below* (Knoxville, TN, 1990); David Patrick Geggus, *Slavery, War, and Revolution: The British Occupation of Saint Domingue, 1793–1798* (Oxford, 1982); and David Nicholls, *From Dessalines to Duvalier: Race, Colour, and National Independence in Haiti*, Cambridge Latin American Studies, No. 34 (Cambridge, 1979).
 - 18 Wright, *Café con leche*, 26–30; John V. Lombardi, *The Decline and Abolition of Negro Slavery in Venezuela, 1820–1854*, Contributions in Afro-American and African Studies, No. 7 (Westport, CT, 1971), 130.
 - 19 Salvador Camacho Roldán, *Notas de viaje (Colombia y Estados Unidos de América)* (1890; rpt. Bogotá, 1973), 115; Francis Hall, *Colombia, Its Present State . . .* (London, 1825), 14; Wade, *Blackness and Race Mixture*, 9–10, 32; Aline Helg, “Race, Class, and Gender in the Making of the Culture of Caribbean Colombia, 1800–1920” (Manuscript in progress).
 - 20 Emília Viotti da Costa, *The Brazilian Empire: Myths and Histories* (Chicago, 1985), 10–12, 22–23, 213–14; Hendrik Kraay, “Soldiers, Officers, and Society: The Army in Bahia, Brazil, 1808–1889” (Ph.D. diss., University of Texas at Austin, 1995). The Paraguayan War (1864–70), by increasing social contradictions within Brazil and the army, indirectly advanced the cause of abolition.
 - 21 Pedro Deschamps Chapeaux, *El negro en el periodismo cubano en el siglo XIX* (Havana, 1963); Deschamps, *Rafael Serra y Montalvo, obrero incansable de nuestra independencia* (Havana, 1975); Fernández, *El negro en Cuba*, 3–35; Helg, *Our Rightful Share*, 23–54; Horrego, *Juan Gualberto Gómez*; Fannie Theresa

- Rushing, "*Cabildos de nación, sociedades de la raza de color: Afro-Cuban Participation in Slave Emancipation and Cuban Independence, 1865-1895*," 2 vols. (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1992).
- 22 See, for example, Juan Gualberto Gómez, "Lo que somos," *La igualdad* (Havana), 7 April 1892, 19 December 1893, 8 May 1894, 29 May 1894.
 - 23 Deschamps, *El negro en el periodismo cubano; La igualdad; Montejo, Biografía de un cimarrón*.
 - 24 The existence of separate *sociedades* for blacks and mulattoes in a few cities, such as Santiago de Cuba, indicates that some Afro-Cubans subscribed to color distinctions (Emilio Bacardí y Moreau and Amalia Bacardí Cape, comps. and eds., *Crónicas de Santiago de Cuba*, 10 vols. [Madrid, 1972-73], 6: 327-32, 340-41). In addition, a handful of Afro-Cuban intellectuals, notably the mulatto Martín Morúa Delgado, refused to include mulattoes in the same race as blacks and favored a tri-tier racial system ("Factores sociales" [1892], in Morúa, *Obras completas*, 6 vols. [Havana, 1957], 3: 212-16).
 - 25 Nishida, "Gender, Ethnicity, and Kinship," 24, 66-69; Michael R. Trochim, "The Brazilian Black Guard: Racial Conflict in Post-Abolition Brazil," *Americas* 44 (1988): 288-89; Michael Mitchell, "Racial Consciousness and the Political Attitudes and Behavior of Blacks in São Paulo, Brazil" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1977), 102-5; Spitzer, *Lives in Between*, 145; Warren Dean, *Rio Claro: A Brazilian Plantation System, 1820-1920* (Stanford, CA, 1976), 127, 142-45.
 - 26 Spitzer, *Lives in Between*, 148-49; Trochim, "The Brazilian Black Guard," 285-300; Andrews, *Blacks and Whites*, 44.
 - 27 Mitchell, "Racial Consciousness," 125-28; Andrews, *Blacks and Whites*, 77, 140-43.
 - 28 *Zambos* are persons of mixed African and native Indian ancestry.
 - 29 Wright, *Café con leche*, 14, 35-43, 98-114.
 - 30 José Escorcia, "Conflictos políticos y luchas sociales en el Caribe colombiano, 1810-1950" (Communication presented at the Second International Seminar of Caribbean Studies, Cartagena, Colombia, 2 August 1995); Helg, "Race, Class, and Gender."
 - 31 No doubt U.S. black mobilization has no parallel in the hemisphere. But some broad comparisons between Cuba and the United States can be sketched here. In the U.S. North, where abolition was decreed in the early nineteenth century, black organizations ranged from churches to mutual aid societies and craft guilds. But the highest form of collective mobilization was the Negro conventions, which from the 1830s promoted the legal challenge to official discrimination and campaigned for universal male suffrage and abolition in the South. Though Afro-Cubans never shared U.S. blacks' attachment to churches, those in exile in the United States during the wars for independence observed and admired forms of black organization, especially the Negro conventions, which were later adapted to Cuba. In addition, some major lines of action proposed by black leaders in the United States can be found in Cuba as well. In particular, they include the progressive integrationism first personified by Frederick Douglass (i.e., separate black institutions as a transitional stage toward integration into a color-blind but white-dominated society), which dominated mainstream Afro-Cuban thought and was mostly articulated by Juan Gualberto Gómez, and the racial solidarity and protest advocated by W. E. B. DuBois and the Niagara Movement (1905-8), of which parallels can be discovered in

- many assumptions of the Partido Independiente de Color, founded by Afro-Cubans in 1908. The accommodationism of Booker T. Washington (i.e., blacks should accept their lot and struggle to gain white respect through education, industry, and moral living) found few supporters among Afro-Cubans but was commended by several elite white Cubans.
- 32 In mid-nineteenth-century Jamaica, Baptist ministers mobilized freeholders to register to vote, which considerably broadened the black electorate and the number of Afro-Jamaican assemblymen. In addition, Baptist churches had played a fundamental role in the Baptist War of 1831, which, despite bloody repression, speeded up emancipation not only in Jamaica but in the whole of the British Caribbean. Native Baptist churches were also major catalysts in the Morant Bay rebellion of 1865 (Thomas C. Holt, *The Problem of Freedom: Race, Labor, and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832-1938*, Johns Hopkins Studies in Atlantic History and Culture [Baltimore, MD, 1992], 14-16, 194, 224, 289-94).
- 33 In early 1910 the party newspaper *Previsión* claimed sixty thousand members in the Partido Independiente de Color (among them fifteen thousand veterans, twelve generals, and thirty colonels). This figure was probably inflated, as it constituted 44 percent of all Afro-Cuban adult males qualified to vote ("Al trote," *Previsión* [Havana], 15 February 1910; U.S. War Department, *Censo de la república de Cuba bajo la administración provisional de los Estados Unidos, 1907* [Washington, DC, 1908], 233). My estimate is based on the list of the party's 146 registered municipal committees, on *Previsión's* circulation of approximately nine thousand in 1909, and on the fifteen thousand shares issued by the party in 1910 to solve financial problems (*Previsión*, 25 December 1909, 5 January 1910, 30 January 1910, 28 February 1910; municipal committee membership lists in *Causa 321/1910 por conspiración para la rebelión contra Evaristo Estenoz y 79 otros, legajo* [hereafter "leg.,"] 228-1, fol. 859, Audiencia de la Habana [hereafter AH], Archivo Nacional de Cuba [hereafter ANC], Havana; leg. 229-1, fol. 2364; leg. 529-1, fol. 164).
- 34 The files of the proceedings against the Partido Independiente de Color in April and May 1910 provide valuable information on the social origins of its members. Of the 170 men from all over the island who were arrested and sent to the Havana jail as suspected *independientes*, 85 percent belonged to the working class and the peasantry. Most were tobacco workers, minor employees, unskilled workers, tailors, day laborers, bricklayers, and carpenters (Causa 321/1910, leg. 228-1 and leg. 529-1). The party leadership comprised a small contractor, a journalist, an untrained rural-guard veterinarian, a small proprietor, and an unskilled laborer, all of them veteran officers of the Liberation Army (Causa 321/1910, leg. 229-1, 3d roll, fols. 437-438, AH, ANC).
- 35 Of the 170 suspected *independientes* (see n. 34), 45 percent described themselves as moreno, 52 percent as pardo, and 3 percent as white. The figures for the blacks and mulattoes roughly corresponded to their proportions within the Afro-Cuban population. Although the suspects continued the tradition of differentiating between moreno and pardo when giving their race individually, their affiliation showed that they all identified themselves with a raza de color (Causa 321/1910, AH, ANC; U.S. War Department, *Censo de la república de Cuba, 1907*, 314-15).
- 36 On Afro-Cubans in mainstream politics see Helg, *Our Rightful Share*, 121-22, 128-29; and Thomas T. Orum, "The Politics of Color: The Racial Dimension

- of Cuban Politics during the Early Republican Years, 1900-1912" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1975), 172-82, 189-93.
- 37 Thomas C. Holt, *Black over White: Negro Political Leadership in South Carolina during Reconstruction*, Blacks in the New World (Urbana, IL, 1977), 96, 101-2; Leon F. Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (New York, 1979), 545-56.
- 38 Heuman, *Between Black and White*, 121-22; Holt, *The Problem of Freedom*, 219-21, 224.
- 39 Wright, *Café con leche*, 35-43, 98-99.
- 40 Robert H. Dix, *The Politics of Colombia* (New York, 1987), 94-97; Virginia Gutiérrez de Pineda, *Familia y cultura en Colombia: Tipologías, funciones y dinámica de la familia: Manifestaciones múltiples a través del mosaico cultural y sus estructuras sociales*, Biblioteca básica colombiana, No. 3 (Bogotá, 1975).
- 41 Andrews, *Blacks and Whites*, 147-51; Mitchell, "Racial Consciousness," 130-39, 155-66.
- 42 For the integral program of the Partido Independiente de Color see Causa 321/1910, leg. 228-1, fol. 392, AH, ANC. On the party's propaganda among the illiterate and rural population see "El general Estenoz en Oriente," *Previsión*, 30 March 1910.
- 43 On black Republican leaders in the U.S. South during Reconstruction and their inability to prevent white southerners from reorganizing behind the Democratic Party and using violence and economic coercion to terrify blacks into submission, see Holt, *Black over White*, 122-23, 175; Litwack, *Been in the Storm*, 520-54; and Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877*, New American Nation (New York, 1988).
- 44 Andrews, *Blacks and Whites*, 150, 154-55.
- 45 Holt, *The Problem of Freedom*, 256-59, 303.
- 46 Helg, *Our Rightful Share*, 161-91.
- 47 Under the Platt Amendment, opponents to the Cuban government often resorted to armed protest to push their agendas (Louis A. Pérez Jr., *Cuba under the Platt Amendment, 1902-1934*, Pitt Latin American Series [Pittsburgh, 1986], 103-4).
- 48 Official Cuban sources put the number of dead at more than two thousand; a surviving member of the Partido Independiente de Color estimated it at five thousand; foreigners living in Oriente spoke of five to six thousand (Arroyo to Ministro de Estado, 31 July 1912, leg. 1431, Sección Histórica, Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, Madrid; M. H. Lewis to Philander Knox, 29 July 1912, file 837.00/913, Records of the Department of State, RG 59, National Archives, Washington, DC; C. B. Goodrich to M. H. Lewis, 20 July 1912, file 837.00/911, *ibid.*; Guillermo Laza to *La Discusión* [Havana], 3 August 1912). On the massacre, see Dirección Política de las FAR, *Historia de Cuba*, 565; Helg, *Our Rightful Share*, 193-226; Serafín Portuondo Linares, *Los independientes de color: Historia del Partido Independiente de Color* (Havana, 1950), 251-55, 261-63.
- 49 For a thorough analysis of the Morant Bay rebellion see Holt, *The Problem of Freedom*, 263-309; and Heuman, *Between Black and White*, 189-95. Both the Morant Bay rebellion and the independiente show of force in Oriente were culminations of legal protest and began only as organized armed demonstrations. In Jamaica, however, after the militia had fired at them, the protesters turned to violence, burning buildings and killing not only whites in positions of power but

- also some Afro-Jamaicans with “a white heart” (Holt, *The Problem of Freedom*, 209). According to Cuban and foreign sources, the independentes committed no racist violence.
- 50 Cuba, *Diario de sesiones del Congreso, Senado* 15 (14 February 1910): 12.
- 51 For estimates see Heuman, *Between Black and White*, 57–59, 74–75, 117–35.
- 52 The reports by foreign consuls in Oriente in 1912 are full of descriptions of the killing of Afro-Cuban peasants, prisoners, and alleged rebels “trying to escape.” Such was the fate of Lt. Pedro Ivonnet, second in command of the Partido Independiente de Color. See G. C. Peterson to M. H. Lewis, 20 July 1912, file 837.00/912, Records of the Department of State, RG 59, National Archives, Washington, DC; William Mason to Stephen Leech, 12 June 1912, FO 277/183, no. 95, Records of the Foreign Office, Public Record Office, Kew, United Kingdom; Arroyo to Ministro de Estado, 31 July 1912, leg. 1431, Sección Histórica, Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, Madrid; Henri Bryois to J. de Clercq, 14 June 1912, Dossiers particuliers, Indemnités cubaines, 1908–1918, Boîte 27, Cuba, Nouvelle série, Archives diplomatiques, Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Paris.
- 53 Smith, “Race and Class in the Post-Emancipation Caribbean”; David Brion Davis, *Slavery and Human Progress* (New York, 1984).
- 54 Darlene Clark Hine, “Rape and the Inner Lives of Black Women in the Middle West: Preliminary Thoughts on the Culture of Dissemblance,” in *Unequal Sisters: A Multicultural Reader in U.S. Women’s History*, ed. Ellen Carol DuBois and Vicki L. Ruiz (New York, 1990), 292–97; Holt, *Black over White*, 95, 211–12; Joel Williamson, *A Rage for Order: Black/White Relations in the American South since Emancipation* (New York, 1986), 186–91; Holt, *The Problem of Freedom*, 146–47, 278–86; Wright, *Café con leche*, 44–46.
- 55 Thomas E. Skidmore, *Black into White: Race and Nationality in Brazilian Thought* (New York, 1974), 11, 17–19; Wright, *Café con leche*, 43, 54–59, 84–85; Wade, *Blackness and Race Mixture*, 20–21.
- 56 In the U.S. South the doctrine of “separate but equal” allowed whites to justify even segregation in the name of equality (Williamson, *A Rage for Order*, 175; John W. Cell, *The Highest Stage of White Supremacy: The Origins of Segregation in South Africa and the American South* [Cambridge, 1982]; George M. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817–1914* [1971; rpt. Middletown, CT, 1987]).
- 57 For a discussion of the Brazilian and Venezuelan myths of racial democracy see Viotti, *The Brazilian Empire*, 234–46; Andrews, *Blacks and Whites*, 7, 129–39; and Wright, *Café con leche*, 5–6, 58, 73–75. For a brief mention of the Colombian case see Wade, *Blackness and Race Mixture*, 146–47.
- 58 Cuba’s myth of racial equality is founded principally on José Martí’s pro-independence propaganda, which aimed at disproving the possibility of Cuba’s becoming another Haiti. See José Martí, “Nuestra América” (1891), in Martí, *Obras completas*, 6: 15–23; Martí, “El partido revolucionario a Cuba” (1893), in *ibid.*, 2: 335–49; Martí, “El plato de lentejas” (1894), in *ibid.*, 3: 26–30; and Martí, “Para las escenas” (1893?), *Anuario del Centro de estudios martianos* 1 (1978): 33–34.
- 59 On the return of blacks to Africa see Jerry Michael Turner, “Les Brésiliens: The Impact of Former Brazilian Slaves upon Dahomey” (Ph.D. diss., Boston University, 1975), 44–84; Rodolfo Sarracino, *Los que volvieron a Africa* (Havana, 1988);

and Spitzer, *Lives in Between*, 150–53. On pan-Africanism in Latin America see Judith Stein, *The World of Marcus Garvey: Race and Class in Modern Society* (Baton Rouge, LA, 1986); Rupert Lewis, *Marcus Garvey: Anti-Colonial Champion* (Trenton, NJ, 1988), 99–123; and Bernardo García Domínguez, “Garvey and Cuba,” in *Garvey: His Work and Impact*, ed. Rupert Lewis and Patrick Bryan (Mona, Jamaica: University of the West Indies, Institute of Social and Economic Research and Department of Extra-Mural Studies, 1988), 299–305. In the 1930s the Communist Party in Cuba advocated black separatism in its campaign for the “self-determination of the Black Band of Oriente” but met with little success among Afro-Cubans (Serviat, *El problema negro*, 116–18).

60 Helg, *Our Rightful Share*, 78–82, 121, 123, 163, 234.

61 Interestingly enough, studies of postindependence Jamaica have shown that Jamaican nationalist elites, like their predecessors in postcolonial Latin America, have promoted a myth of racial equality to prevent black Jamaicans from protesting their socioeconomic and political marginalization and from supporting black power (Colin A. Palmer, “Identity, Race, and Black Power in Independent Jamaica,” in *The Modern Caribbean*, ed. Franklin W. Knight and Colin A. Palmer [Chapel Hill, NC, 1989], 111–28).