

2010-01-01

Black Mobilization in Pre-Revolutionary Cuba: Regeneracion and Bicultural Nationalism

Jordan Daniel Adams

University of Miami, j3adams@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholarlyrepository.miami.edu/oa_theses

Recommended Citation

Adams, Jordan Daniel, "Black Mobilization in Pre-Revolutionary Cuba: Regeneracion and Bicultural Nationalism" (2010). *Open Access Theses*. 62.

http://scholarlyrepository.miami.edu/oa_theses/62

This Open access is brought to you for free and open access by the Electronic Theses and Dissertations at Scholarly Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Open Access Theses by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Repository. For more information, please contact repository.library@miami.edu.

UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

BLACK MOBILIZATION IN PRE-REVOLUTIONARY CUBA:
REGENERACIÓN AND BICULTURAL NATIONALISM

By

Jordan Daniel Adams

A THESIS

Submitted to the Department of Latin American Studies
of the University of Miami
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts

Coral Gables, Florida

December 2010

©2010
Jordan Daniel Adams
All Rights Reserved

UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

BLACK MOBILIZATION IN PRE-REVOLUTIONARY CUBA:
REGENERACIÓN AND BICULTURAL NATIONALISM

Jordan Daniel Adams

Approved:

Lillian Manzor, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of
Modern Languages and Literatures

Terri A. Scandura, Ph.D.
Dean of the Graduate School

Edmund Abaka, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of History

Ruth Reitan, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of
International Studies

ADAMS, JORDAN DANIEL

(M.A., Latin American Studies)

Black Mobilization in Pre-Revolutionary Cuba:
Regeneración and Bicultural Nationalism.

(December 2010)

Abstract of a thesis at the University of Miami.

Thesis supervised by Professor Lillian Manzor.

No. of pages in text (68)

Many black Cubans decided to join the Cuban criollo separatists in their fight for independence from Spain in the late nineteenth century because rebellion seemed to promise a means to end slavery and shake their bonds of second class citizenship. To a large degree this was true as Cuban independence represented a multiracial triumph that ignored race and social status. Racial fraternity quickly faded, though, as the twentieth century began and black Cubans found themselves in the same disadvantaged position as before independence. This essay discusses how racism and limitations on black organization in the early republic dashed any real hopes for social mobility and spurred many Afro-Cubans to seek alternative ways to fight for racial and socioeconomic equality. I will focus on how Afro-Cuban racial awareness and black organization grew following the disappointments of Cuban independence and how the application of the 1910 Morúa amendment restricting political organizations and the 1912 massacre of thousands of Afro-Cubans forced black activists to seek less direct means to redress problems of poverty and inequality. Following an analysis of why many black Cubans renounced assimilation and decided to organize based on race, I will discuss the small political space within which Afro-Cubans were able to operate and the various strategies they employed to avoid being labeled as racists and anti-Cuban. These strategies were

generally passive in nature, though, and employed racial uplift or *regeneración* as a means to become accepted by white society. Considering that many black elites accepted racial uplift as a means to fight for black opportunities and equality, I will evaluate if this strategy served their goals of penetrating white society at the expense of poorer Afro-Cubans. I will also focus on the rare efforts of Juan René Betancourt, one of the very few black activists that rejected *regeneración* and endorsed black nationalism as the sole means to achieve racial equality in Cuba. The paper will conclude with an analysis of the efficacy of black Cuban organizations to improve the position of blacks in Cuban society leading up to the 1959 revolution and why they were not more successful.

Dedicated to the loving memory of...

my Mema, Betty Jean Adams, who touched the lives of everyone she met and showed me
the importance of humility and love

and Opa, Daniel Meewis, who was a loving man that inspired me to travel
and challenged me to think

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
Chapter 2: Cuban Independence and Black Aspirations.....	5
- Black Discontent Following Independence.....	5
- Racism and Limitations on Black Organization.....	9
- Black Organization and Racial Awareness.....	12
Chapter 3: Black Organization and Political Space following 1912.....	23
- <i>Regeneración</i> and Bicultural Nationalism.....	26
- Non-Political Resistance.....	30
Chapter 4: A Glimpse of Hope in a New Constitution.....	43
- Black Nationalism and the Vision of Juan René Betancourt.....	46
- <i>La Doctrina Negra</i>	55
Chapter 5: Conclusions.....	59
Bibliography.....	63

Chapter 1: Introduction

Beginning with the Spanish conquest of the Americas, white dominance became infused into colonial life. This was especially true in Cuba where centuries of slavery and racial discrimination set a trajectory that stripped dark-skinned people of their rights and inhibited any form of racial equality. This longstanding power structure began to be challenged, however, during the independence wars that pitted Spanish loyalists against Cuban separatists beginning in the nineteenth century. During the initial rebellions beginning in 1809, elite *criollos* sought to attain independence from Spain while maintaining existing power structures; this aspiration was challenged, though, as the *criollo* elites realized that they would need the support of black Cubans who constituted one-third of the population in order to defeat the Spanish.¹ During this same period, Spain was increasingly worried that Cuba's free black population may side with the English, who were lobbying Spain to end the transatlantic slave trade, or the *criollo* separatists. As a result, based upon a supposed conspiracy led by the mulatto poet Gabriel de la Concepción Valdés in 1844, the Spanish arrested and killed hundreds of Cuban blacks in order to stamp out the seemingly nonexistent rebellion (Orum 1976). The campaign had the opposite affect and black Cubans began to join the *criollo* separatists because they saw the independence movement as a means to end slavery and break their bonds of second class citizenship under the Spanish crown. Especially

¹ In this paper I use the term black to refer to all Cubans of full or partial African descent. I do not distinguish between mulattos (Cubans of partial African descent) and Cubans of full African descent because this tends to be a distinction of aesthetics, and because Cubans of either full or partial African descent face many of the same prejudices and socioeconomic obstacles (Adams 2004, 168).

following the end of the Ten Year's War and the failure of the Pact of Zanjón that was supposed to outline a new affiliation between Cuba and Spain, many Cuban slaves felt that promises of freedom had been betrayed and they left Cuban plantations en masse to join freedmen, poor whites, and the elite *criollos* to fight against colonial Spain for independence and freedom (Ferrer 1991). In 1884 slavery was abolished on the island and strong Afro-Cuban leadership in the revolutionary army reinforced an image of equality in Cuba.² Furthermore, *criollo* separatists fostered the image of racial democracy in order to garner black support for the independence movement and José Martí's manifesto of a Cuba 'with all and for all' became integral to the vision of a free Cuba. The idea of racial fraternity also helped counter Spanish propaganda that maintained Cuban independence would lead to black usurpation of power on the island. As black Cubans vigorously supported the independence movement and constituted large proportions of rebel militias, Cuban independence came to be seen as a nationalist revolution that ignored race and social status in order to gain sovereignty from Spain in 1898 with an astounding multiracial leadership. Following three years of military administration under the United States, Cuba became an independent nation-state on May 20, 1902 that considered Africans, who had been enslaved, as naturalized citizens and guaranteed universal male suffrage.

Racial fraternity quickly faded, though, as the twentieth century began and black Cubans found themselves in the same disadvantaged position as before independence.

² I use the terms black and Afro-Cuban interchangeably to refer to Cubans of African descent. Many scholars use the term Afro-Cuban to refer to black culture and its integration into Cuban society, but until Cuba becomes a truly raceless nation, Afro-Cuban cannot simply refer to culture (Fuente 2000, 341).

This essay discusses how racism and limitations on black organization in the early republic dashed real hopes for social mobility and spurred many Afro-Cubans to seek alternative ways to fight for racial and socioeconomic equality. I will focus on how Afro-Cuban racial awareness and black organization manifested itself following the disappointments of Cuban independence and how the application of the 1910 Morúa amendment restricting political organization and the subsequent 1912 massacre of thousands of Afro-Cubans forced black activists to seek less direct means to redress problems of poverty and inequality. Following an analysis of why many black Cubans renounced assimilation and decided to organize based on race, I will discuss the small political space within which Afro-Cubans were able to operate and the various strategies they employed to avoid being labeled as racists and anti-Cuban. Many of these strategies were passive in nature and employed racial uplift or *regeneración* as a means to gain acceptability in white society while at the same time pushing for recognition of Afro-Cuban rights. Considering that many black elites accepted racial uplift as a means to fight for opportunity and equality, I will evaluate if this strategy, coupled with the apparent endorsement of *Cubanidad* and a raceless Cuba, served their goals of penetrating white society at the expense of poorer Afro-Cubans who could hardly benefit from such an approach. Conversely, Juan René Betancourt was one of the very few black activists who rejected racial uplift and endorsed black nationalism as the sole means to achieve racial equality in Cuba based on the premise that poorer black Cubans could never gain equal footing in a white-dominated society. As a contrast to the non-political means to fight for racial equality advocated by most Afro-Cuban elites, I will also explore Betancourt's *Doctrina Negra* and discuss how it completely diverged from

previous strategies that struggled for black socioeconomic liberation. The paper will conclude with an analysis of the efficacy of black Cuban organizations in their efforts to improve the position of blacks in Cuban society leading up to the 1959 revolution and why they were not more successful.

Chapter 2: Cuban Independence and Black Aspirations

Black discontent following independence:

Following independence in 1902, Cuban leaders needed to forge a sense of nationality that had been lacking under colonialism. Cuba was socially and racially heterogeneous and few had a sense of nation. In fact, personal group interests often exacerbated class and racial tensions and outweighed affinity towards national interests. Political independence alone was not enough to overcome societal cleavages and the new nationalist leaders began to nurture a sense of *Cubanidad* in order to unify the various elements of Cuban society and create a national identity (Schwartz 1977). The national elites also sought to allay white fears and reconcile racial diversity by erasing the issue of race through nationalism; distinctions of white, mulatto, and black were to be subsumed under the banner of *Cubanidad* that made no racial distinctions. Martí's writings were often used as justifications to silence the issue of race. For example, his essay entitled "My Race," which asserted that "the negro who proclaims his racial character... authorizes and brings forth the white racist," was cited as justification to persecute those who acknowledge racial differences (Martí 1953). In the process of forming a national identity, nationalist leaders were urging black Cubans to renounce their Afro identity and adopt a unified Cuban one. Simultaneously, many young Cubans, black and white, disapproved of the decadent and corrupt tendencies of the *criollo* elites. The nationalist leaders seized upon this dissatisfaction and portrayed *Cubanidad* as a moral foundation upon which to build the new country (Schwartz 1977).

Many rejected the idea of *Cubanidad*, however, because they believed it was impossible to discuss a unified national identity when Cuba was in no way homogenous and social inequality and racism were prevalent across the island (Pérez Sarduy 2000, 157). Afro-Cubans, especially, rejected the idea of *Cubanidad* because they saw it simply as a means to garner black support while a new entrepreneurial white elite and middle-class sought to oust the traditional *criollo* elite and gain power. The farcical idea of *Cubanidad* and deteriorating conditions during the early twentieth century forced many black Cubans to reexamine their goals and position in society following Cuban independence.

It was increasingly clear that the many promises made to black Cubans during the independence wars were hollow and that they would continue to be excluded from equal participation in society without cohesive action. The illusion of racial fraternity was further eroded under the military administration of the United States following independence from Spain in 1899 and many white Cuban elites believed, in fact, that Afro-Cubans should simply be grateful for the abolition of slavery. Allusions to *Cubanidad* and *La Patria* purposely avoided the theme of race and only vaguely defined equality. Along with white Cuban elites, the U.S. army that administered Cuba from 1899 to 1902 feared a black revolt similar to the one that led to the republic of Haiti and believed that the island could not self-rule with such a large Afro-Cuban population (Fuente 2000). As a result, the U.S. occupation forces disbanded the Cuban Liberation Army, to which many Afro-Cubans belonged and were officers, and formed the new Rural Guard and Havana Police that were predominantly composed of white personnel.

Black fighters of the Liberation Army were thus excluded from important appointments in the military establishment and never held a rank higher than captain in the Rural Guard (Dzidzienyo 1979; Schwartz 1977). Exclusion from government positions was especially detrimental at the time because Cuba was war torn from the independence wars and faced high unemployment rates. The vast majority of veterans of the Liberation Army were dismissed with a pittance (75 pesos) and returned home to find their property destroyed and families gone (Helg 1995).

Afro-Cuban women were especially disillusioned following the end of Spanish rule in Cuba. During the independence wars they were lauded as brave nationalist symbols both for fighting in the *mambí* rebel armies that opposed Spanish royalists and also for supporting revolutionaries by: working as spies, nurses, raising money, and generating propaganda. In fact, Mariana Grajales Cuello, the mulatta mother of General Antonio Maceo Cuello, came to be known as the “mother of Cuban independence” after teaching her eleven sons to fight and sending them to join the rebels to struggle for independence and the abolition of slavery (Stoner 2004). Another Afro-Cuban woman, known as *La Rosa*, became famous for setting up first-aid posts for the Cuban rebels and was described as an “independent, masterful negress, profoundly confident in her own methods who had a wide knowledge of medicinal plants that cured fevers, wounds, and illnesses” (Helg 1995, 64). Despite the widespread support women provided during the independence wars, they were not given the right to vote in the 1901 Cuban Constitution and continued to be excluded from male social clubs and politics. They were also underrepresented in public employment as a male-dominated social hierarchy persisted in

Cuba. Black Cuban women especially suffered because they were excluded from jobs other than servile domestic employment and work that was done in public such as manual labor or working in the market (Helg 1995). Even as the economy began to improve, Afro-Cubans continued to remain impoverished and discriminated against.

Sugar production was paramount in Cuba during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and independence from Spain coupled with an increase in demand for sugar during World War I meant that more profits would stay on the island, which led to increased purchasing power for all Cubans. The economic improvement was, however, disproportionately directed towards the Cuban elites who controlled the sugar industry and poorer Cubans benefited little the explosion in sugar production (Schwartz 1977). As sugar processing technology improved and large-scale sugar mills (*centrales*) gained use, the sugar elites tightened their control on the industry and its profits. During these boom times inequality grew and discontent due to lack of social mobility began to manifest among black Cubans. To exacerbate the situation, more than 150,000 Spaniards immigrated to Cuba during the six years following independence and overwhelmingly filled the labor needs of the expanding economy in place of Afro-Cubans (Schwartz 1977).

The early years under President Estrada Palma initially seemed to bode well for black Cubans in spite of the few gains made under U.S. military administration before, but the improvements were soon reversed. During Estrada Palma's first term, from 1902 to 1906, he directed a large amount of the government's budget towards education and health, both sectors that could help reduce inequality and foster social mobility. His

reelection in 1906 was marred by violent opposition and claims of election fraud, however, and he increasingly had to cater to political cronies in order to maintain power. Public funds were pilfered, corruption was rampant, and money for social services were reduced as the army increased in size (Schwartz 1977). Many poorer Cubans began to lose confidence in the government and the administration was heavily criticized especially by black veterans for the ostracism of Afro-Cubans and their lack of government appointments (Orum 1975).

Despite the abolition of slavery in 1884 and the constitutional guarantees black Cubans gained following independence from Spain, racism persisted and white Cuban elites retained political, social, and economic control over the island. Black discontent was further exacerbated by unrealistic promises continually made by Cuban politicians belonging to the mainstream political parties. As Afro-Cubans comprised a third of the voting population, they were potentially decisive voters and the promises of politicians created high expectations. Each time politicians did not follow through on their promises black Cubans felt misled and became more aware of their numerical importance. In order to harness their growing discontent and organize, though, they would have to overcome entrenched racism and social boundaries that had been present in Cuba since colonial times.

Racism and limitations on black organization:

Especially following the independence wars, racial prejudice was a taboo subject to many on the island as the new nationalist leaders sought to foster José Martí's vision of

a raceless Cuba in order to forge national unity. Cuban elites vehemently denied the existence of racial discrimination as they claimed that “to be Cuban is more than being black, more than being white, more than being mulatto” and they attacked any groups or organizations that threatened this mantra of racial equality (Martí 1953). It was true that any form of racial discrimination was technically illegal and many cited exploding race problems in the United States as reasons to avoid racial conversations, but informal codes and norms regulating race relations prevailed on the island (Casal 1979). Racism was not as violent or institutionalized in Cuba as it was in the U.S. or some other Caribbean countries, but it did exist, especially amongst the upper-classes. One had only to examine inequality in income and education along with occupational disparities between whites and blacks to see indicators of racial discrimination (Dzidzienyo 1979).

Evidence of Afro-Cuban social mobility also fueled the denial of racial inequality and discrimination following Cuban independence. Unlike in the United States where the “one-drop rule” distinctively drew a line between black and white people, the complex social hierarchy in Cuba did allow for limited Afro-Cuban social mobility and many cited this mobility as proof that racial equality existed in the country (Davis 1998).³ While some black Cubans held government positions and breeched the upper echelons of society, they were uncommon and privileged. Juan Gualberto Gómez and Martín Morúa Delgado, for instance, were powerful Afro-Cuban senators and nationalist leaders, but they spent the independence wars in exile and received western educations. They had

³ The “one-drop rule” is a term commonly used in the United States and refers to the belief that a person with any trace of African ancestry is black.

wealth and education that was far out of the reach of most black Cubans, yet they were still hailed as examples of black social mobility and thus were used to perpetuate the myth of racial equality (Helg 1995). Due to this myth, many white Cubans (and prominent black Cubans) claimed that poor Afro-Cubans were simply ignorant or lazy, but did not suffer from discrimination. They believed that racism was a class problem that could be solved through education and that black Cubans were to blame for their inferior position because they did not take advantage of the egalitarian policies of the new Cuban republic (Davis 1998). This particularly incensed black veterans because they had few opportunities to gain an education while fighting for Cuban independence and were thus in a disadvantaged position to find work following independence. They also believed that they were denied social services such as pensions and government posts that may have helped them become more upwardly mobile.

Given that racist practices were embedded in Cuban society, the emerging political elites hoped that a unified national identity could obscure the problems of racial discrimination that permeated island life. *Cubanidad*, therefore, was introduced as a means to silence the issue of race by reconciling racial diversity and white fears. It was deemed unpatriotic to look down upon your black or white Cuban brother and even the acknowledgement of race was considered dangerous. To buttress this view and inhibit racial awareness, some nationalists quoted Martí's essay "My Race" that asserted "the white man who says 'my race' is redundant; so is the negro who says 'my race'" (Martí 1953) in order to discourage any discussions of race and ethnicity.

Cubanidad was also a tool to counter U.S. hegemony and the growing influx of West Indian migrants into Cuba. Nationalists argued that Afro-Cubans were not really black because they were no longer slaves, but Cuban citizens. They insisted that Haitians and other Caribbean migrants epitomized blackness, but that Afro-Cubans were something better and more exclusive than black; they were Cuban. The nationalists urged Afro-Cubans to repudiate their black racial identity because they feared the growing West Indian population in Cuba would destabilize race relations and thus the precarious Cuban power structure. This was offensive to many Afro-Cubans, however, because they could not fathom rejecting their blackness while still enduring inequality and racial discrimination (Chomsky 1998). They also saw *Cubanidad* as a means to create barriers between Afro-Cubans and West Indians while promoting white assimilation to white cultural norms. Faced with socioeconomic inequality and discrimination, many black Cubans rejected the idea of racial fraternity and began to explore alternate means of advancement in society.

Black organization and racial awareness:

Black participation during the independence wars, such a large Afro-Cuban population, and the need for a unified national identity prevented black Cubans from being excluded from the polity despite entrenched racism. Universal male suffrage thus gave black Cubans limited access to political participation, and as they constituted one-third of the electorate, the main political parties could not afford to completely ignore them. At the same time, the sugar boom during WWI had the effect of raising wages for all Cubans, but also highlighted growing inequalities for both poor whites and poor

blacks. Discontent among the poor led both races to discuss questions of poverty and discrimination more openly (Schwartz 1977). This began to arouse the sociopolitical conscience of members of the black middle class, however small, and they began to inject their own emerging racial awareness into the polemic of *Cubanidad*. As their political efficacy was extremely limited and poverty and inequality persisted, many black Cubans turned towards mutual aid societies and veterans associations for socioeconomic support.

Black mutual aid societies, also known as *sociedades de color*, had the primary objective to fight for social justice and to achieve and maintain a decent standard of living for Afro-Cubans; furthermore, they were amongst the first organizations in Cuba to foster black awareness (Howard 1998). Following their proliferation, some became politically engaged and began to discuss issues of black equality and racial discrimination. Afro-Cuban veterans were also early proponents of black equality and racial awareness. They had no feelings of inferiority following the independence wars and were particularly exasperated by racial barriers that they faced both within the government and in civil society. They had fought for years alongside their fellow white rebels and were recognized as the most fervent activists in early twentieth century Cuba. The most powerful veterans association was the *Comité de Acción de Veteranos y Sociedades*; they demanded equal treatment and more government jobs for black veterans, yet followed a soft approach in preferring to work with sympathetic whites (Schwartz 1977). In 1902 they lobbied the government heavily for their cause, and fearing the prospect of 30,000 veterans in revolt, the government granted them extensive back pay for the war period. Later, in 1907, the *Comité* began to push for a political

organization that would force the traditional political parties to give black Cubans proportional political representation; this call would later lead to the formation of the first and only black Political Party in Cuba in 1908. Ultimately, however, the veterans' organization was seen by many as a failure. It lacked the support of prominent Afro-Cuban political leaders and could not gain assistance from many of the *sociedades de color* who preferred to remain non-confrontational and work within the confines of the existing political system; this meant that the *Comité de Acción de Veteranos y Sociedades* could not effectively mobilize urban blacks. The *Comité* was also subject to infighting over government patronage and cooptation from the traditional political parties, and most damningly, they were accused of abandoning reforms that would benefit all black Cubans in return for war payments as a type of bribe to become more muted in their fight for increased Afro-Cuban political representation (Helg 1995).

Although there are many criticisms of the veterans associations, they, along with mutual aid organizations opened the door for black awareness and cohesion immediately following Cuban independence. Black Cubans repeatedly voiced their claims that they wanted to achieve equality in Cuban society without overthrowing the existing political order, but combined with increasing racial inequalities and a new spirit of self awareness, they slowly withdrew their support of the traditional political parties and began to seek alternate means of political expression (Schwartz 1977). Many black veterans especially supported this course of action as their contempt grew for white Liberal veterans who excluded them from public jobs and repeatedly passed legislation promoting white European immigration. Activist Afro-Cubans also decried prominent black political

leaders who colluded with white politicians to deny blacks of their rights (Helg 1995). Choosing to reject white assimilation, which seemed to be impossible because of racial discrimination and inequality, many black Cubans exploited their position as one-third of the electorate and encouraged the formation of an independent political party that would be primarily concerned with racial equality and the uplift of Afro-Cubans.

Afro-Cuban political discontent peaked with the August elections of 1908 in which not a single black candidate from the two traditional political parties was elected to office. Following years of agitation and political upsets, it was clear that black Cubans could not depend on the existing party apparatus. As a result, prominent Afro-Cubans banded together to form the first black political party in Cuba, the *Partido Independiente de Color (PIC)*. They held their first rally, which drew a crowd of around two hundred people, in Havana in September 1908 under the leadership of Evaristo Éstenozy and Pedro Ivonnet and set their political aspirations on the upcoming 1910 elections (Schwartz 1977). Despite the *PIC*'s name, its supporters did not rhetorically advocate black separatism; they sought Afro-Cuban integration into society and the government. They also championed an eight hour work day, unfettered immigration for all races, distribution of land among veterans, and black representation in: the diplomatic service, the military, and the different branches of the government (Fuente 2000). Although the party was progressive with respect to a variety of social issues, it maintained a traditional view of family relations and did not support increased women's rights. In fact, women were not allowed to formally join the *PIC* and instead took on supporting roles. Their main contribution to the *Independientes* was in the form of women's committees where

Afro-Cuban women assisted in outreach, supported *PIC* functions, and helped raise money (Helg 1995). The *PIC* leaders knew that they could not win elections in Cuba, but they hoped that a unified voting bloc could more effectively help extract political gains for Afro-Cubans and improve socioeconomic inequality. Support for the party among black Cubans continued to grow, and by 1910 the *PIC* had developed into a stable organization that had an active national network and members in each of the Cuban provinces (Helg 1995). However, the party struggled because its broad mass base could not make up for its lack of social and economic leverage. As well, it was rejected by national political leaders.

Furthermore, the *PIC* was attacked on all fronts and just as its support grew, so too did its opposition. Surprisingly, much of the resistance against the *Independientes* came from fellow Afro-Cubans who feared white reprisals and an upsurge in racial discrimination. These opponents believed that a racially exclusive organization could only exacerbate white animosity and they opted, instead, to fight for upward mobility within the traditional political parties (Orum 1975). Afro-Cuban politicians largely opposed the development of the *PIC* as well, because their success in the political system depended on delivering black votes to the existing political parties. Juan Gualberto Gómez and Martín Morúa Delgado, the two most prominent black Cuban congressmen at the time, opposed the movement from the beginning and used Cuba's supposed history of racial harmony as a justification to put down the *Independientes*. Aside from black politicians, most members of the established political system feared the growth of the *PIC* also, because it would surely erode some of their power and popular base.

Racism and accusations of racism were the most virulent means to garner opposition against the *PIC*. The *Independientes* were forced to walk a fine line that aimed to highlight black oppression and racial inequality, without directly challenging Martí's interpretation of a raceless Cuba for the good of all. In order to do fight for equal opportunity they often quoted mandates of equality from Martí himself, but they could not help but be accused of anti-patriotic actions and of being anti-white. Known to many as a historically effective strategy to suppress black solidarity, some whites began to circulate rumors of a black conspiracy on the island. This stoked fears of a recurrence of the Haitian experience and immediately incited alarm and opposition against the *PIC* (Schwartz 1977). U.S. occupation forces still present in Cuba did not lend credence to a black revolt, but they did order officers and enlisted men to come to active alert as tensions flared concerning the new party. White Cubans took this as a sign that a rebellion was ever more likely and feared U.S. intervention on the island (Helg 1995). This fear was further exacerbated as the *Independiente* leader Evaristo Éstenoz began to publish editorials in the party's newspaper, *Previsión*, that made such declarations as "Any man of color who does not instantly kill the cowardly aggressor who persecutes him in public is a wretch" (*Previsión*, 30 Jan 1910). Such inflammatory statements combined with white fears already circulating around the implications of a racially-based political party prompted the government to act. The government began discussing ways to break up the *PIC*, and in February of 1910, Éstenoz was arrested for posting anti-Cuban editorials. He was pardoned within a month due to passionate protests by the *Independientes*, but tensions on the island increased and the U.S. began to amass troops in Guantanamo bay amid *reports* of roving negro bands and unruly workers (Fuente

2000). At the height of the hostility, Juan Gualberto Gómez and Martín Morúa Delgado marshaled public opinion against the *Independientes* and led the political opposition against the party. They, along with other traditional political leaders, were determined to destroy the *PIC* before it could gain any real foothold in Cuban politics or the government.

The first main setback to the *PIC* came during Ésteno's incarceration when senator Morúa proposed an amendment to declare illegal all political parties and groups based on race, class, place of birth, or profession. He claimed such a law would help erase ethnic divisions in Cuba and move the island closer to a unified national identity, *Cubanidad*. Not all senators agreed with Morúa's course of action; some believed that Afro-Cubans had the right to form a political party of their own and that such a party would not necessarily provoke a violent reaction. For example, Salvador Cisneros Betancourt, once head of the revolutionary government and a member of Morúa's Liberal party, asked Morúa to withdraw his proposed amendment claiming that "if we have proposed to the negro that he is equal to us, let's let them see that, fulfilling what we have promised, and not taking vengeance now with laws that impede negros from forming a party and voting on their own volition" (Horrego Estuch 1957).⁴ Cisneros and others' support of the *PIC* was ignored by a margin of 20 to 3, however, and the Morúa amendment passed as Article XVII of the Cuban electoral code on February 14, 1910. It

⁴ "Si nosotros le hemos ofrecido la negro que sería igual a nosotros, hagámoslo ver eso, cumpliendo lo que hemos prometido, y no vengamos ahora con leyes que impidan que el negro pueda formar partido y pueda votar a su voluntad" (Horrego Estuch 1957, 253).

established that “groups constituted of individuals of only one race or color will not be considered political parties or independent groups because they pursue racist purposes” (Horrego Estuch 1957).⁵ The *Partido Independiente de Color* was thus deemed illegal, and as a direct result, the Cuban government promptly detained the principal *PIC* leaders and charged them with illegal association and began to harass the party with fines and indiscriminant arrests. The leaders of the *PIC* had no intentions of withdrawing from politics, however, and the imprisonment of Ésteno and the Morúa amendment only buttressed support for the *Independientes* among Afro-Cubans.

The *PIC* immediately mobilized and spent the next two years growing its membership and attacking the legality of the Morúa amendment. Regrettably, by 1912 all legal options to overturn the law were exhausted and it was clear the party was going to be excluded from the upcoming elections. As a last resort, the *Independientes* decided to organize an armed protest on May 20th, 1912 in Oriente province both to commemorate the 10th anniversary of Cuban independence and to demand the reinstatement of the *PIC* (Schwartz 1977). Afro-Cuban men, women, and children all participated in the protest. The demonstration was meant to be an armed, non-violent protest against the Morúa amendment, but the fact that one-third of Afro-Cubans lived in Oriente province and were willing to resort to armed protest prompted a decisive and violent reaction from the government (Helg 1995). The *Independientes* were accused of

⁵ “no se considerarán como partidos políticos o grupos independientes... a las agrupaciones constituídas por individuos de una sola raza o color, que persigan fines racistas” (Horrego Estuch 1957, 254).

launching a race war, a false accusation willingly spread by Cuban newspapers, and the government began to amass troops in Santa Clara and Oriente. As tensions rose, some *Independiente* members began limited rioting and burning buildings beginning on May 31st. This provoked U.S. fears of property damage and resulted in the dispatch of marines to the Guantanamo Bay military base and threats of intervention. Cuban president José Miguel Gómez could not risk an invasion from the United States, and with overwhelming cross-party support, he suspended constitutional guarantees on June 5th and sent an armed force to quell the uprising of *Independiente* supporters. During the following days, the leadership of the *PIC*, along with thousands of party supporters (men, women, and children), were massacred, and based on rumors of rebellion in other parts of the country the government stepped up its efforts and indiscriminately jailed and murdered Afro-Cubans throughout the island (Fuente 2000). Racist terror and white fear also led to the formation of unsanctioned civilian militias that joined government forces in their repression and killings. Although most white Cubans did not actively participate in the massacres, few questioned or denounced the violence (Helg 1995).

On June 27th, 1912 Evaristo Éstenož was shot at point-blank range with fifty other men near Alto Songo, and later, on July 18th, Pedro Ivonnet was murdered as he tried to surrender to government forces. Constitutional guarantees were finally reinstated and the deaths of the two main leaders of the *Partido Independiente de Color*, Éstenož and Ivonnet, marked the end of the 1912 ‘revolt’ (Helg 1995). The Afro-Cuban community was devastated by the loss of its most race-conscious male leadership and any forms of black response were severely limited following the 1912 massacre (Dzidzienyo 1979).

Nonetheless, the question of Black incorporation into Cuban society was by no means solved by the Morúa amendment and racial tensions were heightened by the 1912 massacre. Also, the credibility of the Liberal Party, which had most directly sought Afro-Cuban votes before 1910, was destroyed among many black Cubans because its most prominent members, black and white, supported government actions during the killings of 1912. But most importantly, black electoral power was not destroyed by the dissolution of the *PIC* and the events leading up to 1912 awakened many black Cubans to the necessity of unity. The Morúa amendment also had the limited benefit of precluding the formation of any explicitly white political parties or organizations.

The ‘race war’ of 1912 proved to be an eruption of white racism against black Cubans. Faced with the fact that direct confrontation concerning racial issues would lead to violence, Afro-Cubans were forced to find more passive alternative means to fight for political inclusion and socioeconomic equality. The close memory of the 1912 massacre combined with the fact that black Cubans were a racial minority without wealth or power meant that they had to develop non-confrontational strategies of struggle dissimilar to other civil rights movements in the United States and Caribbean countries.⁶ Ironically,

⁶ There is some scholarship written about the connection between the Afro-Cuban struggle for equality and the African-American struggle for civil rights in the United States. Although black Cubans were well aware of the Harlem Renaissance and the writings of African-American intellectuals, racial conditions were very different in Cuba and most Afro-Cubans rejected the methods pursued by African-American activists because they feared the type of violent, institutionalized racism present in the U.S. Because of the stark differences in racial conditions between the U.S. and Cuba and since the majority of Afro-Cubans rejected the methods African-Americans adopted during the Harlem Renaissance, I do not thoroughly discuss the relationship between the two movements. I believe that Afro-Cuban mobilization was so distinct from the African American struggle for civil rights in the 1920s and 1930s that a comparison between the two is overly broad and not germane to this essay.

though, black Cubans still held political sway over the government because they continued to constitute nearly one-third of the electorate.

Chapter 3: Black Organization and Political Space following 1912

When considering race and the position of black Cubans in society, the immediate years following the massacre of 1912 were strikingly similar to the period following independence. The economy experienced another boom and bust, racial discrimination continued on the island as many white Cubans denied its existence, and Afro-Cubans were left yet again in a disappointed position where their aspirations of sociopolitical equality were stamped out. In fact, the economic growth and social mobility of the poorer classes leading up to the 1920s prompted a reaction against black Cubans who were transcending social barriers and the result was a more rigid color line. When world sugar prices began to plummet following WWI and the great depression spread across the world's economies, material conditions worsened for all Cubans and equity seemed even more remote for Afro-Cubans. Racial discrimination became pervasive as white Cubans viewed it as a means to control economic competition of educated black Cubans and a way to reinforce the invisible social barriers present on the island. For example, white racists devised informal strategies to exclude Afro-Cubans from public spaces; the most common practice was to create private clubs in seemingly public spaces such as beaches in order to exclude black Cubans through membership (Fuente 2000). There were also a series of lynchings during this period that challenged the picture of a racially harmonious Cuba. In 1919 the body of a young white child was found in Matanzas and the town instantly made racist claims that eight Afro-Cuban *brujos* kidnapped, killed, and cannibalized the girl. Caught up in a rage, mob violence erupted and white residents along with police killed the eight accused Afro-Cubans. Shortly after this incident, a

Jamaican man was arrested for allegedly giving a young white girl candy and then trying to kidnap her in the township of Regla; he was also murdered in a fury of mob violence. These lynchings played off of common stereotypes that the purity of white women needed to be protected from black men who were savages and innate rapists. As white Cuban men sought to galvanize their dominant position in society, they claimed to be protecting their wives and daughters in order to persecute black men (Helg 1995). This grim trend was continued in 1934 when a black Cuban, Félix Justo Proveyer was lynched in Trinidad, Cuba, for going into the white-section of a public park (Montejo Arrechea 2004). As incidents of racism increased and economic conditions worsened, it seemed very clear that education and professional status alone would not be sufficient for black Cubans to be accepted into white society. Consequently, they began exploring alternate ways to achieve social mobility and socioeconomic equality.

Although the PIC had been disbanded and race-based political parties declared illegal, some black Cubans still believed politics could be a viable means to improve the socioeconomic situation of Afro-Cubans. Though many of the former *Independientes* had been killed or imprisoned during the 1912 massacre, several of the remaining members decided to form their own political parties, yet were careful to avoid any rhetoric that could be construed as racially based. The first party to rise from the ashes of the PIC was the *Conjunción Patriótica*. The party members intentionally avoided a name that alluded to race and instead chose one that espoused Cuban patriotism. Their prime goal was to support the Conservative party and its candidate Mario G. Menocal in order to unseat the Liberals and President José Miguel Gómez from office. They blamed the

government for the 1912 massacre and held President Gómez personally responsible for the orders to assault the *Independientes* (Chomsky 1998). Because of the tense political atmosphere and the fear of being labeled racists themselves, the members of *Conjunción Patriótica* avoided direct mention of race and instead criticized the Liberal government for its handling of events in 1912, but not the underlying issue of disbanding the PIC for being race-based. Later, in 1914, some of the members of *Conjunción Patriótica* split from the group and formed a new political party, *Amigos del Pueblo*. They also emphasized patriotism and avoided allusions to race. They sought to fight for the rights of Afro-Cubans by framing their struggle in terms of the ‘popular class’ and attempted to do so through legislation that was meant to address economic problems of inequality. Some of the regulations they sought would have increased payments to veterans, created credit and access to government lands for small farmers, and called for schools in rural areas, but made no explicit references to race (Chomsky 1998). Both parties did argue for amnesty for black prisoners taken during 1912, but also made it clear that they supported the democratically elected government and the ban on race-based organizations. Ultimately, though, government restrictions on Afro-Cuban political organization combined with continued rumors and accusations of black conspiracies and racism would constrain the efficacy of these new political parties. They had limited appeal because their platforms revolved around support for the Conservatives and traditional reforms that had been suggested for decades. Instead, black Cubans would have to find new means to organize in non-political, yet effectual, ways and confront problems of discrimination and inequality that had been long present in Cuba.

Regeneración or bicultural nationalism:

With the realization that political venues were no longer viable to fight socioeconomic inequalities and racial prejudice, black Cubans began to discuss alternate ways to improve their position in Cuban society. It was generally agreed that they needed to push for greater economic independence without stirring white fears, but there was no general consensus of how to do so. The primary options available were to choose education adopt western cultural norms in order to gain the approval of white Cubans, or to advocate racial cohesiveness and find non-confrontational ways to push for equality within a unified black front. The first approach, which came to be known as cultural uplift or *regeneración*, depended upon the gradual decline of racism against black Cubans as they became more assimilated into mainstream white Cuban culture. The second strategy, Black or Bicultural Nationalism, rejected the theory that racial discrimination would disappear as Afro-Cubans adopted white cultural norms and instead focused on black unification and the valorization of their African-derived culture (Morrison 2000). Whereas some Afro-Cubans broke into the Cuban middle-class due to the limited social mobility during the boom years of the early twentieth century, there was increased individualism and class differentiation among black Cubans, thus making unified black mobilization more difficult (Schwartz 1998). In the years to come, many prominent black Cubans would debate the values of cultural uplift and bicultural nationalism as they devised ways to improve the position of Afro-Cubans within the small political space left by the Morúa amendment and the 1912 massacre.

Proponents of *regeneración* blamed Afro-Cuban racial discrimination on black ignorance and retention of African-derived beliefs. They believed that cultural and moral development would provide acceptance into the Cuban upper-classes and thus diminish socioeconomic inequalities. This policy of uplift sought to reconcile Afro-Cubans' aspirations for social ascent and political influence with the dominant belief in European cultural superiority (Morrison 2000). Since cultural assimilation was non-confrontational and generally welcomed by white Cuban society, *regeneración* held a strong appeal to many black Cubans, especially those who benefited from limited social mobility. This belief was particularly strong in Cuba because historically race had not been a great social determinant as it was in other countries such as the United States, but some Afro-Cubans feared that black-mobilization could galvanize racial separations in the country. Furthermore, many successful Afro-Cubans denounced racial mobilization as they sought to separate themselves from lower-class black Cubans in order to breach the upper echelons of society. Black Cuban public demonstrations especially alarmed proponents of *regeneración* because they believed the protests portrayed Afro-Cubans as ignorant and primitive while reinforcing the social divide. They instead called on blacks to de-Africanize themselves and adopt middle-class (white) principles of honor, virtue, and privacy (Fuente 2000). Educated Afro-Cubans in no way supported *blanqueamiento*, or the erasure of blacks in Cuba, because they subscribed to Martí's ideal that blacks and whites should live together as Cubans, but they did reject certain African cultural elements as primitive. And finally, many black Cubans supported cultural uplift because they did not see Afro-Cuban poverty and inequality as a racial dilemma, but as a class problem. They believed that poor black Cubans should align themselves with working-

class white Cubans to improve their situations in society, especially because any form of racial-mobilization would hinder a coalition with white Cubans.

By the 1920s the ideology of *regeneración* had been adopted by many black Cubans and increased nationalism fostered by twenty years of independence coupled with resentment against North American imperialism provided a means to address social discontent in Cuba. President Gerardo Machado was elected in 1925 with an overwhelming majority due to his platform of Cuban modernization and increased social works, but as he stayed in power after his constitutional term was over popular sentiment quickly faded. Machado cracked down on political and individual liberties and forced the closure of workers' organizations. Increased repression combined with the spread of the great depression across world economies in the early 1930s prompted an upsurge of protests and working-class political mobilization. The national conscience was awakened and average Cubans began to focus more on internal problems such as poverty and inequality. Black activists seized this momentum and began to use the rhetoric of exploitation, nationalism, and Yankee imperialism to rally working-class whites for their cause. This gave them room to fight against inequality and discrimination without referring to race (Montejo Arrechea 2004). Many black Cubans also began to promote Afro-Cuban culture as a means to counterbalance North American imperialism. An infusion of Afro-Cuban culture into *Cubanidad* enabled the country to resist Yankee cultural imperialism, but also valorized African-derived culture and prompted many black Cubans to reexamine the value of white cultural assimilation. As white Cubans began to accept this new interpretation of *Cubanidad*, they became more receptive to

black cultural expressions including Afro-Cuban music such as jazz, son, and rumba that exploded in popularity by 1940. The awakening of a national conscience as well as the increasing acceptance of African-derived culture led many black activists who were becoming increasingly disappointed with the results of *regeneración* to consider race-based mobilization for the first time since 1912.

By the 1930s successful popular revolutions in countries such as Mexico and Russia and the barbarities of World War I began to challenge the general acceptance of western European culture norms as the ideal model for a modern state and created an opportunity for the possible acceptance of African-derived cultural identity in Cuba (Morrison 2000). These world events in conjunction with growing nationalism, increased anti-imperialism, and sociopolitical mobilization on the island precipitated two related ideologies developed by some Afro-Cuban scholars – black and bicultural nationalism. Bicultural nationalism constitutes a rejection of assimilation and monoculture under the guise of *Cubanidad* and instead supports a unified Cuba that achieves equality and social justice through the recognition and valorization of both white and Afro-Cuban cultures (Morrison 2000). Black nationalism is related to bicultural nationalism in the sense that black nationalists rejected mono-cultural *Cubanidad*, however adherents of black nationalism more specifically focused on the valorization of Afro-Cuban culture and the importance of black unification in order to fight against assimilation and inequality. Nonetheless, both ideologies stress the importance of black unity, independence from white society, and social, political, and economic self-determination. As the twentieth century wore on, many proponents of *regeneración* were

increasingly disappointed in Afro-Cuban progress, renounced cultural uplift, and began to adopt principles of bicultural nationalism.

Due to the confinements of the Morúa amendment, the repercussions of the 1912 massacre, and other challenges to racial unification, neither bicultural nationalism nor *regeneración* completely constituted Afro-Cuban efforts to fight for equality in twentieth century Cuba. Yet, it was still important to develop non-political institutions to serve in the pursuit of sociopolitical rights. Black activists still had to take great pains to channel frustrations of prejudice and inequality into something constructive without inciting hatred or claims of racism and the class divide within the Afro-Cuban community continued to inhibit a unified black front. This led many Afro-Cubans to look to the most respected and long-established institutions that survived the devastation of the PIC, Afro-Cuban mutual-aid societies and journalistic traditions (Schwartz 1977). These institutions began to fill the void that had been left by the end of race-based political mobilization on the island and would eventually advocate for Afro-Cuban rights using methods proposed by both *regeneración* and bicultural nationalism.

Non-political resistance:

Mutual aid societies have a long history in Latin America as organizations based on relations such as religion or guild and typically function in a manner to exchange services and resources for the community's benefit. The history of Cuba's black mutual aid societies, or *sociedades de color*, date back to *cabildos* of the slave era. These *cabildos* were often clandestine societies that practiced African-based religions and music

outside of the scrutiny of the government and white society and also served as communal support organizations for slaves and freedmen in colonial society (Howard 1998). Due to the events of 1910 and 1912 the Afro-Cuban *cabildos* or mutual aid societies began to take on more outwardly social roles since political organizations such as the PIC could no longer fulfill those needs. Juan Gualberto Gómez, one of the three main leaders of the Cuban independence movement and a fervent supporter of black equality, furthered this belief by arguing that black and mulatto associations had a legitimate role in Cuban public life and called on black organizations to become more active in the struggle against black poverty and racial inequality. He claimed that the exclusion of Afro-Cubans from white mutual aid societies meant that black Cubans were entitled to organize their own associations to provide healthcare and education and stressed that they need not be political in nature (Bronfman 2004). Many Afro-Cuban associations heeded this call and registered with the government as mutual aid associations; registration provided legal protection and sheltered the associations to a limited degree from accusations of racism and conspiracy. As the *cabildos* transformed their objectives, they became more widely known as *sociedades de color* and began to look outward to expand their memberships. They publically affirmed apolitical and areligious agendas and sought public figures as honorary members in order to secure access to donations and political power. The newly innovated *sociedades de color* also gave black Cubans access to previously inaccessible community activities such as dances and sports teams by sponsoring gatherings and community athletic leagues. Their primary focus, however, was to facilitate discussion concerning socioeconomic obstacles facing black Cubans and to provide community support. Many criticized these *sociedades de color* because they

were primarily composed of wealthy Afro-Cubans who had little in common with the average working-class black Cuban. Poorer Afro-Cubans believed that the societies focused too much on scholarly ideological debate and did little to actually improve conditions for the poor (Fuente 2000). This type of criticism, which also came from influential Afro-Cubans such as Gualberto Gómez, was the driving force that prompted the traditional *cabildos* to adopt more socially conscious objectives, and as the twentieth century progressed, the *sociedades de color* increasingly advocated for underprivileged Afro-Cubans and concentrated on problems facing the poorer classes. Regardless of these reformist social goals directed towards impoverished black Cubans, the *sociedades de color* endorsed traditional family values and generally excluded female members. In most cases the black middle-class believed that women should maintain the home and create a stable family life and “criticized what they perceived as many Afro-Cuban women’s lack of morality and decency” (Fuente 2000, 169). This perspective upheld the idea of social uplift or *regeneración* as it emphasized dominant social norms and the perceived ignorance of the lower-classes. Similar to the *PIC*, women were encouraged to form “Ladies’ Committees” in support of the *sociedades de color*, yet full membership was restricted to men.

The *Unión Fraternal*, founded in 1890, was one of Havana’s most prominent *sociedades de color* and one of the first black associations to take a more prominent public role in the twentieth century. Following the 1912 massacre the society called for cross-class unity, but also began to discuss problems facing the Afro-Cuban community. The *Unión Fraternal* announced a new literary section for accomplished writers and

journalists to discuss ways of confronting obstacles facing black Cubans and proposed a scientific section that would organize conferences devoted to discussing such problems. They also, for the first time, instituted programs directed towards the poor that included night school for illiterate adults and a program to give food and clothing to impoverished schoolchildren. This newfound attention towards problems facing poorer Afro-Cubans opened a discussion of poverty and inequality outside of the political sphere and fostered a more collective black conscience. Most importantly, during the tense time following 1912, members of the *Unión Fraternal* consistently reiterated the fact that they had no aspirations for politics or personal gain (Bronfman 2004).

The *Unión Fraternal* may have been one of the first mutual aid societies to begin focusing on problems facing blacks in Cuban society, but *Club Atenas*, founded in 1917, would become the most well known and impressive on the island. It was a new type of *sociedad de color* composed primarily of professional Afro-Cubans who championed social change rather than pleasure and diversion for its members. The club explicitly promoted black consciousness, education, and economic self-sufficiency, yet did so in a non-belligerent manner. Its motto was to “reflect the cultural, political, and spiritual goals of blacks, and provide a forum for the appreciation and encouragement of their achievements” (Davis 1998, 43). Again, members of *Club Atenas* continually reaffirmed that they constituted no threat to white Cubans, but they did plan to work energetically in defense of *la raza negra*. As the club evolved over time, it slowly progressed from rhetoric supporting cultural, intellectual, and spiritual uplift of Afro-Cubans, and began to discuss collective black aspirations and the vindication of their rights (Schwartz 1977). It

was composed of many black Cuban professionals and politicians and thus the club had considerable efficacy. It became the greatest attempt at uniting Afro-Cubans across the island to form one association. The members of *Club Atenas* were trying to create enduring institutional structures in order to generate awareness and self worth, and assert black Cuban presence in larger society. *Atenas* constituents hoped that unity and a heightened collective conscience would help overcome inequality and racial discrimination (Schwartz 1977). As part of their mission, the club's members held protests and wrote articles against violence and discrimination perpetrated against Afro-Cubans. They decried the 1919 lynchings of blacks in Regla and Matanzas and campaigned against the newspapers that helped incite mob violence by spreading false rumors of Afro-Cuban *brujeria*. They also fought alongside workers' organizations such as the *Frente Cívico Cubano* for worker's rights and against racial discrimination in the workplace. Together with other workers' organizations, *Club Atenas* successfully lobbied for protections against racial discrimination in the 1940 constitution and further protections against discrimination in the workplace in 1950 (Montejo Arrechea 2004).

One of the indicators of the success of *Club Atenas* was its large membership that swelled in the early twentieth century as black Cubans sought a non-political, non-confrontational means to join together. The club also advertised that it did not exclude members based on race and counted among its colleagues the white Cuban anthropologist, Fernando Ortiz. The club also regularly hosted lectures and debates by famous Caribbean and African-American civil rights leaders (Montejo Arrechea 2004). In spite of the fact that *Club Atenas* was large and well known, it was continually

criticized for failing to represent the needs of working-class Afro-Cubans. Just as white Cuban associations excluded poorer constituents, so too did *Club Atenas* when individuals could not afford membership fees. As *Atenas* members increasingly tried to foster a sense of black unity in Cuba, they found it hard to reconcile the aspirations of its elite members with the needs of most working-class black Cubans and thus lost much support towards the middle of the century to the growing communist movement on the island. The club also struggled with ideology sometimes due to its relatively heterogeneous mix of Afro-Cuban professionals and politicians who held diverging views concerning the means to promote black equality. Miguel Angel de Céspedes Casado, one *Club Atenas* president, for instance, stated in 1919 that the club is responsible for the cultural growth and acculturation of the Afro-Cuban masses (Morrison 2000). This view of *regeneración* diverged from other *Atenas* members who regularly promoted ‘community capitalism’ and other forms of black economic solidarity (Davis 1998). Nonetheless, much of the success of *Club Atenas* derived from its diverse membership and robust discussions focused on race and inequality in Cuba.

Following the rise to preeminence of *Club Atenas*, many elite black Cubans came together in 1938 to form *La Federación Nacional de Sociedades Negras*, later called *La Federación Nacional de Sociedades Cubanas* to avoid any implications of racism, with the goal of unifying the various *sociedades de color* located throughout Cuba to fight for the legal equality of all Cubans. The main goals of the federation were to: end the informal social, economic, and cultural separation between black and white Cubans, end racial discrimination, fight for a stringent application of anti-discrimination laws,

establish an exchange of ideas among all organizations that fought against inequality in Cuba, and discourage concepts of Afro-Cuban inferiority (Montejo Arrechea 2004). Although the federation was not numerically strong, it had the backing of many Afro-Cuban societies along with workers' organizations that sought to lobby the 1940 constitutional committee to include legislation against racial discrimination and to protect workers' rights (Serviat 1993). The main achievement of *La Federación Nacional de Sociedades Cubanas* was a series of conventions held in 1938, 1945, 1949, 1951, and 1953 to discuss issues of racial discrimination and inequality in Cuba. The first convention helped push for the equality guarantees included in the 1940 constitution and each convention was attended by both black and white constituents from workers' organizations and *sociedades de color* throughout the island. There were also countless other *sociedades de color* in Cuba following independence and each contributed to black gains in some form leading up to the 1959 revolution, but there were also other non-political means to fight inequality and discrimination following the events of 1912 other than mutual aid societies.

Print was an excellent way to engage all Cubans on the subject of poverty, inequality, and race on the island and newspapers and journals became increasingly important in the twentieth century as forums for the Afro-Cuban struggle. The journal *Minerva* was the first print media to broach the subject of race to a large audience. It had existed since colonial times and was dedicated to Afro-Cuban women, but in 1910 it was re-launched as an all encompassing Afro-Cuban journal with the subtitle *Revista universal ilustrada, de ciencia, arte, literatura y sport, órgano de la raza de color*

(Montejo Arrechea 2004). The journal fought for the social progress of black Cubans and highlighted the importance of Afro-Cuban institutions, but focused on cultural and educational gains while avoiding political and racial subjects in order to avoid racist accusations. *Minerva* delicately engaged the issue of racial discrimination following 1912 and soon became a common archetype for other newspapers and columns interested in the Afro-Cuban perspective. Print media did have limitations, nonetheless, as many poor Cubans were illiterate. Poorer Afro-Cubans especially could not read or write and were thus shut out of the emerging racial debate that played out in print media. Black female voices were also missing from most Cuban periodicals during the first half of the twentieth century. White, middle-class, educated women constituted the majority of female writers at the time very few, with the exception of Lydia Cabrera, wrote about Afro-Cuban issues (Davies 1997).

One of the widest read and most important publications addressing race in Cuba during the post-1912 period was Gustavo Urrutia's column "Ideales de una Raza" published in the widely read *Diario de la Marina*. "Ideales" was very important because it discussed the subjects of racial discrimination and Afro-Cuban poverty in the mainstream media and exposed the ideas of black intellectuals to white Cubans, many of whom continued to deny the existence of racism on the island. Urrutia hoped the column would help move away from the commonly held idea of *Cubanidad* that espoused a unified national identity and fostered a race-blind society. "Ideales" was also important because it allayed white fears by rejecting violent reactions against discrimination, but instead, advocated an animated debate among all Cubans regardless of race or class

(Fernández Robaina 1990). Urrutia hoped that the column could help solidify a collective consciousness and an emerging sense of *la raza de color*, which had been lacking in Cuba, while simultaneously explaining the new racial mentality to white Cubans. He also encouraged greater Afro-Cuban understanding of economic and social issues and promoted respect for African-derived cultural elements (Bronfman 2004). Urrutia's goal of a collective black consciousness would have been especially difficult, though, since many Afro-Cubans were illiterate and thus did not read "Ideales." The primary audience of "Ideales de una Raza" was, therefore, white Cubans and black intellectuals and elites. The column sought to show that racial discrimination did actually exist on the island, but it did so in modest manner that would not provoke a violent reaction.

Not surprisingly, Urrutia and other contributors to "Ideales" struggled with the most effective means to overcome problems of black poverty and inequality in Cuba. Thus, there were many articles that discussed both the benefits of *regeneración* and black nationalism. While Urrutia supported the confirmation of a black racial identity and unification, he also discussed the importance of collaboration with white Cubans in the struggle for Afro-Cuban equality. On 18 April 1931 Urrutia wrote that "black and white revolutionaries know that in Cuba there are no fundamental antagonists aside from exploiters and the exploited. For that reason, exploited whites and blacks must fight together."⁷ Urrutia saw little difference between poor and exploited white workers and

⁷ "Los negros y los blancos revolucionarios saben que en Cuba no hay más antagonistas fundamentales que el de los explotados y explotadores. Por eso los blancos y los negros explotados luchan juntos" (Urrutia, Gustavo E. 18 April 1931. "Ideales de una Raza." Diario de la Marina, La Habana.)

black workers and he hoped that “Ideales” could bridge the gaps between the two groups. As the economy worsened following the onset of the great depression, however, Urrutia was discouraged by decreased Afro-Cuban social mobility and became disenchanted with black-white solidarity. The column began to lean towards bicultural nationalism and publically praised the Afro-Cuban experience. In a 1932 article, “El Nuevo Negro,” Urrutia wrote that the new negro is “one who was proud of his origin and his Cuban nationality and who placed the culpability for the continuation and continued racial discrimination squarely on the shoulders of whites, instead of blaming other Afro-Cubans for their lack of civility.”⁸ Urrutia makes two important points in the above quotation: he rejects the concept of *regeneración* by praising black African origins, and very clearly states that racial discrimination is solely a white offense committed against black Cubans. “Ideales de una Raza” cannot be described as a column supporting just cultural uplift or black nationalism; Urrutia tries to find a middle ground that supports black socioeconomic success and respect, while engaging the white community in a constructive manner.

Another important periodical advocating the advancement of black Cubans was *Adelante*, published from 1935 to 1939. This paper ran with the motto “culture and social justice, equality and fraternity” (Montejo Arrechea 2004). Similar to other black periodicals, *Adelante* advocated for the unification of Cuban blacks of all shades (black and mulatto) and the integration of *sociedades de color* in order to form a more

⁸ (Urrutia, Gustavo E.. 27 August 1932. “Ideales de una Raza: El Nuevo Negro.” Diario de la Marina, La Habana.)

formidable organization. The paper was especially important because it fought for Afro-Cuban rights, but also discussed the combined struggles of women and workers in Cuban society. One article noted that “the black masses, like the masses of poor women, suffer in a scheme of double repression, the general due to class, and the specific due to race or sex.”⁹ *Adelante* sought to expose the existence of racial discrimination and Afro-Cuban inequality, but also acknowledged similar struggles women and working-class Cubans were facing. In various articles, contributors to *Adelante* called for the admission of women to traditionally male organizations such as *sociedades de color* and argued that “subordination based on sex” and “subordination based on race” were related and both fueled discrimination in Cuba (Fuente 2000, 202). Because Afro-Cuban women had little representation in black mutual aid societies and were excluded from the Cuban feminist movement, as I will discuss later in this essay, this is one of the few instances that sexual discrimination is compared to racial or class discrimination.

Aside from the above mentioned periodicals, there were many other journals and publications such as: *Bohemia*, *Nuevos Rumbos*, *Nuevo Criollo*, *Juvenil*, *Aurora*, and *Labor Nueva*, some of which were printed by individual *sociedades de color*. They generally had small readerships but were very important in propagating ideas concerning equality and anti-discrimination among Afro-Cuban intellectuals and activists. The periodical *Nuevos Rumbos*, for instance, ran a full campaign against the characterization

⁹ “Las Masas negras, como las masas de mujeres pobres, sufren en dicho régimen una doble opresión, la general, de clase y la específica de raza o sexo” (Alarcón, Augustin. November 1936. “¿Nación Negra? ¡No! *Adelante* 10: 12).

of black Cubans as second class citizens and denounced informal segregation prevalent in many public spaces and private businesses (Fernández Robaina 1990). There were also non-black periodicals such as the academic journal *Estudios Afrocubanos* that sought to expose discrimination and prejudice in Cuba. This was the journal published by *La Sociedad de Estudios Afrocubanos* headed by Fernando Ortiz and its articles generally praised elements of Afro-Cuban culture including popular music, dress, and beliefs by showing how they contributed to the building of colonial Cuba (Fernández Robaina 1990). One must remember, however, that Ortiz's initial works generally talked of Afro-Cuban inferiority and savagery and only later began to transform into a more positive tone.

Sociedades de color and Afro-Cuban columns and periodicals thus fulfilled an important role in the fight to recognize the existence of racial discrimination and inequality in Cuba. The fear of a violent black uprising following the armed protest of the *Partido Independiente de Color* in 1912 and the political restraints due to the Morúa Amendment passed in 1910 continued to limit black mobilization on the island, but Afro-Cuban institutions explored means to discuss race in non-confrontational ways. As the *sociedades de color* and black journalists advocated ideas of *regeneración*, some white Cubans became more receptive to Afro-Cuban ideas and struggles for equality. Conversely, there are doubts whether the strategy of cultural uplift pursued by many *sociedades de color* and advocated by numerous Afro-Cuban writers actually benefited the majority of black Cubans who were generally illiterate and lived on the fringes of white society. Although few influential black Cubans had become successful

businessmen and politicians and thus overcame the color barrier to be accepted into elite society, the vast majority of Afro-Cubans was poor and excluded from the ongoing debate on racial equality. *Regeneración* was a viable means to move up in Cuban society for the few wealthy and educated elite black Cubans of the time, yet working-class blacks were poor and not even accepted into the influential Afro-Cuban *sociedades de color*. This dichotomy was what prompted Gustavo Urrutia and others to begin to move away from racial uplift and pursue more grassroots strategies such as Afro-Cuban economic organization and bicultural nationalism. This trend away from *regeneración* was rare and difficult to pursue until anti-imperialist sentiment towards the United States and the overthrow of the Gerardo Machado dictatorship in 1933 began to culminate in a more lenient and participatory political atmosphere that would potentially allow black mobilization to take root in more meaningful ways.

Chapter 4: A Glimpse of Hope in a New Constitution

In spite of the concerted efforts of *sociedades de color* and black journalists to create an effective vision for Afro-Cuban progress leading up to the 1930s, they continued to have small memberships and be bound by the repercussions of the Morúa amendment and 1912 massacre. Their largest opportunity to become mainstream and exact concrete benefits for black Cubans came in 1933 with the ousting of Gerardo Machado who illegally stayed in office after his first term (Fernández Robaina 2007). Many Cubans were energized by the overthrow of the dictatorship and turned their attention to the 1901 constitution. They saw the document as defunct, not just because of the various changes made by the Machado regime in 1928, but also because of the Platt amendment that was originally added to the constitution which allowed continual United States' interference in Cuba's domestic and foreign affairs. Soon after the military overthrow of Machado, of which Fulgencio Batista was a key participant, a series of interim governments were set up by the armed forces and talks of a constitutional convention began as preparations were made to transition to a modern political system that was free of United States' intervention. Also, the 1901 constitution only vaguely called for racial equality and provided no means to penalize racial discrimination so the constitutional convention was seen by many subordinate groups, including workers' organizations and Afro-Cubans, as an ideal opportunity to secure legal rights that were ostensibly left out in the previous constitution. And perhaps more importantly, the constitutional convention gave black activists a legal means to discuss issues of discrimination in a political setting for the first time since 1912 (Fuente 2000).

It was also during this period, from 1933 to 1940, that Afro-Cuban women for the first time became actively involved in the women's suffrage movement. Before 1933 the Cuban feminist movement generally consisted of middle-class white women who sought power for themselves and black women were generally excluded. The women's suffrage movement was also dominated by middle-class white females and class and race divisions inhibited Afro-Cuban women from joining (Stoner 1991). This was primarily due to the fact that black women had little formal education; for example, although women comprised almost 25% of the students at Havana University, almost none were Afro-Cuban (Davies 1997, 14). As a result, Cuban feminist discourse was explicitly middle-class and white. Following the overthrow of President Machado and encouraged by the prospects of a constitutional convention, the trend of exclusion changed and Afro-Cuban women began to push for recognition by Cuban feminists and within the women's suffrage movement. In an effort to gain equal rights, black Cuban women organized several committees "for the defense of women" in the 1930s in order to pressure Cuban institutions, including *sociedades de color*, to accept women and grant them full membership rights. The result of pressure from Afro-Cuban women along with Afro-Cuban men and white feminists during the interim government from 1933 to 1940 led to a progressive constitution that guaranteed many rights that were omitted in the 1901 constitution.

The combined efforts of various black activists along with other advocates for the oppressed succeeded in pushing for a progressive constitution that not only expressly outlawed racial discrimination, but also gave women equal voting rights under the law

and provided enforcement of legal guarantees. Articles 10, 20, 73, and 74 of the 1940 constitution all directly address the issue of racial discrimination. Article 20 declares that all discrimination by reason of sex, race, class, or any other factor that detracts from human dignity is affirmed illegal and punishable. Furthermore, it notes that the sanctions incurred by those who violate this precept shall be established by law.¹⁰ Article 74 goes on to state that the minister of labor shall see, as an essential part of his permanent social policy, that in the distribution of opportunities to work in industry and commerce, no discriminatory practices of any kind prevail. In the removals of personnel and in the creation of new positions, as well as in new factories, industries, or businesses that are established, it will also be obligatory to distribute job opportunities without distinction as to race or color, provided the requisite qualifications as to ability are met. And the law will establish that the practice of such discrimination will be punishable and publically actionable upon official initiative or petition of the affected party.¹¹ Furthermore, article 99 states that all Cubans of either sex over twenty years of age are members of the electorate.¹² These articles are so important and groundbreaking because they not only

¹⁰ “Se declara ilegal y punible toda la discriminación por motivo de sexo, raza, color o clase y cualquier otra lesiva a la dignidad humana. La Ley establecerá las sanciones en que incurran los infractores de este precepto” (1940 Cuban Constitution, art. 20).

¹¹ “El Ministerio de trabajo cuidara, como parte esencial, entre otras de su política social permanente de que la distribución de oportunidades de trabajo en la industria, y en el comercio, no prevalezcan prácticas discriminatorias de ninguna clase. En las remociones de personal y en la creación de nuevas plazas, así como en las nuevas fábricas, industrias o comercios que se establecieren, será obligatorio distribuir las oportunidades de trabajo sin distingo de raza o color, siempre que se satisfagan los requisitos de idoneidad. La ley establecerá que toda practica será punible y prosequible de oficio a instancia de parte afectado” (1940 Cuban Constitution, art. 74).

¹² “Son electores todos los Cubanos de uno u otro sexo, mayores de veinte años...” (1940 Cuban Constitution, art. 99).

expressly declare discrimination as illegal, but they also mandate legal action against the perpetrators – something entirely lacking from the 1901 constitution. The new constitution, however, maintained the basic precepts of the 1910 Morúa amendment that made it illegal for political groups to organize based on race, sex, or class.¹³ Regardless of the continued prohibition of black political organization, the subsequent result of the 1940 constitution was the reinvigoration of the black movement in Cuba and broadened hopes that the issues of poverty and inequality for Afro-Cubans could be overcome. Black activists along with members of workers' organizations hoped that the legal gains in the new constitution would be the first step in a renewed push against racial discrimination and towards equality.

Black nationalism and the vision of Juan René Betancourt:

By 1940 there was no doubt that non-political forms of black mobilization helped make small gains for Afro-Cubans, but increased political participation among all Cubans and the prospects of such a progressive constitution pushed some black Cubans to reconsider bicultural nationalism as a viable and more effective means to overcome racial discrimination and inequality. For these black activists, *regeneración* represented only the first iteration of Afro-Cuban mobilization on the island and they believed it was time to employ more aggressive tactics. They viewed the increasing political space and tolerance towards discussing issues of race as an opportunity to experiment with black

¹³ “Es libre la organización de partidos y asociaciones políticas. No podrán, sin embargo, formarse agrupaciones políticas de raza, sexo o clase” (1940 Cuban Constitution, art. 102).

nationalism, a more controversial means to confront discrimination that could have never been accepted in the past sociopolitical climate. The seeming failure of *sociedades de color* to overcome racism and inequality and mistrust of white Cubans also prompted many black Cubans to turn towards the race-based solution of black nationalism.

Although bicultural nationalism had historical roots in the Caribbean, primarily in relation to Garveyism and the United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), it only had mixed success in Cuba leading up to the 1940s because Afro-Cubans feared the racial violence and divisions that were much more virulent in other Caribbean nations and the United States. Marcus Garvey's appeals to overcome poverty and inequality through black nationalism and pan-Africanism were attractive to many African descendants throughout the United States and Caribbean, but the idea of multiethnic *Cubanidad* that denied race in Cuba and the resistance to discussions of race created large obstacles for Garveyism to overcome. Garvey proclaimed that he simply wanted to unite Afro-Cubans with the efforts of blacks throughout the world in order to promote black economic progress, but Cuban nationalism and a lack of a defined black conscience stymied his efforts on the island (Guirdy 2003). Nonetheless, black Cubans slowly became more receptive to Garveyism and the UNIA was legally registered in 1920 as the "Universal Improvement Association and Communities League" or UIA in Cuba; the modified name dropped the word Negro in order to conform to the 1910 Morúa Amendment. Garveyites eventually founded over 50 UIA branches in Cuba and helped spread the ideology of black nationalism throughout the island. Some branches even became so emboldened, such as the one in Camagüey, the hometown of the future advocate of bicultural

nationalism, Juan René Betancourt, that they registered under the full name of the United Negro Improvement Association and included such words as Negro and African in their mission statements (Giovannetti 2006). Garvey's ideology of black nationalism did meet much resistance, however, from *sociedades de color* such as club *Atenas*, and the UIA was eventually banned by President Machado (McLeod 2003). It was not until after the implementation of the 1940 constitution that there was another strong push for black nationalism.

The staunchest advocate of black nationalism in Cuba came to be Juan René Betancourt, a long time advocate for Afro-Cuban mobilization. He began advocating for black unification in his home province as the cultural secretary to the *Federación Provincial de Sociedades Negras de Camagüey* in 1940 and then founded his own movement, *La Cooperativa Comercial* in 1945. Betancourt began to refine his ideas concerning Afro-Cuban mobilization with this movement and it would become a precursor to his life's work, *La Doctrina Negra*. Later, in 1954, he became the director of culture for the colored society *Unión Fraternal* in the capital city, Havana, and in the same year founded his own organization, the *Organización Nacional de Rehabilitación Económica* (O.N.R.E.) that became the primary vehicle for communicating his ideology of black nationalism throughout the island (Aguirre Lavarrere). In many ways Betancourt's ideology was a culmination of both the gains made by previous black activists and a reaction against their failure to push harder against racial discrimination and inequality. His basic arguments were in line with mainstream black activists during his time, but his overall vision of black nationalism was quite radical. Like other

activists, he believed that Afro-Cubans gained little from independence regardless of the many promises made. He gives the example of the social hierarchy present in Cuba that placed white *criollos*, Spaniards, other white foreigners, and Asian immigrants ahead of black *criollos* and black foreigners as proof that independence did little to improve the position of black Cubans in society.¹⁴ He also argued that Martí's vision of *Cubanidad* pushed Afro-Cubans into an abstract group of 'Cubans' that disabled them from organizing and demanding their rights as an oppressed group (Betancourt 1959). From this ideological basis, Betancourt began to construct a movement that sought to empower black Cubans and finally free them from the drag of racial discrimination that had shadowed them since slavery. This movement was the first and only one of its kind that completely rejected assimilation into white society and instead advocated absolute socioeconomic independence among Afro-Cubans.

The basis of Betancourt's *Doctrina Negra* was the legacy of slavery in Cuba and its contribution to enduring racial discrimination on the island. As he described it, slavery in the world has no historical roots to race or ethnic group and the bondage of Africans in Cuba was simply coincidental. Betancourt argues that Europeans and indigenous peoples were too weak and few in numbers to farm tobacco and sugar cane, so the colonizers began to import African slaves because they were strong and resistant to the harsh Caribbean environment. It was from this early relation of slavery that racial

¹⁴ "No puede ni siquiera alegarse que en semejante caso el negro hubiera arribado a una ciudadanía de segundo o tercer orden, pues actualmente los residentes en nuestro país están alienados de la siguiente manera: de primera: los blancos criollos, de segunda: los españoles, de tercera: los extranjeros blancos, de cuarta: los Chinos, de quinta: los negros criollos, de sexta: los negros extranjeros" (Betancourt 1959, 36-37).

prejudice arose against dark-skinned people in Cuba. Betancourt then goes on to explain that the submissive position of African slaves combined with their non-European languages, basic clothing, foreign culture and religions, and physical differences from the dominant class constituted the beginnings of racial prejudice in Cuba. Furthermore, Catholicism condoned racial prejudice as church doctrine claimed that Africans were not human beings, or at least not children of God, but rather savages (Betancourt 1955). This led to Betancourt's first premise that blacks were discriminated against because of their relation to the dominant class, but they are biologically equal to whites and in fact of the same race. He then went on to explain that racial prejudice is benign in itself, but that racial discrimination is a harmful result of prejudice. Once somebody believes they are superior, they believe they can act as they please and impress a subservient destiny upon others. This type of racial discrimination is particularly difficult to overcome, however, because it becomes mechanic or subconscious over time as it is passed from generation to generation. Betancourt gives the example of an industrial owner who must find somebody to supervise his plant. The owner will hire somebody whom he knows and trusts, yet he likely only closely interacts with other white people so blacks are mechanically excluded from such important positions (Betancourt 1955). This is easily reproduced in social settings where Afro-Cubans are not invited to white clubs or homes and through this seemingly inadvertent exclusion their lower position in society is secured; although white Cubans may not outwardly believe in racial superiority, customarily discrimination does exist.

Juan René Betancourt then explains that the abolition of slavery and Cuban independence had little effects on racial discrimination and that continued forms of informal prejudice led to the perpetuation of racism on the island. As he describes it, slavery disappeared in 1884 and there were no longer laws against black literacy, but poor blacks continued to polish shoes or sell newspapers and their lack of economic resources precluded them from getting an education. Thus, according to Betancourt's position, the basis of prejudice against Afro-Cubans came from their economic dependence first on former slave-owners and then their descendents. It would be impossible to improve their subservient position in society based on the dishonorable jobs available to them (Betancourt 1959). The result was a class-based society where the upper-class is composed of former slave owners and their descendents who dominate in politics and the economy and the oppressed lower classes who are dark skinned and uneducated.

Considering this scathing description, however, Betancourt did not blame white Cubans entirely for the position of blacks in society. He argued that as Afro-Cubans continued to console their oppressors by accepting the status-quo and refusing to confront their subservient position in public, they too were responsible for the reinforcement of white superiority. He uses the example of a respectable black woman, whom he refers to as the good mother, compared to a white woman who yields to repugnant vices and lacks moral convictions. Betancourt argues that Cubans, both black and white, almost universally see the respectable Afro-Cuban mother as inferior to the immoral white woman. Through this story, Betancourt alludes to the allegory of the lustful *negra* that

describes black women as seductresses and oversexed and the myth of white female purity that needs to be defended from black brutes (Helg 1995). He seeks to emphasize the fact that if Afro-Cuban men continue to uphold the falsehood of white purity and the seductive *mulatta*, they perpetuate the myth of white superiority enable their oppressors to remain ignorant (Betancourt 1959).¹⁵ Essentially, Betancourt asserts that Afro-Cubans must treat other blacks with the respect and dignity they reserve for whites in order to break a centuries old complex of inferiority. Furthermore, they must demand that white Cubans do the same. Unless black Cubans were to confront negative stereotypes themselves, white Cubans could hardly be expected to do so.

Betancourt also rejected communism as a viable means to seek black equality in Cuba, even as its popularity grew in the 1940s and 50s. Firstly, he did not agree with the communists' stated goals of the triumph of the proletariat over capitalists. Betancourt believed that racial discrimination existed because Afro-Cubans constituted the proletariat, but he believed the solution was to become part of the capitalist class in order to end exploitation. He saw private property as a means to escape discrimination, not to exacerbate it. He also heavily criticized the *Partido Comunista Cubano* (PCC) for gaining black Cuban support by denouncing *sociedades de color* and making promises the PCC could never keep. Betancourt cites the fact that the PCC gave up on its many ambitious goals in the 1950s and instead concentrated on smaller goals such as reduced

¹⁵ “De modo sea que una mujer blanca, aunque tiene peores condiciones morales y sea objeto de los más repugnantes vicios, será superior a la señora madre de nuestro negro claro, pues para ello le basta ser más clara que su rival... y es este hecho precisamente al que llamamos Consuelo Opressor” (Betancourt 1959, 70-71).

working hours and a shorter work week, goals that Marxism, and Betancourt himself, denounce as diversions from the overall problems facing poor Cubans (Betancourt 1948). As Betancourt embraced black economic nationalism more and more, it became harder to reconcile his methods with the surging communist movement.

Furthermore, Betancourt viewed the cultural and legal efforts of Afro-Cubans to end racial discrimination on the island as entirely ineffective. *Sociedades de color*, as Betancourt claimed, chose a cultural method to fight against racism that sought to demonstrate through reason that the color of one's skin could have no bearing on one's intrinsic value. He explained that talks, dissertations, conferences, and articles were useless without concrete action and that racial discrimination was only becoming increasingly entrenched as Afro-Cubans were taught to wait patiently for social change (Betancourt 1948). Also, he saw the *sociedades de color* as largely ineffective because they failed to help wide swaths of the poorer black population and because they were meek and afraid to upset the dominant white class. Betancourt considered white associations as a source of amusement for white Cubans, but Afro-Cubans needed to form organizations much more complex and focused in order to confront the entrenched racial discrimination present in Cuba. He was also critical of legal strategies against discrimination because no law has the power to force whites to view Afro-Cubans as equals. Alternatively, Betancourt did not view discrimination as intentional, but instead, believed that people naturally divide into groups in order to better their lives. Moreover, racial discrimination leaves no physical marks so it is nearly impossible to adjudicate

against, and Betancourt saw any efforts to do so as further provoking white malice (Betancourt 1959).

Because of these legal and cultural failures to end racial discrimination, Betancourt rejected integration into white society, which he saw as impossible because of the entrenched stigma of superior and inferior, and instead endorsed what he called *negrismo* - the love of Negroes with preference over any other race.¹⁶ This was entirely in contradiction to the idea of *regeneración* and diverged from any forms of black mobilization that had existed in Cuba to that point. He believed that integration would only silence the issue of racial discrimination and deny its existence. *Negrismo*, conversely, endorses black organization and the construction of a unified strategy to overcome white oppression. Betancourt views *negrismo* as necessary because without an admiration for black Cubans' African roots, they would inevitably lose their dignity and direction and not be able to effectively organize as an oppressed class. Therefore, Betancourt advocated racial unity in order to achieve the socioeconomic aspirations of Afro-Cubans and expressly rejected integration into the dominant society that simply sought to maintain the superior position of whites. This was a profound step for black mobilization in pre-revolutionary Cuba because it for the first time entirely rejected integration into Cuban society: politically, economically, and socially. Instead, Juan René Betancourt proclaimed the equality of whites and blacks but recognized a broken societal system that could not mutually benefit both groups.

¹⁶ “Nosotros somos descendientes negristas, si por ello se entiende amor a los negros con preferencia a los individuos de cualquier otra raza” (Betancourt 1959, 29).

La Doctrina Negra:

The main basis for Betancourt's vision of black nationalism was that racial discrimination in Cuba was based on the dependent economic position of black Cubans and that they must achieve economic liberation in order to gain sociopolitical equality. He reiterates his argument that slavery continued to oppress black Cubans well after abolition because former slave owners retained all significant capital, land, and instruments of labor. This theory was supported by the fact that Afro-Cubans constituted one-third of the Cuban population, yet owned only approximately eleven percent of farms on the island, the majority of which were small and on less-fertile land (Schwartz 1998). Even opponents of black nationalism could not dispute similar facts and as black consciousness grew from 1930-1950, support for Afro-Cuban enterprises also began to grow (Davis 1998). A significant problem, however, was that Afro-Cuban enterprises and professionals needed black patrons, but if average black Cubans had no work, they could not support black enterprise. Betancourt proposed that the first step in economic liberation would be to boycott any businesses that discriminated against Afro-Cubans. The second step was to be more concrete and begin to solve basic economic problems such as paying for food, bills, and other necessities. Betancourt saw this very clearly; Afro-Cubans did not need to fight against discrimination, they simply needed to fight for economic stability and independence (Betancourt 1948). Liberty and equality seemed to be abstract concepts, whereas exclusion from higher positions in government and Cuban businesses along with a lack of education were real threats to black Cubans.

Betancourt thus concluded that since all Afro-Cubans felt the pain of discrimination, they should organize in a fraternal way in order to uplift their entire community. He reasoned that if the eight hundred thousand blacks present in Cuba organized into an economic cooperative, it would be impossible to discriminate against them. His doctrine was simple: accumulate capital from the black community and invest it well, spread the benefits throughout the community by involving as many people as possible, and boycott anybody who discriminates against Afro-Cubans or seeks to inhibit the good doctrine (Betancourt 1959). These simple steps became the basis of Betancourt's *Doctrina Negra* where small black-owned businesses would theoretically facilitate Afro-Cuban employment and small profits that could then be reinvested back into the community and lead to larger, more prolific, black businesses and gains. The most significant part of the plan, as Betancourt believed, was that the unity and success of *La Doctrina Negra* could eventually force whites to patronize black enterprises and recognize black equality, thus overturning a history of white Cuban domination. He uses the example of a community *bodega* to illustrate his doctrine. Perhaps one person could not accumulate fifteen thousand pesos to open up a community *bodega*, but Betancourt reasons that fifteen people could save one thousand pesos each to open up one as a cooperative. If they open the *bodega* in a community of four hundred Afro-Cuban families that must spend a peso a day to eat, the *bodega* could potentially earn four hundred pesos a day. Betancourt points out that it is impossible for a family to perpetually survive on one thousand pesos, but their investment in the community *bodega* will benefit them for life. Furthermore, as the *bodega* employs other Afro-Cubans and invests in its community, other black entrepreneurs will have the opportunity to open

other businesses in the community. As the *bodega* and other small black enterprises flourish, the psychological benefits of success would grow and the community would become more united and strong (Betancourt 1959).

And finally, once the community became economically integrated and successful, it would be able to organize politically in order to protect its newfound success. Betancourt believed that the efforts of the *Partido Independiente de Color* and other black activist groups to improve Afro-Cubans' position in society failed because black Cubans had no economic base. They continued to depend on the dominant white society for their basic needs. He reasoned that *La Doctrina Negra* would promote economic independence for black Cubans, which would lead to a basis for increased political influence, which would lead to even more economic success and equality in Cuban society. Betancourt also argued that White Cubans would be hard-pressed to attack such a strategy because it simply followed the model that whites had pursued both before and after abolition. Afro-Cubans could hardly be faulted for not patronizing discriminatory businesses, and it seemed perfectly sensible to open up black-run businesses in predominately Afro-Cuban communities. Unfortunately, after years of promoting black nationalism through weekly meetings of the *Organización Nacional de Rehabilitación Económica* and in various articles, journals, and books, Betancourt's *Doctrina Negra* never solidified into a meaningful movement. His organization was able to spread ideas of bicultural nationalism and help fund a few small Afro-Cuban businesses, but none came to be prosperous enough to help build up and spawn new Afro-Cuban enterprises in their neighborhoods. Eventually Betancourt's push for black nationalism was

permanently halted due to the triumph of the 1959 revolution. The class-based solution had seemingly won the debate and any aspirations of black enterprise as a means to end racial discrimination were stamped out. As a staunch anti-communist, Betancourt was forced to abandon his push for economic nationalism and seemingly faded away from the national scene.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

From 1912 to 1959 black Cubans employed many strategies to confront racial discrimination in an effort to reduce inequality without challenging the 1910 Morúa ban on race-based organization or provoking a violent reaction from whites. Using relatively non-confrontational means, *sociedades de color* and black journalists sought to open a debate on race that would engage all Cubans without eliciting accusations of racism. In an open forum they confronted the well entrenched belief that racism did not exist in Cuba and also fostered a black identity that had scarcely existed in the country, while at the same time painstakingly avoiding the rejection of Martí's ideal of a unified Cuba. They lauded African-derived culture as a testament to Cuba's uniqueness and emphasized that while Afro-Cubans may have different cultural beliefs and practices than white Cubans, they were still wholly part of the unified nation. Afro-Cuban journalists were also successful in denouncing overtly racist acts and members of *sociedades de color* regularly demonstrated against instances of violence perpetrated against black Cubans. Yet they also urged Afro-Cubans to be patient while white Cubans came to understand and respect black cultural differences. The legal guarantees against discrimination and laws meant to enforce these guarantees in the 1940 constitution were further testaments to the efforts made by *sociedades de color* and Afro-Cuban journalists in the early twentieth century. Black activists harkened to nationalism and the long-held tradition of equality in the eyes of the law on the island in order to secure these guarantees. Just as the Morúa amendment protected the unified ideal of *Cubanidad*, so too did laws calling for the absence of segregation and non-discriminatory hiring practices. Bicultural

nationalism, especially under the guise of Juan René Betancourt's *Doctrina Negra*, also sought to eliminate racial discrimination without provoking a violent white reaction. Betancourt urged Afro-Cubans to open up enterprises in black communities for the good of those communities and criticized white Cubans and businesses only when they discriminated against black Cubans. All of these efforts culminated varying ways for black Cubans to confront racial discrimination and inequality through non-political means in an effort to avoid being labeled as racists themselves. Unfortunately these strategies achieved only very little.

Discussions of race and black consciousness grew in Cuba throughout the twentieth century, but only among the educated class who constituted a small portion of the population. By the middle of the twentieth century the racial hierarchy was unchanged and the vast majority of Afro-Cubans remained poor and illiterate. These poorer black Cubans had very little input in the racial debates occurring in *sociedades de color*, from which they were likely excluded or could not afford to join, and it would be unimaginable for them to save one thousand pesos to begin a black cooperative. Informal segregation also persisted as blacks and whites continued to segregate in public places such as beaches or parks and maintained exclusive social clubs. Betancourt's concept of bicultural nationalism also failed to materialize as few black Cubans could muster the required initial investment to open a *bodega* or any other community businesses. Wealthier Afro-Cubans also rejected his pushes for black nationalism because they had in some instances become accepted in white society and feared the alienation of the

dominant class. These wealthier black Cubans were generally lawyers, politicians, and doctors and did not believe that they would benefit from a black economic cooperative.

Afro-Cuban women were also underrepresented in the movement to achieve black socioeconomic equality and thus their specific circumstances were generally ignored. Since there were very few Afro-Cuban female writers, and they were excluded from the Cuban feminist movement and most *sociedades de color*, their voice was not heard throughout the first half of the twentieth century. The lack of female representation was exacerbated by the fact that as middle-class black Cubans adopted *regeneración* in order to break racial boundaries, they also adopted traditional familial cultural norms that emphasized the woman's role as being in the home taking care of the family. It wasn't until the 1930s that Afro-Cuban women began to take more active roles in social movements, but even then they were marginalized by most men and some white female activists. This does not mean that black women did not perform important roles in the movement for Afro-Cuban equality, they were just relegated to indirect forms of struggle and details of their participation are incomplete.

Furthermore, one of the largest obstacles to black mobilization in pre-revolutionary Cuba was the lack of a black consciousness. Throughout the United States and in many parts of the Caribbean black movements gained momentum during the twentieth century, but one never materialized in Cuba. This is primarily due to the fact that Afro-Cubans did not see themselves as black, they simply saw themselves as Cuban. Martí's vision of a raceless Cuba unified under the ideals of *Cubanidad* had been achieved to a large degree. Discrimination was by no means institutionalized, in fact

laws encouraging segregation would have been seen as extremely unpatriotic, and the unofficial discrimination that did exist was relatively non-violent. What segregation and discrimination did persist, many attributed to cultural norms and did not connect to the impoverished and unequal status of black Cubans. Afro-Cubans also shunned race consciousness to a large degree because although they were well aware of the efforts of African Americans, they feared the type of divisions and racial violence common in the United States. Nonetheless, any advances towards increased black consciousness and mobilization were completely halted by the 1959 revolution. Once again, issues of race were marginalized as Fidel Castro continued with Martí's vision and championed an inclusive revolution. Many black Cubans who had been fighting against discrimination and inequality saw the revolution as a great opportunity to advance the position of Afro-Cubans in society and were energized about the beginning of a new era. Considering this abrupt change in the political arena, it is hard to gauge if non-political resistance to racial discrimination would have become more successful in the absence of the 1959 revolution, and even harder to postulate if any black cooperatives would have successfully given economic freedom to Afro-Cuban communities, but it is clear that all of these efforts were halted once Fidel Castro took power in 1959.

Bibliography

- Adams, Henley C. 2004. "Fighting an Uphill Battle: Race, Politics, Power, and Institutionalization in Cuba." *Latin American Research Review* 39, (1): 168-182.
- Aguirre Lavarrere, Manuel. "¿Quié Fue Juan René Betancourt?" *Blog Makandal*. <http://debates-makandal.blogspot.com/2008/12/qui-fue-juan-ren-betancourt.html> (February 4, 2010).
- Bernal, Emilia. 1937. *La Raza Negra en Cuba*. Santiago, Chile: Prensas de la Universidad de Chile.
- Betancourt, Juan René. 1964. *Integral Sociology; the Scientific Improvement of the Racial Prejudice*.
- Betancourt, Juan René. 1959. *El Negro: Ciudadano del Futuro*. Habana: Cardenas.
- Betancourt, Juan René. 1955. *Doctrina Negra; La Única Teoría Certera Contra la Discriminación Racial Cn cuba*. La Habana: P. Fernández.
- Betancourt, Juan René. 1948. *Mi Opinión y Mi Raza*. Habana: S.N.
- Betancourt, Juan René. 1945. *Prejuicio: Ensayo-Polémico*. Camagüey: S.N.
- Brock, Lisa, and Digna Castañeda Fuertes. 1998. *Between Race and Empire: African-Americans and Cubans Before the Cuban revolution*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Bronfman, Alejandra. 2004. *Measures of Equality: Social Science, Citizenship, and Race in Cuba, 1902-1940*. Envisioning Cuba. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Bronfman, Alejandra Marina. 2000. *Reforming Race in Cuba, 1902-1940*. Thesis (Ph.D.) Princeton University.
- Bustamante, José A. 1959. *Raíces Psicológicas del Cubano*. Habana: Impresora Modelo.
- Carbonell, Walterio. 2005. *Cómo Surgió la Cultura Nacional*. Colección escribanía. 2 corregida ed. La Habana: Ediciones Bachiller, Biblioteca Nacional José Martí.
- Carr, Barry. 1998. "Identity, Class, and Nation: Black Immigrant Workers, Cuban Communism, and the Sugar Insurgency, 1925-1934." *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 78, (1): 83-116.

- Carr, Barry. 1996. "Mill Occupations and Soviets: The Mobilization of Sugar Workers in Cuba 1917-1933." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 28, (1) (Feb.): 129-58.
- Casal, Lourdes. 1979. *Revolution and Race: Blacks in Contemporary Cuba*. Washington D.C: Wilson Center, Latin American Program.
- Castillo Bueno, Maria de los Reyes. 2000. *Reyita: The Life of a Black Cuban Woman in the Twentieth Century*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press
- Childs, Matt D. 2004. "Expanding Perspectives on Race, Nation, and Culture in Cuban History (review article)". *Latin American Research Review* 39, (1): 285-301.
- Chomsky, Aviva. 1998. "The Aftermath of Repression: Race and Nation in Cuba After 1912." *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies* 4, (2): 1-40.
- Davies, Catherine. 1997. *A Place in the Sun? - Women Writers in Twentieth-Century Cuba*. London; Atlantic Highlands N.J.: Zed Books.
- Davis, Darien J. 1998. "Nationalism and Civil Rights in Cuba: A Comparative Perspective, 1930-1960." *The Journal of Negro History* 83, (1) (Winter): 35-51.
- Labra, Rafael M. de, Gabriel Millet, Manuel Ruiz de Quevedo, and Agustín Sardá. 1894. *La Raza de Color de Cuba*. Madrid: Estab. Tip. de Fortanet.
- Dzidzienyo, Anani, and Lourdes Casal. 1979. *The Position of Blacks in Brazilian and Cuban society*. [London]: Minority Rights Group.
- Fanon, Frantz. 1967. *Black Skin, White Masks*. New York: Grove Press.
- Fermoselle-López, Rafael. 1974. *Política y Color en Cuba: la Guerrita de 1912*. Montevideo: Ediciones Géminis.
- Fernández Robaina, Tomás. 2008. "Hacia el Centenario de la Fundación del Partido Independiente de Color: Aproximación Crítica a Tres Nuevas Contribuciones." *Caribbean Studies* 36, (1): 131-40.
- Fernández Robaina, Tomás. 2007. *Cuba, Personalidades en el Debate Racial: Conferencias y Ensayos*. Etnología. Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales.
- Fernández Robaina, Tomás. 1998. "Marcus Garvey in Cuba: Urrutia, Cubans, and Black Nationalism." Chap. 6 in *Between Race and Empire: African-Americans and Cubans Before the Cuban revolution*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Fernández Robaina, Tomás. 1994. *Cultura afrocubana*. Cuadernos de bibliografía cubana. Vol. 1. Havana, Cuba: Biblioteca Nacional José Martí.

- Fernández Robaina, Tomás. 1990. *El Negro en Cuba, 1902-1958: Apuntes para la Historia de la Lucha Contra la Discriminación Racial*. Sociología. La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales.
- Ferrer, Ada. 1999. *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution, 1868-1898*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Ferrer, Ada. 1991. "Social Aspects of Cuban Nationalism: Race, Slavery, and the Guerra Chiquita, 1897-1880." *Cuban Studies* 21: 37-56.
- Fuente, Alejandro de la. 2000. *Una Nación para Todos: Raza, Desigualdad y Política en Cuba, 1900-2000*. Madrid, España: Editorial Colibrí.
- Fuente, Alejandro de la. 2000a. "Race, Ideology, and Culture in Cuba: Recent Scholarship." *LARR* 35, (3): 199-210.
- Fuente, Alejandro de la. 1998. "Race, National Discourse, and Politics in Cuba: An Overview." *Latin American Perspectives* 25, (3) (May): 43-69.
- Giovannetti, Jorge L. 2006. "The Elusive Organization of 'Identity': Race, Religion, and Empire Among Caribbean Migrants in Cuba." *Small Axe* (19) (Feb): 1-27.
- Giovannetti, Jorge L., and Reinaldo L. Román. 2003. "Garveyism and The United Negro Improvement Association in the Hispanic Caribbean." *Caribbean Studies* 31, (1).
- González, Ricardo E. 1994. "Por Qué No Hay Balseiros Negros?" *El Nuevo Herald*, September 12.
- Graham, Richard, Thomas E. Skidmore, Aline Helg, and Alan Knight. 1990. *The Idea of Race in Latin America, 1870-1940*. Critical reflections on Latin America series. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Grillo Sáez, David. 1953. *El Problema del Negro Cubano*. 2nd ed. Habana: S.N.
- Guridy, Frank A. 2003. "'Enemies of the White Race': the Machadista State and the UNIA in Cuba." *Caribbean Studies* 31, (1) (Jan-Jun)
- Guridy, Frank Andre. 2002. *Racial Knowledge in Cuba: The Production of a Social Fact, 1912-1944*. Dissertation (Ph.D.) University of Michigan.
- Guillén, Nicolás. 1984. *Martín Morúa Delgado: Quién Fue?*. Ciudad de La Habana: Unión de Escritores y Artistas de Cuba.

- Handley, George B. 2000. *Post-Slavery Literatures in the Americas: Family Portraits in Black and White*. New world studies. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia.
- Helg, Aline. 1995. *Our Rightful Share: The Afro-Cuban Struggle for Equality, 1886-1912*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Holcomb, Gary E. 2001. "New Negroes, Black Communists, and the new Pluralism." *American Quarterly* 53, (2): 367-76.
- Horrego Estuch, Leopoldo. 1957. *Martín Morúa Delgado: Vida y Mensaje*. Habana: Editorial Sánchez, S.A.
- Howard, Philip A. 1998. *Changing History: Afro-Cuban Cabildos and Societies of Color in the Nineteenth Century*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press.
- Lewis, Rupert. 1988. *Marcus Garvey: Anti-Colonial Champion*. Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press.
- McLeod, Marc C.. 2003. "'Sin Dejar de Ser Cubanos:'" Cuban Blacks and the Challenges of Garveyism in Cuba. *Caribbean Studies* 31, (1) (Jan-June): 75-105.
- Martí, José. 1953. *The America of José Martí: Selected Writings of José Martí*. New York: Noonday Press.
- Martínez-Echazábal, Lourdes. 1990. *Para una Semiótica de la Mulatez*. Ensayos. Madrid: J. Porrúa Turanzas.
- Montejo Arrechea, Carmen Victoria. 2004. *Sociedades Negras en Cuba, 1878-1960*. Historia. La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales.
- Moore, Carlos. 1995. "Afro-Cubans and the Communist Revolution." In *African Presence in the Americas / General Editor, Carlos Moore; Editors, Tanya R. Saunders, Shawna Moore*. 199-239.
- Moore, Robin. 1997. *Nationalizing Blackness: Afrocubanismo and Artistic Revolution in Havana, 1920-1940*. Pitt Latin American series. Pittsburgh, Pa: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Morrison, Karen Y. 2000. "Civilization and Citizenship Through the Eyes of Afro-Cuban Intellectuals During the First Constitutional Era, 1902-1940." *Cuban Studies/Estudios Cubanos* (30): 76-99.
- Ortiz, Fernando. 1975. *El Engaño de las Razas*. La Habana: Ciencias sociales.

- Ortiz, Fernando. 1945-46. "Contra las discriminaciones racistas." *Estudios Afrocubanos* (5): 233-238.
- Ortiz, Fernando. 1945-46a. "Por la Integración Cubana de Blancos y Negros." *Estudios Afrocubanos* (5): 216-219.
- Ortiz, Fernando. 1939. "La Cubanidad y los Negros." *Estudios Afrocubanos*: 3-15.
- Orum, Thomas Tondee. 1975. *The Politics of Color: The Racial Dimension of Cuban Politics During the Early Republican Years, 1900-1912*. Thesis (Ph. D.) New York University.
- Pérez Landa, Rufino, and María Rosell Pérez. 1957. *Vida Pública de Martín Morúa Delgado*. Cuba: s.n.
- Pérez, Louis A. 2006. *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution*. Latin American Histories. 3rd ed. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Pérez Sarduy, Pedro, and Jean Stubbs. 2000. *Afro-Cuban Voices: On Race and Identity in Contemporary Cuba*. Contemporary Cuba. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.
- Pérez Sarduy, Pedro, and Jean Stubbs eds. 1993. *Afro-Cuba: An Anthology of Cuban Writing on Race, Politics, and Culture*. 1st ed. Melbourne, Victoria, Australia: Ocean Press.
- Pino, Julio César. 2002. "Fernando Ortiz y Gilberto Freyre: Racismo, Democracia Racial y Revolución." *Estudios (Venezuela)* 10, (19) (Jan-July): 73-89.
- Portuondo, Aleyda Tamayo. 1978. *Vigencia Política y Literaria de Martín Morúa Delgado: Un Ensayo Sobre el Gran Negro Cubano*. Colección cuba y sus jueces. Miami, FL: Ediciones Universal.
- Rees, Tim, and Andrew Thorpe. 1998. *International Communism and the Communist International, 1919-43*. New York, NY: Manchester University Press.
- Rodríguez, Pedro Pablo. 1988. "Marcus Garvey in Cuba." *Anales Del Caribe Del Centro De Estudios Del Caribe*. 7, (1): 279-301.
- Schwartz, Rosalie 1998. "Cuba's Roaring Twenties: Race Consciousness and the Column 'Ideales de una Raza.'" Chap. 5 in *Between Race and Empire: African-Americans and Cubans Before the Cuban Revolution*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Schwartz, Rosalie. 1977. "The Displaced and Disappointed: Cultural Nationalists and Black Activists in Cuba in the 1920s." Thesis (Ph.D.) University of California, San Diego.

- Serviat, Pedro. 1993. "Solutions to the Black Problem." in *Afro-Cuba: An Anthology of Cuban Writing on Race, Politics, and Culture*. 1st ed. Melbourne, Victoria, Australia: Ocean Press.
- Solomon, Mark I. 1988. *Red and Black: Communism and Afro-Americans, 1929-1935*. Harvard dissertations in american history and political science. New York: Garland Pub.
- Stoner, K. Lynn. 2004. "Militant Heroines and the Consecration of the Patriarchal State: The Glorification of Loyalty, Combat, and National Suicide in the Making of Cuban National Identity." *Cuban Studies* 34: 71-96.
- Stoner, K. Lynn. 1991. *From the House to the Streets: The Cuban Woman's Movement for Legal Reform, 1898-1940*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. 1986. *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. London: J. Currey.
- Thomas, Hugh. 1971. *Cuba: The Pursuit of Freedom*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Toplin, Robert Brent. 1974. *Slavery and Race Relations in Latin America*. Contributions in Afro-American and African Studies, no. 17. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press.
- Trelles, Carlos. 1927. "Bibliografía de Autores de la Raza de color." *Cuba Contemporanea: Revista Mensual* 43: 30-78.
- Urrutia, Gustavo E. 1937. "Puntos de Vista del Nuevo Negro." Havana: Imprenta El Score.
- Welch, Kimberly. 2002-2003. Negotiating the Cuban Identity: Migration, Race, and the Politics of Whiteness in Republican Cuba, 1910 to 1930. *PCCLAS Proceedings* 20-21: 84-118.
- West, Alan. 2003. *African Caribbeans: A Reference Guide*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press.