

# Race and Nation in the United States, Mexico, and Cuba, 1880–1940

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**T**his essay examines the ways in which racial identities and ideologies shaped the construction of nationhood in the United States, Mexico, and Cuba in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These years were formative ones for each of these three societies, with Mexico undergoing modernization and revolution, Cuba achieving slave emancipation and national independence, and the United States struggling with postbellum reunification, industrialization, and empire. In the United States nationhood depended equally on the contradictory but coexisting ideologies of civic and racial nationalism. Mexico and Cuba are often thought to have incubated alternative conceptions of nationhood, especially in regard to race, yet systematic comparisons of the nationalist projects in Mexico and Cuba with that in the United States are hard to find. I provide such a comparison in this essay, being careful to treat these three countries not simply as discrete entities but as neighbors unequally endowed with power and enmeshed in each other's affairs. Thus I explore both the similarities in nationalist discourses circulating through the three societies and the particular conceptions of race and nation that, owing to divergent historical experiences and asymmetric power relations, emerged in each.

In the United States the concept of civic nationalism signified a desire to construct a polity and a people on an egalitarian and democratic foundation. Civic nationalists argued that the United States should open itself and be prepared to grant equal rights to all individuals, irrespective of race, religion, gender, ethnicity, or political creed, who were willing to declare their loyalty to America and obey its laws. Racial nationalism in the United States, by contrast, expressed a sense of peoplehood grounded in common blood and skin color and an inherited fitness for self-government. At the turn of the twentieth century racial nationalism in the United States was as potent a force as civic nationalism and shaped the country's nationhood in profound ways. Mexican and Cuban

nationalists understood well the vigorous racial basis of U.S. nationhood in part because of their proximity to the United States and their intimate knowledge of its internal affairs and in part because they experienced firsthand how the United States used racial nationalism as a justification for extending its imperial reach into their own countries: the "racially inferior" peoples of Latin America, Theodore Roosevelt and other U.S. imperialists often insisted, were simply not "fit" to govern themselves.

In order to refute this imperial argument and legitimate the central role played by nonwhites in their nations' struggles for independence and justice, Mexican and Cuban nationalists each developed an ideology that repudiated North American conceptions of race as a marker of their nationhood: *mestizaje* in Mexico, "racelessness" in Cuba. These ideologies were notable accomplishments given the pressure, both political and cultural, that the United States was able to exert on both countries. I explore the origins and evolution of these two nationalist ideologies in this essay. I also note, however, the difficulties that both Mexican and Cuban nationalists experienced in freeing themselves from their own racial nationalist impulses. These difficulties suggest how tough it was, even for the most progressive and anti-imperialist nationalists in the Western Hemisphere, to transcend ethnically and racially based notions of national belonging.

## The United States, 1880–1940: The Resurgence of Racial Nationalism

Civic and racial nationalism mutually constituted the ideological foundation of the U.S. nation at its very origins. The Declaration of Independence and in particular its statement that "all men are created equal" embodied the country's civic nationalist creed, revealing America's aspiration to become a nation for all kinds of individuals irrespective of their caste, religion, nationality, race, or politics. The openness of U.S. society went hand in hand with the nation's commitment to equal rights and democratic government: empowered as citizens and protected by the rule of law, the American people would rule. The centrality and appeal of this civic creed quickly made this new nation a beacon to other peoples in the world seeking freedom and equality, especially those in western Europe and Iberian America.

But the United States was also a slaveholders' republic. Slave owners played key roles in the 1776 revolution against Britain and in drafting the 1789 Constitution, which endorsed slavery and apportioned congressional delegates to ensure that slave owners would exercise disproportionate power in national affairs. In 1790 the first U.S. Congress passed a law limiting naturalization to "free white persons," thereby creating a racial test for citizenship that would remain in force

for more than 160 years. From the very beginning, in other words, the United States propagated a racial nationalism that conceived of the country in racial terms, as a home for white people, which, in the eighteenth century, meant those of European origin and descent. As the case of Thomas Jefferson exemplifies, many of those who fashioned America's universalist and democratic political creed were also the architects of its racial nationalism—a paradox that has been one of the most fascinating and enduring in U.S. history.<sup>1</sup>

The North's victory over the slaveholding South in the Civil War (1861–65) offered the United States an opportunity to uproot its racial nationalist tradition and to reorganize the republic solely around its civic creed. Indeed, the abolition of slavery, the passage of the 14th Amendment (outlawing discrimination based on race, creed, or color), and the wide-ranging efforts to empower freedmen and women in the years between 1863 and 1877 constituted a second American revolution—Reconstruction—every bit as fundamental as the first. But this revolution, unlike the first one, failed. Propertied Southern whites who had lost their political power regained it after 1877. Though these elites could not restore slavery, they did fashion a system of peonage that held rural blacks in economic semiservitude and an ideology of Jim Crow that ensured African American segregation and subordination in politics and culture. White Southerners stripped blacks of basic citizenship rights—to vote, hold elective offices, and sit on juries—while denying them access to any space, public or private, defined as white: schools, parks, restaurants, stores, theaters, churches, railroad cars, and bathrooms. Through this system of apartheid white Southerners revived America's tradition of racial nationalism for a new century and mocked black claims to be equal or full participants in the American nation.<sup>2</sup>

An invigorated tradition of racial nationalism also influenced U.S. attitudes toward the country's indigenous population. In the second half of the nineteenth century Indians were subjected to a system of apartheid different from Jim Crow, this one organized around ever-shrinking reservations into which the surviving populations of Native Americans, those who had not been killed in the Indian wars nor had succumbed to illness, had been confined. The Dawes Severalty Act (1887) nominally attempted to promote the assimilation of Indians into the (white) American nation by giving individual Indians the opportunity to withdraw from tribal control, cultivate their own plots of land, and transform themselves into that great hero of Euro-American life, the yeoman farmer. That the U.S. Congress would even consider a policy that might lead to the assimilation and integration of Indians into white America so soon after it had repudiated Reconstruction (1877) suggests that Indians possessed a higher stature in America than did blacks. Indeed, many white Americans developed a romantic attachment to Indians that they rarely displayed toward African Americans,

admiring the former for their alleged ferocity as warriors, for their "simplicity," "purity," and "noble savagery," and for their supposed freedom from the contaminating effects of civilization.<sup>3</sup>

The history of the Dawes Act demonstrates, however, that such romance rarely led white Americans to treat Indians as their equals or to ensure that Indians would be given the assistance necessary to allow them to become full participants in the American nation. Most Indians who took possession of individual lands under the Dawes Act either failed as farmers or quickly lost their property to white speculators. After the law had operated for two decades, Indians found themselves on smaller reservations that had been stripped of their best land. They sank into a kind of poverty that mocked purported efforts to include them in American bounty or American dreams. And to the extent to which public and private agencies persisted in their integrative campaigns, these campaigns often degenerated into ugly attempts at coercive assimilation, as in the case of white educators who forcibly removed Indian children from their families and placed them in special Indian schools hundreds, even thousands, of miles away. If Indians had a higher stature than blacks in the U.S. nationalist imagination, it did nothing to improve the condition of Indian life in the United States in the first thirty years of the twentieth century.<sup>4</sup>

The late-nineteenth-century subordination and marginalization of blacks and Indians are developments that U.S. historians have known about for a long time. But, for an equally long period of time, their significance for understanding the development or "progress" of the U.S. nation was minimized or rationalized by reference to the "backward" nature of the South and the "primitive" nature of the West. In the early twentieth century America's social and political weight seemed to be gravitating to its industrial-urban cores in the Northeast and Midwest and on the West Coast. Here conditions of political equality prevailed; here a reform-minded liberalism intent on reducing economic inequities and righting social wrongs gained vigor; here hundreds of thousands of immigrants (and sometimes as many as a million), many of them impoverished and unwanted in their homelands, arrived every year and were greeted with respect and opportunity. Here, in the words of the political thinker and *New Republic* founder Herbert Croly, a new nation, inclusive and progressive, was taking shape. Croly, indeed, called for a "new nationalism" that was both demographically inclusive and reformist in its efforts to tame capitalist excess. Theodore Roosevelt became this new nationalism's most famous tribune, making it a robust expression of the civic nationalist creed.<sup>5</sup>

In the view of progressives such as Croly and Roosevelt and many of the key historians at work in the middle decades of the twentieth century, themselves partisans of this Progressive (and then New Deal) tradition, the new

urban-industrial nation would realize America's democratic ideals. As this new civic nation deepened democratic practice and spread economic opportunity through the social order, the South would be modernized and see its apartheid abolished and the West would be civilized, its Indians given a better deal. But the ease with which Progressive thinkers and liberal historians pushed the South and West to the periphery or treated both regions as belonging to America's flawed past rather than to its bright future always rested on a series of evasions about the role of the West and South in shaping modern America and about the ways in which Croly's new nation had implicated itself in sustaining racialized discourses of national belonging. Nothing illustrates this better than immigration policy from the 1880s to the 1920s.<sup>6</sup>

Prior to the 1880s the United States had possessed a remarkably liberal immigration policy that constituted one of the finest expressions of its civic nationalist creed. During this period America welcomed virtually anyone, regardless of his or her national origins, who wished to make the United States his or her home. In the forty-year period from the 1880s to the 1920s, however, Congress and the executive branch replaced the nation's open borders policy with a "closed border," one grounded largely in a series of racial exclusions. Congress banned Chinese immigration in 1882, and President Theodore Roosevelt banned Japanese immigration in 1907. While both actions were responses to regional anxieties, notably white westerners' worries that "yellow hordes" were taking over the Pacific Coast, they became national policies, endorsed and sustained by the federal government. Frankly racist justifications underlay such discriminatory practices: Chinese and Japanese were so different from Americans of European origin and were so primitive, restrictionists argued, they could never be civilized or acculturated. Their biological constitution was such, their opponents alleged, that they needed no rest and little food. They thus would outperform American workers on a sliver of an American workingman's wages and thus drive the latter to ruin. These Asians were also alleged to know (or to care to know) nothing about democracy and citizenship and to be oblivious to the value of family life or moral probity. They were thought to be sexual predators (on white women) and the carriers of debilitating drug habits. They would contribute nothing to the American nation and had already harmed it by their presence. Fortunately, in the eyes of America's Asian immigrant enemies, no immigrant from East (and South) Asia could become a citizen, thanks to the 1790 law limiting naturalization to those who were free and white. The American nation had no place for these groups.<sup>7</sup>

In 1924 Congress extended its ban on immigration from East Asia to most of the world. And, for the first time, it struck at Europe and, in particular, at groups from southern and eastern Europe who were also thought to be racially inferior and thus damaging to America's "Anglo-Saxon" or "Nordic" stock. Here

is how legislators in the House of Representatives described eastern and southern Europeans in 1924: "There is little or no similarity," declared Congressman Fred S. Purnell of Indiana, "between the clear-thinking, self-governing stocks that sired the American people and this stream of irresponsible and broken wreckage that is pouring into the lifeblood of America the social and political diseases of the Old World." Purnell quoted approvingly the words of a Dr. Ward, who claimed that Americans had deceived themselves into believing that "we could change inferior beings into superior ones." Americans could not escape the laws of heredity, Ward argued. "We cannot make a heavy horse into a trotter by keeping him in a racing stable. We cannot make a well-bred dog out of a mongrel by teaching him tricks." The acts that Ward dismissed as "tricks" included the learning by immigrants of the Gettysburg Address and the Declaration of Independence.<sup>8</sup>

Congressman J. Will Taylor of Tennessee, meanwhile, approvingly read to his colleagues a *Boston Herald* editorial warning that America was entering the same period of eugenical decline that had doomed Rome: "Rome had [mistaken] faith in the melting pot, as we have. It scorned the iron uncertainties of heredity, as we do. It lost its instinct for race preservation, as we have lost ours. It forgot that men must be selected and bred as sacredly as cows and pigs and sheep, as we have not learned." "Rome rapidly senilized and died," the editorial concluded, and so would America unless Congress took note of eugenical principles and passed the 1924 restriction legislation. The law passed both houses of Congress by overwhelming margins, drawing votes from congressmen and senators from every region of the country, East and West, North and South, urban and rural. It remained on the books until 1965, giving a decidedly racial cast to America's new nation.<sup>9</sup>

I do not want to suggest that no one opposed this law or generated alternative conceptions of nationhood at this time. In the first three decades of the twentieth century sizeable and varied groups of Americans drawn from the ranks of liberal reformers, ethnic and racial minorities, and socialist radicals labored to invigorate the civic basis of their nationhood and to insist that equality and inclusion ought to remain the governing principles of their polity. Many Americans were drawn to Israel Zangwill's vision of America as a melting pot in which the races of many lands would be drawn together and forged into a single people. A much smaller group, but including individuals whose writings and politics would gain influence in subsequent decades (the philosophers Horace Kallen and Alain Locke, the literary critic Randolph Bourne, the anthropologist Franz Boas, the educator Rachel Davis-DuBois, and the Indian reformer John Collier), pushed their thinking beyond inclusive programs of assimilation and began to argue that ethnic and racial pluralism would strengthen the egalitarian and democratic foundation of the American nation. But the eloquence with

which these proponents of "pluralist nationalism" expressed their views should not blind us to their marginality in the 1910s and 1920s. The racial boundaries of the American nation grew stronger in the early twentieth century, not weaker. The country's urbanization and modernization at this time went hand in hand with the deepening of American's racial nationalism.<sup>10</sup>

This development was apparent not just in domestic politics but also in international relations, as an industrializing America extended its economic, political, and military influence abroad. It wasn't just that America's racial nationalism influenced the country's foreign policy but that its very nature and strength emerged from encounters between the United States and foreign countries. This process is especially apparent in U.S. relations with Latin America. The pivotal episode in that relationship was the war between the United States and Spain and the subsequent U.S. occupation of Spain's former colony, Cuba.

The U.S. rout of Spain in 1898 regenerated an American nation ground down by economic depression and class conflict and still suffering from the after-shocks of its civil war. The victory fueled a conviction that the United States was indeed a superior nation that could accomplish great feats, and this, in turn, energized both imperialists who wanted to flex America's muscles abroad and social reformers who wanted to improve U.S. society at home. But the war against Spain also shaped American nationalism, and especially its racial nationalist tradition, in more particular ways.

In Cuba in 1898 Northern U.S. white soldiers and Southern U.S. white soldiers fought alongside each other for the first time since before the Civil War. This development was itself a key act of sectional reconciliation and racial nationalist regeneration and underscored what was happening in politics and society in the United States: the repudiation of the Reconstruction promise of racial equality and the embrace of white unity and superiority as the basis of American nationhood. The significance of white Northerners and white Southerners fighting together increases in light of accusations emerging from the war itself that black soldiers then serving in the U.S. Army were inferior to white soldiers and should no longer be permitted to represent the United States in combat. These accusations were false, but they nevertheless damaged the reputation of black soldiers, who, after 1900, were systematically excluded from combat roles in the U.S. military. By World War I the U.S. Army permitted very few of the hundreds of thousands of blacks it had drafted to fight. This exclusion from combat devastated many blacks and their standing among whites, especially in an era when a nation's prowess was thought to rest on the quality of its military. The refusal to let black warriors join white ones on the field of battle underscored the strength of racial nationalism and the tenuousness of the black claim to be part of the American nation.<sup>11</sup>

## Mexico, 1880–1940: The Racialist Residue of *Mestizaje*

Mexico had been a sovereign nation since the early nineteenth century (1821). But, as Eric Van Young notes in his essay for this collection, nationalist consciousness at the time of Mexican independence barely penetrated the ranks of the Mexican masses and especially of its large Indian majority. In the early years of independence, even efforts to fashion a polity in Mexico out of the minority of the population that was Creole and propertied proved difficult, as centrifugal regionalist forces frustrated efforts to unify the Creole elite around a common political authority and identity. Nevertheless, Mexican nationalism of the nineteenth century, like virtually all nationalisms of the period, did contain integrative and democratizing impulses that gained strength over the course of the nineteenth century and that made questions of incorporation—including that of Indian incorporation—inescapable.

Nations, to use a Benedict Anderson formulation, depend on a broad and deep horizontal comradeship. For a nationalism to work, the majority of people residing in a territory calling itself a nation have to be able to look at each other and say, we are all Mexicans, we are all Cubans, we are all Brazilians. In historical terms, such declarations of common nationality meant inviting the masses onto the political stage—to participate in movements for independence, reform, national defense, conquest, and economic development. These invitations often unleashed democratic enthusiasms, as groups within the nation, as a result of their mobilization, imbibed discourses about political rights and popular sovereignty. Nationalist mobilization did not always amplify democratic practice; indeed, by the late nineteenth century some nationalist regimes, such as the one developing in Germany under Otto von Bismarck, embraced authoritarianism as the best way to achieve social order, territorial expansion, and national glory. But even Bismarckian-style regimes had to contend with the instability that nationalist mobilization unleashed, for the shared and special nature of national identity allowed individuals who possessed it to press democratic claims on the state in the name of the nation.<sup>12</sup>

In Mexico the consequences of nationalist mobilization began to unfold in the middle decades of the nineteenth century. Mexico's defeat by the United States and the consequent loss of half its territory in 1848 shook the nation's established political and social order and led to the Ayutla Revolt of 1854, which brought Mexican Liberals to power. These Liberals quickly passed laws that legislated a free-market economy, a regime of private property rights (and individual landowners), a constitutional democracy, and a secularized system of education. When the country's Conservatives responded with force, the Liberals raised a popular army to defend their new state. A civil war ensued (1857–60),

followed by the arrival in 1861 of invading armies from France, whom Conservatives had invited into Mexico in the hopes of restoring monarchy to their nation (in the anachronistic and ironic form of an Austrian archduke, Maximilian, who served Louis Napoléon of France). The Liberals waged years of guerrilla warfare against this Conservative-European alliance, finally emerging victorious in 1867 due in part to their success in mobilizing Indians and mestizos into National Guard units. Although many of the latter fought to defend their particular land or territory or to serve a military strongman, they also, through their struggle to defend Mexico, developed a popular nationalism hostile to foreign intervention and committed to the principles of individual rights and popular sovereignty.<sup>13</sup>

After 1867 some Indian and mestizo groups turned their arms on the Mexican state and the regional elites that supported it for privileging the propertied and powerful over the rural poor. The liberal Laws of Reform passed between 1855 and 1857 had outlawed the communal forms of property ownership then prevalent among Mexico's indigenous peoples and—in a manner that anticipated the Dawes Act in the United States—called for such land to be broken up into plots owned by single individuals or families. As would happen in the United States, this Liberal law became a pretext for large landowners and merchants to accumulate huge stretches of village lands. Such seizures, in turn, provoked the anger of poor Mexican peasants who now defended their lands using the new nationalist language of popular sovereignty and individual rights. Nationalism, in Mexico, had intensified democratic aspirations.<sup>14</sup>

In 1876, after several years of popular rebellions, regional resistance to central government consolidation, and infighting among liberal elites, Porfirio Díaz came to power and ruled the fragile nation until 1910. Díaz had originally built his reputation as a man of the people, specifically as a military leader of a popular alliance that had fought and then defeated the European invaders. But increasingly Díaz fancied himself a Bismarck or Napoléon of the New World, intent on restoring order and stability to Mexico and pursuing economic development and modernity through authoritarianism.

To modernize Mexico and make it more like those nations that were, in the late nineteenth century, regarded as the world's strongest (the United States, France, England, and Germany), Díaz and his technocratic advisors (*científicos*) first hoped to whiten the Mexican population. Spencerian ideologues of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had turned the coincidence between national vigor and predominately white populations into evolutionary law: the fittest races naturally had built the strongest and most civilized nations. Porfirian nation builders wanted to make this law work for them, which meant finding a demographic strategy for turning Mexico's population white. Impressed with the U.S. and Argentine model, they hoped to encourage Europeans to immigrate to Mexico. The Porfirian intellectual and state builder Justo

Sierra wrote in the 1880s that Mexico's "impoverished blood" could only be improved by "large doses of strong blood, supplied in the form of [European] immigration."<sup>15</sup> But Sierra and the other *científicos* never managed to convert their desire for increased European immigration into a successful policy. Meanwhile, the economic modernization projects of the Porfirian state were drawing more and more Indians and mestizos from isolated rural areas into commercial, mining, and industrial regions, making the nonwhite character of Mexico all the more visible.<sup>16</sup>

The reaction of the Porfirian elite to Mexico's nonwhites was complex. On the one hand, its members found themselves appalled by the primitivism and poverty of the rural Indian and mestizo populations and used social Darwinist arguments to explain the "failure" of these people to succeed under conditions of capitalist competition. On the other hand, some members of this elite understood that a Mexican nation, unlike its U.S. neighbor, had somehow to incorporate these Indian masses. They initiated this process of incorporation by reviving an older nationalist narrative about how the Aztecs of the 1300s and 1400s had built a civilization rivaling those of ancient Greece and Egypt. The Aztecs, in other words, had already demonstrated how Indian peoples could fashion Mexico into a mighty nation and a glorious culture. How, then, to explain the gap between the superiority of the Mesoamerican Aztecs and the squalor of Indian life in the 1880s? Porfirian intellectuals laid this responsibility at the feet of the Spanish conquerors, who, even as they brought European civilization to Mexico, destroyed Aztec society in such an indiscriminate manner so as to trigger a process of Indian degeneration. This degeneration could not be easily reversed, but it could not be ignored. If Mexico were to succeed as a modern nation, Indians—or at least those who could claim an association with the Aztecs—had to be rehabilitated and incorporated. In the process, the greatness that the Aztecs had once bestowed on Mexico would be reclaimed.<sup>17</sup> This reclamation project took symbolic form in 1887, when the Porfirian regime erected in Mexico City a huge statue honoring Cuauhtémoc, the last Aztec emperor and, most important, the man who inspired the Aztecs to resist the Spanish conquistadors. Francisco Sosa, a government publicist at the time, declared that the "magnificent monument" would "honor permanently . . . the first and most illustrious of the defenders of the nationality founded by Tenoch in 1327."<sup>18</sup>

The Porfirian state builders often dealt harshly with Mexico's Indian populations and could be ruthless in their policies of incorporation—through, for example, the waging of war against and conquest of tribes that resisted central state authority.<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, by the early twentieth century this governing elite had gone considerably further than had U.S. nation builders in acknowledging how central Indians were to the making of their nation. Their efforts to recognize the importance of an Indian heritage to the construction of Mexican

nationhood allowed more and more Mexicans, including those outside elite circles, to glimpse that their nation's greatness lay in the racially mixed character of its population. If Mexico were one day to rival the great nations of Europe in its modernity, culture, and prosperity, it would do so by celebrating rather than by denying its mestizo character.

While the Porfirian elite launched the discourse on mestizo nationalism, it could never fully embrace it. That embrace would be the work of the Mexican revolutionaries who overthrew Díaz in 1910 and, with extensive Indian support, consolidated their power over the next twenty years. These revolutionaries celebrated the concept of *mestizaje*—the mixing of European and indigenous Indian stocks—and argued that such mixing had endowed their nation with uncommon vigor and valor. The United States feared the Mexican Revolution and invaded Mexico in 1913 and again in 1917 to subdue its most radical elements and, in the process, to protect U.S. economic interests.<sup>20</sup> The United States never secured the influence in Mexico that it had gained in Cuba after 1898, but its actions nevertheless impelled Mexican revolutionaries to frame their concept of national belonging as a repudiation of the one dominant in the United States. Mexico rejected the nationalism of its northern neighbor through its veneration of *mestizaje*.

Scholars often treat *mestizaje* as a uniquely Latin American product, which it was not.<sup>21</sup> The equivalent term in the United States, the “melting pot,” gained popularity at precisely the time that *mestizaje* did, during the first twenty years of the twentieth century, though its conceptual roots can be traced back to the eighteenth century and, in particular, to the musings of the French immigrant J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur. In 1782 Crèvecoeur had asked, “What, then, is the American, this new man?” and he had answered, “He is neither an European nor the descendant of an European; hence that strange mixture of blood, which you will find in no other country. I could point out to you a family whose grandfather was an Englishman, whose wife was Dutch, whose son married a French woman, and whose present four sons have now four wives of different nations. . . . Here individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of men, whose labours and posterity will one day cause great changes in the world.”<sup>22</sup> One hundred thirty years later Israel Zangwill updated this hybrid definition of the American for the twentieth century: “America is God’s Crucible, where all the races of Europe are melting and reforming,” the protagonist of Zangwill’s 1908 play, *The Melting Pot*, proclaims. “Germans, Frenchman, Irishmen and Englishmen, Jews and Russians—into the Crucible with you all! God is making the American.”<sup>23</sup>

Crèvecoeur and Zangwill were both forward-looking thinkers of their own times. The former conceived of an America open to Europeans who were not English and the latter of an America welcoming to Europeans who were neither

Anglo-Saxon nor Nordic. But neither could imagine an America emerging from a population mix that included not just Europeans but non-Europeans as well: Africans, Asians, and Native Americans. The idea that became so central to Mexican nationalism—that Indians were not only part of the melting pot but formed one of the fundamental metals out of which the Mexican national alloy had emerged—was inconceivable north of the Rio Grande. Thus, it was not the idea of *mestizaje* itself that distinguished Mexico but the idea that the best hybrid had emerged from the interaction of indigenous and European stock. The Mexican conception of nationality broke from notions of Europeaness and whiteness in ways that those in the early-twentieth-century United States never did.

It did not take long for Mexican revolutionary intellectuals to make *mestizaje* a defining characteristic of their nationhood. Manuel Gamio, a Columbia University-trained anthropologist and Mexican revolutionary, called on his fellow insurgents as early as 1916 “to take up the hammer and gird themselves with the blacksmith’s apron, so that they may make rise from the miraculous anvil the new nation of blended bronze and iron.”<sup>24</sup> José Vasconcelos, the Mexican secretary of public education from 1921 to 1924 and a key architect of the revolutionary regime’s cultural policies, celebrated racial hybridity not just in Mexico but everywhere in the world. “All the great periods of history,” he declared, “have been the work of a mixture of races, of peoples and colors, rather than the work of any privileged pure-blood nation.” Hybridity “in man, as well as in plants,” tends to produce better types, Vasconcelos argued, “as it tends to complement the weaknesses of a particular stock through interchange and assimilation with all the world.” So thorough and rich was the process of mixing the blood of peoples as different as the Indians and Europeans, Vasconcelos averred, that the resulting hybrid race really did contain “all the world.” Mexicans constituted nothing less than the “cosmic race,” a race superior both to more narrowly based hybrids and to the “pure” races of North America and Europe. The future, in Vasconcelos’s telling, lay with the mestizo nationalities of Latin America and not the “unmixed” ones of the United States and France.<sup>25</sup>

Mexican revolutionaries developed an ideology of *indigenismo* to honor the native peoples of Mexico and articulate the progress that would result when the latter’s contributions to Mexican nationality were properly recognized. These revolutionaries undertook a variety of initiatives both to bring their transformed nation and its ambitions to the attention of Indian populations and to incorporate the Indian story and experience into the history and culture of Mexico. In the 1920s the Mexican state took control of elementary schools in remote areas and began teaching students literacy, hygiene, sobriety, patriotic virtue, nationalist history, and modern sports while countering the influence of the Church and local caudillos. To emphasize the Indian contribution to the

making of the new nation, the revolutionary state rehabilitated Indian customs and folklore and encouraged urban and rural artists—musicians, balladeers, muralists, dancers, playwrights, and others—to mark the Indian presence and contributions in their work.<sup>26</sup> The revolutionaries did indeed spark a cultural revival in many areas, even as they often lost control of the programs they had set in motion. Popular artists who had been inspired by government initiatives used the cultural space that those initiatives opened up not to pursue revolutionary agendas but to create art grounded in the particularities of their experience and of their regions. Yet in the largest sense many Mexicans believed that their nation's cultural renaissance in the 1920s and 1930s, evident in everything from the symphonies and ballets of Carlos Chávez to the murals of Diego Rivera, expressed the richness and vigor of mestizo nationhood.<sup>27</sup> This mestizo renaissance, in other words, was understood to be the realization of revolutionary nationalist dreams.

In truth, this renaissance was far more an internationalist project than many nationalists could admit. Whether we point to the influence of the cosmopolitan Parisian painting milieu on the work of Rivera, or the importance of Afro-Caribbean rhythms and melodies to dance music in Mexico City, or the influence of U.S. big bands on mariachis, we can discern the importance of transnational flows of artists and cultures. Yet in this archnationalist age Mexicans usually insisted that the critical cultural mixtures were indigenous rather than international, an expression of Mexican rather than global *mestizaje*.

The emphasis on *mestizaje* marked Mexican nationalism as different from its North American counterpart. Even as the arrival of a reform government in the 1930s and the appointment of John Collier as head of the Bureau of Indian Affairs made U.S. policy toward its own Indians more liberal than it had been, the notion that American national greatness emerged from the mixing of its native and European stocks remained as heretical a thought during the New Deal as it had been in the 1880s. And even as diverse groups of Americans—eastern and southern European immigrants, Catholics, Jews, and Protestants, whites and blacks—were coming together in U.S. cities to create a vigorous mass culture of song, jazz, and dance and to form an eager audience for Hollywood movies, the Euro-American *mestizaje* that lay at the foundation of this cultural effervescence was denied far more than it was celebrated or even acknowledged.<sup>28</sup> The United States still aspired to be a white Anglo-Saxon nation, an aspiration that found expression in the maintenance of Jim Crow and a racialized system of immigration restriction. This aspiration manifested itself, too, in the expectation that those whites who were not Anglo-Saxon would hide markers of their ethnic difference (and inferiority) and seek to acquire the physical and cultural qualities that denoted Anglo-Saxons and Nordics as superior.<sup>29</sup> Thus, despite a convergence of political and cultural trends in Mexico and the United States

after World War I, the articulation of nationhood in the two countries remained far apart.

Mexican nationalism, however, resembled its North American counterpart in at least three important ways. First, despite its progressive and inclusive character, racial essentialism lay at its core. Most Mexicans, even the revolutionary-minded ones, had not yet figured out how to separate nation from race. The Mexican people were thought to constitute a race, *la raza*, all of them marked by defining and enduring characteristics. Vasconcelos, for example, celebrated the mestizo for his “great vivacity of mind,” his “boldness, universality of thought and sentiment,” while at the same time worrying that his “unsteady” temperament made him hotheaded and irrational.<sup>30</sup> Most instructive about Vasconcelos's writing on this subject are not the particular adjectives that he chose to describe mestizos but his conviction that the characteristics he had identified as “Mexican” appeared in all those who were the product of *mestizaje*: northerners and southerners, urban dwellers and rural campesinos, workers and shopkeepers. Seen in this way, Vasconcelos's thinking differed little from that of the U.S. senators and congressmen who, in the 1920s, ascribed inborn characteristics to entire “races” of people from eastern and southern Europe and from East Asia. While Vasconcelos adhered to a more progressive vision than did the U.S. legislators who imposed a racist system of immigration restriction on America and favored a racial science that was Lamarckian rather than Mendelian in approach, he partook of a racial essentialism similar to the one that shaped North American thought.<sup>31</sup>

The second way in which Mexican nationalism resembled its American counterpart was in its emphasis on homogeneity: all Mexicans were expected to be fundamentally alike, just as all Americans were expected to fit into an Anglo-Saxon mold. Manuel Gamio wrote that successful nation building depended on “a solemn cry of shared blood, of shared flesh, that cry which is above all else, since it is the voice of life, the mysterious force which pulls material together and resists disintegration.”<sup>32</sup> Gamio and fellow revolutionary nationalists differed from their U.S. counterparts, of course, in their belief that Mexico's “mysterious force” would emerge from the mixing of European and indigenous blood rather than from a Europeans-only melting pot or a campaign for racial purity. Nevertheless, they shared with North American nation builders a commitment to uniformity. Gamio was unambiguous on this point: “Racial homogeneity, that advanced unification of physical types, that advanced happy fusion of races, constitutes the first and most solid basis of nationalism.”<sup>33</sup> It was the job of the revolutionaries to bring that happy fusion, that racial homogeneity, about.

This emphasis on uniformity and homogeneity led directly to the third resemblance between Mexican and U.S. nationalism: a hostility to those within the nation who were either racially or culturally different from the mestizo

mainstream. Significant numbers of Indians regarded the emerging Mexican nation-state and its ideology of *mestizaje* as an unwelcome imposition on their way of life. A modernizing, "civilizing" ambition underlay the *mestizaje* project, many Indians believed. While the proponents of *mestizaje* sought to cultivate aspects of Indian life they liked (folk art traditions, the commitment to communal and cooperative labor), they were also intent on eliminating aspects they abhorred (diets lacking in nutrition, poor hygiene, folk medicinal practices that relied on potions and incantations to cure disease, and perhaps most of all a deep attachment to Catholicism and clerical authority).<sup>34</sup> Many Indians did not want to be modernized if it meant that they were going to be stripped of their ways of living, so they asserted their right to be left alone. This stance, in turn, infuriated many Mexican nationalists who feared that an insistence on cultural difference would weaken Mexico and imperil its future. These nationalists began using both propaganda and state power to impose modernity on these recalcitrant populations. By the 1930s a small group of anthropologists and educators, sometimes called Indianists, came to defend indigenous cultural preservation and autonomy within the nation, but they were as marginal in interwar Mexico as were their cultural pluralist counterparts, Horace Kallen and Randolph Bourne, in the United States.<sup>35</sup>

This intolerance of difference emerged in Mexico as well in connection to those groups who were thought to be so unlike Europeans and indigenous peoples that they simply could not be included in the *mestizaje* project under any circumstances. Blacks, for many Mexicans, constituted one such people. Mexico's African heritage and peoples of African descent were ignored by revolutionary nationalists, many of whom disdained the rage for "jazz" in the 1920s, by which they meant the popularity of the Charleston, fox-trot, and ragtime, and Mexican popular music deeply influenced by Afro-Caribbean, particularly Cuban, trends.<sup>36</sup> When these nationalists worried about the cohesion and strength of Mexico, they would often comfort themselves with the thought that at least they did not have a "Negro problem" on the scale of the one afflicting the United States. This fear of the Negro may also explain the reluctance of Mexican revolutionaries to explore in any depth the linkages between their own *mestizaje* and the *afrocubanismo* version of it taking shape in nearby Cuba.

The most dramatic manifestation of Mexico's intolerance of difference, however, occurred in connection not with blacks but with the Chinese. As many as forty thousand Chinese immigrants lived in Mexico by 1910, many of them concentrated in the northwestern state of Sonora. Chinese entrepreneurialism in Sonora had brought these immigrants disproportionate influence and visibility as a regional petite bourgeoisie: they were small manufacturers (shoes and garments), merchants, and small businessmen. In their middleman role they became well known both to the area's Mexican population and to U.S. corporations that were investing in Sonoran mining, railroads, and cattle raising.<sup>37</sup>

Chinese immigrants had come to Sonora for a variety of reasons: some had wanted to go to the United States but no longer could, owing to the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act. The Porfirian regime had invited others to come to Mexico to remedy a regional labor shortage generated by the exodus of Sonoran men to California and the U.S. Southwest in the late nineteenth century. Still other Chinese came once they learned that their countrymen who had gone to Sonora at an earlier time were prospering. In nine Sonoran towns Chinese immigrants owned all the businesses.<sup>38</sup>

Mexican resentment of the Chinese escalated as the latter's regional prominence and affluence grew. Sonoran migrants who returned to Mexico from California brought with them the virulent anti-Chinese sentiments then gripping the U.S. West as well as a desire to create a society in Sonora in which white Creoles were dominant, much as their U.S. counterparts had done across the border in Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. The revolution intensified immigrant Chinese vulnerability in part because the Chinese Mexicans were seen as favoring the interests of U.S. corporations over those of the Mexican poor and in part because a disproportionate part of the revolution's leadership had grown up in a Sonoran petite bourgeoisie that had been eclipsed by the Chinese newcomers. Anti-Chinese agitation coalesced into a regional movement in Sonora between 1916 and 1919 and then into a national movement as the "Sonora faction" of Mexico's revolutionary movement, led by Mexican presidents Álvaro Obregón and Plutarco Elías Calles, took power in the 1920s. By 1931 the revolutionary Mexican state had begun expelling the Chinese from Mexico even as it continued to glorify the wonders of *mestizaje*. By 1940 it had reduced a Chinese population of Mexico that had once numbered forty thousand to a mere five thousand people. José María Dávila, the Baja California Norte representative to the National Congress, justified the expulsion of the Chinese in these terms: they "do not represent a step forward in the ideal of *mestizaje* . . . but rather signify a step backward in the anthropological search for the prototypical [Mexican] man."<sup>39</sup> Just as the populist nationalism of the revolution "sought to 'forge the nation' by integrating the Indian," Alan Knight has written, "so it also sought to cleanse the nation by expelling the Chinese."<sup>40</sup> In the discrimination against, scapegoating of, and then expulsion of the Chinese, Mexico had become indistinguishable from the United States.

The Chinese experience in revolutionary Mexico underscores a general point: that even nations that had gone much further than had the United States in opening themselves to nonwhite peoples could not free themselves altogether from the nexus of nation and race. The Chinese appeared to Mexicans to be so foreign and so racially different that they could not possibly be assimilated into Mexican culture or incorporated into the Mexican nation. Their incorporation would undermine the racial superiority that *mestizaje* had bestowed on Mexicans.



It mattered, too, that Mexican nationalists, like those of virtually every country, believed that their people possessed a character that was singular and indivisible. Even as the scientific racism that underlay nationalism began to wane in the 1930s, the notion that each nation possessed a powerful and encompassing "national character" gained life. Anthropologists and public intellectuals such as Franz Boas, Manuel Gamio, Ruth Benedict, and Margaret Mead insisted that every people possessed a "personality," the result of deeply rooted and extensively practiced patterns of culture. This ascendant school of cultural anthropology had substituted, in effect, a cultural essentialism for a racial one and thus helped to preserve the fiction about the cultural unity and uniformity of nations for another generation. Only slowly did an alternative, pluralist conception of nationhood begin to enter political thought: that nations contained a variety of peoples, not all of them alike or possessing the same traits, and that such nations could accommodate their diversity without sacrificing political unity, sovereignty, or muscle. This conception belonged to the post-World War II era. Nowhere did it emerge without profound conflict and struggle, a mark of how much the early-twentieth-century history of nationalism, and especially the era's near-universal emphasis on what Gamio had called "racial homogeneity" (and later modified into cultural homogeneity), lived on into our own time.<sup>41</sup>

#### Cuba, 1880–1940: Resisting Jim Crow, Fearing a Black Republic

At first glance, the radical supporters of Cuban independence and nationalism in the late nineteenth century seem to have escaped the Mexican and U.S. preoccupation with racial homogeneity, whether produced through purity or hybridity. Revolutionary nationalists there repudiated both the ideology of white supremacy, then fastening its hold on the U.S. South, and the Mexican revolutionaries' celebration of *mestizaje*. José Martí and other leaders of the independence movement insisted instead on "racelessness" as the defining characteristic of Cuban nationhood. Cuba Libre, Martí declared, would not be composed of different races—blacks, mulattos, and whites—but only of raceless individuals bound to each other by their common status as Cuban citizens. This was a bold pronouncement for Cuban nationalists to make in an age in which racialist thought suffused nationalist discourses and in light of Cuba's proximity to the United States, where racial nationalism was growing in strength and looking to include the Caribbean in the scope of its discursive influence.

Few people in Cuba, it turned out, would be able to escape U.S. power and prejudice. Imperial circumstances would frustrate the anti-imperial and revolutionary dream of establishing a raceless republic in Cuba. But the failure cannot be attributed entirely to U.S. interference with Cuban affairs. Even the most pro-

gressive groups in Cuba, those that had done the most to free their nationalism from ideologies of racial supremacy, could not escape the race-nation discursive nexus altogether. Some of their insistence on "racelessness" masked a fear that too much emphasis on race would expose a fact that they preferred to disguise, namely, that a very large portion of Cuba's population was of African descent. If Cuba showed its African face to the world, they worried, Cuba would come to be categorized, designated, and denigrated as a black nation, much as Haiti had been. Thus even Cuba's revolutionary nationalists were quick to condemn efforts by Afro-Cubans to assert a distinctive racial identity and to call attention to their group's particular needs. Those needs, many Afro-Cubans argued, grew out of a singular *racial* history—especially the ordeal of their enslavement and the unfinished business of their emancipation—and demanded a singular response. Among the legatees of the Martí nationalist tradition, opposition to this position congealed not around explicit claims that Afro-Cubans were racially inferior but around warnings that any acknowledgment of difference, racial or otherwise, would weaken the solidarity on which the Cuban nation rested. A fear of blackness, however, did lie at the root of Cuban hostility to difference, which also helps to explain why a Cuban version of *mestizaje*, what would become known in the 1920s and 1930s as *afrocubanismo*, emerged much more slowly in Cuba than in Mexico or other Latin countries.<sup>42</sup>

Cuba gained its national independence in 1902, almost a century after its South American neighbors and Mexico had won their independence from Spain and Portugal. Two facts about Cuba help to explain its tardy arrival on the nationalist stage: first, the lucrativeness of its sugar economy, which made it one of Spain's prized colonial possessions; and second, the heavily African and enslaved character of its population, which inclined Creoles to put aside their hopes for independent nationhood. In 1846 Afro-Cuban slaves and free people of color comprised more than half of the Cuban population.<sup>43</sup> That demographic reality conjured up for white Cubans the nightmare of a second black republic in the Caribbean and one that would resemble the first, Haiti, in its poverty, hostility to whites, and alleged corruption and ungovernability. At bottom, this Creole fear of black rule expressed a racist conviction that Africans were a people too primitive to govern themselves or others.

From the perspective of Afro-Cubans themselves, national independence would mean little—and would not be worth the sacrifice of time and blood that it would inevitably entail—without the simultaneous abolition of the Cuban slave system and the incorporation of the Afro-Cuban population into a polity on equal terms with its Creole counterpart. National independence from Spain, in other words, required nothing less than a revolution in Cuban race relations and a transformation in property and social relations. This double project of freeing Cuba from Spain and Afro-Cuban slaves from their owners was a major

undertaking and one that was going to take time—in Cuba's case, much of the nineteenth century.

Pressure for independence and emancipation built steadily, however, especially from the 1860s on. The abolition of slavery and the defeat of the Confederacy in the United States fatally damaged the credibility of the remaining Western Hemispheric slaveholding regimes and helped to spark the first anti-colonial insurrection in Cuba. Creoles and Afro-Cubans took up arms against Spain in 1868 in what became known as the Ten Years War. This struggle lasted not ten years but thirty, progressively weakening the legitimacy both of Cuban slaveholders and Spanish imperial authority. Spain formally abolished slavery in Cuba in 1886 and had lost virtually all of its political control over Cuba by 1898.<sup>44</sup>

The struggle against Spain was not an easy one for Cuban nationalists to wage, and the scale of fighting left tens of thousands dead, imprisoned, or displaced while devastating a once-prosperous colonial economy. But the struggle was invigorating for Cuban rebels, nevertheless, and prompted the liberation movement's more radical elements not only to insist that there would be no compromise with Spanish authority on questions of independence but also that racial distinctions would carry no significance in Cuba Libre, the free Cuban nation. This insistence on eliminating race as a social and political category had incubated with particular force in the Cuban Liberation Army, in which, since the late 1860s, white and colored Cubans fought side by side and in which colored Cubans claimed a proportion of the officer corps—40 percent—that by the 1890s had outstripped their percentage of the population.<sup>45</sup> This integrated and egalitarian military experience did not lead to the organization of separate black political groups with primarily Afro-Cuban agendas, however. Nor did it culminate in *mestizaje*-like calls for the mixing of the white, mulatto, and black races. It led instead to the embrace of racelessness as a defining characteristic of the Cuban nation.

The most eloquent spokesperson for "raceless" nationalism in the 1890s was José Martí, a Cuban Creole and the acknowledged leader of the Cuban revolutionary struggle until his battlefield death in 1895.<sup>46</sup> Believing that race had deformed colonial Cuban society, Martí wanted to create a sovereign Cuba in which racial divisions had no place. Martí refused to concede to any group "special rights because they belong to one race or another." For Martí, "the word man defines all rights," and "man" meant "more than the white man, mulatto, or black man." Cuba meant "more than white man, mulatto, or black man." It meant the opportunity to be free, to develop one's character and humanity, to strive for economic improvement, and to cultivate "greatness in Cuba." Thus, to harp "on racial divisions and the differences between races in the case of an already divided people impedes the attainment of national and individual well

being, which are to be secured by the greatest coming together of the racial elements that form the nation."<sup>47</sup> Martí did not advocate that whites, blacks, and mulattos in Cuba should mix with each other and produce a hybrid race; he imagined that the three races would remain separate but that the salience of their racial identities would atrophy as the affinity of Cubans to their nation increased.

Martí's vision of a raceless Cuba granted Afro-Cubans a more central place in their nation than African Americans were being offered during that period in the United States. Indeed, Martí deliberately embraced a form of national belonging very different from the U.S. race-conscious one. Not many white Americans living in the 1890s United States, North, South, East, or West, would have celebrated the fundamental unity and equality of white and black citizens as Martí did in 1893 when he spoke about the "souls of white men and Negroes" who rose "together from the battlefields where they fought and died for Cuba."<sup>48</sup> Cuba Libre was unimaginable apart from the sacrifices made by Negroes and whites to bring it about.<sup>49</sup>

Martí knew the United States well, as he had lived there as a Cuban exile for most of his adult life, in New York City and Tampa in particular. Both his commitment to egalitarianism and his opposition to racism took their mature form during these North American years. His desire to establish a raceless republic in Cuba revealed how much the civic nationalist ideals of the American Revolution—and in particular the Declaration of Independence—had influenced his thinking, as they had many other Cuban exiles. Yet Martí also believed that America by the early 1890s had reneged on the raceless and egalitarian promises of its republican heritage. Capitalism was undercutting America's commitment to economic equality, while the resurgence of a white supremacist South had destroyed Reconstruction's promise of racial equality. America had become a "monster," a model of nationhood to be repudiated, not emulated, by Cubans.<sup>50</sup> And so Cuban "racelessness" became his response to North American racial nationalism. It was a courageous stance.

Yet Martí could not free himself entirely from fears of black inferiority or from an anxiety that Cuba would never succeed as a nation if it marked itself—or was marked by others—as black. Martí made no allowance for blacks in Cuba calling special attention to their problems or for celebrating their African heritage. He rejected the proposition that slavery had saddled Afro-Cubans with particular problems—poverty, lack of skills and education, political inexperience—that had to be named and addressed.<sup>51</sup> He defined racism not simply as discrimination against blacks by whites but as the proclamation by blacks of their "special character."<sup>52</sup> While this stance can be interpreted as a radical—even admirable—attack on all forms of racial essentialism, it also seems a bit strained given the practical problems faced by an Afro-Cuban popu-

lation emerging from slavery. Problems ignored were ones likely to persist and to undercut efforts to make the island's Afro-Cubans truly free and equal citizens. Martí's reluctance to address Afro-Cuban difficulties stemming from the slave experience arose in part from the homogeneity imperative that disfigured nationalism everywhere, even on the Left: cultural difference had to be eliminated in order to achieve civic equality and national solidarity. But Martí's refusal to contemplate the solution to the problem of cultural diversity emerging in Mexico and other Latin countries—homogenization through cultural mixing—also points to his enduring anxiety about the large African presence in Cuba. A brown nation could become great; a black nation could not.

Martí died in 1895, killed in a battle between Cuban and Spanish forces. But his legacy lived on, evident both in the stout resistance Cubans displayed toward U.S. conceptions of racial order and in their anxiety over revealing the African basis of their nation to the world.

The explosion of the USS *Maine* in Havana Harbor in 1898 brought the United States directly into the Cuban anticolonial struggle. Prior to 1898 many white Americans had not only supported the Cuban independence movement but likened Cubans to the American revolutionaries of 1776: oppressed by a haughty colonial power, struggling for their freedom and independence, and largely European (and white) in origin. The substantial Cuban Creole exile community in cities like New York successfully encouraged such comparisons, using the connections its more prominent members had established with the Hearst and Pulitzer newspaper media empires headquartered there to turn Cuban insurrectionists into reincarnations of the Lexington and Concord Minutemen. New York's powerful yellow press and its allies across the country trumpeted the cause of Cuban freedom and stressed the similarities between the U.S. and Cuban wars of independence. The Spanish imperialists, meanwhile, were depicted in the American press as brutish and corrupt, their capacity for goodness, liberty, and equality diminished by their Catholicism, popery, and dark skin and features.<sup>53</sup>

White American soldiers and journalists arriving in Cuba in 1898 brought these media preconceptions with them only to discover a world apparently turned upside down: many Cubans and a disproportionate number of those fighting for independence from Spain were black or mulatto. Most Cuban soldiers were poor—many of them had to fight without proper uniforms, arms, or provisions—and appeared to U.S. soldiers to lack education, discipline, and deference. They lived off their Spanish enemies, taking guns, clothing, and other useful items from those they had killed. Americans found their sympathies drawn to those they were told to fight—the Spanish soldiers, who appeared to be (at least in the officer ranks) educated, disciplined, and white. The audacity and the lack of “civilization” among the Afro-Cuban soldiers, meanwhile, aroused

fears among Americans that the conditions that had allegedly prevailed in their own country during Reconstruction—irresponsible and incapable blacks on top—had taken root in Cuba.<sup>54</sup>

Neither individual U.S. soldiers nor the U.S. military authority took well to these discoveries, and the U.S. decision, soon after its victory over Spain, to occupy Cuba and to shape the new Cuban nation to its liking was informed by the conviction that the Cuban people, with its large population of African descent, could not be trusted to govern themselves. Lt. Gen. Leonard Wood, head of the American occupation authority and Theodore Roosevelt's close friend, did everything he could to impose American racial practices on the Cubans. He dissolved the integrated Liberation Army and attempted to replace it with an all-Creole guard. He reserved important jobs in the new Cuban government for Creoles and Spaniards and attempted to restrict the right to vote and other political rights to those who were white. Under this U.S. pressure more conservative elements of Cuban society came to the fore in 1899 and 1900. The middle-class and upper-class Creoles and Spanish settlers who dominated these conservative ranks wanted to sustain social arrangements in Cuba as the Spaniards had left them—Creoles on top, Afro-Cubans on the bottom. Some were enamored of the white supremacy arguments gripping the United States and hoped to make Cuba if not an Anglo-Saxon nation then at least one dominated by superior (and white) European stock. When the Cuban census of 1900 revealed that fully one-third of the Cuban nation was colored, conservative whites in the Cuban provisional government, with the support of the United States, passed a Europeans-only immigration policy meant to whiten the population.<sup>55</sup> Wood encouraged these efforts. And in order to secure the United States' ability to influence Cuban politics over the long term, Wood, before taking his occupation army home in 1902, compelled the Cuban Constitutional Convention to write the U.S. Platt Amendment into their constitution, giving the United States a perpetual and unchecked right of intervention into internal Cuban affairs.<sup>56</sup>

Yet even with their extraordinary power Wood and his U.S. occupation force often found themselves on the defensive against Cubans who refused to capitulate to U.S. racist imperatives and who reaffirmed the “raceless” conception of Cuban nationhood. Thus, Cuba rejected Wood's attempt to limit suffrage to whites by writing the principle of universal manhood suffrage into its constitution.<sup>57</sup> The U.S. effort to exclude blacks from the new nation's military also failed. When Cuba's first president, Tomas Estrada Palma, a social conservative elected in 1902 and much taken with America's Jim Crow policies, went too far in his determination to break with Martí's egalitarian tradition by excluding colored Cubans from the military, government, and economic opportunity, he provoked a political backlash. Organized by Cuba's Liberal Party and drawing heavily on Afro-Cubans, this opposition sparked the Revolution of 1906 that

drove the conservatives from power.<sup>58</sup> In such ways did Martí's dream—and the determination among Cubans not to let U.S. Jim Crow policies shape the racial politics of their nation—live on.

But the United States was in no mood for capitulation either. The 1906 revolution brought the U.S. army back to Cuba to restore order and reimpress U.S. social views on the Cuban people. This time, the influence of the Americans deepened a racial fissure within the Cuban population itself. As Afro-Cubans found their path to equality blocked again, a significant minority among them jettisoned Martí's ideology of racelessness and joined a separatist colored party, the Partido Independiente de Color (PIC), insisting that the particular needs of Afro-Cubans had to be addressed. The PIC became a magnet for political fury within Cuba, emanating from nationalists on both the Right and the Left who charged that its Afro-Cuban supporters had abandoned Martí's dream of a "raceless" Cuba. In 1912 government troops, with the tacit support of the United States, massacred thousands of insurrectionist PIC supporters. Aline Helg and other scholars have argued that this was one of the darkest days in the history of the Cuban Republic and in its colored people's struggle for racial equality.<sup>59</sup>

The extreme nature of the government's reaction to this black protest reveals how much Cuban nationalists remained discomfited by the African presence in Cuba and by the possibility that Cubans might, at some point, wish to declare their blackness to the world. This discomfiture was itself part of Martí's revolutionary legacy and expressed his worry that any effort to mark or legitimate racial difference in Cuba risked highlighting the sizable African population in Cuba Libre. Such highlighting, Martí had feared, could easily imperil the entire nationalist and republican project.

Is it too much to expect that the Cuban revolutionaries, especially the Creole ones, would have overcome entirely their prejudice against Afro-Cubans? Perhaps. Simply keeping U.S. Jim Crow policies out of Cuba at a time when the United States was exporting its ideologies, commodities, and military to the island republic was a tall order. Racism, increasingly sanctioned by science, had, by the early twentieth century, suffused so many nationalist discourses in the Eastern and Western Hemispheres that it was difficult to escape its influence. And the subjugation and colonization of Africa by European colonial powers at this time intensified international perceptions of Africans as too weak and primitive to become independent and self-governing. This condescending posture in turn prompted people of African descent in the Caribbean and the United States in the early twentieth century to proclaim the blackness of their culture and identity—a move apparent in the actions of the PIC in 1912 Cuba and, only a few years later, in the black nationalist movement led by Jamaica's Marcus Garvey in the Anglophone Caribbean and the United States.<sup>60</sup>

Some historians have argued that the PIC insurrection and defeat, despite the tragedy of the massacre, left a positive long-term legacy by opening up a political space for Afro-Cuban activism that had not been there before. Thus, by the late 1920s, a populist general and president, Gerardo Machado, not only appealed to the Afro-Cuban population for its support but also granted Afro-Cuban organizations a legitimacy and a freedom of operation not previously available to them. As Alejandra Bronfman has noted, Machado made it possible for Cubans to question the "notion of a raceless Cuban nationalism" and to invoke instead "images of distinct ethnic and racial groups, united in harmony."<sup>61</sup> Soon after some Cuban artists and intellectuals began popularizing a particular form of Cuban *mestizaje*, often captured by the word *afrocubanismo*, which, for the first time, publicly celebrated the mixing of African and Spanish heritages in Cuban culture. Acknowledging the existence of separate cultures had, finally, it seemed, made it possible for Cubans to talk about how the interpenetration of the two had given Cuba its distinctive and proud character.<sup>62</sup>

Still, neither the separatist conceptions of black nationalism nor the *mestizaje* celebration of cultural hybridity developed as fully in Cuba by 1940 as the former had in the Anglophone nations of the Western Hemisphere or as the latter had in Mexico and other Latin American countries. Blackness in Cuba remained a volatile subject, and fears that revealing its face could undermine the nationalist project endured. In this continuing fear of Cuba's blackness we can detect the continuing influence of racialized nationalist discourses on Cuba's quest for identity and culture.<sup>63</sup>

This essay has stressed both difference and similarity in its analysis of U.S., Mexican, and Cuban nationalisms in the years between 1880 and 1940. Difference is apparent in the distinct ways in which each country addressed the question of its own racial diversity, with the United States embracing an ideology of white supremacy, Mexico celebrating the mixing of the European and Indian races, and Cuba trumpeting its racelessness. The Mexican advocates of *mestizaje* and the Cuban supporters of racelessness acted boldly in developing formulas of belonging and integration that repudiated the racial nationalism of the United States, their physical neighbor and their region's geopolitical policeman and ideological hegemon. The Mexican and Cuban rejection of the U.S. model should be understood in terms of both demographic imperatives and the dynamics of nationalist ideology. The demographic imperative is clear. The United States could pursue its path to racial nationalism by excluding a relatively small percentage of its people—about 10 percent—from the nation. But in Mexico and Cuba, pursuing the U.S. strategy would have meant excluding or subordinating a majority (in Mexico) or near majority (in Cuba). Some conservative nation-

alists in each country favored such an approach, but their plans for whitening their nation through European immigration or through drastic restrictions on who could become citizens of their nations met with little success.

A key reason for this conservative failure lay in the dynamics of nationalist mobilization. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries nations were expected—and nations expected themselves—to be big, powerful, and unified. How could a new nation such as Cuba make a convincing case for its strength if it denied a large minority of its people participation in its polity? How could Mexico resist the imperial advances of France or the United States or build a modern industrial economy if its indigenous and mestizo populations had no stake in the country's defense or economic development?

Nationalism's injunction to be strong created a parallel one to be inclusive. The drive toward inclusion did not necessarily translate into democratic ideas and practice, but often it did, especially in situations when nationalism became bound up with social revolution—as was the case in both Mexico and Cuba. Thus, leading nationalists in Mexico and Cuba became determined to include nonwhite peoples in their nationalist projects and to do so in ways that invigorated republican institutions and practices. Thomas Holt has argued that this drive to include nonwhite peoples in the nation, apparent not just in Mexico and Cuba but in many other Latin American countries as well, did something fundamental to the European- and North American-centered discourses that dominated nationalist thought: it “challenged the exclusive association of modernity [and nationhood] with whiteness” and “decoupled racial mixture from the idea of racial degeneration.” It may be that Latin America's chief contribution to nationalist thought is to be found here—breaking the connection between whiteness and national greatness—far more than in the nation-building activities that Benedict Anderson has attributed to the continent's eighteenth-century “creole pioneers.”<sup>64</sup>

And yet, ultimately, the nationalists in Cuba and Mexico could not escape the racializing implications of the North American–European nationalist discourses they had embraced and, in some ways, transformed. The similarities between Cuban and Mexican nationalism, on the one hand, and U.S. nationalism (and, by extension, European nationalisms), on the other, were as impressive as the divergences. In all three countries national strength was thought to require racial or cultural homogeneity. In all three certain groups were identified as incapable of overcoming their difference from the homogeneous mainstream; they would therefore have to be subordinated, expelled, or hidden. Thus, even as Mexican nationalists were welcoming Indians and mestizos into the Mexican nation, they were distancing themselves from groups—blacks and Chinese—who were thought to weaken or contaminate the Indo-European basis of *mestizaje*. And even as Cuban nationalists were insisting that race would not be

a defining characteristic of their nationhood, they were engaged in a sub rosa process of racialization, rendering invisible the African elements of their population and culture.

Why did Mexican and Cuban nationalists end up reproducing racializing tendencies that they were, in other respects, so determined to repudiate? One thinks of Marx's aphorism that people make their own history but not always in circumstances of their own choosing. To become a nationalist in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century was to enter a force field of potent and interpenetrating global discourses on nation, modernity, and race. Here one encountered powerful attractions and repulsions, not all of which could be controlled or overcome. In the late nineteenth century fashioning a strong and modern nation almost everywhere meant building an industrial economy and transforming the country's population into a vigorous, productive, and disciplined citizenry. Even under the best of circumstances this was not easy work. And nations in the 1880s and 1890s seemed beset by sharply deteriorating conditions: economic turmoil and depression, unemployment, class conflict, war, and regional and cultural resistance to national consolidation. In these circumstances of economic and political uncertainty and amidst the developing conviction that nation building was a zero-sum game, one nation's advance requiring another nation's decline, nationalists everywhere sought assurance that their nation was destined to succeed. Many found this assurance in racialized discourses that spoke with conviction about the special qualities that either inhered in or could be imparted to their people. As long as conditions were created (unity, homogeneity, and racial integrity) for those special qualities to flourish, then the nation's future would be secure.

If we understand that Mexican and Cuban nationalists had to operate within this force field of globalized discourses just as much as U.S. and European nationalists did, then their failure to free themselves entirely from racializing tendencies becomes more comprehensible. A full reckoning with the racist elements and the homogeneity principle of nationalist discourses would come, but only after nationalism's force field had been ruptured by two world wars, the Holocaust, and both the successes and failures of scores of new states emerging in Africa and Asia. That it took so much to disrupt these discourses speaks to the extraordinary power that the nexus of race and nation once exerted over the imagining of national communities.

#### NOTES

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drafts of this essay. A special thanks to Mary Kay Vaughan for encouraging me to move ahead with this exercise in comparative history, for reading multiple drafts of this essay, and for educating me in Latin American and especially Mexican history.

1. For one of the most interesting explorations of this paradox see Edmund Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom* (New York, 1975). On the 1790 law see James Kettner, *The Development of American Citizenship* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1978), and Matthew Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Americans and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, Mass., 1998).

2. On the promise and failure of Reconstruction see Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863–1877* (New York, 1988); Steven Hahn, *A Nation under Our Feet* (Cambridge, Mass., 2003); Ira Berlin et al., *Slaves No More: Three Essays on Emancipation and the Civil War* (New York, 1992). On the restoration of elite white power in the South and the implementation of Jim Crow see C. Vann Woodward, *The Origins of the New South* (Baton Rouge, La., 1971); C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (New York, 1955); Edward L. Ayers, *The Promise of the New South: Life after Reconstruction* (New York, 1992); David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, Mass., 2001).

3. On the late-nineteenth-century history of American Indians see Philip Weeks, *Farewell, My Nation: The American Indian and the United States, 1820–1890* (Arlington Heights, Ill., 1990); Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians* (Lincoln, Neb., 1984); Robert Mardock, *Reformers and the American Indian* (Columbia, Mo., 1971). On the Indian image in the white mind see Philip Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven, Conn., 1998); Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600–1860* (Middletown, Conn., 1973); and Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America* (New York, 1992).

4. Leonard A. Carlson, *Indians, Bureaucrats, and Land* (Westport, Conn., 1981); Christine Bolt, *American Indian Policy and American Reform* (London, 1987); Francis Paul Prucha, *The Indians in American Society from the Revolutionary War to the Present* (Berkeley, Calif., 1985).

5. On Croly's and Roosevelt's New Nationalism and its connection to the American tradition of civic nationalism see Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, N.J., 2001), chap. 2.

6. For a sampling of historians who celebrated this new nation see George Mowry, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement* (Madison, Wisc., 1946); Arthur S. Link, *Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, 1910–1917* (New York, 1954); and Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., *The Age of Roosevelt* (Boston, 1957–60), 3 vols.

7. On Chinese and Japanese exclusion see Andrew Gyory, *Closing the Gate: Race, Politics, and the Chinese Exclusion Act* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1998); Lucy Salyer, *Laws Harsh as Tigers: Chinese Immigrants and the Shaping of Modern Immigration Law* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1995); Erika Lee, *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration during the Exclusion Era, 1882–1943* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2003); Yuji Ichioka, *The Issei: The World of the First Generation Japanese Immigrants, 1880–1924* (London, 1988); Roger Daniels, *Not Like Us: Immigrants and Minorities in America, 1890–1924* (Chicago, 1997).

8. *Congressional Record*, 17 March 1924, 4389.

9. *Ibid.*, 8 April 1924, 4389.

10. Gerstle, *American Crucible*, chaps. 2–3; Israel Zangwill, *The Melting-Pot: Drama in Four Acts* (1909; New York, 1923); Gary Gerstle, "The Protean Character of American Liberalism," *American Historical Review* 99 (October 1994): 1043–73; Jeffrey C. Stewart, ed., *The Critical Temper of Alain Locke: A Selection of His Essays on Art and Culture* (New York, 1983); Randolph Bourne, "Transnational America," in Olaf Hansen, ed., *The Radical Will: Selected Writings, 1911–1918* (New York, 1977); George W. Stocking Jr., *Race, Culture, and Evolution: Essays in the History of Anthropology* (New York, 1968); Lawrence C. Kelly, *The Assault on Assimilation: John Collier and the Origins of Indian Reform Policy* (Albuquerque, N.M., 1983); Rachel Davis-DuBois, "Adventures in Intercultural Education," Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1940.

11. Gerstle, *American Crucible*, chap. 1; Cecilia Elizabeth O'Leary, *To Die For: The Paradox of American Nationalism* (Princeton, N.J., 1998); Blight, *Race and Reunion*.

12. On the importance of horizontal comradeship to nationalism see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London, 1983). On the importance of nationalism to the unleashing of democratic enthusiasms see Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1870: Programme, Myth, Reality* (New York, 1990); and Gerstle, *American Crucible*, 148–49. Claudio Lomnitz has reminded us that the homogenizing and democratizing effects of nationalism should not prevent us from understanding how nationalism can simultaneously reproduce relationships of hierarchy and inequality in families, communities, and corporations ("Nationalism as a Practical System: Benedict Anderson's Theory of Nationalism from the Vantage Point of Latin America," in Miguel Angel Centeno and Fernando López-Alves, eds., *The Other Mirror: Grand Theory through the Lens of Latin America* [Princeton, N.J., 2001], 334–37). Another version of this essay appears under the same title in Claudio Lomnitz, *Deep Mexico, Silent Mexico: An Anthology of Nationalism* (Minneapolis, 2001), 3–34.

13. See Mark Wasserman, *Everyday Life and Politics in Nineteenth Century Mexico: Men, Women, and War* (Albuquerque, N.M., 2000), 91–157; Florencia E. Mallon, *Peasant and Nation: The Making of Postcolonial Mexico and Peru* (Berkeley, Calif., 1995), chaps. 2–5.

14. *Ibid.*

15. Quoted in Charles A. Hale, *The Transformation of Liberalism in Late Nineteenth-Century Mexico* (Princeton, N.J., 1989), 236.

16. For more on the attitude of Porfirian state builders toward the question of European immigration see William Raat, "Los intelectuales, el positivismo, y la cuestión indígena," *Historia Mexicana* 20 (1970): 415–21. For general background on the policies of the Porfirian regime see Wasserman, *Everyday Life and Politics*, 159–228.

17. Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo, *Mexico at the World's Fairs: Crafting a Modern Nation* (Berkeley, Calif., 1996), 91–99.

18. Quoted in Barbara A. Tenenbaum, "Streetwise History: The Paseo de la Reforma and the Porfirian State, 1876–1910," in William H. Beezley, Cheryl English Martin, and William E. French, eds., *Rituals of Rule, Rituals of Resistance: Public Celebrations and Pop-*

ular Culture in Mexico (Wilmington, Del., 1984), 139. On the colonial, protonationalist roots of Aztec celebration see D. A. Brading, *The Origins of Mexican Nationalism* (Cambridge, 1985).

19. Porfirian state builders could also be ruthless in their approach to questions of Indian acculturation and modernization, though many such efforts in the late nineteenth century were ineffective. For the limitations on educational reform, for example, see Mary Kay Vaughan, *The State, Education, and Social Class in Mexico, 1880–1928* (DeKalb, Ill., 1982), 9–78.

20. John S. D. Eisenhower, *Intervention: The United States and the Mexican Revolution, 1913–1917* (New York, 1993).

21. For an exception to this tendency see Thomas C. Holt, “Foreword,” in Nancy P. Applebaum, Anne S. Macpherson, and Karin Alejandra Rosemblatt, eds., *Race and Nation in Modern Latin America* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2003), xi–xii.

22. J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer and Sketches of Eighteenth-Century America* (1782; New York, 1981), 69–70.

23. Zangwill, *The Melting-Pot*, 33.

24. Quoted in Alan Knight, “Racism, Revolution, and Indigenismo: Mexico, 1910–1940,” in Richard Graham, ed., *The Idea of Race in Latin America, 1870–1940* (Austin, Tex., 1990), 84–85.

25. Vasconcelos, “The Latin-American Basis of Mexican Civilization,” in José Vasconcelos and Manuel Gamio, *Aspects of Mexican Civilization* (Chicago, 1926), 84. See also José Vasconcelos, *The Cosmic Race: A Bilingual Edition* (Baltimore, Md., 1997).

26. Mary Kay Vaughan, “Nationalizing the Countryside: Schools and Rural Communities in the 1930s,” Desmond Rochfort, “National Identity in Mexican Mural Painting: Rivera, Orozco and Siqueiros,” and Marco Velazquez and Mary Kay Vaughan, “Mestizaje and Musical Nationalism in Mexico,” all in Mary Kay Vaughan and Stephen E. Lewis, eds., *The Eagle and the Virgin: National Identity, Memory, and Utopia in Mexico, 1920–1940* (Durham, N.C., 2006). See also David A. Brading, “Manuel Gamio and Official Indigenismo in Mexico,” *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 7, no. 1 (1988): 79–80.

27. Velazquez and Vaughan, “Mestizaje and Musical Nationalism”; Rochfort, “National Identity.”

28. To comprehend the *mestizaje* underlying U.S. mass culture in the 1930s see Michael Denning, *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century* (New York, 1997); Lewis A. Erenberg, *Swingin’ the Dream: Big Band Jazz and the Rebirth of American Culture* (Chicago, 1998); and Lary May, *The Big Tomorrow: Hollywood and the Politics of the American Way* (Chicago, 2000).

29. Gerstle, *American Crucible*, chap. 5; Matthew Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color* (Cambridge, Mass., 1998); Michael Rogin, *Blackface, White Noise: Jewish Immigrants in the Hollywood Melting Pot* (Berkeley, Calif., 1996).

30. Vasconcelos, “The Latin-American Basis of Mexican Civilization,” 92–94.

31. Though Lamarckian thought had a longer life in Latin America than in North America, support for eugenical approaches was widespread by the 1920s. See Nancy

Stepan, *The Hour of Eugenics: Race, Gender, and Nation in Latin America* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1991).

32. Quoted in Knight, “Racism, Revolution, and Indigenismo,” 88.

33. *Ibid.*

34. Brading, “Manuel Gamio,” 82–88.

35. On the Indianists see Knight, “Racism, Revolution, and Indigenismo.” For a more sympathetic treatment of the *indigenismo* movement see Alexander Dawson, “From Models for the Nation to Model Citizens: Indigenismo and the ‘Revindication’ of the Mexican Indian, 1920–1940,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 30 (May 1998): 279–308.

36. Velazquez and Vaughan, “Mestizaje and Musical Nationalism”; Mauricio Tenorio Trillo, “Stereophonic Scientific Modernisms: Social Science between Mexico and the United States, 1880s–1930s,” *Journal of American History* 86 (December 1999): 1156–87, 1174; Knight, “Racism, Revolution, and Indigenismo,” 95.

37. Knight, “Racism, Revolution, and Indigenismo,” 95.

38. Evelyn Hu-DeHart, “Huagong and Huaohong: The Chinese as Laborers and Merchants in Latin America and the Caribbean,” *Amerasia Journal* 28 (2002): 64–90; Evelyn Hu-DeHart, “Racism and Anti-Chinese Persecution in Sonora, Mexico, 1876–1932,” *Amerasia* 9 (1982): 1–28; Eugenio Chang-Rodríguez, “Chinese Labor Migration into Latin America in the Nineteenth Century,” *Revista de Historia de America* (December 1958): 375–97; Leo M. Jacques, “Chinese Merchants in Sonora, 1900–1931,” in Luz M. Martínez Montiel, *Asiatic Migrations in Latin America* (Mexico City, 1981), 13–20; Lee, *At America’s Gates*; Erika Lee, “Enforcing the Borders: Chinese Exclusion along the U.S. Borders with Canada and Mexico, 1882–1924,” *Journal of American History* 89 (June 2002): 54–86.

39. Quoted in Gerardo Rénique, “Race, Region, and Nation: Sonora’s Anti-Chinese Racism and Mexico’s Postrevolutionary Nationalism, 1920s–1930s,” in Applebaum, Macpherson, and Rosemblatt, *Race and Nation*, 223.

40. Knight, “Racism, Revolution, and Indigenismo,” 97; see also Charles C. Cumberland, “The Sonora Chinese and the Mexican Revolution,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 40 (May 1960): 191–211.

41. For a thoughtful discussion of the racializing implications of *mestizaje* see Lourdes Martínez-Echazábal, “Mestizaje and the Discourse of National Cultural Identity in Latin America, 1845–1959,” in *Latin American Perspectives* 25 (May 1998): 21–42; and for an incisive look at the way in which the ideal of “whiteness” survived in Mexico through both the Liberal and revolutionary periods see Claudio Lomnitz-Adler, *Exits from the Labyrinth: Culture and Ideology in Mexican National Space* (Berkeley, Calif., 1992), 261–81.

42. Cuban nationalists also sought to hide the presence of Chinese immigrants. Almost 125,000 Chinese immigrants had come to Cuba between 1847 and 1874, most as indentured servants, at a time when Spanish imperialists were searching for an alternative labor supply to African slaves. Thousands died in transit, during their period of indenture, or shortly thereafter, so that by 1900 the total Chinese population had shrunk to fifteen thousand. Still, the Chinese had formed a significant part of the nineteenth-century Cuban population (near 10 percent at its peak), made important contributions

to the economy, and participated in the anticolonial uprisings such as the Ten Years War. Nevertheless, their presence and contributions were all but erased from Cuba's historical memory by the founders of the Cuban Republic. See Hu-DeHart, "Huagong and the Huaohong," 68–69; and Chang-Rodriguez, "Chinese Labor Migration," 377. For a brief reference to their participation in the Ten Years War see Ada Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution, 1868–1898* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1999), 48–63.

43. Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, 2.

44. On this thirty-year struggle see *ibid.*; the standard work on the abolition of slavery is Rebecca Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba: The Transition to Free Labor* (Princeton, N.J., 1985).

45. The colored proportion of Cuba's population had declined from more than half to about a third between the 1840s and the 1890s due to limitations on the slave trade that Spain reluctantly agreed to in the 1840s in response to international pressure. See Aline Helg, "Race in Argentina and Cuba, 1880–1930: Theory, Policies, and Popular Reaction," in Graham, *The Idea of Race*, 47.

46. John M. Kirk, *José Martí: Mentor of the Cuban Nation* (Tampa, Fla., 1983).

47. José Martí, *The America of José Martí*, translated from Spanish by Juan de Onís (New York, 1953), 310, 308.

48. *Ibid.*, 310.

49. Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*.

50. On Martí's disillusionment with the United States see Philip S. Foner, "Introduction," in José Martí, *Inside the Monster: Writings on the United States and American Imperialism*, ed. Philip S. Foner (New York, 1975), 15–48. In a letter to Manuel Cercado in 1895 Martí wrote of the United States, "I have lived inside the monster and know its entrails—and my weapon is only the slingshot of David" (*ibid.*, 3).

51. See, for example, Aline Helg, *Our Rightful Share: The Afro-Cuban Struggle for Equality, 1886–1912* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1995).

52. Martí, *Inside the Monster*, 150.

53. On the importance to Cuban politics and culture of the Cuban exile community in New York see Louis A. Pérez Jr., *On Becoming Cuban: Identity, Nationality, and Culture* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1999), chaps. 1 and 2. See also Allesandra Lorini, "Engendering 'Patria': Transnational Meanings of Late Nineteenth-Century Cuba Libre," unpublished essay, 2003. On American perceptions of the Spanish in Cuba see Gerald F. Linderman, *The Mirror of War: American Society and the Spanish-American War* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1974).

54. Linderman, *The Mirror of War*.

55. Alejandro de la Fuente, "Race, National Discourse, and Politics in Cuba: An Overview," *Latin American Perspectives* 25 (May 1998): 47–48.

56. James E. Bradford, *Crucible of Empire: The Spanish-American War and Its Aftermath* (Annapolis, Md., 1993); Louis A. Pérez, *Cuba under the Platt Amendment, 1902–1934* (Pittsburgh, Pa., 1986); James H. Hitchman, *Leonard Wood and Cuban Independence, 1898–1902* (The Hague, 1971).

57. Alejandro de la Fuente, "Myths of Racial Democracy, 1900–1912," *Latin American Research Review* 34 (1999): 55–56; Helg, *Our Rightful Share*, 128.

58. Lillian Guerra, "From Revolution to Involvement in the Early Cuban Republic: Conflicts over Race, Class, and Nation, 1902–1906," in Applebaum, Macpherson, and Roseblatt, *Race and Nation*, 132–62.

59. Helg, *Our Rightful Share*.

60. On the influence of these international, scientific, and racist discourses on nationalism in Cuba see Alejandra Marina Bronfman, "Reforming Race in Cuba, 1902–1940," Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 2000; and Stephan Palmie, *Wizards and Scientists: Explorations in Afro-Cuban Modernity and Tradition* (Durham, N.C., 2002), esp. chap. 3. On the rise of radical forms of black nationalism in the Caribbean see Winston James, *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia: Caribbean Radicalism in Early Twentieth-Century America* (New York, 1998).

61. Bronfman, "Reforming Race in Cuba," 142; de la Fuente, "Race, National Discourse, and Politics in Cuba."

62. Robin D. Moore, *Nationalizing Blackness: Afro-Cubanismo and Artistic Revolution in Havana, 1920–1949* (Pittsburgh, Pa., 1997); Bronfman, "Reforming Race in Cuba," chap. 5.

63. Vera M. Kutzinski, *Sugar's Secrets: Race and the Erotics of Cuban Nationalism* (Charlottesville, Va., 1993); Palmie, *Wizards and Scientists*; Martínez-Echazabal, "Mestizaje."

64. Thomas Holt, "Foreword," in Applebaum, Macpherson, and Roseblatt, *Race and Nation*, xi. For critical approaches to Anderson's argument about the role of eighteenth-century Creole pioneers in the making of modern nationalism see Lomnitz, "Nationalism as a Practical System"; and Eric Van Young, "Revolution and Imagined Communities in Mexico, 1810–1821" in this volume.