Dear participants;

The paper I’ve submitted is part of a manuscript that is very much in progress. What follows is a brief summary of the manuscript, in order to put the paper, which is a version of the final chapter, in context.

The project traces the formation of Cuba’s multi-racial legal and political order in the years following independence in 1902. It examines the construction and transformation of political identities. Nationalists in the early Cuban Republic aimed to transcend racial categories in the interest of promoting a universalizing (male) and individualistic notion of citizenship. By the 1940’s, however, both activists and state officials came to rely on a collective notion of citizenship. My interest lies in how this (incomplete and uneven) shift, which changed the terms of citizenship for all Cubans, changed understandings of race in particular.

Social science and law play a central role in this story because of the way they produced (and consumed) knowledge and social categories. While social science was initially concerned with reform, it increasingly sought to depoliticize, in response to growing mass mobilization, those perceived as threatening to the state. Black intellectuals were instrumental in the ways in which they engaged changing social scientific categories, critiqued them, and turned them to their own uses. The narrative thus engages intellectuals, institutions and ideas and the complex interactions between them as they both buttressed one another and came into conflict. This project is not so much about ‘integration into a political order’ as it is about the transformation of a political order and of the terms of participation for all involved.

As you’ll see, the final chapter opens in 1937, on the eve of the constitutional convention which resulted in the 1940 Constitution. It looks at the ways black activists, who have fostered a bout of mobilization in the early and mid-thirties, engage both ethnographic, folklorized versions of ‘African traditions’ and the opportunities to advocate legal reform in their struggles towards social and economic equity.

I look forward to hearing your comments and suggestions in November, and to reading your papers.

Sincerely;

Alejandra Bronfman
On January 30, 1937, Antonio Beruff Mendieta, the Mayor of Havana, sent a query to the recently founded Sociedad de Estudios Afrocubanos. He asked whether it was advisable, as part of the upcoming Fiestas de Carnaval, to allow the performance of comparsas. Comparsas were musical ensembles with roots in the slave processions that had been part of Día de los Reyes and pre-Lenten carnival celebrations in colonial Cuba. Over the years they had come to approximate ambulatory theater, with musicians and dancers in spectacular costumes reenacting historical scenes. In 1937, the Commission of Tourism had recommended their inclusion in that year’s fiestas in the hopes that tourists would flock to the display of traditional culture. The mayor agreed that the reauthorization of comparsas, which had been officially prohibited since 1913, would attract tourists. He hoped as well that it might reacquaint the city’s own residents with their rich history and folklore. Critics of this plan had warned him, however, that the comparsas would incite “racial conflicts and public disturbances.” Was there any truth to this, and could the Sociedad please provide some expert advice? The prominent Cuban
criminologist, ethnographer, and politician Fernando Ortiz, then president of the
Sociedad, wrote back an extensive reply. In it he advocated the performance of
comparsas.¹

This seems to have allayed the Mayor’s fears, for the comparsas took place as
scheduled. Soon afterwards the historian and member of the Sociedad de Estudios
Afro cubanos Emilio Roig de Leuchsenring contributed a description of the brilliant,
surreal scene. Nine different comparsa companies had paraded through the streets, each
with a different theme: Los Mambises, Los Componedores, Los Colombianos modernos,
Los Marqueses, Los Guaracheros, Las Bolleras, Los Modernistas, El Barracón and Los
Guajiros. The groups included between fifty and one hundred performers each, many of
them carrying musical instruments or banners, the others executing the choreography in
all its syncopated complexity. While some of the groups had remained within the
traditional thematic norms, others stepped outside them to follow a more ironic path. In
what was according to Leuchsenring a wry comment on the entire proceedings, the men
in Los Modernistas paraded as Indians, carrying bows and arrows, while the women wore
Parisian haute-couture fashions. An observer or participant might well have agreed with
Ortiz’s assessment of the pageant’s unifying potential: “it is precisely these collective
amusements that integrate the people, through the most emotional and intimate aspects of
culture.”²

But a look just beyond the street-level proscenium reveals that the comparsas
provoked a heated controversy. The performance of the comparsas set off an extensive
debate in the monthly publication Adelante, one of Cuba’s major black newspapers. If
the Sociedad de Estudios Afro cubanos and the mayor believed the comparsas had
afforded Havana’s visitors and residents lively and even instructive entertainment, *Adelante*’s commentators viewed them with varying degrees of hostility, bickering over the quality and degree of exploitation in evidence. For many, these performances only signaled blacks’ continued marginalization as less than equal citizens. This debate over the politics of representation called up issues that had been subject to debate in Cuba since the onset of the republic in 1902: how should cultural practices and traditions fit into a national imaginary premised on modernity? To what extent were paternalistic state-sponsored displays of those practices detracting from the realities of persistent social and economic inequalities? Who, among social scientists, politicians or political activists, white or of color, ought to control the representation of cultures? (None of the participants in the debate devoted much energy to the perspectives of the artists or musicians).

At stake was a struggle over blacks’ actual experience of the ideal of equality before the law as it had been granted in the 1901 Constitution’s Article Eleven. Although a race-transcendent nationalist ideology had promulgated this ideal, most notably in the form of universal manhood suffrage, the reality of equality was in 1937 a variably achieved goal, characterized by tensions between measures of black participation in politics and public life and ongoing denigratory practices in judicial, occupational and recreational arenas. Moreover, instances of anti-black violence in 1912, 1919 and 1933 had both revealed and underscored the fragility of claims about racial equality to all Cubans.

A notion of citizenship as “a set of mutual contested claims between agents of states and members of socially constructed categories” is useful here. Combined with T.
H. Marshall’s concept of ‘social worth,’ as crucial, beyond the recognition of formal equality, to the experience of equality, the idea of citizenship as a set of mutually contested claims provides a framework for understanding the link between *comparsas* and citizenship. Critics of the *comparsas* argued that this particular use of African traditions demonstrated that though formal equality was recognized, social worth was tenuous. Social inequality, these critics argued, was persistently underscored and in some ways reproduced in many versions of African traditions as stereotyped spectacles. As such they proved an obstacle to the meaningful social equality that ought to accompany citizenship.\(^5\) Citizenship, in the minds of those in pursuit of racial equality, became linked to representation in its dual sense: that which referred to portrayals or depictions of a particular group as well as the meaningful presence of that group in the structures of the state. This late 1930’s struggle over the meaning of citizenship is the subject of this chapter. The new constitution, written and adopted in 1940, included an article declaring illegal and punishable all discrimination based on race, color, sex, and religion. My contention is that black political activists and intellectuals took advantage of an unusually consensual episode to bring, more explicitly than ever before, the issue of discrimination to the law-making agenda. The combined outcome of years of mobilization, both as autonomous entities and with intensifying, if uneven, engagement with the state had changed the terms of struggle. No longer on the defensive about claiming ‘blackness’, intellectuals’ critiques of the politics of culture, in this case tourist versions of folklore, did not need to rest on “high culture” as a common referent. With regard to constitutional debates, activists came to demand more of the state than mere recognition of equality. The pursuit of “civic citizenship”, with its emphasis on autonomy and education, had
slowly fallen away as autonomy became less and less tenable, and incursions into public arenas had all too often animated hostility. They thus engaged a rapidly changing political context with ambivalent memories of failed strategies and a sharpened sense of the contingency of their status. Although mobilized Cubans of color were not a uniform or homogeneous entity, they issued a clear demand with regard to the constitution.

Further research will undoubtedly expose the fault lines and tensions within the ‘raza de color’. For the moment, however, I will focus on the conditions that allowed for their powerful and significant presence in the Convención Constituyente of 1940. The debates over the article in the constitutional assembly demonstrate that there was broad agreement (at least in public) about the desired ends. But there was also profound uncertainty about the means required to achieve those ends. In the end, the constitution amounted to an uneasy victory that created rich grounds for subsequent contention.

BATISTA: SLIPPERY POPULIST

The reconsideration of citizenship by Cubans of color took place in a national context of reconfigured roles for state and society. In the aftermath of the Machadato in 1933, Fulgencio Batista had accumulated power as the head of the politically dominant military forces. With military backing he had contrived an uneasy peace after years of Depression-induced hardship and violent terrorism perpetrated by both the government and its opposition. In 1934 the Mendieta government, under Batista’s vigilance, had negotiated the Jones-Costigan law which placated sugar interests as it raised sugar prices and guaranteed US markets for Cuban sugar. When a wave of strikes demanding agrarian reform and the end of military rule swept the island in 1935, Batista responded
by suspending civil rights, jailing hundreds of opposition leaders, and dissolving all labor unions. The momentary stability gave Batista some room to maneuver, which he used to shore up his legitimacy beyond the military and sugar interests. A growing consensus in support of increased state intervention in economic and social arenas consolidated Batista’s authority. Both conservatives and progressives began to look towards an expanded state: for the left it seemed to promise economic well-being, and for the right it would serve to anchor ‘stability’ with regards to labor unrest and access to foreign markets. After 1936 this allowed him to create initiatives which, as Robert Whitney has observed, were cast as appeals to ‘el pueblo.’ Batista would then fashion himself as a ‘populist’ with gestures and spectacles appealing to the people. But ultimately he ought to be considered, as Alan Knight has suggested, a “slippery populist” due to his ability to smoothly maneuver amongst bitterly opposed interests.

The sweeping social and economic measures set out in his Three-Year Plan, or Plan Trienal, (1937) show the extent to which Batista aimed to create a more interventionist state. The plan included the abolition of large estates, a new national banking system, health insurance, and literacy programs. It also included a plan for the reorganization of the sugar industry into a profit-sharing enterprise between producers and laborers, with the state acting as mediator between the two. Although the level of intervention and the direction of redistribution gave rise to dissatisfaction amongst the Cuban Association of Sugar Manufacturers, it did not dissuade them from subscribing to the general principle that an expanded state would serve them in the long run, providing stability and efficient economic structures.
Efforts to generate a dependable source of revenue included the revival of tourism after a lull induced by the depression and fears of political violence. In order to placate critics of tourism’s corrupting and immoral influence, government officials promoted cultural tourism. They began to emphasize historical sites, museums, folkloric practices and natural beauty over the casinos, cabarets and horseraces that had dominated tourism in during Machado’s regime from 1924-1933. Comparsas, as we have seen, formed part of this scheme to exhibit national cultures as wholesomely as possible. ¹⁰

Batista’s proposal to draft a new version of the constitution provided another way to garner support. Machado’s 1928 unilateral constitutional reform and subsequent dictatorship had stripped the existing constitution of any legitimacy as the blueprint of Cuban democracy. In the transitional years after the fall of Machado, many sectors had pressured for the drafting of a new constitution. Batista, realizing that heeding this call would nurture the legitimacy he sought, had by 1938 given top priority to producing that document. In the interest of giving life to the unfinished business of the revolution of 1933, he swept aside his own Plan Trienal and ceded to the calls for a new Cuban ‘Magna Carta’. ¹¹ In a flash of self-abnegating rhetoric he cast himself as both in control of and responsive to the people. As a contemporary observer described it, “in a dramatic and unexpected statement, the strongman of the island told the people that he was sacrificing his plans for social and economic reconstruction of the Republic because of the clamor for a Constituent Assembly.” ¹²

This growing faith in the role of government as mediator of social conflict mirrored developments abroad. In Latin America, post-depression states expanded in efforts to rescue shattered economies and to harness discontent. Governments across the
political spectrum partook of this strategy. One of the legacies of Mexico’s left-leaning revolution was an expanded state, as was Vargas’ Estado Novo, the ideological content of which is still debated by historians. In the Dominican Republic, Trujillo had found ways to consolidate his dictatorship by ensuring that the state was far more present in everyday life than ever before. Likewise, in the United States the New Deal ushered in an era of unprecedented state growth.\textsuperscript{13}

Whether or not Roosevelt’s New Deal served as a model for Cubans looking to ease economic and political tensions that had intensified during the depression, the US’s foreign policy directly affected the landscape of Cuban politics. The United States’ retreat from direct intervention as espoused by the Good Neighbor Policy gave Batista more freedom and greater leverage in domestic politics. He was able to support labor over US business interests often enough to allow him to expand his popular base, resulting in a high degree of political mobilization. In the brief interlude of the Good Neighbor policy (1934-45), Batista’s negotiations with leftist groups and especially the Communist Party were a possibility that would become unimaginable in later years.\textsuperscript{14} As the concerns (and the membership) of black associations and the Communist Party overlapped during this period, it proved a particularly auspicious time to mobilize around issues of socio-economic and racial equality.

\textit{Dead Letters, Live Letters}

After 1935 the state’s failed egalitarian promise became the focal point of activists’ calls to action. Offering his grim assessment of current affairs, black activist Salvador García Agüero asserted that “there exists, undeniably, a widespread neglect of
blacks in all arenas of national life, perpetuated at given intervals by those who keep prejudice alive. This has rendered equality before the law and in the Constitution a dead letter.” The ‘letra muerta,’ a ubiquitous trope in the writings of black intellectuals, indicates a faltering faith in the Constitution’s ability to implement the Republic’s egalitarian ideals. Recent history, they argued, had proven that if the Republic’s founding words—‘con todos y para todos’—had exuded moral power in earlier years, the thorns of prejudice had punctured their core and drained the life out of them.

Whether or not the letter of equality was as cold and lifeless as they claimed, it is also important in the context of this analysis to look at the ways in which García Agüero and others responded to this perception. If Cubans had failed to integrate a commitment to equality into the practices of everyday life and into the agendas of institutions, it would be up to leaders such as García Agüero to marshal available resources and accrue the moral and political force to revive, or reincarnate, those letters.

_Adelante_, founded in 1935 with national and often radical aspirations, grew out of this conviction. In its monthly publication, chroniclers of the Havana-based association looked back to the anti-black violence that followed Machado’s fall as a turning point that had animated their oppositional stance. Ernesto Pinto Interián, one of _Adelante’s_ contributors, blamed the intensified overt racism on an uncharacteristically inappropriate remark made by one of Cuba’s eminent intellectuals. When a dying Enrique José Varona had said that “the race of blacks has been indifferent to the sufferings of our Republic during the bloody struggle to topple Machado’s tyranny,” he had unleashed, according to Pinto, “a systematic and unjust persecution against the black race.” As a result, he argued, the few blacks with civil appointments had been ousted in the chaos that ensued
after Machado’s fall. Pinto saw in the betrayals of blacks by white political patrons who reneged on promises of protection the stuff of which the “tragedy of blacks in their political phase” was made. Already mobilized groups would have to demonstrate greater singularity of purpose: “as black societies began to mobilize, it became necessary to leave behind uncooperative individuals, so that we could create a more unified collective and work to determine our own future.” And later, with growing institutional aspirations: “we agreed, in concordance with the Sociedad Santo Domingo . . . to the proposition of initiating the preparations to organize a convention of black societies, in order to articulate and record the feelings, hopes, and ambitions of our ethnic conglomerate.”

In efforts to present a more unified front the editors and contributors to Adelante’s monthly publication directed its readers towards a greater awareness of political, social and economic inequalities. Unlike more elite publications which had neglected or underemphasized class issues, many of Adelante’s contributors argued that eliminating or attenuating economic disparities ought to be a principal focus of those concerned with racial inequality. Indeed, many of the contributors, such as Salvador García Agüero, Juan Marinello, and Romulo Lachatañeré, were also active in socialist and communist organizations. But these leaders vacillated in determining the ultimate cause of inequality: they argued that racial discrimination in the public and private sectors ought to be addressed separately from the economic issues of low wages and unemployment. If they held indeterminate beliefs as to the precise origins of the problem, they were more certain of what was immediately required: “we must work intensely, until we achieve the
kind of understanding and cohesion necessary in order to achieve the status we deserve and the rights that have been eternally denied us... GREATER UNITY FOR ALL.”20

The directors of Adelante aimed not only to galvanize a broadly-based black political identity but also to encourage higher degrees of contention and dissent. They supported and reported on large gatherings such as the Convención de Sociedades Negras, which took place in Santiago in 1936. They also tried to influence the everyday practices and beliefs of blacks throughout Cuba, advocating the formation of local “amigos de Adelante.” These clubs were intended to promote education and exercise vigilance over local discriminatory practices by bringing them to the attention of local authorities. Adelante kept track of the many clubs that sprang up, creating a network of information about like-minded activists all over the country.21 Blacks were also asked to exercise their strength as consumers by choosing establishments that advertised in Adelante.

Through commemorations of struggles for equality throughout various regions of the country the editors created a sense of shared purpose. Blacks in Havana, they showed, were just as prone to rebuff or humiliation as those in Santiago.22 Articles transported the minds of readers not only across Cuba but from Cuba to the United States as well. A regular column featured articles on North American activists, such as W.E.B. DuBois and Paul Robeson, as well as contributions by noted writers such as Langston Hughes. Essays on Antonio Maceo and Quintín Bandera as well as Martín Morúa Delgado, Juan Gualberto Gómez and Placido constructed a genealogy of military, political and literary struggles for equality over time. Women, engaged in their own struggles towards greater equity, also received attention, especially through the astute
writing of one outspoken feminist, Cloris Tejo. The goal of greater unity led the editors to tackle a prickly issue: the existence of tense divisions between blacks and mulattos, which until that time had been a public secret. Santiago in particular was infamous for this, as many mulatto sociedades excluded blacks and vice-versa. The editors encouraged exchange regarding this troubling practice with a survey that invited readers to write in with their thoughts as to why this occurred and how to put an end to it.23

Despite such efforts, progress, inevitably, was uneven. After the first eight months production had tripled in volume and the journal attained nation-wide circulation. Another group of black intellectuals, aspiring to start a publication of their own entitled Igualdad, bowed out after a few months, acknowledging their redundancy and Adelante’s fine work. But Adelante did not always manage to persuade by example. Although a great deal of enthusiasm heralded the Convención de Sociedades Negras, in the end Adelante expressed, with pointed allusions to frivolity and wasted time, its disapproval of the sociedades’ priorities and comportment. For their three-year anniversary in 1938, the editors issued an ambivalent retrospective: if on one hand they had survived and garnered considerable support, they were nonetheless disappointed with lukewarm responses from some key (unnamed) constituencies. In addition, ‘dishonorable activities’, to which they had euphemistically alluded earlier, forced them to exclude some sociedades from their rosters.

Lively debates and stubborn disagreements filled the pages of Adelante. The convocation of a collective consciousness did not seem to stifle ideological heterogeneity. Prominent intellectuals, both white and of color, contributed regularly. They included Gustavo Urrutia, Alberto Arredondo, Emilio Roig de Leuchsenring, José Luciano Franco,
and Ángel Pinto along with Marinello, García Agüero, and Lachatañeré. Debates arose over the relationships of blacks to political parties, over the question of separatism versus integration, and over the extent to which racial characteristics were shaped by biological or cultural factors.

_El pasado en el presente: comparsas and the politics of culture_

When the issue of the _comparsas_ arose in 1937, interlocutors presented it as a debate over the question of representation: what was the merit in parading African-derived musical practices as symbols of a valued tradition in a context of economic distress and widespread social animosity? Although the coexistence of _comparsas_ and contempt were not necessarily related, many—and disagreement ran along precisely this fault line—felt that the presentation of Afro-Cuban spectacles would deflect attention from a reality of racial animosity. Whose vision of the place of blacks in the imagined national community would dictate policies and practices? As Urrutia told his audience at the _Instituto Nacional de Previsión y Reformas Sociales_, a “nuevo negro” was one who “does not limit himself to the diverse definitions, both friendly and hostile, that whites have produced to describe blacks.”

One of the principal sources of these “diverse definitions” was the _Sociedad de Estudios Afro cubanos_.

Fernando Ortiz’s tireless efforts at institutionalization had resulted in the founding of this society in 1937. Reflecting the ascendance of public discourse firmly embedded in racialist categories, it promised to produce and disseminate the most recent and sophisticated knowledge concerning “the race called black, of African origins, and that called white, or caucasian.” In so doing it hoped to promote egalitarian, cross-racial
interactions and make progress towards “the happy realization of our common destinies.”

Its membership reflected these goals. The initial roster included Miguel Angel Céspedes and Nicolás Guillén as vice-presidents, Salvador García Agüero as treasurer, and Gustavo Urrutia among its members. Having attained a position inside, however, did not result in total agreement with the positions or strategies of the Sociedad. It meant instead that critiques of representation, whether they were, in Urrutia’s terms, “friendly or hostile”, could be formulated in closer dialogue with the creators of those representations.  

Romulo Lachatañeré expressed perhaps the most direct critiques of Ortiz, current representations of African-derived religions, and the stubbornly persistent trope of brujería. A black anthropologist trained by Ortiz himself, he challenged Ortiz’s early writings on brujería in the pages of the Estudios Afrocubanos. Pointing out that the criminalization and conflation of all religious practices into the category of brujería did a grave injustice to legitimate beliefs and practices, he offered a complex narrative tracing their origins and noting distinctions between various African religions that had been transposed to Cuba.  

As some became more and more familiar with anthropological theory, black intellectuals thus contended with the representation of ‘Afrocuban culture’ in its terms. In their valorization of African-derived traditions they vied for greater control over those terms, rather than, as had earlier generations, distancing themselves from the practices under discussion. The issue of the comparsas animated a heated discussion in which black intellectuals engaged, and dissented from, the opinion of the Sociedad de Estudios Afrocubanos.
A consistent ‘allegory of salvage’ informed the Sociedad’s support of the comparsas. These musical performances, it claimed in response to the mayor’s inquiry of January 1937, had originated in Africa, traveling to the New World with the slaves who had originally performed them. As such they ought to be valued as ‘supervivencias contemporaneas’ from that lost world. The comparsas would afford the residents of Havana an opportunity to engage in what Ortiz called ‘internal tourism.’ Through them one could perceive glimpses of the ‘remote religious ideas’ that had given sustenance to Afrocuban rituals. And although they were relics from a remote past they might still retain the power to harmonize a dissonant society.

Thirty-five years earlier Cubans of color in very similar costumes had posed a threat to the tentative boundary between freedom and civility. Those costumes had served religious, criminological, and anthropological understandings. By 1937 such costumes had taken on additional roles as emanations of an essential ‘Cubanidad’ and sources of income for the Commission of Tourism. But the threat of incivility lingered. In its advocacy of the performances the Sociedad de Estudios Afrocubanos included a warning against congas: comparsas too often and too easily degenerated into lascivious free-for-alls when enthusiastic observers joined in the dancing. This development might also be a traditional practice, but it ought to be discouraged.

Neither the cautious supporters nor the vehement critics in Adelante’s pages seemed to care much about bringing the alleged past back into the present. In fact, this justification drew the bitterest complaints. For María Luisa Sánchez, comparsas represented an idealized past and obfuscated exploitation. They had originally been performed, she pointed out, during the zafra (sugar harvest) by slaves in order to keep
their spirits up. Their rebirth as frivolous entertainment served as a drug in her view, an opiate spreading docility and erasing the memory of suffering. Likewise, Alberto Arredondo challenged the notion that comparsas would be salubrious revivals of cultural traditions. He rejected any claims of their artistic value with counterclaims that constantly evolving musical forms had superseded them long ago: they were “without a doubt, an artistic stage long ago surpassed.” Rather than seeing them as a valuable memory of the past, he viewed them as manifestations of the injustice of the present. “Since blacks are in a situation so dire that they barely have enough with which to feed and clothe themselves, the town council had to finance the comparsas and supervise them so that they might take on ‘artistic value.’” He also criticized alleged supporters of the performances for their hypocrisy. No member of Club Atenas (who had supported the comparsas, apparently) nor from Adelante had attended, much less participated. This was irresponsible, especially “in this historic moment, when it is necessary to lead through example.” Worse still, the performances had fed reactionary racism. Arredondo, who had attended the performance, noted in a later article that most of the spectators had been intolerant whites, sneering amongst themselves about the backwardness and barbarism evidenced by the pageant. The Diario de la Marina’s opinions reinforced his belief that the spectacle provided far too much grist for reactionary mills: “the comparsas must have proffered few benefits to the masses, and they must have been presented with an absurd intention to enclose the past within the present, otherwise the Diario de la Marina would not have sung their praises on the front page.”

These critics did not, however, speak with a unified voice. Even those who defended the comparsas (and even, cautiously, the congas) resisted their characterization
in terms of an inert past, choosing instead to see them as reflections of the present. Ángel Pinto, also a black activist writing in the pages of *Adelante*, charged critics like Arredondo with holding overly negative views. To denigrate the art form was to blame the victim he argued, since blacks remained tied to these cultural forms because of economic disadvantage and lack of education. Reproaches by insensitive intellectuals wouldn’t help matters:

> blacks will continue to play their music and dance the conga, despite Mendieta’s wishes or those of the Sociedad de Estudios Afrocubanos, and despite ‘our intelligentsia,’ which continues vomiting, with unsurpassed insensitivity, their bitter and virulent reproaches of our brothers, who as victims of the oppression that weighs on them and that causes their ignorance, have remained in their primitive state.31

Despite the disagreements, the comments coming from contributors to *Adelante* shared certain premises. They clearly believed that black intellectuals ought to shoulder the responsibility for improving the political and social status of what they called ‘las masas.’ Battles over representation were directly connected, in their view, to battles over rights and citizenship. While some nationalists had integrated *Afrocubanismo* into a more heterogeneous ‘cubanidad,’ the growing acknowledgment of the profound influence of African culture had proven double-edged. Time and experience had demonstrated that some versions of *Afrocubanismo* were all too easily yoked to a conservative agenda.

Disappointment with social scientific and artistic endeavors and legal structures that had failed to yield social equality or greater economic parity impelled black activists to refine their strategies. As the constitutional convention approached, they transplanted concerns over the meaning of citizenship and equality to new ground, reframing issues of marginalization and cultural representation raised by the comparsas to issues of legal and
political representation. They began to formulate demands that took into account the consensus supporting expanded state power. Conceiving of the state as obliged to protect against discrimination rather than merely recognize equality seemed an apt use of constitutional reform.32

FROM RITES TO RIGHTS

As the Convención Constituyente opened on February 9, 1940, it evinced a remarkable degree of consensus, having quickly overcome initial disputes between heterogeneous factions. The factions which constituted the opposition included the reformist socialist Partido Revolucionario Cubano led by Grau San Martín, the ideologically slippery ABC, led by Jorge Mañach, the Partido Acción República, made up mostly of supporters of Miguel Mariano Gómez, the impeached former president, and the Demócrata República, led by Menocal, and peopled by “moneyed sectors and those aligned with the old guard.” Those representing the interests of the government included the “conservative and discredited” Partido Liberal, and Unión Nacionalista parties as well as the Unión Revolucionaria Comunista.33 In addition to the aforementioned agreement on the need for a more interventionist state, international developments had pushed the Cuban political spectrum to the left. Both an intensifying relationship with Cardenas’ Mexico (which had nationalized its oil companies in 1938) and a growing reaction against fascism in Europe fed labor and Communist support and isolated the contingent of disgruntled conservatives.34

The Convención Constituyente commenced with speeches reflecting a sense of renewal and optimism. Yet beneath lofty invocations of democracy, cooperation and
justice ran a sombre undercurrent that commemorated the conflict and violence that had permeated recent political events. Marinello, speaking on behalf of the Unión Revolucionaria Comunista, acknowledged the profound injustices that continued to corrode the social fabric. Many complicated issues would have to be addressed, he suggested, for the Convención Constituyente to deliver its promise.  

Participants seemed prepared, however, to fight for their proposed measures with a good deal of energy. Black activists mobilizing on a number of different fronts had continued to work in the Comité por los derechos del negro and Adelante and begun to develop strategies to fight continuing discrimination in private spaces, in the workplace, and in objectionable representations of blacks in media and public discourses. They had founded Federación Nacional de Sociedades Cubanas de la Raza de Color in 1938, hoping that increased numbers would give them a more viable voice. Marinello and Salvador García Agüero led other activists engaged in struggles for both racial and socio-economic equality in founding the political party Unión Revolucionaria, which linked racial issues to party politics in the most explicit manner (excepting the Communist Party’s experiments) since 1912.

As the convention opened, representatives of Federación calling themselves a “new social presence,” had presented a long written statement to its participants. Its membership had grown, they claimed, to include over 90% of Cuban sociedades, from Oriente to Pinar del Rio. Furthermore, they confidently claimed to represent all Cuban blacks: “given the national scope and the truly popular following of our constituent societies, the principles, demands and activities of this national federation not only represent the beliefs, needs, and mandates of all the affiliated societies, they also act on
behalf of those groups of blacks which are not specifically represented.”38 They cast their net even more widely, careful not to make overly particularistic demands. The reforms they advocated would in theory alleviate the conditions of ‘rural and urban proletariat, women, peasants, even middle class’ in addition to that of blacks. Nonetheless they insisted on the specificity of the problem of race: “on order for this gathering of forces to be effective it is necessary to propose specific solutions to the specific black problem.”39 Their demands included a series of interconnected political, social and economic reforms. Fragmentary approval of some reforms and not others, they argued, was unacceptable. Nor were empty resolutions—“lyrical declarations which live only on paper.” The Federación insisted on the need for the threat of force, lest the adopted measures become a ‘juridical fiction’, like the 1901 Constitution’s Article Eleven.

First and foremost they required guarantees of protection in addition to the granting of basic rights. They asked for the penalization of discrimination, and the prohibition of public manifestations of racism, as well as secret organizations. Other demands were just as far-reaching. They included a 50% law (50% of employees must be native-born), proportional representation in workplaces, a código de trabajo, with special protections for women, children and domestic servants, extensive social security measures and attention to education, family, and agricultural policy. Their demands for “political rights” included a requirement that the racial composition of rosters of candidates supported by all political parties correspond proportionally to the racial composition of those parties. They also advocated immigration restrictions to mitigate competition in the labor market.40
As leaders of the *Unión Revolucionaria*, Juan Marinello and Salvador García Agüero (who was also a member of the *Federación*) responded to this manifesto with a proposal for an amendment banning racial discrimination to be presented as a part of the official deliberations. This amendment was in turn adopted by the PCC as part of its platform in 1938, soon after it was granted legality and merged with the *Unión Revolucionaria* to form the *Union Revolucionaria Comunista* (URC), which sent delegates to the convention.\(^4\) This evidence suggests that in this instance the Communist Party had not subsumed race to class interests, but rather that this merger depended on the continued viability of both forms of political categorization, which had come together through shared ideological stances and political contingencies. Although struggles over racial equity and labor rights have been imagined separately more often than not, historians have begun to uncover an early history of civil rights that focussed on labor rights as its primary arena of struggle in the United States. At this moment, US activists envisioned battles for civil and labor rights as intertwined, rather than incompatible. This seems to have been the case in Cuba as well.\(^4\)

However, integrating concerns about discrimination and racial equality into the *Unión Revolucionaria Comunista*’s platform did involve a measure of ideological gerrymandering. In a speech to the *Club Atenas*, Marinello, president of the party, conflated Cuban workers with Cuban blacks as he spoke of the benefits to both of state control of latifundia and redistributive measures. In the end (or perhaps because he was addressing the *Club Atenas*) he produced an impassioned if frangible synthesis: “it is not enough to declare equality for all citizens . . . the black question is so transcendent, and its existence wounds our democracy so deeply, that we call for firm state intervention in
private activities, especially in the spheres of labor and the economy.” Blas Roca, the vice-president, utilized a slightly different strategy. Although he acknowledged the role of economic disadvantage in racial discrimination, he distinguished more clearly between the two issues. In so doing, however, his demands included some that elite black associations had been making for years, including unimpeded access to public spaces, educational institutions, and high-level jobs.

The URC’s proposal for an amendment to Article Twenty-three attempted to define discrimination as broadly as possible, so as to include the array of expressed goals. The proposed Article Twenty-three had already superseded Article Eleven with protections against discrimination. Article Twenty-three read as follows:

All Cubans are equal before the law. The Republic does not recognize any special rights or privileges. All discrimination due to sex, race, class or any other motive harmful to human dignity is declared illegal. The law will establish sanctions for those who violate these norms.

The amendment eschewed the term discrimination and substituted a specific list of rights:

All Cubans are equal before the law. The Republic does not recognize any special rights or privileges. All behavior or action that prevents any citizen from full access to public services or public places, the right to work and culture in all its aspects, or the full enjoyment of all his civil and political activities, due to his race, color, sex, class or any other discriminatory reason, shall be declared illegal and punishable. Within six months following the promulgation of this constitution, the law will establish the sanctions incurred by those who violate these norms.

The shared premises and subtle differences between the article and the amendment set the stage for a debate not just over the nature of discrimination, but over
the extent of the state’s responsibility and capacity to remedy the problem. In these debates, Salvador García Agüero, a black schoolteacher, eloquently but insistently compelled the Assembly to linger over the question of race. As a member of both the Federación and the Unión Revolucionaria Comunista, he was well qualified and familiar with the issues from slightly different perspectives. Born in Havana, he had witnessed and participated in the political upheaval of the late twenties and thirties. In his youth, he had volunteered to teach night classes sponsored by Unión Fraternal, which had become one of Havana’s best known black associations. His politicization continued when he became a founding member of the Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Enseñanza just after the fall of Machado, and he received an opportunity to publicize his views through an invitation to contribute to Adelante. The conflict in Trinidad in 1934 thrust him in the public eye, beginning with an invitation, as a member of the Comité por los Derechos del Negro, to speak to members of the Cabinet at the Presidential Palace. More importantly, through the Comité he met Juan Marinello, who was also a member. Once Marinello became editor of the first legal communist paper, La Palabra, he invited García Agüero to contribute. García Agüero then embarked on an increasingly public life of speaking tours, radio shows, and participation in the Ciclo de Conferencias organized by the Communist Party. The Federación Nacional de Sociedades Cubanas de la Raza de Color elected him member of its National Executive Committee and vice-president of the delegation from Havana. When the Unión Revolucionaria joined forces with the Communist Party, he was elected second vice-president under Juan Marinello and Blas Roca.⁴⁶
It was not until April that the Assembly began its discussions of individual rights. García Agüero quickly turned the debate into a lesson on the meaning and history of discrimination. Although they had been granted formal equality and participated in the political process, blacks had nonetheless suffered ill-treatment and exclusion “in the crucial aspects of culture, work, and in the enjoyment of all rights that accompany citizenship.” He refused to lay full blame on slavery, which was often pointed to (and served to shift blame onto Spanish colonialism) as the source of Cuba’s troubling racial dynamic. Discrimination, he argued, was a historical phenomenon that emerged out of the political and economic circumstances of the Republic as much as out of the institution of slavery:

From then until now, due to a series of reasons—which I really ought to elaborate on—this process has been growing; and if in the first moments it [discrimination] emerged out of the slaveholding regime, at present, a series of economic, political and social developments has resulted in the continuation of prejudices which create harmful oppressions, difficulties, obstacles and limitations for the human potential of this sector of the national population . . .

He tried to point out the grave implications for all Cubans, not just those of color, by appealing to Cubans’ sense of honor, their aspirations to stability, material welfare, and modernity.

These constitute not only a stain for any democratic organization or country, but also a danger to its internal stability and an obstacle to its progress and economic, political and social development. One can see manifestations of this reality particularly in the three aspects mentioned in the amendment I just proposed.47

While García Agüero drew attention to these issues from within the ranks of the convention, ordinary citizens demonstrated their concern with a flood of postcards
addressed to the assembly. Approximately one hundred postcards filed along with the
documents produced by the constituent assembly attest to the investment ordinary
Cubans had in the lawmaking at hand. Dozens wrote in support of the article and
amendment barring discrimination. It is possible that the Federación de Sociedades
Cubanas de la Raza de Color organized the effort, for many of the cards expressed their
support with exactly the same wording. These made their request succinctly:

We ask this assembly to approve the following demands:
1. Absolute equality of all Cubans before the law.
2. A law against discrimination and specific sanctions.
3. Proportional representation in the labor force for blacks.

Others sent in more elaborate statements, saturated in rhetoric. Pedro Pablo
Toledo, Nicolás J Terry, Lázaro Bravo, Perfecto Quiñones, José Antonio Aponte, José I.
Angera and Juan Mederos invoked citizenship and nationalism:

As a conscientious and responsible citizen who prays for equality,
justice, fraternity and above all for peace in the Republic of Cuba, I ask
and implore that for the good of the nation, the following demands be
supported and approved in the Constitution that is now being elaborated:
1. Equality for whites and blacks
2. Punishment for discriminators.
3. Proportional representation in the labor force for blacks.
4. Secular education.

Still others distilled their appeal into one basic point. Gustavo Martínez was very
direct: “the author of this card would like to notify those delegates representing the
Cuban people that the principle desire of those who want to live in this nation with true
fraternity, is the cessation of discrimination due to color, sex, etc., because after all we
are all Cuban, or human.” 48 These postcards formed part of a mobilization campaign in
which many sectors, including peasants, students, and women as well as blacks voiced
their demands through postcards, letters to delegates, and rallies outside the Convención’s meeting halls, creating an unprecedented atmosphere of vigilance and accountability just as the constitution was being drafted. Blas Roca attributed the progressive nature of the constitution in part to these mobilizations, arguing that reactionary and conservative delegates who would have fought against progressive measures buckled under the pressure to appeal to ‘el pueblo’. 49

In the end García Agüero lost the battle for his amendment but won the war to penalize discrimination. The amendment lost with twenty-three votes against and twenty votes for. Those voting against the amendment argued that it was unnecessary, since it addressed issues already covered by the article’s broadly general language. Their reasoning reveals a widespread recognition (in public debate, at least) of the problem of discrimination and of the need to penalize it. Even Nuñez Mesa, the only delegate who broke the consensus by denying the existence of racial discrimination in Cuba, beat a hasty retreat when he was caught in a contradiction. Nuñez Mesa asserted first that there was no discrimination in Cuba, and second that the problem of discrimination could be redressed by the laws already in place. García Agüero pointed to the inconsistency of his claims and forced him to concede. No other delegates used their allotted time to argue that race relations were acceptable as they stood.

With the discussion of the amendment terminated, García Agüero extended the discussion about race by requesting a modification of the article with the term ‘color’ to differentiate it from ‘race.’ The notion of distinct or pure races, he argued, drawing from recent anthropological thought, had been proved false. If distinct races had ever existed, miscegenation had blurred the boundaries to the extent that one could only describe Cuba
(and indeed, many parts of the world) as a nation of mestizos. Yet this had not prevented discrimination. Indeed, it had heightened the importance of color and created new divisions, introducing an insidious array of exclusionary practices based on slight differences in skin tone. This twist on prevalent claims about Cuba’s racial intermixture further demonstrated that agreeing to the notion of a mestizo nation did not necessarily imply agreeing to the claim that racial harmony had been achieved. Echoing the ambivalence about mestizaje expressed by Urrutia, Guillén and others, he insisted that rather than eliminating problems mestizaje reconfigured them.50 The assembly honored his request and modified the article, adding color to sex, race, and class in the list of illegal bases for discrimination.51

Examined thus far the debates surrounding the proposed article indicate that there was very little room for public dissent from the claim that racial discrimination existed in Cuba. The fact of this consensus in 1940 reveals the distance from the days in which claims about inequality or exclusion prompted accusations of disloyalty to the Cuban republic. The ‘myth of racial democracy’ was no longer the powerful silencer it had once been. Instead the assembly agreed that the expectations raised by the declaration of equality in the 1901 Constitution had not been met.

The state had come to “see” races as a political category, and its duty came to be understood (ideally) as protecting and enforcing both individual and social rights. Thus the social scientific reinvention and perpetuation of race as a social category had shaped political outcomes. Although politicians and black activists had found social scientific versions of this category either objectionable or ineffectual, they ultimately rendered it an indispensable political category. Transcendence of racial categories, an admirable ideal
perhaps, had been found lacking by too many sectors, who sought equality, or order, or modernity as they remade, re-entrenched, and politicized blackness and whiteness.\textsuperscript{52}

\textit{CONCLUSION: ARTICULATED IDEALS AND NEW HINDRANCES}

Most historians agree that the final document produced by the \textit{Convención Constitucional} was Cuba’s most liberal and progressive constitution. In a matter of months they had crafted a utopian document that contained 286 articles confirming universal suffrage, free elections, freedom to organize political parties, and a large variety of protected civil and political rights, including rights to speech, association, religion and publication. In addition it created extensive provisions for social rights, including provisions for old age, accident and other forms of insurance; as well as measures for the protection of women and children. It also regulated working conditions, with specifications for maximum hours, minimum wages, and annual one-month paid vacations for every worker. Finally it guaranteed the right to strike.\textsuperscript{53} If implemented, the constitutional dictates would create a state that was present in many more aspects of daily life than ever before, not only granting freedoms but also alleviating material hardships for many of the worst-off citizens.

In addition to the aforementioned article banning and criminalizing racial and other kinds of discrimination, it dictated social and civil rights for Cubans of color in other arenas. Article 74 prohibited discriminatory practices in the workplace, and article 44 conceded rights to the children of unmarried parents, which would affect many blacks and mulattos (as well as whites). Although it was still illegal to form political parties
based on race, class or gender (Article 102), minorities were guaranteed representation in
elected bodies at the federal, provincial and municipal levels (Article 103).\textsuperscript{54}

As the convention drew to a close, Blas Roca expressed a great deal of optimism
and enthusiasm as to the constitution’s merits. It was, according to him, “progressive,
democratic, contained principles of revindication for the popular classes, and capable of
serving as a tool for economic improvement.” Yet as Samuel Farber and others have
pointed out, if the progressive vision was its strength, it would be its weakness as well, as
it became mired in the vagaries of political life and legal structures. Many of the
measures included a provision dictating that enabling laws must be drafted by future
legislative assemblies, which opened up the process to political contingency. Many
measures never received the legislative backing they required. Campaigns for laws to
enforce the criminalization of discrimination, initiated in 1941 and again in 1944, failed,
dying of neglect on the Senate floor. After 1948, the Communist Party, which had been
the principal advocate of these laws, lost much of its power as it fell victim to the
exigencies of the cold war.\textsuperscript{55}

Nicolas Graizeau describes the problem as one of ‘parliamentary apathy’, arguing
that the gap between the ‘real structures’ of the state and its ‘formal constitution’ were
too wide to allow for the codification of the most idealistic measures. ‘Real structures’,
including public opinion, political culture, state corruption and use of political violence,
and the economy failed to provide enough support for the codification of the kind of
regime envisioned by the constitution. An alternative explanation is that a conservative
contingent, working cynically, had allowed for the passage of constitutional articles
without having any intention of seeing them through the legislature. Additionally, as
Robert Cottrol has pointed out in the case of Brazil, criminalizing discrimination may in fact have made its enforcement more cumbersome. Comparing Brazil’s case to that of the United States, he argues that the most effective measures against discrimination have come as a result of civil litigation rather than criminal prosecution. If Cuba’s activists focused their activities in criminalization rather than civil suits, in part because that was the most accessible route, they may have comparably hindered the pursuit of racial equality. In any case, full access to the rights of citizenship, which includes, in Guillermo O’Donnell’s formulation, recourse to the law and legal apparatus, were denied.56

It was a fundamentally ambiguous moment. In addition to enumerating these failures of codification it is also important to underscore the exceptionally idealistic, progressive nature of the constitution in relation to most of the Americas, where disregard for rights prevailed. In much of the United States, segregation laws made a travesty of political equality. In the Dominican Republic and Argentina, authoritarian governments would not have considered allowing the expression of popular voice (however mediated) in the form of a new constitution, and in 1940 Mexico witnessed a shift, under the regime of Manuel Avila Camacho, to conservative government policy. Moreover, the degree of visibility and effectiveness of black political mobilization was rare, if not unprecedented, in Latin America in this period. Black activists in Brazil, for example, enjoyed a brief opening with the formation of the Frente Negra in 1930, but this was shut down along with other opportunities for expanded political participation with the initiation of Getúlio Vargas’ Estado Novo.57

There was no more Cuban consensus about the myth of racial equality. This had been challenged from all sides, by social science, the state, and black activists who
increasingly invoked a collective, political identity. But if that myth unraveled, perhaps a
new unstated myth arose, that of popular participation and the merits of social rights for a
society conceived as a set of distinct groups, including blacks, women, workers, and
occupations, rather than an agglomeration of individuals. Struggles over the terrain and
content of citizenship had created new venues for political participation and set high
stakes that would be the source of further conflict in the years to come.

1 Beruff Mendieta’s and Ortiz’s letters are reproduced in Fernando Ortiz, Ramón
Vasconcelos y otros “Las comparsas populares del Carnaval Habanero” Estudios
Afrocubanos vol. 5, 1945-46. (hereafter Ortiz et. al,“Las comparsas populares.”), 130-
147. On the history and content of comparsas, see Robin Moore, Nationalizing Blackness
(Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997) esp. Ch. 3.

2 Emilio Roig de Leuchsenring, “Las comparsas carnavalescas de La Habana en 1937” in
Estudios Afrocubanos, Vol. V 1945-46, 148-172; Fernando Ortiz, cited in Ortiz et. al,
“Las comparsas populares” 131.

3 Antonio Barreras, ed., Textos de las constituciones de Cuba (1812-1940) (Havana:
Ediciones Minerva, 1940), 142.

4 Aline Helg, Our Rightful Share: The Afro-Cuban Struggle For Equality, 1886-1912
(Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995); Alejandro De la Fuente, A
Nation For All: Race, Inequality and Politics in Twentieth-Century Cuba (Chapel Hill:


8 Whitney, “The Architect of the Cuban State: Knight, “Populism and Neo-populism in Latin America”.


14 Jorge Domínguez, *Cuba: Order and Revolution*, Ch. 3.


16 Ernesto Pinto Interián, “En torno a la convención de sociedades negras” in *Adelante* May 1935, 11.


18 Pinto Interián, “En torno a la convención de sociedades negras.”
This was a relatively long run for a publication: *Revista de Avance*, one of the most famous avant-garde journals, only ran for three years.


The records of these clubs, if they have survived, might provide fascinating glimpses into local racial dynamics in distinct regions.

“Discriminación” in *Adelante* July 1936, 11.

See especially the issues of *Adelante* from January 1936, February 1936, March 1936, May 1936, July 1936, August 1937. Responses to the survey appear beginning in January 1937 and continue throughout that year.

Urrutia, “El Nuevo Negro” reproduction of a lecture given at the Instituto de Previsión y Reformas Sociales. Published in *Adelante* October 1937.


Bronfman, “Reforming Race” Chapter 1.

Ortiz et al., “Las Comparsas Populares”, esp. 132-137.


31 Angel Pinto “Una aclaración” in Adelante, June 1937.

32 On race and the Constitution of 1940 see also De la Fuente, A Nation For All; and James Cohen and Francoise Moulin Civil eds., Cuba Sous le Régime de la Constitucion de 1940: Politique, pensée critique, littérature (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1997).

33 Julio A Carreras, Historia del estado y el derecho en Cuba (Havana: Ed. Pueblo y Educación, 1981) 460; Farber, Revolution and Reaction, 94.

34 Whitney, “The Architect of the Cuban State”.

35 Juan Marinello, Convención Constituyente, Diario de Sesiones, Vol. 1 #1, Sesión Primera Inaugural, 9 February, 1940, 13.

36 See de la Fuente, A Nation For All, Chs 5 and 6, Fernández Robaina, El negro en Cuba.

37 Serviat, El problema del negro en Cuba, 130-131.

38 Federación Nacional de Sociedades Cubanas de la Raza de Color, Manifiesto a la Asamblea Constituyente (Havana: Imp. O’Reilly, 1940).

39 Federación, “Manifiesto a la asamblea.”

40 Federación, “Manifiesto a la asamblea”. This document was signed by Pedro Portuondo Calá, delegate for the Comité Organizador de la Convención, García Agüero, Secretario de actas and delegate of the province of Havana, Urrutia, treasurer and national delegate, Mario Lacret Paisán, president of the provincial federation of Oriente. Also signing were José I Rosell, delegate for the province of Oriente, Francisco Guillén, president of the provincial federation of Camaguey, Martín Castellanos, delegate from the province of Camaguey, Juan Tandrón, president of the federation of Santa Clara,
Agustín Iznaga, delegate from the Santa Clara, Angel Sarracet, pres of the federation of Matanzas, Manuel García Ulloa, delegate from the Matanzas, Pedro Rojas, president of the federation from Havana, Narciso López, president of the federation from Pinar del Rio, Otilio Gutierrez delegate from Pinar del Rio, and Pastor de Albear y Friol, Asesor Tecnico.

41 See “Pacto de la Unión Revolucionaria y el Partido Comunista” in Mediodía no.90, 17 octubre 1938, 10-11.


43 Marinello, “La cuestión racial en la constitución”, 12.

44 Blas Roca, “Por la igualdad de todos los cubanos” (conferencia pronunciada en los salones del Club “Atenas”), (Havana: Ediciones Sociales, 1939).


47 García Agüero, Convención Constituyente, Diario de Sesiones, Vol. 1 #26, Sesión Vigesima Sexta, 27 April 1940, 21.

48 Archivo Nacional de Cuba, Fondo Convención Constituyente, legajo 18 #1.

49 Blas Roca, El pueblo y la nueva constitución (Havana: Ediciones Sociales, 1940).

50 Bronfman, “Reforming Race” Chaper 5.
51 Convención Constituyente, Diario de Sesiones, vol. 1 #26, 27-29.


53 Whitney, “Architect of the Cuban State”; Farber, Revolution and Reaction 94; Rafael Rojas, Isla sin fin: contribución a la crítica del nacionalismo cubano (Miami: Ediciones Universal, 1998); Serviat, El problema negro en Cuba; Antonio Barreras, ed. Textos de las constituciones de Cuba.

54 Maria Poumier, “La expresión del pensamiento negro en Cuba bajo la Constitución de 1940” in Cohen and Civil eds., Cuba Sous le Régime de la Constitución de 1940.

55 Roca, El pueblo y la nueva constitución, 3; Farber, Revolution and Reaction; De la Fuente, A Nation For All, Ch. 6.
