

**BLACK BRITISH SUBJECTS IN CUBA:
RACE, ETHNICITY, NATION, AND IDENTITY IN
THE MIGRATORY EXPERIENCE, 1898-1938**

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"Racism only begins with an interpretation of differences, from which arise both the dreams and invented narratives of the other and, at times, the attacks."

-Albert Memmi

Abstract

This thesis examines the history of black British Caribbean migrants in Cuba during the early twentieth century. It centres on their experience of social and racial discrimination within Cuban society, and how this was influenced by the historical legacy of black fear in Cuba and the social, political, and economic changes the country experienced from 1898 to 1938 (i.e., foreign intervention, social and political revolts, and economic depressions). The racial, ethnic, and identity dynamics in the interaction between the migrants, Cuban society, and the consular representatives are examined in detail. The study avoids the generalisations that are prevalent in the historiography, and contributes with new insights into the history of this migration through its emphasis on different migration patterns, the experiences of the various islanders, and the complex identity politics and social practices of resistance, adjustment, and accommodation in which the migrants were involved. The thesis looks at the triangular relation between the black British Antilleans, Cuban society, and the representatives of the British Empire at various levels, and reveals the otherwise unacknowledged agency of the migrants in gaining consular support. The complex debates on race, ethnicity, identity, and nation arising from this case study are of prime relevance not only for the understanding of migration processes in Caribbean societies, but also for the study of nation formation in Cuban society and British colonial and imperial history. At the same time, these debates are connected to wider issues concerning the relationship between race and nation, and racism and migration in the Caribbean past and present. The study is of an interdisciplinary nature and combines archival and documentary research with interviews, ethnographic data, and anthropological and sociological literature.

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List of Abbreviations

AFSC	Atlantic Fruit and Sugar Company
<i>AHR</i>	<i>American Historical Review</i>
CASC	Cuban American Sugar Company
<i>HAHR</i>	<i>Hispanic American Historical Review</i> (United States)
<i>JLAS</i>	<i>Journal of Latin American Studies</i> (United Kingdom)
<i>LARR</i>	<i>Latin American Research Review</i> (United States)
PIC	Partido Independiente de Color (Independent Party of Colour)
<i>SES</i>	<i>Social and Economic Studies</i> (Jamaica)
UFC	United Fruit Company
UNIA	Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I came to Britain in 1997 only to leave in the very final days of that same year and to return again in 1999. I missed 1998. Two things happened during that year. One part of British society celebrated the 50th anniversary of the arrival of the S. S. Empire Windrush and the Caribbean migrants in it. Another part mourned the death of J. Enoch Powell, a Conservative politician. The former, a ship, became a symbol of the migration experience of black people from the Caribbean. The latter, a person, came to epitomise the racism against the black migrants at their destination. Together, the ship and the person were symbols of the almost inseparable relation between migration and racism.

On my arrival in 1999 I witnessed the aftershocks of both; the Empire Windrush euphoria and the death of Powell in the way of books, biographies, documentaries, conferences, and all the rest. Moreover, in 2001, I was able to see how a speech by the Conservative leader William Hague on Europe where he spoke of Britain as a “foreign land” was immediately associated with xenophobia, racism, and the issue of migration – asylum seekers in particular.¹ As much as Hague’s “foreign land” speech resembled Powell’s comments on Britain as “alien territory”,² the then Conservative leader gave the reassurance that he was speaking about the loss of sovereignty if Britain joined the European single currency. Despite the explanation, and under the continuing debates over asylum seekers, institutional racism, race relations and multi-culturalism, Hague’s speech continued to be seen as xenophobic and aligned with the racist ideas of other Conservative politicians.³ From this British context, I started to observe my research and the general developments around the world from a different perspective. Quite clearly, at the beginning of a new century, migration and race remained central inter-related issues not only in the UK, but also in the Americas, and certainly in the Caribbean region. It was then that the reason for my London Ph.D. sojourn acquired a new significance.

For the Caribbean people who arrived in Britain in 1948 and after, the encounter with racism in the migration experience was not new. Their exclusion from the British body politic and from the national and cultural conception of being British was not new either –and indeed was far from being an issue of the past. Less than one generation before the mass migrations to the centre of the Empire, hundreds of thousands of them had migrated to Cuba, also in search of work and of a better future. Although in a completely different context than that of Britain, they also encountered racism and discrimination and found themselves struggling for survival and trying to assert their rights. In Cuba, they also

claimed their space within the British Empire and challenged its dominant notions of inclusion and exclusion. The pages that follow are an account of part of that chapter in the history of Caribbean migration; one that covers the movement of over 140,000 persons within the same socio-cultural and geographical region. I am confident that the examination of racial and social dynamics in the intra-Caribbean migration to Cuba is important for the comparative analysis of other experiences in the region, but can also assist in our understanding of the relation between racism and migration that pervades not only the Caribbean past, but also its present.

During my own migration into both the Caribbean past and the process of human mobility, while preparing this PhD thesis, I have acquired countless debts. I cannot measure my gratitude to Jean Stubbs, who, as my director of studies at the University of North London (UNL), supported my project from the very beginning, provided incredible intellectual encouragement and constant practical support. I am deeply grateful for her solid criticism of my work, which will definitely keep me working even after the examination of this thesis.

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Central to the work of anyone doing historical research is the assistance of librarians, archivists, and curators. I have not been lacking in such assistance, and would like to thank the staff and faculty in the different archives and libraries I visited in the Caribbean, Europe, and the United States, all of which are listed in the bibliography of this dissertation. However, I want to single out the special support given by Carl Van Ness, curator of the Braga Brothers Collection, and Richard Phillips, Head Librarian of the Latin American Collection, at the University of Florida. Special thanks also to Lauren Brown and Timothy Mahoney of the Special Collections Department, McKeldin Library, University of Maryland at College Park, and Mitch Yolkensen, David Wallace, and specially Ken Heger of the National Archives of the United States in Washington DC and Maryland. In Cuba, special thanks go to Coralia Alonso, Julio López, Cecilio Delgado, Mayra Mena, Silvia Cervantes, Ester Calderin Friol, Ines Baró Valle, and Isabel (Archivo Nacional, Havana); Eugenio Suarez, Miriam González, Yolanda González, and Lourdes Capote (Archivo Histórico Provincial, Camagüey); Mirta Padrón Torrens (Biblioteca Provincial José Antonio Mella, Camagüey); Mireya Durán and Esperanza Velazquez (Archivo Provincial de Historia, Holguín); Angeles Aguilera (Municipal Archives, Holguín); Teresa Pérez Quesada (Casa Natal Calixto García Iñiguez, Holguín); Jorge Cruz and Cristina Chapman (Museo Municipal Histórico, Banes); Ana Gloria González (Biblioteca Municipal, Banes); Esteban Grant and Arnoldo González (Girondinos Lodge, Banes); Marina Pichs Brito and Madelys Velazquez (Archivo Histórico Provincial, Las Tunas); Tamara Gamboa and Sonia Morell (Biblioteca Provincial José Martí, Las Tunas); Esteban Yero Rosales (Museo Municipal Rosendo Arteaga Guerra, Jobabo); Maria Antonia and Rebeca Calderon (Archivo Histórico Provincial, Santiago de Cuba); and Margarita Canseco (Biblioteca Provincial José Policarpo Pineda Rustán, Guantánamo). I want to give special thanks to Olga Tarín Zayas of Las Tunas, who shared her private newspaper collection of *El Eco de Tunas*. In the University of Puerto Rico, as always, I am grateful to the staff of the Caribbean and Latin American Regional Library, and to Manuel Martínez, Director of the Inter-Library Loans Office.

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¹ William Hague's speech was delivered in the Spring Conference of the Conservative Party in March 2001.

² J. Enoch Powell, "Immigration," in *Still to Decide*, ed. John Wood (London: B. T. Batsford, LTD, 1972), 184-207. Speech delivered by Powell on 4 November 1971, to the Southall Chamber of Commerce, at Centre Airport Hotel, Middlesex.

³ These include, of course, Hague's own hard-line policy against asylum seekers, but also the views by Lord Norman Tebbit against multi-culturalism and those of John Townend, former Minister of Parliament for Yorkshire East, with regard to how immigration was "seriously undermining" British Anglo-Saxon society.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

One of the most influential works in my training as a student of the Caribbean region has been Harry Hoetink's *The Two Variants in Caribbean Race Relations*, published in English in 1967. The book was one of the many works that in its time set out to explain the relation between slavery and the nature of racial dynamics in the Americas. The argument exposed by Hoetink –one that was sustained, followed, and criticised by others- was that

... one and the same person may be considered white in the Dominican Republic or Puerto Rico, and 'coloured' in Jamaica, Martinique, or Curaçao; this difference must be explained in terms of socially determined somatic norms. The same person may be called a 'Negro' in Georgia; this must be explained by the historical evolution of social structure in the Southern United States.¹

That is, social constructions of race and colour in countries with a Luso-Iberian colonial tradition (e.g., Puerto Rico, Brazil) were different from countries of a northwestern European colonial tradition (e.g., Jamaica, Martinique). Countries of the former variant had a flexible racial continuum of multiple gradations (and categories) with black and white at the opposite ends of the racial spectrum. Countries of the latter variant had a more rigid racial system divided between blacks, coloureds, and whites. Race relations in the Southern United States were of a binary nature (black and white) due to the way its social structure evolved.

In Hoetink's work, as well as in that of others, the reasons for the different patterns of race relations were attributed to the religious traditions of the different colonial powers, the previous cultural contacts of the colonisers, and the nature of the system of slavery. Some of these reasons were successfully contested and critically examined in academic debates, and others remained the subject of interminable discussions among sociologists, historians, and anthropologists studying race relations in the Americas.² And indeed, observers of race relations in the region find it difficult to escape the divide between the Hispanic American countries on one side and the countries colonised by North-Western European powers on the other. I was not an exception. When I set out on the task of studying the experience of black British Caribbean migrants in Cuba during the early twentieth century, my intention was to examine what happened to the conceptual framework exposed by Hoetink when peoples from the different variants of race relations (black British Caribbean migrants, Cubans, and U.S. entrepreneurs and military personnel, who were mostly white) met in the same social and historical setting. I wanted to see if the constructions of race and colour of these social actors (or the ones they were supposed to have according to the conceptual

framework) changed or were affected in their cultural encounters or in a different social setting. This was the question with which this study started, a question that remains partly unsolved.

Nevertheless, I did study the experiences of the black British Caribbean migrants in Cuba and the racial perceptions that emerged from their presence in that country. My research covers the story of the migration process and the dynamics of race, ethnicity and identity that existed between the migrants, Cuban society, the sugar entrepreneurs and planters, and the British consuls and representatives of the Empire. Such dynamics are certainly complex enough, and cannot be understood solely by virtue of the colonial backgrounds or countries of origin of the social actors involved. A fixed and deterministic sociological conceptualisation, be it of a racial continuum or a two-tier racial system, does not suffice for the understanding of the racial perceptions of the British Antilleans, their self-identification, and the various attitudes to their presence and their migration to Cuba in the early twentieth century.

First, the reaction against the migrants has to be seen against the background of the long history of black fear that existed in Cuba. That fear, one that was mainly anchored in the fear of the black *outsider*, was particularly consolidated after the Haitian Revolution and its independence in 1804. Events in Cuba and around the Caribbean region during the nineteenth century helped to increase those fears, along with the obsession of keeping a racial balance. Such processes were parallel –and complementary– to the beginnings of the idea of Cuba as a ‘white’ nation, an idea that persisted well into the twentieth century. The ‘race war’ of 1912, when the Partido Independiente de Color (PIC) revolted against the government, is perhaps the best example of the persistence of the racial fear. But contrary to the argument of Cuban historian Rafael Duarte Jiménez, that the “black fear vanished from our political mythology”³ in 1912, this work argues that the fear of blacks persisted beyond that year and was manifested particularly in relation to the presence of the black Caribbean migrants.

Secondly, the understanding of the racial and social perception of the migrants has to be analysed in its own historical context. The reception afforded to thousands of black Caribbean migrants in the early part of the century needs to be seen in relation to the various social and historical developments that took place during the period of their migration from the 1900s to the 1930s (i.e. social and political revolts, economic depressions, and political interventions). While the discrimination, antagonism, and racism against the migrants were always present, it was in particular moments of crisis that they were more openly and explicitly manifested. It is within this dual perspective –one that considers both the historical

background and the historical context- that one must study the racial dynamics that surrounded the black British Caribbean migration to Cuba.

A third consideration in the analysis of race, ethnicity, and identity in the experience of the migrants is that of their colonial predicament. The movement of the workers from their colonial setting in each of the British Caribbean possessions did not imply a break with their burden of colonialism and its racial implications. On the contrary, by moving to a foreign country, Jamaicans and Leeward and Windward Islanders entered into a relationship with consuls and officials who were representatives of the British Empire. The dynamics of race, ethnicity and identity emerging out of such an encounter provide a second angle on the social relations in which the black migrants were involved during their time in Cuba. The contradictions of colonial identity, Empire, and island identity, and the racial and power dynamics involved are also considered in this study.

The triangular relationship between Cuban society, the British Caribbean migrants, and the Empire implied the clash of different understandings of race, nation, and identity. Conceptions of a 'white' national polity for both Cuba and the British Empire were exposed in the encounter with the 'other'. For Cubans (particularly the elites) the migrants arriving in their country were a racial and ethnic other; for the British officials the migrants they had to represent in a foreign land were a colonial and racial other. These processes implied specific racial understandings of both 'Britishness' and 'Cubanness'. Not only was the encounter with the 'other' a space that engendered the explicit exposition of those national understandings, it also revealed their problematic nature. The attack on the black migrants by Cuban elites revealed the fragility and the limits of black inclusiveness within a Cuban national polity in which racial equality was a foundational aspect. On the other hand, the black migrants' assertion of their Britishness challenged the equation of Britishness and whiteness, thus breaking the imperial understanding of the nation. The politics of identity within these processes are discussed and examined as part of this work.

This study looks critically at another aspect of the relationship between the colonial subjects and the Empire. One argument commonly held by some students of Caribbean migration to Cuba is that the migrants from the British Caribbean were in a better social position than other Caribbean migrants due to the support given to them by the British consuls in Cuba. From this it might follow that the British consular officials provided support to the migrants willingly and in an altruistic way, particularly during the repatriations of the 1930s, and generally during the early twentieth century. This study does not share that interpretation and argues that, while diplomatic support was certainly provided to the

migrants, this cannot be understood in a vacuum, but in a historical perspective that examines the development of diplomatic representation in its different stages from the very beginnings of the black British Caribbean presence in Cuba.

The disagreement with the simplicity of the argument goes further. First, the agency of the migrants themselves is barely acknowledged in the literature despite their role in pressing for consular support and claiming their rights for representation as British subjects. Second, the support of the British consuls only looks advantageous in comparison to the lack of support for the Haitians. This has led to an uncritical examination of the process of British consular assistance, the racism and racial dynamics in the relation between the migrants and the representatives of the Empire and the racial prejudices influencing the diligence, or indeed the paternalistic actions, of British consuls. No analysis has been made of the *real* effect the consular support offered, and how many cases of support went beyond the first stage of complaint to reach a satisfactory conclusion. Moreover, two final elements are not considered: first, the abolition of consular establishments during that period limited the migrants' access to diplomatic assistance; and second, not *all* British Caribbean migrants received the same support. The Jamaicans had for some time a Secretary of Immigration who dealt with their particular cases, while Barbadians, St. Lucians, Dominicans, and others remained unprotected. There was no homogenous *migración antillana* or 'British Caribbean' migration experience to Cuba. An attempt to provide such a generalisation without distinguishing its internal social and historical complexities falsifies our comprehension of the experiences of black workers in Cuba.

A methodological concern relates to the specific comparison between the Jamaicans and Haitians. The comparison –often resolved uncritically over the consular support argument referred to above- has not considered: 1) the divergent patterns of migration and departures to and from Cuba in the years preceding the repatriations of the 1930s; or 2) the significant numerical difference between the two groups at the moment of repatriation during the economic depression and the Nationalisation of Labour Law of 1933. If one considers that there were substantially more Haitians than British Antilleans at the moment of repatriation, the picture is a different one. The Haitians were indeed in a terrible social position, but that does not automatically mean that those from the British Caribbean were in a 'better' position, or escaped racism and discrimination.

In tackling the issues above, this thesis provides new knowledge of the experience of the black British Caribbean migrants in Cuba. The study avoids the different generalisations to be found in the historiography of the topic, and focuses on the

complexities and particularities, thus providing different perspectives on the migration process (different trends and patterns), the particular experience of the various islanders (Jamaicans and eastern Caribbean islanders), the politics of identity, and the social practices of resistance, adjustment and accommodation (i.e. religion, imperial allegiance, UNIA). Rather than taking for granted the issue of British consular support, one of the strengths of this study is that it examines in detail the triangular relation between the Cuban government, the migrants, and the representatives of the Empire at different levels. In the process it reveals the otherwise unacknowledged agency of the migrants in gaining consular representation.⁴ The debates on identity, race, and nation emerging from this account transcend the experience of the migrants in Cuba, and the time frame setting of the thesis. The events discussed here provide new insights into the historical and contemporary debates on British and Cuban national identity. Accordingly, the study contributes to our knowledge of the relation between race and migration, and between racism and social, political, and economic changes not only in the Caribbean past, but also in its present.

Organisation of the Study

The chapters of this dissertation are organised in the following way. Chapter 2 provides a historical background on various aspects that are central to the arguments in the dissertation. The discussion covers the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth century with reference to the black fear. Racial and national ideologies and discourses in Cuba, and the related debates, are also discussed. Chapter 3 provides a general overview of the migration experience of black British Antilleans in the Caribbean region, and centres on the process of migration to Cuba from 1898 to the 1930s. Using the available statistical data as well as interviews and other documentary sources, the chapter discusses the process of migration as a whole and the various migratory trends and patterns of the different islanders. It also re-examines the comparison between the Jamaican and Haitian migrants; looks critically at some of the conclusions that have been reached and raises some specific methodological concerns on the way comparisons have been made. I also look at the hegemonic control of the twentieth-century sugar plantation and its effect on migratory trends and conclude with a discussion about issues of gender in the migratory process.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 discuss the experience of the black British Caribbean islanders in Cuba between the second half of the 1910s and the 1930s. Chapter 4 covers from the mid-1910s, when there was a dramatic increase in immigration, until 1921 when the sugar

market crashed. The chapter explores how the reaction of Cuban society to the mass migration of black workers coincided with a period of political crisis and racial tensions in 1917. This triggered the emergence of the black fear and the institutional violence against Afro-Cubans and the black migrants, ending with the killing of black British Antillean migrants. I examine these events using a variety of sources that include Cuban government documents, company records, and affidavits of witnesses of the killings. Using British and Cuban correspondence, I then look in detail at the diplomatic aftermath of the killings and how the process of obtaining compensation was related to issues of labour, politics, and the political economy of sugar production. Chapter 5 examines the first half of the 1920s, starting with the conditions of the migrants during and after the economic crisis of 1921. The discussion then centres on specific cases of violence and discrimination against the black migrants in the early twenties and the diplomatic conflict between the British and Cuban governments during those years until 1924. Contemporary newspaper articles and government documents are used in this examination. Chapter 6 covers the period of the late 1920s up until the late 1930s, a period of social, political, and economic change that affected the position of the black British migrants in Cuba. It centres on the conditions of the sugar industry and the issues of labour supply and demand through the examination of government and company records of the sugar industry. The policies of the Cuban government are examined in relation to the interests of the sugar planters. With the assistance of official registers of association, private papers, and other sources, I also study the social organisation of the migrants and the general perceptions different sectors of the Cuban society had of them. The chapter concludes with the period of economic depression and the eventual process of deportation and repatriation of labourers. Rather than focusing on the comparison between Haitian and Jamaican workers, I pay attention to the different experiences of the Jamaican migrants, on the one hand, and the Leeward and Windward Islanders on the other. The analysis looks critically at the issue of consular support and highlights the relatively advantageous position of Jamaicans *vis-à-vis* other British Caribbean islanders.

In Chapter 7 I examine forms of social organisation, resistance, and opposition of the migrants and the social, racial, and ethnic identities emerging from it. I look at how the migrants' assertion of their subject-hood served them in their search for justice and fair treatment in the Cuban context. The claim of British allegiance also challenged dominant notions of 'Britishness' within the Empire. This leads to the link between race and Empire that I consider in Chapter 8, focusing on the triangular relation between the black British

migrants, the representatives of Empire, and Cuban society. I examine the different notions of 'whiteness' in British and Cuban national conceptions that were manifested in the encounter with the black British Antilleans. I explore how the presence of the black migrants and the racial perception of them as 'other' –either the black outsider or colonial other- was in itself a catalyst for the racial articulation of both the Cuban nation and the British Empire. I conclude with a discussion on other complex identity issues emerging from the process.

Notes on Terminology, Statistics and Sources

This research does not attempt to study the Haitians, Spaniards, or any migrant group other than the black British Caribbean migrants and their experience within Cuba. However, on many occasions during the study, I will refer to other Caribbean groups, primarily the Haitians. While I remain confident that there were differences in the experiences of different islanders (i.e. Haitians, Jamaicans, Barbadians, etc.) and that they deserve particular attention, all the black Caribbean labourers (or *immigrantes antillanos*) certainly composed a larger social group. Black Caribbean migrants, on many occasions, particularly in moments of crisis, occupied a similar racial slot in the Cuban imagination. Precisely because of that, I have included some references to other migrant groups. These references are used when, for instance, the Haitians are mentioned along with black British Antilleans or when they assist in the understanding of the general situation of all black migrants in Cuba. Haitians were the most numerous group of migrants to Cuba from the Caribbean and leaving them out of the picture would not provide an accurate picture of the issues discussed.

One point needs to be made with regard to the sources used in this research, particularly those that relate to statistical and numerical data on migration and population figures. The available data on Cuban reports of immigration and movement of passengers, and in the censuses, presents a series of problems of categorisation for the analysis intended here. In both the census and the yearly reports on migration, there were changes in the structural organisation, classification procedures and categories used over the years considered in this study. While Jamaicans do not constitute a category until the year 1912, that of "non-specified Antilleans" is completely ambiguous when not distributed between Danish, Dutch, British, and French Antilleans. The category of interest here, British Antilleans (referred to as *antillanos ingleses*), when it is present, does not permit a differentiation between those coming from, for example, Barbados and St. Lucia.

Due to the lack of knowledge on the processes of identification and categorisation at the ports of entry and general government statistical data,⁵ the categories of “English” and “Jamaican” are problematic. Most of those categorised as “English” came to Cuba from a third country, often a British Caribbean colony or Central American countries with considerable numbers of British Antillean migrants. Taking into account that many of the British Caribbean migrants, particularly non-Jamaicans, were identified and identify themselves as *los ingleses* (“English”) in Cuba, and that they were in theory British Subjects, the category is open to more speculation. Moreover, by drawing on other sources, and given the fact that many of those categorised as “English” were field labourers and that their migratory patterns (i.e., places of departure and ports of arrival) sometimes follow that of black Caribbean workers, it can be argued that they were in fact British Antilleans. The “Jamaican” category can be equally problematic because Jamaican, or *jamaicano*, was the way in which most of the black British Caribbean migrants –and indeed black migrants– were identified. The term itself had, and continues to have, a pejorative connotation, and *jamaicano* is the word preferred by the descendants of Jamaican migrants in Cuba.⁶

The category of “non-specified Central Americans”, appearing after the end of the construction of the Panama Canal in 1913, is equally problematic. It is not known whether they were actually Central Americans, or descendants of British Caribbean islanders born in either Costa Rica, Nicaragua, or Panama. If one considers that some of the migrants coming from Central America were born elsewhere, according to the records, one can safely assume that they were originally from a British Caribbean colony. Also, if one takes into account that birthplace population figures in the British colonies in the 1920s indicate significant numbers of people born in Central American countries, the possibility that the “non-specified Central Americans” were in fact British Antilleans becomes more plausible. Of course, we cannot say anything as to whether they felt attached to a Latin-Hispanic identity (Central America) or to an English-speaking Caribbean identity (British Antilleans).

As noted above, Jamaicans –and Haitians– were not identified in the census or immigration records until 1912. The government’s socio-political rationale for starting to categorise Jamaicans and Haitians in 1912 –the year of the Afro-Cuban revolt that was associated with these migrant groups– is never assessed. Before 1912, the category used is “non-specified Antilleans”. It is not known whether the people within the category were Jamaicans, Haitians, or eastern Caribbean islanders. Cuban historian and demographer Juan Pérez de la Riva assumes in his study that they were Jamaicans, which can be supported by the fact that once the Jamaicans start to be categorised individually in 1912 (with 1,269

arrivals), immigration under the category of “non-specified Antilleans” decreased significantly: from 2,736 in 1911 to 201 in 1912. What we do not know, however, is which migrants were then categorised as “non-specified Antilleans” after 1912. One can assume that the category became the one to classify eastern Caribbean islanders. Nonetheless, “non-specified Antilleans” does not appear consistently in the records (during the 1920s and after), and when it does, and one compares the data from other sources, the figures seem to be an underestimation. It was precisely during the 1920s that eastern Caribbean migration increased to some specific sugar plantations. For some of the years that there is no register of non-Jamaican British Antillean migrants or that the information is not provided at all, it is known that at least one plantation –one that preferred eastern Caribbean workers as its labour force- had authorisation to import from 2,000 to 3,000 migrant workers. And for those years, while no Leeward and Windward Islanders were recorded as immigrants, considerable numbers were recorded as “passengers”. For instance, in the year 1920, while there were only 131 “non-specified Antilleans” registered as immigrants, there were 1,775 registered as passengers. In 1923, no “non-specified Antilleans” are registered as immigrants, and a total of 7,841 are registered as passengers. If these “passengers” were contract workers coming to work on specific plantations, can they be considered as what is known as swallow migration?

The case of the migrants from the eastern Caribbean islands coming as contract labourers to specific plantations relates to another problem with the sources. Sugar plantations such as those of the Cuban American Sugar Company (CASC) and the United Fruit Company (UFC) had a total hegemony over their land and their strategically located ports. Therefore, their control of the amount of workers moving in and out of their territory meant that the State –that is, officials compiling data on migration- did not necessarily have accurate records on the immigrants arriving to these plantations. This is very evident in the incompatibility of data for specific years between the immigration records and the labourers imported by the CASC. The amount of illegal migration, known to be existent throughout the early twentieth century, is another element to be considered when examining the data.

Another problem is that there are disparities in the data when one compares the records on migration in the census and the immigration data in the registers of immigration and movement of passengers. For instance, in 1917, the immigration of “non-specified Antilleans” was registered at 656 in the census. However, according to the records of immigration and movement of passengers, there were only 195 “non-specified Antilleans”

that year. For the Jamaicans the difference is equally striking. During the same year, the immigration and movement of passengers reported 7,889 immigrants, while the census reported 5,866: a difference of 2,023 migrants. Finally, the census records only distinguished between foreign and native whites and not between foreign and native blacks. This lack of information does not facilitate an accurate estimate of the proportion of black migrants out of the total black population, a factor that would allow the researcher to speak with more certainty about the visibility of black migrants within Cuban society. In short, while the information on population and migration is relatively good when compared to that of other countries, it has to be examined critically and along with other sources.⁷

One of the original features of this research is the extensive combination of sources and its interdisciplinary methodological approach. I worked in archives in Cuba, the Caribbean, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States. For example, I used archival material from the Public Record Office in London to obtain the views of the British consular officials and those black British Caribbean migrants who wrote regularly to the representatives of the Empire. Company records such as those of the Braga Brothers Collection and the Cuba Company Papers in the United States and the UFC and the CACS in Cuba were used to garner the perceptions of foreign entrepreneurs and sugar administrators. The papers of the UFC and CACS in particular are sources that remain virtually unexamined in the study of labour migration to Cuba and of Cuban history in general.⁸ The opinions of Cuban government officials were culled from the national and provincial archives in Cuba and those of U.S. citizens were taken from collections such as those in the National Archives of the United States and the Library of Congress. This multi-archival research assisted in the better re-construction of the events under analysis and in the critique of the sources during the analysis of the data by, for example, comparing and contrasting the exposition of a single event in each of the different sources.⁹

One particular goal of the methodological approach used for the study was the attempt to collect, as far as the sources allowed, the 'voice' of the migrants themselves. For this, I benefited from the assistance of the migrants and their descendants, who kindly provided private personal documents for my examination. I also conducted interviews with surviving migrants in the different communities in Cuba and benefited from the collection of interviews on early twentieth-century Jamaica held at the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute for Social and Economic Research, University of the West Indies, Jamaica. This collection, prepared by Erna Brodber, represents a valuable, yet underused source, for the history of Jamaica and Jamaicans that are otherwise deprived of their 'voice' in most historical

representations. Another important source were the letters the migrants wrote to local newspapers in their islands of origin, some of which I was able to obtain in my examination of the press in the former British colonies. My ethnographic visits to many settlements of migrants in Cuban towns such as Banes, Baraguá, and Puerto Padre, was also vital in informing my understanding of the black Caribbean experience in Cuba.

With regard to other documentary sources, it was my attempt to collect a wide range of different perspectives. Therefore, instead of only focusing my research on the main archives and sources in Havana, I devoted considerable time to research in provincial and municipal archives. Accordingly, rather than depending on the mainstream Havana press, I also used collections of regional newspapers from the eastern provinces and specialised periodicals such as *The Louisiana Planter and Sugar Manufacturer*. Other periodicals such as *Cuba Contemporanea*, *Carteles*, *Labor Nueva*, were an important source for obtaining the views of Cuban intellectuals and politicians.

In this work, I will not use quotation marks for the words race or ethnicity. Both race and ethnicity are understood here as socially and historically constructed categories centred on perceived difference, whether that is on the basis of culture, language, or physical features such as colour of the skin or type of hair.¹⁰ While it is understood that race as such does not exist as a biological category, it does exist as a social construction or as an idea of “great tenacity and power” around which people organise their behaviour. That is, as Peter Wade has noted, “a social reality of paramount importance.”¹¹ The use of race in this study follows Howard Winant in that:

The longevity of the race concept and the enormous number of effects race thinking (and race acting) has produced guarantee that race will remain a feature of social reality across the globe [...] despite its lack of intrinsic or scientific merit (in the biological sense).¹²

Race is then used as “social race”, to borrow a term used over half a century ago in Charles Wagley’s assessment of race in the Americas. Social races, Wagley noted, “may be classifications based on real or imaginary physical characteristics”, on “criteria of social status such as education, wealth, language, and custom”, or “may indicate near or distant ancestry.” Such criteria for defining social races, he sustain, differs from region to region.¹³ And because the people who are at the centre of this study did use race on these terms, and did organise their behaviour and actions on the basis of a certain notion or idea of race, one cannot possibly study such phenomena as if they did not exist. As noted by Wade, “it is necessary to highlight the history of race by calling it by its name.”¹⁴ The use of ethnicity

-also as a social construction- is distinguished from that of race in that it refers particularly to the cultural differences (i.e., customs, language) existing between groups, a difference that may or may not coincide with national origin and colour. For example, while any given British Caribbean migrant and an Afro-Cuban might share a similar skin colour, they will not speak the same language or have the same customs. Also, while a white British consul and a black British subject may share the same imagined national affiliation, they will regard each other as coming from a distinct cultural background or heritage. In this -a study of a migration experience and therefore cultural contact of Cubans, Jamaicans, North Americans, etc.- such distinctions will be referred to as ethnicity. Distinctions of perceived physical and colour difference will be regarded as race. That conceptual distinction will be kept whenever the terms are used in the following pages,¹⁵ even when I am aware that there are occasions when race and ethnicity share a similar space in human perception.

¹ H. Hoetink, *The Two Variants in Caribbean Race Relations: A Contribution to the Sociology of Segmented Societies*, translated by Eva M. Hooykaas (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), xii. The book was originally published in Dutch as *De gespleten samenleving in het Caribisch gebied. Een sociologische studie* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1962).

² Some of the works on the debate at different stages are Gilberto Freire, *The Masters and the Slaves: A Study on the Development of Brazilian Civilization* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946), Frank Tannenbaum, *Slave and Citizen* (Boston: Beacon Press [1946] 1992), Stanley M. Elkins, *Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966), Sidney W. Mintz, "Groups, Group Boundaries and the Perception of 'Race'." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 13: 4 (1971): 437-450, Vera Rubin, ed. "Social and Cultural Pluralism in the Caribbean," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 83 (1960), and Ann J. Lane, ed., *The Debate over Slavery: Stanley Elkins and His Critics* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971).

³ Rafael Duarte Jiménez, *Nacionalidad e historia* (Santiago de Cuba: Editorial Oriente, 1989), 45.

⁴ The only work dealing with the issues of imperial allegiance and the agency of the migrants, to my knowledge, is the monograph by Moji Anderson, *Imperial Ideology: 'Subjects', 'Objectivity', and the Use of 'Empire' in the 1918-19 Banana Workers' Strike in Costa Rica and Panama*, Working Paper No. 43 (Kingston: Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1998).

⁵ See Marylee Mason Vandiver, "Racial Classification in Latin American Censuses," *Social Forces*, 28:2 (December 1949): 139.

⁶ Both terms, *jamaicano* and *jamaíquino*, appeared in the Spanish Dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy, the first one referring to the latter, which means coming from Jamaica. Real Academia Española, *Diccionario de la Lengua Española*, Vol. 2 (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S. A., 1984), 793. That the latter term is linguistically correct, however, does not exclude its negative connotation in the Cuban context, where *jamaicano* is the term preferred.

⁷ For a more detailed critique of the issues with regard to the statistical data and the generalisations on terminology see Jorge L. Giovannetti, "Revisiting the *Migración Antillana*: A Critical Overview of the British West Indian Migration to Cuba" (Paper delivered at the Society for Caribbean Studies Conference, University of Birmingham, UK, 4-5 July 2000).

⁸ The only works that have had access to these sources are Oscar Zanetti and Alejandro García, et al., *United Fruit Company: Un caso del dominio imperialista en Cuba* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1978) and Ariel James, *Banes: Imperialismo y nación en una plantación azucarera* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1976).

⁹ On the contemporary relevance of the approach of source-criticism and multi-archival research in historical studies see Richard J. Evans, *In Defence of History* (London: Granta Books, 1997), 18-19; Georg G. Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century: From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge* (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1997), 12, 100, 144; John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History*, second edition (London: Logman, 1991), 65-66. On the importance of archival research for the study of race and ethnicity see John H. Stanfield II, "In the Archives," in *Race and Ethnicity in Research Methods*, eds. John H. Stanfield II and Rutledge M. Dennis (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1993), 273-283.

¹⁰ On the emphasis of the important role of perception of both race and ethnicity, see the discussion on somatic norm image, in Hoetink, *The Two Variants in Caribbean Race Relations*. For a critical discussion, yet emphasising the importance on perception, or perceived 'race', see the works of Sidney W. Mintz, "Caribbean Nationhood: An Anthropological Perspective," in *Caribbean Transformations* (New York: Columbia University Press, [1974] 1989), 302-328, "Ethnic Difference, Plantation Sameness," in *Ethnicity in the Caribbean*:

Essays in Honor of Harry Hoetink, ed. Gert Oostindie (London: Macmillan, 1996), 39-42, and "Groups, Group Boundaries and the Perception of 'Race'," 437-443.

¹¹ Peter Wade, *Race and Ethnicity in Latin America* (London: Pluto Press, 1997), 14. See also Tzvetan Todorov, "Race, Writing, and Culture," in *Race, Writing, and Difference*, ed. Henry Louis Gates Jr. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 370-371.

¹² Howard Winant, *Racial Conditions: Politics, Theory, Comparisons* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 16.

¹³ Charles Wagley, "The Concept of Social Race in the Americas," in *The Latin American Tradition: Essays on the Unity and the Diversity of Latin American Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), 153-154. The essay was originally written in 1957, was published first in the *Actas del XXXIII Congreso de Americanistas*, Vol. 1 (San José, Costa Rica, 1959), 403-417.

¹⁴ Wade, *Race and Ethnicity*, 21.

¹⁵ On the distinction see Mintz, "Ethnic Difference, Plantation Sameness," 40-42.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL FOUNDINGS

The nineteenth century in the Caribbean started with the success of a slave revolt in the most prosperous European sugar colony, the establishment of the first black independent nation in the Americas, and the first racial revolution in the Hemisphere. Haiti was the only country where slavery and colonialism collapsed simultaneously. As noted by historian Hilary McD Beckles, “the Saint Domingue revolution was the beginning of the end for the twin process of slavery and colonisation imposed upon the region.”¹ The consequences of such an event cannot be underestimated. Haiti’s “cardinal sin”, Sidney W. Mintz reminds us, was that it “freed its people (*all* of its people, including slaves) by revolution, at a time when slavery was still an acceptable custom for Europeans”² –and, indeed, for the people of independent North America.

The impact of the Haitian Revolution and independence on the geopolitical and economic landscape of the Caribbean region was dramatic. For Cuba, one of Haiti’s nearest neighbours, the impact was twofold. First, the vacuum left in the regional production of sugar was covered by Cuba, which also received the migration of planters from Haiti coming with their knowledge, ideas, capital, and slaves. Secondly, at the socio-political level, Cuba would live out the nineteenth century with the “haunting vision” of another Haiti.³ That slaves had been successful through a revolt had racial implications that were inevitably linked to the debates over slavery and the slave trade.

The 19th Century Black Fear

Early in the nineteenth century, the Cuban representative in the Spanish Courts, José Antonio Saco, manifested these concerns in relation to the equation of slavery and Cuban agriculture. It was his preference to have whites doing the work in the plantations rather than Africans who were given to “profound and stupid laziness”.⁴ In 1837, Saco questioned the lack of a project of white colonisation in Cuba and lamented that the country was being “flooded with African slaves”.⁵ Saco’s concerns stemmed in part from the demographic changes taking place in Cuba due to the complementary processes of increasing sugar production and the growing traffic of slaves. By the census of 1841, the slave population had surpassed that of the whites – a demographic change that was related to the growth in agricultural activity experienced by Cuba during the nineteenth century.⁶

The changes in Cuban agricultural production, especially sugar, at the turn of the nineteenth century were accompanied by the intensification of the slave system. As a

consequence, there was also an increase in slave rebelliousness that was inevitably linked to the past events in neighbouring Haiti. Cuban historian Rafael Duarte Jiménez has established that link and has shown the increase in the different ways of slave resistance during the early nineteenth century. There was a growth in the *palenques* (maroon settlements) as well as in slave conspiracies and revolts in different regions of the island.⁷ Among the most notable conspiracies uncovered by the colonial authorities was that of free black José Antonio Aponte. It was reported that the persons in charge of the conspiracy, who were eventually executed, owned portraits of the different Haitian leaders.⁸ The wider Caribbean context was not very encouraging either for those fearing a slave revolt. Major slave uprisings took place in Barbados in 1816, Demerara in 1823, and Jamaica in 1831; and from 1822 to 1844 Haiti occupied the Dominican Republic. Last but not least in increasing Spanish concerns, was the independence of the South American nations.

The fear of black revolts was heightened by the existence of maroon communities. In a letter manifesting his concern about the *palenques*, one Captain-General commented in 1840 that:

... we also have as neighbors Jamaica and St. Domingue where the greater part of their inhabitants are freed persons of color, very disposed to contact with the maroons and inclined towards rebellion for the idea of liberty...⁹

In 1844, the Spanish colonial government uncovered a slave conspiracy (or set of conspiracies), leading to an “intense period of search, seizure, torture, confession, trial and punishment” of hundreds of suspects, some of whom were tied to a ladder and flogged.¹⁰ The conspiracy, paradoxically, became known after the method of retribution: *La conspiración de La Escalera* (The ladder conspiracy).¹¹ The extent and ruthlessness of the retributions also shows the underlying fears and concerns of the white political and economic elites. In that context, anti-black feelings were heightened along with pro-white feelings and ideas of ‘whitening’ that were exposed not only by Saco, but also by other intellectuals such as Ramón de la Sagra and Francisco de Frias, better known as *Conde de Pozos Dulces*.¹²

The colonial authorities in Cuba (as well as in Puerto Rico and also the governments of the independent Latin American nations) made efforts to encourage white migration. During the late 1810s, the Spanish authorities started to develop policies of white colonisation through the actions of the *Junta de Población Blanca*. In some instances, the *Junta* acquired land in different regions of the island destined for European settlers. But

the relative failure of the *Junta's* efforts was not so much the absence of white migrants arriving in Cuba.¹³ The ultimate purpose of the *Junta* –to control the racial composition of the country- confronted the parallel process of consolidation of the slave society and accompanying increase in the slave population. Estimates of the importation of slaves from 1835 to 1864 are of 387,216, averaging some 12,908 slaves annually.¹⁴ In addition to the Spanish settlers and the forced migration of African slaves, indentured Chinese labourers were also brought in from the 1840s on. It is estimated that nearly 125,000 arrived in Cuba between 1847 and 1874 in conditions analogous to slavery.¹⁵

The economic, social, and demographic changes had set in motion the Cuban plantation society, a society replete with racial, social, and political contradictions. Technological changes in the process of sugar production (i.e. introduction of the steam engine) and the construction of railways made further impact in Cuba's economic development. At the political level, Spain tightened its colonial control over Cuba, marginalized locals from positions of power, and imposed higher taxation rates. The colonial authorities used the fear of a slave revolt to consolidate their political grip on the island and repress dissidence among the Creoles.¹⁶ Nevertheless, the sugar economy continued to thrive and the traffic of slaves persisted during the second half of the century. In the 1850s alone, slave imports were of 123,327 (1851-1860).¹⁷

While the fear of slave revolt may have served as a political tool, it was a real concern for colonial officials in Cuba. Precisely because of the internal racial and political tensions (i.e., black slave/white master), events outside Cuba's boundaries served as prospective scenarios for Cuba. It is therefore no coincidence that when the Morant Bay rebellion exploded in Jamaica in 1865, racial fears were again triggered in Cuba. When the news was received in Cuba, Domingo Dulce, the Civil Superior Governor responded immediately on 19 October:

... I have arranged for two of the three war ships that we have in Cuba to depart for Kingston, so that they can communicate to us [the] news from Jamaica... just in case the British General, Governor of that Island may need them... Accordingly, I have circulated preventive orders to the Lieutenant Governors of this Province to guard the slaves [*dotaciones de esclavos*] in sugar mills in case one of them tries to exploit the news...¹⁸

On 28 October, Bruno Badan, Spanish Consul in Kingston wrote to Dulce saying that the "diabolic plan" of the Jamaican insurgents was frustrated.¹⁹

The persistence of the fears of a slave revolt was accompanied by a growth in slave-based sugar production. Even when different systems of labour co-existed during the 1860s,

sugar production based on slave labour remained as a viable alternative.²⁰ During that period, despite the uneven regional and technological development, sugar production grew from 428,769 metric tons in 1860 to 720,250 in 1868, comprising 28.57% of the total world sugar production.²¹ With slaves actively working in the production of Cuba's main crop, the freedom of the slaves became an inescapable necessity when the first war of independence started in 1868. But the very fact that the slaves became insurgents and were part of the independence struggle was enough for the Spanish authorities to define the struggle and those struggling along racial lines. The black fear was manifested during the Ten Years' War (1868-1878), but more obviously in the "Little War" (1879-1880) that took place after a group of insurgents did not accept the terms of the 1878 Pact of Zanjón agreed between Maximo Gómez, for the Cuban Liberation Army, and Arsenio Martínez Campos, for Spain. Among the leaders of the "Little War" were blacks and mulattoes such as Antonio and José Maceo, Guillermon Moncada, Quintín Banderas and Mariano Tones, providing some degree of legitimacy to the Spanish claim that the insurrection was a "race war".²² However, Antonio Maceo himself stated that, while the revolution had as its purpose the "fall of the Spanish Government", it did not aspire to the extermination of the Spaniards. The revolution, Maceo noted, "does not have the character that some extremists would like to give to it".²³

Parallel to the struggle for independence, and complementary to it, was the struggle of the slaves to gain their freedom. Laws and decrees gave liberty to newborn and elderly slaves, and legislation for the abolition of slavery came into effect in 1880, with an interim eight-year period of *patronato*, or apprenticeship, that actually ended two years earlier in 1886. The end of the legal institution, however, was not only because of colonial laws and decrees but also, as historian Rebecca J. Scott has shown, as part of the efforts of the slaves themselves in buying freedom through the limited legal tools at hand.²⁴ She argues, nevertheless, that the system of slavery –and its associated systems of physical and economic control, subordination, and discrimination- remained alive until the very "last minute", and "as late as 1879 slaves were still seen as the most appropriate form of labor for many tasks on plantations."²⁵ The persistence of the racial fears until the very end of the century is evident in Scott's argument:

The willingness of planters to consider some form of abolition seems to have been based in large measure on their perception of the *social and political risks* of maintaining slavery, rather than on any immediate collapse of slave-based production.²⁶

By the 1880s, the Spanish officials continued to face the threat of slave revolts and conspiracies.²⁷ The colonial government also lived under the threat of an alleged plan of the “Black League of the Antilles” that aspired to the “predominance of the coloured race in the Antilles.” The League, that was directly associated with Haiti and Jamaica and is said to have influenced the “thought of Maceo”, had the intention of taking the properties from the whites in the region.²⁸

The abolition of slavery did not put an end to racial preoccupations and concerns, nor to the ideology of racism that had accompanied the institution for years. As Gordon K. Lewis noted, “It would be naive to assume that, as slavery ended, it also ended. Ideological systems long survive the concrete economic conditions that originally give rise to them.”²⁹ It must come as no surprise, then, that the Spaniards again held to their strategy of racial fear when the second war of independence started in 1895. Their opposition was inevitably ‘weakened’ because of the process of ‘whitening’ that Cuba was experiencing –paradoxically with Spanish migration- and because there could be no fear of slave revolt in a country without slavery. Moreover, the challenge to the Spaniards was not only in the military arena but also from the “intellectual leaders of Cuban independence [who] had made racial equality a *theoretical* foundation of the Cuban nation.”³⁰ Although racial prejudice did exist within the Liberation Army,³¹ in practice, what Spanish troops were fighting on the Cuban battlefield was a multi-racial army in which peoples of all shades and colours were taking part.³²

Enter the USA

Rather than ending with independence, the war concluded with nearly four years of military intervention by the United States –a country where racial segregation persisted. It was under such an unsolicited shadow that the Cubans had to decide their country’s independent future and write their constitution: a constitution amended by the U.S. in the form of the 1901 Platt Amendment, allowing the U.S. to intervene in Cuban affairs whenever deemed necessary. The U.S. pressure was political, but also ideologically charged with U.S. notions of race and civilization. Intervention was conceived as both a duty and a ‘civilising’ mission in what was understood to be their region of influence –their racial destiny.³³ Cubans had to face U.S. scepticism as to their capability for self-government,³⁴ which was accompanied by specific U.S. racist notions.³⁵ This represented an obstacle to the Cuban discourse of racial equality and actually opened the door for the persistence of the racial ideas resulting from centuries under slavery. In the competition between U.S. racial understandings

and the history of multi-racial struggle and the ideology of racial unity, the former would have the advantage.

After the end of the military intervention by the United States, in 1902, administrative control over Cuba was handed –in theory- to President Tomás Estrada Palma. A former member of the Cuban Revolutionary Party, Estrada Palma was not, at that time, affiliated to any of the political parties existing in independent Cuba. In many ways his administration served as a sequel to the changes that were being implemented under the U.S. military administration, witnessing the increase in U.S. control over the country. Foreign investment, primarily from the United States, became more intense accelerating the process of expansion and consolidation in the different sectors of the economy –sugar, railways, and tobacco.

Land appropriations that started during the U.S. military government facilitated the expansion of railways and the sugar industry. The Canadian Railway entrepreneur, William Van Horne had acquired lands through his relationship with the military governor, Leonard Wood, and by 1902 was actively involved in the construction of the eastern railway network. The UFC bought lands in northeastern Cuba around the Nipe Bay area at extremely low prices for the construction of the Boston and Preston Sugar Mills. In 1900, the UFC owned 7,803 acres of land cultivated in sugar cane, and it is reported that the area under its control by 1914 (Banes, Nipe Bay, and Saetia) comprised 255,000 acres, of which 58,000 were planted in sugar cane.³⁶ By 1899, Mario García Menocal had selected the lands where Robert Bradley Hawley's CASC would develop two of the largest sugar complexes in Cuba and the Caribbean: the Chaparra and Delicias Sugar Mills. It is perhaps symbolic of U.S. economic control in Cuba after independence that two of the largest sugar mills, Chaparra and Boston, had their first sugar crops in 1902, the year of the establishment of the Cuban Republic.³⁷ The U.S. signed a treaty whereby they acquired land in the Guantánamo Bay area to develop a Naval Military Base.³⁸ In all, it is estimated that U.S. capital investment in Cuba rose from \$80,000,000 in 1902 to \$220,000,000 in 1912.³⁹

The rural sector of Cuban society experienced a process of marginalisation as U.S. capital started to gain more control of the land, particularly in the east. The process affected all Cubans, but was particularly damaging for Afro-Cubans.⁴⁰ In Camagüey, for instance, in 1906, the Governor of the Province reported that the “population of colour” was concentrated in the cities, leaving the rural areas to the whites. The latter owned the majority of the farms in the province (2,383), he noted, and the “property corresponding to the element of colour is insignificant” (171 farms).⁴¹ Ironically for a country that had just

gained its independence from Spain, employers in different areas had a preference for the massive wave of Spanish migrant workers that were arriving every year, particularly during the 1900s and 1910s. In 1905 and 1906, the sugar entrepreneur Manuel Rionda was concentrating his efforts in bringing labourers from Spain, in particular Galicia and the Canary Islands.⁴² Cubans, especially Cuban blacks, faced marginalisation in the labour arena. Not only had Afro-Cubans been displaced and marginalized under the socio-economic changes experienced by Republican Cuba, but also those who became proletarians on the sugar plantations had to work with the permanent reminder of the racial order of the society. The guards of Edwin Atkins's sugar estate in Cienfuegos were mostly Spaniards who, as suggested by Rebecca Scott, echoed "the white militia of the southern United States".⁴³ Accordingly, during the first decade of the century, virtually all the *guardias jurados* hired by the UFC in Banes were either white Cubans or Spaniards.⁴⁴ At the CASC plantations, both private guards and Government Rural Guards were also predominantly white.

While Afro-Cubans were facing marginalization at the lower end of the social spectrum, at the upper level, the political arena became the space where Cuban elites could have access to power. And it was precisely access to power that triggered the first political crisis in Republican Cuba. President Estrada Palma joined the Moderate Party and ran for re-election in 1905, winning against Liberal candidate José Miguel Gómez. In August 1906, the Liberals started a revolt against the government of Estrada Palma, a revolt that had as undercurrents the social and racial problems existing in Cuban society since the nineteenth century but also those caused by the U.S. ideological and economic domination over the society. Because most of the followers and clientele of the Liberal Party were from the black and mulatto classes, it is not surprising that most of the insurgents should have been non-whites. But the racial composition of the rebels would also be framed within the discourses of civilisation and race that prevailed in Cuba at the time, not least within the ideological framework of the black fear.

That August, a fruit planter by the name of W. A. Page, wrote to the U.S. Department of State:

As far as I can find out the leaders are disgruntled politicians and their principal follo[wing] are Negroes[,] as the better class of people are not taking up with the insurgents.⁴⁵

The Acting U.S. Charge d' Affaires reported in September that the "war appears in one respect to be assuming its most dangerous phase." Immediately after, he remarked: "Parties

of the worst class of negroes are rising up and under the pretext of being revolutionist are robbing, and sacking shops".⁴⁶ A report from a Cuban Provincial Governor also commented on the link between the Liberals, the blacks, and the insurgency. In his assessment of the situation by November 1906 he provided a picture of the existing racial and political divisions in Camagüey. Governor Manuel R. Silva noted that even when most of the "coloured element" had joined the Liberals, the racial antagonism was not manifest in a grave manner or in ways that would "seed a feeling of hatred." "There has been the natural division between the two races," he noted, but even with the opposite views in which they "consider the progress of the civilization," such a "fundamental distinction" had not turned into abuses or injustices that had irritated any of the "contending parts". And precisely because of the lack of such abuses during the revolt, or anything for which revenge was needed, once the revolt was finished, "all the elements, the coloured ones, that have formed the contingent of the revolt", returned to their normal life. The Liberals, he concluded, needed to look for support among the "ignorant classes" for their political combinations.⁴⁷

Racial implosion

Scott has argued that many of the fearful rumours of black rebels and insurgents during the Liberal revolt of 1906 seemed to be unfounded and were more the "projection of white fears onto a stage in which people of color were in fact very visible." She argues that "cross-racial clienteles were the rule rather than the exception" and that there were spaces of "incorporation" for the persons of colour.⁴⁸ But such cross-racial order seems to have had a hierarchical order, such as the one described in reports of "24 men of colour, led by a white Chief" who took arms and ran through the province on horses days before the end of hostilities.⁴⁹ Many of the fears may well have been unfounded, but the politics around the Liberal Revolt were definitely indicative of the major racial tensions that were emerging in Cuba twenty years after the end of slavery and only eight years after the end of the independence struggle. As argued by several scholars, by 1906, black and mulatto veterans had not received a proportional share of political power,⁵⁰ something that would become more and more evident in the events after the Liberal Revolt of that year. The poor quality of the Cuban military forces and Estrada Palma's incapacity to control the revolt and guarantee stability in the country prompted the U.S. intervention in 1906 and the establishment of a provisional government that would last until 1909.

The first intervention, its practical effect on Cuban institutions, and its ideological influence on the notions of race and civilisation had already impacted on the politics of race within Cuban society.⁵¹ The actions of leading Afro-Cuban politicians during the early Republican years (Martín Morúa Delgado or Juan Gualberto Gómez) appears to have presented a strong challenge to the discriminatory practices taking place in the country.⁵² It is not surprising that the second U.S. intervention (1906-1909) witnessed a growth in the existing political activism of blacks and mulattos within Cuban society. If anything, the discrimination against the Afro-Cubans actually triggered the activism of blacks and mulattos and also their willingness to play the role they thought they deserved within Cuban society. As early as 1905, one commentator, “a Cuban patriot”, identified “three great divisions in the population of Cuba”: the “native Spaniards”, the “Criollos”, and the “negro element”. About the latter, he observed:

The third class was composed of the negro element in all its gradations [...]. This element is now beginning to play a part in the destinies of Cuba, for much of the success of the recent revolution is said to be due to the energy of the negroes. It has been noticed that at least those in the cities were seeking education, and endeavouring to release themselves from the effects of slavery.

He noted that the “mulattoes are remarkably intelligent” but added, “unfortunately they seem to derive from their intermingled races not only physical and mental beauties, but strong evil propensities.”⁵³ The acknowledgement of the efforts of Cuban blacks for self-reliance, improvement and equality, was therefore confronted with discrimination, notions of backwardness, and fears of evilness.

The dualism of racism and the struggle for improvement (or *regeneración*) became more evident after the revolt of 1906 and during the U.S. intervention. To be sure, Afro-Cuban activism had existed before, through the black press,⁵⁴ the *Directorio Central de Sociedades de la Raza de Color*, and the Committee of Veterans and Societies of Colour; but by 1907, Afro-Cubans began to claim their “rightful share” in a more assertive way. Evaristo Estenoz, a former veteran of the wars of independence, started the activities that would lead to the foundation of the *Agrupación Independiente de Color* (later, *Partido Independiente de Color*, PIC) during the following year. At the same time, and probably in reaction to it, other “Cubans of colour” manifested their position. In August 1907, a “Committee” launched a “Pronouncement to the Cuban People and the Citizens of Colour” saying:

From today the coloured race in Camagüey will not be a social element without direction, but on the contrary and due to the rights that our citizenship provides us, we are inclined, in the measure of our efforts, towards the moral, political and economic dignity of the individuals of our race.⁵⁵

The goals of the “Committee” were to be accomplished through an organisation that would bring together a diversity of people that respected their particular political affiliations. In apparent reaction, a second group declared that the “people of colour” had a space within the Liberal Party and that there was no need for any other “heterogeneous” organisation. Because the whites and the coloured people had been together since the struggles for independence and in the 1906 revolt, it was asked: “What reason, of an essential character, exists now for us not to be able, as before, to remain united as always affirming our unquestionable rights? How can it be possible that men of colour affiliated to the Liberal Party could consider as good, a Directory in which individuals who are enemies of liberalism are taking part?” For the signatories of the second pronouncement, the creation of a multi-partisan association on the basis of colour would have “fatal consequences” for the coloured people who would lose the “protection of the white element in the arts, industry, and commerce.”⁵⁶ Why would the coloured people need the protection of the white element? The possible answers to that question, along with the ideas of racial order expressed and implied in both declarations, indicate that while the Cuban social and historical landscape was full of instances of cross-racial collaboration and unity, it was also a landscape with fissures, social boundaries and divisions.

The PIC started their organisational efforts in 1908 through meetings and the publication of the newspaper *Previsión*. That same year they participated in the elections of November, only to face a defeat and obtain a small share of the popular vote. The Association’s main motivation was to obtain equal rights and representation for people of colour without –as it was explicitly stated- creating racial antagonism.

Convinced, as we are, that we are strong and worthy, we wish to participate in all the acts of government that constitute the Cuban Republic for the purpose of being governed rightly, our intention never being that the right to govern shall rest solely with the negro race while this constitutes to be a republic constituted on the rights of all.

The PIC understood that Cuban blacks were being “ignored” and “excluded systematically from participating in the public affairs of the country”.⁵⁷ The Party opposed the migratory policies existing in the country and advocated the migration of “all races, without any preference” and sought reforms in the education system. Their political programme also

called for improvement in working conditions, abolition of the death penalty, improvements in the prisons, and changes leading to a fairer judicial system. It was also understood that Afro-Cubans should have representation in the diplomatic corps so that the Cuban Republic would be represented “as it is”, with all its different racial components.⁵⁸

The struggle of the PIC was not well received within the broader Cuban society. In 1910 the Party was declared illegal, with an amendment to the electoral law presented by coloured politician Martín Morúa Delgado banning all political parties and groups organised on a racial basis. After unsuccessfully trying to fight against the ‘Morúa Amendment’ and failing in an attempt to enter in the electoral process, the PIC organised a revolt against the Government.⁵⁹ “The black uprising of 1912,” wrote Duharte Jiménez, “seemed to materialize the fear that had chilled the creole planters ever since 1791.”⁶⁰ And indeed, the PIC revolt was characterised by the same racial fears that had dominated the Cuban psyche across the colonial nineteenth century and the early Republican years. As such, perceptions and portrayals of the PIC and its leaders saw the revolt as a racist and divisive enterprise that would hamper Cuba’s imagined racial democracy and damage the nation. On those grounds, the revolt was brutally repressed by the government of José Miguel Gómez.

Gomez’s perception of the revolt was not that of a legitimate struggle for equality. Rather, his government viewed it as a challenge to the State and the nation –and surely to the Liberal Party which had the following of the blacks and mulattoes. In his reply to an offer of “cowboys” he received from the United States, Gómez said: “I am very grateful for your generous offer; I do not need men; convey my most expressive thanks to the courageous Cowboys. I have enough forces to crush immediately the rebellious negroes that remain in arms.”⁶¹ After the end of his presidential term, Gómez visited Carlos García Vález (General of the independence struggle and diplomat) in London. García Vález recollected later that after narrating the battles of 1912, Gómez had remarked, constantly pointing to his coloured servant: “He can tell you [...] All of them were killed, not one left [...] He can tell you.”⁶² While not all were killed, the government repression took the life of over 3,000 blacks and mulattoes.

The explicit racial nature of the PIC revolt –as opposed to the 1906 uprising- had a significant effect on the way in which it was perceived and portrayed. Like the 1812 Conspiracy of Aponte a century earlier, the 1912 “race war” was perceived in the same ideological framework of racial fear and as a revolt that was influenced from abroad. It was said that the leader of the revolt, Evaristo Estenoz, had been born in the Dominican Republic and was also labelled a “black adventurer from Jamaica.”⁶³ Numerous accusations

from different sources claimed that the movement was inspired by foreign elements, either from Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, or Haiti.⁶⁴ Arthur M. Beaupré, U.S. Minister in Havana, wrote to the U.S. Department of State with reports of “many strange negroes in Cienfuegos, many from Haiti and Jamaica.”⁶⁵ The commercial magazine *Tobacco* echoed the news of the “strange negroes” and *El Camagueyano* reported on a meeting held by Estenoz as “*Los independientes de color: El mitin de Jamaica*”, but in reference to a town of that name in Guantánamo. The reference to “Jamaica” in the title of the article, even when it was not the neighbouring island, surely triggered the fear among ‘headline readers’.⁶⁶ The Governor of the Province of Oriente reported to the Secretary of Government that among some insurgents in his province there was one man of “Haitian nationality” who was “in charge of bringing the expeditions of arms and ammunition for the rebels.”⁶⁷

An indication of the wider racialized perception of the Cuban revolt in the press can be found in *The Jamaica Times* reported:

It has been persistently said that [there are involved] in the uprising many fighters from Jamaica as well as from Hayti [*sic*] and Santo Domingo. Fancy writers have gone so far as to spread the idea that the black populations of the West Indies are all [in]volved, with the idea of making a big federation of the black race.

The somewhat sceptical writer, however, acknowledged that there was “some truth in the assertion that there are black people of other countries mixed up in the present turmoil.”⁶⁸ Another Jamaican newspaper, *The Daily Gleaner*, reported that Evaristo Estenoz was “a native of Jamaica”, “anxious for notoriety, although of considerable intelligence and some military ability.”⁶⁹ One day before its report on Estenoz, the same newspaper argued against the claims of Jamaican involvement in the revolt saying that “neither Haytian [*sic*] nor the Jamaicans care a fig whether Cuba remains a Republic or not.”⁷⁰ Charles Carvalho, the Haitian consul in Santiago, who had previously condemned the murder of one Haitian in Guantánamo on racial grounds and asked the Governor of Oriente for justice,⁷¹ argued later that the “8,000 Haytians [*sic*] resident in that province, were all honest workers, earning a living until they can go back to their country. Haytians [*sic*] never interfere with politics in Cuba or anywhere else outside the country.”⁷²

There is actually little evidence to prove that there were foreigners (Haitians or Jamaicans) involved in the political uprising of the PIC. However, there is an impressive amount of evidence on how the imaginary fear of the black outsider was triggered during the revolt. The century-long ideology that an uprising within Cuban boundaries (whether from the slaves, ex-slaves, or disenfranchised blacks) would happen because of outside influences

had remained engrained in the Cuban psyche even after the end of slavery and a multi-racial struggle for independence. Moreover, after independence, the fear for the black *outsider* persisted despite José Martí's ideology of equality and harmony, or probably because of it. Since all Cubans –blacks, mulattoes, and whites- were considered to be equal in theory;⁷³ the blame for any internal disturbance was to be attributed to outside influences, and not to domestic forces. But 1912 and the killing or imprisonment of thousands of labouring blacks, set the arena for the arrival of thousands of Jamaican and Haitian migrants –the very embodiment of the black outsider. Duharte Jiménez has argued that the “black fear vanished” from “Cuban political mythology” with the massacre of blacks in 1912.⁷⁴ If anything, the PIC revolt re-activated the black fear in a way that would impact on the immigrant black workers. Fear of the black outsider, as will be shown, remained alive, anchored in its long history but also developing and refashioning itself in diverse discursive practices by virtue of the different social and economic changes.

The Black Fear and its Significance in Twentieth Century Cuba

The condensed and simplified historical background outlined above opened and closed with two different and distant events: the Haitian Revolution and Independence (1791-1804) and the uprising of the PIC in Cuba in 1912. However distant in time and different in nature, these two events embody the racial fear ideology that preceded and defined the way in which black British Caribbean islanders were going to be perceived in Cuba. “The Haitian Revolution”, Michel-Rolph Trouillot contends, “entered history with the peculiar characteristic of being unthinkable even as it happened.” A “revolutionary uprising in the slave plantations, let alone a successful one leading to the creation of an independent state” was something beyond the conception of the colonial world.⁷⁵ As Anthony P. Maingot argues:

Haiti represented the living proof of the consequences of not just black freedom but, indeed, black rule. It was the latter which was feared; therefore, the former had to be curtailed if not totally prohibited.⁷⁶

The colonial and independent governments surrounding Haiti, planters and elites, all lived with that concern and with the racial antagonism emerging from it. And it was precisely the racial nature of the concerns which sustained the fears. Maingot refers to the state of “panic”, a sense of “terrified consciousness”, created by the very existence of Haiti, a challenge to the normative order existing in the region.

... “panic” will outlive the end of actual hostilities over power and ideology. This certainly was the case with blacks in the nineteenth century. Because race, at least over a short term, is an involuntary point of identity and identification, it did not easily lend itself to the political bargaining and social exchanges which normally brought conflicts to an end. Involuntary social traits contribute to the irrationality of the fears and, as such, block the path to social and political reconciliation.⁷⁷

In the nineteenth century, at a regional level, then, the Haitian Revolution was the “living proof” that a black revolution could happen in the Caribbean. It was against such a spectre, and towards avoiding that possibility, that colonial regimes all across the region directed their colonial policies in the nineteenth century. The Spanish ambivalent use of the “Africanization scare” and the regulations against the slave trade in the 1850s are to be considered in that context, as well as earlier policies in French Louisiana.⁷⁸ Accordingly, it is not coincidental that British slave emancipation followed a series of slave revolts in the Caribbean colonies and that centralization and Crown Colony government was instituted after the 1865 Morant Bay Rebellion. Haiti’s “terrified consciousness” was, as it has been shown, equally present in Cuban society during the nineteenth century,⁷⁹ and remained alive well into the twentieth. In 1912, the country had its own “living example”, and its own source and referent for a “terrified consciousness”. For Cuban society, the PIC revolt was both associated with the memory, however distant, of the Haitian Revolution, and also engrained in the “historical and material factors” of the time.⁸⁰

The PIC revolt –or the perception of it- had an equivalent “terrifying” effect among the Cuban elites, the sugar planters, and the U.S. interest in the country. It was viewed as a challenge at the three levels presented by Maingot for the development of the “terrified consciousness” (personal, group, and international). At a personal level, the revolt was a threat to individual planters and was also presented as a threat against whites, and particularly white women.⁸¹ At the group level, the actions of the PIC represented a challenge to the nation-state, but also to the national ideal and the myth of racial equality on which it was based. At the international level, the events of 1912 were closely observed by neighbouring countries in the region, and, moreover, by the U.S. In reality as well as in the imagination, the possibility of another Haiti in a region that was, by then, consolidated as the U.S. sphere of influence, was definitely not viewed as a good prospect for international relations and the political future of Cuba and the Caribbean.

The fact that blacks and mulattoes had organised as a political party (that is, the possibility of black rule) and, moreover, had challenged the *status quo* of the island through an armed uprising, was something the white Cuban elites could not ignore in 1912 or

after.⁸² The fear that Cuban black rebels –or racists, as they were portrayed⁸³- might take power in association with Haitian and Jamaican insurgents, unfounded and irrational as it may have been, was *real* in the minds of many Cubans. It was in that context that thousands of British Antilleans and Haitians arrived in Cuba, a place where their physical presence and visibility in such large numbers may have been new, but where their imaginary presence was certainly old. Using Aline Helg’s “icons of fear” (the Haitian Revolution, African religion and culture, and Afro-Cuban sexuality),⁸⁴ Marc C. McLeod has suggested that the prejudice against Afro-Antilleans was an “extension of long-standing beliefs about the Afro-Cuban population.”⁸⁵ However, in many ways, the prejudices against the black migrants, and certainly Helg’s first fear, that of the Haitian Revolution, had their basis in the fear of the black outsider. While prejudices may have been common to both Afro-Cubans and Afro-Antilleans because of their common racial trait –‘blackness’-, I would argue that when thousands of black migrants started to arrive in Cuba they became, as it were, the devil incarnate on the Cuban shores. More than the victims of “extended” fears, the black Antilleans –from British colonies, Haiti, or others- were the materialisation of the fear itself.

Race and Nation in Cuba

The emergence and development of an ideology of black fear, mostly associated with the outsider, was parallel –and complementary- to the process of nation building. In the early twentieth century the black fear materialised in the black Caribbean migrants and the Cuban nation was partly defined in that encounter. This, along with its racial implication, was exemplified in 1906 when Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz noted, “the problem of immigration could be reduced in great measure to the problem of the national future of Cuba.” Ortiz also warned that “*race*” was the “most fundamental aspect” to be considered about the immigrant.⁸⁶ It is not surprising that in a recent study Aviva Chomsky argued that the debate on migration in Cuba was an “implicit dialogue” on Afro-Cubans’ position within the nation.⁸⁷ Moreover, she noted that because blackness became mostly an attribute of the Caribbean migrants, black Cubans “were not really blacks”.⁸⁸

Central to the discussion on race and nation is the question of race relations in Cuba. Did they follow a pattern like the one attributed to Luso-Hispanic regions of the Americas? Did they follow another pattern, like that of countries colonised by northwestern European powers? Or, did they follow neither? What emerges from the historical sources, the historiography, as well as the works of writers and interpreters of

Cuban history and nationalism is a complex picture. It does not lend itself to an analysis based on pre-fixed pattern of race relations, but to one that takes into account the socially and historically contingent nature of race and ethnicity. A socio-racial picture of Cuba, nonetheless, provides an idea of where the migrants stand in relation to Cuban society, and where the different sectors of Cuban society were located in reference to them. It also illustrates how the positions of the various social actors, and the race relations and perceptions among them, were subject to the social formations of particular historical moments and circumstances, whether it be a political struggle, a social revolt, or an economic depression.

In nineteenth century Cuba, the intensification of a slave-based economy, along with the development of an ideology of black fear, had significant consequences for race relations. As noted by Cuban historian Jorge Ibarra, the dominant contradiction in the colonial society was that between the owners of the plantations and their slaves, a dual distinction with racial connotations. Masters and exploiters were white and slaves and exploited were black.⁸⁹ The colonial changes due to the mass importation of slaves from 1790 up to the 1860s were significant. The divisions created by the strengthening of the plantation economy, Ibarra argues, altered the previous social arrangements within the emergent Creole society.⁹⁰ In his interpretation of the mid-nineteenth century, the population of free blacks and mulattoes⁹¹ and the slaves were all subject to the “discriminating prejudices emerging out of the slave system;” they were all blacks.⁹² Partly illustrating this, Duharte Jiménez notes that the space for upward mobility of free blacks and mulattoes was within “the world of the ‘coloureds’, not with respect to the whites.” Non-whites within the colonial society did not have any mechanism to overcome their social distance from the whites.⁹³ The boundaries “between whites and free people of color became much more rigid during the first half of the nineteenth century.”⁹⁴

The rigidity of the Cuban slave society of the nineteenth century has led to debates among U.S. based scholars. Franklin W. Knight, on the one hand, has distinguished that period from the traditional view of paternalistic slavery and flexible race relations.⁹⁵ Robert L. Paquette, on the other, has acknowledged the harshness of slave life in Cuba, but has contended that “racial boundaries” never hardened as in societies with a northwest European colonial tradition, such as the southern United States. He argues that the “Iberian traditions and institutions [...] did shape social arrangements in ways significantly different from the social arrangements” in the U.S. South.⁹⁶ Cuban historian Manuel Moreno Fraginals avoided the categorisation of the various colonial slaveries –and

therefore the subsequent patterns of race relations- and preferred to argue that slavery was based on the single pursuit of profit.⁹⁷

Ibarra's assessment of the matter exemplifies the complexities of racial dynamics in colonial societies. Invariably, he characterised the "plantation regime prevailing in Cuba in the nineteenth century as the most inhuman and brutal system of exploitation in the American continent."⁹⁸ However, he recognised the existence, since early in the nineteenth century, of "forces tending to cultural fusion, which had to be manifested in a non-explicit and marginal way, within a society that was rigidly divided and stratified."⁹⁹ That is, despite the divisions and caste-like features that Cuban slave society may have manifested, underlying social dynamics were less rigid. The "cultural impact" of the slaves and blacks in the whole of society cannot be ignored.¹⁰⁰ In the same vein, racial dynamics at other levels, such as that of the private sphere, may have been different from the dominant social arrangements and ideal norms of race relations between groups in the public sphere (i.e., plantations).¹⁰¹

The racial order prevailing during the nineteenth century was dislocated with the beginning of the wars of independence and the collapse of slavery. The freedom granted to the slaves and their mobilisation "altered forever the social relations of slavery."¹⁰² This was the outcome of a movement where white Creoles, slaves, maroons, and free blacks and mulattoes joined hands to struggle against Spanish colonialism, and indeed, against slavery.¹⁰³ The multi-racial struggle for independence continued after 1878, through the Little War of 1879-1880, and parallel to the slaves' struggle to gain their liberty. It is in those twin processes where one finds the "definitive basis for the formation of Cuban nationality"¹⁰⁴ and the ideological foundation for the final war of independence that would start in 1895. This version of Cuban nationality and race relations speaks about a fusion of the different groups into a multi-racial or *mestizo* nation where the whole prevails over the different components.¹⁰⁵ Racial distinctions of a two-tier or three-tier type do not have a space within that particular national formation, which could be associated with the pattern of race relations attributed to Hispanic Caribbean countries.

The multi-racial homogenised version of the nation was certainly a cornerstone of the last war of independence, but in their call for unity leaders of the struggle clearly demonstrated the existence of tri-racial or bi-racial divisions that they were trying to overcome. In 1893 José Martí remarked: "Cuban is more than white, more than mulatto, more than black."¹⁰⁶ While stressing three groups in this case, Martí's rhetoric was also full of binary distinctions between blacks and whites.¹⁰⁷ Another leader, Juan Gualberto

Gómez, perceived the nation as composed of “two great Cuban races,” blacks and whites, although referring to himself as a mulatto.¹⁰⁸ While an ideal of racial equality prevailed in both Martí and Gómez, their perceptions of the prevalent divisions in the society are evident in their discourses. Also, their call for unity on the eve of the last struggle for independence was tainted with the concerns of a conflict between the *two* groups and of the prevailing black fear. Gómez insisted on the need to discuss the race problem and condemned the “exposition, with faked terror, of the ghost of the war of races,” that would never take place in Cuba.¹⁰⁹ Martí, on the other hand, criticised the fear of the black race promoted by the advocates of Spanish colonialism. In contrast he highlighted the common struggle and the virtues of those who had left behind the divisions of slavery and had demonstrated loyalty to the nation in the battlefield.¹¹⁰ There is no question about the ideal of the Cuban nation without racial distinctions, but the bi-racial and tri-racial divisions were clearly present in the discourse that advocated this unity.

The dichotomy between racial equality and the persistence of divisions by race continued after the end of the independence struggle into the Republican Era. While the myth of racial equality existed, the Cuban society of the early twentieth century remained divided along racial lines, and blacks and mulattoes remained on the margins of the nation. That the ideology of racial equality had a lasting impact is evident in the various instances of cross-racial alliances at particular moments. But these alliances co-existed with discriminatory practices¹¹¹ which, supported by the white elites, defined the racial order of Cuban society as well as the racial character of the nation. The events of 1912 are a clear representation that, in moments of crisis, the binary division between whites and non-whites emerged immediately. And even when the PIC struggle was framed as a claim by blacks for a legitimate share of the national polity, and indeed espoused Martí's ideas,¹¹² their adherence to the nation had to be in terms defined by white elites. It might be that after all, as Sidney W. Mintz has argued, “white/nonwhite is the global underlying distinction in Caribbean societies, even when it is not referred to.”¹¹³

The Republican Cuba to which the black Caribbean migrants arrived was one that was racially divided between whites and non-whites. It was a society where black Cubans, even after the massacre of 1912, continued to struggle for a place within the national polity. The dominant construction of the nation, that was portrayed by the political and intellectual elites was one defined on white terms. Cuban blacks leaders, such as Juan Gualberto Gómez and Martín Morúa Delgado, claimed their part in the nation through attempts to gain parity with the white Cubans in different arenas and through the struggle

against discrimination. The PIC, its members and followers, on the other hand, claimed their part in the nation through an open challenge to dominant structures of power, for which they paid a high price. Alejandro de la Fuente's assertion that the creation of the myth of racial equality by dominant elites provided the space for subordinate racial groups to make their claim is certain.¹¹⁴ However, I do not see how it could have limited the political choices of the elites in 1912 or later, in subsequent instances such as 1917, where blacks mobilised and were suppressed by the government.

During the 1920s, as Karen Morrison has shown, Afro-Cuban intellectuals opted for the development of a separate conception of Cuban identity and citizenship in biracial and bicultural terms.¹¹⁵ Such binary divisions within the nation persisted in the work of Fernando Ortiz, who used the terms Hispano-Cuban and Afro-Cuban, and actually formed societies and publications for each of these versions of being Cuban (*Estudios Afro-Cubanos* for black Cubans and *Ultra* for white Cubans). Following Rogelio Martínez Furé, it transpires that there was "no homogeneous Cuban culture" or "national cultural identity". What emerges from Cuban historical experience is a diverse "multiethnic, pluricultural identity"¹¹⁶ that, at times, reflected conflict among its various components.

Despite the pronouncements on the character of blacks in his earlier work, by 1942 Ortiz recognised that "Without the Negro, Cuba would not be Cuba."¹¹⁷ The evolution of Ortiz's thought with regard to domestic Cuban racial issues was evident in his oeuvre, although not explicitly acknowledged or directly self-critical,¹¹⁸ but his opinion on the black migrants was unequivocal and remained virtually unchanged from his earlier views.¹¹⁹ By the 1940s, in his perception, Haitians and Jamaicans remained out of the transculturation project; they were considered a "retarding" element for a national fusion¹²⁰ that was never fully achieved. Whether the black migrants arrived to a haven of racial equality, to a bicultural nation, or to a transculturated one, the space for inclusion was limited by the historical legacy of black fear and by the way in which dominant Cuban elites (those in the government and implementing migration policies) defined the nation. Within an imagined white Cuban nation, they definitely did not have a space, and within a biracial and bicultural one, their presence might represent a problem for the Afro-Cubans' claims to civilisation. The questions that remain are how a nation that was defined as white against the black migrant could claim, at the same time, to be inclusive of Cuban blacks? And how black Cubans could stretch out their hands to their foreign Caribbean racial and social counterparts, reconciling their adherence to the nation with an assertion of their blackness?

- ¹ Hilary McD Beckles, "‘An Unnatural and Dangerous Independence’: The Haitian Revolution and the Political Sociology of Caribbean Slavery," *Journal of Caribbean History*, 25: 1-2 (1991): 161.
- ² Sidney W. Mintz, "Labor and Ethnicity: The Caribbean Conjuncture," in *Crises in the Caribbean Basin*, ed. Richard Tardanico (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1987), 50.
- ³ Mintz, "Labor and Ethnicity," 50.
- ⁴ José Antonio Saco, *Mi primera pregunta. ¿La abolición del comercio de esclavos africanos arruinará ó atrasará la agricultura cubana?* (Madrid: Imprenta de Don Marcelino Calero, 1937), 6-7.
- ⁵ José Antonio Saco, *Paralelo entre la isla de Cuba y algunas colonias Inglesas* (Madrid: Oficina de Don Tomás Jordan, Imprenta de Camara de S. M., 1937), 17.
- ⁶ Franklin W. Knight, *Slave Society in Cuba during the Nineteenth Century* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press [1970] 1986), 22, Julio le Riverend, *Historia económica de Cuba*, 4th ed., Havana: Instituto del Libro Cubano, 1974), 317-331.
- ⁷ Rafael Duharte Jiménez, *Nacionalidad e historia* (Santiago de Cuba: Editorial Oriente, 1989), 53-61, 99-114. See also Francisco Pérez de la Riva, "Cuban Palenques," in *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas*, ed. Richard Price (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1973), 49-59.
- ⁸ See Jose Luciano Franco, *La conspiración de Aponte (1812)* (Havana: Consejo Nacional de Cultura, Publicaciones del Archivo Nacional, 1963). To locate the Aponte Conspiracy in a wider Caribbean context, see also David Geggus, "Slavery, War, and Revolution in the Greater Caribbean, 1789-1815," in *A Turbulent Time: The French Revolution and the Greater Caribbean*, eds. David Barry Gaspar and David Geggus (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 15.
- ⁹ Quoted in Robert L. Paquette, *Sugar is Made with Blood: The Conspiracy of La Escalera and the Conflict between Empires over Slavery in Cuba*. Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1988), 73.
- ¹⁰ Paquette, *Sugar is Made with Blood*, 219-220.
- ¹¹ For the retributions of La Escalera Conspiracy see Paquette, *Sugar is Made with Blood*, 209-232.
- ¹² For Ramón de la Sagra's writings during the 1840s, see his essays "Agricultura y Esclavitud" and "Esclavitud y sistema colonial," in *Cuba: 1860: Selección de artículos sobre agricultura cubana* (Havana: Comisión Nacional Cubana, UNESCO, 1963), 189-218. On the reformist of that period in relation to race and migration, see Consuelo Naranjo Orovio and Armando García González, *Racismo e inmigración en Cuba en el siglo XIX*, prólogo de Josef Opatrný (Madrid: Doce Calles, 1996), 85-96.
- ¹³ See Naranjo Orovio and García González, *Racismo e inmigración*, 45-67, and Duvon C. Corbitt, "Immigration in Cuba," *HAHR*, 22 (1942): 288-297.
- ¹⁴ "Table 5: The Slave Trade, 1835-64," in Knight, *Slave Society in Cuba*, 53.
- ¹⁵ See Manuel Moreno Fraginals, "Migraciones asiáticas a Cuba, 1849-1959," in *La historia como arma, y otros ensayos sobre esclavos, ingenios y plantaciones* (Barcelona: Editorial Crítica, 1983), 118, 131, and Mary Turner, "Chinese Contract Labour in Cuba, 1847-1874," *Caribbean Studies*, 14: 2 (July 1974): 79-81.
- ¹⁶ Jorge Ibarra, *Ideología mambista* (Havana: Instituto del Libro, 1967), 24-25, Luis Martínez-Fernández, *Torn between Empires: Economy, Society, and Patterns of Political Thought in the Hispanic Caribbean, 1840-1878* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994), 61-66.
- ¹⁷ Knight, *Slave Society in Cuba*, 53.
- ¹⁸ Domingo Dulce, Civil Superior Government, Cuba, to [Exmo. Señor Ministro de Estado], Archives, Servicio Histórico Militar, Madrid, Spain (hereafter ASHM), Ultramar, Cuba, Asuntos Políticos, leg. 90, no. 1 (microfilm reel 24), [October 1865].

¹⁹ Bruno Badan, Spanish Consulate, Kingston, Jamaica, to Domingo Dulce, Cuban Government, ASHM, Ultramar, Cuba, Asuntos Políticos, leg. 90 (microfilm reel 24), [November 1865].

²⁰ Laird W. Bergad, "The Economic Viability of Sugar Production Based on Slave Labor in Cuba, 1859-1878," *LARR*, 24:1 (1989): 95-113.

²¹ Manuel Moreno Fragnals, *El ingenio: Complejo económico social cubano del azúcar*, 3 (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1978), 35-40. On the uneven processes of development and technological changes in the sugar industry during the late nineteenth century see Fe Iglesias García, "The Development of Capitalism in Cuban Sugar Production, 1860-1900," in *Between Slavery and Free Labor: The Spanish-Speaking Caribbean in the Nineteenth Century*, eds. Manuel Moreno Fragnals, Frank Moya Pons, and Stanley L. Engerman (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 54-75.

²² See Ada Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation and Revolution, 1868-1898* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 70-89.

²³ Antonio Maceo to Sr. Don Antonio Norma, 14 September 1879, Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Spain, Sección de Diversos, Leg. 7, no. 525.

²⁴ See Rebecca J. Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba: The Transition to Free Labor, 1860-1899* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).

²⁵ Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba*, 119, 184-185, 279, 281-2.

²⁶ Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba*, 119. (my emphasis).

²⁷ See *Conspiración de la Raza de Color, descubierta en Santiago de Cuba el 10 de diciembre de 1880 siendo Comandante General de la Provincia el Excmo. Sr. Teniente General Don Camilo Polavieja* (Santiago de Cuba: Sección Tipográfica del Estado Mayor, 1880), Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Spain (hereafter AGI), Libros Antiguos, s. XIX, no. 77 [belonging to the Sección de Diversos, leg. 8].

²⁸ Mr. Du Defair, 10 December 1880, manuscript, AGI, Sección de Diversos, leg. 8 [nos. 68-70].

²⁹ Gordon K. Lewis, *Main Currents in Caribbean Thought: The Historical Evolution of Caribbean Society in Its Ideological Aspects, 1492-1900* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), 169. See also Douglass Hall, "Jamaica," in *Neither Slave Nor Free: The Freedman of African Descent in the Slave Societies of the New World*, eds. David W. Cohen and Jack P. Greene (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972), 212.

³⁰ Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, 162. (my emphasis).

³¹ Ibarra, *Ideología Mambista*, 67, Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*.

³² Duharte Jiménez, *Nacionalidad e historia*, 60-61.

³³ See Louis A. Pérez Jr. *The War of 1898: The United States and Cuba in History and Historiography* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 23-56, and Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, 170-194. On the racial contours of the manifest destiny, see Anthony P. Maingot, "Geopolitics and Racial Destiny, 1823-1903," in *The United States and the Caribbean* (London: Macmillan, 1994), 14-28.

³⁴ Pérez Jr., *The War of 1898*, 37-38. Such scepticism was also present during Spanish colonial rule. Duharte Jiménez, *Nacionalidad e historia*, 10.

³⁵ For instance, at the moment of establishing the Republic non-white leaders of the Liberation Army (Quintín Banderas, Máximo Gómez, Ricardo Batrell) remained at the margins. See Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, 170-194, Joel James Figarola, *Cuba, 1900-1928: La República dividida contra sí misma* (Havana: Instituto Cubano del Libro, 1974), 21-132

³⁶ Frederick Upham Adams, *Conquest of the Tropics: The Story of the Creative Enterprises conducted by the United Fruit Company* (New York: Arno Press, [1914] 1976), 244, 247.

³⁷ On the development of railways during the early years of independence, see Oscar Zanetti and Alejandro García, *Caminos para el azúcar* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales,

1987), 195-266 (For the English version see Zanetti and García, *Sugar and Railroads: A Cuban History, 1937-1959* [Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998]). On the Cuba Company particularly see Juan Carlos Santamarina, "The Cuba Company and Cuban Development, 1900-1959," (Ph.D. diss.: Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 1995). On the UFC see Zanetti and García, et al., *United Fruit Company* and Ariel James, *Banes*. For the CASC, see *Agricultura y zootecnia: Edición extraordinaria* (1924). Tobacco was another area where U.S. gained control, see Jean Stubbs, *Tobacco in the Periphery: A Case Study in Cuban Labour History, 1860-1958* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 22-27.

³⁸ Teresita Yglesia Martínez, "Organización de la república neo-colonial," in *La neocolonia: Organización y crisis, desde 1899 hasta 1940*, Instituto de Historia de Cuba (Havana: Editorial Política, 1998), 65-67.

³⁹ Robert B. Hoernel, "Sugar and Social Change in Oriente, Cuba, 1898-1946," *JLAS*, 8 (1976): 229.

⁴⁰ Alejandro de la Fuente, *A Nation for All: Race, Inequality, and Politics in Twentieth Century Cuba* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 105-110.

⁴¹ Manuel R. Silva to Charles E. Magoon, 30 November 1906, Archivo Nacional de Cuba (hereafter ANC), Fondo 189-Secretaria de Presidencia, Leg. 28, No. 13.

⁴² Manuel Rionda to Messrs Czarnikow, McDougall & Co., New York, 30 January 1905, Manuel Rionda to C. Czarnikow, London, 14 December 1906, Braga Brothers Collection, Special Collections, George A. Smathers Library, University of Florida, Gainesville (hereafter BBC), RG II, S. 5, Box. 1.

⁴³ Rebecca J. Scott, "Race, Labor, and Citizenship in Cuba: A View from the District of Cienfuegos, 1886-1909," *HAHR*, 78: 4 (November 1998): 707.

⁴⁴ See the correspondence in the *Manager's Letter Books, 1908-1912*, United Fruit Company Papers, Museo Municipal Histórico de Banes, Banes, Holguín, Cuba (hereafter UFC Papers).

⁴⁵ W. A. Page, to Elihu Root, U.S. Secretary of State, 28 August 1906, RG 59, Numerical and Minor Files of the Department of State, 1906-1910 (hereafter NMFDS), File #244/57 (M862, Roll #37).

⁴⁶ Jacob Sleeper to Elihu Root, U.S. Secretary of State, 8 September 1906, RG 59, NMFDS, File #244/98-105 (M862, Roll#37).

⁴⁷ Manuel R. Silva to Charles E. Magoon, Provisional Governor, Havana, 30 November 1906, ANC, Fondo 189-Secretaria de Presidencia, Leg. 28, No. 13.

⁴⁸ Rebecca J. Scott, "The Lower Class of Whites' and 'The Negro Element': Race, Social Identity, and Politics in Central Cuba, 1899-1909," in *La nación soñada: Cuba, Puerto Rico y Filipinas ante el 98*, eds. Consuelo Naranjo Orovio, Miguel Ángel Puig-Samper y Luis Miguel García Mora (Madrid: Doce Calles, 1996)187.

⁴⁹ Manuel R. Silva to Charles E. Magoon, Provisional Governor, Havana, 30 November 1906, ANC, Fondo 189-Secretaria de Presidencia, Leg. 28, No. 13.

⁵⁰ Scott, "The Lower Class of Whites' and 'The Negro Element'," 187. See Aline Helg, *Our Rightful Share: The Afro-Cuban Struggle for Equality, 1886-1912* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 117-139 and Tomás Fernández Robaina, *El negro en Cuba, 1902-1958: Apuntes para la historia de la lucha contra la discriminación racial* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1990), 46-67.

⁵¹ See Cathy Duke, "The Idea of Race: The Cultural Impact of American Intervention in Cuba, 1898-1912," in *Politics, Society, and Culture in the Caribbean*, ed. Blanca G. Silvestrini (San Juan: University of Puerto Rico, 1983).

⁵² Helg, *Our Rightful Share*, 120-123.

- ⁵³ "The Different Classes in Cuba," *The Louisiana Planter and Sugar Manufacturer* (29 July 1905): 75.
- ⁵⁴ See Pedro Deschamps Chapeaux, *El negro en el periodismo cubano del siglo XIX: Ensayo bibliográfico* (Habana: Ediciones Revolución, 1963).
- ⁵⁵ Emilio, Céspedes, Federico Montane, et al, [Comite], "Manifiesto al Pueblo Cubano y a los Ciudadanos de Color," 27 de agosto de 1907, Archivo Histórico Provincial, Camagüey, Camagüey, Cuba (hereafter AHPC), Fondo Jorge Juárez Cano, Carpeta 58, #122.
- ⁵⁶ El Comité, "Manifiesto a los Ciudadanos de Color del Pueblo Cubano," (6 September 1907), AHPC, Fondo Jorge Juárez Cano, Carpeta 58, #126.
- ⁵⁷ "Negroes' Declaration of Independence," Given to Gov. Magoon By Estenoz," *Havana Post*, (1 October 1908), USNA, RG 59, NMFDS, File #1943/164-165 (M862, Roll #206).
- ⁵⁸ See Fernández Robaina, *El negro en Cuba*, 46-67, and also the appendix "Programa Político del Partido Independiente de Color," in pages 192-195, originally published in *Previsión* (15 October 1908): 3.
- ⁵⁹ On the PIC revolt, see the works of Rafael Fermoselle, *Política y color en Cuba: La guerrita de 1912* (n.p.: Editorial Colibrí, [1974] 1998), Helg, *Our Rightful Share*, Orum, "The Politics of Color," Louis A. Pérez Jr., "Politics, Peasants, and People of Color: The 1912 'Race War' in Cuba Reconsidered." *HAHR*, 66:3 (August 1986): 509-539, and Serafín Portuondo Linares, *Los independientes de color: Historia del Partido Independiente de Color* (Havana: Publicaciones del Ministerio de Educación, Dirección de Cultura, 1950).
- ⁶⁰ Rafael Duharte Jiménez, "The 19th Century Black Fear," in *Afrocuba: An Anthology of Cuban Writing on Race, Politics, and Culture*, eds. Pedro Pérez Sarduy and Jean Stubbs (Melbourne: Ocean Press, 1993), 44.
- ⁶¹ José Miguel Gómez to Irvinamier, New York, 26 May 1912, ANC, Fondo 189-Secretaria de la Presidencia, Leg. 108, No. 117.
- ⁶² Carlos García Velez, "Diario del General de Brigada del Ejercito Libertador de Cuba Carlos García Vélez," La Habana, Entry for 26 April 1950, 245-246, Museo Casa Natal Calixto García, Holguín, Cuba, 245-246. I am grateful to Cuban historians in Holguín, José Abreu Cardet and José Novoa Betancourt for guiding me to this source.
- ⁶³ Quoted in Fermoselle, *Política y color en Cuba*, 94.
- ⁶⁴ See Fermoselle, *Política y color en Cuba*, 144-145.
- ⁶⁵ A. M. Beaupré to U.S. Secretary of State, 2 June 1912, USNA, RG 59, General Records of the Department of State-Internal Affairs in Cuba (hereafter GRDS-IAC), File #837.00/657 (M488, Roll #6).
- ⁶⁶ "Cuba Situation is Serious," *Tobacco*, 53:7 (6 June 1912): 1, 19, "Los independientes de color: El mitín de Jamaica," *El Camagüeyano* (6 March 1912). I am grateful to Professor Juan José Baldrich for referring me to the article in *Tobacco*.
- ⁶⁷ Governor, Oriente Province to The Secretary of Government, 27 May 1912, Archivo Histórico Provincial de Santiago de Cuba (hereafter AHPSC), Fondo-Gobierno Provincial de Oriente, Leg. 1790, exp. 6.
- ⁶⁸ Johns de Pool, "Cuba's Present Rebellion: Its Sources and Dangers," *Jamaica Times* (6 July 1912): 5, 8.
- ⁶⁹ "Cuban Revolt," *The Daily Gleaner* (12 June 1912): 1.
- ⁷⁰ "The Revolution Grows in Cuba," *The Daily Gleaner* (11 June 1912): 1.
- ⁷¹ Charles V. Carvalho to R. Manduley, 27 May 1912, ANC, Fondo 189-Secretaria de Presidencia, Leg. 110, no. 2 [Primera Pieza].
- ⁷² "The Revolution Grows in Cuba," *The Daily Gleaner* (11 June 1912): 1.
- ⁷³ José Martí, "Mi Raza," (*Patria*, 16 April 1893), in *Obras Completas*, Vol. II, (Havana: Editorial Nacional de Cuba, 1963), 299.
- ⁷⁴ Duharte, "The 19th Century Black Fear," 45.

⁷⁵ Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 73. I am using Trouillot's statement verbatim, meaning a revolutionary slave revolt that would completely alter the order of things, as opposite to a slave revolt that were, of course, the daily fear of virtually every plantation owner in the Caribbean region. Before the Haitian Revolution, planters certainly envisaged the possibility of slave revolts, but perhaps never what happened in Haiti.

⁷⁶ Anthony P. Maingot, "Haiti and the Terrified Consciousness of the Caribbean," in *Ethnicity in the Caribbean: Essays in Honor of Harry Hoetink* (London: Macmillan, 1996), 56-57.

⁷⁷ Maingot, "Haiti and the Terrified Consciousness," 55.

⁷⁸ See, for the Hispanic Caribbean, Martínez Fernández, *Tom between Empires*, 32-49, and for French Louisiana see Paul F. Lachance, "The Politics of Fear: French Louisianians and the Slave Trade, 1786-1809," *Plantation Society in the Americas*, 1:2 (June 1979): 162-197.

⁷⁹ Jorge Castellanos and Isabel Castellanos, *Cultura afrocaribena: El negro en Cuba, 1492-1844*, Vol. 1 (Miami: Ediciones Universal, 1988), 159-179, 243-252.

⁸⁰ Maingot, "Haiti and the Terrified Consciousness," 54, 65-67.

⁸¹ On the black rapist as an icon of fear in Cuba see Helg, *Our Rightful Share*. See also Aline Helg, "Black Men, Racial Stereotyping, and Violence in the U.S. South and Cuba at the Turn of the Century," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 42: 3 (July 2000), 587-588.

⁸² Charles E. Chapman speaks of the presence of the fears in the 1920s. See Charles E. Chapman, *A History of the Cuban Republic: A Study in Hispanic American Politics* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1927), 583.

⁸³ See for instance, José de J. Monteagudo, *Memoria explicativa de los trabajos realizados por el cuerpo de la Guardia Rural desde el 1ro de julio de 1910 hasta el 30 de junio de 1912 inclusive, por el Mayor General Jose de J. Monteagudo* (Havana: Liberia e Imprenta la Moderna Poesia, 1912), 264, 266, 267, 272.

⁸⁴ Helg, *Our Rightful Share*, 17-18.

⁸⁵ Marc C. McLeod, "Undesirable Aliens, Race, Ethnicity and Nationalism in the Comparison of Haitian and British West Indian Immigrant Workers in Cuba, 1912-1939," *Journal of Social History*, 31: 3 (1998): 601.

⁸⁶ Fernando Ortiz, "La inmigración desde el punto de vista criminológico," *Derecho y Sociología*, 1: 5 (May 1906): 54-55.

⁸⁷ Aviva Chomsky, "'Barbados or Canada?': Race, Immigration and Nation in Early Twentieth-Century Cuba," *HAHR*, 80: 3 (August 2000): 424.

⁸⁸ Aviva Chomsky, "The Aftermath of Repression: Race and Nation in Cuba After 1912," *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies*, 4: 2 (December 1998): 4, 16; Chomsky, "'Barbados or Canada?'," 446.

⁸⁹ Ibarra, *Ideología mambista*, 30. On the duality of this contradiction see also Knight, *Slave Society in Cuba*, 192

⁹⁰ Ibarra, *Ideología mambista*, 12-13.

⁹¹ On the relative degree of economic power of free blacks and mulattoes during the seventeenth and eighteenth century Cuba, see Duharte Jiménez, *Nacionalidad e historia*, 84-85.

⁹² Ibarra, *Ideología mambista*, 24.

⁹³ Duharte Jiménez, *Nacionalidad e historia*, 90.

⁹⁴ Paquette, *Sugar is Made with Blood*, 113.

⁹⁵ See Knight, *Slave Society in Cuba*.

⁹⁶ Paquette, *Sugar is Made with Blood*, 111-112

⁹⁷ Manuel Moreno Fraginals, *La historia como arma, y otros ensayos sobre esclavos, ingenios y plantaciones* (Barcelona: Editorial Crítica, 1983), 164. (my emphasis).

⁹⁸ Ibarra, *Ideología mambista*, 43.

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- ⁹⁹ Ibarra, *Ideología mambista*, 14-15.
- ¹⁰⁰ Ibarra, *Ideología mambista*, 13.
- ¹⁰¹ See Verena Martínez-Alier (now Stolke), *Marriage, Class and Colour in Nineteenth-Century Cuba: A Study of Racial Attitudes and Sexual Values in a Slave Society* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, [1974] 1989).
- ¹⁰² Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, 68.
- ¹⁰³ Duharte Jiménez, *Nacionalidad e historia*, 60-61.
- ¹⁰⁴ Ibarra, *Ideología mambista*, 21.
- ¹⁰⁵ Duharte Jiménez, *Nacionalidad e historia*, 23, 60-61. Raquel Mendieta Costa, *Cultura: Lucha de clases y conflicto racial, 1878-1895* (Havana: Editorial Pueblo y Educación, 1989).
- ¹⁰⁶ José Martí, "Mi Raza," 299.
- ¹⁰⁷ See Martí, "Mi Raza," and José Martí, "Manifiesto de Montecristi," in *Obras Completas*, Vol. IV, (Havana: Editorial Nacional de Cuba, 1975), 96-97.
- ¹⁰⁸ Juan Gualberto Gómez, "Programa del Diario 'La Fraternidad'," (29 August 1890), in *Por Cuba Libre*, Juan Gualberto Gomez. Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, (1974), 260, 262.
- ¹⁰⁹ Gómez, "Programa del Diario 'La Fraternidad'," 266.
- ¹¹⁰ Martí, "Manifiesto de Montecristi," 97.
- ¹¹¹ This argumentation runs across Rebecca J. Scott's recent articles, "Defining the Boundaries of Freedom in the World of Cane: Cuba, Brazil, and Louisiana after Emancipation," *AHR*, 99: 1 (February 1994): 70-102, "Race, Labor, and Citizenship in Cuba: A View from the District of Cienfuegos, 1886-1909," *HAHR*, 78: 4 (November 1998): 687-728, and "Fault Lines, Color Lines, and Party Lines: Race, Labor, and Collective Action in Louisiana and Cuba, 1862-1912," in *Beyond Slavery: Explorations of Race, Labor, and Citizenship in Postemancipation Societies*, Frederick Cooper, Thomas C. Holt, and Rebecca J. Scott (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 61-106.
- ¹¹² Tomás Fernández Robaina, *El negro en Cuba*, 104-109.
- ¹¹³ Mintz, "Ethnic Difference, Plantation Sameness," 42.
- ¹¹⁴ See Alejandro de la Fuente, "Myths of Racial Democracy: Cuba, 1900-1912," *LARR*, 34: 3 (1999): 39-73.
- ¹¹⁵ Karen Y. Morrison, "Civilization and Citizenship through the Eyes of Afro-Cuban Intellectuals during the First Constitutional Era, 1902-1940," *Cuban Studies/Estudios Cubanos*, 30 (1999): 76-99.
- ¹¹⁶ Rogelio Martínez Furé, "A National Cultural Identity?: Homogenizing Monomania and the Plural Heritage," in *Afro-Cuban Voices: On Race and Identity in Contemporary Cuba*, eds. Pedro Pérez Sarduy and Jean Stubbs (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 157.
- ¹¹⁷ Fernando Ortiz, "The Relations between Blacks and Whites in Cuba," *Phylon*, First Quarter, 5 (1944): 16. The essay was originally published in *Ultra* of December 1942.
- ¹¹⁸ Fernando Ortiz, "Como pensaba yo hace 30 años," *Ultra*, 1: 2 (August 1936): [167]-172.
- ¹¹⁹ Ortiz, "La inmigración."
- ¹²⁰ Fernando Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*, introduction by Bronislaw Malinowsky, with a new introduction by Fernando Coronil, translated by Harriet de Onís (Durham: Duke University Press, [1947] 1995), 53.

CHAPTER III

BLACK BRITISH CARIBBEAN MIGRATION TO CUBA

The Tradition of Migration in the British Caribbean

One of the main features of the British Caribbean during the post-emancipation period was social mobility and migration. In some of the colonies that had land available, particularly Jamaica, Trinidad, and Guyana, the decades following 1838 witnessed the establishment of a peasantry.¹ In the eastern Caribbean islands, where the planters had control of virtually all the land, the former slaves defined freedom through migration to places such as Trinidad and Guyana where –unlike the old sugar colonies- there was active sugar production after the mid-nineteenth century.² People from Barbados migrated to Guyana and Trinidad during the 1830s and 1840s, despite the efforts of the colonial government to restrict out-migration and retain the plantation labour force. Barbadians also went to St. Croix, Antigua, and elsewhere in the eastern Caribbean. Estimates of net movement from Barbados between 1861 and 1891 are of 29,000 (21,800 men and 7,600 women).³

In Jamaica, although there was land available in the immediate aftermath of emancipation, the second half of the nineteenth century would bring social and economic changes. Expansion and investment in the banana industry and the associated land transactions affected the peasantry and curtailed alternatives for its further development.⁴ The economic enterprises surrounding the Antilles –mostly, but not exclusively, of U.S. capital- became the labour outlets for the British Caribbean labour force.⁵ The development of the banana industry in Central America, the construction of railways in Costa Rica, Ecuador, and Panama, and the construction of the Panama Canal, all represented alternatives for employment.

Starting in the 1850s, British Caribbean workers travelled to Panama to work on the construction of railways. Subsequently, between 1881 and 1889, Velma Newton estimates that about 60% of the labour force in the Panama Canal and Railroad Projects was from the British Antilles (an average of 6,837 workers).⁶ In the eastern Caribbean, the economic depression of the 1880s had a marked effect. The economy of Barbados and the Leeward Islands was less diversified and sugar remained the main crop. For a labour force that had been already looking for economic alternatives abroad, the situation became more acute. Moreover, with the sugar depression, and also the supply and competition of East Indian indentured workers, the labour outlets in British Guiana and Trinidad were limited.⁷

Therefore, many eastern Caribbean islanders ventured to Central and northern South America in search of work. Some 4-6,000 St. Lucians, along with other islanders who had travelled to work on the construction of the Canal were left stranded with the collapse of the project in 1889.⁸ Thousands of labourers from Dominica went to the gold fields of Venezuela and to Cayenne, French Guyana,⁹ and Leeward Islanders started their movement to the sugar plantations in the Dominican Republic. The West India Royal Commission of 1897 reported on Barbados that the “whole island is already occupied and developed” and “very thickly populated”. The Commission concluded that: “Emigration is a natural and, in view of complaints as to want of labour elsewhere, at first sight a promising situation.”¹⁰

At the turn of the century additional migratory destinations offered more alternatives for British Caribbean labour. In 1900 and 1901, Jamaicans were contracted to build the railway from Guayaquil to Quito in Ecuador¹¹ and migration from the Leeward Islands to the Dominican Republic increased during the 1900s.¹² The Panama Canal project that had been abandoned by the French (*Compagnie Universelle du Canal Interoceanique* and *Compagnie Nouvelle du Canal de Panama*) was taken over by the U.S. Isthmian Canal Commission in 1904, and its construction lasted until 1913. During that period (1904-1913), contract labour migration from the British Caribbean colonies has been estimated at 23,037, from virtually every island, but primarily from Barbados (19,000).¹³ Departures of Jamaicans to Panama –not only as contract labourers- are recorded at 62,103 during the same period.¹⁴ Simultaneously, estimates of labour migrations from Jamaica to Costa Rica in the first two decades of the twentieth century are of 22,362.¹⁵ In the early part of the century, British Antilleans also migrated north to the United States, primarily to communities such as Harlem in New York. Estimates of net Jamaican migration to the United States from 1881 to 1921 are of 46,000.¹⁶ One must note that, along with the economic crisis of the British Caribbean colonies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, a number of environmental disasters –hurricanes, droughts, and the Jamaican earthquake of 1907- were additional factors influencing the process of out-migration from the different colonies. The outbreak of the First World War represented another reason why Caribbean islanders left their home countries, in this case as soldiers of the West Indies Regiment.¹⁷

A common feature of the migration experience in these places was that of social, racial, and economic inequality. At different times, labourers in Venezuela and Panama were left in a destitute condition, and those in the Canal Zone worked under a discriminatory system of payment based on racial difference.¹⁸ In the various enterprises where the black

migrants worked, as well as in their contact with the societies to which they arrived, they were exposed to socially discriminating practices and to racial violence.¹⁹ Soldiers on the European war front confronted discrimination within the army ranks that was manifested in the tasks they were assigned to do, but also in their encounter with white officers and soldiers.²⁰

The story of British Caribbean migration and mobility after 1838 is certainly one of suffering, oppression, and discrimination. But it is also true that the migrants were not passive or content with their place in the post-emancipation world. From a mutiny of soldiers of the British West Indies Regiment and the labour activism in Central America to the organisational practices in Harlem and the Panama Canal, Caribbean migrants challenged social discrimination and struggled for economic survival.²¹ Collectively and individually, they asserted their independence, searched for self-improvement, and challenged the social and racial order left by centuries of slavery and colonialism. It is as part of this story of the century following emancipation (1838-1938) that we can properly understand the British Caribbean movements to Cuba; not only because it is the history that preceded it, but because it is a history to which it belongs.

The Movement to Cuba

Between 1898 and 1938 Cuba received more than 140,000 British Antilleans to work mainly –but not exclusively– in the growing sugar industry. This migration has commonly been portrayed in the historiography as one that began in the second decade of the twentieth century (1910s) and ended in the 1930s with massive deportations. The picture resembles a sort of ‘bell curve’ migration process where the immigrants came in a moment of economic growth and left (or were forced to leave) in a moment of economic depression.²² However, despite the references made to the sugar crisis in 1921, in the middle of this general trend, the actual impact on the migratory process has not been properly assessed; and only recently have scholars begun to refer to the ups and downs in the migratory process of Caribbean labourers.²³

Certainly, the late 1910s witnessed the most dramatic increase in Caribbean labour migration to Cuba, and it was in the 1930s when most of the migrants left the country. But such an interpretation that rests mainly on the quantitative data, does not give attention to the migration of Caribbean workers that, however small in comparison, did take place before the 1910s. The overall picture of the migration to Cuba also neglects the changes of migration patterns during the 1920s and 1930s. A critical analysis of the quantitative data on migration, combined with other qualitative information, provides a more complex

picture of the migration process; and it is this complex picture that gives a richer and more diverse representation of the British Antillean migration experience in Cuba.

The most common point of departure in the historiography of Caribbean migration to Cuba is the Presidential Decree of 1913 by José Miguel Gómez before he left office. Gómez authorised the Nipe Bay Company in northeastern Cuba to import several hundred migrant labourers from the Antilles.²⁴ A second point of departure is August 1917, when the need for sugar production during the First World War prompted then President Mario García Menocal to authorise the entry of cane cutters for two years until after the end of the war.²⁵ Both the 1910s in general, and the harvest years of 1912/13 and 1916/17 in particular, witnessed an increase in the immigration of many groups, including British Antilleans. Historians have tended to use 1912 as the point when Antillean migration started probably because that was when Jamaicans and Haitians began to be registered in the immigration records. This does not mean that there was no migration before then, when all Caribbean migrants appear to have been lumped together under the category of “non-specified Antilleans.”

Despite its relative low levels, the presence of the “non-specified Antilleans” before the migration boom of the 1910s, as well as contacts between Jamaica and eastern Cuba, must not be underestimated.²⁶ By 1899, for example, census records identify a total of 1,712 persons as being born in the “West Indies”. Of these, a total of 1,043 were classified as “colored”, and most were located in the Province of Santiago (892). While many were classified as “laborers” (314), others were active as merchants, carpenters, tailors, and seamstresses.²⁷ Another migration current that must not be overlooked, and that falls outside the general trend, is the growth in Antillean migration between 1908 and 1911. By using 1912 as the starting point for Caribbean immigration, scholars have ignored the entry of 13,685 Antilleans in those four years. Moreover, in the same period, the Antilleans constituted the second largest migrant group in Cuba, after the Spaniards. These early migrants were not only the forerunners of the subsequent migration, they also exemplify the first instances of British Antillean organisational efforts (Salvation Army) and became the first ones to experience Cuban rejection and discrimination. It was precisely against this early migration current that Fernando Ortiz was speaking when, in 1906, he condemned the criminal nature of non-white migrants.²⁸

As it has been noted, it was in the 1910s that the immigration of British Caribbean migrants increased dramatically (See figure 3.1). At the beginning of the second half of that decade, for example, Jamaican migration more than tripled in only one year, from 1,834 in

1915 to 7,133 in 1916. Later, again in only one year, migration figures more than doubled from 9,184 in 1918 to 24,187 in 1919, and then reached their highest level in 1920 with 27,088 Jamaican migrants. Overall, during the four years between 1916 and 1920, Cuba received more than half of the total migration of the three first decades of the century (that is, 75,871 out of 142,275). Influenced by the news of the economic bonanza of those years (the so-called Dance of the Millions), thousands in the British Antilles decided to move to Cuba in search of better opportunities. The testimonies of some of the migrants provide an indication of the general awareness of the migration process that existed during that period. One migrant who went to Cuba in 1919 responded: "Oh. Yes. Plenty people travelling there".²⁹ Another migrant who went in 1920 said that: "In those days? Yes, man. Yes, Man. Everybody of my age."³⁰ The movement of people, together with the news about the growing sugar industry, motivated others: "Oh people were going to Cuba you know and there was a boom there. The cane crop was there you know and people leave Jamaica and go to Cuba. So I went along."³¹

Figure 3.1. Jamaican, West Indian, and English Migration to Cuba, 1899-1933

The process of emigration to Cuba took place in a variety of ways. From Jamaica, for example, some people travelled in a sailing boat, which might carry over fifty people, and the journey would take three days.³² Luckier travellers apparently managed to do a faster journey in the Royal Mail Steam boats. One of them tells: "Well, it only take a night. We leave here in the evening and by daylight the next morning we were in Cuba."³³ Another migrant recalls that:

... in those days now we had sailing boats. It wasn't now like steamships and all like that. So the only way you could go is on a logwood boat and a sugar boat. [...]

So I went on a sailing boat name the Varona. And we had one name, what, the Nemisis [*sic*]; and that had a little motor boat on it. But the one that I went on didn't have any motor boat and it is just sails – took us I would say about 7 days to get up the 90 miles deh.³⁴

According to the testimonies of some migrants, the process of migrating was relatively easy, and the passage may have cost 50 shillings. One migrant who travelled from Kingston Harbour to Santiago de Cuba said that basically they only needed to pay the passage and have "a dollar or whatever" for your arrival on Cuban soil. In those days, with English money "you can't get anything to buy for nobody will tek it from you." Getting the passport to migrate was not that problematic either: "No. No difficulty. You only give your name. So many days, and you go to Sutton Street for it, pay down your 5/-, send you to King's House and the Governor sign it."³⁵

On arrival in Santiago de Cuba, the migrants had to spend some time in the quarantine station to be tested for "malaria fever", "any fever or any plague." When the migrant could "prove that everything is fit", then the officials there "let you pass out and go on land."³⁶ Once in the country, the migrants were either recruited to work in the sugar industry or made their own moves to get a job. One migrant from St. James, in Jamaica, travelled to Santiago de Cuba at the age of 17 because "at that time them was taking people to Cuba." Once in Santiago, he narrates how people were recruited to work:

Get a job? Man will carry you and give you job. After you come, men come right in the lodging or the hotel or where you stop come give you job and come and ask you if you want work. Not Cuban alone. Jamaican and Cuban. You see the Jamaican know the languages and the Cuban want me to go and do such a work so he come and say; 'How much of you is here? We want about 50 odd, 25 men to go and do such and such a work. You will go?' We say 'Yes'. He say, 'Alright, I will pay you fare if you will come. Come I will pay you fare'.³⁷

The journey was described by one of the migrant labourers as “a very hectic ride”, leaving in the afternoon, travelling during the night, and arriving in Cuba in the morning. He continued:

... I was seasick and throwing up. All I could ... Anyway, we landed in Cuba in the morning, and we had to come off on a launch and go in Havana –don't mean Havana- Santiago, that's where we land. Santiago. And we remain there for a little while till the afternoon, I think. No, I arrived there in the night, you see. And I sleep on two barrel until next morning. Two barrel pushed together and I slept there.

He described how people were going to Banes, but that he decided it would be better to go to Ciego de Avila where he had a cousin. He “couldn't manage” the cane cutting work and decided to work as a timekeeper in the one sugar estate.³⁸ Other migrants also tried to avoid work in the cane field:

People were going to Cuba backward and forward. Then a gentleman from Woodburn came in and I asked him how the work stay over there and he told me if you can cut cane and you can do this and do that. So I say, well I'll try it. So I leave and I went along with him. That time I was 22 years old. But I didn't figure the work out there and when I see the cane work I say, 'No bwoy, this thing too tough for me.' Listen, me dear, I still hold on and then I change over and from thence 1920 the last I cut any cane ... I work in factories, curing sugar, sewing sacks, painting. I do different works.³⁹

Another migrant from Clarendon who went to Cuba at the age of 19, did not work in the planting, but in the factory:

I either work around the centrifugals – they cure sugar. When the time is cold, we get into the factory. We work around the centrifugals because you warm inside, for you see you have electricity, [...] So in the winter we work in the factories, except when we drawing canes.⁴⁰

Beyond the raw figures, the testimonies above give some insights on the actual process of migration, the reasons for it, and the type of work in which some of the migrants were involved.

Migration Trends and Patterns

There was a diversity of British Antillean migration routes to Cuba. Many went from their islands of origin, while others who had migrated elsewhere in the Americas moved directly to Cuba instead of returning home. According to the available immigration data, between 1913 and 1924, more than 5,673 British Caribbean islanders travelled to

Cuba from countries such as Panama, Costa Rica, and British Honduras (now Belize). If one counts those classified as “English” as part of the West Indians, the number rises to 6,708 migrants. Of these migrants 3,571 came from Panama, 1,249 from Costa Rica, 1,717 from Central America, and 172 from British Honduras. Together with these groups, a total of 619 migrants categorised as Central Americans entered Cuba in 1919 and 1920.

In those years, immigrants from everywhere were going to Cuba and while those classified as Central Americans might have been citizens of Panama or Costa Rica, it is not unlikely that they may have been descendants of British Antilleans born there. This possibility emerges out of the fact that the population data for some of the British Caribbean colonies in 1921 and the 1940s indicate a great number of peoples being born in Central American countries.⁴¹ Among these were the sons and daughters of migrants born in the Canal Zone, also known as the “Panamericans”.⁴² Ms. Emelina Anderson, for instance, currently living in Baraguá, Ciego de Avila, was born in Costa Rica in 1910 to Jamaican parents (Catherine Ellis and John Anderson) and had come to Cuba by 1920 when she was 9 or 10. In Baraguá, she attended the Episcopal Church and was taught at school by William Preston Stoute, himself a former worker, teacher, and labour activist on the Panama Canal.⁴³

Beyond the connection with Central America, other British Antilleans went from a variety of places. Between 1915 and 1921, a total of 7,711 Jamaicans went from outside Jamaica. Small groups of Jamaicans arrived from the United States, some arrived from the Dutch Antilles, and 110 are registered as arriving from Hawaii in 1918. A total of 148 came from the Dominican Republic on 1916, the year of the U.S. intervention to that country.

Census estimates of 1919 indicate that there were 41,159 British Antilleans, mostly from Jamaica, comprising 12.2% of the total population.⁴⁴ In 1920, British consular officials reported that there were some 12,000 Jamaicans living in the two eastern provinces of Camagüey and Santiago de Cuba.⁴⁵ Of the total Jamaican born people living in Cuba by 1919, 77.6% were male and 22.4% were female.⁴⁶ The sugar crisis of 1921 definitely affected both the migrant community already in Cuba and the migration process as a whole. Migration decreased very much in the same dramatic way that it had increased in the previous years. In 1921, only 12,469 Jamaicans entered Cuba, in contrast to 27,088 in 1920.

In 1922, Jamaican immigration dropped to only 4,455. The memories of one migrant who went to Cuba in the early 1920s serve to illustrate the depression during those years:

I went there in 1923 and during that time things just tumble down. I didn't go and find any sweetness you know; because I heard what was going on there so I went and was trying to catch some of that good. And when I went there everything just tumble down on me. It was all finished, you see. It was a little salt among the sweetness and had to clear out.⁴⁷

There was some limited increase in Jamaican migration for the years 1923 and 1924, then the migratory movement from Jamaica experienced a gradual decline: 4,747 in 1925, 2,508 in 1926, 2,348 in 1927, 974 in 1928, 243 in 1929, and only 38 migrants in 1930.

While Jamaican migration was in decline, there is evidence that population movement from other British Caribbean colonies was increasing during the 1920s. Although this movement, mostly from the Leeward and Windward Islands, was definitely much less than that of the Jamaicans, the task of analysing eastern Caribbean migrants is complicated both by the aforementioned ambiguity of the category "non-specified Antilleans", and by the lack of quantitative data. There is no information on British Leeward and Windward Islanders in either the census or the immigration reports for the years 1919, 1922-23, 1925, and 1928 to 1938. However, a combination of the available quantitative data with other archival sources makes it possible to outline some of the trends from the eastern Caribbean British colonies. This, in turn, will assist us in going beyond the generalising conceptualisation of the *migración antillana*, which puts all the Caribbean migrants in a single group without distinctions. It will also provide some insights into the inner complexities of the British Antillean group.

For the *zafras* (harvests) of 1923-24, 1924-25, and 1925-26, the CASC in northeastern Cuba recruited workers exclusively from the eastern Caribbean. For those years, this company was authorised to introduce between 2,000 and 3,000 labourers each year.⁴⁸ In a report in 1931, Lieutenant A. J. Molina, Cuban Military Supervisor of the Immigration Department, reported that through the ports of Oriente, 2,059 Barbadians entered the country in 1927 and 1,400 in 1928. He added that on the day he was writing, 2 October, 4,500 Barbadians were still in the country.⁴⁹

Although there is a lack of information on the immigration charts about eastern Caribbean islanders, the listings of passenger arrivals in the reports on immigration and movements of passengers provide some interesting information. The contrast in the figures is remarkable, with large numbers of non-Jamaican British Antillean passengers arriving during years in which this group are rarely registered as immigrants. For instance, 1,775 British Antillean passengers entered Cuba in 1920 in contrast to 131 registered as immigrants. In 1921, while immigration data reports 591 British islanders, passenger

reports indicate a total of 5,529. Later, in 1923, 7,841 British Antillean passengers arrived and in 1924 the figure is of 768. In 1926, the British Consulate in Santiago de Cuba reported to the Colonial Secretary in Kingston that along with 75,000 Jamaican migrants, there were 8,000 from Barbados, 2,000 from Grenada, 1,500 from Trinidad, 1,500 from St. Vincent, 500 from Antigua, 500 from St. Kitts, and 1,000 from St. Lucia and Martinique: in all at least 15,000 eastern Caribbean islanders.⁵⁰

As late as 1946, British Consul-General M. E. Vibert reported that among the British Caribbean migrants in the Province of Camagüey desiring repatriation were 1,140 from Barbados, 420 from the Leeward Islands, 360 from the Windward Islands, and 180 from other islands (presumably British colonies).⁵¹ In the Province of Oriente, Vibert reported 3,870 from Barbados, 2,160 from Nevis, 1,800 from Antigua, 1,950 from St. Kitts, 720 from Montserrat, 265 from St. Vincent, 275 from Grenada, 360 from Dominica, 450 from St. Lucia, and 180 from other islands.⁵² That is, if Vibert's report is accurate, a total of 19,530 non-Jamaican British Caribbean migrants in Cuba in 1946. This data, along with other evidence illustrates the importance of exploring particular migratory trends of the different islanders, rather than dumping all islanders into one single group, be it *jamaicanos*, *ingleses*, or *antillanos*.

Migration and Regional Hegemony in the Sugar Industry

Based on the developments of the sugar industry in the Provinces of Camagüey and Oriente in the early twentieth century, Cuban demographer and historian Juan Pérez de la Riva treated the two provinces as a single geo-economic region.⁵³ Equally, during that period some particular sugar mills and plantations in both of these provinces could be considered to be separate geo-social and economic units. Many of these plantations enjoyed a significant degree of regional hegemony and relative independence from the outside world. In practice, these plantation complexes were company towns, defined as “a settlement built and operated by a single business enterprise” where “virtually everything associated with the settlement, including houses, store, school, and even the chapel, was subordinate to the business enterprise.”⁵⁴ Two clear examples of Cuban sugar settlements that exhibited company town features were those under the control of the CASC (Chaparra and Delicias Sugar Mill) and the UFC (Boston and Preston Sugar Mills), all located in northeastern Cuba. Horace B. Davis noted that “the purpose of the company town is to attract, hold and control labor”⁵⁵ and it is this feature of the company town that I will

examine in this section. I will describe the impact of the hegemony of the Cuban company towns on the patterns, trends, and policies of black Caribbean migration to Cuba.

Santiago de Cuba was by far the leading port of entry for black Caribbean labour in general, including those from the British Antilles. But with the economic developments and the requirements of the sugar industry, some companies preferred to exercise a major control over their activities, from cane growing and sugar production to its shipping to the U.S. refineries. Being an industry mostly dependent on foreign labour, one of the activities over which the companies wanted to exercise more control was the process of recruitment of workers for each *zafra*. Companies with a privileged geographic position on the coast or a bay used these natural resources to their advantage. Some ports became the exclusive exit for the final product (sugar), but also the entrance of those responsible for it (cane cutters). During the glory days of sugar production in the Cuban Republic, a number of ports became virtually private points of entry for thousands of migrant labourers.

The port of Puerto Padre, under the control of the CASC, was one of these exclusive ports. The region was carefully chosen in the early twentieth century by the former member of the Cuban Liberation Army, later President of the Republic, Mario García Menocal, for the U.S. Congressman Robert Bradley Hawley, who also owned a sugar mill in Louisiana. Hawley's company administered the sugar production, railway tracks, and electric infrastructure in the region of Puerto Padre, plus a refinery in Gramercy, Louisiana. Both, the Chaparra and Delicias Sugar Mills would become two of the leading *centrales* in Cuba, with Chaparra having a first *zafra* in 1902 and Delicias in 1912. In 1924, probably under the pressure of a growing feeling of marginalisation felt by the national labour force, the company reported having an ethnically mixed labour force consisting of: "5,046 Cubans, 324 Spaniards, 685 Jamaicans, 2,726 English [*sic*], 1,088 Haitians, 956 Dutch, and 170 of various nationalities."⁵⁶ Of this labour force, the "English", those coming from eastern Caribbean British colonies, were the ones that the company considered their "special preserve [*sic*] of labor recruiting."⁵⁷ As such, it was this group that the company brought directly to their exclusive port in Puerto Padre.

Migration figures available are indicative of this particular migration trend that, to some extent, took place beyond the reach of the Cuban authorities. The exclusivist nature of the port emerges clearly in the data. In 1921, of the 591 British Antilleans (non-Jamaicans) that entered Cuba, all coming directly from the eastern Caribbean, 589 entered through Puerto Padre. All of them were male, registered as field workers, and reported as having a sure job at the moment of arrival. In 1923, there is no data for British Caribbean

migrants, but all of the 450 persons entering through Puerto Padre were field labourers. In 1924, a total of 1,185 British Antilleans arrived in Cuba with a sure job at the moment of entering the country. Virtually all of them were single and were coming directly from their country of birth in the eastern Caribbean, and all but one entered through the port of Puerto Padre.⁵⁸ All of the 1,623 persons entering through Puerto Padre in 1924, including the 1,184 British Antilleans, were classified as field labourers. Later in 1926 the pattern is the same, 886 British Antillean males entering Cuba as migrants, and all but one entering through Puerto Padre. Most of them were single, all of them were registered with a sure job at the moment of arrival, and 300 of them had been in Cuba before. This would suggest a regular pattern of active labour recruitment policy by a company assuming control both of its region and of the kind of labour force it wants. Some of the implications of this particular migratory trend will be examined in the following chapters.

The UFC exhibited a similar pattern of hegemony over its region and policies of labour recruitment. Located to the east of Puerto Padre, the UFC began in the sugar producing business in 1901. The region under its control consisted of the Bays of Nipe and Banes, and the municipal regions of Antilla, Banes, and Mayarí. Both of their sugar mills, Boston and Preston, like their neighbours in Puerto Padre, occupied a leading position in terms of Cuban sugar production.⁵⁹ The UFC also had a convenient geographical location that allowed it to engage in similar patterns of labour trade as that of the CASC. Its labour force was also ethnically diverse, but most of the workers were brought from Haiti and Jamaica.

It is precisely to the Nipe Bay Company, a subsidiary of the UFC that administered the Preston Sugar Mill, to which historians have attributed the 'first' importations of Antillean workers with the decree of 1913. However, Jamaican workers were used in the lands of the UFC from very early in the twentieth century. By 1907, Jamaicans who arrived through the southern coast of Cuba were hired by the UFC and brought to the plantations.⁶⁰ For the year 1911 there are 354 West Indians and 226 "English" entering through the port of Nipe and two years later, in 1913, there were 559 Jamaicans and 507 "English". But it is after 1917 that an immigration and labour recruitment pattern like that of the CASC emerges.

In 1918, a total of 1,701 field labourers entered through the port of Nipe, almost all of them black Caribbean workers: 1,664 Haitians, 20 Jamaicans, and 3 from other islands. Of the 4,160 immigrants entering Cuba through Nipe in 1919, 3,525 did not pay for their own tickets (registered as paid by 'other', presumably the company) and a total of 1,789 are

registered as field labourers. In 1920 all of the migrants entering through Nipe were classified as field labourers (5,583) and another person or a company paid all their tickets. In 1925 and 1926 all the field labourers arriving through the port of Nipe were Haitians: 6,660 field labourers in 1925 and 1,939 in 1926. Again, in 1927 all the people entering through Nipe (6,265) were field labourers and in 1928 the 9,216 field labourers arriving in the UFC region were Haitians. The port of Antilla, also under the area of hegemony of the UFC, received 2,000 field labourers in 1929 and all of them came from Haiti.

For some of the years above (1919, 1920, 1927) I have not been able to indicate the clear correlation of ethnicity and occupational status and port of entry. Nonetheless, given the clear pattern of territorial hegemony that emerges from the data, the fact that most of the arrivals in those years were field labourers, and that in those years most of the tickets were paid by 'others' (i.e., the company), it would be safe to assume that most of them were either Haitians, Jamaicans, or British Leeward and Windward Islanders. For another year, 1925, there are no field labourers registered as entering through the port of Nipe in the reports of immigration and movement of passengers. However, from the company records, the authors of the study *United Fruit Company* recorded 5,976 field labourers entering the properties of the UFC during that year.⁶¹ The study does not specify ethnicity in the figures, but they recorded a total of 42,502 field labourers entering the UFC region between 1923 and 1928.

Other ports of Cuba were also used exclusively for the entrance of black migrant labour. In 1917, for instance, of the 777 migrants arriving through the southern port of Manzanillo in Oriente, 759 were field labourers, and 688 of them were Jamaicans. For 1920 in the same port, of the 185 immigrants, 150 were field labourers, and 86 were classified as Jamaicans. This trend is hardly surprising if one considers the location of sugar mills near the port of Manzanillo. For example, the New Niquero Sugar Company, related to the CASC, had control of sixty-seven thousand acres of land in that region, including their "internal railroad system, and its location on the seaboard gave it an advantage in reduced freight costs."⁶² The port of Manzanillo, together with the southern port of Júcaro in the Province of Camagüey, received in 1919 some of the immigrants classified as "Central Americans" referred to above: 192 through Júcaro and 125 through Manzanillo. In the south of Cuba, very near to the port of Júcaro is the location of the Baraguá Sugar Mill, a classic company town, which, either for company preferences or due to the social networks of the migrants themselves, ended up receiving a considerable number of the British Caribbean migrants coming to Cuba from Panama. This also raises the question as to

whether the “Central Americans”, particularly the ones entering through Júcaro, were descendants of British Antilleans going to Baraguá. From 1927 to 1930, the port of Sagua de Tánamo, in the northeastern coast of the Province of Oriente received impressive numbers of black Caribbean field labourers. This port was near to the Central Tánamo, founded in 1921 by the United States’ Atlantic Fruit and Sugar Company (AFSC), also in the business of exporting bananas. Its general administrator, Eardly G. Middleton, relied heavily on black migrant workers for the sugar production of this mill.⁶³ Among the 2,862 immigrants who entered through Sagua de Tánamo in 1927, 558 were registered as British Antilleans and 2,304 as Haitians. In 1928, all of the 4,630 migrants entering Cuba through that port were Haitians (no occupational information is provided for this year). In 1929, a total of 2,290 Haitians entered through Sagua de Tánamo; all of them illiterate single male Haitian field labourers who had been in Cuba before, with a sure job at the moment of entry, and had their tickets paid by someone else. Again, the pattern of control over the process of recruitment and selection of the labour force was made in a calculated manner by the sugar companies located in Cuba.

From the migration patterns and trends described above, it is evident that not all the Antilleans went to Cuba in the same way or through the same process. Many went directly from Jamaica. Others went from Central America and travelled directly to places where they had contacts or an almost sure job. Yet others made a long journey from the eastern Caribbean islands with several stops in their way. Each of these journeys was different from the other. Some migrants came on their own after hearing the stories of the economic boom in Cuba, while others came hired by agents as contract labourers knowing that they would return at the end of the sugar crop. The former probably entered ‘freely’ through the port of Santiago de Cuba with nothing other than the will to find a good job and earn some money. The latter probably came to a job and a company. Some women might have come through the port of Santiago de Cuba after receiving a long awaited letter telling them to come to Cuba. Small groups of black Caribbean workers laboured in citrus farms in the Isle of Pines and Omaja in Oriente Province or in coffee plantations in Palma Soriano. Larger groups arrived recruited in a calculated manner by multinational corporations, entering through exclusive ports, joining thousands of their kin in unsanitary barracks, under a labour regime in company towns, with their own white guards and overseers.⁶⁴ Different jobs implied a different labour experience, and even within the sugar industry, labour regimes differed from one agro-industrial complex to the other. For instance, despite being in the same area (now the province of Ciego de Avila), the

treatment of the labourers in Baraguá was not the same as in Stewart Sugar Mill.⁶⁵ Labour regimes under the UFC and the CASC were different from those in other sugar plantations. Such distinctions must be taken into account for the proper understanding the complexities of the Caribbean migratory experience in Cuba.

Deportations of Workers

One of the main emphases in studies of Caribbean migration to Cuba has been that of the comparison between Jamaicans and Haitians.⁶⁶ Particular attention has been paid to the deportations and repatriations that followed the economic depression of the 1930s and the “Nationalisation of Labour Law” of 1933. It has been commonly argued that Haitian migrants suffered more than the British Antilleans in this process.⁶⁷

The comparisons made between these two groups do not take into account that, during the 1920s, Haitian and Jamaican migrations to Cuba were experiencing opposite processes. The migration of the former group was increasing, and the latter was decreasing. Also, there were differences in the departure patterns of both groups before the economic depression and the establishment of the “Nationalisation of Labour Law.” The results of these differing patterns are obvious in the census of 1931, which shows a total of 77,535 Haitian-born people living in Cuba, and only 28,206 persons that had been born in the British Caribbean.⁶⁸ It will come as no surprise, therefore, that the weight of the deportation policy –and its related discrimination- fell harder on the Haitians than on the British Antilleans. Quite simply, by the time the Cuban Government decided to start the process of forced repatriations, there were far more Haitians than British Antilleans on Cuban soil. Ignoring such basic statistical differences and attributing the difference of treatment solely to British diplomatic support is not only inaccurate, but also misleading.

Several distinctions have to be made at the moment of establishing a comparison between the Haitians and Jamaicans with regard to the deportations in the 1930s. First and foremost, one must note that during the decade preceding the deportations and repatriations of the 1930s, the patterns of migration of these two groups differed drastically. As can be seen in figure 3.2, from 1920 to 1930, Haitian migration (139,449) was more than double that of Jamaicans (65,800). While Jamaican migration never recovered from the crisis of 1921, Haitian migration skyrocketed in 1924 to a total of 21,013. Not only that, but, while Jamaican migration had been in a process of steady decrease since 1924, Haitian migration experienced dramatic increases in the late 1920s.

Between 1925 and 1930, the number of Haitians entering Cuba (69,226) was actually more than the number of Jamaicans arriving during the whole decade.

Figure 3.2. Jamaican and Haitian Migration to Cuba, 1912-1933

Figure 3.3 shows the departures of Haitians and Jamaicans from 1924 to 1938, where distinctions between the two groups are also evident. Two things must be noted, however. First, departure figures might well be indicators of regular return migration, and not strictly of deportations. Secondly, the departures of many migrant workers were sometimes in the hands of individual sugar companies, and therefore, not necessarily registered in the government records. Nonetheless, I believe the figures available can provide an idea of the process of deportation of Haitians and Jamaicans from Cuba.

Figure 3.3. Departures of Haitians and Jamaicans from Cuba, 1924-1938

The pattern of departures of Jamaicans from 1924 to 1929 is a relatively stable one until 1930-1931 when the effects of the economic depression hit Cuba. The pattern of departures of the Haitians is somewhat different, decreasing in the years 1931 and 1932.

The departures then increase in the year of the declaration of the “Nationalisation of Labour Law” in 1933 to 3,336 and later in 1937 reaching a total of 19,561 departures.

Other significant factors arise from a detailed examination of the data on Jamaican and Haitian departures. The fact that Jamaicans were leaving Cuba in a consistent way, and that immigration was decreasing steadily is probably indicative of their awareness of the depressive state of the sugar industry. Haitians, on the other hand, kept migrating to Cuba, something that can be attributed perhaps to the fact that, unlike Jamaica, the U.S. military intervened in Haiti from 1915-1934. That departures of Haitians did not increase until the “Nationalisation of Labour Law” and the active policy of forced repatriation in the late 1930s probably indicates the unwillingness on the part of the Haitians to return to a country that was under foreign military occupation. On the other hand, the earlier departure process of the Jamaicans probably testifies to their migration tradition and experience in other countries during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Perhaps British Caribbean workers were ‘better trained’, as it were, in the migration process, and they knew when it was time to leave. Indeed, British Antilleans, and Jamaicans in particular were in an advantageous position as migrant workers *vis-à-vis* the Haitians. But while, on the one hand, the British Caribbean islanders and Haitians held a similar place in the Cuban social arena, in many other ways they were qualitatively different migrant groups. Any comparison must take account of that distinction.

Gender and Migration

The British Caribbean migration to Cuba –and general labour migration, for that matter- was eminently male. In the case of the Jamaicans, the male predominance in the process is clear from figure 3.4. What is also evident, nonetheless, is that, despite the relatively low level of female migration, the migratory pattern for women is a stable one, which in itself raises questions with regard to the female migratory experience.

Figure 3.4. Jamaican Female and Male Migration to Cuba, 1912-1928

Many of the women who went to Cuba worked in domestic service and also as seamstresses and dressmakers. Thus, in 1921, a total of 2,805 Jamaican women entered Cuba. That same year, 1,687 Jamaicans were in the category of seamstresses and dressmakers and 681 were domestic servants. That represents a total of 2,368 persons active in both occupations. Again, if we consider that women performed those jobs, the figures for 1921 leave us with only 437 (out of 2,805) not performing any registered economic activity. The figures are equally revealing in other years. In 1923, when 1,554 Jamaican women migrated to Cuba, a total of 1,014 Jamaicans were seamstresses and dressmakers, and 328 were domestic servants. For 1924, of 1,723 Jamaican female migrants, a total of 1,430 declared their occupations as seamstress and dressmakers (842) and as domestic servants (588). The pattern continues during the late 1920s. In 1927, a total of 121 Jamaicans were registered as seamstresses and dressmakers and 856 as domestic servants, out of 1,196 female migrants. Following the labour and gender correlations stated above, that means 977 Jamaican women involved in formal economic activities. While female migration was comparatively low in comparison with men, their economic role in the migrant community seems to have been a significant one.

In a report in 1934, H. A. Grant-Watson at the British Legation reported that the male British Antilleans who left the rural plantations and moved to the towns to work as

tailors and carpenters were “depending more often upon their womenfolk who work as laundresses or domestic servants.” When referring to the effect of the governmental decrees on labour and migration in the early thirties, Grant-Watson noted:

The decree does not affect those in private domestic service. The large number of British West Indian women employed as servants, laundresses etc. will not be affected by the decree. These women often support families of considerable sizes.⁶⁹

Female migrants therefore must have contributed to the remittances that were sent back home, to the wealth of the family unit, or that of the immigrant community as a whole with its churches and social clubs. A good example is Ms. Celia L. Campbell, better known as Ms. Jones, who, in Gloria Rolando’s film *My Footsteps in Baraguá*, as well as in my own conversation with her, emphasised how much and for how long she had to work, cleaning and ironing for North Americans in the Baraguá Sugar Mill.⁷⁰

When a male migrant was asked about Jamaican women in Cuba in the early twentieth century, he replied: “Yes man ... plenty of them [...] Yes, hundreds or thousands of them. Some of them get married.”⁷¹ A Jamaican carpenter who arrived to Cuba in 1913 commented: “They go to do servant work. Work for ... they work for wife of the big planters, you see. Or sometimes, they go there, mostly they would do ‘breaking the conditions’.” [i.e. prostitution]⁷²

Another suggestive indicator of the presence of female migrants in Cuba during the first three decades of the century is to be found in the birthplace figures of the British Caribbean colonies. As early as 1921, a total of 591 persons residing in Jamaica had been born in Cuba, and in 1943 a total of 6,713 people were registered as born in Cuba. Cuba held the second position as the country of birth for those residing in Jamaica by 1943.⁷³ A similar situation did not occur in other British Caribbean colonies, although, in 1946, a total of 86 persons in Barbados were registered as born in Cuba.⁷⁴ In that same year, in Grenada and St. Lucia, there were 22 and 12 persons respectively registered as being born in Cuba.⁷⁵ The CASC, with its preference for non-Jamaican British Caribbean workers in their plantations, is a case in point. Through their own ports, this company controlled the selection of the workers in terms of gender. If one explore the figures of migrants entering the country through Puerto Padre, one can note that the migrants brought every year by this company were virtually all male. According to the reports of immigration and movement of passengers, in 1921, a total of 591 migrants entered the country. All of them were male and virtually all of them entered through the port of Puerto Padre (a total of

589). The same pattern is repeated in 1924 when no Antillean women arrivals were registered and a total of 1,185 male Antilleans came to Cuba; all but one (1,184) entered through Puerto Padre. In 1926, 886 males entered the country and 885 are registered as arriving through Puerto Padre. No women are registered for those years.

The list of British Antilleans repatriated by the CASC to the eastern Caribbean in the year 1924 confirms the male character of the migrants brought by this company. Although a limited number of the names listed might be confusing in terms of identifying the gender of the migrant, almost all of them were clearly men.⁷⁶ Taking into account this migration policy, it comes as no surprise that there was a difference in gender migration figures between Jamaican islanders and those from the other British Caribbean colonies. The leading importer of eastern Caribbean workers had a complete control of the labour entering their lands and that labour was male. Thus the difference between Jamaica and the other colonies in terms of the amount of Cuban born population they had in the 1940s.

But even with the control exercised by this sugar multinational on its agro-industrial complexes, today, almost eighty years later, there is an undeniable impact and influence of British Antilleans in the towns of Chaparra and Delicias. The activism of the Garvey movement in Chaparra and Puerto Padre, along with the organisations of the migrants founded in the 1940s provides evidence of the community that developed in the area.⁷⁷ To this date, the signs of that community remain as many of the descendants of these migrants continue to live there.⁷⁸ Can such a community presence have emerged only with male members? Is it possible that the CASC had a permanent labour force of both men and women and only imported specific numbers of male workers during the 1920s to meet the yearly labour needs of the *zafra*? Did the women who either had ties or family links in the Chaparra and Delicias sugar mills migrate to Cuba independently, entering by another port and then joining their kin in the controlled lands of the company? These are questions for which definitive answers cannot be found with the available data, and beg for their study.

¹ See Gisela Eisner, *Jamaica, 1830-1930: A Study of Economic Growth* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1961), 210-235, Douglas Hall, *Free Jamaica, 1838-1865: An Economic History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), 157-181, Thomas C. Holt, *The Problem of Freedom: Race, Labor, and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832-1938* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University, 1992), and Woodville K. Marshall, "Notes on Peasant Development in the West Indies since 1838," *SES*, 17:3 (1968): 252-263. On general debate on the argument of the flight from sugar plantations after emancipation see Douglas Hall, "The Flight from the Estates Reconsidered: The British West Indies, 1838-42," *The Journal of Caribbean History*, 10-11 (1978): 7-24, and Michel-Rolph Trouillot, "Labour and Emancipation in Dominica: Contribution to a Debate," *Caribbean Quarterly*, 30: 3-4 (September-December 1984): 73-84.

² See Bonham C. Richardson, "Freedom and Migration in the Leeward Caribbean, 1838-48," *Journal of Historical Geography*, 6:4 (1980): 391-408.

³ See G. W. Roberts, "Emigration from the Island of Barbados," *SES*, 4:3 (September 1955): 245-288, and also David Lowenthal, "The Population of Barbados," *SES*, 6:4 (1957): 453-455.

⁴ On this aspects and the eventual proletarianization of the Jamaican labourers, see Holt, *The Problem of Freedom*, 336-379.

⁵ See George Reid Andrews, "Black Workers in the Exports Years: Latin America, 1880-1930," *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 51(Spring 1997): 7-29.

⁶ Velma Newton, *The Silver Men: West Indian Labour Migration to Panama* (Kingston: Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1984), 47.

⁷ On the depression see S. B. Saul, "The British West Indies in Depression, 1880-1914," *Inter-American Economic Affairs*, 12:3 (Winter 1958): 3-25.

⁸ Bonham C. Richardson, "Human Mobility in the Windward Caribbean, 1884-1902," *Plantation Society in the Americas*, 2:3 (May 1989): 311.

⁹ See *Report of the West India Royal Commission, with subsidiary report by D. Morris (Assistant Director of The Royal Gardens, Kew) and Statistical Tables and Diagrams, and a Map* (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1897), 50, 123. It was reported that by 1892, some of the migrants were in "a poverty-stricken condition in Venezuela" and "anxious to return to their native country."

¹⁰ *Report of the West India Royal Commission*, 29, 31.

¹¹ "Labour and its History," *Jamaica Times* (3 November 1900), 12; "From the Sea to Quito: The Railway in Ecuador," *Jamaica Times* (9 September 1900), "Ecuador," *Jamaica Times* (8 December 1900): 5, "Ecuador," *Jamaica Times* (26 January 1901): 2, "Ecuador," *Jamaica Times* (1 February 1901): 14; "Ecuador" *Jamaica Times* (16 March 1901): 11. For specific accounts of the experience of workers and the migratory process, see, "In Far Ecuador," *Jamaica Times* (1 December 1900): 14, Sadler But Wiser, "Letter to the Editor," *Jamaica Times* (26 January 1901): 2, and A Discharge Foreman, "Jamaicans in Ecuador: A Full Account of Their Adventures and Mis-Adventures," *Jamaica Times* (9 February 1901): 14.

¹² Patrick E. Bryan, "The Question of Labor in the Sugar Industry of the Dominican Republic in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century," in *Between Slavery and Free Labor: The Spanish-Speaking Caribbean in the Nineteenth Century*, eds. Manuel Moreno Fraginals, Frank Moya Pons, and Stanley L. Engerman (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 235-251, and José del Castillo, *La inmigración de braceros azucareros en la República Dominicana, 1900-1930* (Santo Domingo: Cuadernos del CENDIA, Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo, 1978).

¹³ Newton, *The Silver Men*, 41.

¹⁴ Jamaican contract labourers are recorded by Newton at only 47. Newton, *The Silver Men*, 41. The Jamaican Government had restrictions on emigration to Panama and other Central

American countries starting with the Emigrant's Protection Law of 1902 whereby the migrant or the recruiting agents had to pay the departure tax. As shown by the contrast the figures in Newton and those of Malcolm J. Proudfoot, the policies apparently detracted agents from contracting labour in Jamaica, but did not inhibit Jamaicans from emigrating (47 contract labourers against 62,103 departures from 1904-1913). Malcolm J. Proudfoot, *Population Movements in the Caribbean* (Port-of-Spain, Trinidad: Caribbean Commission Secretariat, 1950).

¹⁵ Proudfoot, *Population Movements in the Caribbean*, Table 19, pp. 79-80. On the West Indian workers in Costa Rica, see Aviva Chomsky, *West Indian Workers and the United Fruit Company in Costa Rica, 1870-1940* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1996) and Elisavinda Echeverri-Gent, "Forgotten Workers: British West Indians and the Early Days of the Banana Industry in Costa Rica and Honduras," *JLAS*, 24: 2 (May 1992), 275-308.

¹⁶ George W. Roberts, *The Population of Jamaica: An Analysis of its Structure and Growth*, with an introduction by Kingley Davis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957), Table 31, 139. On Caribbean migrants in the United States, particularly in New York, see the pioneering work of Ira de Augustine Reid, *The Negro Immigrant, His Background, Characteristics, and Social Adjustment, 1899-1937* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939). More recent works are Winston James, *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia: Caribbean Radicalism in Early-Twentieth Century America* (London: Verso, 1998), and Irma Watkins-Owens, *Blood Relations: Caribbean Immigrants and the Harlem Community, 1900-1930* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996).

¹⁷ A total of 15,204 soldiers from the British Caribbean were active in the war as part of the British West Indies Regiment, 397 of them serving as officers. Islanders from virtually all the colonies were active, but the major groups were from Jamaica (10,280), Trinidad and Tobago (1,478), and Barbados (831) and British Guyana (700). See C. L. Joseph, "The British West Indies Regiment, 1914-1918," *The Journal of Caribbean History*, 2 (May 1971): 94-124 and Glenford D. Howe, "In the Crucible: Race, Power and Military Socialization of West Indian Recruits During the First World War," *Journal of Caribbean Studies* 10: 3 (Summer/Fall 1995): 163-181. 1,256 soldiers died, the majority due to sickness, and 697 were wounded.

¹⁸ See Newton, *The Silver Men*, 131-159.

¹⁹ See Bryan, "The Question of Labor," 242-246, Michael L. Conniff, *Black Labor on a White Canal: Panama, 1904-1981* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1985), 31-40, Echeverri-Gent, "Forgotten Workers," 286, Newton, *The Silver Men*, 131-168.

²⁰ Howe, "In the Crucible," 163-181, and Glenford D. Howe, "West Indian Blacks and the Struggle for Participation in the First World War," *The Journal of Caribbean History*, 28:1 (1994): 27-62.

²¹ Conniff, *Black Labor on a White Canal*, 52-61, Chomsky, *West Indian Workers*, 147-206, Watkins-Owens, *Blood Relations*, 11-91, James, *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia*, 122-194, Reid, *The Negro Immigrant*, 124-141, 146-160. On the mutiny of the British West Indies Regiment during the First World War, see the documentary *Mutiny*, directed by Helena Appio (Untold Series), (London: Channel 4, 1999).

²² See Juan Pérez de la Riva, "Cuba y la migración antillana, 1900-1931," in *La república neocolonial: Anuario de estudios cubanos*, 2 (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1979), 3-75, Rolando Alvarez Estevez, *Azúcar e inmigración, 1900-1940* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1988), and Dominga González Suárez, "La inmigración antillana en Cuba." *Economía y desarrollo*, 100 (September-October 1987): 50-61

²³ This is to be found in the work of César J. Ayala, *American Sugar Kingdom: The Plantation Economy of the Spanish Caribbean* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 167. However, his study did not centred on migration, to which he devoted a superficial chapter.

²⁴ Pérez de la Riva, argues that the authorisation was for 3,000 workers, while Oscar Zanetti, Alejandro García, and associates sustained that it was for 1,000. See Pérez de la Riva, "Cuba y la migración antillana," 28, and Zanetti and García, et al. *United Fruit Company*, 212.

²⁵ ["Ley de Inmigración,"] *Gaceta Oficial*, 'Parte oficial' (4 August 1917): Year XVI, No. 30, Volume II, 1941; "Decreto No. 1717 [Inmigración de trabajadores]," *Gaceta Oficial* (2 November 1917): 7464-7465.

²⁶ It has been recognised that illegal trade between southeastern Cuba and Jamaica have existed across different points in history. See Louis A. Pérez Jr. *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution*, Second Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, [1988] 1995), 11, 52, 55. Other contacts include the links between these two islands during the Cuban wars of independence. See Charles Jacobs, "Jamaica and the Cuban Ten years War, 1868-1878," *Jamaica Journal*, 44 (1980): 80-92, Jean Stubbs, "Political Idealism and Commodity Production: Cuban Tobacco in Jamaica, 1870-1930," *Cuban Studies/Estudios Cubanos*, 25 (1995): 51-81, and Gayle McGarrity, "Cubans in Jamaica: A Previously Neglected Segment of the Cuban Diaspora," *Caribbean Quarterly*, 42:1 (March 1996): 55-83.

²⁷ See War Department, Office of Director of Census of Cuba, *Report on the Census of Cuba, 1899* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1900), 220-225, 472-473.

²⁸ Ortiz, "La inmigración."

²⁹ "Mona in Retrospect," Interview 22KMD, recorded in August Town, Kingston, Jamaica, January 1973, *Life in Jamaica in the Early Twentieth Century*, by Erna Brodber (Kingston: Institute of Social and Economic Research, [1980], 1990), Documentation and Data Centre, Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Research, AA.1678, (hereafter DDC, SALISER), 6.

³⁰ "Mr. W," Interview 20KMB, recorded in Tivoli, Kingston, Jamaica, January 1973, DDC, SALISER, 8.

³¹ "Rev. John B," Interview 75StTMA, recorded in St. Thomas, Jamaica, February 1975, DDC, SALISER, 7.

³² "Mona in Retrospect," Interview 22KMD, recorded in August Town, Kingston, Jamaica, January 1973, DDC, SALISER, 6.

³³ "A Cart Driving Mother," Interview 16KFD, recorded in August Town, Kingston, Jamaica, January 1973, DDC, SALISER, 4.

³⁴ "Man-Boy," Interview 5CMB, recorded in Kellits, Clarendon, April 1975, DDC, SALISER, 13-14.

³⁵ "Mona in Retrospect," Interview 22KMD, recorded in August Town, Kingston, Jamaica, January 1973, DDC, SALISER, 7.

³⁶ "Man-Boy," Interview 5CMB, recorded in Kellits, Clarendon, April 1975, DDC, SALISER, 14.

³⁷ "Gemini," Interview 64StjMb, recorded in Roehampton, October 1975, St. James, DDC, SALISER, 6-8.

³⁸ "Rev. John B," Interview 75StTMA, recorded in St. Thomas, Jamaica, February 1975, DDC, SALISER, 8.

³⁹ "Mr. Bert," Interview 76StTMB, recorded in St. Thomas, Jamaica, November 1973, DDC, SALISER, 1.

⁴⁰ "Man-Boy," Interview 5CMB, recorded in Kellits, Clarendon, April 1975, DDC, SALISER, 29.

⁴¹ For instance, in Barbados by 1921 there were 449 residents born in Central America, and in 1946, the total of people born in Central America were 731 (722 of them in Panama). In Jamaica, a total of 1,802 residents in 1921 were born in Central America: 1,403 in Panama, 313 in Costa Rica, and 86 in other Central American countries. In 1943, there were in

Jamaica 3,416 peoples born in Panama, 681 born in Costa Rica, and 562 born in other countries of Central America. R. R. Kuczynski, *Demographic Survey of the British Colonial Empire: Vol III: West Indian and American Territories* (London: Geoffrey Cumberlege/Oxford University Press, 1953), 79, 235.

⁴² Interview with Teófilo Gay Watkins, Baraguá, Ciego de Avila, Cuba, 11 February 1999.

⁴³ Interview with Emelina Anderson Ellis, Baraguá, Ciego de Avila, 12 February 1999.

⁴⁴ *Census of the Republic of Cuba* (Havana: Maza, Arroyo y Caso, S. en C., 1919), 310.

⁴⁵ William Erskine to Rt. Hon. Earl Curzon of Kedleston, FO, UK, 14 April 1920, Public Record Office, Foreign Office Papers (hereafter PRO, FO), 369/1398.

⁴⁶ *Census of the Republic of Cuba, 1919*, 312.

⁴⁷ "Rev. John B," Interview 75StTMA, recorded in St. Thomas, Jamaica, February 1975, DDC, SALISER, 10.

⁴⁸ Eugenio Molinet, Administrator, Chaparra Sugar Company, to Cuban Secretary of Agriculture, 10 December 1923; G. de Aranguren to Eugenio Molinet, 14 December 1923; Eugenio Molinet to Secretary of Agriculture, 12 November 1924; E. A. Brooks to Secretary of Agriculture, 13 October 1925; G. de Aranguren to E. A. Brooks, 9 November 1925; ANC, Fondo 302-Secretaria de Agricultura, Comercio y Trabajo (hereafter Fondo 302), Leg. 4, No. 45.

⁴⁹ A. J. Molina to Immigration Commissioner, Havana, 2 October 1931, ANC, Fondo 189-Secretaria de la Presidencia (hereafter Fondo 189), Leg. 121, No. 68.

⁵⁰ British Consulate, Santiago de Cuba, to A. S. Jelf, Colonial Secretary, Jamaica, 19 May 1926, Jamaica Archives and Record Department, Spanish Town, Jamaica, 1B/5/77/150 [1926].

⁵¹ People from the British Cayman Islands and the Bahamas also migrated to Cuba.

⁵² "Estimated Number of British West Indians Desiring Repatriation (Excluding Havana)," Annex No. 3 in M. E. Vibert to H.M. Principal, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Foreign Office, PRO, FO 1001/1.

⁵³ Pérez de la Riva, "Cuba y la migración antillana," 21.

⁵⁴ John S. Garner, "Introduction," in *The Company Town: Architecture and Society in the Early Industrial Age*, edited by John S. Garner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 3, 4.

⁵⁵ Horace B. Davis, "Company Towns," in *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, editor-in-chief, Edwin R. A. Seligman (New York: The Macmillan Company [1930] 1949), 119.

⁵⁶ *Agricultura y Zootecnia*, 40. This was a special issue of the journal devoted to the CASC in Cuba. For other information on the administrative structure of the CASC see Ayala, *American Sugar Kingdom*, 74-120.

⁵⁷ R. B. Wood to Walter S. Bartlett, 15 November 1928, Archivo Histórico Provincial de las Tunas, Las Tunas, Cuba (hereafter AHPT), Fondo 5-The Cuban-American Sugar Mills Company, Leg. 37, exp. 444, no. 191.

⁵⁸ For this year, the data indicates other 38 West Indians entering through Havana, but they are not registered in the actual immigration figures.

⁵⁹ The most complete account of the UFC in Cuba is the one by Zanetti, García, et al., *United Fruit Company*. See also James, *Banes*.

⁶⁰ Zanetti, García, et al. *United Fruit Company*, 211.

⁶¹ Zanetti, García, et al. *United Fruit Company*, 217. In my own research with the remaining records of the UFC in Banes, I was not able to find much information on the migration policies of the company. The records are in a deplorable condition and practically unavailable and, as they stand today, unsuitable for historical research. Therefore, the works of Zanetti, García and Associates, and of Ariel James are to be considered unique sources to our knowledge of the UFC.

⁶² The New Niquero Sugar Company, together with the CASC and other sugar enterprises, were all under the control of the United States' National Sugar Refining Company group. See Ayala, *American Sugar Kingdom*, 79-87.

⁶³ See José Vega Suñol, "La colonización norteamericana en el territorio nororiental de Cuba, 1898-1933," *Anales del Caribe*, 10 (1990), 217-219 and González Suarez, "La inmigración antillana en Cuba," 55.

⁶⁴ Virtually all the recruited guards in the UFC during the 1910s and after were white Cubans or Spaniards. See the *Manager's Letter Books*, for those years at UFC Papers. Photographs of the Rural Guards and Private Guards of the CASC stationed in the Chaparra and Delicias Sugar Mills also testify to the predominance of phenotypically white people among the guards. See *Agricultura y Zootecnia*, 88-89.

⁶⁵ Interview with Osvaldo García Arroyo, Baraguá, Ciego de Avila, Cuba, 12 February 1999.

⁶⁶ See Pérez de la Riva, "Cuba y la migración antillana," Alvarez Estevez, *Azúcar e inmigración*, and more recently McLeod, "Undesirable Aliens."

⁶⁷ Barry Carr, "Identity, Class, and Nation: Black Immigrant Workers, Cuban Communism, and the Sugar Insurgency, 1925-1933." *HAHR*, 78: 1 (February 1998): 93, McLeod, "Undesirable Aliens," 613.

⁶⁸ *Memorias inéditas del censo de 1931*, eds. Gladys Alonso and Ernesto Chávez Alvarez (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1978), 218.

⁶⁹ H. A. Grant-Watson to The Right Hon. John Simon, FO, 21 February 1934, PRO, FO 277/228.

⁷⁰ See *My Footsteps in Baraguá*, Script and direction by Gloria Rolando (Havana: Mundo Latino, 1996); Interview with Celia L. Campbell, Baraguá, Ciego de Avila, Cuba, 11 February 1999. Entry for 11 February 1999, *Journal Notes* (Cuba).

⁷¹ "Gemini," Interview 64StjMb, recorded in Roehampton, October 1975, St. James, Jamaica, DDC, SALISER, 15.

⁷² "The Philosopher," Interview 47STAMb, recorded in Thatchfield, July 1975, St. Ann, Jamaica, DDC, SALISER, 25.

⁷³ "Table 4, Population by Birthplace, Jamaica, 1921 and 1943," in Kuczynski, *Demographic Survey of the British Colonial Empire*, 235.

⁷⁴ "Table 4, Population by Birthplace, Barbados, 1921 and 1946," in Kuczynski, *Demographic Survey of the British Colonial Empire*, 79.

⁷⁵ See "Table 6: Population by Birthplace, Grenada, 1921 and 1946," and "Table 13: Population by Birthplace, St. Lucia, 1921 and 1946," in Kuczynski, *Demographic Survey of the British Colonial Empire*, 398, 416.

⁷⁶ See the registers of repatriation of labourers of the Chaparra Sugar Company (subsidiary of the Cuban-American Sugar Company) for the months of August, September and October 1924 at ANC, Fondo 302-Secretaria de Agricultura, Industria y Comercio, Leg. 4, exp. 45. Some of the names appear to have been repeated along the lists, but that might have been done as a strategy of the company to certify that they were repatriating the exact amount of immigrants that they brought into the country. Through this practice, they were in a good position to ask permission for further importation of labour. Also, the company would get back the whole amount of money deposited with the government as guarantee for bringing immigrant labour in the country. Virtually all of the immigrants repatriated seem to have been males, but still, there are a number of women in the lists, some of them with their sons and daughters, or listed together with their husband or partner. While it may have happened that women arrived to the Cuban-American Sugar Company region in some of the years for which I do not have data available, another possibility is that the women might have come from other sugar mills or plantations in Cuba. Some British West

Indian immigrants moved from plantation to plantation looking for better salaries or benefits

⁷⁷ See *The British West Indian Progressive Association of Central Delicias, Municipio Puerto Padre* (Puerto Padre: Imprenta Pimentel, 1943) and *Constitution and Laws of the British West Indian Progressive Association of Central Chaparra, Pueblo Viejo, Oriente* (n.p.: Imprenta Lanuza, 1943?).

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⁷⁸ For a literary approach to the presence of the West Indians in Central Delicias in Puerto Padre, see Pablo Armando Fernández, "De bateyes," in *De memorias y anhelos* (Havana: Ediciones Unión, 1998), 11-43.

CHAPTER IV

THE *CHAMBELONA* AND THE DANCE OF THE MILLIONS

In the late 1910s the Cuban sugar economy was expanding dramatically in what came to be known as the *Danza de los Millones* (Dance of the Millions). But despite the boom in the sugar economy, by 1917 Cuba was experiencing turbulent times. The Presidential re-election of Conservative Mario García Menocal, the allegations of electoral fraud, and the Liberal Party revolt in spring 1917, put the issue of race again onto the Cuban political scene. With black Cubans at the centre of political and labour debates, the mass arrival of thousands of black migrants was not exactly a contribution to socio-political stability. Racial tensions, undesirable migration, the political situation, and the boom of the sugar industry (and its related politics) were issues that came to a head in 1917 in and around a single event. In this chapter I examine how the Liberal revolt (known as the *Chambelona*) was framed within the black fear ideology that had persisted in Cuban society. The interplay of domestic racial politics and the racialisation of the migrant outsider had as its consequence the killing of British Caribbean workers in the Jobabo and Elia Sugar Mills. I look at this event, its prologue, and its long aftermath, and explore how an otherwise 'normal' incident within a larger political revolt turned into a major diplomatic affair between the British and Cuban governments, bringing together issues of the political economy of the war years, the international sugar market, and national labour politics.

The Road to 'La Chambelona'

In 1916, the then Cuban President, Conservative Mario García Menocal decided to run for a second term in office. At the centre of García Menocal's political strategy was the issue of race and a propaganda campaign intended to attract black voters –typically affiliated to the Liberal Party- over to the Conservatives. The race issue was prominent in political debates in newspaper articles and cartoons as well as in political manifestos. There were constant references to the 1912 massacre of blacks during the revolt of the PIC. Anticipating a defeat, García Menocal and his political machinery turned to illegal practices and outright bribery to win the 1916 elections.¹

The controversial and fraudulent triumph of the Conservatives was not overlooked. After negotiations that included the U.S. mediation, partial elections were arranged for February 1917 to clarify the results in the provinces of Santa Clara and Oriente. However, it seemed unlikely that the results of the new partial elections would change the outcome of

the previous fraudulent electoral process. Against this scenario, the Liberal Party, headed by former President José Miguel Gómez decided to launch an armed revolt against the government hoping that –as in the revolt of 1906- the U.S. would intervene and put the Liberals in office again. This time, however, the political and international context was a completely different one. The United States did not intervene. Their growing economic interests in Cuba were better off under the Conservative government that, unlike the government of President Estrada Palma in 1906, gave the assurance (at least in rhetoric) of having the revolt under control.² Nonetheless, the U.S. did enforce control in the diplomatic sphere and also deployed military troops in the provinces of Camagüey and Oriente. Officially for the U.S., the presence of the troops was not to be understood as another intervention, but as allied support during the ongoing war conflict through the protection of sugar production, and later as part of training exercises. In this context, the race ‘problem’ and the migration ‘problem’ converged providing explanations for the ongoing situation.

Black migrant workers had been arriving in Cuba in increasing numbers after 1912 to work in the sugar industry; and it was precisely the sugar industry that had to be protected from the revolt. The social environment in which the migrants came was one of open hostility. Since 1912, the Cuban press was giving increasing coverage to the arrival of, and the concerns and criticism about, the black migrants. These concerns were there before, but after the “living example” of 1912, the preoccupations were not of an imaginary significance. In February 1913, the Acting Chief of the Rural Guard wrote to the Cuban Under Secretary of Government regarding the “introduction of individuals of the coloured race from Haiti and Jamaica,” and suggested the measures to prevent this type of immigration. The government official added:

... the experience shows us that once established in this Republic, [the Jamaican and Haitian immigrants] turn out to be a pernicious element that always attempts to damage, with perverse ends, the cordial relations existing among the ethnic components of this society.³

Intellectual commentators at the time had also established the link between the political disturbances –such as the 1912 revolt- and foreign influences or black Antillean migrants. In the midst of the PIC revolt itself, Fernando Ortiz spoke about the black revolts in Cuban history and warned about the racism coming to Cuba from “foreign predications”.⁴ In 1913, when criticising the government’s authorisation for the recruitment of black Caribbean labourers for the sugar industry, Carlos de Velasco also linked the black

migrants with the Cuban revolts. He warned of the “social dangers” of the Antillean migration saying that: “Some of these elements, which not so long ago disturbed the country with an armed uprising [...], are now agitated again and it is said that they are even conspiring...”⁵

In October 1914, the national government wrote to the local administrators of the province of Oriente worried about the arrival in Cuba from Curaçao of the Haitian General Edmond Defly, who was allegedly a “disturbing element” of a “rebellious” character. The Cuban Under Secretary of Government speculated in his letter:

Now [Edmond Defly] leaves Curazao [*sic*] to proceed to Santiago de Cuba, for what? [T]o conspire there with his followers... to look for Cuban adherents to help him in his job of disorder and demoralisation, offering in exchange his advice, his moral and material support for the revenge against the whites and [the] Constitution of a black Republic in Oriente. [...] [F]or this reason that I conclude my cable with the words ‘IT IS CONVENIENT TO HAVE A LOT OF VIGILANCE’.”⁶

General Defly was under government surveillance during his stay in Santiago de Cuba, from where, adding to the Cuban fears, he decided to travel to Jamaica in the Dominican vessel *Viuda Alegre*. The authorities speculated again about his intentions, and made sure they had complete information about his journey.

The port police have been warned and vigilance is maintained as to whether he [Defly] is smuggling arms... There is a list of the passengers on board the *Viuda Alegre* vessel, Captain Marcelino Sosa. The great majority of them were Jamaicans (English), 2 female, 3 Haitians, one American.⁷

Apparently, the Cuban government had associated General Defly with Eugenio Lacoste, a surviving member of the PIC, who, according to newspaper rumours, was planning an uprising for 10 October 1915. But after all the concerns and rumours, Lacoste died on 2 October,⁸ and the fate of the feared General Defly and his other Caribbean colleagues was unknown.

In 1915, the complaints about the immigration of Jamaicans and Haitians continued in the national and regional press, labelling them as “vagabonds”, “adventurers”, of “bad habits” and “different manners,” and with a tendency for a “delinquent life”.⁹ The presence of the black migrants, both Haitians and British Antilleans, in the eastern part of the island after 1912 contributed to a revival of the racial fears of the white Cuban elites.¹⁰ After the fraudulent elections of 1916, Luis Marino Pérez wrote that the Jamaican blacks “do not contribute to our society with any civilising impulse, have nothing to teach us [and]

only bring us racism, which is incompatible with our social harmony.”¹¹ Other newspaper articles paid attention to the number of Jamaicans arriving in the country and to the different diseases they allegedly brought to Cuba.¹²

While the debates on the social and racial undesirability of the black migrants were taking place, the issue of race with regard to the Cuban blacks was equally fuelled. The Conservatives were playing the race card in the electoral processes of 1916 and 1917, trying to manipulate the black voters. Through *La Política Cómica*, an illustrated weekly newspaper, the pro-Conservative sectors developed an intense campaign against José Miguel Gómez (nicknamed *Tiburón* [Shark]) recalling the massacre of 1912 under his presidency. A cartoon showed the ghosts of PIC leaders Evaristo Estenoz and Pedro Ivonet saying to Gómez: “Do not ask for the vote of the black, José Miguel, for he still shakes thinking of what you did to him.”¹³ Numerous cartoons and articles appeared in *La Política Cómica* in October and November 1916, during the weeks preceding Election Day. The drawings portrayed black ghosts in the nightmares of José Miguel Gómez and blacks mourning at the graves of Estenoz and Ivonet, with Gómez hidden behind the tombstone with a cutlass covered in blood.¹⁴ The image of Gómez and his cutlass was repeated in other cartoons, as well as in written headline references to the “slashes by José Miguel” that made a direct connection between him and the killings.¹⁵ Another cartoon portrayed a mountain-shaped pile of human skulls in a large burial ground, resembling the Turquino Peak, a mountain in Oriente province –the region where the 1912 revolt was concentrated.¹⁶ (For some examples of the cartoons and the portrayal of the *Chambelona* as black in the *Política Cómica* see appendix I)

While some cartoons were reminders of the slaughter of Cuban blacks, others made more direct references to the ongoing electoral process. One cartoon showed four blacks going to the ballot boxes with blackballs for José Miguel Gómez, himself hiding behind the boxes with his cutlass.¹⁷ The success of the campaign in the *Política Cómica* was dramatic, and they reproduced articles from other newspapers reacting to it. One of the comments was from a person identified as black who originally wrote in *El Día* newspaper. The article began saying “Blacks of Oriente! Read What is told by One of Yours”. In clear awareness of the links between blacks and Liberal leadership, the article noted:

What is being published in LA POLITICA COMICA, is true. The reports on the unforgettable events of Oriente are not lies... It is not that we want to deny the blacks their vote for Campos Marquetti [a renowned coloured politician] and others who deserve it within the Liberal Party; what we do not want is for

them to raise to the highest authority of our Republic the cynical men who proposed to send us directly to the grave to satisfy their desires. Brothers of the coloured race: do not make it possible for harsh events such as those of the year 1912, to take place again in our beloved Cuba.¹⁸

In the same issue, the same author wrote to “his race” about the fate of Pedro Ivonet and made an appeal to the people not to choose the Liberal candidates and to re-elect President García Menocal: “that distinguished General, virtue of the Cuban people, patriot and veteran.”¹⁹ Other cartoons used the images of Afro-Cuban leader Estenoz and independence martyr Antonio Maceo as supporters of García Menocal.²⁰

The propaganda of the *Política Cómica* impacted on Cuban society during the months of October and November 1916 and was praised for having had an “immense success” all around the island. Each issue immediately sold out, and people in “Güines, Santiago de Cuba, Bayamo, Jamaica,²¹ Niquero, Puerto Padre, and Morón had requested thousands of copies” that the publisher was not able to supply. In Jovellanos, people asked for larger versions of the cartoons to be displayed on walls, and in Oriente, a special edition was requested to be distributed in the region where the “bloody racist epic” took place.²² Other publications in the month of October joined the campaign against José Miguel Gómez, reminding their readers of the events of 1912. A second edition of *El General Gomez y la sedición de mayo*, by Ramón Vasconcelos, was published that month, criticising Gómez for the massacre of the insurgent blacks, an uprising that had been allegedly organised by Gómez himself for the purpose of re-election. Vasconcelos recognised the importance of the blacks as an electoral force because they were “passionate, and get excited easily”. While noting that “seventy five per cent of the energies of the Liberal Party was because of its coloured affiliates,” it also pointed out that those figures had decreased due to the marginalisation of the people of colour within the Party.²³ The political climate was tense indeed, and the blacks were at the centre of that tension.

Since the summer of 1916, the writings in *Labor Nueva* had tried to argue against any “race problem” in Cuba, saying that “whites and blacks were united by strong blood bonds” that secured “perpetual brotherhood”.²⁴ Another article in the same periodical mentioned the affection and respect that the whites had for the black race in Cuba and contrasted the racial situation of the United States with the “beautiful and democratic Republic of Cuba”. Rather naively, the author claimed that:

... the individuals of both races are intimately related: live like families, and with others as if they were alike; there seldom exists any preoccupation for the

colour, and none for the nationality, nor for the positions enjoyed by virtue of material wealth.²⁵

The harmonious tone of *Labor Nueva* was reaffirmed in reaction to October's political propaganda. In his article of 22 October 1916, black commentator Vicente Silveira manifested his concern of the race issue being set in motion in the country's political debates –a reference to *La Política Cómica*. According to Silveira, the propaganda that recalled the events of 1912 was being pursued with “the most depraved malice” and that for “patriotism and even for humanity, we must forget it”. He said that the coloured population “was fully conscious of its rights and of its situation, within the national community” and added that:

The existing parties in Cuba are Cuban parties and we black citizens, are as good as the whites: therefore, forgetting the past mistakes of some individuals of both races [...] we should stay unchanged along with the banner to which we are affiliated... in the end, victory in the elections will not be of whites or blacks, but of Liberals or Conservatives.²⁶

Silveira was worried about the Conservatives playing the race card, but it seems he was also clear that the sort of propaganda that was being employed would have an effect beyond electoral politics. As will be shown, his concerns would become a reality in the context of the Liberal uprising that came to be known as the *Chambelona*.²⁷

When the *Chambelona* exploded in February 1917, two main concerns were catapulted into the Cuban social arena: the black Cuban and the black immigrant. At the moment of the revolt, the already acknowledged relationship between the black masses and the Liberal Party was clearly in the minds of the Cuban people. Also, black outsiders (British Antilleans and Haitians), besides being labelled as carriers of disease, had been associated with, and made responsible for, any revolt or disorder taking place in Cuba. From the Aponte and Escalera conspiracies in the nineteenth century to the Spanish colonial portrayal of the struggle for independence and the uprising of the PIC, all these conflicts were perceived as being caused –as Ortiz has noted- by foreign influences.²⁸ The *Chambelona* was no exception, and because it was a Liberal revolt, it was seen as a black revolt, and, therefore, as one that was influenced from outside Cuba.

The 1917 partial elections were arranged for 14 February in Santa Clara and 20 February in Oriente, but even before then the government had already begun to repress Liberal voters.²⁹ Without any other recourse to overcome the position of power of the Conservative government and to avoid electoral fraud, the Liberal revolt was scheduled for the days prior to the date for the elections. On 11 February, some rebel leaders signed a

manifesto to “the people of Cuba” condemning the government for its failure to listen to the country’s claims and arguing that taking up arms was the only solution to defend the rights of the people.³⁰ Between 12 and 17 February, the troops of General Gómez are said to have occupied Majagua and Jatibonico in Central Cuba.³¹ On 12 February the whole of Camagüey province was in revolt and without communication with Havana,³² and by 14 February it “had joined Oriente under Liberal authority”.³³

The larger plans of the insurgents to take Havana and its main military posts (Camp Columbia and La Cabaña) failed when the government forces destroyed the railroad bridge that would lead most of the rebels to the capital city. This provided the opportunity for the government to develop a plan of action against the revolt.³⁴ For the many Liberals who had not yet joined the revolt, the failure in the western provinces created more ambivalence. Moreover, when on 7 March government troops in Las Villas defeated the Liberal soldiers under the leadership of Gómez himself, the hopes of any real political success vanished. Despite the imprisonment of the most renowned Liberal leaders, in the eastern provinces the uprising took on a life of its own; it became an outlet for the grievances of socially and economically marginalized peasants. According to Louis A. Pérez Jr., the “collapse of central insurgent authority had decentralized the leadership of the armed struggle and transformed a national movement into a protest largely regional and local in nature.”³⁵

While on 8 March President García Menocal had proclaimed that the revolt was a definite failure,³⁶ long after that date insurgent activities continued to take place and, “throughout the spring, Afro-Cubans in increasing numbers joined the partisan bands operating in the east.”³⁷ The change in the nature of the revolt and the loss of whatever political legitimacy it had (with the arrest of the leaders), brought to the surface (or increased) the already existent racialised perceptions that were present in Cuba’s social and political arena. It was precisely at that point, when according to the government the revolt was over, that a specific event raised the issue of the ‘black rebel outsider’ to the headlines again.

A Warm Reception: The 1917 Massacre of West Indians in Jobabo

By mid-March, two women, Mrs. María Pría de Cuenco and Mrs. Hall, the wives of a Spanish retailer and a sugar manager respectively, had told their stories about the revolt in the town of Jobabo to *El Camagüeyano* newspaper. They spoke about the different rebel troops that arrived in the town and emphasised how the situation became worse as the days went by. For them, it was with the arrival of the rebel leaders Mariano Caballero Morejón

and Fernando Fernández that the robbery, threats and banditry began. Mrs. Hall in particular noted:

The Liberals in arms were not the only ones doing the ravaging. The black Jamaicans like hordes of savages, assaulted the women, with knives in their hands and took the jewels and money they had, they stole the silverware and the precious crockery... In carrying out these thefts and outrages, the Jamaicans were helped out by some Spaniards working in the *central*...³⁸

Mrs. Hall condemned the actions of Caballero and Fernández, and added that all “the evil on the earth has concentrated, unfortunately, on that piece of Cuban land. If the constituted government surrounds Jobabo and burns it, it can be asserted that they have burnt the scum of Cuba! That community have lost their heads; all are equal; all are bad... Jobabo! I would like that name to disappear from the world.”³⁹

The article in *El Camagüeyano* brought attention to the violent qualities of the revolt and to those performing the actions: Caballero, Fernández, the Jamaicans, and some Spaniards. The article’s impact was by no means limited, as it was reprinted all around the island with sensationalist titles. The headlines speak for themselves: “Horrible Example of the Ferocity and Savagery of the Rebels at Jobabo,” *La Discusión* (25 March); “The Tale of the Atrocities by the Insurgents at Jobabo is a Cause of Indignation,” *La Lucha* (26 March); “The Horrible Events in Jobabo” *El Pueblo* (3 April); and “The Ferocity and Savagery of the Rebels Took Place Horribly in Jobabo,” *El Pueblo* (4 April). The events narrated and the language used framed the events with the rhetoric and imagery of the black fear. Moreover, the available files of those who surrendered (*presentados*) to the government in the summer of 1917 indicate that the rebels under Mariano Caballero and Fernando Fernández were predominantly blacks or mulattoes.⁴⁰ With these facts, and against the social and historical backdrop to the revolt, I would suggest that by late March three things might have been persistent rumours in the provinces of Oriente and Camagüey: first, that the political revolt had turned into acts of banditry and savagery; second, that most of the rebels, especially those under Caballero and Fernández who seized Jobabo, were either black or mulatto; and finally, that the Jamaicans involved themselves in the revolt with acts of violence and aggression. It was in this context that government troops entered the region of the Cuban Company’s Jobabo Sugar Mill, perhaps with a profile of the typical rebel, its social behaviour and its racial and ethnic features.

On 16 March, George H. Whigham, President of the Cuba Company, wrote directly to President García Menocal asking for governmental protection at the Jobabo

Sugar Mill.⁴¹ Another communication followed on 26 March, where Whigham requested for protection to the President of the Republic.

SITUATION IN JOBABO[.] LATEST REPORT EXTREMELY GRAVE[.] MANY COMPANY[']S BUILDING DESTROYED[.] SAFE DINAMITED AND LOOTED AND RECORDS BURNED[.] MUCH DAMAGE BATEY. UNLESS IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE PROTECTION FEAR TOTAL DESTRUCTION MILL PROPERTIES.⁴²

García Menocal replied saying that he understood that the troops had been sent to Elia and Jobabo on 10 March but they had remained in Elia at the request of John Bullard, the administrator of the Jobabo Sugar Mill. The reports received by García Menocal indicate that, in order to avoid further damages in Jobabo, Bullard agreed with the rebels to go to Francisco Sugar Mill, where U.S. Marines were stationed to ask for their intervention in Cuba.⁴³ For Whigham there had been a misunderstanding; although the rebels did request Jobabo's administrator to ask for U.S. intervention, Bullard never asked the Marines to take that action. Whigham therefore proceeded to assert to García Menocal the need for protection: "I am confident you will surely do your best to give us every protection before more serious damage occurs."⁴⁴

On 27 March, the same day that Whigham and the Cuban President exchanged communications, a body of government troops led by Captain Melchor Batista entered Jobabo and, according to many sources, restored order in the town.⁴⁵ However, about a week after Batista's troops appeared to have controlled the situation in Elia and Jobabo, the troops of Captain Julio Cadenas –a personal acquaintance of García Menocal– and Miguel Cutillas were also on their way to the Jobabo area to fight against the revolt and protect the properties of the Cuba Company. Captain Cadenas, who had interrupted his military training in Fort Riley in the United States,⁴⁶ arrived in the Elia Sugar Mill on 3 April. On their arrival at Elia, a witness said, the troops took some new shirts that were the property of two Jamaicans. The two Jamaicans asked to have the shirts back.

Captain Cadena [*sic*] refused, and the men were ordered to be flogged, and they were flogged with machetes, and sent back to the camp. They then went to breakfast, and the Jamaicans talk about the matter among themselves, but there was a spy present, and he reported the conversation of the Jamaicans. The Captain ordered two guards to take the two men, and they were led out and shot.⁴⁷

The day before these two murders at Elia, another Jamaican, Samuel A. Campbell, had been attacked by Government troops between Berocal and Jobabo. He later testified that:

They [the troops] stripped me of my pants[,] which contained \$150.00 in the waistband, and they took the money away from me. I have not heard that any Jamaicans were with the rebels, nor that any of them were asked to fight for them.⁴⁸

After his experience Campbell went to Jobabo without knowing that he would witness worse atrocities than those he had suffered.

On 4 April, the troops under the command of Captains Cadenas and Cutillas arrived at Jobabo. Albert Britton, a Jamaican living in Jobabo, testified about the events:

It was on the 4th of April when the next troop [*sic*] came into Jobabo and started to rob us and kill us. [T]he first occurrence [*sic*] took place at 12.30 on the 4th night when they killed three of my countrymen and one Nassau [Bahamas] man. I do not know one of the Jamaicans, but two I know –Felix Henry, a tailor, and Theophilus Seymour. I do not know the Nassau man's name. On the 5th of April they robbed all the Jamaicans of their clothes and money.

He went on:

I was p[ee]ping out of my door when I saw a mule coming up the street with a machine gun on its back, and a gang of men behind. When they came to my door I saw six Jamaicans, but not all the names. One of the men was Henry Taylor, and one Co[w]jer. I do not know his Christian name. I do not know the names of the others. After they passed I ran to the back of my kitchen and I heard the gun start to shoot. When I saw them passing I heard them say that they would kill them all. After I could get out I went and looked at them and saw them dead.

Britton continued his story noting that the military troops “also took a man out of the house [near] to mine and killed him but I could not reach the spot before they buried him. Another man got shot too.”⁴⁹ Of the last two murders mentioned by Britton it is possible that one was that of “a man named ‘Charlie[,] a Jamaican” who was ordered “to go and get feed [*sic*] for their horses. He came without his boots, and asked permissi[on] to go back and put them on, and he was instantly shot.”⁵⁰ Joseph Barrett, who was at one point shot by the government troops but “was not struck by a bullet”, testified that he was robbed, and he was also ordered to get food for the horses. But before leaving the house to do the job, the troops

... called another Jamaican from the building at the side of mine, and the boy got frightened and was going away, but they call him back and then they shot him on the spot. I heard his name was ‘Gerat’. I saw him shot and a few minutes afterwards the soldiers compelled us to carry his body to the

guardarays [*sic*]. I heard other Jamaicans were killed but I do not know them, nor do I know their names. I do not know why the boy was shot.⁵¹

“Charlie” and “Gerat” seemed to have been the same person, since another witness mentioned a Charlie Gerard, who was killed by the guards.⁵² This “Charlie”, according to one of the witnesses, was first shot by one of the soldiers in the neck “and he fell down struggling and other one came up and shot him in the heart”.⁵³ While those murders were taking place at the mill on 5 April, James Justin Anderson was attacked in the road between Berocal and Jobabo, the same area where Samuel A. Campbell has been hurt on the 2 April. Anderson was not only robbed of his property, but also shot in the arm by government troops.

Aaron McDormott mentioned that originally nine British Antilleans were lined up to be machine-gunned in the morning of 5 April, but “[o]ne was saved through his wife and the next was by another women, and they turn back the third one.” The remaining six, McDormott added:

... were placed before the machine gun and were shot dead. There were some other men that were shot but I haven[']t seen them for during that time I had to be hiding underneath the house.

The man in charge of the machine gun, who had threatened to kill McDormott, forced him to bury the dead.⁵⁴ Rosamond Constance Reid, who heard the shotguns, testified hearing “the soldiers say ‘all Jamaicans’” while the killings were taking place.⁵⁵ Arthur R. Hall, a British subject and employee of the Jobabo Sugar Mill, was left in charge when John Bullard left. A witness of the events, Hall said that when the machine gun killings took place, one of the military officials “turned to me and asked me if I did not think these people needed a lesson.”⁵⁶

Those who were not killed or wounded in Jobabo, were ill-treated, robbed or forced to bury their own kin. Henry Samuels testified that when he woke up on the morning of 5 April:

I was standing at my door and three soldiers came up to me in rage and said take off that kahki [*sic*] pants or we will blow your brains. I turned into my room and they rushed in on me as if to kill me, but as my wife called for mercy one of them said don[']t kill him, as his family is here. So they took my pants from me, and cut it in pieces and throw it away.

Later Samuels was forced to bury those who had been killed the day before. He also heard of another four Jamaicans who had been killed on the Santa Lucia estate, and “quite a few”

others that the troops “meet travelling on the roads they killed”.⁵⁷ At the time of his declaration on 18 April, Samuel A. Campbell mentioned that there “are some Jamaicans who are still working for the Government cutting cane leaves to feed the horses. If they do not work willingly they are lashed with machetes by the Government troops.”⁵⁸ Most of the British Antilleans who made affidavits to the British Legation also mentioned the goods that were taken by the government: money, clothes, suits and dresses, a bible, tables, chairs and many other items.⁵⁹

All told, 14 appear to have been killed, mostly Jamaicans, though one at least was from the Bahamas. Other sources have numbered the casualties at twenty,⁶⁰ thirty-six,⁶¹ and Pérez Jr. has sustained that “some fifty persons were summarily executed by an army patrol on the property of the Elia and Jobabo estates.”⁶² British sugar expert, Noël Deerr, at the time House Superintendent at Jobabo, declared:

I saw the rebel troops personally and never saw any Jamaican with them. I saw the stores of the town of Jobabo being sacked, and did not see any Jamaican present when this was going on. To the best of my knowledge and belief all the Jamaicans living at Jobabo behaved as law[-]abiding individuals during the period that the alzados were in possession of Jobabo.⁶³

When mentioning the persons murdered by the government, Theophilus Harris said: “I do not know that they had done anything wrong.” Aaron McDormott did not find “any reason for the shooting” and said that “the rebels did not compel us to fight for them,” agreeing with Albert Britton’s declaration referred to earlier. Most of the other witnesses declared in a similar fashion.⁶⁴ The British Caribbean workers were not only traumatised by what happened, but also bewildered by how the events unfolded. At the beginning some of them were glad to see the government troops because they had been forced to work for the insurgents and they were “always ill[-]treated by the rebels,” but as it turned out, the government troops “were worst than the rebels.”⁶⁵ When referring to the arrival of the first troops that arrived to Jobabo, those of Captain Batista, the migrants testified that they “did not ill[-]treat the people. They took charge of the whole place, and the rebels had already gone. The rebels only asked us to cut food for their horses. No Jamaican had fought for the rebels, and the rebels did not ask them to fight for them.”⁶⁶ Rosamond Costance Reid made clear that it “was not the first body of Government troops who committed the outrages, but the second group who came on the 4th April. The first troop behaved well and quite differently.”⁶⁷ Many of the witnesses emphasised in their declarations the fact that it was the second body of troops who did the killings, and the role of Captain Julio Cadenas in the deed. If the rebels were already out of Jobabo, and if the Jamaicans were

not involved with the insurgents, the question is why, with what rationale, and under which circumstances, did Cadenas's troops decide to perform such a massacre of black migrants?

When the rebels were in control of Jobabo, "they opened the stores and gave away the things to both Jamaican and native women who needed them." This distribution was done exclusively by the rebels who "allow no men to go there and taking [*sic*] anything."⁶⁸ Arthur Hall, acting manager of Jobabo, mentioned that some stolen clothes were found outside a window when the government troops arrived, but no one in the town mentioned who was guilty. Hall added in his declaration that:

When the rebels were looting the stores in the town of Jobabo, some Jamaicans had goods given to them, and the finding of these goods in their possession may have led to their having been accused of looting, but I have never heard of a single case of a British subject joining the rebels.⁶⁹

Other accounts have mentioned that Cadenas, serving as accomplice to some merchants of the sugar *central*, carried out the murders, and that at the moment of killing the migrants, he referred to them disparagingly as a "pile of blacks". It has been suggested that some merchants and *colonos* (small farmers) took the opportunity of the revolt and the arrival of Captain Cadenas to take the money that the workers had saved for their remittances; a plan that ended in the mass murder of some fifteen to twenty of them.⁷⁰ Even today, elders who were either children at the time or later heard the stories of what happened seem to prefer to avoid the topic by saying that the *Chambelona* was "bad" or "terrible", that the Jamaicans were killed "for pleasure", for "sport", and that that was the day when Captain Cadenas "photographed the Jamaicans" in *El Jigüe*. Oral tradition refers to the killings as the "event of the photographic camera" since it is said that before the murders, Captain Cadenas had covered the machine gun with a black blanket and said to the Jamaicans that they were going to be "photographed".⁷¹

Racial Conflict and the Liberal Revolt

The killings in Jobabo and Elia were not isolated incidents. During the *Chambelona* it was said that other Jamaicans were killed in Santa Lucia, north of Camagüey. In the Baraguá Sugar Mill, in Ciego de Avila, a place that received many British Caribbean migrants, several people were buried in the same place where they died,⁷² although there is no information as to their nationality. U.S. Marines who were protecting the foreign economic interests in Cuba killed about twenty-five insurgents.⁷³ It is clear that after the

capture of the political leaders of the revolt, the government decided to implement repressive measures to end the uprising.

Without prominent family links, important political associations, and national stature, minor insurgent commanders in the field after mid-March could expect to receive from the Conservatives only the severest penalties. Their fate at government hands was of little consequence to the party: since they were politically anonymous and nationally unknown, their condition would not attract national attention or generate public sympathy.⁷⁴

The remaining insurgents in the field, and people such as the black migrants in Jobabo, paid for the problems the revolt caused to the Conservative government at the national and international levels in trying to avoid U.S. intervention. But in their struggle to end the revolt, the government's military forces seem to have had a clear target in mind, and that was a rebellious black insurgent and perhaps, a black foreigner. To put it more specifically in the case of Jobabo, I would suggest that by the time Captains Cadenas and Cutillas arrived there they had in mind an idea of who were the people involved in the revolt, namely the Jamaicans. At a more general level the government troops had one target, and that was 'blackness'.

The Liberal revolt was transformed from a political revolt into a popular uprising. In the process, it also became more inserted into the ideological framework of the 'black fear' that had haunted Cuba for more than a century. Black insurgents appeared again in the political arena, robbing, doing "savageries", turning the country over to anarchy, and assaulting white women, which is a classic threat in Cuba in matters of race relations.⁷⁵ But the fears of the 'black rebel', or indeed of a black revolt existed in Cuba since the very beginnings of the uprising. Racial political propaganda such as that in the *Política Cómica*, combined with the constant references to the dangers of black migration provided an appropriate atmosphere for the consolidation of the black fear. The existence of these racial concerns became evident in the comments of North American observers that, while revealing their own racial perceptions, also illustrate the prevailing feelings at the time. As early as 14 February, the Rear Admiral Reginal Belknap of the U.S. Navy, stationed in eastern Cuba, commented that it was "not the good element, not even the [illegible] middle class that revolts here now, it is the mixed black [breed] easily fomented... and started into disorder."⁷⁶ On 15 February, the U.S. consular authorities feared the arming of black civilians⁷⁷ and on 18 February, the U.S. Naval Forces reported that:

... the principal fear of the inhabitants of the city is that the blacks, who have been armed, will revolt in the event of the trained military being

withdrawn from the city. Santiago was the center of the Negro revolt which was suppressed with great bloodshed in 1912 and it is this question which is causing the greatest alarm.⁷⁸

In March, a manager in Marcane, in the province of Oriente (now Holguín) reported to the U.S. authorities that Negroes were taking horses and other personal property.⁷⁹

The comments of U.S. citizens living in Cuba also illustrate how the Liberal revolt became associated with the 'black fear', and particularly with the 1912 revolt. In April 1917, some North Americans wrote to the Consul with complaints of the treatment received from the rebels under the leadership of General Blas Masó. In their letter, they quote from one of General Masó's aides:

You will notice that we rebels are negroes to a man. You will remember the negro revolution of 1912 when 5,000 negroes were killed in this Province, we remember that, too, and now that we are armed, we shall spread Hell among you all. The death of the 5,000 defenseless negroes of 1912 shall now be avenged in a horrible way, I assure you.⁸⁰

By 3 May, U.S. Consul P. Merrill Griffith wrote to President García Menocal telling him about the activities of the rebels and the possibilities of more disturbances on the day of inauguration of the government, 20 May. He added that the "element composing the insurgents are about 75 per cent negroes who openly declare their desire to avenge the deaths of 1912."⁸¹

To add insult to injury, the newspaper *La Lucha*, which reprinted the article on the rebel atrocities in Jobabo, also published an editorial note specifically commenting on the participation of the Jamaicans in the revolt. They argued that the actions of the black migrants confirmed their predictions:

On more than one occasion, when dealing with the inconveniences for Cuba that brings the increase of Haitian and Jamaican immigration, and taking into account the experiences of the events during the so-called racist rebellion [of 1912], we have pointed out the dangers to the social order brought by fomenting an immigration not desirable at all for a multitude of reasons. The acts of the Jamaicans in Jobabo should serve as a valuable lesson for tomorrow...⁸²

On 4 April, the very day the killings in Jobabo were taking place, a North American businessman wrote to the U.S. consul saying that a Jamaican Negro cast 5 votes on the day of the elections. He added:

You understand that these revolutionists or truthfully speaking Bandits, are composed mostly of Negroes and Mulatto's, some undoubtedly from Santo

Domingo and Haiti, and the white element among them are blacker at heart than the blackest Negro...⁸³

On the second day of killings in Jobabo, 5 April, the editorial of *El Diario de la Marina* condemned Jamaican migration in an article with the title “The Plague of Jamaicans”.⁸⁴ William Gonzales, the U.S. Minister in Havana, reported that in the eastern provinces “numerous leaderless bands mostly negroes [are] operating, robbing country stores and houses”.⁸⁵

Surrenders (*presentaciones*) of insurgents to the *Juzgado de Instrucción* of Camagüey during April, May and June were racially motivated. At the moment of their *presentaciones*, many black and mulatto rebels declared that their surrender was because they heard that the troops of Colonel Eduardo Puyol, a leading official of the government army during the revolt, “were killing the Liberals”. Some of the *presentados* were more specific and declared that Puyol “was killing all the blacks”.⁸⁶ This may have been either because the actual repression of blacks by the government was a truthful reality or because the news of the killings in Jobabo had travelled throughout the region at the same speed that the rumours of black revolt had done before. During the aftermath of the revolt, *La Política Cómica* constantly portrayed the *Chambelona* as black (in fact, as a black woman). It also illustrated the distinctions between those who began the revolt –the leaders- and those who paid for it: José Miguel Gomez and Alfredo Zayas (whites) eating good food and drinking wine in a house and two mulattos eating in a prison.⁸⁷ Further cartoons dealing with the issue of an amnesty for those prisoners involved in the revolt also portrayed those in prison as non-whites, a fact that highlighted the perception that the revolt had been performed by blacks.⁸⁸

In the end, the *Chambelona* was perceived as just another attempt by the blacks (either Cubans or foreigners) to take control of the country, and it was suppressed as such.⁸⁹ Having the 1912 ‘race war’ as a precedent, the Cuban government officials lost no time in their action against the Liberal insurgents. ‘Blackness’ became the target of the government’s repression, because of the relation between the Liberals and the Cuban blacks and because of the ever-existing association of a social revolt with black outsiders from Jamaica and Haiti. Since black outsiders had always been identified as a potential cause of Cuba’s domestic racial conflicts, the British Antilleans were identified as the enemy. By the 1910s, as part of the imagined Cuban national identity, ‘blackness’ had been identified as something alien, but also, as Aviva Chomsky has noted, “as an attribute of West Indians –especially Haitians.”⁹⁰ But ‘blackness’ was also the feature that distinguished

those *in* and *out* of the revolt, and the common factor for both black Cubans and black foreigners. The government's repression followed the 'safest' visible indicator: racial markers.⁹¹ The importance of this visibility has been noted in Bernard F. Robinson's correlation of racial conflicts and wars in the history of the United States:

... skin color readily distinguishes white from black. It enables people to identify themselves with their own side and to impute everything evil ever heard about the other race to any representative of it. This consciousness of kind makes an attack upon one's race and attack upon one's person.⁹²

And indeed, both black Cubans and black immigrants, through the feature they had in common –i.e., skin colour- became targets of the government's military forces. Such 'confusion' becomes evident in the testimony of a migrant who actually left Cuba after six months, precisely because of the *Chambelona*. His account also gives some indication as to how the political discrimination was implemented.

No man, the Cubans. Sometimes some of the Jamaicans them link up with the Cuban – them getting in you know, 'Who you voting for? My fren?' If you nuh tell dem! It was a dangerous thing because perhaps de man who you go tell dem say you deh vote for, a dem same on dem against, you see. But all like me bredder now, dem never attack me, but dey attack me bredder. Me bredder pay. [...] But them never attack me. So now, what really happen now, as de time did come and me bredder wife wasn't feeling bright, say, 'Bwoy, me not leaving you nuh, because see deh a chambilona [*sic*] time and if dem meet you any at all dem would-a tek your life.'⁹³

Again, as in 1912, the blame of internal conflict was located in outside influences. In this particular case the black migrants represented a clear target in a context where repressive action was –as noted by Robinson- "aimed at anyone identified with the opposing racial group."⁹⁴

In the 1910s, and by the time of the Liberal revolt specifically, many of the postulates of the white Cuban's normative order of society were being challenged and race relations were then "out of the limits of the established social patterns" conceived by the dominant group.⁹⁵ The revolt of 1912 was not to be taken for granted as a landmark in that respect, neither was the level of organisation of black Cubans after the revolt overlooked by white elites: i.e., the founding of the Partido de los Amigos del Pueblo in 1915, writings in periodicals such as *La Prensa* and *Labor Nueva*, and the role of black politicians.⁹⁶ The dynamics of social interaction in Cuba had been altered by the demographic dislocation of many Cuban blacks affected by the sugar expansion, and by the mass immigration of blacks from Haiti and the British Caribbean. While the early decades of the twentieth century were

characterised by hostility against blacks, it has been argued that from “1899 to 1930, racial differentials in several key social indicators diminished in Cuba.”⁹⁷ One observer even noted in the late 1910s that the negro was “becoming the real virile element” in Oriente, while the “white is becoming, if he is not already, the degenerate”. He added that:

The fact that the negroes are ambitious and studious, and becoming racially conscious of their strength and therefore, demanding their proportionate share of offices and graft, [may] well alarm the observer.⁹⁸

While it would be inaccurate and simplifying to claim that the Liberal revolt was a race conflict, the fact is that the normative behaviour and the patterns of interaction with regard to race relations were being changed or challenged during the period. When these norms and patterns, as well as the social place of each group –in this case defined by Cuban white elites- are altered, the door is open for racial conflict.⁹⁹ The violent actions of the rebels, the *blacks*, were regarded –and imagined- as the utmost expression and challenge against the norms, and it was then that racial conflict openly emerged targeting those identified as blacks. The government (the dominant group) took action in the form of “legitimated hostilities”, which through military action enforced the norms and the “established order”: that is, white over blacks.¹⁰⁰ In the process, not only Cuban blacks were killed, but the black British subjects in Jobabo. There was one difference. The repression against black Cubans went relatively unnoticed because, as a domestic affair, it was under the complete control and hegemony of the State that enforced ‘order’. The killing of colonial subjects of the British Empire was outside that domain.

Diplomacy, Politics, and Sugar in the Aftermath of the Jobabo Massacre

Between 18 and 30 April 1917, the British Consul General in Havana, Stephen Leech, took the declarations of over fifteen witnesses of the events in Jobabo and Elia. On 15 May, Consul Leech wrote formally to Pablo Desvernine, the Cuban Secretary of State, enclosing affidavits of the witnesses and demanding “an immediate enquiry, and punishment of those responsible for the shooting of the British Subjects, as well as due compensation for their families or relatives”.¹⁰¹ The United States Government –and, therefore, its diplomatic representative in Cuba, William Gonzales- were also informed on the incident by the British Ambassador in Washington DC, Cecil Spring Rice.¹⁰² It was perhaps at that point that the Cuban government and officials first thought about the wider consequences of the repressive actions they were taking against the Liberal revolt. There was no immediate formal response from the Cuban Government at that point. They were

still struggling with the revolt in the eastern provinces and planning the inauguration of the 'new' government scheduled for 20 May. The news of the Jobabo murders, though kept out of the local press, were already known in Jamaica and would probably have had an adverse effect on the migration of labourers to Cuba. But there were other elements that would complicate both the British complaint itself and any possible response from the Cuban government.

While the Jobabo incident put the Cuban and British Governments at odds, other events at the international level located them together or at least on the same side. President García Menocal had declared war on Germany in early April, a decision whereby Cuba became allied to the British in the war effort. On the economic front, Britain had become, after the United States, the leading consumer of Cuban sugar on the international market. Cuba, on the other hand, was dependent on labourers from the British Caribbean colonies for the production of their sugar. But sugar production had been affected also by the damages caused by the revolt in the eastern railway system, as also in the Jobabo Sugar Mill itself, both under the control of the Cuba Company, a North American corporation heavily financed from London by Robert Fleming.¹⁰³ Both British colonial subjects and British commercial interests had been affected by the revolt. The United States were also brought into the controversy: They had supported García Menocal's government and his repressive activities, they had interests in the sugar industry in general –and the Cuba Company in particular– and they were also involved in the war (not to mention their 'responsibilities' under the Platt Amendment). Other personal and political connections of some of the people involved in the forthcoming diplomatic warfare would make the situation more complex.¹⁰⁴

It was a complicated scenario. The British wanted Cuban justice and needed Cuban sugar. The Cubans wanted British workers to produce their sugar, which they knew the British wanted to buy. The Cuba Company wanted Cuban money in compensation for damages to their infrastructure, in order to be able to set the sugar economy in motion. The United States government also wanted the sugar industry running, as well as the political stability they thought García Menocal's administration would provide. And the sugar entrepreneurs, local and foreign, were in desperate need of British Caribbean cane cutters.

The Cuba Company was perhaps the first party to gain something from the whole dilemma. On 21 April 1917 they received an advance of \$1,000,000 for damages to their property during the revolt.¹⁰⁵ By that date, a formal complaint on behalf of the black British

subjects had not even been filed. But it appears that no one within the higher administrative structure of the Cuba Company, nor at the local managerial level, was concerned about what had happened to the migrant workers on their property. Their main interest was in the material damages to the Sugar Mill and to the railway lines. At one stage, George Whigham, the President of the company, seems to have been worried about the security of the workers, but probably only because he did not want to lose his labour force. Paradoxically, he had asked directly to García Menocal for troops with a machine gun to be stationed at the Sugar Mill. But by the time he had expressed his will to have that sort of protection for his workers, no less than fifteen of them had been summarily executed – precisely with a machine gun. Since 24 April, John Bullard, the manager of the Sugar Mill, had communicated with U.S. Minister Gonzales with regard to a claim to the government for damages in the revolt. As is evident from the immediate compensation money advanced by the government, Bullard, and the company he represented, did not have to wait long.

Although Minister Gonzales was in contact with Bullard, he seems to have only heard of the killings from the British Consul Leech, shortly before the formal claim against the Cuban Government was made on 15 May. Nonetheless, and according to his letter of 19 May, he was aware of the damages to the mill and asked the U.S. Department of State if they wanted him to make an official inquiry.¹⁰⁶ Whether Gonzales was asking to inquire into the murders or the damages to the Cuba Company is not explicit, but by May both of them would have been irrelevant. The U.S. Department of State had already received information on the killings through the British Ambassador in Washington, and the Cuban Government had already made steps to pay for the damages of the Cuba Company. No action, however, had been taken with regard to the murders of the British Antilleans, and Consul Leech, who had some seven years of experience in Cuba, already had presumptions about the responses to his complaint.

I have reason to suppose that the Cuban Government may attempt to defend themselves by alleging that the victims had been looting; but even if this were true, which I am not prepared to admit, and which is quite contrary to the statements sworn to at this Legation, the constitutional guarantees had not been suspended and they were entitled to protection and justice therein provided.¹⁰⁷

During the summer, the British authorities in Cuba did not receive any formal response from the Cuban Government to their complaint. In June, when Minister Gonzales reported briefly on the events to the U.S. government he mentioned the British

Government's desire "to make no more of the circumstances than is absolutely necessary" but that the British Minister was already "annoyed by the delay" in a proper response.¹⁰⁸

After verbal communications with both the President and the Secretary of State of Cuba, Consul Leech wrote formally to the Cuban Government in 10 July insisting in his complaint. While he reminded Desvernine about the Jobabo incident, this time Leech added over twenty individual complaints of British subjects who had been shot, robbed, or attacked by Government troops between March and June 1917. He submitted a memorandum with the cases and wrote:

Apart from the injustice which my countrymen have received I think that Your Excellency will agree that the international situation due to the entrance of this country into the European conflict, and the circumstance that Cuba is urgently in need of labour, points to such action being taken without delay as will put an end to the state of affairs which is having the effect of inducing many British Subjects who can do so to return to Jamaica for good, and doubtless on their arrival to discourage other[s] from coming to Cuba.¹⁰⁹

Among the reclamations included in Leech's memorandum were other cases in Jobabo where the government troops had entered the houses of migrants and had beaten and robbed them.¹¹⁰ Other British Antilleans were robbed in several parts of the province of Camagüey; in Cespedes, in Cuatro Caminos, in the Florida and Francisco Sugar Mills and in Morón.¹¹¹ In Cuatro Caminos particularly, on 22 April, there was a raid on a *colonia* (sugar farm) where Government soldiers "fired at some 30 Jamaicans and subsequently robbed them of all their money and clothes".¹¹² It was also reported that in Ciego de Avila, the Government troops arrested several Jamaicans and robbed them. And on 28 June, at the Cupey Mill in the province of Oriente (now Holguín), several Jamaicans were involved in a quarrel with some guards who beat them and jailed them for the whole day until midnight.¹¹³ Anticipating the reply to his letter, Leech had also stated that "these complaints are not without foundation" as "many of them came from residents in different parts of the island and tell the same story".¹¹⁴

By the summer, Leech was not the only one pressuring the Cuban Government. The administration of the Cuba Company were concerned about the next harvest and the total amount for compensation for the damages on their property. They had only received the advance of \$1,000,000, when their claim was for a total of \$7,000,000, including property destroyed and compensation for profits lost because of the revolt.¹¹⁵ There was a real interest in setting the sugar industry in motion for the next harvest, and the railway lines –dominated by the Cuba Company- were a central part of it.¹¹⁶ So important was this

that both the Foreign Office in London and the State Department in Washington were pressing on the particular issue of the Cuba Company's claim.¹¹⁷ From London, Robert Fleming had already pointed out to George H. Whigham that it was of "prime importance in the British interest to get the Railway in good working order in time for next year's crop".¹¹⁸ U.S. Minister Gonzales was handling the claim of the Cuba Company, presumably because the corporation was a North American undertaking –even when Fleming was the leading shareholder in the 1910s. But Consul Leech had written to Gonzales telling him that he was "authorized by the Foreign Office to support any representation" with regard to the Cuba Company's complaint, "in view of the large interests held by British subjects" in the company.¹¹⁹ The British Ambassador in Washington has also written to the U.S. Department of State, in the name of "His Majesty's Government", that some pressure be put to bear in the Cubans with regard to the Cuba Company's claim.¹²⁰

But there was one point where a conflict of interests would arise in the role of the British authorities as advocates for both the Cuba Company and the murdered British subjects. That was the issue of labour. Clearly, to get a prompt response from the Cubans, Leech thought that an appropriate way to strengthen his argument was to use the need for British Caribbean workers in Cuba as bargaining tool. But it was precisely the Cuba Company, which Leech was keen to support, that was amongst those actively seeking for migrant workers. George Whigham had made an extensive trip throughout the island and wrote to Leech in 20 July reporting on the political and labour situation in the country for the forthcoming sugar crop. Whigham was concerned with the fact that Spanish workers had been leaving the island and that

Jamaicans and Haitians were practically driven out of the Island by the treatment they received during the revolution, and it is quite likely that most of them will be afraid to come back.

He added that labour should "be controlled and disciplined and a large importation of foreign labor [must] be arranged immediately". Whigham, of course, mentioned the need of the funds that would pay for the damages of the Cuba Railroad and noted that the rise in value of Cuban raw sugar due to the revolt had already cost the British Royal Sugar Commission more than \$25,000,000.¹²¹ The British needed the sugar, and the sugar producers needed "controlled and disciplined" labour, which for the experts in the plantation trade, meant cheap migrant labour: one of the bargaining weapons in Leech's demands for the killings in Jobabo.

On 8 August, Desvernine wrote formally to Leech acknowledging his memorandum –presumably that of 10 July- and mentioned the war and the need for labour in Cuba as “of sufficient importance for this Government [Cuban] to take adequate steps in order that all cause of complaint shall disappear”.¹²² In August, Leech has also visited his “personal friend”, the Minister of War, José Martí, and discussed with him some of the aspects with regard to the Jamaican labourers and the “unjust campaign against them”.¹²³ Both Leech in Cuba and Spring Rice in Washington DC were trying to use the British Caribbean labour force as an element to pressure their demands, even when Leech already suspected that the Cuban Government was “attempting to trifle with” the British authorities.¹²⁴ In the early days of September, Spring Rice wrote to Robert Lansing, the U.S. Secretary of State, complaining about the lack of attention given to the British complaints on the Jobabo murders. He mentioned that the whole issue was more difficult because Julio Cadenas was “one of the best officers in the Cuban Army, and [was] highly connected”. Spring Rice added:

The matter is aggravated in a purely material manner by the fact that labour is urgently required for the sugar plantations from Jamaica, which is the home of most, if not all, of the murdered British subjects.

The British Ambassador also requested Lansing to instruct the U.S. representative in Havana, William Gonzales, “to give his firm support to Mr. Leech’s action”.¹²⁵ Spring Rice then cabled Leech in Havana telling him that the U.S. Minister would report on the issue and that:

They [the U.S.] are desirous that you should incite British subjects from Jamaica and Barbadoes [*sic*] to go over to labour in the sugar harvest, so I have reinforced my request by pointing out strong effect produced by impunity of these murderers.¹²⁶

Leech, for his part, had consulted the Foreign Office in London about the fact that, before any labour is encouraged to go to Cuba, “His Majesty’s Government should receive full satisfaction for the murder of British subjects in Jobabo”.¹²⁷ Faced with U.S. pressure for the need for migrant labour in Cuba, on 15 September, Cecil Spring Rice wrote a memorandum to the U.S. Department of State stating the British Government’s position:

With regard to the desire expressed by the United States Government that British subjects from Jamaica and the Bahamas should be encouraged to go to Cuba to remedy the shortage of labor needed for the sugar harvest, the British Embassy has the honour to inform the Department of State that His Majesty’s Minister at Havana has proposed and has been authorized by the

Foreign Office to address a note to the Cuban Government stating that before any action is taken to obtain laborers from the British West Indies, His Majesty's Government consider it essential that full and public satisfaction should be afforded for the murder of British Subjects at Jobabo and the adequate assurances should be obtained as to the future treatment of Jamaicans.¹²⁸

But whilst the British Government was making a strong argument with regard to the migration of labour from the British colonies, there was some action on the Cuban side in connection with the issue of labour and the war. On 4 August 1917, the Cuban government had embraced their role as allies in the war effort, and authorised all immigration of cane cutters until two years after the end of the war.¹²⁹ And after the summer, the fears that might have restrained migration from Jamaica and other islands during the Liberal revolt seemed to have vanished. By September, many agencies were actively engaged in the promotion of their shipping services for labourers from Jamaica to Cuba.¹³⁰ At another level, Julio Cadenas's formal appointment as Captain of the Cuban Army –though he had been referred to as a Captain before- came on 9 August even when he had been accused of such a severe crime as the massacre in Jobabo.¹³¹ The Cuban Government, according to the reports submitted to the U.S. Department of State, had said with regard to the Jobabo incident that “the British subjects had been mixed in the revolution”, as Leech had speculated before. Spring Rice clarified to the U.S. authorities that such an assertion was wrong, after which the U.S. Department of State would “speak strongly” to the Cuban Minister in Washington DC.¹³² The United States were seriously concerned with the need for labour for the next harvest, and warned Gonzales in Havana of the British authorities' insistence on “full satisfaction for what they call the murder of these British subjects”. The U.S. Department of State then told Gonzales that

In view of the necessity in Cuba for labor from the British possessions in the Antilles, the Department desires you to state to the Government of Cuba that it sincerely hopes that this matter may be brought to a satisfactory conclusion in the near future.¹³³

Gonzales criticised the procedures followed by the British Consul and mentioned that Leech had been “under great strain for a long time” and “in a very nervous state”. He also said that Leech's outspoken unfavourable opinion of the Cubans and their Government was not “conducive to influence”. Gonzales went further, becoming somehow sceptical on the matter of the “family connection” between García Menocal and Julio Cadenas which, he said, was “construed by the Ambassador” Spring Rice. Based on a personal conversation he had with the President (shortly after García Menocal had met with Leech) Gonzales contested

Spring Rice's interpretation –or construction- arguing that what really happened was that the “President expressed doubt of the accuracy of Mr. Leech's reports, because Cardona [*sic*] was an officer having one of the best records in the Army and [was a] very ‘serious’ –or well-balanced- man”.¹³⁴ Scepticism and distrust existed on the different sides. Later in the process, Leech complained about “some mystery” in the negative replies from the U.S. Minister when confronted with the fact that the U.S. government had instructed Gonzales to provide support for the British demands.¹³⁵

By October, the Cuban Government seems to have taken no definite official action with regard to the Jobabo incident. To an already complex situation, the labour struggles in October and November of 1917 became another reason to press the need for controllable migrant labourers.¹³⁶ There were concerns about the labour situation in the different sugar mills, there was a “fear of strikes”, and the different companies were taking steps to bring migrant labourers.¹³⁷ Despite the fact that the government was concerned about foreign labourers instigating, fomenting and directing the strikes, they remained committed to the need for migrant labour for the sugar season.¹³⁸ On 4 October Leech met with President García Menocal. He reported:

... I impressed on His Excellency the importance of avoiding further delay. I drew his attention to the necessity of British West Indian labour coming here [to Cuba] both for Cuba and the Allies, and told him that until I received full satisfaction, and was assured as to future treatment, I should not encourage this labour to come here, although the United States were anxious that I should do so.¹³⁹

But both of Leech's bargain tools –the labour and the war effort- were not working anymore. Migration of workers from the British colonies was already taking place under a Cuban Presidential Decree, and the war effort, instead of becoming the motive for a prompt action from the Cuban Government to the Jobabo incident, turned out to be their main argument for bringing migrant labour for Cuban sugar production. After all, as noted by Leo J. Meyer: “Sugar, in fact, was Cuba's ‘contribution’ to the cause of the allies.”¹⁴⁰

In November, finally, according to Leech's correspondence to the Foreign Office, orders were issued for the arrest of the persons connected with the murders and the date of a court martial was set for 3 December.¹⁴¹ But Leech's hopes were soon dashed, as the court martial was changed to 10 December and later postponed indefinitely.¹⁴² Even the arrest of Cadenas seems not to have taken place as Leech had received a communication dated 17 November from John Bullard saying that Cadenas had appeared in Jobabo “trying his best to get certificates from residents as to the behaviour and character of the ill-fated Jamaicans”.¹⁴³

But Cadenas was not alone in his attempt to interfere with the outcome of an imminent court martial. On 19 November, a person by the name of Felipe E. Cadenas, a Lieutenant of the Cuban Army, had written to the U.S. Legation in Havana inquiring on the “actions of Jamaicans in Jobabo during the revolution”.¹⁴⁴ Mr. Bernabe Sanchez, the grandfather of Cadenas’s wife, visited Stephen Leech on 24 November to inquire about the possibility that Leech would modify his demands. Leech replied that the demands were not going to be altered, that they were not his, but those of His Majesty’s Government.¹⁴⁵ The postponement of the court martial, allegedly, had been made in order to admit over 100 witnesses.¹⁴⁶ Also, the Minister of War, José Martí, had commissioned a report on the issue whereby an officer was sent to Jobabo to collect the necessary evidence. According to Gonzales’s account of his meeting with Martí, the report was favourable to the accused army officers, and in order to avoid a “whitewash,” Martí ordered a second investigation by a “reliable officer” that took some weeks.¹⁴⁷

With the possible date of the court martial approaching, all types of concerns and argumentations were unfolding among the actors involved. In conversation with Leech, President García Menocal maintained his position that Cadenas was “a man of education” and “incapable of such actions” as the killing of British Antillean workers. He had also pointed out that “Jamaicans had been found amongst the rebel troops of Gustavo Caballero who were defeated north of Camagüey”. Leech replied that it “might or might not have been the case, and if true they had doubtless been compelled to joined Caballero’s band, and in any case it had nothing whatever to do with Jobabo”. Leech had also warned General Martí that at some point the British Parliament would ask what had happened with the case. And even when the court martial had not taken place, Leech had already thought about how to handle the compensation under the Cuban Workmen’s Compensation Act.¹⁴⁸ The British Consul also visited Minister Gonzales to express his “belief that fraudulent evidence would be introduced, or that the court-martial would no[t] render a just verdict”. Against this possibility, in conversation with Gonzales, Leech realised that in the context of the war it was not sensible to break off relations with an ally, but thought the United States should act by virtue of the Platt Amendment that guaranteed security of life and property. Gonzales did not discuss the issue because of the complication that the Jobabo incident took place in the midst of a revolt.¹⁴⁹

The court martial was finally scheduled to start on 7 January 1918. It seems, however, that there was some difficulty in the process of summoning those witnesses who had submitted affidavits at the British Embassy. Leech was particularly concerned about whether

the declaration of Arthur Hall, who was the acting administrator of the Mill at the time of the massacre, was going to be used in the trial. But some of the witnesses –including Hall- were not living in the same places; the subpoena notifications were sent to the former addresses and therefore there was no guarantee of their participation.¹⁵⁰ At this stage in the game, and perhaps frustrated by what he termed “deliberate inaction” in the Office of the Cuban Secretary of State, Leech manifested his position, this time to Rafael Montoro, Secretary to the Presidency:

British Subjects had been murdered in cold blood and without trial or investigation. Even if it were said that they had looted or that they were rebels, neither of which I admitted, there was no excuse for their murder, and someone was responsible, and an unsatisfactory verdict of the Court-martial would not settle the matter.

Again, though probably immaterial by January, Leech stated that he could not encourage British colonial workers to come to Cuba until the Jobabo and Elia question is settled.¹⁵¹

The court martial against Julio Cadenas and Miguel Cutillas finally took place, and it is said that many of the declarations were contradictory. The prosecutor asked for the death penalty for the accused. The defence attorney, who happened to be no less than Ricardo Dolz, the President of the governing Conservative Party, argued that even if the charges were true, Cadenas and Cutillas should not be condemned because they had acted out of “patriotism”. And on 11 February 1918, exactly a year after the beginning of the Liberal revolt, both Julio Cadenas and Miguel Cutillas were declared not guilty and walked free from La Cabaña.¹⁵²

“A travesty of justice” was the way British authorities years later referred to the court martial.¹⁵³ On 14 August 1918, Cadenas was made Chief of the Police in Camagüey and Cutillas was later promoted to Captain in the Cuban Army until his retirement.¹⁵⁴ Whether the alleged ‘high’ and ‘family’ connections of the accused were true or not, their subsequent appointments speak for themselves. Not only that, but the fact that Ricardo Dolz took time from his schedule as Conservative leader to serve in the defence of Cadenas and Cutillas might be considered unusual. Also to be noted is that on 30 December 1918, a military officer by the name of Miguel Cutillas married Margarita M. de las Mercedes García-Menocal Martínez, the daughter of Pablo García Menocal, the President’s brother.¹⁵⁵ Cadenas for his part seems to have remained in Camagüey where he resigned from the police on 8 January 1919. He, however, had to live under the shadow of his past deed, when in 1922 he was involved in a duel with the editor of a newspaper that had published something on the killings at Jobabo.¹⁵⁶ And, if Cadenas felt he owed something to García Menocal, he was sure

to provide his support to him when in 1931, the former President failed in the armed uprising against the regime of Gerardo Machado. Cadenas provided his yacht 'Coral' for the uprising where he joined García Menocal, his former defence attorney, Ricardo Dolz, and others in the movement against Machado.¹⁵⁷

The result of the court martial was a moral defeat for the British authorities, and certainly for Consul Leech. García Menocal, who was ill during the court martial and recovered just after the trial finished, was not able to do anything with the outcome of the decision –or so he said to Leech. The only thing that was left for Leech was to try to obtain some compensation for the families of those affected by the killings. At the same time, the Cuba Company officers were also insisting on their own compensation. In September 1918, the Office of the Secretary of State received a press cutting from *The Economist* –the influential British periodical- from the Cuban Consulate in London with a note saying that the article made reference to the claims against the Government of Cuba during the Liberal revolt. After praising Cuba as “the world’s sugar-bowl” the article remarked on the successes in the Cuban sugar industry. It mentioned that one of the “largest producing companies on the island is British-owned” and that it has filed a claim against the Cuban Government. While the largest producing companies were not British owned, *The Economist* may have been referring to the interests of Robert Fleming in the Cuba Company. The article referred to other companies that had claims, but ended pointing out that the sugar industry’s “prospects this year are so encouraging that there is little desire to press any immediate action”.¹⁵⁸ It would be perhaps too much speculation to say that the very last sentence of the article was the reason why a copy of it was sent to Havana. But the truth is that the Cuban Government really took its time to respond to any claim from the Cuba Company or that on behalf of the families of the black British subjects killed.

The U.S. Government, however, did not want to take any further risks in terms of guaranteeing a stable labour force for the growing sugar production of the *Danza de los Millones* and for the war economy. As reflected in the internal correspondence of the Cuban Government officials, on 28 February 1919 the American Legation suggested that an indemnity should be offered to the families of those who died in Jobabo. To this note the Cuban Government replied that by virtue of the fact that England and Cuba were united in war and that Jamaican labourers were needed, the Cuban Government could agree to make a rational indemnification. That indemnification could be made under the scheme for accidents in the workplace, but that it should be a credit not to exceed the amount of \$100,000 for the necessary payments, as it was assumed that the amount was going to be less.¹⁵⁹ Later, in

September 1919, the British decided to push forward their claim once again. By then they had decided to ignore any discussion of the court martial, at which they considered a “gross miscarriage of justice had clearly occurred”. Besides, “it was impossible to go behind that decision by punishing the officers” as one of them had “already resigned from the army” -it seems that, after all, there was a logic behind Cadenas’s resignation in 1917. But the British maintained that the compensation to the families of the dead men should be made. Finally, on 26 February 1920 the Cuban Government notified the British that it had been decided that compensation was going to be provided under the Cuban Workmen’s Compensation Law of 1916. Under that scheme, a payment of \$3,285 was to be provided for each of the murdered men. The claim, that had only included 13 persons, was reduced to eleven cases because there was doubt regarding the identification of two men. In 6 May 1920, the President addressed the Cuban Congress asking for a credit of \$100,000 –as suggested by his Cabinet members- for the indemnification of the Jamaicans, but no action was taken because of lack of quorum.¹⁶⁰ And it was not until 12 May 1921, after García Menocal had left Presidential Office, that a disbursement of exactly \$36,135 was announced in the *Gaceta Oficial*, not explicitly for \$3,285 for each of the victims of the Jobabo massacre, but for unexpected expenses of the Office of the Secretary of State.¹⁶¹ And that same day General Carlos García Velez (a former Cuban Consul in London during the war and personal friend of García Menocal) met with Godfrey Haggard, the then British Consul and Chargé d’ Affaires in Havana, and handed him a cheque from the Cuban National Treasury for \$36,135. Drafts for the corresponding amounts were then forwarded to the Governors of Jamaica and the Bahamas, the islands of origin of the victims in the killings.¹⁶²

Coda: Silences, ‘Conspiracies’, and the Legacy of Jobabo

That the Cuban government did not want to take responsibility for what happened in Jobabo is quite clear, as is the fact that their role as sugar producers and allies in the war effort was an element in their favour –rather than a bargaining tool for the British authorities. Whether there was an orchestrated plan to shirk their responsibility and protect those being accused of the killings is a matter for speculation. That the war conflict and the economics behind the Jobabo affair –namely sugar production and the need for British Caribbean workers- were more important than the damage done to those murdered and the families is also evident. In the whole process there were –and still are- silences to be explored. On several occasions, the British officials condemned the fact that the whole Jobabo affair was kept out of the local press. The *Heraldo de Cuba*, which campaigned

against García Menocal, was closed down by the government during the *Chambelona* and did not open until December 1918.¹⁶³ The *Eco de Timas*, a newspaper that used to report on the daily events at Jobabo, was not printed during 1917 because its editor was active in local politics.¹⁶⁴ The censorship in the case of the *Heraldo de Cuba* is obvious, but other newspapers such as *Diario de Cuba* also remained silent. The latter reported on the acquittal of Cadenas and Cutillas and did not mention the reason for the trial, but only said that they were “processed with regard to the events of ‘February’.” Another case in point is that of the *Gaceta Oficial* in its announcement of the payment of compensation. No mention was made that it was a compensation for the killings in Jobabo, but that the money was for “unexpected expenses”.¹⁶⁵

It is difficult to unveil a conspiracy within the government circles, power structures, and personal linkages that had as its purpose getting away with murder. But the moves by the Lieutenant Felipe Cadenas inquiring about the Jamaicans, and the pressure on Consul Leech by the grandfather of Cadena’s wife point in that direction, as does the appointment of Ricardo Dolz to the defence of the accused in the court martial; without mentioning García Menocal’s illness during the trial. One can also mention that Cadenas’s appointment as Chief of the Police of Camagüey –possibly close enough to Jobabo to be able to control any information from coming out- and perhaps the coincidence that Miguel Cutillas married within the García Menocal clan. Was Cadena’s resignation of the Army –presumably to avoid further prosecutions- also a tactical move? The fact that Cadenas travelled to Jobabo in the aftermath of the revolt, as Bullard pointed out to Leech, is not to be taken lightly.¹⁶⁶ When in the 1970s, the local historian of Jobabo, Manuel Arevalo collected data on the event, he pointed out that the policeman who provided him the information on the killings had made declarations on the Jobabo incident and later received death threats. According to Arevalo, the policeman declared even when he was offered the amount of money he wished with the condition that he would abandon Jobabo and not go to the trial, even if summoned by the *Gaceta Oficial*.¹⁶⁷

But even if there was a cover up of the events in Jobabo, the persons involved in the affair were not able to escape from it. The very forces that have created a silence have, at the same time created its endurance and permanence in many ways –however unspoken. Cadenas had to live with that permanence when, some five years after his deed, he was involved in a duel because someone published something on Jobabo. Pablo Desvernine and García Menocal, perhaps, had to live with that burden. It was also said that when a mission to Britain from the Cuban Government was suddenly suspended in 1920, it was because

Desvernine was *persona non grata* in London.¹⁶⁸ The mission then took place in 1921, when García Menocal finished his term and went to Europe, and the new President, Alfredo Zayas used him as the Cuban Government's representative. While there is no mention of Jobabo, one biography of García Menocal mentioned that the former President was received in London, even when "at that time the relations of Cuba and England were in a turbid state because of the shadows brought upon them by past diplomatic incidents".¹⁶⁹ After all, there seems to be some sound in the silence –for those who want to listen.

One can also ask why, after so much time, after the matter had been solved to their favour in the court martial, García Menocal and the Cuban Government decided to pay the compensation to the British authorities? One British Consul later recalled that the Secretary of State had admitted to him that "the only reason for the offer of compensation" was "the desire not to discourage the flow of Jamaican labour to Cuba".¹⁷⁰ If the Cubans were really concerned with the labour issue, and if they were indeed challenged by internal labour struggles, why did they wait so long to take action regarding the compensation? And if, generally speaking, the immigration never really stopped but rather increased during the period,¹⁷¹ then, what other reasons beyond the alliance in the war, and the pressure from the U.S., were compelling them to pay the compensation? One may venture to suggest that in 1920-21, when the compensation was finally agreed, García Menocal particularly had a reason to do it. While he was about to conclude his Presidential term, it was by no means that was the end of his political life, and one may suggest that he did not want to carry the burden of Jobabo with him. He probably did not want the silence that had been created, precisely because of its 'sound': the sound that was haunting Cadenas in his duel, and that is said to have stopped the Cuban mission to England. García Menocal, more than anyone else, knew the cost of carrying a burden like that. After all, he had used José Miguel Gomez's burden of the 1912 massacre as an electoral tool, in 1916, and if he was going to be active in politics, he did not want any politician to bring any Jobabo ghosts –or cartoons- out in an electoral process. While some of my suggestions might be considered to be excessive, I believe that, as has been noted by Michel-Rolph Trouillot, the "unearthing of silences" require "a project linked to an interpretation".¹⁷²

Perhaps the most regrettable silence of the whole story is that of the black British subjects themselves. Besides the affidavits submitted by the witnesses, written –and probably edited- by the British authorities in Cuba, there is no other source that provides their voice in the whole affair. Worst still, there is no written evidence as to whether the families of those killed were pressing the British Consul to act against the Cuban Government. It seems,

rather, as if the British authorities, and Leech particularly, were acting because of what the killings meant symbolically for the moral standard of the British –*vis-à-vis* the Cubans– than for what it really meant to the British Antilleans and their families. But the memory of the events, like the burdens caused by it, are not easily erased. Mentions of the events in Jobabo are mostly based on official documentation or scattered through a few historical works such as Leon Primelles’s *Crónicas Cubanas*, the short accounts on the *Breves monografías de los centrales de Oriente*, and Guillermo Rubiera’s entry in *La Enciclopedia de Cuba*.¹⁷³ Mainstream historians of the Cuban Liberal revolt both inside and outside Cuba have not referred directly to the Jobabo incident –or to the racial elements in the revolt.¹⁷⁴ The writings of Marta Rojas, through a brief mention, have represented another avenue for the exposition of events that would otherwise be forgotten.¹⁷⁵ Oral history and memory passed away without the attention of historians, with the exception of Manuel Arevalo’s manuscript on the history of the Jobabo municipality written by the 1970s. His account of the killings is noted as one of the events of most resonance in the town and was based on the oral account of one witness and actor in the events. As part of his seminal work on Garvey, Rupert Lewis has referred to the event, to the myth of the photographic camera, and to the possibility that the killings were made to obtain money from the Jamaicans.¹⁷⁶ Bernado García Domínguez’s essay on Garvey’s visit to Cuba quotes only oral interviews as his sources, and, while he mentions the event, there is no elaboration on it.¹⁷⁷ Local historians in Cuba seem to have heard about the event from elders in the region,¹⁷⁸ but there has not been an attempt to collect the oral history of the Liberal revolt –and by now, it is perhaps too late.

But memory outlives the silences, sometimes in precarious ways. Speaking on “non-events” Raymond Fogelson has noted that some of them are “so traumatic that they are denied.”¹⁷⁹ When I visited Jobabo eighty-two years after the killings, there were some indications of how terrible the *Chambelona* was there. I heard comments on the events from people who preferred not to speak of the *Chambelona* and the day when Cadenas “photographed the Jamaicans” in *El Jigüe*.¹⁸⁰ One migrant even said to me that when some excavations for a construction were taking place on the spot where the killings happened, they found the remains of the bodies.¹⁸¹ Myth or reality, who knows? But it is clear that the memory of the Jobabo massacre remained alive for some time.

There is another question with regard to the black British migrants, a question that is not so much related to memory, but to the long-term legacy of the Jobabo massacre. What effect did the massacre and its diplomatic aftermath have on relations between the Cuban Government and British Consular officials in the following decades when thousands of

migrants from the British Caribbean went to Cuba? As a general rule, consular support has been regarded as the factor that set the difference between the treatment of British Antillean migrants, and other immigrants, particularly the Haitians. If the Jobabo affair had an effect in the subsequent treatment of the migrants, why has that connection not been acknowledged? What would have been the support for the British Antilleans in the 1920s and 1930s if the diplomatic saga of the Jobabo killings had not taken place? The discussion in the following chapters takes on board these and other questions as to the process through which consular support to black British migrants evolved from the Jobabo affair to the 1930s.

- ¹ Louis A. Pérez Jr., *Intervention, Revolution, and Politics in Cuba, 1913-1921* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1978), 10, 19-21.
- ² Pérez Jr., *Intervention, Revolution, and Politics*, 16, 33-34.
- ³ Transcript of the letter, in Sub-Secretary of Government [Luis Carmona] to Provincial Governor of Oriente, 10 February 1913, Archivo Histórico Provincial de Santiago de Cuba (hereafter AHPSC), Fondo-Gobierno Provincial de Oriente, Leg. 786, exp. 1.
- ⁴ Fernando Ortiz, "Las rebeliones de los negros en Cuba," *Cuba y América*, 15: 30 (29 June 1912), 6-8. Originally published earlier in *Revista de Administración*, 2: 9 (1-15 May 1912): 157-158. Ortiz's earlier thoughts about black and non-white immigration were best exposed in Ortiz, "La inmigración."
- ⁵ Carlos de Velasco, "El problema negro," *Cuba Contemporánea*, 1:2 (February 1913): 73, 75.
- ⁶ Sub-Secretary of State, Cuba, to Governor, Province of Oriente, 8 October 1914, AHPSC, Fondo-Gobierno Provincial de Oriente, leg. 1709, exp. 9.
- ⁷ See Chief of Government Police to Governor, Province of Oriente, 15 October 1914; Chief of Government Police to Governor, Province of Oriente, 17 October 1914, AHPSC, Fondo-Gobierno Provincial de Oriente, Leg. 1709, exp. 9.
- ⁸ Helg, *Our Rightful Share*, 240.
- ⁹ See "La inmigración en Oriente," *El Eco de Times* (17 April 1915): 2; "Problemas Obreros: Inmigración," *El Pueblo* (4 June 1915): 1.
- ¹⁰ See Chomsky, "The Aftermath of Repression," 9-13.
- ¹¹ Luis Marino Pérez, "La inmigración jamaicana desde el punto de vista social, económico y sanitario," *La Reforma Social*, 8 (August-November 1916): 393-394.
- ¹² "El Jueves llegaron más de cien jamaicanos," *La Lucha* (6 March 1917): 1; "Los haitianos y jamaicanos son los principales transmisores del paludismo," *El Cubano Libre* (12 February 1917): 1.
- ¹³ "Tiburón en Oriente: La sombra de Estenoz," *La Política Cómica* (1 October 1916): [5].
- ¹⁴ "El sueño de Tiburón," *La Política Cómica* (22 October 1916): [5]; "En la tumba de Estenoz," *La Política Cómica* (8 October 1916): [5].
- ¹⁵ "Recuerdo de una 'Cacería', 1912," *La Política Cómica* (15 October 1916): [1]; "El macheteo de José Miguel: La raza de color," *La Política Cómica* (8 October 1916): [11].
- ¹⁶ "El macheteo de los negros," *La Política Cómica* (15 October 1916): [5].
- ¹⁷ "Las elecciones en Oriente," *La Política Cómica* (22 October 1916): [10].
- ¹⁸ Pedro González Barreda, "La palabra de un negro: Ecos de nuestra campaña," *La Política Cómica* (29 October 1916): [5].
- ¹⁹ Pedro González Barreda, "A la raza de color," *La Política Cómica* (29 October 1916): [3].
- ²⁰ "El desquite de los negros," *La Política Cómica* (29 October 1916): [17]; "Desde el Cacahual," *La Política Cómica* (29 October 1916): [5]; "Candidatos del Titán," *La Política Cómica* (5 November 1916): [10].
- ²¹ Not referring to the island of Jamaica, but to a town in Guantánamo with that name.
- ²² "El macheteo de José Miguel: La raza de color," *La Política Cómica* (8 October 1916): [11].
- ²³ Ramón Vasconcelos, *El General Gómez y la sedición de mayo (Segunda edición)* (Havana: n.p., October 1916).
- ²⁴ Basilio Valle, "El Problema Actual," *Labor Nueva*, 1: 22 (23 July 1916): 5.
- ²⁵ Inocencia Silveira, "Etnología cubana," *Labor Nueva*, 1: 23 (30 July 1916): 7.
- ²⁶ Vicente Silveira, "No echemos combustible," *Labor Nueva*, 1: 34 (22 October 1916): 5.

²⁷ *Chambelona* is the name of a musical piece with Afro-Cuban rhythms that was used as part of the political propaganda of the time.

²⁸ For my discussion on the black fear in general and its relations to revolts and revolutions see chapter 2.

²⁹ Pérez Jr., *Intervention, Revolution, and Politics*, 21.

³⁰ Enrique Recio, Rogelio Z. Bazan, and Gustavo Caballero, El Consejo Organizador, "Al Pueblo de Cuba," 11 February 1917, Archivo Histórico Provincial, Camagüey (hereafter AHPC), Fondo Jorge Juárez Cano, Folder 61, file no. 6.

³¹ W. W. Craib to Stephen Leech, 21 February 1917, United States National Archives (hereafter USNA), Record Group (RG) 84, Records of the Foreign Service Post, Diplomatic Posts, Cuba, Vol. 096 (1917), [File 800].

³² Academia de Ciencias, *Índice histórico de la Provincia de Camagüey* (Havana: Instituto del Libro, 1970), 72.

³³ Louis A. Pérez Jr., "La Chambelona: Political Protests, Sugar, and Social Banditry in Cuba, 1914-1917." *Inter-American Economic Affairs*, 31:4 (Spring 1978): 5.

³⁴ Leo J. Meyer, "The United States and the Cuban Revolution of 1917," *HAHR*, 10 (1930): 144; Pérez Jr., "La Chambelona," 6

³⁵ Pérez Jr., "La Chambelona," 7-10

³⁶ Mario García Menocal, "Proclama," *Gaceta Oficial* (8 March 1917): 1.

³⁷ Pérez Jr., "La Chambelona," 11.

³⁸ "Los Bandidos Fernando Fernández y Caballero Morejon han cometido atrocidades en Jobabo," *El Camagüeyano* (23 March 1917): 5.

³⁹ "Los Bandidos Fernando Fernández y Caballero Morejon han cometido atrocidades en Jobabo," *El Camagüeyano* (23 March 1917): 5.

⁴⁰ The records of the surrenders are to be found in the documents of the AHPC, Fondo Juzgado de Instrucción of Camagüey, Leg. 376, no. 4708, Leg. 476, no. 4709, Leg. 376, no. 4706, and Leg. 393, no.4919.

⁴¹ George H. Whigham to Mario García Menocal, 16 March 1917, Cuba Company Papers, Special Collections, McKeldin Library, University of Maryland at College Park (hereafter CCP), Series 1, Box 35, [Folder for 1917]. This collection was consulted in 1998 when it was only partially processed. Some of the series and box numbers might have changed.

⁴² Cable communication from G. H. Whigham to Mario García Menocal, 26 March 1917, CCP, Series 1, Box 35 [Folder for 1917].

⁴³ Mario García Menocal to George H. Whigham, 27 March 1917, CCP, Series 1, Box 35 [Folder for 1917].

⁴⁴ George H. Whigham to Mario García Menocal, 27 March 1917, CCP, Series 1, Box 35 [Folder for 1917].

⁴⁵ Stephen Leech, British Consul, to Pablo Desvernine, Cuban Secretary of State, 15 May 1917, PRO, FO 371/2923. Captain Batista's entrance to Jobabo was reported later: "La entrada del capitán Melchor Batista con sus fuerzas al pueblo de Jobabo," *El Camagüeyano* (5 April 1917): 4.

⁴⁶ Julio Cadenas, then First Lieutenant, together with Second Lieutenant Pedro H. Iribarne were undergoing military training in the Mounted Services School at Fort Riley, and they were call into service due to the Liberal revolt, travelling to Cuba on the 22nd of February. León Primelles y Xenos, *Crónica Cubana, 1915-1918. La reelección de Menocal y la Revolución de 1917. La danza de los millones. La Primera Guerra Mundial* (Havana: Editorial Lex, 1955), 262.

⁴⁷ Affidavit by Beatus Ebenezer White, signed at the British Legation, Cuba, before British Vice Consul, George Plant, 20 April 1917, enclosed in Stephen Leech to Pablo Desvernine, 15 May 1917, PRO, FO 371/2923. With the exception of the dates, unless otherwise indicated, all the affidavits quoted below were submitted before British Vice Consul Plant,

at the British Legation, and enclosed in the corresponded from Leech to Desvernine referred in this note.

⁴⁸ Affidavit by Samuel A. Campbell, 18 April 1917.

⁴⁹ Affidavit by Albert Britton, 26 April 1917.

⁵⁰ Affidavit by Aaron McDormott, 18 April 1917.

⁵¹ Affidavit by Joseph Barrett, 30 April 1917.

⁵² Affidavit by Henry Samuels, 18 April 1917.

⁵³ Affidavit by Aaron McDormott, 18 April 1917.

⁵⁴ Affidavit by Aaron McDormott, 18 April 1917.

⁵⁵ Affidavit by Rosamond Costance Reid, 18 April 1917.

⁵⁶ Affidavit by Arthur Reeve Hall, declared before Vice Consul Denys Cowan in the British Legation, Cuba, enclosed in Stephen Leech to Pablo Desvernine, 13 November 1917, PRO, FO 371/2923.

⁵⁷ Affidavit by Henry Samuels, 18 April 1917.

⁵⁸ Affidavit by Samuel A. Campbell, 18 April 1917.

⁵⁹ See the affidavits in Stephen Leech to Pablo Desvernine, 15 May 1917, PRO, FO 371/2923.

⁶⁰ Primelles y Xenés, *Crónica Cubana, 1915-1918*, 320.

⁶¹ *Guión museológico* (Jobabo, Cuba: Museo Municipal Rosendo Arteaga Guerra, ca. 1970), 16.

⁶² Pérez Jr., *Intervention, Revolution, and Politics*, 87.

⁶³ Affidavit by Noël Deerr, 27 April 1917.

⁶⁴ See the affidavits by Albert Britton, 26 April 1917, Theophilus Harris, 18 April 1917, and Aaron McDormott, 18 April 1917, as well as those of other witnesses.

⁶⁵ Affidavit by Aaron McDormott, 18 April 1917.

⁶⁶ Affidavit by Henry Samuels, 18 April 1917.

⁶⁷ Affidavit by Rosamond Costance Reid, 18 April 1917.

⁶⁸ Affidavit by Joseph Barrett, 30 April 1917.

⁶⁹ Affidavit by Arthur Reeve Hall, before Vice Consul Denys Cowan, 13 November 1917.

⁷⁰ See Comisión Provincial de Activistas de Historia, *Breves monografías de los centrales de Oriente* (n.p.: Comisión de Historia, Oriente, n.d.), 86. Available in the Archivo Provincial de Historia, Holguín (hereafter APHH), Fondo-Registro de Información, Miscelanea no. 11; *Guión museológico*, 17.

⁷¹ Interview with Ignacio Anderson, Jobabo, Cuba; Interview with Juana Chapé Cardenas, Jobabo, Cuba; Interview with Amelia Ortiz Arevalo, Delicias, Cuba, 22 May 1999. See Jorge L. Giovannetti, *Field Notes* (1999), and the entries for 21 May 1999, Las Tunas, Cuba, and 24 May 1999, Santiago de Cuba, Cuba, in Jorge L. Giovannetti, *Journal, 1998-1999*. Cuban historian Gustavo Sed in Camagüey has also heard of the myth of what he called the “event of the photographic camera” among elders in the region and was the first to mention it to me in telephone conversation. See also *Guión museológico*, 17. *Jigüe* is the local name for a three located in the place where the massacre took place.

⁷² Comisión de Historia del Central ‘Ecuador’, *Monografía de la historia del Central Baraguá* (Ciego de Avila: n.p., 1972), 5. I am grateful to Osvaldo and Ofelia García in Baraguá for providing this, and other sources used in this research.

⁷³ Pérez Jr., *Intervention, Revolution, and Politics*, 44.

⁷⁴ Pérez Jr., *Intervention, Revolution, and Politics*, 67.

⁷⁵ See, for example, in the revolt of the PIC in 1912, Damas Santiageras, “Hablan las mujeres cubanas,” (Imprenta de J. Borron: Periódico *Cuba*) (18 June 1912), ANC, Fondo 189-Secretaría de la Presidencia, Leg. 110, No. 2 [Segunda Pieza]. For the gender aspect with regard to racial fears, see Helg, *Our Rightful Share*, 18. Other aspect beyond the scope of this chapter is the language and the words actually used to represent the ‘black rebel’ and

his actions that were also present in the 1917 revolt. See also Aline Helg, "Black Men, Racial Stereotyping, and Violence."

⁷⁶ Reginald R. Belknap to [His Wife, names illegible], February 14, 1917, Reginald Rowan Belknap Papers (RRBP), General Correspondence (GC), Box 13, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

⁷⁷ U.S.S. Petrel (Cable Report), 15 February 1917. USNA, RG 45, Navy Subject File, 1911-1927, WA-7, Box 739, Folder 5. See also D. W. Knox to Commander in Chief, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, [18 February 1917], USNA, RG 45, Area File, Caribbean Area, 1911-1927, Box 205, Folder [4].

⁷⁸ U.S.S. Petrel, "Intelligence Report of Conditions Existing in and near Santiago de Cuba," USNA, RG 45, Navy Subject File, 1911-1927, WA-7, Box 738, "Cuba, 1912-1917," Also in USNA, RG 45, Navy Subject File, 1911-1927, WA-7, Box 739, Folder 6.

⁷⁹ U.S.S. Machias (Cable Report) to U.S. Government, 20 March 1917, USNA, RG 45, Navy Subject File, 1911-1917, WA-7, Box 738, "Cuba, 1912-1917".

⁸⁰ Quoted in A. H. Lindelie, Andrew Kobler, and A. Lind, to P. Merrill Griffith, 20 April 1917, USNA, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts, Diplomatic Posts, Cuba, Vol. 096 (1917), [File 800]. Also in Vol. 097, [File 850.3].

⁸¹ P. Merrill Griffith to U.S. Secretary of State, 3 May 1917, USNA, RG 59, GRDS-IAC, File #837.00/1535 (M488, Roll #9).

⁸² "Editorial: Las fechorias de los sediciosos," *La Lucha* (27 March 1917): 2.

⁸³ Charles H. Drake to James L. Rodgers, USNA, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts (RFSP), Consular Posts, Havana, Cuba, Volume 445, (1917).

⁸⁴ "La plaga de jamaíquinos," *Diario de la Marina* (5 April 1917): 3.

⁸⁵ William E. Gonzales to U.S. Secretary of State, 16 April 1917, USNA, RG 59, GRDS-IAC, File #837.00/1311 (M488, Roll #8).

⁸⁶ See the "Comparecencias" to the Juzgado de Instrucción in Camagüey for the 28 and 30 April, the 1, 10 and 17 May and the 2 June 1917, AHPC, Fondo-Juzgado de Instrucción del Partido Judicial de Camagüey, Leg. 373, #4678, Leg. 376, #4706, #4708, and #4709, Leg. 377, #4721, Leg. 393, #4919.

⁸⁷ See "La explosión del polvorin: ¡ae, ae, la chambelona!" *La Política Cómica* (1 July 1917): 10; "Las garantías constitucionales: ¡Menocal, prepara tu cañón!" *La Política Cómica* (22 July 1917): 11; "¡Abreme la puerta: la amnistia!" *La Política Cómica* (9 December 1917), 15; "Entre chambeloneros: la suerte de las personas," *La Política Cómica* (23 December 1917): 10.

⁸⁸ See, for example, "¡Abreme la puerta: La amnistia," *La Política Cómica* (9 December 1917), 15.

⁸⁹ On these perceptions and fears of the takeover by blacks see, for different periods, Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, 141-169, and Helg, *Our Rightful Share*.

⁹⁰ Chomsky, "The Aftermath of Repression," 2. Most of the evidence of my own research supports Chomsky's argument. However, while her emphasis on the Haitians as the group that better epitomised the black fear can be certain in some cases, it can be inaccurate as a generalisation.

⁹¹ See John Dollard, "Hostility and Fear in Social Life," *Social Forces*, 17:1 (October 1938): 21.

⁹² Daniel Katz and Richard L. Schanck, *Social Psychology* (New York: J. Wiley & Sons, 1938), 142, quoted in Bernard F. Robinson, "War and Race Conflict in the United States," *Phylon*, 4:4 (1943): 314.

⁹³ "Master Carpenter," Interview 46STAMA, recorded Beverley, St. Ann, June 1975, DDC, SALISER, 12.

⁹⁴ Robinson, "War and Race Conflict in the United States," 314.

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- ⁹⁵ Robinson, "War and Race Conflict in the United States," 311.
- ⁹⁶ See Fernández Robaina, *El negro en Cuba*, 110-123.
- ⁹⁷ Alejandro de la Fuente, "Race and Inequality in Cuba, 1899-1981," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 30 (1995), 159.
- ⁹⁸ Andrew De Graux to Paul W. Beck, U.S. Military Attaché, 30 August 1919, USNA, RG 45, Navy Subject File, 1911-1927, WA-7, Box 739, Folder 4.
- ⁹⁹ See Robinson, "War and Race Conflict in the United States," 311-312.
- ¹⁰⁰ Many of the ideas on normative behaviour, patterns of interaction, and legitimate actions and violence mentioned in this last paragraph are informed by the works of Maingot, "Haiti and the Terrified Consciousness," 54-55, Robinson, "War and Race Conflict in the United States," 311-313, and Dollard, "Hostility and Fear in Social Life," 19-20.
- ¹⁰¹ Stephen Leech to Pablo Desvernine, 15 May 1917, PRO, FO 371/2923.
- ¹⁰² Cecil Spring Rice to U.S. Department of State, 30 April 1917, USNA, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts, Diplomatic Posts, Cuba, Vol. 094, File 310.
- ¹⁰³ Santamarina, "The Cuba Company and Cuban Development," 5, 82.
- ¹⁰⁴ Captain Cadenas was an acquaintance of President García Menocal and was regarded as an exemplary military official. Captain Cadena's superior, the Minister of War, José Martí was a personal friend of the British Consul Stephen Leech, but because of his position his loyalties may have been with both García Menocal and Captain Cadenas. Pablo Desvernine, the Cuban Secretary of State, who had received the complaint from Leech, has been related to the Cuba Company as a lawyer. William Gonzales, the U.S. Ambassador, who was supposed to support the British complaint, had a close personal relation with García Menocal, probably beyond the professional and diplomatic levels. See Pérez Jr., *Intervention, Revolution and Politics*, 82.
- ¹⁰⁵ Mario García Menocal and Leopoldo Cancio, "Secretaria de Hacienda," *Gaceta Oficial de la República de Cuba*, 16:94 (21 April 1917): 5907-5908.
- ¹⁰⁶ William E. Gonzales to U.S. Secretary of State, 19 May 1917, USNA, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts, Cuba, Vol. 094, File 350.
- ¹⁰⁷ Stephen Leech to [A. J. Balfour, Foreign Office], 22 May 1917, PRO, FO 371/2923.
- ¹⁰⁸ William E. Gonzales to U.S. Secretary of State, 25 June 1917, USNA, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts, Diplomatic Posts, Cuba, Vol. 094, File 310.
- ¹⁰⁹ Stephen Leech to Pablo Desvernine, 10 July 1917, PRO, FO 277/191.
- ¹¹⁰ The cases at Jobabo were those of Samuel Waith (4 March), Charles Weekes (6 March), Sydney F. H. Miller (15 March), Albertha Carthy (4 April), Wildred Dier [*sic*] (April 6), James Green (6 April) and George Manning and Nathan Greyson (no date provided but probably early April). See Memorandum enclosed in Stephen Leech to Pablo Desvernine, 10 July 1917, PRO, FO 277/191.
- ¹¹¹ The cases were those of James W. Golding at Cuatro Caminos (6 March), Ebenezer Forest at Francisco Sugar Estate (10 April), George Lord and Samuel N. Jones at Florida (12 April) and Peter Burrel in Cespedes (no date provided). The case of Morón was reported by Alex Brown. See Memorandum enclosed in Stephen Leech to Pablo Desvernine, 10 July 1917, PRO, FO 277/191.
- ¹¹² Memorandum enclosed in Stephen Leech to Pablo Desvernine, 10 July 1917, PRO, FO 277/191.
- ¹¹³ For these cases in Cuatro Caminos, Ciego de Avila and Cupey Sugar Mill see Memorandum enclosed in Stephen Leech to Pablo Desvernine, 10 July 1917, PRO, FO 277/191. The persons involved in the incident in the Cupey Mill were Uriah MacDowell, Theophilus Watson, Theophilus Sealy, and Gothan Johson [*sic*] (28 June). There is no mention as to whether those shot in Ciego de Avila were killed.

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- ¹¹⁴ Stephen Leech to Pablo Desvermine, 10 July 1917, PRO, FO 277/191.
- ¹¹⁵ George H. Whigham to C. R. Hosmer, Montreal, Canada, 17 July 1917, CCP, S. 1, Box 20, Folder 2, [File #41].
- ¹¹⁶ On the important links between the railroad and sugar industries see the classical work by Zanetti and García, *Caminos para el azúcar*.
- ¹¹⁷ George H. Whigham to C. R. Hosmer, Montreal, Canada, 17 July 1917, CCP, S. 1, Box 20, Folder 2, [File #41].
- ¹¹⁸ Robert Fleming to George H. Whigham, 18 June 1917, CCP, S. 1, Box 29 [Folder 1917, File #37]. The relationship between Fleming and Whigham should be stressed. Whigham was Fleming's personal employee and was appointed as President of the Cuba Company after the death of William Van Horne (1915) to represent his interests. See Santamarina, "The Cuba Company," 69-70, 82.
- ¹¹⁹ Stephen Leech to William E. Gonzales, 22 May 1917, USNA, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts, Diplomatic Posts, Cuba, Vol. 094, File 350.
- ¹²⁰ Cecil Spring Rice to U.S. Department of State, 16 July 1917, USNA, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts, Diplomatic Posts, Cuba, Vol. 094, File 350.
- ¹²¹ George Whigham to Stephen Leech, 20 July 1917, CCP, S. 1, Box 28, [File #118]
- ¹²² Pablo Desvermine to Stephen Leech, 8 August 1917, PRO, FO 277/191.
- ¹²³ Stephen Leech to A.J. Balfour, FO, 15 August 1917, PRO, FO 277/191.
- ¹²⁴ Stephen Leech to Foreign Office, 18 August 1917, PRO, FO 371/2923.
- ¹²⁵ Cecil Spring Rice to Robert Lansing, 7 September 1917, PRO, FO 371/2923. See also Cecil Spring Rice to U.S. Secretary of State, [15 September 1917], USNA, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts, Diplomatic Posts, Cuba, Vol. 096 (1917), [File 810].
- ¹²⁶ Cecil Spring Rice to Stephen Leech (Telegram), 11 September 1917 [also forwarded to the Foreign Office], PRO, FO 372/2923.
- ¹²⁷ Stephen Leech to Foreign Office (Telegram), 13 September 1917, PRO, FO 371/2923.
- ¹²⁸ Cecil Spring Rice to the U.S. Department of State, 15 September 1917, USNA, RG 84, Records of Foreign Service Posts, Diplomatic Posts, Cuba, Volume 096, (1917),[810].
- ¹²⁹ "Parte Oficial," [Immigration Law], *Gaceta Oficial*, 16: 30, Volume II (4 August 1917): 1941.
- ¹³⁰ See "Best Way to Get to Cuba," *Jamaica Times* (15 September 1917): 1, "New Service to Cuba," *Jamaica Times* (22 September 1917): 4, "Samuels' Service to Cuba," *Jamaica Times* (20 October 1917): 4.
- ¹³¹ Primelles y Xenos, *Crónica Cubana, 1915-1918*, 345. Cadenas, nonetheless, resigned from the Army in 20 September.
- ¹³² Cecil Spring Rice to Havana Legation and Foreign Office (Telegram), 18 September 1917, PRO, FO 371/2923.
- ¹³³ [Frank Lyon Polk] to William E. Gonzales, 28 September 1917, USNA, RG 84, Records of Foreign Service Posts, Diplomatic Posts, Cuba, Volume 096 (1917), [No. 404 at 810].
- ¹³⁴ William Gonzales to U.S. Secretary of State, 13 October 1917, USNA, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts, Cuba, Vol. 096 (1917), [File 810].
- ¹³⁵ Stephen Leech to A. J. Balfour, 23 November 1917, PRO, FO 371/2923.
- ¹³⁶ On the labour struggles in that period see John Dumoulin, *Azúcar y lucha de clases, 1917* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1980).
- ¹³⁷ See Eduardo Diez de Ulzurrun to Manuel Rionda, 10 October 1917; F. G. Smith to Higinio Fanjul, 12 October 1917, Braga Brothers Collection, Special Collections, George A. Smathers Libraries, University of Florida, Gainesville (hereafter BBC), RG II, S. 1, Boxes 26 and 22 respectively; George Whigham to C.R. Hosmer, 29 October 1917, CCP, S. 1, Box 20, Folder 2, [File #41].

- ¹³⁸ "Alien Strikers will be Expelled from Cuba," *The Havana Post* (24 October 1917); "Decreto No. 1707," [Immigration of workers], *Gaceta Oficial* (2 November 1917): 7464-7465.
- ¹³⁹ Stephen Leech to A. J. Balfour, 23 November 1917, PRO, FO 371/2923.
- ¹⁴⁰ Meyer, "The United States and the Cuban Revolution of 1917," 165.
- ¹⁴¹ Stephen Leech to Foreign Office, 17 November 1917, PRO, FO 371/2923.
- ¹⁴² Stephen Leech to Foreign Office (Telegram), 30 November 1917; Stephen Leech to Foreign Office (Telegram), 10 December 1917, PRO, FO 371/2923.
- ¹⁴³ Stephen Leech to A. J. Balfour, 3 December 1917, PRO, FO 371/2923.
- ¹⁴⁴ O.H.B., Second Secretary of U.S. Legation, Havana, to Lieutenant Felipe E. Cadenas, 19 November 1917, USNA, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts, Diplomatic Posts, Cuba, Vol. 096 (1917), [File 800].
- ¹⁴⁵ Stephen Leech to A. J. Balfour, 3 December 1917, PRO, FO 371/2923.
- ¹⁴⁶ Stephen Leech to A. J. Balfour, 3 December 1917, PRO, FO 371/2923.
- ¹⁴⁷ William E. Gonzales to U.S. Secretary of State, 10 December 1917, USNA, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts, Diplomatic Posts, Cuba, Vol. 096 (1917), [File 800].
- ¹⁴⁸ Stephen Leech to A. J. Balfour, 23 November 1917, PRO, FO 371/2923.
- ¹⁴⁹ William E. Gonzales to U.S. Secretary of State, 10 December 1917, USNA, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts, Diplomatic Posts, Cuba, Vol. 096 (1917), [File 800].
- ¹⁵⁰ See Stephen Leech to A. J. Balfour, 3 December 1917, PRO, FO 371/2923; Stephen Leech to Rafael Montoro, Cuban Secretary of the Presidency, 4 January 1918, ANC, Fondo 189-Secretaria de Presidencia, Leg. 56, No. 31.
- ¹⁵¹ Stephen Leech to Rafael Montoro, Cuban Secretary of the Presidency, 4 January 1918, ANC, Fondo 189-Secretaria de Presidencia, Leg. 56, No. 31.
- ¹⁵² See Primelles y Xenes, *Crónica Cubana, 1915-1918*, 229-230; "Cadenas y Cutillas resultaron absueltos," *Diario de Cuba* (12 February 1918): 3. In my exhaustive search I was unable to find any available records either on the court martial or on the reports allegedly made by the Ministry of War at the time. Some of the military records in Cuba are still considered classified material, and if there is some surviving material on the court martial, it will not be accessible for historians.
- ¹⁵³ William Erskine to Earl Curzon, Foreign Office, 11 February 1921, PRO, FO 371/5565
- ¹⁵⁴ Primelles y Xenes, *Crónica Cubana, 1915-1918*, 453; Manuel Arevalo, *Historia del Municipal Jobabo Urbano*. manuscript [197?]: 24. I am grateful to Mr. Esteban Yero Rosales, Director of the Museo Municipal Rosendo Arteaga Guerra in Jobabo who provided Arevalo's manuscript from among the museum's files.
- ¹⁵⁵ "Acta Matrimonial," Registered 30 December 1918, Registro Civil, Norte, Havana, Volume 21, Folder 75. See also Primelles y Xenes, *Crónica Cubana, 1915-1918*, 531.
- ¹⁵⁶ Leon Primelles y Xenes, *Crónica Cubana, 1919-1922. Menocal y la Liga Nacional. Zayas y Crowder. Fin de la danza de los millones y reajuste* (Havana: Editorial Lex, 1957), 43, 595. The duel was with Aldo Baroni of the *Heraldo de Cuba* (a anti-conservative periodical that was censored during the Liberal revolt) because Cadenas had hit the aged North American editor of the *Evening News*, where the information was published.
- ¹⁵⁷ Edelmira González, *La revolución en Cuba: Memorias del Coronel Rosendo Collazo* (Havana: Editorial 'Hermes', 1934), 107-108; Pedro Martínez Fraga, *El General Menocal: Apuntes para su biografía* (Havana: n.p., 1941), 46, note 1.
- ¹⁵⁸ "Latin-American Notes," *The Economist*, 87: 3,913 (24 August 1918): 239.
- ¹⁵⁹ See Guillermo Patterson to Rafael Montoro, 4 May 1920, ANC, Fondo 189-Secretaria de la Presidencia, Leg. 56, No. 31.
- ¹⁶⁰ "Annual Report for the Year 1920," enclosed in William Erskine to Earl Curzon, 11 February 1921, PRO, FO 371/5565; Primelles y Xenes, *Crónica Cubana, 1919-1922*, 303.

According to other correspondence, the offer for compensation from the Cuban Government had been on the table since 13 November 1917, and it was not until 26 February 1920 –perhaps after the failure in the court martial– that the British Legation accepted the amount. However, the available correspondence I have revised does not reflect an explicit offer of compensation in 1917. See Godfrey Haggard to Earl Curzon, 3 May 1921, PRO, FO 371/5563.

¹⁶¹ Mario García Menocal and Pablo Desvernine, “Parte Oficial: Poder Ejecutivo-Secretaría de Estado; Decreto N. 714,” *Gaceta Oficial de la República de Cuba*, 20: 109 (12 May 1921): 8217.

¹⁶² Godfrey Haggard to Earl Curzon, 17 May 1921, PRO, FO 371/5563.

¹⁶³ Rafael Montoro, “Gobierno del General García Menocal,” in *El libro de Cuba: Historia, letras, artes, ciencias, agricultura, industria, comercio, bellezas naturales. Obra de propaganda nacional*, General literary and artistic editor, Emilio Roig de Leuchsenring (Havana: n.p., 1925), [667].

¹⁶⁴ Personal communication with Ms. Olga Tarín Zayas, Las Tunas, May 1999. Ms. Tarín Zayas is a relative of the founder of the local newspaper *Eco de Tunas*. I am grateful to Ms. Tarín Zayas for her hospitality and for allowing me access to the newspaper collection.

¹⁶⁵ “Cadenas and Cutillas resultaron absueltos,” *Diario de Cuba* (12 February 1918): 3; Mario García Menocal and Pablo Desvernine, “Parte Oficial: Poder Ejecutivo-Secretaría de Estado; Decreto N. 714,” *Gaceta Oficial de la República de Cuba*, 20: 109 (12 May 1921): 8217.

¹⁶⁶ See Stephen Leech to A. J. Balfour, FO, 3 December 1917, PRO, FO 371/2923.

¹⁶⁷ Arevalo, *Historia del Municipal Jobabo Urbano*, 23.

¹⁶⁸ Primelles y Xenes, *Crónica Cubana, 1919-1922*, 300-301.

¹⁶⁹ Gerardo Rodríguez Morejon, *Menocal* (Havana: Cardenas & Compañía, 1941), 147.

¹⁷⁰ William Erskine to Earl Curzon, 11 February 1921, PRO, FO 371/5565.

¹⁷¹ On consulstation of the census figures, one will find a decrease in the Jamaican immigration for the year 1917, when the migration tendency was to increase. In the reports of immigration, however, the tendency is of constant increase and the decrease is not reflected. And while one can argue that the decrease on immigration was due to the Liberal revolt –or the knowledge of what happened in Jobabo–, one has also to consider that many Jamaicans during that year were enrolling as soldiers for the war in the West India Regiment. The difference between the census and the reports of immigration for the year when the decrease is recorded is of 2,023. Jamaica alone provided 10,280 persons for the war effort. See Joseph, “The British West India Regiment, 1914-1918,” 124.

¹⁷² Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 58.

¹⁷³ Primelles y Xenes, *Crónica Cubana, 1915-1918* and *Crónica Cubana, 1919-1922*; Comisión Provincial de Activistas de Historia, *Breves monografías de los centrales de Oriente*; and Guillermo Rubiera, “Mario García Menocal y Deop (1913-1921),” in *La enciclopedia de Cuba: Gobiernos Republicanos*, ed. Vicente Báez (San Juan: Enciclopedia y Clásicos Cubanos, Inc., [1975] 1977), 156-210. See also Pedro Luis Padrón, “Indemnizo Menocal el crímen de los Jamaicanos en Jobabo con la ley de ‘Accidentes de Trabajo’,” *Granma* (1 February 1971): 2.

¹⁷⁴ See Meyer, “The United States and the Cuban Revolution of 1917,” Pérez Jr., “‘La Chambelona’,” Herminio Portell Vila, “La Chambelona en Oriente,” *Bohemia*, 53 (24 April 1960): 12-13, 124, and “La Chambelona en Camagüey,” *Bohemia*, 53 (8 May 1960): 12-13, 119, or the works in the recent volume by the Instituto de Historia, *La neocolonia: Organización y crisis, desde 1899 hasta 1940* (Havana: Editorial Política, 1988).

¹⁷⁵ Marta Rojas, “Rey Spencer’s Swing,” in *Afrocuba: An Anthology of Cuban Writing on Race, Politics, and Culture*, eds. Pedro Pérez Sarduy and Jean Stubbs (Melbourne: Ocean Press, 1993), 276-277.

¹⁷⁶ Rupert Lewis, *Marcus Garvey: Anti-Colonial Champion* (London: Karia Press, 1987), 101-102.

¹⁷⁷ Bernardo García Domínguez, "Garvey and Cuba," in *Garvey: His Work and Impact*, eds. Rupert Lewis and Patrick Bryan (Kingston: Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1988), 299.

¹⁷⁸ Telephone conversation with historian Gustavo Sed, Camagüey, Cuba, 20 February 1999.

¹⁷⁹ Raymond D. Fogelson, "The Ethnohistory of Events and Nonevents," *Ethnohistory*, 36:2 (Spring 1989): 143.

¹⁸⁰ Interview with Ignacio Anderson, Jobabo, Cuba, 21 May 1999; Interview with Juana Chapé Cardenas, Jobabo, Cuba, 21 May 1999, and Interview with Amelia Ortíz Arevalo (who grew up in Jobabo), Delicias, Cuba, 22 May 1999. See Jorge L. Giovannetti, *Field Notes* (1999) and entries for "21 May 1999, Las Tunas, Cuba," and "24 May 1999, Santiago de Cuba, Cuba," in Jorge L. Giovannetti *Journal* (1999).

¹⁸¹ Interview with Ignacio Anderson, Jobabo, Las Tunas, Cuba, 21 May 1999.

CHAPTER V
“CUBA GOT MASH UP”: SUGAR CRASH, REPATRIATIONS, THE UNIA,
AND BRITISH DIPLOMACY

I remain there for a while until Cuba got mash up you know [...] I'll give it to you as graphic as I can. That is, sugar was selling at 22 cents a lb., you see, and a slump came and the sugar started to sell at 5 cents a lb. 2 ½ cents. You see, America used to buy the sugar and then they dropped the price.¹

That was the way in which a migrant described the situation in Cuba by 1921 when the sugar markets crashed. The post-war recovery of the European beet sugar affected the financial and commercial sectors of the sugar cane industry as well as the producers, from the foreign sugar entrepreneurs to the *colonos*. The country that had provided labour for thousands of local and foreign workers went into crisis, leaving many of them in destitute conditions. This chapter examines the experiences of the British Caribbean islanders during and after the crisis, the problems they confronted, the increasing discrimination that accompanied the economic crisis, and a second diplomatic crisis between the Cubans and the British.

Unlike the informant above who was in Cuba at the moment of the crisis, many of the prospective migrants in the British Caribbean were not necessarily aware of the economic situation there. As the sugar boom was coming to its end in 1920, it was reported that people in St. Lucia were “heeding the call of Cuba” and leaving their home country.² That year, registered Jamaican immigration to Cuba reached its highest point of 27,088 migrants and recorded Barbadian departures to Cuba were of 19,455. But the crisis turned those figures upside down and in the subsequent years British Caribbean migrants found themselves with no job, food or shelter. Returning migrants to Barbados in 1920 were 22,659 probably reflecting the arrival of migrants who had arrived that same year, but also many of the 21,573 Barbadians who had gone to Cuba in 1919. Jamaican return migration in 1920 was 22,285, the highest rate ever of returning migrants from any country to Jamaica during the first three decades of the century.³ In 1921, Cuban figures of immigration plummeted side by side with the sugar prices.

From early 1921, the local press in the British colonies tried to discourage emigration from their respective islands,⁴ but the effort against eastern Caribbean out-migration was not necessarily working. In April 1921, it was reported that in Barbados “crowds of labouring men were flocking the office of the Cuban recruiting agent daily.”⁶ In St. Lucia,

even when notifications in March warned on the drop in wages in Cuba,⁶ it was reported that in April:

The British three[-]masted schooner 'Nellie Louise'... sailed from here with 123 *declared* passengers for Cuba. We say *declared* because there is a rumour current that when under way the schooner was boarded by a good many who were made welcome.⁷

While these travelling labourers were accepted in the schooner, it was unlikely that they would be welcomed in Cuba. A subscriber of the *Jamaica Times* in Cuba wrote back to Jamaica warning that "Jamaicans are not wanted in Cuba" and wondered how the "Jamaican Government allows labourers to leave for Cuba." He said that:

Now men from all parts are flocking to the Chaparra Division [of the CASC] where work would be steadily progressing but for the inclemency of the weather[,] Chaparra brought in such a lot of contract men from the British Isles that the market is overcrowded. She [Chaparra] cannot now find work for all her contract men much more [for] the thousands coming [*sic*] from other Estates.⁸

Thousands of black migrants were either without pay, driven off the sugar plantation, or stranded in their efforts to try to return home. The international press reported of planters in Cuba complaining of Jamaicans that were not working and therefore becoming a drain on the public purse. But it was also stated that the immigrants were not working because while Cuban workers were paid with currency, they were receiving "bits of paper" that they could exchange for food in the local shop.⁹ In his warning to potential Eastern Caribbean migrants, the Acting British Consul of Santiago de Cuba warned labourers against the fate of being employed in

... one of the numerous small sugar cane fields known as 'colonos' [*colonias*] generally run by small irresponsible men, who I have found in many cases endeavouring to escape the payment of a portion at least of the wages of their men, [they] do not give the men any accommodation worthy of the name, have no hospital accommodation which means that should the labourers be unfortunate as to fall sick, he is place [*sic*] on the train and sent to Santiago [...] and I have to place him in the Public Hospital, which I do with great regret, as I know that the men stand a very fair chance of dying through neglect.¹⁰

The state of affairs in Cuba, and thus the situation for the black migrants, was reported in the press in the following way:

According to private advices [*sic*] at Jamaica from Cuba not only are the West Indian labourers finding difficulty in obtaining work on the sugar estates in the

Republic, but many of those employed are experiencing difficulty in getting their pay. Up to a year ago a good labourer could earn as much as five dollars a day in cutting canes. Today the rate of pay is between 80 and 90 cents per day, and then the labourer is given a 'good' [*vule*, a coupon or token] and he has to wait for some time before he can redeem this 'good'.

This article further stated the implications of the *vule* payment system for the immigrants who were unable to send the accustomed drafts to their families in their islands of origin, who as a consequence were "suffering". Still in the summer of 1921, the press noted that: "despite all the drawbacks labourers are flocking to Cuba from different parts as it is certainly the largest field for labourers."¹¹

Aside from the news in the press and the warnings of the British officials in Cuba, the immigrants themselves were condemning the situation. John Hunt, together with other British Caribbean islanders, in a "Humble petition of the British subjects in Cuba to His Majesty the King", wrote asking for:

[H]is Majesty to take account of the sufferings of us in Cuba, emigrated by the Central Chaparra Sugar Company and Central Delicias Sugar Company [as labourers]. [T]he Administrator and those at the head of affairs had agreed to make us comfortable in every way, printed paper [to] the effect and emigrated [us] from all parts of the British West Indies, Barbados, Antigua, St. Kitts and all other British West Indies Islands; after we reached Central Chaparra Company and Central Delicias [...] we were treated like animals of the lower class. Thousands of us from the time we arrived have not received a stroke [*sic*] of work, and are suffering from hunger and nakedness and sickness, we are dying by the hundreds.

Hunt's letter also highlighted that the tensions between local and foreign labourers were not just in the method of payment but also in the recruitment policies. The employers in charge, he argued, rejected them in favour of the Cubans.¹² Hunt's complaint, sent directly to the metropolis, eventually led to the questioning of British diplomats in Cuba by the Foreign Office. The reply by Godfrey Haggard in the British Legation in Havana was that the Chaparra estate was "by general consent the best managed in Cuba and one where the welfare and comfort of the labourers receives considerable attention." Haggard conceded, however, that due to unemployment, preference was being given to Cuban labourers.¹³

By the time of the crisis, many of the black migrants had developed a variety of social networks and organisations. Among them was the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), a pan-African organisation founded by the Jamaican Marcus Garvey in 1918, and which had created chapters and divisions across Latin America and the Caribbean. Marc C. McLeod has argued that the "efforts of the UNIA organisers to ameliorate the

terrible conditions in 1921 won them the respect of numerous British West Indian immigrants in Cuba.”¹⁴ The presence of the organisation, however, also represented the creation of a visible target for the discriminatory practices and repression in the different sugar mills.

In the Preston Sugar Mill of the UFC, the UNIA experienced the actions of the local managers when members were “turned out of their jobs and houses” and “ill-treated”. The General Secretary of the UNIA Division himself was a victim of abuses when:

On Saturday, September 3, 1921, he along with several others were called into the office of Mr. Howley to be questioned about the organization, and because he did not find it convenient to say, ‘yes sir’, to every question asked [of] him, he was grossly assaulted and beaten [*sic*] and afterwards imprisoned in the government’s ‘lock-up’ for several hours.¹⁵

The immigrants had to face not only the campaign in the press and the shouts from Cubans, but discriminatory practices by shopkeepers, sugar administrators, and material deprivation and physical hostility:

Different prices and fares are paid for household commodities and on railway cars by *Mikeinas* [*Jamaicanos*, Jamaicans]¹⁶, Haytians [*sic*] and Spaniards. According to your color and nationality you pay... Entering any of the stores or business places, and from your appearance and lingo you are a Jamaican you pay half as much again for anything you may purchase. If you are a Haytian [*sic*], which they know very well by their appearance, he pays two times as much again in many instances whether in stores, shops or railway cars.¹⁷

Female Jamaican migrants were discouraged as it was “most undesirable for young women to come to Cuba especially those of the very ligh[t m]ulatto class”. “There is very little employment for them,” it was reported, “and the chances of their going wrong are very great.” The previous statement was made in reference to the “moral environment” where female migrants entered Cuba’s “houses of ill-fame”. It was said that the “agents of these houses” met the boats at the time of arrival and “tempt the girls away.” A case was reported in which a “girl” was taken “ostensibly for a ride” from the house where she worked by one of the women keeping the brothel, “with the result that she was lost to respectability.”

Women from Jamaica can usually only hope to find employment as domestic servants. Usually the servant has to sleep outside the house, and that is where the trouble begins...

If they ended up in one of the houses of ill fame or brothel, it was reported, they had very little chances of leaving, as they “are practically slaves.”¹⁸

There were other instances where the sugar crisis seemed to have affected the immigrants. Lionel Gardier, from Dominica, wrote to the British Secretary of State of the Colonies because he was not able to withdraw the money he had deposited in the Banco Español de Cuba and the Banco Nacional de Cuba.¹⁹ Samuel Ambrose, an Antiguan, wrote to the Foreign Office complaining about being arrested, charged for a crime he did not commit, and sentenced to three years imprisonment without evidence. He said that there were “lots of Britishers bearing the same pressure” and receiving bad treatment from the Cuban authorities due to the lack of knowledge of Spanish. Ambrose, like others, appealed to the Foreign Office because of the inaction of the British consul.²⁰

Some of the black Caribbean migrants wrote to *The Negro World*, the official newspaper of the UNIA, to condemn the situation in Cuba. One referred to the rumoured slaughter of all Jamaicans, whom he said were called “*Mikinas*”:

We are being mocked by the Cuban peasantry. Anywhere we turn the slang is ‘*Mikinas bambose para Jamaica*’.²¹ This is very painful to the well-thinking Jamaicans who are peaceful and law abiding.²²

Another wrote criticising the propaganda in the *Heraldo de Cuba*:

Wherever a West Indian along the streets of Sagua la Grande... walks, he is constantly hailed by such names as cannibal, anthropophagus, etc. and if you attempt to deny the story a copy of the paper [*Heraldo de Cuba*] is held up to your view to confirm the insults.

Of the many aliens in Cuba, he confirmed, the editor of the *Heraldo* had “picked out and named the Jamaicans because they are made up mostly of Negroes.”²³

In the midst of such a critical situation, the Cuban Government considered measures to limit immigration and devised a rationale for their action. Central to that rationale was the conclusion of the Great War and with it the end of the “material reward” and the “moral compromise” of the Cuban State with the “triumph of the Allies.” But other factors had emerged as part of the rationale, especially the health and sanitary preoccupations and racial, social, and nationalist concerns. By outlining the “danger of the Jamaican and Haitian immigrations” the press noted:

Due to recent sanitary reports... it has emerged with an urgent character the need to establish rigorous restrictions to the noxious immigrations, including the Asiatic, that bring us, besides the small-pox, the paludism...²⁴

Dr. Fernando de Plazaola illustrated the situation of the immigrants and the social problems they represented in the Cuban press. He had reported directly to the Secretary of Health that:

I have been able to observe in my tour across the different towns of the Interior of more or less importance, that an enormous mass of immigrants and Jamaicans, and above all Haitians, are to be found in these towns living the life of vagabonds, taking care of roosters... I can assure you that in Guantánamo, Morón, Ciego de Avila, and other places, there are thousands of individuals without work, while for the demands of the crop there is a continuous introduction of men and more men of this undesirable immigration, that as is already taking place, turns out to be a public burden...²⁵

The city of Camagüey was said to be in a state of “putrefaction”, on the verge of catastrophe, due to “contagious illnesses.” The main complaint was that, in effect, there was no hospital because the section devoted to smallpox treatment was “replete with Jamaicans and Haitians.”²⁶ The Secretary of Health and Welfare, Dr. Juan Guiteras reacted to these conditions, as well as to reports of a smallpox epidemic in Jamaica,²⁷ drawing the attention of the Cuban President to a decree to regulate the immigration into the country. This measure was well received by a press that was dramatic in its conviction of the reason for the unsanitary problems:

This is the most practical measure that Dr. Guiteras has found to free the country of smallpox and paludism that was brought by the Haitian, Jamaican, and Chinese immigrants, who disseminate it especially throughout the provinces of Camagüey and Santiago de Cuba, spreading death and desolation to numerous homes.²⁸

This discourse against migration was not new. Similar anti-immigration arguments were used against the immigration in 1920 and 1921 when Cuba had faced a sudden and dramatic increase in immigration in the second half of the 1910s. Then the U.S. consul P. Merrill Griffith observed that the health discourse did not have a real basis and that the real concern of the Cubans was based on the colour of the immigrants.²⁹ Whether the Cubans had a genuine concern with regard to contagious diseases and epidemics or a racial preoccupation may be an issue of debate. But what Consul Griffith argued in 1916 seems to be equally true for 1921.

In the Senate, conservative Cosme de la Torriente, who had opposed the 1917 immigration law was in 1921 arguing for immigration restrictions. His discourse was carefully crafted. He accepted in the country a reasonable number of families of “whichever of the two races peopling our land; the same if the people entering are from

the white race or from the black race.” However, his preferences can be read between the lines when he imposed other guidelines for migration policy, saying that the immigrants must speak Spanish and have the same customs and conditions as in Cuba. His rhetorical discourse playing with race, language and colour speaks for itself:

... but I would be opposed –in the same way I oppose the entrance of black Jamaicans and Haitians- to the entrance here of workers from Russia, Austria, or other European countries that are not of a race that speaks our same language, like the one spoken by Spaniards and Canary Islanders, the races that founded this country.³⁰

While race was not an explicit criteria in De la Torriente’s discourse, language (culture/ethnicity) became his measuring device for immigration policies, one that in effect targeted the main migratory concern of Cuban elite and government circles: French-, English-, and Creole-speaking Antilleans.³¹

While the discourse against undesirable immigrants was being replicated, 1921 did represent a different context. In the absence of the “material benefit” or the “moral commitment” of the war years, and in the middle of an economic crisis, there was more fertile ground for the opposition to the immigrants. The Cuban Government acted to solve the ongoing immigration problem, and on 23 June the Senate approved Cosme de la Torriente’s measure to restrict immigration. In a related development, a decree was issued by President Alfredo Zayas stating that, since the reasons for justifying the immigration of labourers (i.e., the War effort) were no longer valid, the government resolved to:

Repatriate at the expense of the State the cane cutters that have come from Haiti, Jamaica, and the other Lesser Antilles hired under the Immigration Law of 3 August 1917, as they constitute at the present moment a public burden for the nation.³²

Even when other groups such as the Spanish migrants were also experiencing “indigence” due to the sugar crisis,³³ the repatriation law was targeted at those migrants that, in De la Torriente’s terms, had a different race, language and manners from the Cubans: Haitians, Jamaicans and other Antilleans. The decree seems to have been in tune with the editor of the *Heraldo de Cuba* referred above, in that the Jamaicans were targeted due to the colour of their skin.

But while the legislative debates and procedures were taking place in Havana in June and July, the situation for the local provincial governments of eastern Cuba was demanding rapid action. The central government of Santiago de Cuba received letters expressing concerns about the possibility that the nearly 8,000 Jamaicans and Haitians in deplorable

conditions in the province would upset the public order. An open request was made to the government to execute a “forceful repatriation of these immigrants to their respective countries.”³⁴ As an argument, it was stated that, in the midst of the economic crisis, the repatriation of the immigrants would free Cuba of “agents of disease” and of competition for the native workers.³⁵ Quoting a different figure, the press reported that the governor of the Province of Oriente, Alfredo Lora Torres, faced a situation of some 5,000 Jamaican and Haitian immigrants in the province “without work and in need”. He was considering measures to counter the prospect of “these immigrants upsetting the public order”.³⁶

And, indeed, Jamaicans, as well as Haitians and British Leeward and Windward islanders, and blacks in general, began to be the subject of all sorts of accusations in the Cuban press. The Mayor of the Municipality of Niquero in eastern Cuba, Victor Labrade, stressed the need for repatriation to the Governor of Santiago de Cuba when referring to the case of a woman who had been allegedly raped by a Haitian and of robberies in the countryside. Labrade added that, due to the fact that foreigners “are out of work and in a state of vagrancy,” they “devote themselves to these matters”.³⁷ The press reported on the accusations of the Mayor with regard to a frustrated assault on a child in a farm, but Labrade was not able to ascertain whether those who committed the crime were Haitians or Jamaicans. It was noted that: “According to the Mayor, the Jamaicans appropriate what is not theirs because they lack a job and do not have with what to acquire food.”³⁸ The confusion between both migrant groups indicate that while ethnic lines were sometimes identified (as above in the case of the shopkeeper), in some instances, blackness, i.e., skin colour, represented a main concern for the Cubans and thus the principal target of their accusations.

The British authorities shared the same concern that some type of social disorder would arise due to the deprivation in which the black migrants found themselves. When discussing the Cuban decision to assume the cost of repatriation, Godfrey Haggard from the British Legation proposed that the Foreign Office agree to the repatriation scheme due to the “danger of internal disturbance.”³⁹ Haggard remarked: “The Cuban Government fear, apparently with reason, that from begging these negroes [may] get to rioting.”⁴⁰ And it seems that the situation for the migrants was very serious indeed. The *Jamaica Times* reported that labour conditions in Cuba were “worse than the worst days in Jamaica” with men every morning ready to work for the day only to obtain breakfast.⁴¹ The same newspaper regularly announced the death of Jamaicans in Cuba.⁴² Some of those who managed to return to Jamaica described the situation in Cuba as “desperate” with “thousands being out of work, unable to pay their passages home, and actually starving.”⁴³ The Repatriation Commissioner

for Jamaica, J. W. Sheridan, while acknowledging that a large number of British Caribbean migrants were in distress, found the reports of Jamaicans being in “great want” and “starving” to be “exaggerated.”⁴⁴

From the point of view of the imagined fears of Cuban politicians and policy makers, the concern about social disturbances by blacks –migrants in this case- had a strong foundation. The 1920 elections were again not lacking in racial propaganda and concerns about the black vote. Also, U.S. officials during the period had reported on the “importance of the negro vote”, the “revival” in the cultural practices of Cuban blacks, and the living memory of the events of 1912.⁴⁵ Negroes were said to be favouring candidates of their own race and the racial propaganda was said to be a “disquieting feature” fomented largely by *brujos* and witches.⁴⁶ In that context, and considering the usual association of the migrant outsider with any type of racial issues within Cuban society, it is not strange that the Cuban authorities acted immediately with regard to the repatriation of the immigrants.

In July the Cuban Government contracted called Xavier Rumeau to implement a repatriation scheme for the “British West Indian Subjects”. The scheme would use the ports in Guantánamo, Manzanillo, Antilla, Chaparra, Nuevitas, and Santiago de Cuba, the latter solely for the repatriations of Jamaicans.⁴⁷ The British Government, in turn, would allocate funds to Jamaica to assist in the process.⁴⁸ The first contingent of over 200 repatriates under Rumeau’s scheme is said to have departed on 5 August 1921.⁴⁹ Among other departures on the 8 August were 145 Jamaicans and 62 Haitians, 400 men from Chaparra to Barbados, 200 men from Niquero to Jamaica, and 400 men from Antilla to Haiti.⁵⁰

The circular distributed by Rumeau in the eastern provinces of Cuba motivated many destitute and unemployed migrants to make their way to Santiago de Cuba. However, when they arrived, it was often to find no boat waiting. On his arrival, the Repatriation Commissioner for Jamaica, J. W. Sheridan, found “a large number of British West Indian labourers [...] roaming about Santiago de Cuba begging”. The British Consul had been providing food to some thirty of these, but in less than a week there were about a hundred migrants. Sheridan admitted that there were “hardships”, but understood as exaggerated the reports of Jamaicans “starving by the roadside in their endeavor to get to Santiago”. Apparently, due to being appointed as a Commissioner for Jamaica only, Sheridan was making clear distinctions between the “British West Indians” (probably from the eastern Caribbean) that were “begging” and the Jamaicans, who he found not to be suffering or starving. He said: “I am glad to be able to report that Jamaicans have not been subject to such great want and inconvenience[,] as were the other West Indian labourers.” In the port,

Sheridan took action to inquire as to why there were no ships available to undertake the repatriations and pointed out to the Contractor that it was a “risk that so many distressed persons [were] being kept without housing or food awaiting embarkation.” He understood that the management of the repatriation scheme was “to say the least, primitive,” and that the agents were “incompetent” and with no experience.

Without ships available, Sheridan and the British Consul managed to get some of the immigrants into the Quarantine grounds for housing and feeding, but after three days the immigrants were out again looking to be repatriated. The Police had brought nearly a hundred more Jamaicans at the request of the Contractor’s agent forcing them to abandon work and leaving their belongings. This group was equally stranded and without a ship for their transportation.⁵¹ The repatriations from Niquero were also problematic, with Cuban authorities forcing some of the immigrants to abandon everything even when many did not want to leave Cuba.⁵² In Santiago, the situation did not improve and a warehouse was secured to house the immigrants. Meals were ordered and distributed daily for the immigrants at the expense of the Government, a process that ended up in the hands of the local President of the UNIA. The latter, however, was accused of partiality in the distribution and of profiting by selling the food.⁵³ Rumeau’s scheme proved to be a problem, rather than a solution, because “the contractor, for selfish motives, has neglected his obligations under the contract.”⁵⁴ After an enquiry, the Cuban Government decided to cancel the contract with Rumeau in 2 September 1921 and to offer the task to the Compañía Naviera de Cuba.⁵⁵

The new repatriation scheme was not successful either. It only managed to send two ships, one for Jamaica on 12 September and one for Barbados on the 1 October. During that time, the involvement of the UNIA seemed to have gone beyond the distribution of food. The presence of this group, primarily composed of British Antilleans, did not go unnoticed or without tensions. In mid-September, the U.S. Consul in Santiago, Harold D. Clum noted that there were some “700 British negroes” from the Lesser Antilles who for a long time had been awaiting transportation. Clum added that the UNIA was “doing its best to keep these people stirred up and to arouse the unruly spirit in them” and accused the association of propagating false rumours “evidently with malicious intent.” Among the alleged rumours being spread by the UNIA were the following:

- 1) The Jamaicans repatriated will be marched through the streets of Kingston as prisoners and their properties used to pay the expenses of their repatriation.

- 2) Having reached a port in Haiti, the Haitians will receive arms to fight the USA there (Haiti was militarily occupied by the USA from 1914 to 1934).
- 3) Each black workman has been sold to sugar estates for \$45 each for the next crop.
- 4) The British consul had kept for himself the money he received from the British government to be used in the repatriations.
- 5) The British consul was linked to the sugar estates and was trying to keep the cane cutters for the next crop.
- 6) The Cuban government had decided to stop the repatriations.

The rumour with regard to the links between the British consul and the sugar estates was not that far from reality. The Acting Consul in Santiago, Ernest P. V. Brice, was later to be accused of being engaged in the traffic of labourers with some sugar mills in the east.⁵⁶ The accusation of there being an end of repatriations caused a demonstration by the UNIA in front of the British Consulate at which the police were used to disperse the protesters. U.S. officials in Cuba said that even without having steamships, the UNIA were selling tickets for Haiti and Jamaica:

They preach openly in the streets telling negroes that they should not buy their tickets from a white man but purchase them from the organization. When bookings are made they are turned over to one of the steamship agents here who allow a commission of \$3 on each to the league [the UNIA and ACL].

It was reported that a white steamship agent from the U.S. by the name of William Burger was harassed by the UNIA in their attempt “to stir up hatred amongst the negroes against the white race.” After outlining all the alleged actions of the UNIA, the opinion of the U.S. consul in Santiago was that the organisation “should be suppressed, which can probably be done without difficulty owing to the fact that, if I am correctly informed, the laws of this country do not permit such organizations”.⁵⁷

The US perception of the UNIA was immediately communicated to the Cuban authorities by the staff of the US Legation in Havana, but multiplied by two:

...in the Province of Oriente there are two negro organizations reported as (one) the Universal Negro Improvement Association (U.N.I.A.) and (two) the

African Colored League (A.C.L.) -that the officers of these organizations are openly preaching racial war.⁵⁸

The reasons are unknown, but the US authorities' communication to Cuba had divided one organisation into two (thus increasing any fear) and highlighted their "racial" nature, particularly by writing African Colored League, instead of the real name, African Communities League. In this instance the Cuban press portrayed the UNIA in a more pacific role stating that the Santiago Division of the organisation was going to collect money to "improve the state of those brothers, who are waiting to be repatriated promptly."⁵⁹ And, indeed, the UNIA, together with the Salvation Army, were central in assisting the immigrants in moments of distress by providing shelter and food.⁶⁰ Certainly, and in contrast with the role of the British consuls and the actions of the Cuban authorities, the UNIA was steps ahead in terms of their standing with the British Caribbean community.

But, despite the letters published in *The Negro World* and the alleged actions of the Santiago Branch of the organisation, the parent body of the organisation in New York, its principal leaders, and whoever edited *The Negro World* seemed to be distant, unaware, or out of touch with what many black Antilleans were experiencing in Cuba. The UNIA's protest in Santiago de Cuba was not reported in *The Negro World* and it seems that the ships of the organisation were not provided -or even offered- to transport some of the destitute migrants. What is more striking is that while many of the prominent leaders of the organisation visited Cuba in 1921, none of them seems to have made any pronouncement on the problems experienced by the immigrants in Cuba.⁶¹ In 1921, UNIA leaders, George Alexander McGuire, Henrietta Vinton Davis, J. S. de Bourgh and Marcus Garvey himself visited Cuba. However, the local events in Cuba -the forced repatriations, the racial and ethnic discrimination, the suffering, and the abuses- seem to have been beyond their agenda.

As the 1921 repatriation saga started to fade, Cuba was entering into a new sugar crop. In that context, the wider implications of the treatment received by the immigrants were not at all positive for a sugar industry that would eventually need more cane cutters. And in the sugar circles, while there were comments about the repatriation of the workers, it was also "feared that many will never return" to Cuba causing a shortage of labour.⁶² The 1920s actually witnessed an increase in labour migration, but after the previous events of the 1910s and the crisis of 1921, the attitude towards the immigrants would definitely not be the same. The racial fears, the concern with regard to diseases, and the feelings against the immigrants with "different language and manners" were very much present in the society. Equally present was a more realistic awareness of the effects of the immigration on the

labour market and for Cuban workers. The visibility of destitute immigrants in 1921, together with the press propaganda, must have highlighted the effects of the presence of aliens in a moment of economic crisis. This was the social setting that the black immigrants in Cuba had to face in the 1920s, not a safe environment by far, and sometimes with distressing consequences.

Discrimination and the Diplomatic Conflict of the Early Twenties

As in the previous decade, the presence of the black British Antilleans in Cuba located the different actors within the plantation society in a complex set of relationships. The Cuban elites continued to consider the migrant workers as a threat and preferred to keep them outside their national borders. The sugar interests –the big *centrales* and some of the *colonos*- wanted the migrant workers to remain inside Cuba working in the cane fields, factories, and company towns. The British, still having a significant share of Cuba's sugar, would prefer the sugar industry to keep on working without obstacles and with cheap labour –that is, British Caribbean workers. But at the same time, the British consuls found themselves defending the migrants from the very conditions of cheap labour that, from another perspective, were favourable to the sugar markets.

The other side of the above tensions was, of course, the Caribbean migrants themselves. Even with the previous experiences, they continued to regard Cuba as a better place to find success than in their islands of origin. In the process of trying to build that better future, they had to face discriminatory practices from all quarters: the Cuban elites, rural guards, and labourers; the British consuls and colonial officials; and the sugar administrators and overseers. The migrants actively resisted and challenged that hostile environment in many ways, developing alliances, resisting oppression, and complaining to the various representatives of the British Empire.

Many immigrants kept condemning their situation actively, not only by demanding the action of the British consuls, but also by writing to their islands of origin. A report on the conditions of St. Lucian immigrants stranded in Cuba said:

Not only are they suffering from the effect of non-employment, but [...] their treatment by the Cuban authorities is worse [*sic*] than that which was meted out to slaves in those dark days of long ago. At Chaparra, there is work for cane cutters[,] we understand, but the company offer a price upon which the labourers cannot possibly exist. The native Cubans threaten to beat them if they work, and the Company, to the knowledge of the authorities, torture them for not working. Thus, they occupy a position between the 'devil and the deep sea'.⁶³

The letters published by the press in the different British colonies had an effect in Cuba. When assessing the situation in the Vice Consulate of Camagüey, the British Consul in Havana, Godfrey Haggard, pointed to how a great portion of the work of Vice Consul Francis Matthews was related to “the British West Indians- their estates, their whereabouts and their trouble with the police.” He added that Matthews had “to answer enquiries about them to the West Indian Governments and also on occasions from Your Lordship.”⁶⁴ Letters written by the immigrants to the King, the Foreign Office, the Colonial Office and the local island governments ended up on the desks of consular officials in Cuba forcing them to implement some kind of action.

The actions of the British officials, however, continued to be ambivalent. In theory, it was their duty to protect all the colonial subjects independent of the colour of their skin. In practice and in the minds and policies of the consuls and the Foreign Office, there were clear distinctions as to who was a legitimate British subject. That contradiction was represented in the ways in which the consuls proceeded with the different situations (as well as in their rhetoric as will be explored later in Chapters 7 and 8). While Stephen Leech had diligently kept up pressure during the Jobabo affair, other consuls seem to have ignored the claims of the black British subjects. For example, the St. Lucians of the claim presented above added to their letter that:

We have been to the English consul several times, asked him for help. He bluntly refused to help us in our need. He said that we are British objects, but not British subjects.⁶⁵

In March 1922, another group of St. Lucians condemned the situation of the migrants in Cuba saying that they “could not walk in the streets, because they were being stabbed and shot by the Cubans in broad day light” in Havana. They remarked that nothing has being done with regard to that situation because “we have no one to represent us.” After telling the story of an immigrant flogged by a Cuban, the writer noted that:

Perhaps one question may be asked ‘Is there a British Consul?’. The answer to it is ‘Yes there is one, but how-often times we go to him and his answer is that he can’t do anything for us.’⁶⁶

At the other side of the spectrum were the actions taken by the consuls themselves when representing the interest of the colonial subjects. On 14 April 1922 Charles Sadler, a British Antillean, was killed by the Cuban police. Consul Haggard in Havana wrote to the Cuban Government, stating his position in favour of the immigrant and asked the Cuban government to take some action in the matter. Sadler had been present when some sort of

entertainment practice (not clear in the sources) was taking place among the workers, when a *guardia jurado* (sworn guard) ordered them to stop the game. The immigrant claimed that they were not gambling, and it is reported that the guard unexpectedly took out his revolver. Sadler reacted, taking the gun away, while going immediately to deliver the firearm to the Terminal Superintendent's House, "preferring in his own defense not to return it direct to his aggressor".

On the way, Enrique Cespedes, Sergeant of the Police, met the party and Sadler gave the revolver to him. There were other policemen near and at Cespedes' order they then attacked Sadler with their machetes and threw him to the ground severely injured. As he was lying there Cespedes shot him twice and wounded him in the body.

Sadler died four days later and when the Consul made his request for a full inquiry on the incident, he stated clearly that he had "no reason to disbelieve" the circumstances of the event.⁶⁷ The policeman accused of the murder of Sadler was finally acquitted in a trial marred by some irregularities: 1) the absence of a specific accuser against the police officer and 2) the language barrier between the English-speaking migrants declaring for Sadler and the Spanish-speaking witnesses on the side of the Police. There is no way to measure how proactive were the consuls in this case –or in others– but Haggard's confidence in the circumstances of the event, and other statements indicate some degree of concern. Haggard wrote to the Foreign Office saying that:

With reference to [...] the murder of the British subject, Charles Sadler, I regret to report that on the 2nd instant, as I learn from the British Vice Consul at Nuevitas [F. L. Patten], the policeman accused of his murder was acquitted of the crime and was set at liberty. Mr. Patten believes that money was expended by relatives of Cespedes in persuading material witnesses to be absent from the trial at Camaguey [*sic*], and in inducing others to give false evidence, but I fear that this would be impossible to prove.⁶⁸

Vice Consul Francis Matthews concluded with regard to the trial and the conditions of the immigrants saying: "I consider that it will be almost impossible to expect a conviction, and consequently the abuse which we know these subjects are constantly receiving will continue."⁶⁹ The abuses did continue in many ways.

The miserable conditions suffered by the immigrants would begin from the very moment of arrival. The fear of distribution of diseases by way of the foreign people was made more concrete in 1922 when Cuban migration policies tightened through the establishment of sanitary regulations and quarantine stations. Migrants arriving in Cuba had to remain in a quarantine station at the port for fifteen days to undergo the scrutiny of the

Cuban medical officers who would certify them to be healthy to enter the country. The deposit was to cover the maintenance of the migrants while at the station. If declared healthy and released before the fifteen days, they were entitled to receive a balance from their deposit. But what began as a policy to prevent diseases turned out to be a further complication in the already precarious situation experienced by the migrants.

In December 1922, the U.S. and British consular officials visited the quarantine station. The U.S. consul in Santiago, Harold D. Clum, reported to Havana the conditions found in a report from which I quote at length:

We found that about 138 people who were there, there were 40 and 50 beds. We were told of three or four persons sleeping in one narrow bed, in a number of instances. Most of the beds had no mattresses. Some people slept on old, ragged, and filthy mattresses. The place is on the edge of a mangrove swamp, and must be infested with mosquitos at night. Yet there are no screens in the windows or doors [...]. The latrines are all out of order, or at least there is no water for them and therefore they are closed, and to relieve themselves the people, men and women alike, are obliged to go out among the mangrove bushes. The only water provided is brought from across the bay in a launch and is stored in [three] barrels holding about 60 gallons each. This has to suffice for 138 people for all purposes. There are few small wash basins, but not nearly enough. The baths, like the latrines, are without water.

Although there are separate sleeping quarters for the women, there is no privacy, for the men invade the veranda in front of them, the doors and windows stand open, and men who claim to have wives there invade the women's quarters.

The cure seems to have been worse than the disease, as the conditions described by Clum were a potential setting for the very diseases that the Cubans were trying to avoid. According to the report from the quarantine officer provided to the consular visitors, 40% of the persons examined in the station had hookworm, but there was no case of malaria. Clum warned:

If there is one case of malaria at this station conditions are ideal for its spread to everyone there. Hookworm also might easily be spread there, owing to the complete lack of sanitation. In short, the place is everything that a quarantine station should not be. One case of yellow fever would be communicated quickly to everyone in the station.

He also made reference to the disadvantages of small children and ill persons in the station. With regard to the distribution of food, the U.S. official said that it was limited and its quality was "disgusting". He suggested that the Chief Immigration Officer, Mr. Alberni, was earning some money out of the situation.⁷⁰

In effect, it seems there were some irregularities in the practices employed within the Cuban quarantine station. On 17 July 1923, Mr. Alberni wrote to the British Consul in Santiago to say that due to a mistake by one of the employees, some immigrants had been left out of the station. Alberni asked Consul Brice to send the migrants back to the quarantine station if they presented themselves in the consulate.⁷¹ The same day, however, the migrants reached Consul Brice with another version of the events. Rather than having left the quarantine station by a mistake, they claimed that the doctor in the station had certified them healthy before the fifteen days limit. Therefore, the migrants were entitled to have the balance of their deposit, but they were “all refused the refund by said immigration officer.” The Jamaicans argued further that, to obtain the money, they had to return to the quarantine station. The boatmen would charge them 50¢ to get to the station and then the disparate amount of \$2.00 to get back. If they did not pay, the only available choice for them was to travel with the boatmen of the migration authorities, which they seemed not inclined to do. In their complaint to the British consul, the migrants maintained they were placed in a “very awful position and quite likely to lose all that we ought to get.” As “British subjects of Jamaica”, they requested from the Consul to “write or to telephone the emigration [*sic*] agent and advise him to pay us at his office at the Customs.” Consul Brice acted accordingly and wrote to Alberni stating that:

In view of their declaration, and knowing that it was impossible that you would retain their money, I recommended them to make a fresh application, as there is no doubt that it is a fresh mistake made by one of your employees, which has already on many occasions cause me to trouble you that it may be corrected, and [I] presume that they will apply to you to-morrow.⁷²

It seems that here the letter written by the migrants to the British Consul had some effect in their favour. Later, investigations by British consular officials uncovered the fraudulent ways the system of deposits at the quarantine station was dealt with by the Cuban authorities. In August 1923, the Acting British Consul in Santiago, G. L. McCormack, wrote to Havana saying that effectively the officers in the Station had a system whereby they threatened the immigrants when they claimed the balance of their deposit. When asking for their money, the recently arrived immigrants were told, “they will be kept there the full fifteen days, although their discharge has been ordered by the medical officer of the port.” McCormack added that:

... to completely cover up this underhand transaction the Jamaicans are forced into signing a receipt covering the balance due to them. This receipt is made out in Spanish, and as most of the Jamaicans do not understand Spanish, in their eagerness to get out of the quarantine station, they sign same. This absolutely

ties my hands, as with such a document in the possession it makes me powerless to take any action in the matter.

McCormack said that this practice was taking place since the deposit system was initiated. He recommended that “a very strong report” should be made on the subject of these irregularities because the issue will “continue to be a source of trouble to this consulate, and the means for fleecing the poor Jamaicans of their money.”⁷³

Action have been taken already when the British Consul in Havana warned local colonial governors that the situation in Cuba was regarded as “*extremely unsatisfactory* and persons contemplating proceeding to Cuba are *strongly advise[d] not to do so.*”⁷⁴ However, in the 1920s British Antilleans continued to migrate to Cuba. Recorded immigration and census figurers illustrate an increase in migration from Jamaica in the years 1923 and 1924 and other evidence illustrates that the movement from the other British Caribbean colonies also increased. As presented in chapter 3, sugar mills such as Chaparra and Delicias recruited thousands of workers during the 1920s. The eagerness and need to recruit migrant labourers is also evident in the labour recruitment policies of the Manatí Sugar Company. Having been authorised to import 3,000 workers at the beginning of 1923, and after the recruitment of 2,000 from the Dutch Caribbean colonies, the Manatí administrators considered they might “go elsewhere for laborers,” probably Haiti or the British Antilles.⁷⁵ While the general immigration of British Caribbean workers was less than in the 1910s, and was actually in a process of gradual decline, a conservative estimate of the migration from the available figures will be of an average of approximately 3,000 immigrants per year in the eight years that followed the sugar crisis of 1921 (that is, 1922 to 1929). In the same period, Haitian migration far surpassed that from the British colonies with a total of 85,869 (an average of 10,733 per year) and a significant increase after 1924. The outcome was a substantial presence of black migrants –from British and Dutch Antilles as well as from Haiti- that would inevitably lead to the reaction of Cuban society. In 1924, the Cuban government estimated that there were more than 65,000 Jamaican immigrants living in the country.⁷⁶

The presence of large numbers of black foreigners triggered the reaction of Cuban society, mostly manifested in the press of the period. But leading intellectuals such as Jorge Le-Roy y Cassá and Carlos M. Trelles also joined in the attacks on the migrants through the discourse on health and civilisation. This is discussed at length in Chapter 8, but suffice it to say here that the migrants continued to be perceived as “uncultured”, “inferior races”, “illiterate”, of “rudimentary civilisation”, and carriers of disease. The counterpart to such views –and the logic for the opposition- was the notion that Cuba was a white and civilised

country. The arrival of Jamaican and Haitian migrants would be damaging to the nation and the government must encourage the immigration of peoples of the “Caucasian” race.⁷⁷

In that context, British Caribbean migrants –and blacks in general- continued to be the targets for prejudice. *The Negro World* reported on a case where the Cuban police abused a black Jamaican by the name of John Sawyers. The newspaper portrayed the racial nature of the incident in which a white man and his family ordered Sawyers to get off a bench. Sawyers moved but a group of policemen appeared and “after giving him brutal blows, took him to jail.” He was released the next day with “his arm useless and with cuts on his right arm and all from the blows of the policemen.” The Jamaican searched for medical treatment but, when he realised that “the young man was not a Cuban and, worst of all, that he was a Negro” he was refused. The inaction of the British authorities was highlighted again, when the article noted Sawyers’ scepticism in relying on the consular support: “Despite the advice of his friend, Sawyers has resolved to be content with his lot, for he considers it a waste of time and money to write the British Consul about the matter.” According to the newspaper, this event and “many other similar incidents show the sort of treatment given to the Negro in this country.”⁷⁸

Among the “many other similar incidents” was the case of Oscar Taylor who was shot dead by three Cuban guards without any attempt to arrest him, in March 1923. In April of the same year, Locksley Roye, who was spending his required fifteen days in the quarantine station, was beaten by a marine guard and shot dead because he refused to take a second dose of medicines. In May 1923, an unarmed immigrant named Moses Buchanan was accused of stealing and was killed by a guard at the Central Tacajo. Egbert Archer “was arrested on a charge of robbery in October 1922, and was detained in prison for a year before his trial took place.” Other cases include the actions taken against immigrant workers who asserted their rights as labourers and for decent pay, and a raid on a Jamaican Lodge in Ciego de Avila where property was stolen and members arrested without explanation.⁷⁹ A “coloured British subject” from Jamaica named A. Llewelyn Porter refused to accept a lower salary for his work and left the *hacienda*. His employer, a *colono* by the name of Alfredo Bernal, sent the Rural Guard who not only “thrashed Llewelyn Porter with his machete” but also “attacked various coloured workmen for refusing to work.” Later, when Porter was leaving the *colonia*, he “was again struck by the Guardia, and cut twice in the jaw with a machete.” On 16 February 1924, there was a fire in the cane fields of Central Algodonez, leading three “coloured labourers” to be the victims of “wilful ill-treatment”. While the owner of the

Central had not requested “his men to put out the fire”, it is reported that a group of Rural Guards that had been drinking in the shop “thought differently”.

... they attacked three British subjects, named Wilfred Bennett, Charles Bennett, and a man called FitzGerarld. These men were cut about the head with machetes, and subsequently, on the usual charge of ‘resisting the authorities’, were flung to jail.⁸⁰

Other cases include an attack on Randolph Smith by a Cuban guard in Cascorro and the flogging, imprisonment, and robbery of Joshua Bartlay, “a Jamaican Negro” who was accused of taking workers from one Central to a *colonia* on 26 February 1924. Two immigrants who were crossing from one *colonia* to another were shot by the local overseer, and were “thrown in jail on the accusation of their aggressor.” David C. Patterson, a Jamaican with a “good record of service during the great war and a good local reputation was beaten with a sword by the rural guard at Guaro, Oriente” in February 1924. Among other grievances was the illegal continuation of the system of payment through vouchers or *vaks*.⁸¹

The British officials took some action in defence of the migrants. Verbal communications were made in 1923 to the Cuban Government with regard to the abuses. British Consul Haggard spoke directly to the Cuban Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, on 21 January 1924 about the different cases. Formal communications were written in 22 and 23 January to De Céspedes stating: “His Majesty’s Government has learnt with grave concern of the treatment to which British West Indians laborers continue to be subject in Cuba.” He made reference to the various instances where the migrants had been discriminated, abused, ill-treated, robbed, or killed, by the Cuban authorities. Consul Haggard condemned the

conditions at the quarantine station at Santiago de Cuba; the use of fire-arms, too often with fatal results, by Cuban guards against unarmed West Indians; the apparent lack of interest in arresting and prosecuting men guilty of such acts; and the unsatisfactory termination of such trials as have taken place; together with the maltreatment on the estates of these British subjects, who, His Majesty’s government considered in view of the benefit which the sugar plantations derive from their labour, deserve every protection and consideration from the Cuban authorities.⁸²

Yet again, diplomatic relations between Britain and Cuba were in crisis and a courtesy visit by the Admiral Sir Michael Culme-Seymour and the Royal British fleet was cancelled. De Céspedes acknowledged Haggard’s communication, although without an immediate reference to the particular cases referred to by the British Consul. He declared that the Cuban Government would inquire into the problems outlined and hoped for a peaceful settlement

of the issue.⁸³ As in the 1910s, the British authorities used colonial labour as a bargaining tool, by communicating to the Cubans that, in view of the conditions, they were exploring “the possibility of restricting, if not prohibiting, the emigration to Cuba of the referred coloured workers” who were employed in the sugar harvests.⁸⁴

De Céspedes acted promptly and on 24 January 1924 he gathered the necessary information to provide a proper reply to the British complaint. While he acknowledged the poor conditions in the quarantine station, he assured Haggard that there had been some improvements, including the separation of the migrants by sex and the sanitary installations. He noted that new beds had been allocated. With regard to the issue of the deposit, De Céspedes guaranteed that they would be returned to the migrants in cash. In the case of several migrants who had been killed or abused (Egbert Archer, Moses Buchanan, Locksley Roye, Oscar Taylor), the Secretary of State limited himself to saying that some of the cases were still postponed but were subject to due process that is an “equal right in Cuba [for] the national [as well] as the foreigner.” De Céspedes also responded to allegations of the discharge of labourers without pay in certain plantations. He acknowledged that such practices were employed during the crisis of 1921-22 against both local and foreign workers. He noted, however, that at the moment the migrants “seemed to be content and satisfied with the treatment offered to them, because, notwithstanding the dark picture provided on the conditions, they continue to arrive in Cuba in ever increasing numbers.” This migration trend, De Céspedes told Haggard, “would not happen if the current situation was like the one exposed in your note.”⁸⁵

While there was an ever-present threat of Cuba becoming more “black” due to the presence of the immigrants, the threat of facing a shortage of labour was also a compelling one. Some sectors had already openly criticized the hostility against the immigrants by noting the importance of their role in the economy as cane cutters in the sugar industry.⁸⁶ De Céspedes was well aware of the problems that a shortage of labour could cause to the sugar economy and tried to act as soon as possible. The Secretary of War and Marine, A. Montes, notified him on 23 January that the “rural guard have special instruction to treat aliens with the utmost correctness and courtesy in cases in which they are obliged to make them some request.” Montes’s instructions were given to the guards “with special regard to their relations with the Jamaicans and the Haitians” reminding the officers “they should refrain from every action which might give rise to friction and to well-founded complaints.”⁸⁷ The Secretary of State also contacted sugar entrepreneur Aurelio Portuondo in a “precipitous way” to discuss the issue of the Antillean migration and to show him what Portuondo

described as an “extensive note, expressed in harsh terms, aggressive almost, by the British legation, in which somewhat unfair charges are formulated for grievances against the Jamaicans residing in Cuba.” Portuondo understood the “alarm” of De Céspedes in view of the “fatal consequences” that a restriction or prohibition of immigration would have for the *hacendados* in Oriente and Camagüey and offered his assistance to “prepare the reasoned response that would be presented to the British Minister.”⁸⁸

Sugar and government interests found some common ground and Portuondo wrote a memorandum to assist the Cuban Secretary of State in his dealings with the British. At several points, Portuondo noted that the voucher system was something of the past and that when it happened it was a practice to which “the Antilleans as well as the Spaniards and Americans and foreign nationals” were exposed. In the memo he noted that it was surprising that the “Antilleans, especially the Jamaicans, whose culture is superior to that of the Haitians, could be so naïve or ignorant as to accept the payment of their job with paper.” For Portuondo it was unreasonable and absurd that the *hacendados* and *colonos* who needed the Antillean labour force would ill-treat them, since eventually they will have to incur the expense of bringing “other workers of analogous precedence.” He understood that if the workers experienced any situation of distress or abuses, the Antilleans were not the exclusive victims of it, but also the Spaniards and the Cubans.⁸⁹ Manuel Rionda himself wrote to Portuondo on 28 January 1924 providing more arguments for De Céspedes’s reply to the British. Introducing the British sugar consumption again into the discussion, Rionda commented on Portuondo’s memo saying that it would “be good to add something in relation to the fact that England needs from 4/500,000 tons of Cuban sugar, and, if the whole crop is not done due to the lack of cane cutters, the price of sugar will increase – resulting in detriment to the English.”⁹⁰

The answers provided by the Cuban authorities were not that convincing for the British officials in Cuba. In March 1924, Consul Haggard handed a memorandum to the Secretary of State outlining some of the cases of ill-treatment mentioned above. Haggard added that even when De Céspedes’s note had confirmed the illegality of the ‘*vales*’ since the Arteaga Law of 1919, the British Legation had evidence of ‘*vales*’ issued as late as December 1923. Payment for these ‘*vales*’, Haggard argued, has been “unjustly refused.” Even when January and February 1924 witnessed diplomatic discussions between the Cubans and the British with regard to the Antilleans, and when the Rural Guard had been allegedly instructed to provide a better treatment to alien labourers, incidents of ill-treatment continued to

unfold. On 2 March, Albert Barnett made a complaint to a Rural Guard who, in turn, “attack and drew his revolver on him”

The guard caused Barnett to be arrested and bound; and then shot him from behind, the ball passing through Barnett’s left side. Undoubtedly, but for fortunate chance, Barnett would have been killed. The man was taken to the hospital at Ciego de Avila, where he remained for twenty-three days undergoing a cure. He is now in gaol.⁹¹

Joseph Holness and Eustace Winter stated to the British Consul that while travelling from Siboney to Jatibonico on 31 March 1924, the train was crowded and they, along with three others, decided to sit on the seats reserved for Government Guards. The Guards “immediately assaulted them” and on arrival at Jatibonico, “they were struck by the guards with the butt of their rifles, were arrested on some charge unknown and taken to the gaol in Majagua and thence to Ciego de Avila” where they remained in prison. On 24 March, two other migrants, Edward Robinson and Barnard Hall, were arrested on the “charge of stealing a Cuban child, which was afterwards found to be asleep” in the house of the parents. The immigrants, nonetheless “were bound with ropes and ill-treated by the police” and put in prison to await trial. Another five immigrant workers who had been hired on an estate and had performed a job worth \$1,184.95 did not receive their payment. When they demanded it

soldiers were sent for, the men were arrested and locked up in the guard-house. On declining to work the next morning they were brutally beaten until the intervention of a non-commissioned officer. They were then handcuffed and taken to Ciego de Avila, where they were tried on some count or other and discharged.⁹²

On 18 April, a Jamaican named Frank Ellis working in Camagüey, was rounded up by two Rural Guards and a civilian in front of the local shop of a *colonia*, and assaulted. The next day when he went to complain and get medical attention in the town the same guards who had abused him the day before, arrested him. He and a witness who had gone with him to make the complaint were locked up for four days.⁹³

In April and May 1924, the Cuban Department of State responded to some of the complaints that had been raised by the British consuls since January. All the reports from the Department of War and Marine favoured everyone except the migrants –and therefore the British consuls. This was so in cases such as that of Alfred Barnett, who was accused of “brawling and drunkenness” and the shots received were to “intimidate him and compel his obedience.”⁹⁴ The attack on A. Llewellyn Porter for not accepting a lower salary was considered “completely groundless” because it happened in the middle of a strike where “the

majority of the strikers agreed to continue at work". Accordingly, the Cuban officers did not find any evidence in favour of Wilfred Bennett, Charles Bennett, and Edward FitzGerald who were attacked when they did not provide assistance in extinguishing a fire in one of the *colonias* of Central Algodonez.⁹⁵ Other cases such as those on behalf of Randolph Smith, Laban Morgan, Wilfred Dixon, and David Patterson went against the migrants who had alleged ill treatment, except in the case of Smith, which remained unresolved because it was not clear which judge or authority had jurisdiction over it. Morgan and Dixon were attacked because they "trespassed on the property of the plantation 'El Progreso', and David Patterson, the Great War veteran who was beaten by a rural guard, was accused of "refusal to aid" during a cane fire.⁹⁶ These and other cases turned the spring of 1924 into a battle of wills between the Cuban and British versions of the events involving British West Indians.

On 10 June 1924, Havana's British Consul, D. St. Clair Gainer, reported to the Foreign Office that:

In conclusion, I would state that complaints of assault, ill-treatment, and refusal to pay wages due continue to reach me from all quarters, and that general conditions affecting British West Indians in Cuba appear in no way to have improved since serious representations were made in January last.⁹⁷

On 25 June, the Consul wrote again to the Cuban Department of State referring to further cases of the abuse of immigrant workers, and noting that "no marked diminution in the number of complaints of ill-treatment has been observed, in spite of the orders stated to have been given to this end by the various departments concerned." The British Consul remarked strongly that, since "the Cuban Government must be regarded as having failed to comply with the conditions contained in Mr. Haggard's note of the 3rd January," the issue of ill-treatment against British Caribbean migrants in Cuba should be presented before the British Parliament. "I am to state clearly," the consul added, "that there is a definite prospect of the restriction or prohibition of immigration from the British West Indies to Cuba at an early date."⁹⁸ This final warning to the Cuban authorities was presented by St. Clair Gainer in a visit to the Secretary of State, where Aurelio Portuondo engaged in what the Consul described as a "long harangue explaining how beatific was the state of Jamaicans" in his companies.⁹⁹

De Céspedes's response to the British action was to provide a justification by saying that in comparison to the amount of Jamaicans in Cuba, the cases brought to the courts were "not so numerous". He noted that there were "obedient" Jamaicans, but called on the British authorities to "recognise that a minority, luckily small, exists, which, on the other hand, is

turbulent in the extreme, [...] and at times violent and criminal, and which make very difficult the duties of the authorities when these for some reason are obliged to come into contact or relation with them.” For him, it was unfair to accuse the authorities of ill treatment continually and disregard their position against that of Caribbean migrants committing “acts of disrespect” and “misdemeanours”.¹⁰⁰

After that letter from De Céspedes, the British authorities remained firm in their position. The correspondence regarding the ill treatment of British Antilleans in Cuba was presented to Parliament and subsequently published. The Cubans responded by also publishing the correspondence on the diplomatic saga and De Céspedes also warned St. Clair Gainer saying “that bad feeling would be created and that Cubans would unite against” the actions of the British.¹⁰¹ But during the summer of 1924, the Parliamentary discussions and the publication of the details of several cases of ill treatment against migrants transcended the diplomatic and governmental circles and became public. The British press, much against the wishes of the Cuban diplomats in Britain, published sensationalist articles on the topic that compared the situation of the British immigrants to those in Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and Charles Dickens’s *American Notes*.¹⁰² Details of the cases were also published in the local press in the different Caribbean colonies, and possibly had an effect on emigration to Cuba.¹⁰³

The publication of the White Papers on the ill treatment of the British Caribbean migrants represented the ‘end’ of a second diplomatic saga between the Cuban and British governments. By the mid-1920s, British Caribbean migrants had been going to Cuba for years looking for a better life and an improvement in their economic condition. In the process, they were victims of abuse and discrimination from the host society, while they demanded their rights as “British subjects” to the representatives of that Empire in Cuba. The British Consuls had no alternative but to fulfil their duty and make an effort to represent their colonial subjects. The British consular support provided to the migrants was the responsibility of the British officials in Havana, but it was not something that came automatically. The role of the migrants themselves in requesting diplomatic assistance and demanding action proved to be a key element in gaining the support of the Empire. But in the end, the Cuban government never actually admitted any wrong doing against the British Antilleans, and the British seemed pleased with the publication of the White Papers. The question remaining is what did this really mean for the British Caribbean migrants? The numerous social, political, and economic changes of the late 1920s and the 1930s would again affect the social dynamics and relations between Cubans, migrants, and British officials.

- ¹ "Rev. John B." Interview 75StTMA, recorded in St. Thomas, Jamaica, February 1975, DDC, SALISER, 9.
- ² "Vital Statistics" *The Voice of St. Lucia* (20 November 1920), 4.
- ³ For the Jamaican figures see *Memorias inéditas del censo de 1931*, 290-299. For the Barbadian figures see Basil Maughan, "Some Aspects of Barbadian Emigration to Cuba, 1919-1935." *Journal of the Barbados Museum and Historical Society*, 37:3 (1985): 264. Other figures quote returning migrants to Jamaica in 1920 with several hundred more at 22,659. See Table 30, "Recorded Arrivals of Returning Labourers in Jamaica, 1901-1944," in Mary Proudfoot, *Britain and the United States in the Caribbean: A Comparative Study in Methods of Development* (London: Faber & Faber Limited, 1954), 402-403.
- ⁴ See "Intending Emigrants to Cuba: A Warning from the British Consul," *Jamaica Times* (15 January 1921), "Wages Dropped in Cuba: Warning to Labourers," *Jamaica Times* (5 February 1921), 2, and "Labour Conditions in Cuba Bad," *The Voice of Saint Lucia* (4 June 1921), 6.
- ⁵ "Barbados and Cuba," *Jamaica Times* (30 April 1921), 3.
- ⁶ "Wages Dropped in Cuba: Warning to Labourers," *The Voice of Saint Lucia* (16 March 1921), 5.
- ⁷ "Notes and Comments," *The Voice of Saint Lucia* (23 April 1921), 5. (emphasis in original).
- ⁸ "Bad Labour Situation in Cuba: Jamaicans Workless and Half Naked," *Jamaica Times* (23 July 1921), 17.
- ⁹ [The Northern News], "Jamaica: Labor in Cuba," *The Negro World* (19 March 1921), 7.
- ¹⁰ "Labour Conditions in Cuba Bad," *The Voice of Saint Lucia* (4 June 1921), 6.
- ¹¹ "West Indians in Island of Cuba: Many Experiencing Difficulty in Getting Pay," *The Voice of Saint Lucia* (22 June 1921), 6.
- ¹² John Hunt and others to His Majesty the King, 5 June 1921, PRO, FO 371/565.
- ¹³ Godfrey Haggard to The Marquis Curzon of Kedleston, FO, 29 August 1921, PRO, FO 371/5565.
- ¹⁴ Marc C. McLeod, "Garveyism in Cuba, 1920-1940," *Journal of Caribbean History*, 30: 1-2 (1996): 138.
- ¹⁵ "Hard Treatment to the Preston Division in Cuba," *The Negro World* (8 October 1921), 10.
- ¹⁶ The term *Mikinas* probably emerged from the migrant's understanding of the derogative *jamaiquino*.
- ¹⁷ "Reports on the Conditions Existing in the Cuban Republic," *The Negro World* (27 August 1921).
- ¹⁸ "Appendix III: Moral Environment of Immigrate Girls in Cuba" in Margery Corbett Ashby to The Secretary, Colonial Office, UK, 24 June 1921, PRO, FO 369/1597.
- ¹⁹ Lionel Gardier to The Secretary of State, British Empire, 11 November 1921, PRO, FO 371/5565.
- ²⁰ Samuel W. N. Ambrose to Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Foreign Office, 4 April 1921, PRO, FO 277/197.
- ²¹ This is probably a translation from Spanish made by the writer trying to say, "Jamaiquino, vamose pa' Jamaica" (Jamaican, get going to Jamaica).
- ²² "Reports on the Conditions Existing in the Cuban Republic," *The Negro World* (27 August 1921).
- ²³ "Propaganda in Cuba to Divide Cuban and West Indian Negroes," *The Negro World* (20 August 1921), 9.
- ²⁴ "Editoriales: El problema inmigratorio," *El Camagüeyano* (8 February 1921), 2.
- ²⁵ "Hacinamiento de Haitianos y Jamaquinos," *El Camagüeyano* (8 February 1921), 3.
- ²⁶ "Editoriales: La Ciudad Podrida," *El Camagüeyano* (11 March 1921), 2.

- ²⁷ "La viruela [en] Jamaica," *La Voz del Pueblo* (13 April 1921), 2.
- ²⁸ "Regulando la inmigración," *La Voz del Pueblo* (11 June 1921), 2.
- ²⁹ P. Merrill Griffith to the U.S. Secretary of State, 1 June 1916, RG 59, GRDS-IAC, File #837.55/34 (M 488, Roll #84).
- ³⁰ Discourse pronounced by Cosme de la Torreinte in the Senate of the Republic of Cuba, 23 June 1921, included in Cosme de la Torreinte, *Cuarenta años de mi vida, 1898-1938* (La Habana: Imprenta El Siglo XX, 1939), 119.
- ³¹ The other non-Spanish speaking groups mentioned in his discourse were immaterial (but as a rhetorical tool) as their numbers were really limited. From 1902 to 1919 there are only 241 Austrians and 153 Russians as registered immigrants to Cuba (a total of 394). The combined immigration of these two groups must have been less than 500 up to the time of de la Torreinte's speech.
- ³² Alfredo Zayas, President of the Republic of Cuba, "Decreto No. 1404 (Secretaria de Agricultura, Comercio y Trabajo)," *Gaceta Oficial* (22 de julio de 1921): 1445-1446. ANC, Secretaria de Estado-Fondo 304, Leg. 532, No. 12473.
- ³³ "El problema inmigratorio," *El Cubano Libre* (9 June 1921), 2; "En pro de los españoles," *El Cubano Libre* (11 June 1921), 1; "Distressing Conditions Prevail in the Interior of the Island," *The Louisiana Planter and Sugar Manufacturer* (16 July 1921): 40-41.
- ³⁴ Letter to Provincial Governor of Santiago de Cuba, 29 June 1921, AHPSC, Fondo-Gobierno Provincial de Oriente, Leg. 786, exp. 11.
- ³⁵ Gilberto [Santos] to Gobernador of Santiago de Cuba, 29 June 1921, AHPSC, Fondo-Gobierno Provincial de Oriente, Leg. 786, exp. 11.
- ³⁶ "5,000 inmigrantes sin trabajo y hambrientos hay en Oriente," *El Cubano Libre* (9 July 1921), 1; "En Oriente hay 5,000 Jamaicanos y Haitianos," *La Voz del Pueblo* (11 July 1921), 2.
- ³⁷ Victor Labrade to Governor of Santiago de Cuba, 17 August 1921, AHPSC, Fondo-Gobierno Provincial de Oriente, Leg. 786, exp. 11.
- ³⁸ "Jamaicanos acusados," *La Voz del Pueblo* (18 August 1921), 2.
- ³⁹ Godfrey Haggard to Foreign Office, 1 July 1921, PRO, FO 371/5565.
- ⁴⁰ Godfrey Haggard to Rt. Hon. Earl Curzon of Kedleston, Foreign Office, 5 July 1921, PRO, FO 371/5565.
- ⁴¹ "Worst Than the Worst in Jamaica: Bad Times in Cuba," *Jamaica Times* (2 July 1921), 14.
- ⁴² See "Jamaican Dies in Cuba," reports in *Jamaica Times* for 11 June 1921, p. 13, and 2 July 1921, p. 6.
- ⁴³ "Hundreds Back from Cuba," *Jamaica Times* (9 July 1921), 2.
- ⁴⁴ J. W. Sheridan to The Colonial Secretary, Kingston, 17 November 1921, ANC, Fondo 304-Secretaria de Estado, Leg. 532, No. 12473.
- ⁴⁵ See Boaz W. Long, to U.S. Secretary of State, 20 October 1920, RG 59, GRDS-IAC, File #837.00/1802 (M488, Roll #11) and Harold D. Clum to Boaz W. Long, 21 October 1920, RG 45, Navy Subject Files, WA-7, Box 739, Folder 4.
- ⁴⁶ Harold D. Clum to Carlton B. Hurst, 4 December 1922, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts, Consular Posts, Santiago de Cuba, Cuba, Vol. 227, File 800.
- ⁴⁷ Xavier Rumeau, "To British West Indian Subjects" [advertisement], 20 July 1921, AHPSC, Fondo-Gobierno Provincial de Oriente, Leg. 786, exp. 11; "Repatriación de haitianos y jamaicanos," *El Cubano Libre* (22 July 1921), 1.
- ⁴⁸ "El gobierno ingles repatriara 10,000 jamaicanos," *El Cubano Libre* (20 July 1921), 1.
- ⁴⁹ "Repatriación de Haitianos y Jamaicanos: El primer contingente," *El Cubano Libre* (5 August 1921), 1.
- ⁵⁰ [Illegible] Secretary to The Secretary of State, Havana City, 10 August 1921, ANC, Fondo 304-Secretaria de Estado, Leg. 532, No. 12473.

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- ⁵¹ For details on the repatriation scheme process see J. W. Sheridan's report to the Colonial Secretary in Kingston, 17 November 1921, ANC, Fondo 304-Secretaria de Estado, Leg. 532, No. 12473.
- ⁵² See McLeod, "Garveyism in Cuba," 139.
- ⁵³ Harold D. Clum to John R. Putnam, U.S. Consul, Havana, 23 September 1921, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts, Cuba, Vo. 138, File 843.
- ⁵⁴ Charles E. Hughes to British Embassy, Washington, 20 September 1921, PRO, FO 371/5565.
- ⁵⁵ J. W. Sheridan to Colonial Secretary, Kingston, 17 November 1921, ANC, Fondo 304-Secretaria de Estado, Leg. 532, No. 12473.
- ⁵⁶ See "Memorandum of 'Blackbirding'," by D. St. Clair Gainer (1923), enclosed in T. D. Dunlop, to The Under Secretary of State, Foreign Office, 19 March 1925, PRO, FO 369/1869.
- ⁵⁷ Harold D. Clum to John R. Putnam, U.S. Consul, Havana, 23 September 1921, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts, Cuba, Vo. 138, File 843.
- ⁵⁸ Philander L. Cable to Dr. Guillermo Patterson, Subsecretary of State, Havana, 29 September 1921, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts, Diplomatic Posts, Cuba, Vo. 138, File 843.
- ⁵⁹ "En pro de los inmigrantes jamaicanos y haitianos," *El Cubano Libre* (23 August 1921), 1, 8.
- ⁶⁰ J. W. Sheridan to Colonial Secretary, Kingston, 17 November 1921, ANC, Fondo 304-Secretaria de Estado, Leg. 532, No. 12473
- ⁶¹ This is based on my survey of the year 1921 in *The Negro World*, as well as other newspapers and correspondence.
- ⁶² "Jamaican Laborers Being Returned to their Homes," *The Louisiana Planter and Sugar Manufacturer* (17 September 1921): 184-185.
- ⁶³ "Stranded West Indians," *The Voice of Saint Lucia* (28 January 1922): 4.
- ⁶⁴ Godfrey Haggard to Marquess Curzon of Kedleston, Foreign Office, UK, 3 May 1922, PRO, FO 369/1777.
- ⁶⁵ "Stranded West Indians," *The Voice of Saint Lucia* (28 January 1922): 4.
- ⁶⁶ "West Indians in Cuba," *The Voice of Saint Lucia* (4 March 1922): 5.
- ⁶⁷ Godfrey Haggard to Dr. Rafael Montero, Secretary of State, Havana 23 May 1922, enclosed in Godfrey Haggard to Marquess Curzon of Kedleston, Foreign Office, UK, 25 May 1922, PRO, FO 369/1777.
- ⁶⁸ Godfrey Haggard to Marquess Curzon of Kedleston, Foreign Office, UK, 25 May 1922, PRO, FO 369/1777.
- ⁶⁹ Francis Matthews to Godfrey Haggard, Havana, 17 October 1922, enclosed in Godfrey Haggard to Marquess Curzon of Kedleston, Foreign Office, UK, 25 May 1922, PRO, FO 369/1777.
- ⁷⁰ Harold D. Clum to Carlton B. Hurst, American Consul-General, Havana, 14 December 1922, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts, Santiago de Cuba, Cuba, Vol. 228, File 812.
- ⁷¹ José Alberni to E. Brice, British Consul, Santiago, 17 July 1923. In *Further Correspondence between His Majesty's Government and the Cuban Government Respecting the Ill-Treatment of British West Indian Labourers in Cuba, No. II* (1924), Jx1543z7.C.1924, Trade Union Congress Library, University of North London, UK (hereafter TUC, UNL).
- ⁷² Benjamin Stewart and others, to British Consulate, Santiago de Cuba, 17 July 1923, and E. Brice to Jose Alberni, Chief of Quarantine Station, Cayo Duan, 17 July 1923, in *Further Correspondence between His Majesty's Government*, Jx1543z7.C.1924, TUC, UNL.

- ⁷³ G. L. McCormack, to St. Clair Gainer, Havana, 31 August 1923, in *Further Correspondence between His Majesty's Government*, Jx1543z7.C.1924, TUC, UNL.
- ⁷⁴ "Warning Against Emigration to Cuba," *The Saint Lucia Gazette* (3 February 1923), 31. (emphasis in original).
- ⁷⁵ Manuel Rionda to Manatí Sugar Company, 14 January 1923, BBC, RG II, S. 10a-c, Box 69.
- ⁷⁶ Carlos Manuel de Cespedes to St. Clair Gainer, British Legation, Havana, 4 July 1924, in *Further Correspondence between His Majesty's Government*, Jx1543z7.C.1924, TUC, UNL.
- ⁷⁷ See Carlos M. Trelles, *El progreso (1902-1905) y el retroceso (1906-1922) de la República de Cuba* (Conferencia en el Aula Magna del Instituto, el 14 de abril de 1923), (Matanzas: Imprenta de Tomás González, 1923) and Dr. Jorge Le-Roy y Cassá, *Inmigración anti-sanitaria* (Leído en la Academia de Ciencias Médicas, Físicas, y Naturales de la Habana, Sesión del 14 de diciembre de 1923), (Havana: Dorrbecker, 1929).
- ⁷⁸ "A Jamaican Negro Beaten by Three Policemen," *The Negro World* (20 January 1923), 10.
- ⁷⁹ Godfrey Haggard to Cuban Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 3 January 1924, in *Correspondence between His Majesty's Government and the Cuban Government Respecting the Ill-treatment of British West Indian Labourers in Cuba, No. 1* (1924), Jx1543z7.C.1924, TUC, UNL.
- ⁸⁰ Godfrey Haggard to Cuban Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 20 February 1924, in *Correspondence between His Majesty's Government*, Jx1543z7.C.1924, TUC, UNL.
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- ⁸⁷ A. Montes to Cuban Secretary of State, 23 January 1924, in *Further Correspondence between His Majesty's Government*, Jx1543z7.C.1924, TUC, UNL.
- ⁸⁸ Aurelio Portuondo to Manuel Rionda, 25 January 1924, BBC, RG II, S. 10a-c, Box 58.
- ⁸⁹ "Memorandum for the Secretary of State," 25 January 1924, enclosed in Aurelio Portuondo to Manuel Rionda, 25 January 1924, BBC, RG II, S. 10a-c, Box 58.
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- ⁹¹ D. St. Clair Gainer to Cuban Secretary of State, 17 April 1924, enclosed in St. Clair Gainer to Mr. MacDonald, Foreign Office, London, 19 April 1924, in *Further Correspondence between His Majesty's Government*, Jx1543z7.C.1924, TUC, UNL.
- ⁹² "West Indian Labourers in Cuba," Memorandum, enclosed in D. St. Clair Gainer to Mr. MacDonald, 23 April 1924, in *Further Correspondence between His Majesty's Government*, Jx1543z7.C.1924, TUC, UNL.
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- ⁹⁴ Report of Sánchez Clavel, First Lieutenant, enclosed in Guillermo Patterson, Cuban Under-Secretary of State, to D. St. Clair Gainer, 6 May 1924, enclosed in D. St. Clair Gainer to Mr. MacDonald, 14 May 1924, in *Further Correspondence between His Majesty's Government*, Jx1543z7.C.1924, TUC, UNL.

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¹⁰¹ D. St. Clair Gainer to Mr. MacDonald, 14 July 1924, in *Further Correspondence between His Majesty's Government*, Jx1543z7.C.1924, TUC, UNL.

¹⁰² See "Official Tales of Cuban Cruelty: 'Uncle Tom's Cabin in a White Paper. 'Red Sugar'," *The Daily Chronicle* (15 July 1924); Rafael Rodriguez Altunaga to Editor, *The Daily Chronicle*, 16 July 1924; "Cuba Reply of Tales of Cruelty: 'Hideous Deeds' Not Denied: Alleged Offencers on Trial," *The Daily Chronicle* (18 July 1924), ANC, Fondo 304-Secretaria de Estado, Leg. 457, No. 10149.

¹⁰³ See, for instance, the Government Notices in *The Saint Lucia Gazette* (15 July 1924, 11 October 1924, 12 January 1925).

CHAPTER VI

CUBAN NATIONALISM, SUGAR INTERESTS, DEPRESSION AND DEPORTATIONS

The second half of the 1920s witnessed a process of gradual and relative decline in the immigration of British Caribbean workers to Cuba. However, they remained one of the most numerous migrant groups, having a significant presence within Cuban society. By 1925, in the province of Camagüey estimates of black British migrants ranged from 15,000 to 40,000.¹ By 1930, despite only 38 registered arrivals of Jamaicans, the estimate of British Antilleans in the country was of 40,000 Jamaicans and 3,000 from other islands.² Many of them were more or less settled in the country, although many of the attitudes against them remained the same as in previous years. But in the late twenties their position was to be affected by a number of social, political, and economic changes which took place during, and because of, the administration of Gerardo Machado (1924-1933). At the same time, many migrants had consolidated their position in the social arena through associations, churches, and social clubs. But the Cuba of the 1920s was a changing society. There was a rise of nationalist feeling in the country and marginalized sectors such as Cuban blacks and workers began to have a stronger presence in the politics, society, and culture of the country.³

Among the developments affecting the immigrants were Machado's sugar policies. As an attempt to avoid the overproduction of 1925, the "Ley Verdeja" of 1926 limited the amount of sugar to be produced by 10%. With the intention of protecting the Cuban *colonos*, subsequent legislation established a quota system whereby the sugar mills had to buy the cane of the local farmers in proportion to their production. 1 January 1927 was established as the date for the formal beginning of the sugar crop, limiting those planters who otherwise would have begun grinding in December. This practice shortened the length of the crop season and, in turn, limited the amount of working days –and therefore the incomes- of people employed in the sugar industry. It is not surprising then that the Cuban labour movement was also consolidating its position in that decade with the foundation of the National Confederation of Cuban Workers in 1925. The Cuban Communist Party was also founded that year. Protectionist sugar policies, as well as local workers, found a voice amongst the intellectuals of the period in the form of Ramiro Guerra y Sanchez's nationalist defence in *Azúcar y población en las Antillas*, first published in 1927.⁴ Guerra y Sanchez condemned the latifundium led by the big foreign sugar mills in eastern Cuba and

also the importation of foreign labourers that displaced the local workers, depressed salaries, and lowered the living standards of the Cubans. In general, the social and economic changes at the local, and later international, levels were affecting all aspects of the sugar industry. Those who have examined the period have noted that the “reality” of the sugar industry of the late 1920s and early 1930s was depression;⁵ the sugar industry was –to borrow the words of historian Luis Aguilar- in a state of “precarious balance” that would end in disaster.⁶

The year 1926 witnessed many concerns with regard to the lack of field workers in the sugar industry. The labour conditions were unsettled and President Machado announced “he will not authorize the entry of more Jamaicans and Haitians for cane work during the coming crops” due to its “evil consequences.”⁷ Machado’s public works scheme was also a subject of concern because, as it was then argued, the wages offered competed with those on the sugar plantations. Petitions were made to the Cuban government to allow the entrance of Antillean labourers because of the effect that this scheme was having on the labour market.⁸ While the antagonism between the *colonos* and the big sugar mills was centred upon the use of foreign labourers by the latter,⁹ some *colonos* also advocated the entrance of Antillean labourers. The Vice-President of the National Association of Colonos of Cuba complained that failure to allow the importation of Antilleans or preferably Haitians “will mean a loss of approximately \$9,000,000 to the *colonos* of Camagüey and Oriente.” He argued:

That immigration of this kind is socially undesirable is a well known fact, as often contagious diseases are brought into the country with the laborers, but that this introduction is absolutely necessary to the economic welfare of the country cannot be doubted and immigration of this kind will have to continue until a substitute more favourable and at the same time as cheap can be found, or until the prices of sugar are such that they will enable the cane growers to pay more for their cane cutting and field work.¹⁰

The Cuban government replied by saying that the entrance of foreign labourers into the country would be authorized only if the persons or companies bringing them guaranteed their repatriation after the end of the sugar crop. It was reported that the Secretariat of Agriculture contended that the public works program did not represent an obstacle for the sugar industry because “Jamaicans and Haitians prefer to work in the cane fields.”¹¹ It was argued elsewhere that the migrant labourers came to work for the sugar industry as an excuse, in order to leave later for more populated areas away from the plantations and avoid returning to their islands of origin.¹² “The Jamaicans and other British West Indian laborers,”

it was reported by U.S. authorities in Cuba, “tend to gravitate toward the larger cities and the return of the full number of field-hands imported is practically impossible.”¹³ Sugar entrepreneurs were foreseeing the problems of labour supply for the 1927 sugar crop. Salvador Rionda of the Manatí Sugar Mill wrote to the central headquarters of the company:

You can realize that on account of many mills in Cuba starting to grind on the same day, there will be great competition amongst mills, especially in Oriente and Camagüey, for their labor supply, and for this reason we want to try to bring immigrants instead of trying to take the labor away from other mills.

The head of the Rionda clan, Manuel, had manifested his dislike for Jamaican labourers. He possibly wanted to avoid the problems that he had known about through Aurelio Portuondo’s recent intervention in the British-Cuban diplomatic conflicts. Thus, Salvador Rionda joined the neighbouring mills of the CASC to bring labour “from the British West Indies, outside of Jamaica” and asked for a budget appropriation of \$60,000 for the endeavour.¹⁴ But it seems that confidence was not widespread between the different sugar mill owners and administrators. Manuel Rionda wrote to Salvador advising him to be cautious with the neighbours at Chaparra and Delicias “because, as far as I know, the outcome has never been good for us when we have tried to bring people in combination with those sugar mills. They always keep many cane cutters and give very little.”¹⁵ After much tension with regard to labour, as the official day for the beginning of the crop approached, labour conditions were reported to be “everything to be desired” as Antillean labourers had been imported and there were no indications of any labour disturbances.¹⁶

Subsequent years experienced similar complications with regard to labour supplies. In 1928 it was the turn of the Haitian government to decide to restrict emigration to Cuba until some improvement was shown in the treatment of the workers. The preferred labour force of northeastern sugar mills such as Boston, Preston (UFC) and Tánamo (AFSC) was to be limited. R. B. Wood, General Manager of the Chaparra and Delicias Sugar Mills (also in the northeast), illustrated the situation of 1928 in a letter to the CASC’s central office: “Our own immigration business seems to be progressing satisfactorily, but the other Oriente mills are, apparently, having much trouble.”¹⁷ Wood, nonetheless, had been taking the necessary precautions to secure his labour supply. He reported to his superiors that:

I understand that both the United Fruit Company and Cayo Mambi are sending agents throughout the British West Indies, to Grenada, St. Vincent, St. Kitts, Barbados and Dominica, which, as you know, are our special preserve for labor recruiting.

But by then, Chaparra and Delicias had agents “on the scene” who were “very expert in such operations” and had “a fortnight start over the other Companies.”¹⁸ The administration of the AFSC had written to the Machado government opposing immigration restrictions, and commenting on the lack of labourers in the northeast region and the need to bring migrant workers.¹⁹ Writing to the government seems to have worked, as this company alone brought some 12,566 immigrants, mostly Haitians, from 1927 to 1930, through their own port in Sagua de Tánamo.²⁰

The big sugar entrepreneurs of the northeast were being touched by Machado’s policies and the unsettled state of the sugar industry and they had to take active measures to secure a labour supply. Spending more than expected, the Riondas at Manatí managed to get some 550 men from the eastern British Caribbean islands to be sent to the *coltrías*. But still Salvador Rionda reported, “Chaparra and Delicias have been very short of labor.”²¹ He also expressed hopes that the “Cuban Government will change its attitude toward the importing of Negro labor, for otherwise the cost of producing sugar is going to go up because of lower grinding capacities of the sugar mills and higher rates for cutting and hauling.”²² Manuel Rionda, though sharing his nephew’s concerns, notified him immediately when he learned about the authorization provided to import thousands of labourers to Chaparra, Delicias, and Tánamo mills. Aware of the distance between the Cuban government’s rhetoric and their actions, he limited himself to stating the information to the younger Rionda and saying: “I think you must take care of this.”²³

In 1925, the Cuban press reported on the good treatment received by Jamaicans in Cuba, quoting Sir Donald McNeill, the British Sub-Secretary of Foreign Affairs, in his response to the House of Commons on the matter. He was quoted as saying that:

The treatment currently received in Cuba by workers, British Subjects of the West Indies, has improved much since the English Government dealt it with the Cuban government some months ago.²⁴

Sir Donald was referring to the 1924 diplomatic correspondence that led to the presentation of two White Papers to the British Parliament. But as the White Papers were published, the principal British protagonists representing the British Antilleans (Consuls Godfrey Haggard [1921-1924] and D. St. Clair Gainer [1922-1924]) disappeared from the Cuban scene, presumably transferred to posts elsewhere. The Vice Consul at Camagüey was also replaced and the post in Santiago was left vacant after the Consul himself was caught involved in the traffic of black British Caribbean workers. A new consul was appointed in Havana, T. J. Morris, and inspections were made of the different vice

consulates around the island in 1925. Apparently aware of the diplomatic events preceding his appointment, Morris engineered the post of “Secretary of Immigration” to assist in

... smoothing out the difficulties caused to the legation and the Cuban authorities by the numerous complaints from British West Indians working on the Cuban sugar plantations, difficulties which at one time threatened to cause an interruption of the good diplomatic relations existing between His Majesty's Government and that of Cuba.²⁵

The expenses of the post were paid for by the Government of Jamaica, and provided relief for the consular officers working directly under the Foreign Office, in terms of both finances and time. Right from the start of his appointment Consul Morris began what was labelled as a “new policy of conciliation” that “will eventually reduce the volume of complaints from Jamaicans, and enable the Consul-General to devote at least half of his time to consular work.”²⁶ In 1930, after some time in the post, Morris himself provided a summary of the situation of the British Antilleans in Cuba, noting that, after the problems of 1924: “A *modus vivendi* has now been established, and worked successfully with a minimum of trouble, for five years.”²⁷

But what was the reality of such “conciliation” and “*modus vivendi*” for the black British migrants who were working in Cuba during the late 1920s and the early 1930s? From the available data, it is virtually impossible to ascertain whether there was a real improvement in the conditions of the immigrants after 1924 (as stated by Sir Donald McNeill). Certainly, there was not another diplomatic quarrel such as the one caused by the massacre in Jobabo or another presentation of White Papers in the British Parliament. But their continuing presence in Cuba was the source of further uneasiness amongst Cubans within the power structures, the Cuban government, and the U.S. officials who were always concerned about the country's stability. Moreover, by the 1920s, the migrants had consolidated their social and cultural infrastructure in their different communities - a factor that aggravated the concerns of Cuban society.

The UNIA had been active in Cuba from as early as 1920. Many divisions of the Association continued to renew their official registration with the Cuban Government during the late twenties.²⁸ Divisions in Florida, Guantánamo, and different areas of Camagüey remained active during the 1920s and up to the 1930s and 1940s.²⁹ Delegates from six divisions or chapters of the UNIA in Cuba (Antilla, Camagüey, Ciego de Avila, Havana, Marianao, and Oriente) attended the emergency convention of the organisation held in Detroit in March 1926.³⁰ Twenty-six divisions or chapters either reported their activities to the *Negro World* in the 1920s or were listed as active in the UNIA records for

1925-1926. F. A. Francis, A. McLarty, William A. Mills, and S. U. Smith were delegates from Cuba to the Sixth Convention of the UNIA in Kingston in 1929.³¹ Other associations of migrants in different areas included the Beneficence Society of Baraguá, which had amongst its leaders Joseph M. Gaskin and William Tait.³² The Jamaican Club of Banes, on the premises of the UFC, was formally founded in August 1924, although it is said to have informally existed before, having the UNIA as a precedent.³³

While foreign labourers were used as strike breakers, they were also active in labour struggles along with workers of other nationalities. Several historians have already recorded the participation of the Union of Antillean Workers of Santiago de Cuba (*Unión de Obreros Antillanos de Santiago de Cuba*) and its delegate, the Jamaican Henry (Enrique) Shackleton, in the foundation of the CNOC and the labour congresses of Cienfuegos and Camagüey in 1925.³⁴ In the late twenties there was also a concerted effort to organise British Antillean workers on the part of the Cuban Communist Party.³⁵ Last but certainly not least, the migrants in the different towns of eastern Cuba continually attended Churches such as the Salvation Army, the Seventh Day Adventist, and other protestant denominations. Despite their economic limitations, the Salvation Army was involved in the difficult task of keeping ten day schools on different sugar estates.³⁶

Although these organizational practices might have assisted many migrants in their survival within Cuba, they did not change the existing prejudices or the abuses to which they were exposed. Being organised probably had a conflicting effect. On one hand, it could make the migrants more visible within the society and therefore more exposed to discriminatory actions. On the other, by serving as a source of stability, organisational centres were sometimes promoted, sponsored, or assisted by the sugar mill owners and administrators that –with such a critical labour market– preferred a tranquil and stable labour force. Company Towns such as the Baraguá Sugar Mill of the Punta Alegre Sugar Company in Camagüey province (now Ciego de Avila) had within its British Caribbean community churches belonging to the Salvation Army and the Christian Mission, and at different points had a Grenadian Club, a Social Club, and a Unity Club, all founded by Caribbean migrants.³⁷ Elders in the community and of descendants of migrants remembered that amidst the structural segregation of the Company Town, the dynamics in the community seemed to have been fine.³⁸ Unfortunately, as times in Cuba became more unsettled and the social environment more hostile, discrimination against migrants prevailed.

It is very likely that organizations such as the UNIA operated under pressure. Garvey's fate in the U.S. (his trial and imprisonment for mail fraud) was kept in the spotlight by the Cuban press,³⁹ and the government kept the different branches of the organisation under surveillance. Regional newspapers reported on "Marcus Garvey, Jamaican by birth, eminent man educated in Europe, admirable writer and orator of extraordinary conditions," but also mentioned his "monstrous plan to elevate the level of the black race" that was "nothing more than a Monroe Doctrine applied to Africa."⁴⁰ Propaganda concerning the whereabouts of the pan-African leader seems to have worked in tandem with Cuban racial fears. When Garvey applied to the Cuban consulate in Kingston for a visa to travel to Cuba in 1928, Consul Armando de León notified the Cuban Secretary of State about the racial nature of Garvey's ideals and his recent deportation from the United States. "I put this to your superior knowledge," he added, "because I regard the presence of this person in our fatherland to be prejudicial." The Judicial and Secret Police, and the Secret Police of Santiago de Cuba were mobilized with regard to the matter and a "meticulous investigation" was requested about the "individual referred" to by the Provincial Government of Oriente.⁴¹ Later, in 1930, the UNIA was accused of "spreading propaganda tending to cause racial disagreements" in the eastern side of the island and President Machado signed an expulsion decree against Garvey, who was in Jamaica at the time.⁴²

The actions against the UNIA were not the only area where the activities of the migrants became the target of criticism, discrimination, and prejudice. It seems that the image held in the early years of the century, of the migrant as having criminal tendencies, had persisted. Whether or not the accounts were truthful or just sensationalism, Caribbean migrants continued to have a high coverage in the press as the authors of crimes and the protagonists of a variety of violent attacks. In 1925 *El Camagueyano* reported that in Guantánamo "a bloody event took place, carried out by a Jamaican, who went mad." The man in question suffered from a "sudden dementia" and took out a gun, which he shot in different directions, wounding one of the passengers.⁴³ Another event that year involved a Cuban woman and a Jamaican man who shot each other. The Jamaican had wanted an amorous relationship (*amores*) with the Cuban woman and she rejected him. Because of her denial, "she had to be maltreated" by the man, but she shot the man in self-defence. The Jamaican, however, "due to his greater strength," managed to disarm the woman and shot her as well. Both were wounded in the event and were detained in the hospital of

Camagüey.⁴⁴ A police officer in Santiago reported to his headquarters in 1925 that a woman described as *mulata* (mulatto) and “English” from Jamaica

... does not work, devotes herself to prostitution, being at the same time immoral and prone to scandals. It is known that she looks for underage women, from her country, to induce into a life of licentiousness.⁴⁵

Based on accounts of persons arriving from Havana, the local press of Guantánamo reported on a Jamaican who attacked a Spaniard in Jobabo.⁴⁶ The late twenties also witnessed the publication of Jorge Le-Roy y Cassá’s discourse on “anti-sanitary immigration” (which had been delivered in 1923), as well as Ramiro Guerra y Sanchez’s argument concerning the presence of migrant workers in Cuba. The statements by the latter were echoed at the time by other writers who deplored the substitution of Spanish immigrants by black Jamaicans in Cuba, a migrant group considered a great “danger” because it would cause the eventual “dissolution of the nationality” in Cuba.⁴⁷ Another intellectual, Emilio Roig de Leuchsenring, criticised the “undesirable immigration” of Jamaicans and Haitians who were “less civilised, more weak,” “noxious to the country,” and represented an “extraordinary danger” for the nation.⁴⁸

The opposition to the immigration of Antillean labourers manifested itself through the discourses of race, nation, sanitation and labour. It was perhaps the latter, that of the labour market and the need or redundancy of the immigrant workers, that seems to have dominated the debate in the 1920s. A possible reason for this was the vivid memory of the crisis of 1921 that had graphically illustrated the critical situation and the tensions between local and foreign labourers in the event of a fall in sugar prices. The unstable circumstances of the sugar industry during that decade probably kept this awareness alive. Such a prospect demanded either a discontinuation of foreign immigration or a strict regulation of it. One of the principal criticisms about the administration of Mario García Menocal (1913-1920) was that it allowed the entrance of thousands of black workers. But for the sugar producers –particularly the ones in the east- the instability of the industry, the low sugar prices, and the Cuban restrictions, were a prime reason for lowering the cost of production. That could be done, in part, precisely by contracting cheap, foreign labourers. And many of the big U.S. sugar interests in the northeast of Cuba (the Manatí, Chaparra, Delicias, Preston, Boston, Tánamo sugar mills) were actively seeking ways to introduce cheap migrant labour from Jamaica, Haiti and the eastern Caribbean islands.

Reacting to the “the wave of criticism against the immigration of Antilleans” a writer in the local newspaper in Banes favoured the immigration of Haitians and Jamaicans.

His argument was made in reaction to the newspapers in central and western Cuba (*El Sol* in Cienfuegos and other periodicals in Havana) that were writing about the “black danger” that the Antillean workers represented and the “need to impede the entrance of such a contingent to our fatherland.”

Jamaicans and Haitians are the ones in charge of the most arduous part of the sugar works and thanks to these Haitians and Jamaicans, the trade can sell great quantities and the industry can improve, making it possible for money to get into circulation and reach everyone. This immigration, as those who are against it must know, is the only one that directly benefits Cuba, because it is the only one that comes exclusively to cut our rich cane, to convert into gold our principal product, challenging the rain, or the rigours of the blazing and merciless sun, under which we would like to see, if only for one hour, those who are against the Haitian and Jamaican immigration.

The author added that “one must not fear that these elements will multiply in our country and form families” because they only came on a temporary basis and leave after the sugar crop.⁴⁹ And indeed, during the 1920s, the policy of repatriating migrants immediately after the sugar crop was actively enforced and publicised.⁵⁰ In 1924, President Alfredo Zayas himself actively guaranteed in the press the repatriation of the Antilleans after the crop, when the President of the Sugar Industry Association wrote to him opposing Jamaican migration. But in so doing Zayas admitted that he had reservations about taking “determinations to regulate or foment the desirable migrations” and that it was a responsibility for Congress. While he acknowledged the importance of the “problem” of the Antillean presence in Cuba, such immigration was necessary for “our great sugar production.”⁵¹ As shown above, Machado’s rhetoric against “undesirable foreigners” when he took office in 1926 was also condemned in sugar industry circles.⁵² But it only took direct correspondence between the sugar producers in the northeast and his government to allow the entrance of the labour they needed. The laxity in the migration policies was actively condemned in some sectors that called for a systematic policy that would “eliminate the evils” that occurred when there was no regulation. A writer in the bi-monthly publication *Neptuno* warned that Cuba had become the “favorite” destination for “those elements, who damage, rather than benefit, Cuba.”⁵³

Some of the *colonos* in the east favoured repatriation, but they also acknowledged that it could cause a crisis in the labour market. A motion presented by the President of the Colonos de Oriente, Dr. Tomás Puyans, said that “without repealing any disposition with regard to the repatriation”, it had to be made in a “gradual and progressive” way securing the replacement of any Antillean by a local labourer.⁵⁴ Such statements illustrate the

vulnerable position in which the national sugar sector found itself. Another writer, the Congressman Carlos Manuel Cruz, argued that for “the future of Cuba” one had to combat the “immigration of elements of the race of colour”. He nonetheless acknowledged that “the existence of the sugar industry was due, in great part, to the Antillean immigration; the only one that can live and work in our cane *colonias*.” But Cruz antagonised the foreign sugar interests that were requesting an Antillean immigration quota. That sector, he argued, “worries more about the cost of production of the sugar, than of what the strong annual introduction of 30 to 40,000 men, healthy and strong, in full vitality, of the black race, would represent for the future of Cuba.” For him, “an industry whose existence depends on the indispensable employment of the manual labour of an inferior race, that has to be imported, is not a healthy industry.” After saying that Australia produced sugar with a white labour force, the Congressman concluded by stating the established views of the period and appealing to the government:

The problem is very important, and we have faith that our authorities will know how to resolve it satisfactorily, finding an adequate solution between the present economic needs, the interests of an industry, mostly foreign, and the racial and cultural future of our country.⁵⁵

Cruz’s position was also published in other Cuban newspapers and was part of an ongoing debate on the topic, notably in *El Diario de Cuba* of Santiago de Cuba. The U.S. authorities, as part of their survey of the events in Cuban society, reported on the discussions over the issue of Antillean migration observing that “cases are known of plantation owners who clamour in public against foreign labor, yet privately employ only such.” “There is no doubt, the U.S. Consul in Santiago reported, “that immigration of Jamaicans and Haitians is essential to the prosperity of the sugar and coffee planting industry unless they are substituted by a European element.”⁵⁶

While planters were caught between admitting the need for foreign labour and decrying its evils –or both at the same time- other marginal sectors held equally ambivalent positions. The labour movement expressed what could be labelled as an amicable opposition to the immigration, and a leading spokesman of the Cuban blacks remained silent on the current debates. On the workers side, the 1925 Congress in Cienfuegos proclaimed with regard to the immigration that:

Not being our concern the restriction of the entrance of the fellow immigrants and considering that they come misled, ignorant of the real situation in the country, where [they] lower the level of the labour force worsening the situation of the workers that look for our subsistence here [in Cuba], the SCON [*Segundo*

Congreso Obrero Nacional] agrees to ask all the Worker's Organisations in Cuba that they address their peers abroad advising them not to come to Cuba where the situation of the workers deteriorates more every day.⁵⁷

While the intention was not to antagonise, the workers clearly preferred foreign workers to stay away from Cuba and leave the space to those who had to work for their subsistence in Cuba.

Black Cubans, on the other hand, had been caught in the migration debates led by Cuban white elites, earlier in the 1910s. While they recognized the conflict caused in the labour market by the foreign workers and its impact on the Cuban working class – predominantly non-white – black Cubans did not embrace totally the racial nature of the anti-immigration discourse of the 1910s.⁵⁸ Similarly, in the late 1920s, Cuban blacks were invited to provide their opinion on the issue of Haitian and Jamaican migration. One of the leading spokesmen for Afro-Cubans was a middle-class architect from Havana by the name of Gustavo Urrutia. Urrutia, who had a regular column named “Ideales de una raza” in the mainstream newspaper *El Diario de la Marina*, was asked to address the issue of Caribbean migration in 1928. A person named as “Dr. Alfa” challenged him –apparently in the press– to protest against the Antillean migration. According to “Dr. Alfa,” if the “Haitians and Jamaicans, without moral or culture” were lowering that of the Cuban blacks to a “disgraceful” level, why had the latter not made any protest? Based on his experience struggling to have a voice within Cuban society through his column, Urrutia concluded that it would be useless to express an opinion that would not be listened to. People such as Ramiro Guerra, he thought, had already exhausted the issue of the Haitians and Jamaicans, and he agreed with the latter in relating the immigration to the big American sugar interests. Urrutia maintained, then, that no matter how heroic one wanted to be, if the racism of the Americans were taken into account, acting against them would be like bringing “lightning on our heads.” Urrutia’s unwillingness to state his position on the Antillean migration –and one can be sure that he had one– illustrates perhaps the delicate position of Cuban blacks within the debate on foreign labour, as much as their marginalized position within Cuban society. Later, in the 1930s, when the economic pressure was more intense, it was reported that the white and black Cubans shared a “similar antipathy” to Haitians and Jamaicans due to their lower standard of living. It was reported that many “Cuban Negro leaders” sympathised with the deportations that took place in 1933.⁵⁹

There were in fact differences and probably antagonisms between black Cubans and British Antilleans, and in many ways the latter remained as a relatively isolated community. In spite of this, there is also some evidence of unity in other instances. The

UNIA, for example, is a case in point where some black Cubans found a certain unity with the Caribbean workers. In a conversation in 1999, an 86-year-old black Cuban woman in Jobabo told me that as an adolescent she participated for some time in the meetings of the UNIA. When I asked her about Garvey, she responded immediately: “the door of Africa open to the blacks”. She mentioned that, whilst the association was mainly of Antilleans, the Cubans sympathised with it. She paid her monthly fees of 2 pesos and attended the meetings because she wanted the advancement of blacks. The testimony of Afro-Cuban María de los Reyes Castillo Bueno (Reyita) also illustrates how the message of Marcus Garvey appealed to the Afro-Cuban population of the early twentieth century. A woman conscious of the racial discrimination against her, Reyita joined the movement and participated in its activities. She also narrates how Jamaicans were persecuted and ultimately expelled from the country, leading to a decline in the UNIA’s activities.⁶⁰

As has been noted by McLeod, since very early in the movement, Cubans participated in the meetings “by the hundreds and by the thousands” to listen to Garvey during his visit to Cuba in 1921. The Cubans are said to “pack the meetings, join the UN.I.A. and address the audience in the Spanish language.”⁶¹ In 1921 alone, *The Negro World* reported the participation of Cubans in meetings at Jobabo, Guantánamo, Remedios, and Río Cauto. Cubans Elacio Espino, Thomas Hernández, and Marcelino Echamendez are said to have delivered speeches in some of these meetings.⁶² Throughout the 1920s, Cuban participation was also registered in some instances such as Henrietta Vinton Davis’s visit in 1927. Also, there were efforts from UNIA members to overcome the language barrier between the Spanish speaking Cubans and the English speaking Caribbean workers.⁶³ At the opposite end of the efforts for unity among black Cubans and British Antilleans were the attempts to divide them. *The Negro World* condemned the *Heraldo de Cuba* for prejudicing “the minds of the Cuban Negroes against we the West Indian Negroes” through propaganda that portrayed the latter as cannibals. The article declared that with such propaganda, “if the Cuban Negroes knows that the Jamaicans are eating white people they are going to keep as far as possible from us, as when we cannot get white folks to eat we may try some of them also.”⁶⁴

In terms of the labour movement, it was no surprise that there were antagonisms between local and foreign workers. This may have been overshadowed by the general economic prosperity of the Dance of the Millions, but in the 1920s, with a fall in wages and a general trend towards depression, the differences between the Cubans and the immigrants increased. That is partly represented in the Second National Labour Congress

manifesto quoted above, in which the Cuban workers preferred to keep the foreigners out of the Cuban labour market. But, while the divisions between locals and foreigners may have been dominant, that does not exclude the possibility that on many occasions –united as workers- they found a common ground for struggle against their employers. As has been argued by Barry Carr, the evidence “of the participation of black immigrants in Cuban labor unions is difficult, but not impossible, to find.”⁶⁵ In 1923, during a general strike in the district of Camagüey, the press reported that: “Haitians, Jamaicans and native cutters have joined hand in this concerted movement to secure increases in pay and the situation is becoming more acute each day.”⁶⁶

In 1925, the Federation of Workers of Havana demonstrated against the government’s attempt to divide local and foreign workers and blame the latter for labour conflicts. In doing so, it opposed the idea that the “imported evil” had to be “eliminated through the deportation of foreign labor activists” and declared that: “Among workers there is no distinction.”⁶⁷ Carr has been able to document how there were efforts on the part of the labour and Communist organisations in Cuba to increase the participation of black workers, including the Caribbean migrants. In what he has labelled a movement of “pan-ethnic” solidarity, the late 1920s and early 1930s witnessed the activism of some black immigrants who refused to act as strike-breakers, made demands to mill managers, were active in communist mobilisations, and had a role in the strikes during the 1933 revolution.⁶⁸ At that time, for example, during an instance of labour mobilisation at the Central Senado, it is reported that some of the delegates on behalf of the workers were Spaniards, Jamaicans, and Haitians.⁶⁹ That a Jamaican by the name of Elijah Sigree was shot in one of these mobilisations is perhaps an indication of their activism in the labour arena.⁷⁰ In a separate instance, Cuban workers on the railroad and in a steamship company went on strike because of the dismissal of “fellow workers who were foreigners.”⁷¹ As Jorge Ibarra has noted, the Antillean workers were not necessarily contented with their depressed salaries, and gradually participated in the labour struggles in Cuba from the strikes in the 1910s up to their involvement in the Cuban Communist Party in the 1930s.⁷²

Economic Depression and Repatriations: Jamaicans and Eastern Caribbean Islanders

The 1930s presented other challenges for black migrants and for Cuban society in general. Politically, the Cuban government had become more repressive and intolerant of any

dissidence, thereby provoking increased opposition. Intellectuals, students, communists, 'old guard' politicians, and the labour movement were among the sectors that in different, and sometimes opposing, ways reacted to Machado's regime. In terms of the economy, the crisis in the market and the depression represented further complications for the Cuban sugar industry. This sector was particularly affected by controls and tariffs in the international market, in particular the Hawley-Smoot tariff limiting Cuban access to U.S. sugar markets. In the early thirties, sugar prices continued the falling trend of the late twenties, only more dramatically. In 1930, the average New York price went down to an unprecedented 1.471 cents in 1930, and later reached 0.59 cents in May 1932.⁷³

These changes would have an effect on the more than 40,000 British Caribbean migrants that were in Cuba.⁷⁴ One can suggest that the economic and political crisis might have led the destiny of the immigrants in two directions. Critical working and social conditions in the plantation society might have forced them to struggle within the labour movement.⁷⁵ Another alternative was to leave Cuba to return to their islands of origin. The latter was, from a different point of view, an alternative for a Cuban government that was willing to eliminate all the redundant workers from the country. Cuban policies included the repatriation not only of Jamaicans and Haitians, but also of Spaniards, Puerto Ricans, and other alien workers. In 1931, the Cuban government started the repatriation process and also attempted measures to regulate and even stop migration into the country.⁷⁶ This process of repatriating foreigners would entail, yet again, problems and sufferings for the British Caribbean islanders, and highlight the actions of the British authorities and of the appointed Jamaican Secretary of Immigration.

As before, during the 1930s, different groups demonstrated their open and active opposition to the black migrants. In government circles, Machado himself was opposed to black migration. In 1929, the U.S. Embassy reported to Washington DC on Machado's second inauguration as President, and on the "somewhat marked favoritism on the part of the President towards the Spanish Special Embassy and Resident Embassy." The U.S. Embassy official, Noble B. Judah, wrote giving the reasons for the "favoritism":

President Machado called me aside at one of these ceremonies and remarked that he was doing this deliberately as he was 'playing politics'. At an interview[,] which I had with him yesterday morning, President Machado told me that his purpose in favoring the Spanish was to encourage the immigration of Spaniards; that Cuba needed immigrants and must choose among those which were available to it, Spaniards and West Indians specially. He said that Cuba's negro population was already quite as large as was desirable and that he wished to encourage white migration...⁷⁷

Since early 1931 the government implemented measures dealing with the presence of the migrants, ordering the repatriation of those who were unemployed and in a destitute condition.⁷⁸ But even when the press reported constantly on the departures of immigrant labourers, many sectors in the Province of Oriente understood that more action was needed. For example, in August 1931, the Civic Committee of Local Defence of Puerto Padre reacted to the overwhelming presence of the CASC. After criticising the company's economic and territorial control that limited "free commerce", the Committee noted:

It is also to be reckoned as an improper conduct at this time when labour is scarce, that the Company [CASC] has been using for the shipment of sugar and other labours, foreign elements of that class [Antilleans], that take from the native, and from others more desirable, the means of living.⁷⁹

Along the same lines, the regional press in Oriente Province commented on the situation of Palma Soriano.

Despite the orders dictated by the Superior authorities for the Antillean immigrants to be gathered together and repatriated, nothing has been done, at least in our area, since the fields continue to be invaded with Haitians and Jamaicans.

These workers are in ruinous competition for work with the Cuban workers, since many of them will even work just to eat. Right now, with the coffee and maize harvest coming, which is the only hope that natives have of sorting out in part their economic situation, they find themselves surplanted by the competition from the Antillean workers.

It is just that the small amount of work that there is in the gathering of coffee should be for the Cuban and Spanish workers, who have their family and interests in Cuba.⁸⁰

The crisis of the depression in the 1930s dislocated the steady trend of Jamaican departures that had started in the late twenties. McLeod's sources in his documented examination of the repatriations process indicate that, "more than 12,000 Jamaicans sought and received repatriation through the Emigrants Protection program" between 1930 and 1937.⁸¹ But the amount of Jamaicans arriving from Cuba between those years is recorded at 22,429, almost doubling the figures for those seeking assistance.⁸²

It is precisely the repatriation of the thirties that has received most attention from scholars studying Caribbean migration to Cuba. As noted before, the usual comparison has been, for obvious numerical reasons, that between Haitians and Jamaicans (the two major groups), for which some methodological concerns were presented before. But comparative studies of the repatriation process have also neglected the study of differences between

islanders coming from the different British Caribbean colonies. This is probably due to the lack of reliable numerical data for the non-Jamaican migration into Cuba. But between the reference to the Jamaicans only, or the generalisation of all the other islanders under “British West Indians”, the distinctions between Jamaican migrants and other British Leeward and Windward Islanders remain unexplored. If, as it has been argued, British Caribbean migrants in general were in a better position than others, the question is whether *all* the British Antilleans were in the same situation? In my assessment of the repatriations during the 1930s, rather than focusing solely on the Haitians and Jamaicans, I centre on the particular experience of British Leeward and Windward Islanders. The focus on this group illustrates the active role of the migrants in pressing for their right to diplomatic representation, and also shows that consular support was not present at all moments and for *all* British Caribbean labourers in the same way.

At the centre of my analysis are those eastern Caribbean workers who were concentrated in particular sugar mills such as Chaparra, Delicias, Tánamo, in the northeast, and also in Baraguá in central Cuba. The administration of the mills of the CASC (Chaparra and Delicias) in particular considered the eastern Caribbean islanders a “special preserve for labour recruiting.” Such practice indicates the control and hegemony of the CASC as an economic enterprise and a company town whose purpose was to “attract, hold and control labor.”⁸³ These agro-industrial complexes are perhaps one of the most graphic examples of the traditional company town in Cuba and the Caribbean.

In a company town, virtually everything associated with the settlement, including the houses, store, school, and even the chapel, was subordinate to the business enterprise.⁸⁴

This was obvious when the local interests criticized the company’s control openly. In 1931 it was stated about the CASC that:

This Company exerts an absolute control over everything that can be considered to be the free commerce of men, monopolizing trade, services of electric lighting, railroads, wharf and maritime warehouses, bakeries, ice factories, cattle raising and carwashes, telephones and sawmills. Therefore, due to this control, in the territory comprised in the demarcation under tenure –that is almost all the municipality of Puerto Padre, and part of Holguín, Tunas, and Gibara- industry and commerce are almost exercised by them without anyone else being able to benefit even from the social elements of life and prosperity that industry and commerce represent.⁸⁵

For labourers in the company town, the “social order derived from labor routine, isolation, and company-imposed rules and policies.”⁸⁶ In the case of the CASC, these characteristics

were present not only in the recruitment and management of the labour force, but through the government Rural Guards and private *guardias jurados* –mainly white in complexion- who kept the social order, security, and control in the plantations.⁸⁷ According to a publication promoting the company in the twenties, the labour force of the CASC was of all nationalities, but “preferably Antillean blacks that are not from Jamaica, but from the islands of Barbados, St. Kitts, St. Lucia, Grenada, etc.”⁸⁸ Although I have not been able to ascertain the explicit reasons behind the company’s preference for these particular immigrant groups, their use may have had a rationale linked to the company town structure of the CASC: “labour control”.

The main implication for the labourers controlled by these plantations resided in that very few Leeward and Windward Islanders travelled to Cuba without a pre-arranged contract with a sugar mill. This was not the case for many of the Jamaicans and Haitians who arrived independently through Santiago (though many Haitians did arrive under the contract labour system, particularly to the UFC and AFSC sugar mills). With limited transportation to their islands, apart from that provided by their employer, the recruited labourers from the Leeward and Windward Islands were in many ways bound to the company, and indeed subject to its control. Migrant workers did challenge the company’s control and hegemony, but they then had more limited alternatives for returning home. They could not rely on the CACS’s repatriation schemes and they did not have the advantages of the Jamaicans, who had their own Secretary of Immigration. In the middle of the 1930s crisis and the deportations and assistance to Jamaicans by the Secretary of Immigration, the lack of someone who could assist the other British Antilleans brought their presence as “non-Jamaicans” to the forefront. The usual generalizing term of *jamaiquino(a)* for every black immigrant in Cuba no matter his or her place of origin was no longer valid.

In the summer of 1930, the press in the eastern Caribbean islands reported on a group of 3,000 Dominicans stranded in Cuba. The newspaper, in an attempt at accuracy, commented that the writer must have meant either 300 Dominicans or 3,000 British West Indians (two figures that could be accurate as the possible amount of immigrants in Cuba from either both Dominica alone, or the Windward British colonies). In the published letter, which I will quote in length, the writer stated their difficulties:

Dear Sir-We, the emigrated, who come to Cuba between 1926 and 1927 by permission of the Government, are stranded in Cuba, while the Government of Barbados, Grenada and St. Vincent send for the total number of their men emigrated that year; if the Chaparra Sugar Co. fails to send back the total number, the Company is liable to pay a certain sum for each man left behind.

And why can not [sic] our Government (of Dominica) do the same? Last year when sending back the emigrated from Barbados, several Dominicans tried to get home on the ship but were rejected.

The letter commented on what they were experiencing after the end of the sugar crop:

... this year's crop was finished in June 2, and the company informed us that they were not going to send home anyone, because last year they had sent a boat to the West Indian Islands and the boat had returned empty. Yet, we in Cuba cannot make up a passage money: for we are only working for month [sic] in the year; the rest of the year is 'tempo molto' [*tiempo muerto*, dead season] which means that after crop time starvation stares [sic] us in the face...

As a conclusion, the degree of their sufferings and what they were enduring was illustrated with some analogies.

Sir, we are worse than animals in the pasture; for they have a master to call them in the nights, whilst we have no one to call for us. A prisoner is better of [sic] than we; for when his time has expired, he is let off free; but we; no, no! Many of us would like to see our parents and children. So, please, do help us out of this awful land of Cuba, although we know it is not your duty.⁸⁹

The letter, published in the Dominican press seems to have had some effect. On 6 August 1930, R. B. Wood, General Manager of the Chaparra Sugar Company, found himself replying to the inquiries of the Acting British Consul in Santiago de Cuba with regard to some Dominicans. He explained his views on the situation in the following way:

Please be advised that at the time of sailing of our last ship for the repatriation of these men, we used due diligence and all methods in our power to assure the embarkation of every British subject who was entitled to repatriation.

We maintained a free kitchen at our port for some ten days to the arrival of the ship hoping by that means to lure all interested parties and assure their presence at the instant of sailing. In spite of all this, we were obliged to round up with the 'guardiajurada' [sic] many men who hid in the cane fields and who refused to accept repatriation.

Immediately upon the sailing of this ship these [men] reappeared and quietly resume their employment in agricultural work. No complaint has been received from them until the present and I imagine that the letter you enclose is the product of discontent among a very small minority of the British Negroes on our place.

There is still ample employment in our cane fields and any man who wishes work can secure same.⁹⁰

The different opinions about the conditions in the Chaparra Sugar Company became obvious in the views of the labourer writing to the newspaper and the sugar manager. During

the following year, the situation remained the same: labourers continued to complain about the conditions, and Wood rejected their views.

In February 1931, a collective letter by a group of “British Leeward and Windward West Indian subjects” from the Chaparra Sugar Company was written to the British Legation in Havana. The group of 515 men and women, headed by a Dominican named Melville A. Jacobs, argued that:

The fact is indisputable that the present situation afford[s] us very little scope of maintenance even during the crop, and little or nothing to do during the dull season. So during such critical times we actually have to beg our daily bread around the natives homes [...] Many of us are, at present are [*sic*] suffering in this island and there seems to be no possibility of obtaining passage money to leave. So before things should be worse off, we therefore jointly and severally place this matter entirely to your kind consideration, hoping that you shall take immediate steps over the matter[,] which is greatly to our welfare and interest.⁹¹

Again, the complaint of the migrants to the consular authorities forced the Chaparra Manager to answer the inquiries of the British Legation. After partially investigating the issue, Wood replied on 12 March to the Havana Legation stating that fifty percent of the signatories in Jacob’s letter were fictitious. He argued that many of the persons included in the letter were not registered in the estate and that “the Chaparra Sugar Company has never brought any women from any of the British islands, or, as a matter of fact, from anywhere.” “These women,” Wood declared, “arrived here of their own free will and [...] paid their own passage, staying on the estate against the desires of the management.” However, repatriation records of the Company included not only some British Caribbean women, but also their children. It seems that by 1931 the Company was no longer so flexible with their rules. As in the previous year, Wood again stated to the British consul that the company had to use the guards to “forcibly compel the men to be repatr[r]iated to take passage, using for that purpose the Rural Guards and our own private police.” The Manager wrote to the British Legation enclosing letters from some of the migrants who were included in Jacobs’ letter, which he said to be “self explanatory”.⁹² He noted that “every British subject whom I have interviewed, desires to remain on the estate”, and added that there was “very little distress amongst the British workmen.” Wood condemned Jacobs suggesting that he was “taking more interests in the matter” because he had been discharged from his job at Chaparra’s offices.⁹³

It seems apparent that the British Legation was satisfied with Wood’s reply and evidence. Jacobs thought differently and he responded directly to the “Honorable Representatives” at the Foreign Office and argued that:

As a matter of fact, the General Manager of the Chaparra Sugar Company, by whom we were brought here as immigrants, influenced the [British] consul with all false reports, went all over in the [bush] and to different sections of the estate where he has all the British Subjects bound in misery, calamities and with starvation, compelled them to sign a typewritten document that is against the petition, state that 'the men are well treated by the Company, and are having everything to their facilities, and that they do not want to go home'. With all these false, he compelled the Consul to dropped [*sic*] the matter right there.

Jacobs declared that the Company did not want to return the migrants to their islands of origin, and that they were exposed to "starvation" and "famine". Asserting his position as a subject of the British Empire, he concluded his letter thus:

... we are putting our distress to the mother country, asking her for some kind of assistance by which we may be able to liave [*sic*] this island of Cuba. We are just like children of Israel in the land of Egypt. Consequently we hereby appeal to your kind assistance over the matter, hoping that your friendly conscience will appl[ause] your [...] feelings, toward this important loyal cause. We are patiently awaiting your favourable reply 'Salvamos Deus'. We beg to remain, Subordinately Yours, British West Indian Subjects. M. A. Jacobs.⁹⁴

Besides writing to the Foreign Office, Jacobs also communicated with a barrister-at-law named C. E. A. Rawle in Roseau, Dominica, with His Majesty the King, and the Colonial Office. Rawle wrote to the Colonial Government in Dominica referring to the "acute distress" of the migrants in Cuba and suggested "action should be taken by the West Indian Governments concerned to repatriate them without delay."⁹⁵ On 15 May 1931, T. R. St. Johnston, Governor of the Leeward Islands, forwarded the correspondence from Jacobs and Rawle to Lord Passfield at the Colonial Office. St. Johnston agreed with Rawle in the fact that some action had to be taken, but lamented that

... it would be quite impossible to repatriate all these people, at possibly a cost of perhaps £25 or so per caput [*sic*], in the present state of finances of the Colony, and unless some special grant were made for this purpose by the Imperial Government the only thing to be done is to take each case on its merits and deal with any very especial [*sic*] one where possible.⁹⁶

Wood had already identified and condemned Jacob in his letter to the Havana Legation, but by late May and early June, Jacobs' actions seemed to have gone too far for the administration of the Chaparra Sugar Mill. His identification went beyond the printed word.

On the afternoon of 12 June 1931 three men showed up in Jacobs' house telling him they had a job for him in the Hotel America in a place called Vazquez. Jacobs said that he could not go at that moment because he did not have a person of confidence with whom he

could leave his son. Then, one of the persons in the group known to him walked off, but “the other strange fellows” told him that he was under arrest. When he complained and asked what he had done to be arrested, they said: “‘hush up’ [sic], you have nothing to ask, for we are men sent by the authority to do so.” Jacobs asked for some proof about that authority and the men showed him some badges and “their guns” and proceeded to take him out of the house leaving all his belongings. He was driven with his son about 150 miles off the Chaparra Sugar Mill to a place called “Sabuaso”. In his letter to the Colonial Office narrating the events, Jacobs told how he was dropped in this place at 10:30 p.m. “with the little infant, knowing nobody in the place, having not a nickel in my pocket and absolutely destitute.” He added:

After I were [sic] put off the gasoline truck, one [of the men] made me to understand that they were sent by the Secretary of the Island to take me off the Chaparra’s boundary, and he then told me that I am being saved through the child, else I don’t know what further would happen to me. So therefore we are warning you not to go back to Chaparra again as your life is in danger there. If you do get back, you shortly get killed, and nobody will not [sic] be able to declare how it happened. Afterwards I got to know that it was only a plot by the General Manager of the Chaparra Sugar Company [R. B. Wood] to take me off the bound, and to threaten my life to death so only that they might succeed me.

He complained to the Colonial Office about the lack of proper action in his case noting that he had written to the Consul, but “such as the Republic of Cuba, the bigger fishes eat the smaller ones and everything stays right there.” “Too many things happened here with British subjects,” Jacobs wrote, “while the British Government knows nothing about it.” As he had done before in his letter to the Foreign Office, Jacobs asserted his allegiance to the British Empire strongly.

I am a British subject, have in my possession a British Passport, showing me that ‘By the Name of His Majesty, I must be provided in every case that I may stand in need[.]’

Consequently, I am now laying myself in the hands of the British Government, as my life is being threatened to death and at the same time to assist and protect me in my resent [sic] struggles and to see to it that the Company should send and fetch [sic] me back to the estates.

Awaiting you most favourable reply, that I may know what to do, and how I stand in this outer part of the world. In the Name of ‘His Most Gracious Majesty’ ‘God Save the King’. M.A. Jacobs.⁹⁷

In his “struggle” Jacobs made an epistolary journey to virtually every bureaucratic corner of the Empire, from the consular offices in Cuba, to the Colonial Government in the eastern Caribbean, up to the Foreign and Colonial Offices and to “His Majesty the King”. He

wanted his voice to be heard and was determined to expose not just his personal condition but also that of the other Leeward and Windward Islanders.

Of course, Jacobs was not the only eastern Caribbean islander to experience problems in 1931. Another case, that of George J. Carlisle from Antigua, illustrates the difficulties endured by eastern Caribbean islanders and also the credibility of Jacobs' complaints. Moreover, it shows how not all the British Caribbean islanders benefited either from the consular support or from the presence of a Secretary of Immigration who only dealt with the cases of Jamaicans. In April 1931, Carlisle wrote to the Government of the British Leeward Islands saying:

We as westernian [*sic*] in this Island of Cuba such as Leeward Island is asking your favour to help us in some way are [*sic*] the other. Such as to send us a free boat to take us out of this country Or [*sic*] we will die of starvation, hardship and exposure. The Government of Jamaica is sending to take her subject out so they are all gone but she decide not to take any difference [*sic*] nationality, so we are left here.

After referring to the proactive role of the Secretary of Immigration with the Jamaicans, Carlisle described the situation in Cuba as “unspeakable” with “no food, no work” and without money to get clothing. He seemed to be well aware of ways to call attention in his attempt to gain some support and concluded the letter saying: “I ask you sincerely look up this situation for it is serious, we will die, *please give this to the publisher.*” (My emphasis) Another thirty-six migrants, of whom at least 17 were women, also signed his letter. Carlisle, like Jacobs and many others, manifested his allegiance to the British Empire:

... I am a native of Antigua please send me a quick reply that I can know just what to do[;] for our people here ar[e] just waiting to hear the result of our Governement[. W]e will have to look for our people so we can provide them and care them for our next war[;] just as the Jamaicans['] Government have done[. Q]uite a lot of our men here have Been [*sic*] in the world war and we may need them again.⁹⁸

In June 1931, Edward B. Chandler, a Barbadian who has “been accustomed [*sic*] to handle labourers from the Islands for Chaparra Estates Co.”, was asked by some immigrants to write a letter to the Government of Barbados to tell about the “destitute condition they are now in.” Chandler described how some of the labourers were “naked, barefooted, and starving.”⁹⁹

The desperate conditions continued to increase during the summer of 1931. Early in July, about 500 British Caribbean migrants from Chaparra were transported to the Sabanazo Railroad Station (property of the Chaparra Railroad Company) following an advertisement for repatriation of Haitians and Jamaicans. The group, mainly composed of Barbadians, was

reported as being in “a condition of complete destitution” and “entirely without means.” Neil Hone, a British subject who owned a sugar *colonia* in Sabanazo and was linked to the British consular service in Cuba, was called on 8 July to provide food to a group of destitute immigrants who “were in charge of the Guards”. When Hone went to investigate the situation on 9 July, he found that 30 Haitians had been taken by Captain Jomarron, the District Military Chief, to be repatriated while the Windward and Leeward Islanders were left because they were neither Haitians nor Jamaicans. The advertisement said that there was going to be free transportation from Sabanazo to Santiago for the repatriations of *jamaiquinos* and Haitians only. However, the fact that all British Caribbean migrants in Cuba were generally named *jamaiquinos* caused confusion whereby eastern Caribbean islanders from Chaparra were also taken to the Sabanazo. This resulted in hundreds of British Leeward and Windward Islanders being stranded at the railway station. Hone was aware that the migrants “had been badly treated and deceived” and considering the “excited state of mind” and the possibility of “bloodshed” he tried to convince the immigrants to return to the plantations, or what he called “the lesser of evils.” In Hone’s opinion, the military authorities in charge of the process of repatriation “acted with undue precipitation” and without having made sufficient provision for transporting the migrants. The authorities, on the other hand, blamed the migrants themselves because the advertisement was calling only for Jamaicans and Haitians. However, when Hone asked what would have been the case if the “people happened to be Jamaicans only vague answers were returned.” He concluded that even if they had been Jamaicans they “would have been stranded” as well.

Despite his effort, Hone was not able to convince some of the British Antilleans to go back to Chaparra, and a group of over a hundred “declared they preferred [*sic*] to try and walk to Santiago rather than return.” This group managed to arrive at Santiago and was temporarily located in an Immigration Camp. The Cuban authorities wanted the British Consulate to assume the cost of the subsistence of the immigrants. The British understood that the Sabanazo incident was caused by the “carelessness, to say the least, of the Cuban authorities”, and rejected that proposal.¹⁰⁰ The newly appointed British Consul, J. J. Broderick communicated to the Cuban Ministry of Finance that, “unless this situation was handled promptly and satisfactorily we might be compelled to reconsider the whole question of Jamaican repatriation.” With this strategy, Broderick managed to acquire a credit to feed the migrants in Santiago. Nonetheless, a more definite action had to be taken with regard to the migrants who Broderick later referred to as “group of malcontents”.¹⁰¹ They were obviously willing to get back to their islands of origin, but due to shortage of

funds in the smaller eastern Caribbean colonies,¹⁰² the British position was that “there is, for the present at all events, no case for any extravagant scheme of repatriation.” According to the British Consul it was more likely that the migrants would be returned to the Chaparra Sugar Company that had “agreed to receive these men and to provide them with employment.” The Company, nonetheless, admitted to the Consul that their decision was because “they were anxious to please the Island Governments so that no obstacle may be placed in the way for their drawing labour from the British West Indies in future years.”¹⁰³

According to reports by Consul J. J. Broderick, after the Sabanazo incident, the situation in the Province of Oriente with regard to the repatriation was “for the time being liquidated.” At this stage he took the opportunity to make an assessment of the situation of the distribution of consular establishments in Cuba. The newly appointed Consul of Santiago, Francis O’Meara, concluded that there was “no justification whatever for a career post at Santiago” and it was stated that a reduction of the post to an unsalaried one (i.e. Vice Consulate) was advisable. As a basis for that decision, O’Meara’s memorandum concluded that:

The correspondence is almost all of the petty miscellaneous type, and deals mainly with the troubles of non-Jamaican West Indians. These people have a smattering of education and address letters to the Consul about incredibly trifling matters, such as family quarrels, high cost of living, reflections on the Cuban manners and customs, etc.

Besides the “petty miscellaneous” correspondence, the decision was also based on the fact that the Jamaican Secretary of Immigration relieved the “Santiago Consul of nearly all the work of any complexity connected with West Indians.”¹⁰⁴ In his letter to the Foreign Office, Broderick agreed with O’Meara’s conclusions and added some comments to his opinion concerning the British Antilleans and the way he intended to deal with their situation in Cuba.

The presence in Cuba of a large body of British West Indian Negro labourers, with their inveterate tendency to get into trouble, to quarrel with their employers and with the Cuban population[,] and to fall foul of the Cuban Rural Guard and local officials, is liable to give rise, and does give rise a[t] frequent intervals, to incidents that must be handled with tactful energy if the interest of the West Indians are to be properly safeguarded and our relations with the Cuban authorities maintained at the same time on a friendly footing. With ordinary complaints the unsalaried consular officers on the Island deal in a satisfactory manner...

Broderick added that there were still situations of “unusual difficulty” like the Sabanazo incident, for which none of the officials had the “kind of ability that is required.” He reported:

Other troubles of a diverse character are constantly occurring amongst the West Indian immigrants. They are cheated and defrauded, maltreated, thrown into gaol and sometimes murdered, or they themselves, being turbulent and vain, resort to acts of fraud, provocation and violence. In either case they demand protection of the nearest consul...

His strategy to deal with that situation was to follow the recommendations of O'Meara's memorandum and use the budget in Santiago to have “a good man at [the] headquarters in Havana to keep an special watch on all such developments –a sort of wing three-quarter back- with the authority to detach him and send him to the critical spot at the critical moment.” Broderick seemed to be well aware of the long history of diplomatic problems that arose out of the presence of the British Antilleans in Cuba. He argued that his proposed changes were “justified by the serious difficulties, controversies and bad blood aroused in the past by the attempts of this Legation to protect the lives and interests of British West Indians against wanton attack or to obtain for them and their families proper redress for lives lost and interest violated.” “My own aim” he remarked, “has been to bring about a change in the attitude of the Cuban police and judges and other provincial officials towards British West Indians.”¹⁰⁵

Broderick's policies seem to have been well received by his superiors and 1932 started with the reduction in the consular post in Santiago, and the closure of vice consulates in other key eastern localities with a significant presence of migrants. After a “careful” review, Consul Broderick recommended that the Foreign Office abolish the unsalaried consular posts at Nuevitas, Antilla, and Camagüey. The Nuevitas Vice Consulate had been established “to take care of the needs of the British Negro subjects” working in the nearby estates but since the “importation of British West Indian labour ceased” the post had no justification. The post in Antilla was not considered “essential” because the British West Indians were “drifting away” from the locality. With regard to the Vice Consulate at Camagüey Broderick reported that:

The present holder, M. F. E. Kezar is very active in the interests of the West Indians, but I cannot help feeling that much of his activity is the result either of a personal urge to rid himself of superfluous energy, or a personal desire to get the greatest advertising advantage out of the position. He takes up numerous cases, but does not bring them to any useful conclusion...

Since Kezar passed all the cases up to the Havana Legation, there was no need to have a Vice Consul “merely to look for difficulties to pass on to higher authority.” At Havana, Broderick ended up having two Vice Consuls, and a pro-consul to support his work. At such a critical stage in the status of British Caribbean migrants, the question that remains is what happened when the access of the migrants to a consular post was limited in such a way?

The Consul’s understanding was that “Genuine cases would, in any event, gravitate to the [Havana] Legation sooner or later.” Replying to concerns from the Foreign Office with regard to the disadvantages of abolishing the Camagüey post, Broderick replied that:

We have very few white British subjects in this district, and I really know of no one who would be willing to undertake the duties of British consular agent at Camagüey. Of course, there are a large number of Jamaicans in the outlying districts, but in nearly every case I have been informed that they receive information and attention from the British consular agent at Santiago-de-Cuba.¹⁰⁶

Those needing to have access to a British consular official would have to travel to Santiago de Cuba, at a time when the British Antilleans in the Camagüey Province were still estimated in the thousands. In 1933, a year after the abolition of consular posts, the estimates ranged between “20 to 30 thousand British West Indians of non-Jamaican origin.”¹⁰⁷ A report of Broderick’s successor in July 1933 indicated that

... there are still from 40/50,000 British West Indians in this country but that it is quite impossible to ascertain their exact number. They all retain their British nationality, speak English and hope eventually to return to their native islands. Jamaicans are said to number 20,000, Barbadians, 15,000, the remainder belonging to various other islands. The Cuban authorities clearly want to be rid of them as the labour market is at present over-stocked but have no funds with which to repatriate them. So far only Jamaicans have been repatriated with the assistance of their Government.¹⁰⁸

Yet again, eastern Caribbean islanders would be in the worst position in the context of rising hostility and the economic crisis of the early thirties. In June 1932, Edward B. Chandler, wrote to the Colonial Office as well as to Barbados to communicate the state of affairs for many of his fellow citizens.

I might mention for your information that since that time which is about one Year things has [*sic*] become worse which makes conditions hazardous, so much so, that the other Nationalities, every one of them, are repatriating their people. The Spaniards, the Americans, the Santo Dominicans [*sic*], the

Haitians, etc., etc., and up to now nothing has been done to relieve the present situation of our people, absolutely nothing to help these unfortunates.¹⁰⁹

It was not long before the British Antillean community manifested their feelings about Broderick's policies with regard to the closure of consular posts. The opposition became obvious as soon as the news started to spread. The extent of the complaints is reflected in Broderick's own report to the Foreign Office:

Since it became known that the vice-consulate at Camagüey was about to be abolished, a few groups of British West Indian Negroes living in the neighbourhood of that town have sent me letters and memorials expressing the fear that the closing of the post would leave them without protection or assistance in their difficulties. Similar fears have, I understand, been voiced by the same groups in memorials addressed to you, Sir [John Simon], as well as to the Governors of the West Indian Colonies and the enclosed extracts transcribed from a memorandum submitted to me by Mr. Vice Consul Gedge, record interviews held by him with deputations of Negro labourers from Jamaica and elsewhere who appeared to be filled with misgivings on the subject.¹¹⁰

The meetings with Antillean workers included in Vice Consul Gedge's memorandum illustrate both the great degree of concern among the migrant community, and also the nature of their preoccupations. On his arrival in Camagüey, to make an assessment of the situation, the Havana Vice Consul was going to be received by about 200 British Caribbean migrants, but the local Vice Consul, Mr. Kezar, convinced the group to send a deputation. The first group of twelve Jamaicans expressed their "regret at the closing of the Vice-Consulate, and a warm appreciation of Mr. Kezar's work in protecting the interests of the British Caribbean community in Camagüey Province." Since the men were Jamaicans, Gedge pointed out that they had "the Secretary of Immigration, and officer of their own Government, to look after their interests."

A Grenadian by the name of Alexander Henry, said to be "already known by correspondence to the Legation and Consulate-General", also presented his concerns to Gedge. Henry spoke particularly on behalf of the "non-Jamaican British West Indians" which he estimated at 5,500, and pointed out that they would be without protection in Camagüey with the elimination of the Vice Consulate.¹¹¹ Henry also asked about repatriation for this particular group. Gedge was only able to tell Henry that the issue had been raised with the Governments of the Islands but "that only [in] a few instances had small sums [of money] been placed at our disposal for repatriation purposes." Gedge reported that Henry "proposed to write a protest to the Legation, to the Governments of all the British West Indian Islands except Jamaica, and to the Foreign Office and war [sic]

Office in London.” According to Gedge, two other Jamaicans who also criticized the elimination of the Vice Consulate had made “a special point of the fact that a great deal of animosity existed on the part of the Cubans against the British West Indians in Camagüey Province.” He attributed these feelings and the preference given to Cuban nationals to the “severe economic depression”. When Gedge confronted them saying that perhaps the animosity was “directed against all foreigners irrespective of nationality,” one of them, T. A. Moody, “still insisted that it was directed mainly against British West Indians.” The other Jamaican, J. P. Baxter, from Ciego de Avila, “insisted that they were regarded with more antipathy than any other foreigners by the Cubans” because “they would not tolerate such treatment as was, for example, meted out to the Haitians.”

After those interviews, the British official concluded in his memorandum that “the fears expressed by the British West Indians of the local Cuban authorities are not altogether without foundation.” When referring to the comments of A. W. L. White, the spokesman of the first deputation of migrants, he noted:

After some years experience of Cuba, I do not suppose that his accounts of cases of harsh and even brutal treatment by the Rural Guard and corruption in the local courts were much exaggerated.

Prejudices were not lacking amongst British officials in their assessment of the situation in Camagüey. Gedge’s preconceptions concerning the black migrants are obvious in his opinion about the first deputation of Jamaicans, in which he showed amazement that “These twelve men, and their spokesman in particular, seemed quite intelligent, and capable of discussing their problems reasonably.” About the spokesman, Gedge said that he “was somewhat impressed by the moderate and rational way in which the Jamaican, A. W. L. White, put forward the view of the deputation which he headed.”¹¹² But, while Gedge had given some credit to the views presented by the migrants, Consul Broderick looked at them with some reservation. He thought that the “danger of maltreatment of coloured West Indian subjects by the Cuban police and rural guards” had been “somewhat overstated” in the Camagüey consular post and also in the memorandum submitted by Gedge. He went on:

In the first place, the West Indian Negro, as I have come to know him in Cuba, scarcely ever loses an opportunity of bringing his grievances, actual or anticipated or imaginary, to the notice of every official whose name and address he can secure. The writing of protests and the receipts of letters in reply increase his sense of self-importance and lead him to magnify the difficulties of his position.

He even suggested that the retiring Vice Consul of Camagüey, Mr. Kezar, “would not discourage the West Indians in the vicinity from pressing for his reinstatement.” In a long letter that Broderick then had to write justifying his policies to the Foreign Office, he acknowledged the problems faced by the labourers but argued that some of the larger estates allowed the migrants to remain in the plantations. He referred specifically to Chaparra stating that, even with the exodus from that plantation in the summer of 1931, “the conditions of the West Indian labourers could not be said to be desperate,” though he did recognise that “on the great majority of the estates the labourers can find neither shelter nor land to tide them over the slack season.” The Consul acknowledged the existence of a “hunger problem” among the Caribbean migrants, and, basing himself on the Jamaican repatriation scheme, he thought that a solution lay with the allocation of some funds for repatriation by the Colonial Governments.¹¹³

As part of Broderick’s policies, he had also pressed the Cuban government to improve the treatment of the migrants by the Rural Guards and the Army. In 1932, the Military General Staff issued a circular that called on the members of the different branches of the armed forces to “remember that they must only make use of their arms when there is reasonable need to do so” and that “persuasion should be used as far as possible”.¹¹⁴ He thought that the “complete absence of serious complaints during the past four or five months” was due to the Cuban Government’s circular. Broderick’s language and perception of the immigrants implied that many of their grievances were not genuine and that they might be even “imaginary”. According to his somewhat sceptical view, instances of “serious maltreatment” would arrive “sooner or later” at the Legation.¹¹⁵

As a matter of fact, during the Cuban economic crisis of the early 1930s, the complaints of the British Caribbean islanders did reach the Havana Legation. In September 1932, Broderick reported to the Colonial Government of the British Leeward Islands that:

... Every day destitutes [*sic*] natives of the British West Indies colonies come to His Majesty’s Consulate-General in Havana and to the consulate in the provinces begging to be sent home and have, unhappily, to be told that no funds exist for the repatriation or even for the temporary relief of any but Jamaicans.¹¹⁶

While since 1931 the British officials in Cuba had been making enquiries as to the possibility of repatriation of those Leeward and Windward islanders willing to return, they remained “purely tentative”. In assessing the financial impact that the repatriation of non-Jamaican British Antilleans would have, he lamented their situation in contrast to the “smooth operation of the Jamaican scheme.”¹¹⁷ But by 1932, there seemed to be more concern on the

part of the British authorities in London, probably due to the reports of the consuls, but also very likely because of the letters that the immigrants themselves were constantly writing to the centre of the Empire. Again, in comparing the Jamaican scheme to the situation of the other British Antilleans, Broderick had pointed out the “heavy cost of repatriating individuals and families to the more distant islands” and suggested the allocation of some funds for “relief of the worst cases of distress.”¹¹⁸ When considering the allocation of funds, S. McNeill Campbell at the Colonial Office in London understood that “more detailed information should be obtained as to the scheme which Sir J. Broderick has in mind” to assist the migrants and on the estimates of immigrants from the different colonies. Aware of the difficult task of making the Cubans responsible for the distressed migrants, McNeill Campbell also asked the Foreign Office whether there was a “legal instrument binding the Cuban Government in any way to provide for destitute resident aliens.”¹¹⁹ The response from the Foreign Office did not help much. Estimates of population were inaccurate “and subject to wide seasonal fluctuations” and “economic conditions”, and there was no law that would force the Cuban Government to assist in the relief of British Caribbean islanders.¹²⁰

The *Ley del 50%* and the Consequences for Antillean Labourers

The year 1933 did not bring any improvement in the conditions of the immigrants. In January, Neil Hone, the Briton who had assisted the migrants at Sabanazo, wrote to the Colonial Office warning that the already critical state of many migrants would intensify after the end of the sugar crop. He argued that the Barbados Legislature seemed to have taken the position that the workers had gone to Cuba under contract and should be returned by the companies that hired them. Many of the workers had remained in Cuba, losing the opportunity to go back with transportation provided by their employers, but Hone declared: “for British Prestige it is a very sad sight to see hundreds and thousands of destitute men, claiming to be British Subjects and in the most abject misery.” He suggested pressure be exerted on the Island Legislatures in the eastern Caribbean colonies to bring the labourers back to their homes, since most of them wanted to return but were not able to do so. “The few British here in a position to help cannot do more,” he argued, and added that while the majority of the people were from Barbados, “there are men from every island in the Caribbean.” The cost of travel to Dominica, for instance, was \$100, which was “utterly impossible to any agricultural labourers here to find” such amount.¹²¹

Denis Capel-Dunn, who had some affiliation to the British Legation in Havana, also pressured for a solution to the distressed situation of the eastern Caribbean islanders. In a

memorandum to the Foreign Office of May 1933, referring to “20 to 30 thousand British West Indians of non-Jamaican origin,” he wrote:

Few families had any savings and few could either find the means of returning home or obtain any but casual employment. The colonial governments –with the exception of Jamaica, have never seen [*sic*] their way to meeting the cost of repatriating their nationals. Whilst it may justly be held that these people have nobody but themselves to blame for the plight to which their improvidence has brought them, yet the rapid degradation and deterioration of a large body of originally respectable British subjects present a distressing problem and encourages the search for a reasonable solution.

Based on a private communication from the Governor of British Guiana, Capel-Dunn suggested a scheme by which transportation for the destitute labourers could be provided to British Guiana where there was “plenty of good land available.”¹²² It seems that nothing was agreed for this scheme, however.¹²³

At a moment when it looked as if the migrants’ situation could not get worse, it did. In May 1933, the Government of Jamaica notified the British Minister in Havana that due to limitations in funding, the office of the Secretary of Immigration was going to be abolished by the end of June.¹²⁴ The British Legation in Havana received the news with much regret. Perhaps in an attempt to make the Jamaicans reconsider their decision, the Vice Consul in Havana, Hugh W. Border, wrote that the consulate had “estimates that the number who will eventually apply for repatriation amounts to between six and eight thousand.”¹²⁵ Border also wrote to the Foreign Office lamenting that:

It is very regrettable that the Government of Jamaica should have considered it necessary to economise in this direction at a time when Jamaican subjects, in common with other British West Indians in Cuba, are suffering severely from economic depression.¹²⁶

In the midst of a state of general crisis, some of the migrant workers found some alternatives. In July 1933, a letter to the Foreign Office from Consul H. A. Grant-Watson, who succeeded Broderick at the Havana Legation, indicated that in Camagüey and Oriente some of the migrants were “engaged in fieldwork”. He estimated that there were between 1,500 and 2,000 British Antilleans located in Havana where they “seek employment as mechanics, servants, porters, etc.” Some sugar mills reported that employment conditions had improved, that more labourers were being required; and “above all, that there is no question of starvation among the workmen.” Grant-Watson’s letter, however, indicated that many of the immigrants had “undoubtedly degenerated and their condition arouses the indignity and pity of British subjects who travel among them.” He was glad, nonetheless, that

churches such as the Salvation Army and the Episcopal Church, along with North American mill managers, were assisting in the situation. Some relief funds, such as the Victoria Fund, had given some support, in the form of \$40 per month for the British West Indians but this had ceased in July 1933. Other funds, such as the “Anglo-American Community Chest,” had given \$2,268 to assist “English speaking negroes (95% British) for the period from July, 1933-1st July, 1934.” This fund had received 800 applications –indicative of the extent to which the migrants sought assistance- but had only been able to give relief in 257 cases. Grant-Watson concluded that:

... it will be seen that the relief of genuine cases of distress among the British West Indians is inadequate and that the small amount of relief which is being accomplished is a strain on the resources of British residents in Cuba, with help of American residents...¹²⁷

After the economic crisis and the setbacks in terms of the available representation for the immigrants (abolition of consular posts and of the office of the Jamaican Secretary of Immigration) further developments in 1933 would affect the situation of the British Caribbean islanders still more.

While the migrants and the imperial officials were trying to solve their problems, Cuban society was experiencing dramatic social and political changes. The crisis of the migrants in the first year of the 1930s was only one of the multiple and inter-related symptoms of the economic depression in Cuban society. At a more general level, economic crisis and the accompanying destitution added a key ingredient to the opposition that had been building up since the late 1920s against Machado’s dictatorship. Strikes had been taking place across Cuba in different places throughout the spring and the summer of 1933, and the opposition to Machado increased. An indicator of the concern of the U.S. government with the political crisis in Cuba was the appointment of Sumner Welles as U.S. Ambassador to Cuba in April 1933, with the commission of scrutinising the situation in the country and serving as mediator between Machado and the opposition groups.¹²⁸ But in August 1933, amidst some stubborn attempts to remain in power, U.S. diplomatic mediation, popular manifestations, and a military *coup* forced Machado out of office. A political crisis involving the military and the *de facto* lack of government created a fertile ground for the protest of long-time disaffected workers. In September, without an army to react against them, the workers –including foreigners- seized sugar mills and virtually turned the power relations of the industry upside down.¹²⁹ The state of affairs was probably best described by Salvador Rionda in his letter to the Manatí Sugar Company’s central offices in New York.

The writer after having spent around twenty-two years on plantations in Cuba has never seen anything like these strikes that seem to have been organized all on more or less the same plan although at some places they have been more violent than at others.¹³⁰

The nature and organization of the strikes was indeed like nothing Cuba had seen before, encompassing mobilization across the country.¹³¹ The end of the *Machadato* was followed by further political instability in the short-lived presidency of Carlos Manuel de Céspedes that collapsed in September with a revolt within the army ranks led by then Sergeant Fulgencio Batista. The “Sergeants’ Revolt”, as it came to be known, was joined by members of the opposition –the Student Directory- forming a “*Junta Revolucionaria*” that assumed control of the country. The new revolutionary *Junta* appointed Dr. Ramón Grau San Martín as President and placed former leaders of the student opposition to Machado in key governmental positions. The policies of the new government were about to bring significant changes to Cuban society, but one particular decree is of relevance for the subject of this study. On 8 November 1933, with the Nationalization of Labour Law, the government of Grau San Martín gave more substance to the previous governmental decrees on the repatriation of unemployed foreign labourers.¹³² Also known as the *Ley del 50%*, this law was in tune with the both the nationalist and the xenophobic feelings of the moment and responded to the deprivation of many Cubans workers. In essence, it established that fifty percent of the employees of industry, commerce, and agriculture had to be native Cubans. The *Ley del 50%* represented a nationalist *coup de grâce* for the destiny of the migrant workers remaining in Cuba.

Although the revolution of 1933 changed the country and the faces heading the government, the ideas concerning the black migration remained more or less the same. As stated before, Machado had openly expressed his concern with the impact of black labourers on the racial composition of Cuba. Grau San Martín’s policies gave a solution to the ‘africanization’ of Cuba –Machado’s concerns- by providing the legal basis for the expulsion of foreign black workers. A former professor of medicine in the University of Havana, Grau San Martín had been exposed to the “sanitary” ideology that opposed the black immigrants and was actually present in Le-Roy y Cassa’s renowned 1923 discourse on *inmigración anti-sanitaria*. Whether for sanitary, racial, nationalistic, or economic reasons, the opposition to the migrants had persisted for decades; in 1933 it had a legal basis. Ironically, while the British government was searching for a legal instrument to force the Cubans to provide assistance to destitute migrants, the Cuban government found a legal instrument to get rid of them.

Days after the approval of the *Ley del 50%*, the U.S. military attaché, Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Gimperling, reported on its implementation stating that it was affecting “mostly Haitians and Jamaicans.” Commenting specifically on the Haitians, he remarked on the “arbitrary and hasty procedure adopted” and on the fact that many of them “were taken by force from their families and without being given an opportunity to settle their affairs.” Gimperling also exposed how the impact of the law was different for the two major immigrant groups from the Caribbean:

Jamaicans are being returned to their native land by [the] British Government. It is reported, that in view of the treatment accorded to the Haitians at Santiago de Cuba, the British representative there has taken charge of the repatriation of the Jamaicans.¹³³

His view certainly is evidence for the argument that Haitians endured more hardships as a consequence of the *Ley del 50%*. Moreover, if the departure figures for the year of the enforcement of the law are used as a measure for the impact of the repatriation –though not necessarily an accurate one- the Haitians remain as the most affected. In 1933, recorded departures of Haitians (3,336) were more than double those of the Jamaicans (1,242). Further evidence from the 1934 report of the then Secretary of Labour, Rogelio Piña, reports of the U.S. authorities,¹³⁴ as well as that in the work of several historians, also point towards a major impact of the law upon the Haitians *vis-à-vis* British Caribbean migrants. As presented in Chapter 3, that is not surprising, not only because of the consular support, but also because of the distinctive patterns of migration and the numerical difference between the two groups by the 1930s.

Other factors to consider in the comparison are that British Antilleans had more room for manoeuvre in the labour market due to their skills and levels of literacy. While Haitians were almost exclusively field labourers, the British Caribbean islanders performed other duties beyond the agricultural phase of sugar production –and indeed beyond the sugar industry itself. Partly because of that, at the moment of the forced repatriations the patterns of settlement of British Antilleans were different from those of the Haitians. In 1931, it was said that British Caribbean islanders were “scattered in remote parts of the island,”¹³⁵ and with the difficult economic situation some of them had moved west thus escaping the ‘witch hunt’ of migrants in the 1930s. Cienfuegos, for instance, had a “floating population” of British Antilleans estimated at 100 in 1925, at a time when it was considered extremely useful to the Havana Legation in “dealing with the Jamaican questions.”¹³⁶ But ten years later, by 1935, the “coloured British subjects in that part of the island” were estimated between 1,000-

2,000. There was therefore sufficient reason to maintain the consular post because of “their numerous complaints regarding illtreatment [*sic*], non-payment of wages and other matters, and the difficulties caused to many of them by recent legislation regarding employment of foreigners”.¹³⁷ Havana is another case in point for the movement westwards; in 1933 between 1,500 and 2,000 were said to be seeking jobs as mechanics, servants, and porters.¹³⁸ However, by 1935 British officials estimated that “8,000 to 10,000 coloured reside in Havana and the immediate neighbourhood.”¹³⁹ Many British Antilleans had therefore moved outside of the areas where the Nationalization of Labour Law was being implemented more forcefully. If one considers, first, the difference in numbers between the two groups, and second, the mobility of the British Caribbean migrants out of the eastern side of the island, we have an answer as to why the Haitians were more affected by the Nationalization of Labour Law, an answer that goes beyond the accessibility to diplomatic support.

But the diplomatic support in the 1930s in itself is something to be qualified as well. There is no doubt that this factor was key to the way the Cuban authorities dealt with each of the immigrant groups. However, one must note that the diplomatic support did not come automatically out of the context of crisis in the 1930s. First, as has been shown, on many occasions the support emerged out of the demands of the black immigrants themselves to the representatives of the British Empire in Cuba, in the Caribbean colonies, and in London. Second, by the 1930s, the diplomatic support of black British subjects in Cuba had a long history dating back to the very beginnings of the immigration. In the process, the Cubans, the British Foreign Office, and the British Antilleans had gone through a number of diplomatic ordeals that included the aftermath of the Jobabo massacre in the 1910s and the presentation of the White Papers to the British Parliament in 1924. Later, in 1937, the U.S. Military Attaché explained the distinction in a rather simple way:

It is not believed that this wholesale deportation will include the Jamaicans, for while Cuba has nothing to fear from Haiti, the contrary is true with respect to England, and, consequently, the Jamaicans will be weeded out just as thoroughly but less arbitrarily.¹⁴⁰

But, as has been shown above, not all the British Antilleans received equal support from their diplomatic representatives. The islanders from the eastern Caribbean colonies remained marginalized from the support of the British authorities, and neglected by the island governments. In the case of the grievances of those Windward and Leeward Islanders based in the Chaparra Sugar Mill, for instance, the British authorities automatically believed the version of R. B. Wood, the general manager. British officials considered Chaparra to be “an

exception” where conditions “could not be said to be desperate”¹⁴¹ or as a place where the immigrant labourers were in a “relatively fortunate position” or where the cases of destitution were “less serious than elsewhere”.¹⁴² It seems that for them such versions were more believable than M. A. Jacobs’s claim that General Manager Wood had the immigrants “bound in misery, calamities, and with starvation.”¹⁴³ Still, about four years after the destitution of the non-Jamaican British Antilleans came to the attention of the British consuls in 1929-30, and months after the *Ley del 50%*, the only assistance received from Trinidad, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Grenada, and Barbados for thousands of immigrants was £80.00.¹⁴⁴ The average price of one passage to one of the Leeward or Windward Islands, according to enquiries by the British officials, was between £13 and £16. Thus the £80.00 (approximately \$403 at the time) would only have allowed for the transportation of about half a dozen islanders.¹⁴⁵

For the Jamaicans the situation was somehow different, though not necessarily with encouraging prospects. Before the *Ley del 50%* was put into practice in 1933, the Jamaican Secretary of Immigration –not the British consular service- had managed to repatriate over ten thousand Jamaican immigrants. However, many Jamaicans had remained in Cuba even after the decrees for deportation. By the 1930s, many migrants had families in Cuba and were somewhat established in the country, others changed their names to Spanish, or used a Spanish nickname to protect themselves from the nationalist labour policies. In a survey of the migrant settlements in regions in the province of Camagüey by 1932, a British official reported that of the 2,500 British Antilleans (1,700 of which were Jamaicans): “All those I met are unwilling to go home.”¹⁴⁶ Other British West Indians may have been ‘protected’ by their employers from the Cuban policies, as many sectors within the sugar industry still regarded the foreign labour as better than the native. On the other hand, not only was there no Jamaican Secretary of Immigration, but also several key consular establishments had been closed. The Santiago Consulate was paradoxically reduced to the rank of Vice Consulate at a moment when it was supposed to take over the duties of the Jamaican Secretary of Immigration and probably to assume the weight of the work from the areas where consular posts had been abolished. What choices were then left to the British West Indians in Cuba during the 1930s?

The already mentioned reduction in consular establishments might have affected the migrants but it does not mean that they stopped their demands for representation. An official inspection of the Consulate-General in Havana in 1935 estimated that 80% of the miscellaneous correspondence was related to British Antilleans, mostly Jamaicans, and that

the work related to them was “large in volume and seems to be duly attended to”. The inspector also referred to the amount of work related to the British Antilleans in the Vice Consulate of Cienfuegos.¹⁴⁷ Besides consular support, but in connection with it, the migrants also resorted to their own means of safeguarding their interest through the Churches and social organizations that already existed and new ones founded in the 1930s and 1940s. In August 1935, a group of British Caribbean islanders met in the locale of the Universal Negro Improvement Association in Havana to

...organise an Association for the defence and protection of their common interests and social benefits, as well as for the prosperity of their members and a greater harmony between the British Antilleans resident in Cuba.

The group, registered under the Spanish name of *Sociedad de Socorros Mutuos de los Antillanos Británicos* (British West Indian Mutual Association), intended to maintain its members in “amicable contact with the Government of the Metropolis, protecting the cause of every British Subject, as far as this cause is officially reported and just.” The association was also open to provide support to Antilleans from the French West Indies and from the Republic of Haiti, or any other foreign nationality, that “as member will obtain the same benefits received by British Antillean.” They would report any unjust act they were notified of to the British Consul and also engage in investigations of them through their own lawyer. However, their by-laws stipulated clearly that: “In the improbable case that the Consul refuse to act or assist us in obtaining justice, we will be able to act under our own criteria.”¹⁴⁸ This statement –however naively expressed- indicates both the awareness of the British Antilleans that their claims to British authority might fall on deaf ears, but also their determination to act on their own in the defence of their rights.

A branch of the British West Indian Mutual Association was founded also in 1935 in the City of Nuevitas, Camagüey Province, both a city and a province where consular establishments had been closed.¹⁴⁹ Other associations that were active during the mid- and late-thirties were the “Granadian Club” in Baraguá, which was related to other associations and later became the “Unity Club” to reflect the variety of islanders composing the community.¹⁵⁰ In the summer of 1937, David S. Nathan, Eduard J. Henry, Daniel E. Nathan, and U. Noel, organized the *Asociación de la Repatriación de Antillanos Ingleses* (Association for the Repatriation of English Antilleans) in Camagüey. The organization intended to: 1) make the repatriations economical and effective; 2) to “persuade” its members of the advantages of repatriation “according to the requirements of the Cuban authorities”; 3) to try to provide opportunities in the British territories to those repatriated; 4) to assist persons who cannot be

repatriated by their own means; and 5) to protect the rights of those who underwent repatriation.¹⁵¹ As can be seen, these organisational initiatives from the migrants responded to the particular problems that they continued to experience after the early years of the Great Depression and the Nationalisation of Labour Law.

The impact of the *Ley del 50%* was strongly felt immediately after its implementation. However, as Pérez de la Riva has argued, the 1934 report on the deportations by Rogelio Piña to the government contributed to stopping the “waves of expulsions” of migrants and other economic factors also helped to “postpone” the “Haitian problem” during the mid-1930s.¹⁵² And in fact, even after 1933, immigrant labour remained central to the Cuban sugar industry, which entered a period of recovery after the depression crisis, with both sugar production and the value of the sugar crop increasing between 1935 and 1938. From a total production of 1,994,000 tons in the critical year of 1933, production grew to 2,538,000 tons in 1935 and up to 2,976,000 in 1938.¹⁵³ Amongst the factors contributing to these changes were developments in the international sugar market, which included the conclusion of the “Chadbourne Agreement” in 1935 that limited the Cuban sugar export quota and had an effect on the availability of work. Nonetheless, the antagonism towards the immigrant labourers continued in tandem with a rising nationalism and government measures once again targeting the immigrant workers. In 1936 a Bill was passed in the Lower House of the Cuban Congress requiring the companies operating in Cuba to pay 80% of their total payrolls to Cubans. In reporting this measure, the U.S. Military Attaché, Colonel Thomas N. Gimperling, commented on the existing problems with regard to local and foreign labour. He said that the large companies employed Cubans as common labourers only because “they were forced to do so by law.” “In the sugar mill” Gimperling noted, “the Haitian and Jamaican negroes are considered much more satisfactory than native Cubans.”¹⁵⁴

Despite the repatriations and deportations of the early 1930s, the amount of Antillean labourers –mostly Haitians– in the Cuban territory was more than the authorities would have expected. In consequence, the years 1937 and 1938 witnessed more measures from the Cuban government to deport the alien workers. The new Secretary of Labor, Juan M. Portuondo, met with sugar *hacendados* to “ask for their concrete suggestions as to a solution for the large problem created by the presence in Cuba of large numbers of Haitian and Jamaican Negro canefield laborers.” According to a report from the U.S Embassy on 6 January 1937:

The new Labor Secretary indicated that he was not considering any drastic action to prevent the employment of non-Cuban canefield laborers during the

coming 'zafra', but he apparently hopes that it will be possible during the next few years to repatriate a substantial proportion of them.¹⁵⁵

Subsequent reports from the U.S. Embassy, on 30 January, indicated that the move against the Haitian and Jamaican labourers was "proving popular with Cuban labor organizations".¹⁵⁶ This time the measure was actively targeted on the Haitians, who constituted a very visible presence in the eastern side of the island, and since February 1937 deportations of thousands of Haitians started to take place.¹⁵⁷ By March it was reported that a "total number of up to 3,267" Haitians had been deported and "that in spite of the grinding season in Cuba, further deportations of as many, if not considerably more, Haitians are in prospect for the immediate future."¹⁵⁸ While the deportations were taking place throughout the spring of 1937, U.S. officials reported that representatives of the sugar industry seemed not to be that concerned.¹⁵⁹

The departure figures for Haitians and Jamaicans were highly disparate. If there was a time when Haitians were the main victims of the Cuban deportation policies it was not immediately after the *Ley del 50%* in 1933, but later, in 1937 and 1938. A report from a sugar company based in Cuba indicated that between 1 January and 18 June 1937 a total of 15,816 Antilleans were deported: 15,563 Haitians and only 253 Jamaicans.¹⁶⁰ The impact of Cuban policies on the Haitians at this point is noticeable in the departure figures where the number of Haitians increased dramatically, from 1,652 in 1936 to 19,561 in 1937. However, U.S. officials in November 1937 referred to a greater number of Haitian repatriations, of "approximately 35,000."¹⁶¹

By 1938, the extent of the repatriations and its impact came to the attention of both the sugar entrepreneurs and the British authorities. The former were concerned with the availability of labour for the 1938 crop, although in 1937 it was not believed that the repatriations would create a shortage of labour. Although probably aware that the Haitians had become the main target of the Cuban policies, the British authorities were concerned for two main reasons. First, due to previous repatriation and deportation experiences (1920-21; 1930-34) it was reasonable to believe that British Caribbean workers remaining in the island might end up being victims of the arbitrary practices of the Cuban Army that was in charge of the repatriations. Second, it is very likely that it was not in the best interests of the British Caribbean colonies, themselves experiencing critical economic conditions and the prospect of labour unrest, to receive repatriated labourers.

In March 1938, the U.S. Military Attaché, Major E. W. Timberlake reported on the repatriations thus:

Mill owners, both Cuban and American, feel that the repatriation of Antillians[sic], if carried out as planned, will seriously cripple the sugar industry, for, in spite of the Secretary of Labor's statement, the Cuban canefield laborer does not compare with the Haitian and the Jamaican. Also, the substitution of Cuban for Antillian [sic] laborers means the general improvement of labor conditions and universal adoption of a minimum wage of \$1.00 for the 8-hour day, as compared with the present meagre facilities provided for the Antillians [sic] and average daily wage of less than fifty cents per head.¹⁶²

That same year, in November, sugar interests in Guantánamo had also expressed their concern as to the effect of the repatriations in the labour force. A representative of a delegation from Central Esperanza wrote to the President of the Provincial Assembly of *Colonos*, saying that whilst agreeing with the repatriation, the region was being affected by it; and that if the repatriation continued some sugar mills would have to stop grinding for the next season. A gradual retrieval of labourers was suggested:

...we propose that when a shipment [of immigrants] is decreed by the Secretariat of Labour or whoever is responsible, their numbers are made up by taking from each farm a proportion of the Haitians within the farm or *colonia*, and not all of them..., resulting in that while in certain places, where the collection of these workers does not occur, none is taken, and in the places where the soldiers, pickers of Haitians, go by the organizations of *colonos* and coffee growers become dislocated.¹⁶³

In other municipalities such as Yateras and Jamaica, also in Guantánamo, there were protests because the repatriations were taking place in the middle of the coffee crop. Coffee growers demanded that if the repatriations were going to take place, then the government should assure that a native Cuban substituted each repatriated Antillean worker. However, the President of the Cuban Institute of Coffee did not oppose the repatriation of the Antilleans. He argued that "such repatriation does not damage us in terms of the works of the coffee crop [...] we are Cubans and we want that the little or the much that we could provide for the earnings of the peasant workers, Cubans be the ones who should earn it. We want to cubanise Cuba."¹⁶⁴ As before, in the 1910s and 1920s, economic interests clashed with the nationalist interest of the country.

The British also reacted to the repatriation and the impact that it might have on the thousands of British colonial subjects who had stayed in Cuba after the repatriations of the early 1930s. On 1 June 1938, the issue of the Cuban repatriation of immigrant labourers was raised in the House of Commons in London. The Secretary of State for the Colonies was asked whether the British Government was considering making any protest about the repatriation of the thousands of British Caribbean workers there. In the same way as issues

of the political economy of sugar had mediated the Jobabo affair more than twenty years previously, in 1938 'sugar politics' came again to the forefront. Mr. Maiquisten asked whether the British protest against the repatriation could be made using as an argument the "large volume of Cuban sugar imported by Great Britain, and the benefits which Cuba receives from the sacrifices made by British Colonial sugar-producers under the international sugar agreement?" Mr. MacDonald answered that representations with regard to the repatriations had been made already and that there was no use in making further representations at that time. Macquisten replied: "Cannot we refuse the Cuban sugar? Would not that prevent dumping labour on our labour market, thus perpetuating labour evils in the West Indies?"¹⁶⁵ It is very probable that Macquisten was aware of the current condition of the sugar market, but also concerned with the labour unrest that had exploded across the British Caribbean.¹⁶⁶

Subsequent debates in the House of Commons, in July 1938, brought out the issue of British consumption of Cuban sugar. The Secretary of State of the Colonies was then asked:

... whether he was aware that for the three years 1935 to 1937 they had imported sugar from Cuba to the extent of 600,000 tons per annum and approximately the same amount from British sugar producing Colonies; and, as during this period they had sold £1,000,000 worth of goods to Cuba as against £7,000,000 worth to the sugar producing colonies, what steps were possible under the international Sugar Agreement to reduce their imports of Cuban sugar and to increase their imports of Colonial sugar.¹⁶⁷

The concern of sugar producers in the British colonial Caribbean was grounded in the recent developments in the international sugar market. In April 1937 the International Sugar Conference took place in London and while Britain kept imperial preferences, exports from some parts of the Empire –with the exception of the Union of South Africa- were reduced. At the time, Cuba was among the countries enjoying a favourable balance of trade with Britain, which remained as an important market for sugar producers. It has been observed that at that point any "sugar diverted from the British market would have jeopardized sales of those exporters who were largely independent from the United Kingdom," among them, Cuba.¹⁶⁸ After Java, Cuba enjoyed second place in British export quotas for non-colonial sugars, with a total of 940,000 metric tons. And later, in the years following the 1937 sugar agreement, there would be further increases in the quota assigned to Cuba for the British markets to cover the sugar market dislocations in the early years of the Second World War.¹⁶⁹

The Cubans were surely aware of the importance their sugar trade had for Britain at the time. For that reason, once the issue of sugar was raised in the House of Commons during the discussion on repatriations, the Cuban Ambassador in Britain immediately wrote to

Havana sending transcripts of the debates. The Ambassador, Guillermo de Blanck y Menocal, understood the concerns of the British with regard to the Antilleans, which were obviously in conflict with the Cuban desire for eliminating as many immigrants as possible from the country. However, it seems that the discussion at Westminster had some influence without the need for further representation. As the opinion of the Ambassador suggests, there was a willingness to find a middle ground in the interest of both countries:

Really, in my judgement, the repatriation of the Jamaicans, accomplished in the hygienic and comfortable conditions [...] that must prevail in that repatriation, must be made at a sure pace but without urgency, reconciling in this way our interests with the considerations that could be held for that nation [Britain]...¹⁷⁰

Later in that year, De Blanck y Menocal continued to report on the debates in Britain with regard to the repatriation of migrants, disturbances in Jamaica and the other islands, and the creation of the Moyne Commission to inquire into the situation of the British colonies. He acknowledged the impact of the repatriations in the disturbances in Jamaica and realized that this would be an issue investigated by the West India Royal Commission. De Blanck y Menocal stated his opinion, trying to maintain a conciliatory note:

It is clear that the [Cuban] Republic will not be concerned with the conclusions of such a commission, but it should be concerned with the need of keeping its right to repatriate the Jamaicans. From there my suggestion of putting into place repatriation measures to alleviate the job market of the national labour force without at the same time –due to its application– either causing serious disturbances in the social and economic life of Jamaica or worrying the government of that island and of Britain.

The Ambassador suggested that the repatriation measures should be implemented before the arrival of the Commission and repeated his plea for a periodic repatriation, “without urgency, thus conciliating our interests and not giving motives for the complaints” of Britain.¹⁷¹ After so many years of diplomatic tensions between the two nations, at least the Cuban side seems to have been sufficiently concerned to try to avoid further protest from the British. But at the same time, some things remained more or less the same as in the 1910s and even before. First, the political economy of sugar, as during the Jobabo affair, continued to mediate in some way the dealings between the Cubans and British with regard to the black British subjects. Second, racism continued to prevail among Cubans and to dominate nationalist thinking and governmental policies. In his letter, De Blanck y Menocal had also noted that it was not convenient for Cuba to keep “undesirable Jamaicans” and other foreign components of the black race within the national territory.

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- ¹ T. D. Dunlop to the Under Secretary of State, Foreign Office, "Inspection of Camagüey Vice Consulate," Mr. Kelham to Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Foreign Office, PRO, FO 369/1869.
- ² F. O'Meara, "Memorandum," enclosed in J.J. Broderick to The Marquess of Reading, 4 November 1931, PRO, FO 369/2190.
- ³ See Robin D. Moore, *Nationalizing Blackness: Afro-Cubanismo and Artistic Revolution in Havana, 1920-1940* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997), Morrison, "Civilization and Citizenship," Rosalie Schwartz, "Cuba's Roaring Twenties: Race Consciousness and the Column 'Ideales de una raza,'" in *Between Race and Empire: African-Americans and Cubans before the Cuban Revolution*, eds. Lisa Brock and Digna Castañeda Fuertes (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998).
- ⁴ Ramiro Guerra, *Azúcar y población en las Antillas* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, [1927] 1976). For the English translation of the book see Ramiro Guerra y Sanchez, *Sugar and Society in the Caribbean: An Economic History of the Cuban Agriculture*, with an appendix by José A. Guerra y Debén; Foreword by Sidney W. Mintz (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964).
- ⁵ Jules Robert Benjamin, *The United States & Cuba: Hegemony and Dependent Development* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, [1974] 1977), 29.
- ⁶ Luis E. Aguilar, *Cuba, 1933: Prologue to Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972), 95.
- ⁷ "Ba[n]s Entry of Further Supply of Jamaican and Haitian Labor," *The Louisiana Planter and Sugar Manufacturer* (5 June 1926): 452.
- ⁸ "Importation of Labor Asked to Offset Shortage Caused by Public Works Program," *The Louisiana Planter and Sugar Manufacturer* (25 September 1926): 253.
- ⁹ Among those noting the little use of foreign migrant labour by the colonos, and also the antagonism with the big sugar mills, see Guerra, *Azúcar y población en las Antillas*, 170-174, and Brian Pollitt, "The Cuban Sugar Economy in the 1930s," in *The World Sugar Economy in War and Depression, 1914-40* (London: Routledge, 1988), 103.
- ¹⁰ "Refusal to Admit Laborers Will Mean Financial Loss to Two Provinces," *The Louisiana Planter and Sugar Manufacturer* (23 October 1926): 333.
- ¹¹ "Government Unable to Grant Request Concerning Antillian [sic] Labor," *The Louisiana Planter and Sugar Manufacturer* (6 November 6, 1926): 273-274.
- ¹² See the accounts of Luis Araquistain, a Spanish visitor to Cuba between 1926 and 1927, in his *La agonía antillana: El imperialismo yanqui en el Mar Caribe* (Impresiones de un viaje a Puerto Rico, Santo Domingo, Haiti, y Cuba) (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S.A., 1928), 193.
- ¹³ C. B. Curtis, Chargé d' Affairs ad interim, to US Secretary of State, 11 October 1928, USNA, RG 59, GRDS-IAC, File #837.5538/15 (M488, Roll #84).
- ¹⁴ Salvador Rionda to Manati Sugar Company, NY, 22 November 1926, BBC, RG II, S. 10a-c, Box 70.
- ¹⁵ Manuel Rionda to Salvador Rionda, Manati Sugar Company, 30 November 1926, BBC, RG II, S. 10a-c, Box 70.
- ¹⁶ "Labor Conditions Good," *The Louisiana Planter and Sugar Manufacturer* (25 December 1926): 512.
- ¹⁷ R. B. Wood to Walter S. Bartlett, Vice President, CASC, 24 November 1928, Archivo Histórico Provincial, Las Tunas (hereafter AHPT), Fondo 5-The Cuban American Sugar Mills Company, Leg. 37, exp. 444, no. 188.
- ¹⁸ R. B. Wood, to Walter S. Bartlett, Vice President, CASC, 15 November 1928, AHPT, Fondo 5-The Cuban American Sugar Mills Company, Leg. 37, exp. 444, no. 201.
- ¹⁹ González Suarez, "La inmigración antillana en Cuba," 55.

²⁰ See the reports of immigration and movement of passengers for those years. República de Cuba, Secretaria de Hacienda, Sección de Estadística, *Inmigración y movimiento de pasajeros* (Havana, 1927-1930).

²¹ Salvador Rionda to Manuel Rionda, NY, 24 January 1928, BBC, RG II, S. 10a-c, Box 70.

²² Salvador Rionda to Manuel Rionda, 17 August 1928, BBC, RG II, S. 10a-c, Box 70.

²³ Manuel Rionda to Salvador Rionda, 3 October 1928, BBC, RG II, S. 10a-c, Box 70.

²⁴ "Los Jamaíquinos están recibiendo ahora un buen trato en Cuba," *El Camagüeyano* (11 June 1925): 1, 2.

²⁵ J. R. Murray to Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Foreign Office, 5 June 1930, PRO, FO 362/2130.

²⁶ T. D. Dunlop to The Under Secretary of State, Foreign Office, 4 May 1925, PRO, FO 369/1869.

²⁷ Mr. Morris to Foreign Office, [6] January 1930, PRO, FO 369/2129.

²⁸ See, for instance, for the Antilla Division, Leonard Bryan to Secretaría del Gobierno Provincial, Santiago de Cuba, 20 April 1926, AHPSC, Fondo-Gobierno Provincial de Oriente, Leg. 2497, exp. 7. For divisions in Havana, see C. S. Morris and Septimus Blair, "Reglamento de la Sociedad de Recreo y Sport Universal Negro Improvement Association and A. C. L., No. 593," 13 May 1928, and "Actas de Consitución" [3 June 1928]; Westmore Chance and others, to Gobernador de la Provincia de la Habana, 25 June 1928; C. S. Morris and others, to Honorable Delegado, 30 September 1928, and Westmore Chance and H. Geo Smith, "Reglamento de la División #593 de Marianao de la Asociación Universal para el Adelanto de la Raza negra y la Ligas [sic] de Comunidades Africanas," 17 February 1929, ANC, Fondo 54-Registro de Asociaciones, Leg. 306, exp. 8892. For the development of the Garvey movement in Cuba during those years see McLeod, "Garveyism in Cuba, 1920-1940."

²⁹ See "Florida, Cuba," "Guantánamo, Cuba," "Sola, Cam. Cuba," *The Negro World* (10 May 1924): 8; "Elia, Camagüey, Cuba," "Guantánamo, Cuba Division," *The Negro World* (2 August 1930): 3.

³⁰ See *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers, Volume VI: September 1924-December 1927*, ed. Robert A. Hill (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 393, note 2 of Letter from Marcus Garvey to Fred A. Toote, 18 March 1926.

³¹ See Appendix I: "Delegates to the Sixth International UNIA Convention, Kingston, August 1929," and Appendix X, "Locations of UNIA Divisions and Chapters, 1921-1933," in *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers, Vol. VII: November 1927-August 1940*, ed. Robert A. Hill (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 961-963, 998.

³² William Tait and Joseph M. Gaskin, "Reglamento-Sociedad de Beneficiencia de Baraguá, Provincia de Camagüey, Termino Municipal de Ciego de Avila," 12 April 1926, AHPC, Fondo-Registro de Asociaciones, Leg. 48, number 9.

³³ William E. Oakley, "Jamaican Club, corazón de la vida sociocultural de la inmigración anglocaribeña en Banes," II Simposio Internacional, La presencia de la cultura de los pueblos angloparlantes en Cuba, Noviembre 1998. I am grateful to William E. Oakley for providing this material.

³⁴ See Evelio Tellería Toca, *Congresos obreros en Cuba* (Havana: Editorial de Arte y Cultura, Instituto Cubano del Libro, 1973), 119, 188; Instituto de Historia, *El movimiento obrero cubano: Documentos y artículos, Vol. I: 1865-1925* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales/Instituto Cubano del Libro, 1975), 434. See de la Fuente, "Two Dangers, One Solution," 43; Carr, "Identity, Class, and Nation," 96.

³⁵ See Carr, "Identity, Class, and Nation," 96-104.

- ³⁶ C. T. Cloud, Salvation Army Church, Territorial Headquarters, Jamaica, to Hon. A. S. Jelf, Colonial Secretary, Kingston, 30 December 1926, Jamaica Archives and Record Department, Spanish Town, Jamaica, IB/5/77/361 [1926]. In 1926, the Jamaica Branch of the Church was trying to seek funds from the Jamaican Government to support the efforts of the Cuban branches.
- ³⁷ Teófilo Gay Watkins, "Actividades (Creación de Sociedades)," (19??), 4, Teófilo Gay Watkins, "[Procedencia]," (19??), 2, Private Papers, Teófilo Gay Watkins. See also *My Footsteps in Baraguá*.
- ³⁸ See Jorge L. Giovannetti, *Field Notes* (Baraguá), February 1999.
- ³⁹ "El Redentor de los Negros en la Carcel: Marcus Garvey quiso libertar a Africa y ha sido condenado," *El Camagüeyano* (5 April 1925): 1, 2.
- ⁴⁰ "Marcus Garvey fue detenido en New York acusado de varios delitos," *El Camagüeyano* (6 February 1925): 1.
- ⁴¹ Armando de Leon to Dr. Rafael Martínez Ortiz, Secretary of State, Haana, Cuba, 26 January 1928, ANC, Fondo 304-Secretaria de Estado, Leg. 215, No. 2921; Gobernador Provincial, Oriente, to Secretaria de Gobernación, 20 March 1928, AHPSC, Fondo-Gobierno Provincial de Oriente, Leg. 377, exp. 17.
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- ⁴³ "Escena de Sangre en un Tren al Volverse Loco un Jamaiquino," *El Camagüeyano* (5 March 1925): 1, 5.
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- ⁹⁴ M. A. Jacobs to Honorable Representatives, [FO], 5 May 1931, PRO, FO 369/2191.
- ⁹⁵ Cecil E. A. Rawle to Governor Johnston, Government House, Dominica, 4 May 1931, PRO, FO 369/2191.
- ⁹⁶ T. R. St. Johnston to Lord Passfield, Colonial Office, 15 May 1931, PRO, FO 369/2191.
- ⁹⁷ M. A. Jacobs to The Right Honourable Secretary of the Colonies, London, England, 16 June 1931, PRO, FO 369/2191.
- ⁹⁸ George J. Carlisle, to His Excellency Governor [of the Leeward Islands], 30 April 1931, PRO, FO 369/2191.
- ⁹⁹ Edward B. Chandler, to Hon. The Colonial Secretary, Barbados, 29 June 1931, PRO, FO 369/2248.
- ¹⁰⁰ J. J. Broderick, to The Right Hon. Arthur Henderson [FO], 28 July 1931, PRO, FO 369/2191.
- ¹⁰¹ J. J. Broderick to The Most Honourable, The Marquess of Reading [FO], 4 November 1931, PRO, FO 369/2190.
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Bahamas to Governor of Jamaica, 29 August 1929; Lieutenant General, Governor and Commander in Chief, Bermuda, to Governor of Jamaica, 6 September 1929; Jamaica Archives and Record Department, Spanish Town, Jamaica, IB/5/77/140 [1928].

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¹⁰⁶ J. J. Broderick to The Right Hon. Sir John Simon, [FO], PRO, FO 369/2247.

¹⁰⁷ Denis Capel Dunn, to Foreign Office, "Memorandum," 28 May 1933, PRO, FO 369/2307.

¹⁰⁸ H. A. Grant-Watson, to The Right Hon. John Simon, 31 July 1933, PRO, FO, 369/2307.

¹⁰⁹ Edward B. Chandler to Secretary of State of the Colonies, London, England, 11 June 1932, PRO, FO 369/2248.

¹¹⁰ J. J. Broderick, to The Right Hon. Sir John Simon [FO], PRO, FO 369/2247.

¹¹¹ Vice Consul Gedge considered Henry's figure of 5,500 non-Jamaicans as an over-estimation for Camagüey only. Vice Consul Kezar agreed, but said that the figures "might be more nearly correct for the Provinces of Camagüey and Oriente together."

¹¹² Extracts from the Memorandum submitted to H. M. Minister, J. J. Broderick, by Mr. Vice Consul Gedge, 10 May 1932, enclosed in J. J. Broderick to The Right Hon. Sir John Simon [FO], 22 June 1932, PRO, FO 369/2247.

¹¹³ J. J. Broderick to The Right Hon. Sir John Simon [F.O.], 22 June 1932, PRO, FO 369/2247.

¹¹⁴ A. Herrera, and E. F. Torres, Circular No. 7, of the Military General Staff, Republic of Cuba, 11 March 1932, enclosed in J. J. Broderick to The Right Hon. Sir John Simon [FO], 22 June 1932, PRO, FO 369/2247

¹¹⁵ J. J. Broderick to The Right Hon. Sir John Simon [FO], 22 June 1932, PRO, FO 369/2247.

¹¹⁶ J. J. Broderick to Hon. Edward Baynes, Acting Governor of the Leeward Islands, B.W.I., 6 September 1932, PRO, FO 369/2248.

¹¹⁷ Mr. C. N. Ezard to The Right Honourable Arthur Henderson, [FO], 10 June 1931, PRO, FO 369/2191.

¹¹⁸ J. J. Broderick to The Right Hon. Sir John Simon, [FO], 22 June 1932, PRO, FO 369/2247.

¹¹⁹ S. McNeill Campbell to D. V. Kelly [FO], 8 June 1932, PRO, FO 369/2248.

¹²⁰ R. Craige, to S. MacNeill Campbell, 26 July 1932, PRO, FO, 369/2248.

¹²¹ Neil Hone to the Hon. Secretary of State for the Colonies, 30 January 1933, PRO, FO 369/2307.

¹²² Denis Capel-Dunn, "Memorandum" to the Foreign Office, 28 May 1933, PRO, FO 369/2307.

¹²³ Still in 1934, it is reported Jamaicans were constantly requesting information in the British Vice Consulate of Santiago as to the availability of contract labour in British Guyana and British Honduras. See Acting British Vice Consul, Santiago de Cuba, to Colonial Secretary, Kingston, Jamaica, 10 May 1934, Jamaica Archive and Record Department, Spanish Town, Jamaica, 1B/5/77/291 [1934].

- ¹²⁴ A. R. Slater to H.B.M, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, Havana, Cuba, 5 May 1933, PRO, FO 369/2307.
- ¹²⁵ Hugh W. Border, to A. R. Slater, Governor, Jamaica, 25 May 1933, PRO, FO 369/2307.
- ¹²⁶ Hugh W. Border, to The Right Hon. Sir John Simon [FO], 14 June 1933, PRO, FO 369/2307.
- ¹²⁷ H. A. Grant-Watson, to The Right Hon. Sir John Simon, [FO] 31 July 1933, PRO, FO 369/2307.
- ¹²⁸ On the mediation of Welles see Aguilar, *Cuba 1933*, chapter 10.
- ¹²⁹ Braga, "To Relieve the Misery," 27-28.
- ¹³⁰ Salvador Rionda to Irving Trust Company, Receiver of Manatí Sugar Company, NY, 25 September 1933, BBC, RG II, S. 10a-c, Box 69.
- ¹³¹ On the mobilisation in 1933, see, among others, Braga, "To Relieve the Misery," Barry Carr, "Mill Occupations and Soviets: The Mobilisation of Sugar Workers in Cuba, 1917-1933," *JLAS*, 28 (1996): 129-158; and Robert Whitney, "What do People Think and Feel? Mass Mobilisation and the Cuban Revolution of 1933," *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies*, 3:2 (December 1997): 1-31.
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- ¹³⁷ H. Hall-Hall, to Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, FO, 17 April 1935, PRO, FO, 369/2394.
- ¹³⁸ H. A. Grant-Watson, to The Right Hon. Sir John Simon [FO], 31 July 1933, PRO, FO 369/2307
- ¹³⁹ H. Hall-Hall, to Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 7 May 1935, "Inspection of the Havana Consulate-General," PRO, FO 369/2394.
- ¹⁴⁰ Major E. W. Timberlake, Letter to G-2, "Report" 26 April 1937, RG 165, Military Intelligence Division Correspondence, 1911-41, Box 1806, File #2736-Q-19.
- ¹⁴¹ J. J. Broderick, to The Right Hon. Sir John Simon [FO], 22 June 1932, PRO, FO 369/2247.
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- ¹⁴³ M. A. Jacobs to Honorable Representatives [FO], 5 May 1931, PRO, FO 369/2191.
- ¹⁴⁴ H. A. Grant-Watson to The Right Hon. Sir John Simon, [FO] 2 January 1934, PRO, FO 369/2351.
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¹⁵⁷ H. Freeman Matthews to The Hon. Secretary of State, U.S., 5 March 1937, RG 59, GRDS-Decimal Files, 1930-39, Box 5946, File #837.504/724.

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¹⁶² Major E. W. Timberlake, G-2 Report, 23 March 1938, RG 165, Military Intelligence Division Correspondence, 1911-41, Box 1806, File #2736-Q-19.

¹⁶³ Antonio Pérez Calviño to Enrique Díaz Ulloa, Presidente, Asamblea Provincial de Colonos, Santiago de Cuba, 18 November 1938, AHPC, Fondo-Gobierno Provincial de Oriente, Leg. 313, exp. 27.

¹⁶⁴ See Alvarez Estevez, *Azúcar e inmigración*, 249-251. Quote from the President of the Cuba Institute of Coffee in page 251. My translation from Alvarez Estevez' quotation from ANC, Donativos y Remisiones, Box 702, number 21.

¹⁶⁵ *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons Official Report (Monday 16 May to Friday 3 June 1938)*, Fifth Series, Vol. 336 (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1938), 2031-2032. Also published in "Repatriations from Cuba," *The Voice of Saint Lucia* (15 July 1938): 3.

¹⁶⁶ See Ken Post, *Arise Ye Starvelings: The Jamaican Labour Rebellion of 1938 and its Aftermath* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1978); O. Nigel Bolland, *On the March: Labour Rebellions in the British Caribbean, 1934-1939* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 1995); Richard Hart, *Rise & Organise: The Birth of the Workers and National Movements in Jamaica, 1936-1939* (London: Karia Press, 1989).

¹⁶⁷ "Cuban and Colonial Sugar Imports," *The Voice of Saint Lucia* (26 July 1938): 4.

¹⁶⁸ Swerling, *International Control of Sugar*, 58.

¹⁶⁹ See Swerling, *International Control of Sugar*, 56-64.

¹⁷⁰ Guillermo de Blanck y Menocal to Dr. Juan J. Ramos, Secretary of State, Havana, 3 June 1938, ANC, Fondo 304-Secretaria de Estado, Leg. 220, No. 3055.

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CHAPTER VII

RACE, RELIGION, AND EMPIRE: SOCIAL, CULTURAL, AND POLITICAL PRACTICES OF THE BRITISH CARIBBEAN MIGRANTS

The British Caribbean migrants who went to Cuba were not strangers to racism, discrimination, and the social marginalisation of the plantation society: they had experienced it at home as well as in other Hispanic societies where they had migrated as workers. But the prospect of a better life or economic gain abroad was their main drive for emigrating. Once in Cuba, either by choice or forced by the geo-social system of the plantation, many of them seem to have accepted the divisions in society and their own role as migrant labourers. That compliance on the part of the migrants has to be understood against the fact that in Cuba they were earning more money than in their islands of origin and that most of them –even the ones who ended up staying– always had the expectation of departure.¹

This type of social consent, however, did not imply that the migrants would always tolerate the racism and discrimination they faced. They could and did react to hostility in a variety of ways. They developed their own communities and socio-cultural infrastructure in the form of churches, associations, social clubs, and other cultural practices such as music and sport. They responded collectively by joining trade unions and labour association, and individually by, for example, moving from one job to another when the wages or the labour conditions were not appropriate. As British colonial subjects, allegiance to the Empire served as a way to face problems, which raises the issue of their ‘Britishness’ and the British authorities’ perceptions of this.

British Antilleans claimed support and assistance as “British subjects”. In theory, such entitlement was common to all subjects of the Empire without regard to race or colour.² In practice, notions of “Britishness” were more exclusive and clearly had racial implications. By asserting their rights as “British subjects” the migrants were challenging the racial understandings of Empire, forcing British representatives into an encounter with the colonial ‘other’ outside the imperial domain. The encounter implied not only that the British authorities would attempt, racially and ethnically, to classify and qualify that ‘other’ and his or her ‘subjection’, but that they would also end up racially classifying and qualifying themselves as ‘white’. The ‘discovery’ of the self came about by facing the ‘other’;³ the use of “Britishness” by the black migrants became not only a challenge to racial understanding, but also a confrontation with the British colonial system itself. Racial

and identity perceptions and assertions emerged when British officialdom faced the dilemma of protecting black British subjects. The following explores the issues of race, ethnicity and nationalism thrown up in the process.

British Caribbean Islanders and Migrant Life in Cuba

In 1999, I visited the Cuban towns of Banes, Baraguá, Chaparra, Jobabo, and Delicias, where many British Antilleans settled in the early part of the twentieth century. Some eighty years before my visit, these towns were semi-segregated settlements composed of different social groups: North Americans, Spaniards, Cubans, and Caribbean migrants. At the end of the twentieth century, they were like any other Cuban rural community, albeit distinctive in many ways. Despite the transculturation process, the social and spatial divisions that once existed were still noticeable and there was evidence of the particular cultural traditions of each of the social groups living there.

Both Banes and Baraguá hosted at least three protestant churches at little distance from one another, all either founded or attended mostly by British Antilleans and their descendants. The Pentecostal Church of Banes was erected in the place where the UNIA's Liberty Hall used to be. It was in that Liberty Hall that the Mount Sinai Church of Banes, now led by a female descendant of British Caribbean migrants, held its first meetings in the 1940s. In Jobabo it was the other way around, and the UNIA members held their meetings in the local protestant church. What is now the *bodega* (local food store) of La Güira section in Banes was the location of the Jamaican Club, and one of the local schools in Baraguá was the building for the British Antillean's Unity Club. Within Baraguá, a section known as Bajan Town owes that name to the many Barbadian migrants that lived there. And within Bajan Town one can find the Grenadian Hall, founded by migrants from Grenada in the early part of the century. In the 1930s, this place hosted meetings for the labour unions⁴ and today serves as a place for the rehearsals of the folkloric group *La Cinta*, composed of descendants of British Caribbean migrants. When I visited it, the Grenadian Club structure had a wall painting of two traditional cultural practices: the left half of the wall has a May Pole dance and the right half a cricket game.⁵ It was in Baraguá, in 1999, where I met nonagenarian, Celia L. Campbell, a Barbadian. Formulating my question to her in the past tense, I asked about the allegiance to the British Empire among the migrant community. She moved her fragile body forward towards me and said with confidence: "I am still a British Subject."⁶

Those are the remnants of history. Remnants giving evidence that, despite the hostility against the British Caribbean migrants, their place in Cuban history was not erased. But the churches, the associations, racial organisations, the naming of towns and social clubs, and the allegiance to the British Empire, are also evidence of the social and identity practices of the Antilleans in the migration experience. Instances of social and religious organisation were a response to an unwelcoming social environment and particular identity choices were adopted in virtue of the specific social situations encountered. Identity choices were about an assertion of the immigrants' distinctiveness within Cuba generally, but also about whom they were in particular contexts, and which identity (i.e., race, class, island) was more practical for specific purposes. In this section, I first refer to the different practices of social organisation in which the migrants were involved and look at the identities that emerge from them. I then examine the identity politics in the allegiance to the British Empire manifested by many immigrants, the reactions caused by it, and how it relates to the other identities expressed by the immigrants.

Most of the instances of social organisation by the British Caribbean islanders took place during and after the 1920s, following the mass migrations of the late 1910s. However, a tradition of social organisation is noticeable as early as 1902, when a Jamaican veteran of the West Indies Regiment by the name of Alexander Hay started meetings of the Salvation Army in Santiago de Cuba. Hay, who had been employed in the construction of the railway, organised the meetings in the house of Robert Dixon, who was from the island of St. Kitts. Meetings in English were also held in Guantánamo, where the testimonies were "translated ... into French, which Spanish-speaking people were able to understand."⁷ I have found no further evidence of religious activism by British Antilleans in the 1900s or the early 1910s, despite the immigration increase between 1905 and 1911. But following the mass migration of the late 1910s, other Salvation Army churches were founded in Baraguá (Bajan Town) and Banes (La Güira) by 1918. The Christian Mission Church of Baraguá was founded in 1917. These three churches, founded and run by British Caribbean migrants, were all located within areas of the sugar company towns near their housing facilities. In Guantánamo, the British authorities reported in 1916 that there were "three protestant churches, Episcopal, Baptist and Methodist, with large congregations, of whom the majority are British West Indians. There are also two Masonic Lodges with large membership confined exclusively to British West Indians."⁸

While religious organisation occurred almost immediately upon the arrival of the immigrants to Cuba, labour organisation was a more difficult arena. In the 1910s, migrant

workers were used as an alternative to the unstable local labour force. Their role as competition for native Cuban workers becomes evident in the 1914 Labour Congress when, according to Jorge Ibarra, it was decided to oppose that migratory current.⁹ Historian Alejandro de la Fuente has shown how a dispatch of Jamaican workers was used to break the strike of the stevedores in the port of Cabañas in 1912 and mentions that the UFC also used Antillean workers to neutralize any demand for higher salaries made by the native workers.¹⁰ At the same time, De la Fuente has noted that migrants participated in the strikes of 1917, although he is only able to mention William Benjamin, “a negro who is believed to be from Barbados.”¹¹ Although strikes such as the ones in 1917 did take place, the sugar bonanza of the Dance of the Millions was not fertile ground for labour activism, and certainly not for a labour movement in which Caribbean migrant labourers would be involved. For the immigrants, labour conditions in Cuba were preferable to the prospects they had in islands such as Jamaica, where “the labouring population was no better in 1916 than their forefathers who live in the early days of emancipation.”¹² Major activism on the part of the Antillean migrants in the labour arena would have to wait for a context of more instability in the labour conditions in the late 1920s and 1930s. In 1925, the labour activism of the migrant workers was evident in their participation in Labour Congresses in 1925. And as noted in chapter 6, the labour and political movement of the 1930s counted on the presence of British Caribbean islanders.¹³

Other instances of social organisation among British Caribbean migrants emerged more rapidly than labour activism. With the unprecedented levels of immigration of the late 1910s, it is hardly surprising that the 1920s witnessed the emergence of numerous instances of social organisation on the part of the immigrants. The UNIA was one such organisation. In order to work in conformity with the Morua Law in Cuba, and the legacy of 1912, the UNIA registered with the Cuban government as the Universal Improvement Association and Communities League (UIA & CL), avoiding the words “Negro” and “African” from its original name.¹⁴ The racial nature of the organisation disappeared from the name and as far as the authorities were concerned. Under these terms, the prime objective of the UNIA in Cuba (or UIA & CL, for that matter) was the “confraternity between all its associates, assistance to members in need and the search of employment in the case them requesting it.” For the purpose of learning and instruction, the association would eventually found colleges, academies, and schools. Membership was provided to “men of good conduct and moral; and it was essential to prepare a written application signed by the interested person, as well as for two members.”¹⁵ Unlike the constitutions

and by-laws of the parent body in the USA, the Cuban version of 1920 avoided, at least in print, that part of the objectives that referred to the “uplift of the Negro peoples of the world” and also any reference to the fact that membership was for people of “Negro blood and African descent.”¹⁶

In 1921, the UNIA followed similar procedures of avoiding the use of the word “Negro” and “African” when referring to the association. By 1921, the Havana Branch of the UNIA had among its members a Barbadian by the name of William Preston Stoute. Stoute had been both a labour activist and a Garveyite in Panama, where the government had imprisoned him not just during a strike, but also because of Marcus Garvey’s visit in 1921.¹⁷ Other Garveyites and activists from Panama who also moved to Cuba at the beginning of the 1920s were Samuel Percival Radway and Dave Davidson.¹⁸ Such experience among officials of the UNIA in Cuba, together with the awareness of the problems of organising along racial lines, probably prompted the strategy of avoiding any racial reference in the UNIA’s public image. Nonetheless, in 1922, the Camagüey division did register the association under its full name in Spanish, including the words “Black Race” in its name, and also stating that the purpose of the organisation was the uplift of that race. Moreover, contrary to the Havana Branch, the Camagüey division explicitly stated that a requirement for membership was being a “person of the Black Race having a minimal drop of black blood in the veins.” Further registrations of the UNIA included the word “Negro” and “African” in official documentation. However, the by-laws and regulations of some of the Cuban divisions of the UNIA were written in a way that would not threaten the Cuban government. In their official registration with the Cuban government, the regulations of some of the Cuban divisions of the UNIA stated that:

... its members have to swear to respect the right of every human gender, the Government under which jurisdiction they operate, not to interfere with the political affairs of the country, not to speak against any other race... [and] not become interested in any discussion that would alter the peace, union, and harmony that must reign as the foundation of the well governed societies.¹⁹

In Marianao, Havana, the UNIA Branch No. 593, that had adopted the above regulations in 1929, seems to have developed a parallel body that one year before registered under the name Society of Entertainment and Sport, Universal Negro Improvement Association. Its purpose was to “offer to its associates all kind of entertainment and sport” and its members had to “avoid discussions or acts that sustain political or religious principles”.²⁰

At some stages, the disparities and changes in the regulations brought members of the association into conflict with one another.²¹ But generally, the Cuban divisions of the

UNIA portrayed themselves to State officials as organisations that would not pose any 'danger' to the Cuban society in general, and to the elites and government officials in particular. Race, an otherwise key organising principle of the UNIA and a principal source of identity for its members, was thus relegated from such central position for external purposes. However, despite somehow sacrificing its principal political stance, internally the UNIA remained an important institution for the racial identity of the migrants in Cuba. By the very composition of its members, the UNIA was indeed a black organisation or, which was the same in the Cuban context, an association of Caribbean migrants. Also, as stated in their regulations presented to the Cuban government, the organisation remained at the margins of domestic developments in Cuba, with the exception of issues related specifically to the welfare of migrants, such as the events of 1921 and some labour strikes in eastern sugar plantations. The politics of strategic identity employed by the UNIA and its members was only partially effective in manoeuvring around Cuban racial and social preoccupations. Despite its non-racial and non-political public stance, Cuban officials were certainly concerned with the existence of that type of organisation within its boundaries. This was aggravated by the U.S. hegemony in the country and the active role of the U.S. Charge d' Affairs in reminding the Cubans about the racial nature of the organisation and the fact that it was "openly preaching racial war".²² As shown before, government officials and elites were informed about the actions of the UNIA and made efforts against its development by policing the activities of the organisation, banning the *Negro World*, declaring the organisation illegal,²³ and prohibiting Marcus Garvey's entrance into the country in 1930.²⁴ Whether Cuban fears and concerns about the organisation were imagined or actuated by a real threat on the part of the UNIA is a question that remains to be answered.

The strategic practice of the UNIA in Cuba illustrates Marc McLeod's argument that the movement "adopted different forms in different countries."²⁵ As he has noted, the UNIA fulfilled a central role in providing a sense of identity to British Antilleans and in assisting them to survive in a hostile environment. This role, it could be argued, worked primarily inside the migrant community. Only on a few occasions did the UNIA openly challenge the inequalities of the system in which the migrant workers were living, dominated by the Cuban government and U.S. sugar interests. Besides the events during the sugar crisis in 1921, when the UNIA was accused of arousing the "unruly spirit" among Antilleans and of spreading rumours about the actions of both Cuban and British Colonial governments, I have found little evidence of the UNIA serving as an outlet for overt

protest against racial discrimination in Cuba. The *Negro World* did serve as a space where some migrants could condemn their situation in Cuba, but as a general rule, the news on Cuba reported in the newspaper was not of a critical nature. More often than not, the *Negro World* concentrated on positive descriptions of the meetings held by the different branches and on reproductions of speeches of some of the leaders. Moreover, in several instances, the UNIA leaders outside Cuba showed themselves to be uncritical of the actions of the Cuban government. In 1917, during García Menocal's presidency, British Caribbean migrants were killed, robbed, and wounded and under President Zayas the immigrants suffered deprivation not only because of the economic crisis, but also because of the government's deportation practices and the use of force in the process. Garvey met both of these presidents during his 1921 visit, and I have found no evidence of complaints about the situation that the migrants were experiencing that same year. Moreover, Zayas was actually congratulated officially by the UNIA later, in 1924.²⁶ At times, it was the local leadership of the UNIA in Cuba who criticised the situation the migrants were experiencing (Eduardo V. Morales and R. H. Bachelor) and challenged the dominance and abuses suffered under the plantation regime (Mr. Christian, Secretary of the Preston Division).²⁷ However, none of the UNIA officials who visited Cuba in 1921 (Marcus Garvey, George A. McGuire, Henrietta Vinton Davis, and J. S. de Bourg) seem to have made any critical public statement specifically on the problems confronted by British Caribbean migrants at the time of their visit. Most of the reports given by these leaders were about their reception at the different meetings and, surprisingly, considering the economic crisis of that year, about the donation of money for the organisation made by the UNIA affiliates in Cuba.

The UNIA ended up having a significant impact in Cuba, which I believe is two-fold. First, part of its legacy resides in cementing the general organisational tradition of the immigrants on Cuban soil. This is evident in the development of a number of organisational forms by the British Antilleans in Cuba after the 1920s, such as Churches, Benevolent Societies, Social Clubs, and Lodges. Secondly, I would argue that the prime role of the UNIA was one of self-support for the British Caribbean diasporan community itself, as "an immigrant protection society"²⁸ and as a "civil religion".²⁹

A glance at the reports of the UNIA in Cuba contained in *The Negro World* indicates how the religious character of the organisation prevailed. Rather than assuming the stance of a politicised black organisation, the UNIA worked more as a religious movement consistently adopting the proceedings of McGuire's *Universal Negro Ritual*.³⁰ It is to no

surprise, then, that McGuire had visited Cuba twice, before and after Garvey, but also that the visits of the former seem to have been better received and more successful than that of the latter. In his account of his travels in Cuba, and apparently conceding to McGuire's personal skills, Garvey himself noted:

From Moron I went to the little city of Nuevitas and there also I received another hearty response, and there the people 'went over the top' 100 per cent. for the Black Star Line and the Liberation Construction Loan, even though his Grace, the Chaplain-General, Dr. McGuire had been there and as an Archbishop, naturally he had cleaned up all Cuba and left not even a brass nickel there. [...]

From Nuevitas, I went to the great stronghold of the Universal Negro Improvement Association -Preston. In Preston, I also received a warm reception. Dr. McGuire had preceded me there, and I believe in two nights took away all the savings of the people of Preston. So when I arrive there to get some more they did the best they could, and I think that the best can be measured with the best of any other center of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, because they open-heartedly did everything they possibly could to make my trip there a success. From Preston, I went to another great stronghold of Barnes [*sic*], where Dr. McGuire, I believe, in two nights got \$4,000 for the Black Star Line.

Immediately after his reluctant remarks on McGuire's fund-raising success, Garvey apologetically noted that:

I must say that I was sick all during my stay in Cuba because I contracted a very bad cold[,] having gone immediately from the cold in the north to the warmth in the tropics down in Key West. I took a very bad cold and having to speak every night it developed seriously and I was much embarrassed in my speeches in Cuba because I suffered [nightly] from the effect of the bad cold. Nevertheless I was sent out to represent the Universal Improvement Association [*sic*], and the first night hundreds and thousands of people assembled in the biggest theatre [in] the city of Barnes [*sic*] and I was suffering terribly while I spoke.

While using ill health as an excuse, Garvey avoided the word "Negro" when referring to the UNIA, which is perhaps an illustration of his awareness of the organisation's avoidance of race in its discourse within the Cuban context.³¹

Garvey's speech and the particular references to McGuire are indicative of what would later become a conflict between the two UNIA leaders,³² but also give some insights into the religious nature of the organisation in Cuba. That the visits of McGuire seem to have been more successful and well received than those of Garvey is probably the best evidence of this. McGuire, who was the first member of the UNIA's Executive Council to make an official trip to the Caribbean, travelled to Cuba twice from January to March and then from

May to July 1921. Garvey met with the incoming and outgoing Cuban Presidents, with Havana's Afro-Cuban leaders, and was interviewed by the national press, before continuing his tour across the island and departing for Kingston. McGuire's visits had a lower profile at the national level, but apparently had a significant impact in the different settlements of British Antilleans all across the island. In the complex mixture of the secular and religious functions of Garveyism in Cuba, the latter was the most important. This, along with the concealment of UNIA's racial function, seems to become apparent in the *Negro World* report of Garvey's visit to Banes:

The interest aroused by His Grace the Rev. George Alexander McGuire has resulted in the *conversion* of many members in Banes and their subsequent enlistment in the ranks of the Universal Improvement Association [*sic*] A hearty welcome awaits the return of the chaplain-general to Banes.³³

Despite the UNIA's official stance on religion, the Association's link with black Christian traditions was inevitable, and perhaps, as the above quote suggests, indispensable for ultimate success in the spreading of Garvey's message.

In Cuba, a variety of religious figures played key roles in the development of the organisation. In 1921, Rev. A. W. Charles (or William Alexander Charles) was the Secretary of the Chaparra Branch of the UNIA, and had participated in McGuire's visit to Guantánamo.³⁴ A former deacon of the Church of God, Retford E. M. Jack who joined Rev. Charles in his mission in Chaparra, was a member of the Episcopal Church and had been ordained by Archbishop McGuire.³⁵ Several of the meetings during 1921 had the participation of local Chaplain R. Daley Tibblis in Antilla, and also of a Reverend Duggon (or Duggan) who spoke at meetings in Camagüey, but apparently was Chaplain in the San Geronimo Branch of the organisation.³⁶ Another Reverend by the name of T. C. Glashen presided over meetings of the UNIA in Havana.³⁷ In Camagüey, "Brother Roderick White", an officer of UNIA's advisory board and "Brother Wm. Letford", its Chairman, were assisted by the "Captain of the Salvation Army of Florida, who is also a brother of the UN.I.A.," in the organisation of what was labelled a "big meeting" and "beautiful service" of the division.³⁸ In Morón, another member of the Salvation Army, Mr. Rigard, "spoke words of encouragement, especially on education".³⁹ Two other "Brothers", B.B. Simms and William Holmes, were First Vice President and Executive Secretary respectively of the Manatí Division of the UNIA. When they sought permission from the Manatí Sugar Company to hold meetings, it was reported that Brother J. T. Parris "and his committee of the church" played an "instrumental" role.⁴⁰ When the Florida branch of the UNIA

unveiled its charter in 1924, the *Negro World* reported on a procession being led by “the band of the Salvation Army and it’s [sic] captain”.⁴¹

Despite the complications caused by the “religious question” at the higher levels of the organisation, it was precisely this aspect of the UNIA that served the British Caribbean migrants in Cuba best. In the history of the black peoples of the Americas in general, and the Caribbean in particular, religion had a significant role as an outlet for resistance and protest. Garvey, as argued by E. Franklin Frazier in the 1920s, was successful in capitalising on this aspect,⁴² and his movement therefore proved to be successful in adjusting to the cultural and ideological traditions of its members and prospective adherents. In a way, the particular needs of the affiliates of the organisation were the ones who ultimately defined its nature and role of the UNIA within their community. Therefore, among the many facets of the UNIA, the inter-related functions as a religious movement and as an immigrant protection society became dominant. As a religious movement the ethos of the UNIA fitted within the religious tradition of many British Caribbean islanders, but as an immigrant protection society, the UNIA would have to co-exist with other ideological forces not necessarily in harmony with its values and beliefs. While the UNIA presented a challenge to British colonialism at other levels, by protecting the migrants in Cuba the UNIA ended up sharing that task with the consuls and officials of the British Empire. Such a paradox of criticisms to, and alignment with, the Empire illustrates both the defensive strategies of the migrants and also the contradictions embedded in the legacy of colonialism.

As stated above, in practice, the UNIA shared with the British consular officials the role of protecting the migrants, especially in 1921. In 1923, the British government considered granting official recognition to the organisation in order to cope with the amount of work that was being devoted to the attention of matters related to the British Antilleans. Such “quasidiplomatic” recognition would come into contradiction with British policy to the organisation in the colonies and elsewhere. After consulting with local colonial governments in Barbados, Jamaica, and Trinidad, the “semi-official” recognition was not granted.⁴³ This affair, and the contradictions of race, colony, Empire, and Britishness within it, takes me to my next area of discussion: the relations between black British subjects in Cuba and the representatives of the British Empire.

Black British Subjects and the British Empire

As we have seen in the previous chapters the migration of British Caribbean migrants to Cuba implied a relationship with the representatives of the British Empire outside the imperial domain. In the Cuban context, the relationship that emerged between colonial subjects and the representatives of the Empire became the setting for particular political, social, and identity dynamics. First, allegiance to the British Empire served the migrant workers as one of the main instruments with which to face Cuba's hostile environment. Secondly, the appeal to the imperial authorities was in itself a struggle within and against the power structure of the Empire. Thirdly, the social encounter of colonial subjects and the British government was the setting where issues of race, identity, Britishness, and Empire were both asserted and contested.

Appeals to the British authorities by the migrants in Cuba are evident since the early stages of the immigration process and even before the massive arrivals of the late 1910s. In 1906, Samuel Archer, a native from St. Kitts who was accused of rape and imprisoned, claimed his innocence to the British authorities in Cuba and the Foreign Office in London. British officials responded to Archer saying that the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs "does not propose to take any further action in your case".⁴⁴ A previously mentioned case is that of Jamaican John A. McKenzie, who in 1909 wrote to Sir Edward Grey at the Foreign Office in London stating: "Honorable Secretary. You will pardon my boldness for writing you [...] We British subjects in Cuba especially colored are suffering terrible from the aggressions of the Cubans." McKenzie explained that the amount of \$10.30 was being demanded from him for unpaid taxes of the previous owner of the house he had bought. He considered the action "not being legal" and therefore refused to pay. As a consequence, the government threatened him with putting the house up for public sale unless the taxes were paid. In his letter McKenzie stated the racial nature of what he considered to be "ill, wrong abuses" in the context of the general conditions of migrant workers in Cuba. He demanded the support of the British authorities and was also critical of the consular officers in the country.

My Lord Highness hear my case I am a colored man but a de[s]cen[dant] of one of those noble Scotch who led the fight up [Almas Hights?] in the reign of Good and Great Majesty Queen Victory God rests her in peace she lay[.] Mr. Brooks the British Counsel [sic] don[']t look after no colored man[,] he won[']t hear any complain[t]. He holds in with the Cubans. Here is another instant my Lord[.] In Guantanamo [sic] Cuba the rural g[u]ards beatin[g] and ill treat a man[']s wife name of Byfield in his house. His Excellency the Governor of

Jamaica (our Home) investigate the matter [...] let it past away [*sic*]. So we are beaten like dogs and robbed ill[-]treated no one look after our rights, so long as we are black.

Your most humble servant, [signed] John A. McKenzie.”⁴⁵

McKenzie’s letter illustrates two types of discrimination to which the British Antilleans were being exposed in Cuba. By saying that “colored” people were the ones “suffering terrible from the aggressions of the Cubans,” McKenzie illustrated how race was an important factor in the relations between Cubans and British Caribbean migrants. But he also noted blackness as influential in the lack of support from the British consuls and as the reason why no one looked after them. Rather ironically, the reaction of the British Consul in Cuba to McKenzie’s complaint is what best illustrates the racism that prevailed among consular officials. When asked by the Foreign Office to provide a report on the situation, Consul Leech responded in an official letter on 12 October 1909, saying that the complaint was “entirely without foundation”. Leech also reported that in the case of Mrs. Byfield, referred to by McKenzie, she had been guilty of wounding the rural guard. Leech also praised both consular officials, Brooks and Mason, for the handling of the situation. Brooks, who had been directly criticized by McKenzie, was, according to Leech, a “conscientious consular official” and Mason was described as an “able official” and “one of the kindest of men [...] always doing his best to assist people.”

Along with Consul Leech’s defence of the role of his diplomatic staff, it is his additional prejudiced commentary that actually gives some credibility to McKenzie’s complaint –which had been considered groundless by Leech himself:

The Jamaican negro causes a great deal of trouble to everyone in Cuba, and especially at Santiago[,] the Chief port of landing from Jamaica. He is saucy and quarrelsome by nature and constantly getting into trouble. When in difficulties he appears to think that the British Consul must fight his case in Court and act as a lawyer.

This Legation has refrained from troubling your department [Foreign Office] with the details of the innumerable cases of Jamaican negroes in difficulties which are constantly occurring in Cuba, but I can assure you that every consideration is shown them both at this Legation and by the Consular Representatives in this Island, and that they receive the same treatment as any other British subject.⁴⁶

Leech apparently wanted to be sure his position on the matter was clearly understood in the Foreign Office, and on 14 October he sent a hand written letter to his friend Louis Mallet, Assistant and Superintendent Undersecretary of State at the Foreign Office. This time, more explicitly, Leech stated:

The Cuban Negro is the most well-trained and orderly person and has many good qualities, good manners [...]
The Jamaican seems to lack all of these, and hardly a day seems to pass without a grievance of some sort. He is incessantly getting into [illegible] and troubles.

After attributing the above difference to the variants of British and Spanish colonial systems and methods of abolishing slavery, he added:

... although few of our Jamaican negroes can write, they generally find some one in prison who can and they have no hesitation in [firing] off long [winded] stories of their imaginary grievances in all directions. Whether they are in the [habit] of complaining to the FO or [us] I do not know, but I want to say, and this is the object of my letter, that as far as I can judge, the Jamaican negro obtains fair and equitable treatment both from the Cuban judicial authorities and from our Consular Offices.

In his communication, Leech praised Consuls Brooks and Mason again and concluded: "Roughly speaking a negro with a grievance must [be] looked upon as a child, and a Jamaican negro generally as a naughty one."⁴⁷

Dynamics between black British subjects and British officialdom, such as the ones shown above, became common in the years that followed as the migrants kept seeking the assistance of the consular officials stationed in Cuba. The extent to which the migrants had recourse to requests for assistance is clear in Consul Leech's report on the Guantánamo consular establishment when he noted that "there are many British West Indians resident in the district and their troubles and quarrels give plenty of occupation to the Vice Consul" there.⁴⁸ In 1911, Edward C. Moloney, a medical doctor who had been settled in Ciego de Avila for six years, wrote to the Foreign Office asking whether he could be appointed to an official position. He said:

There are numerous British Subjects mostly Jamaicans employed in the vicinity [*sic*] at the three different Sugar Mills located within a radius [*sic*] of twenty five miles of this place.
I being the only British Subject in this town of any prominence am frequently asked for advice as the Jamaicans do not understand Spanish.⁴⁹

Again, this shows that British Antilleans were seeking advice not only from British officials, but also from 'prominent' British people in their respective communities. But Moloney's letter, together with Leech's comments in 1909, also show some subtle distinctions that would become clearer as the migrants consistently demanded support.

While the allegiance of the migrants to the Empire as British subjects becomes clear and obvious in the correspondence of both Leech and Moloney, one can notice certain distinctions and even a reluctance in accepting their claims to British subjecthood. In the case of Moloney, while he did refer to the migrants as British subjects, he also noted that they were “mostly Jamaicans” and that he was “the *only* British Subject” of “prominence”, thus establishing levels of subjecthood (my emphasis). In the case of Consul Leech, he said that “Jamaican negroes” were receiving the same treatment afforded to “any other British subject,” which is not necessarily that they were considered as such. As noted by Kathleen Paul, while in theory every member of the Empire was equal, in practice, British subjecthood was compromised by many factors, including skin colour (and also gender and class).⁵⁰ This would become more obvious and explicit as more migrants continued to arrive during the 1910s.

One has to note that appeals from British Caribbean migrants to representatives of the Empire to sort out difficulties or problems were not a new phenomenon. Throughout the nineteenth century in the British Caribbean colonies, former slaves, free coloureds, and peasants were among those believing in the authority of Empire.⁵¹ Outside the imperial domain this practice persisted in the different places where British Antilleans migrated in search of jobs and a better life. In previous migratory destinations such as Panama and Costa Rica, for example, the practice of resorting to the Empire “was an important means of survival and integrity in an ideologically hostile situation.”⁵² Their participation in the First World War as part of the British West Indies Regiment was perhaps a second influential factor in reinforcing the importance of imperial ideology. As noted by Laura Tabili, “the war simultaneously strengthened troops’ reciprocal bond with the monarch and conferred a sense of entitlement that was ultimately subversive of the imperial order.”⁵³ She has argued further:

Thus the war experience was at once conservative in strengthening Black working men’s claims on the British state, and radicalizing, in provoking a sense of betrayal –expressed not through the separatist impulse of nationalist elites, but through a militant demand to redeem their rights as imperial subjects.⁵⁴

If one considers that over 6,000 West Indians went directly from Central America to Cuba in the 1910s and that returning veterans of the war also moved there (an estimated 4,000 out of 7,000 returning Jamaicans, for example),⁵⁵ it comes as no surprise that imperial allegiance was also present among British Antilleans in Cuba during the late 1910s and after.

On 8 June 1913, a Cayman islander by the name of Donald Chisholm wrote from a Cuban prison to King George in London regarding his situation and that of other British Caribbean islanders. The letter provides an example of the steps followed by most migrants when protesting to the Empire about their situation, but also shows their understanding of the way in which they were neglected.

Honorable Sir,

I Donald Chisholm a British Subject, was born in one of the British West Indins [*sic*] Islands by name of Grand Cayman.

Now apply to His Royal Majesty, asking for protection [*sic*] as I have already applied to the Honorable English Minister and also to the Honorable General Consul, who I believe was sent by Great Britain, to this Country of Cuba to look after their Subjects or in other words to protect [*sic*] us. As it is known by His Royal Majesty, that our Mother Country has plenty of Children to content with, or in other words, that England has a lots of Small and Large Countries in the British West Indies and some of them are poor and has but very little work to do, and so some of us has to go around, or in other words has to go around to other forigen [*sic*] countries trying to ear[n] something so that we can return to our native homes and build it up. But; sometimes missfortunes [*sic*] besets us, and also I need not say it, for you knows that trubles [*sic*] are every where; But if unfortunately one of us gets into any trouble [*sic*] and call upon the English Minister, or General Consul, to protect us, or so that he can [appear] at the day of our trials, So that by his presen[ce] no advant[age] of injustice [*sic*] will be taken of us, or in other words so that he can help us as they know that we cannot speak the Spanish Language, they will [t]ell us to our face of if we write, Them [*sic*] they will answer us in this form and say that Great Britan [*sic*] did not send them out to these Forigen [*sic*] Countries to protects, or look after poor people, or in other words to look after poor Subjects, that they were only send to look after Sailors.

After noting that class and social distinctions were the grounds on which consular assistance was not provided, Chisholm continued:

Then we will write to Sir E. Grey Secretary of State Forigen [*sic*] Office trying to seek or asking for protection he then send a copy of our [l]etter asking the Minister or G. Consul about our case and as we cannot help ourself [*sic*] they send and tell him whatever they thinks [*sic*] like and please and that is all up to the matters. So as we see how we are trated [*sic*] by the Minster & G. Consul we made up our mind to write you this letter asking of His Majesty King George to humble pitty us with love and compassion, and make a good investigation on our behalf. As the Minster and G. Consul are only selling us British Subject out to the Cuban Government as far as we can see into the matters.

Chisholm, together with Jamaican James Samuel, Barbadian Joseph Hall, and another James Samuel from St. Kitts, signed the letter as “Obedient Children” and added a postscript saying: “We are all British Subjects an[d] are able to present to any Special

Investagater [sic] that you send to investagate [sic] our cause, and prove we are English and nothing else.” They further stated that they were the only ones remaining in the prison and that others had died due to the lack of help from the British consuls in Cuba.⁵⁶

Chisholm’s letter, stamped as not being acknowledged by Buckingham Palace, appears to have been forwarded to the Foreign Office from where, on 9 July 1913, Andrew Bonar Law replied thus: “I am directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to state that if you will furnish particulars as to any specific instances in which protection has been refused when it should have been properly given, the matter will be investigated.”⁵⁷ More than a month after replying to Chisholm, and more than two after the original complaint, Law wrote to the British Consul in Havana requesting information on the case and asked him to “suggest” to the Cuban Government the possibility of interpreters being provided in Court hearings involving British subjects who had no knowledge of Spanish.⁵⁸ The reply from Consul Leech in Havana was in contradiction to what had been claimed by the British Caribbean prisoners. According to Leech, the British Legation had actually supported the application for pardon made by some of the British Antilleans and had visited them in prison. Therefore, Leech argued, the claim by Joseph Hall that no one “came to see if I was white or black” was “inexact” and Chisholm’s statement that “no one has visited him, though unimportant,” was “untrue”. With regard to the interpreters in Court, Leech decided to make “no suggestion to the Cuban government” because Cuban legislation had provisions on that score and he understood that they were “carefully carried out”. Leech concluded: “I do not think that prisoners are placed at great disadvantage in not knowing Spanish.”⁵⁹

Whose version of the events was true is a matter of speculation, but some things become evident from the exchange of correspondence between the colonial subjects and the representatives of the Empire. As argued by Moji Anderson, in the case of migrants in Central America, “a fervent belief in the efficacy and superiority of the Empire” existed on the part of the British Caribbean migrants.⁶⁰ It is also clear that the actions of the migrants had a degree of efficacy in triggering the action of British officialdom, even if such action was ultimately ineffective. And if the British consuls were indeed being negligent in providing support to the migrants, at least the officials in the Foreign Office seem to have assumed their paternalistic imperial responsibility towards the subjects of the Empire. However, what becomes apparent is that as in the cases described above, there would always exist more than one version of the events in which the migrants were involved. And more often than not, among the contradictory versions, that gaining more prominence and

credibility would be the one of the Cuban government or of the sugar managers –thus legitimising the power structure of the plantation society. Such was the case of Robert Brown, who “as an English subject[,] a Jamaican” wrote to the War Office in London on 14 September 1914 seeking “the welfare of my right”. He accused some Rural Guards in the Manatí Sugar Company of assaulting a group of Jamaicans who were “playing”. Brown received lashes on his back that impaired him from any activity.⁶¹ Again, the British consul had to report on the matter to the Foreign Office. Consul Leech relied on the version of the Manager of the Manatí Sugar Company, under which Brown had allegedly been “fighting with another Jamaican”. The Rural Guard had to separate them and since the incident was Brown’s fault, he ran away in fear of punishment. The Manager at Manatí assured him that on the “estate it is strictly forbidden to ill-treat workmen”. Brown eventually returned to work and was advised by Consul Mason in Santiago to “avoid getting into trouble in the future.”⁶²

That the migrants’ versions of events were often ignored was perhaps aggravated by the prevalent views among British consular service that the black migrants had a tendency to “get into trouble” and had “imaginary grievances.”⁶³ As in the above case, once those in power (the government and the sugar managers) had stated their position, it was unlikely that the British West Indian’s version of events would be accepted, and so the consuls would take no further action. The proactive action of the British consul in the murders at the Jobabo Sugar Mill is an exception to that rule, but even there the compensation took four years of constant struggle and correspondence on the part of the British officials to materialise, and those accused of the massacre were acquitted.

Further cases of ill treatment of British Caribbean islanders continued to emerge as migration increased in the 1910s, thus creating a rise in the claims made to the British government. According to the migrants, the consuls in Cuba continued to be negligent in protecting the rights of the workers there. On 22 April 1916, a Jamaican worker named James D. Lowe wrote to the Colonial Office in London, notifying them that he had been attacked and beaten with a machete by a Guard in a sugar *colonia*. Lowe mentioned that on the evening when he was attacked “there were much comments made by the Guards to the effect that ‘England cannot defend her subjects now’.” Based on this, one would assume that the inaction of the consuls was so widely recognised that even the Guards felt unthreatened by it. He complained about the negligence of the consuls and demanded action: “I have forwarded a complaint to the British Legation here, regarding this matter, but his reply was, that he can do nothing concerning the matter. As a British Subject I

therefore appeal to the Supreme Authority for jurisdictional [*sic*] protection from such atrocity.”⁶⁴ Even if the consuls did not act properly in matters relating to the British Antilleans, from the reports, it is clear that they were aware of the disadvantageous situation they confronted in Cuba. In September 1916, Consul Leech reported that: “The politicians and press are very much opposed to the British West Indian, and it is to be feared that they are often unfairly treated by the police, rural guard, and the courts.”⁶⁵

The massacre of 1917 was perhaps the best example of the kind of abuse committed against British Caribbean migrants. Also, for several reasons, the “Jobabo incident” and its long aftermath would represent a point of reference for future dealings between the British and Cuban governments with regard to the black British subjects in Cuba. Considering his previous comments and apparent negligence, it is surprising that it was Consul Stephen Leech who pro-actively demanded compensation for the migrants murdered. Surely, the violent and unfair nature of the massacre was too much to be ignored by the British authorities. In this case British prestige was on the line, and the lack of a proper reaction to this particular event would have set a bad precedent for the migrants; it would also have undermined the British Empire. Which of these two factors had more weight for British officialdom, is a question that cannot be answered with the sources at hand.

Another unanswered question is whether the testimonies offered by surviving British Caribbean workers were collected as a concerted effort on the part of the consular officials or due to the effort of the migrants themselves. The fact that Jobabo Sugar Mill was heavily financed by British capital at that time may have been important in the consular effort to sort out what happened there. British officials and British witnesses, such as Noël Deerr and Arthur Hall, were unequivocal in their support and endorsement of the position in the declarations of the British Antilleans. For them, even if they were prejudiced against black migrant labourers, such an unjust act of violence was inadmissible. It is also unclear from the sources if the families of those killed were exercising pressure on the British government, during the four years of diplomatic warfare, for the compensation (I have found no surviving document to suggest this). In 1921, the money for compensation (\$36,135) was sent to the Governor of Jamaica, but in the case of one of the persons killed, Charles Jarrett, they were unable to find any family members. The consuls in Havana apparently asked for Jarrett’s compensation (\$3,285) to be allocated in the Victoria Fund, which had been “depleted largely on behalf of Jamaicans themselves and other British West Indians.” But it has also been suggested that the British consuls kept the money from the

compensation and that the families did not receive anything.⁶⁶ What is certain after the diplomatic ordeal of the “Jobabo incident” is that the claims made by British Caribbean migrants to the Empire continued to take place and that British diplomatic action on them seems to have become more active and diligent.

As discussed previously, the diplomatic aftermath of the killings in Jobabo was followed by the sugar crisis of 1921 and further cases of ill treatment in the early 1920s. In 1921, the position of the British officials was relatively alleviated when the Cuban Government proposed that, given the “distress and unemployment amongst coloured British subjects and the danger of internal disturbance” they would assume the costs of repatriation. After consulting the colonial government of Jamaica and the British Vice Consul in Santiago, Consul Godfrey Haggard in Havana agreed to the Cuban proposal.⁶⁷ Clearly sharing the prejudices and racial fear of the Cuban government, Haggard noted:

... some five to ten thousand British West Indians are out of work and in many cases ill and starving. This office is being besieged by destitute negroes, and at Santiago de Cuba –the district where many Jamaicans have been working- the situation is even worse. The Cuban Government fear, apparently with reason, that from begging these negroes ma[y] get to rioting.⁶⁸

But even in the acknowledged crisis of 1921, the complaints of the migrants continued to take second place to the explanations given by sugar managers. When Leeward and Windward Islanders complained about the situation at Chaparra, Consul Haggard reported to the Foreign Office basically praising the management of the company and sceptical about accusations of negative treatment of workers there.⁶⁹ As was shown above, the description of the conditions for workers in Chaparra was disputed; as were the different versions of events surrounding the ill treatment of British Antilleans.

The migrants continued to write to the centre of the Empire, not only to protest about their situation, but also to condemn the lack of action of the British officials in Cuba. From prison, Antiguan Samuel W. Ambrose, who had been accused of forgery, condemned the lack of evidence against him and the irregularities in the judicial proceedings. He wrote to the Foreign Office saying: “Through the none [*sic*] assistance of the Consuls, I am compelled to forward my grievances to you as Secretary in Charge of our Affairs.”⁷⁰ On 5 June 1921, a group of British Caribbean islanders from Chaparra headed by John E. Hunt submitted a petition to “His Majesty the King”. Asserting their allegiance to the British Empire and their identity as British subjects, they criticised the conditions of work in Chaparra and Delicias. In what one may consider as a skilful and submissive appeal

to the imperial authority that referred to the tensions left by the war in Europe and to their sense of Britishness, they added:

And I humbly beg that his Majesty shall take account that the head engineers who are placed in authority to give us work [...] are Germans they are trying in every possible way to suffer we the British subjects. First question asked when we apply for work is: Are you a British? We answer yes, they at once reply we have no work and as we leave they employ Cubans. It is for this cause we [b]end our knees in [t]ears and make our humble petition to his Royal Majesty the King to deliver us out of our greivous [*sic*] distress as we have no one to represent us. We are histening [*sic*] in anciety [*sic*] while we are praying for deliverance.⁷¹

Hunt's reference to the fact that they had "no one to represent" them was, again, a critique of the action (or lack of it) taken by the consuls in Cuba. George Smith, a migrant who wrote to the Home Office in London stating that the Consul "would not help us", repeated such criticism. To strengthen his argument and further condemn the Consul, Smith noted: "the Majority of us are Ex. Soldiers who have been in the Consul with our papers Etc. He disacknowl[ed]ge us as British subjects."⁷² In 1922, a letter from Santiago by 105 St. Lucians, including 38 veterans of the British West Indies Regiment, noted: "We have been to the English Consul several times, asked him for help. He bluntly refused to help us in our need. He said that we are British objects, but not British subjects"⁷³

While there is evidence showing the lack of action of the consular officials, other evidence suggests that British consuls were active and persistent in questioning the Cuban government about the abuses committed against the immigrants. The "Jobabo incident" and Consul Leech's actions from 1917 until 1920 is a case in point, but later cases in the 1920s show similar determination on the part of British officers. In his letter to the Cuban Secretary of State with regard to the murder of Charles Sadler, Consul Haggard remarked: "It is unnecessary for me to lay stress on the gravity of this incident which appears to have been the unprovoked and wanton murder of a defenceless man by an officer of the Cuban Police Force."⁷⁴ After the many cases of aggression, discriminatory treatment, and violence that took place against British Caribbean migrants in the early 1920s, the response of the British officials was unequivocal. Consul Haggard wrote to the Cuban Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, invested with all the authority of the British Empire, saying:

I am instructed by His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to inform your Excellency that His Majesty's Government have learnt with grave concern of the treatment to which British West Indian laborers continue to be subject in Cuba.

Haggard outlined how the British Antilleans suffered because of the poor conditions in the quarantine station of Santiago de Cuba, the use of firearms by Rural Guards against unarmed West Indians, the lack of interest in prosecuting people responsible for violent attacks, the unsatisfactory termination of trials, and the ill treatment on the plantations. He further stated that due to the “benefit which the sugar plantations derive from their labour,” the migrant workers “deserve every protection and consideration from the Cuban authorities” The Consul concluded his letter warning the Cuban Government that “the British West Indian Governments concerned are being consulted by His Majesty’s Government with a view to joint action to restrict, if not indeed entirely prohibit, further emigration of coloured labourers to Cuba.”⁷⁵ After many inquiries on the part of the British consuls, St. Clair Gainer concluded that representations made to the Cubans had “proved useless”, that the Cuban reply was in the “usual form” and “the blame is thrown on the West Indian”. The actions of both Haggard and St. Clair Gainer in the early twenties became part of the diplomatic saga that ended up in the British Parliament in 1924. It is clear that British consuls stationed in Cuba did act in favour of British Caribbean migrants, particularly in notable cases such as those of the Jobabo massacre and the ill treatment of the early 1920s. But what is also evident from the declarations of many migrants is that consular officials were, at the same time, negligent in providing assistance to the migrants. This was either because attention to the complaints of the migrants was not a priority for them, or because of the racial and class prejudices and the personal interests of the consular officers. As argued by Anderson in the case of British Caribbean migrants in Costa Rica:

The conflation of racism and paternalism within imperial ideology also added to the ambivalence of the officials. Imperial ideology was in part a rationalization of domination of other peoples, often based on the inferiority of the colonized’s ‘race’. The ideology depicted the British role as that of a father caring for his children, this paternalism explaining British dominance, but also guaranteeing assistance to all the Empire’s subjects.⁷⁶

As is evident from their correspondence, British Antilleans were aware of the racial prejudices among British Consuls, but also of the responsibilities of the Empire towards its colonial subjects. It was on the basis of the latter that the migrants continued to use writing as a way of articulating their grievances in Cuba.

During the late 1920s and the 1930s, the practice of writing to the Imperial authorities continued. British Caribbean islanders in Cuban prisons, for instance, constantly appealed to British authorities. A Barbadian by the name of Evans Pile, who had been

sentenced to death, was a case in point. After trying to seek the assistance of the local consuls, Pile wrote to the colonial government in Barbados in January 1928:

Sir, and the last information I Received [*sic*] from Havana British Consul the last I receive from the British Consul of Havana stating that he don[']t come to reporgent Know [*sic*, represent no] Black people in Cuba. Sir I will like to know if we British West India[n] don[']t know portiction [*sic*] in Cuba. Sir, I was out to the front fighting for my King & Country.⁷⁷

In Barbados, the Governor, W. C. F. Robertson supported his case with the Colonial Office because the evidence against Pile did “not seem convincing” and “the prolonged imprisonment prior to trial may be reasonable ground for diplomatic action.”⁷⁸ By the time Robertson had contacted London with regard to the case, Pile himself had written to the War Office, in March 1928, describing how the case against him had been a set up by Cuban officials. He concluded his letter by saying: “I am one of those Brave Boys who fought in the last Worlds [*sic*] War for my Brave Good King and my Brave Good flage [*sic*], and Country and my number is 15.152.P.T.”⁷⁹ Despite the correspondence, Pile was executed in November 1928, triggering the concerted action of his co-veterans of the British West Indies Regiment in a letter written by Charles Burt, and signed by members of the Regiment 807, E. H. Walters, A. S. Wilson, James Brown, Dr. S. A. Holly, and E. A. Reid.

As a British subject I believe to myself that this is very un-fair to treat a British Subject in that kind of way. We do not know if the consul here made any report about this, any way, I beleive [*sic*] he will. We regret to say that we are not protected in this Country or do we get any right from the Government in this Country. So we would be very grateful if our Mother Country could take some more interests in us in this country as Britishers. According to report it is stated that this same Evans Pile is a native of Barbadoes [*sic*], B. W. I. We also learnt that he was a soldier in the World's War [*sic*]. So we think as fair thinking Loyal subjects of His Majesty the King that this case should be taken in consideration by proper investigation. I beleive [*sic*] that we should not be allowed to be abuse or kill by inferior nation of any kind that would only show the world that we as British Subjects are not protected abroad and by so doing these people would do as they please with us.⁸⁰

Other protests from migrants also followed similar practices and rhetoric: a sign that by stressing their allegiance to the Empire, British Antilleans had better possibilities of succeeding in their complaints or to obtain protection. Such is the case of Melville A. Jacobs from Dominica, discussed in the previous chapter. Jacobs wrote on behalf of 515 men and women from the eastern Caribbean islands to the British Legation in Havana to condemn the situation in the Chaparra Sugar Mill.⁸¹ As a consequence of his letter, the

manager of the Sugar Mill, R. B. Wood, had to respond to the inquiries of the British Legation about the situation of the migrants. Wood denied the accusations,⁸² something that was enough for the British officials, but Jacobs insisted in his protest writing to the “Honorable Representatives” of the Foreign Office in London. Not only did he criticise the manager but also said that Wood had influenced the British Consul –something for which the Foreign Office would probably question him. Jacobs demanded some action and demonstrated his imperial allegiance by signing “Subordinately Yours, British West Indian Subject, M. A. Jacobs.” Jacobs’s actions, which he referred to as his “struggles”, included letters to the Colonial Government in Dominica and to “His Majesty the King”; but this also prompted active repression by the Chaparra’s administration, his eviction from the premises of the sugar mill, and a death threat.

Another letter that indicates how British Antilleans thought they could improve their condition through writing to the representatives of the Empire and to the Colonial Governments is to be found in the letter of Antiguan George J. Carlisle referred to in the previous chapter. In a letter to the Colonial Governor of the Leeward Islands on 30 April 1931, Carlisle wrote on behalf of 36 eastern Caribbean islanders, condemning the situation in Cuba. He wrote: “I ask you sincerely to look up this situation for it is serious, we will die,” and added:

... I am a native of Antigua please send me a quick reply that I can know just what to do[;] for our people here ar[e] just waiting to hear the result of our Government[. W]e will have to look for our people so we can provide them and care them for our next war[;] just as the Jamaicans[s] Government have done[. Q]uite a lot of our men here have Been [sic] in the world war and we may need them again.⁸³

While manifesting his subordination to the dominance of the Empire by saying that he would wait for a reply, he was also reminding the Colonial Governor of his and his people’s role within the Empire.

It is clear from the letter that, as in other migrant destinations in the Americas, the British Caribbean migrants either had “a fervent belief in the efficacy and superiority of the Empire”⁸⁴ or had learned to use the Empire as a strategic tool to face problems. The Cuban Secretary of State, Carlos Manuel de Cespedes, noted the strategic practice of the migrants when defending the actions of government officials:

It would not, then, appear just continually to accuse the said [Cuban] authorities of ill-treating those individuals, refusing to admit the validity of their declarations that they acted in self-defense or in the course of their duty,

but nevertheless giving credit to the information supplied by those persons who, after committing acts of disrespect, misdemeanours and breaches of the law, seek impunity in the diplomatic protection of the British Empire of which they form part.⁸⁵

The use of the authority of the Empire on the part of the British Caribbean migrants in Cuba may be considered what Richard D. E. Burton has described as a practice of 'opposition', one that "simultaneously challenges and confirms the dominant order by turning the latter's resources against it in a complex double game of oppositionality."⁸⁶ The actions of the black workers in interwar Britain compare to the actions of the British Antilleans in Cuba. These workers "appropriated and refashioned imperialist arguments in defence of their rights as they defined them."⁸⁷ The actions of individual migrants on their own, or in representation of others, function as what James C. Scott has defined as "everyday forms of resistance"; individual acts that pressured –or forced– British authority to act on their behalf, but that avoided a "confrontation with authority."⁸⁸ No confrontation does not necessarily mean no challenge. By emphasising their identity as British subjects, reasserting their role in the British West Indies Regiment and the Great War, and praising the Monarchy, the immigrants appropriated the language of the Empire in an action that, to paraphrase William Roseberry, recognised authority and addressed power at the same time as protesting about it.⁸⁹ Such practice of opposition and protest also altered notions of race and identity among British officialdom in Cuba, the colonies, and London, and resulted in challenging British understandings and notions of Empire at the margins and at its very centre.

¹ The options of struggle, such as trade unionism, were therefore limited by their own view of their prospects and future within and without Cuban society.

² Ann Dummet and Andrew Nicol, *Subjects, Citizens, Aliens, and Others: Nationality and Immigration Law* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1990), 77, 79. There were, however, some distinctions in different historical periods in Britain.

³ See Anna Tryiandafyllidou, "National Identity and the 'other'," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 21: 4 (July 1998): 593-612. More specifically in the British case, see Simon Gikandi, *Maps of Englishness: Writing Identity in the Culture of Colonialism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

⁴ Teófilo Gay Watkins, "Papel de las migraciones en la formación y el desarrollo de las fuerzas laborales nacionales," 20 January 1997, 2. Private Papers, Teófilo Gay Watkins.

⁵ Jorge L. Giovannetti, 11 February 1999, Baraguá, Ciego de Avila, Cuba, *Journal* (1998-1999).

⁶ Interview with Celia Leonore Campbell, Baraguá, Cuba, 11 February 1999.

⁷ Arch R. Wiggins, *The History of the Salvation Army, Vol. V: 1904-1914* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, LTD, 1968), 39.

⁸ "Memorandum in Regard to the Conditions of West Indian Labour in Cuba," enclosed in Stephen Leech to Rt. Hon. Viscount Grey, Foreign Office, 8 September 1916, PRO, FO 277/190.

⁹ Ibarra, "La inmigracion antillana," 24.

¹⁰ de la Fuente, "Two Dangers, One Solution," 40.

¹¹ de la Fuente, "Two Dangers, One Solution," 42.

¹² E. Ethelred Brown, "Labour Conditions in Jamaica Prior to 1917," *The Journal of Negro History*, 4: 4 (October 1919): 358.

¹³ See Carr, "Identity, Class, and Nation."

¹⁴ This is evident in records for the register of associations in Havana. See, for example, Sociedad 'Universal Improvement Association and Comunities [sic] League, "Reglamento," (Negociado de Asociaciones), 17 February 1920, and Richard A. Bennett, and P. A. Beausoleil, President and Secretary of the Universal Improvement Association and Comunities [sic] League, "Acta de Constitución," 3 March 1920, ANC, Fondo 54-Registro de Asociaciones, Leg. 388, exp. 11640.

¹⁵ See Sociedad 'Universal Improvement Association and Comunities [sic] League', "Reglamento," [Negociado de Asociaciones], 17 February 1920, ANC, Fondo 54-Registro de Asociaciones, Leg. 388, exp. 11640.

¹⁶ See the Constitution and Book of Laws of the UNIA, particularly Article IX, section 1, with regard to membership, in *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers, Vol. I: 1826-August 1919*, ed. Robert A. Hill (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983). This version of the Constitution and Book of Laws is as approved in July 1918. Although it was amended in 1920, the elements stated above remained.

¹⁷ Clarke, Jabez L., Assistant Secretary, Havana Division. "Havana Division Coming Up from the Rear: Holds Big Mass Meeting at Which a Live Wire from Panama Electrifies Vast Audiences." *The Negro World*, (18 June 1921): 8; "Rt. Hon. High Commissioner for Cuba, Mr. Eduardo V. Morales takes Havana Division by Storm: Leaves Her in Thorough Working Condition." *The Negro World*, (16 July 1921): 8. Interview with William V. Stoute Green, Ciego de Avila, Cuba, 13 February 1999.

¹⁸ See notes 4 and 5 to Marcus Garvey's letter to William H. Ferris, Literary Editor, *The Negro World*, Kingston, Jamaica, 21 May 1921, in *The Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers, Vol. III: September 1920-August 1921*, ed. Robert Hill (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 424-425.

¹⁹ See, Ethelbert Blackwood and Herman Angus, President and Secretary, "Reglamento de la Asociación Universal para el Adelanto de la Raza Negra," 6 April 1922, AHPC, Fondo-Registro de Asociaciones, Leg. 104, #12; T. D. Allen and H. P. Martin, President and Secretary, "Reglamento de la Asociación Universal para el Adelanto de la Raza Negra," 3 June 1922; AHPC, Fondo-Registro de Asociaciones, Leg. 129, #6; and Westmore Chance and H. Geo Smith, President and Secretary, "Reglamento de la División #593 de Marianao de la Asociación Universal para el Adelanto de la Raza Negra y la Ligas [sic] de Comunidades Africanas," 17 February 1929, ANC, Fondo 54-Registro de Asociaciones, Leg. 306, exp. 8892.

²⁰ C. S. Morris and Septimus Blair, President and Secretary, "Reglamento de la Sociedad de Recreo y Sport Universal Negro Improvement Association and A.C. L. Num. 593." 13 May 1928, ANC, Fondo 54-Registro de Asociaciones, Leg. 306, exp. 8892.

²¹ Westmore Chance and others, to Gobernador de la Provincia de la Habana, 25 June 1928, and C. S. Morris and others, to Honourable Delegate, 30 September 1928, ANC, Fondo 54-Registro de Asociaciones, Leg. 306, exp. 8892.

²² Philander L. Cable to Dr. Guillermo Patterson, Cuban Secretary of State, Havana, 29 September 1921, and Philander L. Cable to U.S. Secretary of State, Washington DC, 30 September 1921, USNA, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Post, Diplomatic Posts, Cuba, Vol. 138, file 843.

²³ Lewis, *Marcus Garvey*, 112.

²⁴ "Cuba Puts ban on Garvey," *New York Times* (3 January 1930): 4.

²⁵ McLeod, "Garveyism in Cuba, 1920-1940," 135.

²⁶ "Convention Reports, 1924," in *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers, Vol. V: September 1922-August 1924*, ed. Robert Hill (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 714.

²⁷ See R. A. Bachelor, "Convention Report, 4 August 1924," in *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers, Vol. V: September 1922-August 1924*, ed. Robert Hill (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 652, and Eduardo V. Morales, "Convention Report, 14 August 1922", in *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers, Vol. IV: 1 September 1921-2 September 1922*, ed. Robert Hill (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 862. For the case of Mr. Christian, see "Hard Treatment to the Preston Division in Cuba," *The Negro World* (8 October 1921): 10.

²⁸ McLeod, "Garveyism in Cuba," 134.

²⁹ See Randall K. Burkett, *Garveyism as a Religious Movement: The Institutionalization of a Black Civil Religion* (Dover, Mass: The Scarecrow Press and The American Theological Library Association, 1978).

³⁰ *Universal Negro Ritual: Containing Forms, Prayers, and Offices for Use in the Universal Negro Improvement Association, together with a collection of hymns authorized by the High Executive Council, compiled by His Grace, the Rev. George Alexander McGuire, Chaplain-General; Approved by His Excellency Marcus Garvey, President General and Provisional President of Africa* (1921). Available at the Rare Books and Manuscript Division, Schomburg Center for the Study of Black Culture, New York Public Library, Sc. Rare C 81-18.

³¹ "Marcus Garvey and Miss H. V. Davis Tell Thrilling Story of Trip to West Indies and Central America," *The Negro World*, (Vol. 10, No. 24, July 30, 1921): 3. See edited version of the speech in *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers, Vol. 3: September 1920-August 1921*, ed. Robert A. Hill (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 532-545. The lack of the word Negro in the name of the organisation is in page 534, when Garvey referred to Cuba. In the same speech, when referring to his activities in countries other than Cuba, Garvey did use the complete name of the organisation with the word Negro.

³² After his return from Cuba, McGuire founded the African Orthodox Church, a fact that lead to preoccupations on Garvey's side as to the exclusion of other denominations from the UNIA. By 1923, according to Karl Prüter, Garvey and McGuire were in "open conflict". See Karl Prüter, *The Strange Partnership of George Alexander McGuire and Marcus Garvey* (Highlandville, Missouri: St. Willibrord Press, 1986), 4, 15-16.

³³ "UN.I.A. News of Banés," *The Negro World*, 6(Vol. 10, No. 12, May 7, 1921): 8. (my emphasis). This link between the church and the UNIA is evident in the organisation and the structure of the meetings elsewhere. For examples, particularly in the U.S. see Burkett, *Garveyism as a Religious Movement*, 23. For another Hispanic Caribbean example, in the Dominican Republic, see Humberto García Muñiz and Jorge L. Giovannetti, "Historical Commentaries: Dominican Republic," in *The Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers (Caribbean Series)*, Vol. [VIII], ed. Robert Hill (Berkeley: University of California Press, forthcoming).

³⁴ Ewart, D. E., Secretary, [UN.I.A.], San Manuel, Cuba, "San Manuel Division Holds Regular Meeting," *The Negro World*, 3(Vol. X, No. 2, February 26, 1921): 7; Sherwood, O. Louis, Secretary, Trustee Board, Guantánamo, Division 164. "Distinguished Visit Paid to the Guantánamo Division, as Well as others in Cuba, by His Grace, Our Esteemed Chaplain General, Dr. George Alexander M'Guire," *The Negro World*, UN.I.A. News, by Wm. H. Ferris, (Vol. X, No. 5, March 19, 1921): 8.

³⁵ "Priest and Deacon Organized by Chaplain General of the UNIA," *The Negro World*, (Vol. 10, No. 12, May 7, 1921): 8.

³⁶ "The Chaplain General Bids Farewell to Antilla, Oriente, Cuba," *The Negro World* (Vol. 10, No. 26, August 13, 1921): 11. "Camagüey Division U.N.I.A. & A.C.L.: Visited by Miss Henrietta Vinton Davis and Rt. Hon. Sidney De Bourg," *The Negro World*, (Vol. 10, No. 20, July 2, 1921): 4. Wilson, Sidney A., Report[er], "Unveiling a Charter at San Geronimo, Cuba," *The Negro World*, 1-2(Vol. X, No. 2, February 26, 1921): 10

³⁷ "Enthusiastic Wednesday Night in Havana," *The Negro World*, (Vol. 10, No. 24, July 30, 1921): 10. 13.

³⁸ H. Angus, General Secretary, Camagüey, "Camagüey Division holds big Meeting," *The Negro World* (18 June 1921): 10.

³⁹ "Moron Division U.N.I.A. Unveils Charter," *The Negro World*, (Vol. 11, No. 2, August 27, 1921): 11.

⁴⁰ "Manati Division, Oriente de Cuba, Secretary's Report," *The Negro World*, (Vol. 11, No. 3, September 3, 1921): 11.

⁴¹ "Florida, Cuba," *The Negro World*, (Vol. 16, No. 13, May 10, 1924): 8.

⁴² E. Franklin Frazier, "Garvey: A Mass Leader," *Nation*, 123 (18 August 1926): 148, quoted in Burkett, *Garveyism as a Religious Movement*, 15.

⁴³ Tony Martin, *Race First: The Ideological and Organizational Struggles of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1976), 49-51.

⁴⁴ Samuel Archer to Under-Secretary of State, Foreign Office, 15 October 1906, PRO, FO 369/13.

⁴⁵ John A. McKenzie to Sir Edward Grey, [M.P. Foreign Office] 1 September 1909, PRO, FO 369/207.

⁴⁶ Stephen Leech to The Rt. Hon. Sir E. Grey, Foreign Office, 12 October 1909, PRO, FO 369/207.

⁴⁷ Stephen Leech to [Louis] Mallet [Assistant & Superintendent Under-Secretary, FO], 14 October 1909, PRO, FO 369/207

⁴⁸ Stephen Leech to Sir E. Grey, Foreign Office, 21 July 1910, PRO, FO 369/288.

⁴⁹ Edward C. Moloney, M.D. to Right Hon. Secretary of State, Foreign Affairs, Foreign Office, 18 July 1911, PRO, FO 369/367.

⁵⁰ Kathleen Paul, "'British Subjects' and 'British Stock': Labour's Postwar Imperialism," *Journal of British Studies*, 34:2 (April 1995): 233-276.

⁵¹ See, for example, Abigail B. Bakan, *Ideology and Class Conflict in Jamaica: The Politics of Rebellion* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), 83-85, 111-115.

⁵² See Anderson, *Imperial Ideology*, 57.

⁵³ Laura Tabili, *We Ask for British Justice: Workers and Racial Difference in Late Imperial Britain* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 18-19.

⁵⁴ Tabili, *We Ask for British Justice*, 29.

⁵⁵ See Richard Smith, "Engendering Race: Jamaica, Masculinity, and the Great War" (Ph.D. diss: University of North London, 2001), for the war veterans in Jamaica. Many of the returning veterans to Barbados also went to Cuba. See Maughan, "Some Aspects of Barbadian Emigration," 241.

⁵⁶ Donald Chisholm and others to His Royal Majesty King George, London, 8 June 1913, PRO, FO 369/566.

⁵⁷ A. Law to Donald Chisholm, 9 July 1913, PRO, FO 369/566.

⁵⁸ A. Law to Stephen Leech, 25 August 1913, PRO, FO 369/566.

⁵⁹ Stephen Leech to Sir E. Grey, Foreign Office, 3 November 1913, PRO, FO 369/566.

⁶⁰ Anderson, *Imperial Ideology*, 3.

⁶¹ Robert Brown to [W.O.D., England], 13 September 1914, PRO, FO 369/690.

⁶² Stephen Leech to Sir E. Grey, Foreign Office, 3 November 1914, PRO, FO 369/690.

⁶³ Stephen Leech to [Louis] Mallet [Assistant & Superintendent Under-Secretary, FO], 14 October 1909, PRO, FO 369/207; J. J. Broderick to The Most Honourable, The Marquess of Reading, 4 November 1931 PRO, FO 369/2190.

⁶⁴ James D. Lowe to Right Hon. Bonar Law [Secretary of State for the Colonies], 22 April 1916, PRO, FO 369/867.

⁶⁵ "Memorandum in Regard to the Conditions of West Indian Labour in Cuba," enclosed in Stephen Leech to Rt. Hon. Viscount Grey, Foreign Office, 8 September 1916, PRO, FO 277/190.

⁶⁶ This was noted in the Convention Reports of the UNIA in New York, 1922, but erroneously quoting the year as 1912. *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers, Vol. IV: September 1921-2 September 1922*, ed. Robert A. Hill (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 894-895. To my knowledge there was no killing of British West Indians in 1912 for which compensation was awarded by the Cuban government. Presumably due to the lack of knowledge about the massacre of 1917, and the prominence of the PIC massacre in 1912, the editors wrongly put the date of 1912 in the convention reports.

⁶⁷ Godfrey Haggard, telegram to Foreign Office, London, 1 July 1921, PRO, FO 371/5565.

⁶⁸ Godfrey Haggard to Rt. Hon. Earl Curzon of Kedleston, Foreign Office, London, 5 July 1921, PRO, FO 371/5565.

⁶⁹ Godfrey Haggard to The Marquis Curzon of Kedleston, Foreign Office, 29 August 1921, PRO, FO 371/5565.

⁷⁰ Samuel W. Ambrose to Secretary of State, Foreign Affairs, Foreign Office, 4 April 1921, PRO, FO 277/197.

⁷¹ John E. Hunt and others to His Majesty the King, 5 June 1921, PRO, FO 371/565. The letter was forwarded to the Foreign Office, from where reports were asked from the consuls in Cuba.

⁷² George Smith to Home Office, 7 December 1921, PRO, FO 371/5565.

⁷³ "Stranded West Indians." *The Voice of Saint Lucia*, (28 January 1922): 4.

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- ⁷⁴ Godfrey Haggard to Dr. Rafael Montoro, Secretary of State, Havana, 23 May 1922, enclosed in Godfrey Haggard to The Marques Curzon of Kedleston, Foreign Office, 25 May 1922, PRO, FO 369/1777.
- ⁷⁵ Godfrey Haggard to Cuban Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Havana, 3 January 1924, in *Correspondence between His Majesty's Government*, TUC, UNL, Jx1543z7.C.1924.
- ⁷⁶ Anderson, *Imperial Ideology*, 2.
- ⁷⁷ Evans Pile to [Colonial] Secretary of Barbados, B.W.I., 27 January 1928, enclosed in W. C. F. Robertson to L. C. M. S. Amery, Colonial Office, 27 June 1928, PRO, FO 369/2022.
- ⁷⁸ W. C. F. Robertson to L. C. M. S. Amery, Colonial Office, 27 June 1928, PRO, FO 369/2022.
- ⁷⁹ Evans Pile to War Office, UK, 30 March 1928, PRO, FO 369/2022.
- ⁸⁰ Charles Burt and others to The British War Office, UK, 24 November 1928, PRO, FO 369/2022.
- ⁸¹ M. A. Jacobs, and others to British Legation, Havana, 5 February 1931, PRO, FO 369/2191.
- ⁸² R. B. Wood to Mr. C. N. Ezard, British Legation, Havana, 12 March 1931, PRO, FO 369/2191.
- ⁸³ George J. Carlisle to His Excellency the Governor [of the Leeward Islands], 30 April 1931, PRO, FO 369/2191.
- ⁸⁴ Anderson, *Imperial Ideology*, 3.
- ⁸⁵ Carlos Manuel de Cespedes to St. Clair Gainer, British Legation, Havana, 4 July 1924, in *Further Correspondence between His Majesty's Government*, TUC, UNL, Jx1543z7.C.1924.
- ⁸⁶ Richard D. E. Burton, *Afro-Creole: Power, Opposition, and Play in the Caribbean* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 8.
- ⁸⁷ Tabili, 'We Ask for British Justice', 5.
- ⁸⁸ James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), xvi.
- ⁸⁹ William Roseberry, "Hegemony and the Language of Contention," in *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico*, eds. Gilbert Joseph and Daniel Nugent (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 364.

CHAPTER VIII

RACE, ETHNICITY, AND NATION IN THE MIGRATION EXPERIENCE

The Politics of Identity: Ethnicity, Nation, and 'Britishness'

British imperial authority was not the only thing that was contested by the migrant's active claim to British subjecthood. Their practice also challenged the central racial and ethnic notions of Britishness and Empire among its various governmental and consular representatives. As has been shown, British Caribbean migrants used their identity as British subjects more often than other identities, such as those based on island of origin and race, which, if used, were complementary to their subjecthood to the Empire. However, for the representatives of the Empire, themselves also British subjects, the encounter with the British Caribbean islanders represented a face-to-face meeting with the 'other' within. The different imperial representatives, and indeed the migrants, were aware of the racial tenets of Empire and their discursive practices were used on those lines. The incompatibility of blackness and Britishness has been a constant predicament in British society and history, from Thomas Carlyle's notorious discourse on the "Negro Question" in 1849, through the post-war migrations to Britain one century later, to the present day. As Paul Gilroy observes, to "speak of the British or English people is to speak of the white people".¹ The encounter between the colonial subjects and the Empire in Cuba, outside the imperial domain, was no exception to this.

When Jamaican John McKenzie complained to the Foreign Office in 1909 he was aware of the ethnic and racial politics of Britishness, and thus stated that he was "a colored man *but* a de[s]cen[dant] of one of those noble Scotch."² In the same fashion one can mention the comment by Barbadian Joseph Hall, when from prison he noted that nobody "came to see if I was white or black". Subtle distinctions mentioned above in the correspondence of Stephen Leech and Edward Moloney are evidence of the racial notions behind British subjecthood, as is the reluctance on the part of British consuls to talk about the migrants as British Subjects without any ethnic or racial qualification. British consuls referred to the British Caribbean migrants usually as British West Indians, Jamaican negroes, Jamaican subjects, blacks, or whatever other island affiliation the migrant might have. The notion of British subjects was kept for those white British residents in Cuba, including the consuls themselves. For example, when reporting about British peoples living in the Nipe Bay area of Cuba to the Foreign Office, Consul Leech reported that there were "nearly four thousand black *and* one hundred fifty white British subjects." Whether Leech wanted to distinguish between black people and white British subjects or between white

and black British subjects cannot be ascertained, but what is clear is that a racial distinction between the two groups had to be stated, even if the subjecthood of the migrants was acknowledged. In 1933, Neil Hone, himself one of the “few British” in his region, manifested his concern about British prestige being affected by “hundreds and thousands” of British Caribbean migrants “*claiming* to be British Subjects” in a state of misery and destitution.³ The hundreds and thousands of migrants were, apparently, not part of the “few British” but only had a “claim” to British subjecthood.

But as much as officials wanted to make distinctions, it was not possible to take the British allegiance away from the Jamaicans, Barbadians, and other islanders: they were British subjects. Through the meeting with colonial British subjects in Cuba, the representatives of Empire, especially consular officials, entered into a process of identifying the ‘other’. Homi K. Bhabha has noted: “The construction of the colonial subjects in discourse, and the exercise of colonial power through discourse, demands an articulation of forms of difference”.⁴ For the British officials such difference was articulated in the arena of race and ethnicity, by qualifying the British allegiance of the migrants. Such practice can be noticed in reports such as those by Consul Leech, when he referred to British subjects but identifying in brackets their origin: “British subjects (Jamaicans).”⁵ In a memorandum on the situation in Cuba, Vice Consul Dennis Cowan referred to the migrant workers simply as “West Indian negroes” and “Jamaicans”.⁶ In his reference to the alleged involvement of black migrants in the revolt of 1917 and the wider consequence of the events of that year, the British Ambassador in Washington, Sir Cecil Spring Rice, referred to the migrants as “British subjects” but also as “our negroes”.⁷ In another example, the British Legation reported to London in 1920 that the British subjects registered in Santiago de Cuba were 35 in 1914, 515 in 1917, and 1,506 in 1919, while simultaneously stating that there was “no doubt that the major portion of this Consulate’s duties concerns the approximately 12,000 Jamaicans in the two Eastern provinces.”⁸

During the crisis of 1924, both of the consuls who were more involved, Godfrey Haggard and D. St. Clair Gainer, also classified the migrants in different ways. Not that the different classifications were mutually exclusive, but the multiple ways of identifying the migrants testifies to the dilemma faced by the British officials in the construction of the colonial subjects. When outlining some of the cases of ill-treatment of the migrants, Haggard mentioned Randolph Smith, “a British subject”, Joshua Bartlay, a “Jamaican negro”, and David C. Patterson, “a Jamaican”.⁹ St. Clair Gainer, for his part, in separate correspondence identified migrants Frank Ellis, Henry Haiden, and C. N. Davis, as “British

subject ... native of Jamaica".¹⁰ British officials in the Foreign Office had similar concerns in terms of identifying and qualifying the subjects of the Empire. After Consul St. Clair Gainer reported on the case of Albert Barnett who was assaulted and shot by a Cuban Rural Guard, the reply from J. Ramsay MacDonald from the Foreign Office was: "I should be glad to learn whether the British subject in question is a West Indian or not."¹¹

Reports from other British officials inspecting the consulates in Cuba are also revealing of the racial and social distinctions within the Empire. Inspector T. D. Dunlop reported on the Vice Consulate of Antilla that the "British colony numbers half a dozen whites and about 350 West Indians."¹² From his report on Santiago de Cuba, where thousands of black migrants were resident during the 1920s, it is clear what Dunlop's notion was as to who were British Subjects: "There are only about 40 British subjects in Santiago."¹³ Ethnic and social distinctions and notions of Britishness prevailed in Dunlop's assessment of the British colony and the consular establishments in Cuba, and were also central to his personal opinion of the different people he came across in the performance of his duty. He referred to the Jamaican Secretary of Immigration, Mr. Dignum, and Pro-Consul MacCormack as "white Jamaican". About the different candidates to fill a consular post in Santiago he had several opinions, including that Mr. L. Brooks was "more Cuban than British" and that Mr. Dew and Mr. Henriques were "white Jamaican". He concluded that the appointments of any of these men "would be a risky and undignified expedient" and added:

Jamaicans, white or black, are not liked or trusted in Santiago, and I regard it as essential that the new Consul should not be Jamaican.
[...] It had occurred to me that Mr. H. J. Dignum, whose appointment as Secretary for Immigration had been approved [...] might serve as Consul, *although a Jamaican*. After a few days spent with him in Santiago getting him equipped to start his Jamaican work, I can say that he is quite unsuitable. [...] He has no standing in the white British colony. A liaison with a young married woman, the subject of an impending divorce suit in New Orleans, may further discredit him, if the particulars become generally known.¹⁴

His other reports are equally clear in their social and racial criteria and distinctions. In his evaluation of Cienfuegos he noted that: "Besides the 12 white British subjects in Cienfuegos, there is a floating population of about 100 coloured Jamaicans".¹⁵ In Camagüey he noted that the "British colony numbers about twenty whites and a floating population of blacks. In the province of Camagüey there are perhaps 15,000 Jamaicans."¹⁶ About Nuevitas he said that there was "only one British subject besides Mr. Patten [the Vice Consul]" and that there was the "usual large colony of Jamaicans in the vicinity."¹⁷

And about Havana, Dunlop noted that the “British colony numbers about 500 whites and about 60,000 blacks in all Cuba.” He added that there had been difficulties in “persuading white British subjects to register” at the Consulate and that the “registration of West Indians of colour has not been attempted.”¹⁸

In 1930s, the articulation of difference within the Empire remained central to British consular policy. In his letter to the Acting British Consul of Santiago de Cuba with regard to the consular inspections, J. R. Murray noted that:

In endeavouring to promote the registration of British subjects resident in the Santiago consular district you will do well to remember that His Majesty’s Government is not anxious to encourage the registration of British West Indian negroes of the labouring class.¹⁹

Murray referred to the migrants as “Jamaican negroes”. Like other British officials, when speaking of them as part of the British colony, the racial distinction had to be made explicit, noting that the number of “British subjects resident in Camagüey is 60 white and 900 blacks.” As we saw previously with the white Jamaicans, even among the white British subjects ethnic distinctions were made by stating that the “whites are chiefly Canadians who are employed in the large sugar estates or who have fruit plantations of their own”.²⁰ In the early 1930s, colour and class were central to British Consul J. J. Broderick’s identification of the migrants as “British negro subjects”, “West Indian labour” or “British negro residents”.²¹ Other British officials, such as Consular inspector H. Hall Hall in 1935, also kept the racial distinctions by noting that in Cuba there were “2,000 white British subjects” and “possibly 60,000 coloured, British West Indians, mostly Jamaicans.”²² For Cienfuegos, Hall Hall reported that there were “about 25 white British subjects in the town” and “possibly one to two thousand coloured British subjects.”²³

Racial and social prejudice permeated the views of the representatives of the Empire, and certainly their actions with regard to the British Antilleans. In the 1910s Consul Leech viewed the Jamaican as people “not always to be relied for truthfulness” and “apt to exaggerate,” and in the 1930s Consul Broderick saw the British Caribbean black labourers as having an “inveterate tendency to get into trouble”.²⁴ The emphasis on racial categorisation through phenotypic description or racialised stereotypes of behaviour noted above, was part of the prejudices among the consular officers. Such a need for differentiation was part of an implicit and explicit struggle over who belonged to the British body politic and how ‘Britishness’ was to be defined. What I find remarkable about the racial politics emerging from the colonial encounter is that the migrants’ claim to British

subjecthood seems to have been the force that prompted the British officials and others to define Britishness. Who was a British Subject, or an unqualified British Subject, was defined through the encounter with the 'other' –the colonial 'other' in this case. As noted by several scholars, it is in such encounters that people decide and define who they are.²⁵ Catherine Hall reminds us that the colonies, or the colonial subjects in this case, "provided the benchmarks which allowed the English to determine what they were".²⁶

British officials were not only involved in the task of racially defining the 'other' by qualifying his or her subjecthood, but they were compelled to racially define what they were; their 'whiteness'. In a different context, Michel-Rolph Trouillot has noted that "unmarked humanity is white," and Catherine Hall has argued that being English was "outside of ethnicity".²⁷ The circumstances of the colonial encounter of black British subjects and the representatives of the Empire in the Cuban social setting changed those understandings. There, following Hall's argument, it was "no longer possible to believe only in 'negative ethnicity' where only 'the other' is visibly ethnic, while the 'non-ethnic' characteristics of one's own nation are taken for granted."²⁸ An otherwise explicitly unracialised identity such as that of the British subject became racially charged, not only for the black British subjects, but also for *white* British subjects. For the representatives of the Empire, the exercise of racially defining the 'other' meant also the racial definition of the self.

The 'White' Nation and the 'Black' Outsider

White Britishness was not the only notion of whiteness and nationality that was challenged as part of the social relations of the black British Caribbean migrants. Their very presence on Cuban soil also presented a challenge to those who imagined Cuba to be a white nation. This became evident in the discourses used by Cubans against the black migrants. The opposition articulated against the migrants was anchored in the nineteenth century ideology of black fear, but at the same time in the nineteenth century idea that Cuba was white. As with the encounter of British officials and black British subjects, it was the visible presence of the black migrants who provided the context in which Cuban elites and intellectuals articulated the nation in racial and ethnic terms. And in the same way that the encounter with the colonial 'other' had uncovered the myth of an inclusive British subjecthood, the encounter with the black 'other' showed the fragility of racial democracy and the illusion of multi-racial nationality.

As early as 1900, the authorities of Santiago de Cuba complained of the “bad life and customs” and the “scandals” being produced by Jamaican immigrants in the city.²⁹ When rumours spread that Jamaican labour was going to be used for the construction of the Cuban eastern railway network, widespread opposition forced railroad entrepreneur, William Van Horne, to refute the allegations in the Cuban press. He declared that, in harmony with the feelings against Jamaicans, his company had sent agents to recruit labour in Venezuela and Spain. These agents had particular instructions to “engage only such men who are in every way suitable to become, further on, good Cuban citizens.”³⁰ The racial and nationalist implications of such preferences and perceptions, though not always explicitly stated, were obvious. Prospective good Cuban citizens were to be found in Hispanic countries regarded as white or ‘whiter’, and not in the Caribbean islands associated with blackness.

In the mid-1910s the migration preference was for European workers. Spaniards were by far the biggest immigrant group in that decade, with some 195,468 arriving between 1902 and 1910, more than two thirds of them during the second half of the decade (134,315). The preference for Hispanic or European migrations at the time was expressed at different levels. Between 1905 and 1906, for example, sugar entrepreneur Manuel Rionda concentrated his efforts of labour recruitment in bringing workers from Spain.³¹ When facing “troublesome” labour prospects for the crop of 1906, Theodore Brooks of the Guantánamo Sugar Company requested permission to import Puerto Rican labourers. The Government acceded to the request provided that the immigrants were of the “Caucasian race”.³² In July 1906, the Cuban Government authorized \$1,000,000 *pesos* to promote the immigration and colonisation of families not just from Spain and the Canary Islands, but also from Switzerland, Norway, Denmark, and the North of Italy.³³ According to immigration figures in the late 1900s, this immigration policy was not successful. Two years later, in July 1908, the Cuban Government commissioned Gonzalo de Quesada to travel to Europe and do research on the possibilities for emigration to Cuba.³⁴ His studies on France, Switzerland, Portugal, and other European countries were published between 1909 and 1912 but without any real effect on immigration.³⁵

While a great central European migration never materialised, the immigration of what many Cubans considered less desirable peoples increased. Although far fewer than the Spaniards, British Caribbean migration more than tripled in the middle of the first decade of the twentieth century: from 479 in 1904-5 to 1,550 in 1905-6. This sudden increase in the black population, along with the fact that nearly all of the Antilleans entered

through, and settled in, the eastern half of the island, certainly gave them a degree of visibility. It was at that moment that Fernando Ortiz outlined the delinquent nature of the black and yellow races and urged for measures to stop the entrance of what he thought were “noxious” groups. In turn, Ortiz advocated white immigration and argued that the migrants had to be spread throughout Cuba’s countryside “to avoid the formation of nuclei of foreigners of the same race, specially those who speak non-Spanish languages.” The “absorption” of immigrants was needed to “avoid collective crimes and the rooting of secret societies.” He concluded emphatically that, “*small migratory currents from many countries are preferable than a great migratory current from one type of people.*”³⁶ Long before he coined the term “transculturation”, it seems to have been central to his conception of what Cuban society should be, for he concluded that “the immigrant has to be absorbed, assimilated; we have to make him ours.”³⁷

Ortiz’s criteria for the criminal nature of non-white races were grounded in notions of racial superiority. Blacks were a “backward” race who were more delinquent than the whites when in a similar social position, he observed, and a “primitive” and “barbarian” psyche, together with other “social defects”, distinguished the non-whites from whites. Even when his ideas of assimilation and absorption could be seen as part of an ideology of *mestizaje*, for him even the *mestizos* –because of being in a middle ground between “pure races”- were in the similar criminological predicament of the blacks.³⁸ The essence of the ideas that Ortiz upheld at that moment could be summarised in that black immigrants were inferior, criminal, and damaging to Cuban society and nation. The opposite was therefore true, and formed the active policy of the Cuban State: white immigrants were good. In the years that followed, what Ortiz had put onto paper would transcend his authorship and remain central to the Cuban politics of race and migration. Whether true or not, blacks in general and black immigrants in particular became the criminals and delinquents *par excellence*. Towards the end of the first decade of the 1900s, the continuing presence of black immigrants in the east and the appearance of the PIC contributed to increase the ongoing racial tensions.

In northeastern plantations the link between immigration and criminality was sustained when some British Caribbean migrants were accused of stealing. In one case, within the lands of the UFC in Banes where a person lost his money, two Jamaicans were arrested under suspicion without any evidence. The manager of the sugar mill declared that the Cuban authorities only took action against the Jamaicans and nothing was done with regard to Cuban nationals who were around the area when the money was lost.³⁹

Paradoxically, while British Antilleans were being targeted as authors of criminal activities, they were complaining about actions committed against them. In 1909, a Jamaican by the name of John A. McKenzie explicitly noted that immigrants, “especially colored are suffering terrible [*sic*] from the aggressions of the Cubans.” McKenzie added: “So we are beaten like dogs and robbed [and] ill treated[;] no one look after our rights, so long as we are black.”⁴⁰

In many ways, the black migrants came to epitomise everything negative in Cuba, from everyday criminal activities to socio-political uprisings. The 1912 revolt of the PIC did not escape this association, and Jamaicans and Haitians were constantly linked with the uprising.⁴¹ When mentioning the “destructive” character of the revolt, the *Diario de la Marina* said that there was no reason to argue against it when the people involved were probably at the mercy of external influences.⁴² The leader, Evaristo Estenoz, and the revolt itself were constantly associated with Jamaica or Haiti.⁴³ While it has been noted that Fernando Ortiz remained silent concerning the events in 1912,⁴⁴ his essay, “Las rebeliones de los negros en Cuba”, was reproduced twice during the PIC revolt and its aftermath. In this essay, after a survey of the different slave revolts in Cuban history, Ortiz mentioned the racism involved in them and referred to it as a “fatidic phantom that from *foreign predications*” comes to affect the situation of the Republic.⁴⁵ The racial problems then were not endogamous to Cuban society.⁴⁶ The reasons for the timing of the essay –if any– are unknown, but Ortiz’s conclusions were certainly more than relevant to the general context in which he was writing.

Like Ortiz’s “foreign predicaments”, some commentators on the PIC revolt framed it within a rhetoric blaming “outside” influences. A writer condemning the racism in the revolt linked it with the external historical context of the “conflict of races” in the Antilles that dated from Haitian independence in 1804.⁴⁷ When a group of “Ladies” in Santiago de Cuba condemned the actions of the rebels, they referred to them as “cafres Africanos”, not as Cuban rebels or black Cubans. *La Prensa*, along with other Cuban newspapers, constantly reported on “Haytian [*sic*] and Jamaican negroes” being led by Estenoz and linked that with the fact that most of these immigrants were based in the east, where the rebellion was concentrated.⁴⁸ The involvement of black immigrants was denied at the time, and indeed there is little historical evidence about it, but in 1912 and after, the view of the immigrants as disturbing elements continued. The very fact that the uprising was considered a divisive attack on the integrity of the Cuban nation was in itself a statement that identified the sources of the revolt as external to an imagined national community.

Haitians and Jamaicans were therefore framed in that rhetoric of “foreignness” attributed to the rebels and the rebellion, not least because as black outsiders, they had also been perceived as prejudicial to the “national collective”.⁴⁹

After 1912 the fear of the black outsider gained more substance partly because of how the revolt was portrayed by the press, the government, and the Cuban elites. In the view of many, the long-held fear of a black revolt within Cuban boundaries was no longer a fear, but something possible. And however imagined or inaccurate, black outsiders, Jamaicans or Haitians, were to be part of it. It is not surprising that when black immigrant labourers kept arriving in the 1910s, they continued to be perceived as disturbing elements, criminal, and damaging to the Cuban nation. In February 1913, Carlos de Velasco opposed the authorisation granted to the Nipe Bay Company for the importation of Caribbean labourers with the following argument:

From Jamaica and Haiti came a part, not insignificant, of the contingent that followed Estenoz and Ivonet in the racist rebellion; from that ethnic origin and with the same instincts, are the ‘Antillean’ workers imported by the ‘Nipe Bay Company’, and that is the social danger that has been brought onto us by General José Miguel Gomez at the end of his government...

Due to the arrival of the “Antillean” immigrants who had been allowed in by President Gomez, the country had to be “on guard against the grave conflict of no remote probabilities.”⁵⁰ That same month Rural Guard officials in Oriente reported to the Secretary of Government on the immigration from Haiti and Jamaica. The Acting Chief of the Rural Guard wrote that coloured individuals from these two islands were “pernicious elements who always manage to disturb with perverse ends the cordial relations existing among the ethnic components of this society.” He also noted that “individuals of the coloured race from Haiti and Jamaica” were not the “most appropriate element for the convenience of the country.”⁵¹ In October 1914, a Haitian General named Edmond Defly was, according to Cuban authorities, recruiting people to organise the “revenge against the whites” and establish the “Constitution of a black republic in Oriente”⁵² And in 1915, the visit of another Haitian leader named Rosalvo Bobo raised similar concerns among Cuban authorities.⁵³

By 1915 Cubans were articulating their views on the black labourers constantly arriving in the country. In the regional press of eastern Cuba action was demanded from the Cuban authorities because among the Jamaicans and Haitians lawfully giving the \$30 deposit at their arrival there were “vagabonds”, “adventurers”, “perverted”, and people of “delinquent” life “capable of everything that is not permitted by law”.⁵⁴ In response, *El*

Pueblo newspaper of Banes –the centre of the activities of the UFC- reacted to the numerous articles on the “Jamaican danger” by emphasising the fact that it was the cheap Antillean labour that made possible the profits in the sugar industry.⁵⁵

And indeed, in the late 1910s, the effects of the First World War on the world sugar markets increased the prospects for higher profits for planters in Cuba. Sugar production increased and with it the demand for cheap labour. Despite legal obstacles, in only one year, British Caribbean migration skyrocketed from 1,640 in 1915 to 6,005 in 1916. A reaction was immediately recorded in *La Reforma Social*, when Luis Marino Pérez openly wrote that it was because of their colour, that Jamaican migration represented a social problem for the Republic.⁵⁶ He was concerned that this migration would turn Cuba’s eastern half into a predominantly black region, thereby weakening Cuban nationality. Without any regard to these social or racial concerns, sugar planters were trying to obtain government permits to bring labourers from the Antilles.⁵⁷ Marino Pérez argued that even though the Jamaicans might be good workers, they did not constitute good material for the construction of the Cuban national structure. In this, Marino Pérez seems to disagree with Ortiz’s earlier ideal of the assimilation of the immigrant. He referred to the “little assimilative power of Cuban society” and that due to the development the Cuban nation had attained it does “not absorb, nor assimilate with easiness the foreign elements living in its territory.”⁵⁸

The national conception imagined by Marino Pérez when faced with the black immigrants was not an inclusive one. He observed that:

... in Cuba *we* have made all the Cubans citizens of the Republic, without regard to their colour, and the blacks are as respected as are the whites. *We* place before skin colour, their condition as Cubans, because above ethnic aspects comes nationality, the common history of struggle and common sacrifices that have had the virtue of melting into one single nation, whites and blacks –an example unique in history.⁵⁹

The “melting” did not occur on equal terms, however. In Marino Pérez’s discourse the power to make all the Cubans citizens, and to place nationality before skin colour rested in an implicit “*We*”. The uneven terms of that equality became clear when he said that the “black Cuban cannot disavow that his social improvement depends on his association with the white.” The immigrant did not bring any “civilising impulse”, only “racism” that was incompatible with Cuba’s “social harmony”.⁶⁰ Against the backdrop of the events of 1912 and of the imagined threat of black migration, Marino Pérez embraced the myth of racial equality. To face the uncivilised and racist influence of the black immigrant, black Cubans had to look inwards and embrace a particular notion of Cuban nationality, one that was

mirrored in whiteness, placing nation above colour and ethnicity, but yet was not inclusive of other non-white elements.⁶¹

Months after Marino Pérez had put his argument forward, the “social harmony” he had referred to was put to a test. As shown in Chapter 4, the 1917 Liberal revolt triggered both the racial tensions among Cubans and also the antagonism against foreign blacks. Before, during, and after the revolt, the perceptions held by some sectors of Cuban society on the black immigrants were demonstrated. Again, British Caribbean migrants were associated with things negative and harmful, very much in the same way as in the first decade of the century.

The press accused Haitians and Jamaicans of being the principal transmitters of paludism and argued that their immigration should be avoided by all possible means.⁶² Jamaicans were accused of taking part in the revolt, particularly in the Jobabo Sugar Mill, where like “hordes of savages” they committed robberies and assaulted white women, a story that was repeated in the press all across the island.⁶³ In referring to the events in Jobabo, *La Lucha* related them directly to the “so-called racist rebellion” of 1912 and the increasing immigration from Haiti and Jamaica.⁶⁴ The *Diario de la Marina* followed, identifying the Jamaicans as a “plague” and warning about the “prejudices” and “dangers” that such immigration brought to the country. Consistently referring to them as “disturbing” the editorial noted: “What the country needs are men of order, not those who are uncontrollable, quarrelsome, and disturbing, like the Jamaican immigrants.” The racial and ethnic grounds for the argument were stated clearly when commenting about what was needed for Cuba:

It is an immigration that is adaptable to the Cuban population, with ethnic affinities and able to coexist and blend with her; that is what Cuba requires. It will never be of benefit to her to have elements that are completely foreign, distinct in their language, in their character, and their habits. These coloured immigrants will never serve, but as agents of discord and of perturbation, since without any rooting in Cuba, any bond with its history, any affection for her national and patriotic interests, they will take every occasion to promote racist conflicts. The Jamaican migrants will bring with them neither a healthy and robust sap of labour and wealth, nor a source of strength and homogeneous cohesion, but a virus of vices, vagrancy and disruption.⁶⁵

The black fear had been set in motion again by the Liberal revolt of 1917. This time even some sugar entrepreneurs, usually advocates of immigration and indifferent to Cuban nationalist preoccupations, demonstrated some concern about the “black elements coming over from Haity [*sic*] and Jamaica.” Eduardo Diez de Ulzurrun, manager of Rionda’s

Manati Sugar Company, suggested that the importation of Chinese workers was the only solution, in view of the fact that black immigrants would bring “another revolution of a racist nature”.⁶⁶ Victor Zevallos, of the Cuba Trading Company, also wrote to Manuel Rionda suggesting that:

... we could also bring people from Puerto Rico, and although they do not work much, that can be corrected by bringing two men instead of one. What is essential is to have workers here for the next crop, even if they are bad, and better for them not to be black.⁶⁷

Later that year, labour strikes worsened the situation of the country providing yet another justification for the opposition to the entrance of black labourers. Given the fact that blacks were seen by the elites as the source of all problems, the aftermath of the Liberal Revolt and the strikes in the fall of 1917 provided the setting for a plea for the encouragement of white European migration.⁶⁸ But in the late 1910s, the realities of wartime sugar production responded to economic needs and not to nationalist desires. Despite the attempts to foment white Spanish migration,⁶⁹ it was that of the black Antilleans which was witnessing increases at unprecedented levels.

That British consular officials constantly received complaints from the migrants is indicative of the fact that the latter were not being received with open arms. In 1919, the Cuban Police reported several cases in which both Jamaicans and Haitians were attacked, wounded, or involved in some kind of fight.⁷⁰ Three Haitians were found hanged between Marcane and Preston.⁷¹ In 1919, British Caribbean immigration to Cuba more than doubled reaching a total of 24,187, and Haitian migration was of 10,044; as a whole, there were some 34,231 foreign black from the Caribbean in Cuba. The census for that year recorded the black population of Oriente and Camagüey provinces at 131,752 (no distinction is made as to the nationality of the blacks). Considering that Caribbean migrants settled almost exclusively in these two provinces, and assuming that in the census they were part of the total black population, one could argue that, in 1919, the black migrants composed over a quarter of the total black population in the eastern provinces. When the sugar depression hit Cuba, the already existent contempt against black foreigners increased. If there was a degree of tolerance towards black migration during the Dance of the Millions, as argued by an editorial in *El Camagueyano*,⁷² the collapse of the sugar industry saw the end of it. The situation opened the space for the existing racism and hostility against the migrants, this time with economic and sanitary justifications.

The discourses used against black migrants were similar to those of previous times, and they were identified as carriers of disease or as elements who could “disturb the order” and “cause upset”.⁷³ As if being the rebel *par excellence* was not enough, a Haitian named Benito Fis was accused of cannibalism.⁷⁴ The economic crisis in 1921 also added the perception of the black migrant as a social burden, and increased the already existing concern about the competition that foreign labourers represented to the locals.⁷⁵ Cubans shouting “Mikinas bambose para Jamaica” constantly mocked the immigrants; St. Lucians were shot in broad daylight, and it was reported that Jamaicans were “all termed dogs” in Cuba.⁷⁶ In the press, and therefore in the Cuban imagination, Jamaicans and Haitians retained a high association with criminal activities and social troubles, or simply as “vagrants”.⁷⁷ Two Jamaicans were accused of stealing winning lottery tickets and Alfredo Wallero, “native of the English Antilles,” was known as “The Brilliant Negro” for his pick-pocketing activities.⁷⁸ In Niquero, the Mayor reported that a group of “Haitians or Jamaicans (he could not say which) attempted to assault the boy Fermin Sanz, with the intention of taking the money he was carrying.”⁷⁹ The pressure of the years of sugar crisis prompted the government to act with a Presidential Decree to repatriate “cane-cutters coming from Haiti, Jamaica, and other Lesser Antilles”.⁸⁰ The repatriations took place, and British Caribbean immigration started a process of gradual decline, never again reaching the levels of 1919 and 1921. However, the presence of black migrants was to remain an ever-existing concern for Cubans in the 1920s.

In 1923 Jorge Le-Roy y Cassá made one of the best known arguments against black migration, on health grounds, in his discourse entitled “Inmigración Anti-Sanitaria” at the Academy of Medical, Physical, and Natural Sciences in Havana. His discourse transcended the medical terrain with social and political overtones that referred to José Antonio Saco, to arguments on morality, and labelled the Jamaican and Haitian as “undesirable for the Nation”. The criminal stereotype, by then common, arose in reference to the immigrant when he concluded by noting the “blood crimes” and the use of drugs as related to them.⁸¹ Along with Le-Roy y Cassá was Carlos M. Trelles who gave a conference in 1923 entitled “*El progreso (1902-1905) y el retroceso (1906-1922) de la República de Cuba*”. Trelles looked to the immediate Cuban past, praised U.S. migratory legislation during the intervention, and condemned García Menocal’s migration policy during the war that had allowed the entrance of “a total of 156,000 uncultured men of rudimentary civilisation”.⁸² In Trelles’s view, the introduction into the nation of “so many beings of inferior, illiterate races” was a process harmful to the nation. Trelles chided García Menocal for forgetting the teachings

of Saco and the Count of Pozos Dulces. In eight years, he argued, the former President permitted the entrance of “as many blacks as those let in furtively in twenty five” years by several Colonial Captain-Generals. He continued his criticism of García Menocal saying: “As if his keenness for darkening Cuba were not enough, he also wanted to turn it yellow, and with that purpose he modified the Immigration Law of 1917.” The conduct of García Menocal was worse still, Trelles argued, considering that after the elimination of yellow fever, Cuba had become a country “perfectly habitable for the white race”. It was Cuban “patriotism” that called for a migratory policy that favoured groups of “what we could call Caucasian; but never the African or the Asiatic.”⁸³

During the 1920s and 1930s, the image of British Caribbean islanders –as well as that of Haitians- continued within the frameworks that have been set by the government, the elites, and the intellectuals. The reports of events involving them were always of a negative nature. “An event of blood” took place when a Jamaican turned mad and start to shoot passengers in the train.⁸⁴ Another shooting involving a Jamaican took place when a white Cuban woman was trying to “defend her honour” from the immigrant.⁸⁵ From the point of view of the periodical *Neptuno*, it was unfortunate that Cuba had become a favourite destination for “undesirable elements, who damage, rather than benefit, Cuba.”⁸⁶

Racial demographic change in the society was at the centre of Cuban preoccupations with regard to black migration. In April 1928, a regional newspaper argued that the useful and necessary migration was that which tended to improve the population. This was to be achieved by allowing the entrance of “elements of the same race” and “absolutely attacking the immigration of the coloured race.” The implied message was that those of the coloured race were not considered part of the country. The writer was worried about the consequences for the future of Cuba that would result from a “strong annual introduction of 30 to 40,000 healthy and strong men in full vitality, of the black race”. The article, reproduced in other newspapers, also noted that the problem was central to the “racial and cultural future of our country.”⁸⁷ In 1931, when repatriations of the black immigrants were taking place, a statement from the Department of Immigration pleaded guilty to irregularities during past government administrations and in not safeguarding Cuba’s future, through allowing the entrance “of elements that have made vary the ethnic and moral physiognomy, with a serious detriment to our country.”⁸⁸ Cuban concerns about the multiplication of the black element in the country were highlighted later in 1933 at the local level. White Cubans, maintaining the allegation that blacks were claiming the “POSESSION OF THE WHITE WOMEN”, formed the Ku Klus Klan Kubano and asserted

that if necessary they would use “VIOLENCE WITHOUT SCRUPLES”.⁸⁹ From the early 1920s, others had already tried to calm the fear that through miscegenation with the black immigrants Cuba would turn blacker. It was argued that there was no reason to be afraid that “those elements [will] multiply in our country and form families” because they would leave the country at the end of the sugar crop.⁹⁰

It is clear that in the first decades of the twentieth century, among the Cuban elites and government officials, the desirable racial demographic change in Cuba was towards ‘whiteness’. In its argument against Jamaican and Haitian migration, *El Pueblo* remarked in 1915 that Spanish immigration was of “easy adaptation” to Cuba because of the similarity in “manners and customs” and the “affinity of race”.⁹¹ When assisting the Cuban Government in the diplomatic conflict of 1924, Aurelio Portuondo prepared a memorandum in which he referred to the Spanish migration as having the “same ethnic condition and origin as the majority of our [Cuban] native population”.⁹² In 1931, the *Diario de la Marina* criticised the fact that Antillean labourers had remained on a coffee plantations in Palma Soriano and argued that in the middle of the economic crisis the available work should be for the “Cuban and Spaniard that has family and interests in Cuba.”⁹³ A U.S. official reported that President Machado intimated to him that the black population in the country was quite large and that he wanted to encourage white immigration from Spain.⁹⁴

From the early part of the century up until the *Machadato* and the economic depression of the 1930s, the arguments against the black immigrants became multiple: lack of culture, innate racial inferiority, criminal tendencies, carriers of diseases, depressors of wages, and being prejudicial to the Cuban nation. However varied in their articulation, all of these discourses were ultimately linked to, or indeed founded on, racial and racist ideas and eugenic principles. In some instances, the opposition to the immigrants embraced the Cuban myth of racial equality or an ideology of *mestizaje*, where the black migrant did not have a space because of not sharing the same customs, language, and history as the Cubans. The process of encountering the ‘other’ thus forced Cubans to reveal the definitions of what being “Cuban” meant.

Anna Tryandafyllidou has noted that a nation does not exist as an autonomous unit, but as part of a relationship with other communities or nations. She argues that:

... the identity of a nation is defined and/or re-defined through the influence of ‘significant others’, namely other nations or ethnic groups that are perceived to threaten the nation, its distinctiveness, authenticity and/or independence.⁹⁵

She also notes that the identification of “significant others” takes place “in periods of social, political or economic crisis during which the identity of the nation is put into question.”⁹⁶ Those crises were the ones Cuba experienced in the first three decades of its independence in the form of political revolts, economic depressions, and U.S. hegemony. And among the multiple “others” against which Cubans could define their national identity –because North Americans and Spaniards, at particular moments, were also significant others- the black migrants became the preferred target. British Caribbean islanders and Haitians were the ideal scapegoat for all the crises. If there was a political revolt, somehow Jamaicans –or any other embodiment of outside black influences, i.e. Haitians- were invariably implicated. If there was an economic crisis, as in 1921 and the 1930s, it was in the destitution of the black migrant workers that it first became obvious. The black migrants were also unsolicited representatives of U.S. hegemony, as they were part and parcel of the foreign plantation system that was pushing Cuba into economic dependence. The large U.S. plantations were blamed for the dependency and for affecting the local sugar planters or *colonos*, but also for bringing in the black labourers without any concern for Cuban national aspirations. As mentioned above, people from the United States and Spain also represented, at different stages of the neo-colonial period, a “significant other” for the Cuban. However, neither of them threatened the racial idea that the Cuban elites had constructed in the same way as the black migrants did.

As has been shown, it was in their encounter and definition of the black immigrants that the Cuban elites and intellectuals explicitly and implicitly defined what they understood it was to be “Cuban”. Cuba was a country “perfectly habitable for the white race” where the “ethnic affinity” of its peoples was with Spaniards of the “same race”. Foreign “coloured race” did not have a space in the country and had to be “attacked”. Such a discourse, however, had implications for the domestic racial politics of Cuba. Aviva Chomsky has noted that the debate on immigration was “an implicit dialogue about Afro-Cubans and their place in the national polity”.⁹⁷ Although not necessarily a two-way dialogue, the debate on immigration was indeed about, and against, Afro-Cubans. While the discussion dealt with race and the negativity of blackness, Afro-Cubans played little or no role in actual policy discussions and decisions on immigration. They seem to have been redundant –or ‘invisible’- in the national discourse embraced by the proponents of migration restrictions and in the making of migration policy itself.

With the exception of the PIC’s position against immigration restrictions, I know of very few instances where Afro-Cubans had some voice with regard to the debates on

immigration. Chomsky has noted that after 1912 black commentators did not join the attack against black immigrants,⁹⁸ which does not mean that they voiced their own opinion. An example of their marginal position in the debates is perhaps best illustrated in the silence of leading Afro-Cuban commentator, Gustavo Urrutia, when he was challenged to tackle the issue. He limited himself to saying that the topic had been exhausted by Ramiro Guerra's "profound and patriotic studies", which had criticised the Antillean migration on economic grounds, and had rejected the notion that the opposition was on the basis of race. That Urrutia washed his hands and explicitly stated that addressing the issue would be like bringing "lightning to our heads" is telling, and perhaps the best example of how black Cubans had been excluded from any discussion on migration. But certainly, with his position of silence, Urrutia was perhaps saying that Afro-Cubans were not going to join an opposition to foreign labourers that had racial implications. Chomsky has argued that blackness became an attribute of foreigners and thus "black Cubans were not really blacks".⁹⁹ Certainly, for Cuban elites, the Haitians and British Antilleans represented a particular and threatening kind of blackness and a marginalized position different from the one of Afro-Cubans. But that did not mean that the anti-black discourse of the Cuban elites and government with regard to the immigrants automatically relieved Afro-Cubans from the burden of 'blackness'. They were ignored in the white national construction that was built against the immigrants or, if anything, reluctantly accepted as a residual part of the Cuban nation. Perhaps, the question to be asked is not whether the elites considered Afro-Cubans as "really blacks", but on what terms they were going to be considered as Cubans.

After decades of cultural contact between the migrants and the Cubans, many things had certainly changed. British Caribbean migrants accepted Cubans into their associations, and the Cuban working class joined forces with the black migrants. But at the level of government policy, and also in the minds of some intellectuals, by the 1930s, the image of the black migrant was not that distant from the early discourses of the 1900s. In his 1934 report to the government on Caribbean migration, Secretary of Labour Rogelio Piña assumed a discourse of civilisation and whiteness that condemned the immigration and praised the "advantages of its ultimate elimination." The "West Indian negroes" had "undesirable features", "low morality," and brought "diseases and vices" that "constituted an undeniable menace to the country." Grounding his report in the long history of Cuban black fear, Piña commented:

All the foregoing will cause even the least perspicacious person to realize that if we maintain the immigration policy advocated by men like José Antonio Saco and the Count of Pozos Dulces, our ethnic improvement will become more and more effective, and I do not hesitate to affirm that in less than two centuries our population would be completely white, the black race having been extinguished by absorption, in virtue of a kind of biological-social instinct that is not to be seen in other latitudes nor among the Saxon race, a phenomenon which, although some might consider it a vice or defect in personal morality, is nevertheless up to a certain point an ethnic quality if the future interests of Cuba are borne in mind.

While admitting the mixed nature of Cuba, or what he termed as “biological-social instinct”, Piña’s view of “absorption” was one that was geared towards whiteness. If Cuba’s doors were closed “tightly to the Negro and Chinese immigration,” then the country “in a not remote future [would] be completely white.”¹⁰⁰ Still, years after Piña’s report, Fernando Ortiz understood that the migration from Haiti and Jamaica upset Cuba’s “racial balance, thus retarding the fusion of its component elements into a national whole.”¹⁰¹ Absorption, fusion, or indeed, transculturation, and the arrival at a certain national ideal, was –in the voice of policy makers and intellectuals- a process with its own racial scale of values where ‘blackness’ retarded, and ‘whiteness’ improved.

Multiple (Strategic) Identities

The picture I have presented above is likely to fall short of the complex identity politics in the British Caribbean migration experience. It has been stated that British Antilleans asserted their social identity through social and religious institutions but also their colonial identity in their allegiance to the British Empire. When facing the colonial ‘other’, the representatives of that Empire, because of their own prejudiced and imperial views, established distinctions of race, colour, ethnicity, and class within the imperial realm. However simplified, the two sentences above certainly outline one of the most common identity dynamics that took place in the processes I have examined in this research. But perhaps some questions arise from the examples I have provided as well as from reading between the lines of my arguments. What other identity processes took place within the more outstanding processes of identity assertion that I have described above? Does the strong assertion of ‘Britishness’ on the part of the migrants mean that being a British subject was their most enduring identity? What about the other social, racial, and ethnic affiliations that the migrants were asserting through membership in societies, labour unions, and churches? What about other more complex and strategic social practices?

Stuart Hall's remark that in "the diaspora situation, identity becomes multiple"¹⁰² is perhaps the most appropriate explanation for the experiences of British Caribbean migrants in Cuba. They had a number of identities to which they had a legitimate claim either as blacks, British subjects, labourers, or a particular island identity. When the migrants claimed their British identity, and avoided any reference to colour or ethnicity, it was probably pre-empting the discrimination to which they knew they would be exposed. As Jonathan Okamura argues in his examination of the concept of "situational identity", a social actor "may consider it in his interest to obscure rather than to assert his ethnic identity in a given situation so that the relationship proceeds in terms of other social statuses he holds."¹⁰³ Such was the practice in which many British Caribbean migrants were engaged.

But while British Antilleans often concealed their race and ethnicity in favour of their imperial allegiance, some of them were explicit about their ethnic origins. In 1916, for instance, James Lowe said first that he was a "Jamaican" and then emphasised that he was making his claim "as a British subject". When Benjamin Stewart and others placed their complaint to the British consulate in Santiago in 1923, they made it as "British subjects of Jamaica". A particular instance where the migrants asserted their place of origin boldly was when in 1931 eastern Caribbean migrants ended in a disadvantageous position *vis-à-vis* the Jamaicans who had their own Secretary of Immigration to deal with their cases. In that situation, the migrants asserted their island origins when writing to their colonial governors, the consuls in Cuba, or the Foreign and Colonial Offices in London. This was evident in some of the cases explored when, for instance, George Carlisle wrote as a Leeward Islander and prefaced his signature: "I am a native of Antigua".¹⁰⁴ Melville Jacobs explicitly said in his correspondence: "I am a British subject from the Island of Dominica, B.W.I." He also referred to the group on whose behalf he was writing as "British Leeward and Windward West Indian Subjects".¹⁰⁵ In such examples where social groups and individuals can "reinvent themselves" we witness the strategic role of ethnicity and ethnic allegiance.¹⁰⁶

In his research McLeod has noted the lack of evidence for instances of "inter-island jealousy" among British Caribbean migrants in Cuba, such as the ones shown in Michael Conniff's study on Panama.¹⁰⁷ Nonetheless, the particular situation of the CASC's recruitment of eastern Caribbean islanders and the presence of a Secretary of Immigration for the Jamaicans seems to have triggered among Leeward and Windward Islanders the assertion of their own particular island identity. If not "jealous", as the letter of Carlisle shows, eastern Caribbean islanders at least articulated their situation juxtaposed with that of

the Jamaicans.¹⁰⁸ The pejorative connotations that the term *jamaicano* (Jamaican) acquired in Cuba may have also been a reason why other islanders may have preferred to emphasise the fact that they belonged to other islands. A 1921 speech by the UNIA's Commissioner for Cuba, Eduardo V. Morales provides insights into some of the issues raised above:

I am going to give you an illustration of unity [...] The White man unites among himself and the Negro has got to do so too; we do not want the big island and the small island man any longer; we want all to be Negroes. When you go to look for a job the white man does not refuse you because you are a small island[er,] it is because you are black, and when he is going to pay you he pays you as a Negro and gives the other fellow more money because he is white. Now, when they look on you in Cuba, what do they call you all (voice, Jamaicans). Now, then why can't you all unite and be Jamaicans? It is the equivalent to our being called 'nigger' in the United States.

Apparently, Morales was trying to advocate that all the migrants unite under the labels that were being used discriminatorily against them, Jamaican and Negroes. He noted that it should “not be a matter of island” but that the migrants must assert their blackness. Morales continued by giving an example of violence and discrimination in the Panama Canal Zone, and praised William Preston Stoute, “one small island man” for his activism. As a consequence, he remarked on the island distinctions that, “today the Negroes on the C.Z. [Canal Zone] have not got such differences between them.”¹⁰⁹

Other non-printed evidence suggest that while British Antilleans did emphasise their island identities, this did not produce conflict among them. Such evidence can be found in the existence of social clubs such as the “Grenadian Club” in Baraguá, founded by Grenadians and named after their island of origin. Descendants of British Caribbean workers in the Baraguá community told me that despite the unity among the different peoples, there were some distinctions between the different islanders.¹¹⁰ That a part of the company town is named after the Barbadians (Bajan Town) and another after the Jamaicans (Jamaican Town) is surely not irrelevant.¹¹¹ In Banes, the social club of the migrants in La Güira was called the Jamaican Club, probably after the immigrant group with the highest representation in that region. Nevertheless, while separate island identities were emphasised through social clubs, later other societies such as the “Unity Club” were developed on the basis of inter-island solidarity.¹¹² Other societies such as those at Chaparra and Delicias, where many non-Jamaican migrants settled, were organised under a broader identity, such as The British West Indian Progressive Association. The societies stressed the membership of people originating in the “Greater and Lesser Antilles, Bahamas, British Honduras and British Guiana”¹¹³ The remark of a descendant of migrants,

Teófilo Gay, in the documentary film *My Footsteps in Baraguá*, is also an indication of the assertion of both British Antillean and island identity: “They were really English subjects. [...] Now, there were some who did not forget their nationality. They said, I am an English subject, but I am Jamaican, of Barbados, or of Grenada.”¹¹⁴ In a way, as noted by David Lowenthal, the island remains as a primary geographical reference for identification and allegiance.¹¹⁵

That identities were multiple is probably more evident within some of these societies and clubs, and even within the UNIA. In the UNIA, the members had a space for the assertion of their racial and ethnic identity as blacks and British Antilleans, while simultaneously opening their proceedings to other members and the performance of the Cuban and Ethiopian National Anthems. Active also in the UNIA meetings in Cuba were ex-members of the British West Indies Regiment, and on occasion, the flag of the UNIA shared space and honours with flags from the United States, Cuba, and Britain. Photographs of the British West Indian Welfare Centre in Guantánamo, Cuba, show it displaying on its main wall the Jamaican and Cuban flags along with photographs of the Monarchy and of Alexander Bustamante, the Jamaican labour leader and Prime Minister.¹¹⁶ The social clubs of Chaparra and Delicias, while asserting their wider pan-Caribbean identity, were founded for the “British subjects” and printed their constitutions and laws only on the occasion of the visit of some British officials in the 1940s.

Among the British Caribbean diaspora in Cuba, ethnic and island identity easily co-existed with affiliation to the colonial power. Scholars analysing the British Empire and the politics and legacy of colonialism have tried to “come to terms with the colonized subject’s self-willed entry into the imperial realm”.¹¹⁷ However, for British Antilleans, their appropriation of imperial dogma was not a matter of value judgement, willingness, or lack of it. For them, it was a matter of survival and resistance in a hostile environment. Whether when facing the discrimination of Cuban society or the power and authority of the British Empire, British Caribbean migrants chose the identity which, as Orlando Patterson has noted, “maximizes material and social gains in the society at large, and minimizes survival risks”.¹¹⁸ On occasion, those choices, while being used primarily for self-protection, consciously and unconsciously, challenged the power structure of the plantation society and contested the central notions of Empire from its very centre and through the Empire’s own institutions.

- ²⁶ Catherine Hall, "Histories, Empires and the Post-Colonial Moment," in *The Post-Colonial Question: Common Skies, Divided Horizons*, eds. Iain Chambers and Linda Curti (London: Routledge, 1996), 71.
- ²⁷ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 81; Catherine Hall, "'From Greenland's Icy Mountains ... to Africa's Golden Sand': Ethnicity, Race, and Nation in Mid-Nineteenth Century England," *Gender and History*, 5:2 (Summer 1993): 215.
- ²⁸ Hall, "'From Greenland's Icy Mountains ... to Africa's Golden Sand'," 215.
- ²⁹ "Actas Capitulares, Ayuntamiento de Santiago de Cuba," Archivo Histórico Municipal de Santiago de Cuba, Actas Capitulares, Año 1900, Libro 120, Folio 156, r.v. I am grateful to Oscar Abdala Pupo for this reference
- ³⁰ "Our Labourers Not Wanted," *Jamaica Times*, (7 September 1901): 3. See also William Van Home to José Miguel Gomez, Governor, Province of Santa Clara, 3 October 1900, and 3 November 1900, CCP, S. 1, Box A (1900-1905).
- ³¹ See Manuel Rionda to Messrs Czarnikow, McDougall, and Co. New York, 30 January 1905; Manuel Rionda to C. Czarnikow, London, 14 December 1906, BBC, RG II, S. 5, Box 1.
- ³² Theodore Brooks to J. R. Villalon, Habana, Cuba, 5 November 1906; [Illegible] to Provincial Governor [Oriente], 8 November 1906, ANC, Fondo 189-Secretaria de Presidencia, Leg. 115, No. 101.
- ³³ These European immigrants would not be charged any taxes by entering the country. Secretaria de Agricultura, Industria y. Comercio, *Gaceta Oficial* (11 July 1906), ANC, Secretaria de la Presidencia-Fondo 189, Leg. 121, No. 82.
- ³⁴ Manuel Carballeda y Puentes, *Sumario de las Leyes de Cuba, promulgadas desde 20 de mayo de 1902 hasta 31 de diciembre de 1931* (Habana: Imprenta P. Fernández y Co., 1932), 273.
- ³⁵ Gonzalo de Quesada, *Páginas escogidas: Gonzalo de Quesada* (La Habana: Ediciones Políticas, Serie Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1968), 10.
- ³⁶ For these arguments see Ortiz, "La inmigración," 55-61. (emphasis in original).
- ³⁷ Ortiz, "La inmigración," 59.
- ³⁸ Ortiz, "La inmigración," 55.
- ³⁹ Harold Harty to William Mason, British Consulate, Santiago de Cuba, 19 February 1910, *Manager's Letter Books, 1909-1911*, UFC Papers, p. 226. See also Harold Harty to William Mason, British Consulate, Santiago de Cuba, 1 August 1907, on a case of another Jamaican accused of stealing, *Manager's Letter Books, 1907-1908*, UFC Papers, p. 466.
- ⁴⁰ John A. McKenzie to Sir Edward Grey [MP, Foreign Office, London], 1 September 1909, PRO, FO 369/207.
- ⁴¹ A. M. Beaupré to U.S. Secretary of State, 2 June 1912, USNA, RG 59, GRDS-IAC, File #837.00/657 (M488, Roll #6); "Cuba to Invoke Martial Law," *Tobacco*, 53: 7 (6 June 1912): 1, 19. See also Helg, *Our Rightful Share*, 197, 209-10, 217, and Fermoselle, *Política y color en Cuba*, 144-145.
- ⁴² "Actualidades," *Diario de la Marina* (22 May 1912): 1.
- ⁴³ Fermoselle, *Política y color en Cuba*, 94; Governor, Oriente Province to Secretary of Government, 27 May 1912, AHPSC, Fondo-Gobierno Provincial de Oriente, Leg. 1790, exp. 6; "Cuban Revolt," *The Daily Gleaner* (12 June 1912): 1; "The Revolution Grows in Cuba," *The Daily Gleaner* (11 June 1912): 1; Johns de Pools, "Cuba's Present Rebellion: Its Sources and Dangers," *The Jamaica Times* (6 July 1912): 5, 8; "Cuban Revolt: The Destruction of an American Sugar Estate, Burning of Houses," *The Daily Gleaner* (5 June 1912): 1.
- ⁴⁴ This argument is attributed to Maria Poumier in Fernando Coronil, "Transculturation and the Politics of Theory: Countering the Center, Cuban Counterpoint," in *Cuban*

Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), xlix, note 11. Coronil provides no printed reference is given for Poumier's argumentation.

⁴⁵ Ortiz, "Las rebeliones de los negros en Cuba," 8. The essay was initially published in *Revista de Administración*, 2: 9 (1-15 May 1912): 157-164. (my emphasis).

⁴⁶ A similar argument can be found in Chomsky, "The Aftermath of Repression," 7.

⁴⁷ "Racismo, si racismo," *El Carnegieano* (8 June 1912): 2.

⁴⁸ "The Revolution Grows in Cuba," *The Daily Gleaner* (11 June 1912): 1.

⁴⁹ In a sense, the view of the revolt as an attack to the nation placed Afro-Cubans outside the national body politic by default. The discourse of attributing the sources of the revolt to outsiders was at the same time based in a naïve belief, or hopeful aspiration, that the Cuban nation was in harmony and unity. During the revolt, blackness, whether local or foreign, became a target for repression. But there were also moments in which an explicit declaration was made against the policy that was targeting people on the basis of the colour of their skin. On generalisation of black peoples, see C. V. Carvalho to R. Manduely [sic], Governor of Oriente Province, 27 May 1912, ANC, Fondo 189-Secretaria de la Presidencia, Leg. 110, No. 2 [Primera Pieza]. On declarations against generalising on the basis of colour see José A. García, "Proclama", Alcaldía Municipal de Holguín, 23 May 1912, Archivo del Museo Provincial, Holguín, Fondo-Ayuntamiento, 1912, exp. 11.

⁵⁰ de Velasco, "El problema negro," 75-76.

⁵¹ Enclosed in Luis [Carmona] to Provincial Governor of Oriente, 10 February 1913, AHPSC, Fondo-Gobierno Provincial de Oriente, Leg. 786, exp. 1.

⁵² See Sub-secretary of State, Cuba, to Provincial Governor of Oriente, 8 October 1914; Chief, Government Police to Provincial Governor of Oriente, 15 October 1914; Chief, Government Police, to Provincial Governor of Oriente, 17 October 1914; AHPSC, Fondo-Gobierno Provincial de Oriente, Leg. 1709, exp. 9.

⁵³ Chomsky, "The Aftermath of Repression," 10-12. Rosalvo Bobo (1873-1929) had written a history of Haiti entitled *Pour l'histoire de la revolution haïtienne par le parti progressiste* (St. Thomas, D.W.I.: Lightbourn's Press, 1908).

⁵⁴ "La inmigración en Oriente," *El Eco de Times* (27 April 1915): 2.

⁵⁵ "Inmigración perniciosa," *El Pueblo* (15 November 1915): 1.

⁵⁶ Marino Pérez, "La inmigración jamaicana," 392.

⁵⁷ See, for example, Victor Zeballos to Manuel Rionda, NY, 14 October 1916, BBC, RG II, S. 1, Box 29.

⁵⁸ Marino Pérez, "La inmigración jamaicana," 393.

⁵⁹ Marino Pérez, "La inmigración jamaicana," 393. (my emphasis). "Pero en Cuba hemos hecho a todos los cubanos ciudadanos de la Republica, sin reparar en su color, y tan respetados son los negros como los blancos. Anteponemos al color de su piel, su condicion de cubanos, porque por encima de los aspectos etnicos esta la nacionalidad, el comun origen y la historia de luchas y sacrificios comunes, que han tenido la virtud de fundir en una sola patria, a blancos y negros -unico ejemplo en la historia."

⁶⁰ Marino Pérez, "La inmigración jamaicana," 394.

⁶¹ The events of 1912 have shown Cubans that embracing racial identity –black in that case- over national identity would be meet with hostility.

⁶² "Los haitianos y jamaicanos son los principales transmisores del paludismo," *El Cubano Libre* (12 February 1917): 1.

⁶³ "Los Bandidos Fernando Fernandez y Caballero Morejon han cometido atrocidades en Jobabo," *El Carnegieano* (23 March 1917): 5.

⁶⁴ "Editorial: Las Fechorias de los Sediciosos," *La Lucha* (27 March 1917): 2.

⁶⁵ "La Plaga de Jamaicanos," (Editorial), *Diario de la Marina* (5 April 1917): 3. In Spanish: "Es una inmigración que se adapte a la población cubana, que tenga afinidades étnicas y que

pueda convivir y fundirse con ella, la que se requiere en Cuba. Nunca podrán beneficiarla elementos completamente extraños, distintos en su idioma, en su carácter y en sus hábitos. Nunca podrán servir más que de factores de discordia y de perturbación inmigrantes de color que sin arraigo ninguno en Cuba, sin ningún vínculo con su historia, sin ningún afecto a sus intereses nacionales y patrióticos han de aprovechar todas las ocasiones para promover conflictos racistas. No es savia[,] sana y robusta de trabajo y riqueza ni fuerza de cohesión homogénea, sino virus de vicios, de vagancia y de perturbación lo que han de traer los inmigrantes jamaquinos.”

⁶⁶ Eduardo Diez de Ulzurrun to Manuel Rionda, New York, 22 June 1917, BBC, RG II, S. 1, Box 26.

⁶⁷ Victor Zevallos to Manuel Rionda, New York, 22 June 1917, BBC, RG II, S. 1, Box 29.

⁶⁸ “La inmigración,” *El Pueblo* (5 October 1917): 1; “La inmigración conveniente,” *El Camagüeyano* (25 October 1917): 1; “Los colonos y la inmigración,” *El Camagüeyano* (26 October 1917): 1; “Editorial: El Fomento de la Inmigración,” *El Camagüeyano* (31 October 1917): 1.

⁶⁹ “El problema inmigratorio,” *La Voz del Pueblo* (22 March 1918): 2.

⁷⁰ See correspondence between the Chief, Special Police to Provincial Governor of Oriente, 14 April 1919, and two letters for 2 May 1919, AHPSC, Fondo-Gobierno Provincial de Oriente, Leg. 1836, exp. 22.

⁷¹ Chief, Special Police to Provincial Governor of Oriente, 2 May 1919, AHPSC, Fondo-Gobierno Provincial de Oriente, Leg. 1836, exp. 22.

⁷² “Editoriales: El problema inmigratorio,” *El Camagüeyano* (8 February 1921): 2.

⁷³ “En Oriente hay 5,000 Jamaquinos y Haitianos,” *La Voz del Pueblo* (11 July 1921): 2.

⁷⁴ “Un haitiano salvaje asesino a un niño, y se comió su cuerpo,” *El Cubano Libre* (20 October 1921): 1.

⁷⁵ Gilberto [Santos] to Provincial Governor of Santiago de Cuba, 29 June 1921, AHPSC, Fondo-Gobierno Provincial de Oriente, Leg. 786, exp. 11; “Repatriación de haitianos y jamaicanos,” *El Cubano Libre* (22 July 1921): 1.

⁷⁶ “Reports of Conditions Existing in the Cuban Republic,” *The Negro World* (27 August 1921); “West Indians in Cuba,” *The Voice of Saint Lucia* (4 March 1922): 5; “Jamaican Shoots White in Self-Defence,” *The Negro World* (16 December 1922): 9.

⁷⁷ “Hacinamiento de Haitianos y Jamaquinos,” *El Camagüeyano* (8 February 1921): 3.

⁷⁸ “Noticias de Oriente,” *Diario de la Marina*, Segunda Sección (16 March 1921): [11]; “‘El brillante negro’, habil carterista detenido anoche,” *Diario de la Marina* (29 March 1921): 1.

⁷⁹ “Jamaquinos acusados,” *La Voz del Pueblo* (18 August 1921): 2.

⁸⁰ Alfredo Zayas, “Decreto No. 1404 (Secretaria de Agricultura, Comercio, y Trabajo),” *Gaceta Oficial* (22 July 1921): 1445-1446.

⁸¹ The discourse was published later in 1929. See Le-Roy y Cassá, *Inmigración Anti-Sanitaria*.

⁸² Trelles, *El progreso (1902-05) y el retroceso (1906-1922)*, 14-15

⁸³ Trelles, *El progreso (1902-1905) y el retroceso (1906- 1922)*, 15.

⁸⁴ “Escena de sangre en un tren al volverse loco un jamaquino,” *El Camagüeyano* (5 March 1925): 1, 5.

⁸⁵ “Una cubana y un jamaquino se entraron a tiros: Se atribuye el hecho a que ella defendía su honor,” *El Camagüeyano* (16 June 1925): 1.

⁸⁶ “Inmigración deseable y no deseable,” *Neptuno* (20 July 1926). Reproduced in Carlton Bailey Hurst to U.S. Secretary of State, 8 September 1926, USNA, RG 59, GRDS-IAC, File #837.55/79 (M488, Roll #84).

⁸⁷ Carlos Manuel Cruz, “Editoriales: Ecos,” *El Noticiero* (19 April 1928): 2. Reproduced also in *El Diario de Cuba* (21 April 1928).

- ⁸⁸ Departamento de Inmigración, "Proclama," enclosed in A. J. Molina to Immigration Commissioner, La Habana, 2 October 1931, ANC, Fondo 189-Secretaria de Presidencia, Leg. 121, No. 68.
- ⁸⁹ "Bulletin No. 1," enclosed in Sumner Wells to U.S. Secretary of State, 17 October 1933, USNA, RG 59, GRDS-Decimal File, 1930-39, Box 5941, File #837.4016/2.
- ⁹⁰ "La inmigración de haitianos y jamaicanos," *El Pueblo* (10 December 1923): 1.
- ⁹¹ "Problemas obreros: Inmigración," *El Pueblo* (4 June 1915): 1.
- ⁹² Aurelio Portuondo, "Memorandum," enclosed in Aurelio Portuondo to Manuel Rionda, 25 January 1924, BBC, RG II, S. 10a-c, Box 58.
- ⁹³ "Permanecen el Palma los inmigrantes antillanos," *Diario de Cuba* (11 July 1931): 10.
- ⁹⁴ Noble Brandon Judah to U.S. Secretary of State, 31 May 1929, USNA, RG 59, GRDS-IAC, File #837.5552/orig (M488, Roll #84).
- ⁹⁵ Tryiandafyllidou, "National Identity and the 'other'," 594.
- ⁹⁶ Tryiandafyllidou, "National Identity and the 'other'," 603.
- ⁹⁷ Chomsky, "Barbados or Canada?" 424.
- ⁹⁸ Chomsky, "The Aftermath of Repression," 4.
- ⁹⁹ Chomsky, "The Aftermath of Repression," 16. Also in Chomsky, "Barbados or Canada?" 446.
- ¹⁰⁰ Rogelio Piña to President of the Cuban Republic, June 1934, PRO, FO 277/228. (Translation from the version of the document in English in the Foreign Office Papers)
- ¹⁰¹ Fernando Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*, introduction by Bronislaw Malinowsky, with a new introduction by Fernando Coronil, translated by Harriet de Onís (Durham: Duke University Press, [1947] 1995), 53.
- ¹⁰² Stuart Hall, "Thinking the Diaspora: Home-Thoughts from Abroad," *Small Axe*, 6 (September 1999): 1-18.
- ¹⁰³ Okamura, "Situational Ethnicity" 454-455.
- ¹⁰⁴ George J. Carlisle to His Excellency Governor [of the Leeward Islands], 30 April 1931, PRO, FO 369/2191.
- ¹⁰⁵ M. A. Jacobs to British Legation, Havana, 5 February 1931; M. A. Jacobs to Honorable Representatives, Foreign Office, 5 May 1931, PRO, FO 369/2191.
- ¹⁰⁶ Joan Nagel, "Constructing Ethnicity: Creating and Recreating Ethnic Identity and Culture," *Social Forces*, 41:1 (February 1994): 153.
- ¹⁰⁷ See McLeod, "Undesirable Aliens," 614-615, note 4. See Conniff, *White Labor on a White Canal*, 9.
- ¹⁰⁸ George J. Carlisle to His Excellency Governor [of the Leeward Islands], 30 April 1931, PRO, FO 369/2191.
- ¹⁰⁹ "Rt. Hon. High Commissioner for Cuba, Mr. Eduardo V. Morales takes Havana Division by Storm: Leaves Her in Thorough Working Condition." *The Negro World*, (Vol. 10, No. 22, July 16, 1921): 8.
- ¹¹⁰ Jorge L. Giovannetti, 16 February 1999, Baraguá, Ciego de Avila, Cuba, *Journal* (1998-1999). See Teófilo Gay Watkins, "Actividades (Creación de Sociedades)," (Private Papers, Teófilo Gay Watkins, 19??), 4.
- ¹¹¹ Jorge L. Giovannetti, *Field Notes* (Baraguá, 1999).
- ¹¹² On Baraguá, see Teófilo Gay Watkins, "Actividades (Creación de Sociedades)," 4, Rafael Valdés Martínez (Historian of Baraguá), "Documentos manuscritos sobre la historia de Baraguá," (n.d, [c.1970s]), 5, On the Güira, Banes, see Edwards Oakley, "Jamaican Club," and Jorge L. Giovannetti, 13 May 1999, Banes, Holguín, Cuba, *Journal* (1999).
- ¹¹³ See *The British West Indian Progressive Association of Central Delicias, Municipio de Puerto Padre, Oriente, Cuba*. Puerto Padre: Imprenta Pimentel, 1943; *Constitution and Laus of the British West*

Indian Progressive Association of Central Chaparras, Pueblo Viejo, Oriente. n.p.: Imprenta Lanuza, [1943?]. I am grateful to Clara Goodridge for providing access to these documents.

¹¹⁴ See *My Footsteps in Baraguá*.

¹¹⁵ David Lowenthal, "The Range and Variation of Caribbean Societies," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 83, article 5 (1960): 786-788.

¹¹⁶ Photographic collection, West Indian Welfare Centre, Guantánamo, Cuba, exposed in the conference, *Intra-Caribbean Migration: The Cuban Connection (1898-Present)*, Latin American-Caribbean Centre, University of the West Indies, Mona Campus, Kingston, Jamaica, 14-16 June 2001.

¹¹⁷ Simon Gikandi, *Maps of Englishness*, 20.

¹¹⁸ Orlando Patterson, "Context and Choice in Ethnic Allegiance: A Theoretical Framework and Caribbean Case Study," in *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience*, eds. Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), 311.

Epilogue

This study chronicled forty years of black British Caribbean migration in Cuba. Male and female British Caribbean islanders went to Cuba in search of opportunity and a better life, but faced rejection, racism, and discrimination on the part of the host society. Their story illustrates that reality, and also serves as a window on the complex social and racial legacy of slavery and colonialism in the Caribbean. As migrants, they suffered discrimination from both Cubans and representatives of the British Empire, because of the colour of their skin, their ethnic background, and their subordinate position within the labour and social order. Nonetheless, they were able to create their own social and religious organisations, and turn British subject-hood to their advantage.

The racism and discrimination has to be seen in dual perspective. First, the migrants represented the materialization of long-held racial fears in Cuban society, particularly among political and intellectual elites. The evidence presented in this study demonstrates that, contrary to what has previously been held, the black fear persisted in Cuba way beyond the 1912 race uprising, manifest in a variety of discourses of the racialised 'other'. These were articulated through eugenics and hygiene, as well as arguments related to labour and the nation state, varying from one historical context to another. Recourse to eugenics and hygiene can be observed when the need for and nature of immigration was discussed in political and economic circles in the 1910s and early 1920s. Nationalistic and labour discourse became the rationale for the expulsion of thousands of migrants in the 1921 crash and 1930s depression. It was in moments of social and political crisis, such as 1912, 1917, and 1933, that the more explicit racist discourses and practice came to the fore, culminating in instances of overt condemnation of alleged violent qualities and assassination - moments which approximated more closely to a black-white divide.

Second, in the face of adversity, black British subjects employed a strategy of turning to the representatives of the British Empire, only to face another type of discrimination, at times overt in its racist commentary on the character and attitudes of the black migrants, at others manifest through the lack of attention to their legitimate claims for justice. Consular correspondence clearly exemplified the social and racial distinctions established by British officials. The migrants' counter-strategy of then writing to the heart of Empire, to the Colonial Office and the King, evidenced the lack of on-the-spot action, but also testified to their confidence and loyalty to Empire. Whether a genuine allegiance or

a practical tool, the use of Empire by the black migrants put British officers in the difficult position of having to protect the racial and colonial 'other' as 'equals', as British subjects.

The confrontation of black British subjects with British officialdom made both sides conscious of the colonial predicament. Black British Caribbean islanders 'discovered' their place in the social order. White British officials came to articulate the racial nature of 'Britishness' and themselves as *white* British subjects. In the final analysis, however, the imperial doctrine of the personal allegiance of every British subject to the crown meant that representatives of Empire were limited in the ways in which they could exercise discrimination. Despite the racial order of Britishness, consular officials were eventually forced to put their prejudices aside and act in response to the claims of black colonial subjects. For consular officials in Cuba, as well as British officials in the Foreign and Colonial Office, the 'whiteness' of British subject-hood could no longer be taken for granted.

While the primary functions of British consular officials were to deal with commerce and trade, the protection of British subjects against any grievances or troubles was inevitably part of their responsibilities.¹ Moreover, given the central role of black British Caribbean workers in the Cuban sugar industry, their protection represented also the protection of Cuban sugar, an important item in early twentieth-century Anglo-Cuban trade. Whether the consular support –when provided– was due to a genuine preoccupation with the conditions of black British subjects, or the sugar trade, or British prestige and dignity in Cuban and U.S. eyes, is hard to answer. Yet, whatever the reason, the fact that migrants did receive consular assistance must not obscure the racial tensions in the encounter of Empire and other.

It follows from this that the unqualified argument to the effect that black British Caribbean migrants were in a better situation than others because of consular support is overly simplistic. While consular support was provided in many occasions, seldom did it reach a satisfactory conclusion from the migrants' perspective. It is clear that the support offered was through the agency of migrants themselves claiming assistance, something which has certainly not been accorded due recognition in the historiography. Moreover, while support was provided in many instances, not *all* British Caribbean islanders enjoyed it in the same way. Chapter 6 in particular showed how British Leeward and Windward islanders found themselves in a critical situation compared to Jamaicans who had, for some time, a Secretary of Immigration to deal with their particular cases. Finally, all were affected by the reduction in consular posts in the 1930s. Thus, while it is true that Haitians were at

the bottom of the social ladder in Cuban plantation society, this did not automatically mean that all British islanders were better-off or that, if they were, this can be attributed to the British consular altruism.

The comparative complexities of the *migración antillana* are also considerable. A critical examination of migration trends and patterns of Jamaicans, British Leeward and Windward islanders, and Haitians illustrates this graphically. The story is not altogether that which has been hitherto presented, of a movement of Caribbean migrants into Cuba in times of economic bonanza (1910s) and out of Cuba in times of depression (1930s). British Caribbean migration did increase significantly after 1912 and 1917, but the presence of *antillanos ingleses* in Cuba –and the reactions of Cubans to them– dates back to the early years of the century. Migratory trends of Jamaicans and eastern British Caribbean islanders differed, particularly during the 1920s, as did their patterns of settlement in central and eastern Cuba. While British Caribbean migration started a process of gradual decline from 1924, Haitian migration decreased in 1921 and then skyrocketed in the late 1920s. The salutary lesson of this study is that generalisations limit our understanding.

Most vividly, perhaps, an examination of their story serves as a window onto racial and national politics in early twentieth-century Cuba. As Aviva Chomsky has argued, the debates on black Caribbean migration were an implicit dialogue on Cuban blacks within the national polity.² The positions taken, arguments put forward, and migration policies adopted by Cuban intellectual and political elites illustrated how the racial idea of the Cuban nation was built on ‘whiteness’. Foreign blacks did not have a space within the national polity, and the position of Cuban blacks was muted. As shown in Chapter 6, Cuban blacks and mulattoes, whether intellectuals or workers, on the whole preferred silence or neutrality on the migration issue. Their silence illustrates, perhaps, their disapproval of racist rhetoric, but also, I would argue, their own marginalised position. If the dominant national rhetoric embraced Cubans of all colours, the national reality accepted Cuban blacks provided racial identity remained secondary to national allegiance. Visible racial features were, of course, not easily masked in practice, and discrimination persisted side by side with a national ideology and rhetoric of racial inclusion. After 1912 and 1917, black Cubans must have been clear on where they stood, and in the main action on their part took routes other than the explicitly political ones characteristic of the earlier PIC. And yet, the affiliation of Cuban blacks to the UNIA (and their acceptance by the British Caribbean migrants leading this organisation), as well as instances of black worker solidarity during the struggles of 1933, are telling.

As a case study, my research provides insights into how perceptions of racial and cultural difference in specific social and political conditions served as a trigger to discriminatory practice. The linkage between racism and migration has been one of prime importance in the history of the Caribbean and the lives of Caribbean peoples. Richard J. Evans reminds us that “history never repeats itself; nothing in human society [...] ever happens twice under exactly the same conditions or in exactly the same way.”³ While noting the historical continuity of migration in Caribbean history, Mary Chamberlain emphasised the historical specificity of each migration experience whereby those involved respond to specific material and ideological factors within a particular historical moment.⁴ Yet, while I remain confident of the particularities of how migration is experienced in different contexts and locations, I cannot ignore how racism, discrimination, and complex identity issues have been a central underlying thread to the overall migration experience of Caribbean peoples throughout history, within and beyond the region. I believe that the issues discussed in this study contribute to our knowledge and understanding of how racial discrimination and prejudice is articulated in the cultural encounters of specific migration experiences. How and why were the migrants perceived racially in a particular way by the host society? How were the discourses against them articulated in relation to the social, political, and economic conditions of the receiving country? In what different ways did migrants adjust during the migration experience and which were their strategies of survival in hostile environments? What were the complex identity issues at stake in the process of human mobility? The answers to all these questions in the preceding chapters certainly provide material for future comparative study with, for example, intra-Caribbean migration to Panama, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua, or subsequent out-migratory waves to the United Kingdom⁵ and the United States.⁶

At the outset of this study, I noted how my closeness to the experience of many Caribbean islanders in the United Kingdom and the racial and problems in turn-of-the-century Britain informed my own process of research and writing. Similarly, the process and context of ‘concluding’ this study has furthered my conviction of the need for a comparative perspective and more conceptual and theoretical tools for our understanding of the links between racism and migration in the Caribbean, the Americas, and the world. While I have been immersed in my historical study, the growing literature on migration is indicative of how migration and its relation to racial and ethnic relations remain central concerns for scholars and policy makers.⁷ I left Britain in the summer of 2001, having just witnessed ‘race riots’ involving Asian migrants in northern cities and accusations of

xenophobia levied against the political establishment. My destination was Puerto Rico, to take up a teaching post at the University of Puerto Rico and an appointment as visiting researcher at the University's Institute for Caribbean Studies. It was in my 'new' location that I started to edit the final version of this thesis. In my first days, I was bombarded by contemporary discussions of xenophobia against migrants from the Dominican Republic on the island of Montserrat. I learned how the Puerto Rican government, on grounds of health and hygiene, is developing a program of vaccination in rural areas of the Dominican Republic with high levels of out-migration to Puerto Rico. Walls in Río Piedras, where the University is located, were –and still are– full of graffiti against Dominicans. On a bus one day, driving through Santa Rita, a neighbourhood of Río Piedras with a visible presence of Dominican migrants, one passenger commented on how Santa Rita had deteriorated socially with problems such as drugs and crime. Another turned to me and quietly commented: "That's because of the Dominicans."⁸

Not only does migration continue to be part of Caribbean reality, but so also do the racial and social preoccupations of host societies in the present appear relatively unchanged. More than half a century after the year that was the cut-off to my study, my journey from the Caribbean past to its present confronted me with a different socio-historical context yet similar discrimination and racism. I would have preferred another ending, not - tragically for some- one that gives such contemporary justification for my study.

¹ See D. C. M. Platt, *The Cinderella Service: British Consuls since 1825* (London: Longman, 1971), 16-19, and "The Role of the British Consular Service in Overseas Trade, 1825-1914", *The Economic History Review*, Second Series, 15: 3 (1963): 494-512.

² Chomsky, "Barbados or Canada?", 424.

³ Evans, *In Defence of History*, 59.

⁴ Mary Chamberlain, *Narratives of Exile and Return* (London: Macmillan, 1997), 32-33.

⁵ Winston James, "Migration, Racism, and Identity: The Caribbean Experience in Britain," *New Left Review*, 193 (May-June 1992): 15-55.

⁶ Mary C. Waters, *Black Identities: West Indian Immigrant Dreams and American Realities* (Cambridge/New York: Harvard University Press/Russell Sage Foundation, 1999).

⁷ Among the growing literature on migration topics from different perspectives, see Lillian Bobea, "Migration and Regional Security: Besieged Borders and Caribbean Diasporas," in *Security in the Caribbean Basin: The Challenge of Regional Cooperation*, eds. Joseph S. Tulchin and Ralph H. Espach (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2001), 119-135; Jessica Byron, "The Return of the Cocolos: Migration, Identity, and Regionalism in the Leeward Islands," *Global Development Studies*, 2: 1-2 (Winter 1999-Spring 2000): 252-275; Jorge Duany, "The Fear of Illegal Aliens: Caribbean Migration as a National and Regional Security Threat," in *Security in the Caribbean Basin: The Challenge of Regional Cooperation*, eds. Joseph S. Tulchin and Ralph H. Espach (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2001), 97-117; Ramón Grosfoguel, "The Geopolitics of Caribbean Migration," in *Security Problems and Policies in the Post-Cold War Caribbean*, eds. Jorge Rodríguez Beruff and Humberto García Muñiz (London: Macmillan, 1996): 201-224; Luis Eduardo Guarnizo, "La migración internacional y el 'nuevo' orden global: La experiencia latinoamericana y caribeña," *Anuario Social y Político de América Latina y El Caribe*, 4 (Abril 2001): 113-124, and the articles in the special issue "Crossing Borders: Race and Racism in the Americas, Part II," *NACLA: Report on the Americas*, 35: 2 (September-October 2001).

⁸ On the migration from the Dominican Republic to Puerto Rico see Jorge Duany, ed. *Los dominicanos en Puerto Rico: Migración en la semi-periferia* (Río Piedras: Editorial Huracán, 1990).

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