

evidence of sophisticated constitutional ideas in an unexpected quarter, though the extent to which the Lagos rebels were genuine subalterns remains unclear.

**David Rock**

*University of Cambridge*

JESSE HOFFNUNG-GARSKOF, *Racial Migrations: New York City and the Revolutionary Politics of the Spanish Caribbean, 1850-1902*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019.

With an historian's incisive analytical eye and the sensibilities of a novelist, Jesse Hoffnung-Garskof invites us, in his book *Racial Migrations*, into the bustling interconnected city that was New York in the mid-nineteenth century. Following the "radial lines" that converged in the city, bringing Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and African Americans together in bonds of association, marriage, education, and work, back to their points of origin, Hoffnung-Garskof delicately and deftly first disentangles and then re-entangles the webs of transnational collaboration that made New York a nineteenth-century global city. But *Racial Migrations* is much more than a new history of New York City. It also offers a new vantage point on the Cuban independence movement and makes a substantial contribution to diasporic black intellectual history. While the author states quite clearly that he writes for a non-academic audience, I think academics will be happy beneficiaries of this multilayered work.

Jesse Hoffnung-Garskof's commitment to centering the intellectual contributions of people of color in this book and to revealing in rich detail and thoroughly researched speculation the lives of understudied figures in Cuban and Puerto Rican history, such as Sotero Figueroa, Rafael Serra, Juan and Gerónimo Bonilla, and Gertrudis Heredia de Serra, is commendable. These figures are well known in Cuba and Puerto Rico and to some Caribbeanist intellectual and political historians and literary scholars, but not to many others. The single greatest contribution of *Racial Migrations* is the author's rigorous and thoughtful excavation of the lives of these men and women who helped make José Martí into the most celebrated Cuban independence hero and were subsequently overshadowed by his legacy. *Racial Migrations* resolutely dispels this shadow by ensuring that we understand just how central the work and contributions of Afro-Puerto Rican and Afro-Cuban men and women were to the Cuban revolutionary movement of the nineteenth century, especially its anti-racist foundations. This correcting of the historical record through the centering of black intellectuals, activists, and revolutionaries is not only important to reframing our understanding of Cuban, Puerto Rican, and New York City history, but also to the broader project

of undoing the grip of white supremacy on our past. Indeed, Hoffnung-Garskof states that his book aspires to making two distinct contributions to his readers' thinking on race that, he argues, "are hard to illuminate for non-academics." The first is that race is a social construct. The second is that systems for organizing societies around race intersected with others like class, gender, and sexuality in complicated ways. At every opportunity, the author takes pains to highlight these complex intersections and to explain and demonstrate how race and racism operate at a structural, social, and personal level.

Hoffnung-Garskof begins his book with a "cast of characters," their portraits, and a series of maps through which he situates the urban, regional, and hemispheric geographies of the story. The technique is effective as the reader is anxious to turn the page to discover how the characters behind the elegant nineteenth-century likenesses are intertwined. More than once while reading the book, I found myself flipping back to linger on a portrait, as if it could bring me closer to the historical figure. The book unfolds over six chapters.

Chapter 1, *Beginnings*, sets the scene by reconstructing the birth, parentage, childhood, and early adult life of several of the central actors. This chapter is crucial because it establishes the different social, political, and economic contexts that shaped the experiences of the protagonists, reminding us exactly how much they brought to their migratory experience. Too often, we meet migrants at the point of migration and explore their pasts retrospectively.

The second chapter follows the characters to New York City after carefully reconstructing the political events that led to their migration or expulsion. While the author does not always have evidence that a given figure experienced a given event firsthand, he expertly reconstructs the most plausible options giving us a well-rounded, rich, and believable narrative using his "exact imagining." Building expertly on the first chapter, this one moves the story forward setting the characters in motion against the backdrop of anti-colonial revolution in Cuba.

The third chapter is called *Community* and it centers on New York City, the point of convergence for the characters. Readers will especially appreciate Hoffnung-Garskof's attention to the racial geography of the city and the ways in which Cubans and Puerto Ricans navigated that geography in unexpected ways, affirming and crossing racial, ethnic, and class lines. The connections the protagonists made with African Americans as they established themselves in the city shaped their thinking about race, rights, and revolution in important ways.

The fourth chapter, *Convergence*, diverges at first. Moving from the radial center of New York City outward, Hoffnung-Garskof takes us on a trip around the greater Caribbean, to Jamaica and then to Panama and then back to the British West Indies and ultimately to New York. If time spent in New York City shaped the protagonists' lives, experiences, and political thought, so too did

their experiences living with those seeking freedom, dignity, and rights in the British West Indies and Central America. By the time Martí is introduced into this story as a central character (on page 152), we have come to know Serra, the Bonillas, and Figueroa as men who are worldly, erudite, accomplished, and experienced. Here Hoffnung-Garskof is at his best as he reconstructs the relationship between the founders of *La Liga*, an educational association for black Cubans, and Martí by reading one-sided correspondence, speeches, and newspapers together to create a coherent story, one that conspicuously de-centers the revolutionary hero. This chapter is the fulcrum of the book: it is where we learn that Martí's building of the Cuban Revolutionary Party through alliances with workers and Cubans of color was, in large part, a product of his bonds with Serra, the Bonillas, and Figueroa. While some field experts know this, none have demonstrated it with such skill and care and rigor.

Chapters five and six bring us through the tumultuous decade of the 1890s, which began with the vigorous organization of the Cuban Revolutionary Party, saw the death of Martí in battle, witnessed the war between the United States and Spain followed by the US occupation of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. Throughout all of this, the central figures in this story engaged in what the author calls a "war of position" looking for the most effective ways to navigate quickly shifting political terrain in a world increasingly shaped by white supremacy on both sides of the Gulf. The end of this story is not necessarily uplifting. Rather, the reader is left confronting the reality of the relentless, all-to-familiar, and ongoing struggle of black people to secure rights, respect, and dignity by all means possible and any means necessary. Yet, the ending of this story is hopeful. The author invites us to know these characters, to celebrate them, to learn from them and to take courage from their stories for our collective anti-racist struggle.

To find fault with this monograph, which is so expertly researched and elegantly written, the reader must work extremely hard. The best I could do was to note, with some remorse, the near ghostly presence of the women in the story. This is not a reflection of the author's limitations, as Hoffnung-Garskof makes significant and laudable efforts to wrest these women's stories from the shadows. In fact, it is clear that the author's inability to write the full stories of Gertrudis Heredia de Serra and many other women haunts him. The reader shares the author's pain and frustration. In sum, I commend Jesse Hoffnung-Garskof on a fantastic and important work. *Racial Migrations* should be read by all those interested in the history of New York, the history of the United States, and the history of the Caribbean, as well as those who are passionate about afro-diasporic intellectual history.

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