
are numerous misspellings: p. 51, for example, contains incorrect spellings for Ouro Prêto and *mestizaje*. These small shortcomings, however, do not take away from the usefulness of this valuable synthesis of a key period in Latin American history.

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NANCY PRISCILLA NARO (ed.): *Blacks, Coloureds and National Identity in Nineteenth-Century Latin America*. London: ILAS, University of London, 2003.

During America's decisive "long nineteenth century" (1776 to 1914), race lost none of the salience it had accreted over the previous three centuries. Just as notions of physical, cultural and psychological difference colored encounter and exploitation throughout the hemisphere, they prejudiced the overthrow of slavery and colonialism and the making of nations across the New World. It is one thing, however, to acknowledge that in this supposed era of liberation racial ideology and practice remained pivotal; it is quite another to elucidate how people struggled with racialization. This is the task taken up in *Blacks, Coloureds and National Identity in Nineteenth-Century Latin America*, an edited volume that focuses on the political experiences of non-whites in the "other" Americas.

For all its extended range, from Cuba down to Argentina, the collection coheres around two main contentions. First, the essays underline that colonialist precepts equating moral virtue and political competence with whiteness, and more narrowly with Europeanness, gravely haunted descendants of Africans. In an era when victorious American rebels redefined themselves as citizens rather than subjects, non-whites rarely got through the doors of citizenship. Even those black and mixed people who fought for the anticolonial cause faced this fate. As Carmen Bernand chronicles, despite the public lionizing of some Buenos Aires blacks for their honorable soldiering during the English invasion (1806-7), elites remained wedded to the legal enslavement of Afro-Argentines for the next four decades.

Up in the Caribbean, too, non-whites keenly felt the "constraints of race and color." According to Franklin Knight, citizenship was scarcely thinkable in the British territories, where white people constituted a tiny minority and carried around a "terrified consciousness." In the Spanish Caribbean, which boasted

a larger proportion of whites, patriotic elites, he argues, ameliorated their racial terror by “disappearing” or domesticating blackness. In the writing of José Antonio Saco, Knight offers an example of Cuban intellectuals’ tendency to ignore non-whites’ presence in imagining Cuban nationhood. And in the state-supported massacre of race-conscious Afro-Cuban activists in 1912, he advances dramatic evidence of white Cubans’ determination to depoliticize blacks in the new nation.

Indeed, even in the exceptional case of Haiti, David Geggus proposes that this “tremendous upheaval” in which enslaved Africans triumphantly struggled for citizenship was as much a setback as it was an inspiration for other blacks in the Americas. Challenging received wisdom, his chapter maintains that although the St. Domingue revolution emboldened some slaves in the rest of plantation America, the episode also alarmed aspiring American governments into adopting more repressive tactics toward black and colored people. Even a republican hero like Simón Bolívar, Geggus points out, took heed from Haiti and violently silenced Venezuelan voices of black power.

Marginalization and exclusion, however, composed only one side of the story for people of color in nineteenth-century Latin America, and the volume’s second focus is their ceaseless political self-activity. Authors highlight that in the face of imposing elites preoccupied with building societies based on European blueprints, black and brown people in the Americas brought their own materials, drew up alternative plans and, if they were fortunate (as in Haiti), put up competing structures. These constructive efforts are captured in Jean Stubb’s essay that reassesses the life of Marian Grajeles, a “brown” Cuban woman and the mother of outstanding independence “heroes” (most famously, Antonio Maceo). Concerned about the tendency to reduce Grajeles to a mythical matriarch, Stubb recasts her as a figure who reveals the revolutionary activism of Cuban women and, in particular, mixed Cuban women. Political initiative is evident, too, in Nancy Paro’s discussion of the road to Brazilian abolition, which, at several stages, involved enslaved Afro-Brazilians leading the way.

Lauren Derby’s chapter also exemplifies the collection’s aim to “depart from traditional emphases on the political elites and their agendas.” Against explanations that characterize Dominicans’ anti-Haitianism as a reflexively racist response to the Haitian Occupation (1822-44), Derby proposes an older history that, importantly, emphasizes popular perceptions. Since the 17th and 18th centuries, she claims, poor Dominicans juxtaposed themselves with their filthy rich Francophone neighbors. Across the border, they saw a society in which sugar, slaves, prosperity and the commodification of African people seemed inseparable. Within, they saw failed plantations, small-scale agriculture and ranching, kidnapped rather than purchased slaves and, as a result, “racial

democracy.” These opposing “economic logics,” Derby argues, conditioned Dominicans to conceive of real blackness as belonging across the border.

As with many multi-authored works, this book frustrates efforts to offer comprehensive critical remarks. Here the task is aggravated by the thinness of the editor’s introduction, which would benefit from historiographical commentary situating the volume within the scholarship on race and nationality in Latin America. The absence of such a discussion is particularly glaring given the admirable quality of some of the recent relevant literature. As well, despite their overall strength and persuasiveness, some chapters would have profited from a more critical approach to the notion of nationhood. In Derby’s essay, for example, nationalism is subtly naturalized. Failing to distinguish cultural differences from their political mobilization, she neglects that nationalism does not derive directly from the fact of cultural difference but rather from the summoning of *certain* differences in struggles over state power. However much Spanish and French Hispaniola might have been objectively different (and there is no certainty that they were any more different than two villages within the Spanish side of the island), these differences became politically salient only when activists seeking state control invidiously identified them.

Insufficient grappling with the idea of nationalism also informs Knight’s unfortunate statement that British Caribbean whites “simply failed to convey (...) exemplary models of local national identity.”¹ This charge of “failure” trivializes the matter. If we define nationalism, as Rolph Trouillot does in a terribly overlooked essay, as a political claim made in the name of an alternative culture and history, its absence in the 19th century British Caribbean becomes a profound problem of hegemony.² What Knight dismisses as a “simple failure” reappears as colonial elites’ inability to conceive of an alternative to British identity, an inability that reflects not so much their futility but Great Britain’s *greatness*. To 19th century British Caribbean elites, Britishness seemed not just unassailable but unimpeachable.

Detailing nationalists’ difficulty in crafting a discourse that effectively escaped imperial assumptions is a project that promises to drive the scholarship in the coming years. Despite doing little by way of the historiographical future, the collection under review will serve as a solid point of departure and thus deserves a wide readership.

NOTES

1. It also leads him to the shocking assertion that the English planter and historian Edward Long “came close to the depiction of a Jamaican nationalist.” The infamous Long and his

patently racist pals who sought home rule did so as Englishmen abroad, not as Jamaicans. They invested nothing in valorizing Jamaicanness.

2. Rolph Trouillot, *Haiti, State Against Nation: the Origins and Legacy of Duvalierism* (New York, 1990), intro.

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MIGUEL ÁNGEL CENTENO: *Blood and Debt: War and Nation-State in Latin America*. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002.

Why did the Latin American state fail to develop in the nineteenth century beyond its limited organizational capacities? Why did international wars occur so infrequently on the continent in the 19th and especially in the 20th centuries? What are the mutual relationships between war and the nation-state in Latin America? These are the three major puzzles that Miguel A. Centeno has addressed in a seminal and original work of political sociology about the (lack of) war and the (lack of) states in Latin America. This is an engaging *tour de force* about the origins and failures of the Latin American state and the links between war and political development. The result is a very readable, incisive, broad, and extremely original research, which combines bold theoretical statements, sweeping generalizations, and a quite unconventional use of quantitative data, including tax receipts (to examine the limited reach of the Latin American state); conscription records (to assess the relative lack of mobilization of the citizens); the names of articles published in military journals (to address the peculiar absence of bellicose sentiments in the respective armies); and the naming of streets and public monuments in the major cities of the region (as a proxy for the relatively cosmopolitan and non-nationalistic political culture of the ruling elites).

To address these three puzzles, Centeno suggests the following thesis: “Latin America was relatively peaceful because it did not form sophisticated political institutions, capable of managing wars. No states, no wars” (26). The failure of the state to develop as a strong and significant institution provides the initial explanation for the relative absence of (significant) international wars. Although the author is aware of the large number of international wars that had taken place in the region between 1810 and 1883, he tends to dismiss those as mere “limited wars” that had only a minor impact upon very weak and under-developed states, as compared to the European experience of the last two