

BRAZILIAN INTELLECTUALS AND THE PROBLEM OF RACE, 1870-1930*

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FEW COUNTRIES offer so rich a field for the study of thought and behavior in the area of race relations as Brazil. In recent years Brazil has come to enjoy the reputation of being a racial paradise. Americans and Europeans, disillusioned and depressed by the hypocrisies at home, have repeatedly found in Brazil a counterpoint to the dreary and often tragic record of race prejudice in their own lands. Stefan Zweig, for example, driven from his beloved Vienna, found refuge in Brazil and published an exuberant book about Brazilian tolerance in 1943. Gilberto Freyre is avidly read by members of the History Book Club who duly learn, if only by implication, that Brazil was spared the holocaust of civil war by the sentimental libidinousness of her Portuguese settlers—since Brazilian planters, unlike their counterparts in the American South, took the trouble to legitimize the bastard mulattoes who issued from their forays into the slave quarters.¹

Any visitor to Brazil soon discovers that her race relations are more complicated than the current stereotype suggests. During the past year an alert reader of the Brazilian press would have found three interesting stories. One concerned the Mayor of the Northeastern city of Olinda, who wrote a letter to the local press explaining that an opposition candidate could never be elected because, "as everyone knows, the people of Olinda will accept a mulatto like me for Mayor but they won't stand for a black."² Why would the incumbent Mayor think he might use the issue of color against his opponent? He *must* have assumed that some considerable part of the electorate would agree with his logic.

The second item was a feature story on racial discrimination published in the monthly magazine *Realidade* for October 1967. The article recounted the experiences of a team of journalists, representing the three popularly acknowledged categories of white, mulatto and black. In several of the major cities they found discrimination against the black group, especially in such sensitive areas as admission to private primary schools.³

*This paper is part of a larger study of the history of ideas in Brazil between 1870 and 1922. The author is professor of history at the University of Wisconsin. Dr. Skidmore, one of the leading students of Brazilian history in the United States, presented it in an address given at Vanderbilt University, on November 19, 1968, under the auspices of the Graduate Center.

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The final item comes from the May-June issue of *Cadernos Brasileiros*, a cultural bi-monthly published in Rio de Janeiro. The entire number is devoted to race relations since the abolition of slavery in 1888. Included is a round-table discussion containing bitter testimonials by black intellectuals who flatly deny the existence of a racial paradise in Brazil. Lauro Salles even goes so far as to say he would prefer the North American situation because *there*, at least, prejudice is open and not veiled, as in Brazil.⁴

My remarks should not be misunderstood. Being neither an anthropologist nor a sociologist, I lack the qualifications to undertake an analysis of social behavior in Brazil. Even properly trained social scientists face a dearth of adequate monographic literature on this subject, notwithstanding the pioneering work of Donald Pierson, Emílio Willems, Arthur Ramos, Florestan Fernandes, Thales de Azevedo, Manoel Diegues Júnior and Charles Wagley.⁵ Yet we are even more seriously handicapped in discussing the history of race relations in nineteenth and early twentieth century Brazil. Aside from Gilberto Freyre's well-known work, we have little more than the pioneering research of Florestan Fernandes and his students Octavio Ianni and Fernando Henrique Cardoso, and the essays of Edison Carneiro. In any case, my topic here is thought, not behavior. The introductory anecdotes are intended only to remind ourselves that Brazilians themselves do not consider, even today, that their country has no "race problem." Obviously racial behavior there is quite different from the United States. Many Brazilians, including sociologists such as Manoel Diegues Júnior, argue that social status in Brazil is a function of class and not race. Others, such as Florestan Fernandes, disagree with that conclusion—arguing that historically race has been an important variable in itself.⁶

A further caveat is in order. Any North American who broaches the subject of present-day racial attitudes in Brazil cannot avoid arousing the understandable Brazilian reaction of "so, you are simply trying to prove that we are as prejudiced as you." Since I am unqualified to offer a competent technical analysis of social stratification in either country, I shall now turn to my actual topic: Brazilian thought about race between 1870 and 1930.

Again, a warning. Ideas are not necessarily carried out in action. It is perfectly possible that Brazilians espoused one ideology in their books, speeches, and journalistic articles, and applied quite another in their daily behavior. I think a good case could be made for describing the period after 1888 in exactly that manner. Yet such a discrepancy between thought and action is itself interesting. It would reveal a great

deal about the mental world of the elite and the pressures, both internal and external, under which it operated.

Thought about race is best understood as it related to the social ideology predominant after 1870. The relationship is two-fold. First, Brazilian thinkers worried about their past—they asked themselves whether heavy miscegenation and the resulting mestizo population had predestined them to perpetual third-class status as a nation? If so, then they were caught in a determinist trap. Little could be done except to understand *how* their ethnic formation had doomed them. If, however, the future left room for maneuver, if ethnic “redemption” were somehow possible, then social policies might be devised to accelerate national development through economic modernization. The latter possibility raised the second question: how should the country manage its human capital—how could its resources be directed as part of national development?

After 1870 the Brazilian elite came to accept an identifiable ideology of development. It was a form of classic liberalism—calling for secularization of the state (schools, marriage, cemeteries, etc.) and the abolition of all restraints on individual freedom, as well as decentralization of government.⁷ The most obvious restraint on freedom was slavery. Thus the predominant ideology could focus on the single issue of legal servitude. As a result, the elite thought more about slavery than about either color or race. And since total abolition took so long—until 1888—this fixation on slavery *per se* gained, quite understandably, a very strong hold on the liberal mind. Nonetheless, the abolitionist liberals—who undoubtedly included the majority of the (few) “intellectuals” by the 1880’s—*did* have some interesting views on race.

Before examining those views, we should remind ourselves of the actual social structure in Brazil in 1870. Most important, there *already* existed a large number of free men of color—mostly mulatto but also black. Historians at the moment disagree over how these men had been able to become free—Freyre and Tannenbaum emphasize the institutional and cultural factors, such as the previous Iberian experience with dark peoples and the intervening power of the Church and crown which allegedly prevented the total dehumanization of the slave.⁸ Others, such as Marvin Harris, stress the demographic context, arguing that the relative shortage of whites left the planter class no choice but to allow and even facilitate the emergence of a free class of mixed-bloods to serve as artisans and cattle herders. In other words, Brazil had economic “space” for free men of color—unlike most of the American South, where poor whites pre-empted these positions.⁹

Whatever the explanation, by 1870 Brazil had a significant percentage of free coloreds throughout the country. Race or slavery could not possibly be seen as a strictly regional problem, nor could one merely speculate about any “new” problem of free men of color *after* abolition—they had already won access (if only on a very small scale) to the highest reaches of society. Mulattoes such as the Baron of Cotegipe (an outstanding Conservative Prime Minister) and André Rebouças, (a famous engineer of the Empire), showed how far one could go.

The census of 1872 listed only 38% of the population as “white.” 20% were listed as “black” and the remainder, or 42% were classified as mulatto (“pardo” in the Brazilian

taxonomy).¹⁰ The rapid growth of the coffee culture in the south had drawn slaves from the decaying agriculture of the Northeast and thus had made certain that significant Negro influence would occur in the economically most dynamic area of the country.

What, then, did Brazilians think about race between 1870 and 1888? In these years the liberal ideology rapidly conquered the younger generation. The culmination of its influence came with the abolition of slavery in 1888, the establishment of a republic in 1889, and the rapid realization between 1889 and 1892, of such liberal goals as disestablishment of the Church, secularization of the schools and cemeteries, institution of civil marriage, and decentralization of government.

In this atmosphere of liberal agitation, race was seldom discussed *per se*. Instead, liberals talked about slavery. In their writings, however, one can find the following strands of thought:¹¹

1. Virtually no one believed in the simple theory of biological inferiority so abolitionists only rarely tried to refute racist doctrines. Even the defenders of slavery argued that it was a necessary evil in order to maintain the economy—and they always added that Brazilian slaves were physically better off than many free workers in Europe. Occasionally, the opponents of abolition cast doubt on the humanity of the Negro slave. Exceedingly seldom, did they ever go so far as to claim that Africans were biologically fated to perpetual servitude.¹²

2. Abolitionists *did* worry about the large illiterate, unskilled mass represented by the slaves. Few of them, however, thought through the probable social consequences of abolition. How would the ex-slaves be employed? How could they be trained and prepared for a free life? Where would they go? André Rebouças was an exception—as early as 1883 he outlined a plan for modernization in agriculture which would streamline the commercial sector.¹³ The majority of liberal abolitionists, however, preferred to think about European immigrants as the solution to the post-abolition labor problem. Throughout the speeches and writings of such prominent abolitionists as Joaquim Nabuco and José do Patrocínio one finds this logic: we must abolish slavery because its continued existence repels potential European immigrants whom we badly need.¹⁴

3. Abolitionists believed that miscegenation would gradually and inexorably “whiten” and thereby “upgrade” the Brazilian population. This view can be found quite clearly in both Joaquim Nabuco and José do Patrocínio.¹⁵

It is at this point that the Brazilian view on race becomes complicated and interesting. Having rejected the straightforward theory of absolute biological differences, the abolitionists nonetheless believed in racial influences. Those relative influences were hardly a matter of indifference. The abolitionists, like most of the elite, hoped to maximize the influence of the “higher” or “more advanced” civilization—meaning the white European. Ergo: the whiter the better. Occasionally this concept of “whitening” could be read in cultural, not physiological terms. For example, the famous incident related by Koster in 1817 about the royal officer who looked dark—“Can a *capitão-môr* be a mulatto?” was his host’s reply.¹⁶ Here color attributed to an individual became a function of his social position. Yet even this interpretation

meant that the darker men had to "whiten" culturally—an enormous task. *How* could it be done? By maximizing their contact with individuals who were more advanced culturally. One of the easiest channels was intermarriage. Miscegenation, therefore, was seen as regenerative, if not biologically, at least in terms of culture contacts.

What evidence is there to support my description of such a "whitening" ideology? Quite a lot. Consider the reaction by abolitionists to the proposal for importing Chinese coolies into Brazil in 1879. Planters (and even republicans such as Salvador de Mendonça) saw coolies as a ready replacement for the slaves whose attrition had become inevitable with the end of the slave trade in 1850 and the law of free birth in 1871. Joaquim Nabuco, the leading abolitionist politician of the day, vigorously opposed the coolie proposal on the grounds that Brazil already had enough trouble balancing off its African blood without importing Asian blood!¹⁷

The "whitening" thesis got unique support in Brazil by the widespread belief, later popularized by Gilberto Freyre, that the Portuguese enjoyed an uncanny ability to "whiten" the darker peoples with whom they mixed. At times, this view seemed almost to amount to a faith in the "strong" genes of the amorous Portuguese. Underlying the belief was a largely unverified conclusion that Negro and Mulatto net reproduction was low. Often this was attributed to allegedly low fertility among Negroes or mulattoes. In any case, it was taken as comforting proof that Brazil's color problem would gradually and inevitably disappear. As European immigrants increased the white element, the darker strain would naturally fade—either through miscegenation or failure to reproduce themselves.

How can one summarize thought about the Negro before 1888? The abolitionists believed that slavery was a moral, economic, and political drag on the nation's development. They saw the heritage of slavery as a mass of passive, "pre-modern" workers who could, in their present state, contribute little to the rapid development of Brazil. The immediate solution was to import Europeans, thereby increasing the "white" (sometimes defined in cultural terms) element. The purely Negro element was fated to disappear, as the Brazilian population steadily whitened.

The history of Brazilian thought about race changed sharply after the final step of total abolition was taken in 1888. At this point intellectual influences from abroad affected Brazil in a manner very different from the era of the abolitionist campaign. The nineteenth century had witnessed two contradictory movements of thought about race. On the one hand, the anti-slavery movement triumphed throughout the North Atlantic basin and finally even in the South Atlantic. While slavery crumbled under the impact of economic change and moral pressure, however, European thinkers at the same time were articulating systematic theories of innate biological differences among races. After Wilberforce came Gobineau.

Brazil was slower to pick up the currents of European thought than some of her Latin American neighbors. The absence of universities helped maintain her relative isolation. The growth and apparent victory of the liberal cosmopolitan ideology in the 1880's, however, signalled an intensified interest in the latest European ideas. Brazil was very vulnerable, like the rest of Latin America, to European theories of race. Ironically for Brazilians, the two decades after total

abolition in 1888 were a high period for theories of biological inferiority and superiority.

Furthermore, Brazilians now had to focus on race, not slavery. Many of the questions which could be avoided or glossed over before 1888 now came to the fore. And the harder Brazilian intellectuals tried to inform themselves about the latest ideas from Europe—for them the citadel of culture and progress—the more they heard about the inherent inferiority of the Negro. In France, for example, the imposing historical theories of Gobineau were supported by the "scientific" anthropology and anthropography of Le Bon and Lapouge.¹⁸

Brazilian social thinkers now faced a difficult task: how could they evaluate the "scientific" race theories being imported from Europe, and, to a lesser extent, North America? The anthropological theories, which even went to the point of "proving" Aryan superiority by measuring cranial capacity, were reinforced by the social Darwinist doctrines dominant in England and the United States. Because of their inherent biological inferiority, so the reasoning went, darker races were bound to be dominated, and perhaps even eliminated, by the "stronger" Aryans. Like the dinosaur, the Negro could not argue with evolution, as the struggle now took on a social as well as a strictly physiological form.

The influence of these theories was great in Brazil, at least among prominent writers. The Negro became a target for study—a laboratory subject. Nina Rodrigues, for example, the acknowledged pioneer in this field, attempted to catalogue African social customs as they had been transmitted to Brazil by the slaves. In addition to this seemingly neutral exercise, however, he also studied the social behavior of Negroes and mixed-bloods in the light of Lombrosian theory. Criminal tendencies among Negroes, for example were explained by analyzing their skulls. His approach to criminal medicine—which clearly followed dominant European theories—greatly influenced the succeeding generation of anthropologists and sociologists (such as Afrânio Peixoto and Arthur Ramos). Rodrigues held the chair of legal medicine in Bahia from 1891 until 1905. To appreciate how far he carried Lombrosian theory, one need only remember that he recommended differential treatment of convicted criminals by *race*. Furthermore, his racially-based theory of collective hysteria—applied to the famous case of Antônio Conselheiro and his followers in Canudos—greatly influenced Euclides da Cunha.¹⁹

Euclides is himself an interesting case study. He was the personification of the self-taught Brazilian intellectual desperately attempting to keep up with the latest developments in European social science. Among the European thinkers he absorbed second-hand (through his faithful intermediary Francisco Escobar) was the Polish racist theoretician, Gumplowicz. Euclides managed at times to work himself out of determinist thoughts about the *caboclo*, the half-breed which resulted from European-Indian unions. Euclides saw the *caboclo* as the backbone of a new race uniquely adapted to the rigors of the harsh interior of the Brazilian Northeast. But the Negro and the mulatto got no such reprieve. Euclides regarded them, especially the mulatto, as degenerates.²⁰

No less interesting is the case of Graça Aranha—whose widely-read if mediocly-written novel *Canaan* (1902) consisted largely of an agonizing dialogue between two German immigrants over the possible vices of racial miscegenation.

Aranha seems to sympathize with Milkau, who rejects Lentz's racist theories. But the novel's moral was ambiguous enough for Aranha to arouse the fury of journalists and Congressmen, who attacked him for impugning Brazil's reputation. Nonetheless, his novel was considered a triumph by José Veríssimo (a leading literary critic and fellow-member of the Academy of Letters), as well as by most contemporary opinion.²¹

It is hardly surprising, then, that Brazilian intellectuals picked up racist ideas from abroad. Books by European racists such as Le Bon were widely used in Brazilian schools. Visiting European lecturers such as James Bryce openly lamented Brazil's "plight"—a huge Negro and mestizo population.²² Innumerable visitors from North America and Europe reinforced, through their comments, the pseudo-scientific racist writings dominant in their countries. During these years Brazilian intellectuals experienced an intense feeling of inferiority vis-à-vis Europe and the United States.

Again, we should remind ourselves that we are focusing on the views of intellectuals, not on actual behavior in Brazilian society. Could it be that the intellectuals, insecure in their modest outpost of European culture, were repeating European ideas which in fact did *not* significantly influence Brazilian social customs? The answer must await more extensive monographic research in social history. It is certainly true that many members of the Brazilian elite were consciously catering to European prejudices in order to win the capital and immigrants they believed indispensable for Brazil's development. In attempting to refute European prejudices against the tropical climate, Brazilian propagandists had an easier task—they could simply point to relatively temperate southern Brazil where levels of disease and temperature were equivalent to Europe, especially Italy. But in the case of race, it was difficult. Usually the Negro or mulatto was simply *not mentioned* in propaganda aimed at potential immigrants.²³

This omission was practiced symbolically by Baron Rio Branco, Brazil's Foreign Minister from 1902 to 1912, who was thoroughly familiar with European prejudices because he had served his country abroad for thirty years. As Foreign Minister he followed a "white only" policy in recruiting diplomats and in choosing special envoys for missions abroad. He preferred the tall, handsome blond types, such as Joaquim Nabuco, who was appointed Ambassador to Washington in 1902. Short men of apparently questionable ethnic origins, such as Euclides da Cunha, were less welcome. *His* missions for the Foreign Office were limited to border disputes in the Amazon Valley.²⁴

Nor should this "white only" policy surprise us. Brazil was, after all, poorly prepared to argue with the powerful, racially conscious nations. Rio Branco, like other intellectuals, knew well that his country was looked down upon as an African potpourri by Argentines, who were far more successful than Brazil in attracting European immigrants. Furthermore, Brazilians were ill-equipped intellectually to refute the supposedly scientific theories of race pouring out of Europe and North America. Whatever may have been their intuitions about their *own* experience as a racially mixed society, they found it difficult to defend anti-racist doctrines against the weight of prestigious opinion abroad.

What were the other characteristics of Brazilian thought about race between 1888 and 1914? As might be expected, little practical attention was given to the actual situation of

the ex-slave. Instead, attention focused on the immigrant. There was a certain logic, not necessarily racist, to this preference. Brazil needed skilled human capital. "Skilled" meant at least literate, and with some experience of a developed society. Immigrants, if available, were undoubtedly a cheaper source for such labor than the ex-slaves, whose basic education and training would prove more expensive—or at least so it could have been argued.

But, seeking immigrants also fitted in with the continuation of the "whitening" ideology earlier predominant among the abolitionists. This was a subtle, often inarticulated ideology. Occasionally, it was stated openly. Such was the case when José Veríssimo, the noted literary critic, published a newspaper review of Oliveira Lima's book about the United States in 1899: Veríssimo said: "I am convinced, as is Sr. Oliveira Lima, that western civilization can only be the work of the white race, and that no great civilization can be built with mixed peoples. I even tend to believe that the United States owes its rapid and steady development to its ethnic purity. But I ask myself if obtaining it a century ahead of time was worth the sacrifice of millions of human beings. . . . There is no danger, as Sr. Oliveira Lima supposes, that the Negro problem will arise in Brazil. Before it could arise it was already resolved by love. Miscegenation has robbed the Negro element of its numerical importance, thinning it down into the white population. Here the mulatto, beginning with the second generation, wants to be white and the white man himself, harboring no illusions and with some insignificant exceptions, welcomes, esteems, and joins with him. As ethnographers assure us, and as can be confirmed at first glance, race mixture is facilitating the prevalence of the superior element. Sooner or later it will perforce eliminate the Negro race here. Obviously this is already happening. And when immigration, which I think is Brazil's principal need, becomes more numerous, it will, through the inevitable mixtures, accelerate the selection process."²⁵

This whitening ideology, which accepted the mulatto but not the black, had one advantage for uneasy Brazilian intellectuals: it was a compromise with racist determinism. Instead of two exclusive ethnic categories, it presupposed a miraculous movement from black *in the direction of* white. Thus Brazil could slowly, thanks to the low net reproduction rate among blacks, work her way out of the determinist trap.

This was true, of course, only as long as one did not at the same time believe the current theories that condemned mixed bloods as "degenerate." Fortunately for them, most thinkers simply ignored or glossed over this fatal objection. In other words, the "whitening" ideology was the Brazilian compromise. Obviously unable to claim white racial purity for any part of the country—unlike the North Americans—Brazilians seemed to accept the racist theory of Aryan (or at least white) superiority and then promptly escaped the seemingly determinist trap by implicitly denying the *absoluteness* of racial differences. The whiter the better. To my knowledge there was no writer who was explicitly aware of the contradiction in this position: how could one accept absolute racial differences and *then* argue that the Brazilian population was moving gradually from inferior to superior? Such reasoning presupposed a shaded area which simply did not exist in rigorous racist thought.

As I have indicated above, many Brazilian intellectuals

must have implicitly assented to racist ideas after 1888 without actually spelling them out. One proof of this is the manner in which the few courageous anti-racist writers before 1914 in Brazil *phrased* their arguments. Writers such as Alberto Tôrres, Manuel Bomfim, Álvaro Bomilcar, and Gilberto Amado, began by asserting that theories of Negro inferiority and white superiority were generally believed in Brazil.²⁶ They had no doubt that, whatever Brazil's social behavior, the elite had swallowed racist ideas from Europe and North America. Having admitted this, they all took virtually the same way out of the determinist *cul-de-sac*—they explained history by emphasizing environment instead of race. Tôrres, for example (probably the most influential of the anti-racists writing before 1914), cited the work of Franz Boas, later to be Gilberto Freyre's teacher, to prove that biological theories of race were being refuted by the most recent science.²⁷ Tôrres, like Bomfim, looked to history and the social habits engrained historically to explain the relative backwardness of Brazil. Their views were often summed up in the phrase, "there are no inferior and superior races, only advanced and retarded races." The later characterization was always explained to mean that there was no *inherent* reason why they could not catch up.²⁸

But these critics of racism remained a minority before the first World War. It was not that they were directly countered by other writers expressing racist views. Rather, they were ignored or read skeptically. Nonetheless, they had an effect. They were pointing the way to an escape from the straight jacket of racism.

When did these critics begin to represent more than a small minority position among Brazilian intellectuals? I think it was during the First World War. The shift in opinion was connected with the undermining of the liberal cosmopolitan ideology which had emerged during the late Empire.²⁹ In the era of the Brazilian belle époque, from 1900 to 1914, that ideology seemed to go unchallenged. Foreign capital was eagerly courted and Brazilians dutifully listened to the racist views of distinguished visitors. At the same time, as we have seen, some isolated critics were attacking the dominant ideology, along with one of its principal corollaries—the theory of racial superiority.

How did the criticism grow in acceptance? In a manner that should not surprise us: anti-racism became a tenet of the new nationalist thought. Alberto Tôrres and Álvaro Bomilcar were nationalist prophets. Tôrres thought he could establish a nationalist position *only* after he had effectively refuted the theory of white superiority. Thus it was an integral part of his overall nationalist attack on liberal cosmopolitanism. To realize this, one need only look at the way in which Tôrres correlated racist theory with the imperialist designs of the economically expansive powers. By impugning the human potential of nations such as Brazil, Tôrres explained, the industrial nations were attempting to justify—both in their own minds and those of the elite in the weaker nations—their economic penetration.³⁰

The connection between nationalism and anti-racism is equally clear in the case of Afonso Celso, a monarchist and author of the famous schoolbook, *Porque Me Ufano do meu País* (*Why I am Proud of My Country*), published in 1901. Celso produced a romantically naive paean of praise to Brazil's natural beauties and its miraculously non-violent

history. His bombastic patriotism, later much ridiculed by Brazilians, was an ingenuous nationalism that included a bold and unambiguous denial of white superiority.³¹ Again the pattern is clear: any nationalist thinker had to begin by defending the Brazilian, whom they *all* acknowledged to be beyond any hope of racial "purity."

As the war continued and Brazil was eventually drawn in as a belligerent in 1917, nationalist opinion grew stronger. In 1915, for example, Miguel Calmon, a prominent Bahian politician, returned from Europe and gave a rousing speech calling for Brazilian mobilization. He had been in France when the war began and had seen colonial colored troops fighting in the French Army. "How comforting it is to hear from the mouths of the French descriptions of heroic acts by Negroes and mestizoes. . . . Fortunately for us, it did not take the war to abolish such prejudices, since we have always honored merit wherever it may be found."³² Clearly Calmon was wrong about what Brazilian intellectuals had said in their writings, although he may have been closer to the truth in social practice. Here again, however, a nationalist had to begin by disowning racism.

The connection is even clearer in the case of Álvaro Bomilcar. In 1911 he wrote a surprisingly forthright pamphlet called *Race Prejudice in Brazil*, using the naval revolt of 1910 to show how widespread was discrimination against Negroes (the enlisted ranks, almost entirely Negro in the Navy, had rebelled in protest against whipping!)³³ Bomilcar went on to help found the nationalist magazine *Brazileia* in 1917 and the "Nativist Propaganda Association" ("Propaganda Nativista," which became the "Ação Social Nacionalista" in 1920). One of the group's nineteen basic tenets was "adoption of the principle of equality of the races."³⁴

By 1918 one finds many more intellectuals openly contesting racist ideas. A minor essayist such as José Maria Belo in that year published an essay on Ruy Barbosa in which he dismissed any explanation of Brazil's relative backwardness based on race or climate. "Fortunately," he noted, "all these pompous phrases, based on a poorly assimilated philosophy, have gone out of fashion. Neither race nor climate has a decisive influence on the development of a country."³⁵

But Belo was overly optimistic. Intellectual styles in Brazil had not altered so quickly. Nonetheless, his comment was itself a sign of a major shift in elite opinion. After 1918 those who espoused racist theories were on the defensive. A younger generation, born with the Republic and Abolition, was much more skeptical of racist theory from abroad. They looked to the anti-racist prophets such as Alberto Tôrres and Sílvio Romero for their inspiration, thereby finding *Brazilian* credentials for the anti-racist theme in their nationalist thought.³⁶

Here we need to remember that the Brazilian revolt against racist thought was directly related to the gradual discrediting of racist theories among European and North American scientists. Alberto Tôrres could quote Franz Boas and Bomilcar could quote Jean Finot. At worst, foreign scientific theory, if taken as a whole, was becoming contradictory and ambiguous. Thus the anti-racist Brazilians could pick their own evidence to support refutations of the racists. Furthermore, the Brazilian elite was well aware of the fruits of systematic discrimination against the Negro after abolition in the United States. This practical application of racist thought offended

even the more conservative Brazilians whose personal experience made it impossible to accept such a dehumanizing and absolutistic system—especially when it came to the mulatto. Insofar, therefore, as the Brazilian intellectual connected North American social behavior with racist theory, he found the results morally and emotionally repugnant. When he looked at Europe, however, it was easier to separate theory from practice because western Europe had virtually no Negroes or mulattoes. As I have suggested earlier, the war helped to undermine the prestige of European thought and to dramatize the possible truth in charges by such Brazilians as Alberto Tôrres that racist thought was in fact an instrument used by industrialized countries to destroy the self-confidence of weaker, darker peoples whose natural resources they wished to plunder.

The decade of the 1920's saw the enemies of racist thought gain further ground. The modernist movement in art and literature contributed enormously to the elite's sense of national identity by creatively affirming the multi-racial nature of Brazilian civilization. Gilberto Freyre's famous and influential portraits of the Brazilian past were one expression of this movement.³⁷

Yet not all intellectuals, even of the younger generation, found it possible to escape the pull of racist thought. Some otherwise notable nationalists, such as Oliveira Vianna and Antônio Torres (no relation to Alberto Tôrres), openly declared their belief in white superiority.³⁸ In other cases, the determinism of race was replaced by the determinism of national character—thereby avoiding the awkward and increasingly outdated theories of biological inferiority.³⁹ Paulo Prado's widely-read *Retrato do Brasil* (1928) was a leading example of this genre—the more subtle theory that backwardness was caused by deeply ingrained social habits such as indolence, shortsightedness, self-indulgence, and excessive individualism. But the fight against this new determinist trap is the subject for another chapter in the long-time struggle of Brazilian intellectuals to convince themselves and their countrymen that they *do* in fact enjoy that most precious of historical gifts: the power to shape their own future.

FOOTNOTES

1. Stefan Zweig, *Brazil: Land of the Future* (New York, 1941). Recent ingenuous descriptions of Brazil as a totally non-discriminatory society appear in Hendrik Riemens, *L'Europe Devant l'Amérique Latine* (La Haye, 1962), 16; and in Alan K. Manchester, "Racial Democracy in Brazil," *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, LXIV (No. 1, Winter 1965) 27-35.

2. *Jornal do Commercio* (Recife) July 28 and 30, 1968.

3. "Existe Preconceito de Côr no Brasil," *Realidade*, October, 1967.

4. *Cadernos Brasileiros*, Ano X (No. 47, May-June 1968). The statement by Lauro Salles is on p. 10-11. The round-table discussion partially published in this issue appeared in its entirety in book form: Edison Carneiro, et. al., *O Negro Brasileiro* [série "Cadernos Brasileiros," No. 7] (Rio de Janeiro, 1968).

5. A very useful review of this literature may be found in the new introduction and supplementary bibliography of the reprint of Donald Pierson, *Negroes in Brazil* (Carbondale, Illinois, 1967).

6. Manoel Diegues Júnior, "O Quadro Social Oitenta Anos Depois da Abolição," *Cadernos Brasileiros*, Ano X (No. 47, May-June 1968), 69-73; Florestan Fernandes, *O Integração do Negro à Sociedade de Classes* (Rio de Janeiro, 1964).

7. The best analysis of this liberal ideology is to be found in Roque Spencer Maciel de Barros, *A Ilustração Brasileira e a Idéia de Universidade* (São Paulo, 1959). See also Richard Graham, *Britain and the Onset of Modernization in Brazil, 1850-1914* (Cambridge, 1968), chapter 10: "Middle-Class Britain and the Brazilian Liberals."

8. Gilbert Freyre, *Casa-Grande e Senzala* (Rio de Janeiro, 1933) and *Sobrados e Mucambos* (São Paulo, 1936). Frank Tannenbaum, *Slave and Citizen: The Negro in the Americas* (New York, 1946).

9. Marvin Harris, *Patterns of Race in the Americas* (New York, 1964). For a comparative analysis of the two positions, favorable to the former, see Eugene D. Genovese, "Materialism and Idealism in the History of Negro Slavery in the Americas," *Journal of Social History*, I (No. 4, Summer 1968), 371-394.

10. Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, *O Brasil em Números* (Rio de Janeiro, 1966), 25.

11. The most famous abolitionist document was Joaquim Nabuco's *O Abolicionismo* (London, 1883). The Abolitionist Society's manifesto, written largely by Nabuco and published in Rio in 1880, is reprinted in Osvaldo Melo Braga, ed., *Bibliografia de Joaquim Nabuco* (Rio de Janeiro, 1952) [Instituto Nacional do Livro. Coleção Bl. Bibliografia, 8] 14-23.

12. Antônio Gomes de Azevedo Sampaio, *Abolicionismo: Considerações Gerais do Movimento Anti-Escravista e sua História Limitada a Jacarehy, que foi um Centro de Ação no Norte do Estado de São Paulo* (São Paulo, 1890) 12-13. Anon. [A. Coelho Rodrigues], *Manual do Súdito Fiel ou Cartas de um Lavrador a Sua Majestade o Imperador Sôbre a Questão do Elemento Servil* (Rio de Janeiro, 1884), 6-7.

13. André Pinto Rebouças, *Agricultura Nacional: Estudos Econômicos* (Rio de Janeiro, 1883).

14. Nabuco, *Abolicionismo*, 233.

15. José do Patrocínio, editorial in *Gazeta da Tarde* for May 5, 1887 reprinted in Afonso Celso, *Oito Anos de Parlamento. Poder Pessoal de D. Pedro II* (São Paulo, [n.d. 1928?]), 131-132. Joaquim Nabuco was scandalized that José Veríssimo should have described Machado de Assis as a "mulatto" in his obituary of the great novelist. Nabuco wrote Veríssimo in 1908 that "For me Machado was a white man, and I believe that he became one. If there was any strange blood it did not at all affect his perfectly Caucasian character." Osvaldo Melo Braga, ed., *Bibliografia de Joaquim Nabuco*, 170.

16. Henry Koster, *Travels in Brazil* (London, 1816), 391.

17. Joaquim Nabuco, *Obras Completas*, v. XI: *Discursos Parlamentares 1879-1889* (São Paulo, 1949), 59-67. Barros, *A Ilustração Brasileira*, 102-103. Vigorous opposition to the coolie proposal, also based on an explicit desire to get "new blood," not "old juice" from "degenerate bodies" was expressed by João Cardoso Menezes e Sousa [Barão de Panapianacaba], *Teses sobre Colonização do Brasil: Projeto de Solução as Questões Sociais que se prendem a êste Difícil Problema* (Rio de Janeiro, 1875), 418-423.

18. Gilberto Freyre, *Ordem e Progresso* (Rio de Janeiro, 1959), I, clx-clxi.

19. Raimundo Nina Rodrigues, *Os Africanos no Brasil*, 3rd ed. (São Paulo, 1945), especially the Introduction and chapter eight. Gilberto Freyre talked frankly of Rodrigues' racist ideas in his Introduction to Augusto Lins e Silva, *Atualidade de Nina Rodrigues* (Rio de Janeiro, 1945). A useful bibliography of Rodrigues' widely scattered works is included in Henrique L. Alves, *Nina Rodrigues e o Negro do Brasil* (São Paulo, n.d. [1962?]).

20. Euclides da Cunha, *Os Sertões*, 2nd ed. (Rio de Janeiro, 1903), 108-113. Gilberto Freyre, *Atualidade de Euclides da Cunha* (Rio de Janeiro, 1943). Clóvis Moura, *Introdução ao Pensamento de Euclides da Cunha* (Rio de Janeiro, 1964), chapter V. In a letter in 1903 Euclides explained "I am a disciple of Gum-

plowicz," Francisco Venâncio Filho, *Euclides da Cunha e Seus Amigos* (São Paulo, 1938), 86.

21. José Pereira da Graça Aranha, *Canaan* (Rio de Janeiro, 1902). José Veríssimo, *Estudos de Literatura Brasileira*, quinta serie (Rio de Janeiro, 1905), 15-35. Also typical of the favorable opinion from important critics was Felix Pacheco whose review in 1902 was later reprinted: *A Canaan de Graça Aranha* (Rio de Janeiro, 1931). The influence of Aranha's work on the younger generation is described in Orris Soares, "Graça Aranha: O Romance—Tese e Canaan," in Aurélio Buarque de Hollanda, ed., *O Romance Brasileiro* (Rio de Janeiro, 1952), 203-221.

22. James Bryce, *South America: Observations and Impressions* (New York, 1912), 401-420.

23. Typical was Luiz de Castro, *Le Brésil Vivant*, 3rd ed. (Paris, 1891), who frankly admitted that until recently his "French friends" knew little more than "in our country there were Negroes and monkeys along with a half-dozen whites of dubious color," 3.

24. Otto Prazeres, "Aspectos do Rio Branco," *Revista do Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro*, vol. 244 (July-September, 1959), 343-345. Gilberto Freyre, *Ordem e Progresso* (Rio de Janeiro, 1959), I, xlix, cl-cli. Euclides' relationship with the Foreign Minister is documented in Francisco Venâncio Filho, *Rio Branco e Euclides da Cunha* (Rio de Janeiro, 1946).

25. José Veríssimo, review in *Jornal do Comércio* (Rio de Janeiro), December 4, 1889. The book was Manuel de Oliveira Lima, *Nos Estados Unidos: Impressões Políticas e Sociais* (Leipzig, 1899). Oliveira Lima feared that without increased European immigration the "actual supremacy of the whites" in Brazil might be "drowned by the spreading of inferior races," 53.

26. A useful introduction to these opponents of racist thought may be found in Guerreiro Ramos, *Introdução Crítica à Sociologia Brasileira* (Rio de Janeiro, 1957).

27. Alberto Tôrres, *O Problema Nacional Brasileiro* (Rio de Janeiro, 1914), 49; and Tôrres, *Le Problème Mondial* (Rio de Janeiro, 1913), 138.

28. Tôrres, *O Problema Nacional*, 9; *Le Problème Mondial*, 141.

29. For a further analysis of this period see Thomas E. Skidmore, "Brazil's Search for National Identity in the Old Republic,"

in Raymond S. Sayers, ed., *Portugal and Brazil in Transition* (Minneapolis, 1968), 127-144.

30. Alberto Tôrres, *Le Problème Mondial* (Rio de Janeiro, 1913), xvi, 179; and Tôrres, *As Fontes da Vida no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro, 1915), 7-8, 39.

31. Afonso Celso, *Porque Me Ufano do meu País* (Rio de Janeiro, 1901).

32. Miguel Calmon du Pin e Almeida, *Tendências Nacionais e Influências Estrangeiras* (Bahia, 1922), 59.

33. Álvaro Bomilcar, *O Preconceito de Raça no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro, 1916). Although written in 1911, the book was withheld from publication for five years, according to the author, in hope of a more receptive atmosphere.

34. The manifesto of the "Propaganda Nativista" group is reprinted in Álvaro Bomilcar, *A Política no Brasil ou o Nacionalismo Radical* (Rio de Janeiro, 1920), 179-181.

35. José Maria Belo, *Ensaio Político e Literário: Ruy Barbosa e Escritos Diversos* (Rio de Janeiro, 1918), 177.

36. An influential collection of articles by members of this generation may be found in A. Carneiro Leão, et. al., *A Margem da História da República* (Rio de Janeiro, 1924). In the unsigned Preface the contributors were said to "read and admire" Alberto Tôrres whose work "has not been read carefully by the generation that preceded us."

37. One of the few secondary works that explicitly views Modernism in the context of intellectual history is Wilson Martins, *O Modernismo, 1916-1945* (São Paulo, 1965).

38. A straight-forward belief in "Aryan superiority" permeates all of Oliveira Vianna's works of historical sociology. Among his early and influential books were *Populações Meridionais do Brasil*, vol. I: *Populações do Centro-Sul*, 1st ed. (São Paulo, 1920) and *Pequenos Estudos de Psicologia Social*, 1st ed. (São Paulo, 1921). The latter work aroused Antônio Torres' enthusiastic admiration: Gastão Cruls, *Antônio Torres e Seus Amigos* (São Paulo, 1950), 97.

39. A useful introduction to Brazilian studies of national character is Dante Moreira Leite, *Caráter Nacional Brasileiro* [Universidade de São Paulo; Faculdade de Filosofia, Ciências e Letras: *Boletim* No. 230], São Paulo, 1954).

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_____, *The Development of the Brazilian Steel Industry*. (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, in Press).

J. LEON HELGUERA (Co-Editor) *Archivo Epistolar Del General Mosquera*. Biblioteca de Historia Nacional, CVIII. (Bogotá: Academia Colombiana de Historia, by Editorial Kelly, 1966).

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ALEXANDRINO E. SEVERINO, *Fernando Pessoa na Africa do Sul: Contribuição para o Estudo de Sua Formação Artística*. (São Paulo, Brazil, in Press).

RONALD SPORES, *The Mixtec Kings and Their People*. (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1967).

EARL J. THOMAS, *The Syntax of Spoken Brazilian Portuguese*. (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1969).

CHARLES M. VANCE, *Bibliografía de la Crítica de la Ficción Hispano-Americana*. (Washington: Pan American Union, in Press).

_____, *Ficción Contemporánea en Cuba*. (México: Editorial Veracruzana, in Press).

EMILIO WILLEMS, *Followers of the New Faith. Culture Change and the Rise of Protestantism in Brazil and Chile*. (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1967).