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## **CARIBBEAN CONTRASTS: GENDER, RACE, AND CLASS IN PUERTO RICO AND CUBA**

Puerto Rico and Cuba are  
two wings of the same bird;  
bullets and flowers strike  
a single heart.

—Lola Rodríguez de Tío

**P**UERTO RICO AND CUBA share, in a myriad of ways, a common destiny. If one were to take only a superficial look at them, one would say that there are many differences, the foremost being that Cuba is a sovereign Socialist nation struggling to survive the effects of a three decade old embargo imposed by the U.S.; and Puerto Rico is an *Estado Libre Asociado*, a Commonwealth state of the U.S., struggling to deal with its dependence on the U.S. and the subsequent loss of control over its own destiny. This main contrast between the two Caribbean nations inevitably leads to many other comparisons and contrasts that point to what interests us most: the conditions of the people.<sup>1</sup>

Our interest in the conditions of the people, and more specifically their socio-economic situation, led us, through our personal experiences in the field and through our research, to recognize the importance of the intersection of gender, race, and class in any analysis which attempts to understand the complexity of society. We are also aware that the current preoccupation with issues of gender, race, and class is due largely to increasingly strenuous attempts by some of the most disadvantaged sectors of society to force such issues into the limelight of public discourse. "Gender, race and class" is not simply a trendy academic catch-phrase, but rather the conceptualization of a complex dynamic of three elements that frequently dovetail in the course of the daily interrelationships between individuals and their society.

The exploration of the linkage of these three elements requires the recognition that the river of inquiry has many estuaries, and that we can only begin to put together the whole picture by first isolating some of the key factors in its formulation. In this paper we will give examples of the ways in which the Puerto Rican and Cuban societies may be analyzed using the factors that have had a major impact in the configuration of gender, race, and class: the historical context of colonialism, cultural and racial heritage, and political-economic systems. Undoubtedly, there are many more factors that can be used

as focal points in such an analysis, but we found these to be the most useful. These are forces that shape the character of gender, race, and class relations, yet they can also be seen as the result of these forces, i.e., as contexts.

### **NEOCOLONIALISM**

Under the shade of the colonial umbrella, the twists of history can be both cause and effect in the dynamics of gender, race, and class relations. The phenomenon of colonialism is an umbrella that covers the factors considered here. Its true dimensions are perceptible in its most overt manifestations in the form of cultural genocide and economic and political underdevelopment, and its more subtle workings of internalized colonization. From the overt to the subtle, the impact cuts across all aspects of society, affecting the collective as well as the individual human condition.

In the process of colonization, the structural elements of society and the actual lives of individuals undergo a series of transformations that reflect the pattern of domination which is based on the assumptions of superiority inherent to sexual, racial, and class hierarchies. When we analyze the junctures at which gender, race, and class converge, in any combination, we can see more clearly the origins and roots of many of the social ills that have been passed on through the colonization process.

“Colonialism” refers to a broad spectrum of definitions of the term, from its standard dictionary meaning, as “the control by one power over a dependent area or people,” to a more complex definition which delves into the inner workings of domination. The following definition by Cynthia Hewitt de Alcántara exemplifies the latter:

Colonialism rests in the economic and political sphere upon the exercise of monopoly control over economic exchange and information by a dominant group of foreigners, who interposed themselves by force and administrative fiat as the single intermediaries between a dominated group and all others, and thereby eliminated the element of competition which would otherwise have provided a certain bargaining power to the colonized. In the psychological and cultural sphere, colonialism implied as well the manipulation of racial or ethnic stereotypes which justified the existence of domination to the colonizers and which were absorbed into the mentality of the colonized in a way which frustrated their own awareness of injustice . . . (de Alcántara 1984:102).

We, of course, would add the element of gender relations to this description of colonialism.

Colonialism has changed from its classic forms to what we now call neocolonialism, exhibiting an exceptional ability to disguise itself through euphemistic terminology, such as the term used to describe the current status of Puerto Rico as an “Estado Libre Asociado,” when in fact, Puerto Rico exhibits all the trappings of a colonized society and is recognized in the United Nations as such. Assessing the impact of the U.S. on Puerto Rico, we see a people forced to restructure their society in order to satisfy the interests of an external power. Neocolonialism transforms the cultural and ethnic fabric

of dependent societies, which though capable of absorbing new elements into their economic and social systems, find their people coerced into activities antithetical to their culture and fundamental interests. Neocolonialism fragments culture and commodifies it in order to prevent it from becoming a source of unity and power. In a mechanism of domination which transforms people into the "other," the unacceptable lower form of humanity, the colonial "subjects" are relegated to the function of objects, no longer commanding their own actions.<sup>2</sup>

Over the course of their long history of colonization, Puerto Rico and Cuba experienced little respite from the grip of colonial powers. Puerto Rico was granted autonomy by Spain in 1897, only to lose it a few months later when the Spanish-American War broke out, ending with the Treaty of Paris in which Puerto Rico was ceded to the U.S. without meaningful participation by the Puerto Rican people. Cuba experienced a similar scenario. After the Spanish-American War, the U.S. sent troops to "stabilize" the island. Withdrawal of the U.S. occupation forces was contingent upon the adoption of the Platt Amendment into the newly drafted Cuban constitution. In 1902 Cuba became officially an independent country, but the Platt Amendment gave the U.S. the right to intervene at will, hold military bases there, and to exploit the land and resources. From that moment until the 1959 revolution, Cuba's affairs were highly influenced by the U.S. After the revolution, the U.S. was to exert a different kind of influence, in the form of negative mechanisms aimed at the overthrow of the Castro regime and the elimination of socialism.

The Cuban Revolution that ousted Fulgencio Batista in 1959 changed the colonial pattern by nationalizing land and wealth and beginning a process which was aimed at creating a more equal distribution of wealth among the Cuban people. It is at this point that the contrast between Puerto Rico and Cuba begins to expand. Whereas Puerto Rico has maintained its commonwealth status, increasingly manifesting the social ills that accompany colonized states, Cuba began a development process the moment it opted for a socialist system which would have as one of its main priorities the elimination of these social ills. Because of this challenge to colonial hegemony, Cuba has had to pay dearly, struggling to survive an economic embargo and, more recently, the loss of socialist bloc support due to the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The U.S. embargo that has been in place for three decades against Cuba can be seen as a form of inverted colonialism, a colonialism that is not allowed to penetrate an area of resistance and is therefore exerting pressure from the outside. The effects are seen in the shortages and hardships, such as food and gas rationing, blackouts, transportation difficulties, and many other inconveniences that put a tremendous stress on the Cuban population.

In Puerto Rico neocolonialism has had ample time to penetrate the island and influence every aspect of its society. One example of the degree of colonial penetration in Puerto Rico is the dissolution of the "campesinado," which has resulted in a distortion of rural production to meet the demands of foreign rather than domestic needs. This is the root of the common saying, "Puerto Rico produces what it does not consume and consumes what it does not produce." For instance, in this land of abundant tropical fruit,

the most popular orange juice among the poor is TANG, a powdered orange flavored product made in the U.S., because it is the one they can afford.<sup>3</sup>

The act of reducing Caribbean islands to cash crop economies (mainly sugar, coffee, tobacco, and fruit) made the population dependent on the vicissitudes of the foreign market and the seasonal flux of employment. As mentioned previously, the "campesinado" was decimated by this process, but ironically, from the viewpoint of capitalist development, this elimination of a "traditional" agricultural sector is an inherent aspect of the process of modernization. A result of this process has been the creation of dependency on foreign imports, higher prices and high unemployment. In Puerto Rico, high unemployment has created a wide range of social ills, such as a high incidence of drug related crime and domestic violence. In a deeper sense, there is also the human tragedy that comes with long term unemployment, a profound feeling of impotence brought on by an unproductive and misdirected existence. An important element of internalized colonization is the consumerism propagated by the U.S. presence in Puerto Rico. Throughout the island there are signs, mostly in English, urging Puerto Ricans to consume American products. There are American chain stores and restaurants, and the supermarkets are loaded with American products. Fifty-seven percent of the population depends on unemployment benefits while at the same time they are bombarded by the sights of American commodities. The result is that they often opt for buying status-related items, such as televisions, cars, kitchen appliances, canned and boxed food rather than buying the more expensive fresh and nutritional food.<sup>4</sup>

Neo- and internalized colonization have had a major impact in the every day lives of the people of these two islands. Not surprisingly, its negative impact can be found most often in the plight of poor and darker-skinned people.<sup>5</sup> Within this category, single women with young children are particularly prone to insecurities produced by inadequate support mechanisms. These support mechanisms deriving from the state, the community, the family, and the individual herself, act as a litmus test for the capacity of a society to take care of its people.

The story of Carmen, a young, single, Black unemployed mother of four children who lives with her male companion and his relatives in a small shack in El Hoyo, on the outskirts of San Juan, Puerto Rico, is one story of the impact of colonialism on gender, race, and class.<sup>6</sup> Her multiple dependencies reveal a state of colonization, both external and internal. Carmen stays at home to take care of her four children. Everyone in the family is unemployed and receives unemployment benefits from the U.S. government. The benefit, in the form of a check, is supposed to cover food costs, but often she uses her check for other things, such as pampers, clothes, and toys. They have electricity and enough food, but their living conditions, which are crowded and unhealthy due to the lack of running water, puts them in the lowest bracket of Puerto Rican society.

The external and internalized colonization of Carmen is evident in her difficulties in overcoming a state of dependency both vis-à-vis her mate and vis-à-vis U.S. government checks. She is the product of Spanish patriarchal attitudes toward women, in the sense that she sees no way out of her current dependency on a man for support. She

accepts her role as a mother who stays at home with her children. This is not necessarily uniquely Spanish, but it is a contrast to a mother who sees her role in the public sphere out of necessity or as an avenue for advancement, which is the case of a number of U.S. and Cuban women. Carmen recognizes few, if any, options for improving conditions for herself and her family.

The story of Betty, a young, divorced, Black mother of two children who lives with her mother and sister in a modest home in Miramar, the Havana suburb, is also the story of the impact of colonialism on gender, race, and class. In Betty's case, it is the impact of inverted colonialism, that is, the forces that pressured Cuba to accept the conditions of a colonized society. The economic embargo and the collapse of the Soviet Union left Cuba in a vulnerable state which the Cubans refer to as the "Special Period." Unlike Carmen, Betty has the option to work outside the home. When her two children, Edgar and Eylan, were young, she chose not to do so in order to stay home with them. She lived from the child support sent by her ex-husband and the income of her mother and sister who worked and with whom she lived. Later she was hired as the administrator of a Havana social club. However, she was not able to buy many of the things she needed, including shoes for her children, due to her low wages and a general shortage of goods. All the adults in her family, in this case, all female, have jobs. They live in a two-story house with electricity and running water. During this "Special Period" there are regular blackouts to conserve energy; they along with other Cubans contend with this and other inconveniences such as the availability of basic foods such as rice and beans, and coffee, but the scarcity of milk for older children. School lunches supplement the food that is available at home for children.

Carmen finds herself in a situation of dependence, with no resources except those of her relationship with her companion and his family, who are also unemployed. Betty depends a lot on her family, but the state provides clean running water, electricity, health care, free education, and job security. However, the Special Period has put a strain on the quality and quantity of these benefits.

Although unhappy with the shortages and the difficult financial situation, Betty has a sense of self which is derived from her independence with regards to men, her ability to work, her family's support for her and her children, and the system's support mechanisms which benefit her entire family. Carmen's outlook is not hopeful: no one around her works, has the ability, or the resources, with which to find jobs which are not plentiful. In contrast, Betty's mother said: "All the adults in this family work. We have always worked." Betty and her family suffer from the impact of colonial forces on the Cuban society as a whole, but they do not display the signs of internalized colonization which render Carmen and her family dependent upon interests of the colonizer above those of the general population. As two poor young Black women with children, living with the legacy of colonialism, both Carmen and Betty present the human face of dependency or destabilization affecting their countries.

## **ETHNICITY AND IDENTITY**

Four groups have had a major impact on the cultural and racial heritage of

Puerto Rico and Cuba: The Indigenous people,\* Spaniards, Africans, and the U.S. Euro-Americans. In the high incidence of interracial sexual relationships between masters and slaves, (as well as, less frequently, white mistresses and Black slaves in Puerto Rico and Cuba, children from these relations were issued titles of “blanqueamiento” or literally, “whitening,” which made them free people and gave them access to social mobility. In Cuba, an ever increasing group of free Black Cubans began to establish itself in businesses and professions, to the point of becoming a Black middle class. Fears by Cuban elites that this large group of free Black people would join forces with the slave uprisings inevitably led to racist repression.<sup>7</sup>

The tense racial situation in the early 20th century was compounded by the U.S. presence and its segregationist policies. Complicating matters even more, U.S. owned sugar mills and plantations introduced a massive seasonal flow of Black migrant workers from neighboring English-speaking islands (Pérez Sarduy and Stubbs 1993:8). Institutional racism continued until the 1959 Cuban Revolution, when the mass exodus of White upper class and middle class professionals marked the beginning of a reversal of the racist trend. The island’s Black population became more prominent and, began to enjoy the benefits of the redistribution process. This is not to say that racism has been eliminated in Cuba, in Havana, for example, many Black people disproportionately live in the poorer sectors of the city.

The complexity of the racial issue in Cuba is reflected in the fact that neither Europeans nor Africans were homogeneous groups. For instance, Nancy Morejón, a Cuban poet and currently the director of the Center for Caribbean Studies at Casa de las Americas, speaks about the multiple complexities of the people who came on the Spanish boats: “Andalucians, Portuguese, Galicians, Basques, and Catalans came to Cuba, as well as other immigrant groups from ancient Mediterranean cultures, of similar racial mix (Morejón 1993:230).” This mix of people brought a mixed mentality. Morejón quotes the observations of Fernando Ortiz, Cuba’s foremost anthropologist:

While some whites brought the feudal economy, as conquistadors in search of booty and peoples to subjugate and make their plebians; others, also white, came driven by the already dawning economy of merchant and even industrial capital. (Morejón 1993: 230)

When discussing the African heritage, Nancy Morejón also points to the multiplicity of Cuba’s African component:

The other component came from a diverse source of slaves, brought from the West Coast of black Africa. To the islands of the Carib-

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\*Editor’s note: the Tainos and Arawaks were the primary indigenous people of Puerto Rico. In Cuba, by 1532, the Siboney, Tainos and Guanajatabeys peoples were decimated from 200,000 to 4,000 following the 1492 Columbus and 1511 Diego de Vasquez voyages to the island. See Bob Chrisman, “National Culture and Revolutionary Cuba,” *Black Scholar*, 8:9-10 (1977).

bean, and especially Cuba, came Africans from Senegal, Guinea, the Congo, and Angola. . . . All the groups of African slaves brought from the West Coast had very different tribal and ethnic origins . . . they were all linguistically distinct from one another. (Morejón 1993: 230)

The fact that the Spanish came of their own will, with motives of their own, and that the slaves were brought by force, “prisoners in body and soul” (Morejón 1993: 231), would mark the relationship between Whites and Blacks in the Caribbean, establishing patterns of attitudes, behaviors, and class distinctions based on race.

Although the Spanish and the Africans have come to be the main racial and cultural components of the two islands, Indigenous peoples have been incorporated into the racial and cultural components of these islands through the process of *mestizaje*; however, their integrity as a racial and cultural unit was severely damaged because of their near decimation under Spanish domination. The Indigenous heritage exerts a powerful influence on the lives and collective conscience of Puerto Ricans and Cubans. Anti-Indigenous genocide meant that little of their autonomous culture was passed on to future generations rarely does anyone in either nation identify as Indigenous American. However, there were interracial relationships and, especially in Puerto Rico, there often is a tri-racial component evident in the physical attributes of the people. These physical attributes of *mestizos* also coexist with received behavioral patterns, passed from one generation to another, the cultural and psychological attributes of Indigenous ancestors.

Recent research shows that the pre-Columbian Taino society in Puerto Rico was matrilineal (as were African societies among enslaved populations), and that women had access to the highest power roles, that of *cacicas* (Acosta-Belén 1979:1). The implications of this in assessments of ethnic and sexual identity and gender politics is often unexamined. To salvage such evidence as part of the puzzle of Puerto Rican identity is both a scientific and a counter-colonialist act, a small reconstruction that counteracts “*la historia oficial*,” (the official history/story) which simply states: “There are no Indians in Puerto Rico.”

The impact of the Indigenous presence on Puerto Rican and Cuban society can also be measured in terms of the effects of a collective trauma. The decimation of the original inhabitants of any nation speaks of the character of the colonizers. In Puerto Rico and Cuba, it is the first national lesson on colonialism, a clear sign that a colonial power will use any means necessary to attain its goals. The Tainos and the Arawaks speak to us largely through their absence. Their absence, or silence, was the first casualty in a long list of silencing acts. Current silencing is done through fostering economic dependency and political complacency in Puerto Rico as well as the U.S. blockade and embargo against Cuban people.

## **POLITICAL-ECONOMIC SYSTEMS**

Political-economic systems within which social relationships in Puerto Rico and Cuba operate, center on capitalism and socialism as they have developed in the two

islands. As a system, capitalism has no interest in altering class differences or inequalities, except in the interest of the accumulation of private wealth or for addressing periodic crises. In Puerto Rico, any leveling of class differences results from the millions of dollars of food and welfare checks that the U.S. invests in the island in order to artificially maintain the population's standard of living at a bearable level. Efforts to alleviate the effects of class differences in Puerto Rico are remedial in nature, always subordinated to the higher interest of maintaining the existing economic system, exemplifying how the U.S. creates and perpetuates economic dependency.

In Cuba such stratification is less evident. In fact, one of the main goals of the Cuban Revolution was the creation of a classless society. This has succeeded on many levels, although class hierarchy has not been eradicated. In 1992, visiting the home of a prominent doctor, who was also the director of a major research hospital, we found that his salary was 600 pesos a month: the salary of a bus driver was 400 pesos a month at that time. The relatively low disparity in salaries attests to Cuba's attempts to construct a more egalitarian society, this elimination of economic disparity continues, in spite of the adverse effects of the "Special Period" and the U.S. embargo.

Economic social classes have a direct impact on gender and race. Women and Black Cubans were the two groups that made the most gains from the Revolution; previously they had been the most disadvantaged under a non-socialist system. During the pre-revolutionary period thousands of women were reduced to the life of servants, prostitution, or street beggars. Women and Black people had the highest unemployment rates. The Revolution officially eliminated discriminatory practices and encouraged interracial harmony. The Federation of Cuban Women launched an ambitious and effective campaign to eliminate prostitution and recruit Cuban women to actively participate in the new society. Women were encouraged to enter the ranks of the economically active population, and also to take part in literacy campaigns and volunteer brigades. The changes for women that were brought on by the Revolution were called by Fidel Castro, "The Revolution Within the Revolution," perhaps the most significant revolutionary change in Cuban society (Cole, 1988: 532-533).

Cuba's socialist system overhauled the conditions that for centuries had allowed gender and race differences to economically and legally disenfranchise the most disadvantaged members of society. Sexism and racism have been eliminated in their overt forms; unfortunately, however, such problems persist, particularly in the area of personal relations where there is still a tendency to link race and class.<sup>8</sup> Because of this persistence, Cuba continues to strive to eliminate the problems related to gender, race, and class inequalities. Concerning gender, the "Family Code," adopted in 1975, is a prime example of the institutional support for equal rights and equal duties (Stone, 1981: 146). Under this code, husband and wife are legally bound to share the responsibilities of household and child-rearing duties. It is not an easily enforceable code, but its inclusion in the body of national law sends a signal to both sexes, particularly to women, that they have recourse for problems of sexual inequality in the private sphere.

Compared to pre-revolutionary Cuba, modern Cuba excels in the area of eliminating the injustices that are often manifested through gender, race, and class

inequalities. Contemporary Cuba's struggle to survive under an economic embargo has had a mixed impact on the area of social and economic justice. Due to the numerous shortages, it has had to appeal to the collective spirit of the people, urging them to accept the hardships and participate in voluntary activities, such as the agricultural camps, which would help the nation to survive. It has developed new models of cooperative production, and through this social experimentation, a new Cuba is being created. La Guinera, a housing construction project outside Havana created by a brigade of Black Cuban women, for their own housing, is a prime example of the social attitudes promoted by the Cuban Revolution.<sup>9</sup> Such projects send many messages to its participants: there are no physical or mental limitations to the activities of any human being; participate in the national struggle for survival; socialism is a collective enterprise; the affirmation of racial and sexual identity can be manifested in organizing for upward mobility (in this case, better housing).

## CONCLUSION

The study of gender, race, and class exists within a broader set of philosophical issues concerning human separation in society. The significance of race and sex is based upon the meaning of difference assigned by social constructions. These constructions vary in different societies or sectors of a single society. Power and wealth accrued from exploitation base on these divisions necessarily depend upon the subordination of the "other."

"La verdad abre sus propios caminos" [Truth opens the way to its own paths], we were told by an elderly man sitting on a Havana sidewalk. This thought reflects the spirit in which we initiated this investigation into race, class, and gender in Puerto Rico and Cuba. It also reflects our belief that exposing ourselves and others to the reality of "the other" and neocolonialism opens new paths of inquiry to help us understand and resolve oppressive sexual, racial, and economic practices in societies, such as our own, founded upon inequality.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> This paper is the result of an extended project at Western Maryland College which included a January Term course entitled “Caribbean Contrasts: A study tour of Puerto Rico and Cuba,” (January 3-24, 1994), a Photography Exhibit (February 28-March 6, 1994), and a workshop on “Gender, race and class in Puerto Rico and Cuba” given at the Latin American Studies Association (LASA) conference in Atlanta, Georgia, March 10, 1994. The coordinators of the project were Isabel Valiela and Norberto Valdez. Students who participated in the study tour contributed to the Photo Exhibit and wrote essays about their experiences. Three of these students, Linda Cunfer, Jered Ebenreck, and Christa Lawson, participated in the LASA workshop.

We would also like to say that this paper was written in the true spirit of collaboration, a result of common experiences and common thoughts shared by those of us who participated in the project. Special thanks to Amy Yerkes, a friend and colleague, who so enthusiastically offered to read the paper and make final stylistic recommendations.

<sup>2</sup> For an in-depth analysis of the colonial concept of “subject” and the mechanisms by which colonial powers subordinate their colonial subjects see Kelvin A. Santiago’s “*Subject People*” and *Colonial Discourses* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994). Puerto Rican culture, while still resisting assimilation, is feeling the impact of the transformations caused by colonization. The main example of this is the effect of the circular migrations to and from the Northeastern urban centers of the United States. In the midst of all these transformations, their greatest strength comes from a sense of identity, which is rooted in their Puerto Rican heritage. It is still unclear how the increasing immigration from Cuba to the U.S., and the return of Cuban Americans as visitors to the island, will shape Cubans perceptions of themselves as a people.

<sup>3</sup> This information was given to us by the cook at the Christian Community Center in Corea, a poor neighborhood in San Juan. The center is run by the Church of the Brethren, hosted our tour group.

<sup>4</sup> “Colonial subjects” resist subjugation, as we observed during our visit to Adjuntas, Puerto Rico. In this small town in the Central Cordillera mountains, a small group of people decided to fight a mining project that would have ruined their environment and contaminated the waters of the area. They won the fight against the mining company by appealing to the sense of community and common culture of the people of Adjuntas. Their efforts resulted in the formation of a grass-

roots organization called Casa Pueblo, which is now involved in numerous community projects and services, including the production of a local coffee called “Madre Isla,” an allusion to Spain as the “mother” country.

- <sup>5</sup> The question of the link between race and poverty in Puerto Rico is controversial. There are those such as Isabel Martínez, the administrator of the Christian Community Center and herself a dark-skinned Puerto Rican of humble origins, who deny that poverty has any relationship to the color of one’s skin in Puerto Rico. As we looked around us in that neighborhood, we saw people of many shades of brown, none too white, and none too dark. It is easy to see why the issue is confusing in Puerto Rico. However, when we visited Bechara, an even poorer community in San Juan, site of an industrial waste dumping ground, we did notice that most of the people we met there were Afro-Puerto Rican. And by the same token, we met more Caucasian Puerto Ricans in places where middle and upper class Puerto Ricans are more likely to be found, such as the university, the banks, hotels and in the higher class neighborhoods.
- <sup>6</sup> The following is a paraphrased description from a report by Linda Cunfer, one of the participants in our study tour. She and three other students visited Carmen at the suggestion of Juan Figueroa, a pastor of the Church of the Brethren who also worked for the Christian Community Center in Corea.
- <sup>7</sup> See Arandia Covarrubias, “Una ruta para fortalecer la nacionalidad,” n.d., b: 7-8; and Arandia Covarrubias, “Raza, género, y religión,” n.d., 2-3.
- <sup>8</sup> At the 1994 LASA, Nadine Fernández, a researcher on Cuban youth, recounted an anecdote about a father who told a Black youth to stop dating his White daughter, a medical student: “She has to study,” he told the youth. Fernández infers that he was insinuating that the relationship would be an obstacle to her advancement in life.
- <sup>9</sup> Information on La Guinera was provided by Global Exchange, which organized our study tour in Cuba.