

Reformers of Slavery

Brazil and Cuba c. 1790 and 1840

Reformadores da escravidão

Brasil e Cuba c. 1790 e 1840

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ABSTRACT This article analyzes debates about slavery in Cuba and Brazil, between the 1790s and 1840s. In different contexts, the reformers were divided between slaveholders and abolitionists and discussed the insertion of Afro-descendants in the mentioned societies. The former defended not only slavery but the insertion of free slaves, blacks and mulattos as part of the heterogeneous Brazilian and Cuban population. However, abolitionists considered the mixture of races to be an obstacle to the formation of the nation or the origin of social integration difficulties. Unlike slaveholders, they defended the homogeneity of the population, repudiated the disproportionate increase of “internal enemies”, and encouraged European immigration. The “racialization” of the project for the nation was a trend more evident in Portuguese and Brazilian writings before the 1830s. In Cuba, the debate became more intense when the reformers detected an increase in the black and mulatto population in the decade of 1830s.

KEYWORDS reforms, slavery, Africanization

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RESUMO O artigo analisa debates sobre a escravidão em Cuba e Brasil, entre as décadas de 1790 e 1840. Em conjunturas distintas, os reformadores se dividiam entre escravistas e abolicionistas e discutiam a inserção de afrodescendentes nas mencionadas sociedades. Os primeiros defendiam não somente a escravidão, mas a inserção dos escravos, negros e mulatos livres como parte da heterogênea população brasileira e cubana. No entanto, os abolicionistas consideravam a mistura de raças como entrave à formação da nação ou origem de possíveis dificuldades de integração social. Diferentemente dos escravistas, eles defendiam a homogeneidade da população, repudiavam o aumento desproporcional de “inimigos internos” e incentivavam a imigração europeia. A “racialização” do projeto de nação era uma tendência mais evidente nos escritos portugueses e brasileiros antes da década de 1830. Em Cuba, o esse debate se tornou mais intenso com a percepção do aumento da população negra e de mulatos a partir da década de 1830.

PALAVRAS CHAVE reformas, escravidão, africanização

The Haitian Revolution (1791-1804) had an enormous impact on slaveholding societies and economies in the Americas. This unprecedented slave rebellion, responsible for expelling the French from its most prosperous possession, liberating all slaves, and forming a republic commanded by blacks, caused great destruction and fear. Slavery entered in crisis with the rumors of the hecatomb in Saint Domingue. However, a “second slavery” was formed despite the opposition of abolitionists, rumors coming from the revolution in Haiti, and English interventions aimed at fighting the trade in humans. Slaveholders’ plans for the economy aimed, at the same time, to expand plantations and the number of slaves, innovate agricultural technology, and combat possible revolts led by slaves and free Afro-descendants (FERRER, 2014, p. 12; TOMICH, 2003).

For many decades, news about the revolt in Haiti terrorized slaveholding societies, especially in Cuba and Brazil. In the writings of the elites, the social division became even clearer with the strengthening of their economies, the expansion of traffic and crops. Fear encouraged the

separation of whites and blacks, between free people and slaves, citizens and non-citizens, creating barriers to a mestizo society composed of free Afro-descendants. Fear of slave revolts was spread by the metropolitan and colonial elites to deter abolitionists and the independence of Cuba. Resorting to racial hatred, these images of black rebels sought to preserve order, discourage freedom as a political agenda, and denunciations against the horrors of slavery. In all of the Americas, blacks and other Afro-descendants represented barbarity, they were primitive and satanic, due to their lack of “culture and civilization” (GONZALES-RIPOLL, 2004, p. 17-19; NARANJO OROVIO, 2004, p. 92-97). The terror propagated made the idea of the nation an uncomfortable theme in slaveholding societies, since increasingly the nation was defined by its ethnic unity and not only its political unity (CHIARAMONTE, 2004, p. 27-57; FRADERA, 2018, p. 1-52). Slavery, thus, intensified the divisions and consolidated racial markers in Brazilian and Cuban societies.

This article analyzes the writings of the reformers of slavery in Cuba and Brazil, published between 1790 and 1820 and, afterwards, between 1830 and 1840. In distinct contexts, the reformers were divided between slaveholders and abolitionists and discussed the insertion of the Afro-descendants in the above mentioned societies. The former defended not only slavery, but also the insertion of slaves, blacks, and free mulattos as part of the heterogenous Brazilian and Cuban population, in other words, they were not concerned with the formation of citizens. In a veiled manner, they defended a model of society with different levels of citizenship, between citizens and non-citizens, between free and slaves. In compensation, the abolitionists considered the mixture of races to be an obstacle to the formation of the nation in the case of Brazil and a social danger for Cuba. They defended the homogeneity of the population, repudiated the disproportional increase of “internal enemies” and encouraged European immigration. The “racialization” of the project of the nation was the most evident tendency in Portuguese and Brazilian writing before the 1830s. In Cuba, the debate about the whitening of the population became more intense with the perception of the increase of Afro-descendants and slave uprisings from the 1830s onwards.

For the entire period analyzed, reformist slaveholders listed the economic and civilizational benefits of slavery, but also warned about the dangers of slave revolt. Abolitionists always defended the gradual reduction of the slave trade to prevent rebellions and the Africanization of Cuba and Brazil. As a hypothesis, however, the article establishes that the predominance of the racial debate among the writings of Luso-Brazilian reformers occurred before 1830. In Cuba, the same quarrel, particularly the danger of revolts and Africanization was more intensely debated by Abolitionists after 1830.

BETWEEN IMPERIAL UNITY AND DEFENSE OF THE ECONOMY (C. 1790-1820)

Since the middle of the eighteenth century, enlightened thinkers drafted aims to reform metropolitan and colonial economies and societies. In this article, by reformers I mean men generally linked to the bureaucracy who devised plans to consolidate the economy and political power of monarchs and different American elites. In Cuba, the reformers experienced at the same time the expansion of sugar plantations and the fears of slave revolt influenced by Haiti. Hence they sought to strengthen ties with Spain. In the Portuguese Empire, especially after 1808, the autonomy of Brazil was consolidated, and reformers initially thought of it as part of Portugal and, after 1822, as an independent nation. From the end of the eighteenth century Cuba received increasing numbers of slaves, while the goods produced there were sent to European and North American markets. In Brazil, before 1822, Luso-Brazilian reformers traced out targets to integrate Brazil and Portugal, as united kingdoms, and pointed to slavery as an obstacle to this integration. Positions in favor of slave traffic became more explicit at the end of the 1820s, when the coffee trade propelled an expansion in agricultural areas and a demand for labor in the country.

In the middle of the era of revolutions, the planter, bureaucrat, and reformer Francisco Arango y Parreño defended both the traffic of slaves in Cuba and technological innovation in the planting of crops.

He wrote memorials and representations to demonstrate the advantages of commercial freedom. Only the increase offer of labor, with good prices and easy credit, would make local production competitive (TOMICH, 2003, p. 4-27). After the beginning of revolts in Saint Domingue, Arango wrote to the *Habaneros* to alert them to the opportunity arising this crisis had created: “Defend now your interests and advantages which originate in this disgrace. Far from the attentive eye and with all tranquility and peace reigning, this is a precious occasion to increase your agriculture”¹ (ARANGO Y PARREÑO, 1888, p. 50). Rather than lamenting the rebellion and repudiating the increase of slaves, Arango advised the Cuban to increase the number of their slaves to increase the crisis of the rich French colony. This defense of traffic was prolonged in his writing, since he returned to this issue at various times between 1789 and 1816, especially during the *Cortes de Cádiz* (PIQUERAS, 2016, p. 116).

To understand the revolt in Saint Domingue, Arango y Parreño listed the terrible conditions in which their slaves lived (ARANGO Y PARREÑO, 1888, p. 49). In Cuba, slaves and freed colored people were better adapted, since there was a numerical equilibrium between the white and the colored population. He also emphasized the existence of fortifications and troops in Havana which guaranteed the security of the island (NARANJO OROVIO, 2004, p. 166-7; OPATRNY, 2010, p. 39-40). He wanted to convince the Creole elites and the Spanish administrators that subjects of African origin in Cuba were docile due to the good treatment they received there. In his discourse, he tried at the same time to justify slavery, defend slave traffic, and not scare white colonists away from the island (GOMARIZ, 2004, p. 48). Arango y Parreño was not alone in his perception that the slave revolt in the largest colony in the Caribbean opened opportunities for its competitors.

According to the Brazilian bishop Azeredo Coutinho, the French colonists were ruined by this “unfortunate revolution” and were

1 Original source: “Entren ahora su interés y las fundadas ventajas que pueden sacar de la misma desgracia. Apartada de su celo y reinando en todo él la tranquilidad y sosiego que el exponente espera, ésta es la preciosa ocasión de aumentar su agricultura”.

incapable of reacting quickly. At this moment great floods hit the Spanish colonies, while the English colonies were hit by hurricanes. In summary, their competitors were at a disadvantage, though the Brazilians would have to hurry to dominate new markets (COUTINHO, 1991, p. 273). In another memorial, the same bishop sought again to prove that slavery and traffic did not violate natural law, since the latter adapted to circumstances. Starting from this principle, he defended slavery to sustain the economy of Portugal and its colonial empire (COUTINHO, 1794, p. 9). In fact, according to the bishop slavery was not a European invention. In Africa, men submitted to this regime adapted well to hard work under the burning sun. On the other hand, the crossing to America freed them from death. Slavery both consolidated the colonial economy and gave slaves the “benefits of civilization.” In his memorial, he demonstrated as much contempt for abolitionists and philanthropists as for blacks, labelled as residents of barbarity (COUTINHO, 1794, p. 68).

Fearing revolution, the Secretary of State of the Navy and Overseas Affairs, D. Rodrigo de Sousa Coutinho, did not share Arango and Azeredo Coutinho’s competitive and incentivizing posture towards slavery. In 1797, he defended the harmony between Lisbon and the different parts of Portuguese overseas territories. He highlighted the strategy capable of neutralizing the revolutionaries who roamed through the metropolises and their colonies. Brought under a single administrative system, the provinces centralized in Lisbon had to obey the same uses and customs, receiving the same honors and privileges. The inviolable and sacrosanct unity would permit the subjects of the monarchy, rooted in the most distant places, to judge themselves as Portuguese (COUTINHO, 1993, p. 49).

Arango y Parreño also considered Cuba as part of the Spain: “We are Spanish not from the perverse classes from the other nations formed many of their commercial factories (...) but from the healthy part of the honorable Spain”² (ARANGO Y PARREÑO, 1888, p. 136). His island

2 Original source: “Somos españoles no de las perversas clases de que las demás naciones forman muchas de sus factorías mercantiles (...), sino de la parte sana de la honradísima España”.

was part of the greater nation, although he claimed that Cuban and ‘*peninsular*’ interests did not always coincide. At various moments he took positions against the laws established by *Peninsulares*, contesting the colonial and metropolitan administration (OPATRONY, 2010, p. 42-43). Dom Rodrigo and Arango thus considered Spain and Portugal as nations capable of aggregating territories in the four parts of the world. At this time, slavery and the slave traffic had not yet weakened these ties of identity, since the nation was thought of as a political body, ordered by the monarch (CHIARAMONTE, 2004, p. 50).

In this context favorable to the expansion of slave traffic and plantations, Arango did not consider the increase of the slave population as an obstacle to the development of Cuba as part of the Spanish nation. Only much later did he come to defend the equilibrium between whites and blacks, free people and slaves, motivated by the large increase in the Afro-descendent population, due to the dangers of a slave rising and the need for the modernization of agriculture (NARANJO OROVIO, 2004, p. 166-7).

In the *Cortes de Cádiz*, the Cuban priest Juan Bernardo O’Gavan continued Arango’s proposals in defense of slavery and slave traffic. By protecting the interests of sugar planters and slaveholders, he highlighted the risks of legislation in this area, since the abolition of slavery would lead to the collapse of the Cuban economy. At the same time that he recognized the dangers of the increasing slave population. He thus drew on Aponte’s conspiracy (1812), a failed attempt at a slave uprising in Cuba, to demonstrate the seriousness of the situation and the convenience of excluding the citizenship of the population of a black origin (GONZALES-RIPOLL, 2004, p. 97-108; CHILDS, 2006). In his 1821 writings, O’Gavan considered black Africans as the laziest and most indolent men. However, when brought to the plantations of the Antilles they become exemplary. Blacks born in the Americas were really robust, since the more agreeable climate allowed for greater degrees of perfection. Thus, for O’Gavan, slavery and slave traffic freed blacks from the horrors of Africa and transformed them into workers on the islands. They enjoyed better conditions, a certain degree of civility which poor Europeans did not enjoy (O’GAVAN, 1821, p. 7-8; PIQUERAS, 2007, p. 47-50).

However, in Cuba, the abolition of slavery was defended by the Bishop of Havana, the Spaniard Juan José Díaz de Espada, who took a position against his Cuban contemporaries and considered the continued traffic of slaves insane (AGUILERA MANZANO, 2005, p. 62-66; ESPADA, 1999, p. 243). In his 1808 *Informe sobre Diezmos*, he argued against traffic, slavery, latifundio, social prejudices, and took a stand against the poor and marginalized. He was one of the first to defend the introduction of colonists and thus propose the division of agricultural wealth and the creation of a broader social class composed of small peasants (NARANJO OROVIO, 2004, p. 137). In addition, among the most renowned Spanish abolitionists was Agustín Argüelles, who in the 1811 *Cortes de Cádiz* was an important defender of the abolition of traffic and the prohibition of the entrance of slaves into the territory of the Spanish monarchy in the Americas and Europe. This rule benefitted the planters and slaveholders, since by giving slaves better living conditions, they survived longer. Since his proposal affected Cuba and other slaveholding regions frontally, the debate stayed absent from the Constitution (GONZALES-RIPOLL, 2004, p. 74-75).

Also in the *Cortes de Cádiz*, between 1822 and 1823, the priest and deputy representing Cuba, Félix Varela, wanted to defend positions contrary to Arango and O’Gavan. He took a position in favor of the immediate abolition of traffic and the gradual extinction of slavery. He accused England of practicing false philanthropy: first it had previously profited from the trade in men, and after the abolition it was looking for advantages in Africa. He also tried to demonstrate that slavery made manual (or mechanical) trades vile and created obstacles to white colonization. His principal objection to captivity was the fear of rebellion and the possibility of the destruction of property accumulated on the island (VARELA Y MORALES, 2001, p. 114-119). Varela proposed the gradual abolition of slavery and the suppression of the slave trade: the concession of freedom to newborns or after ten years of service, the establishment of patronage for ten to twenty years, and the creation of a philanthropic *junta* to free slaves with public and private funds.

However, his proposal was not divulged in Cadiz, since it was opposed to the interests of Havana elites (PIQUERAS, 2007, p. 51-54).

In different moments in the *Cortes de Cadiz*, the fear of rebellion became a sufficient motive to debilitate the emancipatory proposals which granted political rights to free and freed Afro-descendants (FRADERA, 2018, p. 1-52). In fact, the rumors about Haiti led to even more rigid controls over men of color, slaves, and mulattos in Cuba and intensified racial discrimination. In the colony, the authorities still refused to treat whites with the same punishments given to blacks. Reports about the brutal treatment of slaves were repeated in processes against those involved in Aponte's rebellion in 1812. It was evident there that freed people and slaves did not always fight for distinct causes, since racial exclusion united them. Cuban society was divided between blacks and whites, without any space for other colors (CHILDS, 2006, p. 27-77).

In Brazil, the debate took on other proportions. Since the end of the eighteenth century, with the crisis of gold production, the metropolitan government encouraged a diversification in the crops produced. Afterwards, in 1808 the opening of trade and the transmigration of the Portuguese court increased the economy of South-Central Brazil. Thus, a growing number of slaves flowed into Brazilian ports, resulting in a greater Africanization of the slave population. Some treaties were signed with England to restrict this trade, but it did not prevent a large number of slaves being sent from Africa to the cities and fields of Brazil. The groups were characterized by a strong disproportion among the sexes, a factor preventing their natural reproduction. The growth of the slave population was very dependent on the slave trade from Africa (CONRAD, 1985, p. 66-117; MAMIGONIAN, 2017).

Dated 1821, the anonymous author of a letter to a *compadre* in Lisbon did not propose any particular reforms, but rather dealt with themes that were very pertinent to the debate on slavery and slave traffic. Opposed to the permanence of the court in Rio de Janeiro, the author referred, even indirectly, to the theme of dependency between colony and metropole. If the court remained in Rio, Portugal would no longer be a "truly independent kingdom." The anonymous writer was still unhappy

with the king remaining in lands submitted to the “fiery and unhealthy climate, Brazil is now reduced to a few hordes of blacks, caught on the coasts of Africa, unique and only able to put up with the scorching rays from a red-hot area.” According to his testimony, it was better to establish the court in a land of white people, of civilized peoples “than in lands of monkeys, blacks, and serpents” (CARTA, 1821, p. 15-16).

In 1822, perhaps after independence, this letter received a response from a likewise anonymous Brazilian. Contesting his *Compadre* in Lisbon, the new letter highlighted the existence in Brazilian lands of “many whites without any other mixture of blood, other than Portuguese, or born in Europe or in Brazil.” There the whites built cities, controlled the ecclesiastic and public posts, trade, and property. Blacks did not form any state, they lived dispersed in the houses and plantations of their masters or in *quilombos* (JUSTA RETRIBUIÇÃO, 1822, p. 21-22).

At the same time, the Councilor of His Majesty and Brazilian José Severino Maciel da Costa positioned himself against slavery in principle. He considered Brazil a power, although one still in its infancy. The new kingdom had the size to be one of the largest empires on earth (COSTA, 1821, p. 6). However, its system of labor prevented its victories, since slavery encouraged a perpetual war between men and paralyzed industry. A heterogenous population thus multiplied, since the servile condition led to enmity between slaves and free (COSTA, 1821, p. 7).

Next, Maciel Costa mentioned the English newspapers and concerning news that “total abolition in Brazil is very close.” Contrary to the abolitionist preamble, he put himself alongside property owners, incapable of replacing slaves with free labor. He then began to defend slavery and the slave trade, although it was contrary to humanity. Slave traffic was not as horrible as its antagonists stated. Barbarity in Africa was a convincing argument to rescue this population and bring it to the Americas. Incendiary authors, such as Abbé Raynal, encouraged inexperienced young men against slavery. In fact, the greatest defenders of abolition, the English, intended to colonize Africa. Its humanitarian causes were of little importance when the English government sought markets there for its industry (COSTA, 1821, p. 13-17).

However, once again, during the report Costa denounced the evil of slavery and above all the entrance of blacks to Brazil. His arguments sought to preserve the security and prosperity of the state, sometimes alerting to the evils caused by social inequalities, sometimes to the racial inferiority of blacks. For Maciel Costa, the real population did not consist “of herds of black slaves, barbarians by birth, education, and genre of life, without a civil person, without property, without interests or social relations, led by fear of punishment” (COSTA, 1821, p. 19). For this reason, slaves were dangerous and could not form the large majority of individuals of a “civilized nation.” With the intense traffic of slaves, it was asked: “What will we do with this heterogenous majority of the population, incompatible with the whites, this previously declared enemy?” (COSTA, 1821, p. 23). Its rise led to the total bastardization of the “beautiful race of Portuguese men, confused with the immense Africans.” With the increased number of slaves in the population, Costa questioned where, shortly, Brazil would be confused with Africa (COSTA, 1821, p. 25-59).

In the 1820s, the Portuguese doctor Francisco Soares Franco dealt with this theme in depth and preached unity as a solution to reconstruct the Portuguese kingdom and to forge the nation. In principle, he proposed to particularly reduce the number of blacks in the old colony, attack slave traffic, and slavery, and to reduce the diversity of castes existing in Brazil (FRANCO, 1821, 4º caderno, p. 5). With these reforms the white population would become a majority in the Portuguese dominions in the Americas, since they would encourage marriage between whites and the European immigration.

For this generation of Luso-Brazilians, slavery made labor vile, as it hindered agricultural prosperity and the flourishing of industry. Like the economy, civilization, morality, the educated, and the young were impregnated by immorality (ROCHA, 2000). Based in Brazil, the Portuguese immigrants at times were diverted to the military and prevented from prospering. They met the troops charged with countering the internal enemy, as the Portuguese Antônio José Gonçalves wrote: “And what gigantic strength is it not necessary even for this free part of

the nation to form a barrier capable of opposing this innumerable mass of slaves, or internal enemies” (CHAVES, 1978, p. 62). Soares Franco and Gonçalves Chaves considered slavery to be against the liberty of economy and governability.

The strengthening of the white caste was the condition to further the happiness of the nation. A state’s prosperity depended on the harmony of its peoples, since “A people composed of different peoples is not rigorously a nation” (FRANCO, 1821, 4º caderno, p. 5). Mixing was the cause of an “exclusive pride and a decided annoyance between the various races.” Racial mixing caused mutual distrust, robbery, murders, and all sorts of crime. The coexistence of races produced disturbances which made the conservation of good order impracticable. The freedom of some and the slavery of others caused hatred. Black men between evildoers, perfidious, and increased vertiginously, since it was “necessary to continually get, at great expense, new slaves from Africa who could fill the continually loss of this strange settlement” (FRANCO, 1821, 4º caderno, p. 7).

As Soares Franco clearly expressed, color was associated with fear, barbarity, and the impossibility of assimilation. The “inferior nature” of blacks threatened the predominance of the white caste and the civility (whitening) of the Indians. The mixing of whites and blacks, and Indians and blacks, was a setback, a threat to the political stability of Brazil and the union with Portugal. Mixing was thus a potent instrument for the establishment of a single caste in Brazil, but in this mixture there could not predominate black blood. In fact, tolerance of *mestiços* was a highly racist strategy designed to extinguish the black race and continually whiten the population of Brazil. To form a single race, the gradual reduction of blacks was a veiled or explicit plan in the discourse of some Cuban and Brazilian abolitionists.

By encouraging the modernization of agriculture and industry, Soares Franco intended to make the union between Brazil and Portugal feasible based on similar uses and customs. Certainly, his view of blacks, the disorderly increase of slaves, and the interest in strengthening the nation definitely contributed to the formation of his plans to encourage the

union between Brazil and Portugal. Threatened by a slave revolt, the most prosperous part of the Empire could not consolidate the link between the two sides of the Atlantic (FRANCO, 1821, 4º caderno, p. 14-25).

Antônio de Oliveira, a *Comendador* and councilor to His Majesty, was from São Paulo and dedicated a memorial to the constitutional emperor of Brazil to advise him of the potentials of the land and evils of slavery. However, he also stated that he had initially offered his writings to D. João in 1810, but only published his book after independence. Preceding the writings of Maciel Costa and Soares Franco by ten years, his analysis is simpler in defending the end of slavery and encouraging European colonization. After describing the nature and the wealth of the captaincy of São Paulo and Brazil, Oliveira turned to the population. He considered that slaves cost a lot and only worked with the use of force. For this reason, he encouraged abolition and manumission upon payment. At times enslaved men carried out noble functions that should have been carried out by whites (OLIVEIRA, 1822, p. 89-110). Clearly opposed to slaves, he asked: “How, in fact, will these professions that are only dignified for free men, being treated by slave hands, produce civility, science, good customs, and love for the *Patria*?” (OLIVEIRA, 1822, p. 91). In summary, his writings reinforce the incompatibility of inserting enslaved blacks in the *patria* and civilization.

After independence, in the General Constituent Assembly, Deputy Andrada e Silva listed the priorities for the political regeneration of the Brazilian nation. Initially, he defended the general civilization of the Indians and afterwards proposed a new law on the slave trade to allow for both its gradual abolition and to improve the condition of slaves. He considered these reforms urgent: “We are the only nation of European blood which still clearly and publicly trades Africans” (SILVA, 1925, p. 6).

He also defended that Indians should enjoy the same privileges as the “European race” (SILVA, 1825, p. 6). However, these benefits were illusory, since the natives suffered from extreme poverty, a lack of education, and faced constant vexations from whites. This deplorable state made them, according to Bonifácio, as abject and despicable as

blacks. For him, the fierce Indians composed an inconsiderate and to a great extent ungrateful and inhuman race. These characteristics were reversible, since Indians became 'civilized' when appropriate means and zeal were adopted in dealing with communities (SILVA, 1825, p. 5-6). Although he did not defend the transformation of Indians into whites, Andrada e Silva believed in their civility and encouraged mixing as a strategy to increase the population of Brazil (SILVA, 2000, p. 47-61).

In 1825, Deputy Andrada e Silva sought to contest the reasons alleged by "despotic rulers" to bring their victims from Africa. To alleviate the accursed slave traffic, slaveholders defended themselves and asserted that this trade was moved by charity and Christian duty, to present enslaved men with the light of the gospels. Africans changed climate, from a burning and horrible country to a sweet, fertile, and mild one. They were freed from death, because in Africa criminals and prisoners of war were executed. According to the deputy, these reasons were unfounded and actually their masters in Brazil tyrannized them and reduced them to "to brutish animals." Owners and slaves propagated immorality and encouraged indolence and vice. Slavery was not only harmful to blacks, it contaminated everyone, in other words, Deputy Bonifácio introduced a controversy dealt with little by the first reformers (SILVA, 1825).

Bahian, with a degree in maths, and a Brigadier in the army, José Eloy Pessoa da Silva followed the same reasoning by asserting that the goods coming from slave labor were nullified when compared to those produced by free men (AZEVEDO, 1987, p. 42-43). Alien to the public interest, slaves were always in a domestic war with the free population. Like Bonifácio, Silva believed that slaves were "people who when it is necessary to defend honor, property, and life, are the most terrible enemy existing domiciled with free family." Slavery caused both immorality and poverty. Enslaved men offered on a daily basis bad examples of their vices coming from coercion and violence. It was thus very easy for Brazilian youth to satisfy their "disordered passions, pride, and whims" (Silva, 1826, p. 14-15).

Two themes also concerned the deputy and the mathematician. First, they mentioned the difficulty in absorbing small landholders in

a slaveholding society – small landowners had to face the competition of the latifundios. For Bonifácio, this population, a large part white or mixed, with the help of the government could occupy the land unsuited for large-scale agriculture, plots of land around cities and towns of *vilas* which produced food for urban supply (SILVA, 1825, p. 19). Next, the deputy warned that slavery could not be suddenly abolished. To avoid prejudice to society, emancipation had to be gradual and first transform slaves into men worthy of freedom (SILVA, 1825, p. 24).

The gradual emancipation of slaves was also a theme not often dealt with by reformers, either the first or the later ones, as shown in the next section. In fact, the mathematician defended the suspension of slave traffic and slavery and innovated by considering as a solution the encouragement of the colonization of Europeans and Africans from the African Coast, both with free workers (SILVA, 1826, p. 19-23). Neither saw the black population as an obstacle to the formation of the Brazilian nation. Unlike other abolitionists, they fought against slavery and did not exclude blacks from being part of the Brazilian people. In the Commission for the Constitution of Brazil, Deputy Silva Lisboa and the majority of deputies considered all freedmen, including Africans, as Brazilian citizens. However, in the constitution granted in 1824, there was a more conservative version, since only freed people born in Brazil deserved Brazilian citizenship (MAMIGONIAN, 2017, p. 712-713).

In summary, initially evident among the first reformers was the separation between metropolitans and those from overseas territories. The former defended the abolition of the slave traffic and slavery as a strategy keep the empire united. Although the theme of captivity was not on the agenda of D. Rodrigo's writings, his concern was to maintain the connections between the different parts of the monarchy. In more explicit manner, the Spanish and Portuguese, such as Soares Franco, Gonçalves Chaves, Bishop Espada, Father Varela, and Deputy Argüelles defended both the suspension of slave traffic and the reduction of the use of slave labor. They denounced slavery as contrary to political and economic liberty. Many saw it as an obstacle to the formation of the nation.

In defense of slavery and slave traffic, were the Creoles Arango y Parreño and Fr. O’Gavan and the Luso-Brazilian Azeredo Coutinho, who supported the increase in the agricultural slave areas to enrich the overseas elites. This group did not consider the increase of enslaved men as an obstacle to the union between metropole and colonies. To the contrary, the increase in agriculture activated the economic links between the parts of the Empire. There was thus an aversion of Europeans to slavery and the defense of slave interests on the part of Brazilian and Spanish colonists. This division was not, however, so clear, since colonists could be abolitionists and, at the same time, perceive the importance of slavery and the contribution of blacks to the colonial economy.

The Luso-Brazilians Andrada e Silva, Maciel Costa, and José Eloy Silva took positions outside this dichotomy, since they recognized the importance of slavery and slave traffic for the Luso-Brazilian economy, but also pointed to the ills of the Africanization of Brazil and the social inequalities produced by slavery. They sought alternatives to reform the Brazilian economy and society and face the challenges of integrating the African population in the new nation. It is also worth noting Antônio de Oliveira’s original proposal which defending both European colonization and the use of Africans as free labor, and thus disregarding the ills of the Africanization of Brazil.

FROM THE INDEPENDENCE OF SLAVES TO THE DANGER OF AFRICANIZATION (1830-1840)

In this context, the Brazilian economy was gradually linked to the international market. The expansion of agriculture and the increase in the demand of workers coincided with the 1831 Law, responsible for definitely abolishing the traffic of slaves. Reformers of the 1830s and 1840s tended to criticize the new law and demand the expansion of plantations to make the growth of agricultural production possible. In the following years, Brazilian elites came to defend slavery and slave traffic in Parliament and outside of it (PARRON, 2011, p. 43-44; MAMIGONIAN, 2017). However, in the Rio de Janeiro press many articles can be found

in defense of the abolition of slave traffic between 1822 and 1835, following the same directives as the 1831 law. The first articles published in defense of contraband were concentrated in the period between 1836 and 1850, when the planters demanded slaves and created political conditions in the press and in Parliament to tolerate the entrance of Africans into Brazil (Youssef, 2010, p. 275). The publication of books in defense of traffic, in other words, our object of analysis, began before this theme became the predominant in the press and Parliament.

In 1826, an anonymous work was published in defense of Brazil, the first to exempt slave trafficking from its horrors (PARRON, 2011, p. 64-71). In the following year, a similar discourse can be found in the words of Raimundo José da Cunha Matos who defended the exclusive right of Parliament to legislate on forced African labor. He then repudiated the treaties signed by D. João VI and the government of Britain in 1810 and 1815 and afterwards the 1826 treaty, who prohibited the slave trade in Brazil. In his perspective, slavery and slave traffic initially provided a labor force, but afterwards through the intermediation of manumission created Brazilian citizens and defenders of the *patria*. Cunha Matos also claimed that there were immense places where only blacks and brown people could survive. These rich settled spaces would be deserts, controlled by beasts and birds, if they could not count on “people of a black color, or mixed.” In favor of captivity, he also mentioned the fact that traffic freed Africans when they committed crimes punishable with death. Outside Africa, they not only escaped punitive murders, but they also adapted to the climate and worked intensely. “Notwithstanding the lack of freedom, the slave is a man like any of us: the government is responsible for treating these people with charity, so that we do not so many motives to deplore the misery of slaves” (SUSTENTAÇÃO, 1827, p. 3-7).

For Cunha Matos, the end of the slave traffic would cause a crisis in agriculture and further aggravate the demographic vacuum provoked by the departure of the Court from Brazil, as around 30,000 souls had returned to the old continent. European colonists were certainly an alternative and many received funding to come to Brazil. German

soldiers, wretches from the prisons of Hamburg, Lübeck, Bremen, and the Swiss colonies of Freiburg and other cantons, all benefited from incentives to immigration, but few were concerned with agriculture. They opted for the life of peddlers and did not adapt to the climate or to agricultural work. Former malefactors, German and Swiss colonists were bands of thieves, and in Rio de Janeiro “we were all the time exposed to being robbed” (SUSTENTAÇÃO, 1827, p. 14). The services of these colonists were irrelevant when compared to blacks and mixed people. The latter were worthy of praise, although the Brazilian *fidalgua* despised their contribution to the country, “since in the roots of their genealogical trees was a moor, a black, or a Jew” (SUSTENTAÇÃO, 1827, p. 8). In summary, the slaveholder refuted racism and the devaluation of slaves in Brazilian society.

Even though traffic was considered inhumane, politicians defended it in the name of national sovereignty, as an unavoidable alternative to maintain the economy of Brazil. For Tamis Parron, at that time, the defense of the slave trade did not constitute a policy of slavery, founded with the solid support of social and political sectors. In this sense, the Law of 7 November 1831 confirmed the prohibition of traffic and declared free all slaves who entered the country. The new legislation also established penalties for those involved in slave traffic. Finally, the abolitionist movement and slave resistance were strengthened by prohibition. However, illegal trafficking expanded enormously between 1830 and 1856, when 800,000 Africans entered Brazil. Until 1835, at the moment of the *Malês* Revolt in Bahia, slavery and the slave trade were still considered in a negative manner. Only in 1837 was legislation opposed to slave traffic definitely neutralized, when the policy of protecting property acquired by contraband was initiated. This norm and practice weakened the rights of recently arrived Africans, restricting these rights to free Africans (PARRON, 2011, p. 90-192; CONRAD, 1985, p. 66-117; MAMIGONIAN, 2017).

The *Malês* Revolt involved slaves and freed people in Bahia at the beginning of 1835. Its preparation was certainly closely connected to the political instability of the regency period, due to the economic

crisis and scarcity which impacted on the poor sectors in the city. Slaves and freed people planned a radical project to destroy white domination. Other plans involved the enslaving of whites and mulattos, the latter considered accomplices of the slave owners. The rebels intended to construct a “Bahia just of Africans” and were united by experience of captivity, by the adverse conditions experienced in Salvador and above all by racial discrimination (REIS, 1986). However, the events in Bahia did not make the reformers sensitive to the cruelty of slavery or revolutionary dangers. In the years to come, much ink would be spent in defense of slave traffic and the entrance of slaves to work in expanding agricultural areas.

In 1837, Domingos Alves Branco Moniz Barreto published his defense of slavery. He considered it absurd to deprive agriculture and mining of slave labor. The suspension of the slave trade would make the economy of the young nation inviable. However, he recognized the humanity of the Africans, since they “are not from a different mass from other men, but different in color” (BARRETO, 1837, p. 2). He exempted traffickers and slaveowners from the decision to enslave human being. The destiny of slaves was decided in Africa, since slavery originated in the punishment for crime practiced and judged there. Traffic freed them from death and gave them the chance to live better (BARRETO, 1837, p. 20).

Memória sobre o commercio dos escravos (1838), written by an anonymous author from Campos dos Goitacazes, started from the same principles to legitimate slavery and considered the wars in Africa as the origin of slavery (MARQUESE; PARRON, 2005). In fact, these people were not the only victims of the infamous trade. On the southern coasts of Spain, Italy, Sicily and Sardinia, those living there were surprised and captured, “bound and brought to the coasts of Africa, to be sold” (MEMORIA, 1838, p. 11-12). Next, he recognized that many took positions against slavery and in defense of the brilliant future they expected for Brazil. Its fertility, the extent of its lands, and its geographic position gave it many advantages. However, its population was not proportional to its territory. Thus, when commerce was proportional to its fertility,

when “European industry introduces arts and trade and competent machinery to support and make our work progress, then I say that this trade should be abolished” (MEMORIA, 1838, p. 13).

In the middle of debates about slavery in 1835 a posthumous letter was published from D. Pedro, the Duke of Bragança, to Brazilians. According to the editor its authenticity was suspect. Nevertheless, it is worth including here the reflections of the supposed first monarch of Brazil. Among many political themes, the duke warned about the damage caused by slavery, its attack on rights and dignity, “but its consequences are less harmful to those who suffer captivity than to the nation whose legislation allows slavery.” However, he asserted that the plague could not be quickly remedied. Only when free labor was cheaper than slave labor would slavery end itself. The Brazilian government should thus create the conditions for this transformation to occur (CARTA POSTHUMA, 1835, p. 11).

In Rio de Janeiro, *Sociedade Defensora da Liberdade e Independência Nacional* (Society in Defense of Liberty and National Independence) called on its supporters to reflect on traffic, slavery, and its noxious influence on society. Accepting the challenge, the doctor in Mathematical Sciences, Frederico Leopoldo Cezar Burlamaque, wrote an analytical memorial about the theme, influenced by Charles Comte. He considered slavery immoral, an impediment for the propagation of civility, and the multiplication of a free and homogenous population. The trade of enslaved men increased the evils, their origin was in the system of slavery (BURLAMAQUE, 1837, p. 3-6; AZEVEDO, 1987, p. 43). Slavery obliged the elite to conduct this “dark policy,” infinitely influence the entrance of Africans and “form a mixed People, without a spirit of nationality, without civilization.” In his view, the introduction of slaves and the reduced entrance of white immigrants was a deliberate policy of the metropole since the beginning of colonization. They conceived this so that “their colonies would be little enlightened, without industry, a mixture of enemy races” (BURLAMAQUE, 1837, p. 3, p. 18).

In a slaveholding society, where some men rested and the others worked hard, idleness, vices, and exploitation reigned. Violence was a

weapon of the “dominant class,” which maintained its security, resorting to torments and the imbrutement of the “dominated race.” However, “barbarous customs” spread, with murders, poisoning, and all types of ills multiplying, and affecting the country divided into enemy races:

An association will never form a homogenous Nation; but a heterogenous mixture of individuals strange to each other, always enemies, alternatively oppressors and oppressed, full of prejudice, and always ready to use weapons (BURLAMAQUE, 1837, p. 20).

He thus argued that slavery was the greatest calamity for the nation, since it deprived slave owners more than slaves, destroying their moral principles. A nation thus composed would make a just and impartial government inviable. Due to the conflicts in captivity, the nation would remain fragmented and would become incapable of being independent from other others, in other words it would “make this Nation absolutely dependent on other Nations” (BURLAMAQUE, 1837, p. 22).

Burlamaque thus defended a very original argument for the Brazilian debate. In principle, he saw the introduction of slaves as a strategy of the metropolises to prevent the formation of homogenous and strong nations. Social conflicts, inherent to slave holding society, disputes between slave owners and slaves, made their autonomy unfeasible and created ties of dependence with other nations. He also analyzed a recurrent theme since the end of the eighteenth century, when the impossibility of forming nations composed of enemy races was discussed (FRADERA, 2018, p. 1-52; CHIARAMONTE, 2004, p. 27-57). He did not propose only abolition, but a new destination for the “liberated race,” since co-existence between the “dominant race” and the “liberated race” would not be convenient. After abolition, the executive government should establish “in any place in Africa, a colony in imitation of those that the Americans have in the North, making sufficient funds available to purchase the place” (BURLAMAQUE, 1837, p. 95). It is also worth mentioning that in this favorable context for the intensification of traffic, even

if illegal, Burlamaque's writing did not raise greater awareness among the Brazilian elites. In fact, his ideas had many affinities with the Cuban debate raised by Antonio Saco, as we will see below.

After the failure of the project of union between Portugal and Brazil, the debate about the nation almost disappeared from our universe of analysis, with Burlamaque's work being a notable exception, but among Cuban reformers the theme returned with denunciations of the Africanization of the island. Cubans came to defend European colonization when they perceived that slave traffic was altering the equilibrium between whites and Afro-descendants. There the treaty for the abolition of the traffic of slaves, signed with the United Kingdom on 28 June 1835, strongly determined the abolition of this trade. However, as we will see, La Sagra and Saco became suspicious of the census and denounced the increase in the black population. Reformers described the possible dangers caused by the increase in the Afro-descendant population. They warned about possible rebellions and encouraged the immigration of Europeans, as a form of attenuating the tendency towards Africanization (NARANJO OROVIO, 2004, p. 84-125; PIQUERAS, 2016, p. 112-125). The urgency of reform was even greater when the *Conspiración de La Escalera* and the insurgencies between 1841 and 1844 occurred (PAQUETTE, 1988).

In May 1832, the greater defender of slave traffic Arango y Parreño wrote a representation to the king about the imminent abolition of the trade of human beings. To get around the lack of labor, he considered using opportune measures, without much fanfare, and included the increase of the white population, the concentration of colonists in the city and slaves in the countryside, improvements in the living conditions of slaves, an encouragement of slave owners to increase their number of slaves through natural reproduction, and the establishment of a system of gradual manumission. The effective abolition of traffic was inevitable, since Cuba was in a shameful situation of being the only region to continue their terrible trade (ARANGO Y PARREÑO, 1888, p. 651; GOMARIZ, 2004, p. 45-61). The French signed a treaty with England to fight slave traffic in Martinique and Guadalupe and

suspended all the laws which disparaged people of color. Under English pressure, the government of Brazil also prohibited this trade. Arango was also concerned with the differences of color, as potentially capable of provoking popular revolts. For this, he deemed it necessary to create colonies in remote areas, peopled by colonists brought directly from Europe (ARANGO Y PARREÑO, 1888, p. 654). Finally, for Arango, the isolation of the settlement was strategic for erasing social classifications based on color. Strangely, he positioned himself as if racism was a phenomenon unknown in Europe.

Opportune remedies are described in detail in a French memorial on the abolition of slave traffic, translated by Arango and sent to the Spanish king. Due to the limits of this article, I will only analyze part of the French memorial, entitled “Borrar o destruir la preocupación del color o de las castas” (ARANGO Y PARREÑO, 1888, p. 713-722). According to the author, colonial slavery originated in a commercial practice. Enslaved men were not defeated in war but purchased. This made a lot of difference, since the race which suffered from this practice was considered by freemen as a despicable commodity. As a result, there were not many resources for slaves to escape from degradation, since this was engraved on their faces. This contempt originated from slavery, but afterwards became an accident of color, the fatal development of birth.

In the French colonies, this defect not only affected slaves, but also “people of color.” During the eighteenth century, French laws punished marriages between whites, blacks, and mulattos. In 1764 and 1765, edicts determined that people of color were prohibited from exercising public positions. The functions could only be exercised by people with probity, absent in people of color, with vile birth. Even after the revolt in Haiti, French colonial legislation consolidated social exclusion based on color, and many free and freed people returned to captivity because they could not present documents.

Afterwards, the memorial sees the French system as absurd and defended the strengthening of an *intermediate class* between whites and blacks. In a hot climate, the French from the Rhone and the Loire

would certainly change color and customs. “In the natural order of things, the race which establishes things in another region will become mixed and confused with the population found there, whether indigenous or other kind (...) far from losing, it will win in this mix”³ (ARANGO Y PARREÑO, 1888, p. 718). With these teachings, according to the memorial, France would not have lost Saint Domingue, since it had been contempt and the mortifications against people of color which had triggered the revolt. Finally, the colonial government had to encourage union between whites and Afro-descendants, as well as improving the living conditions of slaves (ARANGO Y PARREÑO, 1888, p. 713-722).

In the 1832 representation, Arango told the king of the problems between whites and blacks and the origin of slave rebellion. The old defender of slave traffic appeared to agree with the argument of the Frenchman so much that he had it translated and sent to the king as teachings to be followed in Cuba. The incentive for the formation of an intermediary class at the time was an alternative policy to slavery. According to Gomariz, by recognizing the importance of abolishing traffic, Arango defended the interests of the oligarchy. He recognized the pressure against traffic, the increase in the price of slaves, and the concern in maintaining the competitiveness of Cuba in the global market. For this, elites had to adopt a system of production based on free waged labor and new technologies which required specialized labor. However, the metropole defended the elevated percentage of Africans to neutralize the independence of white creoles (GOMARIZ, 2004, p. 46-57).

Arango defended the gradual abolition of slave traffic, but unlike the other writers he was not an abolitionist. In general, abolitionists fought traffic and slavery as a strategy to form the nation and/or reduce social conflicts. According to Piqueras, nothing was stranger to Arango’s thought than abolishing slavery. He convinced himself of the

3 Original source: “Además, esta en la orden natural de las cosas que la raza que va a establecerse en otro país se mezcle y confunda con la población que allí encuentre, sea indígena o de otra especie (...) lejos de perder, va a ganarse en esa mezcla”.

limits of the capture of slaves and indicated alternatives to this trade (PIQUERAS, 2016, p. 122). In addition, he also indicated the benefits of the formation of an intermediary class, formed by *mestiços* and free Afro-descendants, capable of gradually replacing slaves. He also took advantage of a “fortuitous path,” promoting the whitening of blacks and the suppression of memories of slavery:

Nature itself indicates to us the easiest and safest path to follow. It shows us that the color black cedes to the white, and which disappears, if the repetition of both races is repeated and then we observe the evident inclination which the fruits of these mixings have for white people. Let us take advantage of this fortuitous path.⁴ (ARANGO Y PARREÑO, 1888, p. 376)

Encouraging the immigration of whites into Cuba was linked both with the development of another type of agriculture and the strategy aimed at countering Africanization. Whitening was not only racial, but also cultural and tried to avoid the catastrophe which had affected Saint Domingue. The effective growth of white immigration occurred from the 1840s onwards, activated by economic growth, the abolition of slave traffic in 1835, and help for colonization as a form of attenuating the end of slave trade. Whites did not only act in agriculture, but also developed commerce, protecting the island against pirates and rebels from Haiti. There was also the projects aimed at encouraging whites to produce food for the internal market (NARANJO OROVIO, 2004, p. 97-103).

The Iberian naturalist Ramón de La Sagra defended diversified rural industry, with new crops and technological procedures. He pointed out many obstacles to these reforms, such as the unproductivity

4 Original source: “La Naturaleza misma nos indica el más fácil y más seguro rumbo que hay que seguir esto. Ella nos muestra que el color negro cede al blanco, y que desaparece, si se repite las mezclas de ambas razas y entonces también observamos la inclinación decidida que los frutos de esas mezclas tienen a la gente blanca. Ensanchemos, pues, tan venturosa senda”.

of slaves. As a solution, he indicated the introduction of wage labor, the implementation of white colonization, and the transformation of large plantations into small agrarian properties, “In the chapter Agriculture, we will indicate the pernicious influence of slavery, opposing the rational progress of agronomical practices and preventing the introduction of healthy and proven principles of science”⁵ (SAGRA, 1842, p. 25). According to the tables presented by La Sagra in 1841, official data indicated the increase of the white and slave population which coincides with the expansion of crops (SAGRA, 1842, p. 147-163), however, the expansion of the slave population was contrary to the 1835 treaty for the abolition of slave traffic (PIQUERAS, 2016, p. 115).

A disciple of Felix Varela, the deputy in the Spanish Cortes, writer and politician José Antonio Saco had an enormous influence on debates about slavery in Cuba in the middle of the nineteenth century. He was openly anti-slavery and a defender of white colonization in Cuba. He preached the end of slave traffic as a condition for the maintenance of slaves and the gradual reduction of slavery. Only in this way would the doors be open for the entrance of white colonists: “they were open to whites, and with them, while we increase the number of our friends, we reduce that of our enemies”⁶ (SACO, 2001, p. 132).

Much ink was poured into his polemics, perhaps the most celebrated dealt with Cuban identity, fought with the aforementioned Ramón de La Sagra (OPATRNY, 2010; AGUILERA MANZANO, 2005). Saco still defended a new economy based on small landholders. White colonization was strategic to maintain both the levels of agricultural production and to reinforce the Hispanic culture of Cuba. The Creole intellectual considered that the maintenance of the slaveholding regime prolonged the political submission of the island. His other opponent, the

5 Original source: “En el capítulo Agricultura indicamos la influencia perniciosa que ejercía la esclavitud, oponiéndose al progreso racional de las prácticas agrónomas e imposibilitando la introducción de los sanos y comprobados principios de la ciencia”.

6 Original source: “quedan abiertas para los blancos, y con ellos, al paso que aumentaremos el número de nuestros amigos, disminuirémos el de nuestros enemigos”.

peninsular official Vázquez Queipo was knowledgeable about the Cuban economy and considered impossible the replacement of slaves by white colonists. For this he sought to demonstrate that slave labor was more profitable, since blacks were more robust, and the offer of slave labor was more abundant. It is worth highlighting that the polemic took place in the middle of the 1840s, when the Matanzas slave uprising shook Cuban society and intensified calls for white colonists (PIQUERAS, 2016, p. 115-122; ROLDÁN DE MONTAUD; GARCÍA GONZÁLEZ, 2007, p. 293-297).

In relation to this colonization, Queipo and Saco defended in principle its increase, but considered it prudent to regulate the relations of white journeymen with black women. Illegitimate unions were not be tolerated, since they increased the misery of the underprivileged classes and criminality. Although there was vigilance, Queipo asserted that white colonization fostered mixed casts and create a contingent a thousand times more dangerous than the slaves. He blamed *mestizaje* for the multiplication of mulattos, responsible for triggering the revolution in Haiti (ROLDÁN DE MONTAUD; GARCÍA GONZÁLEZ, 2007, p. 306-309). Saco disagreed about the rebellious potential of mulattos and considered the ties between black men and white women to be grave, since they reduced the white population. However, the counterpart, relations between white men and black women were beneficial since they promoted the whitening of the population (SACO, 1847, p. 40).

For Saco, *mestizaje* was part of the strategy to whiten the Cuban population, by transforming blacks into whites, through ties between white men and black or mulatto women. In fact, his writings appeared to encourage concubinage between blacks and whites and to disapprove ties between white women and blacks. These women had to preserve the purity of the white race. Encouraging *mestizaje* was part of a policy of the racial and cultural erasing of blacks in Cuban society. Finally, the encouragement of *mestizaje* was a racist and misogynous practice, although it was not along the same lines as used in Anglo-Saxon culture, in other words, the Cubans did not imitate “the intolerance and

apolitical conduct of the United State in North America”⁷ (SACO, 1847, p. 40). In his defense of Cuban nationality, Saco took a position not only against the Africanization of Cuba, but also against the interferences of Anglo-Saxon culture, inherent in the project of annexing Cuba to the United States (OPATRNY, 2010, p. 154-215).

In the 1840s, neither in Brazil nor Cuba did arguments frankly in favor of slavery fall into disuse, although the debate increasingly pointed to the suspension of the trade of enslaved people. In Madrid in 1841, Countess Mercedes de Merlin published a book in defense of slavery. There she repeated that slavery was “good” for humanity because it freed the blacks from war and unhuman slavery. Slave owners thus offered them the alternative: either “die eaten by their own or to remain slaves in a civilized place, their decision was not doubtful, they preferred slavery”⁸ (MERLIN, 1841, p. 6). She also wrote that the love of humanity introduced in America the seed of slavery which originated from the idea of charity (MERLIN, 1841, p. 12). Returning to Arango’s question, she highlighted the benevolence of Cubans, who were “sweet, but less arrogant with their slaves, treating them with the authority of the master”⁹ (MERLIN, 1841, p. 23). In addition to the paternal kindness of Cuban slave owners, free people of color enjoyed the guarantees and rights given to colonists, since they formed part of the militia and could even receive the rank of captain. For this reason they were happier and better favored than the mulattos de Saint Domingue. In summary, the countess defended that slavery was a choice of Africans who, attracted by the benevolence of Cuban slave owners preferred to leave their native lands.

In relation to the North American experience, the Countess praised honorable philanthropists and clergy for tirelessly caring for the

7 Original source: “la intolerante e impolítica conducta de los Estados Unidos de Norteamérica”.

8 Original source: “de morir comidos por los suyos, o de permanecer esclavos en un pueblo civilizado, su elección no es dudosa, preferirán la esclavitud”.

9 Original source: “dulces, sino menos altanero hacia sus esclavos, tratándolos con la autoridad de señor”.

separation between whites and blacks, above all when they tried to mix through marriage. She mentioned American attempts to return blacks to Africa (MERLIN, 1841, p. 84) and also analyzed a question that was crucial for all the reformers analyzed here, in other words, how to make the large scale plantations viable without slave labor. Brazil and Cuba had invested in slavery, but the issue was linked to social instability, the formation of a society divided between whites and Afro-descendants, between citizens and non-citizens.

In the writings of the reformers, the fear of revolts and the Africanization of Cuba explained to a large extent the harsh repression of blacks and mulattos involved in the *Conspiración de la Escalera* (1844). In fact, it was not considered as a slave rebellion, but rather a confabulation planned by the Creole black oligarchy and Spanish colonial authorities aimed at neutralizing white Creole abolitionists. It also sought to weaken the economic and social influence achieved by free blacks and mixed people. The repression was intended at the same time to undermine the plans to annex Cuba to the United States and to limit slave rebellion (BARCIA PAZ, 1999).

In the 1830s and 1840s, Cuba and Brazil expanded their economies, particularly their exports of sugar and coffee. Although the slave traffic was under attack, the arrival of slaves, whether in a legal or illegal manner, caused the expansion of slavery. Since the end of the eighteenth century, the abolitionists had pressed for the suspensive of slave traffic. They obtained some victories which collapsed due to the increased demand for sugar and coffee in the 1830s. In this context, the defenders of slavery reinforced the humanity of Africans, highlighting their rescue from lands devastated by wars and “cannibals.” The Americas were their “salvation” and slavery was thus “charity.” According to Cunha Matos, blacks were equal to whites, although they had lost their liberty (SUSTENTAÇÃO, 1827, p. 3-7). The cynical defense of slavery was recurrent among Cubans and Brazilians. Actually, their arguments differed little, equal in the “paternal treatment” given to enslaved men, although they were clearly racist. Brazilian and Cuban abolitionists emphasized the fear of rebellion and the Africanization of the Americas

and called on authorities to intensify European colonization as an alternative to the traffic of Africans. Similarly, both pro-slavery advocates and abolitionist used racist arguments both to legitimate slavery and to repudiate the increase in the black population and denounce the ills resulting from traffic and slavery.

CONCLUSION

Four principal reforms were identified above. The first sought to defend slavery and the ties between metropolises and colonies, proposals formulated by Cuban, Luso-Brazilians, and the Spanish countess between 1790 and 1840 (Arango, Azeredo Coutinho, O'Gavan, and Countess Merlin). The second proposal was in favor of the abolition of slaves and the nation, dating from 1820-1830, referring to the Portuguese and Brazilian nation (Soares Franco, Gonçalves Chaves, Antônio Oliveira, Andrada e Silva, D. Pedro I, and Burlamaque). Next a third reform was used to support slavery and insert Brazil more actively in international trade, plans drafted by Brazilians in defense of slavery, as a reaction to the prohibition of the slave trade (Cunha Matos, Monis Barreto, and the anonymous writer from Campos dos Goitacazes). Finally, the reformers preached the abolition of the traffic of slaves to placate rebellions and the Africanization of Cuba, plans meant to counter the increase of Afro-descendants in Cuba between the 1810s and 1840s (Espada, Varela, Arango, Saco, and La Sagra). However, there are ways these publications can be interpreted.

Sometimes the reformers used the words nation and race. Although these terms were intensely debated among the enlightened thinkers of England and France, no evidence is found that the reformers had more accurate readings of these themes. When dealing with slavery, they particularly centered on the economic and social spheres and analyzed other aspects in a superficial form. Nevertheless, two meanings can be identified for the term nation: in a political senses, the nation was the union of the peoples under the gladius of the monarch, as used by Arango and Souza Coutinho; in the political and ethnical

sense, unity was promoted both by the ruler and homogenous ethnicities and races, according to various abolitionists. The term race is used in a very polysemic manner, and in principle acted as a synonym for the group. But race could also be related to hereditary characteristics referring to physique, customs, and the moral particulars of a human group (CHIARAMONTE, 2004, p. 27-57; FREDRICKSON, 2002; APPLEBAUM, MACPHERSON, ROSENBLATT, 2003, p. 1-31). In summary, drawing on this documentary universe, the evidence is unfortunately too weak to deepen these analyses.

In any case, Cuban and Brazilian abolitionists used words such as “nation,” “patria,” “civilization,” “spirit of nationality,” “caste,” “race,” among others, to express the pernicious diversity of society. Thus, the slave trade and slavery, in other words, the increase of the Afro-descendent population, were frontally opposed to the idea of unity and social harmony. It is also worth noting that among the Cubans the “Cuban nation” was not mentioned, nation was a word much more recurrent among the Luso-Brazilians. Abolitionist reformers and non-reformist slaveholders constructed the idea of the nation in racial terms. The reduction of the slave and black population in Cuba and Brazil made feasible the construction of more homogenous societies, composed above all of whites. The project of the nation of the abolitionists was based on a unity and for this reason they repudiated traffic, slavery, the disproportional increase in “internal enemies” and defended European immigrants. Before and after 1830 abolitionist reformers “racialized” the debate to defend the political, cultural, and racial unity of society. The whitening of the population was based both on the disappearance of the black race through mixing and the destruction of the memory of slavery. The warning about racial diversity was linked above all to the fear of revolts and the loss of the Hispanic tradition in Cuba (AGUILERA MANZANO, 2005; OPATRYNY, 2010).

Before 1830, Brazilians and Cuban defended the increase of slave traffic and the enslaved population not only as an opportunity for enrichment, but also as a condition to tighten the linked between metropole and colonies and above all to insert the Spanish nation, as Azeredo

Coutinho and Arango wrote respectively. After 1830, Brazilian slaveholders did not view slavery as an obstacle to the unity of the national state. In fact, in this context, the theme of nation was not part of the defense of slave traffic and slavery among Brazilians. In the writings of slaveholders, the insertion of blacks as part of the population of Brazil was defended, although it was implicitly understood that there existed citizens and non-citizens, in other words, the Brazilian population was not homogenous. Or better, slaveholders did not think of the future Brazil as a homogenous society. The racial inclusion of blacks as free workers and slaves existed, but the limits of their rights as citizens were not discussed. Implicit in this discourse was the inferiority of blacks and their condition as workers, even after obtaining liberty and citizenship. In Cuba, Arango defended the existence of an “intermediary class,” between whites and slaves, composed of free *mestizos* and blacks who would gradually replace slaves. Thus, among slaveholders homogenous democratic societies were not planned.

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