

## **“Freedom’s Battle Once Begun”: The Role and Reaction of African Americans in the Emancipation of Cuba, 1853-1889**

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### **Abstract**

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*Emancipation in Cuba was a long multi-year, multi-phase, and complex process. Scholars often credit the work of European and white abolitionists in the United States for working towards Cuban emancipation. However, little attention is given to the roles of free African Americans in the endeavor, although primary sources abound exhibiting black contributions to Cuban emancipation between the years of 1853-1889.*

*From ordinary to extraordinary, African Americans from all walks of life advocated for freedom for their brethren of “the Forever Faithful Island.” Well-known abolitionists, such as Henry Highland Garnet, Frederick Douglass, and Frances Ellen Watkins Harper used their means, reputations, and spheres of influence to advance the cause. Moreover, it was a cause that ordinary African Americans supported through the Free-Produce and Emigration to Haiti Movements. This essay explores the work of Americans of African descent to exhibit their faithfulness to help gain freedom for the enslaved in Cuban.*

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### **Introduction**

The perception is that the British, Spanish, and white abolitionists in the United States worked towards emancipation in Cuba. However, little reference is given to the work of free blacks in the United States toward the emancipation of enslaved Cubans. A significant amount of scholarship exists on the relationship between the United States and Cuba, usually addressing the Cold War period. Historian Jules Benjamin acknowledges that the two nations have a longer intertwined history and sees merit in including the Colonial period in the discourse in *The United States and the Origins of the Cuban Revolution*. The emancipation period is well defined by Rebecca Scott, who receives deserved accolades for her work in *Slave Emancipation in Cuba: The Transition to Free Labor, 1860-1899*, which delineates the varying degrees of freedom in the multi-year emancipation process in Cuba. While Scott recognizes the work of abolitionists from Great Britain, France, Spain, and the U.S., she neglects the influence of African Americans, in particular. Susan Brock, editor of *Between Race and Empire: African Americans and Cubans before the Cuban Revolution*, draws parallels between the struggle for freedom of African Americans and blacks in Cuba and recognizes the complexities of the relationship between the two, and further, the difficulty in the lack of scholarship. Prior to her publication, she anticipated that “the centering of two peoples not in state power across nation-state boundaries [and] . . . unraveling the threads of this connected saga would be difficult [because of the] layers of racism and imperialism [that] marginalized both sets of peoples, not only in their societies, and in the region, but also in their academies.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Lisa Brock, ed. *Between Race and Empire: African Americans and Cubans before the Cuban Revolution* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998), 1.

While her anthology examines the relationship between Cuba and the United States from different perspectives, it focuses on a later time period than the emancipation period, extends well into the 20th century, and provides little insight into the crucial period leading up to the independence revolution. Nonetheless, while the scholarship is void, records do, indeed, indicate a concerted effort by a small group of African Americans who conducted campaigns to escalate freedom for black slaves of the “Forever Faithful Island.” Often they campaigned alongside white abolitionists toward their goals. But at times they converged as an independent group of black abolitionists to seek solutions to aid their kin in gaining freedom from slavery. Four major issues dominated their emancipation discourse: annexation of Cuba by the United States; the illegal slave trade to Cuba conducted by Americans; direct action by blacks through the Free Produce and Haitian Emigration Movements; and indirect actions through the black press, organizations, conferences, and political influence to achieve emancipation. This paper will examine the views and reactions of blacks on these major issues and their roles in each to achieve freedom for their brothers and sisters in Cuba.

### **Annexation of Cuba**

The political leaders of the United States maintained a history of contemplating the virtues of annexing Cuba. Just 100 miles off the coast of Florida, Cuba warranted much interest beginning with U.S. presidents as early as Thomas Jefferson. Some leaders believed in the principle of the “political-geographical law of gravity,”<sup>2</sup> which contends that an island that lies in close proximity to the border of a continent, tends to become politically subordinate to the most powerful leader of the mainland neighbor. To the leaders of the growing United States, Cuba’s strategic location in the midst of Caribbean and Gulf trade routes had the potential to interfere with its transnational trade endeavors. Further apprehension of the possibility of Great Britain or France invading Cuba resulted in the establishment of the 1823 Monroe Doctrine and repeated overtures to purchase Cuba from Spain. After the American Civil War, the U.S. and Cuba developed a strong commodities-based relationship. Of those commodities, sugar took the lead; the U.S. became Cuba’s major importer of sugar. Sugar cultivation, however, required a large workforce of enslaved Africans in order to be profitable. For this reason, Cuba aggressively defended its pro-slavery stance.

Author D.S. Whittlesey argues that the oligarchy of the South was concerned with this slave population for two primary reasons: First, if the island of Cuba was taken over by the British or French, who had ended imperial slavery amongst themselves years earlier, this would result in the emancipation of the Cuban slaves. The South dreaded the prospect of the emancipation of the Cuban slaves because it would no longer make it worthy of annexation. Second, the independence of Cuba would result in its “Africanization,” that is, it would become a Negro state without slave labor.<sup>3</sup>

The Southern slave-holding planters recognized the merits of the sugar industry and found the idea of annexing Cuba to add to the arsenal of slave-holding states very attractive. In fact, the foremost agenda item in the formative years of the secret society that promoted secession, the Knights of the Golden Circle (KGC), was to annex Cuba, Mexico, Nicaragua, Central America and the remainder of the Caribbean. Inspired by the 19th century notion of Manifest Destiny—the divine right of the United States to expand throughout the North American continent and gain as much land and resources as possible, even if it meant the extermination of the indigenous population—the Knights saw the acquisition of Cuba as a solution to their losses in the number of slave states in the growing Union. The KGC were an outgrowth of the Southern Rights Clubs, secret juntas that believed the Constitution of the United States was a tyrannical document because it outlawed the slave-trade.

Convincing the powers at the helm to annex Cuba, however, proved no easy task and sometimes came at great peril. From the political front, the KGC supported congressional representatives to ensure that their interests were met in Washington. The objective of these representatives was to inflame the U.S. Government against imperial powers, thereby inciting wars that could potentially result in additional slave-holding states upon U.S. victory—such was the case with the Mexican-American War.

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<sup>2</sup> D.S. Whittlesey, *Geographic Factors in the Relations of the United States and Cuba*, *Geographic Review*, 12, no. 2 (April 1922), 245, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/208739>, accessed February 25, 2014.

<sup>3</sup> D.S. Whittlesey, “Geographic Factors in the Relations of the United States and Cuba,” *Geographical Review* 12, no. 2 (April 1922): 245, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/208739>, (accessed February 25, 2014).

From the back door, the KGC embarked on several filibustering expeditions into Cuba designed to incite a war between the U.S. and Spain, thus upon U.S. victory ending with the gain of Cuba as a slave-holding financial advantage. This more perilous approach often resulted in capture of the filibusters.<sup>4</sup>

African Americans and the abolitionist press were not ignorant to these schemes and viewpoints; consequently the abolitionist press made its readers, predominantly African American, aware of the Southern sentiment and plots to increase slavery. Abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison reported in his March 15, 1859 edition of *The Liberator* about the Tammany Hall Meeting in Boston that garnered cheers by its attendants to take Cuba and encourage filibustering schemes. Characterizing the rhetoric at this meeting as “satanic sentiments,”<sup>5</sup> *The Liberator* served to keep its readers abreast of the pro-slavery activity across the states in hopes to encourage more Americans to join the abolitionist cause. *The National Era*, another abolitionist paper that was published in the District of Columbia, concerned itself with current events, Congressional Proceedings, and general politics. It also served largely as a source for open and thorough discussion of the looming question of slavery and gave advice about the responsibilities of U.S. citizens in relation to it. *The Era* was the first publication to run Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* as a serial. It prided itself in encouraging a gradualist point of view towards emancipation. Its June 22, 1854 issue reported on the comments by Representative Singleton of Mississippi to argue for the immediate annexation of Cuba before Spain, Britain, or France were to set the slaves free rendering Cuba useless to the pro-slavery cause. On the other hand, the more radical publication from Canada, *The Provincial Freeman*, spoke openly about pro-slavery agendas and called for political agitation from free blacks to speak out and demand appropriate action from their representatives. *The Provincial* was co-founded and edited by Samuel A Ward and Mary Ann Shadd Carey. It was published in what is now Ontario, Canada, where a large number of fugitive slaves from the United States had settled into communities. Distributed weekly, it encouraged self-reliance, independence, and transformation of free blacks into model citizens. It had a large readership in the United States as well as Canada. Carey was the first black North American female editor and publisher. After her husband’s death in 1860, she moved to Washington, D.C. and in 1870 became the first black woman lawyer in the United States. The views of *The Provincial* were considered radical by some abolitionists, but Shadd feared no retribution.

The American Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, of which many blacks belonged, including radical Henry Highland Garnet, published its annual report which chronicled both proslavery and anti-slavery activity, legislation, and legal cases throughout the states. Primarily Quakers, this publication kept its readers abreast of the important issues at home and abroad, including the debates on annexation of Cuba and Mexico, free produce, colonization, illegal slave trade, and immediate emancipation. In an 1877 speech representing the American Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, Garnet pronounced his theory on why slavery still existed in Cuba:

. . . We well know that the anti-slavery men and women made a mistake when they hastily laid down their arms. They should have resisted slavery wherever it existed on the face of the earth. If the veteran abolitionists of the United States had not mustered themselves out of service, I believe that there would not now have been a single slave in the Island of Cuba. We sympathize with the patriot of Cuba, not simply because they are Republicans, but because their triumph will be the destruction of slavery in that land. All Europe now frowns on Spain, because of their attitude toward human bondage. We must take our place on the broad platform of universal human rights, and plead for the brotherhood of the entire race. With such a spirit and such principles, we need have no fear of failure.<sup>6</sup>

Garnet would agitate and advocate for Cuban emancipation for years to come.

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<sup>4</sup> *An Authentic Exposition of the “K.G.C.” “Knights of the Golden Circle;” or A History of Secession from 1834 to 1861* by A Member of the Order. Indianapolis: C.O. Perrine Publisher, 1861. <http://ebooks.library.cornell.edu/cgi/t/text/pagevieweridx?c=mayantislaavery;cc=mayantislaavery;q1=Knights%20of%20the%20Golden%20Circle;rgn=full%20text;view=image;seq=1;idno=35918903;didno=35918903>. (accessed April 30, 2014).

<sup>5</sup> William Lloyd Garrison, “Cuba Taken at Tammany Hall,” *The Liberator*, (Boston: March 25, 1859).

<sup>6</sup> Henry Highland Garnet, “A Protestant Against Cuban Slavery,” *The Christian Recorder*, November 8, 1877.

## The U.S. and the Secret Slave Trade of Africans to Cuba

Although the African slave-trade was banned in the U.S. in 1808, the illegal slave trade to Cuba and portions of the Americas continued—sometimes under clandestine operations and sometimes with complicity from local officials. According to the exposé of the Knights of the Golden Circle, one of the earliest efforts of the KGC was to outfit, man, and equip secret slavers “which were to cruise around the African coast and kidnap negroes whenever a good opportunity afforded. Between the years 1834 and 1840 it is presumed that at least six of these vessels were equipped and sent out.”<sup>7</sup> The slavers were often successful, but several ships were captured by the British Navy and turned over to the Cuban Government where the rescued slaves were classified as *emancipados*. But secret societies and militias were not the only organizations involved in the slave trade to Cuba.

Robert Trent Vinson explores the role of the New York City judiciary system’s complicity in the Atlantic slave-trade between 1857 and 1862, even after the Civil War had erupted. Vinson argues that the United States Circuit Court serving the New York southern district was one such guilty party, and in fact, New York City was one of the world’s leading slaving ports. Vinson further reveals that the Portuguese Company and other companies established themselves in lower Manhattan and specialized in capturing Africans from the Congo River region and transporting them to Cuba. His records reveal that the judiciary system rarely prosecuted accused slavers and allowed the slaving businesses to continue under their jurisdiction.<sup>8</sup> Similar cases were reported by many of the newspapers of black interest such as *The Liberator*, *The National Era*, *The Provincial Freeman*, *Frederick Douglass’s Paper*, and *the Christian Recorder*. Naturally, African Americans and their abolitionist allies intensified their vocal reactions and demanded more vigilance by their elected officials. Unfortunately the illegal slave trade to Cuba executed with assistance from pro-slavery Americans continued. Nonetheless, white and black abolitionists and their news outlets continued to sound the horn and demand a crackdown.

## Movements to Escalate Cuban Emancipation

While free African Americans saw the necessity of keeping its number informed of current events, legislation, and political actions concerning the emancipation of slavery through the black and abolitionist press, they also wanted to find and encourage more direct ways to affect the emancipation of enslaved Cubans. Two such movements were the Free-Produce Movement and the Haitian Emigration Movement. Many free blacks found the Free Produce Movement to be the most important personal response to advocate for emancipation in the U.S. and later considered it integral to the ending of slavery in Cuba. Blacks borrowed the idea of boycotting goods produced from slave labor first from Great Britain, then later from American anti-slavery societies led by Quakers. The name “free produce” indicates products, such as sugar, rum, cotton, rice, coffee, and tobacco that were manufactured with labor free from slavery. (For clarification, the produce was not free of charge.) As early as 1750, John Woolman urged his fellow Friends to reject goods produced from slave labor because it contradicted Quaker core principles and anti-slavery policies.

The scholarship on the Free Produce Movement is thin. Ruth Ketring Nuernburger discovered this to be the case and wrote *The Free Produce Movement: A Quaker Protest against Slavery* in 1942. Nuernburger asserts that the minimal success of the movement was due to several factors: the difficulty in obtaining raw materials; the stores that offered the products were faced with offering inferior products at higher prices, and the personal burden of paying higher prices for products. Yet there were still the stalwarts of the movement. Free Produce pamphlets were produced and distributed in the hundreds of thousands to influence consumers. Women were especially targeted because tea tables used a large portion of slave-grown sugar.

The Free Produce Movement reached across the Atlantic to the United States where proponents argued that striking the economic core of slavery’s existence was the only permanent way to terminate slavery’s appeal. Author of “Blood Stained Goods,” Julie Holcomb cites Quaker abolitionist Sarah Pugh: “The great mass of abolitionists need an ‘abstinence baptism.’”

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<sup>7</sup> Member of the Order, *An Authentic Exposition of the “K.G.C.”* (Indianapolis: C.O. Perrine Publisher, 1861), 6.

<sup>8</sup> Robert Trent Vinson, “The Law as Lawbreaker: The Promotion and Encouragement of the Atlantic Slave Trade by the New York Judiciary System, 1857-1862,” *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History*, 20, no. 2, July 1996.

Speaking at the third annual meeting of the American Free Produce Association, Pugh claimed many abolitionists were stained by the ‘taint of slavery’ through their continued consumption of goods produced by slave labor.”<sup>9</sup> Elizabeth Heyrick, another female abolitionist, argued for immediate, uncompensated abolition and contended that the first step was in abstaining from slave-produced goods. Women on both sides of the Atlantic supported her arguments. Abolitionist Lucretia Mott encouraged the adoption of abstinence in the American Anti-Slavery Society constitution and by-laws and organized free-produce societies.

However, some abolitionists such as William Lloyd Garrison withdrew support for the Free Produce Movement. Garrison thought the effort futile and openly mocked its precepts in his *Liberator* which had a wide influence. According to Nuermburger, some abolitionists developed a twisted view and contended that they were the very individuals entitled to the fruits of the sweat and toil of those whose freedom they sought. Nonetheless, there was a contingent of blacks who were committed to its precepts and considered it a personal moral issue; after all, how could they continue to be complicit to slavery by consuming the products that made slavery thrive.

Women and Black abolitionists, such as radical Henry Highland Garnet gave their support for the Free Produce Movement through the end of the Civil War. In 1850, Garnet embarked on a tour in Great Britain to encourage the support of the movement. He also worked on plans to establish a free-labor colony in Africa with American Quaker Benjamin Coates. Haiti became increasingly attractive as the centerpiece to develop a free-produce society. Prior to its revolution, Haiti was the largest supplier of the coveted commodity sugar. After Haiti’s demise, Cuba took its place in becoming the leading grower and exporter of sugar. The notion of making Haiti a leader in sugar production again, however, this time with free-labor, was promoted as a means to end slavery in all areas that produced sugar with slave labor, including Cuba. Richard Allen, anti-slavery activist in Philadelphia and co-founder of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, was a powerful supporter of the Free-Produce Movement and emigration to Haiti. His wife, Sarah, ran a free-produce store in Philadelphia and his son, John, emigrated to Haiti. Among others, the Allen family believed that a successful and renewed Haiti, minus slave labor, would create competition for slave societies, like Cuba’s, and convince slave owners everywhere that free-labor was far more profitable than slave labor. They were confident it would eventually result in the extinction of slavery.

Historian Carol Faulkner recognized the importance of the Free-Produce Movement, especially its appeal to women and African Americans. Her 2007 publication, “The Root of All Evil: Free Produce and Radical Antislavery, 1820-1860,” acknowledged that along with Henry Highland Garnet, other black abolitionists such as Frederick Douglass and Frances Ellen Watkins Harper encouraged commitment and adherence to boycotting slave-produced goods. Douglass carried advertisements for free labor stores in his *Frederick Douglass Paper*. His July 20, 1855 edition carried a particularly strong article imploring his readership to support free-produce stores. The article, by L. Clough, argues that “it is evidently wrong to pay the slaveholder for his plunder. . . our moral power depends on our consistency.”<sup>10</sup> Further, it contends that abstaining from slave-produced products “would be more effectual than all other peaceable measure . . .”<sup>11</sup> Taking a slightly different approach, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper often expressed her views through her influential poetry. Her poem, “Free Labor” is a subtle but powerful commentary on the subject.

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<sup>9</sup> Julie Holcomb, “Blood Stained Goods: The Transatlantic Boycott of Slave Labor,” The Ultimate History Project. <http://www.ultimatehistoryproject.com/blood-stained-goods.html>, (accessed March 4, 2014).

<sup>10</sup> L. Clough, “For Frederick Douglass’ Paper. Free Produce, It is Evidently Wrong,” *Frederick Douglass Paper*, July 20, 1855.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

I wear an easy garment,  
O'er it no toiling slave  
Wept tears of hopeless anguish,  
In his passage to the grave.  
And from its ample folds  
Shall rise no cry to God,  
Upon its warp and woof shall be  
No stain of tears and blood

From "Free Labor"  
Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, 1871<sup>12</sup>

Harper was a strong supporter of Cuban emancipation and independence. With continued attention focused towards Cuba's full independence, Harper recognized General Antonio Maceo efforts for the cause. After his death, and using her preferred form of protest, Harper penned the poem "Maceo" as homage to Cuban's fallen leader for freedom. Here is an excerpt:

Maceo dead! a thrill of sorrow  
Through our hearts in sadness ran  
When we felt in one sad hour  
That the world had lost a man.  
He had clasped unto his bosom  
The sad fortunes of his land --  
Held the cause for which he perished  
With a firm, unfaltering hand.  
On his lips the name of freedom  
Fainted with his latest breath.  
Cuba Libre was his watchword  
Passing through the gates of death. . .<sup>13</sup>

Harper traveled the circuit speaking and writing her anti-slavery views. Her popular writings influenced many to join the cause for freedom in Cuba.

Although the notion of the Free-Produce and Haiti Emigration Movements seemed viable to many supporters, opponents continually invoked fears from Haiti's infamous uprising and discouraged the development of an independent free black society. This did not stop those African Americans who were committed to their moral conscience to boycott the very items that fundamentally supported slavery. Many blacks retained and supported free-produce stores despite their low profit margin. They felt it was the least they could do.

### **Efforts of Organized Radicals**

As demonstrated in the Free-Produce Movement, the effort to escalate emancipation for Cuba was interracial. White and black radical abolitionists wrote and spoke on behalf of oppressed Cubans. Abolitionists Gerrit Smith and Henry Highland Garnet often worked together in the anti-slavery cause. Smith was a regular speaker on the abolitionist circuit. In 1873, he found the occasion of the annual celebration of U.S. independence, July 4th, to speak before a group in Syracuse, New York, to impress upon his listeners that as the U.S. celebrated freedom and Independence Day, it should bear in mind those who had not yet attained their freedom and independence. He titled his speech, "Let Cuba Rise" and the very argument that was used by pro-slavery Southerners to justify annexing Cuba, Smith used to justify helping to set Cuban's free: close proximity to the U.S.

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<sup>12</sup> Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, Quoted in Carol Faulkner "The Root of the Evil: Free Produce and Radical Antislavery, 1820-1860," *Journal of the Early Republic* 27, no. 3 (Fall 2007): 337-405, (accessed February 23, 2014).

<sup>13</sup> Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, "Maceo," *The Collected Works of Frances Ellen Watkins Harper* (BiblioBazaar, LLC, Reproductions, 2007).

Smith asserted that although Spain had nearly eradicated the Cuban people, the five years prior to 1873 proved to be the climax of Spanish oppression. The Spaniards had been allowed to fit out their ships in New York harbors in preparation for battle in Cuba. He questioned the laws that allowed this and admonished the American people to demand that the law be upheld concerning Cuba, and the Spaniards removed. Smith wanted the American people to demand the U.S. government to grant belligerent rights to the so-called Cuban insurgents and provide assistance in gaining their independence. He closed with a proclamation “the people must take the Cuban matter into our own hands.”<sup>14</sup> He was insistent upon solidarity and in considering Cubans our brothers. He called for atrocities committed in Cuba to be recognized as crimes against humanity and that all nations should offer their defense.

Perhaps Smith had been impelled to speak on behalf of Cuba after the December 13, 1872 meeting at Cooper Institute in New York City run by the Cuban Anti-Slavery Committee. Organized by a group of black men, Smith’s associate Henry Highland Garnet and Samuel Scottron led hundreds of African Americans, exiled Cubans, and a few other foreigners, gathered to hear Garnet speak about the slavery and insurgency in Cuba. Just a mere seven years prior, Africans in America had gained their freedom. This was precisely the reason the committee felt it imperative to engage in a campaign to extend the very freedom they enjoyed to their brethren in Cuba.

The Cuban Anti-Slavery Committee was an outgrowth of the 1869 National Convention of the Colored Men of America that was organized by the 1868 assembly of the National Equal Rights League. At the 1869 meeting, the committee advocated for asking the U.S. Congress to institute negotiations to annex Cuba. While this seemed like a change of heart, rather it was a change of strategy in reaction to the change in circumstances. No longer were the Southerners in force demanding the annexation of Cuba in order to make it a slave state, they had already lost the war and the associated causes of the Confederacy. These were free black men demanding annexation in order to free the slaves of Cuba. Now that the U.S. had abolished slavery across the land, if Cuba became a part of the U.S., then its slaves would immediately be emancipated too. The assembly acknowledged that they could not offer material assistance, but they could offer “public sentiment . . . and urge our government to acknowledge the belligerent rights of the patriots of Cuba.”<sup>15</sup> Granting belligerent rights would give the Cuban patriots a legal standing similar to that given to a government and would bring the law of international armed conflict into play on both sides.

The meeting of the Cuban Anti-Slavery Committee at Cooper Institute received a significant amount of press coverage, not only in the black press, but also by mainstream newspapers. The committee took their proceedings, together with some of the appropriate news articles reporting their meeting, and compiled the collection into a brief publication to further advance their Cuban freedom campaign among those who were not in a position to attend the meeting at Cooper. Among the concerns included in the documents shared in the publication were the continued reports of the ongoing slave-trade from Africa aided and abetted by Americans, the retention of the *emancipados* as enslaved persons rather than granting them their due freedom per the treaty between Britain and Spain, and the ability of the newly attained black male vote to influence political outcomes. Black organizations believed in the political system and were anxious to see it work with their input.

## Conclusion

Cuba was the last of the Caribbean islands to emancipate its slaves. The wealth that slave labor brought the planters made them reluctant to follow the global emancipation movement. Efforts by the British and Americans to influence the Spaniards to emancipate their Cuban slaves were met with resistance by the Spaniards and the planter class in Cuba. Moreover, a faction of Americans were interested in the annexation of Cuba to add to the number of slave-holding states thus undermining efforts by abolitionists and other freedom fighters to end slavery in Cuba. Black and white abolitionists vocalized their views, published their views, and converged to form alliances to compel the U.S. Government to take appropriate diplomatic and humanitarian action. Further, many black men and women felt it incumbent upon themselves to be an example by supporting the Free Produce Movement and Haiti Emigration Movement.

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<sup>14</sup> Gerrit Smith, “Rescue Cuba Now,” Speech, 1873.

<sup>15</sup> Cuban Anti-Slavery Committee, *Slavery in Cuba: A Report of the Proceedings of the Meeting Held at Cooper Institute, New York City, December 13, 1872* (New York: Powers, MacGowan & Slipper Printers, Cornell University Digital Library), 9.

To this group, it was important to gain freedom for the Cuban blacks just as they had gained it for themselves. They could not be satisfied with stopping at their own freedom; they felt obliged to pass it forward.

“Freedom’s battle once begun,  
Bequeathed from bleeding sire to son,  
Though baffled oft is ever won.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Cuban Anti-Slavery Committee, *Slavery in Cuba: A Report of the Proceedings of the Meeting Held at Cooper Institute, New York City, December 13, 1872* (New York: Powers, MacGowan & Slipper Printers, Cornell University Digital Library), 16.



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