

*Los negros, los mulatos y la nación dominicana.* By FRANKLIN J. FRANCO. Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 1969. Editora Nacional. Pp. vii, 162. Paper.

The young Dominican historian Franklin J. Franco first attracted international attention when his *República Dominicana, clases, crisis y comandos* received the essay prize of the Casa de las Américas in 1966. Mr. Franco's generation, without rejecting the valuable work of older historians as Emilio Rodríguez Demorizi and Manuel Arturo Peña Batlle, tries to shrug off the anti-Haitian biases that for a long time were a virtual trademark of Dominican historiography, and shows a keen interest in the previously neglected social and economic history of the island.

Ideologically, these new historians are mostly devotees of 'historical materialism,' as Juan Jimenes Grullón proudly notes in his *Prólogo*. But, as Mr. Jimenes Grullón's own work goes far to prove, such an ideological position does not necessarily lead to the type of painstaking research that the term would seem to imply, and sometimes serves as a mere substitute for the earlier Thomistic *partis pris*, functioning as a preconceived mold in which to adjust or deform the scarcely known 'facts.'

It is precisely Franco's merit that he combines an intelligently applied conceptual framework with a willingness to delve more deeply than most of his colleagues into the available empirical material. That so far this latter mostly consists of printed sources may be forgiven more easily if we take into account that Professor Franco and most of his generation no longer belong to the group of gentlemen of leisure from which the earlier historians were mainly recruited.

In his eagerness to demolish the anti-Haitian prejudices and to debunk the myth of idyllic race relations in the history of his own country, Mr. Franco may not escape entirely the danger of creating some new myths and idealizations himself. But even so, his book will serve as a welcome counterpoint to prevailing opinions, as a badly needed addition to Dominican social history for the period prior to the Independence of 1844; and as a useful source of information for those interested in the study of comparative race relations.

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