



Yuko Miki. *Frontiers of Citizenship: A Black and Indigenous History of Postcolonial Brazil.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018. xix + 292 pp. \$99.99, cloth, ISBN 978-1-108-41750-1.

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Yuko Miki's important book explores the intersections and divergences of indigenous and black lives in Brazil. It is an inherently intriguing, yet neglected, topic. Many historians of colonial or nineteenth-century Brazil probably can recall stumbling upon archival stories of Indian-black connections. A police report describes a fugitive slave's whereabouts as known only to a local indigenous group; a plantation owner testifies about an Indian attack on his African slaves; a frontier official admits his reliance upon a black female interpreter in negotiations with an indigenous leader. Hal Langfur and Stuart Schwartz pioneered the study of these interconnected histories, focusing on colonial Brazil, in an influential chapter of *Beyond Black and Red* (2005).[1] But until now, there has been no book-length history of these intertwined histories for nineteenth-century Brazil.

The obstacles to researching and constructing such a history are significant. As Miki admits in her introduction, "archives are both bountiful and exasperating to the historian seeking to write about black and indigenous people in postcolonial Brazil" (p. 26). Relatively few sources discuss both populations or make the connections between them explicit. Instead, documents might mention one group while remaining silent on the other—even in regions where both populations were known to live in close proximity. Another problem

is that historians have few equivalent sources to examine—they are comparing apples and oranges, so to speak—because native and black populations occupied separate legal and administrative spheres that generated different paper trails.

Given the difficulties of her source material, Miki is to be commended on her archival perseverance and innovative approach to bringing indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples into the same frame of reference. It should be noted that although each chapter deals with both populations, most subsections treat one or the other—again, reflecting the separation of these groups in her source material. The study is limited to a frontier region in eastern Brazil, encompassing parts of Bahia, Espírito Santo, and Minas Gerais, and Miki draws much of her evidence from state archives. Keeping a tight regional focus makes it possible to integrate two enormous bodies of scholarship, on Brazil's indigenous peoples and on African slaves and their descendants. Her book, then, has laid a foundation for scholars to consider these themes and the relevance of her arguments for other regions of the country, and perhaps for a broader, synthetic history of indigenous-black histories in Brazil.

In six chapters, Miki shows that the Atlantic frontier of Brazil was not a lawless place, or a zone from which the state was absent. Instead, it was a

testing ground for the state's efforts to define the new nation according to a racial hierarchy, to control the labor of its nonwhite peoples, and to limit the benefits of citizenship. Chapter 1 deals with the thorny interpretive puzzle of Brazil's 1824 Constitution, which defined citizenship broadly and inclusively based on birthplace and free status. But indigenous peoples went unmentioned, and their citizenship status remained ambiguous. Representatives of the Constituent Assembly had argued, in fact, that autonomous Indians should be excluded because they were not part of civilized society, but that language never made it into the Constitution itself.[2] Brazilian slaves, for their part, were excluded on the basis of their legal status—though if freed, they theoretically could qualify as citizens—and African-born freedmen were also ineligible. As the new nation turned its energies toward the development of the Atlantic frontier, it relied on an expansion of black slavery. Legal ambiguities around native status also created space for the Indian slave trade to flourish anew in this zone—as it did in other frontier regions of the country. In these developments, Miki argues, government and private interests were intertwined, as were the experiences and strategies of many native and black populations when faced with their exclusion from the nation. Chapter 2 examines these strategies, with a focus on native and black arts of resistance, negotiation of rights, and interethnic conflict and collaboration. Here Miki unpacks some well-known cases (such as the story of the Botocudo go-between, Guido Pokrane) and also presents fascinating new evidence about slave conspiracies, fugitive movements, and rumors of emancipation that circulated among frontier populations in the 1840s and 1850s.

Racialized nation-building is the main theme of chapter 3, which focuses on narratives about the extinction of native peoples. The author is less interested in the reality behind such narratives; instead, her focus is on how officials, settlers, and foreign travelers constructed images of vanishing native peoples in order to justify the expropriation

of “abandoned” native lands and to support emerging ideas of scientific racism. She helpfully reveals the connections between the extinction narratives and other key developments in this period: the 1845 legislation advocating Indian “civilization”; the 1850 Land Law that enabled the seizure of native territories; and the official promotion of miscegenation as a homogenizing racial discourse that left no place for Indians.

Two harrowing stories of violence from the 1880s are juxtaposed in chapter 4. The state-sanctioned killing of the inhabitants of an indigenous village—the Nok-Nok massacre in southern Bahia—is evidence for Indians' placement in a legal “state of exception” (p. 150): they were considered to be outside of the law but still subject to its penalties. Miki then meticulously reconstructs the social and legal context behind the murder of a slave accused of having an affair with the daughter of a slaveholding family in Espírito Santo. She focuses on the public and official response to the murder: the local censure of the family for their execution of the slave (an act that, revealingly, the family members attempted to deny), the ensuing legal investigation, and the official condemnation of the family's brutality against their slave. Although the family members were acquitted, Miki argues that this episode reveals how shifts in public opinion were gradually “diminishing the legal separation between citizens and slaves” (p. 169) and giving the abolitionist movement a foothold in Brazil. Chapter 5 offers an impressive excavation of the strategies of fugitive slaves, or *quilombolas*, to claim freedom in the years just before the final abolition of slavery. Using a rich swath of local documentation, Miki takes us inside quilombolas' attempts to make their own, independent lives in the niches within the settler society of São Mateus, Espírito Santo. She argues that in doing so, black men as well as women helped make emancipation central to the nation's political agenda in the 1880s.

The final chapter examines a paradox that again reveals the intertwined fates of black and indigenous peoples: the process of abolition actually led to the emergence of new forms of inequality. With the end of slavery came new anxieties about the availability of labor, and both former slaves and settled native groups were subjected to “disciplinary labor regimes.” Policymakers claimed that such measures would make blacks and Indians ready for national inclusion, but they “envisioned a citizenship that was fundamentally servile” (p. 241). National inclusion, Miki reveals, was a coercive process for black and indigenous peoples. It generated new and persistent inequalities, especially around rights to land, against which social movements struggle to this day. The roots of limited citizenship and exclusive nationhood may go back to Brazil’s nineteenth century, but Miki’s book shows that the struggles have deep roots, too.

Notes

[1]. Stuart B. Schwartz and Hal Langfur, “*Tapanhuns, Negros da Terra, and Curibocas: Common Cause and Confrontation between Blacks and Natives in Colonial Brazil,*” in *Beyond Black and Red: African–Native Relations in Colonial Latin America*, ed. Matthew Restall (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005), 81-114.

[2]. As Miki explains, the Constituent Assembly had been dissolved the year before the promulgation of the Constitution, which probably explains the omission of its language on limiting indigenous citizenship.

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