Voices of the Race: Black Newspapers in Latin America, 1870–1960 is a comprehensive volume that contextualizes and traces the breadth and depth of Black intellectual thought in Latin America. Holding 113 translated Black newspaper articles from Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, and Uruguay, Voices of the Race provides invaluable insight into the political, cultural, and social lives of African-descended writers and their communities. As there is a surging historiographical turn that rightfully places Argentina and Uruguay within the histories of people of African descent in Latin America, elevating their legacies of Black intellectual production alongside the well-known histories of Black Brazilian and Cuban journalistic fervor establishes Voices of the Race as a must-read for any scholar curious about using different methods and drawing new connections about Blackness in Latin America.

Renowned historians Paulina Laura Alberto, George Reid Andrews, and Jesse Hoffnung-Garskof make accessible, through the work of translation and compilation, the papers of the Latin American Black press that deserve such reinvigorated engagement. As many of the newspapers were originally written in Portuguese or Spanish, this collection familiarizes researchers of Latin America, the African diaspora, or the Black press who work primarily with English-language sources with documents challenging to interpret without translation. The English-translated articles introduce the writings of Black Latin American thinkers to audiences eager to consider the connections and ruptures between diasporic identity formation, racialized processes of inclusion and exclusion, and liberal nation building. The dynamic world of the Latin American Black press, one forged amidst slavery's undoing, reveals a multitude of concerns, reflections, and ideas about pathways toward and away from the promises of freedom, citizenship, and belonging. Voices of the Race demonstrates that, as in the United States and across the African diaspora, the Black press, as an institution and cultural force, was central for projecting and fashioning visions of Black futures.
Voices of the Race is therefore a long-awaited solution to the material challenges of studying Afro-Latin America. Although scholars have researched the Black newspapers of Latin America since the 1960s, most scholarly publications cite only a few articles or editorials, gathered from disparate digital or physical archives (p. 2). Alberto, Andrews, and Hoffnung-Garskof, in each of their groundbreaking projects respectively published between 1980 and 2022, analyze the Black press as a key source and showcase articles that they identify as most representative of the major debates that shaped Black Latin American political cultures. Their research is geographically expansive, temporally inclusive, and conceptually innovative, from Andrews’s field-defining monographs on African-descended communities in Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil, to Alberto’s books on Black politics and intellectualism in Brazil and Black celebrity and racial storytelling in Buenos Aires, to Hoffnung-Garskof’s work on race and migration in the Dominican Republic, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the United States.[1] Collectively, their work, alongside numerous monographs and journal articles published by other leading specialists, compiles essential documents from the Latin American Black press that depict the multifaceted and ever-changing realities of Black living. In curating and translating this selection of writings from the Latin American Black press, Alberto, Andrews and Hoffnung-Garskof present a consolidated source base that alleviates research barriers and anxieties, perhaps, early-career anxieties about archival access and travel. This collection is therefore essential for the advancement of the field of Afro-Latin American history and the development of new scholars.

The editors organized Voices of the Race with a structure that is helpful to scholars familiar and unfamiliar with the Latin American Black press. The text organization is mindful and meticulous, cognizant of the research and pedagogical utility of the selected articles. The editors structured the eight chapters of Voices of the Race by theme: politics and citizenship; racism and anti-racism; family, education, and uplift; community life; women; diaspora and Black internationalism; and arts and literature. Each chapter begins with an introduction that historicizes the themes within their geographic, temporal, and national contexts. Discussion questions follow the chapter introductions. These questions invite readers to consider the articles as connected across time, space, and place, encouraging them to critically imagine the scope and stakes of Black journalistic production. The translated articles appear below the discussion questions, preceded by a brief, but deeply contextualized, summary. In the interest of temporal integrity, the subsequent articles continue in chronological order, each chapter containing no more than eighteen editorial contributions, usually spanning the entire chronological period that encompasses the book. The editors provide careful footnotes accompanied by a detailed bibliography. A glossary of key terms, events, and figures frames the end of the volume, although bolded phrases throughout the book signal readers to its presence. At the end of the collection, readers can also find an appendix of Black periodicals from Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, and Uruguay for their reference and future research needs. The organizational structure precisely aligns with the goal of democratizing access to the Latin American Black press for English-language scholars, students, and educators. Voices of the Race would be an indispensable resource for any undergraduate or graduate classroom.

The book’s introduction offers a noteworthy overview of the history of the Latin American Black press, which the authors identify as the “richest and most concentrated venue for Black voices in Latin American history” (p. 1). Defined as “newsletters, newspapers, and magazines produced by Afrodescendant writers and directed primarily at a Black readership,” the Black press in Latin America dates to 1833, when the first Black newspaper emerged in Brazil, six years after the publication of the first Black-produced news-
paper in the United States, *Freedom's Journal* (pp. 2-3). While Afro-Latin American journalists contributed to political and labor publications in Puerto Rico, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, and Costa Rica between 1870 and 1960, the most extensive, well-known, and sustained Black newspapers and magazines existed in Cuba, Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay. Specific regional and national formations informed the popularity and prominence of all kinds of periodicals, but for the Black newspapers of Argentina, Cuba, Brazil, and Uruguay, they shared conditions that “were familiar and recurring components of ideologies, experiences, and expressions of Blackness shared across Latin America” and “contributed to networks of Black thought and conversation far beyond those confines” (p. 16). Photographs from the Black press that populate the introductory pages are evidence of this sense of diasporic connectedness, as the papers are not only similar in style and format but construct a visual language that communicates the desire of Black writers, editors, and contributors to be seen on their own terms across and within local, national, and transnational contexts.

The first half of the volume examines newspaper articles that grapple with the politics of representation and self-presentation. Chapter 1, “Politics and Citizenship,” explores the forms of political organization and mobilization that grounded claims that writers of African descent articulated in the name of equality and recognition. Through participating in and challenging the racism of electoral politics to the formation of political parties in response, African-descended intellectuals highlighted the limitations and hypocrisies of so-called equal, raceless citizenship throughout the Black press. Men and women writers debated the possibilities presented by varying political ideologies—from democracy to constitutional monarchism to fascism and communism—for the realization of citizenship rights and political inclusion. Articles that condemn racism and discuss strategies for its demise form the basis of the second chapter. Aptly titled “Racism and Anti-Racism,” this chapter chronicles how Black thinkers understood racial inequalities—its foundations and iterations—across public and private spaces. Alternatively, some Brazilian and Uruguayan writers, particularly during the interwar and World War II era, refuted racism's existence, and reinforced prevailing liberal notions of racial democracy.

Questions around racial reproduction and inheritance continue into chapter 3, “Family, Education, and Uplift.” Here, heteronormative familial and marriage structures emerge as central to the tensions between community advancement and national progress. For many writers, morality and virtue safeguarded against racist stereotypes and ensured respectability. The alleged legitimate family was the site for which children, particularly girls, would be trained as not just responsible people, but as honorable citizens. The articles cast education—and particularly vocational training—as another essential principle that ensured the future of African-descended communities, one in which children would have the skills to secure reputable work and provide for their families. Chapter 4 expounds on the interconnections between intimate and public lives in a selection of articles that portray the richness of Black social life. From reports on dances and weddings to gossip columns, Black periodicals revealed how concerns around morality, sexuality, and respectability spilled from private homes into public, communal spaces. Although the Black press, often aligned with social organizations, sponsored their own dances to generate financial support, many articles detailed the dramas that unfolded, from complaints around the self-interest of club leaders in Cuba to shaming African-descended women for socializing with white men in Uruguay. Yet profiles of Black social events also show how these organizations and clubs reproduced and enshrined color-based social hierarchies, as articles from Brazil, Cuba, and Uruguay particularly depict.
Explorations of who counts as a producer of Black intellectual thought and what informs the parameters of Black cultural and political production shape the second half of the volume. Articles written by Black women writers appear in the preceding chapters, but it is not until chapter 5 that the editors curate a selection of writings written by, and often about, women of African descent. Chapter 5 details how themes of sartorial self-expression, aesthetic practices, and beauty contests emerged alongside concerns about lived experiences and symbolic representations of motherhood, inclusive political participation, and education. Notably, Alberto, Andrews, and Hoffnung-Garskof include articles that describe domestic worker organizing and mobilizing in Uruguay and Brazil, casting African-descended women as key intellectuals and activists in the history of labor rights in the region.[2] While much of chapter 5 demonstrates the strategies that African-descended women writers employed to demand recognition as both mothers and voters, daughters and wives, activists and citizens, chapter 6 exposes the ways in which Black press contributors disagreed about the role of Africa and African heritage in historical memory, identity formation, and political mobilizing. Chapter 6, “Africa and African Culture,” traces the competing visions of Africa in the Black press. For some writers, Africa, African-based practices, and African ancestry each symbolized the barbarism of the past, hindering racial progress and pride. For other writers, Africa represented modernity, particularly as many articles celebrated African independence movements as evidence of successful processes of decolonization, liberation, and self-determination.

The multiple discourses about the meanings of Africa for people of African descent in Latin America did not diminish the importance of diaspora for the Black press, as chapter 7, “Diaspora and Black Internationalism,” elucidates. Black newspapers reported frequently on African-descended communities across the world, often encouraging a sense of diasporic duty that in turn, helped writers based in Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, and Uruguay to articulate their own understanding of their national and political belonging. Coverage of racism and violence in the United States was extensive, but so too were reports about achievements by Black American intellectuals, both representing how African-descended writers viewed the United States in horror, in awe, in question—as specter, as model, as inspiration. Chapter 8, “Arts and Literature,” signals the significance of artistic expression to Black journalistic practices and production. Through short stories, poems, or creative nonfiction articles, African-descended writers questioned the role of the Black artist, the function of art in the dismantling of racist structures, and the meanings and conditions of Blackness across the African diaspora. Memory and legacy are concerns of some of the contributors who published pieces about the epistemic and physical violence of the past, whether in examinations of the brutality of the slavery or the preservation of generational traditions. Chapter 8 ends with an article by Cuban sculptor Teodoro Ramos Blanco, who calls for an embrace of Blackness as a source of pride and hope, and for readers who remain uncertain about this to consult his other works for “greater clarity” (p. 337).

A similar search for “greater clarity” flows throughout *Voices of the Race* as each chapter deepens how we think about Blackness, journalism, and cultural and social politics in Latin America. In showing the transformations in Black thought, Alberto, Andrews, and Hoffnung-Garskof illustrate the profound, spirited, and diverse intellectual fervor that propelled the production and publication of Black newspapers. Readers should finish this collection with an enriched understanding and enlivened curiosity about what motivated and frustrated writers who contributed to the Black press. *Voices of the Race* provides new contextual frameworks for how my own work on Blackness in twentieth-century Argentina engages with the Black press.
As researchers continue to locate twentieth-century Black periodicals that were previously unknown to the field, future work should consider how technological advances, particularly in photography, shaped the Black press.[3] Continuing to delve into the economic and labor histories of the Black press, which include the use of fundraisers, advertisements, and subscriptions to financially sustain the papers, could inform future studies about Black publishing industries and practices. Scholars might expand on Alberto, Andrews, and Hoffnung-Garskof’s explorations of gender, power, and sexuality in Black newspapers and magazines. Especially as the Black press endures in Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, and Uruguay, and since the 1970s in Ecuador, Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, and Panama, emerging scholarship—articles, book proposals, and dissertations—could consider the diasporic connections, visions, and analyses of these current and recent Black publications. This study of Black periodicals should inspire subsequent scholarship to embrace digital humanities as a model for approaches and methodologies capacious enough to analyze, visualize, and archive Black newspapers and magazines in databases, websites, or other multimodal applications. All told, *Voices of the Race* is a valuable collection for anyone interested in teaching, researching, or studying Black print, reading, and political cultures across the Americas.

Notes


[2]. For recent work on Black women and domestic workers’ activism, see Anasa Hicks, *Hierarchies at Home: Domestic Service in Cuba from Abolition to Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022).

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