

HISTORIA CRÍTICA

Call for Papers

Historia Crítica, a journal of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the Universidad de los Andes (Bogotá, Colombia), announces a call for papers for its special issue,

“Black Intellectual Experience in the *Amefricas*, Nineteenth–Twentieth Centuries,”

in collaboration with Surya Aaronovich Pombo de Barros (Center of Education, Universidade Federal da Paraíba, UFPB) and Juan David Murillo Sandoval (Instituto Caro y Cuervo).

Submissions will be accepted from
February 15 to March 15, 2027.

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The African diaspora’s role in shaping the Americas has spurred an extensive historical research agenda. In this context, Lélia Gonzalez (1935–1994) formulated the concept of *Amefricanity* to highlight the shared experiences of Black and Indigenous populations in the Americas and to challenge narratives that render racism—and its historical persistence—invisible. Her proposal affirmed the multiracial and pluricultural nature of societies in the Americas and helped foster new perspectives for studying the experiences of Afro-descendants in the region.

In dialogue with these concerns, research in the social sciences and humanities has developed a diverse agenda on race relations, addressing phenomena such as the ideology of whitening, white privilege, structural racism, and class and gender inequalities. Within this body of work, recent historiography has paid particular attention to the pivotal role of Afro-descendant populations in defending freedom, debates over citizenship, the construction of diasporic networks, and political activism. To understand these individual and collective trajectories, the category of *Black intellectuals* has become analytically central.

This discussion has gained significant momentum across the Americas, particularly in countries with large Afro-descendant populations. A robust historiographical movement has come to recognize this segment as active subjects in education, schooling, and literate culture, thereby overcoming the racist bias that once excluded Black people from the intellectual sphere. In countries such as Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, the United States, Haiti, Panama, and Peru, several researchers have helped reconstruct the life paths of Afro-descendant intellectuals. These men and women worked as teachers, journalists, poets, novelists, publishers, lawyers, physicians, musicians, scientists, engineers, and activists. The discussion centers on Black individuals and their networks who debated the abolition of slavery and the role of

Black people in society and national development, and who left behind a vast and diverse body of written work. While their intellectual contributions are remarkable in their own right, they take on exceptional significance because they were forged within the deeply racialized and racist societies that make up the *Amefricas*.

Therefore, the definition of intellectual underlying this proposal is not confined to scholarly or professional spheres. Rather, it recognizes intellectual activity as a public and mediating practice, evident in dimensions such as critical intervention, the production and circulation of knowledge, the creation of spaces and networks of sociability, and political engagement. The proposal prioritizes the category of *mediating intellectuals*,¹ a concept that complicates the traditional notion of the intellectual by acknowledging the creative, political, and pedagogical work of those who disseminate, translate, circulate, and rework knowledges and cultural goods. This perspective allows appreciation of the interventions of actors historically rendered subaltern—such as Black women and creators of popular culture—whose methodological and theoretical contributions have been systematically overlooked.

In this context, examining Black intellectuality—by reconstructing biographies, social networks, and mobility trajectories—helps explain Afro-descendants' participation in the educational and cultural expansion of societies across the Americas. This dossier proposal is justified by the need to map and disseminate the theoretical and political agency of Black thought in the Americas during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This timeframe encompasses a pivotal era—beginning with Haiti's independence in 1804 and defined by debates over abolition laws, the transition to free labor, and the consolidation of nation-states that institutionalized racism as a policy of exclusion—while also spanning global and transatlantic processes such as African and Asian decolonization, Black internationalism, cooperative relations between Latin American and African nations, and the Cold War. Far from being passive spectators, Black intellectuals participated in the production of fundamental critical analyses of these processes and challenged the deterministic and exclusionary narratives of modernity.

This call for papers also addresses a gap in the historiographical landscape, evidenced by the scarcity of thematic issues dedicated to the Black intellectual world over the past decade. Consequently, the planned special issue aims to offer a critical, innovative contribution that brings together recent research from the fields of intellectual, social, and educational history. At the same time, it seeks to foster a nuanced historical understanding of Afro-descendant intellectual experiences, considering both their contributions and forms of agency, as well as the tensions, disputes, and inequalities that shaped their individual and collective trajectories. Accordingly, we invite submissions presenting historical research on Black and Afro-descendant intellectuals (including those identified by historical terms such as *mestizo* or *mulato*, among others) active between the early nineteenth and late twentieth centuries. Proposals may address, among other topics, the following:

- Biographical trajectories of specific individuals.
- Black intellectual families.
- Black female intellectuals and gender perspectives.
- Intellectuals as mediators: booksellers, typographers, publishers, journalists, and librarians.
- Circulation of knowledge and public spaces for intellectual engagement.
- Social networks, associations, congresses, and intellectual groups.
- Transnational perspectives, connected histories, and Black internationalism.
- Black intellectuals and education (students, teaching, and epistemologies).

1 Ângela de Castro Gomes and Patricia Santos Hansen, orgs., *Intelectuais mediadores: práticas culturais e ação política* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2016).