



Gloria Rolando's documentary, 1912 – *Breaking the Silence*, chronicles a little-told piece of Cuban history that is crucial to a full understanding of the role of Afro-descendent Cubans in the country's life. Afro-Cubans, who had come in the millions as slaves from West Africa during the time of Spanish rule, played an important role in bringing an end to slavery in 1880 and in the War of Independence that began in 1895.

An Afro-Cuban leader of the war was Antonio Maceo, who had become a hero when he refused to accept an earlier peace agreement with the Spanish. The full victory of the Cuban independence forces was denied when U.S. military forces intervened in 1898. Following the defeat of the Spanish, Cuba became a virtual colony of Washington and a Cuban government representing only the landed and monied interests was placed in power by the occupiers. The primary resistance to this turn of events was the formation by Afro-Cuban war veterans of the Independent Party of Color.

By 1912 the party gained wide popular support and ultimately threatened the domination of the white Cuban rulers. The response to the Party of Color by the Cuban leaders and their U.S. backers was savage. Six thousand Cubans, mainly those of dark skin, were massacred and the Party of Color was outlawed. This massacre silenced dissent on the island for nearly a generation and the events of 1912 were never fully discussed in Cuban history books, even following the triumph of the Cuban Revolution in 1959.

However, in recent years as Cuba has grappled with the continuation of racism in its society, Gloria Rolando's film has helped to shed light on a dark chapter of Cuba's racial history. Tonight the first two segments of the three part work will be shown. In fall 2014, the Minnesota Cuba Committee hopes to have Gloria in Minnesota to screen the final segment.

Besides 1912, Gloria's films also include "*Eyes of the Rainbow*," a documentary about Assata Shakur, as well as many other works. She is currently working on a project about Haitian workers who were brought to Cuba as slaves to harvest sugar.

The film will be preceded by *Now*, a powerful five-minute short from 1965, directed by Santiago Alvarez. It depicts the civil rights struggle then unfolding in the United States with clips that were never seen in US news footage.

Join us after the film at Pracna on Main for a discussion led by August Nimtz, political science professor at the University of Minnesota, and Valerie Deus, faculty member at Minneapolis Community and Technical College.

7pm, Thursday, March 20: *De Cierta Manera* ("*One Way or Another*"), from 1974, the fifth film in the festival, the first Cuban feature film made by an Afro-Cuban and by a woman. Sara Gómez uses innovative techniques to focus on the relationship between a mulatta and a Black Cuban, as representative of conflicts between ingrown ideas of race, class and gender.

6 pm, Wednesday, March 26: La Raza Student Cultural Center, Coffman Union, University of MN, East Bank, opening of exhibit "I will die the way I lived," prison paintings by Antonio Guerrero, one of the Cuban Five.

Monday, April 14 – Thursday, April 17: Arnold August, author of the new book, *Democracy in Motion, Cuba and its Neighbours*. See www.minnesotacubacommittee.org for details.

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