The limits of anarchist anti-imperialism: Class, national identity, and transnationalism in the encounter between anarchism and imperialism in Cuba 1898-1902

Alex Owen Doyle

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School of Languages, Cultures and Societies

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Abstract

Following significant research dedicated to foregrounding the global dimensions of the anarchist movement, anarchism is increasingly appreciated as a transnational movement which was not contained solely within Europe. In spite of this, the literature remains markedly Eurocentric and consequently there is an acute lack of understanding of anarchism's interplay with imperialism. Yet, anti-imperialism is often viewed as a core feature of anarchism, and accounts of the movement's relationship to it tend to shirk assessments of the extent to which it was capable or constrained in challenging imperialism. Accordingly, this dissertation critically analyses the encounter between anarchism and imperialism in Cuba between 1898-1902. In particular, the dissertation will explore the themes of the nation, nationalism and national identity, all of which are poorly documented within anarchist studies. This dissertation demonstrates that the Cuban anarchist movement constructed a clear anti-imperialism based on class struggle and social revolution, but it simultaneously insists that this was constrained by antagonisms revolving around national identity. To demonstrate this, the dissertation will a) examine the anarchist conceptualization of imperialism, b) foreground divisions relating to national identity and class c) analyse the workplace and anarchist praxis. Throughout this there will be a consideration of how transnationalism was a key process to the formation, and constraints, of anarchist anti-imperialism in Cuba.

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Abbreviations

FTRE - Federación de Trabajadores de la Región Española

Liga – Liga General de Trabajadores Cubanos

Unless otherwise specified, usage of the term “anarchists” is in reference to the anarchists in Cuba.

Chapter One: Introduction

Anarchism has historically resided at the margins of academic and public discourse. Typically, the role of anarchism in history has tended to be "buried under... defeats and political orthodoxies…when not effaced altogether by its rivals on the Left".[1] Indeed, anarchism has been "outlawed" and "repudiated" "by liberals, by neoliberals" but also "by Marxists".[2] Eric Hobsbawm described anarchism as "pre-political"; it only becomes a relevant actor in the absence of more "modern" forms of political and social organization, namely parties and unions.[3] However, this dismissal of anarchism is dwindling; rather than being referred to as an "insult"[4] and as a movement which makes "no significant contribution to socialist theory",[5] many are in agreement that "this caricature of anarchy and anarchism has begun to crack" and there is now a "revitalized interest in the subterranean anarchist tradition".[6]

Some argue that the "burst of interest" in anarchist studies reflects the contemporary wave of social movements pronouncing their opposition to the "penetrations of varieties of neoliberalism".[7] Indeed, this "20 year wave of social movements" has been accompanied by the label of "a third wave of anarcho-activism",[8] on the basis that these contemporary movements display many "anarchist" tendencies in terms of their "ideology, organization,

[1]Lucien van der Walt and Steven J. Hirsch, 'Rethinking Anarchism and Syndicalism: the Colonial and Postcolonial Experience, 1870-1940', in *Anarchism and Syndicalism in the Colonial and Postcolonial World, 1870-1940: The Praxis of National Liberation, Internationalism, and Social Revolution* (Boston and Leiden: Brill, 2010), p.xxviii.

[2] Jacob Blumenfeld, Chiara Bottici and Simon Critchley, *The Anarchist Turn, (*London: Pluto Press: 2013), p.2.
[3] Eric Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels,* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1971), p.3.
[4] Blumenfeld, p.1.
[5] Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels,* pp.83-86.
[6] Blumenfeld, p.2.
[7] Carl Levy and Matthew, S. Adams, 'Introduction', in *Palgrave Handbook of Anarchism* (Switzerland: Palgrave and Macmillan, 2019), ed. by Carl Levy and Matthew, S. Adams, pp.1-25 (p.4).
[8]Ibid., p.3.

and methods of struggle".[9] For instance, Shaffer explicitly implores readers to notice "parallels between anarchist attempts to check globalization efforts of the early 1900s with similar movements struggling against early twenty-first-century neoliberal globalization".[10] In sum, the maxim that history is "lo que una época encuentra digno de atención en otra",[11] whilst not a universal rule for why certain topics in history experience an intensification of academic study, is relevant when considering reasons for the present-day curiosity for anarchist studies.

The increasing interest in anarchism can be understood as a response to the "failure of state-centric versions to bring about substantial, transformative social change once assuming power".[12] The current form of capitalism, commonly understood as neoliberalism, has been described as a trend of market fundamentalism as well as networked power "above and below nation states",[13] a process with which the state itself is "complicit".[14] Rather than as a protective force for welfare, the state is increasingly viewed as uniquely a "promoter of economic and financial globalization".[15] Overall, scepticism abounds regarding the capacity of state-centric movements, and indeed the state itself, as tools for moving towards "transformative social change".[16] Ultimately, this "vindicates the anarchist critique of the state".[17]

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[9]Lucien van der Walt and Steven J. Hirsch, 'The vicissitudes of anarchist and syndicalist trajectories, 1940 to the present', in *Anarchism and Syndicalism in the Colonial and Postcolonial World, 1870-1940: The Praxis of National Liberation, Internationalism, and Social Revolution* (Boston and Leiden: Brill, 2010), p.395.
[10] Kirwin Shaffer, 'Introduction. An Antiauthoritarian Cartography of the Caribbean', in *Anarchists of the Caribbean: Countercultural Politics and Transnational Networks in the Age of U.S. Expansion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), pp.40-41.
[11] José Álvarez Junco, *La ideología política del anarquismo español (1868-1910),* (México: Siglo Veintiuno, 1991), p.1.
[12] Morgan Gibson, 'The Failure of The State and the Rise of Anarchism in Contemporary Anti-Systemic Praxis', *Journal of Marxism and Interdisciplinary Inquiry,* 10.1, (2019), 45-59 (p.46).
[13] Blumenfeld, p.29.
[14] Gibson, p.47.
[15] Chiara Botici, 'Black and Red: The Freedom of Equals', in *The Anarchist Turn, (*London: Pluto Press: 2013), pp.9-34 (p.24).
[16] Gibson, p.57.
[17] Gibson, p.51.

Despite the burgeoning interest in anarchist history for its parallels with the present-day dynamics of contemporary power, the interplay between anarchism and imperialism remains poorly documented.[18] This is particularly striking given the similarities and continuities between imperialism and neoliberalism. Though carried out by individual nation-states, imperialism, like neoliberalism, is also understood in terms of "transnational processes"[19] or "networks".[20] Indeed, it is contended that the institutions which anchor the transnational networks of neoliberalism, such as the IMF and the World Bank, are rooted in imperialism.[21] Moreover, in the same way that imperialism involved a convergence between the state and the private sector, it is the state which props up neoliberal trends.[22] Studying the encounter between anarchism and imperialism is therefore given impetus by the contemporary parallels which can be drawn.

The lack of literature investigating the interplay between anarchism and imperialism is partly symptomatic of the pervasive Eurocentrism which dictates historical investigation, including that of anarchist histories. Evren writes that this norm manifests itself in an approach which attempts to construct a "linear narration" of anarchist history which builds out from a specific geographical location (typically Europe) and is "led by father figures".[23] Adams urges scholars to look "beyond the canon", including towards anarchism outside of Europe.[24] As

[18] Ole Birk Laursen, 'Anti-imperialism', in *Palgrave Handbook of Anarchism,* ed. by Carl Levy and Matthew, S. Adams (Switzerland: Palgrave and Macmillan, 2019), pp.149-167, (p.150).
[19]Laura Briggs, Gladys McCormick and J.T.Way, 'Transnationalism: A Category of Analysis', *American Quarterly,* 60.3, (2008), 625-648 (p.626).
[20] Stephen Legg, 'Transnationalism and the Scalar Politics of Imperialism', *New Global Studies,* 4.1, (2010), 1-7, (p.2).
[21] Jamie Martin, *The Meddlers*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2022).
[22] David Harvey, 'The Neoliberal State', in *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (U.S.A: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp.64-86.
[23] Süreyyya Evren, "Black Flag White Masks: Anti-Racism and Anarchist Historiography". *Affinities: A Journal of Radical Theory, Culture, and Action*, 8.1, (2014), 23-43 (23).
[24] Matthew Adams, The possibilities of anarchist history: Rethinking the Canon and writing history, *Anarchist developments in cultural studies,* 1.0, (2019), 33-63, (p.33).

Levy writes, delving further into the presence of anarchism in the Global South would "revolutionize our understanding of its [anarchism's] geographical morphology".[25]

There have been significant advances in studies of non-European anarchism. Hirsch and Van der Walt's collection on anarchism in the colonial and postcolonial world, and Craib and Barry's *Global Anarchisms* are the most comprehensive, including country-specific and transnational studies of non-European anarchisms.[26] Moreover, and of particular relevance to this dissertation, laudable progress has been made in furthering the study of anarchism in Latin America since the publication of Cappelletti's *Anarchism in Latin America.*[27] This includes studies of the transnational dimensions of anarchism in the region,[28] including within the Caribbean basin specifically[29] and tracing transnational networks linking the Latin American continent with Spain.[30] However, overall, studies of anarchism in the Global South are limited, and as such anarchism's relationship to imperialism remains poorly understood.

In response, a selection of work has sought to analyse the dialogue between anarchism, colonialism and imperialism. Ramnath's *Decolonizing anarchism* proposes a cross-fertilisation of knowledge which "brings an anarchist approach to anticolonialism and an anticolonial approach to anarchism", using India as a case study.[31] Similarly, Taibo's work further this process of decolonizing anarchist histories by foregrounding the tensions between

[25] Carl Levy, Social Histories of Anarchism, *Journal for the Study of Radicalism,* 4.2, (2010), 1-44 (p.26).
[26] Hirsch and Van der Walt, *Anarchism and Syndicalism in the colonial and postcolonial world;* Raymond Craib and Barry Maxwell, *No Gods, No Masters, No Peripheries: Global Anarchisms,* (Oakland: PM Press, 2015).
[27] Ángel Cappelletti, *Anarchism in Latin America,* (Oakland: AK Press, 2017).
[28] Geoffrey de la Forcade and Kirwin Shaffer, *In Defiance of Boundaries: Anarchism in Latin American History,* (Florida: University Press of Florida, 2015).
[29] Kirwin Shaffer, *Anarchists of the Caribbean: Countercultural Politics and Transnational Networks in the Age of U.S. Expansion*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2020) and *Anarchist Cuba: Countercultural Politics in the Early Twentieth Century*. (New York: PM Press, 2019) and *Anarchism and Countercultural Politics in Early Twentieth-Century Cuba,* (Florida: University Press of Florida, 2005).
[30] Martha Ackelsberg, 'It Takes More than a Village!: Transnational Travels of Spanish Anarchism in Argentina and Cuba', *International Journal of Iberian Studies*, 29.3 (2016), 205-223; James A. Baer, *Anarchist Immigrants in Spain and Argentina,* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2015); Amparo Sánchez Cobos*, Sembrando Ideales: anarquistas españoles en Cuba,1902-1925,* (Sevilla, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas: 2016).
[31] Maia Ramnath, *Decolonizing anarchism*, (Oakland: AK Press, 2011), p.1.

Eurocentric anarchism and indigenous movements.[32] Hirsch and Van der Walt's volume looks to recover "the history of anarchist and syndicalist anti-imperialism—as it was manifest in both theory and practice" which "is a vital history that has often been ignored, or dismissed, in many texts".[33] Despite these contributions, the editors stress that there remains a considerable amount of research to be carried out in dissecting anarchism's interplay with imperialism.[34] Similarly, the editors of *'Reassessing the Transnational Turn'* stated that they aimed to "keep adding nuance and complexity to our understandings of transnationalism" within anarchist studies which "remains overwhelmingly focused on European anarchism" More specifically, they write, "anti-imperial and anticolonial contexts are unfortunately absent".[35]

The anarchist movement in Cuba

As a way of exploring this encounter between anarchism and imperialism, this dissertation will focus on Cuba between 1898-1902. The writing on anarchism in Cuba is sparse, and often neglected in the writing of the country's history. However, there have been notable advances. Fernández's *Anarchism in Cuba,* though cursory and relying "exclusively on secondary sources" for large sections, offers a strong broad overview to the anarchist history of Cuba.[36] Moreover, Casanovas' work on urban labour in Cuba treats the anarchist movement as playing a central role in the Independence struggle, and thus helps to highlight its importance as a historical actor in Cuba.[37] Anderson's monograph *Under three flags:*

[32] Carlos Taibo, *Anarquistas de ultramar: Anarquismo, Indigenismo, Descolonización*, (Madrid: Catarata, 2018).
[33] Hirsch and Van der Walt, p.xxxii.
[34] Ibid., p.lxviii.
[35] Constance Bantman and Bert Altena, *Reassessing the transnational turn: scales of analysis in anarchist and syndicalist studies*. (New York: Routledge, 2015), p.19.
[36] Frank Fernandez, *Cuban anarchism: the history of a movement,* (Arizona: Sharp Press, 2001).
Joan Casanovas, Reviewed Work: Cuban Anarchism. The History of a Movement by Frank Fernández, *International Review of Social History,* 47.3, (2002), 506-507, (p.506).
[37] Joan Casanovas*, Bread, or bullets! Urban labor and Spanish colonialism in Cuba, 1850-1898,* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998).

anarchism and the anticolonial imagination traverses Cuba, the Philippines and Spain, and traces the way in which anarchists collaborated with nationalist movements in anti-colonial struggle.[38] These works have been instrumental in countering the obscuration of anarchist histories in Cuba, but overall the history of the Cuban labour and left remains focused on Communism, and leans towards a teleological drive to explain the revolution of 1959.[39]

The limited literature which exists on anarchism in Cuba has tended to focus on the pre-Independence period, whilst the period under U.S. occupation and influence is less well-understood.[40] This is despite the fact that the first decades of the republic were a period in which anarchism "alcanzó su maxima expresión"[41] and which was "un escenario donde la probabilidad de materializar la proyectada revolución social era más que factible".[42] Rivero Muñiz's monograph on the labour movement in Cuba following the War and under U.S. influence is rich and recovers crucial primary sources, but it is nonetheless a general panorama of the Cuban labour movement and does not focus on anarchism.[43] As such, it forms a part of the trend whereby "one has to read the scattered secondary literature focused on Cuban labor history to find the anarchists".[44] As a response, Shaffer's vast repertoire of publications, focusing on the early twentieth century, give due focus to the anarchists in Cuba. In particular, he expounds the importance of the movement's cultural project, as well as how it should be understood as one component of a broader transnational Caribbean anarchist movement.[45] Similarly, Sánchez-Cobos' work has been instrumental in

[38] Benedict Anderson. *Under three flags: anarchism and the anti-colonial imagination,* (London: Verso, 2005).
[39] Sánchez Cobos, p.39.
[40] Kirwin Shaffer, *Anarchist Cuba: Countercultural Politics in the Early Twentieth Century*, (Oakland: PM Press, 2019), p.11.
[41] Sánchez Cobos, *Sembrando Ideales,* p.51.
[42] Ibid., p.21.
[43] José Rivero Muñiz, 'El movimiento obrero durante la primera intervención. Apuntes para la historia del proletariado en Cuba', (La Habana: Universidad Central de las Villas, 1961).
[44] Shaffer, *Anarchist Cuba: Countercultural Politics in the Early Twentieth Century*, (Oakland: PM Press, 2019), p.8.
[45] Shaffer, *Anarchists of the Caribbean* and *Anarchist Cuba.*

foregrounding the role of anarchism in Cuba, focusing in particular on its transnational network with Spain.[46] Seoane's work on this period has also been crucial in revealing the transnational networks, providing a particular focus on the lives of individual anarchists who epitomized these networks.[47] Overall, despite advances in understandings of anarchism's transnational and cultural project in this period, the anarchist movement under U.S. imperialism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries warrants further examination.

In particular, the anarchist response to imperialism in Cuba is poorly understood. Shaffer's work on anarchist transnational networks in the Caribbean under U.S. imperialism, though giving commendable focus to the anarchist response to imperialism, leans towards an exposé of the anti-imperial actions of the anarchist movement, without pinpointing the ideological schema of the anti-imperial discourse, or assessing the ways in which it was constrained.[48] Llaguno Thomas' work is similar in that it tends towards a listing of the ways that anarchists mounted a challenge to imperialism.[49] Sánchez Cobos' work, though it gives useful insights to the way that anarchism responded to imperialism, remains couched within the effort to highlight the "aporte de los anarquistas españoles" to the "desarrollo del anarquismo Cubano".[50] My work, focusing specifically on the anarchist movement in Cuba's response to

[46] Amparo Sánchez Cobos, *Sembrando Ideales: anarquistas españoles en Cuba,1902-1925,* (Sevilla: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2016); Transcending Borders: ¡Tierra! and the Expansion of Anarchism in Cuba after Independence, in Steve Palmer, Jose A. Piqueras and Amparo Sánchez Cobos (eds.), *State of Ambiguity: Civic Life and Cultural Form in Cuba's First Republic*, (Duke University Press: Durham, 2014), pp.181-208.; 'Nuevas opciones, viejos dilemas. El conflicto social en los primeros años de la República en Cuba', in *Cuba: de Colonia a Republica,* (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2006), pp.69-89.; 'Moralidad y Estado-nación en el discurso anarquista cubano (1902-1915)', *Ayer. Revista de historia contemporánea*, 95.3 (2014), 157-181. 'Extranjeros Perniciosos, El Orden Público y la expulsión de Anarquistas Españoles de Cuba (1899-1930)', *Historia Social,* 59.104, (2007), pp.171-188.

[47] Susana Sueiro Seoane, 'Anarquismo e independentismo cubano: las figuras olvidadas de Enrique Roig, Enrique Creci y Pedro Esteve', *Espacio Tiempo y Forma,* 30.1, (2018), 97-120.; 'Los Anarquistas de habla hispana en Estados Unidos y sus redes transnacionales. El Periódico El Despertar De Brooklyn (1891-1902), *Espacio Tiempo y Forma.* 42, (2019), 25-53.

[48] Shaffer, *Anarchists of the Caribbean.*

[49] José Julián Llaguno Thomas, 'Las voces olvidadas del anti-imperialismo: el anarquismo frente al avance de Estados Unidos en América Central y el Caribe', in *El imaginario antiimperialista en América Latina,* ed. by Andrés Kozel, Florencia Grossi and Delfina Moroni, (Buenos Aires: Ediciones del CCC Centro Cultural de la Cooperación Floreal Gorini, 2015), 125-141.

[50] Sánchez Cobos, *Sembrando Ideales,* p.29.

U.S. imperialism, proposes a critical analysis of both its capacities and limitations in challenging imperialism.

Anarchism and the politics of national identity

To do so, this dissertation will grant significant focus to the importance of the politics of national identity for understanding the anarchist response to imperialism in Cuba. The anarchist movement generally opposes the nation, nationalism and national identity, for its view that they are derivatives of, and legitimizing mechanisms for, the state apparatus.[51] Rudolf Rocker for example, in his work *Nationalism and Culture* written from an anarchist perspective, posited that a dogmatic belief in the idea of nation supplanted religion as the main legitimizing mechanism for state coercion.[52] In this way, the nation is entirely at odds with anarchism. On the other hand, other approaches challenge the reflexive assumption of anarchism's opposition to national identity. Bakunin describes the process of identifying oneself with the nation by "common people" as "a natural, real love". It is only when attachment to nation becomes "political patriotism, or love of the State" that it is no longer its "faithful expression".[53] Gordon writes that this challenges the supposed incompatibility of the nation with anarchist values of non-domination and internationalism since "the idea of a group identity extending from immediate kinship through common ancestry and mediated through language and culture survives the critique of nationalism".[54] Indeed, there were elements of the Cuban anarchist movement for whom national identity signified "amor a la casa dónde nacimos" and as such "la nación vino a ser...la extensión del idea del hogar"'.[55] In this way, like Viroli's distinction between nationalism and patriotism, with the former being

[51] Uri Gordon, 'Anarchism and Nationalism', In *Brill's Companion to Anarchism and Philosophy,* ed. by Nathan J. Jun, (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 196-215 (p.196).
[52] Rudolf Rocker, *Nationalism and Culture*, (New York: Covici-Friede, 1937).
[53] G.P. Maximoff, *The Political Philosophy of Mikhail Bakunin,* (London: Free Press, 1953), p.324.
[54] Gordon, p.196.
[55] 'Patriotismo', *El Rebelde,* 25 September 1898.

antithetical to left-wing republican values and the latter being complementary, there were elements of anarchism which had a nuanced understanding of the nation and national identity.[56]

Indeed, Shaffer has argued that elements of anarchism in Cuba viewed a certain form of Cuban national identity to be compatible with anarchism. Cuban anarchists, cognizant of the expediency of Independence for building its movement, incorporated national identity symbolism and discourse into the anarchist ideal in their challenge to imperialism. In Shaffer's words, "whilst anarchist internationalism and Cuban nationalism were not compatible, anarchist internationalism and Cuban nationality (the island's local symbols, ideas and history) were complementary".[57] It was in this "fluid environment" post-Independence in which Cuban anarchism was able to promote a version of Cuban national identity which aligned with the anarchist principles of class solidarity and social revolution to tackle U.S. imperialism.[58]

My dissertation contends that the politics of national identity, far from being a manipulable category which the anarchists adopted and used to their advantage, instead was rejected by them, which had a significant impact on the capacity of the anarchist movement's anti-imperialism. In this way, the dissertation challenges Shaffer's thesis of Cuban nationality being "complementary" to anarchism.[59] Moreover, it challenges Anderson who, though his writing focuses on the pre-Independence period, similarly offers a thesis which points towards the general "malleability of nationalist ideology" for anarchism in Cuba.[60] Overall,

[56] Maurizio Viroli, *For love of country*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).
[57] Kirwin Shaffer, 'Cuba para todos: Anarchist internationalism and the cultural politics of Cuban Independence 1898-1925', *Cuban Studies,* 31.0, (2000), 45-75, (p.71).
[58] Shaffer, *Anarchist Cuba,* p.26.
[59] Shaffer, Cuba para todos, p.71.
[60] Evan Daniel, 'Reviewed Work(s): Under Three Flags: Anarchism and the Anti-Colonial Imagination by Benedict Anderson', *Journal for the Study of Radicalism*, 1.1, (2007), 137-141, (p.141).

this dissertation points to the politics of national identity as key to understanding the limitations of the anarchist movement's anti-imperialism.

Transnationalism

Whilst it foregrounds national identity, the project adopts a transnational methodology and is not bound to the national level. The importance of transnationalism to anarchist studies has led scholars such as Hirsch to write that anarchist studies is undergoing a "thorough historical revision".[61] This new approach has led to anarchism being considered as a movement that existed not in isolated nodes, but one that proliferated and exerted influence through vast networks and flows of people and ideas. The common thread linking these works is that the application of a transnational methodology to the anarchist movement allows for a fuller appreciation of the large scale of anarchism, one which a nation-centric focus constricts. Transnationalism "allows (and predisposes) certain hidden histories to rise to the surface, histories that might not emerge with the exclusive application of narrower frames".[62]

Keenly aware of not wanting to succumb to the "nacionalismo metodológico" critiqued by transnational literature, but similarly aware of the opportunities that a focus on the national level provides, the dissertation adopts a transnationalism which retains a focus on the Cuban nation-state.[63] Indeed, Margarucci points out that "la historia transnacional trata la nación como una entre una gama de fenómenos sociales a estudiar, en lugar del marco del propio estudio".[64] The dissertation thus situates itself in a middle-ground: as Shaffer writes, "too often transnationalism seemed to privilege the connections between locations over the vital importance of the local and national", and instead "one needs to study these networks both in

[61] Steven Hirsch, 'Without Borders: Reflections on Anarchism in Latin America', *E.I.A.I,* 22.2, (2011), 7-10, (p.7).
[62] Ilham Khuri-Makdisi, *The Eastern Mediterranean and the Making of Global Radicalism, 1860–1914,* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2010), p.9.
[63] Ivana Margarucci, 'Repensando el anarquismo en América Latina. ¿Del nacionalismo metodológico a un giro transnacional incompleto?', *Prohistoria,* 34.1, (2020), 250-280, (p.250).
[64] Ibid., p.257.

specific places and between those places".[65] Balancing the transnational and the national also includes operating at what Ferguson describes as the "meso-level" which privileges "relationships" and "interactions" of "groups of people, places, thoughts and things, emergent communities created by and creating interactions and mediation". This is on the basis that "between outstanding individuals and big social forces there must be a living sensorium in which revolutionary arrangements can emerge".[66] This dissertation will therefore strike a balance between the local, national, transnational and meso levels of analysis.

This balanced methodological approach is particularly apt given that anarchism and imperialism are two phenomena which are at once local and transnational. As Bantman and Altena write, "anarchist networks connect the local with the global".[67] Likewise, assemblages theory argues that "global forms" or "global assemblages" like imperialism are also "articulated in specific situations" at a local level, which in the process results in the creation of "new material, collective, and discursive relationships".[68] Indeed, one of the objectives of this dissertation is to ascertain whether, given the stark difference in scale and in the spaces that they occupied, Cuban anarchism was able to 'meet' and challenge the global power structure of imperialism. In other words, using assemblages theory, it seeks to "de-reify structural processes into specific manifestations, studying the 'global' through its local sites and workings" and thus combining scales of analysis so as to better understand the spaces and methods of the anarchist challenge to imperialism in Cuba.[69]

[65] Shaffer, *Anarchists of the Caribbean,* p.21.
[66] Kathy Ferguson, 'Writing Anarchism with History from Below', *Anarchist Studies,* 30.1, (2022), 7-29, (p.24).
[67] Bantman and Altena, p.12.
[68] Stephen J. Collier and Aihwa Ong, 'Global assemblages, anthropological problems', in *Global Assemblages: Technology, Politics and Ethics as Anthropological Problems,* ed. by Stephen J. Collier and Aihwa Ong, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), pp.3-21, (p.4).
[69] Legg, p.7.

Imperialism

The combination of scales of analysis for examining the anarchist encounter with imperialism is in part motivated by the multifaceted nature of imperial power. This dissertation agrees that "by and large imperialism is a macro label, an umbrella term that describes a set of complex situations and circumstances that cannot be reduced to a single or even a few determining factors like economic and/or political drives".[70] This chimes with Hobsbawm's insistence on the causal factors of imperialism being manifold.[71] Similarly, Ramnath writes that some of the various concrete markers of imperialism are economic control via accumulation by dispossession, political control through surveillance and authoritarianism, and discursive/ideological control via cultural homogeneity, censorship and epistemic violence. [72]

The core definition and unifying feature of imperialism is the process of "the external domination of the ruling class of one country over the classes of another country".[73] The term imperialism was popularized initially by Hobson who emphasized the "economic outcome of imperialism" through the "acquisition of new markets".[74] A similar thesis was later elaborated by Lenin, declaring that imperialism was the "highest stage of capitalism".[75] Both authors were highly influential in persuasively using the term imperialism to denote the capitalist foundations of violent foreign state intervention. In other words, they "added new, uniquely capitalist features to earlier characterizations of imperialism" and highlighted its detrimental impact on "the economic development of colonized countries".[76] As Hobsbawm writes, it was the era of "the rise of large corporations and oligopolies, as well as the

[70] Gabriel O. Apata, 'Review: Atul Kohli, 'Imperialism and the Developing World', *Theory, Culture and Society,* https://www.theoryculturesociety.org/blog/review-atul-kohli-imperialism-and-the-developing-world <URL> [accessed 1 December 2021].
[71] Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire 1875-1914*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987), p.62.
[72] Ramnath, *Decolonizing anarchism,* p.39.
[73] Michael Schmidt and Lucien van der Walt, *Black Flame: The Revolutionary Class Politics of Anarchism and Syndicalism,* (Oakland: AK Press, 2009), p.314.
[74] J.A. Hobson, *Imperialism: a study,* (New York: James Pott & Company, 1902), p.78.
[75] Vladimir Lenin, *Imperialism: the highest stage of capitalism,* (London: Lawrence, 1933).
[76] Murray Bookchin, Social anarchism or lifestyle anarchism : the unbridgeable chasm, (Oakland: AK Press, 1995), p.81.

increased intervention of the state in economic affairs".[77] Crucially, and in a further justification of the use of the term "imperialism" to differentiate it from "colonialism", Hobsbawm writes that "formal colonization was only one aspect of global economic expansions". Indeed, this actual occupation of a territory was "not a major aspect" of the impact of states like Germany and the U.S.A. [78] Writing at the time of U.S. imperialism over Cuba, Paul Louis writes that imperialism must be understood "en toda la amplitud de su campo de operaciones", not least "la concentración de los capitales", and concludes that it is "entre los grandes fenómenos...de la fase contemporánea".[79] Overall, it is this linkage to monopoly capitalism by the private sector, and the state's role in this, which led Hobsbawm to write that the "imperialism of the late nineteenth century was undoubtedly "new".[80]

Although the terms colonialism and imperialism are closely interrelated, this dissertation will adopt the term imperialism. One of the reasons for this is that it takes imperialism to be the ideology which underpins colonialism[81] and as an "umbrella term" within which the realities of colonialism are encompassed.[82] As such, as well as accurately describing the form of foreign intervention exercised by the U.S. in Cuba during the period under study, imperialism is a broad term which helps to encompass the ideology and practice of colonialism and imperialism. That said, the dissertation is equally cognizant of the pitfalls of bundling together the various manifestations of imperialism and colonialism into an "undifferentiated whole"[83] . Instead, it is critical that one "insists on their specificities". As such, the differing forms of imperialism will be specified as and when it is appropriate.

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[77] Hobsbawm, p.73.
[78] Hobsbawm, p.75.
[79] 'La colonización contemporánea', *El Nuevo Ideal,* 15 April 1901.
[80] Hobsbawm, p.73.
[81] Edward Said, *Orientalism*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1995).
[82] Apata. *Imperialism and the Developing World.*
[83] Salar Mohandesi, 'The Specificity of Imperialism', *Viewpoint Magazine,* https://viewpointmag.com/2018/02/01/the-specificity-of-imperialism/ <URL> [accessed 7 November 2021].

As well as acknowledging the variation of imperialism, Stoetzler insists upon the same framing for its counterpart, anti-imperialism:

"The term 'imperialism' bundles together a range of phenomena, and likewise 'anti-imperialism' is a rather shape-shifting creature, depending obviously on what it believes 'imperialism' to be".[84]

Most importantly, this dissertation builds on a literature which critiques the disproportionate emphasis on nationalism as an antidote to imperialism, in which "the depiction of decolonization as a linear transition from empire to nation has acquired the fixity of common-sense".[85] Due to this logic, anarchism's generally principled opposition to nation-state formation results in it tending to be pushed to the margins in anti-imperialist histories. Indeed, even in those works which foreground anarchism's response to imperialism, the anarchists are portrayed as subsidiaries, or reliable and effective allies, to the nationalists.[86] In contrast, this dissertation insists that anti-imperialism was not a "singularity of sentiment" limited to nationalist or nation-centred projects. [87]

Some have insisted on the "centrality of anti-imperialism" to anarchism.[88] Similarly, Van der Walt rejects the view that imperialism and racism are recent concerns exclusive to the late twentieth century anarchist movements, insisting that they have always been "integral" features of the movement's theory and praxis.[89] This dissertation builds on this desire to foreground the importance of anti-imperialism to understanding anarchism, but it is

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[84] Marcel Stoetzler, 'Reflections: antisemitism, anti-imperialism and liberal communitarianism', *openDemocracy*, https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/can-europe-make-it/reflections-antisemitism-anti-imperialism-and-liberal-communitar/ <URL> [accessed 3 November 2021].
[85] Manu Goswami, 'Imaginary Futures and Colonial Internationalisms', *The American Historical Review,* 117.5, (2012), 1461-1486, (p.1462).
[86] Anderson, *Under Three Flags.*
[87] April Biccum, 'Review: Benedict Anderson. Under Three Flags: Anarchism and the Anti-Colonial Imagination.', *Capital and Class,* 32.3, (2008), 175-177, (p.176).
[88] Laursen, p.150.
[89] Lucien Van der Walt, 'Back to the future: revival, relevance and route of an anarchist/syndicalist approach for twenty first-century left, labour and national liberation movements', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies,* 34.3 (2016), 348-367, (p.352).

simultaneously grounded in a questioning of the extent to which it was capable of exercising this anti-imperialism.

Sources, structure and argument

In order to analyse the encounter between anarchism and imperialism in Cuba between 1898-1902, the dissertation will make uses of a number of primary sources. To ascertain the perspective of anarchism, the dissertation uses three periodicals (*El Nuevo Ideal, El Rebelde* and *El Despertar)*, as well as memoirs authored by prominent anarchists within the Cuban movement. *El Nuevo Ideal* was a Cuban anarchist newspaper which "first appeared the same month that the United States took formal control of the island" in March 1899 and produced regular weekly publications until August 1901.[90] The paper was founded by the Spanish-born anarchist Adrián del Valle (1872-1945), also known under the pseudonym of 'Palmiro de Lidia', who moved to Cuba in 1895 where he set up *El Nuevo Ideal*.[91] Luis Barcia, another Spanish anarchist who migrated to Cuba and the US, also formed a part of the editorial board of the paper. Similarly, the other two other main anarchist sources to be used in this dissertation, *El Despertar* and *El Rebelde,* were edited by del Valle and Barcia. These papers were based in the U.S. and thus provide a key resource for understanding the transnational dimensions of anarchism. The Spanish dominance in all of these periodicals is of key significance, particularly given this dissertation's emphasis on national identity for understanding the anarchist challenge to imperialism. Though it is difficult to ascertain the exact composition of the anarchist movement, scholars have argued that the movement's leaders were "mayoritariamente españoles",[92] and "los cuadros dirigentes anarquistas estaban

[90] Shaffer, *Countercultural politics*, p.5.
[91] Fernández, p.45.
[92] Javier Colodrón Valbuena, 'La adaptación del discurso libertario a la nueva realidad postcolonial cubana', *Universidad Santiago de Compostela,* 1, (2015), 1-15, (p.8).

formados por blancos y la mayoría—o todos a decir de algunos autores- eran españoles".[93] Lastly, to provide a more holisitic analysis, this project deploys sources from US government officials such as reports and correspondence. Moreover, it refers to publications such as manifestos and statements from other worker organizations which existed and organized during the same period as the anarchist movement in Cuba.

Using these sources, as well as secondary literature, the dissertation looks to unpack the full dimensions of anarchism's relationship to imperialism in Cuba. This involves detailing the ways in which it approached imperialism in its theory and praxis. In particular, the dissertation foregrounds the tensions and divisions revolving around national identity, and in doing so illustrates how the anarchist response to imperialism was constrained. This provides much-needed nuance to a narrative on the anarchist relationship to imperialism which tends to shirk the limitations of the movement's anti-imperialism. This is partly symptomatic of the overall lack of studies on anarchism's relationship to imperialism, as well as, in an interlinked way, the lack of attention to anarchism's relationship to the nation.[94]

The dissertation also challenges the large corpus of anarchist transnational literature in Latin America which tends towards accounts of the transnational process as being inexorably generative and positive for the Cuban anarchist movement.[95] Rather, by combining the national and transnational lenses of analysis, the dissertation foregrounds divisions grounded in differing perspectives on national identity as potent forces which limited the productive

[93] Amparo Sánchez Cobos, 'Clase versus raza en Cuba: La cuestión racial y el alzamiento del Partido Independiente de Color bajo la perspectiva anarquista (1902-1913)', in *Handbook of Contemporary Cuba, Economics, Politics, Civil Society, and Globalization*, Paradigm Press, ed. by Mauricio Font and Carlos Riobó (U.S.A: Paradigm Press, 2013), pp.243-257, (p.249).

[94] Ruth Kinna and José A Gutiérrez, 'Introduction. Anarchism and the national question – historical, theoretical and contemporary perspectives', *Nations and Nationalism,* (2022), 1-10. Bantman and Altena, *Reassessing the Transnational Turn.*

[95] Sánchez Cobos, *Sembrando Ideales.* Shaffer, *Anarchists of the Caribbean.* Evan Daniel, 'Cuban Cigar Makers in Havana, Key West, and Ybor City, 1850s–1890s: A Single Universe?', in *In Defiance of Boundaries: Anarchism in Latin American History,* ed. by Kirwin Shaffer and Geoffrey de la Forcade, (Florida: University Press of Florida, 2015), pp.34-56.

impact of transnationalism for furthering anarchist objectives. Simultaneously, the dissertation endeavours to build on the pre-existing corpus of work on the centrality of transnationalism for anarchism, and will specifically highlight the pivotal role of transnational networks in the anarchist response to imperialism. Lastly, through its use of assemblages theory, and a multi-scale analysis, this dissertation will study the global through its "local sites and workings", helping to understand how anarchism, a grassroots movement, challenged imperialism, a global and structural process. [96]

The dissertation will be structured as follows. Chapter Two provides an introductory outline to the imperial context in which the anarchist movement in Cuba acted, and in turn, shows how anarchism conceptualized imperialism. Chapter Three will examine the role of the politics of national identity within the dynamic between anarchism and imperialism. It highlights that the anarchist approach to challenging imperialism- intent on social revolution through class solidarity and a rejection of national identity- was constrained by the widespread organizational and principled importance of national identity amongst the working class. Chapter Four demonstrates that the anarchists advocated and undertook forms of direct action and praxis which were specifically tailored towards challenging the imperial power. However simultaneously, workplace actions demonstrate that divisions and cleavages were significant in constraining this anti-imperial praxis.

[96] Legg, p.7.

Chapter Two: Anarchism's conceptualization of imperialism

"De Cuba, á los hispanos

dominadores se echaron,

pero el puesto lo ocuparon,

los amos americanos".[97]

This chapter shows how the anarchists in Cuba conceptualized imperialism following the end of Spanish colonialism and the start of U.S. occupation between 1898-1902. It illustrates that the anarchist critique of imperialism was formed in three ways: a) imperialism as a symptom of structures (state and capitalism) b) the contradictions of the U.S.' republican democracy c) the role of Cubans in perpetuating imperialism. Though indicating distinct ways of processing the failure of Independence and conceptualizing U.S. imperialism, they all converged in the aim of social revolution through a working class united under a common class identity.

Historical context

The end of Spanish colonialism was marked by the transfer of power over Cuba from Spain to the US, occupying a country which following the war was "completamente arruinada" and in which "reina...gran miseria".[98] Between 1899-1902 the Americans formally occupied Cuba, a period in which they would maintain "strict supervision over the affairs of Cuba until

[97] 'La Semana', *El Nuevo Ideal,* 5 June 1901.
[98] 'Viva Cuba libre', *El Nuevo Ideal,* 7 August 1901.

a republican form of government has been adopted by the people thereof".[99] The military intervention was portrayed as a humanitarian effort to rescue Cuba from Spanish tyranny, marked by a discursive framework centred around "gratitude" in which a moral debt was imposed onto the Cuban people. John R. Brooke, the American governor of Habana during the occupation, wrote that "The Cuban people in these provinces have received us everywhere, and at all times, with every evidence of friendship, and in most localities with a cordiality that indicates genuine *gratitude*".[100] Moreover, the American presence is portrayed as a moment of jubilance and harmony of Cuban and American interests: "the Spaniards abandoned successive areas, the Cubans surged behind them, hung out innumerable flags, Cuban and American, and made pandemonium". Indeed, though the U.S. government conceded that there were U.S forces intent on "Americanizing the country and imposing their ways and wishes too much in the manner of conquerors", this was a small subset of "less intelligent soldiers" who were not committed to the "friendly and conciliatory mission".[101] Moreover, the observation of anger amongst the Cuban population is couched in a language of dismissal and paternalism: the Cubans are "hot-headed and irresponsible persons" who nonetheless have an "ability to exercise self-control when appeal is made to their reason and judgement".[102] In general, the U.S. viewed it as incumbent upon the Cuban people to demonstrate their capacity for self-government to the U.S., rather than as holding any legitimate basis for dissent.

Even prior to experiencing U.S. occupation, the anarchists in Cuba critiqued the U.S. intervention. In part due to their understanding of the U.S.' relationship to the Philippines and Puerto Rico, the anarchists were sceptical of the U.S. as a benevolent actor which would

[99] John R. Brooke, *Annual Report of Major General John R. Brooke, U.S. Army, Commanding the Division of Cuba,* (Havana: Division of War Department, 1899), p.21.
[100] Ibid., p.10. emphasis mine.
[101] Ibid., p.4.
[102] Ibid., p.11.

prioritize the interests of the Cuban people. The anarchists wrote that whilst the U.S. portrays itself as a "nación humanitaria" which went to war in order to "libertar á las colonias oprimidas", this was viewed as improbable since "se anexa Puerto Rico" and "quiere apropriarse las Filipinas". The anarchists were thus resolute in their rejection of the potential for U.S. governance to be of benefit to Cubans. They wrote that the U.S. "tiende sistemáticamente á anexarse en el porvenir la misma Isla de Cuba que tanto ha luchado y sufrido por su independencia".[103] This is grounded in their fundamental distrust of the state as an entity being capable of pursuing benevolent ambitions: "no son tan generosas las naciones...Las guerras humanitarias y civilizadoras son un mito, una farsa", narratives deployed to "encubir sus egoismos".[104] In essence, even prior to experiencing U.S. occupation, the anarchists utilized their distrust of the state, as well as their knowledge of the U.S.' foreign policy, to put forward their skepticism of the intervention being anything other than a self-aggrandizing and exploitative mission.

Similarly, in a piece addressed towards Spanish and Cuban anarchists at the 1893 anarchist international conference, Pedro Esteve, a Spanish anarchist who spent a portion of his life as an active anarchist in the U.S., noted that in spite of the purportedly more benign model of republicanism as the basis for "organización política y económica del país", the U.S. still exhibited the traits of an exploitative state, demonstrated by the fact that "no ha impedido el acumulamiento de la riqueza y el poder en pocos manos". He observed "autoridades despóticas y religiosos hipócritas; periodistas venales...magistrados complacientes con los ricos é inflexibles con los pobres".[105] Summarizing, Esteve explains that "la explotación y la tiranía" are rife, leading to "miseria horripilante". In spite of this, there remains a perception

[103] 'HUMANITARISMO', *El Rebelde,* 15 September 1898.
[104] 'CRONICAS SUBVERSIVAS', *El Rebelde,* 15 September 1898.
[105] Pedro Esteve, *A los anarquistas de Espana y Cuba. Memoria de la Conferencia Anarquista Internacional. Celebrada en Chicago en septiembre de 1893,* (Paterson.N.J., Imprenta de El Despertar, 1900), p.16.

of workers that they are ”los hombres más libres y felices del mundo”.[106] This piece of writing authored by Esteve is dated from 1893, and thus prior to the period following Independence. This demonstrates that the transnational network of anarchism stretching from Cuba to the U.S. was constructing an anti-imperialist critique directed at the U.S. even prior to the official intervention. Crucially, this lay the groundwork for an anti-imperialism consisting of pinpointing the flaws of American republican democracy.

At the same time, the build-up to the intervention was one in which the anarchist movement had allied itself to the anticolonial national liberation and Independence movement. Though subject to fierce internal debate within Cuba,[107] as well as in the anarchist movement globally,[108] the position of a temporary and tactical endorsement of national liberation was eventually adopted.[109] Palmiro De Lidia affirmed that despite anarchists being “enemigos del parlamentarismo y de los procedimientos electorales hoy imperantes” they would lend their support to Cuban Independence. He explained that this support for political Independence was contingent on a continued effort to pursue social revolution after Spanish departure. He wrote that “después de haber sacudido el yugo español” the movement must focus on challenging the “yugo” of the “americanos” so as to ensure that efforts towards “emancipación social” remain a focus.[110] In essence, whilst it challenged the national liberation project’s ultimate objective of the formation of a nation-state, it viewed this as a lesser evil than the perpetuation of colonialism. The same logic was reaffirmed by Barcia:

”Lucharé por la independencia y tan pronto como se consiga ésta, antes de que se constituya definitivamente la República cubana sobre las ruinas de la colonia, habrá terminado mi

[106] Ibid., p.13.
[107] Seoane, *Anarquismo e independentismo cubano.*
[108] Fernández, p.45-6: Piotr Kropotkin and Emma Goldman maintained “attitudes of neutrality” towards Independence, whilst other anarchists, namely Elisée Reclus, were vocal proponents. Sánchez Cobos, p.126: Jean Grave stated that “la libertad política es el primer paso para avanzar la lucha económica”.
[109] Fernández, p.33.
[110] ‘Por la Prensa’, *El Rebelde,* 1 September 1900.

misión, y separándome de las filas del ejército que hasta entonces habrá sido revolucionario, entraré de nuevo en la plenitud de mi vida de anarquista, continuando la lucha franca por el Ideal".[111]

Simultaneously, the anarchists in Cuba conceived of Independence as a prerequisite for freedom and liberty. They wrote that "las luchas por la independencia no pueden ser indiferentes á los amantes de la verdadera libertad". Struggles for Independence such as the anticolonial struggle against Spain are "usurpaciones de la autoridad, contra la autoridad misma" and in this way a defence of the nation-state form is a necessary sacrifice in the name of liberty. Stripped to their core, Independence struggles are "la afirmación...del principio libertario que profesamos...de la libertad de un pueblo á regirse por sí mismo" and the "negación de la autoridad ejercida por un poder extraño".[112] Therefore, in spite of the ideological conflict involved in supporting Independence, by viewing it through the prism of freedom from domination by a foreign power, it could be reconciled with the anarchist opposition to politics, national identity and the state.

The U.S. intervention certainly shifted the Cuban anarchist's perspective. The new context led the anarchists to adjusting "algunos de sus postulados" and "adecuándolos a la nueva realidad política y social".[113] For Palmiro de Lidia, in *El Ideal del siglo XX"*, he writes that the latter third of the nineteenth century, not least the Independence process from Spain in Cuba, was a key moment which demonstrated the pitfalls of "revolución política" for advancing anarchists objectives. As a result, the "revolución económica y social" is that which "fermenta en el corazón de todos los pueblos". This is reiterated by an article which insists that from experience, political processes of "discursos, leyes y decretos no se han

[111] 'Algo sobre Creci', *El Nuevo Ideal,* 21 December 1899.
[112] 'Las Luchas por la Independencia', *El Nuevo ideal*, 5 June 1901.
[113] Sánchez Cobos, '*Nuevas opciones, viejos dilemas',* p.80.

logrado nunca mejorar la condición económica de los desheredados".[114] The futility of politics as a means of achieving genuine improvement of quality of life for workers, or in progressing towards anarchist objectives, is further captured in the following: "deben unirse, asociarse, organizarse todos, posponiendo las cuestiones de detalle(las políticas) a la gran cuestión (la económica)".[115] In a piece which summarizes the anarchist opposition to politics and how this was critical for an effective anti-imperialist politics, the author writes "si el yankee abandona a cuba no será, ciertamente, en manos de ningun partido socialista de desheredados, por mas incontrastable, dulce y generosa que sea su fuerza".[116] Whilst in some ways Independence from Spain had allowed for increased freedom for anarchist organizing,[117] the anarchists stood against the idea that "la Revolución nos ha emancipado á todos los cubanos" given that "los obreros siguen tan explotados ó más que estaban.[118] In sum, the anarchists diagnosed the Independence process as proof of the numerous flaws in parliamentary reformist politics. The the fact that political Independence had yielded a seamless transition from subjugation to Spain towards subjugation to the U.S. provided greater impetus for an anti-imperialism which sought for a rupture in the form of social revolution.

The anarchist logic rested in the need for social revolution as the sole mechanism by which their subordinate position could be transformed: **"**solo la revolución social pondrá fin a la rapiña del fuerte".[119] The emphasis on social revolution as the sole avenue for emancipation means that for the anarchists "posponemos todo al ideal anarquista, porque sólo él puede redimirnos; sólo él es capaz de proporcionarnos mejoras positivas y duraderas; él es el único que nos dará, realizándolo, libertad, paz y felicidad". This emphasis on postponement denotes

[114] 'La Organización Obrera', *El Nuevo Ideal,* 4 March 1899.
[115] 'Pasado, presente y porvenir', *El Despertar,* 30 November 1899.
[116] 'Partido Socialista Cubano', *El Nuevo Ideal,* 15 April 1899.
[117] Sánchez Cobos, *Sembrando Ideales,* p.43.
[118] 'A mi amigo anónimo', *El Nuevo Ideal* 29 April 1899.
[119] 'Lo Previsto', *El Nuevo Ideal,* 15 Marzo 1901.

the fact that any action short of that which contributes directly to the social revolution is futile. Challenges to power should not be carried out within the political sphere through reformism or electoralism, but rather the anarchists contended that an overhaul of politics and the state would result from direct action within the workplace sphere, and as such "El camino más recto y expedito para alcanzar mejoras... es por medio de reclamaciones directas, sostenidas en caso necesario por medio de la huelga".[120] This is grounded in the perspective of society as an interconnected whole in which "all is interdependent" and as such "it is impossible to reform one thing without altering the whole".[121] Crucially then, given that social revolution would dismantle the state and capitalism, and imperialism was characterized by these two structures, the anarchist social revolution was necessarily anti-imperialist.

Anti-imperialism as anti-statism and anti-capitalism

This emphasis on social revolution as a rupture with a structural totality involved a strict opposition to the existence of the state, viewed by the anarchists as a fundamental causal factor for imperialism. Some anarchists in Cuba highlighted the fact that the issue lay not in domination of Cuba by Spain or the U.S. specifically, but with the state structure itself. In so doing, the United States ceased to be the specific object of attack. The United States, like Spain, intervened in Cuba due to the logic of the state impelling it to do so. Palmiro de Lidia writes that the prospect of a non-violent and non-expanionsist state is impossible since "el estado de guerra es el estado natural y permanente de las modernas naciones, que fundan su existencia y poderío en el antagonismo de clases, en la lucha económica, en la expansión colonial y en el dominio fuerte sobre el débil".[122] The inexorable connection between the modern state form and expansionist practices is thereby firmly posited. In Luis Barcia's personal memoir, he writes that "el Estado es la guerra en el exterior y la opresión en el

[120] 'La Organización Obrera', *El Nuevo Ideal* 4 March 1899.
[121] Piotr Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread*, (London: Chapman and Hall, 1913), p.50.
[122] ¡Viva Cuba libre!, *El Nuevo Ideal,* 24 July 1901.

interior" and as such "Los Estados Unidos, al guerrear con España y apoderarse de sus posesiones, no hizo otra cosa que lo que han hecho y están haciendo otras naciones incluso España...Cuantas naciones, pequeñas e insignificantes hoy, han sido grandes imperios en otros tiempos".[123] In other words, U.S. imperialism, rather than being particular to the U.S., was a natural consequence of the state as the central structuring apparatus for society.

In a similar approach which focuses on structure rather than individualizing the imperial exploits of certain states, the logic was extended to how capitalism drives imperialism. This market domination effort by the U.S. is viewed by some anarchists in Cuba as symptomatic of capitalism, rather than as a specificity of the U.S. In one article, as a part of a series which seeks to delineate the features of "Colonización contemporánea", the author rejects the possibility of diagnosing the colonial question through individualizing or "hacer aparecer tal ó cual personalidad responsible". This is because to argue that it results from "tal ó cual forma de política" such as through a "concepción transitoria de un gobierno particular, ó de causas provisionalmente activas" would be to avoid a structural explanation. Rather, it is the constant and universal features of nation-states working according to the laws of capitalism which explains colonialism and imperialism; the "contextura económica de los Estados" is where one finds "ese caracter general". As such, it is crucial to "apreciar el esfuerzo universal que venimos estudiando, echar á un lado todas las contingencias". [124] Similarly, another anarchist author suggests that one of the critical levers of the challenge to imperialism must be in resisting the monopolizing tactics of American business. Crucially, this form of anti-imperialism against the U.S. is construed in terms of a challenge to capitalism itself: "debemos evitar caer bajo el yugo de los *trusts* americanos, à fin de mejor combatir el capitalismo del país". This challenge to capitalism, along with attempts to dissolve the state,

[123] Luis Barcia Quilabert, *Memoria,* (Tampa, 1957), p.32-33.
[124] 'La Colonización Contemporánea', *El Nuevo Ideal,* 8 May 1901.

were key traits of "la emancipación social", and as such, given the fact that social revolution was a component of anti-imperialism, was also a part of the anarchist schema of anti-imperialism.[125] In this way, the anarchists saw opposition to the state and capitalism as components of anti-imperialism and social revolution.

The anarchist movement and the specificity of U.S. imperialism

The structural and impersonal approach of the anarchist movement's anti-imperialism was also accompanied by a degree of individualization of the U.S. itself. Building on their pre-intervention critique of the U.S., during the occupation by the U.S. they highlighted the flaws of U.S. republicanism. Fundamental to this critique was the transnational connection between anarchists in Cuba and the U.S.. This migration stretched "de la Habana á Cayo Hueso, de Cayo Hueso á Tampa y de Tampa á Jacksonville, Nueva York, Cleveland, Chicago y Canada, y de estas localidades del Norte hasta la Habana" and characterized by "constante pergrinación afluyendo, ya á una localidad ya á otra, según la mayor ó menor demanda de brazos".[126] The link between Cuba, the U.S. and Spain was a core feature of the Hispanic anarchist movement and is well illustrated by individual anarchists such as Pedro Esteve, an anarchist who epitomized the "enlace entre el anarquismo español, cubano y norteamericano".[127] This type of transnational network facilitated the movement of both people and ideas; as a result, Cubans were able to process their situation under U.S. control through the knowledge gleaned from anarchists based in the U.S.

One way in which this cross-fertilisation revealed itself is through the anarchist reference to racial oppression within the U.S. For instance, in the article 'Kropotkine en los Estados Unidos" the author asserts that resistance to the U.S. is vital since otherwise the same

[125] 'Por la Prensa', *El Nuevo Ideal*, 1 November 1900.
[126] 'CUESTION DE LOCALIDAD', *El Rebelde,* 5 November 1898.
[127] Sánchez Cobos, *Sembrando Ideales,* p.111

racialized oppression that the U.S. government exerts over its black population in the U.S. could be transplanted to Cuba: "si los cubanos no desean llegar á ser los escalvos de los americanos plantadores de algodón y azúcar, harán bien en preparar sus armas".[128] In addition, in an article titled 'Salvajismo Yanqui',[129] the authors republish an account of a "repugnante linchamiento" from an unnamed American newspaper. [130] Further to this, the anarchists point to the "aniquilamiento" of "los indios".[131] In all of these cases, denunciation of racism is deployed principally as a way of the Cuban anarchists better understanding their own subjugation to U.S. imperial power. Though the anarchists were firmly opposed to racial discrimination and oppression, it formed a part, along with national identity discrimination, of the "cuestiones secundarias" by comparison to the need to defend a singular class identity which transcended both race and nationality.[132] The critique of slavery, as well as that of the oppression of "indios" is discussed *in relation to* the Cuban struggle, as opposed to being denounced in and of itself.[133] By exposing these repressive acts committed by the U.S. government on the basis of race, the anarchists could reaffirm the need for working class struggle against U.S. imperialist rule, and were thus "aprovechadas como una oportunidad más de denuncia contra el sistema y de llamamiento a la unidad de todos".[134] Overall, though in some ways illustrative of the anti-racist posture of the Cuban anarchist movement, the anarchist critique of racial injustice in the U.S. mainly allowed for a strengthening of the anti-imperial critique.

This anti-imperialism, directed towards outlining the contradictions of the U.S., also created the space to extol the anarchist alternative. Luis Barcia affirms in an article titled "La

[128] 'Kropotkine en los Estados Unidos', *El Nuevo Ideal*, 15 May 1901.
[129] 'Salvajismo Yanqui', *El Nuevo Ideal*, 1 March 1901.
[130] 'Salvajismo Yanqui', *El Nuevo Ideal*, 1 March 1901.
[131] 'Los indios y los yankees', *El Nuevo Ideal*, 4 March 1899.
[132] Sánchez Cobos, *Clase versus raza en Cuba*, p.247.
[133] 'Los indios y los yankees', *El Nuevo Ideal*, 4 March 1899.
[134] Ibid., p.247.

republica ideal" that the version of republicanism that the U.S. has brought to Cuba does not mark an improvement in the anarchist objective of pursuing emancipation and freedom for the working class.[135] This is confirmed in a letter written by 'José' in New York to his brother Miguel in La Habana, in which he writes of dire workplace conditions: "me veo obligado á sufrir que diariamente me robe mi burgués...pago una renta exorbitante por un casucho inhabitable". Using these specific experiences of exploitation, the author hypothesizes pessimistically that "Cuba será gobernada por los Estados Unidos y el porvenir que aguarda á los obreros de esa isla es el de seguir cual miseros esclavos, al iguales de los obreros de este país, si no peor".[136] Barcia's article, building on this framework of critique of U.S. republicanism, praises those who, in the midst of frenzied "entusiasmo por la independencia", seek to further anarchist conceptions of worker freedom. Interestingly, Barcia does not entirely subvert the language of U.S. republicanism and state-making with the discourse of transformative social revolution. Instead, he points to ways in which the Cubans should tailor the republican state form to their needs: "Nuestra república ha de ser esencialmente democrática, donde el elemento obrero, que forma hoy la base y la fuerza de la revolución, sea el que mande". He continues, further specifying the parameters of how this republic would be structured: in contrast to the U.S. model which is devoid of democracy, an anarchist Cuba "será federativa, existirá el referendum como en Suiza para que nuestros representantes no nos traicionen decretando leyes que no sean de nuestro agrado". Though Barcia argues for decentralization, he does not put forward the same rhetoric of the abolition of the state and capitalism through social revolution that appears in many other texts. This points towards an anarchist anti-imperialism which was not just a rejection, but an affirmation of alternative structures beyond the dismantling of the state and capitalism as a part of social revolution.

[135] '¡Utópicas aspiraciones!', *El Nuevo Ideal,* 18 February 1899.
[136] 'A MIGUEL, EN LA HABANA, DE SU HERMANO JOSE, EN NUEVA YORK', *El Rebelde,* 15 October 1898.

This critique of U.S. republicanism also manifested itself in material and discursive transnational solidarity. Affirmations such as "los compañeros de Tampa pueden contar con el apoyo de sus hermanos de Cuba" were commonplace".[137] Facilitated through the establishment of " Comités de auxilio", anarchists in Cuba expressed solidarity towards anarchists in Tampa in the form of strike funds: They write that: "En todas las poblaciones de la provincia de la Habana...donde existen núcleos obreros, se han organizado Comités de Auxilio, y las colectas se suceden, y el entusiasmo crece" with the objective of "ayudar á aquellos compañeros á vencer en esta descomunal contien contra sus insaciables y ambiciosos enemigos".[138] These "Comités de auxilio" combined their material support with "llevar á cabo una propaganda activa en todas las localidades de la Isla, para levantar el espíritu de protesta".[139] Both the material-based and propaganda-based solidarity held the aim of "protestar enérgicamente de los atropellos realizados con los obreros de aquella localidad por los fabricantes y autoridades". In a specific linkage between the struggle of Cuban anarchists and those in the U.S., one author states categorically that: "En su victoria va envuelta nuestra garantía para las próximas luchas que nos preparan nuestros explotadores de aquí. Su triunfo, es nuestro triunfo: su derrota es nuestra derrota. El dilema es este".[140] In this way, anarchist solidarity in Cuba towards workers in the U.S. was understood as a key facet of anti-imperialism and the struggle for social revolution in Cuba.

The "sterilization" of revolution: Cuban complicity in imperialism

Though the anarchist movement in Cuba constructed a specific critique of the U.S., they also chimed with the conceptualization of imperialism as multi-faceted. In particular, they align

[137] 'Manifiesto de los obreros de Tampa', *El Nuevo Ideal,* 21 July 1899.
[138] 'Movimiento Obrero', *El Nuevo Ideal*, 21 August 1901.
[139] 'La Huelga de Tampa', *El Nuevo Ideal,* 14 August 1901.
[140] 'Movimiento Obrero', *El Nuevo Ideal,* 21 August 1901.

with Van der Walt's view that imperialism was carried out by "foreign and local elites"[141], as well as Ramnath who foregrounds both "external forces" and "local reactionary elements" meaning that "any anarchistic movements against colonial regimes requires also an overhaul of internal oppression alongside the elimination of the external one".[142] In relation to Cuba specifically, as Rivero Muñiz explains, the "autoridades" during this period were understood as "no sólo a las esadounidenses sino también a muchas de las cubanas que cooperaban con ellos en el gobierno de la Isla".[143] Leaning on Legg's assemblages' theory as a way of converting imperialism from an abstract monolith to being characterized by specific identifiable traits, the view of Cubans as imperialist actors brought imperialism closer to the everyday reality of anarchists and workers. In this way, the anarchists in Cuba "de-reify structural processes into specific manifestations, studying the 'global' through its local sites and workings".[144]

Much of the critique launched by anarchists of Cubans as imperial actors is anchored in their participation in political processes, namely the Platt Amendment. Approved on March 2, 1902, the Platt Amendment was a piece of legislation which was the result of the U.S. imposing the precondition on their departure from Cuba being that they would retain the right to intervene. In essence, the Platt Amendment ensured political control of America over Cuba, enshrined by Article Three which stated that "the government of Cuba consents that the United States may exercise the right to intervene for the preservation of Cuban Independence".[145] The anarchists drew a clear link between the specific actions of Cubans, the political processes such as the Platt Amendment which facilitated this, and ultimately the

[141] Van der Walt, *Back to the future,* p.356.
[142] Maia Ramnath, 'Non-Western Anarchisms and Postcolonialism', in *Palgrave Handbook of Anarchism,* ed. by Carl Levy and Matthew, S. Adams (Switzerland: Palgrave and Macmillan, 2019), 677-697 (p.677).
[143] Rivero Muñiz, p.35.
[144] Legg, p.7
[145] U.S Government, 'Enmienda Platt: De Colonia Española a Colonia Yanqui', in *Documentos para la Historia de Cuba. Tomo II,* ed.by Hortensia Pichardo (La Habana: Instituto del Libro, 1969), pp.118-120 (p.118).

subjugation of Cuba to U.S. imperialist hegemony. Writing in 1901 whilst the Platt Amendment is on the verge of becoming enshrined into constitutional law, one anarchist affirms that "los políticos cubanos van muy pronto á estar á la graña con los políticos americanos" resulting in the question being posed of "¿Que conducta debemos seguir las masas productoras, el verdadero pueblo, ante esa lucha de clases ó sease esas diferencias entre los gobernantes cubanos y los gobernantes yanquis?". Framed in terms of class struggle, the anarchist writes that from the perspective of the working classes, there is no distinction between Cubans and Americans: "no han dado prueba los gobernantes cubanos de ser más justicieros ni menos tiranos que los gobernantes americanos".[146] In a sarcastic jibe at the flaws of electoral politics, another column reads: **"**La Convención cubana aprobó la enmienda Platt" which, according to the logic of "teoría democrática", means that the " pueblo *soberano* lo quiere". Of course, the anarchists stood in ardent opposition to the potential of representative politics for highlighting the preferences and concerns of Cubans, leading them to sarcastically summarize this process as one whereby "muy democráticamente, Cuba será una simple dependencia de los Estados Unidos".[147] Combining their critique of both Cubans complicit in the consolidation of U.S. imperialism, and the political processes which "esterilizó...lo que la revolución conquistó",[148] the anarchists constructed an anti-imperialist discourse which de reified imperialism from being a monolithic "macro-label"[149] and highlights the way that local actors were integral to its perpetuation.

Moreover, the anarchists saw the Cubans who became a part of the armed forces in the service of U.S. imperialism as evidence of Cuban complicity. They lamented the fact that

[146] 'La Constitución de la nueva República Cubana', *El Nuevo Ideal*, 15 February 1901.
[147] 'LA SEMANA', *El Nuevo Ideal,* 5 June 1901.
[148] Ibid.
[149] Apata. *Imperialism and the Developing World.*

those who "lucharon bravamente en defensa de los ideales de independencia y libertad" had subsequently opted to work against the interests of workers. This author sees these Cubans as those who "sirvan hoy de instrumento...para ahogar la voz de los oprimidos, las protestas de los débiles, las reclamaciones de los desheredados".[150] This critique was primarily directed at Cuban elites, such as General Menocal. This Cuban complicity was denounced by the anarchists from the perspective of its betrayal both of worker solidarity and struggle, as well as from the perspective of patriotic unity:

"no menos indignación como obrero y vergüenza como cubano experimenté yo cuando poco después de la evacuación de las tropas españolas, supe que el patriota general cubano Sr. Menocal daba orden á sus soldados para que fueran á ocupar los puestos de los infelices trabajadores que...se habían declarado en huelga"[151]

The anarchist movement's critique of the role of Cubans in the consolidation of imperialism is corroborated by the statements of U.S. authorities. Brooke's account of the collaboration between Cubans and the U.S. explains that broader pattern in which "Cuban officers were selected to take the higher positions; inspectors, captains, lieutenants, and the like", whilst "for the main body of the force applications were invited from all quarters". Many of these individuals came from the Cuban army, such as "General Menocal an officer of high rank in the Cuban Army" who "speaking English fluently, and with an American education as an engineer, was invited to take the position of Chief of Police and accepted it".[152] The anarchist movement was aware of, and intent on critiquing, this process of Cubans propping up U.S. imperialism, and as such it formed a part of their anti-imperial conceptualization and critique.

[150] 'Protestamos', *El Nuevo Ideal*, 11 February 1899.
[151] 'La Constitución de la nueva República Cubana', *El Nuevo Ideal,* 15 February 1901.
[152] Brooke, p.22

Conclusion

This chapter has presented how the anarchists in Cuba conceptualized and constructed an opposition to imperialism following the departure of Spain and the arrival of the U.S. It demonstrated that the anarchist approach to imperialism was one which could be broadly classified under three categories: a) imperialism as a symptom of structures (state and capitalism) b) the contradictions of the U.S.' republican democracy c) the role of Cubans in perpetuating imperialism. Whilst these denote a variation in the way that anarchism conceived of imperialism, it was noted that they all fed into and complemented one overarching narrative and conceptualization. This was one which viewed the U.S.' intervention and occupation as an event which demonstrated the failure of Independence, either to create an independent nation-state, or to advance the progression towards anarchist social revolution. It was this which prompted the anarchists to reaffirm their belief in the need for social revolution in response to imperialism. Part of the purpose of the following chapter will be to explain how, with this conceptualization of imperialism as a starting point, the anarchists sought to organize on the basis of unified class struggle.

The chapter also developed preliminary findings on two other themes which this project seeks to answer in its analysis of the encounter between anarchism and imperialism: first, that the anarchist conceptualization and critique of imperialism was significantly aided by its transnational network with the U.S. Second, the anarchist response to imperialism was to "de-reify", in the sense that an abstract global process of imperialism is deconstructed into specific and "local" identifiable parts.[153] This was demonstrated through the anarchist critique of Cubans who the anarchists viewed as complicit in imperialism.

[153] Legg, p.7.

Chapter Three: National identity, class and antagonisms

"en Cuba debíase pensarse en resolver el problema político-patriótico de su independencia, abriendo para ello un paréntesis en la propaganda del ideal anarquista, y reavivároнse con tal motivo los antiguos odios de raza y de nacionalidad (amortiguados… no extinguidos)".[154]

Introduction

Building on the previous chapter's outlining of the conceptualization of imperialism by anarchism, this chapter will highlight the cleavages and antagonisms which are crucial to expanding the understanding of the anarchist movement's capacity to challenge imperialism. On the one hand, these consisted of national identity antagonisms between Cuban and Spanish members of the worker community in Cuba. Simultaneously, the revolutionary class-based project of anarchism collided with large portions of the working class tied to national identity and the construction of an Independent Cuban nation-state. These two antagonisms, rather than being closed and separate from each other, were tightly interlinked and overlapping.

In highlighting how antagonisms constrained the anarchist movement's capacity to challenge imperialism, this chapter identifies Spanish colonialism, and the Independence process, as a key cause of this. This foregrounding of the tensions between Spaniards and Cubans, as a continuing impact of the colonial era helps to decouple anticolonial struggle from the "temporal moment of decolonization".[155] It explains how despite Independence marking a significant rupture in the organization of Cuban society, the continued workplace-related grievances of Cubans demonstrated the continuation of colonial-era structural power as well

[154] 'Pasado, presente y porvenir', *El Despertar*, 30 November 1899.
[155] Andrew Davies, '*Geographies of Anticolonialism: Political Networks Across and Beyond South India, c. 1900–1930'*, (Oxford: Royal Geographical Society, 2020), p.32.

as hierarchical social relations.[156] As a result, anarchist attempts to absorb differences based on national identity with a common unifying class and worker category was difficult within an environment in which the legacy of Independence and colonialism remained potent.

This chapter builds on Shaffer's effort to conceptualize the Cuban anarchist movement's encounter with imperialism through the prism of national identity. However, rather than focusing on the ways in which anarchists succeeded in reappropriating symbols of Cuban nationhood to align with anarchist principles and objectives, it concurs with perspectives which point to the "siren song of nationalism" as holding significant influence on the anarchist movement's capacity to craft a robust opposition.[157] In this way, I present the case that one should be cautious of presenting a view of national identity and nationalism as malleable and tactical vehicles for the Cuban anarchist movement under U.S. imperialism.

This chapter operates principally at Ferguson's "meso-level" of relations between anarchist and other worker groupings.[158] As well as this, it includes a transnational lens when discussing the intersection between anarchism's anti-imperialism, immigration and national identity. Moreover, it argues that the divisive climate pivoting around national identity was significant in limiting the productive impact of transnationalism in building the anarchist movement. In a final interrogation of scale, it argues that the anarchist critique of workers for their division and lack of commitment to revolutionary class struggle can be viewed as an anarchist identification of one of imperialism's "specific manifestations", thus breaking down global imperialism into the local and meso level. [159] In other words, they viewed this attitude by workers to be a key node in which their anti-imperialism should take place; without a

[156] Alejandro García Álvarez and Consuelo Naranjo Orovio, 'Cubanos y españoles después del 98: de la confrontación a la convivencia pacífica', *Revista de Indias,* 58.212, (1998), 101-129.
[157] Brian Meeks 'Review: Anarchists of the Caribbean: Countercultural Politics and Transnational Networks in the Age of U.S. Expansion by Kirwin Shaffer', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History,* 52.3, (2021), 318, (p.318).
[158] Ferguson, p.24.
[159] Legg, p.7

workforce committed to class struggle and social revolution, anti-imperialism would be stunted.

National identity and antagonisms

Prior to the post-1898 period, Cuban-Spanish relations in Cuba were strained. In contrast to the view of Spanish anarchist Luis Barcia, who recalls from approximately the year 1879 that in Cuba "todos, cubanos y españoles, parecían estar contentos y auguraban la felicidad en el porvenir",[160] other writings portray a more antagonistic relationship. Pedro Esteve's writings from the anarchist conference celebrated in Chicago in 1893 elucidate this. Viewed as "la figura más relevante del movimiento anarquista de habla hispana (español y cubano)" "densamente conectado",[161] and who epitomized the "enlace entre el anarquismo español, cubano y norteamericano",[162] Esteve was tied to Cuba by virtue of his centrality to the movement's network, and indeed visited for a four month period between the end of 1893 and the start of 1894.[163] His principal conclusion was that of Spaniards and Cubans existing in an antagonistic relationship:

En las conversaciones íntimas, así como en las relaciones entre cubanos y penínsulares...notábanse rivalidades, resentimientos, vestigios de mirarse como conquistados ó como conquistadores. Ni de padres á hijos existía real cordialidad. Para el peninsular, hablando en términos generales, el cubano es un sér inferior, un degenerado; para el

[160] Barcia, p.28. Barcia states that he has a blurred memory of specific events and their corresponding date: "No sé si estamos ya por el año 1893 o 1894 pues mi memoria es muy fragil, y aunque la tengo para los acontecimientos, no la tengo para las fechas".
[161] Susane Sueiro Seoane, 'Un anarquista en penumbra. Pedro Esteve y la velada red del anarquismo transnacional', *Alcores. Revista de Historia contemporánea*, 15, (2013), 43-66, (p.4).
[162] Sánchez Cobos, p.111.
[163] Sánchez Cobos, p.117.

cubano, el peninsular un hombre brutal, soez, bárbaro. Más que respetarse, lo que hacen es soportarse".[164]

Though these comments were made in 1893, prior to the period of study focused on in this chapter, they serve to give critical context. Esteve highlights how the identification with Spaniards as "conquistadores" and Cubans as "conquistados" was commonplace, thus illustrating that antagonisms were tightly bound up with colonialism. This was contrary to the vision of Cuba as marked by class unity. Given his experiences in the U.S. where he was "acostumbrado á las intransigencias dominantes...donde el elemento cubano separatista había llegado a impedir la entrada de los peninsulares, no sólo en muchas fábricas, sí que también en muchos pueblos", he had conjured a hopeful image of a Habana where these internal divisions on the basis of nationality did not reign supreme: "acostumbrado á sufrir estas intransigencias, repito, rebosada el gozo hasta mis poros al contemplar en Habana esfumadas, disipadas por completo estas cuestiones ante las luchas del trabajo"[165]. Instead, this harmony was absent: the colonial period had a significant impact on cultivating long-lasting antagonisms between Cubans and Spaniards.

This type of antagonism carried over into the period following the end of Spanish colonial rule. Despite the end of Spanish colonialism, Cubans maintained a strong attachment to Cuban national identity. Indeed, the Cuban anarchist fixation with Spain and Spanish identity, though sometimes grounded in stereotypes, was also grounded in several markers of the persistence of Spanish colonialism: employment procedures which favoured Spaniards, the continuation of Spain's colonial administration as reflected in the way that the U.S. imperial force was organized (such as the subdivision into departments),[166] and lastly the continued presence of Spanish elites in the upper echelons of both public and private

[164] Esteve, *Memoria de la Conferencia,* p.80
[165] Ibid., p.79.
[166] James Hitchman, *Leonard Wood and Cuban Independence,* 1898-1902, (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1971), p.17.

spheres.[167] In essence, the Spanish colonial presence remained present in Cuba, though in a different and less overt form as it had taken in the era of colonial occupation. Certain anarchists themselves noted how the colonial era had left a landscape in which "las desastrosas divisiones que siempre fueron causa de mayor degradación y miseria" remained "latentes".[168] Heredia and Putnam have written of how despite the fact that "the liquidations of colonial domination and the conquest of the nation were grandiose achievements" and indeed "decisively altered the strategies and actions of all the Cuban groups" this did not necessarily "eliminate the basics of the existing social domination". [169] In line with Viroli's assertion that "preferential treatment and exceptions produce enmity and dissentions between citizens which weakens their commitment to the common welfare", the preferential treatment of Spaniards created antagonisms between the two groups. [170] Put differently: "the transformations were just as often continuities and syntheses merging the new with the old", and as such Cuban-Spanish antagonisms remained.[171]

Transnationalism and national identity

Importantly, this period under U.S. imperialism also coincided with significant flows of Spanish migration to Cuba, a reality which was certainly influential in the construction of a discourse of national identity and the antagonisms between the two groups. An article in *El Nuevo Ideal* shows how "en el año 1900 desembarcaron por el puerto de la Habana 24,125 inmigrantes, de los cuales 21,203 procedían de España".[172] In the 1899 census of the population of Cuba published by John Brooke, the American civil governor based in Habana,

[167] García Álvarez and Naranjo Orovio.

[168] 'A LOS TRABAJADORES DE CUBA. UNION Y CONCORDIA', *El Nuevo Ideal*, 11 March 1899.
[169] Fernando Martínez Heredia and Lara Putnam, 'Nationalism, Races, and Classes in the Revolution of 1895 and the Cuban First Republic', *Cuban Studies,* 33.50, (2002), 95-123, (pp.100-101).
[170] Viroli, p.101.
[171] Khuri-Makhdisi, p.7.
[172] 'Movimiento Obrero', *El Nuevo Ideal,* 1 March 1901.

individuals born in Spain were the second largest grouping residing in Cuba (numbering 129,240) after the 1,400,262 who were born in Cuba.[173] With specific regards to anarchist migration, the influx of Spanish anarchists was partly due to a repressive Spanish state which carried out a strict and heavy-handed assault on the anarchist movement in this period. An article in *El Despertar* highlights the restrictive climate that the anarchist movement in Spain operated under:"En España la propaganda anarquista es dificilísima, casi imposible. La tirania gubernamental es allí terrible, infame" In particular the author points to "leyes excepcionales contra nosotros", "el estado de sitio y la censura previa", as well as "complots para detener á cuantos se conocen como revolucionarios".[174] It was also due to the perception of Cuba as a revolutionary state within which anarchist ideals would be able to flourish. This perception owed itself to the Independence of 1898 as well as the fact that Cuban libertarians enjoyed comparatively more freedom than those in Spain. Therefore, as well as being pushed away from Spain, they were also pulled to Cuba which was judged to be a site of revolutionary possibility where it would be easier to pursue anarchist objectives.[175] This transnational connection is key to understanding the relationship between anarchism, imperialism and the politics of national identity in the Cuban anarchist movement.

The role of transnational migration between Spain and Cuba tends to be associated with the growth of anarchism. Sánchez Cobos writes that "desde finales de sigo XIX la mayor de las Antillas recibió de la Península importantes contingentes migratorios, que terminaron por dejar su impronta en la sociedad cubana".[176] More specifically, the fertilization of anarchism in Cuba with Spanish collectivist Bakuninist anarchism of the FTRE is described as fundamental to the growth of anarchosyndicalism in Cuba.[177] This is furthered by Sánchez-

[173] Departamento de la guerra, 'Informe sobre el Censo de Cuba, 1899, In *Documentos para la Historia de Cuba. Tomo II,* ed. by Hortensia Pichardo (La Habana: Instituto del Libro, 1969), 58-62, (p.58).
[174] 'Lo que hay que hacer', *El Despertar*. 30 September 1898.
[175] Sánchez Cobos, *Sembrando Ideales,* p.69.
[176] Sánchez Cobos, *Sembrando Ideales,* p.50.
[177] Daniel, *Cigar Makers.*

Cobos who writes that Spanish anarchist migration was positive, and indeed crucial, to the development of anarchism in Cuba in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Importantly however, Sánchez Cobos' work also contributes towards problematizing the grand narrative of Spanish anarchist migration having a solely generative impact. This is tackled through an appreciation of the clunky and non-linear progression of the anarchist movement in Cuba amid this influx of Spanish migration. In this context, migration to some degree contributed towards the reinforcement and indeed further complication of the "ya de por sí difícil situación laboral" within Cuba.[178] Indeed, some have argued that the wave of Spanish migration, and resultant large Spanish worker community, "mantuvo viva la presencia de España en la isla". This, the authors write "no sólo desde un punto de vista cultural, sino también étnico y familiar".[179] Transnationalism in the form of Spanish migration should be viewed then as a process which fed into, and did not neutralize, the existing post-colonial climate of national identity antagonisms.

Class versus national identity

In general, the anarchists in Cuba were very preoccupied with what they viewed as the debilitating nature of national identity antagonisms, which "divide á los hombres en enemigos irreconciliables". They understood this as being of detriment to their aspirations of social revolution since this forging of division within the working class "distrae á los oprimidos con el engaño de un peligro exterior para que no se duelan de la esclavitud que les imponen sus compatriotas ni se rebelen contra ella".[180] Instead, they favoured what they understood as the unifying and transcendental potential of the universal categories of 'class' and 'the worker' over any affiliation to national identity. The anarchist movement insisted on class solidarity and unity as being crucial for advancing working class interests, since they

[178] Sánchez Cobos, *Sembrando Ideales,* p.50.
[179] Álvarez and Orovio, p.110.
[180] 'Libertad, Libertad, Libertad', *El Nuevo Ideal,* 21 agosto 1901.

were the only way of reconciling the toxic division which an attachment to national identity yielded:

"Hacer comprender á esta parte inconsciente del proletariado, que la etiqueta nacionalista bajo la cual son clasificados en cada país… es una ficción que no debe prevalecer sobre la realidad de los intereses que por encima de las fronteras unen solidariamente à los hombres de las mismas clases"[181]

Underpinning the anarchist rejection of national identity was its illegitimacy and antiquatedness. In other words, whilst it had previously held value as a revolutionary tool, and legitimacy as a rationale for hostility, in the new imperial context it was judged to be a relic of the past with no relevance or utility. Proclamations by anarchists proposed that workers put to the side "pasadas pendencias" and that "las causas funestas que en el antiguo régimen dieron motivo á odios, querellas y divisiones entre los trabajadores de Cuba, desaparecieron, barridas por el nuevo estado de cosas, para nunca más volver".[182] The changing circumstances mean that the ties to national identity cease to be a legitimate position since "Las causas que en mala hora pudieron dar origen á tales antagonismos, son causas muertas". In other words, the end of Spanish colonialism nullified the rationale for hostility between Cubans and Spaniards. Though the author insists that the circumstances which led to this division "pueden recordarse con horror", the author writes that national identities "no se deben invocar" lest they "continuén produciendo sus corruptores efectos".[183] With national identity judged to be an irrational irrelevance given the achievement of Independence, the anarchists could propose the solution of class solidarity for working class emancipation: "Desaprecido el obstáculo que existía para una sincera unión de las masas

[181] 'Liga de Solidaridad Internacional', *El Nuevo Ideal,* 19 junio 1901.
[182] 'Marchemos', *El Nuevo Ideal,* 25 January 1899.
[183] 'A LOS TRABAJADORES DE CUBA: UNION Y CONCORDIA', *El Nuevo Ideal,* 7 March 1899.

proletarias en Cuba",[184] it is imperative that "cual miembros de una clase oprimida y explotada, marchemos todos a la conquista de nuestra emancipación económica y política marchemos juntos, que una es nuestra causa y uno también nuestro enemigo: la burguesía, sea cualquiera su nación y su filiación política"[185] In this way, not only was class solidarity promoted as a response to the new imperial context, but there was simultaneously a labour of delegitimating the value of national identity.

Cuban anarchism and the *Liga General de Trabajadores Cubanos:* an opposition

Within the context of these antagonisms, the *Liga General de Trabajadores Cubanos (Liga)* gave organizational expression to the worker attachment to national identity. The influence of the *Liga* as an organizational force amongst the Cuban working-class bears emphasizing: Pichardo writes that its characteristics and objectives were synonymous with the "aspiraciones de la mayor parte del proletariado Cubano" and writes that during 1900 "no acababa de recobrar aquella indudable fuerza con que había nacido".[186] This is reaffirmed by Sánchez Cobos who writes that the *Liga* was "una de las organizaciones que tuvo mayor peso en este período".[187] Moreover, they represented one of the strongest industries in Cuba after the war: tobacco. Foner writes that "Unemployment was widespread when the Spanish-American War came to an end" and "only a handful of industries functioned in the cities" of which tobacco was the largest.[188] Moreover, this incorporation of the tobacco sector into the *Liga* was particularly significant given that the sector of tobacco production in the late nineteenth century and prior to the end of Spanish colonial rule was "el sector más radical"

[184] 'Muralla China', *El Nuevo Ideal,* 29 April 1899.
[185] 'Marchemos', *El Nuevo Ideal,* 25 January 1899.
[186] La Liga General de Trabajadores Cubanos, 'Programa', in *Documentos para la Historia de Cuba. Tomo II,* ed. by Hortensia Pichardo (La Habana: Instituto del Libro, 1969), 37-38, (p.37).
[187] Sánchez Cobos, Sembrando ideales, p.134.
[188] Philip S. Foner, 'The Cuban Labour Movement during the occupation', in *The Spanish-Cuban-American War and the Birth of American Imperialism*, (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1972), pp.484-514, (p.485).

and tied to the anarchist movement.[189] Indeed, testament to this is is the fact that many of the Liga's members had previously aligned themselves with other political traditions: its President, Enrique Messonier, was a former anarchist whose change of ideological orientation first led him to becoming involved with Marti's Partido Revolucionario Cubano, and subsequently heading the *Liga.*[190] Moreover, amongst its adherents was Diego Vicente Tejera, previously the founder of the short-lived Cuban Socialist Party.[191] Overall the *Liga* serves as a critical reference point for highlighting the separation between the anarchist movement and the working class. In particular, its organizational strength and potency in worker circles also shows how the anarchist movement's anti-imperialism, grounded in class solidarity and the rejection of national identity, was constrained.

The *Liga* had what Hortensia Pichardo labels a "carácter marcadamente nacionalista"[192] in campaigning for the rights of Cuban workers specifically.[193] *El Despertar* notes that the *Liga* represented the "inmensa mayoría de trabajadores de Cuba" for whom "sentimiento patriótico" was "todavía arraigado".[194] Cubans demanded to be granted equal employment opportunities, a view which was premised upon the fact that cubans had been "acosados por las autoridades debido a sus opiniones políticas" and therefore "se habían visto forzados a abandonar el terruño natal".[195] The emphasis on Cuban nationalism and rights for Cuban workers runs throughout their manifesto:

"primera: que los obreros cubanos en general disfruten de las propias ventajas y garantías que los extranjeros empleados en las distintas industrias del país. Segunda: gestionar por

[189] Sánchez Cobos, *Sembrando ideales,* p.134.
[190] La Liga General de Trabajadores Cubanos, 'Programa', in *Documentos para la Historia de Cuba. Tomo II,* ed. by Hortensia Pichardo (La Habana: Instituto del Libro, 1969), 37-38, (p.37).
[191] Ibid.
[192] Ibid.
[193] Ibid.
[194] El Despertar en Cuba', *El Despertar*, 8 May 1902.
[195] Rivero Muñiz p.92-3

todos los medios cuanto tienda a proporcionar ocupación en los talleres a los emigrados cubanos, cuya repatriación se hace necesaria. Tercera: iniciar una campaña en favor de los intereses morales y materiales de la obrera cubana"

In particular, the rationale behind these objectives, according to the *Liga*, is rooted in the discriminatory employment practices which favour Spanish workers or "extranjeros" who "la monopolizan en provecho propio". The *Liga* therefore did not view it as possible or logical to subsume all workers under the same category. On top of this, they were insistent that their national identity was an exacerbating factor in their class oppression and lament that they are "secundarios en el orden del trabajo".[196] The *Liga* express that "queremos unión, paz, concordia" but they are firm in insisting that this is not possible without an overhaul of the legacy of Spanish colonialism in employment practices. [197] Indeed, the Liga drew on a tradition of nationalism from the Independence movement; crucially, this nationalism in the build up to Independence, Smith explains, was constructed from "support within the more disadvantaged sectors of Cuban society"[198] This continued under U.S imperialism: there was a clear overlap between national identity causes and material class struggle, an overlap which the *Liga* was the organizational expression of.

Despite this insistence by the *Liga* of national identity being a component of the class struggle, the anarchist movement saw it as pernicious to the harmonization of worker interests. They were convinced that the choice of the Liga to advance the cause of specifically Cuban workers took the working class on a "mal camino, un camino peligrosísimo para los intereses del trabajo, y que puede conducir a los trabajadores al abismo total de la más

[196] José Rivero Muñiz, 'Annex: Manifiesto de la Liga General de Trabajadores Cubanos', in *El movimiento obrero durante la primera intervención. Apuntes para la historia del proletariado en Cuba*, (La Habana: Universidad Central de las Villas, 1961), p.204.
[197] Ibid.
[198] Angel Smith 'Nationalisms against the Spanish State, 1808–1923: Cuba, Catalonia and the Basque Country', in *Nationalism and Transnationalism in Spain and Latin America*, 1808–1923, ed. by Angel Smith and Paul Garner (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2017), pp.101-124 (p.117).

completa división y antagonismo".[199] Rivero Muñiz reiterates this view, writing that from the anarchist perspective, the objective of the *Liga* was "nada menos que dividir a los obreros en dos bandos antágonicos: cubanos y españoles".[200] Though the anarchists exhibit a degree of understanding of the motives of the *Liga* to challenge discrimination against Cubans perpetrated by Spaniards, they remain fixed in their belief that the way to combat this is to advance a universal identity of class solidarity. They write that "condenamos siempre la intransigencia espanola" and equally "no hemos de permanecer hoy callados ante la intransigencia de algunos obreros cubanos".[201] In this way, they group both Spanish national identity and Cuban national identity attachments into the same category: both are responsible for "vulnerar los principios universales de unión y solidaridad obrera" and instead propose class solidarity consisting of "haciendo caso omiso de creencias, nacionalidad y raza".[202]

This critical perspective on the use of national identity to organize workers is also visible in assessments of the workers movement in Cuba from Hispanic anarchists based in the U.S.: in an article titled "Ligas que desligan", the writer critiques the *Liga* for both engendering and exacerbating existing national identity divisions. As well as denouncing the "malquerencia entre trabajadores por cuestiones de nacionalidad", the author critiques the illogical nature of this since "están en igual condición espanoles y cubanos, esto es, bajo el sable de generales norte-americanos". This common experience of subjugation to U.S. imperialism should be to "solidarizar en todos sus movimientos, en todas sus luchas". The author even goes as far as to delegitimize the rationale for division between Spaniards and Cubans, as opposed to the rational basis for division between Hispanic and American workers in the U.S.. Whilst Hispanic and American workers are separated by a large cultural, linguistic and ethnic

[199] 'Por mal camino', *El Nuevo Ideal,* 31 August 1899.
[200] Rivero Muñiz, p.92.
[201] 'Por mal camino', *El Nuevo Ideal,* 31 August 1899.
[202] 'A LOS TRABAJADORES DE CUBA: UNION Y CONCORDIA', *El Nuevo Ideal,* 7 March 1899.

differences, Spaniards and Cubans are ”carne de su propio carne...huesos de sus mismos huesos”.[203] In this way, it is possible to note how transnationalism works as a comparative tool between the U.S. and Cuban worker movements. It uses the example of the U.S. for the purposes of highlighting the irrationality of division between Cubans and Spaniards, rather than seeing them as rooted in a powerful legacy of colonial hierarchy.

This dismissal of the *Liga* fits into a broader pattern of the anarchists, both in Cuba and the U.S., of seeking to thread together relations of class solidarity by relegating other struggles to secondary importance. In another article the anarchists champion the importance they give to equality by denouncing workplace injustices perpetrated on the basis of nationality or race. They write that ”consideramos injusto que en los rezagados y escogidas se cierre la puerta a los cubanos...consideramos injusto, como sucede en Cabañas, que no se admita en un taller á los obreros de color, tan dignos como los blancos de ganarse el pan con el sudor de su frente...consideramos injusto, como ha sucedido en la Florida, que en varias fábricas no se consintiera trabajar á los obreros nacidos en España”. This position is adopted by the anarchists since ”consideramos injusto, en fin, todo privilegio y toda preferencia en el trabajo” In this context of discrimination and antagonism, the most effective response, described as ”lógico y prudente” by the anarchists, is by ”haciendo de ellas un motivo de unión para combatirlas”.[204] In this way, the anarchists maintained that rather than focusing on organizing for individual discriminated groupings, the most logical antidote to challenge this workplace discrimination is class union. Therefore, though the anarchists insist that they will present their ”apoyo” to each of these individual groups, they simultaneously homogenize these individual struggles into an all-encompassing class struggle.

[203] ‘Ligas que desligan’, *El Despertar*, 20 May 1900.
[204] ’Declaraciones’, *El Nuevo Ideal,* 7 September 1899.

In conclusion, the *Liga* acts as evidence of the strong countervailing force against anarchist class struggle. Whilst anarchists sought to expand a universal class consciousness and rejection of national identity, the *Liga* represented a significant body of workers for whom the abandonment of national identity for class signified a betrayal of the Cuban workers. Indeed, whilst the *Liga* championed a discourse grounded in national identity, it was equally grounded in material interests of challenging discrimination in employment against Cubans. As such, national identity was inextricably tied up with class. The anarchist anti-imperialist project however was premised upon class as a category which could not merge with national identity; as a result, the anarchist movement remained divorced from the *Liga* and the vast body of workers that it represented.

Anarchist paternalism? The anarchists in Cuba and the critique of the Cuban working class

This dismissal and separation of anarchism from the *Liga* was reflective of a broader anarchist posture. As well as the anarchists critiquing the working-class' attachment to national identity for being a source of weakness and division, the anarchists also critiqued the working class' potential for revolutionary activity on a more general basis. Sometimes the two were interlinked, with national identity and its resultant antagonisms being understood as productive of a weak working class lacking revolutionary potential. Other times, there is a criticism without drawing a link to national identity. However, in both instances, as in their critique of the *Liga,* the anarchists argue that the perspective and practice of the Cuban working-class population is hindering the project of social revolution and thus the challenge to imperialism. In this way, as well as critiquing the U.S. governing authorities and imperial Capital, a significant portion of anarchist discourse was devoted to picking apart the internal flaws of the movement. This internal focus can be summarized as follows: "no todo el peligro puede venir de elementos extraños al trabajo ; también puede surgir de entre los trabajadores

mismos".[205] In line with assemblages theory's focus on "studying the global through its local sites"[206] anarchism in Cuba constructed an anti-imperialism at the local level through its critique of the Cuban working class.

The critical role of Cubans in perpetuating imperialism, and the national identity divisions which exacerbate this, are both included within a correspondence from Habana published in the New York based anarchist paper *El Despertar.* The writer gives a detailed account of the brutality of punishment of dissenting soldiers in Habana exercised by the U.S. imperial forces. The author, adopting the pseudonym 'Avanti', writes how after a soldier announced the "muchos abusos...de esos jefe, terminando por declarar que era infame el hecho de la intervención" the soldiers "apoderaran a viva fuerza de su persona, conseguido lo cual, fue enfardado como una saco de mercancías" leading the anarchist author to dejectedly conclude "Ante hechos y consideraciones como los procedentes, sólo cabe preguntar si será susceptible de regeneración una humanidad tan corrompida, tan cobarde y tan dispuesta á defender á los tiranos de su propio ser". In essence, when denouncing U.S. imperialism, the author foregrounds the Cuban soldiers who are working in the service of the U.S.. This is an instance where the anarchist critique of imperialism is partly comprised of a critique of the Cubans complicit with the perpetuation of imperialism. This event is used as a platform to bemoan the general poor organizational capabilities of the working class, with a specific focus on divisiveness caused by national identity: "parece que los tabaqueros aquí se organizarán, aunque es bastante dudoso que lo logren por completo. Están tan exaltados por las diferencias de procedencia que no sería difícil que en el día menos pensado dieran en algún taller el espectáculo de una batalla".[207] Overall, this passage shows that the framing of the imperialist context is heavily geared towards critiquing the revolutionary capacity of the

[205] 'Alerta, obreros', *El Nuevo Ideal,* 11 February 1899.
[206] Legg, p.7
[207] 'De Habana', *El Despertar,* 20 May 1900.

masses and workers. Moreover, it illustrates how dissatisfaction with national identity as a factor of division fits within the same framework as the more generalized dissatisfaction of the anarchist movement with the Cuban population as a whole.

In a similar diatribe aimed at the Cuban working class, anarchists in New York bemoaned the problems of national identity divisions. Crucially, they understood these as "producto de la ignorancia". In this instance then, rather than expressing solidarity, the anarchists use the collective voice of *El Despertar* to critique the Cuban working classes. They write that "la inmensa mayoría de los trabajadores de Cuba tienen todavía arraigado el sentimiento patriótico, que es producto de la ignorancia y que yo considero criminal porque tiende a dividir á los hombres en casta y razas, divisiones que traen consigo privilegios y rivalidades...divisiones y odios que aprovechan á los burgueses". The author does not identify these nationalist "divisiones y odios" as phenomena rooted in the colonial experience. In other words, instead of the working class being constrained by the continued impact of Spanish colonialism which laid the groundwork for these divisions, the author opts to see the anarchist movement as constrained by its own "ignorancia".[208] Rather than structures being the focus of critique, it is the working class, portrayed as unaffected by and isolated from structure and historical context, who are centred.

Some anarchists in the U.S. went further to draw explicit links between the weak revolutionary perspective, the actions of the working classes and the consolidation of imperial hegemony. In an article written by a Cuban-born worker in Tampa and printed in *El Nuevo Ideal,* the author contextualizes their arguments by asserting that having been born in Cuba, the individuals feels a responsibility to decry the situation of Cuban workers: "El letargo en que se halla sumido el pueblo de Cuba, le denigra y hace caer en la abyección,

[208] 'El Despertar en Cuba', *El Despertar*, 8 May 1902.

hiriendo de rechazo á todos los que en ese país han nacido. Yo, como nacido en Cuba, quiero salvar la responsabilidad que pudiera caberme, levantando mi voz de protesta". Having established the personal motivation for the critique, the author continues to specifically pinpoint why they are despondent: "La indiferencia con que se miran los males que se vienen sucediendo, debiera cesar. ¿A dónde vamos por ese camino? ¿A la salvación? No; al abismo". followed by an atttribution of blame, not to structural power such as the state, Capital or Imperialism, but to the working class itself: "¿Y quién es el culpable de que tal suceda? El pueblo mismo que, sin tacto ni lógica, ha creído que eligiendo una Convención, pueda ésta traer la restauración del país; pero la práctica ha demonstrado que esa Convención ningún beneficio ha reportado ni nada ha resuelto en definitiva". In reference to this "Convencion", the writer explains that "Está compuesta, en su mayoría, de hombres incapacitados para marcar el trillo del porvenir. Su fracaso en el Capitolio de Washington referente a la enmienda Platt, debiera ser lo suficiente para que el pubelo pidiese, no sólo su destitución, sino la anulación completa de cuanto ha hecho". [209] The pueblo is critiqued not just for being apathetic and lacking revolutionary spirit, but specifically on the basis of its lack of opposition to a political procedure resulting in cementing U.S. power over Cuba through the Platt Amendment. This is also an example of how the anarchists localized their anti-imperialism at the level of the working class.

However, other perspectives merged a critique of U.S. imperialism with the dissatisfaction of the revolutionary potential of the working classes. By explaining that imperialism was responsible for division and low revolutionary consciousness, these more charitable critiques therefore critiqued the Cubans but only insofar as they were victims of U.S. policy. One account of the period following Independence from Spain is critical of the "pueblo" which the author describes as divided and lacking in "conciencia", but does so by portraying them

[209] 'Al Pueblo cubano', *El Nuevo Ideal,* 12 Junio 1901.

as a vulnerable grouping which is a victim of the "política maquiavélica desarrollada...por los politicastros americanos" and the "Jefes de la Revolución". With regards to this latter, the author suggests that the working class and pueblo have been duped or "deslumbrado" by Independence forces complicit in the failure of true emancipation and implementation of U.S. imperialism : "nos sentimos entristecidos porque vemos á nuestro pueblo que sufre y trabaja, sugestionado por teorías incomprensibles, deslumbrado antes los *idolos* que legó la última contienda" This "contienda" is in reference to the tension emanating from the 'betrayal' of Independence and imposition of U.S. imperialism. It is this new situation of subjugation to U.S. imperialism, facilitated by the '*idolos',* which is cited as responsible for the climate of "desconfianza entre ciertos hombres". Indeed, this climate of betrayal and mistrust in the wake of the concretization of U.S. imperialism through the imposition of the Platt Amendment (described as the "coronación de la obra pérfida"), is made more potent since prior to this there was a belief that U.S. imperialism would be temporary and short-lived: "en la conciencia de todos estaba el desenlace del imperialismo yankee". The author proposes, as in all cases of "pueblos que degeneran" in an environment of division and disillusionment, that "la Razón" should prevail.[210] Though not mentioned explicitly, it is possible to infer from the schema of anarchism in this period that "Razón" is an illusion to class solidarity. In sum, this section highlights that the anarchists, by drawing on Independence forces, the U.S. government and the Platt Amendment, attributed the lack of "conciencia" and rife division to imperialism.

Similarly, other critiques of the weak popular masses are framed within an acknowledgement of structural factors or the influence of past historical events which have been productive of this lack of revolutionary zeal or consciousness. For instance, one author highlights the significance of the way in which Independence became captured and corrupted by

[210] 'Lo Previsto', *El Nuevo Ideal,* 15 March 1901.

institutional politics, instead of remaining a social, bottom-up process. The author writes that "en las masas populares faltan energías, faltan entusiasmos, faltan ideas" which, the author states, is a direct consequence of "haber entregado á la política el ideal de la Independencia".[211] Other passages argue that worker division, and thus lack of revolutionary potential, can be attributed to colonialism, referring to a specific feature of colonialism in the form of the capitalist imperative for increasing levels of production: "la organización productora…está llamada á desencadenar una competencia de los antagonismos, de los sufrimientos individuales y colectivos, como jamás se ha conocido" This imposed competition which results from the imperative for increased manufacturing activity results in a situation whereby workers "se ven constreñidos a rivalizar entre sí".[212]

Finally, the anarchists also drew a link between the disastrous effects of the war, namely economic crisis, and the poor organization and vitality of the working class. "La crisis económica perdura, y quien con más intensidad la siente, quien sufre todas sus consecuencias es el trabajador del campo y de las ciudades... seguramente, la profunda crisis que atravesamos influye en la atonía de los obreros cubanos. Falta en ellos entusiasmo, energía, amor de clase, instinto de organización" The crisis is explained as inherent in capitalism and as such these will be recurrent: "hay crisis hoy, y la habrá mañana, y la habrá siempre, periódicamente, en tanto perdure el reinado del capitalismo y el trabajo sea su vasallo obligado". Crucially too, the author argues that the acuteness of the crisis would be buffered "si hubiera consciencia formada en la masa productora, si hubiera unidad de acción para la común defensa, indudablemente que aminorían los efectos de la crisis". However, consistent with the author's omission of discussing colonialism, the lack of organization is not ascribed to effects of colonialism, such as the embedding of hierarchical relations. Instead, the writer

[211] 'Revista Social', *El Nuevo Ideal,* 1 April 1901.
[212] 'La colonización contemporánea' *El Nuevo Ideal*, 17 July 1901.

prefers to lay out that opposition to the economic crisis is stagnant since "no hay fuerza, ni cohesión, ni espíritu de clase".[213] In this way, whilst this author looks to understand the lack of revolutionary potential as symptomatic of economic crisis, a significant amount of agency is attached to workers who, if they were to organize along class lines, would be capable of assuaging the severity of the crisis.

Im sum, some anarchists in Cuba maintained a historical and structural analysis of the problems they were witnessing post-Independence. Principally however, regardless of the effort to understand structural and historical causation, the anarchists expressed a frustration with workers and the Cuban population for their division and lack of revolutionary commitment. Therefore, alongside their critique of structures, the anarchists were focused on the meso-level of intergroup relations, and proposed that both the capacity to challenge imperialism and carry out social revolution were eroded by the lack of commitment to anarchist revolutionary class solidarity. This critique by anarchism of the weak revolutionary potential of Cubans was a significant cleavage, and one which further consolidates the argument of the anarchist movement's anti-imperialism being constrained by division.

Anarchism, Immigration and National Identity

Though the anarchist movement was principally focused on class solidarity, and critiqued the workers and groups which veered from this, it was not a universal position amongst anarchists. As Rivero Muñiz writes, "no todos los libertarios simpatizaban con la actitud asumida por algunos de los suedo defensores del ideal ácrata, no ocultándose para manifestar que el obrero procedía en uso de un legítimo derecho al exigir, en su propia tierra, no un trato privilegiado pero si equitativo, es decir, parejo al que disfrutaban los trabajadores extranjeros".[214] Following efforts to challenge the assumed narratives of a neat and consistent

[213] 'La semana obrera', *El Nuevo Ideal,* 8 May 1901.
[214] Rivero Muñiz, p.94

relationship between anarchist principles and actions[215], we can draw upon this example of affinity to national identity within the Cuban anarchist movement to nuance our understanding of anarchism, class and national identity. Though the principal narrative of the anarchist movement rejected national identity, there were also strands of anarchism which exhibited certain parallels with the values and objectives of nation-centered projects. This helps to highlight that anarchism's exclusively class-focused emphasis in response to imperialism was subject to tension within the movement itself.

In an article from 1 January 1901 title "Por el bien de Cuba...?", an author from *El Nuevo Ideal* expresses his contempt for Spanish migration and counters the view that it is beneficial to Cuba. Contrary to literature which views transnational anarchist links for constructing anti-imperial discourses and praxis,[216] the perspective that "nosotros somos contrarios á toda inmigración" illustrates an anarchist perspective which viewed Spanish migration as pernicious. Interestingly, the author divorces the process of Spanish worker migration to Cuba from its context of government repression within Spain, as well as capitalist labour flows. Instead the agency of these migrants is highlighted, writing that "preciso es que sepan los trabajadores que las emigraciones en grandes masas son inconvenientes". In this way, rather than understanding these migratory flows through the lens of capitalism and the state, since the anarchist movement tended to view events as mediated through these twin forces, the author critiques the workers for selfishly imposing themselves in another country. This, the article argues, is a thoughtless act since it exacerbates strife for Cuban domestic workers, and moreover, is unnecessary since they have migrated from land in which they are able to "atender à su subsistencia".

[215] Bantman and Altena, *Reassessing the transnational turn.*
[216] Daniel Brückenhaus 'Challenging Imperialism Across Borders: Recent Studies of Twentieth-Century Internationalist Networks against Empire', Contemporary European History, 29.1, (2020) 104-115.

Though the author acknowledges that these comments can be construed as nationalist, or as the author writes, "espíritu de egoismo nacional", the argument is that this is justified because this prioritizing of national identity or "egoismo nacional" is grounded in a class analysis.[217] Whilst some portions of the anarchist movement sought to eliminate national identity from its discourse, viewing it as incompatible with and detrimental to the sculpting of a unified class project, others viewed Cuban national identity as key to understanding class relations under U.S. imperialism in Cuba. On top of not accounting for the structural reason which impelled workers to leave their country, such as government repression or the search for work, the migration is also not viewed as a phenomenon which could help the movement to blossom internationally. In this way, it suggests an attitude which is at odds with the internationalism and worker solidarity typically espoused by core anarchist principles, both internationally and in the Cuban anarchist movement.

Other diatribes against Spanish migration from the anarchist movement in Cuba decentre the migrants as responsible agents, and instead critique the "burgueses". The author places the responsibility for this movement on structures, specifically critiquing the capitalist drive for cheap labour, as opposed to an anti-Spanish rhetoric centred around the foreign worker as the architect of domestic plight. The author writes that, given the context of low wages of Cuban workers and difficulty in meeting their subsistence needs, this should not be responded to by stimulating foreign migration, but rather by in the first instance improving the situation of workers within Cuba. The author insists that "no *pueden* trabajar por 60 centavos" since "con ellos no cubren sus necesidades". More specifically, the author seeks to steer the framing of this situation away from that the binary choice between either encouraging foreign migration so that jobs are filled, or not encouraging foreign migration and jobs not being filled. This is echoed in another article which, in an address to Spanish migrants, states that "No crean que

[217] 'Por el bien de Cuba...?', *El Nuevo Ideal,* 1 January 1901.

en Cuba hay escasez de brazos para el trabajo, lo que hay es infinidad de obreros de todos los medios ocupación".[218] Indeed, the actual tangible result of this migration is that both those workers already in Cuba are condemned to "morir de hambre" whilst similarly the migrant workers, described as "infelices trabajadores", are forced to work for an "irrisorio jornal". As a result, the author expresses an internationalist perspective which empathizes with the subordinate and desperate position of migrant labour and draws parallels with the exploitation of the domestic labour force. In doing so, this passage seeks to highlight the contradictory nature of elite nationalism, or "patriotismo de los burgueses". The author writes that encouraging migration, resulting in exploitation of both migrant workers and the domestic population, is a clear contradiction to the nationalist vision of shared prosperity. It serves to solidify the power of the employer and political classes under the guise of Cuban nationalism which benefits the collective : "vengan trabajadores españoles, italianos ó de cualquiera otra región, con tal de que trabajen á bajo precio; y en cuanto á los trabajadores de Cuba, que les parta un rayo. ¡Y arriba con el himno!".[219] The ironic finale to this sentence serves to clearly stress the author's view of the absurdity of claiming that stimulating cheap migration, at the expense of domestic workers, can be construed as patriotic. The author is clearly opposed to the influx of Spanish migrants, but this is firmly geared towards using this opposition to critique the practice of labour exploitation, both domestic and foreign.

This section has shown that whilst the master narrative within the anarchist movement in Cuba was to reject national identity, other anarchists converged to some extent with the nation-centred discourse of the *Liga*. In this way, some anarchist's rejection of national identity was at odds not only with significant portions of the working class outside of anarchism, but also with strands of the anarchist movement who subscribed to national

[218] 'Tribuna del trabajo', *El Nuevo Ideal,* 24 July 1901.
[219] 'Movimiento Obrero', *El Nuevo Ideal,* 1 March 1901.

identity, both as an exclusionary philosophy, and also because they understood national identity to be a very relevant component to class oppression. Importantly too, it nuances our understanding of transnationalism as generative; not only can we argue that transnationalism encountered limits due to the organized force of national identity projects outside of anarchism, but as well as this, the anarchist movement itself expressed skepticism towards transnationalism.

Conclusion

This chapter has aimed to illustrate a key component of the anarchist encounter with imperialism between 1898 and 1902: the prevalence of antagonisms and divisions. It was explained that the primary locus of this division was the politics of national identity. Differing perspectives on national identity drew divisions principally between anarchism and the working class, but also within anarchism itself. These antagonisms and cleavages had a detrimental impact on anarchism's capacity to challenge U.S. imperialism. In this liminal moment in which Cuba underwent considerable change and uncertainty, the anarchists sought to impose a radical form of organizing which came up against more dominant and rooted identities and narratives, namely those tied to the politics of national identity and nationalism. Indeed, the chapter illustrated that whilst the bulk of this attachment to national identity existed outside of anarchism, there were elements of Cuban anarchism which sympathised strongly with nation-centred discourse.

As well as highlighting these divisions as constraints on anarchist anti-imperialism, they help to illustrate how the anarchist movement de-reified the global phenomenon of imperialism into the local and everyday. Specifically, they highlighted attachment to national identity, and overall lack of commitment to social revolution, as problems to overcome in the effort to challenge imperialism. Lastly, in another question of scale, the foregrounding of divisions, as

well as the anarchist hostility to migration, both challenge the dominant narrative of transnationalism as a generative force for anarchism.

Chapter Four: Anarchist praxis and the workplace

"La fuerza del obrero, más que en los partidos políticos donde sus iniciativas vense absorbidas y esterilizadas, está en las organizaciones económicas de resistencia al capital".[220]

The Cuban anarchist movement, in its efforts to achieve social revolution and challenge imperialism, was resolutely focused on "fijar su atención en la (cuestión) económica".[221] More concretely, this translated to collective worker organization as the basis for direct action in the form of strikes. It is this focus on the economic and workplace sphere which the anarchists in Cuba saw as necessary to avoid the pitfalls of parliamentary politics, and thus the most effective method of building social revolution: as Shaffer writes "the workplace was where men and women could best organize to create an anarchist future of decentralized, grass roots democracy that would federate horizontally".[222]

This chapter will highlight the ways in which the workplace became a prism through which we can understand the relationship between anarchism and imperialism. It will demonstrate how the response to the new imperialist context consisted of a class-focused mantra of worker unity coupled with a renewed sense of the importance of direct-action, particularly in the form of the general strike. The logic of workplace struggle, namely through the general strike, was put forward as a specific response to their diagnoses of U.S. imperialism. The economic intervention, and specifically its monopolistic nature, demonstrated the necessity and utility of the general strike to directly resist the U.S. imperial power. This understanding

[220] 'Movimiento Obrero. Isla de Cuba', *El Nuevo Ideal,* 1 November 1900.
[221] La Asamblea de los Tabaqueros', *El Nuevo Ideal,* 20 May 1899.
[222] Shaffer, *Anarchists of the Caribbean,* p.114.

of the nature of U.S. imperialism, and subsequent tailoring of their response to the imperial reality, was greatly facilitated by the transnational network with anarchists and workers in the U.S. Overall, the chapter demonstrates how anarchist activity saw their local workplace struggles as a means to oppose the global and large-scale challenge of imperialism, deconstructing the global phenomenon of imperialism into "local sites and workings".[223]

Importantly, building on the previous chapter's emphasis on cleavages and national identity, this chapter also asserts how national identity was central in limiting the workplace struggle on anarchist terms. In particular, it argues that the tension between national identity and class hindered the anarchist movement's capacity to challenge imperialism. In this way, the chapter continues to address the literature's limited focus on national identity and its impact on the anarchist movement, a feature which is symptomatic of a broader tendency within anarchism to not approach the relationship of anarchism to the nation.[224] Specifically, I foreground national identity and stress its disruptive impact on anarchist anti-imperialism through the prism of the workplace. Moreover, this chapter continues to complicate the narrative of transnationalism as purely generative for anarchism: though transnationalism was critical in improving the strength of direct action, it was less potent compared to divisions along the lines of national identity and class. Overall, these divisions severely complicated the anarchist project of class unification to challenge imperialism.

The politics and economics of American imperialism

The U.S.' intervention had explicit motivations of exerting control over the economic situation in Cuba, as described by American officials themselves. As John R Brooke, U.S. governor general of la Habana, states in 1899, the important thing is to "open profitable

[223] Legg, p.7.
[224] Bantman and Altena, *Reassessing the transnational turn* and Kinna and Gutiérrez, *Anarchism and the national question.*

markets for the productions of the Cuban people" and summarizes that "obviously the problem is economic rather than political".[225] Meanwhile, another governing official argued that "In Cuba the commercial relations will always occupy the front seat, the political situation being a question of secondary consideration only".[226] Hitchman writes that William McKinley, the U.S. President at the time of the transfer of control of Cuba from Spain to the U.S., was motivated by "American supremacy in world markets", and more specifically in the case of the Caribbean "strategic supremacy would be supported by market control". Elaborating further on how this formed the basis of the U.S.' preference for who held political power in Cuba, Hitchman writes that part of the U.S' rationale for refusing to place the insurgents in charge" was a desire to sculpt a "friendly, enduring Cuba, not a constant source of trouble" which would be a reliable trading partner.[227] This type of economic drive is also expressed when a governor describes the urgency in ensuring that the U.S. can compete in the period of the "Cuban boom" to protect the land rights of American citizens who die in Cuba. Situating the U.S. alongside "speculators, bond-holders, claim holder and adventurers" all of whom are vying for control of Cuban wealth, the U.S. is shown to operate using the same logic of private capitalist actors.[228] In sum, there was a direct link between the U.S.' imperial activity and control over the Cuban economy.

More specifically, increased concentration of ownership of industry in Cuba by 'Trusts' - large private conglomerates which owned multiple factories - was a key characteristic of U.S. imperialism. Printed in *El Nuevo Ideal,* a governor of Illinois wrote that this was the "rasgo característico de nuestra época." More specifically, these "grandes capitalistas, por medio de coaliciones y de los *trusts,* han paralizado la acción de la competencia". This capturing of a

[225] Brooke, p.19.
[226] U.S. Consular Officer, 'Annual report of consul general, 1903 – 1904', in *Despatches from United States Consuls in Havana, Cuba, 1783-1906*', Record Group 59.
[227] Hitchman, p.11.
[228] Image 435, 'Despatches: February 1, 1898 - December 11, 1902', in *Despatches from United States Consuls in Havana, Cuba, 1783-1906* https://catalog.archives.gov/id/211380465

large portion of the market share, the author writes, is what permits the fixing of prices and salaries "de un modo abitrario", a process which ultimately paralyzes workers and public who "no pueden reaccionar".[229] This monopoly capitalism created a Cuba which was an example of those "colonial and semi-colonial territories" which "evolved into specialized producers of one or two primary products for export to the world market, on whose vagaries they were entirely dependent" and as such "Cuba stood or fell by the price of sugar and the willingness of the U.S.A to import it". [230] In Cuba, these primary products upon which their whole economy and infrastructure depended on were sugar and tobacco. These were the industries which the Trusts presided over; most notably, tobacco was the largest industry following the Spanish-American war, and the majority of "tabaquerías" were under their ownership. Rivero Muñiz writes that after the departure of the Spanish government from Cuba, Spanish business owners, partly prompted by their "odio al nativo", either dissolved their business or handed them to "algún fiel testaferro". This left a gap which, after the business owners "se ausentaron del país donde se habían enriquecido" was "aprovechada por los grandes "trusts" norteamericanos o ingles para ir adquierendo las principales tabaquerías de Cuba".[231] In this way, despite the end of Spanish colonialism, power was transferred to the U.S. and as a result Cuba "lost control over its economic resources".[232]

This economic penetration by the U.S. must be understood as a product of a combination of political and private interests. Indeed, the economics and politics of U.S. activity in Cuba occurred in tandem. Shaffer writes that "in the decades following the war, foreign, primarily North American, capital dominated Cuba's economy". This coexisted alongside "the political reality of repeated, constitutionally sanctioned U.S. military interventions".[233] These

[229] 'Declaraciones de un gobernador', *El Nuevo Ideal,* 18 March 1899.
[230] Hobsbawm, p.73.
[231] Rivero Muñiz, p.18.
[232] Foner, p.483.
[233] Shaffer, *Anarchist Cuba,* p.21.

interventions and the domination of principally North American capital, though this latter had been occurring prior to the U.S. intervention, were greatly facilitated by the Platt Amendment. The Platt Amendment was crucial to solidifying the political hegemony of the U.S. imperialism over Cuba, but crucially also in facilitating economic control.[234] This had precedent; some argued that economic interests were built into the way that the U.S. defined their intervention on the island, with other authors pointing to the earlier Teller Amendment from 1898, arguing that "it did not signify simply political order. It came to imply a condition of inspiring public confidence and encouraging private investment".[235] This is well represented by the Cuba Company which "formed lasting relationships with Cuba's economic elite because it realized that the economic elite often migrated between public and private life. Businessmen and lawyers often moved freely between elected positions and private life".[236] This type of intertwinement between political and private spheres, Hobsbawm notes, was characteristic of "a new era of national expansion in which political and economic elements were no longer clearly separable".[237] Understanding the insertion of U.S. capital into Cuba, and how this was driven by political developments, is key to contextualizing the anarchist challenge to imperialism within the workplace.

Anarchism, direct action and politics

The anarchist movement in Cuba stood in strong opposition to any prospect of U.S. economic intervention being of benefit to Cubans, and in particular denounced the way in which U.S. political apparatus facilitated economic control by private interests. They critiqued the legitimizing narrative for U.S. imperialism in providing a willing market for the intense

[234] U.S Government, 'Enmienda Platt: De Colonia Española a Colonia Yanqui', in *Documentos para la Historia de Cuba. Tomo II,* ed.by Hortensia Pichardo (La Habana: Instituto del Libro, 1969), pp.118-120 (p.118).
[235] Louis A. Pérez Jr.*, The War of 1898: The United States and Cuba in History and Historiography* (Chapel Hill, NC, and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1968), p.55.
[236] Juan Carlos Santamarina, 'The Cuba Company and the Creation of Informal Business Networks: Historiography and Archival Sources', *Cuban Studies,* 35.50, (2004), p.75.
[237] Hobsbawm, p.59.

levels of production in Cuba. Quoting a passage in *La Lucha,* the writer states that "Cuba es un país más productor que consumidor y que los Estados Unidos son el único pueblo capaz de *consumir* todo lo que Cuba *produzca".* This is responded to by an anarchist writing in *El Nuevo Ideal* that exporting their produce to the U.S. would result in an exploitative relationship in which Cubans would "trabajar sin comer" and the American population *"consumieran* lo que ellos *produjeran".*[238] In a critique of the political mechanisms used to uphold this unequal type of economic relationship, the anarchists cite the fact that *"*La famosa enmienda Platt aprobada por las Cámaras" alongside and with the "beneplácito y cooperación de los elementos mercantilistas de aquel país, conglomerados en poderosos *trusts* hacen é imponen allí la política con baldón de aquel pueblo americano".[239] In this way, the anarchist movement critiques the process whereby political institutions and private interests worked for the mutual benefit of each other but to the detriment of Cuba.

The pinpointing of the convergence of politics and economics in the U.S.' activity in Cuba was important in reaffirming the need to bypass formal politics in challenging U.S. imperialism. In a response to competing discourses which extolled the benefits of engaging in politics for workers, the anarchists insisted that the only politics that workers should follow is that which is centred around work: "Si los trabajadores han de seguir alguna política, esta ha de ser la política de defender su trabajo, de mejorar su miserable condición económica, no por medio de leyes y decretos, sino por medio de peticiones y exigencias directas".[240] Another article states that "La fuerza del obrero, más que en los partidos políticos donde sus iniciativas vense absorbidas y esterilizadas, está en las organizaciones económicas de resistencia al capital".[241] By focusing on the workplace and direct engagement with

[238] 'Esbozos y Comentarios', *El Nuevo Ideal,* 29 April 1899.
[239] 'El Previsto', *El Nuevo Ideal,* 15 March 1901.
[240] 'Alerta, obreros', *El Nuevo Ideal,* 11 February 1899.
[241] 'Movimiento Obrero. Isla de Cuba', *El Nuevo Ideal,* 1 November 1900.

employers, the anarchists were able to avoid "la estéril acción política, con sus pujilatos, sus egoismos, sus enconos y sus inmoralidades". This rejection of politics, which they believed dealt with the "cuestiones de detalle" was counterposed with "la gran cuestión (la económica)".[242]

The rejection of politics was therefore accompanied by a preference for direct action in the form of workplace struggle and organization. This brand of anarchism, often labelled as "anarcho-syndicalism", viewed strike action as a vital weapon with which workers could reject politics and harness worker power to produce a revolutionary rupture. This, Van der Walt writes, is grounded in a "bottom-up, direct-action-based, and inclusive unionism" whereby the objective is "a revolutionary general strike, involving workplace take-overs and the re-orientation of production as part of creating the new society".[243] Though one anarchist concedes that strike action is "medio por cierto muchas veces ineficaz" due to the fact that "los burgueses pueden sostenerse indefinidamente, en tanto que los trabajadores, á la larga, acaban por ser víctimas del hambre y la miseria", it is also viewed as their sole strategic resource for resistance: "la huelga es para los obreros el único medio de resistencia pasiva a las pretensiones del capital".[244] In essence, direct action in the workplace, specifically through strike action, is judged to be a fundamental tool for anarchist struggle in Cuba.

As an antidote of sorts to this imbalance of power between the workers and Capital, the anarchists in Cuba state a preference for "huelgas generales". Whilst the isolated strike action of "huelga parciales...se eternizan y acaban por desmoralizar la resistencia obrera" general strikes utilize "la fuerza de la masa" and in the process a large-scale "conflicto social" in which widespread paralysis of industry requires "inmediata solucion".However, smaller-scale individual strikes were not necessarily dismissed in this period of U.S imperialism. One

[242] 'La Semana Obrera', *El Nuevo Ideal,* 8 May 1901.
[243] Van der Walt, p.355.
[244] 'Consideraciones. Después de la huelga', *El Nuevo Ideal,* 6 October 1899.

author notes that both the “pequeñas” as well as the “grandes contiendas” are vital since they have the same objective which is “la consecución de la felicidad”. They are also valuable since both small and large-scale strike action are at their core “luchas por un aumento de salario ó la dismunición de las horas en las jornadas de trabajo”. Simltaneously, smaller scale actions are valuable insofar as they are the “escaramazas de la final batalla emancipadora”[245] and ”las huelgas generales, más que hijas de una elaborada preparación, son motivadas por huelgas parciales”.[246]

Other anarchists however maintained a more dogmatic stance based on the desire to precipitate a revolutionary rupture and social revolution. They argued that given that the worker “se anhela a la emancipación completa” the general strike is a more efficient way of achieving this.[247] Rather than pursuing “huelgas parciales”, the author writes that "sería más conveniente organizar sociedades de resistencia y agrupaciones con objeto de intentar una acción decisiva” in the form of “la huelga general", described as the “único medio que hasta el presente se ha reconocido eficaz para el servicio de aquella causa emancipadora”. Indeed, some go as far as to argue that ”huelgas parciales”, despite presenting ”resultados apreciables a veces” are fundamentally ”nefastas”. This is because in the end ”no compensan los sacrificios hechos y porque, además, los resultados que pueden dar son impotentes para modificar la cuestión social”.[248] On the whole, the general strike was preferred for its potential to bring about social revolution.

Given that social revolution was a foundational component of the anarchist anti-imperialist schema, the general strike was also perceived as a critical tool for challenging U.S.

[245] ’Nuestro Faro’, *El Despertar,* 15 March 1899.
[246] ‘Consideraciones. Después de la huelga, *El Nuevo Ideal, 6 October 1899*.
[247] ’Nuestro Faro’, ‘*El Despertar*’, 15 March 1899.
[248] [n.a], ‘La Huelga General’, in *El Congreso Revolucionario Internacional de Paris. Septiembre de 1900*. Buenos Aires: Librería Sociológica, 1902), pp.175-6.

imperialism.[249] In a piece written by ”archimillonario Mr Carlos Flint” and reproduced on a page of *El Nuevo Ideal,* the power of trust ownership in mitigating the effectiveness of ”huelgas parciales” is highlighted : ”Las huelgas, esa calamidad social que por tanto tiempo ha venido entorpeciendo la marcha progresiva de la industria y el comercio y que se nos presentaba como un problema de dificil solución, ha sido favorablemente resuelto por el *Trust”.* The existence of trusts means that it is "imposible que sufra la demanda de un artículo por efecto de una huelga, porque si en una localidad se deja de producir, en otra se doblan ó triplican la fuerza y se sigue manufacturando” An anarchist concurs that this ”comunismo del Capital” is significant insofar as it means that each individual factory’s production is protected through alliances with other factory owners. This feeds into some anarchist positing that “huelgas parciales” were impotent; instead, the way in which the collaborative power of U.S imperialism’s capital concentration can be countered is through the cross-industry and transnational organization of “huelgas generals”. They write that “en el nuevo régimen tendían á desarrollarse y florecer los *trusts* con sus demoralizadoras tendencias de mayor explotación” and therefore ”para contrarrestar á las cuales” it is crucial to “fijar su atención en la económica“ through ”la unión de las fuerzas obreras”.[250] Barcia writes that it is particularly important to carry out general strikes due to the monopoly capitalism of *Trusts* carried out by the U.S. and England in Cuba: ”una poderosa compañía inglesa es dueña de una gran parte de las principales fábricas de tabaco de la Habana, y otra compañía americana, no menos poderosa que la inglesa, trabaja para proporcionarse el resto de las manufacturas”.[251] This concentration of capital means that ”huelgas parciales serán de ninguna utilidad” and ”serán de absoluta necesidad las huelgas generales”. Moreover, it is argued that the concentration of capital in the form of trusts accelerates revolutionary

[249] ‘El Trust’, *El Nuevo Ideal,* 7 August 1901.
[250] ‘La Asamblea de los Tabaqueros’, *El Nuevo Ideal,* 20 May 1899.
[251] ‘Muralla china’, *El Nuevo Ideal,* 29 abril 1899

responses: “nada hubiera podido accelerar tanto la marcha de la revolución como la consolidación del capital. En su inmensa fuerza lleva clavado el puñal que ha de darle muerte”.[252] The general strike was thus signalled by anarchists as a coordinated response to what was a coordinated U.S. imperialist assault by Trusts and their model of concentrated ownership in Cuba.

Huelga de Albañiles

Arguably the most high-profile example of the anarchists in Cuba actualizing this opposition to U.S. economic imperialism through direct action in the form of a general strike in the period under study was the “*Huelga de Albañiles*”. Described by Sánchez-Cobos as “una de las huelgas de mayor consideración”[253] and “el movimiento que mayor resonancia tuvo en el primer período inteventor”,[254] this general strike is a crucial case study in understanding the relationship between workers and anarchists, as well as the relation between anarchists and imperialism. In particular, it helps to foreground the way in which national identity impacted the anarchis movement’s anti-imperialist efforts.

The strike took place between “20 de agosto y el 29 de septiembre de 1899”. It began as an isolated strike by construction workers as a demand for an eight-hour day, but morphed into a general strike in which the demands expanded to a ”jornada laboral de ocho horas, así como un aumento en los salarios de operarios y ayudantes, y que los pagos de los jornales se hiciesen en moneda americana”.[255] It was supported by the anarchists and judged by them to be a crucial juncture in rallying against the “burgueses”: ”Los albañiles han establado una lucha con los burgueses, y es necesario que ganen la contienda”.[256] Aside from the fact that a

[252] ‘El Trust’, *El Nuevo Ideal,* 7 August 1901.
[253] Sánchez Cobos, *Nuevas opciones, viejos dilemas,* p.83.
[254] Sánchez Cobos, *Sembrando Ideales,* p.160
[255] Sánchez Cobos, *Nuevas opciones, viejos dilemas,* p.83.
[256] ’HUELGA DE LOS ALBAÑILES’, *El Nuevo Ideal,* 31 August 1899.

fight against the "burgueses" was by default also a fight against the U.S. imperial power, the fact that they sought to be paid in American dollars shows a clear linkage between this local direct action and the influence of U.S. imperialism. In fact, as Pichardo notes, one of the key causes of the strike was the issuing of American currency on the island.[257]

Despite the anarchists being encouraged by the progress of the strike, towards its latter stages they began to draw the conclusion that "hay grandes posibilidades de que muy en breve termine la huelga que hace semanas vienen sosteniendo los compañeros albañiles en completo triunfo"[258]. Indeed, the strike came to be judged as a "fracaso" by the anarchist movement. [259] One of the reasons for this was participation. The anarchists cite the workers and "oficios" who had made a "compromiso" to partake in the strike, but who had then subsequently altered their approach. In particular, the anarchists emphasize "la negativa de los tabaqueros á secundar el movimiento".[260] Given that the tobacco workers were the largest subsection of the workers movement in Cuba,[261] this rendered their non-participation especially impactful. Indeed, the anarchists note how "fue un rudo golpe para éste, por limitar su carácter de general y por contribuir al desaliento de muchos",[262] and as such lamenting the fact that tobacco workers' non-participation both compromised the commitment of workers in general as well as ultimately preventing it from becoming a general strike. Indeed, Rivero Muñiz notes how even though it was known as and remembered as a general strike, it never really attained enough cross-sectional support to merit the label.[263]

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[257] William Mckinley, 'La causa de la primera huelga bajo la ocupación', in *Documentos para la Historia de Cuba. Tomo II,* ed.by Hortensia Pichardo (La Habana: Instituto del Libro, 1969), pp.15-16 (p.15).
[258] 'HUELGA DE LOS ALBAÑILES', *El Nuevo Ideal,* 31 August 1899.
[259] 'Consideraciones. Después de la huelga, *El Nuevo Ideal,* 6 October 1899.
[260] Ibid.
[261] Foner, p.485.
[262] 'Consideraciones'. Después de la huelga, *El Nuevo Ideal,* 6 October 1899.
[263] Sánchez-Cobos, *Sembrando Ideales,* p.164.

National identity was central to this problem of participation. In a bid to explain this lack of involvement, del Valle laments that the "propaganda malsana" during the strike resulted in it receiving less support from workers. The "propaganda malsana", spearheaded by "periódicos y algunas individualidades" was influential in dissuading the tobacco workers from participating in the strike. As del Valle writes: "ha encontrado eco por desgracia, entre una parte del elemento obrero tabaquero".[264] This "propaganda" consisted in branding the 1899 strike a uniquely anarchist project which, rather than being an emancipatory project for all workers, was interpreted as an anarchist ploy to weaken the *Liga,* a nationalist worker organization. The result of this pro-nationalist and anti-anarchist propaganda surrounding the strike, the anarchists write, is that "razones políticas" such as the "cristo de patria" became cited as the reason for rejecting the strike action. The anarchists contended that the mixing of "la cuestión política con la cuestión trabajo", led to lower participation and ultimately eroded the strike's strength.

The centrality of national identity to the strike is further illustrated by a passage from *La Discusión,* a conservative and nationalist paper based in Havana, and architects of the propaganda that the anarchists refer to. In this paper, the anarchists are critiqued for their alleged efforts to tarnish the *Liga General de Trabajadores Cubanos,* arguing that the anarchist strike was carried out to associate the *Liga* with "un movimiento suicida" and therefore "arriesgar su popularidad dentro de cierto elementos obreros". The contingent of "anarquistas españoles" behind this effort are labelled as "enemigos de la libertad y de la grandeza de la patria". The paper implores Cuban workers to see that "se han dejado arrastrar de buena fe por el anarquismo español" and that "al penetrarse de la realidad abondonaran una actitud que no se compagina con sus deberes patrióticos ni beneficia sus aspiraciones

[264] 'Consideraciones. Después de la huelga, *El Nuevo Ideal, 6 October 1899*.

como trabajadores".[265] In sum, regardless of the veracity of the claims of *La Discusión,* the consequence of these tensions between 'Spanish' anarchism and national-identity based projects such as the newspaper *La Discusión* and the *Liga,* resulted in reduced participation in the strike.

The centrality of national identity to the 1899 strike is also demonstrated by examining the perspective of the U.S. National identity divisions were weaponized by the U.S. occupying forces as a way of highlighting the need to quell strike action. They premise their view on the historical antecedent, and continued prevalence of, tensions between Spaniards and Cubans: "existe aquí una continuada dificultad en la hostilidad racial de aquellos reconocidos como de nacionalidad española y los de antecedentes cubanos, quienes durante años se han mantenido en conflictos y en la guerra actual, y los representativos de ambos elementos se hallan febrilmente ocupados en fomentar hondas discordias".[266] This is cited as a factor in prompting the U.S. to not allow "agitaciones" such as the 1899 general strike action to persist on the basis that strike action would serve to exacerbate national identity antagonisms. The U.S. construct a narrative whereby their repression of strike action is a duty "en bien de la seguridad" as opposed to being self-interested. In this way, the existing national identity antagonisms, which were indeed a feature of the general strike, as observed by the anarchists, allowed for a stronger justification U.S. to repress strike action as well as simulatenously fortifying their narrative of a Cuba unable to govern itself due to its pervasive "recriminaciones, pasiones y violencias" which disrupted the "seguridad" and "interés del pueblo mismo". In this way, the legacy of Spanish colonialism's national identity antagonisms not only had a negative impact on the anarchist and workers movement's

[265] Rivero Muñiz, p.146-7.
[266] William Ludlow, 'Informe del General William Ludlow, Gobernador Militar de La Habana, al General John R. Brooke, in *Documentos para la Historia de Cuba. Tomo II,* ed.by Hortensia Pichardo (La Habana: Instituto del Libro, 1969), pp.46-50, (p.49).

capacity to organize, but they were also preyed upon by the American imperial power to strengthen their narrative of libertators bringing prosperity and stability to Cuba.

The reputation of anarchists as disruptors of order were weaponized by the U.S. occupying forces as a way of highlighting the need to quell strike action. Ludlow describes this process as a "tranquila y ordenada disolución del serio peligro que estuvo pendiente sobre la ciudad" which has resulted in improvements of "la atmósfera general" within the city.[267] The repression of the strike was justified in part by its association with anarchism. Ludlow, the governor general of Havana, writes in a report to General John R. Brooke that the "fraseología" during the strike of "7 mártires de Chicago" and the "bandera roja del trabajo" were strong indicators of the "verdadera naturaleza del movimiento". The governor assigns responsibility for the strike to the anarchist movement, which is in turn used to justify "acción inmediata" so as to "proteger la administración de la cidudad y los intereses de sus pobladores". [268] The strike's association with anarchism therefore had an impact upon the strike's legitimacy and the justification for its repression. In a further reference to the anarchist movement, the U.S. authoritie insisted on arguing that the strike was being orchestrated by "ciertos individuos, irresponsables y sediciosos" who are only a "pequeña minoría del número de personas representadas en las organizaciones obreras" intent on "pertubar la paz"[269] It is this 'minority' which have subjected workers to being "persuadidas o intimidadas para participatar en la huelga"[270]. This prompts the "autoridades locales" (denoting both U.S. and Cuban authorities) to carry out "tempranos esfuerzos para dominar estos movimientos". This demonstrates how, as well as national identity, the anarchists were leaned on in this U.S. narrative for the need to dismantle 1899 strike action. The U.S.'

[267] Ibid., p.48.
[268] Ibid., p.48.
[269] Rivero Muñiz, p.211
[270] Ludlow, *Informe del General William Ludlow*, p.48.

narrative is disputed by anarchists who argue that ”No había necesidad de desplegar semejante brutal autoridad. La huelga era pacífica. Los obreros pedían 8 horas de trabajo, y *tienen derecho à pedirlas y mantener su acción pasiva hasta tanto no se acceda a su demanda”*[271]. In spite of this, the U.S. government narrative, in a similar way to the nationalist movement and newspapers, were able to capitalize on the reputation of the anarchist movements as disturbers of order to delegitimize strike action.

Overall, the *Huelga de Albañiles* principally demonstrates the impact of national identity on anarchism in weakening the potential for strike action as a challenge to imperialism. Due to a combination of being perceived in nationalist circles as a Spanish movement which worked against the interests of Cubans, and as a chaotic minority intent on disturbing peace by U.S. authorities, participation was negatively impacted and the U.S. had an easier mandate to swiftly repress the strike. Even though the strike was “auspiciada y dirigida por cubanos”[272] as an attempt to improve their material situation, national identity and anarchism were invoked by the *Liga General de Trabajadores Cubanos,* conservative papers, as well as the U.S. governing forces to delegitimize the strike and ultimately lead to its failure.

Henry Clay

The centrality of national identity to the *Huelga de Albañiles* was not an isolated case. In another workplace context, within one of the numerous factories owned under the umbrella of the Trust called the “*Henry Clay and Bock Company*”, national identity assumed a decisive role. It illustrates how national identity infringed upon the anarchist vision of a unified class struggle to challenge imperialism. Moreover, the example is particularly pertinent to understanding the challenge to imperialism since the *Henry Clay* factory was owned by a Trust, noted earlier in the chapter as a key facet of U.S. economic imperialism in Cuba. This

[271] ‘GRAL CARLOS GARCIA’, *El Nuevo Ideal*, 6 October 1899.
[272] Rivero Muñiz, p.147.

not least because, Gustavo Bock, the owner of this Trust, was the ”líder de la Unión de Fabricantes de Tabaco y Cigarros de la Isla de Cuba”, which was at the time considered the ”entidad patronal de más fuerza e influencia en el país”.[273]

National identity was at the centre of the *Henry Clay* process of workplace exclusion. 93 Cuban tobacco workers at the ”fábrica de *Henry Clay*” signed a petition to ”explulsar á los empleados españoles por el hecho de serlo”[274]. More specifically, they sought “la retirada de los encargados y capataces españoles que había en las tabaquerías del ‘Trust’ regido por Bock, y que los mismos fuesen sustituídos por cubanos”[275] This petition to remove Spanish workers from their posts by Cuban workers took place within the context of what the *Liga General de Trabajadores Cubanos* deemed to be discrimination against Cuban factory workers. This is severely condemned by the anarchist Luis Barcia, writing that “han pretendido echar los cimientos de una muralla cubana que, cual la de China, impidiese toda relación y todo comercio con los demás mortales, con todo aquel que no hubiese vísto la luz primera sobre el suelo de la fecunda Cuba”.[276] Barcia here disparages the act of exclusion based on national identity as one which splinters the working-class by impeding the formation of harmonious relations along class lines.

It is further condemned by anarchists on the basis that divisions result in stifling the potential for anarchist activity by accelerating and legitimizing strong responses by private and political authorities. Consequently, the principal result of the “discordia“ engendered by the actions of *Henry Clay* factory workers is ”beneficio exclusivo de los burgueses y de los anexionistas”. For example, it strengthens the United States’ legitimizing narrative for intervention: ”son los políticos anexionistas que tienen interés en presentarnos ante los

[273] Ibid., p.79.
[274] ‘Muralla china’, *El Nuevo Ideal,* 29 abril 1899.
[275] Rivero Muñiz p.79.
[276] ‘Muralla china’, *El Nuevo Ideal,* 29 abril 1899.

Estados Unidos como un pueblo inculto, díscolo é ingobernable por sí mismo".[277] In this way, Barcia's critique of the *Henry Clay* dispute lies not just in the fact that national identity weakens the organizational praxis of the labour movement, but, just as the U.S. had used the disorder of anarchists to warrant repression of the 1899 *Huelga de Albañiles*, the disorder of national identity antagonisms in the *Henry Clay* dispute facilitated justifications for U.S. intervention. In the article "A los trabajadores. Por la solidaridad" the anarchists refer to the *Henry Clay* dispute and argue against "invocando el patriotismo en el trabajo". In particular, the anarchist author cites an excerpt from a speech made by Don Gustavo Brock, who critiques the demands made by Cubans workers to dismiss Spanish tobacco workers: "tengo un indiscutible derecho á *nombrar, conservar y destituir* mis empleados" and "ha sido mi norma de conducta *no someterme á imposiciones de ningún género".* As a result, the owner threatens the possibility of closing down factories: "me veo obligado...á recurrir á cualquiera medida por grave y extreme que fuera, *hasta* suspender el trabajo en las fábricas y disponer su cierre".[278] Without a factory, the anarchist sarcastically poses the question: "¿A quién váis á recurrir en demanda de solidaridad?" The author concludes by circling back to the importance of worker unity since "desunidos jamás podremos los trabajadores alcanzar nada" These responses are highlighted by anarchists since they demonstrate how national identity imposes constraints on worker bargaining power without harming the power of the factory owners. In sum, the anarchists were especially critical of the *Henry Clay* dispute not only because it weakened worker unity, but because it engendered disunity without a concurrent attempt at direct action aimed at eroding imperial power.

The response by anarchists to the *Henry Clay* dispute also demonstrates the way that Independence was used to critique national identity and justify class unity. National identity,

[277] 'Muralla china', *El Nuevo Ideal,* 29 abril 1899.
[278] 'Por la solidaridad', *El Nuevo Ideal,* 8 April 1899.

they write, can lend itself to a pattern of exclusion which “aplicada en el sentido más restrictivo y egoista” can result in ”la explulsión de todo extranjero, rico ó pobre, ignorante ó sabio, reaccionario ó libertario”. Counterposing national identity dogmatism with the principles which undergird Independence, the author is clear that this act of expulsion of Spanish workers is devoid of reasonable justification since it is ”en contradicción con el espíritu amplio que informó la revolución”. The revolution of Independence, Barcia writes, was founded upon an ”ideal sea cualquiera la región que habiten”, an ideal which resulted in “gran número de españoles” who “ derramaron también su sangre en defensa del ideal que sustentaban sus hermanos los cubanos”.[279] In this way, the response to the *Henry Clay* dispute by anarchists demonstrates an attempt to reappropriate the meaning of Independence to align with its narrative of class struggle to challenge U.S. imperialism, and though the predominant pattern was an anarchist rejection of national identity in its entirety, this example aligns with Shaffer‘s thesis on the incorporation of Independence discourse into the anarchist schema.[280] There was however a degree of separation between the anarchist movement and the working class in Cuba on the theme of Independence. Independence did group together individuals of different social backgrounds, ethnic profiles and nationalities, but it also did so on the basis of a specifically Cuban nationalist identity.[281] Moreover, and very crucially, this Cuban identity was tightly bound up with, and borne out of, the oppression of Cuban people by Spanish colonialism. It is this relationship to national identity and Independence which manifests itself in the Cuban workers’ demand for removal of Spanish workers. The *Henry Clay* dispute demonstrates the centrality of Independence to the tension between anarchists and other sectors of the Cuban working class.

[279] ‘Muralla china’, *El Nuevo Ideal,* 29 April 1899.
[280] Shaffer, *Cuba para todos.*
[281] Ada Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba : race, nation, and revolution, 1868-1898*, (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

Events such as that of the *Henry Clay* factory and the *Huelga de Albañiles* are representative of a strong attachment to national identity. The attempt to establish a more homogenous Cuban workforce was a response to their experience as colonial subjects, as well as the fact that within workplaces Spaniards continued to receive preferential treatment. In essence, workplace actions such as the demand to exclude Spanish workers, far from being devoid of class content and inimical to worker emancipation, were, for these Cuban workers, a key component of their position within the subordinated working class. This was in tension with an anarchist movement who firmly maintained that any association with national identity was inimical to anti-imperialism and social revolution. As such, the importance of Cuban national identity to the working class, and the tension this created with anarchism, was a firm feature of this period. Indeed, the *Henry Clay* event is also noted as that which created momentum for further campaigning for the rights of Cuban workers: "a partir de ese momento empezó a germinar el movimiento que estalló en 1902, reclamando el ingreso de los jóvenes cubanos, como aprendices, en aquellos departamentos de las tabaquerías donde se devengaban los sueldos más elevados, departamentos que hasta entonces rigurosamente vedados a los nativos".[282]

Huelga de aprendices

The nationalist sentiment displayed in the *Henry Clay* dispute was carried into a 1902 general strike known as the "Huelga de aprendices". Spearheaded by the tobacco sector and the nationalist *Liga General de Trabajadores Cubanos,* this strike revolved around demanding rights for Cuban workers. They argued against the unequal treatment of workers on the basis of national identity, describing a scenario whereby "los cargos de capataces, encargados y operarios mejor pagadas desempeñeran siempre españoles". Moreover, the strike pinpointed

[282] Rivero Muñiz, p.79.

the rights of "aprendices" denouncing the fact that "tampoco se admitían aprendices cubanos en algunos sectores de la tabquería".[283] This is echoed by *El Despertar,* who write that the strike, backed by the *Liga,* had as its core the aim of "defensa de los niños que hasta el presente han sido excluidos de los departamentos más lucrativos de la industria del tabaco".[284] In sum, the striker demands came under the following: to equalize wages across all factories under the ownership of the American Trust to that of the highest waged factory, improved quality of working materials, as well as the admission of Cuban apprentices.[285] It is this centrality of national identity, as well as the strike's relavance to U.S. imperialism since "empezó en los talleres de la fábrica Cabañas perteneciente al trust estadounidense Havana Commercial Company" which highlights its importance to understanding the encounter between anarchism and imperialism. [286]

The key feature of the strike is that its demands were centred around national identity and the rights of Cuban workers, further highlighting the relevance of national identity to workers and indeed the gulf between anarchism and worker movements. As well as the central affirmative demand of equal opportunities for Cuban workers, the strikers positioned themselves in opposition to Spaniards, both fellow workers and "patronos". On the 30 November 1902, the 'Comité director' of the strike asserted that it opposed the "flujo de inmigrantes jóvenes llevados de España por los patronos peninsulares", as opposed to granting opportunities to "los hijos del país" [287]. In a similar way to the *Henry Clay* dispute, the Cuban workers who pioneered the *Huelga de Aprendices* were insistent that Spanish colonialism continued to subjugate Cubans and prioritize Spaniards. The anarchist movement however saw class as a transcendent category which was capable of neutralizing the need for

[283] Comités de Huelga, 'Asoma la lucha de clases en la nueva epoca', in *Documentos para la Historia de Cuba. Tomo II,* ed. by Hortensia Pichardo (La Habana: Instituto del Libro, 1969), pp.210-11, (p.210).
[284] *El Despertar,* 31 July 1902.
[285] 'Trabajadores a la Huelga General', *¡Tierra!,* 22 November 1902.
[286] Sánchez Cobos, *Sembrando Ideales,* p.243.
[287] Comités de Huelga, p.210.

causes rooted in national identity. Despite the fact that the anarchists supported the *Huelga de Aprendices*, this was not in line with their preference for class unity. The strike thus demonstrates a continued tension between anarchism and nationalist sentiment. Indeed, Sánchez Cobos writes that the Huelga de aprendices was an example of "la división que había nacido en 1899 entre los trabajadores del sector tabacalero-nativos y extranjeros-se profundizó aún más" over the years.[288] Despite the initial indications that the strike could represent an evolution from the divisive character of other previous instances of workplace struggle, it was ultimately a continuation.

Furthermore, in a similar way to both the *Huelga de Albañiles* and the *Henry Clay* petition, Rivero Muñiz notes that the strike was subject to fierce repression in which reference to the trope of "anarquistas españoles" was weaponized. This was born out of the fact that the anarchists had allied themselves to and endorsed this strike action, despite it being grounded in nationalist sentiment. This is testament to the strength of the nationalist *Liga;* rather than the anarchists opposing the strike on the basis of their opposition to national identity, "se unieron a la Liga General de Trabajdores Cubanos y a la sociedad de Torcedores en defensa de los tabaqueros en paro".[289] Therefore, despite the fact that the strike signalled a moment in which the nationalist worker groupings and anarchist groupings had merged in workplace struggle, it also demonstrated how the association with anarchism was used as a vehicle for the strike's delegitimization - the governing forces denounced the strike based on the argument that the anarchist involvement was evidence that the strike worked to "obstaculizar el establecimiento de la República".[290]

[288] Sánchez Cobos, *Sembrando Ideales,* p.245.
[289] Sánchez Cobos, *Sembrando Ideales,* p.198
[290] José Rivero Muñiz, 'La Primera Huelga General Obrera en Cuba Republicana'. *Islas,* 3.3, (1961), 281-330, (p.290).

The Huelga de aprendices was certainly impactful. This is corroborated by Carlos Loveira's memoir of his experience in the worker's movement which highlights the significance of the 1902 strike: In describing a conflict between the workers and the state between 1908-1917 (date unspecified), Loveira points to it having posed a serious threat to the Cuban government: "no obstante la relativa insignificancia de la población en que germinó y se desarrolló, había preocupado, más que ninguno otro, a un Gobierno de Cuba" Crucially, he adds, "sin excluir de esta apreciación la gran huelga general habanera de 1902".[291] At the same time however, the Huelga de aprendices is evidence of the centrality of national identity to strike action. This is in part illustrated by the fact that anarchism associated itself with the strike, despite it being in principle against the anarchist opposition to associating with national identity. In doing so however, the anarchist involvement allowed for the authorities to use the anarchist movement as a means to justify their repression of the strike. In sum, the strike contributes towards the conclusion that, in clashing with the importance ascribed by working classes to national identity, anarchism's anti-imperialism struggled to take form.

Transnationalism, the workplace and imperialism

In order to fully understand the role of strike action in the anarchist encounter with imperialism, it is important to draw out its transnational dimensions. During the 1901 'Huelga de tabaqueros' in Tampa, Luis Barcia writes that he left Tampa alongside other union leaders due to the "persecució que sufrían". He notes that "una vez en la Habana, trabajaron cuanto pudieron en favor de la huelga de Tampa".[292] Though the anarchists were displaced to Cuba, Barcia equally suggests that it had tactical advantages: "la organización tenía proyectado el enviar a Cuba una comisión que le representara". Ultimately, the strike was not succesful: "al fin, debilitados por la escasez de recursos y oprimidos por la presión

[291] Carlos Loveira, *De los 26 a los 35: Lecciones de la experiencia en la lucha obrera (1908-1917),* (Washington D.C: The Law Reporter Printing Company, 1917), p.198.
[292] Barcia, p.54

material de los barbaros mal llamados ciudadanos de Tampa, sucumbieron las huelguistas ¡Una página más en el libro de las derrotas del proletariado".[293] Despite this, the general strike action helped to consolidate the need for general strike action in Cuba, thus highlighting the transnational influence of the U.S. on the tactical approach of anarchists in Cuba. Specifically, one author refers to a general strike across the whole sector of coal mines "afectando á 150,000 hombres". This was in contrast to previous strike action which had only comprised a smaller number of "diez ó quince mil hombres". The former, comprising 150,000 strikers, was that which "ganaron los obreros". This is because "Nueve compañías son proprietarias de todas las minas de carbón antracita de los Estados Unidos; no forman un *Trust,* pero en caso de huelga se ayudan como si fueran una sola". It is in drawing on the specific success of a general strike in the U.S. which leads the anarchist to the conclusion that given this form of ownership "no basta oponer la resistencia de un número más o menos grande de trabajadores en una localidad determinada, sino que es necesaria la más estrecha unión de todos cuantos se dedican á esa industria en la nación". [294] Transnationalism here operates through the Cuban movement leaning on a specific example of workplace praxis in the U.S. to reaffirm the need for general strike action in Cuba. In this way, the transnational link to the U.S. not only provided motivation for direct action, but also, in highlighting the effectiveness of coordinated general strike action for challenging Trusts, helped to solidify the need for general strike action specifically. In this way, a tailored response to U.S. imperialism was constructed partly as a result of the anarchist transnational network. Moreover, one can conclude that transnationalism succeeded in breaking down the "macro-label"[295] and transnational structure of imperialism into identifiable parts which the local and grassroots anarchist movement was capable of challenging.

[293] Ibid., p.55.
[294] 'El Trust', *El Nuevo Ideal,* 7 August 1901.
[295] Apata. *Imperialism and the Developing World.*

Transnational links with the U.S. were deployed to bolster and improve the chances of strike action success. During the 1899 *Huelga de Albañiles,* by threatening the strike in Cuba with the possibility of a wave of replacement 'albañiles' from the U.S., it was judged that this would subsequently weaken the position of strikers in Cuba; the prospect of replacement workers was an attempt to weaken the strike's organizational capacity since it would attach a sense of futility to the strike action – the general strike is only successful if there is not a cohort of workers ready to replace those on strike. They write that "la mercenaría prensa burguesa ha lanzado la estupenda noticia de que tres miles albañiles estaban próximos a embarcarse en Nueva York con rumbo á la Habana". However, the anarchist movement in Cuba, due to its acute awareness of the situation of workers in the U.S., was able to identify this possibility of large-scale migratory movements of workers from the U.S. as improbable: "esto no pasa de ser un solemne embuste" which had the "intención de atemorizar á los huelguistas". The conviction with which the anarchist movement dismissed the possibility of migrant replacements is grounded in their knowledge of the superior quality of life of workers in the U.S.: "Los albañiles en Nueva York ganan de $3.50 á $4, y de seguro que no han de estar conformes con venir á la Habana para ganar menos y estar expuestos á los efectos del clima" As well as their firm belief that migration to Cuba is unlikely due to it not being an attractive propsect to workers, its likelihood is dismissed on the basis that it would be logistically complex: "eso de contratar a tres mil albañiles, aun en Nueva York, es demasiado contratar".[296] This example illustrates how the anarchist movement, due to its transnational links with the U.S. was able to improve the longevity, and thus the chances of strike action success, within Cuba. [297]

[296] 'LA HUELGA DE LOS ALBAÑILES', *El Nuevo Ideal,* 13 October 1899.
[297] Ibid.

The transnational network between Cuba and the U.S. was homed in on by the U.S. imperial authorities. This is particularly apparent in their response to the 1899 general strike. Ludlow writes: ”es interesante anotar que el inmediato resultado de la disolución de la huelga fue denunciado por una organización obrera de Chicago, mostrando esto cuán estrechas eran las relaciones entre las dos localidades” Going further, Ludlow delineates a critique of the fact that strike methods visible in Cuba, as well as their specific demands, were imported from abroad. Ludlow attacks the ”osadía con la cual los agitadores procuran transferir sus propios métodos y propósitos a una localidad extranjera donde las condiciones son del todo diferentes...donde el peligro de ocasionar complicaciones que pudieran reaccionar de manera desastrosa sobre el pueblo es enorme”. In particular, the principal concern is that transnational networks had prompted Cubans to demand a reduction of the working day to eight hours. Ludlow writes that the eight hour working day, which ”en los Estados Unidos...constituye un día legal de trabajo” cannot be transplanted to Cuba because the ”características raciales, hábitos y condicinoes de clima” create different productivity rates which mean that the number of hours of labour in Cuba will always have to higher than in the U.S.: ”no se realiza tanta labor en doce horas como en seis en los Estados Unidos”. Moreover, Ludlow asserts that the Cuban population is susceptible to chaotic and irresponsible reactions to direct action like strikes: ”estamos tratando con una población relativamente no instruida, cuya sensibilidad es fácilmente excitada, pero carente de juicio, que está inacostumbrada a dirigir sus propios negocios, y que probablemente recurre a la violencia cuando se halla excitada o contrariada”. [298] Overall, the concern held by U.S. authorities for this transnational network‘s impact on anarchist praxis is illustrative of its

[298] William Ludlow, ‘Informe del General William Ludlow, Gobernador Militar de La Habana, al General John R. Brooke, in *Documentos para la Historia de Cuba. Tomo II,* ed.by Hortensia Pichardo (La Habana: Instituto del Libro, 1969), pp.46-50, (p.49).

impact. In particular, it highlights the way that anarchism's transnationalism was a useful tool in breaking down imperialism as a "macro-label" into specific identifiable parts.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the way in which the anarchist relationship to imperialism can be understood through the dynamics of the workplace. In part, it did so by reiterating the fact that direct action and focus on the economic sphere are core features of the anarchist schema in the movement's objective of bringing about social revolution. Since social revolution and anti-imperialism were synonymous for anarchists in Cuba, it is possible to note the relationship between direct action and anti-imperialism.

However, as well as this, the chapter explained how the anarchists conceptualized and tailored their direct action in the 'economic' and workplace sphere to the specific context of U.S. imperialism. By diagnosing the fact that U.S. imperialism was characterized by large-scale ownership of multiple industries and factories, they responded by insisting on the necessity of the general strike as opposed to individual and smaller scale strikes. The anarchists therefore used direct action with specifically anti-imperialist intentions. This also helps to consolidate the thesis that the anarchists in Cuba de-reified imperialism into "specific manifestations" at the local level.[299]

This anti-imperialism through praxis, it was argued, was facilitated by transnationalism with the U.S. movement. Through their connection to anarchists in the U.S., the anarchists in Cuba developed and reaffirmed their position of advocating for direct action in the form of general strikes and class solidarity. Furthermore, the connection with the U.S. allowed for strike action to be sustained for a longer period as was the case in the 1899 *Huelga de Albañiles*'

[299] Legg, p.7.

However, in spite of the facilitating role of transnationalism in the anarchist's workplace praxis against imperialism, it was stressed, in a similar way to chapter three, that the anarchist movement was constrained by the primacy of the politics of national identity. In the *Huelga de Albañiles*, the *Henry Clay* factory as well as the *Huelga de Aprendices*, national identity assumed a critical role in steering the direction of the strike action. Given that the anarchists rejected national identity as inimical to the working-class struggle in Cuba, the centrality of national identity in affecting workplace praxis is at the core of furthering the thesis that the anarchist movement's anti-imperialism encountered significant limitations.

Moreover, the chapter illustrated how the association of anarchism with Spanish national identity was often drawn upon by U.S authorities in legitimizing the repression of strike action, and also discouraged participation by workers who were committed to nationalism. In this way, it demonstrates the limitations of an anarchist anti-imperialism intent on using strike action to challenge imperialism. Furthermore, given that transnationalism in the form of Spanish migration bolstered this association of anarchism with Spain, an association which this chapter demonstrated was influential in weakening direct action, this helps to corroborate the thesis that transnationalism was not a linear and productive force for anarchism.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

This dissertation, through its exploration of anarchism's relationship to imperialism in Cuba between 1898-1902, has made a key contribution to several fields: anarchism, imperialism, as well as Cuban labour histories. Despite efforts in the literature to counter the Eurocentric trends of anarchism[300], in part stimulated by the bulging literature in anarchist transnational studies, the anarchist movement remains narrated and analyzed from a largely European perspective. Consequently, the anarchist encounter with imperialism is largely obscured from historiography[301], and indeed so is the anarchist movement's relationship to the nation, nationalism and national identity.[302] Moreover, with specific regards to Cuban history, the anarchist movement is eclipsed by studies on communism. In this dissertation, I have addressed these shortcomings by studying the anarchist movement in Cuba's interplay with imperialism, and placed significant emphasis on the tensions linked to national identity.

In Cuban anarchist historiography, the literature has made contributions to understanding the relationship between anarchism and imperialism; however, missing from these are an assessment of the extent to which anarchism was capable of challenging imperialism. In particular, this literature presents an account of the anarchist relationship to imperialism as one which was marked by an incorporation of national identity, or an alliance with nationalist projects, as a means to challenge imperialism.[303] In this way, the perspective of anarchism on national identity is construed as flexible and malleable.

Whilst the dissertation illustrated that anarchism endorsed the nationalist Independence project, and in some ways incorporated Independence motifs to construct its anti-imperialism, the period under U.S. imperialism was primarily marked by a refutation of national identity

[300] Hirsch and Van der Walt; Evren; Ramnath; Craib and Barry.
[301] Hirsch and Van der Walt
[302] Kinna and Gutiérrez.
[303] Shaffer, *Anarchists of the Caribbean* and *Cuba para todos.* Anderson, *Under Three Flags*

and championing of class struggle by the anarchist movement. More specifically, it has illustrated how the anarchist movement's anti-imperialism, predicated upon class unity and social revolution, was constrained by tensions and divisions revolving around national identity and revolutionary strategy. In this way, it has departed from literature which has portrayed an anarchist movement which borrowed from and aligned with national identity projects and discourses as a means to further the anarchist project.[304] Not only is this the case within the literature on Cuban anarchism specifically, but similarly the most recent scholarly literature on the anarchist movement's relationship to the nation argues that the anarchist movement's ideals of internationalism and class struggle "did not posit the transcendence of 'national' differences through the attainment of class consciousness".[305] However, the case of Cuban anti-imperialism shows that national identity was indeed belittled and rejected, and class unity was viewed specifically as a means to neutralize or transcend the affinity to national identity. As a result of this, the constituent parts of the anarchist movement's anti-imperialism - class struggle and social revolution - distanced the dominant strand of Cuban anarchism from other worker organizations in Cuba, as well as other anarchists.

In a Cuba which was still marked by its experience with Spanish colonialism, Cuban national identity represented a tool of resistance which retained significant value. This was illustrated through the organizational potency of groups such as the *Liga General de Trabajadores Cubanos* as well as nationalist sentiment which pervaded the anarchist movement itself. The tight attachment to national identity created tensions and divisions between Spaniards and Cubans, as well as between nationalists and anarchists. These tensions manifested themselves most clearly in divisions between anarchism and the *Liga,* anarchist perspectives on migration, as well as the anarchist critique of the working classes' lack of commitment to

[304] Shaffer, *Cuba para todos.*
[305] Kinna and Gutiérrez, p.7.

class struggle and revolutionary action. Moreover, tensions on the basis of national identity had a significant deleterious impact on the success of the anarchist movement's anti-imperial praxis, as represented by the role of division in limiting the productive impact of workplace struggles such as *Henry Clay*, the *Huelga de Albañiles* and the *Huelga de Aprendices*.

These divisions were significant in dictating the capacity of an anarchist movement which was explicitly focused on challenging the U.S. imperial presence. Through their understanding of the pillars of imperialism (the state and capitalism), the pitfalls of U.S. republicanism and finally the complicity of Cubans in the perpetuation of U.S. imperialism, the anarchist movement constructed a detailed portrayal of the nature of imperial power. Armed with this understanding, the anarchists in Cuba struggled for social revolution carried out by a unified class movement deploying direct action tactics. Indeed, on this latter, they specifically tailored their preference for large-scale direct action in the form of general strikes to the imperial context. In other words, they expressed a deliberate intention to deploy general strike action as a means to challenge U.S. imperialism.

This detailed conceptualization of anti-imperialism, and anti-imperial praxis, were significantly aided by transnational networks. The dissertation explained how through its transnational connection to the U.S., the anarchists in Cuba leaned on events taking place (worker oppression and racial discrimination) within the U.S. to consolidate their critique of the new imperial power in Cuba. Moreover, the link with the anarchists in the U.S. helped to provide proof of the fruitfulness of organizing workers on the basis of class as it allowed for a harmonization of conflicting national identities. Moreover, transnational networks of material solidarity with the U.S. were vital to sustaining strike action, as illustrated in the *Huelga de Albañiles*.

Simultaneously however, in a challenge to the literature's tendency to portray transnationalism as a linear and generative process, the dissertation highlighted that the productive potential of transnationalism in the form of Spanish migration was constrained by the divisions and cleavages within Cuba. The influx of Spanish migrants, including Spanish anarchists, was a process which, rather than leading inexorably to the growth of anarchism in Cuba, should be treated as one which fed into and did not neutralize the ideological and nationality-based tensions. It is possible that the influx of Spanish migration (which included many anarchists) complicated existing divisions. Indeed, the dissertation illustrated numerous examples of how the association of anarchism with Spanish identity was a component of the lack of participation in, and repression of, general strike action. Further research on Cuban working-class organizations such as the *Liga,* particularly on their attitudes to anarchism, would be useful in drawing out more nuanced conclusions about inter-worker and inter-organizational relations and the impact of transnationalism on the anarchist project.

The emphasis on transnationalism in this project was balanced with an appreciation for the meso, local and national scales of analysis. By combining a transnational lens with a grounding in the national level of Cuba, the dissertation was able to examine intergroup relations as well as foreground the politics of national identity. Moreover, by combining different scalar emphases, the dissertation was able to illustrate how the local anarchist movement in Cuba challenged a global structure of imperialism. In other words, it sought to explain how the anarchists were able to deconstruct the U.S. imperial monolith into "specific manifestations"[306]. Examples of this were the anarchist movement's identification of Cuban officials complicit in sustaining imperial political processes, as well as the advocation of general strike action as a means to challenge imperialism. Both of these constituted a form of anti-imperialism at the local level. Similarly, the anarchist critique of national identity

[306] Legg, p.7.

antagonisms as hampering the challenge to imperialism is representative of an anti-imperialism at the local and "meso" level.

Furthering this foregrounding of intergroup relations as a means to study the dialogue between the local and the global, studies of Cuban anarchism would benefit significantly from more detailed analysis of the role of race. Though this project has touched on the anarchist attitude to race, highlighting that though there was a principled opposition to racist discriminatory practices, it was argued that this was typically conceived within the framework of justifying the need for class solidarity, and consolidating the anti-imperialist critique. Indeed, the lack of emphasis on race in this project is reflective of the minimal focus on racial questions within the anarchist discourse between 1898-1902. Further studies, building on the work of Sánchez Cobos[307] and Shaffer[308], would fruitfully benefit from ascertaining the way that race interacted with the politics of national identity and class universalism within anarchism. In particular, it would be important to further understandings of how the anarchist movement's focus on class as a transcendent category developed alongside the increasing political representation of black Cubans in the early twentieth century.

In a contemporary context in which racial and national identities continue to be the subject of tension with the preferences for class universalism,[309] this project serves to further confirm the historical precedent of division as a feature of the working class, as well as the overlapping nature of class and national identity. Moreover, in the context of increasing interest in transnational social movements, this project insists on viewing transnationalism as a process which, though very productive and indeed crucial for the construction and strength

[307] *Clase versus raza*
[308] *Anarchists of the Caribbean* and *Anarchist Cuba.*
[309] Michael Richmond and Alex Charnley, *Fractured, Race, Class, Gender and the Hatred of Identity Politics,* (London: Pluto Press, 2022).

of social movements, should also be studied alongside a significant consideration of the pre-existing context with which transnationalism combines. For example, in this project, it asserted that national identity antagonisms within Cuba were critical to challenging the narrative of anarchist transnationalism as solely productive. Whilst scholars are keen to draw parallels between anarchism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and social movements with similar structures and objectives today, it is crucial that this parallel continues to foreground the importance of the way that transnationalism interlocks and combines with pre-existing identities and power dynamics, sometimes productively and sometimes not.

Overall, through its emphasis on the tension between national identity sentiment and the class solidarity of the anarchist movement, this project has demonstrated how the anarchist movement, though it certainly constructed an anti-imperialism as a component of its prime objective of social revolution, it was constrained in doing so. In some ways, the anarchist movement was limited purely by virtue of the conditions of Cuba following the war. Fernández writes that the Cuban anarchist movement was "in a state of total prostration, and therefore it was very difficult — given their almost total lack of resources — for Cuba's anarchists to mount a social struggle under such deplorable conditions".[310] Indeed, as well as this, one must take into account the immense power of imperialism itself to set the terms or "ground-rules" of the struggle, meaning that the U.S. would only ever have been threatened to a very minimal extent by even the most organized and effective of anarchist movements.[311] However, despite the veracity of these structural and external constraints on anarchism's anti-imperialism, this does not take away from the value of foregrounding the limitations of anarchism's anti-imperialism due to divisions and tensions. By highlighting these, this

[310] Fernández, p.55.
[311] John Holloway, *Crack Capitalism,* (London: Pluto Press, 2010), pp.137-8.

dissertation has shed light on the constraints of the Cuban anarchist anti-imperial project of class struggle and social revolution. Most importantly, it has demonstrated the fruitfulness of combining the nation, imperialism, and transnationalism for furthering understanding about anarchism's capacities and limitations, both within Cuba and beyond.

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