

CUBA'S ANGLO-AMERICAN COLONY IN TIMES OF REVOLUTION (1952-1961)

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## **ABSTRACT**

Samuel Finesurrey: Cuba's Anglo-American Colony in Times of Revolution (1952-1961)  
(Under the direction of Louis A. Pérez Jr.)

“Cuba's Anglo-American Colony in Times of Revolution, 1952-1961” explores how, in the context of revolution, contact between Cubans and U.S. nationals--as well as a smaller number of British and Canadian residents--reproduced existing hierarchies, while simultaneously creating new empathies. Cuba's Anglo-American residents managed informal empire by developing and cultivating economic, political and cultural authority on the island. These privileged outsiders were able to exert dominance through socio-economic partnerships with Cuban powerbrokers. However, Anglo-American educators, journalists, missionaries, politicians, executives, mobsters and philanthropists crafted a diverse, and often contradictory set of alliances with Cubans. Through archival research and oral histories conducted with former residents of the self-titled Anglo-American colony, this dissertation argues that proximity to Cuban suffering, most powerfully experienced by U.S. educators and missionaries, forged conditions that challenged existing class-and-nationality-based structures on the island. In the context of revolution, where their Cuban colleagues, classmates, students, parishioners, friends and family risked their lives and their privilege for a “new” Cuba, a significant segment of Anglo-American residents entered into cross-cultural solidarities with revolutionary actors. Based on the personal commitments they developed with Cubans, many U.S., British and Canadian nationals residing in Cuba struggled for a socio-economic and political transformation of Cuban society, both before the revolution ousted the Batista government and after the revolutionary government had consolidated power. The influence, presence, and actions of

Anglo-American residents profoundly impacted the direction of events in Cuba and the United States. This research centers a new set of actors, institutions, and relationships in the narrative of the Cuban Revolution.

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My invaluable research assistants Caleb Finesurrey and Nina Alvarado-Silverman added a depth of original evidence drawn from archival material. Lauren Brown became a partner in this project, transcribing scores of oral histories. Sarah MacCarthy's transcriptions of the Spanish language interviews I conducted for this project also proved extremely helpful. Archivists and library staff of particular note include Meiyolet Méndez, Gladys Gómez-Rossié, and Rosa Monzón-Alvarez of the Cuban Heritage Collection, Taffy Hall of the Southern Baptist Historical Library & Archive, Frances Lyons and L. Dale Patterson of the United Methodist Archive and Historical Society, Tammy Hamilton of the Hershey Community Archive, and Belkis Quesada Guerra of the Instituto de Historia de Cuba.

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## INTRODUCTION

In the Spring of 2011, I spent five months teaching English in Leon, Nicaragua, and became fast friends with Alexis, another foreigner. Originally from Honduras, Alexis arrived in Nicaragua as a teenager. He would move again a few years later in search of employment to Costa Rica. Working in a cellphone repair shop, Alexis faced limited financial security. Still, he proved a tremendous aid in helping me secure a place to stay at his uncle's and directing me to cheap dining options normally hidden to foreigners. We would go out with the tourists and expats living nearby most nights, or the students at the Norwegian language school a few blocks away, but we rarely had more than one or two Central Americans with us. With just a bit of English, Alexis entered into a social world designed for the comfort of privileged outsiders. Both of us were outsiders to Nicaragua, but my socio-economic background and nationality garnered me obvious advantages.

In a moment of beer-induced clarity, Alexis spoke of his frustration with the advantages denied to him, but enjoyed by Anglo-Americans. He recognized that for foreign tourists, ex-pats, English teachers, entrepreneurs and students, Nicaragua represented a carefree retreat from our lives. Despite the revolutionary Sandinista government, the privilege of Anglo-Americans in Nicaragua, in comparison to "Nicas" and other Central Americans, was clear. Alexis' daily struggle for subsistence would continue long after we left, long after our individual "generosity" was delivered to the residents of the town of León, long after we journeyed elsewhere. Our friendship developed on an always uncomfortable platform of transnational inequity. Nicaragua

was fully accessible to Anglo-American residents and travelers, while experiences and opportunities within his adopted home were severely constrained for Alexis.

In this dissertation I define privileged outsiders as individuals visiting, working, studying or volunteering in economically marginalized nations, who benefit from their nationality and access to foreign capital. They can enjoy foreign cultures without the burdens of living like the “locals.” In Nicaragua, Anglo-American tourists and ex-pats were not experiencing life as a Central American, but rather dipping their toes into a Central American reality on their terms; absorbing what they desired, distancing themselves from what proved too unfamiliar and staying only as long as they chose. Many would eventually catalogue “travel abroad” or “international service work” on resumes, as they paved professional paths far from our Central American rest stops. Yet in most instances, their positions as privileged outsiders made it difficult to identify with the sustained struggles and ambitions of those most marginalized in their host society.

When visiting or residing in economically disadvantaged parts of the world, privileged outsiders are typically white, relatively wealthy, North Americans or Europeans. Anglo-Americans enjoy the long reach of geopolitical influence of their governments when traveling to Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. U.S. nationals in particular get peppered with questions about the U.S. political landscape, as the policies of the United States reverberate with tremendous implications throughout the globe. Privileged outsiders generally live in elite neighborhoods and dine out more often than could be afforded at home as their money goes further in these settings. With the concept of *doubly privileged*, Albert Memmi argues that the presence of an underprivileged local group enables privileged outsiders to operate with substantial advantages, even more than those available in their nations of origin.<sup>1</sup> Those from the

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<sup>1</sup> Much of what Albert Memmi experienced under the formal colonization of French Tunisia remains true in settings of informal empire, and notably for the privileged outsiders of pre-revolutionary Cuba. Memmi explains, the

United States generally do not have to fear local law enforcement, as most authority figures will protect U.S. citizens, even when that protection impinges on the freedoms of the local community.

By examining the Anglo-American colony of 1950s Cuba, in this dissertation I am studying the long history of North American and European outsiders enjoying privilege in historically disadvantaged nations, as corporate representatives, students, educators, journalists, missionaries, government officials, military personnel, explorers, men and women on adventure, workers in NGOs, philanthropists, researchers and volunteers. I too am implicated in these dynamics. From a high school program in Spain, to a gap year in Costa Rica, a study abroad program in Egypt, volunteer work in Nicaragua after college, and life as a graduate student in Cuba and Chile, I have spent years benefiting from the global influence of the United States while living abroad. As an English teacher in León and Cairo, I taught the language of political and economic dominance, supporting individuals eager to achieve social mobility by cultivating skills desirable to Anglo-American employers. My position as a U.S. national abroad allowed me to seek refuge in Starbucks and Burger King, attend classes and read road signs in English; I could depend on the assistance of the police, afford the tourist bus, the train sleeping car, auto-rentals and a flight home. These half-in half-out experiences allow privileged outsiders to shape

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privileges of imperial forces do not exist in a vacuum. Instead, they come at the expense of the subordinated. Memmi argues that imperialism naturally causes dialectical inequities between colonized and colonizer, “If [the colonizer’s] living standards are high, it is because those of the colonized are low; if he can benefit from plentiful and undemanding labor and servants, it is because the colonized can be exploited at will and are not protected by the laws of the colony...” The Tunisian scholar continued to explain what it means to be a privileged outsider with regards to legal accountability, “If [the colonizer] is in trouble with the law, the police and even justice will be more lenient toward him. If he needs assistance from the government, it will not be difficult; red tape will be cut...” Memmi further details the economic and educational value of the privileged outsider’s identity, “Jobs and positions will be reserved for him in advance; the tests will be given in his language.” The hierarchies that framed Memmi’s life in French Tunisia, from which he derived these theories, reflect dynamics parallel to, but distinct from the experience that privileged outsiders encountered in pre-revolutionary Cuba. Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and The Colonized* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1991), 8, 12, 64.

transnational contact on their/our own terms, in ways familiar yet remote, intimate while separate and always secure in the reality that they/we can leave at any time. While not a colonist in the traditional sense, in today's world, as they did in 1950s Cuba, privileged outsiders benefit enormously from the political, economic, social and religious tentacles of informal empire, with tremendous implications for both privileged outsiders and their respective host societies.

Drawing from archival research, a collection of seventy-seven original oral histories and nine email exchanges (see Appendix A for sample), this dissertation argues that in Cuba, as elsewhere in the world, hierarchies of ethnicity, nation and class are typically reproduced and solidified through inter-group economic and social relations. Yet, as will be revealed later in the text, in moments of shared struggle and proximity to suffering, locals and privileged outsiders can forge transnational solidarities in contexts of informal empire. These relationships have the potential to move history, as this dissertation will argue was the case in Cuba during a decade of revolutionary upheaval between 1952-1961.

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Primarily comprised of U.S. nationals and a smaller number of British and Canadian residents, the self-titled "Anglo-American colony" formed among white English-speaking privileged outsiders living, working and studying in Cuba before the revolution. While the population of the colony fluctuated dramatically between 1898 and 1961, by the mid-1950s approximately 15,000 Anglo-American colony members spread throughout the island, managing influential cultural, political and economic institutions.<sup>2</sup> With a commitment to excavating both

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<sup>2</sup> By 1899, during the first U.S. occupation, 6,444 U.S. citizens resided on the island along with 588 British nationals and 56 Canadians. The Anglo-American population grew by around 1,000 people in the 1907 census taken during the second U.S. occupation with 6,713 U.S. residents and 1,252 British nationals. U.S. nationals in Cuba alone comprised a population of 9,555 in 1919. Total U.S. citizens numbered 13,005 including Puerto Ricans who gained their citizenship from the Jones Act in 1917. Seven-thousand-one-hundred-and-ninety-five U.S. residents, excluding Puerto Ricans, remained in 1931. The withdrawal of U.S. capital combined with the entry of the United States into World War II left just 3,800 U.S. residents in Cuba in 1943, as the number of British residents fell from 3,095 in

the enormous collective power of, as well as the rich heterogeneity within, the Anglo-American community, this dissertation explores the various commitments, relationships and identities formed in the inter-cultural contact zones of Cuba's foreign-directed schools, households, churches, businesses, sugar mills, casinos, brothels, military bases, and social clubs from 1952-1961. "Contact zones" are defined by Mary Louise Pratt as "Social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power...."<sup>3</sup> In Cuba, these spaces varied wildly, fostering myriad inter-group experiences and relationships between Cubans of diverse backgrounds and members of the self-titled Anglo-American colony.

Cuba offers a valuable case study in the history of transnational contact given the significant influence of Anglo-Americans in Cuba before 1959, and their general absence from the island after 1961. While this dissertation combines archival materials and original oral histories to chronicle the well-established presence and reproduction of foreign influence through Cuba's Anglo-American-controlled edifices, it draws attention to important counter narratives, revealing how some privileged outsiders on the island evolved into advocates for Cubans disenfranchised by the existing order. These Anglo-American residents both reproduced and also helped to destabilize their own exalted status in Cuba. This research peels back how cross-

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1931 to 1,887 in 1943. The 1953 Census reports 6,503 U.S. citizens, 272 Canadians and nearly 15,000 members of the British Commonwealth living in Cuba. Census data is further analyzed in Chapters One and Two. U.S. War Department, Office Director Census of Cuba, *Report on the Census of Cuba, 1899* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1900), 98, 220-221; Oficina del censo de los Estados Unidos, *Censo de la República de Cuba, 1907* (Montpelier, VT: The Capital City Press, 1908), 340; Junta Nacional del Censo, *Censo de la República de Cuba, 1919* (La Habana, Cuba: Maza, Arroyo y Caso, S en C., 1919), 431; Junta Nacional del Censo, *República de Cuba, Informe general del censo de 1943* (La Habana, Cuba: P. Fernández y CIA., S. en C., 1943); Oficina Nacional de los Censos Demográfico y Electoral, *Censos de población, viviendas y electoral* (La Habana, Cuba: Tribunal Superior Electoral, 1953), 81; "12,168 Americans Reported Living Here," *Times of Havana*, September 16, 1957, 1.

<sup>3</sup> Mary Louise Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone," *Ways of Reading*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, eds. David Bartholomae and Anthony Petrofsky (NY: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1999), 2.

cultural relationships between Cubans and privileged outsiders were mobilized, by Cubans and Anglo-Americans, to challenge the Batista government, welcome the revolution and then contest the island's new authorities once the revolutionary government threatened their collective influence and status. This is a study of many, often conflicting stories about the bonds of informal empire, strategic resistance, and the emergence of cross-cultural solidarities, tracing the island's Anglo-American colony from its emergence to its eventual exile.

### ***The Birth of Informal Empire in Cuba***

In their 1953 article "The Imperialism of Free Trade," John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson challenged historians who explored imperialism, specifically British Imperialism, in strictly colonial contexts. By highlighting the ways trade and economic influence allowed an expansion of British authority during the Victorian Era, Gallagher and Robinson complicated the notion of empire by popularizing the concept of informal empire.<sup>4</sup> Poppy Fry defines informal empire as "the exercise of controlling influence by one group or polity over another, without an associated claim to political sovereignty or 'ownership.'"<sup>5</sup> Matthew Brown expands this notion to argue that informal empire results from the dominance of foreign "commerce, capital, and culture."<sup>6</sup> Distinct from formal colonization, in informal empire powerful nations exert authority over a subordinated state without directly managing their affairs. In many ways Cuba was a strategic site for informal empire by the United States, after Cubans gained independence in 1902.

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<sup>4</sup> John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson, "The Imperialism of Free Trade," *The Economic History Review* 6, no. 1 (1953): 1-15.

<sup>5</sup> Poppy Fry, "Informal Empire," *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern World*, ed. Peter N. Stearns (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2008): 167-172.

<sup>6</sup> Matthew Brown, *Informal Empire in Latin America: Culture, Commerce, and Capital* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2008), 21.

No longer primarily motivated by land acquisition, as had been the case in the West, Mexico and Hawaii in the nineteenth century, by the twentieth century the U.S. government and its corporations would extract capital without the formal colonization of foreign peoples. In close consultation with the U.S. government and foreign executives, Cuban policymakers prioritized North American and European economic, political and cultural interests, severely constraining the effectiveness of Cuban strategies to address poverty, health care, infrastructure and education. Anglo-American residents, largely from the United States, managed powerful corporate, diplomatic and social institutions that collectively pressured, convinced, cajoled and/or bribed Cuban leaders to advance Anglo-American aims. Jules Benjamin explains the implications of this informal structure in Cuba: “While the extensive U.S. economic presence benefited those [Cubans] who integrated themselves into it or who learned to manipulate it, the larger effect was to exacerbate class and sectorial tensions. At the same time, the ability of Cuban leaders to contain or resolve such conflicts was undermined by their need to adhere to U.S. advice.”<sup>7</sup> Domination by foreign capital and the threat of U.S. intervention fueled systematic corruption within the Cuban government, and the valuing of Anglo-American, and particularly U.S. interests, over the needs of Cubans. After numerous military and diplomatic incursions in the first decades of the twentieth century, Cuban leaders understood that their continued power was precariously contingent on the support of, and compliance to the United States government, as well as U.S. corporate interests.

Through the deployment of “development” discourses, Anglo-Americans in Cuba circulated and institutionalized a logic that legitimized their influence in the economic, political

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<sup>7</sup> Jules R. Benjamin, *The United States and the Origins of the Cuban Revolution: An Empire of Liberty in an Age of National Liberation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 5.

and cultural spheres, while often denigrating the capacity and undermining the structures of Cuban society.<sup>8</sup> Economic development materialized as large foreign-owned sugar plantations, mining operations, cattle ranches and industrial factories hired tens of thousands of Cuban and other Caribbean workers. These efforts spawned by Anglo-American companies were justified by claims of spurring the Cuban economy, as well as providing jobs. Yet, widespread investment by foreign corporations across Cuba, but in rural Cuba most particularly, offered little material opportunity for social advancement among the vast majority of their non-Anglo-American workforce.<sup>9</sup>

In an effort to protect large-scale investments by Anglo-American firms, the United States government undertook multiple military and diplomatic interventions into Cuba in the first decades of the twentieth century. The interruption of governmental functions destabilized Cuban political structures, just as the co-option of Cuban officials by Anglo-American capital undermined the integrity of the Cuban government. It did not take long for the island's priorities to become aligned with the ambitions of foreign corporations. For many Anglo-American residents, the resulting instability of the Cuban state reinforced their sense of superiority and fed a logic that prescribed foreign investment and Anglo-American leadership to ameliorate Cuban

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<sup>8</sup> In supplementing formal colonial structures with those of informal empire, Arturo Escobar argues that seeking justification for the continued subjugation of foreign societies, the United States and Europe developed a discourse of *development* that justified the dominance of Western authority. Using the tools of science, technology, planning and international organizations, *development* proposed to eradicate the social problems of global poverty, hunger, illiteracy and disease, as if the existence of these were unrelated to early and continued manifestations of empire. Escobar argues that the discourse of "Development has been successful to the extent that it has been able to integrate, manage and control countries and populations in increasingly detailed and encompassing ways. If it has failed to solve the basic problems of underdevelopment, it can be said—perhaps with greater pertinence—that it has succeeded well in creating a type of underdevelopment that has been, for the most part, politically and technically manageable." Arturo Escobar, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 47.

<sup>9</sup> Oscar Zanetti and Alejandro García, *Sugar and Railroads: A Cuban History, 1837-1959* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 211.

underdevelopment.<sup>10</sup> Anglo-American schools and churches were founded on the ideology that they would improve the Cuban condition even as most Anglo-Americans on the island doggedly viewed Cubans as unable to achieve economic or cultural parity, and in constant need of tutelage from foreigners.

In the context of informal empire, the Anglo-American “development” of Cuba spread through economic, political, educational and religious capillaries, and thus was presumably outside state control. Cuba’s Anglo-American colony shared the aim of formal colonial and settler colonial projects to extract wealth and restructure Cuban identities. However, Anglo-Americans managing economic and cultural institutions in Cuba largely did not fit neatly into a storied tradition of colonialism. Their practical function was to limit Cuban sovereignty by streamlining the island’s political and economic priorities to appease and accommodate privileged outsiders and foreign capital. By cultivating Cuban partners dexterous in Anglo-American culture and at the top of Cuba’s professional, industrial and political classes, privileged outsiders successfully exerted their influence through socio-economic alliances while generally avoiding direct management of Cuban political affairs.

Knowledge production often worked to normalize hierarchies in Cuba and proved crucial to cementing the structures of informal empire. Many Anglo-American educators and missionaries arrived on the island dedicated to improving the lives of Cubans. Most, at least initially, were not aware of the ways in which their presence sustained a stratified society dominated by foreigners. By equipping their students and parishioners with English and Anglo-

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<sup>10</sup> Speaking of his experience in formally colonized Tunisia, Albert Memmi advanced a phenomenon which proved equally true in the context of informal empire when he explains, “The abasement of the colonized, which is supposed to explain his penury, serves at the same time as a contrast to the luxury of the colonist.... This place, the people here, the customs of this country are always inferior—by virtue of an inevitable and pre-established order.” Memmi, *The Colonizer and The Colonized*, 67-68.

American customs, they trained individual Cubans to advance socially and financially. With an Anglo-American education and Anglo-American contacts, these Cubans were better able to gain employment and/or forge business ties with foreign corporations.

Though many Cubans were able to secure stable employment at foreign corporations and enter into the Anglo-American social orbit, after six decades of informal empire, the dominance of Anglo-Americans in Cuba largely remained stable.<sup>11</sup> In his work, *The Location of Culture* Homi Bhabha explains that attempts at *mimicry* of the colonizer by locals do not create parity between colonized and colonizing groups, but instead, solidify colonial hierarchies. Bhabha argues that colonial forms of knowledge legitimate ethnic and/or national stratification, even as they seduce marginalized groups to imagine achieving parity with the colonizer.<sup>12</sup>

While reproductions of ethnic, national and class hierarchies remained an important effect of Cuba's Anglo-American colony, it is also true that at the membranes where cultures come into contact, hybrid identities, transnational relationships and shared political ambitions for the island's future emerged between select Cubans and Anglo-Americans. While most Anglo-Americans lived in luxury unimaginable in their home countries, in Havana they lived among, not above, wealthy Cuban professionals. While Anglo-American executives and diplomats often worked in tandem influencing events in Cuba, they did so with the cooperation of Cuban allies. The distinction between direct colonial administration and the everyday seepage of foreign political, cultural and economic influence in informal empire is important for understanding the

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<sup>11</sup> Louis A. Pérez, Jr. argues that the inability of most Cubans to realize the material, political and cultural ambitions achieved by foreigners and inferred as imminent in U.S. development narratives helped to foment revolutionary sentiment. Louis A. Pérez, Jr., *On Becoming Cuban: Identity, Nationality and Culture* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

<sup>12</sup> Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London, UK: Routledge, 2004), 85-92.

varied and shifting subjectivities of privileged outsiders and Cubans, in Cuba before and after 1959.

Understandably, Cubans educated by Anglo-Americans became personally invested in elevating Anglo-American knowledge and cultural forms. Eager to participate in the development of their nation through acquisition of foreign skills-sets that would enhance their financial and social prospects, many Cubans enthusiastically entered (or sent their children to) institutions managed by Anglo-Americans. Over time, these Cubans would become the most vocal advocates for Anglo-American ideologies. Before the revolution, foreign-educated Cubans profited from their ability to communicate with Anglo-Americans as their training enabled them to garner employment at foreign companies or cultivate business relationships with members of the Anglo-American colony. After 1959, Cubans who benefited from their ties to foreigners generally defended Anglo-American influence; the value of their transnational skill-set directly depended on the ascendancy of foreign capital and non-Cuban cultural forms.<sup>13</sup>

In this arrangement of informal empire, Anglo-Americans in Cuba enjoyed a political flexibility absent in many sites of formal colonialism, enabling them to see themselves, and to be seen by some Cubans as politically “neutral” during the revolution. Unlike the French colonists in Africa and Indochina or the British in Africa and South Asia, the Anglo-Americans in Cuba were not explicitly entangled in Cuban political affairs. That is, the governing authority in Cuba before 1959 was sovereign from the United States, although highly dependent *on* and thus generally aligned *with* Washington. This significant distinction between informal empire and

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<sup>13</sup> We learn from the studies of Kevin Durrheim, Nicola Jacobs and John Dixon that black South Africans who had “positive” contact with whites were subsequently less critical of racial hierarchies and less inclined to support “race-targeted policies designed to overcome the legacy of apartheid, including affirmative action, educational desegregation, and land restitution.” Kevin Durrheim, Nicola Jacobs and John Dixon, “Explaining the Paradoxical Effects of Intergroup Contact: Paternalistic relations and System justification in Domestic Labour in South Africa,” *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 41 (2014): 150-164, 151.

formal empire enabled Anglo-American residents to disavow the governing authority, even as they personally reaped the benefits of foreign influence. When the revolution triumphed, many celebrated because, as Anglo-American colony member Adele Fuchsberg remembered, “We needed a change from the criminal Batista.”<sup>14</sup> Anglo-Americans were able to distance themselves from the political conflict of the late 1950s, as ostensibly outside observers, above the tumult of their adopted home. Cuban friends and neighbors had worked hard and effectively to convince them that the Batista government needed to be overthrown and that Cuba needed to transition from dictatorship. However, by the end of 1959, as Anglo-American interests came under attack by the revolution, many of these foreign-trained members of the Cuban professional class resisted what they considered the radical and nationalist turn of their government. These Cubans would eventually join their Anglo-American friends in exile at a significantly higher rate than those Cubans who did not participate in Anglo-American knowledge-producing institutions.

In similar fashion, most of the Anglo-American colony grew disillusioned with the revolution only after their economic and social status was challenged.<sup>15</sup> Determined to exorcise U.S. influence after 1959, leaders of the revolution did not fear Washington’s retaliation as had the previous Cuban governments. No longer protected by their national identity, Anglo-Americans increasingly faced the consequences of their political activities.<sup>16</sup> The Cuban

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<sup>14</sup> Adele Fuchsberg, interview by author, June 24, 2016, New York, NY.

<sup>15</sup> Jules Benjamin roots this phenomenon in the structures of informal empire, arguing, “By defining its own role in the world as anti-imperial, the United States has made difficult any self-understanding of its acts of domination.” Without the self-awareness of their own collusion, Benjamin concludes, U.S. nationals had trouble divorcing themselves from their assumption that “U.S. influence solved problems, it did not create them.” Jules R. Benjamin, *The United States and the Origins of the Cuban Revolution*, 3.

<sup>16</sup> U.S. citizens were shot down flying bombing raids over Cuban sugar mills in an attempt to sabotage the revolutionary economy, while eight faced firing squads for aiding or participating in counter-revolutionary activities. “U.S. Citizens Killed or Disappeared by Cuba’s Communist Regime,” *Cuba Archive*, June 26, 2016, Accessed May 1, 2017, [www.CubaArchive.org/database/](http://www.CubaArchive.org/database/).

Revolution shattered the protective armor of informal empire that previously enveloped those Cubans and foreigners fluent in Anglo-American ways. Anglo-Americans and their Cuban allies found themselves privileged outsiders and privileged insiders no longer. They became highly critical of, as many mobilized to contest, the revolution most had once supported.

### ***Forms of Contact in Informal Empire***

As a theoretical and historic exploration of informal empire, this project documents the combined imprint and also the great heterogeneity within the Anglo-American colony. It unveils the contradictory forms of contact between Anglo-Americans and Cubans, and the resultant commitments, tensions and solidarities that evolved during the tumultuous decade that began with the Batista coup of March 1952 and concluded with the Bay of Pigs Invasion in April 1961.

The notion of “contact” has long been studied as a set of relations between dominants and subordinates. In 1954, in the wake of the *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision, Psychologist Gordon Allport elaborated the conditions under which contact in desegregated schools could usher in more positive cross-racial relations and educational equity. Allport articulated four key conditions necessary for positive effects of contact: equal group status; common goals; intergroup cooperation, and the support of authorities, laws or customs.<sup>17</sup> Over the past sixty-four years, many scholars, including indigenous theorist Eve Tuck, as well as post-colonial South African scholars Kevin Durrheim, Nicola Jacobs and John Dixon have challenged Allport’s positive vision of integration, arguing instead that contact between dominant and marginalized groups has typically, and historically, sustained exploitation. These scholars contend that assimilation for select members of marginalized communities essentially reproduces hierarchies by normalizing subordination and allowing those with power to define the terms of

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<sup>17</sup> Gordon W. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1954).

contact and inclusion.<sup>18</sup> However other theorists, including Mary Louise Pratt, María Elena Torre and Gloria Anzaldúa argue that in the spaces of “borderlands” or “contact zones” shared between dominant and subordinated cultures, hierarchies can be at once reproduced and contested, reshaping identities and creating new forms of political knowledge.<sup>19</sup> This dissertation interrogates contact in a variety of settings, and explores the resultant exploitation, hybridities, and solidarities that emerged between Anglo-Americans and Cubans. The research focuses on *stratified contact* between Cuban and Caribbean labor and foreign management, *transcultural socio-economic contact* among members of the Anglo-American and Cuban professional class, and *contact forged in struggle* among Protestant missionaries and parishioners, particularly in rural Cuba.

**Stratified contact** pursued by Anglo-American corporate executives enforced rigid hierarchies between privileged outsiders and Cuban, as well as Caribbean laborers. Unlike Allport’s template, these groups interacted across large and unchallenged chasms of power, class, race and nationality, with neither shared goals nor equal status. In the sugar mills, mines and factories dotting the island, these highly stratified forms of management-labor contact, laced with unrealized expectations of parity, would ultimately lead to the building of resentment against foreign management. Depictions of the U.S.-owned sugar mill would serve as part of the justification for challenging U.S. influence and advocating a radical socio-economic restructuring of Cuban society. Corporate executives committed to sustaining the status quo,

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<sup>18</sup> Durrheim, “Explaining the Paradoxical Effects of Intergroup Contact”; Eve Tuck, “Suspending Damage: A Letter to Communities,” *Harvard Educational Review* 79, no. 3 (Fall 2009): 409-427.

<sup>19</sup> Pratt, “Arts of the Contact Zone”; Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco, CA: Aunt Lute, 1987); María Elena Torre, *The History and Enactments of Contact in Social Psychology*. Unpublished Dissertation, City University of New York (New York, NY: UMI Dissertation Publishing, 2010).

soured early on the revolution and mobilized their substantial power and political influence to undermine the new Cuban government.

At the same time, **transcultural socio-economic alliances** also formed during this decade between relatively wealthy Cuban professionals and foreign educators, students, journalists, urban missionaries, as well as select business-oriented long-term Anglo-American residents. Cuban professionals cultivated near-equal status by accessing and acquiring Western skill-sets and networks garnered at foreign-run schools, social clubs, churches and business associations. Transnational relations between these groups resulted in hybrid identities and cross-cultural alliances in support of democratic reforms with a shared commitment to sustained Anglo-American influence. While these transnational networks initially worked to defend the revolutionary Cuban government, after 1959 a substantial percentage of these professional class Cubans and their Anglo-Americans allies left the island and many participated in counter-revolutionary efforts.

**Solidarity through struggle** developed between rural missionaries and their Cuban, and to a lesser degree Haitian and West Indian parishioners, patients and students, as they collectively bore witness to some of the more brutal manifestations of desperation and violence during the late-1950s. Those involved in this dynamic viewed the Batista government, as well as foreign corporations, as obstacles to change. Though often still subordinated to Anglo-American missionaries, by the 1950s rural Cuban Protestants had increasingly attained leadership responsibilities in Cuba's Protestant churches. Shared experiences of hardship enabled rural Anglo-American missionaries to ally with empowered Cuban Protestants striving for both a democratic and socio-economic transformation of Cuban society.

These three forms of contact evolved on the same island, in distinct geographic and socio-economic contexts. They developed as competing, yet intersecting elements of the vibrant Anglo-American colony.

### ***Dissertation Outline***

Organized into four sections and divided into ten chapters, this dissertation explores the diverse political, professional, religious and educational contexts of varied segments of the Anglo-American colony and their Cuban, as well as their Caribbean contacts, across ethnicity, gender and class, to explain how this expatriate enclave deployed, internalized and negotiated their privileged roles as managers of informal empire in Cuba. Many U.S., British and Canadian nationals came to Cuba to provide spiritual or educational training to Cubans. Some sought to reorient Cuban values. Most, however, arrived with the purpose of extracting influence and capital. Within the Anglo-American colony, the differing ambitions and relationships cultivated by educators, journalists, missionaries, diplomats, sailors, corporate executives, mobsters, farmers and philanthropists led to the formation of uneven alliances with Cubans in the anti-Batista movement, and later the development of strategic partnerships with Cubans and foreign governments waging counter-revolution. The individual and collective influence, presence and actions of privileged outsiders held profound implications for the direction of events in Cuba between 1898 and 1961. Indeed, the implications of this community continue to impact U.S.-Cuban relations to this day. Focusing on the final decade of this period 1952-1961, this dissertation unveils how exploitation, but also solidarities were nurtured in informal empire in times of conflict, while introducing a significant set of actors, institutions and relationships into the narrative of the Cuban Revolution.

Section One, “Constructing and Maintaining Informal Empire” establishes the significance and enactments of informal empire before the revolution. Chapter One develops a

framework to understand how Anglo-Americans cultivated their influence over Cuba through military might, capital, and alliances with Cubans. It explores how formal, as well as informal empire accommodated privileged outsiders, while disrupting communities of Cubans, West Indians and Haitians, and spiking tensions across the Caribbean. Chapter Two examines how the relationship between Fulgencio Batista, U.S. officials and foreign capital consolidated Batista's control on the island, secured Anglo-American influence and extracted capital from Cuba. Chapter Three explores Anglo-American farming villages, dotted throughout eastern Cuba and the Isle of Pines, where North Americans and Europeans sought to create idyllic Anglo-American replica communities, before being forced to leave or integrate into Cuban society due to natural disasters and the shifting priorities of Cuban and U.S. power brokers. These three chapters detail how privileged outsiders and their Cuban allies forged socio-economic alliances, exercising power in Cuba in ways that codified the structures of informal empire at the expense of both Caribbean workers and independent Anglo-American farming communities.

Section Two, "Cultivating Privilege and Partners in the Cuban Capital" chronicles how contact between Cuban professionals and Anglo-Americans functioned to both reinforce and challenge national hierarchies in the Cuban capital. Chapter Four traces the development of intercultural alliances in Havana, within Anglo-American-managed institutions, where educators and other knowledge producers advanced Western skill-sets to the benefit of foreign corporations, while promoting political democracy on the island. Chapter Five explores how transnational contact within foreign-managed institutions in Havana forged solid working, and then political and social relationships between relatively wealthy Cuban professionals and Anglo-Americans, transforming both groups culturally and politically. Through an extensive collection of oral histories and archival documents, as well as secondary materials, Chapters Four and Five detail

how inter-group socio-economic alliances yielded new and hybrid Cuban and Anglo-American identities, solidarities and commitments crucial to understanding the transnational support for revolution, and then counter-revolution.

Section Three, “Solidarity Through Struggle” narrates the conflicted position of rural missionaries in Cuba. Though they reproduced Anglo-American knowledge and values, often in the service of U.S. corporations, and worked to reshape Cuban spiritual and religious life, these missionaries also sought to break the cyclical nature of Cuban poverty after being exposed to Cuban suffering. Chapter Six examines the fraught motives and dynamics of Anglo-American corporations and political institutions intent upon recruiting foreign missionaries to manage schools, churches and clinics. While missionaries provided basic services to rural workers, they soon discovered that the suffering they encountered developed in large part as a consequence of the structures of informal empire. Chapter Seven is grounded in rural Cuba. Informed by interviews, diaries, memoirs and letters provided by some of these missionaries, this chapter uncovers the ethical commitments and empathies that developed between missionaries and impoverished Cubans living in company towns, who suffered due to neglect from the Cuban state, as well as their Anglo-American employers. These narratives offer a relatively unknown story, as they reveal the profound ambivalence missionaries embodied, concerning both their corporate benefactors and the over-sized imprint of Anglo-American influence on the island.

Section Four “Contact and Conflict” charts the consequences and shifts in political identities and consciousnesses of Anglo-Americans and their Cuban allies, born through contact in times of conflict. This analysis relies heavily on archival documents and oral histories, along with secondary literature to argue that the revolutionary atmosphere, with rising demands for economic and political structural change, catalyzed a diverse assortment of powerful cross-

cultural alliances. Those Cubans who were working, socializing, praying and studying in close proximity to Anglo-Americans functioned as interpreters of revolution to their friends, colleagues and neighbors from England, Canada and the United States. These Cubans worked to alter how power brokers in Cuba and abroad imagined and approached the upheaval, both before and after 1959. Chapter Eight examines how contact with Cuban and Caribbean cane-cutters, mill workers, parishioners, students and farmers struggling in a contested war-zone conditioned rural missionaries to act in solidarity with those seeking to transform the political and socio-economic structures that governed the island. Chapter Nine documents the strategic relationships developed in Havana between Cubans and their Anglo-American friends, colleagues, classmates, lovers and neighbors, orchestrated to access the space, networks and cultural capital necessary to help overthrow the Batista government and pursue a revolutionary agenda. Chapter Ten explores how Anglo-Americans and Cuban professionals recalibrated their political and personal solidarities to support and then resist the new Cuban government, once it was clear that their shared cultural status and financial security were under siege. In these three chapters, we see the profound influence of Cubans on Anglo-American identities, their commitments and their willingness to sacrifice for what they considered justice.

### ***Anglo-American Identities in Flux***

Informed by Fernando Ortiz' concept of *transculturation*, this project wades into conversations about the messy spaces where intergroup exchange unfolds across power structures. Doing so reveals how interactions between privileged outsiders, Cubans, West Indians and Haitians evolved culture and individuals by catalyzing solidarities and empathies, while simultaneously reproducing exploitation and apathy.<sup>20</sup> This project also relies on *standpoint*

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<sup>20</sup> Fernando Ortiz challenged the premise of acculturation in Cuba, that Cubans merely adopted the culture of the politically and economically influential Spanish or later Anglo-American residents. Ortiz argued instead that

*theory* forward by Sandra Harding who argues that “Only through...struggles can we begin to see beneath the appearances created by an unjust social order to the reality of how this social order is in fact constructed and maintained. This need for struggle emphasizes the fact that a feminist standpoint is not something that anyone can have simply by claiming it. It is an achievement. A standpoint differs in this respect from a perspective, which anyone can have simply by ‘opening one’s eyes.’”<sup>21</sup> In the context of revolution, shared struggle proved transformative for many within the Anglo-American colony who became imbued with aspirations for a political, and/or socio-economic restructuring of Cuban society.

The struggles encountered by the diverse sub-communities and individuals who belonged to the Anglo-American colony shaped contradictory empathies, ambitions and actions as the structures of Cuba were challenged and then reorganized by the revolutionary movement. This analysis of transnational contact builds upon Louis A. Pérez’ scholarship theorizing “National identity not as a fixed and immutable construct but rather as cultural artifact, as contested—and contesting—representations often filled with contradictions and incoherences, almost always in flux.... This is identity as historically contingent as both national expression and individual construction, processing multiple forms, often simultaneously, sometimes successively; it is always changing with changing times: open not fixed, more a process than a product.”<sup>22</sup> While this work investigates the varied standpoints developed from the distinct sub-communities on the

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through the processes of *transculturation*, members of Cuban society selectively and strategically adopted, rejected and negotiated aspects of a variety of cultures. Fernando Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947), 99, 102-103.

<sup>21</sup> Sandra Harding, *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge? Thinking from Women’s Lives* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 127.

<sup>22</sup> Pérez, *On Becoming Cuban*, 8.

island, the text also tracks the ways in which respective identities and perspectives proved fluid, contingent and relational.

### ***Mapping Sub-Communities Within and Surrounding Cuba's Anglo-American Colony***

*Official Representatives of Foreign Governments:* Direct representatives of the United States government arrived in Cuba after 1898. Between the periodic occupations and their permanent naval base at Guantánamo Bay, a large U.S. military and diplomatic presence remained in Cuba until the end of diplomatic relations in 1961. The presence of the U.S. armed forces effectively influenced Cuban policies from their centers of operation in Havana and Oriente on behalf of U.S. interests.<sup>23</sup> Scholarship on the Guantánamo Bay Naval Base in the 1940s and 1950s sheds light on how North Americans systematically designed and sustained social, ethnic, economic and national hierarchies in Cuba.<sup>24</sup> Utilizing collections found in missionary archives, the U.S. National Archives, as well as secondary materials, this dissertation discusses how the conduct of U.S. sailors and marines in Caimanera and Guantánamo, exacerbated by the inaction of the Batista government, helped transform these cities that surrounded the naval base into centers of revolutionary and anti-U.S. sentiment by the end of the 1950s.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> José Vega Suñol, *Norteamericanos en Cuba* (La Habana, Cuba: Fundación Fernando Ortiz, 2004), 61; Pérez, *On Becoming Cuban*, 223.

<sup>24</sup> Jana K. Lipman details how citizenship, language skills, gender and race determined opportunities for employment, as well as compensation at Guantánamo Naval Base. Jana K. Lipman, *Guantánamo: A Working-Class History Between Empire and Revolution, 1939-1979* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2006).

<sup>25</sup> Jonathan M. Hansen found that Navy officials used their ambiguous jurisdiction to be selective about which labor laws they would follow—those of United States or Cuba—depending on which suited them at the time. Providing less capital to local base workers weakened the non-sin economies of Caimanera and the city of Guantánamo; in turn, those communities grew to be far more dependent on the dollars spent by U.S. troops in the brothels and bars constructed to accommodate these foreigners. Naval personnel would return from these excursions euphemistically titled *liberty parties* to segregated idyllic developments flush with U.S. social comforts, Cuban servants and detached from local culture. Jonathan M. Hansen, *Guantánamo: An American History* (New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 2011), 199.

Archival work at the Eisenhower Presidential Library, the Library of Congress, the U.S. National Archives, and British National Archives informs this dissertation through an understanding of Anglo-American cultural and political initiatives in Cuba delivered by foreign governments, both before and after the triumph of the revolution. This work traces how British and U.S. diplomats worked to restructure Cubans', Haitians' and West Indians' opportunities and identities in ways that suited Anglo-American interests, while simultaneously pressuring Cuban leaders to prioritize foreign capital and its geopolitical ambitions. The threat of diplomatic or military coercion had profound implications in Cuba.<sup>26</sup>

*Rural Corporate Executives*: Cultivating large tracts of land for mining, rail, tobacco, ranching and especially sugar operations, corporate executives of U.S. companies typically lived in segregated *barrios americanos* in rural Cuba while managing huge enterprises and collectively employing hundreds of thousands of Cuban and Caribbean workers. This sub-community of the Anglo-American colony will be explored through oral histories with Cubans and foreign nationals who lived at North American sugar mills, ranching and mining operations. Further, an examination of these rigidly hierarchical relationships established and sustained between privileged outsiders and their Cuban, Haitian and Jamaican workers relies on research conducted at Bowdoin College Library, The Maryland Room at the University of Maryland, the Hershey Community Archive, Archivo Nacional de la República de Cuba, Butler Library at Columbia University, the New York Public Library, The Cuban Heritage Collection at the University of

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<sup>26</sup> Lars Schoultz, *That Infernal Little Republic: The United States and the Cuban Revolution* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Frank Argote-Freyre, *Fulgencio Batista: From Revolutionary to Strongman* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2006); Esteban Morales Domínguez, and Gary Prevost, *United States-Cuban Relations: A Critical History* (New York, NY: Lexington Books, 2008); Morris H. Morley, *Imperial State and Revolution: The United States and Cuba, 1952-1986* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Louis A. Pérez, Jr., *Cuba Between Reform and Revolution*, 4th ed. (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2011); Marifeli Pérez-Stable, *The Cuban Revolution: Origins, Course, and Legacy* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1999).

Miami, Bowdoin College Library, as well as an extensive literature on U.S. corporations in rural Cuba.<sup>27</sup> Unsurprisingly, the province of Oriente, where most of these large-scale operations were centered, became a hotbed for revolutionary activity in the late-1950s.

*Caribbean Labor*: Using the networks of formal and informal empire, U.S. sugar executives imported seasonal and more permanent workers from Haiti and the British Caribbean altering the demographic, politics and culture of Cuba and the Caribbean. Haiti's proximity to eastern Cuba, and the influence of the United States during its occupation of Haiti (1915-1934) made Haitian workers accessible and vulnerable to the exploitative tactics of U.S. employers. Often hired as cane-cutters, over 100,000 Haitians arrived in Cuba as agricultural laborers during the 1910s and 1920s. The 100,000s of British Caribbean workers who arrived in Cuba during the republican era were familiar with Anglo-American customs, fluent in English, and held legal status as British subjects. For these reasons, British West Indians found a social mobility inaccessible to Haitians and many Cubans. Often accused of stealing Cuban jobs, both Haitians and West Indians faced reprisals from the Cuban government in the 1930s and 1940s when tens of thousands were deported back to their respective homelands. Through archival research at the U.S. National Archives and the British National Archives, as well as the incorporation of studies by Oscar Zanetti, Alejandro García, Robert Whitney, Graciela Chailloux Laffita, Matthew Casey and Jeffrey W. Sommers, this dissertation traces how the transnational financial and labor

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<sup>27</sup> Oscar Zanetti and Alejandro García, *United Fruit Company: un caso del dominio imperialista en Cuba* (La Habana, Cuba: Ciencias Sociales, 1976); Robert Whitney and Graciela Chailloux Laffita, *Subjects or Citizens: British Caribbean Workers in Cuba, 1900-1960* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 2013); Zanetti, *Sugar and Railroads*; José Vega Suñol, *Norteamericanos en Cuba*; Rachel M. Hynson, "Profile of José Vega Suñol: Las claves del diálogo están en la independencia," *Cuban Studies* 40 (2009): 104-111, 206; Thomas R. Wimpenny, "Milton S. Hershey Ventures into Cuban Sugar," *Pennsylvania History* 62, no. 4 (October 1995): 491-502; Hobart A. Spalding Jr., *Organized Labor in Latin America*, (New York, NY: Harper Torchbooks, 1977).

networks of the Anglo-American colony in Cuba dramatically shifted Cuban demographics, while exacerbating tensions between Caribbean nationalities.<sup>28</sup>

*Independent Farmers*: Small communities of Anglo-American farmers developed largely in the eastern-most province of Oriente, as well as on the Isle of Pines in the 1890s, 1900s and 1910s. Offering an escape from the trends of urbanization, industrialization, and wealth inequity that challenged Anglo-Americans at home during the turn of the twentieth century, land-speculator companies sold tracts to settlers who planted predominantly citrus fruits in and around Anglo-American enclaves. Michael E. Neagle's study on the Isle of Pines documents how these communities flourished with thousands of farmers and entrepreneurs, for two to three decades, sending their children to English language schools, attending Protestant churches and living lives that resembled life in the small towns and villages of the United States. Following World War I, the Anglo-American population on the isle declined steeply, due to a series of devastating hurricanes and as the U.S. government increasingly prioritized corporate interests over the needs and desires of Anglo-American settlers.<sup>29</sup> The dynamics of informal empire in Cuba proved disastrous for these farming communities. Largely through oral histories and collections of primary sources by Boyd Leuenberger and Jane McManus, this dissertation explores how the few hundred Anglo-American farmers who remained in Cuba into the 1930s, 1940s, 1950s and 1960s became increasingly dependent on their Cuban neighbors as they cultivated deep ties to the island. This transformation from settler colonists to integrated outsiders led a small number

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<sup>28</sup> Zanetti, *United Fruit Company*; Zanetti, *Sugar and Railroads*; Whitney, *Subjects or Citizens*; Matthew Casey, "Haitians' Labor and Leisure on Cuban Sugar Plantations: The Limits of Company Control," *New West Indian Guide* 85, no. 1/2 (2011): 5-30; Jeffrey W. Sommers, "The U.S. Power Elite and the Political Economy of Haiti's Occupation: Investment, Race, and World Order," *The Journal of Haitian Studies* 21, no. 2 (2015): 46-67.

<sup>29</sup> Michael E. Neagle, *America's Forgotten Colony: Cuba's Isle of Pines* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Carmen Diana Deere, "Here Come the Yankees! The Rise and Decline of United States Colonies in Cuba, 1898-1930" *Hispanic American Historical Review* 78, no. 4 (1998): 729-765.

of these farmers to remain years and decades after 1959, long after the vast majority of Anglo-Americans had left to their respective nations of origin.<sup>30</sup>

*Anglo-American Executives in Havana:* While much of the major investments of foreign corporations led to the development of sugar mills, mining operations, cattle ranches and transportation networks in the Cuban countryside, the epi-center of the Anglo-American colony, generally home to more than half the Anglo-American residents on the island, emerged in Havana. Through oral histories, institutional studies and archival work at the Cuban Heritage Collection, the University of North Carolina, the Archivo Nacional de la República de Cuba, and the Instituto de Historia de Cuba this dissertation unearths the stories of Anglo-American executives in foreign banking, electrical, oil, agricultural, pharmaceutical, textile, communications, and transportation corporations who secured assignments in the Cuban capital. Their narratives chronicle not only the formation of lucrative business partnerships, but also the emergence of significant social relationships between Anglo-American businessmen, Cuban professionals and Cuban politicians. These relationships proved pivotal to an early embrace of the revolution by most Anglo-Americans in Cuba, and, shortly thereafter, to the joint action initiated by many Anglo-Americans and their Cuban allies to undermine the new government.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Deere, “Here Come the Yankees!”; Jane McManus, *Cuba’s Island of Dreams: Voices from the Isle of Pines and Youth* (Gainesville, FL: The University Press of Florida, 2000); Boyd Leuenberger, ed., *La Gloria, An American Colony* (Golden, CO: Boyd Leuenberger, 2013); Enrique Cirules, *Conversación con el último norteamericano* (La Habana, Cuba: Editorial José Martí, 2012).

<sup>31</sup> This dissertation also interrogates the role of U.S. mafia figures in influencing relations between Cubans and privileged outsiders both before and after 1959. Largely isolated from the larger Anglo-American colony, though based in Havana, most, though not all, of this dissertation’s focus on the U.S. mafia is derived from secondary sources including monographs by Cristine Skwiot, T.J. English and Enrique Cirules who have thoroughly unveiled how the mob exacerbated anti-U.S. sentiment through its promotion of vice and relations with the Batista government. Cristine Skwiot’s study proves especially useful as it explores how the mafia’s promotion of gambling and prostitution reinforced stereotypes that Cubans were loose and amoral. Cristine Skwiot, *The Purposes of Paradise: U.S. Tourism and Empire in Cuba and Hawai’i* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010); T.J. English, *Havana Nocturne: How the Mob Owned Cuba and Then Lost It to the Revolution* (New York,

*Havana's Anglo-American Cultural Institutions and Knowledge Producers:* To support Anglo-American executives and foreign diplomats, a well-funded network of social, educational, religious and business institutions was established by North Americans and British nationals in Havana. Foreign schools were operated by foreign educators. Anglo-American-run Protestant churches held English-language services for this community of privileged outsiders. An Anglo-American hospital was staffed by Anglo-American nurses. Anglo-American-owned restaurants and shops, as well as English language newspapers serviced the needs of foreign diplomats and executives. Anglo-American businesses and social clubs provided refuge to those seeking the familiar comforts of home. José Vega Suñol details the processes by which Anglo-Americans in Cuba accumulated economic and social advantages, while avoiding full integration into Cuban society. Although these institutions were designed largely to recreate the comforts of home, and often strove to remain segregated from their Cuban hosts, many of these establishments developed, eventually, into transnational knowledge-producing institutions; settings in which the children of largely professional Cubans were educated and socialized alongside Anglo-Americans.<sup>32</sup> By conducting dozens of oral histories, as well as combing through Anglo-American periodicals and a collection of memoirs, this dissertation enters into the cultural institutions that protected Anglo-American identities in Havana, trained Cubans in Anglo-American customs and skill-sets, while also creating spaces where new knowledges, identities, relationships and political imaginations would flourish.<sup>33</sup>

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NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 2007); Enrique Cirules, *The Mafia in Havana: A Caribbean Mob Story* (North Melbourne, Australia; Ocean Press, 2010).

<sup>32</sup> Vega Suñol, *Norteamericanos en Cuba*.

<sup>33</sup> The primary periodicals of the Anglo-American colony were the *Times of Havana* and the *Havana Post*. Memoirs include Giles S. Gianelloni, *We Remember Cuba: A Republication of John Parker's Yankee You Cant Go Home* (Sarasota, FL: Golden Quill, INC. 1993); Rufo López-Fresquet, *My Fourteen Months with Castro* (Cleveland, OH: World Publishing Company, 1966); Mario Lazo, *Dagger in the Heart: American Policy Failures in Cuba* (New

Through daily interactions with Cubans, Anglo-American educators, missionaries and journalists became social bridges between the Anglo-American colony and Cuban society. They often developed significant friendships with Cubans, learning about and taking seriously Cuban demands for democracy during the Batista government. In the early days of the revolution, they appreciated the appointment of men they knew, liked and trusted to the first revolutionary cabinet. It did not take long, however, until the new government began to challenge the structures that enabled them to continue their work in Cuba, and undermine the value their knowledge production offered Cubans. At that point, these foreign knowledge producers in Havana changed political course and worked to support Cubans seeking to leave the island.

*Relatively Wealthy Cuban Professionals:* Through relationships developed in matrimony, social clubs, churches, boardrooms, backrooms, and educational institutions, some relatively wealthy Cuban professionals penetrated the social networks of the Anglo-American colony. Through a large collection of oral histories, archival material, and published memoirs this dissertation will examine how in Havana's contact zones, Cubans and Anglo-Americans developed socio-economic alliances based on common financial, as well as geopolitical interests. The continued influence of Anglo-Americans augmented the value of the skills these Cuban professionals had acquired in foreign schools, churches, social clubs and business association. Transnational socio-economic bonds strengthened through intimate cross-cultural educational, occupational or social relationships, as foreign-trained Cuban professionals exerted a subtle sway over the political consciousness of Anglo-American residents. Prior to 1959, Cuban professionals expressed to Anglo-Americans their collective frustration with the anachronistic

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York, NY: Twin Circle Publishing, 1968); Anthony Navarro, *Tocayo: A Cuban Resistance Leader's True Story* (Westport CN: Sandown Books, 1981); William S. Chambers, "Memoir," provided by Kay Torpey.

and authoritarian political institutions on the island. Early on, these cross-cultural relationships helped to fuel and support the anti-Batista movement and then the first phase of the revolutionary government. However, soon after 1959, many Anglo-Americans residents and their Cuban allies soured on the revolution and reoriented their vast transnational networks toward counter-revolutionary activities.

*Rural Protestant Missionaries:* Rural executives funded U.S.-based missionaries to provide educational, health and social functions for Cuban and Caribbean employees. Building upon the scholarship of Kurt Urbanek, Marcos Ramos, Margaret Crahan and Jason Yaremko, through oral histories, diaries, memories and letters of a number of Cuban pastors and Protestant missionaries, this project reveals the significant empathies and solidarities forged by foreign evangelizers with Cubans in revolt during the 1950s.<sup>34</sup> This work is supported by research at United Methodist Archives and Historical Center, the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives, the Friends' Historical Collection, and the American Baptist Historical Society. This dissertation considers how, despite their tangled relationship with Anglo-American capital and their home mission boards, these missionaries became invested in projects that contested Cuban hierarchies, even as this collaboration would eventually undermine their own standing in Cuban society. Rural missionaries, and especially women missionaries, lived and worked in close

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<sup>34</sup> Kurt Urbanek traces the development of a significant Protestant community on the island from the nineteenth century to the present day. Margaret Crahan argues that foreign missionaries disseminated values that reinforced U.S. hegemony in pre-revolutionary Cuba. Marcos Ramos traces the development of Cuban Protestants into revolutionary leaders, while sorting through the relationships between cultural and economic imperialism on the island. Jason Yaremko dissects the differences between Protestant denominations and their relationship to U.S. capital in Cuba, with an emphasis on the denominations in eastern Cuba. Kurt Urbanek, *Cuba's Great Awakening: Church Planting Movement in Cuba* (Fort Worth, TX: Church Starting Network, 2012); Marcos A. Ramos, *Protestantism and Revolution in Cuba* (Miami, FL: Institute for Inter-American Studies, University of Miami, 1989); Jason M. Yaremko, *U.S. Protestant Missions in Cuba: From Independence to Castro* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2000); Margaret E. Crahan, "Religious Penetration and Nationalism in Cuba: U.S. Methodist Activities, 1898-1958," *Interamericana* VIII, no. 2 (Summer, 1978): 204-224.

proximity to Cuban suffering, enabling the politically, economically and socially disenfranchised to become what Judith Butler has called *grievable subjects*.<sup>35</sup> Bearing witness to state-sponsored brutality and the rising pressure of revolution cemented transnational solidarities between foreign missionaries and Cubans through the development of a shared goal to restructure Cuba's political and socio-economic hierarchies.

*Cuban Protestants*: Families living in rural Cuba often suffered neglect from the Catholic Church, the Cuban government and large corporations – both foreign and domestic. In these contexts, Protestant missionaries frequently offered the most comprehensive, if still inadequate, social services in the region. From the Spanish colonial period forward, Protestantism emerged as a symbolic and material trope for social change, resistance against Spain and the Catholic Church. Still, the Protestant community represented only a small percentage of the population, with an estimated 10,000 active members and a community perhaps twice that, in a population of just over two million in 1908.<sup>36</sup> By the mid-1950s Protestantism had grown significantly, with close to six percent of the Cuban population identifying with a range of denominations. The religion attracted Cubans who sought to both thrive in and transform Cuban society.<sup>37</sup> The Catholic Church consistently undermined its own credibility in the eyes of many Cubans leading to just 24 percent of the population identifying as practicing Catholics in 1954.<sup>38</sup> The rising practice of revolutionary Protestantism continued into the 1950s as Protestants disproportionately

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<sup>35</sup> The project seeks to answer Judith Butler's call, "to rethink the complex and fragile character of the social bond and to consider what conditions might make violence less possible, lives more equally grievable, and, hence, more livable." Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?* (London, UK: Verso, 2008), 1.

<sup>36</sup> United States Bureau of the Census, *Cuba: Population, History and Resources, 1907* (New York, NY: J.H. Blanchard, 1909), 231; Ramos, *Protestantism and Revolution in Cuba*, 133.

<sup>37</sup> Ramos, *Protestantism and Revolution in Cuba*, 34, 134.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.

joined the cause against Batista, often attaining leadership positions in the revolutionary effort. Through oral histories and archival research, this dissertation offers compelling narratives about Protestant revolutionaries who conveyed the need for a structural reorganization of Cuban society to the Anglo-American missionaries they learned from and prayed with.

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This dissertation explores the complexities of informal empire, illuminating the conditions under which privileged outsiders developed empathy, sympathy and/or apathy for Cuban suffering. The spaces that Anglo-Americans occupied within Cuban society, and experiences they endured, evoked a range of reactions to the development of revolutionary events. In particular, their *proximity to suffering* influenced how Anglo-Americans viewed their role on the island, the rising revolutionary sentiment and their respective political commitments to radical change. At different times throughout the course of this decade, nearly all residents of Cuba considered themselves victims--of authoritarianism, communism and/or informal empire. The cross-cultural revolutionary and counter-revolutionary empathies emerging within the Anglo-American colony in the 1950s and early 1960s developed in dialectic relation with the experiences and observations of suffering, both before and after January, 1959, altering the course of history for both Cuba and the United States.

### ***Summary***

This multi-layered analysis of Cuba's Anglo-American colony, situated in 1950s Cuba, complicates narratives of identity and political commitments during the Cuban revolution. This research aims to contribute to the growing literature on informal empire by exposing how the rhetoric of "development" was exploited to legitimize institutions, policies, relationships and practices that largely reproduced existing socio-economic hierarchies. Most fundamentally this dissertation addresses the uneven terms of contact Anglo-American colony members pursued by

examining the ways in which Anglo-Americans both depended on one another and mobilized for varied visions of change with their respective Cuban allies. While much of the research focuses on Anglo-Americans in Cuba, this project uncovers substantial evidence that Cubans, and to a more limited degree Haitians and West Indians, strategically accessed the Anglo-American colony, exerting significant influence in the struggle against the Batista government, and later against the revolution. From this work we come to appreciate the malleable terms of transnational contact, unique within sites of informal empire. Benefitting from the generosity and eloquence of men and women who sat for oral histories to supplement the scholarly and archival record, this is a study in informal empire, strategic resistance, loss and the emergence of inter-group solidarities that offers a significant intervention in the long-studied narrative of the Cuban Revolution.

Informed by oral histories and email exchanges conducted with missionaries, students, journalists, educators, small business owners, secretaries, embassy officials, corporate employees, ranchers, mill workers, peddlers, fortune seekers and/or their children, who resided in locations as diverse as Preston, Chaparra, Hershey, La Gloria, Mayarí, Báguanos, Playa Manteca, Las Ciegas, Macareño, Camagüey and Havana, this work has been nourished by the diversity of voices, relations and political commitments present within the Anglo-American colony. The imperial gaze of privileged outsiders formed as an assemblage of their original motives, their professional commitments, geographic locations, their families, their gender, race, class, social habits, religion, education, friends, heritages, and experiences. After the loss of what many referred to as a “paradise,” brothers and sisters, friends and lovers, classmates and colleagues often – to this day - disagree with one another about what occurred and who is to

blame. Oral histories and extensive archival research reveal complex, compelling and often contradictory versions of what happened and why.

There is no doubt that the genuine fondness I developed for many of the individuals interviewed for this project will seep into the pages that follow. Still, these relationships pushed me – and the resulting interviews enabled me – to uncover not only the crass reproduction of social hierarchies in these transnational contact zones, but also the fragile cross-cultural solidarities that cemented under the pressure of revolution and, as I hope to show, transcended typical imperial narratives. In Anglo-American-managed workplaces, social clubs, cultural institutions, schools, and churches, Cubans and Anglo-Americans together mapped dreams for a brighter future in a Cuba they could all call home.

## CHAPTER ONE: FORGING INFORMAL EMPIRE

### *Introduction*

After Spain had been defeated in the Cuban Wars of Independence, Cuban General Enrique Collazo wrote, “The appreciation demonstrated by the Americans to the French ought to serve as the model with which the Cubans should demonstrate to the American people.... We are free and independent as a result of the Liberation Army of Cuba and the assistance given by the American government.”<sup>39</sup> Collazo seems disturbed that even before the United States entered the conflict with Spain, Anglo-Americans had constructed a narrative that would feature prominently the U.S. role in the independence of Cuba. The rhetoric of U.S. power brokers surrounding the Spanish-American War, even in its title, eclipsed the role of Cubans in their struggle for sovereignty that started in 1868, and ended thirty years later, shortly after the U.S. intervention. With the United States positioned as the source of Cuban liberation, the logic of U.S. domination in Cuba gained validity after 1898. Many U.S. nationals moved to Cuba assuming a debt owed by the people of Cuba, justifying foreign influence, privilege and control.

As the dynamics of this “origin” story would suggest, influential Anglo-American colony members granted little legitimacy to Cuban political structures or Cuban sovereignty. In the first decades of the twentieth century many U.S. executives and diplomats, as well as some British and Canadian residents, worked to undermine Cuban democracy when it benefited their interests.

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<sup>39</sup> Enrique Collazo, “A mis amigos de Oriente,” *La Lucha*, June 1, 1902, 2, in Louis A. Pérez, Jr., *Cuba in the American Imagination: Metaphor and the Imperial Ethos* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 183.

Foreign capital in Cuba typically supported foreign investments rather than improving conditions for poor and rural Cubans.<sup>40</sup> Anglo-Americans coerced Cuban officials with military actions, diplomatic maneuvering, bribes and threats to promote foreign interests, exacerbating political instability and economic struggle on the island. This dynamic soon garnered Cuban politicians a well-earned reputation for corruption. While many privileged outsiders who arrived at the start of the twentieth century worked on “improving” and “developing” Cuban lives and opportunities, they did so within the structure of informal empire and often advanced a narrative that framed the Anglo-American presence as benevolent. This chapter sketches the establishment and sedimentation of informal empire, arguing that socio-economic alliances between Anglo-Americans and Cuban power brokers who benefited from foreign influence undermined Cuban stability, reproduced Anglo-American privilege, and elevated Cubans who were sympathetic to the ambitions of foreigners.<sup>41</sup>

### ***Socio-Economic Partnerships in Pursuit of Transnational Dominance***

Beginning with the Spanish abdication of Cuba to U.S. authorities on January 1, 1899, until the triumph of the Cuban Revolution exactly sixty years later, executives, military officials

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<sup>40</sup> As economist Thomas Piketty notes in his work *Capital in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, foreign investment from wealthier countries to poorer countries generally does not increase local income; accumulated capital tends to migrate abroad. Thomas Piketty, *Capital in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014).

<sup>41</sup> Oscar Zanetti and Alejandro García’s studies on the United Fruit and Sugar Company and the Cuba’s Sugar and Railroad industries, respectively, trace the utilization of economic dominance to attain political influence, and conversely deploy political pressure in garnering favorable economic policies from the Cuban government. Zanetti *United Fruit Company*; Zanetti, *Sugar and Railroads*; Louis A. Pérez goes further explaining corporate patronage of U.S. knowledge-producing institutions such as schools and churches developed as North American corporate and embassy officials sought to frame the collective presence of the Anglo-American colony as benevolent. Pérez argues in Cuba, “The power of U.S. hegemony was embedded in cultural forms that served as the principal means by which the North American presence was legitimized.” As managers of knowledge-producing institutions, the Anglo-American colony played a significant role in exporting values that legitimized power relationships, which garnered political and economic influence for foreign capital. Louis A. Pérez Jr., *Cuba and The United States, Ties of Singular Intimacy* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2003), 13; Scholars including Jason M. Yaremko and Marcos A. Ramos developed a framework to trace the economic, social and personal connections between corporate donors, Protestant missionaries, Cubans and the dissemination of Anglo-American values between 1898-1958. Yaremko, *U.S. Protestant Missions in Cuba*; Ramos, *Protestantism and Revolution in Cuba*.

and diplomats from the United States subordinated Cuban political structures and insured influential Cubans would remain beholden to the overwhelming economic, political and cultural influence of Anglo-Americans. Before U.S. governing authorities left Cuba on May 20, 1902, Cuban leaders were forced to insert the Platt Amendment into their constitution, guaranteeing the United States government the right to intervene in Cuba at any time. The United States agreed to leave the island only if control over the Isle of Pines was left ambiguous and U.S. ownership of a naval station was affirmed by Cuban authorities.<sup>42</sup> As U.S. Military Governor of Cuba Leonard Wood wrote to Theodore Roosevelt in October 1901, a month after President McKinley's assassination, "There is, of course, little or no independence left Cuba under the Platt Amendment."<sup>43</sup>

New to overseas empire in the 1890s, U.S. authorities did not want to be cast as self-interested colonizers. The United States Congress passed the Teller Amendment in 1898 which "disclaim[ed] any disposition of intention to exercise sovereignty, jurisdiction, or control over [Cuba, and]...to leave the government and control of the island to its people."<sup>44</sup> The Foraker Amendment forbade the U.S. military government from granting concessions or special contracts to U.S. investors on the island. General Wood, who opposed the Foraker Amendment, chose to

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<sup>42</sup> Jane Franklin, *Cuba and The United States: A Chronological History* (Melbourne and New York: Ocean Press, 1997), 9.

<sup>43</sup> Jonathan M. Hansen, "Give Guantánamo Back to Cuba," *New York Times*, January 10, 2012, Accessed March 31, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/11/opinion/give-guantanamo-back-to-cuba.html>.

<sup>44</sup> "Teller and Platt Amendments," *Hispanic Division, Library of Congress*, Accessed March 31, 2018, <https://www.loc.gov/rr/hispanic/1898/teller.html>.

interpret the restrictions loosely, benefitting U.S. corporations including the Cuba Company, as well as the United Fruit and Sugar Company (UFSC).<sup>45</sup>

Occupations by the United States government in the first decade following Spanish colonialism convinced already bullish foreign capital that investments into a devastated Cuban economy would be protected by U.S. authorities. Referencing 1899 when Spain abdicated the island to the United States, Oscar Zanetti and Alejandro García observed, “Those [Cuban] businesses that hadn’t already gone bankrupt were on the brink; land was being sold for a song; and the people, famished and jobless, constituted a cheap source of labor.”<sup>46</sup> U.S. corporations and diplomats collaborated to insure their collective influence. Before handing over control of the country in 1902, the U.S. military government allowed what became the United Fruit and Sugar Company to acquire vast tracts of land in eastern Cuba.<sup>47</sup> By 1905, the United States alone controlled 21 percent of sugar production. This number would rise to 63 percent within a couple of decades.<sup>48</sup>

The arrival of U.S. capital in the eastern provinces devastated the lives and communities of the largely independent Cuban peasantry. According to Louis A. Pérez, the formerly self-sufficient people of rural eastern Cuba found themselves rapidly absorbed into the large-scale

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<sup>45</sup> William Crampton, “Guide to The Cuba Company Archive,” 3, University of Maryland, College Park, MD, The Maryland Room, Historical Manuscripts and Archives Department.

<sup>46</sup> Zanetti, *Sugar and Railroads*, 210.

<sup>47</sup> Oscar Zanetti, “La United Fruit Company en Cuba: Organización del trabajo y resistencia obrera,” *Clío América* 2, no. 4 (December 2008): 238-258, 239-40.

<sup>48</sup> United States Bureau of Foreign Commerce, American Republics Division, “Investment in Cuba: Basic Information for United States Businessmen” (Washington: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Foreign Commerce, 1956), 9-10, 35, Cuban Heritage Collection (CHC), University of Miami.

sugar plantation economy developing around them.<sup>49</sup> Oscar Zanetti and Alejandro García explain, “The conditions in which Cuba had emerged from the War of Independence were particularly favorable to imperialist penetration. Exhausted and ruined, the island was not able to exploit its resources.”<sup>50</sup> The final War of Independence against Spain (1895-98) decimated the Cuban countryside and left the island extremely vulnerable to economic penetration of foreign interests. Matanzas and Santa Clara, which had produced 80 percent of the Cuba’s sugar, were home to 267 sugar mills in 1894 and just 83 in 1899. One and a half million heads of cattle before the war were reduced to 60,000 by its end.<sup>51</sup> Devastated by the damage to properties in the eastern provinces during the 30 years of intermittent revolution (1868-1898), compounded by the destruction or misplacement of Cuban land deeds, *campesinos* throughout eastern Cuba were compelled to adopt new forms of labor, community, family and dignity within the foreign-dominated economy developing around them.<sup>52</sup> Cuban priorities were orienting toward the needs of Anglo-American executives and policy makers; *campesinos* were forced to bend to the new order.

Cuba’s political leaders understood the sway North Americans and British nationals held over the Cuban landscape. Most aligned their policies with Anglo-American geopolitical and corporate goals. To garner military, financial and diplomatic support from abroad meant an immediate increase in prestige and authority for Cuban power brokers. When a revolt by Cuban liberals broke out after the election of 1905, the Moderate President Tomás Estrada Palma

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<sup>49</sup> Louis A. Pérez, Jr., “La Chambelona: Political Protest, Sugar, and Social Banditry in Cuba, 1914-1917,” *Journal of Inter-American Economic Affairs* 31, no. 4 (Spring 1978): 3-28, 27-28.

<sup>50</sup> Zanetti, *Sugar and Railroads*, 210.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 198, 210.

<sup>52</sup> Carmen Diana Deere, “Here Come the Yankees!” 736.

requested a U.S. intervention. By calling on the United States, the Estrada Palma government conceded that Cuba served as a protectorate of the United States. Estrada Palma sought to prevent a takeover by the Liberal Party and aligned with Anglo-American priorities to protect foreign properties threatened by the rebellion. British-owned rail companies had their engines and a rail bridge destroyed by rebel forces. Reports and rumors of the incineration of Anglo-American-owned sugar cane fields and the destruction of U.S.-owned communications wires caused a stir in North America, as well as British embassies and boardrooms. Unable to crush the revolt himself, and unwilling to further negotiate with his Cuban enemies in September 1906, Estrada Palma turned to President Theodore Roosevelt for assistance. Havana's Anglo-American publication the *Havana Post* welcomed the intervention as an opportunity for Cubans to grow, progress and develop under the tutelage of U.S. rule. Other more conservative elements of the Anglo-American colony, like the publication the *Havana Daily Telegraph* responded to the second occupation by advocating for Cuba to be formally annexed by the United States.<sup>53</sup>

While annexation did not occur, the U.S. occupation was managed by close to 6,000 U.S. soldiers, under the leadership of Governor Charles Magoon, and would last until 1909. Justified as an effort to prevent Cuban graft, Magoon emptied the Cuban treasury, exploiting the Cuban surplus by spending money far more freely than the Estrada Palma government. Magoon would leave Cuba six and a half million dollars in debt, despite inheriting a surplus. Throughout the country, Magoon advocated for and advanced infrastructure projects that aided Anglo-American capital. He was accused of favoring bids from Anglo-American companies, for example, when he selected the Oliver & Company of Knoxville for a road contract over the objections of Cuban

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<sup>53</sup> David A. Lockmiller, *Magoon in Cuba; A History of the Second Intervention, 1906-1909* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1969), 59, 183; *Havana Post*, September 29, 1906.

capital and even the *Havana Post*. Proposals by foreign corporations to expand U.S. and British owned rail projects were approved. Canals made transportation of goods easier in areas dominated by Anglo-American residents including the Isle of Pines and ports heavily trafficked by Anglo-American trade. Magoon's biographer David Lockmiller contends that U.S.-owned mining companies, including the Jurangua Iron Company, the Spanish-American Iron Company and the Holguín-Santiago Mine Company were all stimulated by the Magoon program of public works and profited tremendously during his leadership by shipping metals to North American and European factories. The Governor himself financially benefited from his time in Cuba by investing in the Havana Electric Railway Company, managed by former U.S. Consul General in Havana Frank Steinhart. The Havana Electric Railway Company achieved a monopoly on gas and electricity in the city.<sup>54</sup> In defense of Magoon's record, Lockmiller wrote, "As provisional governor it should be remembered that he was placed in the difficult and at times impossible position of administering a civil government satisfactory to both Cubans and officials in Washington."<sup>55</sup> The same could be written about every leader of Cuba between 1899 and 1959.

As Cuban rebels throughout its history would articulate time and again, being forced to prioritize the geopolitical and economic interests of foreigners generally proved incompatible with delivering equity, sovereignty and stability for the Cuban nation. In 1912 a rebellion of Afro-Cubans overwhelmed the eastern part of the island, threatening the extensive Anglo-American interests in the region.<sup>56</sup> After Cuban authorities declared the *Partido Independiente*

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<sup>54</sup> Lockmiller, *Magoon in Cuba*, 105-106, 126, 202, 209, 216; "Havana Electric Railway Light and Power Company: Report to the Shareholders," Annual Report, May 15, 1913, Accessed March 14, 2018, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=njp.32101079833552;view=1up;seq=11>.

<sup>55</sup> Lockmiller, *Magoon in Cuba*, 214.

<sup>56</sup> Zanetti, *Sugar and Railroads*, 402.

*de Color* (PIC) illegal because they organized on the basis of race, Afro-Cuban members of PIC rebelled, primarily in Oriente. One contemporary U.S. naval officer explained the rebellion in economic terms, “Whatever may have been the immediate object of the threatened uprising of the blacks, it’s real cause was due to the existing economic condition of the blacks.”<sup>57</sup> The arrival of U.S. capital into eastern Cuba dramatically altered the lives, families, traditions, communities and labor power of poor Afro-Cubans who became dependent on foreign corporations. Yet Cuban authorities, pressured by U.S. policy makers, demanded passive submission to these new realities. Threats to Anglo-Americans and their investments would not be tolerated.

The U.S. Consul in Santiago, Ross E. Holaday found that foreigners were being intimidated with “letters demanding money, and threatening to burn their property, or take their lives, or that of some member of their family, if they refused to comply with the demands of the unknown writer.”<sup>58</sup> The Vice President of the Cuban Railroad Company lobbied the State Department to force Cuban President José Miguel Gómez to end the upheaval. The railroad executive lamented, “We have been practically at the tender mercy of the negro bands.”<sup>59</sup> An Anglo-American manager for the same company added, “Nothing short of a reign of terror would end the revolt in Oriente.”<sup>60</sup> Anglo-American investors watched in horror as their company stores, mining operations, coffee plantations, livestock, rail bridges, railroad stations, telegraph and telephone wires all succumbed to rebel attacks against property. In 1912 President

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<sup>57</sup> Louis A. Pérez, Jr., *Lords of the Mountain: Social Banditry and Peasant Protest in Cuba, 1878-1918* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1989), 148.

<sup>58</sup> Pérez, *Lords of the Mountain*, 143-147.

<sup>59</sup> Alejandro de la Fuente, *A Nation for All: Race, Inequality, and Politics in Twentieth-Century Cuba* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 74.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 74-75.

Howard Taft landed U.S. Marines on the island and mobilized the U.S. Navy. The threat to Anglo-American sugar, mining, telecommunication and rail operations inspired U.S. maneuvers at the highest levels of government.

In addition to the external pressure applied by the United States, President Gómez faced internal pressure from the Conservative Party leader Mario García Menocal who well understood the influence of the United States and looked to protect foreign investments. Like many wealthy Cubans who sought to oust the Spanish in the nineteenth century, Menocal was educated at a U.S. boarding school before attending Cornell University. After the Cuban Wars of Independence in which Menocal served, the Conservative leader oversaw the construction of the Cuban American Sugar Company mill in Chaparra, the largest in the world at the time.<sup>61</sup> Like Estrada Palma only a few years earlier, Menocal saw the United States as a potential ally in destabilizing the efforts of his political enemies while securing an industry in which he was personally invested.

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<sup>61</sup> “Influential North Americans believed in [Menocal]...” W. Adolphe Roberts, *Havana The Portrait of a City* (New York, NY: Coward-McCann, 1953), 128; “Mario García Menocal,” *latinamericanstudies.org*, Accessed April 2, 2018, <http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/menocal-bio.htm>.



Figure 1. Avenida Menocal, Cuban American Sugar Company, Chaparra <sup>62</sup>

Cuban and U.S. leaders successfully pressured the reluctant President Gómez to send his army and brutally crush the rebellion that was endangering significant domestic and foreign investments. In 1912 *The Cuba News*, among the eight English language newspapers printed in Cuba at the time, explained Gómez' precarious position. They wrote the Cuban President had made his "political capital out of his patriotic, anti-American attitude..."<sup>63</sup> Yet still he felt compelled to act on behalf of U.S. interests. Alejandro de la Fuente argues that Gómez was motivated, at least in part, by the knowledge that a U.S. intervention in the election year of 1912 would have spelled disaster for his Liberal Party. Instead of giving the United States a chance to intercede, North American power brokers and influential Cuban allies persuaded Gómez to suspend constitutional guarantees and send the army to butcher 3,000 Afro-Cubans in eastern Cuba. Contemporaries lamented "many innocent and defenseless Negroes" among the dead.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Provided by Rafael Manuel Rábade Guntin.

<sup>63</sup> Deere, "Here Come the Yankees!" 745; de la Fuente, *A Nation for All*, 74-75.

<sup>64</sup> de la Fuente, *A Nation for All*, 74-75.

Tearing at the multi-racial fabric of Cuban society while mobilizing the massacre of Afro-Cubans, Gómez secured the investments of Anglo-American capital.

Due to U.S. influence, interventions and occupations, Anglo-Americans residents in Cuba operated with levels of protection unavailable to most Cubans, facilitating a substantial expansion of the Anglo-American population in Cuba during the U.S. occupations. In the middle of the nineteenth century, only 1,256 U.S. citizens resided in Cuba.<sup>65</sup> By 1899, during the first U.S. occupation, this number increased fivefold: 6,444 U.S. citizens resided on the island along with 588 British nationals and 56 Canadians.<sup>66</sup> The Anglo-American population grew over time. The 1907 census, administered during the second U.S. occupation, recorded 6,713 U.S. nationals and 1,252 British citizens.<sup>67</sup>

Near the end of the second occupation in December 1908, President Theodore Roosevelt further reassured Anglo-American residents when he spoke to Cubans to “warn them to remember the great truth that the only way a people can permanently avoid being governed from without is to show that they both can and will govern themselves from within.”<sup>68</sup> With assurances from U.S. politicians, the Anglo-American business community quickly expanded in Cuba with large investments from firms like Bethlehem Steel, National City Bank of New York, the Cuban Company, the American and Foreign Power Company, the First National Bank, and

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<sup>65</sup> Vega Suñol, *Norteamericanos en Cuba*, 25, 29.

<sup>66</sup> The Province of Havana proved to be the center of the Anglo-American colony from the beginning with 4,178 U.S. citizens, 272 British citizens and 24 Canadians in 1899. Seven-hundred-ninety-nine of the U.S. citizens were “colored.” Further, 1,712 West Indians and 1,108 Puerto Ricans represented peoples colonized by the United States and England. U.S. War Department, Office Director Census of Cuba, *Report on the Census of Cuba, 1899* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1900), 98, 220-221.

<sup>67</sup> By 1907 the number of “colored” U.S. nationals had fallen to 687, while the population from Puerto Rico had risen to 2,918, and from the West Indies to 4,280. No data was provided for Canadian citizens. Oficina del censo de los Estados Unidos, *Censo de la República de Cuba, 1907* (Montpelier, VT: The Capital City Press, 1908), 340.

<sup>68</sup> Lockmiller, *Magoon in Cuba*, 184.

Chase National Bank all arriving in the first decades of the Cuban Republic.<sup>69</sup> British and Canadian capital invested heavily in the transportation and banking industries during the same period. Large international companies including United Railways of Havana, the Royal Bank of Canada and the Bank of Nova Scotia gained significant influence on the island.<sup>70</sup> By 1915, an estimated 20,000 North American, English and German citizens lived in Cuba.<sup>71</sup> Due to the increased opportunity for Anglo-American investments over the first two decades of the twentieth century, U.S. nationals in Cuba alone comprised a population of 9,555 in 1919.<sup>72</sup>

The fall of global sugar prices between 1920 and 1921 occurred while U.S. marines were stationed on the island, as they had been since 1917. In just a few months, the global sugar market collapsed from 22.5 cents to 4 cents per pound, destabilizing Cuban corporations. Entire industries would collapse. The devastation of the Cuban economy led to a buying bonanza of bankrupted Cuban properties by North American and British banks.<sup>73</sup> Cuban-owned mills began to fall into the hands of Anglo-Americans who could extract capital from abroad.<sup>74</sup> National City Bank benefited from free-falling sugar prices by taking control of more than fifty sugar mills in

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<sup>69</sup> United States Bureau of Foreign Commerce, "Investment in Cuba," 9-10, 35, CHC.

<sup>70</sup> *The Fifth Annual Program of Mothers' Club of Havana, 1958-1959*, provided by Cathy Brown Crescioni; *Anglo-American Directory of Cuba, 1958-1959 Edition*, (Marianao, Cuba: Anglo-American Directory of Cuba, 1959).

<sup>71</sup> George Reno, *Cuba: What She Has to Offer to the Investor or Homeseeker* (Havana, Cuba: Dept. of Agriculture, Commerce, and Labor, 1915), 15.

<sup>72</sup> Total U.S. citizens numbered 13,005 including Puerto Ricans who gained their citizenship from the Jones Act in 1917. No data was provided for Canadian citizens. Nine-hundred-thirty-four of the U.S. citizens were "colored" in 1919. Additionally, the West Indian population numbered 41,159. Junta Nacional del Censo, *Censo de la República de Cuba, 1919* (La Habana, Cuba: Maza, Arroyo y Caso, S en C., 1919), 431.

<sup>73</sup> Deere, "Here Come the Yankees!" 754-56.

<sup>74</sup> Vega-Suñol, *Norteamericanos en Cuba*, 61.

the summer of 1921.<sup>75</sup> Loans to the desperate Cuban state by institutions including J.P. Morgan heavily indebted the Cuban government to U.S. financial firms.<sup>76</sup> Anglo-American, and specifically U.S. economic control, increased substantially, leading to expanded political influence. President Alfredo Zayas y Alfonso was forced to name U.S. General Enoch Crowder as his “financial adviser.” Remaining in Cuba until 1923, Crowder controlled appointments to key government posts in the Zayas administration.<sup>77</sup> By this time British capital had consolidated all railroad interests on the western part of the island, while earlier the U.S.-owned Cuban Company transgressed Cuban law to provide emerging sugar interests the only rail-line that would connect eastern Cuba to Havana.<sup>78</sup> By the 1920s, Anglo-American executives controlled Cuba’s communication, electrical and transportation networks, while dominating both the sugar and banking industries as well. During this period Cuban sugar sales became more dependent on the U.S. market, which made Cubans extremely vulnerable to the whims of U.S. policymakers. By 1926 U.S. mills processed 63 percent of Cuban sugar.<sup>79</sup> Yet this trend would break as the collapse of the global economy in 1929 shifted the attention of many Anglo-Americans away from Cuba.

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<sup>75</sup> Samuel Farber, *The Origins of the Cuban Revolution Reconsidered* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 9.

<sup>76</sup> Franklin, *Cuba and the United States*, 11.

<sup>77</sup> Lazo, *Dagger in the Heart*, 55.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 198; Deere, 737.

<sup>79</sup> United States Bureau of Foreign Commerce, “Investment in Cuba,” 9-10, 35, CHC.

## *Networks of Empire Reshape Rural Cuba*

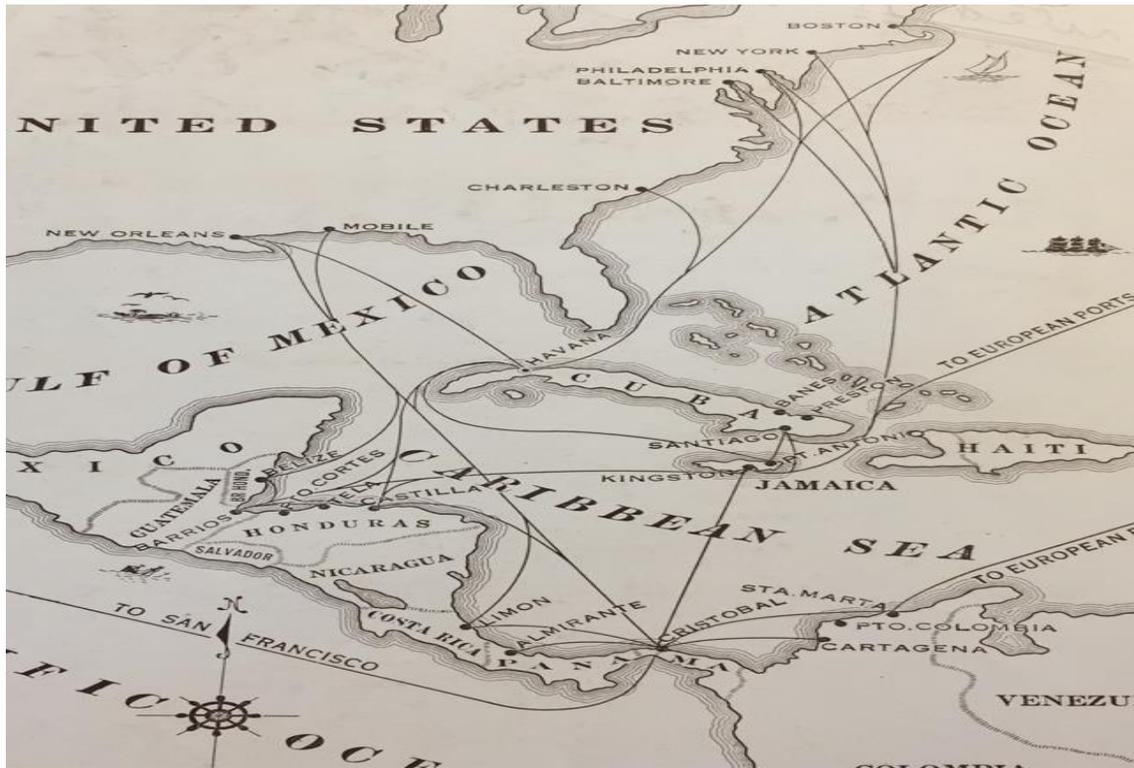


Figure 2. *The Networks and Outposts of United Fruit's Empire, 1929*<sup>80</sup>

Networks of formal and informal empire in the wider Caribbean worked to support Anglo-American investments and consolidate foreign influence in Cuba. Anglo-American institutions encouraged the immigration of Haitian and West Indian workers to provide labor and advance the corporate and geopolitical ambitions of North Americans and British nationals on the island. West Indians from the English colonies of Jamaica, Barbados, St. Lucia and Trinidad, fluent in English and familiar with Anglo-American customs, were more attractive to potential employers than were Haitians or Cubans. British colonialism augmented the desirability and availability of West Indian laborers for Anglo-American employers. By contrast, the U.S. occupation of Haiti (1915-1934) provided largely uneducated laborers to foreign and domestic

<sup>80</sup> M.E. Schoen, ed., *Unifruitco* IV, no. 9, (April 1929), 1, New York Public Library (NYPL).

sugar corporations in Cuba.<sup>81</sup> Without the tools garnered through imperial contact due to their successful expulsion of Napoleon's forces in 1804, likely no group of imported labor during this period proved more vulnerable to exploitation than the Haitian cane-cutter. These networks of empire altered demographics and tensions across the Caribbean, as well as in Cuba.

Often at the bottom rung of rural Cuban society, the Haitian bracero arrived in Cuba with neither the biographies of contact that would appeal to Anglo-American employers, nor the protection of the Cuban or British government. Haitians largely became locked in their roles as cane-cutters and were denied paths toward social mobility.<sup>82</sup> Cuban and U.S. sugar mills successfully pressured the Estrada Palma government to allow the importation of these workers in 1906. With the U.S. occupation in Haiti beginning in 1915, U.S. contracting agents quickly

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<sup>81</sup> Immigration from Haiti to Cuba jumped from just 98 in 1914 to 2,453 in 1915, the first year of the U.S. occupation. Because the U.S. occupation began at the end of July 1915, the first full year Haiti was occupied by U.S. forces was 1916. In this year Haitians immigration to Cuba grew to 4,922. In 1917, 10,136 Haitians arrived in Cuba with just 287, or 2.8 percent of them being women and only 563, or 5.6 percent of these Haitian immigrants being literate. For context, in 1912, of the 111 Haitian immigrants to Cuba 45 percent were women, while 57.7 percent of them could read and write. While in 1913, 1,200 Haitian made the short journey to Cuba, 301, or 25.1 percent were married indicating more families were making the journey, while in 1916 of the 4,922 who arrived in Cuba, just 216, or 4.4 percent were married. Further, in 1913, 80 percent marked themselves as laborers or day laborers, while that number rose to 4,634 of 4,922 or 94 percent in 1916, and 9,963 of 10,136, or 98.3 percent in 1917. This indicates a greater variety in the class of Haitian immigrants before the U.S. occupation of Haiti. Between 1917 and 1919 a little more than 10,000 Haitians arrived annually to Cuba. However, in 1920 that number skyrocketed to 35,971, overwhelmingly male and almost all laborers, paralleling the rise of global sugar prices to their peak during the *Dance of Millions*. Despite a decline due to the crash of global sugar prices later that year, Haitian immigration to Cuba remained in the five-figures for years to come. *Inmigración y movimiento de pasajeros año de 1912* (La Habana, Cuba: Secretaría de hacienda seccion de estadística, 1913); *Inmigración y movimiento de pasajeros año de 1913* (La Habana, Cuba: Secretaría de hacienda seccion de estadística, 1914); *Inmigración y movimiento de pasajeros año de 1914* (La Habana, Cuba: Secretaría de hacienda seccion de estadística, 1915); *Inmigración y movimiento de pasajeros año de 1915* (La Habana, Cuba: Secretaría de hacienda seccion de estadística, 1916); *Inmigración y movimiento de pasajeros año de 1916* (La Habana, Cuba: Secretaría de hacienda seccion de estadística, 1917); *Inmigración y movimiento de pasajeros año de 1917* (La Habana, Cuba: Secretaría de hacienda seccion de estadística, 1918); *Inmigración y movimiento de pasajeros año de 1918* (La Habana, Cuba: Secretaría de hacienda seccion de estadística, 1919); *Inmigración y movimiento de pasajeros año de 1919* (La Habana, Cuba: Secretaría de hacienda seccion de estadística, 1920); *Inmigración y movimiento de pasajeros año de 1920* (La Habana, Cuba: Secretaría de hacienda seccion de estadística, 1921).

<sup>82</sup> Casey points out that many Haitians were able to climb out of these roles taking jobs as recruiters, ox-drivers, mill-workers, and domestic servants, although the vast majority cut cane. Casey, "Haitians' Labor and Leisure on Cuban Sugar Plantations: The Limits of Company Control," 9, 13.

began collecting Haitian labor for work in the cane-fields of Cuba.<sup>83</sup> By the 1920s, a decade in which close to 100,000 Haitians immigrated to Cuba, these systems of formal and informal empire provoked a labor shortage in Haiti.<sup>84</sup>

The experience of British West Indians is better documented than their Haitian counterparts' due to their status as British subjects - until 1962 for Jamaicans and Trinidadians, 1966 for Barbadians, and 1967 for St. Lucians. While many Afro-Caribbean workers from the British Empire also worked as cane-cutters for Anglo-American executives, their contact with English and Anglo-American customs and education often provided them greater opportunities than immigrants from Haiti or poor Cubans. It was not uncommon for West Indians to secure positions as domestic servants, interpreters, nurses, mill workers, or ministers. These positions proved slightly more lucrative and less physically demanding than cane-cutting.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Zanetti, *Sugar and Railroads*, 243-245.

<sup>84</sup> By the 1920s the importation of Haitian laborers by U.S. companies, notably United Fruit, forced U.S. officials in Haiti to attempt come up with solutions to their own labor shortages. Large scale U.S. investments in Haiti found themselves short of workers as companies like United Fruit in Cuba--while still offering meager wages--paid multiple times more than U.S. enterprises in Haiti. U.S. investors like the Roger Farnham of the Bank of New York depended on Haitian labor to fulfill his infrastructure contracts in occupied Haiti. In 1928 the U.S. government proposed making it illegal for Haitians to seek work abroad rather than have U.S. corporations in Haiti offer competitive pay rates. While it is unclear if the ban went into effect, in 1929 fewer than 5,000 Haitians immigrated to Cuba, dropping from a number always upwards of 10,000, though never much higher than 20,000 throughout the decade. The history of informal empire in Cuba cannot be told without examining the context of imperialism in the greater Caribbean. John H. Russell to Secretary of State, February 29, 1928, 837.5538/4; Sommers, "The U.S. Power Elite and the Political Economy of Haiti's Occupation: Investment, Race, and World Order," 62; *Inmigración y movimiento de pasajeros año de 1929 y comparaciones con el año de 1928* (La Habana, Cuba: Secretaría de hacienda seccion de estadística, 1930).

<sup>85</sup> Like many West Indians, Victor Godwin Jefferson arrived in Cuba with a stronger educational background than his Haitian and rural Cuban counterparts. While he was a bit of an outlier, the United Fruit and Sugar Company hired Jefferson as an engineer. Due to a similar legacy of contact black Jamaican nurses, as well as Panamanians--long living in close proximity to U.S. nationals due to the occupation of the Canal Zone--were recruited and served under white nurses because they did not mind caring for "natives." Their contact with Anglo-Americans before their arrival in Cuba often positioned these skilled workers well. Whitney, *Subjects or Citizens*, 58, 162.

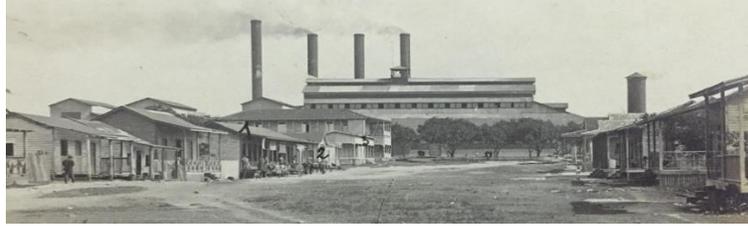


Figure 3. Cuban American Sugar Company, Chaparra Mill <sup>86</sup>

Charles Ray of St. Lucia found some mobility and protection due to his ability to communicate with Anglo-American management. Ray began work as a cart driver in the mill earning \$1.25 a day at the Cuban American Sugar Company in Chaparra, Oriente. After his father spoke to the mill manager, presumably in English, Ray was placed in the lab. Ray remembers his own promotion from the lab when he encountered a U.S. chemist, “who did not speak Spanish.” Ray explains, “He chose me to work with them there, as an interpreter.” This relationship with Anglo-American management protected Ray during the Cuban nationalist, anti-immigrant drives of the 1930s. This very same North American chemist helped Ray change his birth certificate from English to Cuban so that he could continue being employed at the mill.<sup>87</sup>

Those West Indians who arrived through public ports were technically secured a protected status from the British Crown unavailable to other immigrant workers.<sup>88</sup> Though protections nominally existed, when in need, West Indians often found the British authorities unresponsive to their plight. The experience of West Indians in Europe during the World Wars

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<sup>86</sup> Provided by Rafael Manuel Rábade Guntin.

<sup>87</sup> Whitney, *Subjects or Citizens*, 135-136.

<sup>88</sup> Robert Whitney and Graciela Chailoux Laffita explain, “Over the years, huge enterprises such as the Cuban-American Sugar Company or United Fruit Company imported hundreds of thousands of foreign workers through private ports, and the Cuban government had little if any control over or information about how many people entered the country, where they lived and worked, and how many remained (legally or illegally) in the country.” Arriving through these means generally meant sacrificing protections typically available to British subjects. Whitney, *Subjects or Citizens*, 63, 117.

altered expectations among veterans of the conflict. Many no longer placed their faith in a continued relationship with England, and warned Britain that things must change for continued loyalty. Decrying the condition of British West Indian workers in Cuba, in 1938 WWI veteran Theophilus Samms from Central Victoria in Santa Clara wrote to the Colonial Secretary in London,

We have always been obedient to you and at any time of your distress. Many of our boys had been to your rescue in the world's war. Some of whom were slain in that battle. Others have returned to us and among them many are here [in Cuba] suffering the unconstitutional laws of the land. Why should our Emperor which is mighty not only in army and navy but a government that has billions of Pounds allow us to be here under these ferocious [illegible]. Why should you continue to purchase such a vast amount of Cuban Product?<sup>89</sup>

Frustrated with English inaction, Samms warned, "Remember Russia in the World War."<sup>90</sup> West Indians in Cuba began questioning the value of their continued ties with England.

In August 1941, a concerned North American lawyer, John Sawyer wrote the British Foreign Office about the desperate situation of West Indians at the Cuban American Sugar Company mill town of Delicias. With considerable diplomacy, Sawyer wrote, "the Mother country is probably not aware of the horrible conditions." He explained that when he attempted to contact the local British representative, his petitions were ignored. Desperately trying to draw attention to the crisis for those in the Foreign Office, Sawyer wrote, "England has hundreds of Subjects housed in Central Delicias [SIC] in an old fallen down Barracks in a very poor condition with very bad sanitary conditions, a great many on the verge of starvation, and many

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<sup>89</sup> Theophilus Samms to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, April 29, 1938, British National Archives, Foreign Office, 371/21449, quoted in Whitney, *Subjects or Citizens*, 79-80.

<sup>90</sup> Theophilus Samms to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, April 29, 1938, British National Archives, Foreign Office, 371/21449, quoted in Whitney, *Subjects or Citizens*, 79-80.

others just slowly starving to death.”<sup>91</sup> Looking into the matter H.A. Hobson of the British Colonial Office admitted the situation was “deplorable,” but with World War II demanding English resources and geopolitical capital, Hobson determined nothing could be done.<sup>92</sup> Despite hundreds of years of colonization, and over a century after the abolition of slavery, in the eyes of their British colonizers, West Indians remained expendable. Protections for West Indians as British Subjects often went unrecognized while this community faced harassment from Cubans and Haitians who accused them of ‘British arrogance.’<sup>93</sup>

Eventually British officials responded to the conditions exposed by advocates like Sawyer and Samms. In a 1943 report issued by Sir Frank Stockdale, the British government laid out plans to relieve the West Indians in Cuba. Implemented over the course of two decades, 10,000 pounds annually would finance agricultural projects, as well as subsidize welfare for the elderly and those without work.<sup>94</sup> By the 1950s some of this money would be funneled through the Anglo-American Welfare Foundation of Havana to support a burial center for “colored nationals.”<sup>95</sup> White U.S., British and Canadian residents who were unaffiliated with the British Embassy became the legitimate, entrusted authorities who could allocate funds for the West Indian community.

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<sup>91</sup> John C. Sawyer to Anthony Eden, Secretary of the Foreign Office, London, August 30, 1941, British National Archives, Colonial Office, quoted in Whitney, *Subjects or Citizens*, 67-68.

<sup>92</sup> H.A. Hobson, dispatch no. 32, to Anthony Eden, December 3, 1941, British National Archives, Colonial Office, 318/453/14/119685, quoted in Whitney, *Subjects or Citizens*, 67-78.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 84-85.

<sup>94</sup> Sir Frank Stockdale, “Report on the Present Conditions of the British West Indian Community in Cuba,” July 21, 1943, Kew National Archives, London, England, CO 318/453/14.

<sup>95</sup> “Make No Mistake,” *Times of Havana*, March 31, 1958, 6; “Welfare Activities of AAC Community,” *Times of Havana*, April 14, 1958, 9.

The status of West Indians and Haitians in Cuba was precarious both legally and economically.<sup>96</sup> In response, British Caribbean and Haitian workers in Cuba sought to organize themselves. In the late 1920s as many as fifty-two branches of Marcus Garvey's United Negro Improvement Associations (UNIA) were started in Cuba, with one of the world's largest and longest lasting chapter established in Banes, Oriente on United Fruit and Sugar Company property.<sup>97</sup> The pan-Africanist movement developed through UNIA cultivated support networks by pooling the resources of the Afro-Caribbean community to provide limited comfort for colonized subjects away from home. Matthew Casey documents the networks through which Haitians exchanged information within their communities in Cuba. Though hired by particular companies to gather Haitian cane-cutters, Haitian recruiters at times informed these laborers about opportunities for higher pay scales and better working conditions on other plantations.<sup>98</sup> Still, segregation by sugar companies strategically separated workers by ethnicity and country of origin, in terms of where they lived and worked, making it difficult for workers to unite in cross-cultural opposition to the policies of respective corporations.<sup>99</sup> Yet despite difficulties resisting

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<sup>96</sup> The presence and widespread utilization of foreign workers undermined the positions of Cuban labor, leading to the spread of anti-immigrant resentment. In response, a series of populist anti-immigrant laws targeted West Indians and Haitians in Cuba. The nationalist laws of 1925 stated that 75 percent of labor and wages needed to go to Cubans. In 1933, the Grau government passed laws that encouraged the hiring of Cuban over foreign workers. By 1937, undocumented immigrants from Haiti and the British West Indies were being targeted for deportation. And in 1940, the Cuban Constitution declared: "The importation of contract labor, as well as all immigration tending to debase the condition of labor, is prohibited." In 1940 an estimated 40,000 West Indians lived in Cuba legally, while close to 60,000 undocumented residents of Cuba emanated from the British colonies of the Caribbean. Most of these immigrants lived in rural and eastern Cuba, with only between 2,000-3,000 in the capital, 500 of whom, mostly women, were employed as domestic servants, often in Anglo-American households. Whitney, *Subjects or Citizens*, 29, 58, 156; 1940 Cuban Constitution, Title VI, Section 1, Article 76, Accessed June 29, 2017, <http://pdba.georgetown.edu/Constitutions/Cuba/cuba1940.html>.

<sup>97</sup> Whitney, *Subjects or Citizens*, 10.

<sup>98</sup> Casey, "Haitians' Labor and Leisure on Cuban Sugar Plantations," 19.

<sup>99</sup> Zanetti, *Sugar and Railroads*, 248-250.

the networks of formal and informal empire, Caribbean immigrants carved out a space for themselves in pre-revolutionary Cuba, altering the island and the Caribbean basin in the process.

***Socio-Economic Alliances for Power and Profit Prime Conditions for Systemic Poverty***

Unlike most poor Cuban and Caribbean workers for Anglo-American corporations, a segment of Cuban professionals found opportunities for mobility within the structures of informal empire, and emerged as advocates of Anglo-American influence. In his memoir, Mario Lazo, the U.S. educated Cuban lawyer who represented Anglo-American firms and government projects, defended the much-maligned Platt Amendment arguing that the Amendment, “proved to be of inestimable value to the young republic. It induced the flow of American capital to Cuba, contributing enormously to its economic development. It was the sole reason why Cuban bonds sold in the market at a better price than those of such countries as France, Brazil, Argentina and Chile.”<sup>100</sup> Lazo came from a class of Cubans who personally profited from the investments of Anglo-American capital.

Learning English and adopting Anglo-American values aided these Cuban professionals and their families. Many Cubans trained in Anglo-American institutions secured well-compensated jobs working at foreign companies. Those who sought to conduct business on their own were able to transact with Anglo-Americans, retain foreign clients, and access North American and European transportation networks for their products and services, both on the island and to foreign ports. Cubans with deep ties to the Anglo-American colony positioned themselves to attain some of the same benefits privileged outsiders inherited from their nationality.

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<sup>100</sup> Lazo, *Dagger in the Heart*, 52-53.

Benefits of these transnational collaborations flowed in multiple directions. Cubans in top corporate, political and social positions offered Anglo-American residents a variety of advantages including advice concerning the Cuban market, connections to Cuban businesses, cosmopolitan cultural experiences, legal protections, as well as a stable workforce. Cuban politicians, capitalists and enterprising professionals gained access to foreign capital by participating in business organizations with Anglo-Americans including Rotary International, the Lions Club, and the American Club. They sent their children to Anglo-American-run schools like Ruston or Merici Academies. They golfed, swam, rowed, sailed, drank, danced, played bridge and canasta, with foreign executives, diplomats, housewives and their children at places like Hershey, the Havana Yacht Club, the Rovers Club, the American Club or the Biltmore Yacht and Country Club. Cuban politicians offered low tax rates and an army of enforcers on behalf of foreign capital. Some Cubans could help executives resolve a potential punishment for illegal fiscal or labor practices. These Cubans emerged as social bridges, local advocates and professional cultural interpreters for Anglo-American businessmen who often lacked fluency in Cuban ways and words. This transnational community of Anglo-Americans and relatively wealthy Cuban professionals cemented as a mutually beneficial socio-economic alliance.

According to José Vega Suñol, those Cubans who encouraged and advanced U.S. capital, expertise and values would solidify social and financial hierarchies within Cuba, consolidating and stabilizing their own authority.<sup>101</sup> Between 1899 and 1958 Anglo-Americans and select Cubans worked together in making tremendous profits, especially in the sugar industry, as they ensured Cuba would largely remain a mono-crop economy.<sup>102</sup> Exposing the utility of socio-

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<sup>101</sup> Vega Suñol, *Norteamericanos en Cuba*.

<sup>102</sup> López-Fresquet, *My Fourteen Months with Castro*, 38.

economic alliances between Cuban power brokers and Anglo-American capital, Imiley Balboa Navarro explains that many Cuban political leaders encouraged the consolidation of a sugar economy, thereby ensuring their nation's dependency on imported goods for sugar profits. Cuban Presidents José Miguel Gómez (1909-1913), Mario García Menocal (1913-1921), Gerardo Machado (1925-1933), and Carlos Mendieta (1934-35) all worked as owners or high-ranking employees of Cuban or U.S. sugar mills. Out of self-interest, they generally aligned their policies with foreign capital and created conditions favorable to foreign investment in sugar and sugar related industries like the railroads.<sup>103</sup>

### ***The Mill***

Growing up in Preston's *barrio norteamericano* in the 1930s and 1940s, David E. Brewer reflected on the sentiments of conservative Anglo-Americans throughout the island who lived lives quite separate from poor and working-class Cubans. Living amongst vast inequity, due to racial and cultural hierarchies, Anglo-American sugar executives and non-white laborers remained in wholly separate worlds. Still, opportunities arose for a segment of Cubans trained in Anglo-American schools and universities. Over the course of the 1930s and 40s, an estimated 200 U.S. citizens living in Preston fell to a few dozen. As pro-Cuban labor laws began to take effect, Cubans who developed Anglo-American skill-sets were increasingly hired as professionals, executives and engineers at foreign-owned sugar mills. According to Brewer, the majority of Cubans he encountered in and around Preston continued to "look at the United States as big, fat, wealthy Americans." He recalls, "occasionally when I was riding on one of the trains,

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<sup>103</sup> Imiley Balboa Navarro, "Steeds, Cocks, and Guayaberas: The Social Impact of Agrarian Reorganization in the Republic," in *State of Ambiguity, Civil Life and Culture in Cuba's First Republic*

ed. Steven Palmer, José Antonio Piqueras, and Amparo Sánchez Cobos (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015): 216-223.

it's warm and I've got the windows up and my arm out the window and kids would look at me with freckles and say, '*Americano* give me some money.' And they'd pester you. And I'd finally tell them to get lost in Spanish and they'd look at me funny and leave."<sup>104</sup>

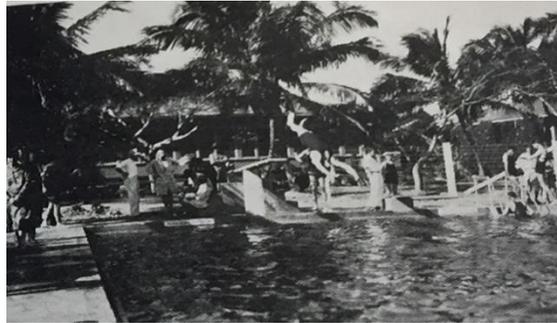


Figure 4. Swimming Pool on *la avenida* in Preston <sup>105</sup>

*Barrios americanos* physically segregated Anglo-American sugar executives from the people who worked for them and lived in their vicinity. The material inequity between the *barrios americanos* and the shacks of Cuban, West Indian, and Haitian cane-cutters, as well as the company-built homes in other neighborhoods in the mill town, created a significant gulf between, and resentment across these communities. In Preston, Anglo-Americans, and eventually a few Cubans in managerial positions working for UFSC, lived on *la avenida* with magnificent porches wrapping around North American styled homes. English-speaking servants filled the public and private spaces, while corporate executives enjoyed exclusive access to a swimming pool at the end of the street, as well as a nine-hole golf course nearby.<sup>106</sup> Jorge Segura

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<sup>104</sup> Brewer estimates 200 Americans lived in Preston when his family arrived in 1931, but that number had been reduced to around 20 when his family left in the 1950s. David E. Brewer, interview by author, January 19, 2017, Greenville, SC.

<sup>105</sup> Virginia Schofield explains the pool was off limits to most of the people working in and around Preston. Despite her father being of English heritage, he was middle management, had grown up in Cuba and married a Cuban. Thus, Virginia explains she, "could not have belonged." M.E. Schoen, ed. *Unifruitco* V, no. 8 (March 1930), 495, NYPL; Virginia Schofield, interview by author, August 1, 2016, Washington, DC.

<sup>106</sup> David E. Brewer, interview by author, January 19, 2017, Greenville, SC.

remembers the United Fruit and Sugar Company of Banes: “There were two sides to [Banes], one for the Americans, one for the Cubans. There was a central, shared part also, but the Americans had their own Colony. There were differences. That sat badly with people.”<sup>107</sup> Many Anglo-Americans simply ignored the Cubans around them. “...I saw a lot of Americans in the streets, on the weekends. Many came. Sometimes they passed me in the street, but they never said anything.”<sup>108</sup> In Hershey, Anglo-Americans lived with a very few Cuban professionals and executives, in beautiful chalets made of stone, with live-in domestic servants. Meanwhile Cuban and Caribbean mill workers lived in smaller wooden town houses further from the Hershey train station.<sup>109</sup> Foreign sugar executives largely kept their distance from their non-Anglo-American employees.



*Figure 5. A Chalet and the Homes of Mill Workers in Hershey*<sup>110</sup>

Throughout Cuba, sugar mill towns employed most of the surrounding community, provided minimal services, and subsidized housing contingent on employment status. Missionary

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<sup>107</sup> Patrick Symmes, *The Boys From Dolores: Fidel Castro and his Generation From Revolution to Exile* (London, UK: Robinson, 2007), 146.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Paul Wirth, interview by Pamela Whitenack, December 9, 2015, Hershey Community Archive (HCA), Hershey, PA.

<sup>110</sup> Taken by author.

Edgar Nesman, who worked outside of Preston, remembers, “Those living in the mill towns often had access to housing, sanitary facilities, education, and health care as part of their employment. For those who worked on the plantations, however, life was not as easy. The sugar harvest usually started in December or January with the onset of cooler weather that raised the sugar content in the cane plants. The harvest (“zafra”) lasted six or sometimes seven months. There was little work available for the cane-cutters after that.”<sup>111</sup> Paul Wirth, whose Louisianan father was the doctor at the Hershey Mill, recalls, “The housing for the [Cuban and West Indian] workers was wooden houses very close together, and...they could never build more houses because then it would become a municipality and the government would get involved. So that’s why they kept it that small.”<sup>112</sup> By keeping the town under 200 homes, Hershey ensured that the company could mitigate interference from Cuban authorities.<sup>113</sup>

Sugar executives consolidated power by keeping workers dependent. In the early years of the Cuban republic, Frances Peace Sullivan explains, company policy strategically installed systems of care, whereby exploited labor became reliant on the “generosity” of their exploiters for basic survival. Sullivan writes “In the late 1910s and 1920s, sugar companies systematically underpaid employees, requiring workers to rely on private acts of charity (or seemingly magnanimous patronage from mill owners and managers) to help them through times of individual or collective economic distress.”<sup>114</sup> The relationship positioned Anglo-Americans as

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<sup>111</sup> Edgar Nesman, “Memoir,” provided by Edger Nesman, 11.

<sup>112</sup> Paul Wirth, interviewed by Pamela Whitenack, December 9, 2015, HCA.

<sup>113</sup> Federico Gil, interviewed by Pamela Whitenack, December 8, 2015, HCA; Conversation with Hershey Archivist Tammy Hamilton, January 12, 2017.

<sup>114</sup> Frances Peace Sullivan, “‘Forging Ahead’ in Banes, Cuba: Garveyism in a United Fruit Company Town,” *New West Indian Guide* 88 (2014): 231-261, 250; Paolo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1996); Aviva Chomsky, “Labor History as World History: Linking Regions over Time,” in *Workers Across*

the benefactors of Cuban and Caribbean labor, while creating a class of workers utterly dependent on their Anglo-American employers.

Having constructed mini-fiefdoms isolated from Cuban metropolitan centers, both Cuban and Anglo-American sugar mills sought to exert as much control as possible within their domain. Enrique Levy was the son of a Jewish peddler who grew up outside of the U.S.-owned Central Macareño. Levy remembers that at Central Macareño, the reliance on the Anglo-American executives was total: “All of our lives were dependent on these people.”<sup>115</sup> As Levy recalls, “The [Cuban] government was not involved at all. For example, the electric plant belonged to the sugar mill company. The water supply belonged to the sugar mill company. The streets, not that they maintained them, but whatever they had to do, it was the sugar mill company. All the homes were ownership of the sugar mill company, which was given to employees.” As was the case with sugar mills throughout Cuba, suspension of contract meant that a worker lost not only a job, but also a home. Central Macareño “was a company town. The store was the company’s, the houses were painted the same way, everything. That’s the way it was in Macareño.”<sup>116</sup> This dynamic typified foreign-owned sugar mills.<sup>117</sup>

Methodist missionary Betty Campbell Whitehurst lived in the small mill town of Báguanos. Her mission was subsidized by the foreign-owned sugar company, a subsidiary of the Royal Bank of Canada. “Almost all of the men worked for the sugar mill. They earned good wages during the sugar harvest, three to five months a year, when the mill was operating. The

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*the Americas: The Transnational Turn in Labor History*, ed. Leon Fink (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011): 23–32.

<sup>115</sup> Enrique Levy, interview by author, August 16, 2016, Telephone.

<sup>116</sup> Enrique Levy, interview by author, September 15, 2017, Edgewater, NJ.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

rest of the year they bought things on credit at the company store and by the time the mill started up again, they had already spent most of their future earnings. It reminded me of Tennessee Ernie Ford's song, 'Sixteen Tons,' which says 'I owe my soul to the company store.'<sup>118</sup> If the *zafra* was not long enough for them to earn enough to pay off their past bills, they went deeper and deeper into debt.<sup>119</sup> Cycles of dependence were built into the fabric of mill town life. When mills became insolvent, as occurred at *Central Almeida* in the 1930s, calamity struck. The mill was unable to pay its laborers, and as a result, "many workers...died of hunger."<sup>120</sup>

While collectively U.S. sugar mills leveraged their economic influence to maintain Cuban dependency on sugar and foreign capital, Hershey presents a significant outlier case-study, given its unique development and outsized influence in framing perceptions of Cuba's dominant industry. Hershey employees could go to the company store, but they didn't have to. Their proximity to Havana, just twenty-eight miles away, made the shops of the Cuban capital an option as well. Thus, the employees of the mill were less dependent on the company store, and, it follows that Hershey operated less like a mini-fiefdom than more rural sugar enterprises.<sup>121</sup> The Hershey sugar mill in Cuba pursued greater integration into Cuban society than other U.S. sugar corporations established prior to the Cuban Revolution.

During, and immediately after the first U.S. military occupation of Cuba (1899-1902),

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<sup>118</sup> Walter A. Whitehurst and Betty C. Whitehurst, *Our Life Story: Blessed by God Through Mission* (Statesboro, GA: In His Steps Publishing), provided by Betty Campbell Whitehurst.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>120</sup> Salvador Rivas, "Si el central 'Almeida' no hace zafra este año, no es culpa de ningún

empleado ni obrero," *Diario de Cuba*, February 10, 1933, quoted in Casey, "Haitians' Labor and Leisure on Cuban Sugar Plantations: The Limits of Company Control," 17.

<sup>121</sup> Armando Gil, interview by Pamela Whitenack, December 8, 2015, HCA; Alexander Stoddart "Housing in Hershey," HCA.

U.S. companies, including the United Fruit and Sugar Company, acquired cheap land devalued by thirty years of intermittent revolutions in rural eastern Cuba.<sup>122</sup> Far from any major city, Richard Smith who grew up in Preston remembered, “There was rarely a need for the company employees to venture much beyond the confines of the plantation.... There was very little interaction between the Havana American community and the Americans on the plantation other than an occasional visit by the Senior Vice President of the Company and his family and some friends. We rarely saw any one else from Havana.”<sup>123</sup>

Hershey was established more than a decade after UFSC in 1916, and in less isolated conditions, receiving concessions from the Cuban government to construct a railroad that connected Havana to Matanzas.<sup>124</sup> Havana’s constantly evolving cosmopolitanism influenced Hershey’s multi-national development during the first half of the twentieth century, and the mill would become Cuban-owned in 1958.<sup>125</sup> Anglo-American executives at Hershey often enjoyed close relationships with a number of Cubans, both at the mill and through Havana’s transnational networks.<sup>126</sup> Meanwhile, the remotely located mills of the United Fruit and Sugar Company maintained a layer of Anglo-American managers in top positions, residing in largely isolated *barrios americanos*. UFSC was nationalized by the revolutionary government in 1960.<sup>127</sup>

Built in a region with a long sugarcane-growing tradition, unlike some other sugar mills,

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<sup>122</sup> Zanetti, *Sugar and Railroads*, 211.

<sup>123</sup> Richard Smith to Louis A. Pérez, December 29, 1991, Wilson Library (WL), University of North Carolina, Louis A. Pérez Jr. Papers, Letters, 1991-1992, Folder 1.

<sup>124</sup> “The Story of Chocolate and Cocoa,” HCA, Box 11, Folder 17.

<sup>125</sup> John Paul Rathbone, *The Sugar King of Havana: Cuba’s Last Tycoon* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2010), 218.

<sup>126</sup> Antonio Valdés, interview by Pamela Whitenack, December 9, 2015, HCA.

<sup>127</sup> Robert Milk, interview by author, September 8, 2016, Telephone.

Hershey adopted many of the pre-existing Cuban labor practices, including the purchasing of sugarcane from local growers. The United Fruit and Sugar Company, by contrast, sought to control its entire operation, harvesting almost 90 percent of the sugarcane its mills processed. Further, Hershey seems to have paid its workers in cash, as opposed to company vouchers used to limit the mobility of workers and increase their dependence on respective employers.<sup>128</sup>

Although the Cuban government attempted to end the voucher system in 1909, many corporations, including the United Fruit and Sugar Company, continued to compensate workers with vouchers, despite legal restrictions against doing so.<sup>129</sup> The most serious excesses of the Anglo-American sugar industry went largely unknown to the Anglo-American colony familiar with Hershey, but not UFSC. To be clear, Hershey underpaid much of its labor, and valued mill workers more than those who labored in the fields. However, this too escaped the imagined reality for Anglo-American residents who knew little about the conditions of cane-cutters.

While most of Cuba's Anglo-American tourists and residents found the distant United Fruit and Sugar Company properties of Banes or Preston to be inaccessible, Havana's Anglo-American schools often took their students to Hershey on field trips. Their parents rode 70 minutes on the train for golf outings on the nine-hole company course, or for a family picnic at the famed Hershey Gardens.<sup>130</sup> A travel book from the 1950s explained, "The trip is enjoyed by tourists because they are greeted in English and made to feel thoroughly at home. A good chance is afforded to see how sugar is manufactured from the cane and afterward refined."<sup>131</sup> The

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<sup>128</sup> Zanetti, *Sugar and Railroads*, 242, 247; Winpenny, "Milton S. Hershey Ventures into Cuban Sugar," 499, HCA.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid; Casey, "Haitians' Labor and Leisure on Cuban Sugar Plantations: The Limits of Company Control," 16.

<sup>130</sup> Jim and Margaret Benson, interview by author, September 12, 2016, Fuquay-Varina, NC; Antonio Valdés interviewed by Pamela Whitenack, December 9, 2015, HCA.

<sup>131</sup> W. Adolphe Roberts, *Havana The Portrait of a City*, 271.

company brochure went further in detailing what awaited Anglo-Americans at the mill:

Everything is modern in ‘the sugar town’, just as in ‘the chocolate and cocoa town’, and the convenience of employees is just as carefully considered. The avenues are wide and macadamized, with cement pavements and rows of tropical trees. All homes are attractive, each with its lawn and garden. There is a beautiful two-story hotel for the executives and tourists. The town is supplied with the purest of water from the famous spring ‘Ojo de Agua del Horne de Cal’, which is located on the property. There is a park, with a baseball diamond, race track and other amusement features.<sup>132</sup>

For foreigners in Cuba between 1916 and 1958, the idyllic town of Hershey emerged as the relatively benevolent face of U.S. sugar corporations on the island.

For many Anglo-Americans, excursions to Hershey fashioned their view of life and labor at the sugar mill, masking the harsh reality of the sugar economy for the rural poor. By 1945, 52 percent of agricultural workers were employed fewer than four months per year, a consequence of the seasonal nature of sugar production. Most rural households were without running water. Three-quarters of children living in rural regions did not attend school and 95 percent of them suffered from parasites.<sup>133</sup> Geographic isolation facilitated Anglo-American ignorance. Despite these realities, in a 1950 documentary called *Cuba: The Land and the People, 1950, Coronet*, the lives of *campesinos* are described as “easy and pleasant.”<sup>134</sup> The film ignored the suffering, especially during the *tiempo muerto* between harvests. Most in the Anglo-American colony never saw the unskilled Cuban or Caribbean worker who earned as little as a dollar a day cutting cane.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> “The Story of Chocolate and Cocoa,” HCA, B11, F17, 87006, 25.

<sup>133</sup> Spalding, *Organized Labor in Latin America*, 233.

<sup>134</sup> David A. Smart, *Cuba: The Land and the People 1950 Coronet*, ed. A. Curtis Wilgus, 5:45-5:57, Accessed, May 2, 2017, <https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=Cuba+1950s&&view=detail&mid=F74C5C514B363E766AC9F74C5C514B363E766AC9&rvsmid=D215AF7FC1CAD07081E6D215AF7FC1CAD07081E6&fsscr=0&FORM=VDFSRV>.

<sup>135</sup> Winpenny, “Milton S. Hershey Ventures into Cuban Sugar,” HCA.

Conditions for labor further deteriorated as time spent working decreased. According to Claes Brundenius, due to the automation of the sugar industry, the length of the *zafra* shrank considerably between Cuban independence and the revolution. Brundenius estimates that technological improvements reduced the average harvest from 300 days at the beginning of the century, to 210 days in the 1920s, to 104 days in the 1930s, to just 95 days after 1945.<sup>136</sup> The rest of the year most sugar workers were left without a steady income.

During times of political upheaval, these contentious visions of U.S.-owned mills surfaced in the popular Cuban discourse, challenging Anglo-American, as well as Cuban myths about the Cuban sugar industry drawn from short visits to the Hershey mill. Armando Gil, the child of a Hershey mill worker, lamented, “the saddest thing, was as good as Hershey had been and as much as the communists tried to picture the concept of the ugly American, in my town, even if they tried, they couldn’t do it. They couldn’t do it because the people that have known and have worked, their experience was the total opposite.”<sup>137</sup> While Hershey proved exceptional, in many ways, by the late 1950s and early 1960s, the suffering of *campesinos* in eastern Cuba moved out of the shadows and became evidence of the need for a radical socio-economic restructuring of Cuban society.

### ***Conclusions***

The United States ensured a prioritization of its interests between 1899 and 1958 through the capillaries of informal empire, including military incursions, economic influence, political intervention and the cultivation of select Cuban leaders. Relationships with Cuban power brokers

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<sup>136</sup> Claes Brundenius, *Revolutionary Cuba: The Challenge of Economic Growth with Equity* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1984), 13.

<sup>137</sup> Armando Gil, interview by Pamela Whitenack, December 8, 2015, HCA.

insured that special attention be paid to the shared interests of Anglo-Americans and their Cuban allies. This chapter traced the construction of mutually dependent Anglo-American influences in the economic and diplomatic spheres that worked to transform Cuban society and Caribbean labor in ways that benefitted foreign interests and accommodated privileged outsiders. The long reach of empire proved paramount for Anglo-Americans seeking a work force best suited to accommodate their needs. While individual Cubans profited from the extensive influence of privileged outsiders, many Cubans and Caribbean workers were denied financial security and educational opportunities. This system destabilized Cuban structures and limited sovereignty for the island, before serving as evidence to justify the implementation of radical socio-economic and political changes after 1959.

## CHAPTER TWO: FULGENCIO BATISTA: A CUBAN PARTNER “GOOD FOR THE COMPANY”

*“We can serve Yanqui imperialism or serve the people, the interests of the two are not compatible.” Antonio Guiteras, 1933<sup>138</sup>*

### ***Introduction***

In September 1933, Ramón Grau San Martín, the popular physiology professor at the University of Havana, was chosen as acting president of Cuba by the student directory of the rebelling forces after the ousting of Cuban President Gerardo Machado.<sup>139</sup> Unacceptable to U.S. policy makers, due to his nationalist agenda, Grau’s government would go unrecognized by the United States. By the end of September 1933, U.S. Ambassador Sumner Welles was already conspiring with another leader in the anti-Machado revolution, a young sergeant named Fulgencio Batista.<sup>140</sup> More than anyone else, Batista would define Cuban politics for the next quarter century, largely through a multipronged alliance with U.S. interests. Understanding his continued leadership depended largely on the support of U.S. officials, over time Batista torqued his political, economic and cultural priorities toward the interests of Anglo-American residents and institutions and away from the needs and desires of the Cuban people.

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<sup>138</sup> Argote-Freyre, *Fulgencio Batista*, 90.

<sup>139</sup> Much like Batista, Gerardo Machado is often described as a populist leader who invested heavily in his own people’s well-being before becoming a tyrant controlled by U.S. interests who refused to yield power. *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

*Batista and Roosevelt (1933-1944)*

A TWO-WAY PRESIDENTIAL HANDSHAKE



President Roosevelt greeting President Fulgencio Batista of Cuba on his arrival in Washington yesterday. In the center is Captain John McCrea, Mr. Roosevelt's naval aide. Associated Press Wirephoto

Figure 6. President Franklin D. Roosevelt and President Fulgencio Batista Shake Hands in Washington, 1942<sup>141</sup>

Fearing radical change, Washington acted quickly in 1933 to prevent President Grau from consolidating power. The Roosevelt administration ordered warships to Cuba and Key West, alerted U.S. bombers and marines, all the while refusing to recognize the new Cuban government. Yet Grau continued to push forward with a number of nationalist reforms to aid impoverished Cubans. Between September 10, 1933, and January 15, 1934, the Grau government implemented an eight-hour workday and a minimum wage. Grau deported Haitians and West Indians in great numbers as they competed for work at Cuban and foreign corporations with the rural and urban Cuban poor. Grau and his political allies invested in a breakfast program

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<sup>141</sup> "Batista is Feted on Capital Visit," *New York Times*, December 9, 1942, 14.

for children in the nation's schools. He held companies accountable by declaring a ban on voucher pay systems throughout the island.<sup>142</sup> Further, he cut electric rates and temporarily took control of the U.S.-owned Cuban Electric Company.<sup>143</sup> These challenges to foreign capital and the structures of informal empire would not be tolerated by the Roosevelt administration.

Ambassador Welles described the Grau government as a “lunatic asylum,” having “communistic” ideas.<sup>144</sup> In late 1933 and early 1934, Welles and Batista partnered to map out Cuba's future. Batista's biographer Frank Argote-Freyre explains, “Batista, to maintain his own power, broke with the students and installed a government more to the liking of the United States and its internal political allies.”<sup>145</sup> The Cuban strongman worked to prevent collateral damage in the removal of Grau, and rejected ideas for a U.S. invasion proposed by Welles. Batista recognized the potential anger that could be unleashed against the United States if they invaded Cuba.<sup>146</sup> U.S. policy makers rewarded the coup orchestrated by Batista in January 1934 by quickly affirming Batista's selection for Cuban president, Carlos Mendieta y Montefur. With a friendly government installed by their ally Batista, on May 29, 1934, the Treaty on Relations

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<sup>142</sup> Argote-Freyre, *Fulgencio Batista*, 92.

<sup>143</sup> The Cuban Electric Company held close ties to the Machado government, with its parent company American & Foreign Power Co., investing \$500,000 in Machado's 1924 campaign for president. High rates and an alliance with the increasingly unpopular Machado government led to a national boycott of the company in 1931 and a bombing of Cuban Electric's headquarters in Cienfuegos in March, 1933. William J. Hausman and John L. Neufeld, “The Cuban Electric Company, 1922-1960: from American Subsidiary to State Owned Enterprise,” European Business History Association Annual Meeting, Vienna, Austria, August 24-26, 2017, Accessed, July 31, 2018, [http://ebha.org/public/C7:paper\\_file:9](http://ebha.org/public/C7:paper_file:9).

<sup>144</sup> Argote-Freyre, *Fulgencio Batista*, 93.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

between Cuba and the United States abrogated the Platt Amendment, one of the central demands of the deposed Grau government.<sup>147</sup>

Growing up poor in Banes, Oriente, a United Fruit and Sugar Company mill town, Batista saw an allegiance with Anglo-Americans as a way to improve his personal fortunes and perhaps also the fortunes of the Cuban people. Batista attended the Banes Friends School run by Quaker missionaries and he graduated fourth-grade at the age of twelve in 1913.<sup>148</sup> As a youth, he cut cane for the UFSC and understood in body and mind, the company's power, and the influence of the United States in Cuba more generally.<sup>149</sup> Argote-Freyre writes that in 1933 "Batista touted himself as the man who established order. As he viewed it, an accommodation with the United States was part of the political equation."<sup>150</sup> Rather than rebel against the influence of the United States, Batista embraced U.S. support as fundamental to Cuban stability. In 1933 Batista skyrocketed from an unknown Cuban sergeant to the most significant figure in Cuban politics for a quarter of a century, in large part due to his early recognition of, and subservience to, U.S. authority on the island.

While allied with Anglo-American executives and diplomats in Cuba, Batista was particularly vexed by Cuban elites, whom he viewed as an obstacle to his leadership due to the scorn they held for his ethnicity--Batista was believed to be of Spanish, African, Taíno and/or Chinese descent--and his class background. His first major confrontation with the Cuban elite

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<sup>147</sup> Franklin, *Cuba and the United States*, 13.

<sup>148</sup> Argote-Freyre, *Fulgencio Batista*, 10.

<sup>149</sup> With Cubans suffering during the decline of sugar prices in the 1920s, President Machado violently put down unions, including at Banes on UFSC property in 1925. Within a few years Cubans across the country came to view Machado as a reviled dictator. Zanetti, "La United Fruit Company en Cuba," 250-1.

<sup>150</sup> Argote-Freyre, *Fulgencio Batista*, 89.

came in 1933. As a sergeant in the Cuban Military, Batista organized enlisted men to overthrow their officers after the military brass failed to meet a number of their demands. Cuban officers, for decades, had treated the enlisted men harshly and without respect, as little more than servants. The officers, under attack, sought intervention from the United States. The Roosevelt administration refused. With the collapse of the Machado government and conflict in the air, Washington understood that power now lay with Batista. Ambassador Welles wrote in October 1933, “[T]here does not exist at the present time in Cuba any authority whatever except [Batista] and that in the event of further disturbances which may endanger the lives and properties of Americans or foreigners in the Republic, it seems to be essential that this relationship be maintained.”<sup>151</sup>

His successful overthrow of the military order did not garner Batista acceptance with high-society Cubans. An incident at the Sans Souci nightclub on New Year’s Eve, 1933, proved particularly stinging for the Cuban strongman eager to be embraced by the nation’s elite. Upon the arrival of Batista and his entourage, the upper-class patrons of the club, almost in unison, got up from their seats and walked out of the establishment.<sup>152</sup> Though he continued to desire admittance into the circles of Cuba’s aristocracy, Batista found it prudent to cultivate ties with Anglo-Americans. He purchased a home in Daytona Beach, sent his children to Anglo-American schools, joined social clubs frequented by Anglo-Americans and wielded authority to strengthen Anglo-American business partnerships with the Cuban government.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 102.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 124.

<sup>153</sup> Jim and Margaret Benson, interview by author, September 12, 2016, Fuquay-Varina, NC; Chris Baker, interview by author, August 4, 2016, Maryland.

Batista's efforts at forging alliances with Anglo-Americans proved fruitful. Welles' successor, Special Representative Jefferson Caffrey, took his predecessor's advice and cultivated a close personal friendship with Batista. They cemented ties to preserve the influence of the Roosevelt administration and secure the authority of Batista in Cuba.<sup>154</sup> In 1936, in the midst of a confrontation between Batista and the elected President Miguel Mariano Gómez over funding priorities, the United States remained silent as Batista orchestrated Gómez' removal.<sup>155</sup> Batista stabilized U.S. interests in Cuba, and Washington reciprocated with continued support for Batista's leadership.

By the mid-1930s, with Batista in charge, Anglo-American power brokers could influence Cuban affairs without the need for a display of military might. When workers took over the Preston mill in the 1930s, United Fruit executive Walter Schuyler and UFSC lawyer Mario Lazo met with then Army Chief-of-Staff, Fulgencio Batista. Lazo recalls, "Brief and to the point..." Batista asked, "How many soldiers did Schuyler believe were needed?" The 50-60 requested would be ordered through a "trusted sergeant [who] proceed[ed] with an army detail from Santiago to Preston that same day." Lazo remembers: "Within seventy-hours, order was restored in both Preston and Banes without bloodshed or violence. During the following weeks, this experience was repeated over and over throughout the country. As a consequence, the conservative elements of Cuban society rallied behind Batista."<sup>156</sup>

By the time the Platt Amendment was abrogated in 1934, Anglo-American capital controlled more than half of Cuban sugar production, along with Cuban rail, electrical and

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<sup>154</sup> Argote-Freyre, *Fulgencio Batista*, 123.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, 228.

<sup>156</sup> Lazo, *Dagger in the Heart*, 67.

telephone lines. Batista understood well the importance of remaining in step with U.S. geopolitical and economic priorities. Mario Lazo and his Anglo-American clients found Batista an eager ally on “war projects for the U.S. government, including the fifteen-million-dollar San Antonio de los Baños Air Base twenty-five miles south of Havana, with its mile-long concrete runways...” Batista approved “a multi-million-dollar nickel plant, financed and owned by the United States government” at Moa Bay and granted millions of dollars in tax exemptions for these U.S. projects. Lazo obviously appreciated the partnership: “In every instance my firm received from the President immediate and cordial cooperation.”<sup>157</sup>

Batista’s deal-making with Anglo-American capital led him into direct conflict with those progressive Cuban leaders who sought autonomy from the United States. Antonio Guiteras, a rival leader who emerged following the revolution of 1933, became disgruntled with Batista’s cozy relationship with U.S. officials. Guiteras explained, “We can serve Yanqui imperialism or serve the people, the interests of the two are not compatible.”<sup>158</sup> Guiteras advocated nationalizing all corporations that did not provide a living wage to their workers. Pushing for confrontation with U.S. capital, Guiteras raised the ire of State Department officials who nicknamed him “Cuba’s Public Enemy No. 1” for his challenges to Anglo-American interests and his budding rivalry with Batista. Guiteras, later celebrated as a hero by the Cuban Revolution, would be eliminated by Batista’s forces in May 1935, at the age of twenty-nine.<sup>159</sup>

Batista is remembered as a brutal dictator who prioritized U.S. capital for his time in power between 1952 and 1958. And yet in the 1930s and 1940s, Sergeant--then Colonel,

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<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 77-78.

<sup>158</sup> Argote-Freyre, *Fulgencio Batista*, 90.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 178, 182.

General, and later President--Batista sought to initiate progressive social change to improve the lives of poor and rural Cubans. Impoverished by the sugar economy as a child, Batista was moved to initiate a number of social reforms to address the suffering of the *campesinos*. In 1936 he mobilized the army to bring education to rural communities by developing a plan to hire “sergeant-teachers” who established *escuelas rurales cívico-militares*. He launched health initiatives leading to the creation of the Technical Public Health Service and the National Tuberculosis Council, and directed the Civic Military Institute to construct orphanages throughout the island to serve the orphaned children of state workers. Batista pursued rights for *colonos* who leased or owned land to grow sugar cane that they sold to large mill operations.<sup>160</sup> Many Anglo-Americans recognized in Batista’s policies a spirit of the New Deal programs advocated by the Roosevelt Administration in the United States. Through his expansion of a social safety net, Batista gained a solid reputation throughout the diverse subsets of the Anglo-American colony. In 1938, Methodist missionary Sallie Lou MacKinnon admitted, “Col. Fulgenicio Batista...appears to be a beneficent dictator sincerely interested in the welfare of the common people.”<sup>161</sup>

Though he rose in large part through the support of U.S. interests, in his 1939 campaign for the presidency Batista could be heard criticizing U.S. excesses. A rising populist to the Cuban electorate, he advocated “absorbing monopolies” and argued for the dignity of small nations. Nevertheless, Anglo-Americans remained unconcerned, confident that a Batista presidency would protect their interests. Batista continued to solicit and receive contributions from leading

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<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 200-205, 250.

<sup>161</sup> Sallie Lou Mackinnon, “The Outlook for Cuba is Different,” *World Outlook*, XXVIII, no. 11 (November 1938): 14-17, 14.

Anglo-American colony members and Anglo-American corporations. Elected in 1940 to serve as the first president under the 1940 Constitution, Batista's term ended with a peaceful transition of power to President Ramón Grau after Batista's preferred candidate Carlos Saladrigas Zayas lost the election of 1944. A champion of progressive ideas and greater equity for Cubans, between 1933 and 1944, Batista attempted to advance the welfare of his people even as he refused to question the role of the United States in Cuban affairs. Following his term in office, Batista moved to his home in Daytona Beach, Florida.<sup>162</sup>

***Batista Returns to Power (1952-1959)***



Figure 7. *Time Magazine* Covers Batista's Coup with the Headline, "He Got Past Democracy's Sentries," April 1952<sup>163</sup>

<sup>162</sup> Argote-Freyre, *Fulgencio Batista*, 240, 260, 274.

<sup>163</sup> "Batista," *Time Magazine*, LIX, no. 16 (April 21, 1952), CHC, Jay Mallin Papers, Box 1.

From the late 1920s until the reemergence of Batista in the 1950s, the size of the Anglo-American population decreased. While 7,195 U.S. residents remained in 1931, this represented a substantial decrease from the 9,555 U.S. nationals who lived in Cuba in 1917.<sup>164</sup> The number of U.S. residents would drop further still through the 1930s and into the early 1940s. For a number of reasons, Cuba grew less attractive to foreign investment and for Anglo-Americans seeking to establish new lives abroad.<sup>165</sup> The “Ley del 50%” adopted by Grau, and the Constitution of 1940 codified protections for Cuban workers, making labor more expensive for Anglo-American corporations, while requiring them to hire a greater number of Cubans and fewer foreigners.<sup>166</sup> The Global Depression of the 1930s further encouraged Anglo-Americans to return to their home societies. The Cuban share of sugar production rose from 22.4 percent in 1939 to 58.7 percent in 1955. Cubans would control 60.2 percent of bank deposits in 1950, a sharp rise from 16.8 percent in 1939.<sup>167</sup> The withdrawal of U.S. capital combined with the entry of the United States into World War II left just 3,800 U.S. residents in Cuba in 1943, as the number of British residents fell to 1,887, from 3,095 twelve years earlier in 1931.<sup>168</sup> However, in coordination with Fulgencio Batista, the reach of foreign capital was significantly reinvigorated after 1952.

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<sup>164</sup> These numbers exclude Puerto Ricans. Junta Nacional del Censo, “República de Cuba, Informe general del Censo de 1943” (La Habana, Cuba: P. Fernández y CIA., S. en C., 1943), 878-879.

<sup>165</sup> Junta Nacional del Censo, *República de Cuba, Informe general del censo de 1943* (La Habana, Cuba: P. Fernández y CIA., S. en C., 1943), 878-879.

<sup>166</sup> Enrique Gay Calbó and Herminio Rodríguez von Sobotker, “A Statement of Cuban Law in Matters Affecting Business in it Various Aspects and Activities,” (Washington, D.C.: Inter-American Development Commission, 1946), CHC.

<sup>167</sup> United States Bureau of Foreign Commerce, “Investment in Cuba,” 9-10, CHC.

<sup>168</sup> No data was provided for Canadian citizens. Junta Nacional del Censo, “República de Cuba, Informe general del Censo de 1943” (La Habana, Cuba: P. Fernández y CIA., S. en C., 1943), 878-879.

Anticipating defeat in the 1952 presidential campaign, on March 10 Fulgencio Batista, with the support of the Cuban military, staged a coup to overthrow the democracy he helped create twelve years earlier. Without the legitimacy garnered by the democratic process, the new Batista government was deeply dependent on U.S. support for its survival. While some Anglo-American residents expressed distress over Batista's overthrow of Cuban democracy in 1952, others applauded the move. As a community, they were comforted by Cuba's new leadership. The coup empowered Fulgencio Batista, whom they were confident would lead an overtly pro-U.S. administration.

On United Fruit and Sugar Company property, Anglo-American employees held a celebration of the March 1952 coup that deposed President Carlos Prío Socarrás because the overthrow of Cuban democracy by Batista “was good for the company.” A North American housewife of a UFSC executive invited Virginia M. Schofield's family to join in the festivities at the social club in Guaro because Walton Schofield, of British descent, served as a middle manager for United Fruit. Schofield recalls, upon answering the phone to receive the invitation, “My [Cuban] mother was insulted. I remember [her] asking, ‘and how would you feel if something like this happened in your country?’ .... [The North American housewife] answered: ‘But, my dear, this could never happen in the U.S.’”<sup>169</sup> The woman was of course accurate in her assessment of what would be “good for the company,” though very bad for labor and democracy in Cuba. Real wages for workers decreased by 16 percent in 1955 alone, while the cost of living remained constant.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> Virginia M. Schofield to Louis A. Pérez, October 1, 1991, WL, Louis A. Pérez Jr., Papers, Letters 1991-1992, Folder 1.

<sup>170</sup> Zanetti, “La United Fruit Company en Cuba,” 256.

Between 1952-1958 Batista dangled lucrative opportunities in mining, energy, agriculture, communications and tourism before foreign capital, including the U.S. mafia.<sup>171</sup> As North American and British corporations and individuals found favorable terms of investment, the number of Anglo-Americans on the island grew. The 1953 census signaled a significant influx of Anglo-Americans with 6,503 residents from the United States, up from just 3,800 U.S. residents a decade earlier.<sup>172</sup> By 1957, 12,168 U.S. citizens had established residency in Cuba.<sup>173</sup> The alliance between foreign capital and President Batista encouraged North American and British immigration, empowered Anglo-American corporations, while agitating a widening collection of Cubans.<sup>174</sup>

Anglo-Americans' positive reactions to Batista's political reemergence catalyzed significant anti-U.S. sentiment throughout Cuba. By extending recognition to the Batista government just seventeen days after the coup, Washington exposed a blatant disregard for Cuba's political institutions and a hypocritical commitment to "democracy" abroad. The military support provided to the Cuban government until 1958 by the Eisenhower Administration aided

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<sup>171</sup> Farber, *The Origins of the Cuban Revolution Reconsidered*, 31.

<sup>172</sup> Two-hundred-seventy-two Canadians and nearly 15,000 members of the British Commonwealth also resided in Cuba in 1953. In this Cuban census, British citizens from England and British subjects from the Caribbean were counted in the same category. Almost certainly, the majority of the population from the British Commonwealth in Cuba consisted of black British Caribbean subjects who were not considered a part of the Anglo-American colony. Oficina Nacional de los Censos Demográfico y Electoral, *Censos de población, viviendas y electoral* (La Habana, Cuba: Tribunal Superior Electoral, 1953), 81.

<sup>173</sup> The information comes from a report released by the Interior Ministry of Cuba. Additionally, 29,848 citizens of British Commonwealth resided on the island. "12,168 Americans Reported Living Here," *Times of Havana*, September 16, 1957, 1.

<sup>174</sup> As had been true throughout much of the republican era, in the 1950s, Cuban businesses could not easily compete with the seemingly unlimited flows of foreign capital. J. Chía explores the 1950s business history of Cuban subsidiaries of the U.S. corporations Colgate Palmolive and Proctor & Gamble that entered into a price war with one another; the financial loser of the corporate conflict was local Cuban soap producer Gravi; J. Chía, "El monopolio en la industria del jabón y del perfume," Editorial de Ciencias Sociales eds., *Monopolios norteamericanos en Cuba: contribución al estudio de la penetración imperialista* (La Habana, Cuba: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1973), 40.

Batista in the Sierra Maestra and further stoked the ire of many Cuban observers.<sup>175</sup> Yet it was not just the United States government taking sides in a civil war that deteriorated U.S. claims as a benevolent neighbor. Anglo-American businessmen, corporations and gangsters - as embodiments of U.S. interests in Cuba - all profited from the overthrow of Cuban democracy.

Paying deference to U.S. corporations, Batista encouraged tourism and protected Anglo-American investments. Historian Samuel Farber concludes that with no natural attachment to the nation's elite, due to his ethnicity and his humble origins, Batista promoted the investment of foreign capital in what Farber calls "giveaway programs" to mostly U.S. corporations.<sup>176</sup> Batista received a "pure-gold telephone" from the Cuban Telephone Company (CTC) for signing a pact to raise rates on Cuban consumers. This "gift" became a symbol of Batista's corrupt relations with foreign capital. The CTC would be the first U.S. corporation intervened on, and later nationalized by, the revolutionary government.<sup>177</sup> In 1957 U.S. investment in the Cuban economy surpassed \$800 million, revealing what Paul M. Heilman, President of the American Chamber of Commerce in Cuba, explained as "the confidence of our investors in this country and their belief in her future."<sup>178</sup>

Batista worked hard to assure Anglo-Americans that their investments on the island were safe and would prosper under his rule, including their relations with labor. After Cuban labor leader Eusebio Mujal was forced to align workers' interests with management's priorities, the *Confederación de Trabajadores de Cuba* functioned as an apparatus of the government. Armed

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<sup>175</sup> Pérez, *On Becoming Cuban*, 448.

<sup>176</sup> Farber, *The Origins of the Cuban Revolution Reconsidered*, 29.

<sup>177</sup> López-Fresquet, *My Fourteen Months with Castro*, 26.

<sup>178</sup> "U.S. Investment Tops 800 Million," *Times of Havana*, April 17, 1958, 4.

patrols were organized to prevent worker uprisings during the mid-late 1950s, especially in sugar zones during the *zafra*.<sup>179</sup> At the time, sugar represented 82 percent of Cuban exports, close to two-thirds of the national income, and 37 percent of production was controlled by the United States. In the late-1950s Batista prioritized the protection of the sugar industry.<sup>180</sup> In 1956 the U.S. Department of Commerce conducted a survey of Anglo-American residents and their Cuban associates about the Cuban labor situation. From their point of view, the Department found that labor conditions had “improved materially during the period 1953-55.” The Commerce report continued, “A more balanced emphasis in Government policy brought the interests of labor, capital, and the public into better focus while declining economic activities acted as a warning to both Government and labor that the attitudes of the period prior to 1953 could not go on indefinitely.” The document explains: “Labor leaders have begun to recognize the long-term implications of blanket opposition to improved production methods and, by 1955, were even willing privately to entertain the possibility of modifications in the existing dismissal system. Top labor leaders have also taken a stand in favor of increased investment in industry both by domestic and foreign capital and their demands in matters of wage and fringe benefits since 1952 have generally not been immoderate.”<sup>181</sup> The coup represented a clear win for Anglo-American corporations. Cuban labor bent to the demands of foreign capital and the Batista government.

Between 1952 and 1958, following his unconstitutional seizure of power, Batista’s authority rested on support from his military and abroad. While U.S. executives and diplomats generally considered their situation much improved after the 1952 coup, over the next several

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<sup>179</sup> Robert J. Alexander, *A History of Organized Labor in Cuba* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2002), 143.

<sup>180</sup> Freeman Lincoln, “What Has Happened to Cuban Business?” *Fortune Magazine*, (September 1959): 110-114, 269-270, 272, 274, 111.

<sup>181</sup> United States Bureau of Foreign Commerce “Investment in Cuba,” 21, CHC.

years, Batista's credibility waned across diverse segments of the Cuban population.

Disenchanted citizens from varied backgrounds and geographic locations in Cuban society would begin to stitch together strategic alliances with Anglo-American colony members, fortifying their opposition to Batista by the late 1950s.

### ***Batista and Cuba's Moral Decline***

Perhaps no alliance infuriated Cubans by the late 1950s more than Fulgencio Batista's close association with the U.S. mafia. While the Volstead Act of 1919 forced U.S. liquor distributors underground or out-of-business, in Havana the tourism industry boomed. During prohibition, Anglo-American styled restaurants and hotels opened throughout Havana, as did brothels and casinos for Anglo-American clientele.<sup>182</sup> Enrique Cirules dates the beginnings of the relationship between Meyer Lansky and Fulgencio Batista to 1933. After organizing a meeting of leading mobsters, Lansky flew to Havana transporting suitcases filled with cash, which Cirules claims the mob boss delivered to Cuba's rising leader Batista in exchange for the casino interests at the Hotel Nacional. Throughout the 1930s and 1940s Lansky continued to funnel millions to Batista and other Cuban powerbrokers, increasing his stake in the Cuban "vice" industries.<sup>183</sup> Lansky and his business partner Charles "Lucky" Luciano cultivated relationships with other leading Cuban officials to secure their influence and access to profits. Senator Paco Prío Socarrás, brother to President Prío, became close friends with Lansky and Luciano.<sup>184</sup> Luciano was also good friends with Cuban Senator Eduardo Suárez Rivas. Luciano would be spotted on

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<sup>182</sup> Gianelloni, *We Remember Cuba*, 89.

<sup>183</sup> Cirules, *The Mafia in Havana*, 23.

<sup>184</sup> Cirules, *The Mafia in Havana*, 4.

trips with the Suárez Rivas family in the Cuban countryside.<sup>185</sup> While the presence of the U.S. mafia in Cuba dates back to Al Capone and the first decades of the twentieth century, the relationship strengthened in the 1950s, with the alliance between Lansky and Batista.

The tangled dynamics of U.S. mafia, labor relations and the rise of “sin” industries were particularly visible in the region surrounding Guantánamo Bay Naval Base. At the base U.S. officials recommended relatively low salaries for non-U.S. workers. A welcome pamphlet for the wives of recently arriving naval officers warned these women away from generosity with maids' salaries. Though the recommended pay “may seem ridiculously low,” the pamphlet suggested a limit of \$15-35 a month “for experienced help.” The document went on, “[while] normal human relations require us to be gracious to our employees, it is well to remember that if you allow too much freedom to your maid, you do her a disservice as well as to the next Navy wife who might hire her.”<sup>186</sup>

With underpaid Caribbean and Cuban local base workers, the economies of Caimanera and Guantánamo City suffered.<sup>187</sup> Over time, these communities grew increasingly dependent on dollars spent by U.S. troops on “liberty parties” in bars and brothels. Naval personnel would return from these excursions to segregated idyllic developments flush with U.S. social comforts, servants and detached from local culture.<sup>188</sup> With the logic of informal empire, and in a discourse

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<sup>185</sup> English, *Havana Nocturne*, 7-9.

<sup>186</sup> Whitney, *Subjects or Citizens*, 234.

<sup>187</sup> The private contracting firm Frederick Snare Corporation, used by the United States government and U.S. businesses in Cuba, applied the labor laws of the U.S. and Cuban governments, according to Jonathan M. Hansen, in ways that were “ambiguous at best.” While not allowing unions, U.S. military officials did allow an “employee group,” though they prohibited them from striking. While these policies and practices successfully depressed labor costs, they fueled anti-U.S. sentiment in the region. Hansen, *Guantánamo*, 199-202.

<sup>188</sup> Vega Suñol, *Norteamericanos en Cuba*, 61; Pérez, *On Becoming Cuban*, 223.

of underdevelopment, Anglo-Americans advocated that foreign missionaries, philanthropists and diplomatic officials be sent to Caimanera and Guantánamo to address prostitution, as well as the spread of venereal disease among U.S. sailors. At the same time, powerful U.S. and Cuban financial interests pressured Cuban authorities to ensure the continued smooth operations of the brothels surrounding the naval base.<sup>189</sup> In Havana these industries were often financed by U.S. mafia figures, and developed for the pleasure of patrons from North America and Europe with the support of Cuban officials. Cubans responded to the demands of Anglo-American tourists, sailors and civilian residents by participating as service workers in bars, brothels and nightclubs. Longtime Anglo-American resident John Parker remembered that drunken tourists, affectionately called *americanos borrachos*, became “a euphemism for North Americans.”<sup>190</sup>

Eager to collect the tourist dollars that mobsters generated, Cuban authorities encouraged the financial investments and activities of the U.S. mafia. In 1946, Lansky gathered the leading mob bosses for a private retreat at the Hotel Nacional to decide how they would expand throughout Cuba. The Cuban government intervened to ensure that the hotel workers, who were on strike, would not interrupt service for these distinguished guests. Prostitutes and performers from the leading hotels and brothels were brought in, as the U.S. mafia re-designed Havana to make it home to the largest gambling operation in the world.<sup>191</sup>

In 1952, Batista named Lansky as an advisor of gaming operations on the island after casino scandals tainted the perceived fairness of gambling in Cuba. Lansky developed a gaming school to prepare Cubans to work in casinos, and Batista ensured that dealers would be classified

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<sup>189</sup> Hansen, *Guantánamo*, 184-189, 199, 264.

<sup>190</sup> Gianelloni, *We Remember Cuba*, 112.

<sup>191</sup> English, *Havana Nocturne*, 32-34.

as ‘technicians,’ and thereby exempt from income taxes.<sup>192</sup> With *Ley Hotelera* 2074, T.J. English explains, Batista “provided tax exemptions to any hotel providing tourist accommodation, and furthermore guaranteed government financing...for anyone willing to commit one million dollars or more toward hotel construction or two hundred thousand for the building of a nightclub.”<sup>193</sup> In this way the Batista government helped fund Lansky’s prized project, the Havana Riviera on the Malecón.<sup>194</sup> By subsidizing the mafia’s presence in Cuba, Batista enriched himself and mafia figures while providing conditions for an alliance of convenience between the mob and the CIA after 1959. The presence and power of the U.S. mafia in Cuba dramatically altered Cuban, as well as U.S. history in the late 1950s and early 1960s.<sup>195</sup>

### ***Conclusions***

While U.S. officials cultivated Cuban allies for control and profit beginning in the 1890s, no ally proved more fruitful and profitable than Fulgencio Batista. Batista spent his early life burdened by stratified contact with Anglo-Americans on the United Fruit and Sugar Company property in Banes. From a highly marginalized class and of mixed-race origin, denigrated by Anglo-Americans and the Cuban elite, Batista embraced the opportunity to become a partner to Washington and U.S. capital. During 1950s, bolstered by the loyalty of his U.S.-armed military and the support of Anglo-American executives and diplomats, Batista became isolated from a

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<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, 94-95, 171-172.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*, 132-33.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, 16, 32-34.

<sup>195</sup> Christine Skwiot and T.J. English illuminate how Batista isolated Cubans, as he forged links with elements of the U.S. netherworld, in expanding industries of gambling and prostitution in Cuba. Fabian Escalante exposes how the United States government employed the U.S. mafia after 1959 to attempt to assassinate Fidel Castro. Cristine Skwiot, *The Purposes of Paradise*; English, *Havana Nocturne*; Fabian Escalante, *The Cuba Project: CIA Covert Operations 1959-1962* (Melbourne, Australia: Ocean Press, 2004).

wide variety of Cubans. The rural poor continued to struggle within the sugar economy. Many Cubans felt Cuba was drifting toward immorality for the profits of U.S. mafia figures and the pleasure of foreign tourists, residents and sailors. The country seemed to be moving further from the ambitions for true sovereignty held by many Cuban professionals, outraged that their island abandoned Western-democratic structures in 1952. Batista was unable to imagine a Cuba sovereign from the United States, and so a growing list of opponents began to plan for a Cuba without Batista.

## **CHAPTER THREE: THE SEDUCTION AND BETRAYAL OF ANGLO-AMERICAN FARMING COMMUNITIES IN CUBA**

### *Introduction*

In the first decades of the twentieth century, thousands of Anglo-American farmers were lured to Cuba with the promise of profit and paradise. These farmers established close to eighty farming communities in Cuba, searching for utopian versions of home on the island. They benefited from their national identities as they enjoyed access to foreign markets, business partners and Anglo-American transportation networks often inaccessible to Cuban farmers. Enticed by advertisements that promised a better life, cheap land and quick returns, these Anglo-American settlers would eventually discover that they were expendable to U.S. power brokers in Cuba and abroad. The socio-economic alliances established between influential Cuban professionals and Anglo-American capital became prioritized over the interests of these farming communities. While most of these independent farmers left the island by the 1930s, those who remained integrated more deeply into Cuban society.

## *Settler Colonies in Informal Empire*



*Figure 8. Cover of Pamphlet Advertising for Cuban Land and Steamship Company* <sup>196</sup>

Beginning in 1898, U.S. corporate and government officials advertised Cuba's emerging citrus industry as a path for middle-and-working-class Anglo-Americans to relocate, plant new roots and begin again with the protective influence of the United States on the island. Many of these North American immigrants sought opportunities following the economically disastrous 1890s in the United States.<sup>197</sup> U.S. authorities, including Governor General of Cuba Leonard R. Wood, encouraged Anglo-American immigration to the island where "great opportunities [awaited] Americans who will come here and settle.... Land is cheap.... Returns would be quick."<sup>198</sup> The Cuban Land and Steamship Company (CLSC) out of New York advertised property in Cuba through informational pamphlets and U.S. periodicals, including the ones they published. The CLSC reported fail-safe conditions for those who invested in property on the

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<sup>196</sup> Cuban Land and Steamship, "Cuba, The Garden Spot of Our New Territory: Facts for the Settler and Investor," (1900?), provided by Virginia Schofield.

<sup>197</sup> United States Department of Commerce, *Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1970* (Washington D.C., 1979), 135.

<sup>198</sup> "Opportunities in Cuba," *New York Times*, October 10, 1900, 7.

island. The Cuban Land and Steamship Company promised, “Any man or woman can invest here with the assurance that loss is impossible,” the reason being, “Anything that will grow anywhere in any country on earth can be grown here.” The CLSC declared, “999 out of every 1,000 can succeed in Cuba, and if that one doesn’t its his own fault.”<sup>199</sup>

In 1899 the CLSC magazine, *The Cuban Colonist*, encouraged investment in Cuba not only for wealthy foreigners, but also for the ordinary U.S. citizen. “That American capital would take the first opportunity to exploit Cuba has long been an acknowledged fact, but it has operated almost without exception heretofore in the form of closed corporations composed exclusively of shrewd capitalists, whose desire was to secure and monopolize the products and franchises which Cuba has so freely to give.” The article characterized Anglo-American Farming communities as inclusive and open to non-elites: “As is known to our investors and friends, the CUBAN LAND AND STEAMSHIP COMPANY was the first to see the base possibilities for organized capital and cooperative effort. *We want to interest small investors.* Not the great capitalist, but the industrious American, quick to see an opportunity and quick to take advantage of it.”<sup>200</sup> These calls for a multi-class community seem to have been successful. *The Cuban Colonist* promoted the village of La Gloria, which would develop into the largest Anglo-American settler colony in Cuba with a population of close to 3,000 in 1917.

The publications of the Cuban Land and Steamship Company were not the only U.S. periodicals soliciting opportunities for middle-class Anglo-Americans in Cuba. In his work *Cuba in the American Imagination*, Louis A. Pérez notes a litany of claims made concerning Anglo-

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<sup>199</sup> Cuban Land and Steamship, “Cuba, The Garden Spot of Our New Territory: Facts for the Settler and Investor,” (1900?), provided by Virginia Schofield.

<sup>200</sup> Cuban Land and Steamship Company, *The Cuban Colonist: A Magazine Devoted to the Interests of Coffee, Sugar and Tobacco Planters, Fruit Growers, Vegetable Gardeners, and Cuban Topics in General* 1, no. 1 (January 1899), 6, Cuban Heritage Collection, University of Miami.

American prospects on the island for foreigners with and without significant savings. One developer was quoted in the *Cuban Bulletin* in 1904 explaining, “Nowhere else in the world are there such chances for success for the man of moderate means...as Cuba offers today.”<sup>201</sup> The *Commercial and Financial World* published an article in 1906, recruiting emigrants from the United States: “Remarkable in the extreme are the opportunities that exist in Cuba for both home seekers and investors.... It is simply a poor man’s paradise and a rich man’s mecca.”<sup>202</sup> Other newspapers marveled at the price, potential and profitability of Cuban land.<sup>203</sup> These voices explained that settling in Cuba would provide opportunities for Anglo-American prosperity regardless of class.

The security of Anglo-American investments was assured by the dominance of the United States’ financial and political power on the island. Many settler colonists arrived with the hope, and expectation, that the United States would formally annex the island and Cuba would attain status as a U.S. state.<sup>204</sup> The CLSC promised potential investors they would not have to assimilate, nor learn Spanish. The company claimed the town of La Gloria “will be as much an American town and as thoroughly under American laws as any town in the United States.”<sup>205</sup> At the turn of the century the CLSC attempted to assuage the anxieties of potential immigrants who feared moving to a foreign land by emphasizing the role of the United States in Cuba’s future.

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<sup>201</sup> *Cuban Bulletin* 2 (February 1904) quoted in Pérez, *Cuba in the American Imagination*, 231.

<sup>202</sup> *Commercial and Financial World*, April 7, 1906, p. 10, quoted in, Pérez, *Cuba in the American Imagination*, 231.

<sup>203</sup> Deere, “Here Come The Yankees!” 738.

<sup>204</sup> Leuenberger, *La Gloria, An American Colony*, 86.

<sup>205</sup> Cuban Land and Steamship Company, *The Cuban Colonist: A Magazine Devoted to the Interests of Coffee, Sugar and Tobacco Planters, Fruit Growers, Vegetable Gardeners, and Cuban Topics in General* 1, no. 1 (January 1899), 6, Cuban Heritage Collection, University of Miami.

“Cuba only needs what she soon will have, a stable government or annexation to the United States to develop and transform this pearl of Islands into a vast garden of untold wealth. Her future is assured, it only awaits what is now developing to an extraordinary degree. American capital, enterprise and colonization.”<sup>206</sup> The first issue of *The Cuban Colonist* published during the initial U.S. occupation (1899-1902) emphasized the security of Cuba and the already established and extensive U.S. influence on the island: “Cuba is practically ours, and its untouched wealth of field and forest or mine alike await but well directed labor.... That is the opportunity that Cuba offers to American capital and energy.”<sup>207</sup>

Unlike other sectors of the Anglo-American colony in Cuba, these fairly small farming communities developed as “settler colonies,” where, Caroline Elkins and Susan Pedersen argue, privileged outsiders “sought to construct communities bounded by ties of ethnicity and faith in what they persistently defined as virgin or empty land.... They wished less to govern indigenous people or enlist them in their economic ventures than to seize their land and push them beyond an ever-expanding frontier of settlement.”<sup>208</sup> While other groups of privileged outsiders were developing socio-economic alliances with Cubans to augment their political and economic influence, these settler colonists attempted to create homogenous Anglo-American farming communities on the island, quite divorced from the Cuban society that surrounded them.

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<sup>206</sup> Cuban Land and Steamship, “Cuba, The Garden Spot of Our New Territory: Facts for the Settler and Investor,” (1900?), provided by Virginia Schofield.

<sup>207</sup> Cuban Land and Steamship Company, *The Cuban Colonist: A Magazine Devoted to the Interests of Coffee, Sugar and Tobacco Planters, Fruit Growers, Vegetable Gardeners, and Cuban Topics in General* 1, no. 1 (January 1899), 4, CHC.

<sup>208</sup> Caroline Elkins and Susan Pedersen, eds., *Settler Colonialism in the Twentieth Century* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2005), 2.

The ideology of Cuban underdevelopment within Anglo-American farming communities was mobilized in ways that would justify Anglo-Americans moving onto, and profiting off of foreign land. The CLSC promoted the rhetoric of Cuban backwardness in *The Cuban Colonist*, where Thomas I. Madge, a veteran of the Cuban Wars of Independence, wrote: “I served three or more years with Maceo in the Ten Years’ War, and I know the Cuban pretty well. The American will have to protect and produce the riches of the island, for the native never will. American capital should be invested here immediately. There is no occasion for delay...” Addressing the concerns of security held by immigrants to Cuba, Madge continued, “The more American money invested here at the present, the greater reason ‘Uncle Sam’ has to take care of his own, which he has always done and will do.”<sup>209</sup>

Still, the CLSC found it important to frame the Anglo-American immigrant as compassionate. The pages of *The Cuban Colonist* advanced the narrative of foreign benevolence and predicted “a great future for Cuba under the restraining influence of conservative American administration.”<sup>210</sup> U.S. settlers seemed to have imagined themselves as benevolent modernizers, as well as pioneers looking to get ahead. They could simultaneously do good, and do well.

For many of these Anglo-American farmers, the easy life promised by U.S. companies like the CLSC proved false, and quickly. By 1900, complaints of the conditions in La Gloria reached the *New York Times*: “The land...was a swamp to a large extent, and several colonists had spent all their money and were in want.”<sup>211</sup> The *New York Times* reported in February 1900

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<sup>209</sup> Cuban Land and Steamship Company, *The Cuban Colonist: A Magazine Devoted to the Interests of Coffee, Sugar and Tobacco Planters, Fruit Growers, Vegetable Gardeners, and Cuban Topics in General* 1, no. 1 (January 1899), 6, CHC.

<sup>210</sup>Ibid., 5.

<sup>211</sup> “Colonists Start for Cuba,” *New York Times*, January 14, 1900, 4.

that many colonists in La Gloria “complained bitterly that everything was misrepresented to them, while others say that the prospects for the future of the colony would have been much brighter had there been efficient management.”<sup>212</sup> U.S. nationals arrived in Cuba expecting a warm welcome. According to Major W.R. Graham, a disillusioned investor returning from La Gloria, they found instead “a seething undercurrent.... The Cubans want the Americans out of Cuba.”<sup>213</sup>

Despite early hardships and a chilly welcome, within a few years of their arrival many of these farming communities were thriving, basking in the context of informal empire and the eventual--if temporary--responsiveness from the U.S. government. By March of 1900, an investigation was ordered by U.S. Governor General Wood to address complaints from La Gloria.<sup>214</sup> Pressure from U.S. authorities in Cuba and U.S. newspapers, including the *New York Times*, seem to have led the Cuban Land and Steamship Company to improve conditions. By the end of March, the CLSC promised deeds would be made available to North American settlers and the town road would be lifted two feet to prevent flooding.<sup>215</sup> The support of the U.S. authorities in Cuba during times of occupation, combined with the negative coverage by U.S. press agencies, forced the CLSC to invest in the La Gloria project.

Soon these colonists were able to carve out comfortable homes in a foreign land where they would encounter no pressure to assimilate to local customs. Anglo-American schools and churches were established, which allowed foreign residents to continue speaking in their own

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<sup>212</sup> “General Wood’s Tour of Cuba,” *New York Times*, February 4, 1900, 6.

<sup>213</sup> “Discouraged Colonists Back,” *New York Times*, February 7, 1900, 5.

<sup>214</sup> “To Probe La Gloria Colony,” *New York Times*, March 20, 1900, 6.

<sup>215</sup> “Report on La Gloria Colony” *New York Times*, March 29, 1900, 6.

language, praying in their own houses of worship and building a homogeneous Anglo-American community reminiscent of home.<sup>216</sup> Anglo-American educators and missionaries arrived to teach and preach in English.<sup>217</sup> Over time, these settlers accumulated wealth in large part because of their access to Anglo-American markets and transportation networks. Eventually, many of these settlers were able to hire Cuban or Caribbean laborers and domestic servants.<sup>218</sup>

Despite the obvious advantages derived from their Anglo-American identities in Cuba, these colonists wanted more. Many believed annexation by the United States would be the best way to cement their status. On the Isle of Pines in particular, the potential for U.S. annexation encouraged Anglo-American colonists and land companies to purchase 90-99 percent of the land in the early 1900s.<sup>219</sup> As was the case with the Cuban Land and Steamship Company in La Gloria, the U.S.-owned American Settlers' Association, the Isle of Pines Land Development Company, and the Santa Fe Land Company purchased large tracts of property for sub-division and resale to Anglo-American nationals.<sup>220</sup>

These few hundred Anglo-American colonists commonly expressed hope that the ambiguous status of the isle penned into Article VI of the Platt Amendment would eventually lead to annexation of Cuba's second largest island by the United States government. Anglo-American settlers on the isle initiated a campaign to argue for absorption, on the basis of what they claimed to be Cuban incompetence, corruption, instability and a debt owed due to the U.S.

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<sup>216</sup> McManus, *Cuba's Island of Dreams*, 81-82; Leuenberger, *La Gloria, An American Colony*, 97.

<sup>217</sup> "Colonists Start for Cuba," *New York Times*, January 14, 1900, 4.

<sup>218</sup> Leuenberger, *La Gloria, An American Colony*, 128; Darryl Rutz, interview with author, October 17, 2016, Miami, FL.

<sup>219</sup> Deere, "Here Come The Yankees!" 740.

<sup>220</sup> McManus, *Cuba's Island of Dreams*, 21.

intervention in 1898. By 1904, however, with the signing – though not the ratification – of the Hay-Quesada Treaty, it was clear that Washington would not pursue jurisdiction over the isle of Pines.<sup>221</sup> In 1905, the treaty came up for a vote in the United States Congress. According to Jane McManus: “More than a hundred American residents of the Isle of Pines rallied at Percy’s hotel in Nueva Gerona and issued a declaration of independence from Cuba.... From Havana, U.S. Ambassador George Squires supported them and was soon retired for his lack of tact.”<sup>222</sup> That same year the American Club of the isle commissioned an annexation delegation to be sent to the Washington, which triggered a wave of protest by Cubans. Ed Ryan, a U.S. resident advocating annexation testified to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 1906: “We who have had abundant experience, fear to trust ourselves to the administration of Spanish and Cuban laws, either by the courts or the executive officers, as they now exist in Cuba and the Isle of Pines.” U.S. national Charles Raynard told Senator John T. Morgan that U.S. citizens on the isle “never will sit silently [and] submit to being ruled by an incompetent government, administering ancient and obnoxious laws calculated only to retard progress and check development.”<sup>223</sup> When U.S. authorities reoccupied Cuba in 1906, colonists were falsely encouraged once again. Within a year, however, dreams of annexation faced another setback. In 1907, the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Pearcy v. Stranahan* declared the United States had no claim on Isle of Pines.<sup>224</sup>

Despite this judicial defeat, the accessibility of North American and European markets facilitated the relatively easy export of citrus fruit to the United States and later to Europe.

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<sup>221</sup> Michael E. Neagle, *America’s Forgotten Colony: Cuba’s Isle of Pines* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

<sup>222</sup> McManus, *Cuba’s Island of Dreams*, 21-22

<sup>223</sup> Neagle, *America’s Forgotten Colony*, 88.

<sup>224</sup> McManus, *Cuba’s Island of Dreams*, 24.

Settlers could rely upon U.S. shipping lines, often owned by U.S. land-speculator companies, to transport their goods abroad. Not only were they able to sell their products for higher rates in their home societies, which, of course, financially aided U.S. settlers, but Anglo-American residents benefited enormously from the political reach of the United States in Cuba. As U.S. citizens, they expected to be privileged by Cuban policymakers and, to a large degree, they were, by both U.S. and Cuban authorities. The Cuban government helped finance Anglo-American schools and infrastructure projects that directly benefitted these settler colonists, despite their foreign status.<sup>225</sup>

The Anglo-American settler colony of Omaja prospered from Anglo-American networks, while preserving a distinctly foreign identity in the first decades of the twentieth century. Carmen Diana Deere chronicles the vitality of the citrus industry nurtured by Anglo-American networks in Omaja. By 1912, Omaja accounted for close to one-quarter of the citrus trees in Oriente. Produce was shipped out on the U.S.-built railroad, transporting the fruits 80 miles to port at Antilla. The U.S.-owned Munson Steamship Line would then take the cargo to New York City docks, completing the journey after three days at sea. Omaja was home to five general stores, four of which were owned by U.S. and British nationals, as well as a Ford dealership during WWI. The Anglo-American colony of Omaja enjoyed a rich social existence during this period, with dances held at the town's hotel, the Mohogany Inn. A school with a North American and a Cuban teacher enrolled 83 English-speaking students between 1914 and 1915. Methodist and Seventh Day Adventist services were offered to members of the developing colony.<sup>226</sup> Like Omaja, settler colonies throughout Cuba benefitted financially from their nationality, while

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<sup>225</sup> Neagle, *America's Forgotten Colony*, 91.

<sup>226</sup> Deere, "Here Come The Yankees!" 747-751.

maintaining a thoroughly familiar cultural community and avoiding assimilation into Cuban society. This would begin to change at the end of the 1910s.

### *A Series of Disasters*

At the end of the 1910s, Anglo-American farming colonies across Cuba began to depopulate due to a combination of the shifting political commitments of the United States government, civil strife in Cuba, and a series of natural disasters. By the 1930s, the dwindling number of independent farmers who remained in the Cuban countryside and on the Isle of Pines, down to a few hundred, were forced to reinvent their identities and their relationships to Cubans.

In 1917 the town of Omaja became the symbolic beginning of the end for Anglo-American settler colonies in Cuba. An uprising of liberals arose following claims of fraud in the 1916 reelection of Conservative President and U.S. ally, Mario García Menocal. At one point, 3,500 liberal rebels marched directly through the Anglo-American enclave of Omaja. A number of U.S. homes were burned, while transportation networks were discontinued for a period of six-months. This conflict endangered not only the citrus producers of Anglo-American settler colonies, but also large sugar plantations and cattle ranchers who could no longer move their goods to Anglo-American markets.<sup>227</sup>

U.S. (in)actions during the 1917 conflict made evident the corporate priorities of Cuban and U.S. authorities and their willingness to ignore or sacrifice the needs and desires of independent farmers. The Cuban government sent one hundred soldiers to protect La Gloria where Anglo-Americans took refuge, while the liberal rebels ransacked Anglo-American homes, livestock, citrus groves and cane fields throughout the Cubitas Valley. At Bartle, a town populated by U.S. and Canadian nationals, the railroad station was burned to the ground. U.S.-

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<sup>227</sup> Ibid., 753

run sugar operations in Las Tunas suffered serious damage, including the mill at Delicias. Eight million arrobas of cane were lost. An Anglo-American colonist remarked after the conflict, that their “confidence in the stability of property in Cuba was shaken up by recent events.”<sup>228</sup>

Carmen Diana Deere references a “third and final intervention” advocated by colonists to secure their investments on the island. U.S. troops landed in Cuba, but a formal occupation never materialized. Independent farmers soon came to realize that Anglo-American power brokers were not going to prioritize their needs or concerns.<sup>229</sup> Despite the instability and lack of security for the settler colonies dotting the Cuban countryside, it remained in the best interests of the United States and U.S. capital to exert influence over Cuban affairs without formally colonizing the island. Deere explains, “the action of their government during the uprising [of 1917] made it fairly clear that its priority was to protect large American investments—the sugar mills and mines—and not small ones.”<sup>230</sup>

The structures of informal empire in Cuba further shifted against the well-being of settler colonists after World War I in particular, due to the rise and fall of global sugar prices. With no beet sugar production in Europe during the war, sugar dramatically increased in value internationally, leading to the period called the “Dance of the Millions” (1919-1920). The land occupied by the citrus groves of these settler communities became extremely valuable to those looking to develop cane operations. In 1918 Omaja residents Sam Yoder, A.J. de Hoff, William Felker, Asmus Price and Mrs. A.E. Peirson sold their properties and made significant profits on their investments. Many of those who chose to stay and shift from citrus to sugar production lost

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<sup>228</sup> Ibid., 754.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid., 750-755.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid., 729-765.

a great deal. The global sugar market collapsed from 22.5 cents to 4 cents per pound between 1920 and 1921. The resulting devastation to the Cuban economy led to a buying bonanza of bankrupted properties throughout the island by North American and British financial firms.<sup>231</sup>

Growing competition with fruit growers in the United States further accelerated the decline of these settler communities. In 1922, the United States passed the Fordney-McCumber Tariff, doubling the duty for certain citrus products like grapefruits, commonly sold by settler colonists to the United States. Fordney-McCumber aided U.S.-based fruit growers, while it undermined Anglo-American citrus farmers in Cuba. Fear of disease led to the quarantine of Cuban fruit periodically throughout the first quarter century of Cuban independence, further debilitating Cuba's settler colonies, while buttressing fruit growers in the United States and other places throughout the Caribbean Basin.<sup>232</sup> By the 1920s, Cuba's Anglo-American settlers found their livelihoods increasingly unsustainable.

In part because of increased competition from domestic U.S. fruit growers, a number of Anglo-American settlers on the Isle of Pines sustained their advocacy for annexation by the United States into the mid-1920s. Adamant in their demands, as captured by historian Michael E. Neagle, "Americans resented submitting to Cuban authority, which they largely viewed as ineffective (at best) or illegitimate."<sup>233</sup> A 1924 letter and petition written by the isle's U.S. residents during debate on the Hay-Quesada Treaty, argued that "American settlers have been subject to an unlawful, most humiliating and unbearable de facto Cuban Government for over 20 years. Many have lost faith and left; some died in despair, and a great majority are holding on to

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<sup>231</sup> Ibid., 754-56.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid., 757.

<sup>233</sup> Neagle, *America's Forgotten Colony*, 11.

their property in the firm belief and faith that our Government will live up to its representations that the ‘Isle of Pines is United States Territory.’”<sup>234</sup>

Yet in the 1920s, U.S. corporations to whom the Cuban government was deeply indebted, including J.P. Morgan and Company, were promoting Cuban solvency, siding with Cuba’s local elite and pushing the Hay-Quesada Treaty through the United States Senate.<sup>235</sup> The settlers were disposable; they represented an obstacle to the socio-economic alliances developing between Cuban professionals and Anglo-American capital investing in sugar, not citrus production. The eventual ratification of Hay-Quesada in 1924, compounded by the devastating hurricane of 1926, convinced a large portion of the Anglo-Americans on the Isle of Pines to return home.<sup>236</sup> The U.S. population on the Isle of Pines dropped to 276 in 1931, from its zenith in the 1910s of an estimated 2,000.<sup>237</sup>

As a final blow, the hurricane of 1932 devastated the community in La Gloria. In November 1932 – the day after U.S. nationals throughout Cuba stayed awake to track the results of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s first election – a cyclone in eastern Cuba forced Pastor Frank S. Persons II of La Gloria, “to reconcile the golden sunshine and blue sky with the utter devastation....”<sup>238</sup> The eye of the storm passed directly over La Gloria; few buildings were left standing.<sup>239</sup> Compounded by the violent aftermath of President Machado’s overthrow in 1933,

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<sup>234</sup> Ibid., 162.

<sup>235</sup> McManus, *Cuba’s Island of Dreams*, 59

<sup>236</sup> Ibid.

<sup>237</sup> Deere, “Here Come The Yankees!” 756-7.

<sup>238</sup> Leuenberger, *La Gloria, An American Colony*, 133.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid., 140-142.

large numbers of Anglo-American settler colonists throughout Cuba abandoned their farming communities by the mid-1930s and returned home to the United States.<sup>240</sup>

### *Isolation, Integration and the Development of Empathy*

In the early part of the century, U.S. nationals arrived in small farming communities as colonizers. By mid-century they were humbled, economically and politically, by nature, competition and the “betrayal” of U.S. authorities. Independent Anglo-American farmers who remained beyond the 1930s now understood that Cuban and Anglo-American power brokers valued socio-economic hierarchies over nationality. Those who stayed began to integrate more deeply into Cuban society.



Figure 9. *The Rutz Ranch, 1950s* <sup>241</sup>

Nicolas Rutz arrived in Cuba in the 1910s after reading an ad in a Connecticut paper. His grandson, Darrell Rutz, explained that by the 1950s, few Anglo-American settlers could be found in the area surrounding the city of Camagüey. Darrell remembers that the Matthews family owned a rice business, and the Rankins ran the Methodist mission, including Pinson College where Darryl boarded for school twenty miles away. Darryl’s father Anthony managed the

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<sup>240</sup> Deere, “Here Come The Yankees!” 757.

<sup>241</sup> Provided by Darryl Rutz.

family ranch where ten to fifteen Cuban workers were employed. The Cuban children of these workers would attend school sometimes, though not every day, at the Florida Mill. In the late 1950s, when anti-Batista rebels thought Anthony Rutz was a spy and threatened to hang him, it was his Cuban friends and workers who spoke in defense of the longtime ranch owner, likely saving Rutz' life. Darryl's parents Anthony and Pinky Kate Rutz remained in Cuba until 1963, long after the severing of diplomatic relations, a CIA-backed invasion and a nuclear confrontation.<sup>242</sup>

After the 1930s, without the support of homogeneous Anglo-American enclaves, those rural colonists who remained had little choice but to deepen their attachments to the Cuban land and Cuban people. Born to British parents who arrived in La Gloria in 1905, Walton Schofield lived his life between worlds.<sup>243</sup> He grew up in a time when the spoken language of La Gloria was English, and when he left at the age of 32, he spoke Spanish with a heavy English accent. Schofield was educated in the Anglo-American school at La Gloria, which ended before high school. After marrying a Cuban of Chinese descent whose family owned the theater in nearby Morón, Walton secured a position as a middle manager at the United Fruit and Sugar Company in Oriente. His daughter Virginia remembers, "When he started working there, he was privileged in the sense that we were invited... We were privileged in the sense that we were invited to the club, we were invited to people's homes... The Cuban workers were not. He spoke English. And remember, he played the violin, which is no small skill."<sup>244</sup> Still Walton found himself

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<sup>242</sup> Darryl Rutz, interview by author, October 17, 2016, Miami, FL.

<sup>243</sup> Virginia M. Schofield to Louis A. Pérez, August 28, 1991, WL; Marcia Hambrick Smalley Olshan, *The Cuban Years*, 50, provided by Byron Smalley.

<sup>244</sup> Virginia Schofield, interview by author, August 1, 2016. Washington, DC.

consistently passed over for promotion by the company; his education had neither a North American nor British pedigree.

Provisionally accepted into the Anglo-American colony, the class and ethnic background of the Schofields set them apart from the other Anglo-Americans working at United Fruit. The U.S. school in Guaro rejected Walton's daughter Virginia because she was "Cuban and spoke no English." Virginia remembers, "My father earned quite a bit less because he was 'Cuban'. He didn't have a retirement. He didn't have the paid vacations. He didn't have the nice salary that their parents had. We didn't have electricity in either company house. They had, you know, beautifully furnished houses with electrical stuff and maids and all this. And so I was different."<sup>245</sup> While Virginia eventually gained access to the school for Anglo-American children in Preston, and her parents socialized with the U.S. employees at the American Club in Guaro, they remained apart from the community of sugar executives who came from the North America and Europe to manage foreign interests.

In contrast to the Anglo-Americans who rarely left the *barrios americanos* of eastern Cuba's mill and mining towns, the Schofields were deeply connected to, and empathic with local Cuban families and workers. Virginia explained that most Anglo-American employees "didn't see the poverty around them."<sup>246</sup> Walton, as a middle manager fluent in both English and Spanish, was responsible for assigning work to Cubans during the *tiempo muerto*. "He used to agonize about parceling out the work. You can imagine everyone wanted work. And they would line up outside his little office. I mean my father suffered hell. I mean he just, because he was a

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<sup>245</sup> Ibid.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid.

very Christian man and he came from this wonderful little La Gloria community, and there he is landed among the... basically very selfish and evil colonizers.”<sup>247</sup>

Walton lived between cultures, which influenced his views on politics and the revolution. In the late 1950s, according to his daughter, Walton delivered supplies to the rebels. In 1959 he accepted a job in the new government, only to be fired after critiquing the poor management of cane operations by the revolutionary authorities. According to Virginia, her father felt disillusioned and betrayed. When living in exile, he carried a sense of guilt and sadness for participating in the family’s loss of place on the island. In an effort to comfort him, Virginia would remind her father: “The only decent thing that you could do was help the rebels.”<sup>248</sup>

### *Conclusions*

Seduced to the island by false promises and dreams of annexation, most Anglo-American small farmers and ranchers would return home by the 1930s. Corporate and U.S.-government commitments to elite interests left settler colonists disappointed as their hopes for creating idyllic versions of home were dashed by the structures and priorities of informal empire. Those few who remained from the very Anglo-American communities who advocated loudly for annexation by the United States in the early twentieth century, developed warm and deep familial, social and political ties with Cubans by the late 1950s. Living between cultures, these Anglo-Americans held significant, and sometimes conflicting, loyalties. Many would ultimately support the revolutionary movement against Batista. After Batista was forced off the island, a small but sturdy group of Anglo-American farmers and ranchers would remain in Cuba, long after their national identity became a burden rather than a privilege.

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<sup>247</sup> Ibid.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER FOUR: COLONIZING HEARTS AND MINDS IN HAVANA

### *Introduction*

Within a year of the expulsion of Spanish authority in Cuba, nearly 6,500 U.S. nationals became residents of the island and 4,178 U.S. citizens moved to Havana, which emerged as the center of an effort to construct a new nation.<sup>249</sup> Anglo-American executives and diplomats engaged in agriculture, transportation, communications, tourism, mining, industry, advertising, energy, diplomacy and banking developed alliances with Cubans in garnering influence over the priorities of the Cuban government and its capital. The majority of foreign companies in Cuba established offices and headquarters in Havana, where Anglo-American executives could easily advocate for their priorities to Cuban-government officials. While many Anglo-Americans arrived to profit from Cuba's land, labor and resources, foreign teachers, missionaries, and nurses generally expressed their desire to improve the lives of Cubans, as well as to support the Anglo-American colony. This chapter explores the influence exerted by Anglo-American schools, churches and the United States Information Services (USIS) section of the U.S. Embassy, all of which attempted to reform Cuban hearts and minds, and in so doing, reshape Cuban society.

To satisfy the needs of the burgeoning community of Anglo-Americans, permeate Cuban culture with values espoused by the United States, train a Cuban workforce and attract Cuban partners who could communicate in English, foreign capital invested in foreign-managed cultural

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<sup>249</sup> U.S. War Department, Office Director Census of Cuba, *Report on the Census of Cuba, 1899* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1900), 98, 220-221.

and educational structures. A network of distinctly non-Cuban cultural institutions and traditions proliferated, organized around the commitments of the Anglo-American colony in foreign-run private schools, churches, newspapers, clinics, and social clubs. These institutions often worked to maintain their foreign character, which preserved their elite status. Wealthy Cubans embraced Anglo-American schools, as they understood the significant opportunities these educational institutions provided their children and themselves, on an island saturated with foreign interests. Thus, many influential Cubans who could afford the tuition, encouraged their children to apply to schools like Ruston Academy, Merici Academy, Candler College, Colegio Buenavista, the St. George School, Lafayette Academy, the Phillips School, the Cathedral School, and other highly regarded Anglo-American-run educational institutions in Havana, anticipating and appreciating that knowledge of the English language and Western cultural norms would open doors in pre-revolutionary Cuban society. The nature of informal empire on the island incentivized Cubans who assumed positions of power after attending Anglo-American schools, to advance the forms of knowledge that helped position them atop Cuban socio-economic hierarchies. In this way, Anglo-American educational institutions cemented and reproduced the privileged status of Anglo-American residents, cultural forms and political ideologies, as well as a small segment of Cuban professionals and their children.

### ***The White Man's Burden***

In a letter that commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of the foreign Methodist presence in Cuba, Dr. George MacDonell wrote, “January 1, (1899) was a day never to be forgotten.” MacDonell explains, “I witnessed the transfer of government and the lowering of the Spanish flags on Morro Castle.... Then as the American flag was raised, pandemonium broke loose. Cannons from war vessels, whistles of former ships and factories, and the cheering of the populace, delirious with joy, heralded the coming of a new day for the island. I lifted my hat and

said out loud, ‘Thank God! Cuba is free.’”<sup>250</sup> Early Anglo-American residents imagined themselves as Cuban liberators, but the paternalistic relationship also demanded Cuban apprenticeship.

At the turn of the twentieth century, the North Americans and Europeans moving to Havana embodied and enacted the calls of their intellectual contemporaries like Rudyard Kipling, who encouraged Anglo-Americans to “take up the white man’s burden” and bring enlightenment to the rest of the globe. Those arriving in Cuba to manage Anglo-American schools, newspapers, churches, clinics and intercultural institutions in the 1890s, 1900s, 1910s and 1920s often described their mission as more expansive than servicing the needs of the Anglo-American colony. They wrote of themselves as responsible for saving Cuban souls, modernizing Cuban structures and developing Cuban minds. They often employed a rhetoric and logic of Cuban underdevelopment to justify their influence to each other and their Cuban contacts.<sup>251</sup> Anglo-Americans offered the adoption of Western ways and values as the path to modernity.

Early Anglo-American leaders of Cuba’s religious institutions in Havana cautioned that the process of modernization would be slow, but they assured Cubans that the benevolent Anglo-American presence would eventually transform the island into a modern nation. At that point, Cubans would garner greater control over their political, economic and cultural institutions. In his 1948 book detailing the life of the Southern Baptist head of mission in Cuba, M.N. McCall, biographer Louie D. Newton explained in 1898 “[Cubans] completely lacked any experience which would make them capable of establishing and maintaining a stable democratic government

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<sup>250</sup> Betty Burleigh, “Half a Century in Cuba,” *World Outlook* XXXIX, no. 5 (May 1949): 5-9, 6.

<sup>251</sup> Escobar, *Encountering Development*, 47; Pérez, *On Becoming Cuban*, 247-249.

and had it not been for the supporting hand of the United States, her condition, free, would have been worse than her former servitude.”<sup>252</sup> The Catholic Church was berated, and many foreigners, especially Protestant ministers, argued its influence needed to be curbed if Cubans were to attain freedom and prosperity.

Early Anglo-American observers generally explained Cuban economic and political instability as resulting from Cuban ineptitude deriving from their history and culture, rather than as products of informal empire. U.S. investment in Cuban graft and the overthrow of Cuban political regimes unresponsive to the demands of Anglo-American capital did not figure in the calculus of many Anglo-American colony members’ evaluations of Cuba and Cubans. In 1942 the journal *World Outlook* published an article by Methodist missionary Arva C. Floyd, who explained the hurdles faced by missionaries as, “Honesty in official life is Cuba's pressing need.... Many factors have contributed to this state of affairs in Cuban life. Spanish overlords for three hundred years set the example. When their tyranny was broken at the beginning of this century, with America playing a prominent part in setting the people free, they had had no experience in politics, no precedent for self-government....” The article continues, detailing how these conditions stunted the development of Cuban citizens: “One senses in the people a rather strange adolescence. Grown men act like boys. Observe them on the streets and on the trains, in the busses and in the parks, and one gets the impression of immaturity. They are noisy in conversation and full of fun--boisterous but not rowdy. Each one wants the spotlight, but is not a bit subtle in his method of gaining it--on the contrary, he is apt to be quite naïve.” Cultural differences were identified as proof of immaturity and foreign residents repeatedly blamed

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<sup>252</sup> Louie D. Newton, *Amazing Grace: The Life of M.N. McCall: Missionary to Cuba* (Atlanta, GA: Home Mission Board Southern Baptist Convention, 1948), 54.

Cubans for their supposed underdevelopment. Floyd speculates the lack of challenges presented by the Cuban environment cultivated laziness among the population. She explains, “Indolence, perhaps born of the tropics, has laid its hand upon them.... There is no struggle against climate—no winter to prepare for—and a very rich soil produces food almost of itself.” Floyd attributed the rampant larceny in Havana to the lack of moral character within Cuban culture:

“Morals...rest lightly upon the Cuban.” Floyd viewed the political tumult of the early twentieth century as the responsibility of the Cubans and Cubans alone; not, as has been shown in the chapters above, due to the imprint of informal empire. As Floyd explains, “Like unsettled people anywhere, the Cubans are pie for the demagogue, and their presidents have been a string of dictators.”<sup>253</sup> In the minds of many Anglo-Americans, Spanish tyranny, a generous environment, an immature culture and Catholic domination stunted Cuban development, undermined their political institutions and justified a significant level of foreign control in Cuban society.

The trope of laziness appeared to legitimize the experience of Anglo-American privilege. As Albert Memmi argues, “Nothing could better justify the colonizer’s privileged position than his industry, and nothing could better justify the colonized’s destitution than his indolence.”<sup>254</sup> Memmi continues, “It becomes obvious that the colonized, whatever he may undertake, whatever zeal he may apply, could never be anything but lazy.”<sup>255</sup> Many Cubans internalized these characterizations of their countrymen, or at least purported to do so in the presence of Anglo-Americans. Arva Floyd remembers an encounter with a Cuban businessman who had spent time in the United States, and told her, “I am constantly made ashamed of my own people.

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<sup>253</sup> Arva C. Floyd, “Cuba Calling,” *World Outlook* XXXII, no. 12 (December, 1942): 12-15, 13.

<sup>254</sup> Memmi, *The Colonizer and The Colonized*, 79.

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

They are always crying like babies for someone to give them something, but will not get out and work for it.”<sup>256</sup>

Racialized and gendered tropes that first became prevalent in 1890s when the U.S. press depicted vulnerable white Cuban women threatened by animalistic Spanish soldiers, continued to serve as justification for Anglo-American influence. While in 1897, North American papers dramatized the arrest and rescue of Evangelina Cossío Cisneros, the “white face, young pure and beautiful” daughter of an insurgent advocate for U.S. intervention, in the mid-1920s, Southern Baptist Una Lawrence Roberts justified U.S. influence by arguing Anglo-American Protestantism provided a path to liberation for oppressed Cuban women.<sup>257</sup> Roberts wrote, “The Gospel and its teachings open to the women of Cuba the door of opportunity whereby [women] may break down the barriers that bind them as slaves in these little homes and make them powers for good in their communities.”<sup>258</sup> She listed a litany of gendered policies which discriminated against women, in comparison to their North American counterparts. Roberts noted different expectations between the genders with regards to fidelity in Cuba. Further, she noted that increased rights with regards to property, rights in divorce and the right to publicly gather for women were only recently achieved on the island. Roberts argued that the Baptist gospel would prove a liberating influence for Cuban women.<sup>259</sup> Anglo-American knowledge

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<sup>256</sup> Floyd, “Cuba Calling,” 13.

<sup>257</sup> North American women undertook a letter-writing campaign to the Pope and Spanish Crown in condemnation of this Spanish atrocity after the *New York Journal* accused Spanish troops of raping Evangelina Cossío Cisneros. Pérez, *Cuba in the American Imagination*, 77-79.

<sup>258</sup> Una Lawrence Roberts, *Cuba for Christ* (Atlanta, GA: Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1926), 106.

<sup>259</sup> Roberts, *Cuba for Christ*, 261.

producers, saving minds and souls in the first decades of the twentieth century, often viewed themselves as liberators and developers as they worked to reorient Cuban values and practices.

### *Schooling Cubans*



*Figure 10. White Cubans Perform Minstrel Show at Methodist School* <sup>260</sup>

Through a variety of educational institutions, North Americans and British nationals bolstered their cultural and economic authority, while encouraging Cubans to refashion their personal and national aspirations around norms and models exemplified by white, English-speaking foreigners. Attending Anglo-American schools offered employment and social advantages to Cuban individuals, as familiarizing Cubans with North American and European business norms and customs produced ideal workers for jobs at foreign companies. During the first U.S. occupation, the United States aided in the establishment of the public-school system that functioned in Cuba during the republican era. By the 1920s, with the crash of global sugar

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<sup>260</sup> *New World Outlook* (April 1970), 29, United Methodist Archive and Historical Society (UMAHS), Drew University, Madison, NJ, UMC General Board of Global Ministers, 2190-6-3.05.

prices, public education began to decline. By 1953 Cuban illiteracy rates remained relatively high at 23.6 percent and a 60.4 percent of all Cubans ended their schooling by the third grade.<sup>261</sup> Most Cuban educational institutions, particularly the public schools founded under the authority of the first U.S. occupation, floundered during periods of economic downturn and political upheaval. Patrick Symmes notes that by the 1930s, just 21 public high schools remained on the island.<sup>262</sup> By contrast, the stability provided by foreign capital and influence bolstered a growing system of Anglo-American academies to complement a large number of Cuban private schools.

As the island's educational system suffered from financial and political crises, Anglo-American private schools, most designed with a religious orientation, gained elite reputations. Advertising the growth of prestige in their educational institutions, and the weakening of Cuban state schools, the 1938 Methodist journal *World Outlook* reported: "The schools of our church naturally had large enrollments during the period when government schools were closed. It is encouraging to find that the schools have such an enviable position on the island that their enrollments are steadily increasing even now that government schools have reopened."<sup>263</sup> The Cuban government could not easily maintain the capital and stability necessary to keep Cuban public schools competitive with Anglo-American private schools. As the quality of Cuban schools declined, the privately funded Anglo-American education system flourished. Anglo-American businesses continued to dominate the employment landscape in Cuba, making it hard to deny the advantages of a private, English-based education.<sup>264</sup>

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<sup>261</sup> Pérez-Stable, *The Cuban Revolution*, 27-28.

<sup>262</sup> Symmes, *The Boys from Dolores*, 84-85.

<sup>263</sup> Mackinnon, "The Outlook for Cuba is Different," 28.

<sup>264</sup> Many upwardly mobile Cuban professionals realized an Anglo-American education held social and economic value. The Cuban economy was managed by an alliance between Cuban businessmen and politicians, as well as Anglo-American executives and diplomats. Business was often conducted in English, and an Anglo-American

Not all Cubans were excited about sending their children to the U.S.-organized public schools or foreign-managed private academies. Louis A. Pérez documents that, “increasing number of Cubans worried about the effects of foreign schooling on children’s capacity to develop ties to *patria*.”<sup>265</sup> Patrick Symmes argues that private Cuban Catholic schools were established in part to ensure the offspring of middle and upper-class Cubans would not shed their Cuban identity under Anglo-American influence. In the early 1900s, private Catholic schools dominated the educational landscape. Highly selective Cuban academies like the Jesuit school Dolores in Santiago, where Fidel Castro attended, formed, at least in part, in response to the growing U.S. influence over the island’s educational system. Symmes argues these Catholic schools developed because wealthier Cubans feared a transformation of their children’s values within Anglo-American educational institutions.<sup>266</sup>

In the first half of the twentieth century Anglo-American educators and religious leaders in Havana often limited their interaction with poorer and darker Cubans through exclusionary policies and practices. The importation of racial stratifications by some U.S. educators divided Cubans by color. Originally an institution managed by the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, the elite girl’s school Colegio Buenavista denied entry to blacks until the mid-1950s.<sup>267</sup> Una Lawrence Roberts explained the popularity of U.S.-run private schools like Buenavista in explicitly racist and exclusionary terms: “In the Cuban schools, there is no separation of the

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education offered avenues to economic prosperity. United States Bureau of Foreign Commerce “Investment in Cuba,” 10, CHC.

<sup>265</sup> Pérez, *On Becoming Cuban*, 404.

<sup>266</sup> Symmes, *The Boys from Dolores*, 84-85.

<sup>267</sup> John Merle Davis, *The Cuban Church in a Sugar Economy* (New York, NY: International Missionary Council: 1942), 97; Crahan, “Religious Penetration and Nationalism in Cuba,” 220.

racess, and many prefer that their children go to a private school where they will have predominantly white associates.”<sup>268</sup> Methodist Superintendent Pastor D. W. Carter attributed the popularity of Protestant schools, among Whites, in part to segregationist policies: “The well-to-do white people are not availing themselves of the public schools...[due to] the mixing of the races.”<sup>269</sup>

Before World War II, Anglo-American residents often justified U.S. influence in Cuba in discourses resonant with ideologies of Anglo-American racial or cultural superiority. In many of Havana’s foreign-run institutions, the select slice of Cubans with whom Anglo-Americans interacted represented the wealthier and whiter parts of local society. While Cubans held many racist traditions of their own, segregation as it developed in the U.S. South never took firm hold of Cuba’s public sphere during the republican era. Those foreign schools that did not explicitly restrict the attendance of darker Cuban students, largely excluded Cubans of color through the high cost of tuition. Racially segregated Anglo-American schools sought to cultivate political change in Cuba by developing Anglo-American values in the white and relatively wealthy Cuban youths who were best positioned to lead the next generation.

Anglo-American religious leaders managed a number of Havana’s top schools offering prestige and opportunities to their graduates. These institutions included the Methodist Candler College and Colegio Buenavista, the Episcopalian Cathedral School and the Catholic Merici Academy. Further, Anglo-American administrators and educators were poised to influence Cuba’s future power brokers at the elite secular school Ruston Academy. With few public

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<sup>268</sup> Roberts, *Cuba for Christ*, 227.

<sup>269</sup> Louis A. Pérez Jr., *Essays on Cuban History: Historiography and Research* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida, 1995), 67.

options for high school in rural Cuba, and most of the elite academies located in major cities, boarding schools in Havana, and to a lesser degree in Santiago, provided an attractive option for families with means, or those lucky enough to earn a scholarship.<sup>270</sup> Thus, Anglo-American educational institutions in Havana became a mechanism of cultural reproduction seeking to transform Cuban society.

The goals of Anglo-American educators in Havana stood in sharp contrast to those of educators in the Cuban countryside. In the capital, U.S.-run religious and secular private schools sought to mold the future leaders of Cuba through Western-styled education at elite institutions; in the Cuban countryside, missionary schools generally sought to inspire local leadership and self-sufficiency. Both were established with the prevailing ethos of benevolent development, but the trajectories of Havana and rural educational institutions would diverge dramatically between 1899 and 1958.

### ***Building Elite Religious Educational Institutions in Havana***



*Figure 11. Methodist Boys School Candler College and Methodist Girls School Colegio Buenavista*<sup>271</sup>

Established in 1899, Candler College, a Methodist boarding school for boys, quickly developed a reputation as one of the elite schools in Cuba. Named for Methodist Bishop Warren

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<sup>270</sup> Emily Towe, "Expansion in Cuba," *World Outlook* XXXVII, no 2 (February 1947): 5-7, 6.

<sup>271</sup> UMAHS, Candler College, Geographic Filed Series 1463-1.46; UMAHS, Colegios Buenavista, Cuba Conference General, 1463.

Candler, the school was endowed with donations from Warren's brother and the head of Coca-Cola Isa Candler. A successor to the original headmaster Thad F. Leland, in 1909 Pastor Harry Brown Bardwell assumed leadership of the school. In 1913 Bardwell successfully relocated Candler to the Havana suburb of Marianao.<sup>272</sup> Responding to requests from parents throughout the island for a sister school to send their daughters, in 1920 Colegio Buenavista opened its doors under the management of the Women's Division of the Methodist Church.<sup>273</sup> Retiring in 1949, Pastor Bardwell received the Carlos Manuel de Céspedes medal for his service to the youth of Cuba. Seven years later he was buried in Havana's Colon Cemetery. Bardwell's assistant Dr. Carlos Pérez rose to the position of director in 1949 and tore down Bardwell's home to construct a new building to accommodate Cuban students.<sup>274</sup> While it never shed its Anglo-American orientation, retaining the four-year U.S. High School program taught largely by U.S. missionaries, Candler and its sister school Buenavista evolved, over time, from a school that predominantly served Anglo-Americans to a school largely for Cubans seeking social mobility through contact with the Anglo-American colony.

With Anglo-American teachers and administrators, as well as substantial donations from U.S. corporations, Candler and Buenavista became commonly referenced symbols of U.S. benevolence in Cuba. Leading Cuban intellectual Jorge Mañach y Robato offered his perspective on Candler:

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<sup>272</sup> Tony Palau, "Candler College," 2011, provided by Enrique Levy.

<sup>273</sup> Board of Missions, Department of Woman's Work, Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Nashville, 1923, UMAHS, Buenavista, 1:51; "Candler College and Buenavista History," August 22, 2011, provided by Enrique Levy.

<sup>274</sup> Enrique Levy, "Pupilo en el Candler," provided by Enrique Levy.

My opinion of Candler College is based principally on the moral character and nobility of purpose of the men who are the product of her teachings. Some of the Cubans of highest integrity, of solid consecrated citizenship, whom it has been my privilege to know, have come out from this Institution, some as teachers, others as students. Such results are never a mere coincidence. Upon the occasion of my recent visit to the school I understood the reasons for these results. ‘Candler College’ is not only a school with modern equipment and teaching methods, but above and beyond these it is a center for instilling moral ideals, a seminary of right thinking and right living.<sup>275</sup>

The Methodist publication *World Outlook* confirmed the economic advantages attained upon graduation, reporting in 1950, “Many prominent business, religious, political, and professional leaders are graduates of Methodist schools.”<sup>276</sup>

While a basic level of income was required to afford the relatively high tuition costs, Candler and Buenavista solicited students from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. Enrique Levy, the son of a Jewish peddler without a formal education from Central Macareño, boarded at Candler alongside Eduardo González, whose Cuban father graduated with degrees from Harvard and MIT, and married a North American bride, before serving as chief engineer at the American Sugar Refining Company in Central Jaronú.<sup>277</sup> Though Anglo-American institutions like Candler often offered scholarships, the school’s price limited the economic diversity of the students to middle-class and wealthy, mostly white, Cubans.<sup>278</sup> Sustained by Anglo-American economic influence on the island and access to foreign capital, schools like Buenavista and Candler were stable educational institutions where privileged Cubans could attain economic prospects unavailable in Cuban schools and inaccessible to most working-class and poor Cubans.

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<sup>275</sup> “Candler College Brochure 1953,” UMAHS, 1:46.

<sup>276</sup> “Methodist Schools in Cuba,” *World Outlook* XL, no. 2 (February 1950), 3.

<sup>277</sup> Enrique Levy, interview by author, September 15, 2017, Edgewater, NJ; Ed González, interview by author, July 7, 2016, Plymouth Meeting, PA.

<sup>278</sup> In the 1940s the annual tuition at Havana’s Methodist Candler University was \$240 a year, far too expensive for most Cubans. “Universidad Candler, Cursos 1957-1958,” UMAHS, Candler College, 1:46.

In Havana, Anglo-American religious schools provided not only economic and political ladders, but social and cultural opportunities for contact between Anglo-Americans and Cubans. These were indeed contact zones for privileged outsiders and relatively wealthy students from Cuba where new identities, relationships and knowledges were produced, even as various forms of assimilation to Anglo-American values were encouraged. Historian Margaret E. Crahan argues that missionaries facilitated the cultural assimilation of Cubans: “The ideals promoted by the churches did not threaten the established order of things, but rather urged the less fortunate to struggle to be incorporated into the privileged group. The Protestant churches provided schools that served to encourage the absorption of values of a middle and upper class that were becoming increasingly ‘Americanized.’”<sup>279</sup> At Havana’s Candler College, juniors enrolled in a course on “American Writers” while seniors enrolled in classes including “English Writers” and “U.S. History.” Neither Cuban history nor Cuban literature was offered as a part of the high school curriculum.<sup>280</sup>

Still, as will be argued in later chapters, the lessons learned at Anglo-American schools simultaneously defended and eroded the status quo in the midst of revolution. Many Anglo-American educational institutions articulated “creating good citizens” as core to the institutional mission. They pursued this aim by orienting young Cubans toward Anglo-American customs and traditions, including democracy and national sovereignty. While in many ways Anglo-American educators reified the influence of the United States, they also planted ideas in their Cuban students that would be used to eventually challenge the structures of informal empire.

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<sup>279</sup> Crahan, “Religious Penetration and Nationalism in Cuba,” 208; Suly Chenkin, interview by author, September 27, 2013, Telephone.

<sup>280</sup> “Candler College Brochure 1953,” UMAHS, Candler College, 1:46.

Given the benefits in securing employment and status, Cuban parents of means were persuaded to send their children to Anglo-American schools. Merici Academy offered girls an Anglo-American, but also a Catholic education that made it especially attractive to Cubans uneasy with the Protestant leadership of other Anglo-American schools.<sup>281</sup> Beatriz Gausch explains her parents chose Merici, “[t]o say the education of my daughter is going to be Catholic and American...”<sup>282</sup> Merici alum Joan Pieper Lanolin furthers this point, explaining that the prestige of Anglo-American academies like Merici was enhanced by being both Catholic and North American: “A lot of politicians came to my school and a lot of the wealthy Cubans because they wanted their daughters to learn English, you know, and of course Cuba was a Catholic country.”<sup>283</sup> According to school historian María J. Cazabon, Merici’s founders expected the school to attract daughters of the Anglo-American colony. As it turns out, Anglo-American enrollment remained low and Merici instead attracted a student body comprised predominantly of the daughters of prominent Cubans.<sup>284</sup> The daughters of President Carlos Prío, sugar magnate Julio Lobo and the CEO of Bacardi, as well as the niece of the Cardinal Latiaga of Cuba, represented just a few of the many powerful families at the Anglo-American Catholic school.<sup>285</sup>

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<sup>281</sup> The school developed during World War II when Anglo-American residents and Cubans who would often send their children to school in the United States found new wartime obstacles in travel. In 1941 Mother Thomas Vorrhies arrived from New Orleans to make the Ursuline English Academy independent from its umbrella institution, *Colegio de las Ursulinas*. María J. Cazabon, “The History of Merici Academy,” provided by María J. Cazabon.

<sup>282</sup> Beatriz Gausch Karasik, interview by author, October 10, 2016, Coral Gables, FL.

<sup>283</sup> Joan Pieper Lanolin, interview by author, September 30, 2016, Miami, FL; Deirdre Todd, interview by author, October 21, 2016, Telephone.

<sup>284</sup> María J. Cazabon, “The History of Merici Academy,” provided by María J. Cazabon.

<sup>285</sup> Joan Pieper Lanolin, interview by author, September 30, 2016, Miami, FL.

Merici alum Sonia Díaz explains, “My mother was very pro-American. She loved the culture, she loved everything. So the moment Merici opened in Havana in 1941...she knew about the school and then...I started school when I was four years old.”<sup>286</sup> Interviews confirm that the children regularly sang *God Bless America*. Further, Merici uniforms were comprised of short sleeves, ankle socks and an open collar, which emphasized the Anglo-American character of the school while causing a stir in Havana’s conservative circles, which expected school girls to be more fully covered.<sup>287</sup> However, most Merici parents recognized the value in their children’s ability to navigate Anglo-American culture. María J. Cazabon recalls that her “father had a great admiration for [the United States]. He wanted his children to learn English.... Most Cubans, educated Cubans, were very much aware of the need to teach their children English.”<sup>288</sup> Many Cuban parents hoped the liberalizing influence of Anglo-Americans would position their daughters for success in the modern world.<sup>289</sup>

As the Cuban students of Anglo-American schools took their place among the island’s power brokers, they privileged Anglo-American forms of knowledge and found it in their best interest to expand the influence of Anglo-American institutions. Their personal privilege depended on the reproduction and proliferation of Anglo-American culture across the island. Those educated in foreign-run academies fought to support and protect Anglo-American institutions, as their personal educational background was evaluated as prestigious, due to the

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<sup>286</sup> Sonia Díaz, Christina Morales & Beatriz Guasch, interview by author, October 25, 2016, Miami, FL.

<sup>287</sup> Sonia Díaz, Christina Morales & Beatriz Guasch, interview by author, October 25, 2016, Miami, FL; María J. Cazabon, “The History of Merici Academy,” provided by María J. Cazabon.

<sup>288</sup> María J. Cazabon, interview by author, November 11, 2016, Miami, FL.

<sup>289</sup> In a survey taken of the 10-leading companies in manufacturing, public utilities, petroleum and banking: stenographer-typists in mostly Spanish made 187 pesos per month, while those typing in English and Spanish made 232 pesos per month. United States Bureau of Foreign Commerce, “Investment in Cuba,” 185, CHC.

high-standing Western-styled schooling garnered in Cuba before the revolution. In the 1930s, Methodist Sarah Lou MacKinnon explained how Candler and Buenavista positioned their graduates for success, who in turn used strategic influence to support Methodist projects: “The former students and patrons of the school are now holding influential positions in the island; [they are] the best friends our educational work has, both in interpreting the school to the public and in securing fair and just government regulations.”<sup>290</sup> In this way, Anglo-American educational institutions, both religious and secular, sustained the status of Anglo-American residents as privileged outsiders and fostered the rise of Cuban professionals as privileged insiders. The new alliances were mutually appealing; both groups benefited from the socio-economic hierarchies established through cross-cultural cooperation.

### ***Ruston Academy***

Among the most well-established and celebrated schools in Cuba, Ruston Academy was distinguished as an elite knowledge-producing institution and the pride of the Anglo-American colony. Founded as a school for Anglo-American children in 1920, by the 1950s it had become a central contact zone where the children of prominent Cuban professionals would be educated alongside Havana’s Anglo-American youths. In the 1950s Cubans represented 65 percent of Ruston’s students and 72 percent of Ruston’s teachers as the school headmaster James Baker worked hard to ensure an elite, intercultural experience.<sup>291</sup> As long-term residents of the Anglo-American colony, the Baker family enjoyed the respect of Anglo-American residents, and many within the Cuban community. In the late 1950s John Molanphy studied at Ruston, while his grandfather Oscar García Montes served as the Minister of Development in the Batista

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<sup>290</sup> Mackinnon, “The Outlook for Cuba is Different,” 28.

<sup>291</sup> James D. Baker, *Ruston: From Dreams to Reality* (E-Book: Ruston-Baker Educational Institution, 2007), 7.

government. In an interview, Molanphy was ecstatic as he offered colorful memories of Ruston: “Ruston was an amazing fucking school.... There was an article in *Time Magazine* about the highest admissions rates to top colleges in the United States, and there were the Ivy League prep schools, and...one of the schools that had the highest admissions rates was Ruston Academy.”<sup>292</sup>

Guillermo Martínez, class of 1959, remembers having “a fit” because he was being sent to Ruston, separated from his cousins bound for Belen Academy, the country’s top Jesuit high school. He recalls that his father tried to explain: “I’m going to give you a gift that someday you’ll thank me for.... My father [Guillermo Martínez Márquez] said English was the international language and I needed to learn English.”<sup>293</sup> Though his father spoke little English himself, as the editor of *El País*, one of the largest newspapers in Cuba, Guillermo, the elder, recognized that mobility and success in a Cuban society saturated with Anglo-American influence required the ability to communicate in English. Martínez was not alone in his insight. Many relatively wealthy Cubans appraised Ruston as an opportunity for their children to thrive in an economy dominated by foreign capital and brokered in English. By the time Modesto Maidique’s mother and step-father were searching for a high school for their son, Modesto’s aunt had risen to the level of Inspector General of Public Schools in Havana. She advised sending Maidique to Ruston, which she described as “by far the best school in the whole country.”<sup>294</sup> Distinguished Cubans from across professions sent their offspring to Ruston, including the son of President Fulgencio Batista, the niece of former President Carlos Prío, the great niece of Cuban sugar magnate Julio Lobo, as well as the children of newspaper editors, bank executives, high-

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<sup>292</sup> John Molanphy, interview by author, June 23, 2016, New York, NY.

<sup>293</sup> Guillermo Martínez, interview by author, November 4, 2016, Miami, FL.

<sup>294</sup> Modesto Maidique, interview by author, October 3, 2016. Miami, FL.

ranking military officers, lawyers, and future members of the first revolutionary cabinet. Many of these powerful Cuban families likely saw their child's education at a school filled with the children of Anglo-American executives and diplomats as an opportunity to gain access to Anglo-American social networks, and eventually Anglo-American capital for themselves or their children. In the midst of so many elite families, an awkward situation erupted on the Ruston campus when Batista ousted President Carlos Prío Socarrás in the 1952 coup. On that day, both Batista's son and Prío's niece, students in the same Ruston class, anxiously sought information about the safety of their respective families. They comforted each other as the family patriarchs sought to consolidate their control over the island and convince U.S. power brokers that they should lead Cuba.<sup>295</sup>

The history of Ruston traces back to the growing Anglo-American colony, that in September 1920, advocated for the development of an elite prep school for Havana's white English-speaking youths.<sup>296</sup> A decade later, doors opened to Cubans, offering them a curriculum distinct from that of the Anglo-American students, which would prepare Cuban youngsters for lucrative jobs within Anglo-American companies. According to former headmaster and school biographer James Baker, the school's founder and namesake Hiram Ruston, "Saw the need for well-trained, bilingual secretaries and bookkeepers and opened a Commercio Department in the early '30s.... This Upper School department provided courses that developed proficiency in the two chief languages of Latin American commerce and prepared students for work in businesses concerned with Latin America."<sup>297</sup> A vocational track was established for Cuban children. A

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<sup>295</sup> Chris Baker, interview by author, November 19, 2013, Telephone.

<sup>296</sup> Baker, *Ruston*, 2.

<sup>297</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

decade later, in the early 1940s, Mr. Ruston decided that the school should also prepare Cuban students for admission to the University of Havana. He introduced the Bachillerato Department, which followed a state-mandated curriculum with an additional English-language component.<sup>298</sup> The division of students served the practical function of preparing Anglo-Americans and Cubans for a future of economic and political leadership that awaited them. Ruston Academy prided itself on providing an academic environment that nurtured intercultural interaction on school grounds, even if this was less apparent within respective classrooms.<sup>299</sup>

At Ruston, most of the intercultural interactions among students took place in the school yard; not in the classroom, and generally not after school. Still, Ruston remained a rare setting where Cubans and Anglo-Americans could interact. Ruston graduate Joan Coles remembers, “At the school my best friends were Cuban,” but paused to comment that contact was limited to the school day. Coles does not remember socializing with these friends outside of Ruston Academy.<sup>300</sup> Bonnie Wroth Reiff, who attended Ruston and whose father worked as Dean of the Episcopal Church in Vedado, recalls: “[I] Felt very close to Cubans, but don’t recall going to their houses.”<sup>301</sup> The culturally gated character of the Anglo-American colony, in concert with the different educational tracks Cubans and Anglo-American youths pursued, stymied the development of more intensely integrated cross-cultural intimacies beyond school grounds. While Ruston aimed for diversity, it responded to local realities by rooting itself in Anglo-American values and traditions, and, in large part, remained stratified academically by

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<sup>298</sup> Ibid.

<sup>299</sup> “Candler College Brochure 1941,” UMAHS, Candler College, 1:46.

<sup>300</sup> Joan Coles, interview by author, October 25, 2013, Telephone.

<sup>301</sup> Bonnie Wroth Reiff, interview by author, October 19, 2016, Telephone.

nationality. Ruston's leaders were deliberate in their desire to not become identified primarily as a Cuban school, as had happened to Candler, Buenavista and Merici. James Baker explains, "When more Cubans than Americans applied for admission to the Lower School, admission policies were established to maintain the balance of the two groups. We believed the school could best achieve its goals by seeking to have this balance."<sup>302</sup> Baker and Ruston understood that the Anglo-American identity of the school garnered it prestige.

At the same time, however, Ruston's leadership envisioned the school as a transcultural space, where Anglo-American ideals predominated, but remained in conversation with Cuban culture. An article in the *Havana Post* from February 1953 commented that Ruston "has always emphasized the value of Cuban culture and attempted to awaken Cuban students to the challenge presented by the great potentialities of their rich land. It has been Ruston's desire to develop in students the most valuable type of patriotism, that which causes one to dedicate his life to working for his country to help develop her resources."<sup>303</sup> With an emphasis on democracy and access to developing transnational socio-economic alliances, relatively wealthy Cubans, members of the Anglo-American business community, and foreign diplomats all seemed to approve of these goals. These groups not only enrolled their children at Ruston, but also contributed large sums of money toward the school's maintenance.<sup>304</sup>

To attract foreign dollars, James Baker emphasized the school's Anglo-American character in his fundraising campaigns; he would explicitly detail the "democratic values" of the

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<sup>302</sup> Baker, *Ruston*, 7.

<sup>303</sup> *Ibid.*, 97-98.

<sup>304</sup> Joining Mr. Baker and his wife Syble as board members of the prestigious international academy were wealthy businessmen like Burke Hedges, acclaimed Cuban professor of history at the University of Havana, Herminio Portell Vilá. CHC, Ruston Academy Records, 5293, Box 1 Folder 4.

school when soliciting support from U.S. power brokers in Washington and Havana.<sup>305</sup> Baker explained “that by sharing [democratic values] with Cubans, the school could contribute to the development of democracy in Cuba...”<sup>306</sup> In 1952, the same year Batista overthrew Cuba’s democratic structures, Baker solicited money for Ruston from the Inter-American Schools Service (IASS) of the State Department, after he had been warned that continued funding efforts were potentially going to be curbed. Addressing the IASS, he emphasized the essential link of a Western-styled education and the rise of democracy by articulating: “How great is the need for an understanding that education should provide methods for developing mature, responsible adults, well prepared for a democratic way of living.”<sup>307</sup> For another seven years, through to 1959, the school continued to receive generous contributions from the Department of State. Ruston depended on these payments, as James Baker expressed to William E. Dunn, director of the IASS in October of 1955, “We are also encountering difficulty in collecting some of our pledges. As the idea of contributions of this sort is new to Cubans, it seems that some of them do not appreciate the hardship caused by their failure to make promised payments.”<sup>308</sup> By mobilizing the development rhetoric popular among U.S. policy makers at the time, and celebrating the commitments to education as “democracy,” Baker convinced potential donors that the stability of Ruston as an intercultural knowledge-producing institution was key to their larger diplomatic agenda in Cuba.

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<sup>305</sup> James Baker to Roy Tasco Davis, October 7, 1952, CHC, Ruston Academy Records, 5293, Box 3, Folder 11.

<sup>306</sup> James Baker, “The Beginning of the Pedro Pan Program in Cuba,” (1998), provided by Chris Baker.

<sup>307</sup> James Baker to Roy Tasco Davis, October 7 1952, CHC, Ruston Academy Records, 5293, Box 3, Folder 11.

<sup>308</sup> James Bakers to William E. Dunn, October 19, 1955, CHC, Ruston Academy Records, 5293, Box 3, Folder 11.

North American and British businessmen with interests in Cuba recognized the economic advantages of an Anglo-American-run, elite knowledge-producing institution in Havana from where they might recruit employees. Many foreign executives sought Cuban workers fluent in English, comfortable with Western norms and exhibiting healthy admiration for Anglo-American culture. Donating to Ruston could be interpreted as an investment in the development of Cuban personnel who would willingly work for or with Anglo-American corporations. G.N. Boesinger, Secretary of the Cuban Atlantic Sugar Company, donated \$3,000 in December 1953, to Ruston Academy through American Council of Education.<sup>309</sup> The American Sugar Refining Company donated \$1,000 to Ruston in 1955.<sup>310</sup> *Readers Digest*, with close ties to the Anglo-American colony, also contributed \$1,000 in 1953 alone.<sup>311</sup> Wealthy and influential Anglo-American residents like Burke Hedges, who held deep roots in Cuba and grew his father's textile company to become one of the largest industrialists on the island, served on the Ruston Board.

Despite intimate relationships developed in occupational, educational and social settings, Cubans did not fully fit within the imagined community of Anglo-American residents. Ruston proved unexceptional in this regard. Ruston alum John Corbin, today an anthropologist who writes about his childhood in Cuba, remembers, "When, as sometimes happened, school authorities sought to ensure American practice outside the school, they usually excluded Cubans. On one occasion...[Baker], concerned that American boys might be adopting the Cuban practice of visiting brothels, called an extraordinary, after-hours meeting of the American high school boys.... Cuban boys were excluded from the meeting." Corbin explains, "Cuban sexual behavior

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<sup>309</sup> Memo, Roy Tasco Davis to Miss Elizabeth Apple Davis, December 29, 1952, CHC, Ruston Academy Records, 5293, Box 3, Folder 12.

<sup>310</sup> "Aid From Private Sources," March 7, 1955, CHC, Ruston Academy Records, 5293, Box 3, Folder 11.

<sup>311</sup> Roy Tasco Davis to James Baker, July 8, 1953, CHC, Ruston Academy Records, 5293, Box 3, Folder 12.

was excluded from the field of Americanisation and American boys were pressured to exclude a Cuban practice.”<sup>312</sup> Institutional integration did not erode, and often reinforced national identities.

The variety of economic and strategic political benefits of Ruston were obvious to Anglo-American corporations, to Cuban professionals and to parents in the Anglo-American colony. As envisioned by educational leaders like James Baker, Ruston and other Anglo-American cultural institutions altered Cuban expectations of their own society. Further, schools like Ruston operated as contact zones that catalyzed personal intimacies between Cubans and foreigners. From within the halls of these schools emerged both a rich revolutionary movement, and later a counter-revolutionary ethos, where Anglo-Americans engaged with Cuban allies both for, and then against, the structural changes sweeping the island. Attempting to exert influence over Cuban students, and in doing so alter Cuban society, the Anglo-Americans themselves were fundamentally altered by their participation in these contact zones.

***Reforming the “Cuban Personality”: A High-Priority Objective of the U.S. Embassy***

Until the social personality of Cuba is remade, the United States will always find it difficult to obtain from Cuba full and forthright cooperation. For that reason a high-priority USIS objective in Cuba must be precisely that of contributing toward the remaking of the Cuban personality, and much of the work toward that end must be carried on in the schools.

– U.S. Embassy Dispatch, February 19, 1953<sup>313</sup>

As Anglo-American cultural institutions sought to impact Cuban values, their efforts were aided by the United States Information Services (USIS) of the U.S. Embassy in Havana that developed educational projects in the broader community to reorient the Cuban personality and

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<sup>312</sup> John Corbin, “*Cubanos, Americanos and Modes of Being Between in Pre-Castro Cuba*,” in *Connecting Cultures*, Emma Bainbridge ed. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2008): 165-172, 170.

<sup>313</sup> U.S. Embassy Dispatch, February 19, 1953, U.S. National Archives (USNA), College Park, MD, Group 59/250 – 1950-54, Box 2341.

to ward off communist threats to U.S. influence in Cuba. To this end the U.S. State Department planted stories and cartoons in Cuban papers like *Mañana* and *Excelsior*, while distributing North American-authored books to Cuban schools and students.<sup>314</sup> These efforts mirrored the CIA program, Operation Mockingbird, which during the same time period sought to recruit U.S. journalists to propagate narratives, carry out assignments and gather intelligence to advance prerogatives of the U.S. intelligence community.<sup>315</sup> In the 1950s the State Department created radio programming which strove “to promote the support of democratic ideals and to combat the propaganda of communism and other forces of totalitarianism.” They found most Cuban radio stations “demonstrated a willingness to cooperate.”<sup>316</sup> By using the medium of radio, the U.S. Embassy could propagate pro-American and anti-communist messages to Cubans who were not literate and held no formal educational training.

With rising tension on the island in the late 1950s, the U.S. Embassy also sponsored Cubans seeking an education in the United States. While framed as altruistic, this project developed in pursuit of the State Department’s geopolitical goals. The stated aim of exposing Cubans to U.S. forms of knowledge was “directed toward creating in Cuba a public opinion receptive to U.S. foreign policy objectives, as well as a greater understanding of those objectives as a direct by-product of study and training in the U.S....” In funding Cuban students abroad,

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<sup>314</sup> “Vice Consul in Santiago Preforms Service for USIS-Habana,” June 19, 1953, USNA, Group 59/250 – 1950-54, Box 2341.

<sup>315</sup> Carl Bernstein, “The CIA and the Media” *Rolling Stone* 250 (October 1977), Accessed July 1, 2018 [http://carlbernstein.com/magazine\\_cia\\_and\\_media.php](http://carlbernstein.com/magazine_cia_and_media.php).

<sup>316</sup> “Vice Consul in Santiago Preforms Service for USIS-Habana,” June 19, 1953, USNA, Group 59/250 – 1950-54, Box 2341.

Embassy officials aimed to “insulate Cubans against the economic illusions of Communism.”<sup>317</sup>

The expressed hope of embassy officials was that Cubans “in such key fields as the arts, science, education, journalism, radio and TV...realized the increasingly important cultural contributions made by the U.S. to the world’s treasure house, thus giving the lie to Communist charges that the U.S. is without a culture of its own.”<sup>318</sup>

Embassy officials further sought to re-orient Cuban perceptions of the United States through popular culture, working with foreign corporations to expose Cuban and Caribbean workers to U.S. films that would stymie dissent among the rural poor. U.S. diplomats organized showings of North American films to tens of thousands of Cubans monthly, particularly in regions dominated by U.S.-owned sugar mills. Their target audience included “labor groups, teachers and their students, and Negroes” as these groups presented the greatest potential threat to Anglo-American capital and control. An embassy dispatch from June 19, 1953, concluded, “The films of highest impact are those that teach something, which offer the people something they could use, those which awaken an interest in things American and which spark admiration for United States ‘know-how.’” While developing a healthy admiration for “things American,” challenges to the status quo would not be promoted through this propaganda. The embassy explicitly avoided films on the struggle of workers, as they could “plant the seeds of further labor unrest, possibly even against the best interests of American employers.”<sup>319</sup>

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<sup>317</sup> Francis J. Donahue, “Educational Exchange: Field Coordination of Fiscal Year 1958 Operations Involving ICA Participants-Technicians and IES Foreign and American Grantees,” March 4, 1957, USNA, Group 59/250 – 1955-1959, Box 584.

<sup>318</sup> Ibid.

<sup>319</sup> “Vice Consul in Santiago Performs Service for USIS-Habana” June 19, 1953, U.S. National Archives, College Park, MD. Dispatch 654, Group 59/250 – 1950-54, Box 2341.

## *Conclusions*

At the turn of the twentieth century, along with large financial investments, Anglo-American missionaries, educators, journalists and diplomats arrived in Havana with the aim of modernizing Cuban society and exporting Anglo-American values. They continually evolved a logic and cultivated Cuban allies to advance Anglo-American authority in the first half of the twentieth century. By the 1950s, many Cubans came to understand that fluency in the language, engagement with the customs and operating in the same social circles as Anglo-Americans could position them and their children for socio-economic success. In promoting Anglo-American knowledge forms, North American and British schools and diplomats legitimized foreign influence, while creating partners and/or employees for Anglo-American capital. In this way, generally earnest efforts to improve the lives of Cubans led to the reproduction of socio-economic hierarchies that maintained the elevated status of Anglo-American residents and incentivized privileged Cubans to perpetrate and legitimize foreign forms of knowledge. In this way, a small group of relatively wealthy Cubans who were locked in alliances with Anglo-Americans in Havana worked to normalize informal empire, on which their own positions had been established, and through which their own privilege would be maintained.

## CHAPTER FIVE: THE SEGREGATION AND TRANSCULTURATION OF HAVANA'S ANGLO-AMERICAN COLONY

### *Introduction*

In his volume *Orientalism*, Edward Said argued that dominant groups expand their cultural reach by “othering” groups who have been colonized, oppressed or marginalized through the marketplace, social ideology, political institutions and in the intimacies of social relationships. Through segregated residences, language, media, social practices, schooling of their children, and religious services, a close-knit Anglo-American colony merged the white English-speaking foreign residents of Havana by celebrating internal commonalities, and marking differences from Cubans. While justification for Anglo-American influence generally centered on presumably benevolent notions of economic, political and cultural development, Anglo-American social institutions often pursued and enforced stratification between Anglo-American residents and Cubans. John Corbin commented that Anglo-American “institutions were imperfect vehicles for transmitting North American forms... [as they] systematically excluded Cubans.”<sup>320</sup> These vigilant identity commitments were particularly apparent in Anglo-American parents who were anxious to secure their children’s national identities while they grew up abroad. Through their embrace of heritage and a commitment to Anglo-American cultural institutions, North American and British residents consistently reminded the children of the Anglo-American colony of their “true” homelands. While, over time, select Cubans were invited into many of these institutions, the intent largely remained to recreate Anglo-American havens,

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<sup>320</sup> Corbin, “*Cubanos, Americanos and Modes of Being Between in Pre-Castro Cuba*,” 468.

distinct from Cuban society at large, and to assimilate those Cubans who entered, while avoiding assimilation themselves.

Between 1898 and 1959, despite the institutional segregation by nationality, members of the Anglo-American colony in Havana became deeply entangled with Cubans from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. They developed stratified relationships with most Cubans, particularly those who served as lower and mid-level employees in Anglo-American companies, or as service workers in Anglo-American homes, as well as the bars, casinos, restaurants and brothels visited by Anglo-American residents. Yet simultaneously, socio-economic alliances formed between Anglo-American residents and the families of Cuban professionals who spoke English and sent their children to Anglo-American schools in Cuba or abroad. These Cubans transcended their status as “other,” entering with provisional acceptance into the Anglo-American social orbit, and occasionally marrying foreign nationals. As cultural translators, these Cubans influenced the perceptions of the Anglo-American colony extensively during the tumult of the 1950s and 1960s.

In his 1947 work *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*, Fernando Ortiz challenged the premise of acculturation in Cuba, that Cubans merely adopted the culture of the politically and economically influential Spanish or later Anglo-American residents. Ortiz argued instead that through the processes of *transculturation*, members of Cuban society selectively and strategically adopted, rejected and negotiated aspects of a variety of cultures. He explained, “In Cuba the term Ciboney, Taino, Spaniard, Jew, English, French, Anglo-American, Negro, Yucatec, Chinese, and Creole do not mean merely different elements that go into the make-up of the Cuban nation, as expressed by their different indications of origin.”<sup>321</sup> Ortiz continues “The

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<sup>321</sup> Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint*, 99, 102-103.

result of every union of cultures is similar to that of the reproductive process between individuals: the offspring always has something of both parents, but is always different from each of them.”<sup>322</sup> The language of transculturation helps decode the complex mechanisms through which hierarchies of nationality reproduced themselves, but also how those structures diversified with the strengthening of cross-cultural socio-economic alliances.

This chapter explores the dynamics of segregation and transculturation in Anglo-American institutions within Havana. By interrogating transnational relations within intermarriage, social clubs and schools, we observe the reproduction hierarchies that enshrined the status of privileged Anglo-American outsiders and a select community of privileged Cuban insiders. These cross-cultural alliances shifted identities and aspirations for Cubans, as well as Anglo-Americans residing on the island.

*Moving to Havana, Becoming a Privileged Outsider*



Figure 12. Havana Yacht Club, Circa 1950s <sup>323</sup>

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<sup>322</sup> Ortiz, 99, 102-103.

<sup>323</sup> Provided by Craig Hartley.

Anglo-Americans eagerly embraced the luxuries afforded them as privileged outsiders in Havana. U.S. resident John Parker reflected that Anglo-American executives “spent years jockeying their way up the corporate ladder to qualify for a Havana post which was considered the top.”<sup>324</sup> Anglo-Americans could live with luxuries unimaginable in their home societies. Joseph Goltz, a movie distributor for Columbia Pictures, Fox, United Artists and Paramount, moved his family from Texas to a home in Miramar a half block from the ocean with a Jamaican live-in maid. His son Albert explained that in terms of “standard of living, there was no comparison.... By American salary standards [dad earned] a very middle-class salary. It wasn’t a phenomenal salary, but translated into local currency in those days, it allowed them to live at a much higher standard of living.”<sup>325</sup> Anglo-American employers enticed North Americans and British nationals to move their families to Havana by offering numerous benefits unavailable to the majority of workers in the United States, England and Canada. Often their companies provided support for home expenses, as well as membership to elite social clubs like the Havana Yacht Club and the Biltmore Yacht and Country Club for their U.S. employees. British and Canadian residents--along with a few U.S. nationals--often belonged to the Rovers’ Club instead. Their salaries allowed for the employment of full-time domestic servants, while also providing significant vacation time. Ann Landreth Gund, the daughter of the Sterling Winthrop manager in Cuba, detailed the standard package for Anglo-American residents in Cuba: “a bigger salary and...usually...a three-month home leave in the summer” for working abroad.<sup>326</sup>

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<sup>324</sup> Gianelloni, *We Remember Cuba*, 231.

<sup>325</sup> Albert Goltz, interview by author, August 6, 2016, Bethesda, MD.

<sup>326</sup> Ann Landreth Gund interview by author, July 7, 2016, Cambridge, MA.

The comparative luxury enjoyed by Anglo-Americans and Cubans of means made Havana a desirable home for transnational couples. Ann's childhood friend, Deirdre Todd, was born to a Cuban father, Carlos Todd, and a U.S.-born mother, Ann Cotter. Todd recalls, "When you had money in Havana, you lived a lot better than if you had money in the United States."<sup>327</sup>

Like Todd, with a U.S.-born mother and a Cuban father, Michael Sanjenis held membership in both the relatively exclusive Anglo-American colony and the surrounding Cuban society. From this unique position, he observed that members of the Anglo-American colony "had lavish lives...they all lived much better than they would've lived at home [in the United States], you know. Maids, chauffeurs, this, that and the other, nice places, nice houses."<sup>328</sup> These domestic luxuries were articulated by Cuban Rosalie Pincus who married U.S. national Meyer Fuchsberg in New York City, got pregnant and "decide[d] there is no way she's washing clothes, and in Cuba you have a lot of help. She want[ed] to go home.... There was no comparison."<sup>329</sup> It did not take long for Anglo-American partners of Cuban wives and husbands to come to appreciate their improved status after moving to Havana.

Most Anglo-Americans enjoyed a level of luxury and social prestige unimaginable in their home societies. Cathy Brown Crescioni remembers her father Melville adored the leisure of his Havana lifestyle: "There wasn't the pressure to be at work...if you want to play golf, go play golf." She remembers the frequent visits from people at the company headquarters "in Cedar Rapids who had any excuse to come to Cuba."<sup>330</sup> U.S. resident J. Bruce Swigert concurred,

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<sup>327</sup> Deirdre Todd, interview by author, October 21, 2016, Telephone.

<sup>328</sup> Michael Sanjenis, interview by author, June 28, 2016, New York, NY.

<sup>329</sup> Adele Fuchsberg, interview by author, June 24, 2016, New York, NY.

<sup>330</sup> Cathy Brown Crescioni, interview by author, August 22, 2016, Champlin, MN.

explaining that the cache of an Anglo-American identity led to real benefits in the workplace: “For those of us in business, there was a faint sense of greater security.... Nobody could fire us, even if we screwed up.”<sup>331</sup> U.S., British and Canadian residents in Havana enjoyed privileges out of reach for most Cubans, as well as their compatriots living back home. Many began their time in Cuba at one of the luxury hotels, perhaps the Hotel Nacional or Ambos Mundos. Although the boundaries around Havana’s exclusive neighborhoods expanded outward over time, by the 1950s the Anglo-Americans lived comfortably among wealthy Cubans in the posh neighborhoods of Vedado, Country Club, Biltmore, Coronela and Miramar.

Domestic help was a staple of the Anglo-American household in 1950s Havana. Anglo-American homes in Havana typically employed at least one live-in maid.<sup>332</sup> Anglo-American households with children often hired a Cuban or a British West Indian nanny as well. Many also employed a cook, a chauffeur and/or a gardener, who either lived in the homes they served, or commuted to and from the house for what generally amounted to a six-day work week. A local economy revolved around the comfort of privileged outsiders. Gund recalls, “To our credit, I don’t know if it was the case too with other people down there, but we had six servants, one of them, the gardener, didn’t live with us; the others all lived with us and we supported them.”<sup>333</sup> John Parker’s collection of essays published on the Anglo-American experience before the revolution confirms the pattern of increased expectations for comforts for privileged outsiders in Cuba. Parker explains, “many Americans who came from ‘do it yourself U.S.’ were new to the

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<sup>331</sup> J. Bruce Swigert to Louis A. Pérez, Jr., September 27, 1991, WL, Louis A. Pérez Jr., Papers, Letters 1991-1992 Folder 1.

<sup>332</sup> Mary Casas Knapp, interview by author, September 23, 2016, Telephone.

<sup>333</sup> Ann Landreth Gund interview by author, July 7, 2016, Cambridge, MA.

custom of having servants to do the housework.”<sup>334</sup> Still, it seems that most found little difficulty adapting to their new realities. Mrs. J. Dykes Granberry described Havana as a “homemaker’s paradise, thanks to the climate and the availability of domestic help.”<sup>335</sup>

Anglo-American needs were well accommodated, including in the realms of child care, domestic assistance and emergency health care. In the event of a health crisis, the advantages of being an Anglo-American in Cuba were substantial. When Evelyn Edstrom Benson lost her ability to walk after contracting polio, B.F. Goodrich, the company that employed her husband Donald G. Benson, encouraged the family to move back to headquarters in Akron, Ohio. Their son James remembers his father declined the company’s offer explaining, “I can get help here for my wife that I can’t get there.” James continued, “This was way before the Americans with Disabilities Act where you had ramps and all the other stuff.... So we stayed down there and basically had people in the house. We had a cook and a maid.”<sup>336</sup> The Bensons remained in Cuba until July 24, 1960.<sup>337</sup>

Often Anglo-Americans compensated domestic workers poorly, relying upon existing salary models provided by wealthy Cubans. Ken Campbell, whose family traced its settlement in Cuba back to the late 1910s, or early 1920s, recalls, “I think we paid our household help like \$20 a month. So were there people who resented us? Sure, but they resented the rich Cubans too I think.”<sup>338</sup> With social interactions largely limited to Cuban professionals, Anglo-Americans

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<sup>334</sup> Gianelloni, *We Remember Cuba*, 121.

<sup>335</sup> “Church Panel Discusses Life of the Colony Woman,” *Times of Havana*, April 10, 1958, 4.

<sup>336</sup> Jim and Margaret Benson, interview by author, September 12, 2016, Fuquay-Varina, NC.

<sup>337</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>338</sup> Ken Campbell, interview by author, July 19, 2016, New Canaan, CT.

buttressed existing class hierarchies between rich and poor on the island and rarely had to confront the resentment prior to 1959.

As in rural Cuba, black British Caribbean workers were often preferred as domestic servants for Anglo-Americans in Havana who did not speak Spanish. Their historic contact with British colonists, and their lack of privilege in Cuba forcing them to assimilate into Cuban society, made West Indians ideal translators of culture and language to newly arrived Anglo-American colony members. Margaret Benson came to Cuba when Esso moved the family down in the mid-1950s. Esso was an English-speaking business environment. Margaret reflected on why her mother hired Violette, the West Indian maid: “The reasons we hired the Jamaican was because they spoke English and Spanish.... It was easier for mom.”<sup>339</sup> Similarly, Cathy Brown Crescioni fondly recalls her Jamaican maids Cybil and Kathleen, who raised Cathy and her twin siblings, just 13 months younger, as triplets. Like Cathy’s mother, many Anglo-American residents depended on their British West Indian servants, as they themselves never learned Spanish.<sup>340</sup>

Lack of fluency in Spanish was typical for newly arriving and short-term Anglo-American residents, but also for some long termers who enjoyed life in segregated, English-only settings. John Parker recalls, “We knew Americans who had lived in Cuba for twenty-five years whose knowledge of Spanish consisted of only a few words. Most, though not all of these, were women who rotated in their own little colony orbit, hired English-speaking Jamaican servants and managed to survive very happily.”<sup>341</sup> As shown in early chapters, the legacy of British

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<sup>339</sup> Jim and Margaret Benson, interview by author, September 12, 2016, Fuquay-Varina, NC.

<sup>340</sup> Cathy Brown Crescioni, interview by author, August 22, 2016, Champlin, MN.

<sup>341</sup> Gianelloni, *We Remember Cuba*, 157.

Caribbean subjects serving the needs of Anglo-American residents extended well beyond cosmopolitan Havana. They proved pivotal to Anglo-American corporations throughout the island and along with Haitians--mostly imported during the U.S. occupation of Haiti--were particularly vulnerable to the anti-immigrant nationalist legislation of 1933, 1937 and 1940.<sup>342</sup> Their presence in Cuba helped the Anglo-American colony to mold local conditions to fit the needs of informal empire.

Often darker than their Cuban counterparts, people from the British Caribbean who worked as domestic servants faced racial hostility from some within the Anglo-American colony. In John Parker's collection of essays, he writes, "With all due respect for the occasional rare jewel that someone else had, the average Jamaican maid in Cuba was a freewheeling, man hunting, food stealing female who was a complete stranger to anything resembling the truth." Parker recommended to prospective members of the Anglo-American colony that they hire a Cuban maid who "would be willing enough, but would know nothing about practically everything, having just arrived from some town in the deep interior."<sup>343</sup> Still, British Caribbean women and men, uprooted by empire, displaced by language, and serving privileged outsiders, proved ironically pivotal to relatively smooth integration of Anglo-American corporations and families throughout the island.<sup>344</sup>

While they arrived in Havana with a variety of professional and personal aims, Anglo-American residents found themselves occupying space within an influential subculture of the cosmopolitan capital, constructed to their desired specifications. Close ties with Cuba's political,

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<sup>342</sup> Whitney, *Subjects or Citizens*, 60-61.

<sup>343</sup> Gianelloni, *We Remember Cuba*, 121.

<sup>344</sup> Whitney, *Subjects or Citizens*, 60-61.

professional and economic power brokers allowed Anglo-Americans and wealthy Cubans to reinforce the socio-economic hierarchies of the city and the nation that sustained their collective privilege. Their access to capital and status allowed Anglo-Americans living in Cuba luxuries most could not have achieved in their home societies. Meanwhile, their ability to depend on colonized British subjects accommodated the structures of informal empire.

### *Cultivating Privilege Through Segregation*



*Figure 13. The Mothers' Club* <sup>345</sup>

By developing fairly exclusive social, as well as business institutions in Havana, and by celebrating their respective national holidays with great flourish, the Anglo-American colony created mechanisms by which North American and British residents could solidify their own distinguished identities and avoid assimilation. This policy of segregation allowed Anglo-American parents to reinforce the national identities of their children raised abroad. With different degrees of orthodoxy, the Mothers' Club, the Daughters of the American Revolution, the American Legion, the Anglo-American Welfare Association, the American Chamber of

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<sup>345</sup> Provided by Cathy Brown Crescioni.

Commerce, the British Chamber of Commerce, the Petroleum Club, the American Club, the British Club, the Women's Club and the Episcopal Church Youth Group all reified an Anglo-American identity through nationality-based, exclusionary policies and/or practices. The widespread celebration of holidays including, the Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, Memorial Day, Empire Day, Saint Andrew's Day and Canada Day, emphasized an identity based on nationalist constructions of heritage.

Anglo-American families enjoyed separated English-language sermons at U.S.-led Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Catholic, and Jewish congregations in Havana. Shortly after their premier in the United States, foreign entertainment companies released a barrage of English-language movies and records by Anglo-American artists that arrived in Havana's shops and theaters.<sup>346</sup> U.S. companies and foreign governments often paid for their Anglo-American employees' membership in an impressive collection of country clubs dotting the Havana landscape. At these clubs, the social leaders of the Anglo-American colony organized regular golf and yachting tournaments for member of the Anglo-American colony.<sup>347</sup> Annually, the Dayton Hedges Cup Tournament pit the top resident golfers from the United States against those from the United Kingdom.<sup>348</sup> A former Cuban student at Ruston Academy, John Molanphy remembers, "The Americans saw themselves as typical Americans. They saw themselves as typical sort of suburban Americans."<sup>349</sup> For these "typical [white] Americans," in the move to Havana they gained an economic and social status unavailable to Anglo-Americans

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<sup>346</sup> Reflections of John Molanphy, who operated in Anglo-American institutions despite his Cuban heritage. John Molanphy, interview by author, June 23, 2016, New York, NY.

<sup>347</sup> Henry Goethals, "Golf Pro is a Tradition Out at Rovers' Club," *Times of Havana*, October 3, 1957, 8.

<sup>348</sup> "American, British Golfers to Tangle," *Times of Havana*, November 13, 1958, 16.

<sup>349</sup> John Molanphy, interview by author, June 23, 2016, New York, NY.

in their respective home societies, in large part by holding on to, as opposed to shedding their national identities.

Annually, the Anglo-American colony celebrated the Fourth of July with a breakfast or lunch at the American Club, before heading to a picnic hosted by the American Legion at the Hotel Nacional.<sup>350</sup> While members of the Anglo-American colony often participated in Cuban celebrations, and many Cubans came out for Anglo-American holidays, the Fourth of July proved a special event for the U.S. citizens who resided in Cuba because it helped reaffirm their national heritage. In 1957, over 1,500 members of the Anglo-American colony showed up to celebrate the event at the Hotel Nacional.<sup>351</sup> Longtime Anglo-American colony member William P. Bryant dressed up as Uncle Sam nearly every year for the two decades preceding the revolution.<sup>352</sup> U.S. companies marked the occasion by donating prizes to be raffled off to Anglo-American colony members, and the popular U.S.-owned restaurant The Yank donated a hot dog stand for the occasion. The *Star-Spangled Banner* was sung, followed by the *Pledge of Allegiance*, before the community held a slew of track and swimming competitions for the children of the Anglo-American colony.<sup>353</sup> The *Times of Havana* reported, “the President of the Republic and other officials join every year in offering their friendly congratulations to their friendly neighbor to the north and the Cuban newspapers prominently display American liberty

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<sup>350</sup> In 1924 the first American Legion-sponsored Fourth of July picnic hosted 800 children at the Playa de Marianao. Henry Goethals, “Legion Really Roared in the Roaring Twenties,” *Times of Havana*, July 17, 1958, 2.

<sup>351</sup> “Uncle Sam’s Nieces and Nephews Enjoy a ‘Glorious Sixth,’” *Times of Havana*, July 8, 1957, 6.

<sup>352</sup> “A Glorious Fourth,” *Times of Havana* July 7, 1958, 9; “Big Picnic Set Saturday,” *Times of Havana*, July 3, 1958, 8B; “Kiddies Really Had a Picnic at Fourth of July Fiesta,” *Times of Havana*, July 7, 1958, 4; “Uncle Sam’s Nieces and Nephews Enjoy a ‘Glorious Sixth,’” *Times of Havana*, July 8, 1957, 6.

<sup>353</sup> “Uncle Sam’s Nieces and Nephews Enjoy a ‘Glorious Sixth,’” *Times of Havana*, July 8, 1957, 6; “Complete List of Prizes and Winners Given For the Fourth of July Picnic,” *Times of Havana*, July 7, 1958, 5.

bells and other symbols of the Fourth of July.”<sup>354</sup> Daughters of the American Revolution hosted an annual trivia contest for Independence Day, while Ambassador Earl Smith inaugurated the Responsible Citizens Program “designed to encourage American High School Students in Cuba to live up to the ideals of American citizenship abroad.”<sup>355</sup> The size, influence and prosperity of the Anglo-American colony allowed this collection of foreigners to reproduce their own culture in ways inaccessible to other migrant communities. After nearly six decades of intensive foreign influence, these foreign nationals living their lives in Havana largely remained distinctly foreign.

The story of the Mothers’ Club reveals the thick entanglements of Anglo-American identity, capital, political influence and social institutions. Five Anglo-American women founded the Mothers’ Club in 1923 “to gather [Havana’s] English-speaking boys and girls together.”<sup>356</sup> In September 1956, the Mothers’ Club was moved to a larger space in La Coronela and became a central meeting place for the children of the Anglo-American colony. An intentional space of identity formation based on language, race and nationality, Anglo-American women attended the Mothers’ Club on Wednesdays with their youngsters and Thursdays with the older children. Representing over 250 families, the Mothers’ Club hosted youth track meets, ping-pong tournaments, hula-hoop competitions, baseball, softball, and volleyball matches.<sup>357</sup> Major League Baseball players participating in the Cuban Winter League occasionally came as guest

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<sup>354</sup> “Residents Will Pause to Mark Fourth,” *Times of Havana*, July 4, 1958, 21A.

<sup>355</sup> “Responsible Citizen,” *Times of Havana*, July 3, 1958, 16.

<sup>356</sup> *The Fifth Annual Program of Mothers’ Club of Havana, 1958-1959*, provided by Cathy Brown Crescioni.

<sup>357</sup> *The Fifth Annual Program of Mothers’ Club of Havana, 1958-1959*, provided by Cathy Brown Crescioni; “Family Supper Attracts Over 250 At Mothers Club,” *Times of Havana*, February 10, 1958, 8; Mothers’ Club Children Go All Out for Hula-Hoop,” *Times of Havana*, September 27, 1958, 5.

instructors for the boys of the Anglo-American colony.<sup>358</sup> Annually, the Mothers' Club held a Halloween party, a May Day celebration and a Valentine's Day dance. May Day proved a special event at the Mothers' Club, as races were held for the children who also decorated a May Day Pole.<sup>359</sup> Children selected a May Queen from among the 15-to-18-year-old girls who belonged to the club.<sup>360</sup> The Ria Jeffre Cup was awarded to the most outstanding boy or girl from the Anglo-American colony.<sup>361</sup>

North American and British companies invested in the Mothers' Club, a social space where cross-generational bonds were strengthened between the Anglo-American residents of Havana. In 1927, the British-owned United Railways of Havana purchased a plot of land which opened as a playground for the Mothers' Club in Marianao. Shortly thereafter, the Anglo-American Community Chest, a philanthropic cooperative of the Anglo-American business community in Havana, named the Mothers' Club as a beneficiary of the charitable organization. In 1929 the American Legion donated supplies and labor to construct an edifice for the mothers to meet. With the aid of these funds the Mothers' Club became an exclusive retreat for the children of privileged outsiders where young Anglo-American identities could be cultivated in the comfort of a relatively homogeneous community.

The Mothers' Club was not wholly an Anglo-American enterprise. The club's constitution explicitly confirmed the wives and children of the Cuban president, Havana's mayor

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<sup>358</sup> "Mothers' Club Ballplayers Get Pointers from Stars," *Times of Havana*, November 7, 1957, 7.

<sup>359</sup> "Pomp and Unceremonious Games Highlight May Day Fiesta," *Times of Havana*, April 28, 1958, 4.

<sup>360</sup> *The Fifth Annual Program of Mothers' Club of Havana, 1958-1959*, provided by Cathy Brown Crescioni.

<sup>361</sup> "Mothers Club Prepares for Presentation Supper," *Times of Havana*, May 13, 1957, 7; "Interesting Program of Events Slated as Mothers' Club to Open 35<sup>th</sup> Year," *Times of Havana*, September 27, 1958, 6.

and the Governor of Havana as honorary members.<sup>362</sup> While Margaret Benson remembers the youngest Batista son struggling to get down the slide of the Mothers' Club in the 1950s, few other former members recall significant participation by Cubans who did not have at least one Anglo-American parent.<sup>363</sup> In practice, the participants in weekly events represented, almost exclusively, Anglo-American households. Still, children from marriages between Cubans and Anglo-Americans actively participated in the Mothers' Club with the North American or British wives of Cuban professionals occasionally attaining roles in the Club's leadership as was the case with Helen López-Fresquet. A very small number of Cuban youngsters with close friends from North American schools attended events at the Mothers' Club, as in the case of Guillermo Martínez, whose mother was not a member.<sup>364</sup>

By design, Anglo-American residents attended the Mothers' Club, along with a number of other foreign cultural institutions, to reinforce the distinct national identities of their children growing up in a foreign country. By celebrating their respective nationalities, which garnered them privilege in Cuba before 1959, Anglo-Americans protected their influential status in Havana and throughout the island.

### ***Philanthropy in Havana's Anglo-American Colony***

The bonds that tied the Anglo-American colony together strengthened through community-wide charity projects. Yet Anglo-American philanthropy in Cuba largely reinforced existing hierarchies. Charity proved to be an important mechanism for bringing the community

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<sup>362</sup> The families of the Canadian, British and U.S. Ambassadors also received free honorary membership to the Mothers' Club. *The Fifth Annual Program of Mothers' Club of Havana, 1958-1959*, provided by Cathy Brown Crescioni.

<sup>363</sup> Jim and Margaret Benson, interview by author, September 12, 2016, Fuquay-Varina, NC.

<sup>364</sup> Guillermo Martínez, interview by author, November 4, 2016, Miami, FL.

together and manifested in a number of ways. The most obvious example was the development of an Anglo-American Welfare Foundation, which raised money for the benefit of Cuba's Anglo-American residents. Additionally, fundraising drives frequently collected cash for Anglo-American-led philanthropic projects, generally in the fields of education or toy drives around the holidays. Anglo-American residents also supported Cuban-led religious and educational institutions that promoted intercultural exchange, often training Cubans in Anglo-American customs, or the English language. Finally, the Anglo-American colony rallied around Cuban initiatives, often in support of Cuban medical projects, which they themselves could someday benefit from. Like most charities, Anglo-American funds supported causes that held meaning or value to the donors: investing in the Anglo-American colony itself and training Cubans to work for, serve and/or communicate with Anglo-American residents. Due to their disproportionate access to capital, these initiatives gained prestige for the causes they supported and improved reputation of the Anglo-American colony overall.

In Havana, charity programs of the Anglo-American colony often supported community functions. Established in 1927 as a project of the then-president of the American Chamber of Commerce in Cuba Hugo Hartenstein, the Anglo-American Welfare Foundation and its fund, the Community Chest, mobilized, collected and distributed charitable donations from the Anglo-American colony of Havana.<sup>365</sup> Theoretically, the fund supported the English-speaking community overall, yet in practice this generosity mostly benefitted the Anglo-American residents of Cuba, over the tens of thousands of African descendants from the United Kingdom's Caribbean colonies who also lived on the island.<sup>366</sup>

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<sup>365</sup> "Hugo Hartenstein Pioneered Community Chest for Colony," *Times of Havana*, April 17, 1958, 8.

<sup>366</sup> Whitney, *Subjects or Citizens*, 29, 156.

By 1958 the annual budget for the Anglo-American Welfare Foundation reached \$85,000.<sup>367</sup> The Welfare Foundation prioritized the non-profit Anglo-American Community Hospital as the primary beneficiary of this fund. Founded in 1921 as an English-language medical center designed specifically to serve the needs of U.S., British and Canadian residents, by the 1950s the Anglo-American Community Hospital relied on tens of thousands of dollars in donations from the Community Chest, as well as a number of the Anglo-American colony's charitable organizations including the Woman's Club of Havana, The Book and Thimble Society and the American Legion Auxiliary.<sup>368</sup> With Community Chest resources and the support of U.S., British and Canadian volunteer nurses, the Anglo-American Welfare Foundation founded the Anglo-American Home, a residence for elderly members of the colony with neither family, nor adequate income.<sup>369</sup> The Anglo-American Association established a burial center, creating a final resting place for Anglo-American residents of Cuba. The Community Chest sponsored the funerals of colony members who could not afford a burial.<sup>370</sup> The British Embassy provided donations to the Anglo-American Association that sponsored a second burial center for "colored nationals," thus, entrusting Anglo-Americans to manage funds for Havana's black British Caribbean population.<sup>371</sup>

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<sup>367</sup> "Welfare Foundation Sets New Budget," *Times of Havana*, February 10, 1958, 14.

<sup>368</sup> "Anglo-American Community Hospital Is a Story of Colonial Co-operation," *Times of Havana*, June 27, 1957, 5; "Anglo-American Hospital," *Times of Havana*, April 3, 1958, 9.

<sup>369</sup> "For Anglo-American Home Residents," *Times of Havana*, April 7, 1958, 4.

<sup>370</sup> "Your Community Chest: Few People Know of Burial Center," *Times of Havana*, April 10, 1958, 4.

<sup>371</sup> "Make No Mistake," *Times of Havana*, March 31, 1958, 6; "Welfare Activities of AAC Community," *Times of Havana*, April 14, 1958, 9.

In the late 1950s the head of Community Chest Drive, Chairman Kenneth Crosby, ensured close links between the charitable and business arms of the Anglo-American colony. Crosby simultaneously maintained his chair at Community Chest, his role as VP of the American Chamber of Commerce in Cuba and his day job as manager of Merrill-Lynch, Pierce, Fenner and Beane in Havana.<sup>372</sup> The Manager of the Royal Bank of Canada Philip H. Eaton took over as president of the Anglo-American Welfare Foundation in 1958.<sup>373</sup> By placing some of its wealthiest and best connected members at the head of the Anglo-American Welfare Foundation, the organization ensured it would remain financially solvent.

When the charities of the Anglo-American colony in Havana explicitly chose to support initiatives that aided Cubans, more often than not the funds were donated to Anglo-American-managed cultural endeavors. For instance, the St. Rita Guild held Rummage Sales to benefit underprivileged Cuban students at the El Cristo Parish School run by U.S. pastor John J. McKniff and located in Old Havana.<sup>374</sup> For the years before the revolution, El Cristo occupied a central position in the charitable campaigns of the Anglo-American St. Rita's Guild.<sup>375</sup> The Woman's and Mothers' Clubs undertook a concerted effort around Christmas to collect food and toys for underprivileged Cuban children.<sup>376</sup> The arrangement encouraged Anglo-Americans to

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<sup>372</sup> "Make No Mistake," *Times of Havana*, March 31, 1958, 6; "Chamber Re-elects Paul M. Heilman," *Times of Havana*, April 17, 1958, 4.

<sup>373</sup> "Anglo-American Welfare Group Elects Officers," *Times of Havana*, January 20, 1958, 6.

<sup>374</sup> "St. Rita's Guild to Give Luncheon," *Times of Havana*, March 17, 1958, 5; "A Day at the Rummage Sale with the St. Rita Guild," *Times of Havana*, November 7, 1957, 6.

<sup>375</sup> "A Day at the Rummage Sale with the St. Rita Guild," *Times of Havana*, November 7, 1957, 6; "Havana Hospitality," *Times of Havana*, October 18, 1958, 6.

<sup>376</sup> "Mothers Club Prepares for Presentation Supper," *Times of Havana*, May 13, 1957, 7; "Interesting Program of Events Slated as Mothers' Club to Open 35<sup>th</sup> Year," *Times of Havana*, September 27, 1958, 6; "Philanthropic Project set For Christmas," *Times of Havana*, November 29, 1958, 6.

donate to Anglo-American institutions, which then provided material relief to Cubans during the holiday season. While the toys were almost certainly appreciated by poor Cuban children, this type of exchange legitimized the logic and perceived trustworthiness of Anglo-American influence, without empowering Cubans.

The Anglo-American colony also joined Cuban-led welfare initiatives, acknowledging their own dependence on health of the Cuban society that surrounded them. In 1958 Gloria Grant Brandon issued an appeal to the Anglo-American colony to support a Cuban drive to raise money for the cancer treatment at Curie Hospital. In her appeal, Brandon focused on personal interests of the Anglo-American colony to encourage contributions to the cause writing, “We’d very much like to enlist the support of the colony in this drive considering the large number of colonyites who have been treated at the Curie Hospital in the past for cancer.” Donations on behalf of an Anglo-American youth guaranteed the listing of the child’s name “in the annual Anti-Cancer League drive booklet...in a special section [of *Diario de la Marina*] dedicated to the A-B-C committee.”<sup>377</sup>

Anglo-American charity at times took the form of promoting international exchange, providing opportunities for Cubans and Anglo-Americans to better understand one another’s culture. Between 1944-1958 the U.S. State Department and a collection of Anglo-American foundations like the Woman’s Club donated over \$500,000 to support Cuban students at U.S. educational institutions, as well as North Americans studying in Cuba.<sup>378</sup> The Anglo-American colony’s Little Theatre donated its earnings from the production “The Sleeping Prince” to benefit

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<sup>377</sup> “Anti-Cancer League Makes Appeal to the Anglo-American Colony,” *Times of Havana*, February 6, 1958, 7.

<sup>378</sup> Henry Goethals, “Cuban-U.S. Cultural Relations Steadily Growing, Says Portell Vilá,” *Times of Havana*, March 31, 1958, 2.

the Instituto Cultural Cubano-Norteamericano run by History Professor at the University of Havana Herminio Portell Vilá. With respected figures including educator James D. Baker, sugar magnate Laurence A. Crosby and intellectual Portell Vilá sitting on the board of the institute, the instituto, founded in 1943 attracted large sums of Anglo-American capital.<sup>379</sup> With support, instructors and money contributed by Anglo-Americans and the U.S. Embassy, the instituto offered a range of classes for Cubans, the most popular being English classes. By the late 1950s, the center offered three daily classes in English.<sup>380</sup> Thus, the charity from the Anglo-American colony in Havana that aided Cuban projects often simultaneously supported the economic goal of creating Cuban employees who could navigate Anglo-American norms and communicate in English while working for foreign corporations on the island.

### ***Moving Between: Privilege and Identity Flows through Friendship and Marriage***

Despite the overwhelming privilege and structured separation of Anglo-Americans in Havana, a slice of colony residents in many ways did integrate into the society in which they lived, through work, school and/or personal relationships. *Americanos aplanados* became the term used by Cubans and colony members to acknowledge those Anglo-Americans who moved between; these women and men, and even children were partially integrated into, and comfortable with, Cuban society. *Americanos aplanados* enjoyed distinguishing themselves from new arrivals, short-term residents and tourists. Christopher Baker, the son of Ruston Academy headmaster James Baker explained, “The *americano aplanado* usually had the vernacular as a language down pretty well. They had complete fluency. They had no difficulties interacting in most cases to different cultural patterns and differences.” Speaking from his

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<sup>379</sup> “English Classes are Popular at the Cultural Institute,” *Times of Havana*, December 5, 1957, 4.

<sup>380</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

Maryland living room in 2016, Baker explained that for him and other *americanos aplatados*, “Home was always Cuba. In fact, we share that in common with ‘exiles’ in the sense that you can’t go back. That’s the overriding feeling and shared emotional experience.”<sup>381</sup> Anthropologist and former Anglo-American colony member John Corbin concurred. Born in Cuba as the son of an Anglo-American restaurant owner, John Corbin observed the unusual space occupied by *americanos aplatados* in 1950s on the island. Corbin and his Cuban friends from Anglo-American cultural institutions “were most at ease with one another, with others who could follow when talk switched in mid-sentence from Spanish to English and then back again any number of words later, who stayed on the dance floor when *guaracha* followed rock and roll and vice versa, who enjoyed cokes as much as *granizados*, *tamales* as much as hot dogs.”<sup>382</sup> The intimate relationships developed between *americanos aplatados* and Cubans ensured that the ideas, aspirations and frustrations of Cuban professionals seeped into even the most segregated spaces of Havana’s Anglo-American colony.

Firmly grounded as citizens of the U.S., England or Canada, and yet raised in Cuba, and moving between cultures, *americanos aplatados* became more integrated into Cuban social lives than other members of the Anglo-American colony. They attained fluency in Spanish, surrounded themselves with Cuban friends and coworkers and lived in Cuba for extended periods of time. They generally enjoyed the semi-segregated edifices constructed by, and for Anglo-Americans in Cuba. Many would return to the United States, Canada or Europe for extended vacations and would attend summer camp, as well as university in their home

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<sup>381</sup> Chris Baker, interview by author, August 4, 2016, Maryland.

<sup>382</sup> Corbin, “*Cubanos, Americanos and Modes of Being Between in Pre-Castro Cuba*,” 171.

countries.<sup>383</sup> However, the inter-group solidarities and empathy formed by *americanos aplanados* and Cubans featured prominently during the revolutionary events of the 1950s and early 1960s. Because they had forged genuine relationships with members of the host society, *americanos aplanados* held insight into Cuban society, witnessed dynamics of Cuban suffering and shared a sense of struggle during the upheaval of the revolution and then the counter-revolution, significantly more than the typical Anglo-American transplant on the island.

For many, their intimate knowledge of the sounds and tastes of Havana came from their early years. Raised by Cuban domestic servants, from whom they learned Spanish, some remembered Spanish as their first language. Allyan Watson was born in Cuba to a mother from the United States and a Scottish father who worked for U.S.-owned Cubana de Electricidad. Watson explains, “I learned Spanish before I learned English because I was at home with the maids all day.”<sup>384</sup> Within the long-term sector of the Anglo-American colony, the experience of being raised in Spanish by Cuban maids was fairly normative. Anglo-American children of new arrivals often acquired the ability to communicate in Spanish before their parents who would generally use English at work, in their social circles and at home.

The long-term business community and the cultural brokers of the Anglo-American community who carried the label *americanos aplanados* prided themselves on their relative integration into their Cuban surroundings. They enjoyed being contrasted with the “other” Anglo-Americans who were in Havana for short work assignments, who rarely ventured beyond Anglo-American institutions. *Americanos aplanados* generally appreciated the advantages of Anglo-Americans being raised in Havana. Chris Baker reflected, “I felt that we were privileged

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<sup>383</sup> “Colony Children Heading for Summer Camp in U.S.,” *Times of Havana*, June 17, 1957, 7.

<sup>384</sup> Allyan Watson-Riviera, interview by author, July 12, 2016, Salem, MA.

to be Americans, but...growing up in Cuba gave us a whole range of things that we would not have had otherwise.”<sup>385</sup> U.S. born Anglo-American colony member Dorothy Todd Tanner affirmed this sentiment, marveling at the “fortune of [Anglo-American] children educated [in Cuba] who naturally grow up to be bilingual, never provincial, and with a world-wide view of life.”<sup>386</sup> Kathryn Wroe French felt Cuba offered an “opportunity for growth in practical knowledge and in social experience.”<sup>387</sup>

For *americanos aplanados*, identities proved complicated. Even in interviews between 2013-2018, many bristled at, or rejected, the simple identity signifiers Anglo-American or Cuban. John Corbin described the emergence of “a wider society of people who participated to varying degrees in both cultures. It contained *Cubanos*, who were familiar with American culture, people who were in some way both *Cubano* and American, and Americans who were familiar with Cuban culture.”<sup>388</sup> Former *americanos aplanados* and the Cubans with whom they engaged as peers articulated a fluid sense of self, that fell between pure or essentialist national identities. As Pérez has argued and Corbin explains, this new identity developing between Cubans and Anglo-American residents grew new layers, in social, educational and religious institutions managed or frequented by Anglo-Americans. As we will see, those who moved between the Anglo-American colony and Cuban society proved incredibly significant in mobilizing political consciousness among both Cubans and foreign nationals, emerging as

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<sup>385</sup> Chris Baker, interview by author, August 4, 2016, Maryland.

<sup>386</sup> “Church Panel Discusses Life of the Colony Woman,” *Times of Havana*, April 10, 1958, 4.

<sup>387</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>388</sup> Corbin, “*Cubanos*, *Americanos* and Modes of Being Between in Pre-Castro Cuba,” 171.

leaders and allies in both the revolutionary and counter-revolutionary struggles of the late 1950s and early 1960s.

More than any other form of relationship, intermarriage between Anglo-Americans and Cubans ensured that even in segregated Anglo-American spaces, Anglo-American residents were never totally isolated from or ignorant of the political upheaval in the 1950s. Over the course of the decade many Anglo-Americans became aware of the rising revolutionary consciousness and some became personally invested in these events. The Anglo-American community was home to many long-term romantic relationships between Cubans and U.S. nationals. Of the close to 1,000 married couples listed in the Havana section of the 1960 Anglo-American Directory of Cuba, 262 Anglo-American residents were married to Cubans or Cuban-Americans.<sup>389</sup> Intermarriages became the epi-center of transnational cultural exchange, though the dynamics varied depending on a number of factors including respective occupation, backgrounds and gendered nationalities.

Cuban men who studied in North America often returned to the island with Anglo-American wives. These foreign wives would generally participate in Anglo-American cultural institutions or serve as teachers at Anglo-American schools, while their Cuban husbands frequently took jobs that rewarded their foreign education. They were also likely to be incorporated into the Cuban families of their husbands. Oscar R. Casas met Bessie Sams in North Carolina where he earned a scholarship to study at the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill. Despite her parents' objections, the couple eloped to New York in the mid-1930s, before moving to Cuba in 1938. Bessie Sams Casas would become the principal of the Episcopalian Cathedral School while Oscar took a job as an accountant for Gillette Razors before

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<sup>389</sup> The Anglo-American Community provided a home to many long-term romantic relationships between Cubans and U.S. nationals. Anglo-American Directory of Cuba 1960, *Cuban Information Archives*, Accessed July 9, 2015, [http://cuban-exile.com/doc\\_201-225/doc0215.html](http://cuban-exile.com/doc_201-225/doc0215.html).

starting a chain of furniture stores in the Cuban capital. Their daughter Mary Casas Knapp tied her North American identity to the traditions and activities of the Anglo-American colony, particularly within the Cathedral School and the Episcopalian Church. She described her Havana childhood as “everything good about small town America in a major city and foreign country.”<sup>390</sup>

Like Bessie Sams, Anglo-Americans married to Cubans commonly participated in the cultural institutions of the Anglo-American colony, and often worked in Anglo-American schools. A significant number of well-educated Anglo-American wives, eager to maintain their ties with Anglo-American culture, embraced the opportunity to teach at foreign-run schools. A teacher at Lafayette Academy, Martha de la Cal met her Cuban husband at a university in Kansas City. Mrs. Mariel Coghlan Salas Cruz taught at the Philips school as her husband Richard served as the Cuban Police Delegate to the U.S. Embassy. Mrs. Felice Moore Delgado taught at Ruston Academy while her husband Héctor J. Delgado worked for Warner Brothers Films.<sup>391</sup> Becoming an educator at an Anglo-American school allowed these women to maintain their connection to home, even as they married into a new nationality. Further, it ensured their children would have access to a community of privileged outsiders who could advance their potential on an island heavily influenced by Anglo-American political and economic interests.

During the revolutionary and counter-revolutionary struggles, the cultural capital many Anglo-Americans derived from contact with the Cuban husbands and wives of colony members shaped their respective political consciousness and helped catalyze some towards activism. Many

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<sup>390</sup> Mary Casas Knapp, interview by author, September 23, 2016, Telephone.

<sup>391</sup> *Anglo-American Directory of Cuba, 1958-1959 Edition*, (Marianao, Cuba: Anglo-American Directory of Cuba, 1959), 34, 109.

members of the first revolutionary government, including Cuban Minister of Treasury Rufo López-Fresquet, were married Anglo-American women. Helen López-Fresquet became a leader of the Mothers' Club serving as its corresponding secretary in 1957.<sup>392</sup> Luis Sanjenis, who would later serve under López-Fresquet in 1959 and 1960, married an Irish-American woman. Their son Michael reflected on his identity in Cuba before 1959. Expressing a sentiment common to the children of these mixed marriage households Sanjenis remembers himself as, "one of those rich expats living the good life."<sup>393</sup>

The Casas, Salas Cruz, Delgado, López-Fresquet, and Sanjenis families were not unusual among intermarried couples in their embrace of Havana's Anglo-American subculture. Carlos Todd, the nephew of Cuban sugar magnate Julio Lobo, married Anne Cotter, who herself came from a politically connected family in Boston. Carlos would become a central figure in the Little Theatre, performing shows and musicals for the Anglo-American colony and their Cuban friends.<sup>394</sup> While relationships between Cuban men and Anglo-American women generally formed overseas prior to returning to the island, marriages between a Cuban woman and an Anglo-American man more typically originated in Cuba.

Long-term Anglo-American male residents who married Cuban women generally either arrived as single professionals or they married a Cuban woman after a divorce with their North American or British wife. Cuban women often wed Anglo-American men who were born in Cuba, or who came from Anglo-American families with deep roots on the island. This was the

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<sup>392</sup> "Mothers Club Installs Mrs. Ross as President," *Times of Havana*, May 2, 1957, 5.

<sup>393</sup> Michael Sanjenis, interview by author, June 28, 2016, New York, NY.

<sup>394</sup> Founded in 1943, the Little Theatre put on four major productions per year. An additional two musicals were performed by the Choral Society at the Anglo-American colony's Community House. "Club Life in Havana: Come on in The Water's Fine," September 8, 1958, 5; Mary Louise Wilkinson, "First Six Months of the Social Season is Reviewed," *Times of Havana* July 3, 1958, 5; Deirdre Todd, interview by author, October 21, 2016, Telephone.

case with long-term residents James and Burke Hedges.<sup>395</sup> Longtime Ruston Academy teacher of German descent, Hal Neuendorf married his former Cuban student Elvira Ruga.<sup>396</sup> Other male residents with long term commitments to cultural aspects of the Anglo-American colony or the surrounding Cuban society proved likely candidates for marrying Cuban women as was the case with President of the American Chamber of Commerce in Cuba Paul M. Heilman and Professor at Havana's University of Villanova John Johnson.<sup>397</sup>

The death of a Cuban or Anglo-American parent could also reorient the family toward-- or away from--the Anglo-American colony. Former Chief Resident at John Hopkins Wilmer Eye Institute at Plinio Montalván met and married Ruth Warren from Richmond, Virginia while living and working in the United States.<sup>398</sup> Their son, Plinio Montalaván, remembers it was “when my father died in January 1950, [that] my mother...really developed her American friends.” Ruth and her daughter Isabel became regular contributors to the plays performed at the Little Theatre. Further, it was not until after his father's death that Plinio enrolled at the U.S.-run Ruston Academy.<sup>399</sup> Eduardo González attended both Harvard and MIT where he met and later married Anne F. Johnston, a nurse at Mass General. The couple moved to Banes to work for the United Fruit and Sugar Company before transferring to Jaronú with the American Sugar Refinery Company. Upon Eduardo's death in 1956, Anne moved to Havana and reoriented the

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<sup>395</sup> United States Bureau of Foreign Commerce, “Investment in Cuba,” 73, CHC.

<sup>396</sup> *Anglo-American Directory of Cuba, 1958-1959 Edition*, (Marianao, Cuba: Anglo-American Directory of Cuba, 1959), 93.

<sup>397</sup> *Anglo-American Directory of Cuba, 1958-1959 Edition*, (Marianao, Cuba: Anglo-American Directory of Cuba, 1959); “Chamber Re-elects Paul M. Heilman,” *Times of Havana*, April 17, 1958, 4.

<sup>398</sup> George Plinio Montalván, interview by author, September 26, 2016, Miami, FL.

<sup>399</sup> *Ibid.*

family toward the Anglo-American colony. She became a teacher at the Anglo-American Columbus School and transferred her son Ed from the Methodist Candler College, with Anglo-American teachers, but mostly Cuban students, to Ruston Academy, the Anglo-American colony's most competitive school on the island.<sup>400</sup> Modesto Maidique came from a politically powerful Cuban family. When Maidique was just eleven-months old, an assassin (likely hired by a political opponent) murdered his father. His mother remarried a U.S. national who moved the family to Corpus Cristi, Texas. Maidique returned to Cuba to attend Ruston Academy for high school. Influenced by his time in the United States, his step-father and his experience at Ruston, Maidique recalled, "I identified myself as a Cuban who was very facile in English and knowledgeable of American civilization and culture and language."<sup>401</sup>

*Americano aplanados* and Cuban-American couples occupied and innovated a range of identities that could only emerge within an intimate community of local professionals and privileged outsiders. The particular dynamics that shaped the space occupied by Anglo-Americans in Cuba before 1959 made it possible for these transcultural contact zones inhabited by *americanos aplanados* and wealthy Cubans to influence the perception of Cuban events between 1952-1962 in both Cuba and abroad. As we will see later, intimate connections among Anglo-American colony members and relatively wealthy Cuban professionals helped form narratives and shape events during times of revolution.

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<sup>400</sup> Ed González, interview by author, July 7, 2016, Plymouth Meeting, PA.

<sup>401</sup> Modesto Maidique, interview of by author, October 3, 2016, Miami, FL.

## *Conclusions*

Anglo-Americans generally moved to Cuba from their home countries for a better life. The promise of luxury, prestige and leisure made Havana an especially cherished assignment. The ability to operate in English; garner domestic support inaccessible to most Anglo-Americans in their home societies; to be respected by Cuban political, as well as economic authorities, and to escape to exclusive social structures and traditions that remind one of home, all provided the Anglo-American colony the benefits of colonists throughout the world. Yet the informal nature of Anglo-American influence enabled friendships and intimacies uncommon in formal colonial settings. Intermarriages, as well as close social, educational and business partnerships softened the edges of many exclusive Anglo-American institutions. Thus, Anglo-Americans in Havana reproduced values that legitimized their influence through knowledge production, while simultaneously forging contact zones where privileged outsiders and privileged insiders could together imagine a “new” modern Cuba.

## CHAPTER SIX: FOREIGN MISSIONARIES IN INFORMAL EMPIRE

### *Introduction*

This chapter explores how Protestantism evolved from a vehicle to attain Cuban sovereignty from Spain, into a spiritual form of knowledge production that helped legitimize, and then undermine informal empire. While most Anglo-American missionaries arrived with the aim of improving the lives of Cubans, their influence in Cuba depended on networks accessed by their nationalities. Foreign capital funded the work conducted by many missionaries, as U.S. corporations often used Protestant missions to outsource health and educational services to their workers. Providing some semblance of a social safety net, Protestant schools, clinics, philanthropy and churches mollified some of the demands for services made by Cuban and Caribbean workers. Yet in comparison to their corporate patrons, missionaries arrived in Cuba with different aims, enjoyed different experiences and developed different relationships that caused them to question, and then contest the structures of informal empire. Working in close proximity to Cuban suffering under the weight of revolution, many rural missionaries would eventually challenge the socio-economic hierarchies that elevated foreign influence, from which their authority derived.

### *Early Protestant Contact and Imperial Hubris*

Born in Guanabacoa, Cuba in 1853, Alberto J. Díaz joined the Cuban army during the Ten Years War (1868-1878), before he sought exile in New York City.<sup>402</sup> In the 1880s, following

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<sup>402</sup> During a battle in the Ten-Years War, surrounded by the Spanish, Díaz and some comrades floated on wooden planks out to sea. He was picked up by a steamer heading to New York, where Díaz began work at a cigar factory.

the Guerra Chiquita (1879-1880), Díaz and other revolutionaries who had converted to Protestantism in exile began migrating back to the island from the United States where they established some of the first Protestant churches in Cuba for Cubans.<sup>403</sup> Without a substantial U.S. community in Cuba before 1898, Díaz proposed and received approval for projects from the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board based on the needs of his Cuban congregation.<sup>404</sup> In 1896 colonial authorities arrested Díaz for plotting with other Protestant workers against the crown.<sup>405</sup> A week after his arrest, the Southern Baptist Convention successfully pressured the United States government to intercede. Díaz was released, as he and his family left for exile in Atlanta.<sup>406</sup> Perhaps Díaz' greatest achievement was the foundation of the Gethsemane Baptist Church of Havana. In 1897, despite his absence, the congregation was described as the most influential Protestant institution in Cuba.<sup>407</sup>

During the Cuban Wars of Independence, between 1868 and 1898, an estimated 100,000 Cubans, or one tenth of the population, spent time off the island. Most emigrated north to escape the violence that enveloped Cuba and/or to plot the overthrow of the colonial government.<sup>408</sup>

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During his recovery from an illness, his nurse Alice Tucker converted Díaz to the Protestant faith. Urbanek, *Cuba's Great Awakening*, 30-31.

<sup>403</sup> From the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, contact between Cubans and Protestant smugglers, pirates, and adventurers occurred on a limited basis due to restrictions on trade imposed by Spain. The 1762-1763 occupation of Havana by British forces opened Cuba economically and culturally to the British Empire, and significantly to their North American colonies. Franklin, *Cuba and the United States*, 2; Urbanek, *Cuba's Great Awakening*, 26-27.

<sup>404</sup> A Baptist cemetery became a priority for Díaz when in 1886 the Catholic Church forbade Protestants from getting buried in the Catholic cemetery. Funded by U.S. donors from Boston and Alabama, the project was successfully completed in January 1887. Urbanek, *Cuba's Great Awakening*, 36-38.

<sup>405</sup> Ramos, *Protestantism and Revolution in Cuba*, 23.

<sup>406</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>407</sup> Yaremko, *U.S. Protestant Missions in Cuba*, 3-4.

<sup>408</sup> Pérez, *Essays on Cuban History Historiography and Research*, 55.

Attaining U.S. citizenship while in exile provided many revolutionaries, including Díaz, a level of protection should they decide to return to their home island and continue to agitate for the cause of independence.<sup>409</sup>

Frustrated with continued Spanish rule, as well as the crown's collusion with its close allies in the Catholic Church, many Cuban revolutionaries converted to Protestant denominations while in exile.<sup>410</sup> Communities like those constructed by Díaz upon his return to Cuba worked to challenge and destabilize the ruling secular and religious orders of the island.<sup>411</sup> Because the predominantly Spanish Catholic clergy collaborated so explicitly with the Crown to sustain their shared authority in Cuba, Catholicism became identified with Spain and the old order.<sup>412</sup> Cuban national hero José Martí condemned the Church in Cuba for its complicity with Spanish rule, declaring "Catholicism must perish."<sup>413</sup> By contrast, prior to 1898, prominent Protestant institutions were managed by Cubans; many of whom actively participated in activities against

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<sup>409</sup> Pérez, *On Becoming Cuban*, 37-38; Urbanek, *Cuba's Great Awakening*, 32.

<sup>410</sup> A shared hatred for the Catholic Church between Protestants and Free Masons led to an "unofficial alliance" between the two groups with many early Cuban pastors being active Masons. The tensions between Catholics and Protestants would last until the overwhelmingly Spanish clergy began being replaced by French Canadians. Far more comfortable with Protestants, especially those from the United States and Canada, relations between the two groups improved after the arrival of the North American clergy. Ramos, *Protestantism and Revolution in Cuba*, 37, 45.

<sup>411</sup> Juana Berges Curbelo, Jorge Ramírez Calzadilla and Eva Hernández Urbano, *La religión en la historia de Cuba: conformación y evolución del campo religioso cubano* (Quito, Ecuador: Centro de Estudios, Consejo de Iglesias de Cuba, 2001), 37-38.

<sup>412</sup> While before 1898 Cubans became pastors and leaders in Protestant institutions, Spanish priests still filled the ranks of the conservative Catholic Church in Cuba. Pérez, *On Becoming Cuban*, 255.

<sup>413</sup> John M. Kirk, *José Martí: Mentor of the Cuban Nation* (Tampa, FL: University of South Florida Press, 1982), 119.

Spain's rule.<sup>414</sup> Becoming a Protestant in many ways signified a revolutionary act in defiance of the ruling order.<sup>415</sup>

U.S. Protestants saw advantage in linking the cause of independence with the downfall of Catholicism and the spread of Protestantism in Cuba. Baptist Pastor Henry L. Morehouse explained that Cubans "in their long and fearful struggle for independence, had a hearty hatred for the Roman hierarchy in league with the tyrannical power of Spain to keep Cubans under the yoke.... The spirit of independence asserted itself in religious as well as in political matters. Indeed, the latter was the overshadowing concern and there was little devotion to the church."<sup>416</sup> U.S. Protestant publications celebrated Cuban revolutionary efforts. In 1896, *The Christian Index* reported that Cuba's "struggle for religious freedom is inseparably linked with that of political deliverance.... The fall of Spanish power is the overthrow of the State Church in Cuba.... Her priesthood, who are all of Spanish birth, must follow the footsteps of the Spanish soldiery, and find a refuge in other land."<sup>417</sup>

While Cuban and North American Protestants supported Cuba's fight for independence from the Catholic Church and Spanish authorities before 1898, Cuban demands for sovereignty became a nuisance for foreign missionaries attempting to take over Cuba's Protestant institutions after 1898. North American mission boards assumed control and demoted the leaders of Cuban

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<sup>414</sup> Alberto Díaz himself was a revolutionary agent working for General Antonio Maceo. Yaremko, *U.S. Protestant Missions in Cuba*, 4.

<sup>415</sup> Louis A. Pérez explains, "The Protestant call for religious freedom complemented the Cuban demand for national independence, and increasingly one became the extension of the other: Cuban anti-Spanish politics generalized easily to anti-church sentiments, and Protestant anti-church sentiments expanded naturally to anti-Spanish views." Pérez, *Essays on Cuban History*, 58.

<sup>416</sup> Henry L. Morehouse, *The Years in Eastern Cuba: An Account of Baptist Missions Therein Under the Auspices of the America Baptist Home Mission Society* (New York, NY: The American Baptist Home Mission Society, 1910), 10.

<sup>417</sup> Pérez, *Essays on Cuban History*, 61.

Protestantism, like Díaz, to subordinate roles within the church hierarchy. In 1901, Southern Baptist superintendent Charles David Daniel assumed leadership of the Cuban projects Alberto Díaz founded and voiced criticism of Díaz' political activism. Díaz expressed opposition to the Platt Amendment that constrained Cuban independence, a cause Díaz had advocated relentlessly.<sup>418</sup> While U.S. Protestant publications cheered the U.S. intervention in 1898, they proved less tolerant of challenges to U.S. domination in the years that followed.<sup>419</sup> Díaz would break with the Southern Baptists and become a Presbyterian in the first decade of the twentieth century, as he grew increasingly frustrated with Baptist attempts to impose their bureaucracy, theology, traditions and politics on the institutions he worked so hard to establish.

Decisions concerning the mission and conduct of Protestant communities now centered on the goals and concerns of Anglo-Americans, often dictated by mission boards back in the United States. This transnational shift is perhaps most apparent in the strategic division of the island to suit the needs of U.S. mission boards. The lines granting distinct regions to different denominations were drawn at a 1902 interdenominational conference in Cienfuegos.<sup>420</sup> The Baptists had already divided the island among themselves in November 1898, when representatives from the Southern Baptist and the American Baptist Conventions met in Washington. At that meeting, an agreement allocated the western portion of the island to the Southern Baptists, while Camagüey to the east went to the American Baptists. Following this accord, the Cuban Baptist pioneer J.R. O'Hallarón left Oriente and the churches he had organized. Perhaps he exited Oriente due to theological differences with the American Baptists,

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<sup>418</sup> Ramos, *Protestantism and Revolution in Cuba*, 23-24.

<sup>419</sup> Urbanek, *Cuba's Great Awakening*, 47-51; Ramos, *Protestantism and Revolution in Cuba*, 23.

<sup>420</sup> Pérez, *On Becoming Cuban*, 244.

as he was a product of the Southern Baptist Convention. Arbitrary lines drawn in Washington, likely without significant Cuban input, now declared O'Hallarón's congregation to belong to another denomination. Were that not enough, O'Hallarón's authority was subordinated to North American Hartwell Robert Moseley, who arrived in 1899, to assume charge of the American Baptist institutions of eastern Cuba. Shortly after Moseley's arrival, O'Hallarón left his work in the region, relocating to the western part of the island.<sup>421</sup> At the turn of the twentieth century, the Protestant ethos that agitated for Cuban sovereignty became a causality of informal empire.

### *Justifying Foreign Leadership in Cuba's Protestant Institutions*

Surely when we think of all these things, we shall judge charitably and speak softly, and trust that under a new political, educational, social, and religious order there will evolve a new Cuban, worthy of his island home and leader in the creation there of a Christian civilization.

*Southern Baptist Missionary Howard B. Grose (Circa 1905)*<sup>422</sup>

With the island shattered by three decades of civil war, foreign missionaries viewed Protestantism as a tool essential to the political, moral, economic and religious salvation of Cuba. Missionaries encountered a people whose development, they described as stagnated by the terror and neglect of Spanish rule. Many expressed the view that Cubans required nurturing through exposure to a Protestant work ethic, Protestant values and the Protestant gospel.

As a leading member of the American Baptist community, Henry L. Morehouse, the namesake of Morehouse College, detailed Cuban shortcomings to justify the introduction of U.S. leadership into Cuban Protestant structures after 1898. In the rhetoric of the contemporary civilizing discourse, articulated most famously in Rudyard Kipling's 1899 poem *The White Man's Burden*, Morehouse saw Protestant institutions on the island developed by Cubans before

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<sup>421</sup> Urbanek, *Cuba's Great Awakening*, 47-51.

<sup>422</sup> Roberts, *Cuba For Christ*, 127-128.

the U.S. occupation (1899-1902) as lacking in “initiative” and “sense of personal responsibility,” and in desperate need of deliverance.

[Cubans] had no initiative; no voice in the management of affairs, no sense of personal responsibility for success or failure in religious enterprises; they were utterly inexperienced and untutored.... They had to be taught the alphabet of a new vocabulary in religious matters and ‘how to behave themselves’ as members of a local church and in their relations with other churches. It required patience, tact and time on the part of our ‘master builders’ to get this material harmoniously adjusted as a voluntary coherent body.<sup>423</sup>

Anglo-American missionaries described their task within the context of a larger project of Cuban uplift, which transcended both the religious and secular spheres. Many early missionaries assumed the duty of “improving” the character and condition of Cuban people. In 1908, the head of the American Baptist mission in eastern Cuba, Dr. H. R. Moseley observed what he considered to be a backward, unmotivated and lethargic Cuban population.<sup>424</sup> “One of the greatest difficulties we have to encounter is the indifference of the people. They are not a serious people and are inclined to take everything lightly and carelessly.”<sup>425</sup> A few years earlier, in September 1901, Dr. J. Milton Greene left his Presbyterian church in East Orange, New Jersey to evangelize Cubans.<sup>426</sup> Pastor Greene’s task grew more ambitious after he arrived and perceived the same challenges as Moseley. “There must be a great deal of uplifting, of change, of improvement...new habits to form, new customs to adopt, before [Cubans] can reach the condition of civilization which they ought to have.”<sup>427</sup> These missionaries believed that

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<sup>423</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>424</sup> Howard B. Grose, “The Cuban Trip,” *The Baptist Home Mission Monthly* 30, (1908): 142-170, 143.

<sup>425</sup> Morehouse, *The Years in Eastern Cuba*, 7.

<sup>426</sup> “The Rev. Dr. Greene’s Mission to Cuba,” *The New York Times*, September 15, 1901.

<sup>427</sup> J. Milton Greene, “What Americans Have Done in Cuba,” *Missionary Review of the World* 30 (August 1907): 595-597, 597.

promoting Anglo-American values through the vehicle of Protestantism would catalyze Cuban development.

Protestant institutions in Cuba often reflected the racial politics held by respective denominational hierarchies in the United States. In the 1920s Southern Baptist Una Lawrence Roberts described, “The Cuban is usually dark in complexion, slender, quick and nervous in temperament, volatile, easily provoked to quarrel, as easily satisfied, polite to an extreme degree.... Because he can grasp a subject easily, he rarely goes very deeply into it, being satisfied too often with a superficial knowledge that often prevents him from becoming expert in any line.”<sup>428</sup> In 1931, nearly three decades after Cuban independence, the *Annual Report* from the Methodist Episcopal Church, South concluded, “Without doubt, one of the tendencies of this winsome people is to take life altogether too easy.”<sup>429</sup> Cuban underdevelopment was explained in the language of scientific racism, “probably the result of an educational and racial process that traces back through the Latins and Greeks of early times.”<sup>430</sup> In 1942 the John Merle Davis agreed, “The Cuban people are a race still in the making and are in the adolescent period of development.... Many Cuban traits come from inexperience, from youthful leaping of barriers and may be attributed to the sudden emergence of a repressed people from four hundred years of a corrupt and outmoded colonial system.”<sup>431</sup> Just as they judged the qualities of the Cuban people to be inferior, so too many U.S. missionaries doubted the abilities of Cuban preachers. In 1946 Methodist Pastor Garfield Evans wrote to Dr. A. W. Wasson “Cuban pastors ‘could not put over

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<sup>428</sup> Roberts, *Cuba For Christ*, 94.

<sup>429</sup> *Eight-Fifth Annual Report* (AR) (Nashville, TN: 1931), 236, UMAHS, Methodist Episcopal Church, South, (MECS).

<sup>430</sup> *Ibid.*, 236-7.

<sup>431</sup> Davis, *The Cuban Church in a Sugar Economy*, 36.

a revival campaign' because they lacked 'the background and preparation of character.'"<sup>432</sup>

Anglo-American explanations for foreign leadership in Protestant missions initially centered on ethnocentric logic by which the deficits of Cubans were attributed to the history of Spanish and Catholic domination. This logic justified continued Anglo-American influence fueled by the rhetoric of development.

***Friends in High Places: The Utility of Anglo-American Networks in Rural Cuba***

At a young age, while attending the *Colegios los Amigos* of Banes, future Cuban President Fulgencio Batista was exposed to Protestant education, if only for a short time. His experience there led him to donate \$2,000 to the Quaker school personally while he was president, and to arrange an additional \$40,000 gift to the school from the national lottery fund during the 1944-1945 school year. Batista contributed toward the construction of a new schoolhouse. The remainder of the building budget was financed with donations from the United Fruit and Sugar Company (\$2,500), the American Friends Board of Missions (\$3,800) and Friends in Banes (\$1,000). Before the revolution, the reputation and the facilities of the Friends project in Banes, as well as mission projects throughout Cuba, benefited not only from their connections to Anglo-American capital, but also from the endorsement of the Cuban state. After 1959, these donations would pique suspicion of the Quakers by revolutionary officials.<sup>433</sup>

Like their corporate counterparts, the foreign missionaries benefited substantially from the socio-economic alliances formed within Cuba during the first six decades of the twentieth century. Further, despite divergent interests, relationships of mutual benefit often developed

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<sup>432</sup> Rev. Garfield Evans to Dr. A. W. Wasson, Foreign Secretary, February 11, 1946, quoted in, Crahan, "Religious Penetration and Nationalism in Cuba," 213.

<sup>433</sup> Hilty, *Friends in Cuba*, 63, 117.

between Anglo-Americans representing distinct economic, political and cultural institutions on the island. These dynamics were particularly complex in the rural areas. Donations of land and resources from U.S. sugar and mining corporations often sustained rural missions. In turn, these corporations would dictate the locations for Protestant schools, clinics and churches.<sup>434</sup> Networks between missionaries ensured that Cubans could access a diverse list of services by entering into Protestant communities.<sup>435</sup> Anglo-American financial networks provided opportunities to raise funds in Cuba and abroad. Due to their connections to foreign and domestic capital, Protestant missions maintained their economic stability, while often providing the only social services in these remote regions.

Yet the political commitments of corporations and the missionaries often conflicted. No doubt, the benefits of collaboration flowed in both directions. U.S. sugar, mining and military institutions relied upon rural Protestant missionaries to provide support to their workers. Their services provided a safety net for those impoverished by the structures of informal empire. Anglo-American corporate leaders in eastern Cuba eagerly invested in the social projects offered by Protestant missionaries, likely hoping to reduce demands for educational, health and community services from their Cuban and Caribbean employees. At the same time, Anglo-American corporate authorities offered few structural remedies for rural suffering of their own, and only limited paths toward social mobility.<sup>436</sup>

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<sup>434</sup> Eulalia Cook González, “El trabajo rural de la iglesia Metodista en Cuba, 1940-1960,” November 28, 1998, 1, provided by Edgar Nesman; Yaremko, *U.S. Protestant Missions in Cuba*, 11-12.

<sup>435</sup> For instance, Eulalia Cook often sent her former students to the Agricultural and Industrial School in Playa Manteca. If those students got sick or injured, the Agricultural School could send the student to the United Fruit and Sugar Company hospital in Preston.

<sup>436</sup> Schools and access to the hospitals were often provided to mill employees and their children. However, under the direct control of companies like United Fruit and Sugar Company, or under the *colonos* who sold their sugar to

The United Fruit and Sugar Company entered into arrangements with both the Quakers and the United Methodists seeking to evangelize in eastern Cuba. In 1897, on a return trip from Jamaica to the United States, Captain Lorenzo Baker of UFSC made an offer to Quaker missionary Zenas Martin that would benefit both United Fruit and the American Friends.<sup>437</sup> With plans to open a plantation centered in Banes, Baker offered \$1000 to Martin to begin a mission on United Fruit and Sugar Company land.<sup>438</sup> On March 29, 1900 the official announcement by the American Friends Board of Missions declared Zenas Martin the head of the Quaker project in Cuba. Shortly after, Captain Baker gave another \$1,000 to the American Friends in Cuba.<sup>439</sup>

While this partnership was deemed fiscally essential, ties to the United Fruit and Sugar Company made Martin uneasy. Martin decided he would not locate the Quaker mission in Banes, fearing it would become beholden to a “great soulless corporation.”<sup>440</sup> The Quakers would instead begin their work in nearby Gibara. However, corporate sponsorship proved difficult to avoid and within a few years a Quaker mission would be founded in Banes, with *Colegios los* established in 1905. The United Fruit and Sugar Company leased land in Banes to the American Friends community for 99 years, charging a sum of \$1.00.<sup>441</sup> Former Quaker missionary Hiram Hilty explained,

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companies like Hershey, the cane-cutters and their families received few services from the U.S. corporations their labor enriched.

<sup>437</sup> At the time, it was called the Boston Fruit Company, however, shortly thereafter it became known in Cuba as the United Fruit and Sugar Company.

<sup>438</sup> The town of Banes, founded in 1513 was destroyed during the Cuban Wars of Independence, before being rebuilt as the early headquarters of the United Fruit and Sugar Company. Hilty, *Friends in Cuba*, 1-10, 20-22, 58, 117-118.

<sup>439</sup> *Ibid.*, 1-10.

<sup>440</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>441</sup> *Ibid.*, 2-10, 20-22, 58, 117-118.

The cynic may say that the United Fruit Company – which literally owned the town – was simply demanding service for value received when it urged English-speaking educational and religious work on Friends at Banes, and there were indeed times when it looked as if were merely a part of the company as Zenas Martin had feared they would be.<sup>442</sup>

Hilty goes on to describe the amicable relationship he and other Quaker missionaries developed with Anglo-American employees of United Fruit, many of whom joined in the mission's "English-speaking activities."<sup>443</sup> With the aid of the UFSC, the Quakers supported underprivileged Cubans like the young Fulgencio Batista, while bolstering the image of their corporate benefactor. The United Fruit and Sugar Company would continue to support the projects of Quakers in Oriente until the Cuban Revolution forced the company off the island in 1960.<sup>444</sup>

Anglo-American networks proved extremely valuable to rural missionaries. In Báguanos, the Woman's Division of the Methodist Church developed in the mill town of the U.S.-run Antilla Sugar Estates. Like Zenas Martin, head missionary Eulalia Cook expressed serious reservations about working in a place dominated by a foreign corporation. Having written her thesis at Scarritt College on President Franklin Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy, in 1942 Cook wrote, "I had studied too much about 'American Imperialism' to feel enthusiastic about working by grace of the permission of a big capitalist – feeling that I would prefer to work in a town where Cubans controlled their own government etc., however badly they might do it, to working under even a 'benevolent despotism.'" Although initially hesitant, upon her arrival in Báguanos

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<sup>442</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>443</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>444</sup> Ibid., 59.

she saw an “opportunity to learn more from first-hand experience how the sugar industry affects the social, economic and moral life of the people.”<sup>445</sup>



*Figure 14. The Báguanos Valley* <sup>446</sup>

Despite their frustrations with informal empire, many missionaries, including Eulalia Cook, developed a gratitude for the mission’s patron. Complex, if amicable relationships often formed between missionaries and the Anglo-American executives who funded the respective missions. Reflecting back in 1953, Cook credited the success of the mission, in part, to “the administrator of the sugar mill [who] felt the need to improve the social life and educational opportunities of the youth of the town and due to his concern at the rapid growth of occultism in the town.”<sup>447</sup> Methodist missionary John Stroud felt a similar warmth to his corporate patrons. When leaving Cuba, he looked forward to reconnecting with friends from UFSC in Panama,

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<sup>445</sup> Eulalia Cook to Elizabeth Lee, June 17, 1942, UMAHS, Missionary Files, 1189-2-1.26; Cook González, “El trabajo rural de la iglesia Metodista en Cuba, 1940-1960,” 13, provided by Edgar Nesman; Betty Campbell Whitehurst, interview by author, September 1, 2016, Telephone.

<sup>446</sup> Provided by Edgar Nesman.

<sup>447</sup> Eulalia Cook González, “Reasons for Growth in Báguanos, Cuba, 1952,” in Cook González, “El trabajo rural de la iglesia Metodista en Cuba, 1940-1960,” 30, provided by Edgar Nesman.

where both he and some United Fruit executives had been reassigned. He wrote, “I expect some old friends from Preston are in some of their places in Central America and I would like to unite.”<sup>448</sup>

The Anglo-American executives at the Báguanos mill, owned by a subsidiary of the Royal Bank of Canada, not only provided the space and material goods to found the mission in Báguanos, but their endorsement also garnered early legitimacy for the Methodist missionaries.<sup>449</sup> Eulalia Cook expressed her appreciation of Mr. Miller in particular for enhancing the social position of the Methodist mission in Báguanos: “[the] company’s cooperation made it easier for townspeople to accept the ‘American nuns,’ as some liked to call us.”<sup>450</sup> Mr. Miller, the chief executive at the mill in Báguanos, ensured a home for the missionaries, as well as access to a plot of land for a church and a school.<sup>451</sup> Miller further allowed the Methodist congregation to begin work on an “experimental farm.”<sup>452</sup> Referring to the social hall being constructed in 1944 to support the activities of the mission, Cook explained, “the Company has carried the expense so far.”<sup>453</sup> In 1948 when the mill came under new management and Cook noticed a change, “There is more friction between labor and capital, the

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<sup>448</sup> John Stroud to James Ellis, November 29, 1960, UMAHS, Missionary Files, 1195-6-3.40.

<sup>449</sup> Like sugar mills throughout Cuba, the crash of global sugar prices led to the passage of the Báguanos mill from Cuban ownership to the Anglo-American financial industry in 1921 ending up with the Royal Bank of Canada in 1930. Guillermo Jiménez Soler, *Las empresas de Cuba 1958* (La Habana, Cuba: Editorial de ciencias sociales, 2014), 37-38.

<sup>450</sup> Cook González, “Reasons for Growth in Báguanos, Cuba, 1952,” in Cook González, “El trabajo rural de la iglesia Metodista en Cuba, 1940-1960,” 30, provided by Edgar Nesman; Eulalia Cook to Elizabeth Lee, September 22, 1948, UMAHS, Missionary Files, 1189-2-1.26.

<sup>451</sup> Eulalia Cook to Emmeline Crane, May 3, 1950, UMAHS, Missionary Files, 1189-2-1.26.

<sup>452</sup> Eulalia Cook to Elizabeth Lee, May 2, 1945, UMAHS, Missionary Files, 1189-2-1.26.

<sup>453</sup> Eulalia Cook to Elizabeth Lee, December 12, 1944, UMAHS, Missionary Bio Files, 1470-3-1.45.

management is a bit harder to reach, -- but our work is firmly established now in the hearts of the people.”<sup>454</sup>

Despite different goals and certain tensions, rural missionary work depended heavily on the socio-economic networks developed in conjunction with Anglo-American capital, and influential Cuban power brokers, who also benefited from the image and practice of Protestant social services for their employees. The companies and Cuban politicians depended on rural evangelizers to blunt the devastation brought by systematic neglect and exploitation of labor in communities surrounding sugar mills. With ambivalence, missionaries entered into arrangements with foreign corporations to provide educational, health and religious services to desperate populations. However, under the weight of revolution, the underlying tensions between rural missionaries and their corporate patrons would be exposed as they pursued divergent agendas in pursuit of their contradictory ambitions for the island. While before 1959 many Protestant denominations hoped to transform Cuban society through their spread of the gospel and improvement of opportunities for Cubans, U.S. corporations sought to maintain the status quo, from which they were profiting enormously.

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<sup>454</sup> Eulalia Cook to Elizabeth Lee, September 22, 1948. UMAHS, Missionary Files, 1189-2-1.26.

*Contending with Corporate Sponsorship to Mollify Cuban Suffering*



*Figure 15. La Granja, Late 1940s*<sup>455</sup>

In November 1946, a few months into his tenure at the Methodist Agricultural and Industrial School, director Richard Milk expressed his anxiety about the sustainability and potential of the project. Beholden to the multiple agendas of Cuban Methodist leaders, the families of his students, the mission board in the United States, his faculty, and the United Fruit and Sugar Company, Milk wondered how the school could function, governed by so many divergent interests. Milk feared that the location of the project undermined its goals: “[The school] is not in an area where there are many independent farm operators.”<sup>456</sup> The spot was chosen because of a donation from the United Fruit and Sugar Company. Milk lamented, “. . .it is too completely dependent upon the sugar company for its existence.”<sup>457</sup> The plot provided by the United Fruit and Sugar Company proved to be poor in quality, making “the magnitude of my task . . . tremendous. The land is a heavy, limestone derived clay. The topography is steeply rolling

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<sup>455</sup> Provided by Robert Milk.

<sup>456</sup> Richard Milk to Dr. A.W. Wasson, November 7, 1946, UMAHS, Microfilm Roll 341.

<sup>457</sup> *Ibid.*

and erosion has made a terrific toll...The land was abandoned for cane production by the United Fruit Company...because yields were low and costs high.”<sup>458</sup> Finally, he expressed his frustration with the state of education in the region dominated by U.S. sugar and mining interests, “There is not even a junior high school within the entire municipio.”<sup>459</sup>

As had been the case for the Methodists in Báguanos, the corporate sponsorship of the United Fruit and Sugar Company determined the location of the Agricultural and Industrial School in Playa Manteca. Similar to the deal worked out between the Quakers and United Fruit and Sugar Company four decades earlier, on July 20, 1946 the Agricultural School, nicknamed *la granja*, began a ninety-nine-year lease with the UFSC at a token cost. Like Martin and Cook, the school’s director often expressed his disenchantment with the company. His son Robert explained: “United Fruit did not reflect the values that he would want his children to pursue. [Milk] believed in a life of service...not about how can I make the most money in the world.” Robert Milk attended the Preston Lee School for the Anglo-American children of United Fruit executives, but he lived in a very different world. His father warned him that among the Anglo-American employees at UFSC, there were “bigots, racists, drunks...my father did not consider them good role models. It was us and them.... We were not considered them.”<sup>460</sup> Due to their cultural, as opposed to corporate, orientation, Anglo-American missionaries viewed their roles in Cuba as distinct from, and often at odds with, their corporate sponsors. These were, indeed, fraught entanglements.

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<sup>458</sup> To Dr. A.W. Wasson, October 1946, UMAHS, Microfilm Roll 341.

<sup>459</sup> Ibid.

<sup>460</sup> Robert Milk, interview by author, September 8, 2016, Telephone.

The continued support extended by the United Fruit and Sugar Company nevertheless proved central to the survival of the school. UFSC provided water, electricity, telephones, roads, railroad service, building materials, technical workers, and capital to compensate the teachers at *la granja*.<sup>461</sup> While the staff of the Agricultural School had access to the hospital in Preston, only “under certain conditions” did UFSC extend the same courtesy to the school’s Cuban students.<sup>462</sup> Eager to donate to the Methodist project, in 1959 Milk declared that “over 500 employees of the [United Fruit and Sugar Company] have given either time or money to the school in the 15-year period [it existed].” Milk continued, “A Bethlehem Steel Company subsidiary and the Atlantic Gulf Sugar [Company] have also contributed, as well as a number of other businessmen in Cuba.”<sup>463</sup>

Beyond the dominant corporate interests of the region, access to Anglo-American networks within Cuba and abroad garnered prestige and financial stability for the Protestant institutions of Oriente. The U.S. leaders of *la granja* purposefully shaped their message for their respective audiences when soliciting financial support from Anglo-American executives in the region of Oriente, elsewhere in Cuba and in the United States. In a fundraising pamphlet, the

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<sup>461</sup> Robert Milk, the son of former headmaster Richard Milk, remembers the lease to be around a dollar per annum. Robert Milk, interview by author, September 8, 2016, Telephone; “Escuela agrícola e industrial, Cuba’s Only Private Vocational School for Rural Youth: Progress Report for the First Ten Years,” provided by Carroll English; Richard Milk to Dr. A.W. Wasson, November 7, 1946, UMAHS, Microfilm Roll 341; Fundraising Pamphlet, “Agricultural and Industrial School,” UMAHS, Microfilm Roll 341.

<sup>462</sup> Staff of Agricultural and Industrial School to Mr. and Mrs. W.D. Carhart, September 22, 1948, UMAHS, Microfilm Roll 341; Though Mayarí stood near to the domain of the United Fruit and Sugar Company, the town of 70,000 in the late 1940s, was considered a “free town,” or not on UFSC land. Still, like the staff of the Agricultural School, the Methodist Churchwell clinic could refer the seriously ill to the nearby United Fruit and Sugar Company hospital in Preston where a number of clinic patients would be treated each year, free of charge. The Anglo-American-run Mayarí clinic served as a gate-keeper, and an advocate, for Cuban children in need of medical assistance at the UFSC hospital. “Facts about the Churchwell Dispensario Infantil 1949,” UMAHS, Microfilm Roll 341; Burleigh, “Half a Century in Cuba,” 9.

<sup>463</sup> Richard Milk, “An Evaluation of the Education Offered at The Escuela Agrícola e Industrial of Preston,” March 1959, provided by Carroll English.

U.S. leadership of the school appealed to the national myths surrounding the American Dream and the entrepreneurial spirit of the United States. The letter encouraged patrons to contribute funds so that Cuban youths could “EARN their way and learn how to live in that part of Cuba.”<sup>464</sup> Nicholas Rutz, a U.S. rancher and citrus farmer in Cuba, whose children attended the Methodist Pinson College in Camagüey, donated a large tractor to the Agricultural School.<sup>465</sup> Milk also secured the purchase of a second hand mechanical corn planter from a North American farmer in Omaja, Cuba.<sup>466</sup> A friend of Methodist Bishop Roy Short, based in Nashville, donated a Ford tractor.<sup>467</sup> In 1947 Emily Towe of the Methodist publication *World Outlook* referenced support from “Many farmers of the southern United States [who] sent over livestock and money. The eight cows were gifts and more are expected.”<sup>468</sup> These gifts supplemented a budget dependent on the limited tuition that could be paid by those students whose families could afford it, as well as the selling of farm produce, including corn and milk.<sup>469</sup> While *la granja* was able to raise a substantial portion of the funds needed to run the school, the administration could never survive without outside support from Anglo-American networks.<sup>470</sup>

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<sup>464</sup> Fundraising Pamphlet, “Agricultural and Industrial School,” UMAHS, Microfilm Roll 341.

<sup>465</sup> Darryl Rutz, interview by author, October 17, 2016, Miami, FL; Edgar Nesman, “Memoir,” 32, provided by Edger Nesman.

<sup>466</sup> A town settled by U.S. Methodists at the start of the twentieth century, Omaja served as a center for rural work under the guidance of Sara Fernández. UMAHS, Missionary Files: 1912-1949, Microfilm Roll 338; Leuenberger, *La Gloria*.

<sup>467</sup> Richard Milk, “Cuba Testimony,” 32, provided by Carroll English.

<sup>468</sup> Towe, “Expansion in Cuba,” 5.

<sup>469</sup> “Escuela agrícola e industrial, Cuba’s Only Private Vocational School for Rural Youth: Progress Report for the First Ten Years,” provided by Carroll English.

<sup>470</sup> Early mission superintendents like the Quaker Zenas Martin, American Baptist Dr. Hartwell Robert Moseley and Southern Methodist William Fletcher all invested in business opportunities while running their missions on the island. For Fletcher and Moseley these interests would eventually become tangled in accusations of misappropriations of mission funds. Yaremko, *U.S. Protestant Missions in Cuba*, 53-54.

With ties and obligation to the Cuban community and to U.S. capital, Richard Milk was forced to balance competing interests from groups that sought influence over the school. In March 1959, Milk outlined the numerous goals articulated for *la granja*. The faculty hoped to “[prepare] youth for adequate social and spiritual adjustments to meet the complex problems of life in a modern world.” Further, they sought to prepare Cubans for “democracy, by trying to practice democracy at all levels within the school structure.” In addition, “individual trustees” and Cuban “church leaders” hoped to train youth in “home farming” so that they could independently create a self-sustaining existence. They believed that combating illiteracy in the region could help enfranchise rural Cuban society.<sup>471</sup> While the North American faculty sought to imprint the values of democracy on their Cuban students, the Cubans themselves emphasized the need to teach skills that could practically improve the lives of Cuban communities. Milk observed that the primary corporate benefactors of *la granja*, the U.S.-owned sugar and mining corporations of the region, by contrast, desired the school to “train semi-skilled workers” for industrial or agricultural work.<sup>472</sup> Milk explained, “The trustees from the sugar corporation...were more concerned with practical technical education.”<sup>473</sup> With seats on the board of directors, and as major contributors to the school’s stability, the United Fruit and Sugar Company – and to a lesser extent the Bethlehem Steel Company – positioned themselves strategically to make their influence felt.<sup>474</sup> Edgar Nesman recalled, “Dick Milk returned from

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<sup>471</sup> Richard Milk, “An Evaluation of the Education Offered at The Escuela Agrícola e Industrial of Preston,” March 1959, provided by Carroll English.

<sup>472</sup> Ibid.

<sup>473</sup> Richard Milk, “Cuba Testimony,” 5-6, provided by Carroll English.

<sup>474</sup> Despite occasional setbacks, the school seems to have mostly gotten its way. Milk wrote, “In general, the board concerned itself almost entirely to broad policies and to financial matters. The development of specific educational,

the meetings very frustrated over some of the restrictions that were imposed.” Almost certainly influenced by his experiences at the Agricultural School, Nesman explains, “Milk had a strong feeling for the need of agrarian reform if there was to be good land available for family farms and that may have been a source of frustration.”<sup>475</sup> While Anglo-American corporate employees sought to profit from the existence of this school through the hiring of semi-skilled labor, the Cubans and missionaries at the school sought to create a more self-sufficient, as well as Protestant rural Cuban society.

### *The Cultural Prestige of National Networks*

The stability provided to Protestant schools, clinics and churches by Anglo-American financial capital complemented the human capital accessible within the networks of privileged outsiders. The presence of Anglo-American teachers strengthened the reputation of Protestant institutions. For many Cubans, Anglo-American missionaries offered a bridge between a social world dominated by Cubans and an economic landscape heavily influenced by foreigners. In the mid-1950s, Mario Casanella, director of the American Baptist *Colegios Internacionales*, requested two North American teachers for the academy.<sup>476</sup> Casanella likely understood that U.S. educators improved not only the curriculum, but the reputation of the school. With the assignment of these new Anglo-American missionaries, Casanella explained, “we could give a great forward step to our work.”<sup>477</sup>

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extra-curriculum, and religious plans they left to the faculty under my direction.” Richard Milk, “Cuba Testimony,” 21, provided by Carroll English.

<sup>475</sup> Edgar Nesman to author, September 14, 2016, Email.

<sup>476</sup> Mario Casanella, “Report of Colegios Internacionales El Cristo, Cuba,” January 25, 1957, American Baptist Historical Society, American Baptist Home Mission Society (ABHMS), Mercer University, Atlanta, GA, 86-14.

<sup>477</sup> Ibid.



Figure 16. Richard Milk and Former Vice President Henry A. Wallace 1957 <sup>478</sup>

The prestige of the faculty, the school's notable guests and privileges, all helped shape the positive perception of the Industrial and Agricultural School regionally, nationally and internationally in Cuban and Anglo-American circles. Appreciating the mission of *la granja* while attaining a comfortable home surrounded by Anglo-American missionaries, Mr. Van Herman, a noted horticulturist originally from Pennsylvania, retired to the school in the 1940s.<sup>479</sup> He came to the region with a reforestation project of the Bethlehem Steel Company and he, with his wife, chose to stay in Playa Manteca, elevating the school's reputation.<sup>480</sup> A visit from former Vice President Henry Wallace further enhanced the standing of the school; Wallace delivered the

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<sup>478</sup> Provided by Robert Milk.

<sup>479</sup> Having arrived in Cuba in the late nineteenth century, Mr. Van Herman eventually became head of the Agricultural Experiment Station in Havana. He later laid out "the grounds for the national capitol building in Havana." Richard Milk, "Cuba Testimony," 37, provided by Carroll English.

<sup>480</sup> In his 90s, by the 1950s, Mr. Van Herman and his wife Ada never left Cuba following the revolution. Long having given up his U.S. citizenship, he relocated to Mayarí where he spent the remainder of his life. Edgar Nesman, "Memoir," 26, provided by Edger Nesman.

graduation speech to the class of 1957.<sup>481</sup> Edgar Nesman remembered the excitement of UFSC executives for Wallace’s visit to the area. One, after meeting him, commented, “I don’t think he’s a communist.”<sup>482</sup>

Throughout Cuba’s republican era, endorsements of Anglo-American institutions by Cuban political and intellectual leaders buttressed the collective reputation of Anglo-American cultural endeavors on the island. The Cuban government consistently honored members of the Anglo-American colony, as well as CEOs of Anglo-American companies with tokens of gratitude for their service to Cuba. The Canadian Dr. Robert Routledge (Director of American Baptist *Colegios Internacionales*), as well as U.S. nationals Milton Hershey (Founder of Hershey), Hiram Ruston (Founder of Ruston Academy), Pastor M.N. McCall (Southern Baptist Superintendent), Pastor Harry Brown Bardwell (Principal of Methodist Candler College) and Pastor Alexander Hugo Blankingship (Episcopalian Bishop) all received the Order of Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, Cuba’s highest awarded medal.<sup>483</sup> President Machado created the medal to honor Cubans and foreigners for distinguished service to the island.<sup>484</sup> Through the financial and moral support of U.S. capital and the Cuban state, the excellence of Anglo-American institutions became a self-fulfilling prophecy.

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<sup>481</sup> Marjorie and Edgar Nesman, interview by author, October 17, 2016, Tampa, FL.

<sup>482</sup> Ibid.

<sup>483</sup> Maikel Arista-Salado, *Condecoraciones cubanas: teoría e historia* (Bloomington, IN: Trafford Publishing, 2010), 177-190; Baker, *Ruston*, 14; Newton, *Amazing Grace*, 92; “A Picture of Dauphin Country” Alexander Stoddart, *Chocolate* (no. 3 of 4), HCA, Alexander Stoddart Files: Articles on Hershey – HERCO .002, Box 1, F51; Ramos, *Protestantism and Revolution in Cuba*, 46.

<sup>484</sup> Arista-Salado, *Condecoraciones cubanas*, 177-190.

### *Cuba's Evolving Protestant Hierarchies*

Missions throughout Cuba, though to a greater degree in urban settings, maintained Anglo-American leadership well into the 1940s and 1950s. For many Protestant groups, only with the triumph of Cuban nationalism in the first years of the Cuban Revolution did North American missionaries lose their authority, along with their place in Cuban society. In an interview with Methodist missionary Edgar Nesman I asked, "Why do you think, after 60 some odd years, Methodists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians--the mainline churches, didn't create autonomous churches?" Nesman explained, "I think some of the older missionaries didn't want them to. They would lose their jobs."<sup>485</sup> Power and control were obvious motives for North American religious institutions to maintain dominance within Cuba's Protestant institutions. Yet Nesman also suggested that financial concerns proved paramount to the maintenance of North American leadership in Protestant institutions.

Foreign capital became less accessible once Anglo-Americans gave authority over Protestant projects to Cubans. In those denominations that granted significant leadership roles to Cubans prior to 1959, foreign capital waned. The Quakers were one of the first denominations to give significant leadership positions to their Cuban ministry.<sup>486</sup> Yet this came at a cost. The Quaker withdrawal of U.S. missionaries in the 1948 led to an erosion of U.S. patronage.<sup>487</sup> In 1959, U.S. Quakers provided only \$4,000 in funding to their missions in Cuba.<sup>488</sup> Without foreign capital, other denominations were able to dwarf the Quaker presence on the island in size

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<sup>485</sup> Marjorie and Edgar Nesman, interview by author, August 25, 2016, Tampa, FL.

<sup>486</sup> Ramos, *Protestantism and Revolution in Cuba*, 25, 28.

<sup>487</sup> Hilty, *Friends in Cuba*, 168.

<sup>488</sup> Theron Corse, *Protestants, Revolution, and the Cuba-U.S. Bond* (Gainesville, FL University of Florida Press, 2007), 20.

and influence. As former Quaker missionary Hiram H. Hilty detailed, the lack of funds from the American Friends diminished the ability of Quakers to maintain their Cuban leaders. Hilty explains that many Cuban Quakers joined more adequately funded mainline denominations like the Methodists, American Baptists and the Presbyterians who, while providing less autonomy, could sustain their evangelizing work with foreign capital.<sup>489</sup> By elevating Cubans to leadership positions, denominations were fiscally punished.

Cuban leadership in Protestant institutions often proved contentious for both missionaries in Cuba and mission boards in the United States. Following the 31-year tenure of Canadian-born Robert Routledge, the highly regarded Baptist School in El Cristo, Oriente, *Colegios Internacionales* appointed its first Cuban director in 1946.<sup>490</sup> Not everyone celebrated the selection. In a letter written at the time, U.S. missionary Kathleen Rounds, a longtime teacher and director of the girls' school, expressed her displeasure about the "timing" to the American Baptist Home Mission Society in New York: "To have national leadership is the ultimate goal of all mission work, but whether the time was ripe for it here, and whether the man chosen is intellectually and spiritually fitted and of the integrity of character necessary for the position are big questions. The enrollment this year has been large, but we have fallen badly in discipline, in the quality of teaching and in the basic things of character education."<sup>491</sup> Even someone as

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<sup>489</sup> Hilty, *Friends in Cuba*, 84-88.

<sup>490</sup> I am fairly confident that this Cuban director was Agustín González, the famed mentor to revolutionary leader Frank País. Though he was born in Spain, González arrived on the island as an adolescent. However, I have yet to be able to conclusively show it was González whom Rounds referenced. "Honor to a Veteran Missionary," American Baptist Historical Society, Mercer University, Atlanta, GA, Woman's American Baptist Home Mission Society (WABHMS), 94-27; "Annual Report," Kathleen Rounds, May 1, 1947, WABHMS, 47-15.

<sup>491</sup> "Annual Report," Kathleen Rounds, May 1, 1947, WABHMS, 47-15.

integrated into the Cuban community as Rounds urged caution in the transition to Cuban leadership.<sup>492</sup>

It is likely that finances, more than prejudice, motivated Rounds' hesitation in the selection of a Cuban to lead the school. Access to Anglo-American capital, as well as the ability to appeal to and satisfy foreign donors proved essential to the survival of Protestant missions. Those Cuban Protestants who were selected for leadership positions were typically trained in Anglo-American institutions in Cuba and often studied at North American seminaries. Before becoming the first Cuban principal of the Methodist Candler College, Carlos Pérez Ramos attended Scarritt College for Christian Workers in Nashville, Tennessee. Episcopal Bishops Onell Soto, Anselmo Carral and José Agustín González all trained in U.S. seminaries. Eastern Baptist Pastor Elmer Lavastida studied at a Baptist seminary in Canada. Presbyterian minister Martín Añorga attended the Princeton Theological Seminary. The Presbyterian scholar and seminary professor Rafael Cespeda graduated from the McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago.<sup>493</sup> The principal of the Friends School in Banes, Miguel A. Tamayo also studied in the United States. A graduate of the Friends School, he attended Berea College and the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy. Quaker missionary Hiram Hilty recalls, "Dr. Tamayo's mastery of English was always of great value to him in his dealings with Americans, whether the missionaries or the United Fruit Company."<sup>494</sup>

Despite learning English and mastering Anglo-American practices within North American seminaries, these Cuban leaders were subject to power and pay differentials.

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<sup>492</sup> Two years later Pastor T.H. Schupbach returned the school to a North American administrator, before Schupbach was replaced with Cuban Mario Casanella. "Annual Letter," May 1, 1949, WABHMS, 71.14.

<sup>493</sup> Ramos, *Protestantism and Revolution in Cuba*, 153-168.

<sup>494</sup> Hilty, *Friends in Cuba*, 129-130.

Methodist intellectual John Merle Davis explains Cuban frustrations over these inequities: “The American missionary’s salary and household equipment, modest as these are, considerably exceed the Cuban standards. Frequently the American standards have become the norm against which the Cuban pastor tends to compare his own salary, living conditions, and cultural amenities.” Davis continues, “This often makes the Cuban dissatisfied with the limitations of a smaller income and set of goals for his family and for himself which are impracticable, burden him with debt, and are apt to give him a sense of injustice and chronic economic struggle.”<sup>495</sup> Mission boards undercompensating of Cuban Protestant workers exacerbated the national inequities of rural Cuban communities. Quaker missionary Hiram Hilty confirms this routinized disparity: “All those Cubans who have given pastoral leadership in Cuba...received part of their support as pastors from the United States. It was always a smaller amount than that given to American personnel.... Sometimes this was noted by the Cubans and caused some resentment.”<sup>496</sup> By devaluing Cuban Protestant workers, U.S. mission boards made it more difficult for fully self-funded Cuban Protestant communities to flourish.

While in some Cubans were able to achieve leadership positions in church institutions, before the revolution, not one completely independent Cuban denomination would develop from any mainline Protestant tradition.<sup>497</sup> Overtime, Cuban pastors grew frustrated with the situation. Many felt that the traditions of U.S. missionaries in Cuba had grown anachronistic and no longer offered the best model for Cuban Protestantism. In the late 1930s, or early 1940s, a Cuban preacher explained the situation to Pastor John Merle Davis:

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<sup>495</sup> Davis, *The Cuban Church in a Sugar Economy*, 79.

<sup>496</sup> Hilty, *Friends in Cuba*, 94.

<sup>497</sup> Ramos, *Protestantism and Revolution in Cuba*, 32.

The founders of our churches brought the social point of view and discipline of the American churches of thirty-five years ago. They have built that discipline into the Cuban churches and have rigidly held to it and have trained our pastor to it in spite of the more liberal belief and practice, which has arisen in the United States churches. Many of us have been educated in the United States church schools, and we know what we are talking about.<sup>498</sup>

To express their resentment of continued Cuban subordination to North Americans, in 1940 the Cubans of Seventh-Day Adventists conference of Holguín voted to expel the foreigners. In response, North American missionaries established a new Seventh-Day Adventists conference.<sup>499</sup>

Bishop Armando Rodríguez contends that Methodists prioritized the goals and values of foreign missionaries not only because they were in the positions of power, but because they controlled the church's capital. Rodríguez became head of the autonomous Methodist church in Cuba in the 1960s after Anglo-American missionaries left the island. The Bishop claims that while the missionaries were extremely capable with respect to managing church projects and that they sacrificed material goods and a life of comfort for poor Cubans, they failed to “emphasize the preparation and training of native workers to occupy their positions.”<sup>500</sup> Rodríguez concludes that before 1959 there were not real opportunities for Cubans to pursue their own goals within the Protestant church structures. Not only did Anglo-Americans direct missionary institutions, but Rodríguez estimates 60-80 percent of the Methodist District Superintendents in Cuba were foreign. When asked if Cuban pastors grew frustrated with the continued dominance of North American missionaries and the lack of a sovereign Cuban church until 1968, Bishop Rodríguez responded: “In the 1950s and earlier Cuban leaders asked about the possibility of an autonomous

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<sup>498</sup> Davis, *The Cuban Church in a Sugar Economy*, 84.

<sup>499</sup> Ramos, *Protestantism and Revolution in Cuba*, 26.

<sup>500</sup> Bishop Armando Rodríguez to author, translation by author, October 9, 2016, Email.

church, however on each occasion the conclusion [by North Americans] was the same, ‘the Church in Cuba was not prepared for autonomy’.”<sup>501</sup> Equity with North Americans proved largely unachievable through the Protestant faith. After liberating the Cubans from the hierarchies of Roman Catholicism, U.S. Protestant missionaries implemented a new set of structures and constraints; Anglo-Americans and their institutions would supplant the Spanish as the primary moral authority, but not without Cuban resentment.

### ***Conclusions***

A lack of government presence in regions dominated by foreign capital exacerbated the demand for social services. In many places, the corporate and political authorities relied upon Anglo-American missionaries to soften the blow and fill the void. Rural Cubans, often with few other educational or healthcare alternatives, relied upon Protestant missionary institutions for services, stability, as well as the potential for social advancement.<sup>502</sup>

Paternalism within Anglo-American Protestant run institutions, however, prevented Cuban Protestants from attaining a determinant influence over their own spiritual development. Anglo-American missionaries gained influence through their national identities and depended deeply on networks between privileged outsiders, as well as ties to Cuban power brokers provided by their nationality. While rural missionaries were far more exposed to Cuban suffering than most Anglo-Americans, they played a significant role in stitching a social safety net designed, in part, to tamp down Cuban critiques of social and economic hierarchies. With the

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<sup>501</sup> Ibid.

<sup>502</sup> Of course, much of this was by design. In 1926 Una Lawrence Roberts, urged the building of Protestant schools to gain Cuban gratitude. She went on to state that “Knowledge of the English language is a very great business and social asset to the Cuban, hence every Cuban wishes his children to learn English, and the mission school, with its directory from the United States, provides this advantage much more efficiently than the public school with its Cuban teacher who has never lived in an English-speaking land.” Roberts, *Cuba For Christ*, 120-121, 227.

onset of the Cuban revolution, the cleavages between Anglo-American missionaries and their corporate benefactors exposed themselves as these two groups of privileged outsiders found each other on opposite sides of Cuba's defining conflict.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: PROXIMITY TO SUFFERING: PROTESTANT MISSIONARIES IN RURAL CUBA

### *Introduction*

The daily routines of foreign missionaries in Cuba proved a humanizing and humbling exercise. They arrived with the aim of mollifying Cuban suffering in this life and the next. Many lived and labored in close contact with disenfranchised Cubans. In relative isolation from larger communities of Anglo-Americans, rural missionaries often became a part of the Cuban communities they served. An evolving emphasis on the social gospel among the ecumenical Protestant traditions focused missionaries on service-oriented projects, opening paths to more intimate forms of contact with Cubans. Rural missionaries, and specifically women missionaries, spread their faith through health and educational initiatives, leading to personal, as well as professional engagements with Cubans.<sup>503</sup> They witnessed Cuban dependency on, and exploitation by, foreign corporations, leading many to re-examine their purpose in Cuba and the edifices that sustained the collective authority of Anglo-American residents. Further, by the 1950s, a growing number of Cuban pastors achieved positions as the peers, and sometimes even the superiors of foreign missionaries. This encouraged Anglo-American evangelizers to take seriously the frustrations and aspirations of Cuban Protestants. In these material, social and spiritual contexts, Cuban pastors, Protestant parishioners and Anglo-American missionaries grew closer as they collectively pursued remedies for Cuban suffering.

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<sup>503</sup> David A. Hollinger exposes that globally women represented around two-thirds of all Protestant missionaries from the United States. David A. Hollinger, *Protestants Abroad* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017), 7.

### *Differentiating Rural Missionaries from Their Mission Boards*

The persistent devaluation of Cubans and Cuban labor often reflected the biases of mission boards in the United States, who remained informed about, but disconnected from, Cuban struggles and aspirations. When missionary Eulalia Cook encouraged the empowerment of Cuban women by advocating their placement on the Methodist Woman's Committee, she was met with a tepid response from headquarters in New York.<sup>504</sup> They allowed Cook to proceed in 1952 with certain stipulations. From New York, Elizabeth Lee warned, "We must get the right women elected to the field committee." Lee feared a recognition of joint leadership could generate hostility, as Anglo-American "missionaries may feel their freedom is curbed in this arrangement."<sup>505</sup> While missionaries in Cuba, such as Cook, fought for more Cuban influence over Protestant institutions, mission boards who convened in the United States did not live among Cubans and seem to have been generally less supportive of Cuban leadership.

Disagreements between rural missionaries and mission boards flared over their vastly different proximities to Cuban suffering. These tensions can be found in the struggle over the Methodist run Churchwell Clinic, for example, which served as a dispensary for poor Cuban children in Mayarí, Oriente. By 1949, 5,250 children were registered by the clinic, enrolling close to 100 new members each month. It is estimated that 12,000 youths received treatment

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<sup>504</sup> Born in 1913 in Little River, South Carolina, Cook became a missionary in Cuba in 1940 and remained there until 1960. Cook hoped to spread the gospel, while eradicating illiteracy. Functioning as a social worker, though also as a pastor, during her time in Cuba, she helped organize ten churches, seventeen Sunday schools, and two day schools. In 1957 Cook was appointed to head the Department of the Rural Church at the Union Seminary in Matanzas, Cuba. Later she would be a founder of Alfalit International, begun in 1961 as a faith-based, non-denominational ministry, that seeks to "eradicate human suffering caused by illiteracy." "Press Release: Board of Global Ministries, The United Methodist Church," UMAHS, Missionary Bio Files, 1470-3-1.45; "Eulalia Cook-González Background Information," *Alfalit International, Inc.*, provided by Carroll English; "Miss Cook Honored with National Citation," UMAHS, Missionary Bio Files, 1470-3-1.45; "Alfalit: Literacy for All," Accessed July 23, 2017, <https://english.alfalit.org>.

<sup>505</sup> Elizabeth Lee to Eulalia Cook, December 18, 1951, UMAHS, Missionary Files, 1189-2-1.26.

annually.<sup>506</sup> The clinic proved a central resource for Mayarí. A 1949 pamphlet explained, “[there] is no other help for these children.”<sup>507</sup> In addition to providing medical services, Anglo-American staff at the clinic taught Cubans basic sanitary and health initiatives, such as boiling water before drinking.<sup>508</sup>

In 1949 the Methodist leadership in New York urged the Churchwell Clinic in Mayarí to reduce the clinic’s financial expenditures. They urged the clinic to avoid “using funds from the States to buy medicines for sick children.”<sup>509</sup> The Board of Missions forwarded a cost-cutting proposal, which included limiting the number of Cuban children served. Missionary John Stroud responded forcefully:

I do not believe the people [who made this declaration] understand the situation. In the other places where we have clinics, there are public hospitals. Here there is none.... One reason we have so many [clients is] that there is no other place to go. The county government is giving us \$56 monthly to help with this work. We cannot get more contributions from the public than we are—around \$40 monthly. That means we have to have help from the outside or shut down, because we are not going to say the first twenty five only will receive help. The twenty sixth one might be the sickest or might have come all night to get here. We can not send that person home as the child might be much sicker the next day. If we can not serve at all, it will be better to close and do something else....<sup>510</sup>

The Methodist clinic remained functioning into the revolutionary period. The constant and intimate contact between Cuban poverty and rural missionaries recalibrated their vision to privilege human needs over financial cost.

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<sup>506</sup> “Facts about the Churchwell Dispensario Infantil 1949,” UMAHS, Microfilm Roll 341.

<sup>507</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>508</sup> Lois Robinson, the missionary who oversaw the clinic’s work, remembers teaching the mothers who were in the clinic about “various health related issues.” Lois and Morrell Robinson, interview by author, August 25, 2016, Jacksonville, FL; Burleigh, “Half a Century in Cuba,” 5-9.

<sup>509</sup> Dr. A.W. Wasson to John Stroud, November 17, 1949, UMAHS, Microfilm Roll 341.

<sup>510</sup> *Ibid.*

### *Implications of Cuba's Rural/Urban Divide*

Unlike these rural missionaries from the United States who lived with, among and bore witness to the struggles of the rural poor, Havana's Anglo-American residents did not generally interact with destitute Cubans. While working-class and less educated Cubans populated the worlds of the Anglo-American colony in the capital as servants, service workers and wage-laborers, the struggles of the *campesino* largely remained a mystery to privileged outsiders in Havana. The demographics of Havana enabled Anglo-American residents to seclude themselves among a whiter, wealthier, and better educated class of Cubans than those Cubans encountered by rural missionaries. Though missionaries stationed in Havana interacted with a range of Cubans, depending on the denomination, urban missionaries often disappeared into the capital's larger Anglo-American colony after their daily duties for the church had ended. The standpoint of these missionaries were deeply affected by everyday contact with lives surviving in poverty.

Missionaries in rural Cuba, especially in Oriente, often came from more racially progressive Protestant denominations including the American Baptists, the Quakers, and eventually the United Methodists. While their ethnocentric attitudes manifested in subtler, if still paternalistic ways, they did not advocate or undertake exclusionary policies or behaviors pursued by some of their counterparts in Havana.<sup>511</sup> Their placements among Cuban sugar and mining laborers put rural missionaries in close proximity to Cuban suffering, dramatically altering their sense of purpose on the island.

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<sup>511</sup> Many arrived with a sense of purpose thinking they were going to change the character of Cubans. Paternalism persisted through the continued leadership of North Americans in Protestant institutions and sustained pay differentials between U.S. and Cuban pastors. As we will see, those who imported U.S. southern traditions into Havana embraced segregationist policies as well. Marjorie and Edgar Nesman, interview by author, August 25, 2016, Tampa, FL; Lois and Morrell Robinson, interview by author, August 25, 2016, Jacksonville, FL; Pérez, *On Becoming Cuban*, 249.

The significant differences between life in urban and rural Cuba provide important context for the development of distinct Anglo-American subjectivities during the tumultuous decade between the 1952 coup and the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion. Members of the Anglo-American colony in Havana enjoyed significant social segregation and superior standards of living. In urban areas, and particularly in the capital, widespread access to material goods, health care and education seemed to present Cubans with decent prospects for upward mobility. Despite a national illiteracy rate of 23.6 percent, in Havana only 7.5 percent of the population could not read or write.<sup>512</sup> Though it held just 21 percent of the island's population, six in ten doctors and dentists resided in Havana along with four-fifths of hospital beds.<sup>513</sup> John Parker, Anglo-American resident who lived in the capital wrote: "Cuba, before Castro, had one of the world's best health care, cradle to the grave, systems."<sup>514</sup> By virtue of geography and relative advantages, Anglo-Americans living in Havana for the most part remained unaware of the devastating ramifications of a mono-crop economy controlled by foreign capital. For most, their understanding of the conditions for workers in the sugar economy were informed largely by superficial outings to nearby Hershey for a round of golf, or picnics in the company garden. Most within the Anglo-American colony of Havana were incapable of fully grasping the harsh realities faced by rural Cuban and Caribbean labor.<sup>515</sup>

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<sup>512</sup> Farber, *The Origins of the Cuban Revolution Reconsidered*, 20-21; Agrupación Católica Universitaria, *Encuesta de trabajadores rurales, 1956-57*, reprinted in *Economía y desarrollo* (July-August 1972), (La Habana, Cuba: Instituto de Economía de la Universidad de la Habana): 188-212; Jorge Ibarra, *Prologue to Revolution: Cuba, 1898-1958* (London, UK: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998), 162.

<sup>513</sup> Pérez-Stable, *The Cuban Revolution*, 29.

<sup>514</sup> Gianelloni, *We Remember Cuba*, 14.

<sup>515</sup> Charles Mills, "White ignorance," in *Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance*, eds. Shannon Sullivan and Nancy Tuana, (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2007): 11-38.

By contrast, rural missionaries in Cuba found themselves immersed in, and transformed by, encounters with socio-economic desperation. By 1945, 52 percent of Cuban agricultural workers were employed fewer than four months per year, a consequence of the seasonal nature of sugar production. With the harvest season shortening throughout the republican era, in the 1950s rural Cubans faced perpetual poverty. Three-quarters of the children living in rural regions did not attend school and 95 percent of them suffered from parasites.<sup>516</sup> Most rural households were without running water and over 90 percent of rural Cubans had no access to baths or showers.<sup>517</sup> A 1956-57 study conducted at the University of Havana found that 34 percent of the nation worked in rural agriculture, but earned only 10 percent of the national income. Just over 69 percent of their income was spent on food. Despite a national illiteracy rate of 23.6 percent, 43 percent of rural workers could not read or write.<sup>518</sup> Unlike their fellow evangelizers in Havana, the purpose of many missionaries in rural Cuba was to combat the economic, social and educational obstacles that faced *campesinos*.

Rural missionaries often found themselves shocked by the desperation endured in the Cuban countryside. In 1949 the Methodist journal *World Outlook* reported on conditions in rural Cuba: “One of the most amazing things about Cuba is the school system. All along the main highway that bisects the island, one sees modern buildings labeled ‘escuela rural’ (rural school). These buildings make a good impression on visitors who cannot fail to see them as they drive by. Many say the schools are purposely built near the highways to be seen, rather than used.” While perhaps trafficking in development narratives, the author stated a reality described by many rural

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<sup>516</sup> Spalding, *Organized Labor in Latin America*, 233.

<sup>517</sup> Cuba, Tribunal Superior Electoral, Oficina Nacional de los Censos Demográfico y Electoral, *Censos de población, viviendas y electoral* (La Habana, Cuba: Tribunal Superior Electoral, 1953), XLV.

<sup>518</sup> Farber, *The Origins of the Cuban Revolution Reconsidered*, 20-21.

missionaries: “[The] losers are the children of the poor. One sees them everywhere. Half-starved and listless they go about their games in slow motion, as though every move were an effort. . . . Most of them are far too thin, except for their huge protruding stomachs, the result of malnutrition and parasites.”<sup>519</sup> Another article from the same Methodist publication written a few years earlier explained, “The workers who have enabled Cuba to become the greatest producer of sugar for export are among the most impoverished people in the world. At the best, they can labor only six months in the fields. The remainder of the year must be spent picking up odd jobs or in idleness.”<sup>520</sup> Rural Methodist missionary Edgar Nesman recalled that education and medical facilities, widely available in urban centers and at foreign-owned sugar mills, “were almost non-existent in the small towns, rural countryside, and mountainous areas.”<sup>521</sup> When the Mexican-American rural Methodist missionary Sara Fernández first arrived in Omaja, Cuba, she encountered an impoverished community without drinking water, schools, clinics, or jobs.<sup>522</sup> Richard Milk, director of the Methodist Agriculture and Industrial School in Playa Manteca, Oriente, remembers on his first visit to what would become the school grounds, “I thought to myself, this must be a mistake. . . . The lack of clothing on the little children. . . the crude homes, the primitive agriculture, and the entirely different aspect of the vegetation—all these made the reaction come upon me. . . . I felt profoundly grateful that God had directed me to such a great need.”<sup>523</sup>

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<sup>519</sup> Burleigh, “Half a Century in Cuba,” 9.

<sup>520</sup> Towe, “Expansion in Cuba.”

<sup>521</sup> Edgar Nesman, “Memoir,” 7-8, provided by Edger Nesman.

<sup>522</sup> Lawrence A. Rankin, “Early Methodism in Cuba – Towards a National Church, 1883-1958,” provided by Lawrence Rankin.

<sup>523</sup> To Dr. A.W. Wasson, October 1946, UMAHS, Microfilm Roll 341.

These missionaries often encountered communities that were very diverse, but highly stratified by class, race and nationality. Still, for most missionaries, many of whom came from the U.S. South, the racial and national hierarchies proved less rigid than what they experienced back home. The South Carolinian Eulalia Cook, head of the Woman's Division's Methodist mission in Báguanos, chronicled her revealing journey to the sugar town:

To reach Báguanos one leaves the main railroad and takes a line car, which takes one through vast green seas of sugar cane, occasionally stepping near a squalid group of cane-cutters' cabins. Turning one's attention to the small but motley crew of fellow passengers, he may find that they include English speaking Jamaican Negroes, French speaking Haitians, Chinese, Spaniards and Cubans. After the dreary huts along the way, one comes unexpectedly upon the pretty little village of Báguanos. Its streets are marked off with coconut palms.... Here theoretically, one's rank in society is determined by the color of house in which he lives. The mill officials live in the white and green houses on the hill, next come the brown houses of the skilled workers, then the gray houses and unpainted shacks of the unskilled laborers. In reality, however, the lines are not so strictly drawn....<sup>524</sup>

As Anglo-American missionaries integrated into these company towns, the persistent anguish of their neighbors and parishioners, due to doubled neglect of the Cuban state and foreign executives, grew increasingly personal. Speaking of the suffering she witnessed around her, in 1945 Cook commented, "We are in the midst of a serious drought here. The zafra [harvest] is going to be very short because of it – and that means real suffering."<sup>525</sup> She lamented the fate of Bobby Contes, the "twelve-year-old Methodist, oldest of eight children...[who] has to be taken out of school to help his father in the struggle to find food."<sup>526</sup> Rural missionaries like Cook recognized both the cruelty and fragility of the structures that governed Cuba before 1959.

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<sup>524</sup> Eulalia Cook to Friends, October 27, 1942, UMAHS, Missionary Files, 1189-2-1.26.

<sup>525</sup> Eulalia Cook to Elizabeth Lee, March 8, 1945, UMAHS, Missionary Files, 1189-2-1.26.

<sup>526</sup> Eulalia Cook, "Some Aspects of Rural Work – Báguanos, Oriente, Cuba," UMAHS, Missionary Files, 1189-2-1.26.

*Developing the Rural Methodist Church in Cuba*

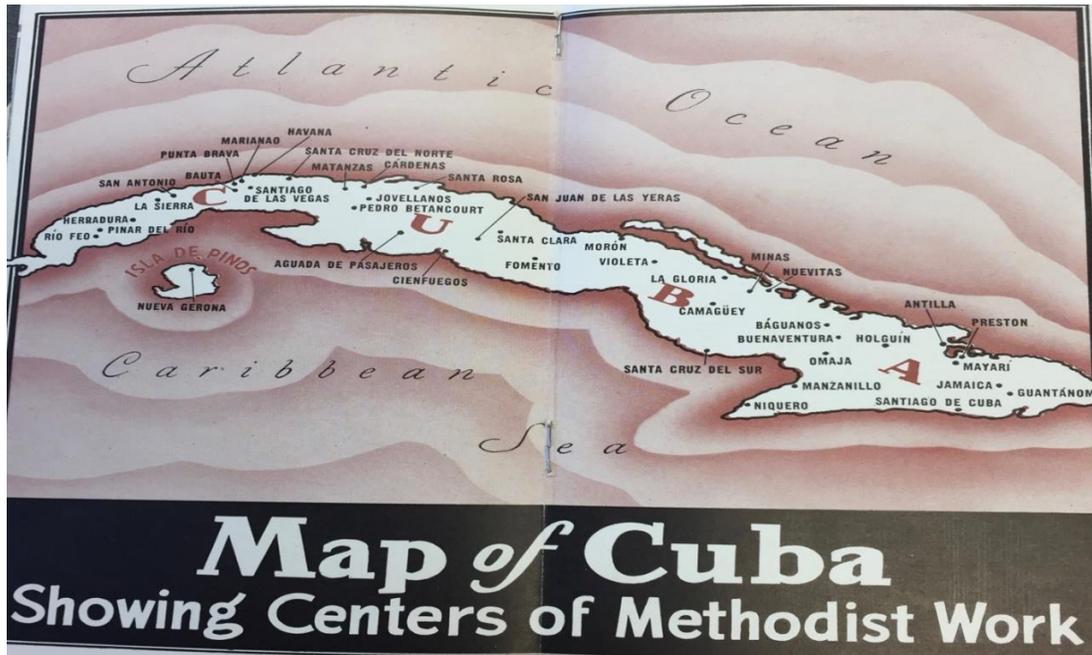


Figure 17. Methodist Missions in 1950s Cuba <sup>527</sup>

Rural missionaries in Cuba were inspired by the Social Gospel forwarded by Protestant intellectuals such as Dr. John Merle Davis.<sup>528</sup> With input from renowned Cuban scholar Fernando Ortiz, Davis' influential 1942 work *The Cuban Church in a Sugar Economy* urged the pursuit of a service-oriented and independent Cuban Protestant institutions.<sup>529</sup> As would be the case for missionaries who lived among rural Cuban poverty, Davis accused the foreign-dominated sugar industry of undermining the potential for Cuban leadership and autonomy: "The Church of Christ in Cuba is a Church of the lower classes and thus it is that one of the chief obstacles to the progress and usefulness of the Church is the poverty arising from a sugar economy." He advocated for "[the] need of greater popular use of land, the diversification of

<sup>527</sup> UMAHS, Missionary Church Board of Missions, Latin American, Cuba, 1463.2-1.40.

<sup>528</sup> Davis, *The Cuban Church in a Sugar Economy*, 8.

<sup>529</sup> Ramos, *Protestantism and Revolution in Cuba*, 32.

crops, the use of spare time, training in farming and industries, the rehabilitation of the individual and the home.”<sup>530</sup> Davis helped inspire the expansion of the rural work advanced by Methodists.<sup>531</sup> After reading the work the year it was published, Methodist missionary Maurice Daily reflected critically upon earlier Methodist evangelizing efforts, “We have tried to save individuals without interpreting adequately...what that salvation means in terms of their own community life.... They are in the community and incidentally in the Church; they should be in the church so as to live purposefully in the community.”<sup>532</sup>

While the Protestant schools of western Cuba’s urban centers sought to influence wealthy Cubans, rural missionaries hoped to attract converts by sponsoring service-oriented projects that would provide a basic social safety net for Cuban communities, and over time transform Cuban society.<sup>533</sup> From the first U.S. occupation until the early 1960s, rural Protestants centered their goals on helping Cubans endure the difficult conditions forged by conflict and poverty.<sup>534</sup> The Presbyterians operated medical clinics, waged literacy campaigns and maintained transportation, meteorological, educational and social services on the island.<sup>535</sup> The Quakers established a set of schools and churches surrounding Oriente’s Nipe Bay.<sup>536</sup> Beyond their work for the relatively

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<sup>530</sup> Davis, *The Cuban Church in a Sugar Economy*, 140.

<sup>531</sup> Missionary F.A Flatt explained, “Now after reading Dr. Davis’ book I am more impressed with our need for a rural program.” FA Flatt to Dr. A.W. Wasson, May 14, 1942, UMAHS, Microfilm Roll 338.

<sup>532</sup> Maurice Daily to Dr. A.W. Wasson, June 26, 1942, UMAHS, Microfilm Roll 338.

<sup>533</sup> Both Candler College (Methodist, Havana) and La Progresiva (Presbyterian, Cardenas) were ranked in the top ten high schools on the island. Ramos, *Protestantism and Revolution in Cuba*, 36.

<sup>534</sup> Pérez, *Essays on Cuban History*, 65.

<sup>535</sup> Corse, *Protestants, Revolution, and the Cuba-U.S. Bond*, 4.

<sup>536</sup> Hilty, *Friends in Cuba*, 2-10, 20-2, 58.

well-off students at Colegio Internacionales,<sup>537</sup> American Baptists provided basic health, food and elderly services to impoverished Cubans in eastern Cuba.<sup>538</sup> Many denominations also organized short service trips for faith groups from the United States to visit Cuba for a few weeks and volunteer before returning home.<sup>539</sup> The rural work conducted by denominations including the American Baptists, the Jehovah Witnesses, the Quakers, the Presbyterians and the West Indies Mission, likely pressured the Methodists to accelerate plans for the development of

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<sup>537</sup> Not including the children of staff members, close to one-tenth of *Colegios Internacionales*' students held scholarships in a student body of 316 in 1957. Among these were four children from the public day school "who received the highest grades when they finished the earlier grade." Otherwise, the student body came from families with means who could afford the tuition costs. According to the school's director Mario Casanella, many students "came from comfortable homes" and upon graduation "occup[ied] positions of responsibility in the government or in industry or in teaching and in the professions." As one of the best schools in the region, the student body also included seven U.S. citizens whose parents lived in Santiago. Mario Casanella, "Report of Colegios Internacionales El Cristo, Cuba," January 25, 1957, ABHMS, 86-14.

<sup>538</sup> "Kathleen A. Rounds," September 9, 1962, ABHMS, 340-1; "Kathleen A. Rounds," August 23, 1963 ABHMS, 340-1; Corse, *Protestants, Revolution, and the Cuba-U.S. Bond*, 4.

<sup>539</sup> As with their access to foreign capital, access to volunteer labor from foreigners boosted the stability and prestige of Anglo-American mission projects. The American Baptists publicized the completion of a service trip in 1955. The article read, "The Gospel never can be preached effectively by a person who manifests no interest in the daily problems of his listeners, and who has no interest in helping his hearers to better themselves in the material, the physical and the mental. Thus the complete 'team' sent on a campaign by the Board of Evangelism and Stewardship of the Eastern Cuba Baptist Convention is composed of: an evangelist, a Bible teacher, a medical doctor, a dentist, a registered nurse, a mid-wife, an agricultural engineer, a veterinarian, an educator, a home economist, a lawyer, a notary public, a musician, and an expert in teaching illiterate adults to read by the 'Lauback' method (the pupil begins to read in one week and completes the course in one month after with the help of any literate neighbor) in order that they may read their bible and also protect their legal rights...Mornings are dedicated to Bible classes, and conferences on first aide, sanitation, etc. Afternoons are dedicated to medical, dental and legal work, literacy classes, conferences on hygiene, crop rotation, livestock and poultry betterment, nutrition, dietetics, home economy, and betterment of interior decorations of homes etc. Evenings are dedicated to devotions, educational films, and a full evangelistic meeting..." Peter I. R. Skanse, "The Rural Betterment Campaigns of the Eastern Cuban Baptist Convention," *Eastern Cuba Baptist News* 2 (March 1955), 3.

Hoping to gain recruits to work for the Methodist projects of eastern Cuba, Pastor John Stroud requested short-term Christian recruits, explaining, "The Cuba Work Camp is scheduled for six weeks during June, July and August in Preston, Oriente, Cuba. Eleven students will be chosen from the states of Florida and Georgia and five from other sections of the country. The cost will include transportation and \$20 for expense of food. The Work Camp will be divided into two groups--one working at the [Agricultural and Industrial] school, the other in the nearby rural community. Activities will include the teaching of classes in Bible, health, canning and food projects, and the manual work of road repair, improvements for the local school, building a church..." "Four Work Camps Planned for Methodist Students," *World Outlook* XXXVIII, no. 7 (July 1948): 46-47.

rural service projects, which would often be maintained by women missionaries.<sup>540</sup> By the 1950s, Methodists claimed the most active missionary community in Oriente.

While American Baptists and Quakers arrived in rural eastern Cuba at the turn of the century, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South limited their rural service activities until they united with the northern Methodist Episcopal Church in 1939. At the turn of the century, Southern Methodists established influential religious and educational institutions in western Cuba. A dedication to the most impoverished elements of Cuban society, however, would not emerge until later. Like the Southern and American Baptists, the Methodists split over the issue of slavery in the mid-1840s.<sup>541</sup> Before reunification, the two Methodist traditions developed along divergent paths. Southern Methodists dedicated themselves to spreading the gospel through evangelism, and northern Methodists prioritized service projects in the realms of health, education and agriculture. Following the war of 1898, they divided Spain's former colonies between themselves. Cuba was allocated to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South while the northern Methodist Episcopal Church acquired Puerto Rico.

The Methodist mission to Cuba seems to have been reinvigorated with the unification of the southern and northern traditions in 1939. World War II and the post-war mentality that framed North Americans as "protectors of the free world" further catalyzed the new Methodist commitment to rural development projects. Of the estimated 225 foreign missionaries in the country, the 38 Methodists seem to have represented the largest foreign presence for a Protestant

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<sup>540</sup> Conversation with United Methodist Archivist L. Dale Patterson, August 25, 2017; Ramos, *Protestantism and Revolution in Cuba*, 31, 34.

<sup>541</sup> Presbyterians also split over the issue of slavery, but a bit later, in 1857. D.G. Hart and John Meuther, *Seeking a Better Country: 300 Years of American Presbyterianism* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2007), 150.

denomination on the island in the late 1950s and early 1960s.<sup>542</sup> The Methodists took new forms in Cuba after unification, introducing themselves to a new, poorer and darker audience in Oriente. Lawrence Rankin, the son of Methodist missionaries Victor and Kathleen Rankin based in Camagüey, explains unification led to “a more global theology toward missions.”<sup>543</sup> His father Victor Rankin chronicles the theological evolution of the Methodist commitment to structural transformation; Methodists, according to Rankin, came to Cuba during the 1940s and 1950s “to train Cubans, while eliminating dependency, promoting financial independence, and self-sufficiency.”<sup>544</sup> This new emphasis on rural service reinvigorated the denomination. In a period when most denominations decreased their foreign presence on the island, the renovation of the tradition led the Methodists to maintain the highest number of North American missionaries of any Protestant group through the 1950s.<sup>545</sup>

### ***Cross-Cultural Collaboration***

Throughout the Methodist projects in eastern Cuba, engagement with impoverished Cubans led missionaries to be increasingly responsive to local needs. Discussions between rural missionaries and Cubans proved more participatory and communal than almost any transnational forms of contact in Cuba. Edgar Nesman, who trained as an agricultural engineer and served as a teacher and the temporary director of the Agricultural and Industrial School on United Fruit and

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<sup>542</sup> “History of the Methodist Church in Cuba,” provided by Edgar Nesman; Ramos, *Protestantism and Revolution in Cuba*, 27, 34, 71; Yaremko, *U.S. Protestant Missions in Cuba*, 3.

<sup>543</sup> Lawrence A. Rankin, “Early Methodism in Cuba—Towards a National Church, 1883-1958,” provided by Lawrence Rankin.

<sup>544</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>545</sup> Most denominations were pursuing greater dependence on Cuban workers by the 1940s and 1950s. “History of the Methodist Church in Cuba,” provided by Edgar Nesman; Ramos, *Protestantism and Revolution in Cuba*, 71; Yaremko, *U.S. Protestant Missions in Cuba*, 3.

Sugar Company land in the 1950s, explained that missionaries responded to the observed problems in rural Cuban society, with respect for, and deference to traditional Cuban solutions.

Unlike their compatriots in Havana or the *barrios americanos* of foreign corporations, these rural missionaries worked with Cubans to provide sustainable solutions to local problems. Nesman understood well the power of local knowledge, and he appreciated the symbiotic relationship between agriculturally-oriented missionaries and Cuban farmers due to his efforts to cultivate relationships and share information with local growers. He wrote, “I learned a lot from these visits in the community. For one thing, it helped to make the classroom teaching at the school more relevant, and related to the real situations faced by the farmers....” Through these meetings Nesman learned to flexibly integrate his training with local knowledge developed through years of experience by Cuban farmers. “The most modern farm practices that came from the agricultural centers of the scientific world were not the most practical starting point for the needed changes in Cuba. It seemed best to search for the practices in the local community that were just a bit better than those presently used by most of the farmers, and start there with the hope that they would be ready for more change in the future as they saw improved results. In leading the discussions, I tried to find what seemed to work best among the farmers who were already doing something about the problem...and add some aspect of science to things they already knew from practice.” Nesman learned that the practicality of his lessons at Michigan State University were limited not just by the Cuban soil and climate, but also by Cuban financial realities. Nesman explains, “Many of the scientific solutions that had been used in modern agriculture had little application for them because of the cost.”<sup>546</sup> Nesman attempted to find solutions with – not for – local agricultural farmers.

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<sup>546</sup> Edgar Nesman, “Memoir,” 38, provided by Edger Nesman.

Nesman shaped his goals at the Agricultural and Industrial School around the vulnerable position and limited options faced by his students due to the dominance of the sugar economy of eastern Cuba. He explained, “Most of [the students at *la granja*] came from settings where they did not have land of their own to use. Many came from sugar plantation areas, with limited occupational opportunities beyond the sugar company. Others came from towns and villages, and even though they were in a rural setting, they would not have a farm to return to where their agricultural skills could be practiced.” Nesman realized, “We were training rural leaders, but not necessarily future farmers or farm wives.” Aided by the expertise of Juliet Chick Milk in John Dewey’s methods of progressive education, *la granja* positioned itself to train Cubans committed to affecting change in their communities and their nation.<sup>547</sup> This mission became increasingly important as Nesman and others tried to convince their students during the revolutionary struggle of the late 1950s to remain at the school rather than joining the rebel forces in the nearby mountains. Nesman argued to his pupils that their training would enable them to become leaders in the “new” Cuba to come.<sup>548</sup>

Clarifying the educational and cultural role of the Agricultural and Industrial School in eastern Cuba, Eulalia Cook argued, “[It] is the one place to which we can send our country boys and girls without a big outlay for scholarships, and hope to have them come back to live and work among us.... We have seen our boys and girls come back for vacation time anxious to share what they have learned, and making a real contribution.... We look to the school for training our adult leaders...”<sup>549</sup> Cook continued, “The very fact that we have a school dedicated

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<sup>547</sup> Robert Milk, interview by author, September 8, 2016, Telephone.

<sup>548</sup> Edgar Nesman, “Memoir,” 38, provided by Edger Nesman.

<sup>549</sup> Eulalia Cook to Elizabeth Lee, January 11, 1950, UMAHS, Missionary Files, 1189-2-1.26.

to helping the *campesino* meet his problems of daily life makes friends for us and our work. The average Cuban, however indifferent he may be to religion, recognizes the need of such a school and appreciates what it is doing to lift the level of life of the *campesino*.” Cook explained that the people of the region “look to the school to help us introduce better seeds, wiser farming methods, better stock, milk goats, etc...[it is] training its student in extension work and helping the neighboring communities.” Seeing the potential for transforming rural Cuban society and disrupting the cyclical nature of rural suffering and dependency on foreign capital, Cook allowed herself to imagine what it would take for “the services of the school to be made more widely available to the country people throughout the island....”<sup>550</sup>

Through their daily contact with Cubans, and based on their goals in Cuba, many missionaries developed a participatory ethic and a sense of empathy for the struggles and wisdom of the Cuban population. In the 1950s, Nesman began to work with a group of boys who had never attended the Agricultural School and who the local company foreman called “a shiftless bunch of no-count delinquents.”<sup>551</sup> The school’s director Richard Milk recalls, “Nesman became deeply interested in this group of older youth. He began a youth club with them.” He worked with their parents to begin “garden projects...[a] neighborhood baseball team...a night class for [literacy]....”<sup>552</sup> Through these programs, Nesman helped a group of teenagers who had been forsaken by employees of a U.S.-owned company, to re-integrate themselves into an economy dominated by foreign capital. Milk recalled that one of the young boys, Sammy Pérez, became a tractor driver, and the United Fruit foreman even “began to speak

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<sup>550</sup> Ibid.

<sup>551</sup> Richard Milk, “Cuba Testimony,” provided by Carroll English, 27-28.

<sup>552</sup> Ibid.

well of him.”<sup>553</sup> While these efforts did little, of course, to alter the dependency on foreign corporations faced by rural Cubans, it enabled these young men to provide for their families and, ironically, to serve as labor for “the company”.

### ***Rural Women Missionaries***

In the early 1940s, after the publication of *The Cuban Church in a Sugar Economy*, John Merle Davis was in close contact with the Executive Secretary of the Woman’s Division of the Methodist Missions Board based in New York City. Elizabeth M. Lee reported to Eulalia Cook, head of the Báguanos mission, that Davis “is very much pleased that several of you are following some of the lines he laid down.”<sup>554</sup> The female-run Methodist circuit of Báguanos began in 1941. Three North American Methodist women oversaw sixteen churches, as well as multiple day and Sunday schools.<sup>555</sup> These single female missionaries inoculated Cubans against diseases, tested them for parasites, helped with home improvement and organized literacy campaigns. Operating in a company-run mill town, women missionaries often offered the only social services available to community members. In 1943, Methodist missionary Eulalia Cook articulated one of the reasons for the success of the Methodist missionary work at the sugar mill of Báguanos, Oriente: “The missionaries have not tried to carry through any set program, but rather to meet the needs of the community as they have arisen.... There has been a conscious effort from the beginning to have the people help plan all activities and to take responsibility.” Distinct from Protestants in Havana who sought to cultivate the next generation of Cuban leaders, missionaries in Báguanos, including Cook, bore witness to the everyday hardship of the sugar economy. Her goals for the

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<sup>553</sup> Richard Milk, “Cuba Testimony,” 27-28, provided by Carroll English.

<sup>554</sup> Elizabeth Lee to Eulalia Cook, April 1, 1943, UMAHS, Missionary Files, 1189-2-1.26.

<sup>555</sup> Whitehurst.

mission were shaped by her desire to help these rural workers endure the conditions of informal empire. Cook wrote “We have tried to let the people know that the church is interested in all of their problems.”<sup>556</sup>



*Figure 18. Eulalia Cook*<sup>557</sup>

In the first half of the twentieth century women missionaries proved more likely to focus on social, educational and health endeavors, while male missionaries tended to become pastors. Thus, Cubans and female missionaries enjoyed personal engagements during service-oriented activities, while a more hierarchical lecturing dynamic developed between many male pastors and their Cuban parishioners. Historically, Protestant denominations placed various limitations on the ability of women to preach from the pulpit. However, in many traditions women could

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<sup>556</sup> Eulalia Cook González, *From Horseback to Cyberspace: A Missionary's Ideas, Ideals and Experiences*, eds. Ruth M. Dow and Ruth C. Leigh (Miami, FL: Alfalit International, Inc., 2004), 30-31.

<sup>557</sup> UMAHS, Missionary Bio Series, 1470-3-1.45.

organize cultural institutions with varying degrees of independence from male oversight.<sup>558</sup> With few interruptions, from the time of their development in the nineteenth century, the Woman's Divisions of the Methodist tradition in particular maintained near complete sovereignty over their finances, property and buildings. More than other denominations, Methodist women missionaries enjoyed an autonomy that enabled them to form stable and independent rural schools, clinics and churches.<sup>559</sup> The isolation of rural women missionaries positioned them for power and influence secured by few North American women of the time. Without a male missionary counterpart in Báguanos, Cook preached to her congregation regularly. In an era when women were not being ordained by the Methodist Church, an exception was made for Eulalia Cook because she was a rural missionary. She was the first woman ordained by the South Carolina conference.<sup>560</sup>

In Cuba's most isolated posts, rural female missionaries lived primarily among Cubans, with few Anglo-Americans in their immediate surroundings. As Larry Rankin remembers, male missionaries "tended to hang out in the cities [while] the women were out among the very poor..."<sup>561</sup> Due to their separation from other Anglo-Americans, their proximity to Cuban poverty, and their focus on ameliorating suffering, rural female missionaries shaped their ministry to serve the Cuban community that surrounded them, which they often embraced as their own.<sup>562</sup> Rankin argued that in these roles,

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<sup>558</sup> Conversation with United Methodist Archivist L. Dale Patterson, August 25, 2017.

<sup>559</sup> Ibid.

<sup>560</sup> Lawrence A. Rankin, "Early Methodism in Cuba—Towards a National Church, 1883-1958," provided by Lawrence Rankin to author.

<sup>561</sup> Larry Rankin, interview by author, August 27, 2016, Lakeland, FL.

<sup>562</sup> This author has seen no evidence of personal enrichment pursued by rural missionaries in the 1950s and 1960s. Most were struggling to balance their mission budget. However, many did enjoy luxuries unavailable to most of

Single women missionaries had a profound impact on the development of Cuban leaders. They founded community centers, schools, clinics, and chapels. They worked mostly in rural areas. They were multi-taskers, able to administer in a variety of ministries, serving as nurses, chaplains, teachers, and mechanics. Their influence among young men and women was profound, who would go on to be pastors and professionals.<sup>563</sup>

### ***Socio-Economic Inequities Provoke Revolutionary Consciousness***

Transformed by their proximity to rural suffering and their ethical foundations, the former missionaries of Oriente narrated an empathic understanding of the revolution's socio-economic and anti-U.S. origins. Carroll English served as a teacher at the Agricultural and Industrial School in Playa Manteca, a few miles from the United Fruit and Sugar Company mill at Preston. In the mornings, before undertaking her duties at *la granja*, English ventured to a nearby batey and instructed the children of Cuban cane-cutters. English explains the one-room school "was just a little project that the agricultural school took on as part of their mission work." Without the efforts of these Methodist missionaries, it's unlikely these children would have been formally educated at all. The school ended at noon and English was the only instructor after she replaced another educator from *la granja* who had been reassigned. In her limited time with these children, English sought to expand upon the world they knew by taking them to the UFSC mill at Preston, as, "most, if not all, of the students had never been anywhere other than around the batey."<sup>564</sup> This small cane-cutting village and the lives endured by these cane-cutting families contrasted wildly with the luxury enjoyed by Anglo-Americans in Preston.

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their Cuban parishioners. In Báguanos and Playa Manteca a Jamaican servant aided the Milks and Eulalia Cook with their work. Juliet Milk to Friends, November 1, 1947, UMAHS, Microfilm Roll 341; Early missionaries like the Superintendents Zenas Martin (Quaker), Hartwell Moseley (American Baptists) and William Fletcher (Southern Methodist) all sought to profit financially during their stay in Cuba.

<sup>563</sup> Lawrence A. Rankin, "Early Methodism in Cuba—Towards a National Church, 1883-1958," provided by Lawrence Rankin to author.

<sup>564</sup> Carroll English to author, July 24, 2018, Email.

The stark inequity in Cuba seems to have complicated English's understanding of the U.S. presence on the island. English explained in a recent email exchange: "Americans were often tied in to the sugar industry.... President Batista protected those interests to keep himself in power and to keep the companies happy to be there."<sup>565</sup> English argues that the prioritization of North American interests by Cuban politicians radicalized those Cubans marginalized by this arrangement. Her time in Cuba exposed how socio-economic inequality can lead to political unrest. She explains, "As long as capitalism can rape the forests and soils and waters of the world, the indigenous peoples will forever be obliged to toil to serve their money-making interests without sufficient compensation to the people of the land. Their experience is of being oppressed with little or no opportunity to share in the wealth that capitalism creates. This feeling of being suppressed makes for revolution."<sup>566</sup> Operating on land donated by the United Fruit and Sugar Company, English and other rural missionaries in 1950s Cuba became acutely aware of the economic, social and political injustices resulting from foreign-influence, aggravated by the priorities of the Batista government in times of revolution.<sup>567</sup>

Rural missionaries bore witness to the myriad ways in which the conflict of the late-1950s exacerbated Cuban suffering. Betty Campbell Whitehurst, a Methodist missionary stationed in Báguanos explained, "The rebels were burning cane fields in an attempt to cripple Cuba's economy. The Báguanos sugar mill began work, but was producing hardly any sugar, because the cane-cutters were afraid to go into the fields. The army then said it would kill anyone who refused to work, so the workers were forced to go into hiding or join the rebels. Meanwhile,

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<sup>565</sup> Carroll English to author, August 21, 2016, Email.

<sup>566</sup> Ibid.

<sup>567</sup> Alexander, *A History of Organized Labor in Cuba*, 143.

their families were starving.”<sup>568</sup> Unsurprisingly, living conditions deteriorated in Oriente during the revolutionary period. Agricultural production dwindled at the end of the 1950s, further crippling the economic stability of many communities. In this context, rural missionaries and Cuban Protestants shared fears and frustrations with the violence that accompanied their shared reality; and yet together they dreamed of the possibilities offered by a “new” Cuba.<sup>569</sup>

### *Contesting the (Im)Morality of the Existing Order*



Figure 19. Sherman's Methodist Church in Guantánamo<sup>570</sup>



Figure 20. Plaque to Sherman at Guantánmo's Iglesia San Pablo<sup>571</sup>

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<sup>568</sup> Whitehurst.

<sup>569</sup> Ramos, *Protestantism and Revolution in Cuba*, 134.

<sup>570</sup> Provided by Edgar Nesman.

<sup>571</sup> Taken by author.

Just as Edgar Nesman worked to create a better life for Cubans through the training of Cuban agriculturalists, in the city of Guantánamo Ira E. Sherman sought to end the sex industry constructed around the desires of U.S. sailors and marines. Arriving in Cuba with his family in 1950, Sherman became pastor of Guantánamo's Iglesia Metodista "San Pablo" in 1958. Sherman explained that both Cuban and U.S. observers "understood then and think now that the prostitution in Cuba, no doubt including that in Guantánamo and Caimanera, was controlled by American Gangsters."<sup>572</sup> The conditions around the Guantánamo Bay Naval Station in the 1950s illuminate well how Anglo-Americans based in Cuba designed and sustained social, ethnic, economic and national hierarchies through the development of an exploitative service economy, and then judged harshly the immorality of the Cubans.<sup>573</sup>

Unable to challenge what he described as the malevolent elements of U.S. influence by petitioning his own government, in 1954 Guillermo Hernández turned to his transnational Protestant network. Hernández wrote the Secretary for Latin America in the New York headquarters of the American Baptists, chronicling how the U.S. personnel from Guantánamo Bay Naval Station brought sorrow to the surrounding communities through demands for sex and entertainment. Hernández detailed how U.S. sailors and marines ushered,

the local population towards the abyss, promoting gambling, pillaging and evil.... Some of the officials and members of the Army and the Navy dishonor the uniform they wear.... The Cuban employees receive little recompense, many parents fail to achieve their most essential needs. The American employees receive high wages and comfortable facilities that are denied to the natives.... As a Christian man, I cannot remain indifferent to these things, so I submit to you. The Cuban authorities do not seem to pay much attention to these things...that the policy must change...the American people is very bad

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<sup>572</sup> Ira E. Sherman to Dr. Louis A. Pérez, December 3, 1991, WL, Louis A. Pérez Jr., Papers, Letters 1991-1992, Folder 1.

<sup>573</sup> Historian Jana K. Lipman details how citizenship, language skills, gender and race determined disparate opportunities for employment, as well as compensation at the base. Lipman, *Guantánamo*.

in the eyes of Latin America. It's time to contribute to the understanding; goodwill among each other, to foster a climate in keeping the evangelio of Christ.<sup>574</sup>

Cuban Protestants including Hernández helped shape how foreign missionaries understood the overwhelming U.S. influence in the region of Guantánamo.

The comportment of U.S. naval personnel horrified the missionaries of Oriente. Sherman recounted: “In Caimanera and Guantánamo, nothing was ‘off limits’ and the Shore Patrol merely walked in and out of the houses [of prostitution], presumably to see to it that the sailors were not robbed or assaulted.”<sup>575</sup> Sherman recalls an incident at a rail station when he felt it necessary to hide his young female Cuban Methodist parishioners from a collection of intoxicated U.S. naval personnel.<sup>576</sup> Anglo-American religious leaders and their Cuban parishioners witnessed not only what they perceived as the immorality of these young U.S. servicemen, but also the lack of accountability. Thus, both missionaries and their Cuban parishioners in the areas surrounding Guantánamo generally embraced the revolution’s demand to dismantle these “amoral” structures.

### *Conclusions*

The terms of transcultural contact, pursued by rural missionaries in close proximity to suffering, proved radically different from those of Anglo-American ranchers and farmers, as well as mining and sugar-mill executives living in the Cuban countryside and often financially contributing to these missions. For foreign missionaries, the goals of growth and development proved to be enticements, not obstacles, for developing empathic relationships with Cubans.<sup>577</sup>

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<sup>574</sup> Guillermo Hernández to Wilbur Larson, December 9, 1954, ABHMS, Folder 98-10.

<sup>575</sup> Ira E. Sherman to Dr. Louis A. Pérez, December 3, 1991, WL, Louis A. Pérez Jr., Papers, Letters 1991-1992, Folder 1.

<sup>576</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>577</sup> The 1953 Census indicates that in the province of Oriente, around which this section focused, only 39 Canadians established residence. British subjects in the region totaled 7,047, including low-paid black labor from the British Caribbean. At this time, there were 1,624 U.S. nationals in the region – close to a quarter of the total U.S. residential

Where a sugar executive saw a disposable laborer to serve capital accumulation, a missionary saw a potential student, parishioner, or fellow Protestant worker helping to transform Cuban society by reducing rural dependency.

Despite the tangled relationship between Protestant missions and foreign capital, in times made desperate by authoritarianism and violence, rural missionaries became invested in projects that worked to reorder Cuban hierarchies, even as this collaboration would eventually undermine their own standing in Cuban society. With Cubans, they hoped to challenge the cyclical nature of rural poverty and framed their goals around shared aspirations for a “new” Cuba. In Oriente, seemingly forgotten by the Cuban government, exploited by foreign capital and often visited less than once a year by a Catholic Priest, life in dependent “company towns,” hundreds of miles from Havana—the same conditions that made the region fertile grounds for Anglo-American Protestants seeking to build a following—contributed to the context for revolution.

While maintaining their status as privileged outsiders, the missionaries of eastern Cuba, and especially the women missionaries, deeply felt the trauma of the 1950s and became convinced of the need for radical, structural reforms. These missionaries largely sought a more democratic, equitable and just society, not beholden to the Catholic Church. They desired a nation where farmers could achieve self-respect through land ownership; where all children would be educated and no one would be exploited. While the radical changes implemented after 1959 would go too far for most rural missionaries, they understood the socio-economic context

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community on the island (6,503). On the entire island, there were 272 Canadians and 14,421 documented British subjects in total. Oficina Nacional de los Censos Demográfico y Electoral, *Censos de población, viviendas y electoral* (La Habana, Cuba: Tribunal Superior Electoral, 1953), 81-82. By the 1950s most foreign corporations supporting Anglo-American missionaries, like most, though not all of the missionaries themselves, came from the United States. In 1939 Canadians held ten sugar mills in Cuba and Englishmen held four. U.S. nationals held sixty-six. By 1959, the increase in Cuban control of sugar production meant no sugar mills were held by countries of the Commonwealth with only thirty-six belonging to U.S. capital. Lowry Nelson, *Cuba: The Measure of a Revolution* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1972), 61-62.

that birthed these demands. Their ambition to create a more egalitarian Cuba, in large part due to the obstacles presented by the informal empire that they helped sustain, and on which they themselves depended, led to the eventual displacement of rural missionaries. Following the model laid out by foreign Protestants during the first U.S. occupation, when the revolution reordered Cuban hierarchies, they did so without Anglo-American input.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT: RURAL MISSIONARIES IN TIMES OF REVOLUTION**

### ***Introduction***

Rural Anglo-American missionaries often mobilized their status as privileged outsiders to shield revolutionaries from Batista's forces, and to lend credibility to the early social, economic and political goals of the revolution. They largely rejected the narrative forwarded by Batista, foreign corporations, and counter-revolutionary forces that framed the revolution as illegitimate and communistic. Missionaries had worked with, and often educated the revolutionary leaders. Missionaries of eastern Cuba, and especially the region's women missionaries, bore witness to Cuban desperation and suffering in the 1950s and generally identified the goals of the revolution as noble. They often worked to protect vulnerable Cuban communities before the revolution and sought to influence Anglo-American power brokers in defense of the revolution after 1959. While poor rural Cubans could be ignored by Anglo-American residents living in western Cuba's more peaceful and prosperous urban settings, foreign-born rural missionaries who experienced the violence enacted by Batista's forces could not be easily silenced.

Over time, the foreign corporations that materially supported rural missions attempted to destabilize the revolutionary government through economic sabotage and accusations of communism. However, after witnessing the socio-economic inequalities, the violence of conflict and the displays of Anglo-American vice, rural missionaries generally followed the lead of Cuban Protestants in championing the early policies of new authorities. This led to an embrace of the revolution in its first few years, before rejecting the Cuban government once it targeted Protestant communities. Yet, perhaps more than any other group of privileged outsiders, rural

Anglo-American missionaries understood and advocated for the political, as well as the early socio-economic goals of the revolution.

### *Revolutionary Educations*



Figure 21. Remains of *Colegios Internacionales*, 2016 <sup>578</sup>

In 1907, the American Baptists serving in Oriente founded *Colegios Internacionales* in the hills surrounding Santiago de Cuba.<sup>579</sup> Like many missions established by rural Protestant missionaries Anglo-American corporate interests helped determine the location of *Colegios*. American Baptists founded the school in the company town of El Cristo, financially dependent on the Quinto mine of the U.S.-owned Cuban Mining Company.<sup>580</sup> As elsewhere, in El Cristo, foreign-owned institutions relied upon rural Protestant missionaries to provide support to their

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<sup>578</sup> Taken by author.

<sup>579</sup> “Kathleen A. Rounds,” September 9, 1962, ABHMS, 340-1; “Kathleen A. Rounds,” August 23, 1963, ABHMS, 340-1; José Luis Molina V., *En la tierra esmeralda*, 1949, ABHMS, 98-4; “Kathleen Rounds,” August 23, 1963, ABHMS, 340-1; Wilbur Larson to James A. Christison, November 22, 1961, ABHMS, 340-1.

<sup>580</sup> F.S. Norcross, Jr., “Development of the Low-grade Manganese Ores of Cuba,” *American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers* 1188 (February 1940), Accessed, August 8, 2017, <http://library.aimehq.org/library/books/AIME%20Technical%20Publications%20%E2%80%93%201940%20-%20A-E/AIME%20Technical%20Publications%20%E2%80%93%201940%20-%20A-E%20-%200007.pdf>.

workers.<sup>581</sup> Working and living in Cuba's eastern-most province Oriente, Colegios teacher Kathleen Rounds enjoyed a warm relationship with members of the local community.<sup>582</sup> In the mid-1950s she lamented the economic suffering of El Cristo, where 2,000 workers in a community of under 10,000 people lost their jobs due to the closure of the U.S.-owned magnesium mine.<sup>583</sup> Though she persisted in her work, the closure of the mine devastated the community Rounds called home.

Oral histories, letters and diaries reveal how and why rural Protestant missionaries, including those in El Cristo, developed transformative relationships with Cubans active in the revolutionary struggle against Fulgencio Batista. The director of Colegios Internacionales, Agustín González became a key figure in the Santiago resistance and a mentor to revolutionary leader Frank País. Rounds also worked for Mario Casanella who presided over País' funeral in 1957.<sup>584</sup> Responding to the assassination of a former Colegios student by Batista's armed forces in the late 1950s, Rounds' students blocked the highway in front of the school.<sup>585</sup> Before 1959, when Rounds read Castro's name in the paper or heard it from the supportive Cuban citizens of

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<sup>581</sup> Schools and access to the hospitals were often provided to mill employees and their children. However, under the direct control of companies like United Fruit, or under the *colonos* who sold their sugar to companies like Hershey, the cane-cutters and their families received few services from the U.S. corporations their labor enriched.

<sup>582</sup> Born in 1899, a native of Everett, Massachusetts, American Baptist missionary Kathleen Rounds graduated Boston University with a Bachelor of Arts before arriving at Colegios Internacionales in 1921. "Kathleen A. Rounds," September 9, 1962, ABHMS, 340-1; "Kathleen A. Rounds," August 23, 1963, ABHMS, 340-1; José Luis Molina V., *En la tierra esmeralda*, 1949, ABHMS, 98-4; "Kathleen Rounds," August 23, 1963, ABHMS, 340-1; Wilbur Larson to James A. Christison, November 22, 1961, ABHMS, 340-1; Kathleen Rounds to Milow E. Wenger, October 12, 1949, WABHMS, 61-16; "Kathleen A. Rounds," September 9, 1962, ABHMS, 340-1.

<sup>583</sup> The population of El Cristo was 9,348 people according to the 1953 census. Oficina Nacional de los Censos Demográfico y Electoral, *Censos de población, viviendas y electoral* (La Habana, Cuba: Tribunal Superior Electoral, 1953), 17; Mario Casanella, "Report of Colegios Internacionales El Cristo, Cuba," January 25, 1957, ABHMS, 86-14.

<sup>584</sup> Ramos, *Protestantism and Revolution in Cuba*, 52.

<sup>585</sup> Corse, *Protestants, Revolution, and the Cuba-U.S. Bond*, 11.

Oriente, she remembered her former pupil Agustina Castro, the sister of the rebel leaders Fidel and Raúl, who Rounds described as “faithful to her evangelical faith” having been baptized at the school.<sup>586</sup> The labor, dreams, aspirations and struggles of Cubans gave meaning to the lives of rural evangelizers like Rounds, especially in times of conflict.<sup>587</sup>



Figure 22. Kathleen A. Rounds<sup>588</sup>

For Rounds and other rural missionaries, relationships with anti-Batista activists and their family members humanized the revolutionaries, while their proximity to communities surviving in conditions of oppression and destitution legitimized not only the democratic goals of the revolution, but also the more radical, and, to Anglo-Americans, more threatening socio-economic aims of the struggle. The revolution advocated economic egalitarianism, as well as educational, health and “moral” initiatives that missionaries recognized as political extensions of Protestant service projects throughout the island. Unlike more secular elements of the Anglo-

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<sup>586</sup> “Kathleen A. Rounds,” August 23, 1963, ABHMS, 340-1.

<sup>587</sup> “Kathleen A. Rounds,” September 9, 1962, ABHMS, 340-1; “Kathleen A. Rounds,” August 23, 1963, ABHMS, 340-1; José Luis Molina V., *En la tierra esmeralda*, 1949, ABHMS, 98-4; “Kathleen Rounds,” August 23, 1963, ABHMS, 340-1; Wilbur Larson to James A. Christison, November 22, 1961, ABHMS, 340-1; Kathleen Rounds to Milow E. Wenger, October 12, 1949, WABHMS, 61-16; “Kathleen A. Rounds,” September 9, 1962, ABHMS, 340-1.

<sup>588</sup> “Rounds, Kathleen A., Retirement Allowance,” ABHMS, 340-1.

American colony residing in Havana and elsewhere, between 1959 and 1960 rural missionaries almost uniformly cheered the overthrow of Batista and the curbing of foreign influence.

In spring, 1959 Rounds celebrated how revolutionary policies “include[s] a reduction of the cost of living, work to combat unemployment, increase of small salaries and no racial discrimination. In April, the emphasis is ‘la Reforma Agraria’ . . .” She noted the excitement of Cubans, explaining, “people are contributing one or two days of their month’s salary to buy tractors and further this campaign.... Our pastors and leaders, [are] whole-heartedly behind Castro and the revolutionary movement. . . .”<sup>589</sup> Energized by their goals, those of their Cuban contacts and fellow Protestants, rural missionaries including Rounds supported the redistribution of wealth and power on the island after 1959. This was not a typical position for other Anglo-American residents in Cuba, and yet was deeply felt and shared by most of these rural missionaries.

It is perhaps no surprise that many of the Cuban revolutionary leaders came out of Protestant traditions, giving comfort and a sense of familiarity to rural missionaries and the larger Anglo-American colony. Commander of the Army in the province of Camagüey Huber Matos, Minister of Recuperation of Misappropriated Goods Faustino Pérez, Minister of Social Welfare Daniel Álvarez, Minister of Education Armando Hart, Minister of Interior José A. Naranjo, and Undersecretary of Labor Carlos Varona, all attended Protestant schools or were themselves practicing Protestants.<sup>590</sup> With the revolution mirroring their goals for Cuban society

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<sup>589</sup> Kathleen A Rounds, “Notes From Cuba,” April, 1959, ABHMS, 215-7.

<sup>590</sup> Vicente Cubillas, “El aporte de la iglesia evangélica a la causa redentora,” *Bohemia*, February 1, 1959, 108; Ramos, *Protestantism and Revolution in Cuba*, 36.

and being led by Protestants who shared their values, Anglo-American missionaries embraced the “new” Cuba that they believed to be emerging in 1959 and 1960.

***The War Zone: Bearing Witness to Violence***

...[Surely] you realize there are people who expect to be tortured and others who would be outraged by the idea. One never tortures except by a kind of mutual agreement.... The poor in my own country, in any Latin American country. The poor of central Europe and the Orient. Of course in your welfare states you have no poor, so you are untorturable. In Cuba the police can deal as harshly as they like with émigrés from Latin America and the Baltic States, but not with visitors from your country or Scandinavia. It is an instinctive matter on both sides...One reason why the West hates the great Communist states is that they don't recognise class-distinctions. Sometimes they torture the wrong people.... Captain Segura to Mr. Wormhold, *Our Man in Havana*<sup>591</sup>

In the late 1950s Batista's forces in Oriente regularly tortured, murdered, and terrorized Cuban pastors, students and parishioners, for both alleged and actual aid to the revolution. Unlike the children of wealthy Cuban professionals attending foreign-run private schools in Havana, who were ushered out of the country to avoid punishment for their activism, most Cubans who participated in rural Protestant institutions belonged to what Graham Greene's anti-hero Captain Segura referred to as the “torturable class” of Cubans.<sup>592</sup> Stationed in Báguanos Oriente, Betty Campbell Whitehurst memorialized in her diary how expendable her parishioners seemed to Cuban authorities, “Soldiers would go to a house after midnight to arrest someone, take him out and shoot him. The people they killed were ‘the enemies of Batista’ – often boys of 16 to 18, usually high school students.”<sup>593</sup> She explains a state of fear gripped the region as, “College and high school students were considered revolutionaries, and it was a crime

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<sup>591</sup> Graham Greene, *Our Man in Havana* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1958), 164-65.

<sup>592</sup> Greene, 164-65.

<sup>593</sup> Whitehurst and Whitehurst, *Our Life Story*.

punishable by death to be seen in a high school uniform. The Constitution had been suspended and there was no freedom of speech, press, or assembly...”<sup>594</sup>

The brutality of the Batista government shaped the sympathies rural missionaries held for the revolution. On December 1, 1957, the violence reached Báguanos in a way that devastated Whitehurst. In her diary she wrote, “[We] found the bodies of four missing boys from Báguanos, mutilated but recognizable. After torturing them for a day and half the night, the soldiers shot them.... Big chunks of flesh had been cut off in various places. Knives had been shoved into the front of their arms and pulled out the back. Their faces are bruised and swollen. Another thing they’d done before killing the boys was put out their eyes.”<sup>595</sup> To Whitehurst and the other women missionaries of Báguanos, these were not just anonymous victims of Batista’s war against civilians; these were youths whose families she knew well.

Because the Methodist mission in Báguanos directed most of the cultural institutions in a town of close to 1,000 people, the families of the victims asked Whitehurst and her fellow missionaries to deliver the eulogies for three out of the four young men. In her role as a spiritual and educational community leader, Whitehurst comforted the families of the victims. She expressed the pain of this experience in her diary that night: “I went...to try to console Mongo’s mother and one sister. The other sister was in another house, completely crazed. In every family there is at least one person who has gone crazy.... When Hugo’s casket arrived at his home...the first thing his mother noticed was the missing fingernails....”<sup>596</sup> Whitehurst continued, “I had

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<sup>594</sup> Ibid.

<sup>595</sup> Ibid.

<sup>596</sup> Ibid.

seen and heard so much that I felt heartbroken.”<sup>597</sup> As we will see, these emotionally devastating experiences shaped Whitehurst’s expectations and assessment of the Cuban revolution.

With frequent contact between foreign missionaries and Cubans, within and among the ecumenical denominations, the horrors of Batista’s rule spread quickly throughout this subset of the Anglo-American colony. Across communities, rural missionaries came to recognize a pattern of government repression, generally in support of the interests of the state and foreign corporations. Having heard many stories about acts of violence, at the end of 1957, Whitehurst recounted the brutality endured by the Cuban people throughout the island in her diary: “In Cienfuegos, after a big massacre, people were buried who weren’t even dead yet. One soldier went mad because a man he was about to bury begged him not to, and his superior officer, standing nearby, told him to bury the man or he’d be buried alive himself. The four who were killed this week in Marcané, between Cueto and Mayarí, were skinned alive, their hands were cut off....”<sup>598</sup> The trauma of the conflict permeated through conversations between Cubans and rural missionaries.

Far away from the blood and violence, most Anglo-American residents of Cuba remained oblivious to the horrors of the conflict until the last months of the revolution. Betty Campbell Whitehurst found the 1958 Methodist Conference in Havana to be “a difficult one, as we were divided into two groups: those loyal to Batista and those affirming the Castro revolution.”<sup>599</sup> Her North American colleagues who worked in the more male-dominated western urban centers did

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<sup>597</sup> Ibid.

<sup>598</sup> Ibid.

<sup>599</sup> Ibid.

not know, and could not fathom the terror Whitehurst described. As Whitehurst herself noted, missionaries in western Cuba were largely unaffected by the revolution in early 1958.<sup>600</sup>

Not only were the Cuban contacts of missionaries impacted by the violence, but between 1956-1958 foreign evangelizers often found themselves living in a war zone. Whitehurst remembers during the last four months of 1958, “There was no mail delivery, the company store soon ran out of food and most other merchandise, and even medical supplies were almost depleted.”<sup>601</sup> Suffering alongside their Cuban students, parishioners and colleagues produced a revolutionary consciousness in many rural missionaries. While other Anglo-Americans on the island lived through this period in relatively blissful ignorance, rural missionaries grew closer to Cubans with whom they shared experiences of desperation catalyzed intimacy and yearnings for change.

With much of Oriente immersed in a state of siege between the end of 1956 and the start of 1959, many rural missionaries lived a tenuous existence. Edgar Nesman recalls at the Agricultural and Industrial School, in Playa Manteca on land donated by the United Fruit and Sugar Company, “We were in rebel territory at night for four years. Army territory during the day.”<sup>602</sup> By the Autumn 1958, Batista’s forces “frequently arrested and disappeared” the school’s male students.<sup>603</sup> According to Nesman, “all of the teachers and students were sympathetic with the rebel cause, or were at least against the Batista government. Nonetheless, we were within the

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<sup>600</sup> Betty Campbell Whitehurst, interview by author, September 1, 2016, Telephone.

<sup>601</sup> Ibid.

<sup>602</sup> Marjorie and Edgar Nesman, interview by author, October 17, 2016, Tampa, FL.

<sup>603</sup> Edgar Nesman, “Memoir,” 63-66, provided by Edgar Nesman.

area controlled by the Batista Army during the day and they made frequent patrols.”<sup>604</sup> The Cuban government’s treatment of students encouraged a pro-revolutionary orientation among the North American leaders of *la granja*. Nesman recalls, “Typical of what happened all over Cuba was the brutal slaying of a graduate of our school. His cruelly disfigured body was found hanging from a tree early one morning, with the only means of identification being the tattered remains of his shirt.”<sup>605</sup> Though devastated by the violence, missionaries at the school sought ways to insulate their students from the conflict.

The staff at the Agricultural School protected the autonomy of the school from Batista’s forces by seeking to prevent students from joining the rebels in the mountains. They encouraged their students to prepare for the “new” Cuba they would build collectively after the defeat of Batista. Edgar Nesman, the school’s Director in the late 1950s, convinced a rebel *comandante* passing through the school grounds one evening to speak with the students about the importance of their studies. The *comandante* agreed to convey a message to the students that they should remain at the school, declaring what they would “offer for the future of the ‘new’ Cuba in agricultural development is very important.”<sup>606</sup> To a significant degree, *la granja* succeeded in developing the next generation of Cuban agricultural leaders. After the triumph of the revolution Nesman recalled, “Our graduates were in great demand to take important posts as technicians in agricultural production as part of the government agrarian-reform program.”<sup>607</sup>

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<sup>604</sup> Edgar Nesman, “Memoir,” 65, provided by Edgar Nesman.

<sup>605</sup> “Concerning Cuba,” *The Michigan State University Magazine*, (October, 1959): 13-15, 14, provided by Edgar Nesman.

<sup>606</sup> Marjorie and Edgar Nesman, interview by author, October 17, 2016, Tampa, FL.

<sup>607</sup> Edgar Nesman, “Memoir,” 64, provided by Edgar Nesman.

### *Anglo-American Missionaries as Revolutionary Actors*

In the late 1950s Ira E. Sherman protected Cubans facing reprisals from Batista's authorities, helping a Cuban pastor on a government "death list" to escape the country. Sherman subsequently feared for his own safety and sent his family back to the United States in late March 1958. For a time, Sherman himself felt it necessary to hide from Batista's security forces at the Guantánamo Bay Naval Base, despite his scorn for the exploitative dynamics on, and around the base.<sup>608</sup> Even as Sherman challenged U.S. authority in the region, his nationality operated as a shield against reprisals from the Cuban authorities. On April 1, 1958 Sherman wrote to Pastor Lewistine M. McCoy in New York, "I am practically a refugee here in the United States Naval Base of Guantánamo Bay.... I am afraid that of necessity I am stuck here until such a time as there is a new government in Cuba...."<sup>609</sup>

The Methodist hierarchy later admonished Sherman for failing to follow procedure, as he was required to write the head of his district or the Bishop to gain permission to send his family back to the United States. He also received a reprimand from Methodist Church General Secretary Eugene L. Smith for overstating the crisis he faced in Guantánamo.<sup>610</sup> Unlike their missionaries stationed in eastern Cuba, mission boards in United States were far removed from the horrors of war, exploitation and poverty, making them skeptical of the need for radical action.

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<sup>608</sup> Ira Sherman to Pastor McCoy, April 1, 1958, UMAHS, 1195-4-(3.11-3.15).

<sup>609</sup> Ibid.

<sup>610</sup> Eugene L. Smith to Ira Sherman, April 28, 1958, UMAHS, 1195-4-(3.11-3.15).



Figure 23. *The Rankin Family*<sup>611</sup>

Foreign missionaries in Cuba used their platform and privilege to condemn the Batista government before 1959.<sup>612</sup> While they themselves proved largely untouchable to government forces, their Cuban congregations often endured the consequences for the bold actions of North American evangelizers. In the late 1950s, Methodist pastor Victor Rankin publicly protested the U.S.-supported Batista government. On January 14, 1959, Rankin referenced a sermon he gave in 1958 in which he compared the culture of fear and silence under the Batista government to the intimidation and terror of life in Nazi Germany: “I spoke of the German pastors who did not speak out, who in effect allowed Hitler to express his policies...People liked to hear what I said, but they didn’t pause to say much as they fearfully hurried home after Church.” The day after he denounced Batista to his congregation, the police of Camagüey detained a member of his church.

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<sup>611</sup> UMAHS, Missionary Bio Series, 1469-5-5.77.

<sup>612</sup> Neill Macaulay reported that Free Will Baptists Director in Cuba Thomas Willey, offered support to the guerillas and offered “refuge” to Macaulay should he “run into trouble” attempting to connect with rebel forces. While this took place in Pinar del Río and not Oriente, the rural mission in the mountains of western Cuba mirrored many of the circumstances encountered by rural missionaries in eastern Cuba. Neill Macaulay, *A Rebel in Cuba: An American’s Memoir* (Chicago, IL: Quadrangle Books, 1970), 16-17.

Rankin remembers thinking painfully about his courage, his privilege, and the price paid by his parishioners. He said to himself: “[You] were a hero yesterday with your brave sermon. But they won’t hurt you, you’re an American. They won’t do anything to you, because they want American favor. But they will take it out on your Church people.”<sup>613</sup> Through their acts of solidarity, foreign missionaries confronted the implications of their privilege during the revolution.

### ***A Protestant Revolution***

After 1959, enthusiastic Cuban Protestants skillfully connected the revolution to the values they absorbed in Protestant institutions throughout the island. Cubans recalibrated the lessons garnered in Protestant churches and schools in attempts to influence U.S. policymakers as tensions between the two countries grew more intense between 1959-1960. While ultimately unsuccessful in affecting U.S.-Cuban diplomatic relations, Cubans articulated a Protestant revolutionary program that profoundly impacted the Anglo-American missionaries who recognized their own teachings in these pleas for justice.

In July 1959, an interdenominational group of Protestant Cuban youth composed a letter addressed to the “President of the United States, Congress of the USA, State Department of the USA and Ambassador of the USA” narrating the shared vision of evangelism and revolution. In English the young writers explained: “The pillars that will sustain this building are: politically—Freedom and democracy; economically—Land Reform and Industrialization; Socially—To

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<sup>613</sup> Victor L. Rankin, “Confessions of An American Missionary During Revolution,” January 14, 1959, 5, UMAHS, 1469-5-5:77.

redeem the poor people and applying the Christian principles of social justice.”<sup>614</sup> The youth demanded,

...a radical ECONOMIC, POLITICAL and SOCIAL restructuration so that [Cuba’s] happiness can be durable; so that we won’t have to suffer again, neither the bitter experience of the past or the future threat of the materialistic, atheist communism, that surely will take over all of Latin America if a real, humanist and just Revolution like Cuba’s does not take those people away from the inhuman conditions in which they die, and lift them to better standards of living where all the most indispensable material and spiritual needs are rightly tended to and filled.<sup>615</sup>

Like the North American leaders of rural Protestant institutions, the Cuban students chided the “false Christianity” of landowning elites who would claim religious ethics and yet choose to ignore rural suffering:

The Land Reform Law, that makes proprietors out of thousands of hungry peasants, has caused certain landlords, Cubans as well as Americans (who call themselves Christian, but that do not want to see the spirit of Christian justice contained in the law) to worry...they are taking sides against the Revolution...These persons, and all who are in one way or the other helping that calumnious campaign, should remember, among other things, the words with which our Lord Jesus Christ started His work: ‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives...’ –St. Luke 4:18. And in Sermon of the Mount: ‘Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.’ – Matthew 5,6,7. The Cuban Revolution is making true these Christian principles of justice.<sup>616</sup>

The young Cuban Protestants defended the revolution against charges of communism and blamed U.S. policymakers for Latin American radicalism:

It is evident that the unjust foreign policy of the State Department toward the countries of Latin American is a dark shadow that obscures the democratic light of the United States. It is widely known that a determining factor for this policy is the pressure of certain financial circles that oppose the development of our countries. That terrible way of acting, carried more than once to the extreme of violating the sovereignty of some of our

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<sup>614</sup> “The Youth of the Protestant Churches of Cuba,” ABHMS, July 1959, 215-7.

<sup>615</sup> Ibid.

<sup>616</sup> Ibid.

nations, has made us think reasonable that the State Department is the best advertising agent that Russian communism<sup>617</sup>

These youth leaders narrated the morality of the revolution in a language that highlighted the values promoted by foreign missionaries, articulated in defense of their new government.

Besides, being Protestants, how could we keep from backing this revolution if, as a consequence of it, the moral standards of the country have been raised? Gambling, alcoholism and other vices that had made Cuba famous as a corrupted nation, are not permitted, and with word and action many noble virtues are being exalted with the Christian purpose that Cuba may be and appear before the world as a nation where dignity, democracy, freedom, justice and love prevail.<sup>618</sup>



BIRTHDAY: September 29  
BIRTHPLACE: Holguin, Ote, Cuba  
FIRST APPOINTMENT: 1959  
PRESENT FIELD: Baracoa, Cuba  
EDUCATION: University of Havana, Havana, Cuba; University of Southern California, Los Angeles, Calif.; Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas

ONDINA MARISTANY'S FATHER WAS A MASON AND her mother was a Catholic. In her early years, she was devoted to the Catholic church. The first school she attended was a nuns' school. The Baptist pastor in the town where the family lived persuaded two of Ondina's sisters to become Baptists - even though it was considered a disgrace to be a "Protestant."

Figure 24. Ondina Cervantes<sup>619</sup>

The discursive linkage of Protestant values and revolutionary demands could be heard in the language of the youth, as well as Cuban Protestant leaders. Ondina Maristany graduated from Colegios Internacionales in 1941 and by the late 1950s had become a leader in the American

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<sup>617</sup> Ibid.

<sup>618</sup> Ibid.

<sup>619</sup> "Cervantes, Ondina (Maristany), "Cuba 1952-72," WABHMS, 264-9.

Baptist Church in Cuba. Like other Cuban Protestant leaders, she was very well educated, both in Cuba and the United States. Maristany attended the University of Southern California, the University of Havana and the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, earning graduate degrees in Law, Social Work, and Religious Education.<sup>620</sup> She taught Faustino Pérez, a revolutionary leader and a Protestant.<sup>621</sup> After 1959, Maristany embraced the interconnected missions of the revolution and the Baptist church. Southern Baptist Superintendent Herbert Caudill wrote to the American Baptist Latin American Secretary Wilbur Larson praising Maristany's ambition to fulfill the goals of the revolution through mission work in Oriente in May 1959: "Naturally she has been greatly interested in the political situation in Cuba, and since the change of government she has felt called to the Sierra Maestra.... She is interested in doing something to improve the backward educational and social condition in the Sierra Maestra. She has definite convictions about what she wants to do and I believe she can be useful to the work in Oriente."<sup>622</sup>

Missionaries galvanized a rich and complex critique of economic and political oppression; they often drew their understanding of events from Cuban groups with whom other members of the Anglo-American colony never associated. In November 1960, well after most Anglo-Americans left the island, the ecumenical Protestant organization, the Cuban Council of Churches wrote a "Social Creed" criticizing both capitalism and communism. The document argued that capitalism "has been motivated predominantly by an obsession for profit and is characterized, at least in Cuba, by an unjust distribution of wealth, which has produced, on the

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<sup>620</sup> "Ondina María Maristany de Cervantes: Personal Record," WABHMS, 264-9.

<sup>621</sup> Wilbur Larson, "Notes on Conversation with Ondina María Maristany," September 20, 1960, WABHMS, 264.9.

<sup>622</sup> Herbert Caudill to Wilbur Larson, "Concerning Ondina Maristany," May 8, 1959, WABHMS, 264-9.

one hand, an excessive accumulation of wealth and on the other misery.” This group remained committed to “total democracy as a manifestation of liberty, equality, and fraternity, under the sovereignty of God.” Interpreting the government as “an instrument of God for the fulfillment of his plans...” they celebrated “the emergence of young nations free from colonialism and semi-colonialism.”<sup>623</sup>

Inspired by the pro-revolutionary positions taken by Cuban Protestants, foreign evangelizers often blamed their long-time nemesis, the Catholic Church, for the decreasing popularity of the Cuban government within the Anglo-American colony and in the United States. In September 1959, Southern Baptist Lloyd Corder implicated the Church as possibly responsible for misinformation disseminated regarding Fidel Castro: “I would keep in mind that newspapers in the United States generally are greatly influenced by Roman Catholicism, and Castro is, if not anti-Roman Catholic, at least pro-evangelical in his points of view.... We could expect the Roman Catholic influence to brand [Castro] as a communist wherever they could.”<sup>624</sup> On December 7, 1959 Southern Baptists missionaries Hubert and Eva Hurt explained why the Catholic Church would spread lies about the new Cuban government: “Our national lottery which was a government sponsored gambling institution that provided a large proportion of the money for building Catholic churches and institutions has given way to the National Institute of Savings and Housing which is building low cost housing to get rid of the slum areas...it shouldn’t be hard to guess how [the Church] feels about losing the millions in gambling

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<sup>623</sup> John A. Machay, “Cuba,” *Presbyterian Life*, July 15, 1961, Southern Baptist Historical Society (SBHS), Nashville, TN, Cuba Work Collections – AR631-16, Clippings, 1961-1987, 1.25.

<sup>624</sup> Lloyd Corder to Mrs. Joel P. Phillips, Jr., September 16, 1959, SBHS, HMB Cuba Work Collections – AR631-4, Box 5, 5.28.

money.”<sup>625</sup> Answering to Herbert Caudill in Havana, and not to mission boards in the United States, Southern Baptist missionaries were able to remain comfortably on the island longer than almost any of their Anglo-American counterparts. Herbert and Marjorie Caudill remained in Cuba until 1965 when Herbert was arrested with his son-in-law David Fite.<sup>626</sup>

The demands of Anglo-American missionaries for moral, economic and political change developed within the same spaces that inspired the solidarity of Cuban Protestants engaged in the revolution. Together, these transnational religious communities embraced a vision of Cuban political autonomy, economic stability and moral clarity.

### ***“The Light that Shineth in Darkness”: Envisioning a “new” Cuba for Cubans***

Early in 1959, long-time leader of the Báguanos mission Eulalia Cook took note of the tremendous changes the island had just undergone. As she drafted her 1958 Annual Report, under a section titled “Biggest Satisfactions,” Cook wrote, “[being] a part of a church in a country under military rule, in tremendous civil disorder gave me a new understanding of The Light that Shineth in Darkness and the Darkness cannot overcome.” Under the section entitled “Frustrations” she noted, “Not having been in Cuba when Batista fled the country...was like not seeing the sunrise after a long, dark night.”<sup>627</sup> Having spent most of her two decades in Cuba stationed in rural Báguanos, Cook and her fellow missionaries celebrated with their Cuban friends, neighbors, and parishioners as they dreamed together of a “new” Cuba in January 1959.

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<sup>625</sup> Hubert and Eva Hurt, to Home Mission Board, December 7, 1959, SBHS, HMB AR631-4, Southern Baptist Historical Society, (Nashville, TN), Box 5, 5.27.

<sup>626</sup> Released in 1969, the Caudills and Fites emerged from Cuba with far more negative sentiments than they expressed from 1959-1961. *Sacrificios de Alabanza: Biografía del Dr. H. Caudill y Sra. Dptos.* (Muscial y de Educación Ctna, Convención Bautista de Cuba Occ., 1984), SBHS, AR631-16, “Caudill, Herbert,” Unprocessed.

<sup>627</sup> Eulalia Cook to Miss Marion Derby, “Missionary’s Annual Report – 1958,” UMAHS, Board of Missions – New York City, 1189-2-1.29.

These relationships and shared dreams of democracy and socio-economic justice would continue to influence the perceptions of North American evangelizers, even as diplomatic relations between Washington and Havana strained.

Rural missionaries were encouraged not only by the religious convictions of the revolution, but also by the religious composition of the revolutionary leadership. Cuban Protestants, as well as the graduates of Protestant institutions, including Frank País, Faustino Pérez Hernández, José A. Naranjo, Rolando Cubela, Oscar Lucero Moya, Mario Llerena, Huber Matos, Daniel Álvarez, Manuel Ray Rivero and Samuel Salabarría all played significant roles in the struggle against Batista with many assuming high-ranking positions in the Cuban government after 1959.<sup>628</sup> Further, the Cuban Protestant revolutionary contacts of missionaries proved extremely useful in navigating the structures of this “new” Cuba. Edgar Nesman explains, “The fact that two or three of our teachers were well connected to the revolutionary movement, did help to get the right permits.”<sup>629</sup> Feeling firmly represented as a spiritual and religious movement within the new Cuban government, rural missionaries delighted in the birth of the Cuban revolution.

While U.S. corporate and political leaders grew alarmed by the unfolding of revolutionary demands, rural missionaries promoted policies pursued by the new Cuban government including mandates to dramatically curb the influence of foreign corporations, to regulate the tourism industry, and to redistribute resources to disenfranchised Cubans. Foreign missionaries accused the United States government and the North American press of hypocrisy in their misrepresentation of Cuban political,

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<sup>628</sup> Ramos, *Protestantism and Revolution in Cuba*, 53-67, 153-168.

<sup>629</sup> Edgar Nesman, “Memoir,” 78, provided by Ed Nesman.

economic and social reforms after 1959. As significant, they defended Cubans against accusations of communist influence.

While officials in Washington, the U.S. press and other elements of the Anglo-American colony decried the executions of Batista officials in early 1959, for many rural missionaries the violence of the past few years was the context within which they understood, even if they did not condone, the revolution's use of capital punishment. Having spent seventeen years in Cuba, mostly in Holguín, Methodist missionary Christine Stout Evans wrote in February 1959, "I don't believe in capital punishment...but what else would you have done with men who have caused so much torture and misery?" Informed by Cuban Protestants and Anglo-American missionaries in Oriente, American Baptist Secretary Wilbur Larson pointed out the hypocrisy of U.S. reactions to the executions. In February 1959, Larson addressed the double standard at play: "The trials and executions of those responsible for atrocities under the old regime have been given wide publicity. However, the atrocities for which they are being punished were not given this publicity and are not now being given publicity."<sup>630</sup> He continued by admonishing U.S. officials for their collective failure to treat the new government fairly: "It is most unfortunate that responsible people in our government expressed judgments which neglected some of the facts of the situation. These expressions in turn brought violent reactions from the Cuban people who felt that the people of the United States were in no moral position to express any kind of judgment on

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<sup>630</sup> Wilbur Larson, "Baptists in Cuba," February 1959, ABHMS, 215-7.

the activities of the new government since they had said nothing about the atrocities of the Batista regime.”<sup>631</sup>

Because of their experiences with both U.S. corporate and naval influence, rural Protestant missionaries understood the rise of anti-U.S. sentiment in ways that other Anglo-Americans could not. Edgar Nesman explained that, “Politicians, and particularly young people studying saw that the country was dominated. I remember a neighbor one time after the revolution said, ‘Well as Martí says, we may have to drink vinegar but at least it’s our vinegar.’”<sup>632</sup> Nesman wrote in 1959 that while U.S. individuals were warmly welcomed, “official U.S. government policy, which includes all business and military associations, is not considered at all in friendly terms.... The primary cause of this feeling appears to Cubans to be that our foreign policy is based to a degree on self-interest and run by big business and the military.”<sup>633</sup> Methodist missionary Morrell Robinson, stationed in Mayarí agreed, lambasting U.S. officials for their “callous indifference to the terror and death that stalked our cities and towns for six long years” during the Batista government.<sup>634</sup>

Throughout 1959, frustration with Washington swelled among rural missionaries, as U.S. officials demanded that revolutionary leaders temper their restructuring of Cuban society. In an interview with a Michigan publication, Methodist Nesman asked in October 1959, “Why should Americans apparently support (or tacitly approve) the

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<sup>631</sup> Ibid.

<sup>632</sup> Marjorie and Edgar Nesman, interview by author, October 17, 2016, Tampa, FL.

<sup>633</sup> “Concerning Cuba,” *The Michigan State University Magazine*, (October, 1959): 13-15, 14, provided by Edgar Nesman.

<sup>634</sup> Morrell Robinson to Friends, January 10, 1959, UMAHS, 1463-2-2:05.

Batista regime which, from the Cuban perspective, was so obviously crooked and tyrannical? And why should a serious attempt at reform be so ridiculed, criticized and discredited as is the Castro government?”<sup>635</sup> Founder of the Agricultural and Industrial School, John Edgar Stroud reinforced Nesman’s sentiment in April 1960 explaining, “We must remember that much of the land in Cuba has been owned by United States corporations that have made...four times what they could make in this nation because of cheap labor and taxes. When the much talked ‘land reforms’ were enforced our American economic concerns have not been able to take it.” Comparing the Cuban experience to a U.S-sponsored initiative to redistribute property Stroud wrote, “Didn’t McArthur introduce land reforms in Japan? We didn’t fuss there because American Companies did not own land...”<sup>636</sup> These missionaries and religious educators were quick to point to the hypocritical responses of other Anglo-Americans to the executions, land reform, and the radical economic transformations underway.

As the revolutionary policies seemed to mirror Protestant goals, many rural missionaries saw the revolution as an extension of their work in Cuba. Richard Milk noted, “The earliest major revisions of the educational program by the Revolutionary government seemed ‘right down our alley.’”<sup>637</sup> Edgar Nesman explained the new government accelerated his efforts at *la granja* by creating a self-sustaining Cuban agricultural system: “[diversification] of agriculture is a partial solution. Our school has been stressing this from the beginning...[diversification] is one of the major aspects of

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<sup>635</sup> “Concerning Cuba,” *The Michigan State University Magazine*, (October, 1959): 13-15, 14, provided by Edgar Nesman.

<sup>636</sup> John Edgar Stroud to Friends, April 24, 1960, UMAHS, 1195-6-3:40.

<sup>637</sup> Richard Milk, “Cuba Testimony,” 8, provided by Carroll English.

the agrarian reform laws. Castro and his government would like to see increased production of rice, corn and eggs eliminate the importation of these items.”<sup>638</sup>

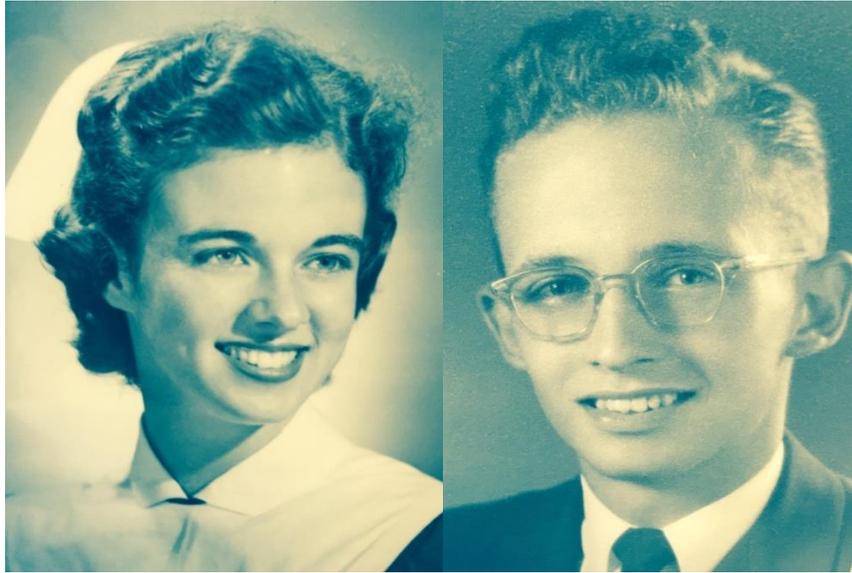
Ira Sherman concluded that the Guantánamo Bay Naval Base had crippled the non-service-oriented economies of Caimanera and Guantánamo, ripening those communities for sexual exploitation. Further, he argued, the complicity of Cuban officials made the “new” morality pursued by the revolution very appealing. Decades after leaving Cuba, Sherman noted with satisfaction that the revolutionary government made a “successful effort to wipe out prostitution and to train the women involved in it in some other ways of earning a living.”<sup>639</sup> Before 1959, Sherman risked his life to support Cubans who shared his vision to produce a more moral Cuban society. Decades later, he noted that many of the reforms implemented after 1959 represented initiatives that he, himself, had advocated. For many missionaries, the revolution was an embodiment and extension of their teachings.

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<sup>638</sup> “Concerning Cuba,” *The Michigan State University Magazine*, (October, 1959): 13-15, 14, provided by Edgar Nesman.

<sup>639</sup> Ira E. Sherman to Louis A. Pérez, December 3, 1991, 1, WL, Letters, Papers, Louis A. Pérez Jr. Papers, 1991-1992, Folder 1.

## *Rising Cuban Nationalism and Painful Self-Reflections*



*Figure 25. Lois and Morrell Robinson*<sup>640</sup>

In 1960, having experienced the revolution and the nationalist fervor in its aftermath, Morrell Robinson reflected on his own complicity in maintaining ethnonational hierarchies in Cuba. In a letter to James Ellis, Robinson explained, “I’ve been struggling with decisions concerning our future relations to work here.... [A]side from present nationalism, I doubt that the Cuban church needs what we can offer it.” Robinson continued, “I feel that a missionary, in order to warrant his presence in another country, must be able to contribute something that possibly no other national might contribute at that particular time. He should be an expert in some line or pioneer in some field. Unless he can do that he is competing with national pastors with the cards stacked against them for their salary is much lower and he often does not have access to funds from the states.”<sup>641</sup> In the aftermath of the revolution, Morrell and Lois Robinson questioned the benefit of foreign missionaries in Cuba.

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<sup>640</sup> UMAHS, Missionary Bio Series, 1469-5-7.73.

<sup>641</sup> Morrell Robinson to James Ellis, May 5, 1960, UMAHS, 1195-3-1.18.

Critical self-reflections by these Cuba-based missionaries distressed mission boards back in the United States. Ellis, who worked in the New York Methodist offices, attempted to engage Robinson in a debate on the matter:

I am entirely in disagreement with much that is being said about missionaries all having to be specialists in this age. The certain number of missionaries in the pastorate working side by side with our national brethren and putting a certain quality into their work and experience and into the sessions and work of the Annual conference may not be classes as specialties or specialization or some of these other terms that are being used. Yet I consider that this is definitely one of the most important contributions that missionaries can make in this day when the responsibility is being shifted to the shoulders of our national brethren.<sup>642</sup>

Ellis sent Robinson's letter to the Methodist Bishop Roy H. Short, who responded, "I am a bit disturbed about our missionary situation in Cuba and particularly about the idea voiced by both Morrell and Schaeffer that they see no point in being 'just ministers.'"<sup>643</sup> The hostile reactions from Methodist leaders in the United States were unsurprising. Robinson's concerns over the imperial legacy of Protestant missionaries challenged the self-assuring logic of benevolence embraced by Ellis and Short.

Living through the terror of war, working in close proximity to Cuban suffering, and exposed to intimate lessons about nationalism, capitalism and imperialism, many missionaries reflected on their purpose, complicity and legacy. Between 1952-1962 missionaries in Cuba responded to the tensions developing in this "new" Cuba, as they reassessed the utility and fairness of existing hierarchies.

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<sup>642</sup> James Ellis to Morrell Robinson, May 16, 1960, UMAHS, 1195-3-1.18.

<sup>643</sup> Roy Short to James Ellis, May 18, 1960, UMAHS, 1195-3-1.18.

### *Maintaining Revolutionary Solidarities in Exile*

In 2016, when I asked Methodist missionary Betty Campbell Whitehurst, “What led to your disillusionment with the Cuban Revolution?” she answered: “I was never really disillusioned; the revolution was doing wonderful things.”<sup>644</sup> When her missionary term expired in 1959, Whitehurst returned to her childhood home of Lemesa, Texas, a town segregated into white, black and Mexican-American sections. At the time Whitehurst and her former Cuban student from Báguanos, Ceferino Pavón planned to reunite and marry. However, Cold War tensions developing between Havana and Washington undermined their relationship. Instead, Whitehurst served as a teacher in Lemesa’s school for Mexican-American children where she was the only staff member who spoke Spanish. She explained, “I was back in very familiar territory, but I now saw it with different eyes.”<sup>645</sup>

When Sara Fernández, the Mexican-American Methodist missionary from Texas first arrived in Omaja, Cuba she encountered an impoverished community without drinking water, schools, clinics, or jobs.<sup>646</sup> Fernández created cultural institutions, much like those operated by Cook and Whitehurst in Báguanos. Respected and accepted by the Cuban community of Omaja, Fernández chose not to return to Texas where she would resume her status as a second-class citizen. She chose, instead, to continue her work in a new context where her service-oriented

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<sup>644</sup> Betty Campbell Whitehurst, interview by author, September 1, 2016, Telephone.

<sup>645</sup> Betty Campbell Whitehurst, interview by author, September 1, 2016, Telephone; The contrast of Cuba and Texas was exacerbated because Whitehurst was engaged to a Cuban. She explains, “During the summer of 1959, I became engaged to Ceferino Pavón, who had graduated from the *Colegio de la Amistad* and had been the star pitcher on the school’s baseball team, of which I was the coach(!)...Ceferino was 19 and I was 25 – about the same age difference as my parents, so I didn’t consider it a bad match. However, he joined the Cuban army after the revolution, and by the time I went home to Texas he had been sent to Moscow to study under the Russian army. Our relationship did not last long after that.” Whitehurst.

<sup>646</sup> Lawrence A. Rankin, “Early Methodism in Cuba – Towards a National Church, 1883-1958,” provided by Lawrence Rankin.

goals were being prioritized by the Cuban government. In 1963, however, she left the island, working first with Cuban refugees in Miami and then returning to missionary work in Costa Rica.

### ***Autonomy, Persecution, and Devastation for Cuba's Protestant Community***

The majority of foreign evangelizers and many of their Cuban counterparts grew disillusioned as the revolution took an anti-religious turn. Further, those Cubans who had attained leadership positions in Cuba's Protestant institutions generally held close ties to the United States that made the severing of relations a devastating development. Their links to the U.S. made these Cuban Protestant leaders suspect to a revolution that increasingly viewed religion as an obstacle in their goal to transform society. By the mid-1960s the revolutionary government began to persecute those who could not adjust to the new order, placing religious leaders, homosexuals, counter-revolutionaries and other "anti-socials" in labor camps. It was in this context that U.S. Protestant organizations began handing power over to their Cuban counterparts. The benefits that had been garnered from association with Anglo-Americans and access to foreign capital, became a burden by the mid-1960s.

Cubans Methodists became autonomous from U.S. Methodists in 1968, according to Bishop Armando Rodríguez, "at the worst possible moment." Rodríguez argued that propaganda efforts by the state sought to undercut religious authorities, in ways that mirrored Protestant efforts to undermine the Catholic Church at the start of the twentieth century. By claiming religion to be the "Opium of the masses" on a number of media platforms, the Cuban government framed socialism as the path to spiritual liberation. According to Rodríguez, the Cuban state declared science, not faith, would lead to progress for Cubans. During this period Cuban pastors were often accused of working for the CIA, which had been attempting to overthrow the government since the start of the decade. These developments led to an exodus of

the Cuban Methodist leadership and a decline in those Cubans who considered themselves Protestant. A lack of leadership proved catastrophic as close to 90 percent of Cuban Methodist pastors entered into exile, mostly to the United States. The Methodist denomination claimed 11,000 members in 1959, but only 3,000 remained in 1968. This was due to the flight of Cuban Protestants and because the revolution incentivized the Cubans who remained to shed their religious identities.<sup>647</sup>

Persecution by the state left Cuban Protestants vulnerable. In 1963 Fidel Castro declared Protestants, particularly Jehovah Witnesses, Gideon's International and Pentecostals as the "principal sects, which are instruments of today's imperialism." Castro claimed these Protestant groups were "directly headed by the United States ...and they are used as agents of the CIA, State Department, and Yankee policy."<sup>648</sup> The attachment of Protestants to the United States made them suspect in the mid-1960s. Many Protestants ended up in labor camps, under the *Unidades Militares de Ayuda a la Producción* (UMAP) program, leaving Protestant institutions rudderless.<sup>649</sup> Between November 1965 and July 1968 the Cuban government demanded hard labor from groups considered "anti-social or "counter-revolutionary." Among those persecuted by the revolution were conscientious objectors, homosexual men, corrupt officials, drug-addicts, Protestant pastors, Catholic priests, intellectuals, farmers who refused collectivization, and those planning to leave the country. These unpaid laborers reported poor conditions, physical torture,

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<sup>647</sup> Bishop Armando Rodríguez to author, translation by author, October 9, 2016, Email.

<sup>648</sup> "Discurso pronunciado por el comandante Fidel Castro Ruz," March 13, 1963, Accessed, August 1, 2018, <http://www.cuba.cu/gobierno/discursos/1963/esp/f130363e.html>.

<sup>649</sup> Bishop Armando Rodríguez to author, translation by author, October 9, 2016, Email.

and mock executions leading some to commit suicide.<sup>650</sup> According to Héctor Santiago, imprisoned for his sexual orientation, Jehovah Witnesses were particularly targeted: “With us, they were terrible, but let me tell you the truth, they treat you like a lady compared to the *testigos de Jehová*. Oh my god, they really, really were terrible with them, terrible.”<sup>651</sup> In a labor camp because of his continued participation in Catholicism, René Cabrera echoed Santiago’s sentiments: “The Jehovah’s Witnesses, as always, were the principal victims of the government’s intention of those crimes.”<sup>652</sup> Protestant leaders became targeted by the Cuban state because of their attachment to foreign enemies and their dedication to a spiritual authority above the state. What was rewarded prior to 1959, was now severely punished.

After the flight of Anglo-American missionaries, Cuban Protestants finally got the sovereignty they had demanded. However, their independence came at a time when the Protestant churches were suffering debilitating population decline, were under attack by the Cuban state and cut off from Anglo-American capital. Attachment to a Protestant way of life had garnered material and social advantages before 1959, but now led to imprisonment and exploitation. The Protestant suffered alongside the intellectual, the independent farmer and the corrupted politician because of their shared attachments to ideologies, practices and cultural values, at least in part, introduced by Anglo-Americans. Protestants often found themselves buried in the rubble as preexisting value systems and socio-economic hierarchies were demolished by the revolution.

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<sup>650</sup> Lillian Guerra, “Gender policing, homosexuality and the new patriarchy of the Cuban Revolution,” *Social History* 35, no. 3 (2010): 268-289, 268; Joseph Tahbaz, “Demystifying las UMAP: The Politics of Sugar, Gender, and Religious in 1960s Cuba,” *Delaware Review of Latin American Studies* 14, no. 2 (December 2013): 1-19.

<sup>651</sup> Joseph Tahbaz, “Demystifying las UMAP: The Politics of Sugar, Gender, and Religious in 1960s Cuba,” *Delaware Review of Latin American Studies* 14, no. 2 (December 2013): 1-19.

<sup>652</sup> René Cabrera, *Agua de rosas* (Miami, FL: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2012), 97.

## *Conclusions*

Prior to 1959, most in Cuba understood that the Cuban government valued the lives of Anglo-Americans over those of Cubans. Taking note of how Anglo-American perceptions of the conflict seemed to influence power brokers in Washington, anti-Batista forces used this knowledge to their advantage. While the experiences of disenfranchised Cubans seem to have mattered little to policymakers in Havana and Washington, Anglo-American missionaries wielded their influence – in Cuba and back home– to shield, connect and advocate for Cuban revolutionaries throughout the conflict. As former students and parishioners actively took up arms and joined the rebel forces, rural missionaries protected Cubans targeted by Batista’s military, undertook an unofficial letter-writing campaign to turn Anglo-American opinion against Batista, before fashioning a narrative that defended the early actions of the revolutionary government. While as far as I have found none took up arms themselves, many of these missionaries took significant risks.

Social psychologist María Elena Torre argues that a contact zone, “even in its most extreme forms, such as colonization, can provoke spaces where new ways of living, ideas, languages, [and] cultures are created.”<sup>653</sup> In interviews, diaries, letters, and memoirs former missionaries painfully detailed the hardship faced by Protestants persecuted under Batista, as well as those who were subjected to the tortures of UMAP in the mid-1960s. While every former rural missionary interviewed for this project expressed disappointment over the lack of democratic reforms instituted in Cuba since 1959, all praised the early socio-economic policies

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<sup>653</sup> Torre, *The History and Enactments of Contact in Social Psychology*, 4.

of the revolution. These women and men viewed redistribution and nationalization as an extension of their own spiritual and ethical work in the economic, social, moral and educational spheres. Ironically, and with pain, they embraced the very policies that led to their expulsion.

## CHAPTER NINE: HAVANA'S STRUGGLE FOR POLITICAL REVOLUTION

### *Introduction*

Before the Cuban Revolution, personal intimacies developed between Anglo-American residents and a group of upwardly mobile Cuban doctors, lawyers, politicians, businessmen, military officers, bankers, industrialists, engineers, journalists, students, and Protestant workers in the contact zones of the Anglo-American colony. In Havana, mostly white and relatively wealthy Cuban professionals learned English, facilitating transnational relationships between privileged outsiders and Cuban professionals. Through their adoption of North American and British cultural forms, Cubans garnered influence and access to Anglo-American jobs, clients, capital and markets through personal and occupational networks developed with Anglo-American residents. In the turmoil of 1950s and early 1960s Cuba, these cross-cultural connections evolved from social and occupational to form revolutionary and counter-revolutionary solidarities between Anglo-American residents and their Cuban friends and colleagues. This chapter explores how the strategic negotiations of Cuban and Anglo-American identity, politics, and influence shaped events and perceptions in Havana in the context of revolution.

### *Exerting Influence Over Anglo-Americans*

By the late 1950s, influential Cuban professionals, through institutional contact, formed a collective community with members of the Anglo-American colony in Havana. Together through integrated schools, churches, social clubs and business associations, they cultivated a shared vision for Cuba. Though many of these institutions were established as exclusive spaces to

protect and privilege Anglo-American identities and interests, over the course of the twentieth century educational facilities like Ruston Academy or the offices of the *Havana Post* emerged as contact zones where knowledge exchanged between groups altered the perceptions of and relations between Cubans and Anglo-Americans. The evolution of these institutions dramatically altered the experience, critical consciousness and activist engagements of Havana's Anglo-American residents between 1952-1962.

Throughout the 1950s Cubans from across the island lamented the oppressive elements of Cuban society to their Anglo-American friends, educators, co-workers, peers and missionaries. Many spoke in a discourse of resistance that seemed to echo the teachings and ministry of Anglo-American schools, clubs and churches. Justifications for subversion were articulated in a language developed from their experience with Anglo-American cultural discursive forms, appropriated in Anglo-American educational, social, occupational and religious institutions. The ability of Cuban professionals to frame revolutionary, and later counter-revolutionary movements, as struggles to achieve Anglo-American values like political liberty, social development, and national sovereignty permeated the consciousness of many privileged outsiders.

Those Cubans who held the ear of Anglo-Americans in Havana, many of whom were leaders in the struggle against Batista, animated a revolution that hoped to achieve political modernity and parity with wealthy nations. From their vantage point, the Anglo-American presence could be viewed a resource for developing the "new" Cuban nation.<sup>654</sup> Comfortable with the language and discourse of Anglo-American values and rhetoric, these Cuban leaders aligned with their Anglo-American allies, and together they were able to articulate the need for

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<sup>654</sup> Lazo, *Dagger in the Heart*, 115-116; López-Fresquet, *My Fourteen Months with Castro*, 156.

the revolution to a world audience. Buoyed by socio-economic solidarities, these Anglo-American residents and wealthy Cubans helped pressure the U.S. government to distance itself from Batista, worked to legitimate the revolution in its infancy, and heavily influenced Washington's relationship with Havana ever since.

In this context, ambitions for a more just political society formed *between* select Cuban, North American and British nationals in Anglo-American institutions. Before 1959, this nascent solidarity manifested as a shared opposition to the Batista dictatorship. As the revolution undermined existing socio-economic hierarchies after 1959, a shared resistance to the revolution that challenged their collective influence, wealth and privilege manifested *between* Anglo-American residents and many Cuban professionals. The political turmoil festering during the decade following Batista's 1952 coup cemented solidarities between elements of a transnational community.

### ***The 1952 Coup***

The tumultuous political events that unfolded in March 1952 held profound meaning for many of the Cuban professionals who formed part of a transcultural community with Anglo-Americans in Havana. On March 10, 1952, Fulgencio Batista organized a coup that established him as President and consequently united Cubans of myriad backgrounds behind the common cause of reestablishing democracy. Over the course of his rule (1952-1958) many Cubans with Anglo-American contacts became revolutionaries, articulating democracy as a central tenet of the modernity they were trying to achieve for their nation. Cubans who enjoyed provisional status within the Anglo-American social and occupational orbit often translated the struggle against Batista to their North American and British co-workers, friends and family in the language of Anglo-American values. Batista's termination of a legitimate electoral process undermined Cuban claims to democratic modernity, which particularly frustrated Cubans who

hoped to develop the island in ways that replicated the form of republicanism so valorized by Anglo-American societies.<sup>655</sup>

Influential Cubans with ties to the Anglo-American colony from across Havana's political, economic and intellectual spheres expressed frustration with the termination of democratic order. Jorge Mañach was a leading Cuban intellectual whose praise of Candler College could be found in their brochure. In the aftermath of Batista's rise to power, Mañach explained, "We had pride that the 1940 Constitution was one of the most advanced of our time." Now Cubans were "losing their right to elect their Government," representing a "humiliation" for the island.<sup>656</sup> The Cuban Minister of the Treasury 1959-1960, Rufo López-Fresquet enjoyed deep ties to the Anglo-American colony. López-Fresquet explained Batista's "dictatorship converted nearly every Cuban into a revolutionary, and on his departure the massive public support for those Cubans who had overthrown him opened the doors to the social revolution that began on January 1, 1959."<sup>657</sup> Mario Lazo, leading Cuban lawyer who managed the accounts of Anglo-American firms and governments, explained, "I became disillusioned with [Batista] on March 10, 1952, when he interrupted the democratic process and took over the Palace by a *coup d'état*. I viewed the event with dark foreboding. It seemed to me at the time that the clock had been turned back, that the slow progress Cuba had been making over the years toward free government had been dealt a crushing blow."<sup>658</sup> President Batista remained good for the

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<sup>655</sup> Louis A. Pérez explains, "The larger implications of the coup, and certainly its deeper significance, were to be found at the point where it shattered collective self-esteem and undermined some of the most cherished assumptions of self-representation.... Constitutional legality, free elections, freedoms of speech, and a free press were attributes of advanced civilized nations by virtue of which Cubans claimed membership." Pérez, *On Becoming Cuban*, 446-47.

<sup>656</sup> Ibid.

<sup>657</sup> López-Fresquet, *My Fourteen Months with Castro*, 10.

<sup>658</sup> Lazo, *Dagger in the Heart*, 89-90.

business of men like Lazo, as his administration encouraged foreign investment and respected Washington's influence. Still, because of his disruption of republican structures, Lazo would never speak to Batista again.<sup>659</sup> The sense of betrayal Cubans with Anglo-American connections felt after the coup would eventually erode foreign support for a government that reliably prioritized the interests of Anglo-Americans.

Unlike in sites of formal colonialism in Africa, Asia and other parts of Latin America, prior to 1959, Anglo-Americans in Cuba could believe that their identities were separate from the political structures that governed Cuba. Though they benefited from the economic and political influence, the United States--and to a lesser degree England and Canada--enjoyed in Cuba, Anglo-American residents in Havana could work towards Cuban democracy while imagining a post-Batista Cuban government where they would continue to thrive comfortably in place; a government dedicated to democracy that would not challenge their status as privileged outsiders, as had happened in the 1940s. Well-respected Cubans who enjoyed close personal ties with the Anglo-American colony secured leadership positions in the movement against Batista. As a consequence, most Anglo-American residents eventually, if temporarily, viewed the revolutionary momentum as pro-democratic. Few anticipated that the movement to overthrow Batista would ultimately obliterate existing hierarchies, leading to the exile of Anglo-American influence, and those who benefited from this influence, from the island.

### ***Social Bridges Shape Anglo-American Reception of Revolution***

Through varied institutions and relations between the Anglo-American colony and the professional elements of Cuban society, a privileged socio-economic lens shaped the shared goals of Anglo-Americans and Cubans. In Havana, most from this transnational community

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<sup>659</sup> Lazo, *Dagger in the Heart*, 89-90.

expressed horror upon learning about the tortures of the Batista government and enthusiasm for the political goals of the anti-Batista movement. Many Cuban professionals risked their lives working to undermine the dictatorship. Still, compared to poor and rural Cubans who in the late 1950s were hunted, tortured and killed by Batista's henchmen if suspected of revolutionary activities, wealthier Cubans in Havana often proved able to employ their capital and contacts to escape punishment.

Perhaps more than any other Anglo-American-led cultural institution in Havana, Ruston Academy became a vibrant contact zone where identities and commitments grew fluid, while political solidarities were forged between the children of wealthy Cuban professionals and privileged outsiders. Cubans at Ruston helped frame and translate the anti-Batista movement to Ruston's Anglo-American employees, to Anglo-American parents and to non-Cuban students. Due to the agitation of their Cuban friends, students and schoolmates, many Anglo-American residents became sympathetic with the growing calls for basic democratic freedoms on the island.

Of course, at a school that attracted influential Cubans, the parents of some students served in the Batista government, including, as discussed earlier, Batista himself. Connection to influential people in the state apparatus worked in the favor of those Rustonians who got caught organizing against the government before 1959. Guillermo Martínez remembers that his dad, then the editor of the Cuban publication *El País*, resigned multiple times throughout the 1950s whenever the Batista government imposed press censorship.<sup>660</sup> Perhaps influenced by his father, and certainly enraged by the lack of basic freedoms under Batista, in April of 1958 the younger Martínez "organized a school strike against Batista." Colonel Rojas, whose child attended

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<sup>660</sup> Guillermo Martínez, interview by author, November 4, 2016, Miami, FL.

Ruston in the grade ahead of Martínez, telephoned the young rebel's father to protect his son's schoolmate. Martínez remembers, "my father got a message from a Colonel [Rojas] in Batista's army saying, 'If you want your son to not get into any trouble, get him out of the country.'"<sup>661</sup> Shortly following that phone call Martínez found himself in Connecticut's Cheshire Academy.<sup>662</sup> Ed González' mother sent her son to school at Saint Stephens in Virginia in March 1958 after Cuban authorities nearly caught him distributing anti-Batista flyers.<sup>663</sup> Cuban youths who risked their lives for democratic liberty, and yet enjoyed privilege, as well as Anglo-American connections, were often able to avoid the darkest aspects of the Batista's justice system by relocating to the United States. While their exit to safety makes visible a level of protection not afforded to most Cubans in the late 1950s, these anecdotes of Ruston students illustrate the commitment that privileged Cuban youths held to political revolution.

Cuban students at the schools of the Anglo-American colony often served as points of contact with privileged outsiders, humanizing and translating the growing movement against the Batista government for foreign youth. González and Martínez were not nameless Cuban classmates who took different classes and lived outside of the social orbit of Anglo-American students. González' only surviving parent was a U.S. national. Martínez was one of the only Cubans who regularly attended events at the largely Anglo-American-only Mothers' Club. In addition to being enrolled in the Cuban *Bachillerato* track, Martínez enrolled in the U.S. High School curriculum so that he could potentially be admitted to universities in the United States. He regularly shared classrooms with the children of the Anglo-American colony. These boys

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<sup>661</sup> Ibid.

<sup>662</sup> Ibid.

<sup>663</sup> Ed González, interview by author, July 7, 2016, Plymouth Meeting, PA.

narrated opposition to the Batista government and made evident a willingness to face very real consequences for democracy – which was a core focus of the school. Stories of political risk and vision traveled through the Anglo-American households of their friends and families throughout Havana. Few were untouched by the rising tensions.

After graduation, Ruston’s Anglo-American students would return to North America or Europe for continued education at a university in their home country, while most Cubans ended their studies, or attended the University of Havana. Still, a relatively small group of Cubans opted to simultaneously pursue the Cuban *Bachillerato* and the U.S. High School programs, which prepared them for universities both in the United States and Cuba. Aided by the accessibility of North American High School tracks in Anglo-American schools, 700 Cuban students attended universities in the United States by 1958.<sup>664</sup> Cuba led all Latin American countries proportionally in terms of students pursuing higher education in the United States.<sup>665</sup>

With their close ties to many influential Cuban families, the Anglo-American staff at Ruston Academy felt obligated to signal support for the anti-Batista movement. While James Baker attempted to preserve Ruston as a “neutral” place in the escalating conflict, his secretary Mariada Comer Arensberg actively advocated against the Batista government. In March, 1958, the same month that the United States announced an arms embargo against the Batista government, Arensberg called the U.S. State Department to protest Washington’s continued

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<sup>664</sup> Though the custom of relatively wealthy Cuban students being sent to the United States for their education dated back to the Spanish colonial period, in the late 1950s many revolutionary Cuban youths were forced to flee the island to avoid arrest from Batista’s authorities. Others left due to the closing of the University of Havana in 1956. As a result, many of these students attended schools abroad. With large numbers of these young Cubans returning to the island in 1959, the networks of contact between Cubans and Anglo-American residents thickened, due to the possibility and reality of educational opportunities in the United States.

<sup>665</sup> Henry Goethals, “Cuban-U.S. Cultural Relations Steadily Growing, Says Portell Vilá,” *Times of Havana*, March 31, 1958, 2.

support of the dictatorship. In a report written after the call, Deputy Director at the Office of Middle American Affairs, C. Allan Stewart, explained that Arensberg, “called by telephone from Havana to protest what she termed our support of the dictatorship in that country.” The memorandum continued, “She said she had been attempting to sell democracy in Cuba for the past 12 years, especially among educators, but that the supplying of arms to the Batista Government for the use in killing Cuban citizens had placed her in a desperate position....” Arensberg lamented U.S. action as ineffective, explaining, “Our policy of attempting to induce the civic institutions and others to support elections in Cuba was unrealistic since everyone knew the elections would be rigged.” Stewart commented that the call, “is an indication of the strong feeling that exists, even among American citizens, about the present state of affairs in the island.”<sup>666</sup>

With his participation in the American Club and his U.S.-born wife taking a leadership role in the Mothers’ Club, Rufo López-Fresquet was well known in the Anglo-American colony long before he became Minister of the Treasury in 1959. A leader in the opposition movement against Batista, López-Fresquet turned to Mariada Arensberg when forced to hide from the secret police of the Batista government.<sup>667</sup> Arensberg’s son Walter remembers his mother “knew a lot of the people who were working against Batista, 26<sup>th</sup>-of-July Movement types, and she would help. She would play a role as an intermediary with the embassy or, in one case, I knew she would also hide people...because they’d heard that maybe Batista’s secret police were going to come get them that night.”<sup>668</sup> Walter remembered one poignant instance of his mother aiding an

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<sup>666</sup> “Memorandum of Conversation: Mrs. Walter Arensberg and Mr. C. Allan Stewart, Deputy Director, Office of Middle American Affairs,” March 21, 1958, USNA, Group 59/250 – 1955-59 Box 2472

<sup>667</sup> Interview of Walter Arensberg by author, August 8, 2016, Washington, D.C.

<sup>668</sup> *Ibid.*

opposition leader, Rufo López-Fresquet: “I came home from a date and went into my bedroom and there was a man with a 45 on the night table.” Arensberg continued, “He turned out to be Fidel’s first Minister of the Treasury, a guy named López-Fresquet.” Walter recalls, “Rufo’s wife was American...mother knew her and Rufo’s kids had been in school at Ruston, so they all were friends. Then Rufo started really working against Batista. So she got really involved.”<sup>669</sup> The intimacy of someone like López-Fresquet with the Anglo-American colony led some like Arensberg to assume his cause as her own.

The future Minister of Treasury enjoyed an array of friendships with members of the Anglo-American colony. These relations became political such that a select group of privileged outsiders took risks in support of friends and a cause. In the late 1950s, Ruston graduate and a third-generation member of the Anglo-American colony Jay Mallin attempted to help López-Fresquet leave the country. As a journalist, Mallin grew to abhor the Batista government, which he hoped to undermine through his reporting.<sup>670</sup> In September 1957 Mallin reported to his contact at *Time Magazine*, “Dr. Rufo López-Fresquet, one of Cuba’s top economic experts, has queried me about the possibility of attending ‘Time’s’ forthcoming economic conference in San Francisco.” After enumerating López-Fresquet’s qualifications as a leading Cuban economist who had represented Cuban manufacturers abroad, Mallin pleaded, “Please do not mention him by name in any cables.”<sup>671</sup> While Mariada Arensberg and Jay Mallin proved exceptional among Anglo-Americans aiding the Cuban underground against Batista, the sentiments they acted on, as well as the justifications for revolution, were appreciated broadly by Anglo-American residents

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<sup>669</sup> Ibid.

<sup>670</sup> Jay Mallin, interview by author, August 4, 2013, Washington, DC.

<sup>671</sup> Jay Mallin to Clara, September 24, 1957, CHC, Jay Mallin Papers, Box 15.

throughout Havana by the end of 1958. Jay Mallin, Mariada Arensberg and the López-Fresquet family embodied a bridge of shared values and courage, within Anglo-American circles, that informed privileged outsiders of the revolution's grievances, while framing its ambitions in a language that could rally Anglo-American sympathies.

In the late 1950s, revolutionary Cubans with connections to the Anglo-American colony, such as López Fresquet, as well as the former and future President of the Cuban National Bank Felipe Pazos, utilized their Anglo-American contacts to undermine and embarrass the Batista dictatorship to international audiences. Pazos enjoyed close contacts with members of the Anglo-American colony, sending his children José and Felipe to Ruston. Pazos utilized his contacts with Anglo-Americans as he took steps to expose the lies of the Batista government.

Shortly following Fidel Castro's December 1956 landing in Cuba, the Batista government declared that Cuban forces killed Fidel Castro. Batista's public relations advisor and biography Chester Edmunds assured the U.S. Embassy that the rebel leader had indeed died.<sup>672</sup> Felipe Pazos sought out *New York Times* correspondent and longtime Anglo-American resident Ruby Hart Phillips to expose this false narrative circulated by pro-Batista forces. Phillips had lived in Cuba for decades, and proved sympathetic to the cause of political liberty advocated by her Cuban friends and contacts. She worked with Pazos to help him undercut the legitimacy of the Batista dictatorship by arranging the famous 1957 interview between Herbert Matthews and Fidel Castro in the Sierra Maestras.<sup>673</sup> The resulting articles published in the *New York Times* introduced the world to the Cuban Revolution in an extremely sympathetic light. Matthews wrote

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<sup>672</sup> Lazo, *Dagger in the Heart*, 119.

<sup>673</sup> Ruby Hart Phillips, *Cuba: Island of Paradox* (New York, NY: Obolensky INC., 1959); Ruby Hart Phillips, *The Cuban Dilemma* (New York, NY: Ivan Obolensky INC., 1962).

in his first article on the rebel leader on February 24, 1957: “Thousands of men and women are heart and soul with Fidel Castro and the new deal for which they think he stands...hundreds of highly respected citizens are helping Señor Castro.” Accessing Castro’s agenda for himself, Matthews explained, “The program is vague and couched in generalities, but it amounts to a new deal for Cuba, radical, democratic and therefore anti-Communist. The real core of its strength is that it is fighting against the military dictatorship of President Batista.”<sup>674</sup> These words introduced many U.S. citizens to the future leader of Cuba and the movement he headed.

Revolutionaries used the Anglo-American presence and contacts to cultivate strategic and diplomatic victories over Batista’s forces. In Santiago, revolutionary leader Frank País regularly met the U.S. consulate, sometimes joined by Vilma Espín, the U.S.-educated daughter of the Bacardí company’s lawyer. A CIA desk officer in Santiago noted the effectiveness of these meetings for the rebel cause: “My staff and I were all *fidelistas*.”<sup>675</sup> Historian Richard Gott hypothesizes that País’ relationship with the U.S. Consulate may have convinced Santiago’s leading rebel of the utility of a broad front against the Batista government. The 26<sup>th</sup>-of-July Movement increased its legitimacy in the eyes of privileged outsiders by turning to established, and more politically-center figures like Raúl Chibás, Felipe Pazos and Roberto Agramonte. These moderate, pro-U.S. revolutionaries that Matthews alluded to in his article as some of the “highly respected citizens...helping Señor Castro,” comforted Anglo-Americans who feared a loss of status in a new Cuban order.<sup>676</sup> Active participation by Cubans who held deep ties to the

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<sup>674</sup> Herbert Matthews, “Cuban Rebel Is Visited in Hideout: Castro is Still Alive and Still Fighting in Mountains,” *New York Times*, February 4, 1957. 1.

<sup>675</sup> Richard Gott, *Cuba: A New History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press 2004), 160.

<sup>676</sup> Herbert Matthews, “Cuban Rebel Is Visited in Hideout: Castro is Still Alive and Still Fighting in Mountains,” *New York Times*, February 4, 1957. 1; Gott, *Cuba*, 160.

Anglo-American colony gave privileged outsiders human anchors on which to ground their commitments to the developing revolution.

The uniting of various revolutionary factions in July 1957 for the formation of the Sierra Manifesto helped secure the triumph of the revolution as the wealthy Cuban professionals like Felipe Pazos, respected Cuban political figures Raúl Chibás and seemingly pro-U.S.

revolutionary leaders like Fidel Castro attempted to mollify the fears of foreign interests by highlighting their unity in pursuing reformist aims after defeating the dictatorship. The Sierra Manifesto itself laid out moderate structural changes to Cuba's economic system, while promoting political liberty in line with Anglo-American rhetoric defining a free and modern society. The document called for a return to the 1940 Constitution, declaring, "We want elections, but with one condition: truly free, democratic, and impartial elections...presided over by a provisional, neutral government, with the support of all, that will replace the dictatorship in order to induce peace and move the country toward democratic and constitutional normalcy."<sup>677</sup>

The Manifesto proposed "freedom of information, of the spoken and written press and of all."

The document implored the United States government to cease support for the "present regime of terror and dictatorship."<sup>678</sup> The Manifesto advanced reformist, not radical, economic promises concerning the redistribution of unutilized land.<sup>679</sup>

While a significant number of Cuba's Anglo-American residents perceived Castro and the Cuban Revolution as threatening before the revolution took power, most adopted the view of their Cuban friends and contacts. Ruby Hart Philips, Marida Arensberg, Jay Mallin and other

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<sup>677</sup> *Sierra Pact Manifesto*, July 12, 1957, Accessed June 6, 2017, [latinamericanstudies.org/Cuban-rebels/manifesto.htm](http://latinamericanstudies.org/Cuban-rebels/manifesto.htm).

<sup>678</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>679</sup> *Ibid.*

privileged outsiders helped advance sympathy and provide some degree of legitimacy to the anti-Batista movement. Further, Anglo-Americans recognized members of the resistance as moderate and pro-American. Prior to 1959 many within this transnational community articulated the struggle as a necessary political and social movement compatible with the continued presence of Anglo-American influence on the island.

### *The Significance of an Anglo-American Presence*

At Guantánamo, Cuban workers used their position as employees of the U.S. Naval station to aid the revolutionary cause. A gun-running operation took hold as small arms, gasoline and field artillery were taken from the base and smuggled to the rebels in the mountains. Given support among many U.S. servicemen, it is plausible to suspect that they actively aided these efforts.<sup>680</sup> Cuban workers at the base further aided the revolutionary cause by documenting the continued support of Batista's Air Force by the U.S. government, despite claims of neutrality after March 1958. By passing incriminating photo evidence of the Cuban Air Force receiving supplies at Guantánamo Naval Base onto 26th-of-July Movement officials, base workers shamed the United States government into keeping its word and cutting off aid for Batista's military. In retaliation for its continued support, Raúl Castro initiated Operación antiaérea, or Operation Anti-Aircraft.<sup>681</sup>

On June 28, 1958, a bus carried twenty-eight U.S. servicemen on its way back from a "liberty party" in Caimanera. Cuban rebels stopped the bus, and with a Puerto Rican marine serving as translator, the U.S. sailors and soldiers were informed they were hostages of the

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<sup>680</sup> Lipman, *Guantánamo*, 137-8.

<sup>681</sup> Lipman, *Guantánamo*, 138-39; Tom Dunkin, "Politically-Inspired Kidnapping: An Old Story," *News Tribune*, June 24, 1988, Accessed, August 1, 2018, [http://www.cuban-exile.com/doc\\_076-100/doc0092.html](http://www.cuban-exile.com/doc_076-100/doc0092.html)

revolutionary army. When they arrived at the rebel camp, U.S. and Canadian employees of the United Fruit and Sugar Company, the Moa Bay Mining Corporation and the Nicaro Nickel Plant awaited them. Raúl Castro announced three demands of the U.S. government: to realize its proclaimed neutrality, desist in aiding Batista's military, and send officials to tour the damage inflicted on Cuban villages during Batista's bombing campaign. Due in large part to widespread support for the anti-Batista movement among Cubans in contact with U.S. power brokers, the invasion suggested by some North American policy makers never occurred. Instead, the United States government agreed to meet all of the demands made by Castro. Upon their release, it was clear that many of the Anglo-American hostages became convinced during their time in captivity that the rebel cause was legitimate. While the kidnapping of these U.S. and Canadian citizens received scant coverage in heavily censored Oriente, Castro achieved favorable coverage in U.S. publications, including the *New York Times*, *Newsweek*, *Life*, and *Time*.<sup>682</sup>

A growing consciousness among Anglo-Americans in Havana about the policy of torture enacted by Cuban officials in the late-1950s furthered negative perceptions of the Batista government. While Carroll English interacted largely with wealthier Cubans in Havana's *Colegio Buenavista* after her transfer from the Agricultural and Industrial School at Playa Manteca, the staff and students at the school represented a lower economic stratum than the students at Ruston. In her diary English stated her belief that her friend, Pastor Mario Fernández, who was arrested by Batista's authorities, was spared only due to the high-level contacts of his family and among his Protestant brethren.<sup>683</sup> While Pastor Fernández perhaps escaped the most severe punishment due to his Methodist faith, English's position among less affluent Cubans

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<sup>682</sup> Lipman, *Guantánamo*, 138-142.

<sup>683</sup> Carroll English, "Diary of Carroll English," December 14, 1958, provided by Carroll English.

exposed her to other stories of the treatment of prisoners by government agents. English wrote in her diary on December 14, 1958 “Someone was saying the other day how several persons they knew, including close relatives, had been forced to answer prison visits from family members while smiling and appearing in sound shape, and saying that, yes, they had been well-treated, while in reality their body except for visible head and hands was practically pulp from beatings and tortures.” English continues,

One wife discovered when she claimed the body of her husband who had been hung, that he had been sat in a chair without a seat in it with a fire under it. Another lady suffered severe internal hemorrhages and injuries and wavered on the brink of death...because her torturers had been so degenerate and brutal. One youth’s feet soles were burned—to make an example out of him just in case anyone doubted the viciousness and brutality of the regime. He was completely innocent.<sup>684</sup>

Similarly, the Cuban contacts of Ruby Hart Phillips shared their stories of interrogation under Batista’s authorities with the *New York Times* reporter. Phillips recalls, “Stories of torture and killings were brought into my office almost daily by relatives and friends of the victims. Sometimes they brought pictures—horrible pictures of mutilated bodies. It seems incredible that there could be been so many sadists in the Cuban army.”<sup>685</sup> With Anglo-Americans in Havana hearing these stories from Cubans they trusted, and spreading this information among themselves, the positive reputation the Batista government enjoyed in Anglo-American circles slowly eroded.

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<sup>684</sup> December 14, 1958, “Diary of Carroll English,” provided to author by Carroll English.

<sup>685</sup> Phillips, *Cuba: Island of Paradox*, 316.

## *Building Consensus on Batista's Overthrow*

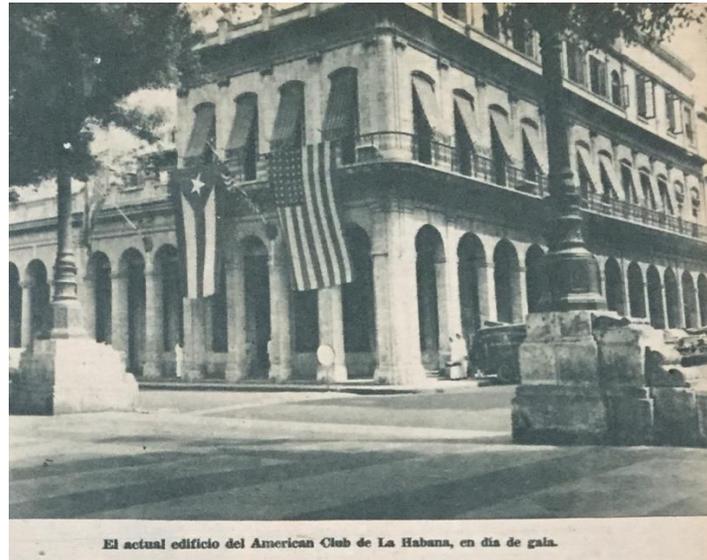


Figure 26. *The American Club, 309 Paseo de Martí, Havana, 1951*<sup>686</sup>

Moved by President McKinley's assassination, U.S. nationals founded Havana's American Club on October 21, 1901, with 59 members. The social organization served as host to major events for the U.S. community in Havana. As observed in the previous chapters, the Fourth of July and Thanksgiving became annual traditions at the club for North American residents.<sup>687</sup> Over time, the American Club became less exclusive and evolved into an intercultural space for Anglo-American and Cuban power brokers to meet, mapping their plans for Cuba. By the 1950s the club had nearly 1,000 members, including many of the most influential people on the island.<sup>688</sup> While dominated by U.S. businessmen, club members

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<sup>686</sup> Herminio Portell Vilá, "La historia del American Club," *Bohemia*, (December 2, 1951): 50-51, 83, 51.

<sup>687</sup> The Club moved to the corner of Prado and Virtudes in 1906. At 309 Paseo de Martí, the block that runs from el Capitolio, past Parque Central through the Prado and to the beginning of the Malecón at San Salvador de la Punta Fortress, the American Club sat on prime real estate. Vilá, "La historia del American Club," 51; "Day of Thanksgiving: Colony Pauses to Observe Holiday," *Times of Havana*, November 27, 1958, 2.

<sup>688</sup> Portell Vilá was a renowned Cuban scholar who studied at a Protestant school in Cuba. Portell Vilá, "La historia del American Club," 83.

included Anglo-American colony educators such as Ruston Academy Headmaster James Baker, Protestant leaders like Episcopal Bishop Alexander Hugo Blankingship, as well as professional Cubans such as lawyer Mario Lazo and Cuban Minister of Treasury López-Fresquet.<sup>689</sup>

Acclaimed in travel books as “A social club equal to the finest in New York or Washington,” the American Club became a space where Cubans and Anglo-American residents from corporate, political, and cultural institutions gathered together to share their ideas, experiences and to relax.<sup>690</sup> As Herminio Portell Vilá explains, “The Businessmen, who have always constituted the vast majority of members of the American Club, have met with his compatriots who acquired distinction through other activities.”<sup>691</sup> John Parker described the members of the institution as a collection of “the great and near great.”<sup>692</sup> Portell Vilá wrote in the 1950s, “If one was to add up the balance sheet, the collective investment represented by the Anglo-American and Cuban members of the American Club would be billions of pesos that contribute to making Cuba a civilized country of extraordinary economic resources, and remarkable achievements.”<sup>693</sup> The club served a collection of people that the Batista regime generally worked to enrich and protect. Yet, many of the Cuban members also hoped to modernize their country in the image of the United States through democratic reforms. The inclusion of these Cubans as leaders in the anti-Batista movement gave legitimacy to the revolutionary government as it consolidated power.

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<sup>689</sup> Gianelloni, *We Remember Cuba*, 216; Anglo-American Directory of Cuba 1960, *Cuban Information Archives*, Accessed July 9, 2015, [http://cuban-exile.com/doc\\_201-225/doc0215.html](http://cuban-exile.com/doc_201-225/doc0215.html).

<sup>690</sup> W. Adolphe Roberts, *Havana The Portrait of a City*, 199.

<sup>691</sup> Portell Vilá, “La historia del American Club,” 83.

<sup>692</sup> Gianelloni, *We Remember Cuba*, 174.

<sup>693</sup> Portell Vilá, “La historia del American Club,” 83.

During the 1950s, conversations between Anglo-Americans and Cuban leaders in institutions like the American Club increased the critical awareness about Batista's abuse of power among those who represented major international corporations, and by extension, foreign governments on the island. Yet this process took time. Batista had done his best to hide the horrors of the revolution from Anglo-American residents. He censored the press attempting to report on revolutionary crackdowns, while endeavoring to insure the violence never threatened the well-being of these privileged outsiders. Further, as Batista seemed to be prioritizing the interests of foreign capital, it proved difficult for many Anglo-American executives to look critically at his government. Ruby Hart Phillips characterized Havana's Anglo-American businessmen as highly reluctant to recognize the problematic nature of Batista's rule. She remembers, "I tried to tell an American businessman who had been living in Latin America for twenty years about the government methods. He refused to believe it. 'Cubans are not that type of people; they would not torture and kill.'"<sup>694</sup> Yet Phillips and others persisted, taking great risks to further the fight against the dictatorship. Their efforts would eventually pierce the consciousness of those who considered themselves "apolitical" Anglo-American residents.

Over time, the experience of the tumultuous 1950s inconvenienced most and scared many of Havana's Anglo-American residents. Anglo-American lives were fundamentally altered in the late 1950s, as a revolutionary campaign repeatedly sabotaged the electrical grid and targeted public spaces with the aim of destabilizing the Batista government. Movie theatres became too dangerous to attend, and Anglo-American schools faced threats of violence. Anglo-American residents began to grow uncomfortable as rumors spread throughout Havana describing the torture and murder conducted by the government's secret police, the Servicio de Inteligencia

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<sup>694</sup> Phillips, *Cuba*, 317.

Militar (SIM).<sup>695</sup> Wealthy Cuban professionals, as well as foreign reporters, educators and missionaries helped to frame and translate the events of late 1958 and 1959 to increasingly sympathetic Anglo-American power brokers.

By the end of 1958, relationships between influential Anglo-American businessmen, other Anglo-American residents, and Cubans associated with the Anglo-American colony convinced most foreign businessmen, initially reluctant to challenge Batista, that the government would soon fall. Still some articulated the desire to find an alternative to Castro. In December 1958, a few weeks before the fall of the Batista government, a group of U.S. businessmen met with Ambassador Earl T. Smith who urged containment of the situation. Esso executive George W. Potts feared the independence of the 26th-of-July Movement. Potts and the other businessmen recommended U.S. action against Batista's government to better manage the transition of power.<sup>696</sup> Yet just a few days after the victory of the revolution, with people celebrating throughout the capital, a group comprised of many of the same U.S. businessmen met with the second-ranking official in the U.S. Embassy, Daniel M. Broddock. This collection of U.S. nationals now knew Cubans like American Club member Rufo López-Fresquet would be serving in the revolutionary cabinet. At the meeting, they enthusiastically pushed for prompt recognition of the new government.<sup>697</sup> Due to his family's integration into the U.S. community through activities like the Mothers' Club and the American Club, López-Fresquet hoped to serve

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<sup>695</sup> Enrique Oltuski Ozacki, *Vida Clandestina: My Life in the Cuban Revolution* (New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.).

<sup>696</sup> Earl T. Smith, *The Fourth Floor: An Account of the Castro Communist Revolution* (Washington, DC: U.S.-Cuba Press, 1962), 162, 165, 170.

<sup>697</sup> Farber, *The Origins of the Cuban Revolution Reconsidered*, 89.

as a bridge between the two nations from his position in the revolutionary government.<sup>698</sup> In other contexts, these foreign executives would likely be hostile toward, isolated from or neutral about local struggles. However, due in large part to their connections with Cubans in the new administration, and their inclusion in a community of privileged outsiders advocating for revolutionary change, these Anglo-American residents largely supported the government in January 1959. Institutional and relational bridges translated Cuban realities into a language that privileged outsiders could understand, saturating Anglo-Americans with anti-Batista sentiments. When Batista fled in the first hours of 1959, few saw his departure as a loss.

### ***A Moderate Revolutionary Government Fluent in Anglo-American***

William Arthur Wieland grew up in Havana and in the 1920s took a job with the *Havana Post*.<sup>699</sup> He began a career at the Department of State in 1941 and rose to become the director of the State Department's Office of Caribbean and Mexican Affairs in 1958.<sup>700</sup> While working in Washington, Wieland helped halt U.S. arms shipments to Cuba in March 1958. Able to convince senior policy makers that Castro was not a communist, Wieland and others forwarded the idea that supporting Batista was no longer a tenable option.<sup>701</sup> Wieland is blamed by many Cubans and Anglo-Americans who left Cuba for encouraging patience towards revolutionary government, even as tensions escalated between Washington and Havana.

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<sup>698</sup> López-Fresquet, *My Fourteen Months with Castro*, 156.

<sup>699</sup> Lazo, *Dagger in the Heart*, 141; Alfonso Chardy, "After 50 Years, Questions About Cuba Still Hound Wieland," *Miami Herald*, January 1, 2009, Accessed August 8, 2018, <http://www.miamiherald.com/latest-news/article1931061.html>.

<sup>700</sup> Schoultz, *That Infernal Little Republic*, 132.

<sup>701</sup> Alfonso Chardy, "After 50 Years, Questions About Cuba Still Hound Wieland," *Miami Herald*, January 1, 2009, Accessed August 8, 2018, <http://www.miamiherald.com/latest-news/article1931061.html>.

Even today many within the Cuban exile community, as well as Anglo-Americans with ties to Cuba, continue to direct their frustration at the U.S. State Department for its failure to recognize the threat posed by a Castro-controlled Cuba earlier, when they could have conceivably curtailed his power. In the first months of 1959, Weiland remained convinced that Fidel Castro's influence was "towards moderation and the establishment of a prosperous, democratic Cuba with honest government."<sup>702</sup> Cubans like Mario Lazo and North Americans, including former CIA officer Grayston Lynch, blame Weiland and his superior Assistant Secretary of State Roy R. Rubottom for supporting Castro's rise. Yet, Weiland and Rubottom had good reason to believe the revolution was compatible with U.S. interests.

Rubottom and Weiland came to their conclusions in large part after listening to many Cubans and Anglo-Americans who advocated for U.S. neutrality before 1959, and patience from Washington for months and sometimes years after the revolution took power. With the notable exception of Ambassador Earl T. Smith, most embassy officials, influenced by contacts within and around the Anglo-American colony, voiced similarly optimistic political forecasts and expressed sentiments largely sympathetic with the anti-Batista movement. These U.S. government officials under-anticipated the deep desire for a socio-economic restructuring that was fomenting in the countryside and spreading across the poor and working-class Cuban communities outside of Cuba's major cities.

In January 1959 Anglo-American residents, generally informed by Cubans, largely considered Castro's goals to be democratic and reform-minded. Mostly isolated from the experiences of poor and rural *campesinos* by their wealth, location and nationality, Havana's Anglo-American colony failed to appreciate the social and economic commitments of the

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<sup>702</sup> Ibid.

struggle. Their knowledge of the Cuban sugar industry was often limited to a twenty-eight-mile train ride to the idyllic town of Hershey on a golf outing or school fieldtrip. The Anglo-American colony in Havana rarely found itself exposed to the hardships endured by cane-cutters. Those Cubans with whom privileged outsiders interacted and who explained the revolution to the Anglo-American residents of Havana before 1959 generally stressed democratic, not socio-economic reforms as the revolution's objective.

By early January 1959 it was widely known among Anglo-American residents that the leaders of the anti-Batista opposition held close social and/or professional relationships with the Anglo-American colony; the revolutionaries were trusted friends and allies.<sup>703</sup> Many had graduated from Anglo-American schools and others were socialized in Anglo-American religious institutions. Felipe Pazos and Rufo López Fresquet had integrated easily into the Anglo-American colony after attending Columbia University in New York. Minister of Economy Regino Boti, as well as head of the Federación de Mujeres Cubana (Raúl Castro's wife) Vilma Espín had attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Elena Mederos Cabañas was raised by U.S. nationals and attended a Methodist school in Cuba. The Minister of Communications Enrique Oltuski Ozacki worked for Shell Oil and attended the University of Miami. Minister of Public Works Manuel Ray grew up in Protestant institutions before enrolling as a student at the University of Utah.<sup>704</sup> Prime Ministers José Miró Cardona was a known

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<sup>703</sup> Louis A. Pérez notes that "Liberals of all types joined the new administration, many of whom were educated in North American schools. Almost all of them would resign by the end of the first eighteen months, as radicals took over the government. But the point here is that the U.S. dispute with Cuba in 1959 was, ironically, largely with the policies and programs enacted by men and women most closely identified with North American practices." Pérez, *On Becoming Cuban*, 488.

<sup>704</sup> Pérez, *On Becoming Cuban*, 487-488; Oltuski, *Vida Clandestina*, ix, 5; "New Cuba Cabinet; Individual and Backgrounds; Groups Represented," January 19, 1959, USNA, RG59, Box 3086, 737.13/1-2859.

commodity to the Anglo-American colony, having his promotion to titular professor of penal law announced in the Anglo-American press.<sup>705</sup>

The composition of these new Cuban authorities delighted Anglo-American observers. United Fruit and Sugar Company executive William S. Chambers, who had been living in Havana since 1950 explained, “The first year or so a provisional government was set up by Castro, and he appointed all kinds of good guys to run the various Cabinet positions, and so forth. Everyone wanted to give Castro a chance.”<sup>706</sup> The Chambers family left in mid-March 1960, the same month as the last of the cabinet’s moderates.<sup>707</sup> Jay Mallin later explained, “If [The initial Revolutionary Government] had been permitted to rule Cuba, the future of the island might have fulfilled the revolution’s early promises of peace and liberty.”<sup>708</sup> These Cuban leaders with prominent roles in the new government had strong ties to the Anglo-American colony, as well as Anglo-American traditions, social status and values; these men and women helped the revolution gain legitimacy in the eyes of Anglo-American observers, even as the new government was being undermined by corporate interests and the United States government.

### ***Defending the Revolution***

In January 1959, while many in the Anglo-American colony were still celebrating the collapse of the Batista government, journalistic and political condemnations of the government’s executions began appearing with repetition in the U.S. press, and in statements delivered by U.S.

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<sup>705</sup> “Cuban News Roundup,” *Times of Havana*, July 1, 1957, 4; “New Cuban Cabinet; Individual and Backgrounds; Groups Represented,” January 19, 1959, USNA, RG59, Box 3086, 737.13/1-2859.

<sup>706</sup> William S. Chambers, “Memoir,” provided by Kay Torpey.

<sup>707</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>708</sup> Mallin, *Covering Castro*, 17.

politicians.<sup>709</sup> Newspapers of the Anglo-American colony on the island tried to emphasize, and translate, the complex context of the executions for their readers in Cuba and in the United States. On January 8, 1959, the *Times of Havana* posted an editorial re-framing the government-sanctioned executions: “Never has there been a revolution in the history of the world where such incidents of summary justice have not occurred. The history of the United States itself shows

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<sup>709</sup> The mainstream U.S. media generally exhibited shock in their columns. On January 8, 1959, *The New York Times* headline read “Executions Announced.” On the same day, *The Chicago Daily Tribune* published an article “15 Cuban Officers Put to Death; 207 on Trial.” Neither of these pieces articulated any justification for the executions beyond “charges [included] torturing prisoners.” John O’Rourke of the *Washington Daily News* wrote on January 23, 1959, “Fidel Castro’s determination to proceed with ‘rebel justice’—drumhead trials, mob juries, and arbitrary executions—cannot avoid stirring second thoughts among those who hoped the revolution signaled the end of tyranny.” The U.S. press fixated on this morbid element in the consolidation of power by the revolution. In an article critical of the near unanimity of major U.S. political and media figures, Dale Francis noted in the national Catholic action weekly *Our Sunday Visitor*, “denunciations of the executions by the new Cuban government have followed no political lines. Fulton J. Lewis and Edward R. Murrow found themselves in surprised agreement. David Lawrence and Max Lerner wound up for the first time in years saying almost exactly the same thing... All without exception denounced the executions.” The Democratic Senator George Smathers from Florida was under pressure from his constituents to “jump on [Fidel Castro’s] bandwagon.” The Senator refused to do so and on January 20, 1959 inserted into the Congressional Record that he urged “restraint on the part of all,” and that it was his “hope that all of us will stop shooting and shouting on these important matters where hasty decisions mean ill-considered acts.” That same day Senator Wayne Morse exclaimed, “It is necessary to keep the record straight, because there have been some reports out of Cuba to the effect that fair procedure trials were held prior to the early executions in Cuba after Castro took over...I know, as a matter of fact, that in some instances that was not the case.” Senator Morse continued, “To the contrary, certain members of the Batista regime—true, known to be men with a sordid record of cruelty, murder, and bloodshed behind them—were not subjected to any trial in the true meaning of the term but within a relatively few minutes after they were brought before military officers, were shot by a firing squad...the substitution of tyranny for tyranny does not beget democracy.” This was not the first time Senator Morse patronizingly derided the new Cuban government. On January 15 the *Washington Post and Times Herald* reported “Sen. Wayne Morse (D-Ore.) yesterday denounce[d] what he called the ‘blood baths’ taking place in Cuba under the new Fidel Castro regime.” The article quoted Morse, the Chairman of a Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Latin American Affairs: “[The] execution of political opponents ‘is not the way for the leaders of the new regime in Cuba to win the support of free men and women around the world...’ [he] pleaded with the new leaders to ‘withhold executions until emotions calm’ and trials can be held in a better atmosphere.” Objections to the revolutionary government could be found in both congressional houses. On January 19, 1959, New York Representative Katharine St. George voiced concern in a tone similar to that of her colleague from Oregon. Referring to the public’s adoration of Castro immediately following the revolution, the Congresswoman said “as these startling errors of judgment of ours keep recurring, one begins to believe the words of the late Senator Huey Long... ‘you can sell any ideology to Americans by calling it Democracy.’” “Executions Announced,” *New York Times*, January 8, 1959, 3; John O’Rourke, *Washington Daily News*, January 23, 1959, quoted in 105 Congressional Record, January 26, 1959, 1153; Dale Francis, “Why Were They Wrong About Cuba?—U.S. Commentators Have Taken For Granted That The People Being Executed “Were Merely Political Opponents—They Were Not—They Were Criminals Who Murdered, Tortured, Raped,” *Our Sunday Visitor*, quoted in 105 Congressional Record, February 3, 1959, A784; 105 Congressional Record, January 20, 1959, 914-915; 105 Congressional Record, January 20, 1959, 924; “Morse Asks Cuba to End ‘Blood Baths,’” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, January 15, 1959, A1; 105 Congressional Record, January 17, 1959, A274.

many instances where undesirables were eliminated by drumhead court martials.”<sup>710</sup> A more strident response to criticism abroad could be found in *Times of Havana* editorial titled “Voice of The People,” which defended the large-scale capital punishment enacted by the Cuban government as the will of the people: “Fidel Castro and his policy of rebel justice for accused war criminals received a resounding vote of confidence yesterday. It echoed in an affirmative shout across the Palace Square and through the adjacent streets when Castro asked all those in favor of continuing with the trials and executions to raise their hands.” The article closed with strong affirmation: “without a shadow of a doubt...the people are solidly behind him [Castro].”<sup>711</sup> Though the Anglo-American press proved ambivalent on the question of executions, they recognized the legitimacy that revolutionary justice held for the Cuban people.

While most Anglo-American colony members arrived in Cuba after the overthrow of President Machado 1933, Anglo-American journalists reminded them of the violence that engulfed Havana a quarter-century earlier. In 1959 Mary Louise Wilkinson wrote in her weekly column for the *Times of Havana*, “This was the first revolution that had not been followed by an aftermath of rioting and rampaging, of utter uncontrollability.”<sup>712</sup> Ruby Hart Phillips reminded the community that in 1933 the violence was far less controlled. In her 1959 monograph *Island of Paradox*, Phillips detailed how in the 1930s the mob chased the *porristas*, the paramilitary death squads of the Machado government and their sympathizers, throughout the streets of Havana. She described onlookers watching bloodthirsty mobs smash a man over the head with a stone and shoot him in the chest before he could unleash his revolver. As the man gripped a post

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<sup>710</sup> An Old Habanero, “Lets Look at Today,” *Times of Havana*, January 8, 1959, 9.

<sup>711</sup> “Let Calmness Prevail,” *Times of Havana*, January 17, 1959, 9.

<sup>712</sup> Mary Louise Wilkinson, “Memo...Random,” *Times of Havana*, January 15, 1959, 5.

refusing to fall, a soldier approached and, to the cheers of the masses behind him, sent the man mercifully to the ground with a bullet through the head. The wife and children of the dead man looked on from the balcony at the Hotel Pasaje as the crowd diligently set to work to render the corpse unidentifiable. Blood stained the streets of Havana in the days following the abdication of President Machado. Homes and stores were looted. With the army guided by the blind rage of the masses, no end to the chaos was in sight.<sup>713</sup> Whether or not they supported the executions, a good number of Anglo-American residents understood that the military tribunals and summary executions contained the potential for even greater violence.

Many Anglo-American journalists emphasized the restraint shown by the revolutionary government during the first weeks of 1959. According to a January 17 *Times of Havana* article, “a number accused of being pro-Batista...have been freed for lack of evidence.” Fidel Castro was paraphrased as estimating that “no more than 450 Cubans will be executed for ‘war crimes’ committed during the regime of Fulgencio Batista.” The article pointed out that this number was less than the 450 bodies “found in the bottom of an abandoned mine shaft” killed in a single town by agents of Batista, with many bearing “evidence of torture.”<sup>714</sup> Some articles revisited the horrors of life in prison during the Batista presidency. One opened, “Life in Batista’s prisons had its gentler aspects, such as indirect music. But when the music stopped, the screams began.”<sup>715</sup> Other works detailed the atrocities committed by the very men being put to death before the revolutionary firing squads.<sup>716</sup> The executions were represented in the coverage of periodicals

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<sup>713</sup> Phillips, *Cuba*, 39-45.

<sup>714</sup> United Press International, “Not Over 450 to be Executed,” *Times of Havana*, January 17, 1959, 1.

<sup>715</sup> Henry Goethals, “Ordeal of Life and Death in Prison is Revealed,” *Times of Havana*, January 17, 1959, 2.

<sup>716</sup> Reeve Waring, “These Are Men Who Tasted Rebel Justice,” *Times of Havana*, January 19, 1959, 3.

produced by Anglo-American residents in ways that were primarily sympathetic in early 1959 with the difficult position of the revolutionary government. On January 22, the *Times of Havana* headline read, “War Trials Begin Today After Roar of Approval Heard Round the World.”<sup>717</sup> On the same day, a columnist for the same paper explained, “The people carried signs, thousands of signs, banners and posters all demanding the trial and execution of ‘war criminals’ of the Batista regime.”<sup>718</sup> Many Anglo-American residents understood these executions were enacted by a revolutionary government acting in response to the demands of the people.

With men like López-Fresquet in the revolutionary cabinet, Cuban and Anglo-American businesses found ways to frame their economic participation before and after 1959 as patriotic. López-Fresquet created legal structures that excused businesses which withheld taxes before 1959, casting their actions as withholding funds against the tyrannical Batista dictatorship, as opposed to being self-serving corporations who financially benefited from Batista’s priorities. Law 40 went into effect in February 1959, allowing taxpayers to back-pay taxes unpaid during the Batista administration. López-Fresquet successfully created capital for the Cuban government, while representing the business networks frequented by Anglo-American executives as invested in, and supporting popular revolution. Under Law 40 the revolutionary government required businesses to pay all of what they owed from 1958, half from 1957, and one-quarter for 1956. This brought the revolutionary government 108 million pesos and paid for 60,000 to be employed in public works.<sup>719</sup> Along with Fidel Castro’s *poco a poco* speech, which stressed that

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<sup>717</sup> “War Trials Begin Today After Roar of Approval Heard Round the World,” *Times of Havana*, January 22, 1959, 1.

<sup>718</sup> An Old Habanero, “Thunderous Approval of Executions Echoes Throughout Republic,” *Times of Havana*, January 22, 1959, 16.

<sup>719</sup> López-Fresquet, *My Fourteen Months with Castro*, 86.

slow-pace revolutionary reforms would be implemented “little by little,” the early policies and rhetoric of the revolution comforted many within the Anglo-American business community.<sup>720</sup>

On February 7, 1959, the *Times of Havana* published an article that enthusiastically endorsed Castro. Delineating the qualities essential to a Cuban leader, the editorial called for someone who “fought and lived for his country...he must be intelligent, imaginative, creative...he should be of a good family...a young lawyer with vision...there is only one candidate: Fidel Castro.”<sup>721</sup> Referencing the upcoming trip to the United States by Castro, another editorial read, “He will get a huge welcome as a liberator which he deserves, and he will see for himself how much the United States appreciates freedom and those who win it.”<sup>722</sup> There was no lack of patriotism for the United States among those privileged outsiders espousing this perspective, but they understood well, in the winter of 1959, that to preserve their status as foreign citizens living in Cuba, the U.S. government would have to accept this new revolutionary Cuba.

Clarence Moore, a former CIA agent and the founder and editor of the *Times of Havana*, hoped to use his journalist platform and professional connections to help ameliorate tensions and perhaps preserve the relationship between the United States and Cuba in early 1959. Moore set off for Washington seeking an audience with Congress to address the “confusion and misunderstanding on both sides.” He envisioned himself as improving what appeared “to be strained relations between the two nations.”<sup>723</sup> While unsuccessful at altering the eventual break

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<sup>720</sup> Lazo, *Dagger in the Heart*, 188.

<sup>721</sup> “Growing Pains of Democracy,” *Times of Havana*, February 7, 1959, 9.

<sup>722</sup> “U.S. Will Welcome Castro,” *Times of Havana*, March 28, 1959, 9.

<sup>723</sup> An Old Habanero, “Agramonte Defends Trials, Executions,” *Times of Havana*, January 17, 1959, 8.

in relations between Washington and Havana, efforts by influential members of the Anglo-American colony, including Moore, offered human connections to policy makers in Washington. They expressed the hope that their defense of the new government would make it harder for U.S. politicians and diplomats to identify the revolution as a dangerous, communist threat that must be confronted.

In April 1959, the Anglo-American press on the island expressed high hopes for Castro's visit to Washington. The trip by Castro to the United States seemed like a viable opportunity to soothe a straining relationship. On April 23, the *Times of Havana* wished Castro, "success on his tour, which has already won him numerous new friends for Cuba and the revolutionary government."<sup>724</sup> The *Havana Post*, the other newspaper published for and by Anglo-American colony, "share[d] with Ambassador Bonsal the hope that [improved relations and increased understanding] will be one of the benefits of the visit of Prime Minister Castro to the United States."<sup>725</sup> Headlines reflected the Anglo-American colony's enthusiasm and optimism for continued bi-national relations. "Wild Welcome for Fidel On Arrival in New York: 20,000 Turn Out at Station Hotel,"<sup>726</sup> and "U.S. Understands Justice of Cuban Cause"<sup>727</sup> made the front page of the *Havana Post*. On April 18, the *Havana Post* commented upon the determination by Castro

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<sup>724</sup> "Setting the Record Straight," *Times of Havana*, April 23, 1959, 9.

<sup>725</sup> "Cementing the Ties of Friendship," *Havana Post*, April 16, 1959, 1.

<sup>726</sup> "Wild Welcome for Fidel on Arrival in New York: 20,000 Turn Out At Station Hotel," *Havana Post*, April 22, 1959, 1.

<sup>727</sup> "US Understands Justice of Cuban Cause: Castro," *Havana Post*, April 25, 1959.

to create a commercial treaty with the United States.<sup>728</sup> The Cuban-based Anglo-American newspapers emphasized Cuban opposition to communism and all dictatorships.<sup>729</sup>

Many Anglo-American residents feared that U.S. power brokers who viewed Castro as ideologically averse to their interests were provoking strife between the two nations. The papers of the Anglo-American colony sought to set the record straight. Continuing to pursue his role as mediator during Castro's tour of the United States, Clarence Moore made public his support for the new government, "In Cuba we have an honest regime that is sincerely devoted to making this island a better place to live for all Cubans.... There are many persons in high positions who are capable, intelligent and dedicated." Trying to ease anxieties of influential Anglo-American executives living in Cuba and policymakers in Washington, Moore was translating again: "Cuba is determined to honor its international obligations.... Cuba wants foreign capital." Moore reminded his readers that Castro was still widely celebrated by their Cuban neighbors and friends: "The morale and spirit of the people throughout the island has jumped tremendously in the last four months—mounting criticism from certain business groups notwithstanding." Finally, turning to the greatest threat of all, Moore concluded, "Prime Minister Castro recently stated that communism feeds on empty stomachs and misery, and that the purpose of his government is to eliminate so far as is possible these sources of unrest and conspiracy."<sup>730</sup>

According to Moore and many others within the Anglo-American colony, in spring 1959 the revolution was set to achieve a restructuring of Cuban society to benefit the Cuban population.

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<sup>728</sup> Bob Berrellez, "Creates 'Favorable Impression': 'We Are Not Communists,' Castro Tells US," *Havana Post*, April 18, 1959, 1.

<sup>729</sup> "We Oppose Communism, All Dictatorships: Castro: Cuban Elections Not More Than 4 Years Off," *Havana Post*, April 21, 1959, 1.

<sup>730</sup> Clarence Moore, "Footnote to the Headlines: A Long Look at the Revolution," *Times of Havana*, April 25, 1959, 3.

Those Cubans and Anglo-Americans who were initially pro-revolution and enjoyed good relations with the U.S. Embassy and power brokers in the United States worked to deter confrontational action from Washington.

***Unsteady Bridges: Fractured Relations Between Colonized and Colonizer***

On January 21, 1959, Philip Bonsal became the new U.S. Ambassador to Cuba. Bonsal was a career diplomat from a family of diplomats. His father served the United States abroad in-between stints as a Pulitzer-Prize-winning newsman who covered the Cuban War of Independence for the *New York Herald Tribune*. The Eisenhower administration chose Bonsal because he successfully promoted U.S. interests when navigating a revolutionary movement in Bolivia a few years earlier. Unlike his predecessor Earl T. Smith, Philip Bonsal was not a political appointee. Smith had been a businessman before receiving the post of Cuban Ambassador and did not speak Spanish. President Eisenhower made clear, through his appointment of Bonsal, that the new Cuban government required a career diplomat; plush appointments designed to reward political allies would no longer suffice. Anglo-American colony member Ruby Hart Phillips agreed that “both Cubans and Americans approved the appointment.”<sup>731</sup> To the Anglo-American colony, Bonsal’s appointment signified that Washington’s policy toward Cuba would be handled diplomatically and not guided exclusively by U.S. business interests. Yet in Cuba’s quest for national autonomy over the first few months of the 1959, it became clear that the ambition of the Cuban Revolution stood in contradiction to the geopolitical and socio-economic interests Bonsal had been sent to defend.

The ground under the Anglo-American colony in Cuba quickly shifted following Batista’s flight. Anglo-Americans found their influence and capital no longer prioritized by the

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<sup>731</sup> Phillips, *The Cuban Dilemma*, 31.

Cuban government. The Agrarian Reform law, which limited the size of farms on the island to 3,333 acres, was signed into law in May and put into effect at the start of June 1959. Within six weeks, on July 16, Cuban president Manuel Urrutia, who enjoyed substantial popularity among Anglo-American residents for his stance against communism, resigned.<sup>732</sup> The Cuban summer of 1959 was opening with a radical turn of affairs, as Anglo-Americans found their privileged status uprooted by a new Cuban nationalism.

Panic grew in the Anglo-American colony as the Cuban government moved forward with the implementation of the Agrarian Reform Law. The new policy challenged Anglo-American sugar and ranching corporations in Cuba and would cause concern in Washington. Many within the Anglo-American colony became disillusioned with the prospects of harmony between the two nations and they prepared to relocate outside of Cuba. Yet still, a large group of Havana's Anglo-American residents continued to work toward maintaining their place in Cuban society, seeking to build bridges upon trembling ground. Some Anglo-Americans defended the actions by the revolution as attempts to ameliorate the suffering of a populace that had been ignored for the entirety of Cuban history. While condemning the verbal and written attacks against the United States by Cuban officials, these Anglo-American colony members were also quick to denounce U.S. antagonism.

At the end of May 1959, Ambassador Philip Bonsal met with the Subcommittee on Inter-American Affairs and its Chairman, Democratic Representative from Alabama, Armistead I. Selden, Jr. The Ambassador knew Selden to be one of the most important men involved in the precarious relations between the United States and Latin America. Bonsal sat before the

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<sup>732</sup> Franklin, *Cuba and The United States*, 21-22.

Congressional Committee being questioned by Representative Selden about the soon-to-be-signed Cuban Agrarian Reform bill:

Mr. Ambassador, in connection with this there has been some discussion in the committee on the possibility of including in the Mutual Assistance bill a section, which would make some reference to expropriation or confiscation of property. Do you think the inclusion of such an amendment in the bill would be helpful as far as the Cuban situation is concerned? That it might possibly ward off expropriation or confiscation of American property in that area?<sup>733</sup>

The ambassador did not quite know how to respond. The Representative from Alabama seemed to be asking for advice on whether it was appropriate to pressure the Cuban government to exempt U.S. interests as the Cuban economy was being adjusted. Having lived in Cuba for nearly half a year and engaged with the Cuban pleas for autonomy, Bonsal emphasized the need to respect Cuban sovereignty.<sup>734</sup> Bonsal responded to Representative Selden: “We do not, as I understand it, question the right of sovereign governments to expropriate private property.... It would be most unfortunate to involve the purposes and objectives of our Mutual Assistance policy in the settlement of these claims. We would lose far more than we would gain.”<sup>735</sup> The gulf between Washington and the Cuban government was clearly growing. Cuba was struggling for an independence denied since it became a nation in 1902. Washington was awash with political anxieties that the United States had completely lost control of the situation and that a communist takeover could be on the horizon.

Coverage of the events in the Anglo-American colony press in the summer of 1959 signaled and circulated evidence of the growing disenchantment with the revolution in

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<sup>733</sup> “Briefing by Hon. Philip W. Bonsal, United States Ambassador to Cuba,” May 28, 1959, 7, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., Phillip Bonsal Papers, Box 1, Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Manuscript Division.

<sup>734</sup> Ibid.

<sup>735</sup> Ibid.

Washington.<sup>736</sup> The *Times of Havana* sadly reflected, “We would be failing in our duties if we did not adequately reflect the fact that relations between Cuba and the U.S. have grown steadily worse in recent weeks.”<sup>737</sup> The *Havana Post* and the *Times of Havana* commented upon the growing separation between the two governments. *Times* reporter Henry Goethals wrote on the day of President Urrutia’s resignation, “Worsening Cuban-American relations hit possibly their lowest point in more than half a century in the wake of the Díaz Lanz testimony before a Senate subcommittee in Washington D.C. in which the former Cuban Air Force commander charged that Fidel Castro and members of his government are Communists.” Díaz Lanz served in, and then fled, the new government in 1959. Goethals continued, “The newspaper *Revolución*, official organ of the 26th-of-July Movement said in a scathing front page editorial yesterday that Cuba is being ‘concretely threatened’ by the United States.”<sup>738</sup> Another article reported on the outrage that Castro directed at Secretary of State Christian Herter. Speaking to the Organization of American States (OAS) in August, Fidel Castro challenged Herter, who was reflecting on a

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<sup>736</sup> Significantly, in regards to the Agrarian Reform Bill, this law might have been a surprise for U.S. citizens living in the United States, this law was far less of a surprise to the expatriate community in Cuba. Castro had been advocating land redistribution since his 1953 trial defense, *History Will Absolve Me*. Tad Szulc, *Fidel: A Critical Portrait* (New York: William Morrow and Company, INC., 1986), 296.

<sup>737</sup> “Overcoming Obstacles to Friendship,” *Times of Havana*, July 18, 1959, 9.

<sup>738</sup> When internal disputes between Prime Minister Fidel Castro and President Manuel Urrutia caused, at least momentarily, both men to resign, the people took to the streets demanding the return of Castro. In a well-orchestrated power swing on July 17, 1959, Prime Minister Castro resigned, denouncing President Urrutia, which forced the Cuban President to resign. Castro returned to his post, as was demanded by a massive public demonstration on July 23. The reasoning behind the removal of Urrutia for the U.S. press agencies was tied, at least in part, to his stance against communism. *The New York Times* emphasized this when quoting Castro after the Prime Minister had resigned, “I am not a Communist and neither is the revolutionary movement, but we do not have to say we are anti-Communist just to fawn to foreign powers...the President suspiciously pictures himself as the champion of anti-communism.” “Cuban Crisis: Castro Ousts President,” *New York Times*, July 19, 1959, E1. While in the American Colony the actions of Urrutia were framed as problematic. “Cabinet Hails Unity as Dorticos Named President: ‘Urrutia’s House’ Coming Tumbling Down,” *Times of Havana*, July 18, 1959, 1. Front-page prominence was placed on the “holding back on the signature of laws passed by the cabinet” by Urrutia and his “[collection of] a \$100,000 per-year salary, ‘just like Batista’” as reasons for his break with Castro. “Castro Says Ex-Pres. ‘Bordered on Treason,’” *Havana Post*, July 18, 1959, 1; Henry Goethals, “Colonyites Show Concern; ‘Revolution’ Lashes Out,” *Times of Havana*, July 16, 1959, 1.

failed expedition of private Cuban citizens attempting to ignite Revolution in the Dominican Republic. The Cuban Prime Minister lambasted Secretary Herter for making “no mention of the horror that the tyranny of Dominican strong man Rafael Trujillo signifies.”<sup>739</sup> Cuba’s Anglo-American editorials criticized U.S. policy makers for undermining peaceful diplomatic coexistence. One article accused the United States Senate of turning the Díaz Lanz hearing into a “three-ring circus,” thus increasing the recent “venomous criticism” by Cubans against the United States government.<sup>740</sup>

In a fledgling attempt at reconciliation, the *Times of Havana* sought to steer Cuban journalists away from attacks against the United States. In July, 1959 one editorial read, “The Times of Havana is distressed to read frankly anti-American editorials in the usually friendly Cuban press.” Eager to affirm a sturdy relationship between Cubans and people of the United States, the editorial sought to reassure readers “that the friendship that exists between the peoples of Cuba and the U.S. is too deep to be jeopardized by any such attacks in the press.”<sup>741</sup> Despite their growing ambivalence toward the revolutionary government, the Anglo-American press continued to emphasize instances of solidarity between the Anglo-American colony, the Cuban government and the Cuban people. Optimism could be found in the periodicals of the Anglo-American colony as a *Times of Havana* piece read, “Nevertheless, it is our firm conviction that the traditional friendship between Cubans and Americans will overcome these obstacles.” The piece ended with a plea for “officials on both sides of the Florida straits [to] refrain from rocking

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<sup>739</sup> “Castro Lashes Out at Herter’s Plan,” *Times of Havana*, August 15, 1959, 16.

<sup>740</sup> “Overcoming Obstacles to Friendship,” *Times of Havana*, July 18, 1959, 9.

<sup>741</sup> “Friendship Will Survive Press Attacks,” *Havana Post*, July 9, 1959, 9.

the boat.”<sup>742</sup> References to the historical friendship of the United States and Cuba reflected strong concern among privileged outsiders of the fragile space Anglo-American residents occupied in the contemporary political moment. A last push to salvage a tenuous relationship would be undertaken by elements of Havana’s Anglo-American colony in fall of 1959. It would end in disaster and lend momentum to cross-cultural organizing of a different kind, against the revolution.

### ***The Fall of Hope***

The fall of 1959 began with lingering, but dissipating optimism from some sectors of Havana’s Anglo-American colony. In early September, Ambassador Bonsal and Fidel Castro sat down for five to six hours for a much-anticipated conversation on U.S.-Cuban relations.<sup>743</sup> In October, the *Times of Havana* reported that the U.S. Ambassador met with Cuban Foreign Minister Raúl Roa Garcia for close to an hour.<sup>744</sup> Some Anglo-American residents expressed optimism that the storms of summer had been weathered. The news improved further when it was confirmed that the American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA) would be holding a major convention in Cuba.

Anglo-American residents knew the ASTA convention was an opportunity to impress a group vital to bolstering tourism on the island. Arm-in-arm with friendly elements of the Cuban government, the Anglo-American colony set to work. They organized volunteers from the Anglo-American colony to “offer their cars and their time to aid with chauffeuring the wives of

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<sup>742</sup> “Overcoming Obstacles to Friendship,” *Times of Havana*, July 18, 1959, 9.

<sup>743</sup> “Cuba is Mending Diplomatic Fences,” *Times of Havana*, September 5, 1959, 1; R. Hart Phillips, “U.S. Envoy, Castro Meet for 6 Hours,” *New York Times*, September 5, 1959, 4.

<sup>744</sup> “Bonsal and Roa Chat for Hour,” *Times of Havana*, October 8, 1959, 1.

the ASTA convention members.”<sup>745</sup> Delegates from the Canadian Embassy courted the group of tourist experts while Ambassador Bonsal prepared to host a reception for the visitors.<sup>746</sup> The travel agents were invited to Catholic mass in English; the women among them were encouraged to attend musical performances at the Women’s Club.<sup>747</sup> Representatives of the Mothers’ Club, the Lyceum and Lawn Tennis Club, and the Menorah Sisterhood attended planning meetings to determine how best to entertain the spouses of ASTA members.<sup>748</sup> On October 17, an editorial in the *Times of Havana* expressed the excitement that could be felt throughout the capital city: “the big day has arrived, and delegates to the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the American Society of Travel Agents began registering in Havana today for a week of festivities and a careful look at the new Cuba.” Appealing directly to the new visitors, the piece continued, “Enjoy yourselves and come back often. You will always receive a typically warm Cuban welcome.”<sup>749</sup> On the cover of the paper that same day an advertisement read “ASTA, We Love You.”<sup>750</sup> Airline companies, beer and cigarettes corporations, hotels, as well as *Reader’s Digest South America*, realtors, and producers of condensed milk all made sure to place advertisements welcoming the travel agents.<sup>751</sup>

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<sup>745</sup> “Volunteers Needed for ASTA Meet,” *Times of Havana*, October 8, 1959, 7.

<sup>746</sup> “ASTA Delegates Feted at Canadian Embassy,” *Times of Havana*, October 19, 1959, 8; “Bonsal Host Reception For ASTA,” *Times of Havana*, October 24, 1959, 5.

<sup>747</sup> “ASTA Delegates Invited to Mass,” *Times of Havana*, October 17, 1959, 9. “ASTA Ladies to be Guests of Woman’s Club,” *Times of Havana*, October 15, 1959, 15.

<sup>748</sup> “Colony Women Can Help ASTA Convention Here,” *Times of Havana*, September 28, 1959, 5.

<sup>749</sup> “Welcome to Cuba, ASTA,” *Times of Havana*, October 17, 1959, 25.

<sup>750</sup> *Times of Havana*, October 17, 1959.

<sup>751</sup> *Times of Havana*, October 17, 1959; *Times of Havana*, October 19, 1959.

Elements within the Cuban government also dedicated themselves to ensuring the success of the ASTA convention. The *Times of Havana* reported that the Cuban “revolutionary government, its people, its hotels and tourist promoters today have one sole thought and one purpose: ‘Welcome, ASTA, to Cuba.’”<sup>752</sup> The agents stayed at some of the most luxurious hotels in the city, including the Hotel Nacional, Havana Riviera, the Havana Hilton, and the Capri.<sup>753</sup> A \$1.5-million renovation of the airport terminal was rushed to completion in time for the group’s arrival. The police coordinated with translators, office personnel and the Boy Scouts, all of whom sported ASTA badges. Cash registers were filled with “tourist dollars,” and an award was given to a local bartender who won a competition to create the official “ASTA Cocktail.”<sup>754</sup>

The Cuban Tourist Commission bought full-length advertisements in the expatriate newspapers that read, “Welcome, Amigos.”<sup>755</sup> As one headline so aptly noted, “Things Are Looking Up.”<sup>756</sup> And they were. The Cuban government and the Cuban people were working in conjunction with the Anglo-American colony to convince this vital group of the island’s viability as a future travel destination. Many seemed to imagine these travel agents could ensure the success of tourism in Cuba and thus the continued friendship of the U.S. and Cuban governments. When Anglo-American colony members took to their beds on the night of October 20, with four days of the convention remaining, Havana’s Anglo-American residents had reason

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<sup>752</sup> “Visiting Travel Agents Get Taste of Havana Hospitality,” *Times of Havana*, October 17, 1959, 1.

<sup>753</sup> Phillips, *The Cuban Dilemma*, 114.

<sup>754</sup> Henry Goethals, “Visiting Travel Agents Get Taste of Havana Hospitality,” *Times of Havana*, October 17, 1959, 1.

“Cuba Goes All Out,” *Times of Havana*, October 22, 1959, 1.

<sup>755</sup> *Times of Havana*, October 17, 1959.

<sup>756</sup> “Things are Looking Up,” *Times of Havana*, October 17, 1959, 1.

to be optimistic. It seemed as if the Cuban government was truly committed to improving relations with the United States, bolstering the tourist industry and securing the standing of the Anglo-American colony within revolutionary Cuba. The situation was looking up; until things began falling from the sky.

On October 21, 1959, former Cuban Air Force Chief Pedro Luis Díaz Lanz took off in his plane from the United States and flew over Havana. This was the same Díaz Lanz who had accused the Cuban government of being run by communists in front of the United States Congress just a few months earlier. What was dropped from his plane is contested. Reports claimed that forty-five people were injured and two were killed.<sup>757</sup> In the next few days, the work undertaken by the Anglo-American colony and the Cuban government would be near completely undone. Immediately following the incident *Revolución*, the official voice of the 26th-of-July Movement, led with a story entitled “The Airplane Left from the United States.”<sup>758</sup> Prime Minister Castro called for a massive rally to show strength against “bombings of Cuban soil from U.S. bases.”<sup>759</sup> In the lead article from the *Times of Havana* Henry Goethals reported, “Bombardments [verbal from Castro] of recent days have made members of Havana’s substantial American Colony a bit jumpy. They’re not used to shots, shells and hot words flying across the Straits of Florida.”<sup>760</sup> Some within the Anglo-American colony tried to reassure their fellow community members that this was “a moment of extreme emotion” which would pass.<sup>761</sup>

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<sup>757</sup> Franklin, *Cuba and The United States*, 23.

<sup>758</sup> “ASTA Chief Gives Cuba,” *Times of Havana*, October 22, 1959, 1.

<sup>759</sup> Henry Goethals, “Pueblo Answers Fidel’s Call in Rally Protesting Planes; Yanks Hope for the Best,” *Times of Havana*, October 26, 1959, 1.

<sup>760</sup> Henry Goethals, “American Residents Uneasy About the Turn of Events,” *Times of Havana*, October 29, 1959, 1.

<sup>761</sup> *Ibid.*

Others were not so confident. One American resident who had observed the massive rally staged in protest of the U.S.-based attack, expressed a more general unease, “For yanks who have called Cuba home for many decades and have always considered Cubans as virtual half-brothers, the week’s events were deeply puzzling and touched with disbelief.”<sup>762</sup> Alongside their Cuban neighbors, large segments of the Anglo-American colony had spent weeks preparing for what many considered the last best hope for improved relations between Washington and Havana, only to watch it slip away through weak or unenforced airplane regulations on the part of the United States government and extremely bitter rhetoric in response by the Cuban Prime Minister.

For many members of the Anglo-American colony in Havana, the foundational October Crisis was not in 1962, better known in U.S. textbooks as the Cuban Missile Crisis, but in 1959. October 1962 marked a significant moment of political crisis at a time when almost all members of the Anglo-American colony had left the island. October 1959 launched a crisis of identity, place, community and belonging. After struggling to salvage for what many of them had been their only home for decades, the members of the colony suddenly found themselves subject to attacks. Many, perhaps naively, had hoped for a rapprochement between Cuba and the United States for ten months so that they could remain in Cuba. Yet in October 1959, the tenor and landscape of the challenge before them had become far more daunting. With pro-U.S. voices leaving the Cuban government, hostility on both sides was more aggressive, and Anglo-American residents found themselves in a rapidly disappearing middle ground as two nations charged towards one another, set to unleash a political conflagration.

The purge of moderates from positions of influence accelerated between the summer and fall of 1959, yet missionaries, educators and others with deep ties to revolutionary Cubans in

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<sup>762</sup> Ibid.

Havana's Anglo-American colony held out hope for reconciliation and supported the revolution far longer than most of their resident compatriots. Over the course of 1959 they became increasingly aware of the overreach by Anglo-American businesses. Their friends, including Minister of the Treasury (until March 1960) López-Fresquet, hoped for an end to Anglo-American exploitation, not an end to foreign investment. He had worked toward a future where Cuba would partner with foreign capital in developing the island for the betterment of Cubans, as well as foreign corporations. In 1959 López-Fresquet explained, "I am a proven supporter of free enterprise, so I welcome American investors to Cuba. I want them to bring their capital and their know-how, but also their democratic ideals. I don't want those who think that democracy is only good back home and who, when here, prefer the lucrative type of business that is done with dictators."<sup>763</sup>

Understanding the position he held as a respected Cuban voice to foreign capital, López-Fresquet further pushed for recognition of other Cuban voices. He lamented that many Anglo-Americans were unable to understand the revolution from the perspective of the Cuban masses. López-Fresquet tried to deconstruct the revolutionary demands to his Anglo-American friends and allies: "In the American companies, the top positions were occupied by Americans, who enjoyed salaries at U.S. levels. It was extremely difficult for them to establish a relationship with the native personnel because of the difference in income. These Americans associated only with the rich elite of Cuban society, who constituted the most conservative class of the island. This association could not give the Americans an objective view of Cuban affairs."<sup>764</sup>

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<sup>763</sup> López-Fresquet, *My Fourteen Months with Castro*, 28.

<sup>764</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

Pazos, both a friend of the Anglo-American colony and head of Banco Nacional de Cuba, resigned from his post in October 1959, protesting the arrest of Huber Matos for his statements against communism and Castro's "overreaction" to the Díaz raid. His departure concerned Anglo-American residents, rapidly losing confidence in the revolution. Jay Mallin wrote, "[Felipe] Pazos was one of [the] best and most respected financial brains in government, and it was not uncommon to hear criticism of the govt. answered with, 'as long as Pazos is in Govt., things can't be too wrong.' But now Pazos is out and, to boot, replaced by onetime Argentine medic Major Ernesto 'Che' Guevara, who once said on a TV program, 'if it appears to you that what we are doing in favor of the people is communistic, then we are communists.' Citizens displayed their confidence in govt. and Guevara by forming lines to start runs on banks."<sup>765</sup> With their moderate friends and allies quickly disappearing from the ranks of the Cuban cabinet, many within the Anglo-American colony feared that they too would be forced from their positions of influence in Cuba.

Increasing numbers of Anglo-American residents moved back to the United States, as well as Canada and Britain. Coverage on the exodus of U.S. citizens back to the United States began to consume the society pages of the colony newspapers. Some Anglo-American residents explained their departures as occupational transfers, while others offered no explanation. A rapid increase in departures announced in the *Times of Havana* during July and August 1959 reflected both a mounting frustration with the tension between Washington and Havana and a fear of the unknown that was embodied in the new Cuban government. Doris Frank, who had first come to Cuba from Brooklyn in 1935 at the age of eight with her family, left in June of 1959 with her husband and newborn son. As a Jew, she explained that just fifteen years removed from the

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<sup>765</sup> Jay Mallin Papers, CHC, Box 16 (3).

Holocaust, many Jews within the Anglo-American colony feared the rise of totalitarianism under the new Cuban government.<sup>766</sup>

By January 1960, the revolutionary government increased its control over local press agencies, provoking reaction from the Anglo-American colony. An editorial in the *Times of Havana* challenged the ethics and integrity of the Cuban Revolution with charges of censorship in a piece entitled “Press Submits to an Indignity.” The revolutionary government had begun forcing Cuban newspapers to print *coletillas*, a state-written paragraph undermining the validity of disagreeable stories. Anglo-Americans decried the practice as a violation of journalistic ethics. The *Times of Havana* lamented, “Freedom of the press protects a newspaper’s right to publish and its right NOT to publish material.... We respectfully urge the Cuban government to take the necessary steps to correct this situation.”<sup>767</sup> Feeling forced to choose between two nations they viewed as home, U.S. nationals were beginning to choose the United States.<sup>768</sup>

### ***Ernest Hemingway and the Privilege of Celebrity***

Unlike other Anglo-Americans in Cuba, Ernest Hemingway, who never fully integrated into the Anglo-American colony, remained privileged in revolutionary Cuba due to his celebrity. Likely the most famous U.S. expatriate in Cuba, Hemingway returned to Cuba, his home of twenty years, in March 1960. Throngs of fans and reporters met him at José Martí International Airport. Asked what he thought of increasing U.S. hostility toward the island, he kissed the Cuban flag and spoke with raw criticism of U.S. policy. *New York Times* reporter Herbert Matthews, a friend of Hemingway, wrote his colleagues at the paper, “Ernest Hemingway is still

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<sup>766</sup> Doris Frank, interview by author, January 24, 2013, Telephone.

<sup>767</sup> “Press Submits to an Indignity,” *Times of Havana*, January 8, 1960, 9.

<sup>768</sup> *Times of Havana*, July 9, 1959, July 20, 1959, July 23, 1959, July 27, 1959, August 20, 1959, August 26, 1959.

the great hero of the Cuban people. He is staying at his home [in Cuba] working as a deliberate gesture to show his sympathy and support for the Castro revolution. He knows Cuba and the Cuban people as well as any American citizen. I was glad to find that his ideas on Fidel Castro and the Cuban Revolution are the same as mine.”<sup>769</sup>

A loyal U.S. citizen, Hemingway and so many others watched with frustration as relations between the United States and Cuba began to deteriorate. From Cuba, in the past, Hemingway had aggressively thrown his reputational weight behind the interests of the United States government. During the rise of fascism in Europe he organized a pro-U.S. private intelligence network in Cuba to counter one formed by the pro-axis groups on the island. He did this with the permission and eventual support of the U.S. Ambassador to Cuba during WWII Spruille Braden. Now, however, he was compelled to voice his support of the Cuban revolutionary government. In a letter to United States’ General Charles T. Lanham, Hemingway insisted, “I am a good American and have been to bat for my country as often as most—without pay and without ambition. But I believe completely in the historical necessity of the Cuban revolution.”<sup>770</sup> Hemingway had been married in Cuba, had many Cuban friends and supported the ousting of Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista. Hemingway even played baseball on a local team with Dr. José Luis Herrera who would join the new Cuban government. After the assumption of power by the revolution, Hemingway announced, “the Cuban people now have a

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<sup>769</sup> Herbert L. Matthews to Dryfoos, Merz, Gatlidge, Markel, Freedman, memorandum, 15 March 1960, Columbia University, Butler Library, New York, NY, Matthews Papers, Series II: Cuba, 1909-2002 (1937-1976), 1948-1978, Box 12, 2.

<sup>770</sup> Ernest Hemingway to General Charles T. Lanham, January 12, 1960, in *Ernest Hemingway: Selected Letters, 1917-1961*, Ed. Carlos Baker (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1981), 899.

decent chance for the first time ever.”<sup>771</sup> Hemingway would commit suicide on July 2, 1961, just a few months after the Bay of Pigs invasion.

### *Conclusions*

Between 1956 and 1958, members of the Anglo-American colony had little sense that their place in Cuba would be challenged by political events. They knew well, and held confidence in, the leaders of the early revolutionary government. They heard their words and values being echoed by revolutionary authorities in the first days of 1959. They became aware of the brutality revolutionary leaders fought so hard to overcome. Yet in March 1960, Rufo López-Fresquet joined Felipe Pazos as a civilian, becoming the last moderate from the initial cabinet to resign. Cuban officials who were considered allies and members of the Anglo-American colony were being replaced by officials either unknown or unfriendly to Anglo-American interests.<sup>772</sup> With Cuban journalists and government officials attacking the United States government and the removal of Cuban officials who were seen as allies by Anglo-American residents, the devastating reality of tensions between home and homeland was becoming undeniable to colony members.

Those working in cultural institutions, with close ties to Cubans, took longer to become disillusioned, but soon, along with their Cuban friends and allies, they too began to leave the island. An overwhelming majority of those Cubans who graduated from the “High School” tracks of schools like Ruston, Lafayette, Candler and Merici would leave as well. Certainly, much of this has to do with class and race, as the Cubans who attended elite Anglo-American schools in Havana were mostly white and wealthier Cubans who would be valued in the United States and were being devalued in revolutionary Cuba. Overall those Cubans and Anglo-

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<sup>771</sup> Carlos Baker, *Ernest Hemingway: A Life Story* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1969), 543.

<sup>772</sup> “Resignation Said Due to Ill Health,” *Times of Havana*, March 17, 1960, 1.

American residents who built cross-cultural communities in the contact zones of the Anglo-American colony, wanted to maintain a capitalist system and relations with the United States, in a democracy. This is why most expressed great excitement in the first days of 1959 and disillusionment in the months and years that followed. These privileged outsiders and privileged insiders had been stripped of their status as the revolution upended Cuban hierarchies.

## CHAPTER TEN: BECOMING COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY

### *Disillusionment*

On January 1, 1959, the Cuban people overthrew a Cuban dictatorship, not a colonial government. Many Anglo-Americans who considered themselves “apolitical” prior to the revolution, celebrated the transition. They imagined the dawn of stability, democracy and peace, envisioning their future as secure on the island. Many, though not all Anglo-American residents, advocated for a quick recognition of the new revolutionary government.<sup>773</sup> Yet within days, the revolution stoked the anxieties of the most conservative elements of the Anglo-American colony. Adele Fuchsberg remembers how an experience with Fidel Castro transitioned the revolution from hopeful to troublesome in her family in early 1959: “I was playing squash outside with one of my boy cousins, and Castro came up and said, ‘Does Max Pincus live here?’ And my grandfather [Pincus] came out.” Fuchsberg listened as Fidel Castro asked Pincus, “Max, why do you need more than one home and why do you need more than one refrigerator?” As the product of a marriage between a wealthy Cuban mother and father with U.S. citizenship, Fuchsberg and her family realized their privileged position in Cuban society was being challenged by a government that sought to reconstruct socio-economic and national hierarchies on the island. She narrates this as the pivotal moment in her rejection of the revolution.<sup>774</sup>

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<sup>773</sup> Smith, *The Fourth Floor*, 162, 165, 170.

<sup>774</sup> Adele Fuchsberg, interview by author, June 24, 2016, New York, NY.

While most Anglo-American residents were more delayed in their turn against the revolution than the Pincus and Fuchsberg family, the Anglo-American colony's sense of political "neutrality" grew precarious and untenable during 1959. Unlike more traditional colonial outposts, North Americans and British nationals in Cuba could conceive of themselves as outside politics during the Batista government (1952-1958). Batista was a Cuban, who like nearly every Cuban president before him, prioritized foreign interests. However, between 1959 and 1960, the ability of colony members to remain neutral shattered, along with their privileged status on the island. Cuban professionals and Anglo-American residents in Havana who advocated for political changes during the Batista government had envisioned traditional democratic structures and a return to the progressive 1940 Constitution. These visions were the explicitly stated political aim of the revolution in the Sierra Pact of 1957, affirmed at a meeting of rebel leaders who in 1959 occupied important positions in the new government. Along with most Cubans, Anglo-American residents generally held no expectation that a revolution with these stated goals would dismantle existing socio-economic hierarchies. Yet by the end of 1959, privileged outsiders found their place of influence and luxury challenged, as John Parker contends, "[American] club members, for the first time in his middle-class American life...were subject to arrest on mere suspicion of disloyalty to the regime."<sup>775</sup> As chants of "Yankee go home!" increasingly rang from the Cuban population, members of the Anglo-American colony realized something unexpected was in the air; a change more radical than anticipated was enveloping Cuba.<sup>776</sup>

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<sup>775</sup> Gianelloni, *We Remember Cuba*, 213.

<sup>776</sup> *Ibid.*, 211, 215.

Colony members reacted to their devalued status in a number of ways, depending on the economic, geographic, political, cultural and relational space they occupied. Proximity to Cuban suffering, goals in Cuba, contacts on the island and the significance of their personal loss all shaped their response to events. Those without deep roots in Cuba often sought a quick exile. International employers transferred these foreign executives home or to another site of operation. Some with Cuban friends and family seeking to flee, established escape routes for their Cuban contacts. Many long-term Anglo-American corporate heads who became aggrieved when the revolution stripped them of their influence and respective enterprises, dedicated their efforts toward sabotaging the new government. A few colony members who witnessed their life's work being undone by an increasingly undemocratic revolution, collaborated with the U.S. government to undermine Cuban authorities, often with violence, in order to restore what had been taken. Those Cubans and Anglo-Americans who resisted the Castro government organized and argued in the very discourses of Western democracy and freedom they had mastered in Anglo-American cultural and educational institutions.

In attempting to undermine the new Cuban government, the Anglo-American colony, cooperating with their Cuban contacts, helped develop major initiatives that often backfired by working to consolidate the revolution. Initially, Anglo-American businessmen felt comfortable promoting the revolution's virtue, filling its treasury with back taxes, which helped provide the time, as well as the resources for more radical elements of the revolution to strengthen their influence. Later, the Anglo-American colony's Cuban friends and contacts in the revolutionary government felt obliged to abandon the revolution, in large part due to their respective ties to Anglo-Americans, their individual experiences in the United States and their general acceptance of Western-democratic, as well as economic, values. As the revolution devalued the relevance of

links to the United States, knowledge of English, and the size of one's bank account, many wealthy and professional Cubans saw the roots of their influence withering with the hierarchies of old. They began building a counter-revolutionary community, both in Cuba and in the United States, which would become home eventually to two million exiled Cuban-Americans.<sup>777</sup> This chapter documents the intimate relations and lingering impact of privileged outsiders within Cuba's counter-revolutionary opposition. Anglo-American residents, organizing with disenchanting Cubans who had been educated in Anglo-American institutions, collaborated, hoping to influence the political and economic responses of the United States government and fuel Cuban, as well as international resistance, against the Cuban revolution. The very public failures of Anglo-Americans and Cubans in enacting regime change in Cuba aided in transforming of the demographics of the United States, in altering the geopolitical landscape globally, and in allowing a new generation of Latin Americans to imagine a successful contestation of informal empire.

### ***Anglo-American Introductions to State Violence and National Ambition***

There is little doubt that most Anglo-American colony members endorsed Cuban ambitions for democratic rule in 1959; however, a few were agnostic and some even hostile, as they understood early that replacing Batista with a nationalist revolution would be bad for business. The ability of foreign executives to stand with the dictator despite calls for democracy emanated from their financial interests and personal relationships with Cubans, who also benefited from the policies of the Batista government. Despite widespread boycotts by politicians and voters during the elections held under the Batista dictatorship, the pretense of

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<sup>777</sup> Anna Brown and Eileen Patten, "Hispanics of Cuban Origin in the United States, 2011," *Pew Research Center: Hispanic Trends* (June 2013), Accessed March 20, 2018, <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2013/06/19/hispanics-of-cuban-origin-in-the-united-states-2011/>.

democracy satisfied some Anglo-Americans who argued political change was unnecessary. Those who benefited economically from Batista's treatment of foreign capital, and who enjoyed few friendships with Cubans seeking reform, could remain aloof and unsympathetic to the political, as well as the socio-economic demands of those who remained *other*. Many within this isolated subset of the Anglo-American colony coveted relationships with wealthy Cubans at work and with Cuban politicians in boardrooms. They held shared interest in maintaining existing Cuban hierarchies.

A number of Anglo-American executives recognized the existential crisis the 26th-of-July Movement presented before it even took power. Kay Torpey remembers her father, an executive for the United Fruit and Sugar Company "never believed that things would go back to the way they were because he believed that Fidel was not someone who could be bought off and that he was very serious and that he wanted to bring justice and equality to the people."<sup>778</sup> As the Batista government seemed to be collapsing, a group of Anglo-American business leaders in Havana wanted to avoid handing over power to a popular movement and sought instead to manage the transition to a "new" Cuba. A group of U.S. businessmen led by G.W. Potts, the General Manager of Esso in Cuba, counseled U.S. Ambassador to Cuba Earl T. Smith on December 1, 1958, that the revolution seemed similar to the "communist" Árbenz government in Guatemala. Potts did not have a long history in Cuba. He arrived in 1954, after Batista had broken twelve years of uninterrupted Cuban democracy, and thus did not experience Cuba's democratic period from 1940-1952. With Batista's increasingly untenable position threatening Anglo-American capital on the island, Potts advised Ambassador Smith that the United States

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<sup>778</sup> Kay Torpey, interview by author, August 4, 2016, Fairfax, VA.

should support a military coup. Potts hoped this would transition into a military-civilian junta and allow the United States to manage the transfer of power.<sup>779</sup>

A few days following the meeting between Potts, other U.S. businessmen living in Cuba and Ambassador Smith, forces working against the 26th-of-July Movement within U.S. diplomatic circles began seeking strategies to best manage the inevitable fall of Batista in 1958. With the blessing of President Eisenhower, Allen Dulles and Williams D. Pawley--who was a friend of Batista--met with the Cuban President in early December 1958. They offered him a retirement in his Daytona Beach home if he would resign so that the U.S. government could better influence the transition of power and avoid a Castro takeover. Batista refused Washington's offer, paving the way for Fidel Castro to become the unchallenged head of the revolutionary movement which would triumph within a month. Until the end of 1958, these Anglo-American businessmen and political leaders determined that the situation in Cuba required the diplomatic intervention of the United States. Yet in the first week of January 1959, swept up by the popular enthusiasm for revolution and with few other options, this same community of U.S. businessmen recommended a quick recognition of the revolutionary government. On January 7, the United States formally recognized the new Cuban authorities who Pawley, Eisenhower and Dulles had tried to undermine by convincing Batista to resign a few weeks earlier.<sup>780</sup>

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<sup>779</sup> Smith, *The Fourth Floor*, 162-170; Mike Archer, "Online Biography Reaches Out to Ages," *Orlando Sentinel*, June 17, 1998, Accessed January 4, 2015, [http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/1998-06-17/news/9806160801\\_1\\_potts-dad-online-biography](http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/1998-06-17/news/9806160801_1_potts-dad-online-biography).

<sup>780</sup> Franklin, *Cuba and The United States*, 18.

### *Identifying the First Crimes of the Revolution*

Many Anglo-American residents were ignorant of the brutality of Batista-government personnel; these members of the community expressed anger at the firing squads that followed Batista's flight. Most Anglo-Americans lived relatively sheltered lives on the island as Batista shielded them from the conflict as best he could before 1959. In cosmopolitan Havana many Anglo-American residents remained unaware of, or unmoved by the desperation of poor, and especially rural Cuban *campesinos*. From their offices and homes in the wealthy areas of Havana, the rumors of murder and torture conducted by Batista's henchmen across the Cuban countryside seemed unrealistic. As a result, exclamations of shock and horror could be heard throughout the varied sectors of the Anglo-American colony with the commencement of executions by the revolution.

The widespread lack of knowledge concerning the experiences of poor and rural Cubans before 1959, within the more secular and business oriented elements of the Anglo-American colony, made the executions of Batista's henchmen seem unlawful, unjust and cruel to many. In early 1959, as they watched on their televisions and saw images in popular magazines of quick revolutionary justice meted out by military tribunals, many Anglo-American colony members grew uncomfortable with the direction of events. Former colony resident Cathy Brown Crescioni remembers, "The executions were terrible."<sup>781</sup> Cuban-American resident Mary Casas Knapp agrees, explaining Castro, "incited the people to be screaming, '*paredón*,'" referencing "the firing wall. And the evil was palpable."<sup>782</sup> Through censorship and disinformation, Batista attempted to hide the death and misery consuming the island between 1956 and 1958 from

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<sup>781</sup> Cathy Brown Crescioni, interview by author, August 22, 2016, Champlin, MN.

<sup>782</sup> Mary Casas Knapp, interview by author, September 23, 2016, Telephone.

Anglo-Americans. By contrast, the public trials and executions after 1959 were often broadcast into the living rooms of the Anglo-American colony.

Anglo-American residents who enjoyed personal relationships with Batista often argued that there was no reason for Batista to lose power. General Manager of Sterling Products International, Edward Landreth, was among the Anglo-American colony members who proved most disenchanted with the revolutionary changes brewing in January 1959. Socializing with the Batista family at the Biltmore Yacht and Country Club, his daughter Ann Landreth Gund remembers, “My parents from the outset thought Castro was terrible and they’d have arguments with their friends. And they lost a lot of friends because most people thought Castro was fine at the time.” Gund continues, “My parents certainly didn’t think Batista had to go because, even though he was a dictator, he was a benign dictator.”<sup>783</sup> The Landreths were not alone in this sentiment. The daughter of Anglo-American industrialist Burke Hedges went further, claiming in 1959 her family wanted, “A democracy that would be good for everybody. Which actually, with Batista, we had.”<sup>784</sup>

Perhaps no Anglo-American resident was closer to President Batista than Burke Hedges; this relationship clearly influenced how the Hedges family experienced the revolution. Burke Hedges held business, political and social relationships with Batista who served as a witness for the wedding of his daughter, Avis Hedges Navarro, in Havana.<sup>785</sup> Hedges served as the Cuban

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<sup>783</sup> Ann emphasized these were her reflections from her childhood. Like many Anglo-Americans, the violence of the Batista regime remained unknown to the Landreth family at the time. Gund explains, “Please keep in mind that what you heard from me about politics *then* was told through the veil of the naivete of youth...in retrospect, I’ve learned that Batista wasn’t as well as we all thought...” Ann Landreth Gund interview by author, July 7, 2016, Cambridge, MA; Ann Landreth Gund to author, July 13, 2016, Email.

<sup>784</sup> Avis Hedges Navarro, interview by author, September 7, 2016, Miami, FL.

<sup>785</sup> *Ibid.*

ambassador to Brazil due to his friendship with the Batista, after being made a naturalized Cuban citizen. Informed by this relationship, as well as six decades of animosity following the loss of their possessions and home, Navarro explained, “Compared to Castro, [Batista] was a sweetie pie.”<sup>786</sup> In March 1959, when the Castro government overturned the acquittals of Cuban pilots Avis became convinced that, “this is a dictatorship. It is a vindictive and personal dictatorship.... I will not live under it and my children will not be brought up under it, and that is final.” Avis would immigrate shortly thereafter to Miami.<sup>787</sup> While Burke Hedges never returned to Cuba after 1958, Avis’ Cuban husband Tony Navarro would join the counter-revolutionary urban resistance helping to unleash a campaign of terror against the new government before fleeing to the Brazilian Embassy on January 1, 1961.<sup>788</sup> After 1959, Anglo-Americans and their Cuban friends and family became vulnerable in a way they had never experienced before.

### ***Falling from Grace: Americanos Aplatanados Lose Place in “New” Cuba***

Michael Sanjenis offered a critical perspective of the Anglo-American colony members when asked why an anti-U.S. rhetoric evolved with the revolution. Sanjenis explained that the revolution “Took on an anti-American tenor when [revolutionaries] found out the United States was not...going to respect them, was not going to grant them their sovereignty and treat them like an equal. In other words, they wanted to treat them the way they’d always treated them, like they owned them.”<sup>789</sup> Michael was a member of the Anglo-American colony through his mother; his Cuban father served under Rufo López-Fresquet in the Ministry of Treasury in 1959 and

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<sup>786</sup> Ibid.

<sup>787</sup> Antonio Navarro, *Tocayo: A Cuban Resistance Leader’s True Story* (Westport, CT: Sandown Books, 1981), 72.

<sup>788</sup> Navarro, *Tocayo*, 269.

<sup>789</sup> Michael Sanjenis, interview by author, June 28, 2016, New York, NY.

early 1960. He understood well, living in an ethnically mixed household, that Washington's rejection of Cuban demands for independence unleashed resentment on the island. After 1959, Cubans increasingly contested the narrative of Anglo-American benevolence, and began describing Anglo-Americans as self-interested colonizers.

As their angst grew more apparent over the course of 1959, members of the Cuban government attempted to assuage Anglo-American residents that their place in Cuba would not disappear. In a note to Ambassador Bonsal, the Cuban Minister of Foreign Affairs Raúl Roa García tried to clarify that the frustration with the United States was not directed at its people, but at its government and corporations. Roa explained, the Cuban government “never did confuse, nor do they now confuse, the American people with the power structure...”<sup>790</sup>

Nevertheless, colony members and their Cuban contacts were growing anxious, hearing the rhetoric of the Cuban government and populace, which critiqued the United States with increasing ferocity throughout 1959. John Parker remembered, “first seeing ‘Yankee Go home’ crudely painted on a house wall in old Havana.” As the son of a soldier during the Spanish-American War and with his siblings buried in Havana's Colón Cemetery, to Parker, as well as many other Anglo-American colony members, Cuba was the only home they knew. Parker remembers, “Cuba was the best friend the United States had and the record proves it.”<sup>791</sup> The intercultural community that developed between Cuban professionals and Anglo-American residents watched, with a blend of pain, fear, sadness, and rage, as their lives and identities were disrupted, often threatened, by Cuba's new economic, political and cultural priorities.

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<sup>790</sup> Raul Roa to Philip Bonsal, November 13, 1959, Dwight Eisenhower Presidential Library (DEPL), Abilene, KS, U.S. Council of Foreign Economic Policy, Office of the Chairman: Records, 1954-61, Randall Series; Subject Subseries, Box 4, Cuba.

<sup>791</sup> Gianelloni, *We Remember Cuba*, 230.

Chris Baker, spoke of the shock experienced by Anglo-Americans as they lost their privilege in Cuban society, explaining that before the revolution, “the majority of Americans or Brits or Canadians didn’t really have an understanding of what was going on...they chose to ignore the big chasms that existed.” He explained, “You had thought of yourself as being one of the good guys; all of a sudden somebody is saying, ‘Well according to the old rules that might be true. According to the rules that we have now, that is no longer going to be true.’”<sup>792</sup> Foreign residents across the island were devastated as descriptions of exploiters replaced the narrative of Anglo-American benevolence cultivated in Cuba’s foreign-run contact zones and through propaganda disseminated by the United States government since 1898.

By the end of 1959, members of the Anglo-American colony retained little faith that their place in Cuban society could be preserved. As tensions rose between home country and nation of residence, colony members watched as Ernesto “Che” Guevara replaced Felipe Pazos as President of the National Bank. Che then sold the gold Cuba held at Fort Knox and by November 1959, transferred the funds to Swiss and Canadian banks. Economic shifts, and new alliances, were rapidly materializing. By the end of January 1960, President Eisenhower sought the authority to cut the Cuban sugar quota. In February, the Soviet Deputy Prime Minister Anastas Mikoyan signed a major trade agreement with Cuban Prime Minister Fidel Castro. Counter-revolutionaries in Cuba and in exile began a campaign of sabotage and violence. Air raids by Cuban exiles flew over the island, attacking and destroying Cuban sugarcane fields.<sup>793</sup> On March 4, 1960, the Belgium ship *La Coubre* exploded, carrying to Cuba “forty-six tons of grenades and ammunition.” Depending on the source, somewhere between forty-four and seventy-three were

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<sup>792</sup> Chris Baker, interview by author, August 4, 2016, Maryland.

<sup>793</sup> Franklin, *Cuba and The United States*, 23-27.

left dead, with 206 to 345 wounded.<sup>794</sup> This newly forming Cuba was quite distinct from the “paradise” the Anglo-American colony enjoyed before 1959.

Internal changes were rapid, and radical. In April 1960, the Cuban government began the process of expropriating the remaining lands owned by the United Fruit and Sugar Company. In May, Cuba and the U.S.S.R. re-established relations for the first time in eight years. By the end of that month the government called upon the U.S. petroleum companies operating on the island to refine Soviet oil. When the U.S. companies refused, in June 1960, Cuban officials ordered the nationalization of those refineries. In response, the United States Congress enacted a measure to authorize the President to terminate the Cuban sugar quota. In August, the Cuban government nationalized all U.S. businesses and commercial properties.<sup>795</sup> Political, economic and social hierarchies were upended; the end was clearly approaching for the Anglo-American colony.

By the summer of 1960, the community was growing smaller, and held less influence than it ever had in Cuba. On July 11, the Vice President of the American Club Gottfried K. “Go” Smith pled with remaining colonists to dine at the Club’s restaurant: “It is only by patronizing the dining room that we can hope to cut down the substantial loss that we sustain every month.... Our overhead and food costs have gone up during the past year and, you must know, our membership has dropped off.”<sup>796</sup> Despite the dwindling size of the Anglo-American colony and its more desperate attitude, some spoke of hope for salvaging the relationship between the two nations, and by extension, for the Anglo-American colony itself. Speaking directly and bluntly to

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<sup>794</sup> “Irresponsible Attitude Damaging Relations, Cuban Diplomat Told,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 8, 1960, 1; “Implications of Sabotage,” *Times of Havana*, March 7, 1960, 16.

<sup>795</sup> Franklin, *Cuba and The United States*, 26-27.

<sup>796</sup> “Urges Greater Use of American Club Facilities,” *Times of Havana*, July 11, 1960, 5.

members of the colony, an editorial in the *Times of Havana*, published on July 18, 1960, expressed this tenor.

Although it seems awfully late in the day, the Times continues to plead for the ultimate understanding between two friendly peoples. We simply refuse to believe that a historical friendship cannot survive a bad year, and we go ahead on that thesis. The situation between the United States and Cuba requires the patience and attention of our best minds. If democracy is a good product, then it is up to all of us to make it work.<sup>797</sup>

By October, desperation had set in and many recognized it was only a matter of time before relations would be permanently severed. The *Havana Post* ended Cuban operations in September 1960, leaving the *Times of Havana* as the sole multi-weekly voice for the Anglo-American colony. The *Times* was shuttered in November.

At the end of 1959, Ruston headmaster Baker began to entertain his own doubts about the direction of the new government. He dedicated his life's work to the "promotion of democracy" in Cuba, and yet the revolutionary government seemed to continually delay its pursuit of democracy. By this time, most of his contacts in the early government had been purged or resigned. The last moderate cabinet member, Rufo López-Fresquet, left in March 1960. Baker remembers, "The year 1959-1960, the last one the school operated its regular schedule, began well.... But as Castro extended his dictatorship, Ruston families, Cuban as well as American, began to move to the United States. At the opening of classes in September 1960, there were only 150 students left."<sup>798</sup> James Baker remained in Cuba until January 4, 1961 with his wife Sibyl. That day they carried "Five suitcases of clothes and left behind the school, our home and all our 22 years' work.... We too were refugees. Refugees driven from our home by Castro's

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<sup>797</sup> "Need for Understanding," *Times of Havana*, July 18, 1960, 7.

<sup>798</sup> Baker, *Ruston*, 32.

tyrannical dictatorship. Refugees concerned about the future of the country and people we loved.”<sup>799</sup>

### ***Professional Class Cubans and the Counter-Revolution***

Many Cubans who had cultivated skills, cultural norms and Anglo-American friendships due to contact with privileged outsiders, grew frustrated with the rise of anti-U.S. rhetoric and the diminishing influence of Anglo-American values on the island. Fluency in English and an electoral democracy, that many Cuban professionals worked hard to attain, seemed to matter less than ever. Anglo-American ways of dressing, celebrating, speaking and thinking became symbols of the counter-revolution, as Cubans abandoned their business suits, stopped celebrating Christmas, no longer chewed gum and altered their own understandings of history and visions of the future. Cuban and Russian alternatives replaced U.S. material goods and cultural norms cultivated by wealthy Cubans looking to advance socially and financially in an economy dominated by Anglo-American interests.<sup>800</sup> For many Cubans who had assimilated and aspired toward Anglo-American values and forms of knowledge, this rupture in U.S.–Cuban relations felt like a betrayal.

Notions of democracy, as well as North American and British definitions of modernity, shaped the developing subjectivities and hybrid identities of many young Cuban students attending Anglo-American schools.<sup>801</sup> In a 2016 interview, Ricky Sánchez reflected on his

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<sup>799</sup> Baker, “The Beginning of the Pedro Pan Program in Cuba,” (1998), provided by Chris Baker.

<sup>800</sup> Cuban historiography began describing U.S. influence as self-interested rather than benevolent. Oscar Zanetti, “Medio siglo de historiografía en Cuba: La impronta de la revolución,” *Cuban Studies* 40 (2009): 74-103, 205-206; Kate Quinn, “Cuban Historiography in the 1960s: Revisionists, Revolutionaries and the Nationalist Past,” *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 26, no. 3 (2007); Louis A. Pérez, Jr., “In the Service of the Revolution: Two decades of Cuban Historiography, 1959-1979,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 60, no. 1 (1980): 79-89.

<sup>801</sup> Sweig’s work exposes how many Cubans who became revolutionaries had been trained in Anglo-American religious and educational institutions. Others worked at North American or British corporations. Julie E. Sweig, *Inside the Cuban Revolution: Fidel Castro and the Urban Underground* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002); Marcos A. Ramos identifies a disproportionate number of Protestants who became leaders of the

commitment to Western-styled democracy in Cuba. A former Cuban student at Havana's top U.S.-run private school in 1950s Cuba, Sánchez attributed his democratic principles to his U.S. education. He explained, Ruston Academy "stressed democratic values as much or more than any school that I've heard of...ambassadors from the United States...would come to talk to us about democracy." Excited about the early direction of the revolution, and his ability to witness and participate in the transformation of his society, in a patriotic gesture Sánchez turned down U.S. universities to attend the University of Havana in 1959. Yet after Castro denounced and distanced the government from the democratic values Sánchez had been schooled in, he grew disillusioned. Sánchez explains, "One defining moment and I've always said it... [Castro] gave a speech in which his theme was.... 'Elecciones para qué?' Why should we have elections?... And in my background of Ruston, that was what I had been taught that was bad about the other government, that it was a "dictatorship" without elections. And here the guy bringing hope.... It blew my mind. It completely blew my mind." He continues, "From then on, progressively I decided to get a little more involved in things, and then I decided to leave and come here and join the invasion." Seduced by the promise of democracy, Sánchez "could not fathom supporting either the previous government before Castro, nor Castro later on."<sup>802</sup> So thoroughly identified with the ideologies cultivated at Ruston, as a young man he was willing to sacrifice his life for his vision of a democratic Cuba, and so he chose to participate in the CIA-organized Bay of Pigs

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Revolution. Ramos, *Protestantism and Revolution in Cuba*; Louis A. Pérez explains, "The larger implications of the coup, and certainly its deeper significance, were to be found at the point where it shattered collective self-esteem and undermined some of the most cherished assumptions of self-representation.... Constitutional legality, free elections, freedoms of speech, and a free press were attributes of advanced civilized nations by virtue of which Cubans claimed membership." Pérez, *On Becoming Cuban*, 446-47.

<sup>802</sup> Ricky Sánchez, interview by author, November 4, 2016, Miami, FL.

Invasion of April 1961.<sup>803</sup> Eighteen months after his capture, at the end of December 1962, Sánchez was welcomed to Miami by James Baker's sons, Dennis and Chris, awaiting him at the Dinner Key Auditorium.<sup>804</sup>

Fidel Castro's refusal to purchase arms from the United States ultimately convinced the Minister of Treasury Rufo López-Fresquet to leave the Cuban government. López-Fresquet had hoped to coordinate the weapons deal with Mario Lazo, who represented Anglo-American corporations and governments on the island. The Minister of the Treasury was the last "pro-U.S. moderate" to serve in the revolutionary cabinet.<sup>805</sup> López-Fresquet recalls, "Up to my last minute in the government I preserved the hope that Castro would somehow abandon the Communist road. I felt that, owing to my contacts with American officials, I could serve as a bridge to renew the traditional good relations that geography, history, culture, and economy direct Cuba to maintain with the U.S."<sup>806</sup> This was not to be, as Anglo-American colony members saw the last friendly face leave office in a revolutionary government once filled with friends and allies whom many colony members celebrated with fourteen-months earlier.

For Minister López-Fresquet, Castro's refusal to buy arms from Washington seems to have signaled a decisive break with the United States. His deep and intimate ties to the United States finally forced López-Fresquet to leave his post in the revolutionary government. Still, López-Fresquet argued: "Those who combat Castro only because he confiscated their ill-acquired properties, or made them leave Cuba for fear of being tried for their crimes, or took

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<sup>803</sup> Ibid.

<sup>804</sup> Ibid.

<sup>805</sup> Lazo, *Dagger in the Heart*, 224.

<sup>806</sup> López-Fresquet, *My Fourteen Months with Castro*, 155-6.

away their privileges, or did not appoint them to public office.... These counter-revolutionaries do not believe in democracy; to them the Cuba of yesterday was perfect.”<sup>807</sup> López-Fresquet served in a government that approved a number of radical economic reforms and demanded national sovereignty, however, it seems, the Minister of the Treasury could not imagine serving a Cuba completely severed from the United States.

In López-Fresquet’s memoirs, he commended many within the Anglo-American colony, including the professional staff at the U.S. Embassy who worked in solidarity with Cubans seeking democratic and sovereign institutions. Still, from exile, López-Fresquet concluded that U.S. businesses and U.S. ambassadors Gardner and Smith “provided Castro with all the examples he needed to convince the Cuban people of the evil intentions of U.S. policy in Cuba.”<sup>808</sup> For López-Fresquet and others like him, who had been educated in the United States, who worked with Anglo-American corporations or who married a U.S. national, deep attachment to the United States and Anglo-American democratic values obstructed their ability to continue aiding the process of reordering Cuban society. After resigning on March 17, 1960, López-Fresquet walked from the Presidential Palace to the American Club, wearing a green tie, and preparing to celebrate St. Patrick’s Day. He recalls, “I never enjoyed as I did then the party given each year on that date at the American Club.”<sup>809</sup>

Most Cubans educated at Anglo-American schools, many Cubans who worked in Protestant institutions, especially in Havana, and those who socialized with Anglo-Americans in clubs would leave the island by the end of the 1960s, with a substantial portion leaving much

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<sup>807</sup> Ibid., 135.

<sup>808</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>809</sup> Ibid., 156.

earlier. Much of this has to do with class; most of the Cubans who closely and intimately interacted with Anglo-Americans were relatively wealthy before being stripped of property, capital and influence by the revolution. These Cubans and their allies in the Anglo-American colony built intercultural communities in the contact zones of the Anglo-American colony. Within these contact zones many developed shared visions for what Cuba should look like after 1959. They generally hoped the nation would become a Western-styled democracy with a capitalist system that strove for more equal relations with the United States. This vision was saturated in Anglo-American conceptions of individual and economic freedom. It is no surprise that most of these relatively wealthy Cuban professionals with close ties to Anglo-American residents expressed great excitement in the first days of 1959, and profound disillusionment in the months and years that followed.

### ***Education Provides Paths to Neverland in Times of Revolution***

In transnational circles of resistance, Cubans and *Americanos aplanados* organized against the revolution by applying financial and political pressure on the Cuban government, while often taking personal and political risks. After “Castro showed his true colors” Bessie Sams Casas “hid anti-Castro students.” Her daughter Mary recalls, “This is in the fall of 1960. My mother hid [members of the] anti-Castro resistance in the home.”<sup>810</sup> As principal of the Episcopalian Cathedral School, and with a Cuban husband, Bessie Casas held a close attachment to the island. Friends, students, family and acquaintances leaned on her for support as they fought to defend the Cuba they knew from collapsing. Educators who mobilized support for the revolution between 1956-1959 joined their Cuban contacts to resist government moves towards communism and totalitarianism.

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<sup>810</sup> Mary Casas Knapp, interview by author, September 23, 2016, Telephone.

Before leaving Cuba, James Baker and Ruston Academy mobilized financial and social networks to resist the revolutionary government. While it is well known that operation *Pedro Pan* developed as a collaboration between the U.S. State Department and the Catholic Church, the program originated in cultural institutions of the Anglo-American colony.<sup>811</sup> Spurred by propaganda disseminated by counter-revolutionary forces, a very real fear among Cuban parents surrounding the forced separation of families and the reeducation of Cuban children took hold on the island in the early 1960s.<sup>812</sup> The varied contact zones across the island, including Ruston Academy, provided safe spaces for Cubans, North Americans and British nationals to organize themselves in response.

In November 1960, a member of the counter-revolutionary underground approached James Baker seeking an educational scholarship to the United States for his seventeen-year-old son. Baker knew this man as a Cuban parent of a child who attended his school. Baker explained that “[This man] and the other parents opposing Castro were willing to face personal imprisonment, even death, as they struggled for their country’s freedom. But they were concerned about their children. They feared that if they were imprisoned or killed their children might suffer the fate of the Spanish children who during the Spanish revolution were sent to Russia when their parents were imprisoned for their opposition to the government.”<sup>813</sup> In early

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<sup>811</sup> James Baker, “The Beginning of the Pedro Pan Program in Cuba,” provided by Chris Baker; *The History of Operation Pedro Pan*, Accessed February 1, 2017, <http://pedropan.org/category/history>.

<sup>812</sup> Keith Bolender and Noam Chomsky allege Operation Peter Pan began in response to a coordinated campaign between the Catholic Church and the U.S. government to undermine the revolution. Through fabricated pamphlets and the CIA-controlled Radio Swan, these institutions augmented anxieties of Cuban parents by declaring that the revolutionary government would separate them from their children and a fifteen-year prison sentence awaited those parents who refused. Bolender and Chomsky write, the fabricated *Apócrifa*, or the Act of Parental Authority “purported to legalize the state’s intention of usurping parental control. It would soon drive thousands of mothers and fathers to send their young to a foreign land.” Keith Bolender and Noam Chomsky, *Voices from the Other Side: An Oral History of Terror* (London, England: Pluto Press, 2010), 70.

<sup>813</sup> James Baker, “The Beginning of the Pedro Pan Program in Cuba,” (1998), provided by Chris Baker.

December 1960, Baker flew to Miami to garner the support of business leaders from the Anglo-American colony in exile to help finance the students “whose parents sought a way to send their children alone to the States.”<sup>814</sup> Working with the Catholic Church in Miami, “I would send these names to Father Walsh. He in turn would obtain for them the student visas required by the Immigration Department.”<sup>815</sup> Baker and other members of the Anglo-American colony utilized networks developed through intercultural institutions to organize individuals and agencies so that Cuban youths could be sent abroad as part of operation *Pedro Pan*. Baker did not anticipate that the U.S. would sever diplomatic ties, disrupting the Pedro Pan project.

In January 1961, the Eisenhower administration ended relations with the Cuban government after it demanded the staff at the U.S. Embassy be reduced from 150 to 11.<sup>816</sup> Walsh and Baker lost the ability to attain legal visas, and so they improvised. British authorities in colonial Jamaica would grant student visas to Cuban youths with the understanding that they would simply pass through *en route* to Miami. With the breaking of relations on the horizon, Baker organized a committee in Cuba to gather the names of children whose parents wished to send them off island before his departure on January 4, 1961.

Baker worked to organize a transcultural network of mostly educators to transport Cuban children from Cuba to the United States. He was aided by fellow educator Penny Powers, a British national and former teacher at the Anglo-American-run Phillips School in Havana and their Cuban contacts including Berta Finlay, a former Ruston teacher and Frank Finlay, head of KLM Airlines in Havana. From exile, James Baker recalls his “most important assignment was

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<sup>814</sup> Ibid.

<sup>815</sup> Ibid.

<sup>816</sup> Franklin, *Cuba and The United States*, 34.

to receive unaccompanied children when they arrived at the Miami airport.... Because of Castro's policy of delaying flights to Miami...it was [often] necessary...to be in the airport 12 to 16 hours a day.”<sup>817</sup> Margarita Oteiza, formerly a Cuban teacher working at Ruston, now in exile, helped relieve Baker by organizing a group of North American and Cuban mothers from the school to provide round-the-clock service as volunteers.<sup>818</sup> The networks of Anglo-Americans and Cubans in Miami and Havana proved pivotal to the transnational transport of more than 14,000 unaccompanied minors between Cuba and the United States in the twenty months between December 1960 and the October Crisis of 1962.<sup>819</sup> This operation transformed the demographics and politics of both Cuba and South Florida.

### ***Anglo-American Colony Residents and the U.S. Government***

With the implementation of revolutionary policies and the unwillingness of Anglo-American residents to accept their new status on the island, it was clear that the Anglo-American colony in Cuba could not be salvaged. A literal and existential loss of place provoked a profound sense of anger and betrayal. Many Anglo-American residents organized to avenge the new Cuban government through fiscal sabotage, promotion of anti-Castro policy solutions in Washington or by mobilizing for counter-revolutionary actions. Before leaving Cuba, some Anglo-American residents worked to injure the Cuban economy. As was the case with many Cubans, Anglo-American colony members attempted to, and often succeeded in illegally

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<sup>817</sup> Chris Baker to author, February 8, 2016, Email; “The History of Operation Pedro Pan,” Accessed March 31, 2017, *pedropan.org*, <http://pedropan.org/category/history>.

<sup>818</sup> Ibid.

<sup>819</sup> Of Penny Power, Chris Baker wrote, “I have read about her involvement with the Unaccompanied Children’s Program and that she had been involved in a program to get Jewish children out of certain Nazi-occupied countries during WWII. Also know that she stayed on in Cuba post Castro arrival and that she had founded and operated an International School located on 5th Avenue in Miramar which Karen and I visited when in Cuba in 2003. If I recall correctly she died in Cuba.” Chris Baker to author, February 8, 2016, Email.

removing their capital and property from the island as they fled. Some well positioned executives actively worked to destabilize production and ensure shortages in Cuba. These Anglo-American residents sought to preserve the wealth they had earned on the island, to keep their capital from the revolution's coffers, as well as to avenge their loss of status and home.

While many lost everything to the revolution, some Anglo-Americans successfully smuggled their money and personal possessions out of Cuba and out of the hands of Cuban authorities. To prevent the flight of capital, the revolutionary government enacted strict guidelines that severely limited what could be taken out of the country. To get around these restrictions, Adele Fuchsberg remembers her father and uncle rolling up U.S. bills and placing them into emptied cigarettes so the currency would not be seized as they left the country. Fuchsberg recalls, "They were doing this meticulously. Taking out the tobacco, putting in money, putting it back in packs and sealing it up. And I was told never to tell anybody."<sup>820</sup> Ann Landreth Gund's mother similarly hid \$100 bills in her cigarette boxes before exiting the island.<sup>821</sup> Stephanie Braxton's mother convinced the dock master to allow her property to be shipped out without being searched in the summer of 1960.<sup>822</sup> Albert Goltz' mother relied upon contacts at the British Embassy to smuggle linen, silver, pictures and other personal items to New York.<sup>823</sup> Before leaving in September 1960, Comida Arensberg gave the family silver to the West German ambassador who got it off the island for her.<sup>824</sup> Allyan Watson-Rivera remembers

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<sup>820</sup> Adele Fuchsberg, interview by author, June 24, 2016, New York, NY.

<sup>821</sup> Ann Landreth Gund, interview by author, July 7, 2016, Cambridge, MA.

<sup>822</sup> Stephanie Braxton, interview by author, June 14, 2016, New York, NY.

<sup>823</sup> Albert Goltz, interview by author, August 6, 2016, Bethesda, MD.

<sup>824</sup> Walter Arensberg, interview by author, August 8, 2016, Washington, DC.

her Scottish father and U.S.-born mother decided to donate their valuable tableware to the British Embassy, rather than have it claimed by revolutionary authorities.<sup>825</sup> Anglo-Americans took great risk to keep their money and property as they carved a new life in the United States, while others were simply determined to prevent the revolution from profiting off their family's loss.

Consequences imposed by the Cuban government for foreign nationals caught in smuggling activities proved substantial. In the summer of 1959, Fuchsberg set off to summer camp in North Carolina as she did every year with cousins from New York. To her surprise when unpacking her suitcase, she discovered silver trays, silver candlesticks and cutlery.<sup>826</sup> Adele Fuchsberg's father Meyer spent a few weeks in a Cuban jail for his smuggling activities after being discovered with a suitcase of cash by the family cook Dominga, who reported Meyer Fuchsberg to revolutionary authorities. Adele explains that with the influence of President Eisenhower, her father secured a temporary release from prison to attend his mother's funeral in New York. He never returned to Cuba.<sup>827</sup>

Motivated by a sense of betrayal, many Anglo-American executives hoped to stymie the Cuban economy over which they no longer held influence. General Manager for Sterling Products International, Edward Landreth, burnt company recipes for pharmaceutical drugs before leaving so that the revolution could not profit from the corporation's intellectual property. Ann Landreth Gund recalls Secretary of State Christian Herter, a friend of her maternal grandfather, called to warn Edward that he was on a "some sort of blacklist" and the family should "get out immediately..." Ann explains, "My father came home from work on whatever day it was in May

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<sup>825</sup> Allyan Watson-Riviera, interview by author, July 12, 2016. Selma, MA.

<sup>826</sup> Adele Fuchsberg, interview by author, June 24, 2016, New York, NY.

<sup>827</sup> *Ibid.*

and he was followed by three or four very large crates that were about 4 x 6 feet in which were all the prescriptions, all the recipes for all the drugs. And we spent the entire night burning the recipes in our fireplace.” A young girl at the time, Ann remembers behind the fireplace “the entire wall was mirror...the heat got such that the mirror cracked all the way. The next morning our gardener saw all these ashes and got very suspicious and we were really afraid that he was going to...I don’t know what we were afraid of. But my father had already made the decision that we were going to leave that day.... We left within 12 hours of the time that my father got the word.”<sup>828</sup>

Once it became clear that the Agrarian Reform Act of May 1959 would destabilize their position in the Cuban economy, Anglo-American sugar companies worked to undermine the Cuban government. Foreign executives would prove to be pivotal translators and predictors of doom and danger to U.S. policy makers in the months to come. Lawrence A. Crosby, President of Vertientes-Camagüey Sugar Company, Phillip Rosenberg, and other sugar executives in Cuba worked to undercut the new government through internal and external pressure. In May 1959, Lawrence A. Crosby told State Department officials that his mill would perhaps refrain from financing the clearing of cane fields and the development of new irrigation systems, due to the political situation in Cuba. Longtime colony member Phillip Rosenberg participated in an economic slowdown conducted by sugar executives in 1959 who sought concessions from the revolutionary government. Rosenberg refused to fertilize and plant new crops, working to ensure a “sugar shortfall” on the island that could damage the Cuban treasury, as well as the revolution’s reputation for strengthening the Cuban economy.<sup>829</sup>

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<sup>828</sup> Ann Landreth Gund interview by author, July 7, 2016, Cambridge, MA.

<sup>829</sup> Farber, *The Origins of the Cuban Revolution Reconsidered*, 91-92.

Throughout 1959, U.S. sugar executives and the U.S. State Department seemed to develop a coordinated response to the evolving situation in Cuba, creating shortages on its main export. The passage of the Agrarian Reform Law in May 1959 nurtured seeds of conspiracy developing between interested U.S. business and political actors dedicated to bringing down the revolutionary government. Upon the law's publication, Lawrence A. Crosby called Assistant Secretary of State Mann to declare the Agrarian Reform measures "will be disastrous to [the] sugar industry of Cuba." A meeting for May 25 was hastily arranged between high-ranking State Department officials and representatives of U.S. business interests in Cuba.<sup>830</sup> A report from the U.S. Embassy in Havana to the Secretary of State explained that Anglo-American sugar executives, who gathered at an embassy meeting where 30 of 34 U.S. sugar mills were represented, were "deeply concerned...that in addition to provisions [in the] present law, future regulations and interpretations thereof by present Leftist Directorate may become so onerous as to be real confiscation rather than just expropriation." The sugar executives wanted U.S. officials to explain "what effects drastic application of [the] law here [in Cuba] will have on U.S. sugar legislation."<sup>831</sup> Assistant Secretary of State Roy Rubottom telephoned with Crosby and Sam Baggett of United Fruit to help find a path forward that would be more amenable to U.S. corporate interests.

Winning the public-relations battle against the revolution in the United States proved significant to U.S. diplomats and sugar executives. Rubottom encouraged Baggett to try to influence coverage of the revolution by the *New York Times*. In particular, he was concerned about the sympathetic stories of the revolution in *Times* articles by Herbert Matthews. Rubottom

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<sup>830</sup> Outgoing Telegram for Ambassador Bonsal, May 22, 1959, USNA, RG59, Box 4369, 837.16/5-.2351.

<sup>831</sup> Havana Embassy to Secretary of State, May 23, 1959, USNA, RG59, Box 4369, 837.16/5-2359.

suggested to Baggett that “if United Fruit had any contact with the *New York Times* through which they could try to get Matthew’s superiors to realize what he is doing[,] it might be helpful.”<sup>832</sup>

Aggrieved Anglo-American executives in Cuba pressured a hesitant U.S. State Department to take a tougher stand against the revolutionary government. In September 1959, President of the American Sugar Refining Company William F. Oliver told State Department officials he felt the United States could procure its sugar from other nations, in case the U.S. decided to “punish” the Cuban government. Despite shared interests, U.S. diplomats proved unprepared for that step and recoiled at the use of the word “punish” in late 1959.<sup>833</sup> By 1960, however, things had changed as Washington adopted the hardline stance of these businessmen against the revolutionary government. In June 1960, the Vice President of United Fruit, Sam Baggett authored a report with other leading U.S. executives who held economic interests in Cuba. Collectively recognized by the Eisenhower Administration as “The Consultants on Latin America for 1960,” these businessmen produced a document enumerating eight central recommendations:

1. Join with other American nations in an effort to expose to the world the Communist regime in Cuba and help the Cuban people regain their freedom.
2. Send strong note on expropriations to Cuban government with the warning that U.S. expects Cuba to compensate American property owners, as required by international law.
3. Start campaign of “truth” propaganda to Cuban people, via radio and news media, exposing Castro as a Dictator and listing freedoms which have been taken away from them.
4. Consult with other American countries to bring Cuban situation before OAS, condemning Cuba for its aggressions and seeking to impose sanctions under treaties.
5. Impose exchange and trade controls on Cuba, thereby cutting off her dollar build-up, which is being used to purchase armaments.

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<sup>832</sup> Memorandum of Conversation, between Samuel Baggett, and Assistant Secretary Rumbottom, July 16, 1959, USNA, RG59, Box 3082, 737.00/7-1659.

<sup>833</sup> Farber, *The Origins of the Cuban Revolution Reconsidered*, 92.

6. Start action through Department of State for elimination of premiums on Cuban sugar, either by taxes or authority for CCC to be sole purchaser.
7. Aid and encourage opposition elements within Cuba to overthrow the present Communist regime and regain internal control.
8. Seek State Department issuance of a White Paper on Cuba indicting the present regime for the suppression of freedoms in the country, and its various aggressions outside the country, which threaten the peace, and security of the hemisphere.<sup>834</sup>

All eight initiatives would eventually be pursued by Washington against the Cuban government in one way or another. After 1959, the United States government quickly embraced business leaders' desire to help design U.S. foreign policy.

### ***Waging Counter-Revolution***

Close to two dozen American Club members were arrested by Cuban authorities between the cessation of diplomatic relations in January 1961 and the Bay of Pigs invasion, April 1961, including U.S. nationals Howard F. Anderson and Angus K. McNair. John Parker estimates that close to 2,000 Americans remained on the island in April 1961. Parker writes after the start of the invasion, "Many of them sought refuge at European embassies as the mass-arrests began in earnest."<sup>835</sup> Though Howard F. Anderson was not involved in the invasion itself, according to his daughter Bonnie Anderson, "He did favors for the CIA. He carried messages back and forth. He brought in radios. Many people in the American Colony down there were active in helping American intelligence gather information and also providing assistance to the underground."<sup>836</sup> The CIA sought out Anderson for his Cuban connections that they hoped could be useful. After meeting with intelligence officials in the United States, Anderson returned home to Cuba in

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<sup>834</sup> Consultants on Latin America for 1960, "Report and Recommendations of Cuba," DEPL, Frederick H. Mueller Secretary of Commerce: Papers, 1956-1960, Box 1, Personal Correspondence 1959 Cuba, Report and Recommendations on... for 1960.

<sup>835</sup> Gianelloni, *We Remember Cuba*, 220.

<sup>836</sup> David Green, "Family Seeks to Avenge Execution by Suing Cuba," *Miami Herald*, December 1, 2001.

February 1961. The revolutionary government had given two-weeks notice to one of his gas stations before its nationalization. Turned in by a maid who became aware of his counter-revolutionary activities, Anderson was picked up by Cuban police on his birthday, March 13, and charged with gun-running. The trial was set to begin on April 18, 1961.<sup>837</sup>

When his Cuban and Anglo-American friends learned that Howard F. Anderson was executed during the Bay of Pigs invasion, they were devastated. Anderson's mother was born in Cuba in 1922, and she attended Ruston Academy. James Baker was her teacher. The Anderson family income derived, in large part, from a rust-resistant formula they developed and sold at their gas stations. The solution prevented salt-water from corroding the metal on automobiles for Cubans and Anglo-Americans alike. Anderson was a regular at the Hemingway Fishing Tournament with his famed sailboat, known as one of the finest docked at the Biltmore Yacht Club. His son Gary swam the 100-meter butterfly for the Biltmore's club team.<sup>838</sup> Howard served as Commander of American Legion and former director of the American Chamber of Commerce. Mario Lazo, who himself was detained following the invasion, attempted to provide legal representation for Anderson hoping to save his life. When he failed to do so he asked his longtime partner: "How did they get away with [executing him] under the law?" His partner responded, "Mario, the law had nothing to do with it."<sup>839</sup> The rules were in flux as Cuban hierarchies shifted. Privileged outsiders no more, Anglo-Americans were significantly more vulnerable to the Cuban justice system after 1959.

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<sup>837</sup> Gary Anderson, interview by author, October 19, 2016, Telephone.

<sup>838</sup> Ibid.

<sup>839</sup> Lazo, *Dagger in the Heart*, 37.

Exile did not end attempts by Anglo-American colony members to dismantle revolutionary authorities in Havana. John Parker worked with a Cuban exile group called Comandos L in 1962 and 1963, raiding the island in an effort to “do as much damage as possible” and “keep the Castro forces insecure and get as much publicity as possible to give lie to the impregnability of the Cuban communist government.”<sup>840</sup> According to Parker, Comandos L depended on funding from Cubans as well as “Americans who had lived in Cuba.”<sup>841</sup> Exile groups like these lit Cuban cane fields ablaze and targeted Cuban infrastructure to undermine the Cuban economy. In the early 1960s many Cubans and some U.S. nationals landed in Cuba hoping to foment an uprising; most were captured by Cuban authorities.<sup>842</sup> For the Anglo-American residents that participated in counter-revolutionary activities, transnational solidarities with Cubans solidified in their shared experience of exile.

### ***Patriotic Cold Warriors***

Upon hearing the news of Batista’s flight in the early hours of January 1, 1959, Meyer Lansky traveled from the Plaza Hotel to the Sans Souci, managed by fellow mafioso Santos Trafficante, to remove money from the Casinos and secure the cash at Joe Stassi’s home. Lansky then went to the Hotel Nacional and his Riviera Hotel to do the same. Upon hearing about the revolutionary victory, Cubans took to the streets and targeted their anger at the financiers of the Batista regime--the mafia-controlled casinos. On January 1, 1959, Cuban mobs destroyed the gambling machines and tables of the Plaza casino in a bonfire. At the Sans Souci, angry Cubans damaged the gaming equipment and ignited fires. The crowds shattered the front windows at the

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<sup>840</sup> Gianelloni, *We Remember Cuba*, 225

<sup>841</sup> Escalante, *The Cuba Project*, 163.

<sup>842</sup> Escalante, *The Cuba Project*, 154-166.

Deauville, as they attempted to enter the casino and wreak havoc. A similar scene unfolded at the Sevilla Biltmore, where according to historian T.J. English, “the casino was destroyed.” English continues,

The greatest indignity of all was saved for the Riviera. In an act of revolutionary audacity, *campesinos* brought into the city a truckload of pigs and set them loose in the lobby of the hotel and casino, squealing, tracking mud across the floors, shitting and peeing all over Lansky’s pride and joy, one of the most famous mobster gambling emporiums in all the world.... Emotionally, the revolutionaries and ultimately the Cuban people had come to identify the Havana Mob with everything they despised about the Batista regime. And so they attacked the fruits of their rule in Cuba with a kind of savagery usually reserved for bullies, wife-beaters and child molesters. *Death to Batista! Death to the collaborators! Death to the American gangsters!*<sup>843</sup>

Many U.S. mob bosses found a home in Cuba after World War II, and became valuable partners to President Batista. Meyer Lansky rose to a position of legitimacy through his relationship with the Cuban government that empowered him to regulate Cuba’s casinos. While some of the children of men associated with the U.S. mafia in Cuba attended Anglo-American schools like Ruston, and Meyer Lansky joined Havana’s North American Jewish congregation for Yom Kippur services, the foreign mobsters remained relatively isolated from the businessmen, educators and diplomats who worked to build a cohesive Anglo-American colony.<sup>844</sup> Yet unlike other elements of the Anglo-American colony, the U.S. government seized the opportunity to collaborate with the mafia in executing U.S. foreign policy in Cuba.

Despite the destruction of their casinos, U.S. mob bosses refused to leave, initially optimistic a place for them could be preserved in this “new” Cuba. The mafia bosses would find great hostility directed at them by revolutionary authorities. Though he sent his family home,

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<sup>843</sup> English, *Havana Nocturne*, 298-306

<sup>844</sup> Adele Fuchsberg, interview by author, June 24, 2016, New York, NY; James Wynne, interview by author, June 27, 2016, Yorktown Heights, NY; Chris Baker, interview by author, August 4, 2016, Maryland.

Meyer Lansky remained on the island in early 1959, as did Santos Trafficante. In June 1959 Cuban authorities arrested Trafficante and placed him under house arrest. Raúl Castro secured Trafficante's release after meeting with the mob boss. Jake Lansky—Meyer's brother—along with others, were detained as well. After suffering these humiliations and being forced into exile, Meyer Lansky would put a one-million-dollar bounty on Fidel Castro's head.<sup>845</sup> In December 1959, CIA officer J.C. King sent a memorandum to director Allen Dulles proposing the agency analyze the elimination of Fidel Castro. The first of many operations approved by the U.S. government to kill the Cuban leader would be initiated on August 16, 1960.<sup>846</sup>

In November 1961, a half-year after the failure of the Bay of Pigs, President Kennedy formally, though secretly, initiated Operation Mongoose to assassinate Castro and overthrow the Cuban government.<sup>847</sup> Seeing their interests as aligned, the Central Intelligence Agency soon contacted U.S. mob officials connected to mafia operations in Havana to collaborate in the assassination of the Cuban leader.<sup>848</sup> In early September 1960, Italian-American mob boss John Rosselli came to an agreement with the CIA to liquidate Castro for \$150,000. In October Rosselli contacted Tampa crime boss Santos Trafficante who returned to Cuba and made preparations for Castro's murder.<sup>849</sup> Of course, like all attempts to assassinate Castro, Rosselli failed. Revelations of this partnership between the U.S. government and the U.S. mafia, as well

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<sup>845</sup> English, *Havana Nocturne*, 311-312, 321-322.

<sup>846</sup> Fabian Escalante, *The Cuba Project*, 149, 154.

<sup>847</sup> Franklin, *Cuba and The United States*, 45-46.

<sup>848</sup> English, *Havana Nocturne*, 311-312, 321-322.

<sup>849</sup> Escalante, *The Cuba Project*, 154, 156.

as the CIA assassination program more generally, were made public by the Church Committee in 1975.

### *Conclusions*

By the end of 1960 the revolution united almost the entire Anglo-American colony in shared frustration and resistance. Cuban events impacted North American and British nationals as they never had before. For the first time, Anglo-American residents found their privilege challenged by Cuban authorities, and many began engaging in Cuban political movements for the first time in their lives. Anglo-American residents employed an array of resistance strategies in conjunction with Cuban counter-revolutionary forces, many of whom grew disillusioned as the Anglo-American skills and values they had acquired became less valuable in a revolutionary context. Foreign nationals organized with Cuban allies to help forge a path for those seeking refuge in the United States. With the aid of the U.S. government, Anglo-American residents attempted to undermine the Cuban economy on both a personal and corporate scale. They pushed for hardline policies that would be adopted by the Eisenhower and Kennedy Administrations. Some risked their lives to overthrow the revolutionary government, while U.S. mafia figures who once resided in Cuba, plotted Castro's assassination. Through these acts of solidarity with their Cuban friends and allies, Anglo-American residents altered both U.S. and Cuban history in their counter-revolutionary campaigns.

## CONCLUSION: THE RETURN OF THE IMPERIAL GAZE

*“If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.”*<sup>850</sup>

On December 24, 2015, I found myself sitting in the comfort of a tourist bus, traveling between the Cuban cities of Trinidad and Santiago. A German man across the aisle, speaking in English seemed to be lecturing a Cuban traveler about Cuba’s underdevelopment. Undaunted by his unfamiliarity with the historic context from which the Cuban Revolution emerged, the man began to proscribe remedies for what he perceived to be the ailments plaguing present-day Cuba. He explained that he and his family of five traveled to Cuba to see “socialism before the Cubans in Miami saved” the island’s decaying infrastructure. He went on to share his reflection that “Fidel Castro must be sad when he walks the streets of Havana, [as]...the Cubans have let the city crumble.” With an air of arrogance, he explained, “life is easy in Cuba’s climate, pick the banana, eat the banana and another grows in its place. This is why the Cubans are lazy.” He went on about German modernity, developed in the context of Germany’s less hospitable environment. The tropical conditions, he continued, are “why in this Cuban paradise the people live like hell, and the Germans, despite their hellish climate, live like they are in paradise.”

Our tourist bus passed a *camión*, packed with over fifty Cubans squeezed together on four stadium-style benches stretched the long way in the back of the truck. These Cubans were probably making the same journey to Santiago. Their lack of luxury likely confirmed Cuban

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<sup>850</sup> Lila Watson, Australian Aboriginal Activist.

backwardness to the German tourist. Upon our arrival, the man's family offered to share a taxi with me, to travel to the Hotel Casa Granda, Santiago's premiere lodging. I had not yet booked a place to stay. The hotel overlooked Parque Céspedes where Fidel Castro triumphantly declared victory on January 1, 1959, stating, "[This Revolution] will not be like 1898 when the Americans came and took over..."<sup>851</sup> I politely declined as I reflected on the ironies. Today, the island is threatened by a return to an imperial gaze that echoes the first six decades of the twentieth century.

Modern Cuba, similar to so much of the globe, stands at a crossroads. The looted economies of nations in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern, as well as Southern Europe, whose leadership failed them, often in partnership with foreign capital, spell disaster for the world's poor. The expansive tools of informal empire have become far more precise since than they were deployed in Cuba during the 1950s and 1960s. Contact and development have materialized through coercion: sanctions, tariffs or austerity, and sometimes war. This leads to punishment of the lower classes for economic and political failures of the international system and immunity for the domestic and foreign leaders who rose and profited from conditions of informal empire. A rise in resentments and radicalisms is emerging, embodied and enacted as nationalisms, fundamentalisms and xenophobia, as well as collective resistance and mobilizations. Today, stratified contact, in the context of informal empire, streams across the globe as inequality gaps grow and antipathies metastasize.

In *The Danger of a Single Story*, Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie argues that a single story of an individual or group is never sufficient. The circulation of a single story about

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<sup>851</sup> "Fidel Speaks to Citizens of Santiago," January 1, 1959, Accessed February 15, 2015, <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/castro/db/1959/19590103.html>.

a people or a nation, defined by generalities, promulgated by corporate or political elites, often reflects a narrative “used to dispossess and malign.” Hierarchies and suffering are naturalized, attributed to deficiencies of groups or individuals. History, as well as global economic and political dynamics are obscured. The people of Africa, Latin America, and parts of Europe and Asia are being defined by a single story, as images of their poverty, disorder, and violence circulate globally in abundance, through film, music, journalism, social media and literature. Adichie contends, “The consequence of the single story is...it robs people of dignity, it makes our recognition of our equal humanity difficult, it emphasizes how we are different rather than how we are similar.”<sup>852</sup> These single stories thrive in the absence of contact.

This dissertation presents a multi-voiced history of the Anglo-American colony, complicating the many single stories that have been told about Cuba, the revolution, and the counter-revolutionary. It goes beyond the story about Anglo-American management of the informal empire in Cuba. The stories told in this dissertation, enriched by oral histories, reveal relationships and intimacies cultivated between Anglo-Americans and Cubans. Many Anglo-Americans, especially in the first decades of the twentieth century, viewed Cuban destitution, political instability, and “immoral” cultural practices as reflections of Cuban temperament, Cuban history or the Cuban climate. However, contact with Anglo-American people and institutions provided a plethora of opportunities to complicate, challenge and contest that narrative. As we have seen, Anglo-Americans proved more and less willing to bend their views, depending on their standpoint, forms of engagement and proximity to suffering.

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<sup>852</sup> Chimamanda Adichie, “The Danger of a Single Story,” *Ted Talks* (July 2009), Accessed, August 1, 2018, [https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda\\_adichie\\_the\\_danger\\_of\\_a\\_single\\_story#t-602891](https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story#t-602891).

The Anglo-American colony helped to prevent the revolution, Cubans, and Anglo-Americans from being defined by a single story. Contact enabled rural missionaries to appreciate the dynamics that produced Cuban poverty in the context of informal empire and an exploitative sugar economy. Contact garnered opportunities for Cuban professionals to convey their desire for republican political structures to Anglo-American knowledge-producers promoting Western values, like democracy. Contact encouraged Anglo-American friends, lovers, colleagues and allies to form solidarities with Cubans, challenging the narrative of an illegitimate and unpopular revolution being promoted by the Batista government in the 1950s. Further, contact provided Anglo-Americans exposure to the atrocities committed by Batista's authorities, provoking many to defend the revolution in the first months of 1959. These multiple stories stood as challenges to the narrative disseminated relentlessly by the U.S. press, U.S. officials and foreign capital, designed to undermine the new government.

Many revolutionary leaders emerged from the contact zones established by the Anglo-American colony.<sup>853</sup> These leaders often graduated from Anglo-American schools in Cuba and the United States, while others attended Protestant institutions on the island.<sup>854</sup> A familiarity with Anglo-American ways augmented their ability to be respected and valued by their Anglo-American colleagues, teachers, friends and neighbors. These Cubans successfully challenged the

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<sup>853</sup> Homi Bhabha's notion explains *cultural hybridity*, or "the 'third space'" as between fixed cultures, which enables the birth of something new, influential and powerful. Rutherford, J. "The Third Space: Interview with Homi Bhabha," *Identity, Community, Culture Difference*, J. Rutherford, ed., (London, UK: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990): 207-221, 211.

<sup>854</sup> Revolutionary leaders including Frank País, Mario Llerana, Huber Matos, Faustino Pérez, Daniel Álvarez, Raúl Fernández Ceballos, José A. Naranjo, Manuel Ray, Carols Varona, Elena Medernos, Armando Hart and Pepín Naranjo belonged to Protestant churches or attended Protestant schools. Others like Regino Botí, Vilma Espín, Rufo López-Fresquet, Manuel Piñeiro, Enrique Oltuski, Elena Mederos Cabañas, José Miró Cardona and Felipe Pazos either went to Anglo-American schools, worked for Anglo-American businesses or had Anglo-American friends and clients. Vicente Cubillas, "El aporte de la iglesia evangélica a la causa redentora," *Bohemia*, February 1, 1959, 108; Pérez, *On Becoming Cuban*, 487-88; Ramos, *Protestantism and Revolution in Cuba*, 36; "Cuban News Roundup," *Times of Havana*. July 1, 1957, 4.

structures that governed the island, in part by exerting tremendous influence over the Anglo-American colony and communicating in the language and values of informal empire. In the end, contact encouraged a transnational community of professional class Cubans and Anglo-American residents to contest the revolution that challenged the United States as an obstacle to progress.

Through archival analyses and personal testimonies, this dissertation explored the variegated terms of contact and power negotiated between Anglo-Americans and Cubans in the context of revolution. Through this work we see the predictable subjugation that erupts in the paradox of *stratified contact*, creating short-term economic abuse, but also the context for revolutionary consciousness to develop. The exploitation of labor and unceasing hierarchies conditioned marginalized Cubans, as well as other Caribbean laborers residing in Cuba, to embrace challenges to the logic and tactics of informal empire.

From within the networks of the same Anglo-American colony, professional Cubans were able to acquire Anglo-American tools and language skills through *transnational socio-economic contact*. In foreign-run schools, social clubs, churches and businesses, this sector of Cuban society proved adept at creating allies among privileged outsiders in support of the revolution. As Cuban professionals in Havana narrated their desire to adopt Western-structures, including democracy and a free press, Anglo-Americans heard an echo of their own values.

On the same island and within the same colony, *contact forged in struggle* developed allies among Cuban parishioners and rural missionaries, dedicated to the political and socio-economic reorganization of Cuban society. These missionaries taught, prayed, socialized and broke bread with revolutionary leaders. They lived in close proximity to poverty and suffering. They grieved young rebels tortured and massacred by Batista's authorities. They observed

foreign and domestic corporations that dispassionately left the rural poor destitute. By 1959, they had become supporters, at least for a time, of the Cubans demanding a radically better life.

The story of the Anglo-American colony is both a dystopic story of greed and a buried set of narratives about solidarities forged in privilege and struggle. Single stories of the *other* were abandoned and replaced with cross-cultural alliances hatched in pursuit of complex desires, needs and ambitions for revolution and counter-revolution. Transnational contact between 1952-1961, destabilized the single, self-serving narrative of Cuba promulgated by those seeking merely to extract wealth and influence from the island in times of revolution.

Ironically, in many sectors of U.S. society, the narrative of the Cuban revolution has returned to a single story. Many U.S. nationals only know Cuba as a story of loss, betrayal, authoritarianism, as well as its absence of individual freedoms, both economic and of expression. An imperial and distant gaze has gained ascendancy, eclipsing the counter-narratives that once matured in Anglo-American contact zones. This simplified narrative of the Cuban revolution, peddled to U.S. audiences and beyond, typically begins after 1959. It focuses on the denial of rights, ignoring the prior history of brutality and failing to appreciate the implementation of egalitarian reforms. To the German visitor who sat across from me on the tourist bus, Cuba's crumbling architecture, the poverty of its people and an exile community numbering in the millions define what it is to be Cuban. Today, without Cuban and Anglo-American social bridges, modern Cuba in the popular U.S. and perhaps European imagination, is draped in incomplete characterizations molded with the political and economic agenda of those seeking to undermine the current Cuban administration. Absent from today's narrative is the complex story

of the Anglo-American colony, that, despite all its contradictions, destabilized efforts by power brokers to simplify Cubans, and amplified across national borders the meanings, passions, desires and significance of the Cuban Revolution.

## APPENDIX A: ORIGINAL INTERVIEWS

This research has been informed by a series of eighty-six original interviews conducted over five years, in-person, on the telephone and through email, with Anglo-Americans and Cubans who lived on the island and were affiliated with Anglo-American institutions in Cuba. In the United States, in-person interviews were conducted in Florida, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, North Carolina, Washington D.C., New York, Massachusetts, Virginia, Maryland, New Jersey, Connecticut, Illinois and Minnesota. In Cuba, oral histories were collected in Havana and Chaparra. Telephone and email correspondence took place with men and women throughout the United States and Cuba. Depending on the informant, the interview was conducted in English and/or Spanish.

The snowball sample was gathered through original contacts with a set of key informants and their recommendations. The original contacts included a key informant from Ruston Academy, Chris Baker, Protestant missionaries Edgar Nesman and Carroll English, and Virginia Schofield who grew up in Oriente on United Fruit and Sugar Company property before attending Colegio Buenavista in Havana. The participants are classified below by the Anglo-American networks--often more than one--they identified with.

This table identifies the associations of participants' networks while in Cuba.

	Students of Havana's Anglo-American Educational Institutions <sup>855</sup>	Anglo-American Religious Institutions <sup>856</sup>	Sugar Corporations <sup>857</sup>	Politicians/Diplomats <sup>858</sup>	Other <sup>859</sup>
Anglo-American	42	10	5	2	4
Cuban	13	2	4	2	3
Cuban-Anglo-American	8	0	3	1	
Total	63	12	12	5	5

<sup>855</sup> The vast majority attended Ruston Academy. However four attended Merici Academy, three attended--and one taught at--Buenavista and Candler, while one attended Lafayette Academy.

<sup>856</sup> This number includes six rural missionaries, the children of missionaries in Oriente and Camagüey, as well as a Cuban bishop, a Cuban parishioner and the offspring of urban missionaries.

<sup>857</sup> The children of five Anglo-American sugar executives who worked for Hershey, Centrales Vertientes and United Fruit, the son of a Cuban engineer, the out-of-wedlock/estranged son of an Anglo-American Cuban American Sugar Company executive, the daughter of a British middle-manager, the son of a Cuban peddler on the property of Central Macareño, three Cubans from the mill town of Chaparra.

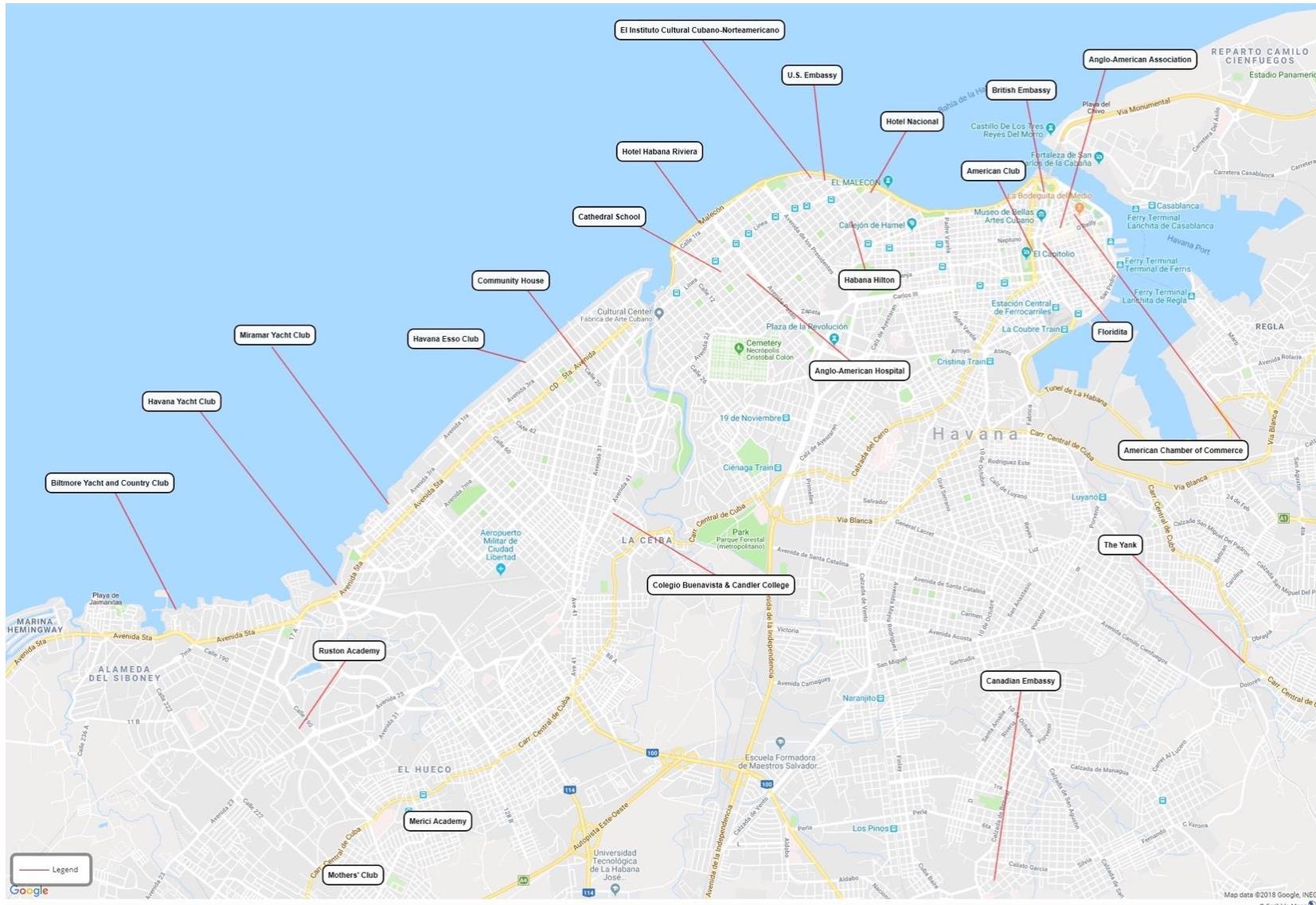
<sup>858</sup> The grandson of a high-ranking Batista official, the son of a Cuban senator in the 1940s, the son of a high-ranking revolutionary official, the daughter of a British diplomat, the daughter of the Cuban ambassador to Brazil, and the daughter of a U.S. Embassy official.

<sup>859</sup> Three Anglo-Americans came from the families of independent farming communities, one Cuban's father served as Ernest Hemmingway's butler while two were the Cuban husbands of Ruston students.

## APPENDIX B: MAPS



Cuba



# Havana

Map data ©2018 Google, INEGI © Scribble Maps



Oriente

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David M. Rubenstein Rare Books & Manuscript Library, Durham, NC

Davis Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC

Dwight Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, KS

Friends Historical Center, Guilford, NC

Hershey Community Archive, Hershey, PA

Instituto de Historia de Cuba, Havana, Cuba

Kew British National Archives, London, UK

Library of Congress, Washington, DC

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