Introduction

> It is necessary to turn toward new directions, to purify the environment. In a phrase: it is necessary to constantly agitate among the workers, in every sense of the word if we do not want the workers to continue being exploited by opportunistic politicians and crafty monks.
>
> Antonio Penichet (1918)

A telephone repairman who wrote poetry, a librarian who wrote short stories and advice on health, a printer who wrote novels and helped to start schools, vegetarian restaurant managers, health clinic coordinators for fellow workers, cigar rollers, full-time teachers, housewives, clerks, waiters, bookstore managers, sugarcane cutters, and railroad workers: these were Cuba's anarchists in the three decades following independence from Spain in 1898. While some published fiction or verse, others staged plays and recited poems in front of audiences. Others put their children on stage to demonstrate the power of an anarchist education. Many more listened; no doubt some of them were bored, wondering when the "real" action would begin. Thousands more read the books or saw the plays or perused the newspapers. Even a few rejected civilization and experimented with nudism. In early twentieth-century Cuba, anarchist culture flourished in many different forms.

Previous study of anarchism in Cuba has mirrored the traditional approach to anarchism throughout Latin America by examining the system primarily as a branch of a country's labor movement. However, by seeing anarchism more broadly as a social movement that engaged in a series of political and cultural conflicts with the larger Cuban society, a fuller picture of these diverse people emerges. By taking a sociocultural approach—an approach detailed later in this introduction and in chapter 1—this book arrives at three overarching conclusions. First, when anarchists challenged the cultural, economic, political, and religious institutions, they did so not only during the eight- to fourteen-hour workday in the workplace but also through their writings, rallies, and alterna-

tive health and educational initiatives; anarchists challenged Cuba's power holders throughout the rest of the day outside the workplace and inside the daily cultural milieu.[1] Second, this anarchist challenge reflected how the international anarchist movement operated within the context of a unique national situation in which Cuba's political culture was shaped by the wars for independence, the U.S. occupations following independence, and the foreign domination of the economy. As anarchists engaged and criticized the larger hegemonic culture and created their own counterculture (see chapter 1), anarchists modified the larger impulses and issues of international anarchism to fit the specific cultural, ethnic, and political realities on the island; thus, they "Cubanized" anarchism. As a result, one becomes aware of how anarchists, via their cultural critiques and initiatives, struggled to create their own specific sense of *cubanidad* (Cubanness). Third, this study sheds light on Cuba's leftist revolutionary heritage by illustrating an important but largely ignored early chapter of that heritage. In the early twentieth century, Cuba's anarchists played important roles in shaping the Cuban Left by agitating for not only labor reforms but also socialist internationalism, worker-initiated health reforms, radical education, revolutionary motherhood, and gender equity while rejecting the political system, capitalism, and religion.

Anarchism is a philosophy of freedom. As historian Peter Marshall puts it, anarchism "holds up the bewitching ideal of personal and social freedom, both in the negative sense of being free from all external restraint and imposed authority, and in the positive sense of being free to celebrate the full harmony of being."[2] One of the world's best-known and celebrated anarchists, Emma Goldman, defined anarchism as "the philosophy of a new social order based on the liberty unrestricted by man-made law; the theory that all the forms of government rest on violence, and are therefore wrong and harmful, as well as unnecessary."[3] I prefer a broader definition of the term along the lines of what Murray Bookchin calls *social anarchism*: a philosophy that "celebrates the thinking human mind without in any way denying passion, ecstasy, imagination, play, and art. Yet rather than reify them into hazy categories, it tries to incorporate them into everyday life. It is committed to rationality while opposing the rationalization of experience; to technology, while opposing the 'megamachine'; to social institutionalization, while opposing class rule and hierarchy; to genuine politics based on the confederal coordination of municipalities or communes by the people in direct face-to-face democracy, while opposing parliamentarianism and the state."[4] While most anarchists agreed

with these sentiments, anarcho-communists, syndicalists, and naturists often disagreed on the best ways to bring forth a state of anarchy.

Anarcho-communists followed the ideas of Russian anarchist Peter Kropotkin, who believed in the communist principle of "from each according to his ability to each according to his need." In this way, anarcho-communists argued that, because humans are by nature social and cooperative beings, then society should be nonhierarchical and everyone should be equally rewarded for their labor contributions. The anarchist "commune" would be composed of free and equal people who were both consumers and producers. There was no single, agreed-upon route to achieve this ideal community; rather, some followed the "propaganda of the deed" belief and engaged in violence, others mobilized workers in labor actions, and still others created social and cultural institutions designed to foster that commune. In Cuba, anarcho-communists mostly organized their own groups independent of labor unions in order to propagandize for their cause, publish newspapers, and at times start schools. The anarchist advance to communism differed from that of the Marxists: the former rejected political parties, engagement with the political system, and the Marxist concept of a socialist state that would make a transition from capitalism to socialism and ultimately to communism. Anarcho-communists distrusted all governments, including dictatorships of the proletariat.

Anarcho-syndicalists evolved from the collectivist ideals of Russian anarchist Mikhail Bakunin and tended to follow a socialist line of "from each according to his ability to each according to his work." To this end, anarcho-syndicalists created revolutionary labor unions and worker-based organizations while the communists focused mainly on creating their autonomous groups. Anarcho-syndicalists hoped that their revolutionary unions would stage a worker-led revolution after which workers would control the industrial means of production. However, the considerable overlap between anarcho-communists and anarcho-syndicalists focused on a general belief in "mutual aid" and the possibility of a cooperative labor organization that operated without state intrusion. Anarcho-syndicalists also took the view that the revolutionary unions had to be concerned with more than just wages. Consequently, they took on educational, cultural, and social functions, like their communist brethren. The central difference between the two groups tended to revolve around the role of the group and the role of the union, which led to different emphases on creating cooperative communes or egalitarian factories and shops. Organizational differences often led to tactical differences when syndicalists used

strategies of resistance that targeted workplaces with boycotts, strikes, and other forms of "direct action."[5]

A third strand within the island's anarchist movement was anarcho-naturism. Naturism was a global alternative health and lifestyle movement. Naturists focused on redefining one's life to live simply, eat cheap but nutritious vegetarian diets, and raise one's own food if possible. The countryside was posited as a romantic alternative to urban living, and some naturists even promoted what they saw as the healthful benefits of nudism. Globally, the naturist movement counted anarchists, liberals, and socialists as its followers. However, in Cuba a particular "anarchist" dimension evolved led by people like Adrián del Valle, who spearheaded the Cuban effort to shift naturism's focus away from only individual health to naturism having a "social emancipatory" function.[6]

Although these definitions are rather fixed, people's ideas tended to be more fluid. People were certainly free to change their ideas, and followers often breeched these delineations. For instance, nothing inherently prevented an anarcho-syndicalist in the Havana restaurant workers' union from supporting the alternative health care programs of the anarcho-naturists and seeing those alternative practices as "revolutionary." For this reason, at times throughout this book such terminological delineations, for all their specificity, actually cloud the truth. Thus, when such specific categorization is not necessary, I use the word *anarchist*, as Peter DeShazo did in his labor study of Chile: "a person who has expressed by work or deed a commitment to any of the various strains of libertarian thought."[7] Furthermore, the use of *anarchist* throughout this book reflects the usage of the term during the time period covered in this study, from 1898 to 1925. It was rare for anarchist newspapers, columnists, or fiction writers of the time to break down the terms; rather, *anarchist*, *anarchism*, and *anarchy* became the umbrella terms used by the movement and its various strands. Where it is necessary to highlight divisions in this book, such distinctions are noted.

The exact arrival of anarchist ideas on the island is uncertain. By 1857 followers of French anarchist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon had established the first mutual aid society in Cuba, and a form of reformist populism, influenced in part by socialist ideas, emerged.[8] In the 1860s, the young tobacco worker Saturnino Martínez founded *La Aurora*, the first weekly newspaper devoted to workers' issues. Through his paper, Martínez, though not an anarchist, provided the springboard for educating workers on the need for cooperative, working-class organizations.[9] In 1872, the same year that Bakunin and his followers were

expelled from the Hague Congress of the International Workingmen's Association, anarchist cigar makers Enrique Roig San Martín and Enrique Messonier established the Instruction and Recreation Center (Centro de Instrucción y Recreo) in Santiago de las Vegas, Cuba, and started the newspaper *El Obrero*.

In the 1880s, anarchism became a force on the Cuban labor scene. Messonier served as secretary of the anarchist-dominated Workers Circle (Círculo de Trabajadores), and Enrique Creci became secretary of the Central Board of Havana Artisans (Junta Central de Artesanos de la Habana) by 1885. In 1887, Roig San Martín launched the anarchist weekly *El Productor*, which became the island's dominant labor newspaper until it was closed in 1890. *El Productor* and the labor organizations were coordinated through the Workers Alliance (Alianza Obrera), an anarchist-based organization that supported better wages and working conditions for Cuban workers as part of a larger revolutionary agenda. By organizing workers in the far-flung tobacco industry that stretched from Havana to Key West and Tampa, the Alianza became quite possibly the first international workers organization in the Americas.[10]

During the 1890s, anarchists played important, though sometimes conflictive, roles in the struggle for Cuban independence. Some anarchists doubted the efficacy of aligning with a largely nationalistic independence movement led by middle- and upper-class exiles. Others saw the war as a means to liberate the island from monarchy and imperialism.[11] These latter anarchists, who fought with the liberation forces, hoped that independence would lead to a social revolution where anarchist ideals of social equality would find fertile soil in a newly freed people. Yet, independence brought a new imperial power, the United States, and the return of a Cuban, Spanish, and North American economic elite.

During the first decade of political independence, anarchists published a series of newspapers beginning with *El Nuevo Ideal* (1899–1901)—a paper that first appeared the same month that the United States took formal control of the island. While continuing their propaganda via the press, anarchists remained committed to social change, especially through the labor movement, which after independence had split into two competing organizations: the more reformist General League of Cuban Workers (Liga General de Trabajadores), led by the more moderate Enrique Messonier, and the anarchist-supported Workers Circle (Círculo de Trabajadores). Initially rooted heavily in the urban tobacco trades, restaurants, and skilled occupations, anarchists began to reach out to rural sugar workers shortly after independence. Anarcho-syndicalists

made contacts through their activities in the Círculo, and anarcho-communists did likewise through their own independent organizations. Both communists and syndicalists supported the major labor actions seeking better wages and workplace conditions in the first decade of independence, especially the Apprentice Strike of 1902. This was important for anarchists because strikers protested employers' preference for hiring Spanish immigrant workers. Because Spaniards were so prominent in the anarchist movement, this support became an important symbolic action linking anarchists with the larger concerns of the Cuban-born workforce.[12]

By 1909, anarchists were publishing three weekly newspapers in Cuba: *La Voz del Dependiente*, *Rebelión!*, and *¡Tierra!*. The latter even became a daily paper for a brief stint. By the 1910s, anarchist activity among workers was profound. Havana's food industry employees, radicalized by anarcho-syndicalism in particular, published their own long-running weekly newspaper *El Dependiente* and called attention to government and employer failures to provide safe workplace conditions; in addition, the paper offered a means through which workers could organize a revolutionary party. As sugar again became the leading sector of the Cuban economy, dominated by foreign capital, anarcho-syndicalists stepped up their radicalism in the rural zones. Successful alliances between Havana-based anarchists and labor organizers in the economically crucial sugar zones of central Cuba led the government to crack down on all anarchists at the end of 1914 and throughout 1915, a repression that temporarily crippled anarchist unions, organizations, and educational initiatives. With sugar prices soaring during World War I, the government responded to not only sugar capitalists' interests but also the fears that a radical labor movement could usher in another U.S. intervention. Officials shut down the long-running *¡Tierra!*, deported anarchists as "pernicious foreigners," and suppressed strike activity until 1917 when strikes again swept the island. General strikes in Havana, coupled with a string of bombings that authorities attributed to anarchists, led the government to again repress anarchists in 1918 and 1919.

By the early 1920s, the war-era economic boom—the famous "Dance of the Millions"—came to an end. Led by anarcho-syndicalists like Antonio Penichet, Alfredo López, Marcelo Salinas, and others and inspired by the Russian Revolution, Cuban workers began to form new labor organizations. Anarchists dominated the Havana Workers Federation (Federación Obrera de La Habana [FOH]), founded in 1921. The FOH renewed attempts to unite workers in the cities and rural zones into one labor organization strong enough to fight for

better wages and conditions. The FOH also put resources into building and staffing schools for workers and their children. These schools were modeled after schools that anarchists had created since the early 1900s on the island. Then in 1925 workers created the first nationwide labor federation, the Cuban National Workers Confederation (Confederación Nacional Obrera de Cuba [CNOC]). Led by anarcho-syndicalists, Marxists, and immigrant labor leaders the CNOC was structured to prevent the creation of a highly centralized, nondemocratic bureaucracy.

By 1925, anarchists enjoyed their greatest success in the labor movement since the 1880s and early 1890s. But the inauguration of President Gerardo Machado in 1925 undermined this success in Cuba. President Machado believed that he had to pacify an increasingly powerful labor movement in order to protect Cuban nationalism. Fearing that increased labor militancy could serve as a pretext for U.S. intervention, Machado, never a friend of organized labor, launched an all-out repression against anarchists and communists by closing anarchist-dominated unions, deporting striking workers, and colluding in the assassinations of several prominent anarchists, especially Enrique Varona of the railway union (1925), Alfredo López (1926), and Margarito Iglesias of the manufacturers union (1927). Many surviving anarchists went underground or fled the island. Others, forming militant groups to struggle against Machado, ultimately led to the 1933 Revolution that brought down the dictator but paved the way for Cuba's next political strongman, Fulgencio Batista. Although Machado failed to completely destroy the anarchists, the movement never regained the stature and influence that it had in those first three decades following independence.

Anarchists were one of many groups struggling to shape Cuba in the thirty years following independence from Spain. Along with black activists, feminists, and socialists, anarchists struggled to define Cuba's future; in the process they challenged the institutions of the Cuban state, national and international capital, the Catholic Church, and periodic rule by the U.S. military. I acknowledge the importance of these other social groups by noting the anarchists' criticism of or cooperation with them; moreover, the other groups provide context by which to better understand anarchist ideas and actions. This book, however, remains dedicated to exploring and analyzing anarchists from the far left wing of Cuban society and politics. Their views reflect understudied viewpoints and perspectives on issues of national identity formation, immigration, race, health, education, and gender relations at the beginning of the twentieth cen-

tury. In short, anarchist critiques and initiatives shed new light on the cultural and political struggles occurring in and shaping Cuba from 1898 to the 1920s.

Cuban and International Anarchism: A Historiography

In Cuba's rich history of social conflict, Cuban anarchism has been pushed into relative obscurity. This is not because the movement was minuscule. Although it is impossible to say how many anarchist activists and followers existed at any one time, intelligence reports and the anarchists' own propaganda put the numbers in the thousands by the end of the first decade of independence. These figures grew by the early 1920s when anarcho-syndicalists dominated the thriving labor organizations on the island. For a country whose labor history was a key factor in developing the island and in particular the island's leftist heritage, and in a country where anarchism played a contentious role in that heritage, little has been written on the anarchist movement. In fact, except for a handful of rather polemical works, some of which I discuss in later chapters, one has to read the scattered secondary literature focused on Cuban labor history to find the anarchists. In addition, because most of these histories have been published since the 1959 Cuban Revolution, historians have tended to analyze the anarchists through the lens of the Revolution with often ideologically driven results.

Until the end of the twentieth century, one's view of anarchists generally resulted from how one felt about the Cuban Revolution. Cuban authors on the island have tended to focus on finding the "socialist" (that is, Marxist or proto-Marxist) roots of the 1959 revolution; in so doing they either denied an important role for anarchism in those roots, downplayed the anarchist beliefs of many people by describing them in studies as "socialist" and "Marxist," or labeled anarchists as misguided or naïve. The varying degrees of negative treatment of anarchism in Cuba can be found in works by Mariana Serra García, José Antonio Portuondo, Joaquín Ordoqui, Olga Cabrera, José Cantón Navarro, José Rivero Múñiz, Gaspar Jorge García Gallo, and various official publications. At the same time, writers in exile and writers abroad, sympathetic to anarchism, have tended to overrepresent the accomplishments of anarchists by portraying them as unsung heroes and heroines who were betrayed by the Communists. We see this especially in proanarchist works by Frank Fernández and Sam Dolgoff, as well as in Peter Marshall's history of anarchism where even Che Guevara's "anarchism" is noted.

Two examples illustrate these ideological interpretations of anarchism and their service to larger political objectives: Carlos Baliño and Alfredo López were

key figures in Cuban labor history from the early 1900s. Writers on the island have portrayed Baliño as a "Marxist." Carlos del Toro, Cabrera, Cantón Navarro, García Gallo, and others focus on Baliño's role in founding the Cuban Communist Party in 1925; they ignore or downplay his history as an anarchist at the beginning of the century. Meanwhile, Dolgoff, Fernández, and Marshall stress his anarchist activities but neglect his role in founding the Communist Party. Thus, neither perspective is entirely correct. Carlos Baliño was a leftist typical of his time. In the early 1900s, he followed anarchism and gradually converted to socialism. *Socialism*, an undoubtedly vague term in the first decade of the twentieth century, could have meant anything from a parliamentary socialist to the most radical of anarchists. Like many "socialists" during the era, he became a Communist following the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. Even though he became a Communist, he continued to work closely with anarcho-syndicalists in an anarchist-Marxist alliance that dominated Cuba's main labor organizations in the early 1920s.

A second example is a leading anarcho-syndicalist printer in the 1920s, Alfredo López. Sympathetic and scholarly literature from outside Cuba clearly portrays López as a key anarcho-syndicalist in the island's labor movement. However, in Cuba, Alfredo López plays a different role. For instance, in her insightful biography of López, Olga Cabrera places the man squarely within the larger social dynamics impacting the Cuban labor movement, which portrays him as the "teacher of the Cuban proletariat," but his anarchist ideas are downplayed. This portrayal of him as a labor leader, while dismissing his anarchism, is reflected further in the Museum of the Revolution in Havana—the official post-1959 shrine and interpretation of Cuban history. In the museum's wing dedicated to the island's pre-1959 history, one can see a portrait of López with a brief discussion of his accomplishments; however, his anarchism is never mentioned. In her sweeping history of Cuban labor history, *Los que viven por sus manos*, Cabrera treats anarchists more fairly than earlier historians; yet, her argument is that only a truly national labor movement was possible after, among other things, anarchist leaders in the 1920s came to see the "truth" of Marxism-Leninism. This is the light into which López and other anarchists are cast: the anarchist-Marxist alliances of the 1920s were not mutual meetings of the mind; instead, anarchists "saw the light" of Marxism and joined the Communists.

Other international scholars have helped to chart a better analysis of anarchists, though still tied explicitly to a labor history perspective and mostly rooted in the nineteenth century. For instance, Gary Mormino and George

Pozzetta analyzed immigrant labor communities in Florida's cigar factories. Though it comprises a small part of their book, they illustrate how Spanish, Cuban, Italian, and American anarchists (as well as other labor radicals) worked and agitated side by side, exposed one another to different cultures and cultural perspectives, and thus helped to educate anarchists on a truly "international" perspective. In his research on Cuban communities in the United States from 1852 to 1898, Gerald Poyo shows the close links between major parts of the Florida émigré community and island anarchist leaders. He illustrates how these links and the strong influence of anarchist ideology posed problems between workers who sought a social revolution and other forces involved in a political nationalist independence movement. He analyzes how José Martí pulled these two strands together into a revolutionary movement in the early 1890s and by extension illustrates the impact of anarchists among Cuban workers in both Florida and Cuba. Jean Stubbs reflects on tobacco workers and the role of anarchists in this important economic sector, again with a focus on the nineteenth-century labor movement. She argues that, far from what is commonly believed, nineteenth-century Cuban anarchism was not a direct by-product of Spanish anarchism, and she notes that some anarchist leaders, like Enrique Roig San Martín, were not Spanish immigrants; in fact, many in the island's anarchist movement did not come from anarchist-dominated regions in Spain. All three studies illustrate the importance of understanding the Cuban anarchist movement as one branch of an international anarchist movement, though with specific local characteristics. In addition, all reflect an agreement that anarchists in Cuba (and Florida) modified the movement to represent the specific realities of Cuban labor. I argue that twentieth-century anarchists continued and expanded this trend beyond the workplace to the larger Cuban culture of politics, ethnicity, health, education, and gender.

Arguably the most important labor study that analyzes anarchism on the island is Joan Casanovas's *Bread, or Bullets!* Casanovas illustrates the central impact of anarchism in Cuba's late nineteenth-century urban labor history. Like Stubbs, he emphasizes the Creole, as opposed to Spanish or in particular Catalonian, influences on Cuban labor at this time. And like Poyo, Casanovas excellently portrays the reformist-anarchist split in the labor movement and its translation into a general, though not unanimous, anarchist support for the Cuban independence movement. Casanovas's especially valuable study describes thoroughly the role of urban labor, and ultimately urban-based anarchists, in shaping the evolution of Spanish colonial Cuba. Thus, Casanovas

shows how the island's workers played a key role in challenging Spanish colonial rule and providing the backbone (both figuratively and literally) for independence forces.

In short, these works have helped students of the region understand the interactions between anarchists and the larger nineteenth-century workers' movements on the island without the polemical undertones. However, even these historians have studied anarchism as part of a larger analysis of Cuban labor history. Thus, students of Cuba now know far more about nineteenth-century labor history than early twentieth-century labor history. But there is little known about anarchists beyond their roles in the labor movement. Consequently, this study takes a more focused analysis of the men, women, and sometimes even children who took part in all facets of Cuban anarchism both inside and outside the workplace. As a result of this more thorough description of anarchism, the larger Cuban political culture, with which the anarchists regularly engaged, emerges in new ways.

To this end, I have followed broader global trends in the study of international anarchism. Beginning in the 1980s, historians moved away from institutional and biographical approaches and toward a focus on anarchist culture. Significant in this trend are studies reassessing anarchism in the United States, Latin America, and Spain. For instance, through an examination of rank-and-file newspapers and anarchist art forms, Salvatore Salerno shows how the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) in the United States was a hybrid creation of rank-and-file attitudes and foreign-born intellectual impulses. In this same vein of international influences on anarchist movements, Mormino and Pozzetta looked at the role of anarchists and immigrant labor in radical unions in the United States. Research has focused on the sometimes contradictory challenges that U.S. anarchists faced, such as how to uphold revolutionary idealism while making a living in capitalist America. For instance, Blaine McKinley examines whether anarchists believed one could be a lawyer or merchant and still be an anarchist. On other fronts, McKinley and Donald Winters have discussed the seeming contradiction in U.S. anarchist anticlericalism by showing the repeated use of Christian symbolism in anarchist writings. Bruce Nelson's examination of "movement culture" illustrates how anarchists drew together different ethnicities and traditions to challenge American power brokers and influence American workers in one of the few social spaces that remained open to agitation: culture.

The study of Latin American and Spanish anarchism also received renewed

life as scholars shifted to a focus on cultural issues and conflicts. Dora Barrancos reflects this shift in the study of Argentine anarchism in her analyses of anarchist education and cultural issues like health and sexuality. Other studies by Barrancos and Maxine Molyneux illustrate the complex nature of Argentine anarchism by focusing on anarcho-feminism and the impact of female anarchists in a mostly male movement. The research by Barry Carr and Donald Hodges on anarchism in Mexico has shed light on the lingering impact of anarchism on Mexican politics, especially in the formation of the Mexican Communist Party. Anton Rosenthal's study of turn-of-the-century Montevideo, Uruguay, illustrates how anarchists and the city's leaders each used the streetcar to define their own ideas of progress. Scholars in Spain likewise have moved away from an institutional focus to emphasize culture, such as Lily Litvak's examinations of anarchist art and aesthetics. In addition, lesser-known cultural dimensions of anarchism like the anarcho-naturists and their approaches to health and population issues have become topics of new interest, as pursued by Eduard Masjuan. Consequently, to study Cuban anarchism, one has to move beyond the workplace and labor disputes (though by no means forsaking them entirely) to explore and understand the cultural creations of anarchists, how they used their culture to put forth their own ideas and initiatives, and how they challenged those who ran Cuba.

Cuban Anarchism

The chapters that follow provide a cultural and political history of anarchism that unfolds in layers. Readers who expect a traditional chronological account of the anarchists in Cuba will not find it here. For that one may consult the often polemical but nevertheless useful accounts of Sam Dolgoff (*The Cuban Revolution: A Critical Perspective*, 1977) and Frank Fernández (*Cuban Anarchism: The History of a Movement*, 2001). Both focus primarily on the labor struggles involving anarchists from the 1800s to the Castro era. Rather, by building on trends in anarchist historiography since the 1980s, this book explores the cultural history of the anarchist movement topically. Each new topic adds another layer to our understanding of the complexity of anarchism in Cuba. The following chapters concentrate on three important aspects of anarchist cultural politics in Cuba following 1898, what I see as "three sites of cultural conflict": nationalism and internationalism; health and nature; and education and gender. Each topic has its own section in this study. The first chapter of each section

follows a chronological overview of how anarchists addressed each site of conflict. Subsequent chapters in each section turn to anarchist culture, especially fiction, for a more thematic analysis of the topic.

Following chapter 1, which looks at the larger theoretical concerns guiding this study, I turn to part 1 to focus on the relationship between anarchism, nationalist politics, and issues of immigration and race. Chapter 2 addresses the anarchist critique of Cuban nationalism and how anarchists "Cubanized" anarchist internationalism after independence. Chapter 3 examines independence symbolism in Cuban anarchism by illustrating how anarchists avoided becoming "nationalists" themselves, yet still used the symbols of national independence to localize the international movement to fit Cuban reality. In particular, they interpreted important images of the island's political culture—the war itself and José Martí—into their critiques of postwar social relations. Chapter 4 explores how anarchists addressed issues of Spanish and Antillean immigration to Cuba. While anarchists described workers of all countries in noble terms, they attacked other "foreign" immigrants like international businessmen. These latter were portrayed as the immigrants that workers of all nationalities should see as their enemies. Chapter 5 examines how anarchists dealt with the particularly thorny issue of race in Cuba. This proved to be another means of localizing anarchist internationalism to meet the specific racial realities of the island. By addressing immigration and race, anarchists tried to overcome attempts by employers, politicians, and nationalistic labor unions to divide Cuban workers from Spanish, Haitian, and Jamaican workers.

Part 2 demonstrates how anarchists dealt with "real life" health and safety concerns of the popular classes. Chapter 6 shows how U.S. occupation forces from 1898 to 1902 and from 1906 to 1909 helped to control yellow fever and to develop improvements in sewers and sanitation. However, anarchists charged that such reforms did not go far enough and that rural and urban workers still suffered from unsanitary conditions both at home and in the workplace. Chapter 7 illustrates how anarcho-naturists helped to create health institutes that utilized alternative medicine and treatment, urged people to grow their own food and eat vegetarian diets, and at times promoted alternative lifestyles like nudism. These anarchists promoted such lifestyles as forms of preventative health care, but anarcho-naturists added a "social liberating" dimension to *naturismo*. Chapter 8 reflects the debate between anarchists over the impact of "Civilization" and its relationship to "Nature" by examining the role of Nature in anarchist statements and fiction. Anarcho-naturists promoted a rural ideal,

simple living, and being in harmony with Nature as ways to save the laborers from the increasingly industrialized character of Cuba. Besides promoting an early twentieth-century "back-to-the-land" movement, they used these romantic images of Nature to illustrate how far removed a capitalist industrialized Cuba had departed from an anarchist view of natural harmony.

In addition to making people healthy, anarchists believed that Cubans needed an appropriate education. Part 3 addresses the anarchist critique of Cuban educational systems and anarchist educational initiatives, particularly as they impacted women and children. Chapter 9 describes how anarchists rejected state- and church-run schools and developed their own coeducational institutions. During the day, schools operated for the workers' children. At night, schools taught the workers themselves. Anarchists recognized that formal schools could reach only a small number of people, so, as explained in chapter 10, they broadened their educational audience by utilizing their cultural meetings, newspapers, fiction, and theater to teach anarchist theories of freedom, egalitarianism, internationalism, and progress. These experiments in popular education also stressed the importance of avoiding greed, politics, and vice within the larger culture. Finally, chapter 11 analyzes how anarchist culture functioned as "texts" when directed particularly at women. Because anarchists saw the family as the seed from which to grow a cooperative society, they believed that women in particular needed to be targeted. Anarchist plays and stories served as educational tools that could instruct women and children on how to behave in an anarchist, egalitarian fashion while waiting for that revolutionary society to materialize.

Notes on Sources

In the fluid situation of Cuban cultural, political, and social life in the thirty years after independence, anarchists and most radicals on the Cuban political left understood that a social revolution was a long time away. Consequently, anarchists of all delineations believed that cultural work in the present was necessary not only to lay the groundwork for the future revolution but also to help people live better, healthier, more enlightened lives in the meantime. It was also essential to help Cubans imagine a reality and a future conducive to the anarchist agenda. To unlock this cultural history of Cuban anarchism, I have focused primarily on the printed cultural sources produced by anarchists themselves. These sources serve as the best surviving record of the movement,

its actions, and its ideas and visions. Thus, to understand the anarchist critique and cultural vision, this book is based largely around three types of sources: anarchist ideological books and pamphlets, anarchist newspapers, and anarchist cultural productions like novels, plays, and short stories. When relevant, I have incorporated archival material such as intelligence reports on anarchist activity. I have also relied on censuses, other official governmental reports, and publications from the anarchists' rivals and friends to provide context to understand just what the anarchists were challenging. Most of this book's insights were gleaned from anarchists' own political and cultural creations uncovered in institutes and libraries in Havana, Cuba, and Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

Although I pay considerable attention to the men, women, and children whose names and activities emerge, disappear, and sometimes reappear throughout the record, I pay special attention to the literary works and activities of the two most prominent of these anarchists, Adrián del Valle (aka Palmiro de Lidia) and Antonio Penichet. Del Valle was a core personality in Cuban anarchism from his first step in Cuba in 1895 to his death on the island fifty years later. He was born in Barcelona, Spain, in 1872, and came of age in the politically charged atmosphere of late nineteenth-century Catalonia. By 1890, he wrote for and collaborated with the Spanish anarchist newspaper *El Productor*, for which he occasionally wrote under the pen names "Palmiro de Lidia" and "Fructidor." In 1892, while living in New York City, he immersed himself in the city's radical politics. He quickly became the manager of the Spanish-language anarchist newspaper *El Despertar* where he was exposed to the numerous Spanish and Cuban anarchists who passed through the city. As tensions between Spain and Cuba increased in the early 1890s, Spanish-speaking anarchists in the United States began to agitate for Cuban independence. In February 1895, Del Valle left New York and arrived in Havana, just as the island began to explode in its final war for independence. Soon, he befriended the leading anarchists in Havana, but, unable to get from Havana to the separatist-dominated sections of Cuba, Del Valle returned to New York where he wrote in support of the war in *El Rebelde* under the name "Palmiro de Lidia." Following Spain's defeat, Del Valle immediately returned to Cuba, where, in the first month of the U.S. occupation of the island (January 1899), he founded the anarchist newspaper *El Nuevo Ideal*.[13]

Over the following decades, Del Valle became a constant presence in not only the anarchist press that proliferated in Cuba but also mainstream literary publications. He regularly contributed columns for the leading anarchist newspa-

pers *¡Tierra!*, *Rebelión!*, and *Nueva Luz*. From 1912 to 1913 he edited the free-thinking journal *El Audaz*. Then he began his largest publishing job by helping to found and edit the monthly alternative health magazine that followed the anarcho-naturist line *Pro-Vida*. While a mainstay in the anarchist press, Del Valle's prolific pieces of social commentary won him a seat at the more mainstream table of Cuban journalism. He served a fifteen-year stint as an editor for the periodical *Cuba y América* before he became an editor of the highly regarded journal *Revista Bimestre Cubana*, published by the Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País in Havana. During his years at the Sociedad Económica he served as a librarian, and in that role he became a leading force in reorganizing the society's extensive library holdings. This rather erudite existence isolated him from the day-to-day realities of physical labor in Cuba's expanding rural agri-industrial complexes and urban shops. But it afforded him considerable time to interact with the leading authors of his day as well as write for newspapers and magazines. Immersed in the atmosphere of revolutionary politics, labor radicalism, and literary dynamism, Del Valle wrote a series of novels, plays, and short stories, which today serve as key sources in understanding the cultural vision laid forth by the anarchist movement's leading artist. This cultural vision, which I describe throughout this book, was recognized by more than the anarchists who read and published his essays or fiction, staged his plays, and followed his advice on seeking alternative health regimens. In fact, he was recognized by Cuba's literary elite; in 1927 he was the subject of a prestigious public reception at the National Academy of Arts and Letters in which the Cuban Socialist and novelist Carlos Loveira—author of important social novels like *Los Inmorales*, *Juan Criollo*, and *Los Ciegos*—gave the honorary speech praising Del Valle's literary and social career. Del Valle remained a constant presence in Cuban anarchism until his death in February 1945.

Antonio Penichet was Del Valle's contemporary, who likewise produced anarchist fiction and short plays. Whereas the latter's world mainly revolved around intellectual circles, Penichet's world was that of a skilled laborer. As a young man, he arrived in Havana from the Cuban town of Güines after Spanish forces drove out rural Cubans in their infamous "reconcentration" policy during the war in the 1890s. Upon arriving in Havana, Penichet stayed at the home of Manuel Comas Seguí, who not only taught Penichet the printer's trade but also urged him to study anarchist ideas.[14] Penichet helped to edit the printers' *Memorándum Tipográfico* from 1913 to 1916, but during these years he shied away from openly supporting anarchism in the pages of the newspaper. This

changed by 1918 when Penichet became a leading anarcho-syndicalist figure in a Cuban labor movement that rapidly recovered from several years of repression during World War I by staging a broad array of strikes. In 1919, Penichet and other anarchists were arrested for their involvement in the strikes. In June, while hiding from authorities, he managed to publish the novel *La vida de un pernicioso* and a short story "El soldado Rafael." Coming on the heels of the Bolshevik Revolution, which Penichet supported, "El soldado Rafael" was suppressed by authorities who feared its call for a military-worker alliance to overthrow the state. He landed in more trouble in 1920 when authorities accused him and other anarchists of inciting workers to engage in bombings throughout Havana.[15]

During the first half of the 1920s, when the labor movement surged in power, Penichet became one of anarchism's leading voices. In 1922, he founded and became editor of the anarcho-syndicalist newspaper *Nueva Luz*, to which he contributed frequent columns on education, the historical and social importance of different inventions and technology, and the overall status of the labor movement. At the same time, Penichet became intricately linked with the FOH school for children. From this experience, he helped to found the CNOC in 1925 and led the organization's Education Committee. To illustrate his prominence in the labor movement, he had to publicly reject efforts by delegates to name a special honor for him during the CNOC's founding convention because Penichet believed such honors were inappropriate. Following the crackdown by the Machado government beginning in 1925, Penichet found himself on the run. He fled to Mexico for a time but returned to Cuba in the 1930s. His involvement in anarchist activities declined after that as he became a historian, an advocate for liberal education, and a librarian like Del Valle. He died in Cuba in 1964.[16]

Del Valle's and Penichet's works are worthy of study in and of themselves, but I focus on their literary works as primary sources that illuminate the anarchists' cultural challenges. As outlined in the next chapter, their fiction and actions served as important cultural frames for the anarchist movement—frames that gave ideational shape to anarchist interpretations of Cuban reality and anarchist goals for the island's future. At the same time these two men themselves were key actors in the movement's educational and health initiatives. I do not argue that all anarchists agreed with everything written by these two key literary and political figures. In fact, many found Del Valle a little too "bourgeois," especially considering his accolades from the larger culture and his life removed

from hard labor. In addition, Penichet and Del Valle did not always agree; for instance, in the 1920s anarchists of all stripes debated whether or not to align with Marxists. Penichet and most anarcho-syndicalists thought it a good idea but Del Valle and the anarcho-communists kept their distance. Thus, in this regard, both their individual lives and their ideas, expressed in their plays and fiction, represented a cross-segment of the anarchist community at any given time on the island: some agreed completely with one, the other, or both, while people could easily sympathize or take issue with, say, Del Valle's romantic rural landscapes or Penichet's creation of heroines out of Havana's prostitutes. However, to undertake a cultural history of a social movement, one must rely heavily (though not exclusively) on the leading cultural creators of that movement. In Cuba, many people staged plays, wrote columns, ran schools, and more; but among these activists, Del Valle and Penichet were the two most prolific, widely read, and widely heard cultural figures in Cuban anarchism.

Alan West has noted that "the artistic realm offers us a distinctive way of understanding both present and latent meanings of Cuban reality and history. The greater freedom in the aesthetic realm means that fiction, myth, folktales, popular music, and poetry can be brought to bear on the historical as a 'dialogue between intentional subjects,' as originating thought. And . . . I agree that 'a philosophy of history may well lie buried in the arts of the imagination.'"[17] West's "arts of the imagination" become central to understanding anarchism and anarchist culture in Cuba. West calls Cuban history and culture a *manigua*, a Taíno word referring to a dense, lush landscape—practically a jungle, a "natural profusion of confusion, a locus of escape from oppression and a new spot from which to begin a life of freedom."[18]

We require our own arts of imagination to slice through the dense layers of Cuban history and culture to make sense of the past. At the same time, we must recognize the arts of imagination used by history's actors to understand the historical images they used to describe their present and shape a picture of Cuba's potential future. Again, to this end, I draw heavily on the anarchists' arts of imagination, especially their cultural creations. Literature can help us understand the values and attitudes of historical actors. As E. Bradford Burns once noted, "on one level the novel reflects the writer's points of view ['world view'] on a topic. On another level, it is a document of, a mirror to, a period."[19] Fiction helps us to understand what the anarchists were seeing, interpreting, and imagining. By the same notion, it helps us understand how anarchists tried to get their readers and viewers to imagine Cuba's past, present, and potential future.

After all, anarchist culture was meant to be not only descriptive but also prescriptive; it was designed as a useful way to raise the consciousness of their audiences. In addition, people like Del Valle and Penichet tapped into the larger Cuban culture to write their fiction in their efforts to Cubanize the movement. Consequently, from a rarely heard viewpoint, literature and the arts can tell us a great deal about Cuba's anarchists, their vision for the island, and the island itself.

For thirty years after Cuban independence from Spain, the island's anarchists provided alternatives to the directions promoted by Cuba's economic, political, and cultural leaders. At times, when their agendas overlapped, they cooperated with reformist groups. Sometimes they disagreed among themselves. However, anarchists of all stripes believed that over time, as the social environment became purified of injustice, oppression, and vice, the imagined anarchist New Dawn of individuals—free, thinking, healthy, and equal—working in a spirit of cooperation and mutual aid would evolve until a day, which they hoped would not be too distant, of a social revolution. Against a wide array of political, economic, and cultural forces, Cuban anarchists struggled to keep that hope alive in the unions, the health clinics, the shops, the schools, the literary world, and even the stage.