

‘Trustworthy Allies’: International Organisations, Ernest Hemingway, Women Activists, and Spanish Republican Exiles in Cuba

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ABSTRACT: A shortage of scholarship exists on US private charitable aid organisations and their efforts to help exiles of the Spanish Civil War. Notably, if the literature on US private aid groups is scant for the Spanish conflict, the research is simply non-existent for refugees who made their way to Cuba or the women in the United States who facilitated aid for these refugees. Thus, this essay addresses a crucial lacuna in the historiography by examining how US aid groups dealt with the crisis on the island. Buoyed by files in the American Friends Service Committee archive and my research in Cuba, I reveal that the confluence of Cuban state hostility against Spanish exile settlement, US private aid’s penchant for advancing a ‘national’ image abroad, and the author Ernest Hemingway’s close relationships to the ‘loyalist’ cause and its exiles, resulted in a selective distribution of aid by mostly women at ‘neutral’ private aid organisations.

KEYWORDS: Spanish Civil War; World War II; immigration policy; conservative nativism; Fulgencio Batista; U.S. private charitable aid; refugees.

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Título traducido: ‘Aliados fidedignos’: organizaciones internacionales, Ernest Hemingway, mujeres activistas y los republicanos españoles en Cuba.

RESUMEN: Existen pocos estudios sobre las organizaciones caritativas estadounidenses y sus esfuerzos para ayudar a los exiliados de la guerra civil española. En particular, si la literatura existente sobre la ayuda de grupos privados estadounidenses es escasa para la guerra civil, las investigaciones no existen para los refugiados que llegaron a Cuba o para las mujeres en los Estados Unidos que facilitaron ayuda para estos. Por lo tanto, este ensayo analiza una laguna importante en la historiografía, examinando como grupos estadounidenses que proporcionaban ayuda se enfrentaron a la crisis en la isla. Apoyado por los expedientes y fondos en el archivo del American Friends Service Committee en Filadelfia y fuentes dentro de Cuba, yo pongo en relieve la confluencia de hostilidad por parte del estado cubano en contra de los refugiados españoles, la afición de las organizaciones privadas estadounidenses para promocionar una imagen ‘nacional’ fuera de su territorio, y las relaciones íntimas del autor Ernest Hemingway con la causa ‘leal’ y sus refugiados que resultaron en una distribución selectiva de ayuda a los refugiados por mujeres, en su mayoría, que trabajaban en organizaciones ‘neutrales’ de ayuda privada.

PALABRAS CLAVE: política migratoria; nativismo conservador; Fulgencio Batista; ayuda caritativa privada estadounidense; refugiados; guerra civil española; Segunda Guerra Mundial.

—Los cuáqueros siempre están donde más se necesitan. Son santos, los únicos santos que respeto. (Isabella Allende, *Largo Pétalo de Mar*)

In 1944, Janet Siebold, the Service Supervisor of the American Christian Committee for Refugees (ACCR) sent a report from Havana, Cuba to the Philadelphia-based Quaker charitable organisation, American Friends Service Committee (AFSC). Siebold informed her colleagues that she planned to reimburse the famed US author, Ernest Hemingway, US\$100 for funds given to Spanish Civil War exiles and pledged an additional US\$290 monthly to aid six refugee families. The most pressing cases, as Siebold described, dealt with those refugees of advanced ages or who suffered from urgent medical conditions.¹ While Hemingway's personal relationships with Spanish exiles are well known, the letter prompts several questions: First, how did Hemingway become the conduit for aid between the destitute exiles in Cuba and a private US charitable organisation? (Fuentes, 2019, p. 248; Domingo Cuadriello, 2019). Second, why did Siebold and the ACCR, trust Hemingway and not the Cuban authorities to carry out this relief work? The answers to these questions reveal not only the unreliability of Fulgencio Batista's government in Cuba to carry out these tasks but also the practices of US private humanitarian aid groups and their alignment with US foreign policy aims.

A shortage of scholarship exists on US private charitable aid organisations and their efforts to help exiles of the Spanish Civil War. Existing research mainly examines initiatives within Europe (Martínez-Vidal, 2020; Mendlesohn, 2002). The Special Issue published by this journal in 2019, entitled "Humanitarian aid: From the Spanish Civil War to the early days of post-war Europe," took an important step in this regard, analysing efforts in southern France. However, as historian and contributor to the issue, Aurelio Velázquez-Hernández, posits, "we know next to nothing" about US participation in this arena (Velázquez-Hernández, 2019, p. 2). The extant scholarship that does exist reveals that the bonds between US private aid and US foreign policy increasingly tightened, reaching its apex between the Spanish Civil War and the founding of the United Nations (Maul, 2018, p. 130; Mendlesohn, 2002). Notably, if the literature on US private aid groups is scant for the Spanish conflict, the research is simply non-existent for refugees who made their way to Cuba or the women who facilitated aid for these refugees. Only some tangential references in larger studies about other parts of Latin America or in monographs about Jewish migration to the island exist.² Thus, this essay addresses a crucial lacuna in the historiography by examining how US aid groups dealt with the crisis on the island. Buoyed

by files in the AFSC archive and my research in Cuba, I reveal that the confluence of Cuban state hostility against Spanish exile settlement, US private aid's penchant for advancing a 'national' image abroad, and Hemingway's close relationships to the 'loyalist' cause and its exiles, resulted in a selective distribution of aid by mostly women at 'neutral' private aid organisations.

Charitable organisations became vehicles through which women could exert influence and provide much-needed aid during times of crisis. These socially accepted spaces allowed women to wield considerable financial and decision-making 'soft' power in the public sphere because, as feminist scholars have affirmed, "the essentialist vision of womanhood contributed to defining humanitarian care as a female competence... [and] reinforced the corollary notion of women operating in a discrete sphere of action" (Marín-Muruno, Edgar, and Leyder, 2020, p. 3). Despite their numeric presence, the role played by female agents in this field has been grossly underrepresented. Integral to the relief efforts in Spain, women at the AFSC demonstrated their commitment to religious principles, yet the higher-ups viewed enthusiasm, spiritual or political, as deviation from the mission (Mendlesohn, 2002, p. 51). As a result, it is difficult to examine what motivated these women from the documents available. Still, their names and actions must be part of the historical record. Their roles change the way we think about Spanish refugees in Cuba, a topic completely overlooked in the scholarship, and help us assess how they approached the refugee crisis in a country where the North-South power imbalances skewed exchanges.

CUBA AND THE SPANISH EXILE PROBLEM, 1936-1940

For refugees who abandoned their homes, hopes, and lives in Spain, life after 1939 only exacerbated hardships. Three years of brutal civil war, frantic overland journeys, and months in French concentration camps awaited the refugees before they could hope to migrate to Latin America. The asylum-seeking refugees faced additional challenges resettling in Cuba. The refugee crisis prompted Cuba's leaders to slam the door shut to European migration for the first time in its history. Like Jewish and Chinese refugees in the 1930s, Spanish Republicans in 1939 faced barriers to their resettlement. Beginning with Gerardo Machado's stint as Minister of the Interior through his dictatorship (1911-33), the Cuban government deported 'pernicious aliens' for ideological deviations (Naranjo Orovio, 1991, p. 219). From the late 1920s through the 1930s, Cuban nationalism and identity, as Phillip A. Howard argues, "were embedded in nativism, an ideology that inspired intense anti-Black immigrant rhetoric and violence" (Howard, 2015, p. 11). Blacks, Chinese, Jews, and 'reds' became dangerous to the nation. By 1930, Machado's government viciously

1 "Letter from Ms. Schauffler to Elena Mederos," n/d, AFSC Archive (AFSCA from now on), Philadelphia, P.A., Box: Part B, Box 31, General Office Files.

2 Mendlesohn (2002, p. 1) notes the work done by the Quakers in Mexico, France, and Spain from 1936-1942 but does not discuss efforts in Cuba. See also: Harvey Gardiner, 1979; Levine, 1993.

executed foreigners, like the Chinese communist José Wong and the Spanish anarchist Jesús Montero Hernández, who mobilised against him. As Cuban historian Lionel Soto has noted, "this act was meant to terrorise revolutionary immigrant groups."³ From 1931 to 1932, under the *Ley de Extranjería*, Machado surveilled foreigners and their families by requiring registration with the government.⁴

Anti-immigrant attitudes gained the fullest expression in the 1930s. Conservative nativism, which strengthened during Batista's shadow dictatorship (1934-1940), promoted fear of the 'other' and enjoyed support from Spanish and Cuban elites as well as the state. After the Cuban Revolution of 1933 ousted Machado from power, leaders further curtailed Cuba's 'open system' through '*leyes de extranjería*' and the Nationalisation of Labour Law (50% law), which resulted in the mass repatriation of Spanish, Haitian, and West Indian labourers.⁵ The hypocrisy in this regard became so blatant that the Cuban anarchist paper, *Tierra!*, observed: "Let's speak clearly. Machado fled Cuba but Machado's methods live on [and] have been perfected."⁶

Some politicians sold these edicts to the Cuban people as nationalist expressions of anticolonial anger, yet by the late 1930s, they became the pretext to fend off all migrants at a time when progressives across the globe fled fascist governments. In 1939, anti-immigration sentiments found their greatest expression in Cuban presidential decrees that discouraged refugees from Germany, Spain, France, and China. A poor economy overlapped with the prerogatives of wealthy merchants in Cuba who turned their guns against 'leftist politics' and refugee 'reds.'⁷ Those who opposed immigration helped shape

Cuba's foreign policy during the 1930s. As a result, asylum for Spanish refugees to Cuba occurred on a small scale, often evading laws and customs officials.

As historian Alicia Altied has argued, the Spanish Civil War mobilised in 'an unprecedented fashion' Western support for the civilian population (Altied Vigil, 2019). At first, US private charitable organisations, like the AFSC, focused on sending food and provisions to European Jews and Spanish children, yet the State Department strictly limited the number of relief workers the AFSC could dispatch (Mendlesohn, 2002, p. 61). The American Friends, however, quickly became the funnel and paragon for other groups, distributing aid from US religious organisations and left-wing organisations, though leaders kept the latter from public view.⁸ All parties during the Spanish Civil War received aid from the AFSC, although it inevitably skewed Left as the Republic crumbled. The AFSC held a special license to carry out this aid with the US government approval, a novel stipulation for such an organisation in the United States during peacetime, bounding this private-religious entity to US foreign policy aims and neutrality.⁹ As Farah Mendlesohn has shown, the top brass of the AFSC included north-eastern, college-educated men who considered themselves part of the establishment and enjoyed access to the president and members of the US Congress. Quaker religious values of non-violence aligned with the US foreign policy objective of neutrality during the Spanish conflict, yet they also shared a belief in 'collective responsibility', something that the Quakers increasingly believed only the United States could deliver after the failure of the League of Nations to solve conflicts, like the Sino-Japanese War, the Abyssinian Crisis, and in Spain (Mendlesohn, 2002, pp. 15-19). When naval blockades limited the reach of governments, the AFSC replaced the American Red Cross (ARC) as the main distributor of US and British aid to Spain and France but donations from the Spanish Refugee Relief Committee (SRRC) and the ARC as well as from fellow pacifist Peace Churches (Mennonites and the Church of the Brethren) flowed into the American Friends's coffers, offering operative flexibility and, with the latter groups, personnel to staff positions abroad.¹⁰ As Franco's repression of Spanish Republicans increased, so

3 Soto, 1977, pp. 3-25. José Cuxart Falgons, a Spanish anarchist in Cuba, attempted to assassinate Machado and was murdered in prison. In July, more than 500 Cuban workers went on strike in Havana's San Francisco docks to protest the deportation of three Spanish workers who opposed Machado. See: "El machadato en el poder," *Bohemia*, 4 March 1977, p. 85; Soto, 1977, p. 377.

4 Naranjo Orovio, 1987b, pp. 42-43. Anarchist literature of the period asserted that the "State manipulates nationalism to foster a climate of fear and hatred against Spanish workers in Cuba." See: Shaffer, 2005, pp. 77-89.

5 Henderson, 2020, pp. 262; Álvarez Acevedo, 1936, p. 251; Naranjo Orovio, 1987b, pp. 42-43. The 50% Law affected Jews and Spanish Republicans equally. Once WWII began and Cuba joined the Allied war effort, the Cuban state froze all citizenship applications which affected Spaniards and Jews disproportionately. See: "Letter from Asociación Nacional Conjunta para Auxilio a Refugiados y Emigrantes to the Joint Relief Committee," Box: Refugee Services New York Office Benefit Concert to France 1942, Folder: Refugee Services Comms & Orgs / Latin American Refugee Fund 1942, 12 Feb. 1942; "From Luis H. Sobel, Assistant Secretary, to Mrs. Schauffer," 21 June 1944. AFSCA, Philadelphia, PA.

6 "Sangre y Azúcar," *Tierra!* 10 March 1934, p. 4.

7 López posits that most Chinese leftists, like most Spanish Republicans, were democratic-minded, anti-imperialistic, and opposed militaristic strongmen. Both Chinese and Spanish merchants opposed 'leftist politics.' López, 2013, pp. 198-199, 206. For the lack of jobs in Cuba for Spanish refugees see: Naranjo Orovio, 1988, p. 166. Domingo Cuadriello and

others downplay 'nationalist feelings and of xenophobia' or of 'chauvinist law(s)', ignoring that some opponents of migration invoked nationalist themes when arguing for restrictions. Domingo Cuadriello, 2009, pp. 36-37; Cabrera, 1993, pp. 98-99.

8 Some of these included: The Greater New York Federation of Churches, the Unitarians, and the Association to Save the Children of Spain and the 'Left' North American Committee for Democracy in Spain. Velázquez-Hernández, 2019, p. 2; Mendlesohn, 2002, pp. 21-22.

9 "Letter from Herman Reissig to John Rich," 21 March 1940, Part H: Organizations, Box 3, SRRO organization-AFSC-2. University Archives, Rare Book & Manuscript Collection, Columbia University Libraries (CUL from now on); Maul, 2018, pp. 134-135.

10 "For Humanity's Sake," *Havana Post*, 6 January 1939, p. 2; "Meeting of Executive Board, Spanish refugee relief campaign," 14 December 1939, Part C: organization minutes and

too did the desperation to evacuate them from Europe. International aid and pro-Republican organisations agreed to resettle refugees in the Western Hemisphere.

The dictatorial regime of Rafael Leonidas Trujillo welcomed boatloads of refugees who arrived in the Dominican Republic from Europe. For dictators like Trujillo, who had recently completed the bloodiest period of his rise to authority by massacring thousands of unarmed Haitians in 1937, the shift in international attention away from his brutality toward concerns about European refugee resettlement must have been welcome (Alfonseca Giner de los Ríos, 2007, pp.129-215; Naranjo Orovio, 1987; Gardiner, 1979, pp. 15-94; Vega, 1984, pp. 45-6; Roorda, 1998, pp. 144-145; Llorens, 1973, pp. 94-95). In July 1938, the US-led Intergovernmental Committee sponsored a conference in Evian, France, where Trujillo's regime offered to accept 100,000 refugees. However, only when resettlement became a US priority did Trujillo act (Gardiner, 1979, p. 34). When Mexico temporarily ended its open-door refugee policy in November 1939 and stopped issuing visas, the Dominican Republic became the only 'safe-haven' in the region. Spanish refugees in France had few choices: join the resistance, work for the French military brigades, or migrate to the Dominican Republic.¹¹ From July 1939 to March 1940, seven ships containing 500 to 700 Spanish refugees each arrived monthly. This Dominican interlude became an important first Caribbean encounter for refugees who eventually resettled in Cuba.

Increasingly, pro-Republican organisations pooled their resources into three major relief efforts: supporting refugees in France, transporting them to the Americas, and administering aid in the Dominican Republic. Cuban organisations, like the National Association to Aid the Victims of the War in Spain (NAAVWS), created a commission to 'investigate... [the] very bad news' they received from Santo Domingo. The organisation attempted to ship soap, dresses, shoes, tobacco, and medicines collected in Cuba directly to Spanish refugees in the Dominican Republic. When high Cuban export duties prevented the shipments, the NAAVWS appealed to US charities, like the SRRC, suggesting they 'become the protectors' and that they could obtain better rates from US custom houses.¹² As they had during the Civil War, a transnational network connected supporters in the United States and Cuba, who communicated, collaborated, and shared information to aid the destitute refugees in the Dominican Republic. However, these webs of information could not

prepare these refugees for what awaited them across the Atlantic.

Asylum-seeking in Cuba encountered opposition from two sectors: the Cuban state and conservative nativists. Like most Latin American governments in the 1930s, Cuba curbed migration under the guise of patriotism and nationalism (Gardiner, 1979, p. 29). In 1936, the government implemented a new immigration law to forestall poorer migrants from arriving by demanding they post a US\$300 bond (Levinson, 2006, p. 100). The following year, under titular President Lauredo Brú and Batista, the Cuban state imposed a yearly tax on *all* foreigners. *New York Times* correspondent in Cuba, Ruby Hart Phillips, commented that "this was not a revenue tax but a means of keeping tabs on all foreigners, motivated by the rising nationalistic spirit" (Phillips, 1959, p. 184; Domínguez, 1978, p. 517). These measures prove that little had changed since Machado's dictatorship.

An onslaught of decrees soon followed. Brú enacted Decree 55 in January and Decree 937 in May 1939, which became the first barrier to European migration in Cuba's history. The decrees explicitly called for visa applicants to prove that they were not "political or religious refugees and that they could return at any time to their place of origin."¹³ To stem the flow of Central European Jews and Spanish Republicans entering Cuba, both decrees raised the price of visa applications.¹⁴ High visa costs meant that Spanish refugees who had their possessions confiscated before crossing the border into France could not afford the price tag of settling in Cuba. Although most of the scholarship on the émigrés has focused on the 50% law as the primary disincentive to Spanish migration, Brú and Batista's new regulations also restricted asylum for Spanish, Chinese, and Jewish refugees. Jewish resettlement organisations complained of the high costs, charging that the government confiscated 78% of the refundable bonds paid by refugees (Fernández, 1972, p. 5; Beevor, 2006, p. 410). Emmitt W. Gulley, the administrator of Finca Paso Seco, an AFSC-affiliated hostel outside of Havana for Jewish refugees, argued that "there is no chance, at least for the present, that the Cuban government will relax the immigration laws. This is an election year, and everybody seems to fear touching upon that question."¹⁵ Politicians feared objections from the well-funded elites in Cuba.

reports, Box 2, SRRO Organization: Organization minutes and report-executive board-Spanish relief campaign.

11 Rubio, 1977, p. 332; Vega, 1984, p. 96. Vega contends that JARE eventually used the funds to pay for the travel costs to leave the Dominican Republic. "Naturalización en México de los españoles que lo soliciten," *España Libre*, 17 Nov. 1939, p. 7.

12 "Letter from Sara Pascual to SRRC," Havana, 25 March 1940, Part J - Foreign Correspondence, Box 1 - Miscellaneous Countries, SRRO organization, Cuba- AANPE (2). CUL.

13 "Requisitos que exige la dirección general de inmigración para los que deseen venir a Cuba," ANC, S/F, Secretaría de la Presidencia, leg. 121, sig. 55.

14 *Ibid.*; "Obtaining a Cuban visa," US National Archives (USNA from now on), Confidential US Diplomatic Post Records Cuba, 1940-1945, File No. 811.11; AFSC Refugee Committee, "Current news on migration," 15 Jan. 1941, Folder: FS Refugee Services 56142, Projects: Hostel - Finca Paso Seco, Cuba Administration 1939, Box: AFSC General Files: Foreign Service - Refugee Services, 1939, AFSCA; Levine, *Tropical Diaspora*, pp. 102-103.

15 Emmitt W. Gulley, "Jewish migration to Cuba," Folder: FS Refugee Services 56142, Projects: Hostel - Finca Paso Seco, Cuba Administration 1939, Box: AFSC General Files: Foreign Service - Refugee Services, 1939, AFSCA.

By early 1939, *Diario de la Marina* had become the mainstream voice of nativist, anti-immigration sentiments, revealing a fear of racialised ideological contagion. The newspaper's editor, José Ignacio Rivero, embraced fascist governments across Europe. Throughout the 1930s, Rivero's newspaper had opposed asylum for Chinese and Jewish refugees based on racial hatreds and a desire to eliminate competition for conservative Spanish vendors in Havana.¹⁶ However, *Diario de la Marina* and its affiliated newspapers became the lone opponents to Spanish Republican refugee resettlement and lumped all refugees together as a threat to Cuba's stability. In May 1939, the paper published an editorial titled 'Against the Immigration Avalanche', that warned Cubans of the 'grave problems' that would plague the island if the doors remained open to European refugees.¹⁷ The article claimed refugees were dangerous because they believed in 'other' ideologies and belonged to other races and religious creeds. Claiming prudence, not xenophobia, the editorial defended Cuba's 50% law, an about-face from its opposition to the law before 1939. The newspaper maintained that they supported the law and an end to open immigration to avoid, as the article asserted, "how soon we will hear the lamentations of Cubans who consider themselves strangers in their own homeland, unable to earn a living, while we will see foreign elements prospering at their expense."¹⁸ Astoundingly, the paper which in the past championed a white foreign workforce over native Cubans, now wrapped itself in the Cuban flag to deny entry to Europe's war-torn refugees. *Diario de la Marina* published daily articles on the enforcement of Brú's decrees, reporting on the firing of non-cooperative employees and sensationalizing tales of corruption in Cuba's ports to rouse anti-immigrant sentiments.¹⁹ The newspaper lumped its fear of Spanish 'reds' with racial prejudices against Jews fleeing fascism and Chinese escaping Japanese imperialism.

A weak economy became the second pillar of conservative nativist discourse. Cuba's economy had struggled to recover after the Great Depression. Cuban sugar lost

much of its share of the global sugar market, falling from 21.1% in 1925 to 10.9% in 1940 (Zanetti Lecuona, 2006, pp. 102-103). In addition, from 1938 to 1940, Cuba's per-capita income dropped and the infant mortality rates increased (Domínguez, 1978, p. 74-76). Cuba's currency dropped in value, and the boom that Cuba's leaders expected from the outbreak of World War II in September 1939 did not materialise until much later (Phillips, 1959, pp. 192-193). Yet, if Cuba's leaders aimed to protect Cuba's workforce, why did they allow the boatloads of Spanish migrants whose families could pay the visa fees to enter Cuba? Did not the fees favour those with ties, familial or regional, to rich Spanish families on the island? Because of the scarcity of records from this period and the absence of most records from Cuba's immigration detention centre, Tiscornia, it is difficult to answer this question. However, pro-Republican newspapers with correspondents in Cuba reported that boatloads of pro-Franco Spaniards landed in Havana after the government enacted the decrees.²⁰ Cuba's Foreign Minister visited Spain and suggested that the island could benefit from an additional 60,000 Spanish workers during the Great Depression, yet by 1938, Brú's Minister of Labour, Juan M. Portuondo Domenech, wanted to deport 50% of foreign workers in Cuba.²¹ The Cuban government, like the Lázaro Cárdenas regime in Mexico, could have touted the economic benefits of 'highly qualified' professionals who fit into Batista's vision of economic development (Sznajder and Roniger, 2009, p. 122). Tellingly, it argued the opposite, that the decrees protected Cuban workers, those hardest hit by the recent global economic crisis; yet most of Cuba's labour unions supported the arrival of Spanish refugees. Cuba's workers understood that the nation's leaders protected the interests of the most reactionary sectors of society.

Some Black Cubans had also opposed Spanish migration before the end of the war because of vanishing employment opportunities for Cubans of colour. In January 1938, before most Spanish refugees arrived, the Black Cuban journalist Carlos A. Cervantes asserted in *Adelante* that hiring practices challenged the economic and social morals of Blacks because "in Cuba there is work for everyone [...] however [Blacks] are fired ignominiously because of their pigmentation, allowing foreigners [to work], be they Spanish, Chinese, Polish, Russian or German."²² Cervantes's account challenged the conservative nativist charge that a weak economy meant no jobs. Also, Cervantes's article affirmed that weak Cuban politicians, who served the interests of imperialists, allowed for preferential hiring and firing practices. During Cuba's

16 Several other Cuban newspapers, like *Información* and *El País*, published editorials calling for restrictions on further migration to Cuba from places like China and Central Europe but opposed an end to Spanish migration. See: Levine, *Tropical Diasporas*, p. 130. Kathleen López finds that *Diario de la Marina* also spearheaded anti-Chinese campaigns to protect the interests of conservative Spanish merchants. See: López, 2013, p. 192. For an excellent analysis of Cuban elite views of non-white immigration see: Naranjo Orovio, 1998, p. 230.

17 "Contra el alud inmigratorio," *Diario de la Marina*, 14 May 1939, p. 4.

18 *Ibid.*

19 "Habrà cesantías por la visa irregulares de numerosos pasaportes," *Diario de la Marina*, 28 May 1939, p. 1. According to Levine, before mid-1939, employment as an immigration official could be a lucrative business by selling immigration visas. See: Levine, 1993, pp. 96-97. Figueredo Cabrera argues that Batista allowed Brú 'total autonomy' in his diplomacy with Spain. Arguably, by allowing Brú to enact a pro-Franco agenda, Batista acted by his own designs. Figueredo-Cabrera, 2014, p. 113.

20 J. Martínez, "Ha pasado por la Habana un barco fascista," *España Libre*, 1 Dec. 1939, p. 12.

21 Klien, 2002, p. 42; Bejarano, 1999. During the same year, Brú's government bestowed the National Order of Merit Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, the highest civil order in the nation, to Nazi diplomats, Joachim von Ribbentrop and Vicon von Bulow Schwant. See: Chongo Leiva, 1989, p. 16.

22 Carlos A. Cervantes, "Las industrias y los negros," *Adelante*, Jan. 1938, pp. 8-10.

Second Republic (1933-1959), some Black Cuban intellectuals maintained that the island suffered from a *de facto* racial caste system with creole whites at the top, followed by Spaniards, other white foreigners, Chinese, Black creoles, and finally, Black foreigners (Betancourt, 1959, p. 37). Although some resentment might have existed, it has thus far been lost to history. The evidence demonstrates that Spanish refugees enjoyed support among Cuban Blacks. Republican Spain and its growing number of refugees had the firm support of Black labour leaders, especially those affiliated with the Cuban Communist Party (PSP).²³ Lazaro Peña, the leader of Cuba's National Labour Union, the C.T.C., held events, fundraised, and lent the full power of the island's workers against Franco.²⁴ Peña argued that Franco and the Falange were an existential threat "to the peoples of America and most especially Cuba."

Spanish Republicans explained to the island's residents that a new relationship had developed organically between Black and Spanish workers. Proletarianization of Spaniards began well before the Spanish War and contained a racial component. While in Havana to rouse support for the Spanish Republic, Alfonso Rodríguez Castelao and Luis Soto echoed these themes on visits to the island's Black fraternal associations to fundraise for the Spanish Republic in 1938. Castelao offered speeches at Black societies, like Club Atenas, Unión Fraternal, and the Federation of Coloured Societies.²⁵ A special commission of Afro-Cuban leaders, like Pedro Portuondo, Emilio Leal, Pedro Padrón, Evelino Armenteros, Orlando Mitijáns and others greeted Castelao and Soto, extending honorary memberships to the Federation of Coloured Societies. In his speeches, Castelao emphasised the proletarian solidarity between Galician and Black workers, pointing out that these two groups had done the hardest, most backbreaking work in Cuba. This discourse, rooted in their shared exploitation appealed to many Cubans (Cabrera, 1993, p. 99). Afro-Cubans had described the fascist threat in Spain using their own experiences as labourers during foreign capitalist expansion in Cuba in the 1930s (Sullivan, 2012, p. 323). Castelao sketched a drawing of the proletarian solidarity between Blacks and Galicians titled 'New Dialogue' that was published in *Noticias de Hoy*, depicting two rural proletarians shaking hands.

In that same year, a Spanish anarchist worker in Cuba wrote: "We are foreigners but not strangers or enemies. On the contrary, the political-social postulates that we defend, bring us together and bring us closer to [...]"

Cuba and our condition as producers unites us to the great masses of the native population."²⁶ As Ariel Mae Lambe posits in the case of the antifascist movement on the island, after Mussolini's forces conquered Ethiopia in 1935, "many antifascists of African descent changed the focus of their struggle from Ethiopia to Spain, at times easily and at other times with considerable tension."²⁷ If, as Lambe adds, Black Cuban antifascists viewed fascism as a 'system of capitalist exploitation', then on those terms, they could work with progressive and radical Spaniards on and off the island who had decried this type of exploitation since the birth of the Cuban Republic. Although antifascism became an important factor for solidarity, Spaniards and Blacks had toiled together since the early years of the Cuban Republic. Racism was not universal within the Spanish community. In fact, progressive Spaniards were at the vanguard of placing class loyalties above racial divisions (Klien, 2002, p. 119). As Spanish socialists observed in 1906, Cuban socialist worker manifestoes "made vehement calls for all workers of the Republic, without distinctions of any kind, [among] those brazed by the sun in the Cuban fields or those choked by the dust of the workshops."²⁸ Whereas Spanish regional clubs barred Blacks from becoming members and forbade them even as guests, the pro-Spanish Republican organisations welcomed Black associates (Klien, 2002, pp. 59-60). In this respect, solidarity gave the Republican 'new Spain' content.

In 1939, however, the decision to allow Spanish refugees to enter Cuba would be judged by the actual power in Cuba, Fulgencio Batista. The military strongmen sent mixed public messages about his posture toward the defeated Republicans.²⁹ The government, under Batista's supervision, recognised Franco's government on 1 April 1939, only days after the Republican defeat (Licea Cisneros, 2016, p. 9). Nonetheless, the head of the military could not have hoped to maintain the support of Cuba's labour movement and the PSP, two key members of the coalition for his presidential campaign in 1940, without at least paying lip service to the Republican cause. As Gillian McGillivray argues, two of the primary reasons Batista turned to the Left in the late 1930s were his admiration for the democratic-populist model of the Cárdenas regime in Mexico and pressure from a popular front of communists, anarcho-syndicalists, and Auténticos in Cuba who mobilised and fundraised to fight

23 "Gran acto pro refugiados en Palisades Park," *Noticias de Hoy*, 3 March 1940, p. 1, 6.

24 "Lázaro Peña... dice..." *Noticias de España*, 15 Jan. 1945, p. 4; Lambe, 2019, pp. 12-13.

25 Neira Vilas, 1983, pp. 59-60. Xosé Neira Vilas accompanied Castelao on his visit to Cuba; "Alfonso R. Castelao," *España Libre*, 23 Nov. 1945, p. 6; Santiago Álvarez, "Querido amigo y paisano (a Castelao)," 16 April 1940, Santiago Álvarez 66, Box: Correspondencia 66 C-E, Folder: "Castelao," Biblioteca Santiago Álvarez, Fundación 10 de Marzo, Santiago de Compostela, Spain. (F10M).

26 Emilio López Díaz, Vicente Veiga, "Frente Popular Antifascista Español U.G.T., C.N.T.: A la opinión de Cuba," Jan. 1938, Havana, International Institute of Social History (IISH) Archive, Amsterdam, Holland.

27 Lambe, 2019, pp. 66-74. Afro-Cubans in Oriente had been, as Peace Sullivan argues, "actively engaged in the pro-Republican struggle, and explicitly linked their efforts to their every-day struggles at home in Cuba." See: Sullivan, 2012, p. 323.

28 "Exterior," *El Socialista*, 28 Dec. 1906, p. 4.

29 Miguel de Marcos, "Si no se restablece rápidamente caeremos en una dictadura: Nuestra vida constitucional Cosme de la Torriente," *Bohemia*, 19 March 1939, pp. 25, 53.

Franco's regime.³⁰ If Cárdenas served as his guide, then Batista's support for conservative nativism makes sense given Mexico's 'strong xenophobic character' from the 1920s through the end of WWII. In the 1930s, Mexico excluded refugees both on racial and ideological terms, instructing their diplomats to ignore asylum requests and discouraging the entry of 'undesirable foreigners' (Sznajder and Roniger, 2009, pp. 123-124). As Mario Sznajder and Luis Roniger point out, Cárdenas's personal affinity for the Spanish Republic and the hospitality he offered "may have constituted the exception rather than the rule in Mexico's refugee policy." Thus, Batista had followed the Cárdenas model, except he did not share the same enthusiasm for the defeated Spanish refugees.

Some Cuban diplomats in Europe, especially those who had opposed Batista's co-optation of the 1933 Revolution in Cuba, helped refugees circumvent the island's immigration barriers by granting asylum through forged documents and 'tourist' visas. Although advocates of refugee resettlement included a wide, often contentious mix of Cuba's progressives with sometimes conflicting attitudes toward migration—including communists, anarchists, socialists, and pro-migration nationalists—most distinguished between progressive asylum-seekers and the large numbers of Spanish migrants who made up the bulk of Spaniards in Cuba (De la Fuente, 2001, p. 190). To be clear, these attitudes evolved alongside the spread of fascism across the globe as well as the political and economic convulsion that rocked Cuba in the 1930s. Diplomats like Cuban feminist Flora Díaz Parrado helped the refugees in Paris by donating cash, shoes, dresses, purses, and coats while securing their exit visas to Cuba and other Latin American republics.³¹ Another diplomat, Ramón Estalella, went beyond his consular responsibilities to guarantee the safety of Spanish Republicans, including driving them across the border into Portugal (Moral Roncal, 2003, pp. 133-50). US consular officials in Havana, fearful that European migrants could enter the United States with Cuban papers, noted that the Cuban ministers in Paris on their own authority, "and allegedly as a humanitarian act" granted visas to European refugees.³² In another US Embassy communique, diplomats noted that "a Cuban group, among which are alleged to be two senators, which is said to be improperly issuing citizenship cards and possible passports, to refugees from

Europe, mainly Spaniards."³³ One can assume that Cuban diplomats, committed to the rights to asylum, felt a kinship with the Republican exiles.

In July 1940, the Cuban government hosted the Pan-American Conference, a meeting of regional governments, which modified Batista's approach toward the refugees. Conference attendees agreed to suppress fifth-column activities in the region, a clear message to the Spanish Right in Cuba (Phillips, 1959, p. 200). By August, the newly elected President Batista once again raised hopes when he expressed Cuba's 'profound sympathy' for the plight of Spanish refugees (Figueredo Cabrera, 2014, p. 135). This time, his government took concrete steps to weaken the barriers established in 1939. On 22 October 1940, Batista promulgated Decree 3023, abrogating parts of Decrees 55 and 937.³⁴ This decree favoured 'transients', those who remained in Cuba for less than 30 days, opening the door for Cuba's expanded role as a 'transit station', for refugees traveling to other parts of Latin America. Cuban and US delegates to the Continental Conference to Aid Spanish Refugees, convened in Mexico City from 15 to 18 February 1940, had argued for this policy change.³⁵ The transnational exile solidarity network successfully influenced Cuban policymaking. Cuban politicians, aware that directing their pleas to the United States might pressure Batista, published an open letter to the US Secretary of State requesting assistance for refugees signed by thirty-four Cuban congressional representatives in November.³⁶ Even Cuban legislators had to appeal to forces outside the island to protect the refugees.

During the debates preceding a new Constitutional Convention in 1939, National Democratic Union representative, Carlos Saladrigas, dismissed the need for anti-discrimination legislation for Black Cubans because, as he stated, the real threat posed to the nation came from immigrants, not from racial prejudice. As Kaitlyn Henderson has argued, for those who embraced this type of nativism, "immigrants were not entitled to the same egalitarianism since they had not sacrificed in contribution to the Cuban Republic" (Henderson, 2020, pp. 273-274). Thus, anti-immigrant sentiments could both stoke fears against refugees and divert attention from national issues like racial inequality.

After the Pan-American Conference, Batista and his allies seemed to increase their support for some causes championed by Spanish Republicans, focusing primarily on halting repressive measures against those refugees

30 McGillivray, 2009, p. 244. In fact, as the dictator fashioned a mythology of his early life in Eastern Cuba in the 1930s, Batista pointed to his sympathy for a strike by mostly Spanish immigrants in the port of Antilla, 'Little Spain', against the United Fruit Company. See: Argote-Freyre, 2006, p. 17.

31 Domingo Cuadriello, 2009, p. 39-40. Domingo Cuadriello finds that several Cuban diplomats falsified passports or aided the refugees, including: Luis Bas Molina, head of the Cuban consulate in Vigo, Rafael Menacho Vicente, Cuban consular official in Alicante, and Enrique Gay Calbó, an advisor to the Ministry of State.

32 Howard Towell, "Reported traffic in Cuban Visas in Lisbon, Portugal," Habana, Cuba, 29 August 1941, 811.11, USNA.

33 George R. Hukill, "Memorandum for the Embassy," 15 September 1941, 800.02/801.2, USNA.

34 Du Bois, "Decree No. 3023 Relating to Immigration," 2 November 1940, USNA, dec. 855. Batista also eliminated a key provision of Decree 937 that required the approval of three separate ministries before refugees could enter Cuba.

35 Álvarez Gallego, "La vastedad del problema," p. 7; "1940 EB minutes," Part C, Organization minutes, Box 1, SRRO-executive board minutes 1940 C-1, CAL. Dr. Samuel Guy Inman of the SRRC also lent support to the measure.

36 "El pueblo cubano en favor de las víctimas del terror franquista...", *España Popular*, 30 Nov. 1940, p. 1.

detained in Europe.³⁷ Batista's gestures were not a sign of humanitarianism but an easy way to join regional governments in trying to constrain Franco's worst impulses against Spanish prisoners, a policy that required minimal effort from the Cuban government.³⁸ Batista established 'amnesty politics' with Franco, whereby Cuban heads of state implored Spain's government, through diplomatic channels, to free Spanish political prisoners but did little else to further the cause of Spanish democracy. All Cuban governments followed this policy until Franco's death (Hosoda, 2020).

For the starving Spanish refugees in Cuba, *Batistianos* tried co-optation. Batista's supporters tried to use the military expertise of some Spanish refugees for their own benefit. From 1940 to 1941, Batista loyalist, Aristides Sosa de Quesada, hired 12 Spanish Republicans to work in Havana's Instituto Martí.³⁹ However, when the Institute's director informed the Spaniards that they were required to offer a month's salary for Batista's reelection fund, the refugees resisted. Sosa de Quesada purged the Institute's faculty and had the most vocal professor, Genaro Artiles, arrested and almost deported. The controversy over his deportation spilled onto the pages of the US paper, *The Nation*. In Cuba, the *Diario de la Marina* lobbied for Artiles's deportation, arguing cynically that he had nothing to fear from Franco's justice.⁴⁰ After the scandal, several refugees left Cuba for greener pastures elsewhere in the hemisphere.

PENURY AND PROGRESS FOR THE EXILES

From mid-1940 through 1945, overlapping global and domestic dynamics shaped how Spanish Republicans experienced Cuba. The exiles, victims of Spanish anti-democratic militarism and global fascism, solidified their position within Cuba because of their individual talents and reputation as freedom-loving refugees. Domestic transformations also helped. By 1941, the island had enacted a new democratic constitution and the economy improved modestly.⁴¹ Cuba's return to democratic go-

vernment undergirded their integration. As national and regional fears shifted to Franco's supporters, acceptance and an improved legal status also meant that some Spanish exiles, especially communists, could now enjoy the freedoms guaranteed by Cuba's democracy to mobilise transnationally against Franco.⁴² Simultaneously, as the exiles rallied to fight Franco's regime in Spain, poverty, unemployment, and underemployment remained a daily problem for most. Consequently, exiles appealed to international aid organisations and a small group of 'trustworthy' allies in Cuba.

As the war raged in Europe, several US-based charitable organisations, like the Latin American Refugee Fund and the ACCR, stepped up their efforts to 'establish' the Spanish Republicans in Latin America. Administered by the AFSC, the Fund offered grant money to institutions, universities, or other groups, willing to provide matching funds. The goal was to help the refugees help themselves by financing research and/or other work carried out.⁴³ This nudging humanitarianism or 'calculated restraint', as Maul has noted, became a hallmark of private aid groups committed to the principles of scientific philanthropy (Maul, 2018, p. 135). Therefore, the Fund set out to establish contacts throughout Latin America with, as Mary S. Wood of the AFSC asserted, individuals "we know and trust."⁴⁴ The Fund trusted Ángel del Río, a member of Columbia University's Hispanic Institute in the United States, who forwarded the Fund lists of intellectuals in need of financial support. On 12 February 1942, Del Río recommended that two refugees in Cuba, Bernardo Clariana and Manuel Altolaguirre, receive assistance from the Fund.⁴⁵ By 1943, the Fund also financed relocation efforts from Cuba to Mexico and created a US\$400 'Emergency Fund' for refugees in Cuba, administered by the 'trustworthy' Hemingway.⁴⁶

the Cuban treasury accumulated 'a great abundance of resources.' See: Zanetti and García, 1998, pp. 348-351; Amaro and Mesa-Lago, 1974, p. 365.

37 As Figueredo Cabrera points out, Batista did ask Franco to commute the sentences of political prisoners and lobbied against the extradition of Francisco Largo Caballero to Spain. Figueredo Cabrera, 2014, p. 131; Eduardo Borrás, "Indalecio Prieto en la Habana," *Bohemia*, 25 Mayo 1941, p. 58.

38 "La extradición de Largo Caballero y Portela Valladares, denegada," *España popular*, 22 Nov. 1941, p. 6. Batista joined Mexico and Argentina's diplomatic protests to appear globally as a Cárdenas-like figure.

39 Bayo, 1950, pp. 41-44. In 1939, Batista had accepted donations for one of his favourite pet projects, the Instituto Cívico Militar, from the falangist organisation JONS. Figueredo-Cabrera, 2014, p. 113.

40 M.P.D., "Franco in Cuba," *The Nation*, 10 August 1940, p. 120; *Ibid.*; Zamacois, 1964, p. 468.

41 The 'sugar boom' improved wages for agricultural workers yet gains mostly benefitted urban skilled and semiskilled workers. Presumably, the influx of capital helped newspaper publishers and other media purveyors where some Spanish refugees found work. See: McGillivray, 2009, pp. 146-147. By 1944,

42 Chongo Leiva, 1989, p. 13; Schoonover, 2008, p. 96; Chase, 1943. Figueredo Cabrera argues that Leiva, Chase, and others are 'impregnated with a Falangist myth' because they rely too heavily on 'biased' sources. However, she ignores the power of myths in Cuban society. Figueredo Cabrera, 2014, pp. 1-40. Domingo Cuadriello argues that Cuba became 'a safe refuge' for Spanish communists because of the PSP's ties to Batista, yet he disregards how laws codified in the Constitution continued to offer 'safety' well beyond Batista's presidency. Domingo Cuadriello, 2009, p. 270.

43 "Letter from Marjorie Page Schauffler to Elena Mederos de González," 25 Oct. 1944, AFSCA, Box: Part B, Box 31, General Office Files, F 378.

44 "Letter from Mary de S. Wood, Assistant to John F. Rich to Paul Bowman, Brethren Service Committee in Quito, Ecuador," AFSCA, Box: Refugee Services New York Office Benefit Concert to France 1942, Folder: Refugee Services Comms & Orgs / Latin American Refugee Fund 1942. Originally, the Protestant churches, labour groups, and private donors funded the ACCR.

45 Ángel del Río, "Hispanic Institute in the United States to Howard Wriggins," 12 February 1942, *Ibid.*

46 "AFSC Financial Statement of Latin American Refugee Fund January 1, 1943, to September 30, 1943," AFSCA, Box: Refugee Services 1943 Coms & Orgs-Latin American Refugee

These endeavours became paramount for the refugees because Spanish resettlement organisations became appendages of the Mexican state or had ceased to exist by late 1942 (Naranjo Orovio, 1987a, p. 523). Thus, the relationship with Republican exiles in Mexico and Cuba through Hemingway became key, outliving the ephemeral Latin American Refugee Fund.

On 14 February 1944, the ACCR signed an agreement to assume financial responsibility for all non-Jewish cases administered by the Joint Relief Committee (JRC). From 1942 to 1944, the ACCR received two-thirds of its funding from the US National War Fund and the other third from churches.⁴⁷ The ACCR had a cooperative project with JRC since 1940 that the organisation described as ‘most successful.’⁴⁸ In all, the ACCR, International Rescue and Relief Committee, and Unitarian Service Committee spent US\$143,151.80 to resettled 1,181 Spanish refugees from the Dominican Republic to other countries in Latin America from February 1944 through 1 October 1945.⁴⁹ However, by late 1944, the AFSC assumed responsibility for distributing aid but dropped the provision to subsidise professors’ salaries.⁵⁰ Aid now focused on individuals, not institutions. The AFSC became the most viable solution to the refugee problem in Cuba. The organisation’s interest grew out of the Quaker programme in Spain during the Civil War and the “inadequate local facilities to aid Spaniards.” In 1941, the AFSC sent Randolph Hutchins for a year to the Dominican Republic to work with Spanish refugees, and by 1943, US Ambassador in that country invited the organisation to help with the chaotic situation.⁵¹ After distributing funds to the Dominican Republic and South America, the AFSC received an increasing number of requests from Spaniards in Cuba.

A new network linked Spanish Republicans in Havana, New York, and Mexico City to sympathisers, like Hemingway, and his cadre of friends, like the exile, Gustavo Durán. This network developed through counterintelligence work conducted out of the US Embassy in Cuba against the Spanish Right. Hemingway, who belonged to

several Spanish Republican refugee aid clubs after the Spanish Civil War.⁵² He moved to Cuba in 1939, purchasing an estate, the Finca Vigía, where he reconnected with several Spanish exiles (Domingo Cuadriello, 2019, p. 73). In 1942, the US Ambassador Spruille Braden enlisted his friend Hemingway’s aid to create a counterintelligence project. As Braden noted, the goal was to unravel the “numerous, active and dangerous” Axis and Spanish Falangist plots on the island (Schoonover, 2008, p. 96). The Cuban government’s recent capture and execution of the Nazi spy Heinz August Luning created the opportunity for expanded surveillance.

Although the ill-fated venture lasted only until April 1943, Hemingway created a private information service, financed by the US government, which employed Spanish Republicans. They reported on the activities of the Spanish Falange and other Axis-affiliated organisations.⁵³ Intelligence reports reveal that Hemingway, who had developed a friendship with Durán during the Spanish Civil War, requested that US officials transfer the exile to Cuba to carry out this work in August 1942. On the island, Durán worked for the US Embassy as a member of the Auxiliary Service and as Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, and according to an FBI report, “assumed proportions of domination and direction rather than assistance” of the project.⁵⁴ Once the counterintelligence operations failed, Hemingway and Durán shifted their energies to helping the considerable number of refugees who had not found work or aid in Cuba.

At the suggestion of the US Ambassador in 1943, the Associate Secretary of the AFSC Refugee Division, Marjorie Page Schauffler, met with Hemingway and Durán in Havana. She wrote to Alice Shaffer days after returning to the United States, adding “Mr. Hemingway’s interest in Spanish refugees is well known.”⁵⁵ Page Schauffler conveyed that Hemingway preferred to help Spanish Civil War veterans, adding that sources in the United States had given ‘little help’. In fact, Hemingway gave refugees money out of his own pocket, especially to those most in

Fund to Country Mexico Polish Refugees, Folder: Refugee Services Coms & Orgs/ Lat. Amer. Refugee Fund Finance 1943.

47 Mr. Gurfinkel, “Joint Relief Committee,” AFSCA, Box: Coms & Orgs–Refugee Scholar Fund to Country – French North Africa, Folder: Refugee Services Country Cuba 1944. Gurfinkel belonged to the Christian Committee.

48 American Committee for Christian Refugees, “Our Story for 1940,” The American Christian Committee for Refugee Records, Swarthmore College Peace Collection, Swarthmore, PA, p. 11.

49 Willy A. Steiner, “Final Report of the Main Office in the Dominican Republic for Work of the ACCR, IRRS, and USC.” Folder: Dominican Republic 1945, AFSCA, 15 October 1945. Most of the 1181 Spanish refugees dispatched went to Mexico (415), Venezuela (705), and 61 relocated to “other countries.”

50 “Page Schauffler to Mederos,” 25 October 1944, AFSCA.

51 *Ibid.* Other organisations followed suit. Celine Rott de Neufville arrived in Santo Domingo early in 1944, representing three American agencies: ACCR, the Unitarian Service Committee, and the International Relief and Rescue Committee to help Spanish refugees reach places like Mexico and Venezuela.

52 “Conferencia en Defensa de los Extranjeros,” *España Libre*, 9 Feb. 1940, p. 12.

53 The FBI reported that a total of 26 informants from across the island cost the U.S. Embassy nearly US\$ 1,000 a month. Four Spanish exiles worked as full-time employees and fourteen as barmen, waiters, and the like, operating on a part-time basis, costing approximately US\$ 500 a month. R. G. Liddy, “re: Ernest Hemingway,” 10-9-42. FBI, vault.fbi.gov; C. H. Carson, “Intelligence activities of Ernest Hemingway in Cuba,” 13 June 1943.

54 Ladd, “re: Ernest Hemingway,” 17 Dec. 1942, FBI. vault.fbi.gov. For Hemingway’s friendship with Durán See: LaPrade, 2011.

55 “Page Schauffler to Alice Shaffer,” 5 July 1944, AFSCA. After working for Braden, Hemingway conducted anti-submarine patrols off Cuba’s coast alongside Spanish Republicans. See: Schoonover, 2008, p. 98. In April 1943, Cuban communists printed a blistering review of his book *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, describing the author as a traitor and a revolutionary tourist for his portrayal of the Spanish Civil War. See: Raúl González Tuñón, “La última postura del traidor Hemingway,” *Magazine de Hoy*, 25 April 1943, p. 1.

need.⁵⁶ Page Schauffler, Durán, and Hemingway agreed to produce 'brief histories' of the most urgent cases for the AFSC and enlisted the help of an exile, José Rodríguez Regidor of the Agrupación Socialista Española, a Spanish socialist displaced in Mexico, to prepare the report. Rodríguez Regidor had lived in Cuba for ten years before the Spanish Civil War, returning in 1933, and took part in the Socialist militias of Valencia when the war began. Like many exiles in Cuba, he had suffered in the French concentration camps before heading to Mexico.⁵⁷ Rodríguez Regidor's report became essential to the distribution of funds in Cuba. After receiving the report in September 1943, Page Schauffler sent a monthly sum of US\$400 for eight families in Cuba.⁵⁸ By January 1944, both the AFSC and its anonymous co-contributor had donated US\$1,200 to 10 or 11 refugees.

The relationship established among Page Schauffler, Rodríguez Regidor, Durán, and Hemingway increased networking between pro-refugee activists and international organisations, yet it also exposed the practical problem of securing international assistance for refugees who had entered Cuba with doctored visas. In 1944, Siebold travelled to Havana to meet with Durán. As she had for the Spanish Refugees in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, Siebold compiled a report detailing the problems faced by all agencies in Cuba.⁵⁹ Her reports convinced the ACCR to help mitigate the plight of over 900 refugees.⁶⁰

The most pressing issue in Cuba included assistance for 300 refugees of Cuban origin who, as Page Schauffler noted, "have spent most of their lives in Spain and have now returned to Cuba because of the changed conditions [...] and find themselves without resources, some of them desperately in need with no source to which they can turn. The refugee agencies all [...] regretfully feel they cannot extend aid to persons who are now back in their own country." Page Schauffler and Siebold surely included some of the Spanish refugees who had arrived with falsified documents. Schauffler's letter reports that her organisation "recognized the long-term nature of the problem and felt that the AFSC cannot become involved in the problem of long duration which should be met by local resources in Cuba."⁶¹ In other words, if falsified documents helped Spaniards circumvent Cuba's laws, now it prevented them from receiving much-needed aid.

International aid organisations scrambled to find solutions. In a letter to Helen Bryan of the Joint Anti-Fascist Committee in New York, Schauffler argued that an 'inter-agency or intergovernmental' body should take the case.⁶² Siebold of the ACCR wrote to Cuban feminist Elena Mederos de González of the Lyceum Lawn and Tennis Club, explaining that "It is not possible for us to give aid to the repatriated Cuban group since they are now in their own country and eligible to all the rights of other Cuban citizens."⁶³ Refugee Aid organisations 'highly respected' Mederos. The press in the United States heralded her for her work with the LLTC and her role in the newly created Cuban School of Social Work at the University of Havana.⁶⁴ The ACCR agreed to provide aid "for a temporary period, of say a few months," to some of the most pressing cases cited by Hemingway, Durán and Rodríguez Regidor. The AFSC also suggested that Cubans organise efforts to raise funds locally.

At the behest of the AFSC, Rodríguez Regidor prepared a report of the most critical cases in Cuba. Interestingly, the AFSC scrutinised each individual case, providing commentary for each. For instance, the printer and bookbinder, Roberto Miranda, spent seven months in bed with a foot infection that stopped him from working. The 30-year-old Miranda, who, according to the report, "was born in Cuba but lived practically all his life in Spain," survived on the charity of friends. Rodríguez Regidor advised that the printer required a 'change in climate' and should migrate from Cuba to Mexico with a US\$200 donation from the AFSC for travel expenses.⁶⁵ The AFSC offered to pay the US\$200 requested but pushed Rodríguez Regidor to ask more critical questions: "On what basis do the skin specialists recommend a change of climate is beneficial? Does he have his Mexican visa? Can it be ascertained whether Mexico would admit him with this kind of infection? What plans does he have for securing work in Mexico after his arrival? Will he be faced with the same problems in Mexico?"⁶⁶ The AFSC women helped Spanish Republicans in Cuba, resisting the temptation to send refugees on to Mexico as a solution to the problem without a practical plan for their successful integration.

Of the cases cited by Rodríguez Regidor, those of Enrique Capriles and Angel Botello Barros gained the most attention. These cases piqued the interest of Mederos and other Cuban supporters of the refugees who

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ <https://fpabloiglesias.es/entrada-db/rodriguez-regidor-jose/>. Interestingly, while in Cuba, it appears that Rodríguez Regidor did much more than prepare reports for the AFSC. In 1945, he contributed funds to the Spanish labour union, U.G.T de España en Cuba, and helped establish the Cuban branch of the Youth Socialists in Havana.

⁵⁸ 'Report from Mr. Regidor', 14 June 1944, AFSCA. AFSC funding came from an array of sources, however, not from grassroots mobilizing but primarily from large individual donors and organisations. See: Mendlesohn, 2002, pp. 21-22.

⁵⁹ "Excerpt of Report on Cuba by Miss Janet Siebold, American Committee for Christian Refugees," AFSCA.

⁶⁰ "Service Supervisor Resigns," *Newscast from the American Christian Committee for Refugees, Inc.*, May-June 1945, p. 2.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² "Letter from Schauffler to Miss Helen Bryan Joint Anti-Fascist Committee," 28 June 1944, Box: Coms & Orgs – Refugee Scholar Fund to Country – French North Africa, Folder: Refugee Services Country Cuba 1944, AFSCA.

⁶³ "Page Schauffler to Mederos," 25 October 1944, Havana, Cuba, AFSCA.

⁶⁴ "Letter from Asociación Nacional Conjunta to Page Schauffler," 5 June 1944, Havana, Cuba, AFSCA, Box: Coms & Orgs – Refugee Scholar Fund to Country – French North Africa, Folder: Refugee Services Country Cuba 1944.

⁶⁵ "Report from Mr. Regidor," 14 June 1944, AFSCA; *Ibid.* Miranda lived with a wife, 7-year-old daughter, and mother-in-law.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

belonged to the Comité Gestor del Patronato de Servicio Social (CGPSS), a creation of the LLTC, the aforementioned women’s club.⁶⁷ According to a plan devised by Schaffler in coordination with the CGPSS, the Comité Gestor could finance refugee aid and later submit their receipts to the AFSC for reimbursement consideration “as it is necessary in each case.”⁶⁸ According to letters from Schaffler to Alice Shaffer regarding Rodríguez Regidor’s report, Mrs. Capriles, a diabetic, required urgent medical care because she suffered from a problem with her appendix and pus in her kidneys. Mrs. Capriles begged for assistance for herself, her 60-year-old husband Enrique, and two boys, the youngest suffering from anemia acquired during their stint in French concentration camps. The boy had lost 14 lbs. since arriving in Havana. Enrique, who was born in Cuba before independence, could not find work and suffered from “acute nervous attacks.”⁶⁹ Several cases listed in the correspondence between aid organisations cite mental illness as a factor, possibly from the post-traumatic shock of the war. The Capriles family had no access to medical care, could not return to Spain because of Franco, and only received temporary aid because of Enrique’s birth on the island when Spain still controlled Cuba. Ironically, what saved their lives and brought them to Cuba also hampered their ability to survive.

The Capriles family finances offer a unique glimpse into the difficult situation faced by refugees who arrived in Cuba with health complications. The only income the family of four possessed was US\$45 a month from their eldest son, Henrique, who worked as a delivery boy.⁷⁰ After paying their bills, they had US\$29.50 for all other expenses, including groceries. A nutritionist who worked in Shaffer’s office advised that the minimum level of nutrition required by each family member costs about US\$20 per person per month. Mrs. Capriles reported that she only used the electricity once a day to cook. Also, she could not afford ice to prevent food from spoiling in the smouldering Havana heat. Cubans also tried to help the family. CGPSS member and historian, Herminio Portell Vilá, tried to place the youngest son, 14-year-old José Luis, at a vocational school with facilities for boarding students.⁷¹ As a chart provided by Alice Shaffer illustrates, the family fell short of their budget by US\$66, which meant that “they simply are doing without food.” The chart does not consider clothing or recreation. As a result, AFSC supplemented their income by US\$50 a month and worked to place José Luis at the boarding vocational school where the school assumed his expenses.

67 “Comité Gestor del Patronato de Servicio Social flyer,” AFSCA, File: Refugee Services Country Cuba.

68 “Page Schaffler to Mederos,” 25 October 1944, AFSCA.

69 “Report from Mr. Regidor,” 14 June 1944, AFSCA.

70 “Alice Shaffer to Mrs. Schaffler,” AFSCA, Box: Part B, Box 31, General Office Files. According to the letter, the family also received US\$ 7 a month from a friend and some bread from the son’s work.

71 *Ibid.* The AFSC proposed that the “family relocate to the rural outskirts of Havana so they could reduce costs and grow their own food.”

Siebold of the ACCR also prepared a dispatch with the help of Rodríguez Regidor, who acted on the organisation’s behalf in Cuba. The survey reveals the attitudes of those who commissioned and prepared the report, and most importantly, is perhaps the only existing census to count the number of refugees in 1944. According to the report, the approximate number of Spanish refugees in Cuba hovered at about 500, divided into four groups.⁷² The first, consisted of about 80-100 individuals, mainly military and government men, who were unmarried. All of them suffered financial difficulties but would, under no circumstances, ask for assistance. The statement implied that these men were too proud to request or accept aid. The second group of about 20 to 30 provoked suspicion from Siebold and Rodríguez Regidor. According to the document, the second group “tried to exploit everyone under the pretext of being Spanish refugees. There is a good deal of question in Mr. Rodríguez Regidor’s mind as to whether they really are what they claim to be.”⁷³ Were these cases of stolen valour or different ideological tendencies? Were they critical of the United States or antagonistic toward Rodríguez Regidor’s political affiliation? Curiously, the AFSC regarded communism, socialism, and trade unionism as suspicious because of their revolutionary potential (Mendlesohn, 2002, p. 13). Rodríguez Regidor’s ties to socialism and labour activism meant that either their trust in Hemingway defied ideological affiliations or Page Schaffler and Siebold ignored Quaker customs. Still, while the report is silent on these issues, Rodríguez Regidor’s strong ties to Spanish Socialism would have made him sceptical of helping most self-identified communists.

Two more groups rounded out the report. The third group included about 30 people of advanced age or with physical conditions that would not allow them to work. Rodríguez Regidor’s document states, “They are in real need of help and no one is doing anything for them.”⁷⁴ The organisation focused on the weakest, most vulnerable group. The fourth and largest group consisted of 300 or more repatriated Cubans who had lived all their lives in Spain. Of these, 30 required urgent attention. The ACCR found that no organisation public or private, was:

Equipped to give any adequate help. The [communist-affiliated] Casa de Cultura has helped some individuals to get work or offers small amounts of money on a temporary basis. There is nothing planned or continuous about their help and apparently adequate funds are not available. [The mainstream] Círculo Republicano has given some small monthly allowances of five dollars or less to individuals and gives some special help at Christmas time. This means that a large proportion of those in dire need are not being served [...] a matter of serious concern to many of us.⁷⁵

72 “Excerpt of Report on Cuba by Miss Janet Siebold, American Committee for Christian Refugees,” AFSCA.

73 *Ibid.*

74 *Ibid.*

75 “Excerpt of Report on Cuba by Miss Janet Siebold, American Committee for Christian Refugees,” AFSCA.

Despite the genuine concern, refugee aid organisations could only provide temporary relief, underscoring the indifference of the Cuban state.

By November 1944, international aid groups became desperate to relinquish responsibility for the exiles with some claim to Cuban nationality. Page Schauffler wrote to Elena Mederos that the AFSC had “been seeking for some time a group of informed and concerned Cuban patrons who would find it possible to undertake the responsibility for persons newly arrived there [...] who have Cuban nationality but have been long absent from the country.”⁷⁶ After 1944, the economic dynamics continued to improve on the island and Batista abandoned office after a ten-year stint as dictator-turned-democrat. Perhaps because of these steps toward the normalisation of Cuban political and economic life, aid continued to trickle in from international groups but was soon to expire as the ACCR looked for Cubans to assume more of the responsibilities. In 1945 Schauffler warned that the Committee “feels it cannot be responsible... [because] the persons concerned are nationals of Cuba and properly subjects for aid from Cuban resources rather than from foreign agencies however interested the latter may be.”⁷⁷ Schauffler added that the CGPSS “will demonstrate a sound and helpful pattern for other countries to follow” for refugees returning to their home countries after the end of WWII.

Letters from Mederos to the AFSC reveal the challenges of a private Cuban charitable organisation in providing aid for the Spanish refugees. In 1945, Mederos sent frequent updates to the AFSC but the CGPSS’s had diverted relief efforts for the Spanish refugees to help victims recover after a category-4 Hurricane hit Cuba in October 1944.⁷⁸ The Patronato continued to support the Capriles family, trying several times to find Mrs. Capriles work, helping Enrique financially after he was hit while getting off a bus, and reporting joyously that the School of Social Work financed a school uniform (US\$10) for the youngest son who received a scholarship to the Central Methodist School.⁷⁹ Roberto Miranda found work. Doctors discovered that his skin condition was a reaction to leather footwear, a situation easily remedied since his wife and mother-in-law worked knitting shoes to make ends meet. The unnamed Miranda women worked an entire day to make one pair of shoes, for which they earned

US\$.40 a pair. They survived with help from friends and the *Círculo Republicano Español*.⁸⁰

By October 1945, the relief efforts in Latin America had decreased significantly. As the Second World War neared its end, efforts shifted back to Europe. The AFSC’s Madrid office began financing monthly family visits on the Iberian Peninsula, 1,433 in 1944 and 6,475 in the first six months of 1945, for prisoners detained in Franco’s prisons. Additionally, it helped repatriate Cuban internationalists or pro-Republican forces stranded in Europe.⁸¹ In 1944, the Madrid office assisted 1,834 persons, five of whom returned to Cuba, as many as Uruguay, Mexico, and Ecuador combined.⁸² In 1945, the numbers increased significantly. The American Relief Organizations in Madrid, represented by David Blickenstaff, repatriated 54 persons to Cuba.⁸³ Blickenstaff received a greeting card from Cuban internationalists thanking him for his efforts. Many of these Cubans belonged to the ‘San Sebastian group’ who had been brought out of German-occupied territory on an exchange agreement, proposed by Ramón Estalella, which ultimately failed.⁸⁴ In 1945, the ACCR published a pamphlet titled *Ten years of Stewardship* that outlined how they had organised ‘The Special Labor Aid Project’ to help refugees who had been active in the European labour movement. Of those who received assistance, the Committee aided 11 cases in Cuba.⁸⁵ The pamphlet also reprinted a letter sent from a refugee in Cuba, explaining, “Through an intermediary of the important [LLTC] of Havana I have received the assistance which the Society, that you so honourably represent, has sent me. My wife and I thank you most expressively since the favour you are doing is immense. Never, most worthy lady, shall we forget how kind you have been to us.”⁸⁶

76 “Marjorie Page Schauffler to Elena Mederos,” AFSCA, File: Refugee Services Country Cuba – Comité Gestor del Patronato de Servicio Social, 22 Nov. 1944; “Letter from Aroos Benneyan to Mr. Gurfinkel, Joint Relief Committee, regarding: José Americo Tuero,” 30 Jan. 1945.

77 “Letter from Kathleen Hambly Hanstien to Elena Mederos,” File: Refugee Services Country Cuba – Comité Gestor del Patronato de Servicio Social, 5 April 1945.

78 *Ibid.* Kathleen Hambly Hanstien took over for Page Schauffler in the Spring of 1945.

79 “Letter from Elena Mederos to Miss Gallagher,” AFSCA, File: Refugee Services Country Cuba – Comité Gestor del Patronato de Servicio Social, 5 Feb. 1945.

80 *Ibid.*

81 David Blickenstaff, “Madrid office statistics for the month of June 1945,” AFSCA, Box: Foreign Service 1945 country-Portugal to country-Spain, Folder: Letters from series LP4 1945, 11 July 1945.

82 “Spain-activities of the Madrid office during 1944,” Folder: Country Spain-letters and miscellaneous info from Spain 1945, 28 Feb. 1945; *ibid.*

83 David Blickenstaff, “Statistical report for the month of generally 1945,” AFSCA, Box: Foreign Service 1945 country-Portugal to country-Spain, Folder: Letters from series LP4 1945. Blickenstaff, a member of the Church of the Brethren who arrived in Spain during the Civil War in his early 20s, had been stationed in Nationalist territory during the Civil War. He became suspicious of how Franco-controlled territories distributed aid. Mendelsohn, 2002, pp. 80-82.

84 David Blickenstaff, “Cuban group, formerly San Sebastian,” Box: Foreign Service 1945 country-Portugal to country-Spain, Folder: Letters from series LP4 1945, 22 June 1945, *Ibid.*

85 Refugee Relief Trustees, *Ten years of Stewardship*, The American Christian Committee for Refugee Records, Swarthmore College Peace Collection, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, PA, pp. 22, 28. The ACCR filed papers with the U.S. State Department to carry out these activities in places like Cuba, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic.

86 Refugee Relief Trustees, *Ten years of Stewardship*, p. 30.

CONCLUSION

By late 1945, Cuba offered the Spanish Republicans some measure of stability after years of war, exile, and poverty. Solidarity provided exiles with Cuban allies who helped assuage their financial burdens. Where solidarity could not meet the mark, locals engaged international aid groups, like the AFSC, to step in on their behalf. An improving economy and a democratic framework marked a seismic shift from a decade of reactionary governments that refused to accept the exiles in their moment of need to a democracy that no longer feared them. Still, assistance did not arrive in Cuba without strings. The principles of humanitarianism, as Altied (2019) argues, are neutrality, independence, impartiality, universality, solidarity, and justice. The assistance US aid organisations, distributed mostly by women, occurred only after US fears of Spanish Falangists in Cuba made the Republicans, as illustrated by the ‘trustworthy’ Hemingway’s network of exile spies, natural allies. Thus, while this important case reveals how women exerted decision-making skills in the internationalist arena, it also confirms how tight-knit private aid groups became with US foreign policy.

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Daniel Jesús Fernández Guevara: conceptualization, formal analysis, investigation, methodology, project administration, writing – original draft, writing – review and editing.

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