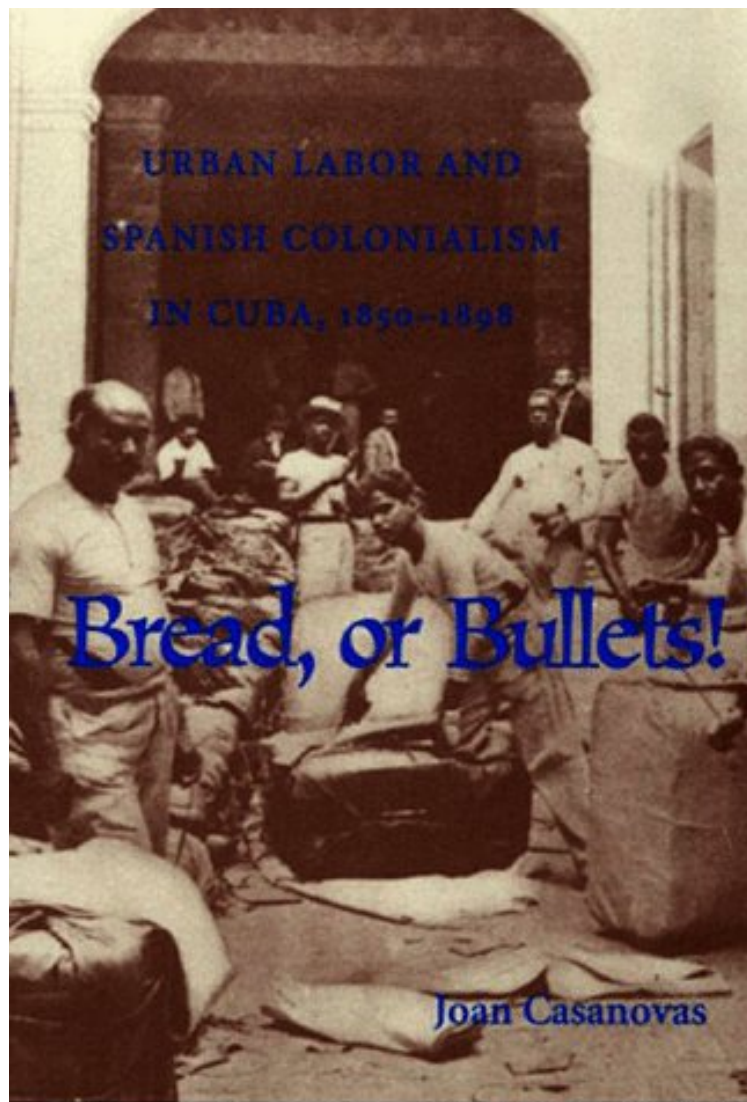


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Bread, or Bullets!: Urban Labor and Spanish Colonialism in Cuba, 1850-1898 (Pitt Latin American Series)

Joan Casanovas

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Bread, or Bullets! is the first thoroughly documented history of organized labor in nineteenth-century Cuba. Based on research in libraries and archives in Cuba, Spain, the United States, and the Netherlands, it focuses on how urban laborers joined together in collective action during the transition from slave to free labor and in the last decades of Spanish colonial rule in Cuba. Nineteenth-century Cuban colonial society and the slavery system sharply divided Cuba's inhabitants by race and origin. This deeply affected the labor movement that started in the late 1850s, as it became difficult to mobilize workers with common interests across these diverse ranks. Paradoxically, this also drove the workers to build class ties across divisions of origin, race, and degrees of freedom. This formed the basis for developing collective action, in the 1860s, the labor movement, under the leadership of white creoles and Spaniards, called peninsulares, joined the reformist movement of the creole bourgeoisie. The outbreak of the Ten Years' War in 1868 created an extremely repressive atmosphere for labor that forced thousands of Cuban workers to flee to the United States. After the peace treaty of El Zanjón in 1878, the workers who returned and those who had remained used their experience to rebuild the Cuban labor movement at an impressive pace. This common goal led Cuban workers to fight continuously against divisions along racial and ethnic lines and to replace their moderate unionist and strongly pro-Spanish leadership with anarchists. The end of slavery accelerated the evolution of Cuban politics and the expansion of the labor movement. Spain's shift toward reactionary colonial policies in 1890 halted this process and accentuated anticolonial sentiment among the popular classes. This helped the left wing of the separatist movement, led by José Martí, to launch the War of Independence in 1895 with strong working-class support. *Bread, or Bullets!* is an important work for anyone interested in understanding Cuban society, Spanish colonialism, and labor relations in Latin America.

"Es incuestionable que esta obra [...] ofrece una visión global de las interconexiones de las clases subalternas de las ciudades en [...] el siglo XIX cubano." -- Olga Cabrera, *Revista de Indias* 215 (Madrid, 1999) "He [Casanovas] has addressed many of the key themes of Cuban nineteenth-century history and presented them under a new light." -- Astrid Cubano *Clonial Latin American Historical* (Spring 1999) "One of the best political histories of late-19th-century Cuba and Spain." -- Christopher Schmidt-Nowara, *Colonial Latin American*, 9:1 (2000), pp. 129-131 "The book is very well organized, thoroughly researched, and clearly written. It will be useful for upper-level undergraduate courses and graduate courses"... -- Frank A. Gerome, *History: s of New Books*, Spring 1999. "This work will force a major rethinking of nineteenth-century Cuban and Spanish political and social history." -- Christopher Schmidt-Nowara, *Colonial Latin American*, 9:1 (2000), pp. 129-131. "this is an insightful study that ought to become recommended reading for undergraduate courses on Latin American and Caribbean social and labor history"... -- Philip A. Howard, *American Historical*, April, 2000 From the Publisher "[This] argument that urban labor was not absent in the process of colonial uncoupling between Cuba and Spain is new, tight and very well documented. The research is impressive, the data are original, and the material . . . will make this book a touchstone." -- Jeremy Adelman, Princeton University "Bread or Bullets! is a tour de force . . . The research is extraordinary, encompassing regional and national Spanish, Cuban, and U.S. sources. It will represent a major contribution to the new literature on the history of popular sectors/classes, or 'subalterns.'" -- Harold Sims, University of Pittsburgh About the Author Joan Casanovas, born in Barcelona, Spain, is assistant professor of Latin American and Caribbean history at the Universitat Rovira i Virgili in Tarragona, Spain. He has published articles on slavery and the Cuban labor movement in the *International of Social History* and in *Cuban Studies* 25.