1998

From Brave Men to Wards: Cuba and Cubans through the pages of The New York Times

Rafael Tarragó
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CUBA AND CUBANS THROUGH THE PAGES OF
Most New York City newspapers supported Cuban independence from the beginnings of the insurrection in February 1895, and the same was true of newspapers in the Midwest of the U.S. Cuban exile clubs and their American sympathizers in southern Florida and in the northeast seaboard promoted public support for the cause of Cuban independence, and financed expeditions that brought food and ammunition to the Cuban Liberation Army.

The purpose of this essay is to analyze U.S. opinion about the Cuban insurgents and events in Cuba as they were reported on the pages of The New York Times from October, 1897 to October, 1898; and to use the resulting chronology as a sounding board for questioning old verities concerning issues such as the position towards U.S. intervention in Cuba and the efficacy of the Teller Amendment to the U.S. Congress Joint Resolution of April 18, 1898 in preventing the annexation of Cuba by the U.S.
The home rule decree issued on November 28 by the Spanish Queen Regent was accepted as a reality by The New York Times, and as an honest attempt by the Madrid government to give Cuba everything in the way of local self-government. In "Cuban Autonomy," published on December 4, however, it warns, "It is in vain that we may hold that any measure 'ought' to pacify Cuba which does not in fact accomplish that result." On December 15, this paper reported the surrender of the insurgent Cuban leader General Sanguily, and on the following day it pointed out the issuance by General Máximo Gómez, general-in-chief of the Cuban Liberation Army, of a proclamation stating that anyone approaching any company of the Liberation Army with peace proposals not based on the independence of Cuba would be executed. In January 28, 1898, General
Gómez proved true to his word, approving the execution of Colonel Joaquín Ruiz, a Cuban-born officer of the royal army sent as an emissary to him by Governor General Ramón Blanco to inform the insurgents of the program of home rule for Cuba.

On January 1, 1898, home rule and universal suffrage went into effect in Cuba, and The New York Times reported “Big Conspiracy in Cuba.” This article asserted that there had been demonstrations in the Cuban cities of Havana and Matanzas against the home rule government established only that day. It concluded with the report of crowds in Matanzas cheering for U.S. President William McKinley and the annexation of Cuba to the U.S. The same issue has an article titled “New Cuban Cabinet in Power,” where the Spanish Minister to the U.S. is quoted saying that with the new government, “there will be full realization of a Government of Cuba by the Cubans.” On January 2, the article, “Cuban Cabinet Sworn In,” describes the swearing-in ceremony of the provisional Cuban autonomous government at Havana.

Indeed, Cuban it was, because as part of his reconciliation policy, Governor General Blanco appointed only Cuban-born men, which angered many European-born Spaniards. In “The Riots in Havana,” on the editorial pages of January 15, The New York Times reports violent protests against the new regime at Havana on January 12. These disturbances were controlled swiftly by Governor General Blan-

co, but The New York Times described them as a mark of the chronic crisis of Spain, and the failure of home rule in Cuba.

It is also said in this article that not a single insurgent had surrendered, implicitly denying events reported by this newspaper earlier concerning the surrender of some insurgents. This article concluded that the Cuban autonomous government was a farce into which Spanish rule in Cuba had degenerated, and that it was time to consider “the exigency of further action by the U.S. before the inhabitants of the wretched island had completed its devastation or their mutual extermination.” The autonomous government installed on January 2, 1898 was remarkably well-qualified. It was not a group of planters, but a group of intellectuals, lawyers, and men of affairs, like Francisco Zayas, Laureano Rodríguez, Rafael Montoro, and José María Gálvez; however, their high professional and human caliber would never be guessed from reading The New York Times.

THE CRISIES OF FEBRUARY: MEN IN A STATE OF OPEN AND DEADLY HOSTILITY

On the front page of The New York Times for January 24 it was reported that several U.S. battleships were gathering in Key West under Admiral Sicard. By that date the battleships New York, Indiana, Massachusetts, Iowa, and
Texas had arrived off the bar; and the battleships Montgomery, Detroit, and Maine joined them later. Claiming to be concerned about the ability of Governor General Blanco to control the riots of January 12, at Havana, U.S. Consul General Colonel Fitzhugh Lee wrote to Secretary of State Day on January 13, asking that U.S. battleships be sent to Havana to protect U.S. citizens. Mr. Day obliged by having the U.S. Maine sent to Havana on January 24. Colonel Lee wrote to Mr. Day on February 4, “Ship or ships should be kept here all the time now.”

That is how the U.S. Maine arrived unannounced in Havana, where the embarrassed authorities made up a story about a courtesy visit to be reciprocated by the Spanish battleship Vizcaya in New York.

Colonel Lee had gone to Havana as Consul General sent by President Cleveland in April, 1896. In a letter of June 13, 1896 to Andrés Gómez, Don Tomás Estrada Palma, Delegate of the Cuban Revolutionary Party in New York City, talks of Colonel Lee as someone who will send reports to Washington that will promote the Cuban insurgent cause. From the moment of his arrival in Cuba, Lee was in touch with insurgent leaders, and carried messages for them. He courted the insurgents and sent Washington negative reports about the possibilities for successful Cuban home rule under the Spanish monarchy long before it was proposed by the Spanish government. It is not unjust to say that he went to Havana as a convinced annexationism. He said that most Cubans wanted annexation and he did his best to have this prophesy fulfilled. Although he curried favors for the insurgents—on February 15, 1898, he forwarded to President McKinley a letter from General Gómez—he always emphasized in his reports to Washington that all the Spaniards and the “better class” of Cubans wanted annexation.

“Col. Lee) always emphasized in his reports to Washington that all the Spaniards and the “better class” of Cubans wanted annexation.”
January 21, 1898, Colonel Lee sent a letter to Secretary of State Day with a devastating analysis of the autonomous constitution of Cuba which emphasized its flaws and did not take into account that it was a vast improvement over what the status of the island had been until then. It is possible that the source that gave those accounts of a failed Cuban autonomous government to *The New York Times* was the man who at that time was supposed to be the American best informed about Cuba, U.S. Consul General Colonel Fitzhugh Lee.

On February 8, 1898, the *New York Journal* published a private letter written by the Spanish minister to the U.S., Enrique Dupuy de Lome, to his friend Antonio Canalejas, in Havana. His letter almost caused a rupture of diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Spain. In it, Dupuy de Lome called President McKinley a low politician, and intimated that Spain’s Sagasta government had not been sincere in its relations with the Cuban autonomous government or the U.S. This affair made the front page of *The New York Times* on February 9. In “De Lome on the President,” it reproduced the contents of the letter, and told that it probably had been stolen from Mr. Canalejas by a Cuban agent while he was in Havana, and that the Delegation of the Cuban Revolutionary Party in New York had given it to the Journal. In the editorial pages of February 15, the Journal endorsed the action of the Cuban insurgents, “Men in a state of open and deadly hostility.” The editors of *The New York Times* concluded this piece with the words, “War is a miserable work, and if stealing a letter or a thousand will shorten it, the letters should be stolen.” Mr. Dupuy de Lome resigned, and the Spanish government apologized for his behavior, assuring the U.S. government that it meant to implement the statutes of home rule granted to Cuba. Thus the publication of the Dupuy de Lome letter did not cause the crisis that the Cuban insurgents in the U.S. wanted.

But within a week a greater disaster occurred. On February 15, the U.S.S. Maine blew up in Havana harbor. A crisis was prevented after the Dupuy de Lome letter affair, but the explosion of the Maine became a cause belli, even though it was never proven that a Spaniard had blown it up. On February 16, *The New York Times* had on its front page the article, “The Maine Blown Up,” where it reported the terrible explosion, concluding that none of the wounded men were able to give an explanation. The following day the Maine was front-page news again. In “The Maine Disaster,” *The New York Times* reported that the loss was due to an accident, that spontaneous combustion in coal bunkers was a frequent peril to the magazine of warships.

Could it be a coincidence that these two incidents happened so close to each other? The attempt by Cuban insurgents to provoke a conflict between the U.S. and Spain on February 8 failed. Could it be that the Cuban insurgents were behind the events of February 15? That was suggested in 1898, and General Máximo Gómez was quick to label the accusation “one more proof of Spanish perfidy.” Exactly one hundred years after the explosion of the U.S.S. Maine, the Spanish edition of *The Miami Herald* published an article by the Cuban journalist Carlos Alberto Montaner, where he asks “Who benefitted from the explosion of the Maine?” It is self-evident to him that it was the Cuban insurgents who wanted the U.S. to intervene as allies against the royal army. The historian Guillermo G. Calleja has arrived at the same conclusion. His thesis (derived from the work of Jorge Navarro Custin) shows that the Cuban insurgents placed a mine on the Maine designed by the engineer Federico Blume, who had contacted the Cuban agent Aristides Agüero in Perú. Calleja points out that Captain Sigsbee of the U.S.S. Maine reported to have heard two explosions the night of the event. This supports the thesis of an external explosion which brought about a second one that blew up.
the magazine of the battleship. According to Calleja, the manuscript collection of Julio Lobo, Cuban magnate, contained sworn statements by some of the Cuban insurgents who blew up the Maine.19

The first reaction to the explosion of the Maine by the U.S. authorities was that it had been an accident. Then annexationists like Colonel Lee accused Spain of the deed. After a Spanish request for a joint investigation was declined, two investigating commissions were established: one conducted by the U.S. Navy, and the other by authorities in Havana. The Havana commission concluded that the explosion had been caused by internal combustion. The U.S. Navy commission reported on March 21 that there were two explosions: the explosion of a mine beneath the hull that blew the keel upward, and the resulting detonation of the powder stored above. The Spanish government proposed to submit both reports to an arbitration commission, but the U.S. government refused. After the explosion of the U.S.S. Maine, the intervention of the U.S. in Cuba was assured.

THE U.S. ROAD TO ARMED INTERVENTION IN CUBA: “BEGGARS SHOULD NOT BE CHOOSERS”

In spite of the threat by generals Gómez and García, Cuban insurgents continued defecting. On March 15, The New York Times reported in the article, “Cubans Kill False Leaders,” that Cuban insurgent leaders Cayito, Álvarez, and Núñez, had been killed by other insurgents while on their way to tender their submission to the Cuban autonomous government. But most insurgent generals did not pact with the autonomous government after the explosion of the Maine. U.S. intent to intervene in Cuba was apparent after the U.S. Congress requested $50 million on March 9, for national defense. The insurgents were encouraged to assume that the Cuban Republic in Arms would be recognized and that the Cuban Liberation Army would be considered “belligerent” by the official declarations made by the U.S. government, and by the apparent support of their cause by the people of the U.S. On March 28, The New York Times reported, “It can be stated upon high authority that there has been no abatement of the President’s intention to see that the war is terminated upon terms that will render the Cuban people practically free. It is not believed that they will accept anything less, nor that the Americans will be satisfied if we should encourage a settlement that would not be acceptable to the Cubans.”

In The New York Times of April 6, 1898, a U.S. Senator is quoted saying, “No one will pretend to say that the status of the Republic of Cuba has ever approached anything like the condition of perfection of government that the southern Confederacy attained. It has no seaports, no U.S. consul... It has not, as a matter of fact, controlled the island of Cuba.” This Senator concluded that if the U.S. was to intervene for the pacification of Cuba it should do so free-handed. On April 7, the article “Junta Members Excited” quoted Mr. Rubens saying, “The action of the U.S., if it should declare that the Cubans are not in a position to be independent after having a week ago notified Spain that she must recognize the independence of the Cubans as a prerequisite to any further negotiations would place the U.S. government in a peculiar light.” On this occasion, Mr. Rubens said that the government of the Cuban Republic, and the Cuban Liberation Army, would reject the intervention of the U.S. in Cuba unless it should be preceded by a recognition of its independence. But Don Tomás Estrada Palma, and his second-in-command, Gonzalo de Quesada, denied Mr.
Rubens' statement. Afterwards Mr. Rubens explained himself. He said that his statement of the previous day meant that the Cuban Liberation Army would fight against U.S. annexation, but that as far as he was concerned, if Cubans opted for annexation once free from Spain, it was "all well and good." On the same day Mr. Quesada reversed himself as well, now threatening that if the U.S. intervened without recognizing Cuba's independence, it would be making a virtual declaration of war against the insurgents as well as against Spain. But the author of the article, "The Junta Members Excited," well judged the situation, concluding that article with the words "beggars should not be choosers."

On April 11, President McKinley addressed a message to Congress concluding that U.S. intervention in Cuba had become necessary, and asked for the authorization to take measures to end the war on the island, and on April 12, The New York Times reported that while opinions differed on this message as a whole, a majority of those questioned by the paper said that the people of Cuba ought to be free. On April 17, The New York Times reported that the previous night the U.S. Senate had concluded a three-day debate. A resolution was voted on jointly by the U.S. Congress on April 18, 1898 stating that the Cuban people ought to be free and independent; that the U.S. and its government demanded the immediate renunciation by Spain of sovereignty over Cuba and the immediate evacuation of the Spanish government and its armed forces from the island; it gave the U.S. president authority to use armed force in order to implement the above; and it declared that the U.S. had no desire or intent of attaining sovereignty in Cuba, except for its pacification, and expressed the intent, once that goal had been achieved, to grant sovereignty and governance over Cuba to her people. The U.S. and the Cuban Insurgents: One Race, Humankind...Only Good Nations and Bad

On May 6, The New York Times reported the opening of the Cuban Autonomous Parliament in Havana on May 5. This article describes the solemn oath taken by the deputies to defend the sovereignty of the Spanish crown in Cuba, the promise of further concessions to the Cubans made by Governor General Ramón Blanco, and the participation in these ceremonies by the hereto anti-home rule para-military corps known as Voluntarios. On May 8, The New York Times also reported the definitive organization of the Cuban Chamber of Deputies, and five days later it reported in the article, "Cuban Congress at Work," that the first political step taken by the Cuban Congress after it was constituted had been to appoint a commission to send—through the Spanish government to European powers—a protest against the intervention of the U.S. in Cuban affairs. The Cuban Senate was also constituted and Mr. José Bruzón was elected as its president.

Reading The New York Times for 1898 one receives the impression that the Cuban insurgents welcomed U.S. inter-
vention in Cuba. Except for the demand that the U.S. recognize the Cuban Republic in Arms before it intervened made by Mr. Rubens in New York, all the Cuban leaders accepted U.S. intervention unconditionally. As a matter of fact, General Máximo Gómez had sent a letter to President McKinley on February 9, 1897, asking him to employ the weight of his authority to stop Spain. He had a similar letter forwarded to McKinley by Consul Lee on February 15, 1898. In the past half century it has become common opinion that the Cuban insurgents were winning in their struggle against the royalist forces and loyalist Cubans, but reading the war diaries of General Máximo Gómez one gets a different impression. General Máximo Gómez admits his desperate situation on February 28, to the pages of his diary—after the desertion of seventeen men, his force had been reduced to thirty men. On March 1, his force was taken by surprise and barely escaped capture.

Proponents of the theory that a conquering Cuban Army of Liberation was cheated of victory by U.S. intervention will admit that a few insurgents were in favor of intervention, but only among those in exile, and some will add that those were former Autonomists. It is true that the propaganda activities of the New York delegation of the Cuban Revolutionary Party (the New York Junta) helped precipitate a war between the U.S. and Spain. Horatio Rubens was scolded by the Cubans at the headquarters of the Junta in New York after he declared to The New York Times that the Cuban insurgents would oppose armed intervention by the U.S. in Cuba unless it recognized the independence of the Cuban Republic. But it was not only Cubans in the U.S. who wanted the U.S. to intervene in Cuba. Insurgent Cubans on the island did too, and they had their reasons. General Gómez was not winning battles or holding towns on May 2, 1898, when he sent a message asking for assistance to General Sampson through the offices of the U.S. vice-consul in Sagua; and on May 17, he was unable to take the town of Jicotea after it was abandoned by government troops, because he was out of ammunition and waiting to receive some from "the chief of the allied army." On May 21, he wrote in his diary: "if reinforcements from Oriente do not arrive, it is doubtful the campaign will be successful here."

Bartolomé Masó and the government of the Cuban Republic in Arms supported the intervention unconditionally as early as April 28, 1898. On May 1, 1898, General García received a delegation from the U.S. Army, one of whose members carried a telegram from Don Tomás Estrada Palma, the Delegate of the Cuban Revolutionary Party in New York, and because of that telegram, and because he consulted the Cuban civil government, it has been argued that General García cooperated with the U.S. armed forces following orders of the government of the Cuban Republic in Arms. But before the Americans went to him with the telegram of introduction from Don Tomás Estrada Palma, General García had expressed his desire to cooperate unconditionally with them in a note dated April 18, 1898. This decision may have been motivated by General García's perception of the Cuban autonomous government as far superior to that of the Cuban Republic in Arms as a civil working government, and therefore more likely to be courted by the Americans once the latter had forced the Spanish crown to cede its sovereignty over Cuba.

In a letter of May 1, 1898, to vice-president Méndez Capote, General García announced his taking Bayamo, and claimed that other cities in Oriente were going to fall soon, but he did not answer desperate calls for help from General Gómez three weeks later, on May 21. In a letter dated June 12, to the U.S. Secretary of the Navy, General Sampson refers to a letter from General García to the American General Miles assuring that officer that he regarded his wishes and suggestions as orders.

It seems that Enrique Collazo made a fair assessment of the conduct in 1898 of the New York Delegation, the civil government of the Cuban Republic in Arms, and of the two major leaders of the Cuban Liberation Army. He wrote in 1905 that "delivered to the U.S. by the civil government and the Delegation of the Cuban Revolutionary Party abroad, Cubans did not expect liberty to come from their army but from the whim or will of the President of the U.S." In his work, Los Americanos en Cuba, General Collazo criticizes the civil government of the Cuban Republic in Arms and the commanders-in-chief of the Cuban Liberation Army for not negotiating with the Spanish authorities in Cuba and the Cuban autonomous government after the unilateral Spanish cease fire of April 11. Instead they gave their unconditional support to the U.S. intervention.
“Cubans did not expect liberty to come from their army but from the whim or will of the President of the U.S.”
—Gen. Collazo

support to the U.S. government that refused to acknowledge them.38 But they had reasons to suspect the good faith of what they saw as reforms made in desperation since the Abarzuza’s reforms, accepted unanimously by the Cortes in February 1895, had never been implemented—although I will dare say that Gómez’ desire to avenge his son and García’s pique were the main reasons for their unwillingness to deal with Spain in a way that allowed her to save face. Likewise, the exiles had decided that anything was preferable to dealing with Spain. General Blanco had success obtaining the surrender of some insurgent officers, but without the surrender of either García or Gómez, peace was impossible in the short term. In his campaign diary Máximo Gómez records at least three attempts by Governor General Blanco to win him over. Unrecorded in Gómez’s diary is a letter from General Blanco dated April 22, which Horatio Rubens translated together with Gómez’s answer in his memoir of Cuba, The Story of Freedom (1937).39

In his letter of April 22, 1898 to Máximo Gómez, Governor General Blanco warned that Americans were of a different ethnic origin and wanted to exterminate Cubans because of their Spanish blood with their blockade of the island; which acts were damaging to both Cubans and Spaniards and would finish the human destruction that mutual depredations during the war of independence had begun. He proposed an alliance of both armies at Santa Clara, where the Cuban insurgents would receive arms from the royal army to fight the Americans, suggesting that once the war was over, Spain would welcome Cuba as a new Spanish-speaking nation of the same religion and blood. General Máximo Gómez answered, indignant, that Cubans and Spaniards could never live in peace together on Cuban soil, and that he knew of only one race, humankind; that for him there were only good nations and bad, and up till then he had reasons for admiring the U.S. He concluded saying, “I have written President McKinley and General Miles thanking them for the American intervention in Cuba.”

THE U.S. IN CUBA: CUBA’S INDEPENDENCE...
FROM SPAIN

It seems puzzling that a war to liberate Cubans from Spanish oppression began in the Philippines, but the destruction of the Spanish fleet at Cavite on May 1, 1898, was the first engagement in this war between the U.S. and Spain. Like in Cuba, there was an independence movement in the Philippines, and on April 24, 1898, the Filipino leader, Emilio Aguinaldo, had conversations with the U.S. consul in Singapore. On May 19, Aguinaldo joined Commodore Dewey, commander of the U.S. fleet in Manila Bay. He established his headquarters at Cavite, assumed dictatorial powers, and began operations against the armed forces of the Spanish government.40 It is likely that Aguinaldo was given verbal statements of support for the independence of the Philippines by the U.S. consul in Singapore, E. Spencer Pratt, and by Commodore Dewey.41 On June 12, Aguinaldo declared the independence of the Philippines, and on June
23, he decreed the establishment of a provisional government with himself as president. Unlike General García in Cuba, he made no offer to place himself under American orders.

When war broke out in April 1898, the immediate action of the U.S. naval squadrons stationed at Key West since February was to blockade Cuban harbors. On the front page of The New York Times on May 7, the capture on the previous evening of the French steamer Lafayette, off Havana harbor while trying to run this blockade, was reported.

The U.S. did not begin military operations in Cuba, however, until June, 1898, a month after it began them in Asia. On June 2, General Miles sent a message from Tampa to General Calixto García, second-in-command of the Cuban army, in charge of forces in eastern Cuba, and within a week the Cuban insurgent general replied from his base near Bayamo that his forces would actively assist the landing of the U.S. Army, and that he regarded Miles' "wishes and suggestions as orders." No formal agreement had been proposed or effected between Miles and García, but the latter's response implied that he was voluntarily placing himself and his troops under American direction and control. A landing of U.S. marines occurred at Guantánamo Bay. However, a massive landing of 17,000 troops did not occur until June 22 at Daikiri, following a meeting between García and U.S. Army Commander General William R. Shafter. This U.S. expeditionary force had the assistance of the Cuban Liberation Army, who had also carried out a diversionary feint at Cabañas. In addition, the mere presence of local insurgent forces acted as a constraint upon the movement of royalist troops throughout the military division of Santiago de Cuba.

The Cuban Liberation Army made important contributions to the Santiago campaign, but U.S. troops soon developed an attitude of contempt for their nominal allies. In his war account, The Rough Riders (1899), Colonel Theodore Roosevelt says, "There was a Cuban guide at the head of the column, but he ran away as soon as the fighting began; two American reporters where there, two men, who did not run away." This dismissal of Cubans as cowardly is one of many negative comments about the courage and fighting caliber of the insurgents as reflected in Theodore Roosevelt's memoirs. In his account of fighting at El Caney, Roosevelt describes Cubans, "scattering like guinea pigs." Roosevelt was particularly unimpressed by the appearance of the Cuban Liberation Army at the moment he landed in Cuba, when, he says, "At Daikiri we found hundreds of Cuban insurgents, a crew as utter tatterdemalions as human eyes ever looked on, armed with every kind of rifle in all stages of dilapidation. It was evident at a glance, that they would be no use in serious fighting, but it was hoped that they might be of service in scouting. From a variety of causes, however, they turned out to be nearly useless, even for this purpose, so far as the Santiago campaign was concerned." Ironically, Colonel Roosevelt praises the "Spanish guerrillas," unaware that this force in the royal army in Cuba was overwhelmingly Cuban-born.

On July 4, the small Spanish fleet, which had been trapped inside Santiago's bottle-necked harbor, attempted to escape, and was sunk in the effort. The city of Santiago would not capitulate unconditionally though, and negotiations began between the Spanish commander of the city, José Toral, and U.S. Army commander General Shafter. The latter feared that investing Santiago would be very costly in human lives, and also that a long siege would allow the spread of tropical diseases among his unacclimated men. On July 14, General Toral formally surrendered the troops of his army in the city as well as all government troops and divisions in the eastern province of Cuba. The U.S. made the commitment to repatriate all the soldiers from Spain who would want to return. The terms of surrender stipulated that incumbent civil officers and local constabulary authorities were to be ratified in their positions, and that all residents of the province passed directly under the authority and protection of the U.S.

In the article "Santiago and After," The New York Times on July 17, 1898, encouraged the conquest of Puerto Rico because "no better time would be chosen for that capture than the moment at which the Spanish Minister of War is talking of the retention of that island as an indispensable condition of peace." It concluded that "the intolerable nuisance which the war was undertaken to abate cannot be perpetuated in Puerto Rico," and that "Spanish rule must be banished completely and unconditionally from our hemi-

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sphere.” These words echo what Theodore Roosevelt said later in *The Rough Riders*: “I preached with all the fervor and zeal I possessed, our duty to intervene in Cuba, and to take this opportunity of driving the Spanish from the Western World.” But in Santiago de Cuba the U.S. regulars fraternized with their erstwhile enemies, the Spaniards. Officers and privates in the U.S. Army and Navy could be seen in the city together with Spaniards of their own rank. A lieutenant in the U.S. Army later reminisced, “I met many of the Spanish officers in the restaurants of the city, and I must admit that they were, as a rule, capital fellows, kindly disposed, hospitable, and very gentlemanly.” The Spaniards reciprocated the feelings of the Americans for them. Before departing for Europe, the Spanish private, Pedro López de Castillo, wrote a letter of appreciation to the American Army which was signed by 11,000 Spanish soldiers. The Spanish soldiers wished the Americans “all happiness and health in this land which will no longer belong to our dear Spain, but will be yours, who have conquered it by force and watered it with your blood;” and concluded, “these people are not able to exercise or enjoy their liberty, for they will find it a burden to comply with the laws which govern civilized communities.”

General Shafter excluded General García from the peace negotiations, and the insurgent army from capitulation ceremonies. On July 14, García learned that his forces would neither share in the municipal administration of Santiago nor receive control of Cuban territory. He demanded from Shafter a clarification of the status of Santiago and learned that the Cuban Liberation Army would not be permitted into the city. He refused the personal invitation to attend the capitulation ceremonies at Santiago extended to him by Shafter, and after breaking publicly with the Americans, he forwarded to General Máximo Gómez a formal protest of American actions accompanied by his resignation. General Shafter answered General García’s protest, and reminded him that the war was between the U.S. and Spain. On July 26, *The New York Times* reported in the article “The Cuban Complaints” the circumstances surrounding the differences between General García and General Shafter at Santiago. This article concludes with the words, “in our view there is at present no government of Cuba, but there is a municipal government of Santiago de Cuba,” and “to keep

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### Timeline of the Spanish-Cuban War

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Charles D. Sigsbee

Ramón Blanco

Máximo Gómez
Cuban troops out was a necessity," because "when our men are compelled to shell our allies in order to induce them to desist from killing prisoners, we have had sufficient notice of what would be the result of letting them lose upon a captive town." In the same issue the article, "The Future of Cuba," ponders the intention as declared in the Joint Resolution of Congress to leave the government and control of the island to its people, but that it might be that Cubans wished to exercise their right of control to become U.S. citizens.

Hostilities between the U.S. and Spain ended formally on August 12—although the capture of Manila by U.S. forces was staged on August 13. Since the Cuban insurgents were not signatories to the peace protocol, insurgent armies continued operations, and the U.S. appealed to the Delegation of the Cuban Revolutionary Party in New York to call them to order. Don Tomás Estrada Palma, the Delegate, accepted the peace protocol, and his decision was subsequently accepted by the civil government of the Cuban Republic in Arms. Talk of renewing the war against the U.S. went on among the Cuban insurgent armed bands, but they had neither weapons nor supplies, nor the monies to purchase them, because those came to the insurgents through the Cuban Revolutionary Party juntas in the U.S. On August 13, General García was dismissed by the civil government of the Cuban Republic in Arms for establishing a military dictatorship in eastern Cuba, and in early September it authorized the disbandment of the entire eastern army. In late September, the civil government called for a National Assembly to meet at Santa Cruz del Sur, and on October 23, it formally dissolved itself and invested the Santa Cruz del Sur Assembly as the provisional supreme authority of the Republic of Cuba.

General H. L. Lawton replaced General Shafter as provincial governor in eastern Cuba, and upon his arrival in Cuba, he had a conference with General García, where he convinced the Cubans that the U.S. intended to honor the terms of the Joint Resolution, but that Cuban cooperation was essential to the success of the congressional pledge. By September 27, García was giving his support to the Americans because he despised the Santa Cruz Assembly more. His denunciation of the provisional government and his endorsement of U.S. authorities in Cuba served to legitimize the refusal by the latter to recognize the authority of the Santa Cruz Assembly. On October 1, 1898, The New York

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Cuban-American War

included the Teller Amendment (disclaimed any intention by U.S. to exercise jurisdiction or control over Cuba except in a pacification role, promised to leave the island as soon as war was over.

April 25
War formally declared between Spain and U.S.

June 10
U.S. Marines land at Guantánamo, Cuba.

July 3
Spanish fleet attempts to leave Santiago Bay. All ships destroyed, 350 left dead, 160 wounded.

July 28
Duque de Almodóvar del Río called for U.S. annexation of Cuba.

Miles issued public proclamation in Ponce stating purpose of U.S. invasion was to bring Puerto Rico a "banner of freedom."

November 10
U.S. does not recognize the Cuban Gov./Assembly of Representatives of the Revolution, which included Major General Calixto García. U.S. instead stated it had declared war on Spain and all of its possessions because of destruction of battleship U.S.S. Maine and other acts against U.S.

December 10
Treaty of Paris signed. Spain renounced all rights to Cuba, allowed an independent Cuba, ceded Puerto Rico and Guam to U.S. gave up possessions in West Indies, and sold Philippine Islands for $20,000,000.

1899
January 1
Spanish forces left Cuba.

1900
April 12
U.S. Congress passed the Foraker Act, establishing civilian government in P.R. under U.S. control, provided for elected House of Representatives on island, but not for vote in Washington.

May 1
With inauguration of Gov. Charles H. Allen, the U.S. civilian government of Puerto Rico begins.
On August 13, General García was dismissed by the civil government of the Cuban Republic in Arms for establishing a military dictatorship in eastern Cuba. Times reported that while former U.S. Consul General at Havana Fitzhugh Lee avowed that Cuba would secure its independence and be fitted for it under a “not long guardianship...,” this seemed somewhat premature confidence.

In the article “An Envoy in Disguise” on October 9, The New York Times chastised Cuban supporters of the Cuban autonomous government, because Mr. Rivero, editor of the senior Havana daily El diario de la Marina, was in New York seeking a rapprochement between Cuban supporters of home rule under the Spanish crown and Cuban exiles in New York who supported Cuban independence. The New York Times wondered how much credence the Cubans in New York would give to “the myth that the Autonomists are anything else than a group of Spaniards who for years have been the worst of foes to the real patriots of the island.” This article concludes that the pretense of an autonomous Cuban government had been revived for the plain purpose of embarrassing the pending negotiations between the U.S. and Spain, and that the disguised royalists were posing as the representatives of a phase of Cuban sentiment.

The fact is that, despite the predictions of The New York Times since October 1897, the Cuban autonomous government continued functioning after the war of the U.S. with Spain began. On June 22 (p. 1: 5), in the article “Gálvez Hopes for Spain,” The New York Times reported an address of the Cuban Prime Minister, where he said that he would rather see heavens fall than an invasion of Cuba by a foreign army. At the Cuban Chamber of Deputies, Mr. Gálvez had repeatedly said that home rule was not a regime to benefit the Cuban-born Creole, nor the European-born only, but for all the inhabitants of the island of Cuba. It is puzzling that one of the better informed newspapers in the U.S. did not know that the Cuban autonomous government continued operating outside of eastern Cuba after the capitulation of Santiago in July, and of the cessation of hostilities between Spain and the U.S. in August. It existed until the end of Spanish sovereignty in Cuba on December 31, 1898. Whatever individual former Autonomists may have said or done after 1898, the fact is that the Cuban Liberal (home rule) Party was the only Cuban political group opposed to U.S. intervention in Cuba in that fateful year.

By November 1898, the U.S. authorities in Cuba had become arbiters of contending factions among the Cuban insurgents. In that month the Santa Cruz Assembly sent a commission to Washington D.C., and General García also traveled to the U.S. in order to present a case for its dissolution. On December 29, General Gómez broke what had been a long silence to address the remains of the Cuban Liberation Army, appealing for reconciliation and unity. Calixto García had died that month in the U.S., and Don Tomás Estrada Palma suggested to the U.S. authorities to give Gómez some official attention. In January of 1899 President McKinley sent a special representative to General Máximo Gómez, who accepted to cooperate in disbanding the Cuban Liberation Army, and distributing $3 million to the insurgent soldiers. Soon after, the Santa Cruz Assembly denounced Gómez’s actions, and threatened to deprive him of the moral authority necessary to implement the dissolution of the Liberation Army. But the U.S. Military Governor of Cuba, Brooke, dissolved the Assembly by decree,
and General Gómez, acting under the authority of the U.S. government, disbanded the Cuban Liberation Army.\textsuperscript{64}

These events clarified that U.S. intervention in the Cuban war of independence evolved into a Spanish-American War.\textsuperscript{65}

CONCLUSIONS

Cuban historian Emilio Roig de Leuchsenring debunked the myth that Cubans received independence from the U.S. in his monograph \textit{Cuba no debe su independencia a los Estados Unidos} (1950), but in this work he devised his own myth of a Cuban Liberation Army on the road to victory.\textsuperscript{66}

He was instrumental in bringing about an official proclamation of the Cuban Academy of History designating the War of the U.S. with Spain a “Spanish-Cuban-American War,” a concept that, in my opinion, ignores the fact that the U.S. government never granted belligerent status to the Cuban Liberation Army, that the U.S. armed forces marginalized the Cuban army as soon as they were established in Cuba (never treating the Cuban insurgents as allies), and that, for all practical purposes, the intervention of the U.S. in Cuba in 1898 was part of a war of the U.S. with Spain which began at Manila Bay in April 1898. Furthermore, if the Cuban Liberation Army was on its road to victory in early 1898, why did its General-in-Chief, Máximo Gómez, request assistance from the President of the U.S. through the offices of U.S. Consul General Fitzhugh Lee on February 15? Victorious generals do not request assistance unconditionally.

The way things seem to have actually been is best described by General Shafter’s answer to General García’s protest. Shafter said, “This war, as you well know, is between the U.S. and Spain alone.”\textsuperscript{67}

It is likely that without U.S. armed intervention in 1898 home rule would have become established in Cuba, and eventually Cuba would have become independent peacefully. But instead of a peace between Cubans, a peace treaty between the U.S. and Spain was signed in Paris on December 10, 1898.\textsuperscript{68}

One may dare say that the unconditional cooperation that generals Gómez and García gave to the U.S. intervention in Cuba is a classic case of decision making flawed by personal motives, and Cuban historiography since Roig de Leuchsenring has been flawed by the awful consequences that come from lying to oneself, by refusing to acknowledge the actions of the patriot generals candidly, without lessening the grave consequences of what was at least a serious tactical error.

From October 1897 to October 1898, the opinions expressed in the editorials and in the reporting of \textit{The New York Times} about Cuba and the Cubans changed considerably. In 1897 this newspaper applauded the reluctance of the Cuban insurgents to accept anything less than independence from Spain. Throughout the year 1898 the negative opinion that \textit{The New York Times} held of Spain did not change, and its editorials on the Cuban autonomous government were consistently pessimistic. Also consistent throughout the period covered in this essay, the sources of \textit{The New York Times} in Cuba would report that the “best people” in the island favored its annexation to the U.S. But in the latter part of 1898, there was a considerable change in opinions about Cubans and Cuban independence. By April, Cuban insurgents demanding a commitment to Cuban independence from the U.S.—as it threatened intervention in Cuba—were reminded by \textit{The New York Times} that beggars should not be choosers. On July 26, this newspaper expressed doubts about the capability of Cubans for self-government, and suggested that Cubans might want to become U.S. citizens. Under Spain it encouraged the Cuban insurgents to intransigence—as brave men—but under the U.S. it encouraged them to acquiesce, to become wards.

\textit{Turn to page 40 for the footnotes to this article.}