CUBA BETWEEN EMPIRES

1878–1902

Louis A. Pérez, Jr.

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UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH PRESS

Published by the University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15261

Manufactured in the United States of America
Printed on acid-free paper

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Pérez, Louis A., 1943–
Cuba between empires, 1878–1902.

(Pitt Latin American series)
Bibliography: p. 449
Includes Index.
1. Cuba—History—1878–1895. 2. Cuba—History—Revolution, 1895–1898. 3. Cuba—History—1899–1906. I. Title. II. Series.
F1785.P47 1982 972.91'06 82-11059
ISBN 0-8229-3472-8 ISBN 0-8229- 5687-X (pbk.)

For Amara and Maya

Do tell my children please, in black on white,
that once, when I was young and close to them,
I loved them as a god must love his fantasies
and laid my hands upon them while they slept,
willing my love to fashion in my hands
such rainbow sprays of covenanted time
as reached one season when, flower-like, they wilted
into the . . . women who do not know me.

—Nathaniel Tarn

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Acknowledgments

The completion of this manuscript has provided moments to reflect back on nearly a decade of research and writing—moments given unabashedly to nostalgic retrospection and detached introspection. I recall many years ago, in one of my first research seminars, the late Professor Russell C. Ewing warning the new and uninitiated graduate students that the enterprise of history was very much a solitary endeavor. There is, I have learned in the intervening years, considerable truth to this observation. But I have come to appreciate more the extent to which the pursuit of the past draws on the resources, talents, and wisdom of others. The completion of this book leaves me very much in the debt of friends and colleagues, individuals upon whose professional assistance, scholarly counsel, and moral subsidy I came to depend. This enterprise of scholarship is, in the end, truly a collaborative undertaking.

In the course of this research I received complete cooperation from a number of libraries and archives. I am especially mindful of the courtesy and assistance provided by the staffs of the National Archives, the Library of Congress, the New York Public Library, the Alabama Department of Archives and Records, the Pennsylvania Historical Society, and the University of Florida Library. I owe a special dept to María A. Lastayo and her staff at the Biblioteca Nacional "José Martí" in Havana. Vital bibliographic materials otherwise unavailable to me originated from that cluttered second floor office of the Biblioteca Nacional.

Most of all, I owe an enormous debt to the staff of the University of South Florida Library. From Donna M. Asbell, Julia L. Schwartz, and Dorothy N. Tiemann I received unflagging cooperation. On many occasions they rescued me from aimless and time-consuming wanderings through labyrinthine stacks of government serials. My debt to Mary Kay Hartung and Florence Jandreau is not repaid here—it is simply acknowledged. My appreciation of the importance of their assistance has deepened over the years. Much of the research for this study would have been impossible to complete without their help. No amount of appreciation can return to them their contribution.

It becomes necessary, also, to acknowledge the enormity of my debt to Michael G. Copeland, Lucia Grimaldi, Gregg B. Gronlund, Marian E. Pittman, and Cecile L. Pulin—but most especially to Robin L. Kester, who with great attention to detail and passion for perfection presided over the

final draft of the manuscript. They all suffered in stoic silence (and sometimes not so silently!) countless drafts of this manuscript—again, again, and again. My appreciation of their efforts on my behalf is most heartfelt. Without them I would still be hopelessly struggling somewhere between the first and second draft.

A special debt of gratitude is owned to Peggy Cornett, who occupied the front trenches of the Department during the period in which the manuscript was undergoing final revisions. A special thanks is due to Travis J. Northcutt, Jr., and Susan M. Stoudinger who between 1977 and 1980 provided the support and contributed to creating the environment that made the final writing of this book possible.

I am especially grateful to the American Philosophical Society for a grant that allowed me to complete the final research for this study. I am indebted, too, to the Office of Sponsored Research under A. Riley Macon at the University of South Florida for support in the form of a Research and Creative Scholarship Grant.

These past years have allowed me to share with friends and colleagues the ideas developed in the forthcoming pages. Since this book has been so long in preparation, drafts of the manuscript and chapters thereof have circulated frequently and in various stages of completion. Cecil B. Currey, Sue Fernández, and Robert P. Ingalls offered helpful advice on various portions of the manuscript. George H. Mayer read an early draft of the complete study and found many soft areas where my enthusiasm exceeded my evidence. The gentility of his criticism and the erudition of his arguments made subsequent reconsideration of my own case a valuable undertaking. Jorge I. Domínguez read a later draft of the manuscript and provided many thoughtful suggestions. I owe a large debt of gratitude to Thomas P. Dilkes, a friend and colleague, who read the completed manuscript and offered suggestions and advice. In the course of those many glorious Florida days we spent together along the Gulf, he passed more time sharpening my arguments than improving his fishing. I also owe much to Steven F. Lawson, a friend and selfless collaborator, who a long time ago believed in the premises that inspired this book and who, from those early research trips together, provided continual support and encouragement. He has been a sympathetic listener and a critical reader. He offered insightful comments and constructive advice at every stage of research and writing.

The aforementioned individuals provided gratifying response to and stimulation for many of the arguments that follow. At times their dis-

agreements forced me to reconsider particular formulations and rework ambiguous constructions. They picked up flaws, challenged dubious propositions, and saved me from egregious errors. Many of their comments no doubt emerge in modified form, with perhaps a different emphasis here and there, but nonetheless began as their thoughts. Not everyone has agreed with the propositions advanced in the pages that follow. Indeed, some have already conveyed their vigorous disagreement. Without their help, however, this book would not have taken the form it has. Their assistance is acknowledged with gratitude. Hard as they tried to eliminate the faults that may remain, and there were some mighty efforts, I did not heed their suggestions every time. Their sustained efforts on my behalf free them of any responsibility for particular statements and arguments that I have stubbornly refused to delete. And, of course, their generosity does not make them in any way responsible for whatever errors persist in the following pages.

There were, too, over the years, listeners—mostly good friends, of course, for upon whom else would one routinely inflict the desultory laments that are so much a part of this thing we call scholarship. They provided the love, moral nourishment, and understanding that reinforced my resolve and sustained my spirits. I realize now, with hindsight, how often I abused their forbearance. Though they did not participate directly in the preparation of this book, it is entirely possible that without them it would not have been completed. A special thanks to Etta Bender Breit, Stephanie Lawson, James W. Silver, and Brenda and G. Kelly Tipps. I am grateful, too, for the encouragement and affection of J. A. Domínguez and Ramón Pi y Castella. The knowledge that the faith can be kept for seventy years is a source of enduring comfort and recurring inspiration.

There is, finally, I have recently concluded, no mystery to completing a book. It simply involves diverting attention, moral resources, and commitment to the task of research and writing. But this is the stuff of love, too—the substance of parenting. This book is dedicated to my daughters, Amara and Maya, who sometimes unknowingly and often unwillingly gave up something of their future to my present study of some other past. In a very real sense, this is their book. They are correct in their expectation that things will now be different.

Tampa, Florida
March 1982

Introduction

I Cuban independence arrived as something of an anticlimax. On May 20, 1902, at noon, the American flag was lowered, the Cuban flag raised —a properly orchestrated and orderly inauguration of the new republic. But something had gone awry, Cubans sensed after 1902. Somehow the twentieth-century republican reality had fallen short of the nineteenth-century separatist ideal. It was not only that the Platt Amendment had compromised the integrity of the republic: it was more. Something else troubled the national mood. The outcome of the separatist enterprise was unequal to the magnitude of the effort. A default was in the making, a promise remained unkept. It was left to the mutterings of the old general in chief to give expression to Cuban disillusionment: "This is not the Republic we fought for," a crestfallen Máximo Gómez brooded in 1902, "it is not the absolute independence we dreamed about, but there is no gain in discussing that now. . . . What we must study with profound attention is the manner to save what remains of the redemptive Revolution."

II Decades earlier, the first of many summons had stirred Cubans to dramatic action. The call to revolution served as a recurring referendum of arms, periodic outbursts of rage registering Cuban inconformity with the Spanish colonial regime. The war launched on February 24, 1895, was a renewal of an earlier war, which was in turn a continuation of a previous conflict. In all, three decades of revolutionary activity, spanning the years between 1868 and 1898, involved two generations of Cubans in three major wars and, in between, a greater number of tentative starts and abortive endings. The Ten Years' War (1868–1878), known also as "La Guerra Grande," was the longest sustained separatist effort. "La Guerra Chiquita" (1879–1880) was among the shortest. They both failed.

The war of 1895 was different not only because it succeeded. It succeeded because it was different. Much had changed in Cuba between the "Grito de Yara" in 1868 and the "Grito de Baire" in 1895. Cuban society was different, more complex. Property relations and production modes were in transition. So were social relationships. Allegiances were in flux. The pull of geography had finally overcome traditional ties of colonialism as the United States replaced Spain as Cuba's principal trade partner and primary guarantor of the status quo. And in 1895, discontent with that status quo was everywhere on the increase.

It was inevitable that the "Grito de Baire" would be different from its predecessors. Cuba had changed, and the sources of Cuban grievances no longer emanated exclusively from the rule of the distant metropolis. By the late nineteenth century, Spain was neither the primary nor the principal beneficiary of empire. Madrid would strain to preserve the island not so much for colonial profits as for national pride.

The principal beneficiaries of empire were local elites, Creole and *peninsular* (Spaniard) alike, whose privileged position in Cuban society was also becoming increasingly anomalous and ambiguous. For decades colonial elites had relied on Spain for the suppression of social challenges to their political preeminence while counting on the United States for the expansion of the economic sources of their political power. Local elites found themselves between two metropolitan centers upon whom they relied for defense against colonial revolution. They feared social upheaval more than they opposed colonial rule, and they preferred security to change, not being willing to risk the loss of privilege to gain independence. What reforms elites did advocate were always conceived within the colonial framework. Politics in the colony may have pitted Creole reform against *peninsular* reaction, but both Creoles and *peninsulares* remained united in their preference for empire and defense of privilege.

It was perhaps inevitable that separatism would reflect the contradictions and the anomalous character of Cuban society in the late nineteenth century. The forces that coalesced around Cuba Libre in 1895 were extraordinarily diverse. The revolutionary enterprise was a coalition of Cubans who shared one—and often, only one—sentiment: a consuming desire to end Spanish rule. But even the sources of this common purpose were varied. Cubans embarked on their mission with a mixture of motives, a conflict of interests, and a diversity of objectives. Some were annexationists, some were *independentistas*. Some wanted automomy, others wanted social revolution. Some wanted a new country, others a new society. Patricians joined with peasants; the proletariat collaborated with the bourgeoisie; black officers commanded white troops; socialists and capitalists, anarchists and liberals shared positions of leadership; and all rallied around this mystical sentiment called Cuba Libre.

Cuban separatism was many things to many people, and these differences acquired institutional form early in the war. Conservative separatists, principally annexationists and those who advocated a protectorate status for Cuba, served the cause of Cuba Libre abroad, in the Cuban Revolutionary party (PRC) and patriotic juntas in the United

States, Europe, and Latin America. *Independentismo* flourished in the armed camps of Cuba Libre.

But armed separatism was more than independence, for it subsumed a social imperative into its vision of a free Cuba. Inequity in Cuba in 1895 had a peculiarly home-grown quality. That the sources of oppression in Cuba were more internal than external, more social than political, served as the premises around which armed separatism took shape in the 1880s and 1890s. Not that these developments were entirely new; they had always been elements of the Cuban insurrectionary tradition of the nineteenth century. What was different in 1895 was the recognition that inequity was not caused principally by Spanish colonial rule, for which independence was the obvious panacea, but, rather, was the effect of the Cuban social system, for which the only remedy was a transformation of Cuban society. After 1895, Cubans continued to speak of independence, but they spoke also of the war as a method of redemption and a means of social revolution. Political separatism had expanded into revolutionary populism, committed as much to ending colonial relationships within the colony as to ending colonial connections with the metropolis.

III

Diversity was the insurrection's principal source of strength. It sustained Cuban resolve. For the duration of the war it was enough that all Cubans agreed on the necessity to separate from Spain. But diversity was also the revolution's principal weakness. The mixed social origins of Cuban separatism gave rise to divisive political conflicts. Ambiguity of purpose produced an ambivalence in policy. Leadership fragmented. In the end, the institutional agencies around which the forces of Cuba Libre had organized were more competitive than complementary, and the only real unifying bond was the will to wage war against Spain.

The will to wage war served Cubans well and in the end carried them to victory over Spain. By the time the United States decided to intervene militarily, the outcome of the war was predictable: Spain was defeated and doomed. But the separatist triumph produced not Cuban independence but American intervention. Once local elites were convinced that Spain could no longer guarantee privilege and property, they were prepared to shed traditional colonial relationships. The call for American intervention came loudest from the representatives of a beleaguered social order on the verge of collapse; elites, Spaniards and Creoles alike, appealed to the United States for salvation against the revolution.

Once the war against Spain was over, the Cuban coalition collapsed.

Contradictions surfaced, conflict ensued, and consensus ended. The forces of Cuban separatism were thrown into disarray and confusion. Cuba Libre spoke with too many voices, and the sounds were unintelligible, the message garbled. Americans chose to listen selectively. Divided, exhausted, and impoverished, the revolutionary coalition came apart. The United States skillfully exploited these conditions, and while the American intervention may have exacerbated the contradictions within the separatist polity, it did not create them. What was remarkable about developments after 1898 was the absence of anything like organized resistance to the United States. A revolutionary movement, for three decades devoted to armed struggle as a means of national liberation, did not challenge the American presence in Cuba. In the end, Cuban separatism collapsed as much from overweighing internal contradiction as from overwhelming external forces.

IV Far from stumbling into war against Spain, the United States followed a policy that was shrewd, purposeful, and calculated. American policy was directed as much against Cuban independence as it was against Spanish sovereignty: 1898 was a climax to a hundred years of policy. For almost a century, the United States had covetously pursued the acquisition of Cuba. The proposition that Washington would suddenly renounce annexation in 1898 is untenable. In fact, it did not. Rather, the specific circumstances under which the American intervention in 1898 unfolded —both in Cuba and the United States—required new ways to achieve old objectives.

For almost four years, between 1898 and 1902, the United States militarily occupied Cuba, officially to discharge the terms of the Teller Amendment, ostensibly for the purpose of preparing Cuba for independence. But other objectives guided its policy toward quite a different direction; the organization of self-government in Cuba was not a means to promote sovereignty but a way to advance annexation. The military occupation was not preparation for independence but the prelude to annexation. The vast resources and authority of the military government were mobilized for this end. The intervention in 1898 blocked the ascendancy of the Cuban revolutionary forces and preserved intact the prevailing social order. The military occupation between 1898 and 1902 created a national system designed to promote dependency and ultimately facilitate annexation. No aspect of Cuban society was spared in this endeavor. Pro-American political parties were organized; elites who earlier had depended on Spain to guarantee

their positions of privilege transferred their allegiance to the United States; a colonial army was created; the national economy was restructured around one export product for one market. And under the auspices of the military government, an annexationist naturalized American citizen was elected as Cuba's first president.

V For decades the Cuban insurrection of 1895 has been viewed as simply the last in a series of New World rebellions in which disgruntled colonial subjects resorted to arms to end European colonial rule. This schema stressed the standard causal factors as precipitants of the Cuban insurrection, including the traditional Creole-*peninsular* schism, the excesses of Spanish colonial administration, and the presentiment of nationality. Focus centered principally on the political aspects of Cuban separatism, chief among which figured the goal of independence. With independence identified as the purpose of Cuban arms, the objectives of the war seemed rather self-evident and fulfilled. The Cuban struggle acquired a one-dimensional form, seemingly conventional in its objectives and successful in its purpose: the last of the nineteenth-century wars for independence in Latin America.

But Cuban separatism was possessed of more than a desire for nationhood. It was not the last of a kind but the precursor of a genre: a guerrilla war of national liberation aspiring to the transformation of society. The Cuban insurrection had more in common with the Mexican revolution fifteen years later than it did with the South American wars for independence seventy-five years earlier. Independence served as the cutting edge of separatist politics, a purpose that found universal endorsement among the diverse social groupings that had organized around Cuba Libre. But the vision went beyond free Cuba, for independence was a means, not an end. Cuba Libre contained elements of anti-imperialism, political radicalism, agrarian reform, racial equality, and social justice.

This was Cuba's first revolution, one crushed by American military intervention. There were portents in these developments, for it would not be the last time the Cuban revolutionary impulse would be thwarted by the United States.

The experience of 1895–1898 cast a long shadow across twentieth-century Cuba and left a legacy of expectations unfulfilled and promises unkept. The revolutionary endeavor of 1895–1898 remained unfinished and incomplete. Cubans had been summoned to dramatic action but failed to produce dramatic change. What remained of the "redemptive Revolution,"

to return to Máximo Gómez's lament, was the ideal, and the ideal was so indelibly impressed on the collective Cuban consciousness that it would serve the same function in the twentieth century that it had in the nineteenth: the call to revolution. Out of the frustration and dashed hopes of 1898 were released the forces that would give structure and substance to Cuban politics for the next sixty years. The political labor of the next three generations of Cubans would be devoted to redeeming the "redemptive Revolution."

CUBA BETWEEN EMPIRES, 1878–1902

1 The Fateful Interlude

The general feeling is that no remedy or relief is possible, except through annexation to the United States. They might prefer it, for there is no particular love for the United States in Cuba. The desire for annexation is purely selfish . . . but . . . in the fullness of time, when Cuba and Spain and we should all be of one mind—without discussion, or revolution, or war,—Cuba would doubtless be added to the Union.
—Adam Badeu, U.S. Consul, Havana, 1833

The country does not have, as it ought to have with the struggle so close upon us, a unification plan to unite it, and a political program to allay its fears. Cuba's resolve to fight will be far stronger than it is today, and the revolutionary work much easier, when the enemies of the revolution can no longer uphold—as they are now doing for lack of expressed declarations against it—the argument that the war will be nothing but an arena for the hatreds and ambitions of rival military leaders.
—José Martí, 1887

I

A gentle rain mourned the dawn. Few Cubans gathered at an abandoned farm at Zanjón found more than fleeting comfort in the symbolic gesture of divine commiseration. The ill-fated events scheduled for the morning of February 10, 1878, placed most Cubans assembling in Camagüey province beyond the reach of any expression of consolation—whatever its origins.

Some ten years earlier, not too distant from Zanjón, many of the very same Cubans had unfurled the banner of rebellion against Spain. But a war launched with national objectives failed to move beyond provincial operations. At no time in the course of the Ten Years' War did insurgent Cubans manage to sustain a drive much beyond the eastern third of the island. Insurgent armies remained effectively contained east of Spanish military fortifications constructed along the Júcaro-Morón *trocha,* (a fortified military trench), there falling prey to internal conflict and strife. A rebellion of such long duration, patently meager in insurgent successes, quickly turned on itself with disastrous consequences for the separatist cause. Recurring military-civilian disputes, racial tensions, and regionalism wracked the insurgent movement. By the end of the decade, desertions, defections, and the depletion of morale dealt the final body blows to the separatist effort. Almost ten years after the euphoric "Grito de Yara," prostrate insurgent forces succumbed easily to the newly arrived Spanish military reinforcements under General Arsenio Martínez Campos.[1]

The arrival of the Cuban peace delegation to Zanjón on the morning of February 10, 1878, served simply to signify the formal, if only ceremonial, acknowledgment of the failure of insurgent arms. After a decade of conflict, disheartened insurgent leaders accepted Spanish peace terms as the most honorable arrangement through which to extricate themselves from a cause hopelessly doomed to failure. By the terms of the Pact of Zanjón, Spain pledged to institute a wide range of administrative and political reforms. A general amnesty pardoned insurgent Cubans and guaranteed unconditional freedom to all African slaves and Asian indentured workers registered in the ranks of the Liberation Army in February 1878.[2] An exchange of signatures and an exchange of salutes brought the conference to a close and the war to an end.

But not all separatist chieftains concurred with either the decision to surrender at Zanjón or the terms of the peace. Meager concessions for such a mighty effort, some Cubans said bitterly. The Pact of Zanjón generated as much dissension among Cubans in arms as any other single issue in the decade-long war. The more intransigent separatists rejected outright any peace settlement that sanctioned the continued presence of Spanish au-

thority in Cuba. For other *insurrecto* chieftains, a formal peace pact that confined the emancipation to only those African slaves formally enrolled in separatist armies fell far short of satisfying a central and long-standing insurgent demand for the complete abolition of slavery.

Many ranking insurgent chieftains denounced the Zanjón settlement. News of Zanjón reached General Ramón Leocadio Bonachea on field operations in the westerm extremity of Camagüey. Bonachea ignored the peace settlement and defiantly continued his westward advance into Las Villas province. In the southeastern Oriente village of Baraguá, General Antonio Maceo assembled the 1,500 officers and men under his command to repudiate publicly the peace protocol and renew the insurgent commitment to armed struggle. In March 1878 a new provisional government, committed to continued fighting, was organized around the irreconcilable elements of the separatist movement.[3] And for ten more weeks the Ten Years' War continued.

This renewed commitment to arms after Zanjón, Cubans knew, was more symbolic than substantive: a demarcation so they would know where to begin the next time. By May, weakened by deaths and desertions and wholly reduced to desultory operations in scattered pockets of territory in the remote eastern interior, the armed protesters of Baraguá, too, grudgingly made their peace with Spain and left Cuba.

II

Until the Ten Years' War, Spain had administered Cuba as an overseas territory, principally for the benefit of metropolitan society. In the colony there had been little significant and less sustained political activity. Administration prevailed in the place of politics. If problems were recognized it was for—not by—the island population; attempts to resolve colonial questions came from above and abroad. Outside of an occasional and short-lived armed protest, a general consensus had prevailed on both the premises and propriety of this arrangement—until the Ten Years' War.

Between 1868 and 1878, Madrid confronted in Cuba the longest and most serious challenge to Spanish colonial rule since the South American wars for independence fifty years earlier. The Peace of Zanjón, to be sure, ended the revolutionary challenge, but only after Madrid had agreed to concede reforms and sanction colonial politics. The war had forced Spain to renounce the principle of metropolitan absolutism; the Pact of Zanjón provided the standard against which to measure the performance of Spanish administration.

The Ten Years' War released political forces that survived long after the

insurgent armies of Yara had abandoned the field. Even as separatist arms faltered in 1878, the question of Cuba's future political status and its relationship to Spain became the subject of intense public debate well beyond the confines of the war zones of the eastern provinces. Politics in post-Zanjón Cuba organized around the central questions raised by the separatist war. The failure of insurgent arms and the subsequent departure of the most ardent separatists did not quiet the central political issues. On the contrary, a decade of armed struggle had catapulted both the objectives of the separatist war and their means onto the central arena of Cuban politics. The abeyance of the armed expression of Cuban separatism after Zanjón and the end of the extralegal challenge to Spanish authority, followed by the exodus of the most intransigent advocates of Cuba Libre, only eliminated the most untenable proposition of the separatist dispute from political consideration—Cuba's complete and immediate independence from Spain.

After Zanjón, the issues of Cuba's future political status surfaced in established and prescribed political forums. Lest Spanish intransigence again drive advocates of change to the outer fringes of legality and into armed rebellion, the issue of reform acquired legitimacy and centrality in an arena of sanctioned political debate. In the Pact of Zanjón, Spain sought reconciliation with the rebellious colony in a spirit of reform and compromise, committing itself to an institutional resolution of outstanding colonial grievances. Zanjón represented Spain's attempt to renew the imperial lease over the colony by offering colonial reforms to Creole dissidents and promising political participation to Creole loyalists. The unsuccessful revolution made reform possible.

Politics in Cuba after 1878 organized around the prospects and promise of Zanjón. Preparations for the 1878 municipal elections and the selection of forty Cuban representatives to the Spanish parliament as outlined in the peace settlement immediately established the political delineations emerging in postwar Cuba. Zanjón served as the summons to politics for Creole planters, an opportunity to step into the colonial breach and assert leadership over the shattered colonial polity. Metropolitan policies had driven the colony into rebellion, but rebellion had failed to expel the metropolis. Neither revolution nor reaction proved capable of resolving colonial grievances. Zanjón created the conditions for a third alternative—reformism. Planters did not hesitate: not that planters were immune from the appeals of *cubanidad*, and indeed, some believed that it could be fulfilled through an independent nationality. Most, however, believed that its fulfillment

could be best guaranteed within the existing, albeit modified, structures of empire.

Thus it was that the first political party to organize after Zanjón embodied the reformist principles long associated with the Creole planter elite. Established in July 1878, the new Liberal party (Autonomist) proclaimed its commitment to actualizing the promises of Zanjón and offered advocates of reform a sanctioned institutional structure within which to pursue the transformation of the colonial regime.[4]

In its charter manifesto published on August 1, 1878, the party outlined the bases of its political, social, and economic program. On the matter of political reform, the manifesto demanded immediate equal rights for Cubans under the Spanish constitution of 1876, the uniformity of *peninsular* laws for all the constituent components of Spain, and the separation of military and political authority in Cuba.[5] On a long-term basis, Autonomists advocated preserving the structure of empire with Cuba in full possession of local institutions leading to self-government.[6] On social issues, liberals supported the gradual abolition of African slavery with indemnification to the planters and the organization of an apprenticeship system for former slaves. The party urged an increase in the white population of the island through unrestricted family immigration and the abolition of all restrictions of white immigration to Cuba. In economic matters, Autonomists advocated far-ranging reform proposals, including the abolition of all duties on Cuban exports, tariff reforms, reduction of Spanish custom fees, and the negotiation of commercial treaties with foreign countries, principally the United States, on the basis of reciprocal tariff reductions.[7]

Early strength of the new party, and ultimately the Autonomist constituency, consisted of *hacendados* (landowners), planters, and professionals—Creoles anxious to steer a course between the uninspired colonial policies of the metropolis and the uncertainties associated with complete separation from Spain. These were the Creole elites, drawn to colonial politics as a result of separatist excesses and metropolitan abuses; this was the Cuban aristocracy, men who presided over Cuba's principal economic institutions, including the Círculo de Hacendados y Agricultores, Centro de Propietarios,Círculo de Abogados, and the prestigious Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País, Cubans who placed their considerable wealth and prestige at the service of reformist politics. The Autonomist party offered Creoles the opportunity to gain political power in pursuit of the reforms promised at Zanjón.

Membership in the Autonomist party was not, however, confined to Creole planters. The reformist banner also attracted the support of liberal sectors of the *peninsular* community in Cuba, Spaniards for whom reform offered the only means through which to preserve empire by a reconciliation of the rebellious colony with the refractory metropolis. Prominent liberal *peninsulares*, men like journalist Manuel Pérez de Molina and property owner Ricardo del Monte, enrolled in Autonomist ranks in the belief that reformism offered the most promising if not the only solution to the colonial problem.

Autonomism also attracted the conservative wing of the separatist polity. The bitter experience of the Ten Years' War persuaded many *insurrecto* veterans of the futility of further appeals to arms. Indeed, for these insurgent leaders the peace of 1878 signaled the bankruptcy of the armed strategy. Disillusioned separatists saw in autonomism the means to achieve peacefully—if admittedly only in modified form and on a gradual basis—the objectives that had eluded them during the Ten Years' War. For conservative separatists, principally those with origins in the Creole planter elite, the failure of Cuban arms in 1878 offered no reasonable alternative to the pursuit of reform within the newly sanctioned arena of political competition.[8] Many of the most prestigious leaders of the unsuccessful insurrection abandoned separatist ranks to embrace autonomism, including José María Gálvez, one of the original conspirators of 1868, Miguel Bravo y Sentiés, formerly secretary of foreign relations in the insurgent provisional government, Emilio Luaces, a member of the separatist junta that negotiated the settlement of Zanjón, and Juan Spotorno, formerly the president of the insurgent provisional republic.

But the enrollment of dissident Cubans and loyal Spaniards into the ranks of the Autonomist party did not announce the emergence of a new colonial consensus. Nor did it signal the triumph of planter leadership. On the contrary, it served to deepen the divisions in the colony and open new political fronts of an old war.

Reformism split separatist ranks, dividing the veterans of 1868 into two distinct groups. Autonomism served to fix institutionally the ill-defined division shattering the separatist consensus after Zanjón—between those veterans, on one hand, who, heartened by the terms of the peace settlement, remained in Cuba to seek fulfillment of the separatist agenda within the autonomist program (legal) and those veterans, on the other, who, unreconciled to the post-Zanjón order, chose expatriation to prepare for a renewal of the armed struggle (extralegal).[9] It was in this process, too,

that Cuban separatism lost its affiliation with and became disassociated from the island's traditional Creole elites, who after Zanjón found autonomism considerably more convivial to their ideological temperament, if not to their class interests.

If the Pact of Zanjón precipitated a rupture within separatist ranks, the emergence of a liberal reformist party in the aftermath of the 1878 peace settlement shattered the loyalist consensus. For the better part of the Ten Years' War, Spanish sentiment in Cuba remained uncommonly united around steadfast opposition to the central tenets advanced by the separatists in arms. The inadmissibility of the separatist objectives, including the abolition of slavery and the independence of the island, together with the singleness of purpose occasioned by the war, shaped the conservative community in Cuba into an uncompromising and unyielding upholder of permanent Spanish sovereignty.

The Pact of Zanjón contributed as much to shattering the *peninsular* consensus as it did to disrupting the separatist unity. The failure of insurgent arms and the repudiation of the most untenable separatist objectives after Zanjón led to a relaxation of the wartime *peninsular* solidarity. Indeed, the restoration of peace encouraged Spaniards and their Creole allies to reexamine, with disinterest and dispassion, the colonial policies that had led to Yara. The willingness, too, of key insurgent leaders to come to terms with Spanish reformers encouraged many *peninsulares* to seek some type of reconciliation with the more moderate representatives of the abortive separatist cause.

Debate over the most efficacious means through which to guarantee the survival of Spanish sovereignty over Cuba divided the *peninsular* community on the island. Within a year of Zanjón, Martínez Campos's emphasis on reform and the subsequent emergence of a liberal party dedicated to the pursuit of comprehensive colonial change aroused a mixture of rancor and resentment among the most intransigent supporters of Spanish authority in Cuba. Having defeated the insurgent armies in the field, Spaniards were ill-disposed to support a policy of reconciliation that involved granting in peace concessions opposed during war. Few were prepared and fewer predisposed to compromise in any form with representatives of the rebellious colony. Quite the contrary. By the end of the 1870s, many resident *peninsulares* had emerged as uncompromising advocates of stronger metropolitan authority in Cuba. The conciliatory tenor of Zanjón and the subsequent organization of the Autonomist party offended the sensibilities of those *peninsulares* for whom victory over the rebellious Cubans in 1878

announced only the prelude to a harsher regimen of metropolitan authority and a rigorous reaffirmation of Spanish sovereignty. Never fully trusting their liberal compatriots, Spanish conservatives viewed the new Liberal party with no small horror and no less amount of misgiving and mistrust. The organization of the Autonomist party, joining liberal Spaniards with Cuban Creoles and former separatist leaders in the pursuit of reforms, aroused the fear among many conservatives that the extralegal dispute of the previous decade had found a spurious if not sinister legality in post-Zanjón Cuba. The large number of former insurgent chieftains enrolling in the ranks of the new party served to confirm the conservatives' worst fears. Indeed, the new party was seen as little more than a legal political fiction behind which lurked the malevolent force of Cuban separatism.

Peninsular reaction to autonomism was not long in coming. Nor was it equivocal. In the autumn of 1878, the conservative response to liberal reformism gave post-Zanjón Cuba its second political party—the Partido Unión Constitucional. Unabashedly metropolitan in its sympathies, overwhelmingly *peninsular* in its composition, the Unión Constitucional attracted to its ranks the most ardent advocates of "Cuba española." Into the ranks of the new party flocked conservative *peninsularss*, most notably former officers who had served Spain in the Corps of Volunteers during the Ten Years' War and whose dedication to "Cuba española" was at once deepened and consecrated by blood spilled in the defense of Spanish sovereignty against Cuban separatism. Distributed in Havana and throughout the larger provincial cities of the interior, this intransigent *peninsular* party organized its constituency around merchants, businessmen, traders, and members of the professions as well as government employees at the colonial, provincial, and municipal levels. Wealthy and influential industrialists, moreover, together with financiers, importers, and exporters, found in the Unión Constitucional a cause worthy of their allegiance and support. *Peninsular* sugar magnates and powerful *hacendados*, men like José Eugenio Mora and the Marquis de Apezteguía, provided leadership and financial subsidy.

The Unión Constitucional sought, in clearly defined and categorically stated terms, both the preservation and regeneration of Spanish authority in Cuba. Like their Autonomist counterparts, Unionists advocatd uniform laws and the expansion of commercial relations with the United States. Unlike the Autonomists, the Unión Constitucional sought these changes without assimilationist objectives; Cuba was to continue as a colonial entity, subservient to and for the benefit of metropolitan interests.

Whatever else may have separated the two new political parties in post-Zanjón Cuba, they shared two central and reciprocally binding premises. Representatives of both the Autonomist party and the Unión Constitucional rejected outright the means and the objectives of the insurgent separatists. An appeal to arms was as unacceptable as Cuba Libre was unthinkable. Second, and closely related, both parties accepted the legitimacy of the Spanish colonial regime and the desirability of empire as the central and unchallenged tenets of colonial politics. For Autonomists, reforms were the best guarantees of empire; for Unionists, empire was the best guarantee against revolution.

III Excluded from the new political alignments in post-Zanjón Cuba were the irreconcilable veterans of the Ten Years' War. Indisposed to accept the implied finality of Zanjón, many insurgent Cubans chose expatriation as an alternative preferable to submitting to continued Spanish rule. The Ten Years' War had permanently changed the character of Cuban separatism. There could be no reconciliation with Spain, there would be no compromise of the ideal of independence. Exile attracted the most irreconcilable members of the separatist polity. An expatriate community acquired its definitive character around the central proposition that reconciliation with Spain on any basis other than independence was unacceptable and that independence through any means other than arms was unattainable. Separatist sentiment remained intact abroad, a vigorous force immune from the compromise associated with political affiliations in the post-Zanjón colonial regime. The ranks of exiled separatists were held together by a persisting vision of Cuba Libre and an enduring commitment to armed struggle. In émigré centers abroad, the ideal of Cuba Libre endured and received its earliest institutional expression in the form of expatriate revolutionary clubs and patriotic juntas. Throughout exile communities in Latin America, Europe, and the United States, patriotic associations nurtured the notion of a free homeland. Expatriation was a political statement, at once a rejection of the surrender at Zanjón and a reaffirmation of the sentiment of Yara. But in 1878 no one envisioned anything more than a short exile, a momentary pause abroad during which the patriots prepared for their return and the renewal of the armed struggle. Unrepentant, unyielding in their conviction that Zanjón represented only a truce, expatriate separatists refused to renounce armed struggle as the means of securing Cuba's independence from Spain. Indeed, their very presence abroad signified a singular inconformity with the

post-Zanjón regime in Cuba and a persistent commitment to arms. No tenet was so central to separatist sentiment after Zanjón as the belief that a new war of liberation was as imminent as it was inevitable.[10]

Nor were separatist expectations unfounded. Only months after Zanjón, separatist leaders abroad completed plans for a new war. In early 1879 veteran General Calixto García organized expatriate separatists into the Cuban Revolutionary Committee of New York and prepared for a new uprising. Several months later, García returned to Cuba at the head of an expeditionary force. "La Guerra Chiquita," as the short-lived war of 1879–1880 became known, fell prey immediately to many of the mishaps and misfortunes that had frustrated the separatist effort a decade earlier. Veterans returned to Cuba only to find anticipated local support nonexistent. Important conspiratorial centers in Camagüey and Oriente had been uncovered well before the exiled military chieftains had arrived in Cuba. The communication network among coordinating centers of separatist activity collapsed. Racism again shattered the separatist consensus when General Antonio Maceo, earlier promised command of the eastern army corps, was passed over for fear that the presence of a black general at the head of the Liberation Army would discourage support of whites in the west. The political infrastructure in exile, moreover, lacking both organization and leadership, failed to support the military venture adequately.[11]

Military disarray in Cuba and civilian disunity abroad sealed the fate of "La Guerra Chiquita." By August 1879, only weeks after his arrival to Cuba, Calixto García fell captive to Spanish military authorities. Pursued by superior enemy forces, without support within Cuba, and lacking supplies from abroad, insurgent chieftains in the field again made peace with Spanish authorities and, once more, returned to exile to prepare for the next war.

The setbacks of the Ten Years' War and "La Guerra Chiquita" had not been without their lasting impact. Two successive military failures had dealt body blows to expatriate morale. For many exiled patriots, the patently meager accomplishments of insurgent arms offered little basis on which to sustain reasonable optimism for the immediate success of Cuba Libre. At times peace produced as much if not more rancor and dissent among separatists than the differences during the war. Recrimination swept through expatriate communities as exiles sought to fix the responsibility for the failures and reversals of the previous decade; the dispute wracked separatist ranks in exile and served as a measure of the depth of despondency and demoralization developing within the separatist polity abroad.[12]

Few saw more clearly the prevailing disorganization settling over the separatist movement than the young writer in exile José Martí. Born in Havana in 1853, Martí entered separatist politics modestly enough. Anti-Spanish statements in Cuba during the Ten Years' War had led to his arrest and exile to Spain in 1871. During the better part of the next decade, Martí traveled throughout Europe, Latin America, and the United States. In January 1880, he arrived in New York and immediately volunteered his services to the Cuban Revolutionary Committee during "La Guerra Chiquita." Irresistible in his rhetoric, compelling in his prose, Martí quickly distinguished himself as the outstanding propagandist of the ill-starred separatist war of 1879–1880. Even before the conflict had come to its infelicitous end, Martí had assumed interim presidency of the committee and had emerged as a central force among separatists exiled in the United States.[13]

Martí drew the correct lessons from the Ten Years' War and "La Guerra Chiquita." Cuban separatists were ill prepared to mount, much less sustain, a successful drive for independence. Both wars revealed the most exposed frailties and contradictions of separatist politics, symptomatic of larger problems that ran the full depth and breadth of the patriotic movement. Martí was convinced that the sources of Cuban failures in the past were to be found within the separatist movement itself, most notably in the lack of political organization through which to promote the purposes of separatist arms. A "war of massive effort," Martí wrote in retrospect about the Ten Years' War, was "lost only through a lack of preparation and unity."[14] The struggle for Cuban independence could not be based on quixotic military adventures organized around well-meaning and dedicated men and women who believed that justice and virtue were sufficient reasons to expect the triumph of Cuban arms. "The revolution," Martí insisted in 1882, "is not merely a passionate outburst of integrity, or the gratification of a need to fight or exercise power, but rather a detailed understanding dependent on advanced planning and great foresight."[15] Cuban independence, Martí argued, was a process, not an event—a process in which final victory would proceed from patient preparation, dedicated organization, and enduring commitment. By 1880, two heroic but ill-conceived attempts at independence had taken an enormous toll on separatist lives, treasure, and morale.[16] Further vindication of Martí's contention was not long in coming. In 1883, veteran General Leocadio Bonachea led his followers into a disastrous uprising in Oriente. Two years later, a short-lived rebellion under Generals Limbano Sánchez and Panchín Varona met a similar fate.

Instead of healing the breaches among contending expatriate factions, Martí's arguments in the early 1880s had the net effect of deepening existing splits and opening new ones. Martí was a relative newcomer to separatist political forums, something of an outsider without a history of revolutionary affiliation. He had not participated directly in either the Ten Years' War or "La Guerra Chiquita," the moral fountainhead of separatist leadership.

But he had a following—enough of a following to justify his participation in preparations for a new war. In 1884, Martí met in New York for the first time with the two prestigious generals of the Ten Years' War, Antonio Maceo and the Dominican-born Máximo Gómez. Gómez unveiled plans for a new rebellion in Cuba—a scheme conceived wholly by the veteran military chieftains, organized entirely by army commanders, and directed solely by Commander in Chief Gómez. General Gómez's military autocracy, his intolerance if not unabashed scorn for civilian sensibilities in the decision-making process, and the arrogance with which he appropriated the direction of the separatist struggle had a sobering impact on Martí.

Martí's awe of the great generals turned quickly to horror. If the soldiers unilaterally ruled the struggle for nationhood, who could be expected to govern the nation? Martí had before him the infelicitous history of Spanish America—new republics in which caudillos, rapacious army chieftains, and military tyrants of all species had preyed on their countries after independence.

Days after his meeting with the generals, Martí denounced military preeminence within and army dominance over the separatist movement. The struggle for Cuban independence, Martí chided Gómez, was not his "exclusive property"; a republic was not founded in the manner of organizing a military camp. Martí returned again to the theme of organization and preparation, stressing the need to coordinate all sectors of Cuban society in and out of the island in order to insure ultimate success. Martí's denunciation of militaristic tendencies within the movement was categorical: "It is my determination not to contribute one iota . . . to the establishment in my land of a regime of personal despotism that would be more shameful and evil than the political despotism that currently exists."[17]

The Martí-Gómez split plunged the separatist polity into still deeper crisis. But it touched on considerably more than a conflict of personality or a struggle for power within the separatist movement. These were, to be sure, some of the unspoken issues of the 1884 controversy. In spurning the Gómez plan of action, however, Martí challenged the traditional and un-

questioned military leadership and, in so doing, alienated many of the most prestigious military chieftains of previous separatist campaigns, including the ranking veterans of 1868 whose collaboration was essential to all future separatist strategies.[18] In a larger sense, the break between Martí and Gómez signified a rupture between Martí and the ranking hierarchy of the separatist movement in exile—a rather exclusive circle in which certification of membership was largely a function of participation in the Ten Years' War and "La Guerra Chiquita." Martí had scandalized the separatist establishment that was linked to the Dominican general by ties of sentiment, politics, and shared experiences; he had challenged the military monopoly on the separatist cause. By the late 1880s, the estrangement was all but complete. In the Dominican Republic, Gómez confided to his diary his dismay over Martí's apparent determination "to eliminate the military" from the separatist movement.[19] In 1888, General Flor Crombet, a close friend of Antonio Maceo, denounced Martí for his overly zealous *civilista* position.[20] Throughout the late 1880s, Martí fell victim to a propaganda campaign that condemned his posture as divisive and impugned his patriotism.[21]

The rupture of the mid-1880s also set off in relief tensions of a different sort developing within the separatist polity. More than twenty years had passed since the debate on Cuban separatism had first erupted into armed conflict in 1868. In the intervening years, the councils deliberating on the fate of Cuba Libre had become the exclusive domain of the veterans of 1868; access to these councils turned on previous service in arms. In many ways, Martí's dispute in the 1880s was as much a sign of generational conflict as it was of political disagreement. A generation of Cubans too young to have responded to the call of Yara, and Cubans born after October 10, 1868, in and out of Cuba, found few opportunities to participate in debates of the decade. The civil-military dispute contained a quarrel between the generation of 1868—military—and the post-Yara generation—civilian. Through political organization Martí hoped to offer the new generation of separatists an affiliation with a patriotic organization devoted to Cuba Libre, one that functioned in parallel fashion to membership in the Liberation Army. In 1891, Martí had found an apt allegory inspired by the Florida pine forests to give form to the new generation: "The sun suddenly broke through a clearing in the forest and there, in the dazzling of unexpected light, I saw above the yellowish grass rising around the black trunks of fallen pines, the flourishing branches of new pines. This is what we are: new pines."[22]

Censured, rebuked, and all but formally expelled from established separatist forums, Martí appealed directly to the expatriate separatist constituency as compensation for the lack of support from the exile leadership. From this point it was a logical and perhaps natural step for him to take the views repudiated by the established leadership directly to the rank and file. By the late 1880s, Martí's early emphasis on organization acquired new strategic urgency as he turned his attention away from attempts to unite the leadership to efforts to organize the rank and file.

For decades, Cuban communities in exile had labored faithfully in behalf of Cuba Libre. They had served as the wellspring of moral and material support into which the leadership had dipped freely in time of need. Indeed, for all practical purposes, civilian expatriates were expected solely to provide the funds to allow the military chieftains to pursue the war. And the leadership, despite the importance of the expatriates to separatist strategy, professed and real, had made little effort to build the institutional framework to integrate the far-flung exile communities into a structured separatist movement. Nor was there, in fact, any urgent need to do so. The very function of their exile made Cuban expatriates a captive constituency of the separatist leadership. Their support of Cuba Libre had been as unqualified as it had been uncomplaining.

For the better part of two decades, however, the idea of Cuba Libre had not moved beyond an essentially undefined and wholly ambiguous sentiment. The schism of the mid-1880s served at once as the cause and effect of a debate to define separatist issues in a manner that transcended factional politics. Martí found it necessary to initiate two simultaneous processes: a broadening of the social base of the movement and a reordering of the central separatist propositions. The first was a tactical necessity so he could appeal to the popular sector of the expatriate community. And the second would attract a following. Both required defining the ideological character of Cuban separatism and unifying program with praxis. It was simply inadequate, if not perhaps impolitic, for Martí to appeal for expatriate support on the basis of political credentials exclusively derived from his advocacy of Cuba Libre. The strength of his patriotic credentials was not enough to rival his detractors. Since the names of Máximo Gómez, Antonio Maceo, and Flor Crombet were virtually synonymous with Cuba Libre for the vast majority of Cubans in exile, he was forced to appeal to a wider cross section of exiles and to introduce broader issues into separatist politics. By the end of the 1880s, Martí had taken the first tentative steps toward giving ideological meaning and political organization to the mystic

patriotic sentiment to which all separatists found themselves devoted.

By the early 1890s, Martí had discovered in Florida's cigarworkers' clubs and juntas a wellspring of patriotic sentiment with a distinct affinity for his version of Cuba Libre. Clearly the most radical sector of the expatriate centers in the United States, the proletarian communities of cigarworkers in Key West, Tampa, Ocala, and Jacksonville brought decades of labor militancy, political activism, and an enduring sense of *cubanidad* to the separatist cause.[23] Moreover the cigarworkers, long in the vanguard of the trade union movement in Cuba, brought organizational experience to Martí's political designs.[24]

In selecting the cigarworkers as the constituency around which to begin the organization of a political movement, Martí at once broadened the social base of Cuba Libre and introduced a conspicuous if only vaguely defined populist current into separatist ideology.[25] The separatist movement directed in the 1860s by slaveowning Creole patricians, revived in the 1890s under the impetus of an expatriate proletariat.

Martí had long understood the need to organize a revolutionary party. The party would serve as the principal unifying agent and provide a common set of objectives around which to organize all sectors of the independence movement—the army veterans of 1868 and the civilian separatists of the post-Yara generation, Cubans from the provinces of the east and west, Cubans who lived inside and outside Cuba, blacks and whites, and Cubans of all classes—brought together in one front of national liberation.[26]

By the early 1890s, Martí's efforts had reached fruition. In November 1891 in Tampa, Martí announced the "Resolutions" of a proposed political party, a statement defining the organizational basis around which the separatists would pursue the liberation of the homeland.[27] April 1892 marked the formal establishment of the Cuban Revolutionary party (PRC). The central goal of the PRC, Martí indicated, was to mount "common revolutionary action" to win Cuban independence. Indeed, the issue of unity continued to be of paramount importance to Martí. The new party represented first and foremost an attempt to organize all patriotic Cubans in one party for one purpose: the liberation of Cuba. The PRC renewed the traditional commitment to armed struggle and summoned all Cubans to participate. It was to unite Cubans in exile with patriots in Cuba for the common purpose of waging war for independence and provide the moral and material support in exile for the revolution in Cuba.[28] Martí had transformed a revolutionary movement into a revolutionary party, and by the end of 1892 the third post-Zanjón political party had taken definitive form.

IV

More than politics changed in the colony after Zanjón. It was not readily apparent in 1878, but the Ten Years' War announced the passing of an age. Colonialism had been shaken at its foundation—and survived, in a fashion. It was colonial society that was measurably different ten years after Yara; for the million and a half inhabitants of the island, life soon returned to normal, but it would never be the same.

The war spanned a changing era in Cuban history, and by the following decade that time of transition was coming to an end. The war had profoundly disrupted the island economy and, while everyone was hurt, Cuban planters were hurt more than most. Estates operating before the war on marginal profits and planters lacking either the finances or the foresight to modernize their mills were among the earliest casualties. Of the 41 mills operating around Sancti Spíritus in Las Villas province in 1861, only 3 survived the war. The 49 mills in Trinidad were reduced to 16. In Santa Clara, only 39 of 86 survived. The Cienfuegos mills were reduced from 107 to 77. In Güines, almost two-thirds of the 87 mills operating before the war had disappeared by 1877.[29]

The disruption of Cuban sugar production was particularly acute in the eastern provinces. Throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century, Oriente and Camagüey had remained impervious to the modernizing currents that had transformed the west into the bastion of the sugar latifundia. Sugar estates in the east, by comparison, were private family enterprises, without the capital reserve and technological resources of the west, and singularly incapable of participating in the modernization drive of the early nineteenth century. The sugar system in Oriente was backward and primitive. The estate in the east was more traditional than commerical, more family than corporate. Life on the *oriental* estates was turned inward, isolated, and largely self-contained, conferring on their owners more prestige than profits.

The Ten Years' War, during which the eastern provinces had served as the principal theater of military operations, had dealt a body blow to agriculture in that area. In some districts the collapse of sugar production was all but complete. None of the twenty-four mills in Bayamo and the eighteen mills in Manzanillo survived the war; the sixty-four mills of Holguín were reduced to four. Of the one hundred *ingenios* (mills) operating in the district of Santiago de Cuba in 1868, only thirty-nine resumed operations after Zanjón. In Puerto Príncipe, only one of a hundred survived the war.[30]

But the destruction wrought by the conflict went beyond sugar. No facet of agriculture in Oriente survived untouched:[31]

Date	*Ingenios*	*Coffee Farms*	*Tobacco Farms*	*Livestock Farms*	*Other Small Ranches and Farms*
1862	1,362	782	11,550	8,834	34,546
1887	1,191	192	4,515	3,172	17,906

Those estates fortunate enough to escape the ravages of the Ten Years' War survived only to discover capital scarce and credit dear. Prevailing rates of interest, fluctuating typically between 12 percent and 18 percent—with highs often as much as 30 percent not at all uncommon—foreclosed any possibility that local credit transactions would contribute significantly to the economic recovery of post-Zanjón Cuba.[32]

The war and the attending destruction of Cuban estates set the stage for the next series of afflictions to descend upon Cuban planters. Expansion of sugar cultivation elsewhere in the world, as a result of the disruption of Cuban cane production during the war and the subsequent decline of sugar exports, led to the development of new sources of competition. In the United States, new varieties of cane were introduced in Louisiana, while experimentation with beet sugar in the west and southwest expanded under the encouragement of state and federal governments. In 1876, sugar from Hawaii entered the U.S. market duty free. Responding to the opportunity created by faltering Cuban production, European beet sugar growers, protected and underwritten by government subsidies, made enormous strides between the late 1870s and early 1880s. Within a decade, France, Austria, and Germany had become the largest suppliers of sugar for the world market. Beet sugar, accounting in 1853 for only some 14 percent of the total world production, had by 1884 come to represent 53 percent of the international supply.[33] Even Spain was not immune to the lure of beet sugar profits. In 1882, two beet factories commenced operation in Granada and Córdoba; another two opened ten years later in Zaragoza and Aranjuez. Spanish beet production increased from 35,000 tons in 1883 to 400,000 in 1895.[34]

As planters prepared to resume production after Zanjón they discovered that they faced not only new competition and loss of old markets, but a precipitous decline in the value of their principal product and an increase in

taxes. A rise in public spending during the 1870s to finance the cost of war and an increase in the circulation of paper money in the 1880s brought on the first of a series of devastating inflationary spirals. After Zanjón, Madrid transferred the war debt directly to Cuban producers and consumers. In 1884, the price of sugar plummeted to an unprecedented low, dropping from eleven cents a pound to an all-time low of eight. The collapse of sugar prices occurred at the precise moment Spain levied a series of harsh taxes on Cuban planters and just as they were trying to adapt to the abolition of slavery and the expiration of the *patronato*.[35] All at once, Cuban planters were hit with declining sugar prices, increased taxes, mounting debts, and shrinking markets. "Out of the twelve or thirteen hundred planters on the island," the American consul in Havana reported in early 1884, "not a dozen are said to be solvent."[36]

In 1883 the American vice-consul in Matanzas, David Vickers, wrote of "the impoverished condition of sugar" in central Cuba:

> Through want of frugality and foresight and with enormous taxation, added to the competition of other sugar countries, the planter, to meet all demands, has discounted his crops at such ruinous rates of interest, piling mortgage upon mortgage, that to-day he finds himself irrevocably involved in debts equal to at least one year's excellent crop and in some instances much more. In the event of a poor crop, he would not have enough money either to pay current expenses or even to commence grinding his cane when the harvest begins, and no one to loan it to him.[37]

Beyond this, Vickers added, planters were forced to endure a crushing tax system. Heavy taxes assessed against agriculture and livestock, municipal taxes on land, sales taxes, transportation taxes, duties on imported equipment and food—"everything that the people eat comes from abroad," Vickers noted—threatened the planter class with extinction. The Cuban landowner, the vice-consul predicted, "is a man of determination and courage and will not submit to it much longer. At times his mutterings can be heard even above the tramp and bustle and pomp of the military occupant, and someday he will rise up in his might, and the Spanish functionary and his compadre—the military incumbent—will be hurled into the sea, and Cuba will go under a kind of temporary autonomy, which will end in its admission to the United States."[38]

Adversity after Zanjón affected all Cubans. Members of the Creole gentry who had opposed Spain during the Ten Years' War paid dearly for their separatist affiliation. The war provided *peninsulares* and their supporters with the opportunity to enlarge their property and expand their power at the expense of Creoles. Landowners who enrolled in separatist ranks or were suspected of separatist sympathies lost their property through a series of punitive expropriation decrees. The decline of sugar production in Oriente announced the collapse of the eastern planter class, a position that the traditional *oriental* elite would never recover. Many Creoles, further, lost administrative positions and public office for displaying insufficient ardor for the *peninsular* cause. Out of the ranks of the impoverished Creole planters and the displaced civil servants emerged an enduring constituency for Cuba Libre, while those who benefited from the expropriation of lands and jobs rushed to fill the party ranks of the Unión Constitucional.[39]

But Creole separatists were not the only Cubans to lose their property. Many small planters had resumed production after the war on a precarious footing. Heavily in debt, without capital to modernize, and lacking the resources to renovate their mills, small planters engaged in marginal production were perched at the brink of disaster. The end came in the mid-1880s. The combination of rising taxes, increased operating costs, declining sugar prices, and mounting debt forced small planters to abandon sugar production. Property changed hands at accelerating levels as planters desperately sought to stave off insolvency. As early as 1883 the American consular agent in Cienfuegos reported that all the mills in his jurisidiction had changed ownership at least once as a result of debt and foreclosures.[40] It was in Cienfuegos that New England financier Edwin Atkins foreclosed on the mortgage of the Soledad estate in 1884. By the end of the decade, the Atkins family had secured possession of nearly a half dozen estates in central Cuba.[41]

Farmers and peasants, too, suffered a loss of property. The wartime practice of relocating rural families into urban centers left the countryside depopulated and the cities overcrowded. Few farmers were successful in reclaiming their lands. Many farms were destroyed during the war; others were simply seized outright by unscrupulous landowners. Dispossessed of their lands, rural families remained crowded in the cities, there to form part of an impoverished displaced population forced to resort to begging and dependent on public charity for survival.

This generally bleak picture of post-Zanjón Cuba was confirmed by

foreign visitors. English historian John Anthony Froude, visiting Havana in the mid-1880s, described the legions of beggars crowding the capital's streets. Squalor and distress were everywhere manifest, Froude wrote.[42] Much the same conditions greeted American tourist Richard Davey during his visit to Havana. "Never," Davey wrote " . . . have I seen such terrible beggars as those of Cuba. They haunt you everywhere, gathering round the church doors, whining for alms, insulting you if you refuse them and pestering you as you go home at night, never leaving you till you either bestow money on them, or escape within your own or some friendly door."[43] Not long after, another tourist, Maturin M. Ballou, traveled across the island east to west. In Santiago de Cuba, Ballou found the local gas monopoly "on the verge of bankruptcy, like nearly everything else of a business character in Cuba." In Cienfuegos, Ballou met a local sugar planter in crisis. The planter was preparing to spread his molasses on canefields as fertilizer, he informed Ballou, rather "than send it to a distant market and receive only what it cost." The planter further indicated that he would allow "thousands of acres of sugar cane to rot in the fields this season as it would cost more to cut, grind, pack, and send it to market than could be realized for the manufactured article." "Mercantile credit may be said to be dead," Ballou noted upon his arrival to Havana, "and business nearly at a standstill." And as he prepared to leave Cuba: "Financial ruin stares all in the face."[44]

By the mid-1880s, all of Cuba was in the throes of a severe depression. Business houses closed and banks collapsed. Seven of the island's largest trading companies failed. Credit, dear after Zanjón, was almost nonexistent a decade later. In October 1883, the Bank of Santa Catalina closed. In March 1884, the most important savings institution in Havana, the Caja de Ahorros, suspended payments, ostensiby in response to the suicide of the bank's president. "It is more probably," the American consul in Havana speculated tersely, "that the Director committed suicide because the bank was unable to meet its engagements."[45] Two weeks later, the Caja de Ahorros went into liquidation. In the same month, panic runs on the Banco Industrial and the Banco de Comercio forced both institutions to close. Two months later, the Banco Industrial went into liquidation. The crisis also affected provincial institutions. In March 1884 the prestigious house of Rodríguez in Sagua la Grande and its correspondents in Havana, Miyares and Company, failed. Government revenues declined and municipal authorities in Havana fell hopelessly behind in meeting municipal payrolls.

The central office of the Spanish-American Light and Power Company in New York threatened to suspend gas service for Havana street lights if the city did not speedily and satisfactorily settle its dept of some $400,000. In the first three months of 1884, business failures totaled $7 million. "The entire population is reduced . . . to blank despondency and universal ruin," the American consul reported in 1884.[46]

At the same time, the destruction of Cuban agriculture and livestock during the war and the subsequent depopulation of the countryside crippled domestic food production. The number of cattle had increased in absolute terms from 1 million head in 1827 to about 2 million in 1894. But the population, too, had increased, quadrupling in approximately the same period. The availability of fresh milk and meat declined. Goats and sheep decreased from some eighty-three thousand head in 1846 to seventy-eight thousand in 1894. There were 50 percent more hogs in 1827 than in 1894; a ratio of three pigs per person in 1827 had changed by 1894 to three persons per pig.[47] Cuban dependency on imported foodstuffs increased. So did prices. Jobs were few and competition fierce. An increase in Spanish immigration to Cuba after Zanjón, in part to maintain the colonial policy of "racial equilibrium," meaning white superiority, further exacerbated unemployment. In 1886, Madrid announced a policy of underwriting the cost of passage to Cuba for all Spanish workers desirous of seeking employment on the island. Between 1882 and 1894, a quarter million Spaniards arrived in Cuba.[48] The crisis in the sugar industry and business failures contributed still further to unemployment. Against this generally bleak economic landscape, the abolition of slavery was completed. Two hundred thousand former slaves joined Cuban society as free wage earners at a time of a stagnating economy, rising prices, and decreasing wages. The decline of the standard of living for former slaves after emancipation was as immediate as it was dramatic.[49] By 1888, upon the completion of emancipation, unemployment reached desperate proportions. Thousands of rural workers migrated to the already overcrowded cities in search of jobs, only to join the swollen ranks of the urban unemployed. Vagrancy and mendicancy developed into major social problems by the end of the decade. In late 1888, Havana authorities passed a severe antivagrancy law, pledging to rid the city of all but the gainfully employed.[50] From the cities, thousands of Cuban workers extended their search for employment to the United States. Another constituency for Cuba Libre took shape in the cigar factories of Key West and Tampa.

V The decline in the number of sugar mills after Zanjón signified more than the disappearance of inefficient *centrales* (mills). A new stage of sugar capitalism was about to transform Cuban society. The demise of small mills contributed at once to the development of a new regimen of property organization and the rise of a new system of production. Smaller sugar enterprises, lacking capital, unable to keep pace with technological and production advances, passed ultimately under the control of larger estates. Planters unable to meet the growing capital requirements of sugar manufacturing abandoned the industrial end of sugar production altogether and devoted themselves exclusively to agricultural pursuits. The prevailing system whereby the grower milled his own cane gave way to a new specialization in which large mill owners concentrated on the manufacturing of sugar and the farmers tended to the planting and harvesting of cane. Many formerly independent planters survived the crisis of the 1880s only to find themselves as *colonos* (farmers) subservient to the larger and more successful *centrales*. The *colono* was reduced to dependence on the mill, was frequently in debt and typically without an alternative marketplace for his product.[51] The disappearance of mills after the Ten Years' War compounded the *colono*'s plight, for fewer *centrales* signified at once the collapse of the Cuban planter class and fewer potential buyers of sugar cane.

While the number of mills decreased, the size of the surviving estates increased. The war and the economic crisis of the mid-1880s provided a powerful boost to new concentrations of land and the expansion of the sugar latifundia. Not since the early third of the nineteenth century had the Cuban estate expanded so aggressively and with such speed as it did in the decade after Zanjón. Military operations during the war destroyed farms and estates; damaged property was cheap land. Farms vacated by the relocation of rural families, as well as property whose owners were killed in the war, provided further opportunities for alert landowners to expand their holdings. So did the expropriation of separatists' property. Then, too, many of the small estates that failed after Zanjón were acquired by larger estates.

During the war years these expansions had been haphazard and fortuitous: land seizures had been sporadic and scattered, more in response to opportunity than the result of organization. This changed by the mid-1880s. Mobilized into action in response to international sugar developments, Cuban planters undertook far-reaching changes that foretold a

profound transformation of the sugar system, changes that were as sweeping as they were systematic. Greater efficiency was needed to market the sugar profitably under the prevailing low prices. By the mid-1880s, production strategies shifted from increasing the number of sugar mills to increasing the production capacity of existing *centrales*. New credit, fresh capital, and expanding ownership, largely American, provided larger enterprises with the resources to expand. Improved varieties of cane, innovations in processing techniques, and technological and industrial advances became generally available to Cuban planters by the 1880s and provided planters the opportunity to respond aggressively to new conditions. New machinery to extract maximum sugar from improved strains of cane and grind the increased volume of harvested cane efficiently was introduced. New vacuum pans and centrifugal equipment were installed to distill and crystalize more sugar from new strains of cane. These requirements, in turn, placed additional pressures on supporting production capabilities, including fuel and transportation. Railroad facilities expanded. So did wharf and pier construction. But most of all, land—and more land—was essential to derive optimum advantage of the technology that was transforming sugar production.

In the eastern provinces, sugar production revived around the new latifundia. In Puerto Príncipe, surviving sugar estates absorbed local cattle ranches. Three *centrales* (Senado, Congreso, and Lugareño) dominated sugar production by 1891. On the north Oriente coast, a joint Spanish-French venture acquired enormous tracts of land around Nipe Bay. To the south, around Manzanillo, new land concentrations revived the moribund local sugar industry. In two years three newly organized *centrales*, Dos Amigos (1884), Niquero (1884), and Isabel (1886), had converted vast tracts of land to sugar production.

In central Cuba, too, the sugar latifundia expanded its boundaries at the expense of other agricultural units, sugar and nonsugar alike. In the region of Remedios in Las Villas province, the new regimen of land concentration proceeded swiftly to establish the preeminence of the sugar latifundia. In Yaguajay, the new *central* Narciso (1891) absorbed older and less efficient *centrales*, including Soberano, Oceano, Encarnación, Aurora, Urbaza, and Luisiana. In the rich sugar zones of Matanzas-Cárdenas-Colón, the sugar estate expanded at a frenetic pace. The sugar revolution of the 1880s also transformed the region around Sagua la Grande. Technological improvements and cultivation of new land increased the production of Sagua's six major *centrales* by 50 percent. Nowhere, however, did land concentration

occur as quickly or as spectacularly as in Cienfuegos. Between 1884 and 1891, some thirteen new *centrales* were organized. These new mills, destined to dominate Cuban sugar production for the next quarter century, included Constancia, Soledad, San Lino, San Agustín, Lequeito, Caracas, Hormiguero, Parque Alto, and Cieneguita.[52] By the end of the 1880s, the Cuban sugar system had revived under the aegis of the corporate latifundia.

This economic recovery was not, however, without far-reaching consequences. The expansion of the sugar estate after war had converted only the more fortunate farmers into *colonos*. In fact, the increased production capabilities of the larger mills and the attending expansion of zones of cultivation had forced the wholesale displacement of the rural population. The process of relocating rural families from the countryside continued through the 1880s, no longer as a military imperative but an economic expedience. The concentration of land into the sugar latifundia uprooted the farmer, destroyed the rural landowning and independent farming class, and impoverished the rural population. Scores of small farmers and peasants, maintaining a precarious existence on marginal farms, found themselves displaced, landless, and unemployed. The cane field spilled out of the traditional regions, laying claim to all land in its path. Old estates passed under new management; traditional holdings, family farms, and unincorporated rural property disappeared under sugar cane. Expelled from the land, deprived of an independent livelihood, many farmers and peasants channeled their rage into banditry. To be sure, the Ten Years' War had given powerful impetus to life outside the law, but formal peace provided former farmers little incentive to resume peaceful pursuits. Many insurgent veterans had little to return to. If their farms had not been destroyed during the war, they had been expropriated. Even in those instances where Cubans could reclaim their land, the destruction of crops, livestock, and equipment was so complete and the cost of a new beginning so great that all but the most determined were discouraged from returning to the farm. *Pacíficos*, too, returned from their war time internment in the cities only to find their former world in shambles. Without land, without employment, the dispossessed peasant joined outlaw bands in the interior, living outside the law in the inaccessible swamp regions and mountains of the Cuban countryside.[53]

By the late 1890s, entire regions of the Cuban interior had fallen more or less under the control of bandits. In Havana province, Juan Vento, Gallo Sosa, José Plasencia, and Manuel García had virtually free range in the countryside. José "Matagás" Alvarez, Nicasio Matos ("El Tuerto Ro-

dríguez"), Regino Alfonso, Desiderio Matos, and Aurelio Sanabria dominated the Matanzas interior. In Las Villas, Florentino Rodríguez, the Machín brothers, and Bruno Gutiérrez eluded Spanish authorities for over a decade. Jesús González, José Muñoz, Lino Mirabal, and Alvaro Rodríguez operated almost at will in the Camagüeyan countryside. In Oriente province, Isidro Tejera, Onofre de la O. Rodríguez, and José de la O. Rodríguez moved through the interior with impunity.

Bandits combined a defiance of Spanish colonial authority with social protest. In its most prominent manifestations, this sentiment found expression in bandit attacks against all forms of property and wealth. In Havana province, Manuel García terrorized planters. His exploits of holdups, train robberies, and the kidnapping of *hacendados* converted him into a figure of legendary proportions throughout the Cuban countryside and earned him the title of "El Rey de los Campos." In Matanzas province, José "Matagás" Alvarez exacted annual tribute from *colonos* and *hacendados* in exchange for "protection."

Spanish colonial authorities were powerless to contain bandit activities, and by the late 1880s banditry reached epidemic proportions. In 1888 Governor General Sabas Marín, in a desperate measure to combat rural lawlessness, declared a state of war in Pinar del Río, Havana, Matanzas, and Las Villas and relinquished the administration of justice to military authorities.[54] Two years later, another governor general, Camilo Polavieja, mounted a new and more formidable military offensive against Manuel García. Some ten thousand troops were mobilized in fruitless operations in the southern part of Havana province.[55] By the 1890s, bandits in the interior ranged over the countryside virtually at will and without serious or sustained obstruction from colonial military authorities.

VI

The forces that expelled the peasants from the land also displaced planters as owners of the estates. An inexorable reciprocity joined both ends of the island social order. The forces that uprooted the peasant and transformed the independent farmer into a *colono* served as portents of the fate about to befall the *hacendado*. The old planter elite survived the crisis of the 1880s, but only at the cost of its traditional supremacy over sugar production. The price of solvency had been dependency. Indeed, the privileged position of the planter elite in Cuban society grew increasingly tenuous as its dependency upon American capital and U.S. markets increased. The landed aristocracy guaranteed its survival by exchanging titles of property for ownership of stocks in American corporations and

positions as land owners for places on corporate boards of directors. And even this salvation was to be illusory, and brief. In practice, planters would henceforth function as the local agents of American capital and the instruments of American economic penetration of Cuba. Their well-being now depended on the success foreign capital enjoyed in extending control over the island's strategic production sectors—a pursuit that would engage the active collaboration of the newly displaced bourgeoisie.

The transfer of property, further, was accompanied by a transformation of nationality. In the decades following the Ten Years' War, scores of Cuban planters found it convenient to acquire American citizenship. Class interests transcended national allegiances. In more than symbolic ways, American citizenship offered planters a hedge against local instability and protection against property destruction. Cuban planters used American nationality as an instrument to defend their economic interests and enlist the support of the U.S. government in the defense of local privilege and property. Through naturalization planters acquired a powerful foreign ally, a protector to be summoned on those occasions when colonial government demonstrated inefficiency or indifference to the needs of property now owned by new American nationals. Equally important, as American citizens planters were in a position to demand reparation and receive indemnification for property losses stemming from local political disorders. A new habit developed in Cuba, one soon to stand as an enduring source of national emulation, in which Cubans appealed to Washington to intercede in their behalf in the resolution of local conflicts. These developments served, further, to internationalize Cuban politics and, in one more fashion, provide the United States with an entree into the internal affairs of the island. In the closing decades of the nineteenth century, the transfiguration of planter nationality placed the object of planter allegiance above national interests and located the sources of planter patronage outside the island. In still another manner, property owners came to identify their well-being with the United States.[56]

By the end of the 1880s, the reorganization of the Cuban economy was nothing less than spectacular. Some 94 percent of Cuban sugar products, the American consul general in Havana reported in 1886, found their way to American markets. The implications were far-reaching. Consul Ramon O. Williams suggested:

> The Island is now entirely dependent upon the market of the United States, in which to sell its sugar cane products; also that

the existence of the sugar plantations, the railroads used in transporting the products of the plantations in the shipping ports of the island, the export and import trades of Cuba based thereon, each including hundreds of minor industries, such as the agricultural and mechanical trades, store-houses, wharves, lighters, stevedors, brokers, clerks and bankers, real estate owners, and shop-keepers of all kinds, and holders of the public debt, are now all directly related to the market of the United States, to the extent of 94 percent for their employment.[57]

Growing dependency on U.S. markets had two immediate consequences. First, it intensified Cuban demands for greater local control over trade regulation and commerce. Secondly, increased Cuban-American trade created considerable colonial pressure on Madrid to negotiate a commercial treaty with the United States.

The availability of North American credit, even on an unlimited scale, would have been insufficient to revive the languishing sugar estates without preferential access to the American market. In 1890, the newly enacted McKinley Tariff Act placed Cuban raw sugar on the free list. Article III (Aldrich Amendment) of the new tariff law, however, required the president of the United States to impose high duties on primary products, including sugar and molasses, against countries that denied American exports concessions commensurate with those offered by the McKinley bill.

Developments in the United States presented Cuban producers with the opportunity they had long awaited. They did not hesitate. The effect of the Aldrich Amendment in Havana was immediate. A series of public meetings throughout 1890 and 1891 galvanized public opinion and resulted in Cuban appeals to Spanish authorities to negotiate a reciprocal trade agreement with the United States. Petitions from all regions of the island were forwarded to the Spanish Cortes; protests flooded the Council of Ministers.[58] In late 1890, representatives of key economic sectors of Cuba organized to demand Spanish tariff concessions to American products. Known as the Movimiento Económico, the coalition was led by Círculo de Hacendados y Agricultores, representing the most powerful producers of sugar, and included the Commerce League, the Association of Cigar Manufacturing, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Economic Society of Cuba. In July 1891, the Central Committee for Economic Propaganda of the movement issued its "Manifiesto Económico," a lengthy denunciation of

past Spanish economic policies that concluded with a demand for a treaty with the United States to provide Cuban sugar with preferential access to American markets.[59] Never had Cuban producers aligned themselves against Spanish policies with such purposeful unanimity. In protesting one of the more onerous features of the colonial system, the Movimiento Económico identified interests that were peculiarly Cuban and demanded concessions that benefited primarily Cuba. The first hairline fracture of the colonial consensus had appeared. "Public opinion here among the laboring, agricultural, proprietary and manufacturing classes," American Consul Ramon O. Williams in Havana had written a month earlier, "sides generally with the Board of Planters." Williams added prophetically;

> This state of things shows that the present ties connecting Cuba with Spain are based more on historic custom than on economic necessity, for while the United States, the great consumer of Cuban products, facilitates the commercial development of this colony through the legislative abolition of import duties on its sugars, the Mother Country difficults that development by increasing their cost of producting, diminishing, in like ratio, their competitive power with the similar products of other countries in its only market, the United States, and exposing the colony, withal, from the loss of industries, to future social dangers.[60]

Within the year, partly as a result of economic pressure at home but chiefly in response to the clamor from Cuba, Spain acquiesced and relaxed long-standing protectionist trade policies. In June 1891, under the auspices of the McKinley Tariff Act, Washington and Madrid negotiated the Foster-Cánovas agreement whereby Cuba and Puerto Rico received the full benefits of the 1890 bill in exchange for Spanish tariffs concessions to U.S. exports.

The results of reciprocal trade arrangements between Cuba and the United States were as dramatic as they were instant. Sugar production revived in spectacular fashion. From some 632,000 tons in 1890, sugar production approached 976,000 tons in 1892, reaching for the first time the historic 1 million ton mark in 1894.

However great the impact of the McKinley tariff on Cuban sugar production, and, indeed, it was by no means inconsiderable, the long range effects of reciprocal trade went far beyond sugar. By 1893, Cuban imports from the United States accounted for just under half of total American

exports to Central and South America ($24 million out of $62 million). Cuban exports to the United States increased from $54 million in 1890 to $79 million in 1893. Indeed, by 1893, imports from Cuba represented almost half the total Central and South American imports to the United States ($79 million out of $111 million). In 1893, Cuban exports to the United States were some twelve times larger than its exports to Spain ($79 million to the United States and $6 million to Spain). By 1894, the United States received almost 90 percent of Cuba's total exports ($98 million out of $116 million) and provided 40 percent of its imports ($39 million out of $97 million). Metropolitan Spain, on the other hand, accounted for some $10 million of Cuban exports while providing the island with $34 million of its imports.[61]

Trade statistics underscored the direction of Cuba's new economic orbit. In the short space of two years, the Cuban economy had taken a giant stride toward deepening its dependence on the capital, imports, and markets of the United States. Colonial political grievances receded quietly into the background as Spain's trade and commercial policies conformed to the demands of all key economic groups on the island. Pressure on the cost of living eased as the reduction of duties lowered prices on foreign imports. The sugar system, in a central and strategic relationship to all other sectors of trade and commerce, prospered and expanded and with it the entire economy.

VII Celebration of prosperity proved premature. Within three years, Cuba's prosperity ended as quickly as it had begun, and with less warning. In 1894, the United States rescinded its tariff concession to Cuban exports. By establishing a new duty of 40 percent *ad valorem* on all sugar entering the United States, the Wilson-Gorman Tariff Act of 1894 dismantled the cornerstone of previous reciprocal trade arrangements between Washington and Madrid. In that same year, the Foster-Cánovas agreement expired. Spanish authorities responded swiftly to U.S. tariff legislation in 1894 and canceled duty concessions extended earlier to American imports. An impenetrable protectionist wall reappeared around the island in mid-1894, reviving memories of the worst features of Spanish commercial exclusivism.

The sudden disengagement of Cuba from its prosperous but brief privileged participation in international trade had jolting consequences on the island. Cuba lost preferential access to the only market with the capacity to absorb its sugar exports and insulate the island from the uncertain-