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PUBLIC OPINION AS A CAUSE OF THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR

by

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## PREFACE

This thesis is the outgrowth of a combination of trends, historic, political and psychological, which have attracted the writer's attention not a little since the close of the World War. In this gigantic clash Americans were classed as crusaders, or idealists, or imperialists, or even as delinquents. In 1897-98 the same terms were employed, but the war with Spain ended so quickly, so completely, at such small cost in blood and treasure, that to us ordinary students it is almost lost in the mazes of history. Yet it seems not unfair to say that the forces and emotions which prompted the masses to action in 1898 were even more idealistic than were those which moved the Americans to join forces with the Allies in 1917. In 1898 America took upon herself the task of freeing Cuba and giving her a place among the nations of the earth.

Now, what were the forces, problems, and emotions back of the sentiment which resulted in America's intervention by force in Cuba's political affairs?

For most of the research material studied in order to find the answer to the above question the writer is indebted to the State Library and the Library of the State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas. A great deal was found while

studying in the library of the Kansas State College. Then, too, the public library and the Junior College Library of Independence, Kansas, were used very profitably.

Chief among those persons who were of assistance were Dr. James E. Ackert, Dean of the Division of Graduate Study, and Dr. Fred A. Shannon of the Department of History, both of the Kansas State College. Dr. Shannon, major instructor, not only called the writer down on many points but as consistently helped him up on many others. Along with all who were directly and indirectly helpful in finding the answer, they have the writer's sincere thanks.

E. J. Castillo.

Independence, Kansas  
January, 1932.

## I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE WAR

Even before the establishment of the United States government Cuba had become an island of interest to the people of the English colonies. Its geographical position, its agricultural resources, and its peculiar political and social conditions furnished the basis for this interest. Following America's entrance into the family of nations Cuba was a disturbing element in the western hemisphere even to the close of the nineteenth century.

Previous to the year 1898 the United States had no definite policy with reference to the island. Jefferson, Madison, John Quincy Adams, Polk, Pierce, Buchanan, Grant, Cleveland, each with varying degrees of success had taken a hand in matters pertaining to its relations to the American nation. One great difficulty encountered was that even throughout the nineteenth century Spain continued to employ her ancient ideas of colonial government. Misgovernment at home and oppression of her colonies had kept her blinded to all modern change and improvement<sup>1</sup>.

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John Holladay Latane, The United States and Latin America (Garden City, 1927), p. 83; Literary Digest, Vol. XV (November 27, 1897), p. 921; Walter Millis, The Martial Spirit (Boston, C. 1931), p. 10.

In 1897 Albert Bushness Hart said, "The Cuban controversy has not been sought by the United States: it arises out of the geographical and political conditions of America". Looking back over the pages of nineteenth century history one is impressed with the various situations, military and political, which have been of concern to the United States, natural outgrowth of "the geographical and political conditions of America"<sup>2</sup>.

When the last insurrection in Cuba against Spain was in progress the people of the United States for more than a hundred years had been in the enjoyment of a republican form of government. Misgovernment and chronic revolution right near them increased their traditional dislike for the methods employed by Spain to control her island dependency<sup>3</sup>. In Cuba was still employed the regime of the sixteenth century, exploitation wholly in the interest of Spain herself<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Albert Bushness Hart, "A Century of Cuban Diplomacy, 1795-1895" in Harper's Monthly Magazine, Vol. XCVII (June-November, 1897). p. 134. Randolph G. Adams, History of Foreign Diplomacy of the United States (New York, 1926), p. 263.

<sup>3</sup> Wichita Daily Beacon, April 24, 1898, p. 2; Quoted from New York Sun in Literary Digest, Vol. XI (July 13, 1895), p. 303.

<sup>4</sup> G.H.D. Gossip, "The Mournful Case of Cuba", in Fortnightly Review, Vol. XCIII, N.S. (May, 1898), pp. 833-843. Fortnightly Review, Vol. IXIII, N.S. (May, 1898), pp. 833-843.

Peculiarities of race and the economic policy of Spain had developed in the island two parties, Liberal or Popular, and Aristocratic. The former was dominated by a small number of comparatively wealthy negroids. The latter was made up largely of Spanish men of wealth and authority, and they neither showed nor possessed sympathy for any popular movement. Between Aristocrat and Liberal the line was sharply drawn, and, owing largely to the antagonisms existing between these two forces, misgovernment in Cuba increased in intensity. After the close of the Civil War in the United States the American people noticed more than ever evidences of misgovernment. However, by the end of the Ten Years War Spain had given assurance of a more liberal treatment of the Cubans. But Spanish promises to Cuban Liberals did not materialize and matters grew worse even than formerly<sup>5</sup>.

But the chief reason, for the bitterness of Cuban liberals toward Spanish autocracy was to be found in the despotic power given by Spain to her governors-general. Although the world of commerce and politics had changed, Spain's attitude toward her only remaining colonies seemed

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<sup>5</sup> Woodrow Wilson, A History of the American People (New York, 1902), Vol. V, p. 250.

unchanging as the laws of the Medes and Persians. In Cuba was neither security for person nor property, nor any approach toward freedom of speech or of worship<sup>6</sup>. The situation thus brought about could not but involve the United States, and all through the century there had been found Americans who advocated measures to compel Spain to leave the island<sup>7</sup>.

However, by the close of the Ten Years War in Cuba the United States had begun a series of moves that later resulted in a very definite attitude toward both Cuba and Spain. Economic changes rapidly brought about political and diplomatic consequences so that when, in 1895, another insurrection broke out in the island America as a nation soon became actively interested. For even in the early part of this uprising of 1895 reports giving melancholy accounts of the conditions under which the Cubans were suffering began to come from the island. For awhile these attracted little attention, but as time passed and each side practiced its cruelties upon helpless victims, reports, official and unofficial, called attention to the frightfulness of the situation<sup>8</sup>. Then from Havana came Consul A. C. Brice's

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<sup>6</sup>George H. Stewart, Latin America and the United States (New York, 1928), p. 192.

<sup>7</sup>Hart in Harper's Monthly Magazine, loc. cit., p. 128.

<sup>8</sup>Wilson, op. cit., pp. 250-252, 273; Edward Stanwood, History of the Presidency 1897-1916 (Boston, 1916), pp. 9-11.

report in the autumn of 1897, and the natural sympathy of Americans was deeply stirred.<sup>9</sup>

The administration had early looked into the matter, studying the situation from official reports. On December 7, 1896, President Cleveland took notice of the situation publicly in his message to congress. In this document the President showed plainly that he wished to maintain neutrality as between insurgents and Spain, but at the same time he objected to control of the island by any other foreign power. "The entire country is given over to anarchy or is subject to military occupancy by one or the other party", he stated. Further, he pointed out other reasons than sentiment, other ways "both vexatious and costly" in which his country was involved. He suggested that, if things did not change for the better, higher obligations would supersede ordinary ones.<sup>10</sup>

Generally this part of the message referring to the situation in Cuba was well received by the press of the country. The whole matter previously had been so confused that no one seemed to understand it well enough to justify

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French Ensor Chadwick, Relations of United States and Spain (New York, 1909), p. 503.

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James D. Richardson, editor, Messages and Papers of the Presidents (New York, 1915), Cleveland's Message of December 7, 1896, Vol. VIII, pp. 6148-6154.

opinion or action. Reports ordinarily were from sources bitterly antagonistic to each other, and therefore untrustworthy.<sup>11</sup> Thus in reality this message of the President was a source of relief to the American public.<sup>12</sup>

In his report to his chief executive, Richard Olney of the State Department had had this to say: "The situation in Cuban affairs seems to me one calling for careful consideration of the Executive". He further informed the President that the Spaniards claimed the Cubans incompetent to maintain a decent government if given an opportunity. However, he maintained that, according to his knowledge of them, the insurgents were not the scum of the earth and called the revolution "just, in itself".<sup>13</sup> Upon such reports and suggestions as those of Olney the President based his conclusions in the message of December 7, 1896.

In this message Cleveland had written of affairs in Cuba as being almost America's affairs. Canovas, Minister of Spain, took emphatic exception to this postulate. According to Canovas, the conflict in Cuba was nobody's

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<sup>11</sup>

New York Times as cited in Literary Digest, Vol. XIV (December 19, 1896), p. 197; Millis op. cit., p. 60.

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Literary Digest, Vol. XIV (December 19, 1896), p. 196; Brooklyn Eagle as cited in American Press Opinion, April 19, 1898, p. 429.

<sup>13</sup>

Robert McElroy, Grover Cleveland, the Man and the Statesman (New York, 1925), Vol. II, pp. 245-247.

business except that of Spain and the insurgents. He let it be known that he was not at all in love with what he used to call in moments of bitterness America's "blood and thunder policy".<sup>14</sup>

Throughout all the troublous times of this rebellion Spain generally had shown a tendency toward indifference concerning America's interests in the island and consequent diplomatic inquiry. By the time McKinley had taken up the work of his administration this failure to act promptly had begun to enrage the readers of American papers, and these readers were numbered by millions. Minister Stewart L. Woodford endeavored to move diplomacy more rapidly, but Spain could not be aroused to respond. However, Woodford always felt that if the American congress had not been too eager for action he could have accomplished all that was needed without war and bloodshed.<sup>15</sup>

What was styled by the New York World as "the most important document of the war", signed January 27, 1897, was a written offer made by Cisneros, President of the provisional government and countersigned by Gomes, commander of the

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<sup>14</sup> Charles Benaist, "Revue des Deux Mondes" quoted by Living Age, Vol. CCXVII (May 28, 1898), p. 627.

<sup>15</sup> Frederic L. Paxson, Recent History of the United States (Boston, 1926), p. 237; Paxson, History of the American Frontier (Boston, 1924), p. 85.

Cuban Army, to enter negotiations with Spain. Two statements in their offer attract attention here: "inadvisable for the United States to intervene as arbiter", and "provided always that the island of Cuba will not sacrifice thereby her own sovereignty".<sup>16</sup> The basis of this proposal was independence for Cuba. Spain had persistently refused to treat on this basis, and thus in a way this proposal really blocked diplomacy.

At this time pressure upon the President to refer the whole Cuban matter to congress was becoming great. The financial interests of the United States were opposed to any radical moves toward intervention because of the possible effects of a war upon business at that time. Newspaper men and congressmen, preachers and politicians, beset the President directly and indirectly, coming and going, and his War Secretary openly claimed that the President was in danger of ruining himself and his party by the course he was pursuing. Still the chief executive strove to stem the tide.<sup>17</sup> At the same time he continued to press the Spanish government to make peace with her Cuban subjects and end the trouble.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Independence, Kansas, Morning Reporter, February 25, 1897, p. 1.

<sup>17</sup> C. S. Olcott, Life of William McKinley (Boston, 1916), p. 394.

<sup>18</sup> Wilson, op. cit., Vol. V, p. 273; Millis, op. cit., p. 80.

In his first annual message to congress, December 6, 1897, McKinley showed plainly his already quite evident intentions to give Spain due consideration at this crisis in her history.<sup>19</sup> "It is honestly due her", so the message ran, "that she be given a reasonable chance to realize her expectations and to prove the asserted efficiency of the new order of things". Whatever action America should take would be such as to deserve to meet the approval of the world.<sup>20</sup>

This message, while quieting to the nerves of the big business interests whose medium was Mark Hanna, was disappointing to the multitude who clamored for intervention.<sup>21</sup> Hannis Taylor, ex-minister to Spain, was a good representative of the radical branch of this portion. Taylor characterized it as a heartless, selfish message, and let it be known that "there are limits to the patience of the American people".<sup>22</sup> Instead of war the President was for peace, so the war party of the nation felt.

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New York Daily Tribune, April 5, 1898, p. 6; Millis, op. cit., p. 60.

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Richardson op. cit., Vol. VIII, p. 6262; Millis, op. cit., p. 90.

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William Allen White, Masks in a Pageant (New York, 1928), p. 176; Omaha World-Herald quoted in Literary Digest, Vol. XV (December 18, 1897), p. 996.

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Literary Digest, Vol. XV (December 18, 1897), p. 995.

In the winter of 1897-1898, Fitzhugh Lee, United States consul-general to Cuba, made two reports upon the condition of the concentration camps that further aroused the American public. When these reports and others of similar nature were given to the world, no further testimony was required.<sup>23</sup> The stories of starvation and hopeless agony that had been published in the press were practically verified, even those of the most rabid type, however fictitious may have been the story published.<sup>24</sup>

Matters between the two nations were now near the breaking point. Meantime Spain had offered a form of autonomy to Cuba. Cuba would listen to nothing but independence. When a further move was made along this line, McKinley said he did not know exactly what autonomy meant as proposed by Spain. What he wished for Cuba was the rights that Canada possessed. He said he understood these.<sup>25</sup>

Contemporary with these events and stories of Spanish cruelty came the De Lome episode. In whatever way the letter written by De Lome may have been obtained, its contents were published in the newspapers and that in itself

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Wilson, op. cit., Vol. V, p. 273; Topeka Daily Capital, April 2, 1898, p. 4; Chicago Tribune, April 13, 1898, p. 6.

24 Chadwick, op. cit., pp. 503-504.

25 Andrew Carnegie, Autobiography (Boston, 1920), p. 361.

represented a force which the diplomat could not withstand. De Lome denied being implicated in any way, but he promptly resigned. Whatever the nature of his mistakes at this time, probably his greatest error was in his insulting characterization of the American newspaper.<sup>26</sup>

Almost coincident with the De Lome disturbance and more far reaching in its effects upon the diplomacy of the situation, was the blowing up of the Maine in Havana harbor, February 15, 1898.<sup>27</sup> The first news of this disaster flashed over the wires amazed the Americans. "A more startling occurrence could scarcely be conceived in view of the state of feeling existing between the United States and Spain."<sup>28</sup>

The findings of the United States Naval Court appointed to investigate the sinking of the Maine were to the effect that it was sunk by a mine or torpedo on the outside. These were submitted to the congress in a special message March 28, 1898.<sup>29</sup> The message, following as it did reports quite authentic, served to intensify the feeling among Americans

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<sup>26</sup> Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (February 19, 1898), p. 211; Carnegie, op. cit., p. 361; New York Daily Tribune, February 16, 1898, p. 6.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., February 19, 1898, p. 6.

<sup>28</sup> Chicago Daily Tribune, February 17, 1898; Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (February 26, 1898), p. 241.

<sup>29</sup> Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (April 9, 1898), p. 421; Congressional Record, 55 Congress, 2 Session, Vol. 31, Part 4, March 28, 1898, p. 3278.

that intervention must come, and that it should not be much longer delayed.<sup>30</sup>

Spain had proposed that a board of inquiry be chosen from the naval powers, but the United States would not agree to this. Each government had then proceeded on its own way to its findings. Spain found that the explosion which destroyed the battleship was from the inside, and that no responsibility for its destruction rested upon Spain or Spaniards in Cuba.<sup>31</sup> The reception of this report and the President's message to congress on the same subject simply increased the already bitter feeling toward Spain. The masses were now more than ever for war.<sup>32</sup>

In this connection the Literary Digest gave a most excellent account of an interview with Robert T. Lincoln, former secretary of war. Lincoln was quoted as saying that on entering the harbor of Havana the commander of the Maine did so with full understanding that it was a "fortified harbor, and took all chances of accident or acts which

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John H. Latane, America's Foreign Policy (Garden City, 1925), p. 499; New York Daily Tribune, April 2, 1898, p.6.

31 "United States Spanish Report" in Senate Report No. 885, 54 Congress, 2 Session.

32 Latane, Foreign Policy, p. 506; Randolph G. Adams, History Of the Foreign Policy of the United States (New York, 1926), p. 273.

might be done by Spain or for whom Spain is not responsible". But the Digest told its readers that Professor H. E. von Holst of Chicago University, an authority on international law, took exception to this view. Holst maintained that in any case supposable, Spain was responsible and liable for damages "if it be true that the place of anchorage was assigned to the Maine by Spanish officials".<sup>33</sup> Thus these two views, opposite and pointedly stated, went before the American people, each helping somebody to form a definite conclusion in his own mind, or both together being confusing to others, as the case might be.

Newspaper agitation for war found its most rabid advocate at this time in the New York Journal. According to these "war papers" nothing but intervention would satisfy the American people.<sup>34</sup> Certain other papers, notably the Evening Post, also of New York, as vigorously opposed armed intervention.<sup>35</sup> At the same time many prominent citizens of the nation, not representatives of any publication, visited the island and made a study of the situation.

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<sup>33</sup> Hermann Eduard von Holst in Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (March 5, 1898), p. 271.

<sup>34</sup> H. Melvin Lee, History of American Journalism (New York, 1923), p. 367.

<sup>35</sup> Allan Nevins, The Evening Post (New York, 1922), p. 509; Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (April 2, 1898), p. 392.

Interviews and statements made by these upon their return almost without exception substantiated the claims of the war crowd, even those of the sensational press. This was true as to the nature of conditions on the island, but not always so as to specific events.<sup>36</sup>

Among these reports, the outstanding one, the one that attracted nearest to nation-wide attention, was the "statement" of Redfield Proctor, United States senator from Vermont, March 17, 1898, and next day reported throughout the nation.<sup>37</sup> In this statement Proctor dwelt particularly upon the treatment of Cubans by Spanish officials, and his statements were based largely upon his own personal observations, reinforced by information gained in interviews with responsible persons. His vivid and apparently unvarnished account of the desolation and distress which he had witnessed in the concentration areas coming close upon the destruction of the Maine, had aroused the public to the point practically of demanding that the government take measures to end the misrule in Cuba.<sup>38</sup>

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36 Julian Hawthorne, The United States in Nations of the World (New York, 1898), Vol. III, p. 1066; Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (April 2, 1898), p. 391.

37 Redfield Proctor in Congressional Record, 55 Congress, 2 Session, p. 2916; Outlook, Vol. LVIII (March, 1898), p. 759

38 Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (March 26, 1898), p. 361; Millis op. cit., pp. 111, 123.

A well known newspaper stated the situation thus: "There has been a Cuban question in the United States most of the time since the republic came into existence. This was inevitable from the proximity of the island to our shores, and its importance in many ways to our interests". The closing sentences follow: "Since the Civil War in the United States ended with the disappearance of slavery, the United States has presented a more united front on the question. There is no North or South in the matter now. A free and independent Cuba is now considered possible and also desirable".<sup>39</sup>

By the first of April, 1898, conflicting desires for peaceful settlement of the Cuban crisis and for ending Spain's dominion in the island by force, were weighing heavily, not alone upon the government at Washington, but upon the minds of peace loving citizens throughout the land. In an issue of the Outlook at this time, the matter was thus neatly summed up: "The action of this nation cannot be determined by President or congress; in the last analysis it must be determined by the people. And the questions before them are profoundly religious ones: Does this nation owe

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Kansas City Star, April 24, 1898, p. 4.

any duty to the people of Cuba? Ought we to interfere? If so, in what spirit? For humanity"?<sup>40</sup> To the answer of such questions as these America was now being fruitlessly employed.<sup>41</sup>

On April 5 Consul-general Fitzhugh Lee had been recalled from Cuba and directed to bring with him all American citizens desiring to return. Still Spain had taken no steps whatever toward any agreement with the United States looking to the future of Cuba, especially in so far as America's interests were concerned. This failure to exercise the courtesies of diplomacy had served to widen the breach, and to hasten the critical moment.<sup>42</sup>

In a special message to an eagerly awaiting congress, April 11, 1898, President McKinley outlined reasons that would justify American intervention in Cuban affairs. These reasons were: first, interest of humanity; second, protection of American interests in Cuba; third, protection to commerce; fourth, to end a menace to peace. "The only hope of relief and repose from a condition which can no longer be endured is enforced pacification of Cuba." In this message

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<sup>40</sup> Outlook as cited in Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (April 9, 1898), p. 439.

<sup>41</sup> Chicago Tribune, April 2, 1898, p. 6; New York Daily Tribune, April 12, 1898, p. 6.

<sup>42</sup> Wichita Daily Eagle, April 6, 1898, p. 1; April 19, 1898, p. 1; New York Daily Tribune, April 20, 1898, p. 6.

the President informed congress that he had reached the end of diplomacy with Spain, and he awaited the action of that body, ready to use the executive authority to the limit.<sup>43</sup>

Notwithstanding the fact that for six months the majority of congressmen had been clamoring loudly for intervention, even censuring the President in very uncomplimentary terms, the pointedness of this message struck them with amazement. The chief executive had thrown the burden of any move upon the legislative body. For this he was later violently denounced and accused of cowardice, although the Constitution of the United States gives to that branch alone the power to declare war, and many of them had long been demanding war, and had called lustily for "Cuba Libre". But many of the members were in sympathy with the President, and in a few days a decided majority endorsed his plan and acted upon his suggestions.<sup>44</sup>

The nation at this time was probably the nearest united it had ever been upon any national or international matter of importance.<sup>45</sup> The New York Tribune in an editorial,

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Richardson, op. cit., Vol. VIII, pp. 6289-6292; New York Daily Tribune, April 12, 1898, p. 6.

<sup>44</sup>

Kansas City Star, April 14, 1898, p. 4; Charles Curtis in Topeka Daily Capital, April 11, 1898, p. 1.

<sup>45</sup>

Topeka Daily Capital, April 12, 1898, p. 4; New York Daily Tribune, April 12, 1898, p. 6.

April 18, called the message a plan for attaining the desired end in the simplest, easiest, quickest way. In an editorial April 12, The Kansas City Star told its readers that the President had outlined arguments which justified intervention, and the Chicago Tribune of the same date did not care to listen to the latest offer of Spain, and expressed the belief that the best answer would be a declaration of war.

April 19, 1898, the Senate and House agreed on the resolution that Cuba ought to be free and independent. The President was directed to make demands at once for Spain's evacuation of Cuba, and to intervene by force if Spain refused to comply with the demands. On the twentieth the resolutions were passed and promptly signed by the President. Spain looked upon this as a declaration of war, and Minister Woodford was dismissed by that government. The Spanish minister at Washington demanded his passports, and diplomatic relations between the two nations were ended.<sup>46</sup>

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Wilson, op. cit., Vol. V, p. 274; Chicago Tribune, April 19, 1898, p. 1; April 25, 1898, p. 6: New York Daily Tribune, April 21, 1898, p. 6.

## II IDEALISTIC MOTIVES

When in 1895 the last uprising in Cuba against Spain had begun, Maximo Gomez, Cuban commander in the Ten Years War, had again taken charge of affairs. In a short time the contest between Cuban and Spaniard had become one of total disregard for life or property. Gomex laid the land waste in order to starve the Spaniards, and Spain retaliated by wanton destruction of Cuban life and property. It was "a war of absolutely no quarter".<sup>1</sup>

The first expedition sent out by Spain was under command of general Campos. His work, destructive as it was, was not satisfactory to the home government, and he was replaced by General Victoriano Weyler.<sup>2</sup> Soon after taking command Weyler issued his order of reconcentration: "All the inhabitants of the country now outside" of the fortifications should "concentrate themselves in the town so occupied by the troops". "The offenses enumerated when the law prescribes the death penalty" were to be dealt with "most summarily".<sup>3</sup> This order, when carried out, caused the

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<sup>1</sup>Chicago Tribune, January 14, 1898, p. 6; George Bronson Rea, Facts and Fakes About Cuba (New York, 1897), p. 31; Fred Funston, Memories of Two Wars (New York, 1912), p. 92.

<sup>2</sup>James W. Garner and Henry Cabot Lodge, History of the United States (New York, 1906), Vol. IV, p. 1643.

<sup>3</sup>Chadwick, United States and Spain, p. 432.

Cubans to crowd themselves into prescribed spaces about the fortified towns. Their homes were destroyed in accordance with the policies of both sides, and the land became a wilderness.<sup>4</sup> Thousands died of starvation and disease, and to make the results the more deadly, Weyler gave his officers power of life and death over all people under their jurisdiction.<sup>5</sup>

This process of suppression as carried out by Weyler and his officers caused hundreds of thousands to be placed within these camps, and finally exterminated about half of them.<sup>6</sup> Spaniards scoured the surrounding country and slew without mercy any insurgents captured.<sup>7</sup> Richard Olney, Secretary of State, in one of his reports to President Cleveland cited "the short and effective way the government (of Spain) had of dealing with non-combatant suspects".<sup>8</sup> Reports of these events reached the world through various channels, mainly newspapers. In Europe such reports were

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<sup>4</sup> Wilson, History of the American People, Vol. V, p. 250; Fred Funston in Wichita Daily Eagle, January 11, 1898.

<sup>5</sup> Garner and Lodge, op. cit., p. 1643; Standard History of the World, Vol. VIII, p. 4419.

<sup>6</sup> Hawthorne, The United States, Vol. III, pp. 1061-1064; Senator Proctor's Statement in Congressional Record, 55 Congress, 2 Session, Vol. 31, pt. 3, March 17, 1898; Wilson, op. cit., Vol. V, p. 273.

<sup>7</sup> McElory, Grover Cleveland, Vol. I, pp. 243-245.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., pp. 245-247; Millis, Martial Spirit, pp. 65-66.

considered highly colored, but in the United States they were received as representative of conditions in Cuba if not wholly plausible.<sup>9</sup>

In this connection it is helpful to quote parts of a few of the numerous telegraph articles found in the Morning Reporter of Independence, Kansas. In various forms these appeared in other dailies of the nation and were read eagerly by a large portion of the population. The Reporter was a "small town daily" of the eight to twelve page variety, and T. N. Sickels, the publisher, was a good newspaper man with a tendency to be conservative even on the Cuban question. This conservatism was not by any means due to lack of sympathy for suffering humanity, but was simply a matter of caution, a valuable characteristic of this fair minded gentleman.

The following quotations and notations are largely headings. In a December, 1896, issue appeared this news: "St. Joseph, Dec. 2 - It is reported that there has been an enlistment of 150 (American) men for the Cuban army, and that others are expected to join them when means of transportation have been properly arranged by the Cuban Junta".<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Literary Digest, Vol. XV (June 12, 1897), p. 201.

<sup>10</sup> Independence, Kansas, Morning Reporter, December 3, 1896, p. 1.

Two weeks later appeared these headings: "Friends of Cuba Active"; "Many Movements of Aid on Foot"; "Their Cause Growing"; "New York, Dec. 16 - Petition of New York Men Asked Congress to Put an End to Barbarities in Cuba".<sup>11</sup>

Under headings of large capitals: "Key West, March 1 - Women Misused in Cuba". In smaller capitals these appeared, "Story of an American Woman". "Arrested With Other Ladies and Thrown into Prison".<sup>12</sup> In May The Reporter gave this heading to reports of outrages in Cuba: "Great Suffering in Cuba". "Consuls Confirm The Worst Reports." "Many Americans In Want". In the same issue was this "Washington, May 15 - The Secretary of State has been receiving answers from consuls to his request for information in regard to stories of outrages committed by Spanish upon Cubans. One consul said: "Things are growing worse every day. If that merciful country does not come to our aid, God only knows how many persons will die of starvation."<sup>13</sup>

Under large capitals as headings: "Neutral Cubans Ask Aid" was printed a strange appeal "on behalf of the starving and dying reconcentrados" in Matanzas. Here are two

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<sup>11</sup> Independence, Kansas, Morning Reporter, December 17, 1896, p. 1.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, March 1, 1897, p. 1; Hawthorne, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 1066.

<sup>13</sup> Morning Reporter, May 16, 1897, p. 1.

extracts: "We are compelled to witness day after day scenes of horror which no language can describe. And yet no voice can be lifted to protest". Again, "Upwards of 10,000 victims of this savage system of warfare have been crowded into Matanzas without providing for their natural wants".<sup>14</sup> The Morning Reporter was publishing the same type of news as was the Kansas City Star, The New York Daily Tribune, The Chicago Tribune, and the Topeka Capital.

Early reports to the government had given as sad accounts as any of these reported through channels of the press.<sup>15</sup> October 15, 1897, Consul A. C. Brice of Matanzas stated that more than two thousand had died within his territory since January 1. "In the Interior towns the situation is beyond belief. In some towns one-third of the population has disappeared". Other reports of Consuls and of representative citizens served but to increase the resentment felt toward Spanish treatment of their Cuban subjects.<sup>16</sup> Large headings such as: "Starving and Helpless

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<sup>14</sup> Morning Reporter, June 8, 1897, p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> Chadwick, op. cit., p. 503

<sup>16</sup> Standard History, Vol. VIII, p. 4228; Topeka Daily Capital, April 2, 1898, p. 4; Kansas City Star, April 11, 1898, p. 1.

People Piled in Ditches to Die", "Horror of the Ditches", had a telling effect upon the American common people.<sup>17</sup>

In the winter of 1897-1898 the Kansas City Star sent an investigator to Cuba to make a special study of those matters which were disturbing the minds of his countrymen. In his report to The Star the investigator said, among other things: "You will find hunger standing virgil at the open entrance of huts in which the dying and dead lie almost equally inanimate."<sup>18</sup> Immediately the "Star's Relief Expedition" was organized and supplies were sent to Matanzas. Later, W. G. Richardson who accompanied the expedition declared that "The starvation policy seems to be endorsed by the Spanish people and officials."<sup>19</sup>

But the most convincing of all the reports that reached the public was one to which reference has already been made, that of Senator Redfield Proctor of Vermont, read before the Senate March 17, 1898. Proctor had been Secretary of War under President Harrison. At his own expense he began and carried out this special investigation, believing, as he said, that reports had been exaggerated. But what he heard

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<sup>17</sup> The Nation, (February 24, 1898), p. 139; Kansas City Star, April 11, 1898, p. 1; Chicago Tribune, April 12, 1898, pt. II, p. 9.

<sup>18</sup> Kansas City Star, March 10, 1898, p. 1.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, April 8, 1898, p. 1.

and saw there was "beyond description". "From all the surrounding country", the statement read, "the people have been driven into fortified towns and held there to subsist as best they can". "There are frequent blockhouses enclosed by a trocha and with a guard along the railroad track. With this exception there is no human life or habitation between these fortified towns and villages.... I saw no house or hut in four hundred miles of railroad rides..... except within the Spanish trocha. It is concentration and desolation ..... conditions are unmentionable in this respect .... What wonder that one-half have died and that one-quarter of the living are so diseased that they cannot be saved..... What I saw I cannot tell so others can see it."<sup>20</sup>

The outstanding result of the cumulative effect of all these reports was intense indignation within the United States. The worst conditions painted by the yellow journals however fictitious, were not more extreme than conditions appeared as reported from reliable sources, and Americans everywhere began to demand action, for the call of the

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Congressional Record, 55 Congress, 2 Session, Vol. 31, p. 2916; Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (April 2, 1898), p. 391; Fred J. Matheson, "The United States and Cuban independence", in Fortnightly Review, Vol. LXIII, n.s. (May, 1898), p. 827; Millis, op. cit., p. 123.

starving had fallen upon listening ears.<sup>21</sup> President McKinley styled the measures employed to reduce Cubans to submission as not civilized warfare but extermination.<sup>22</sup> M. M. Murdock through the columns of his paper drew the conclusion that "Cuba must at this moment be a hell on earth".<sup>23</sup> To all thinking Americans Spain's methods were a species of barbarism beyond understanding, especially so when employed by a part of the world supposed to be civilized.<sup>24</sup>

There seems to be no agreement as to how far humanitarian reason may be employed toward intervention in such a situation.<sup>25</sup> How far may a neutral go on the basis of humanity and still be on a reasonable basis of international understanding? To what extent do "the dictates of humanity" govern such situations? Under which heading would it come, "Self Preservation", or, "Balance of Power"? Or has America added a third?<sup>26</sup>

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James Morgan, Theodore Roosevelt (New York, 1919), pp. 104-130; Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (March 26, 1898), p. 361; Millis, op. cit., p. 110.

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James Ford Rhodes, McKinley and Roosevelt's Administrations (New York, 1922), p. 44; Millis, op. cit., p. 138.

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Wichita Daily Eagle, March 10, 1898, p. 10.

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Kansas City Star, April 11, 1898, p. 1; Democrat and Chronicle, quoted in Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (April 2, 1898), p. 393.

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Charles R. Lingley, Since the Civil War (New York, 1926), p. 389.

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Theodore S. Woolsey in Independent, Vol. L (March 17, 1898), p. 331.

Until the latter part of 1897 Europe, according to clippings from leading publications of the continent, could see no grounds for America's intervention in the Spanish-Cuban crisis.<sup>27</sup> By the close of that year, however, the justice of such an act was becoming apparent to them, although they doubted that humanity was a very real force back of America's agitation.<sup>28</sup> The people of the United States, however, by the very nature of their growth as a nation and of their ideals as a civilized people, found it practically impossible to remain indifferent in the face of stories coming daily from Cuba.<sup>29</sup> Discussion and villification had become exceedingly tiresome to them. "Within the United States public sympathy permeated all parties." Tales of suffering read and repeated over and over had stirred them deeply, and the pressure of this feeling toward action in favor of Cuba was becoming irresistible.<sup>30</sup> In the light

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<sup>27</sup> Literary Digest, Vol. XV (October 16, 1897), p. 773.

<sup>28</sup> Hamburger Nachrichten, as cited in Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (April 30, 1898), p. 532; London Spectator as cited in Living Age, Vol. CCXVII (May 28, 1898), p. 610.

<sup>29</sup> Olcott, Life of McKinley, p. 394; Chicago Journal as cited in Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (March 19, 1898), p. 331; Millis, op. cit., pp. 137-140.

<sup>30</sup> Matheson, "United States and Cuban Independence", loc. cit., p. 828; New York Times as cited in Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (April 9, 1898), p. 426.

of the things the Americans had by this time heard and witnessed could they well be censured for showing impatience at the seeming dilatory action of their government? They let it be known at Washington that they were weary of waiting.<sup>31</sup>

The United States government by this time had reached the point in diplomatic relations with Spain at which no offers could be entertained that did not have their setting in independence for Cuba.<sup>32</sup> Even by the beginning of the year 1898 the great majority of Americans had become almost irreconcilably set against Spain. As the year advanced various issues had become more involved and emotions stirred. Not least among the factors involved was that of human sympathy. The fundamental impulse beneath this was plain American sentiment.<sup>33</sup> In fulfilling its high mission to restore peace to a troubled people, America took up the sword.<sup>34</sup>

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Topeka Daily Capital, April 5, 1898, p. 1; New York Journal as cited in American Press Opinion, February 16, 1898, p. 429; Congressional Record, 55 Congress, 2 Session Vol. 31, part 4, p. 3278; Idem, pp. 3701 and 3704.

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John H. Latane "Intervention of the United States in Cuba", cited in North American Review, Vol. CLXVI, p. 351; Kansas City Star, April 12, 1898, p. 4; April 23, 1898, p. 4.

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### III CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS

In seeking to discover the great moral forces back of the immediate conditions which brought on the Spanish-American War one must not overlook national characteristics. Their presence was evident and their relation to the Cuban situation plainly revealed. In 1898 the "irrepressible conflict was drawing to a crisis."<sup>1</sup> However, in making the above statement Olcott had in mind mainly the conflicting ideals which had been a burden upon diplomacy for more than a hundred years. Centuries back of Jay's time must one go for the fundamental differences which made the clash inevitable.<sup>2</sup>

In tracing these differences in characteristics between the two civilizations one may reasonably go back to the fifteenth century. But even here we find divergencies which made the Reformation the gigantic struggle which in turn intensified national traits already in strong contrast.<sup>3</sup> These differences later became exemplified mainly in religious beliefs and right of worship, and by the close of the sixteenth century they manifested themselves largely

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<sup>1</sup> London Spectator, in Living Age, Vol. CCXVII (May 28, 1898) p. 610; Olcott, William McKinley, Vol. I, p. 394.

<sup>2</sup> Chadwick, United States and Spain, pp. 431-433; Outlook, Vol. LIX (June, 1898), p. 113; Wichita Daily Eagle, March 22, 1898, p. 4; The Nation, March 3, 1898, p. 157.

<sup>3</sup> Staats Zeitung as cited in Literary Digest, Vol. XIV (January 19, 1897), p. 291.

in strife between Catholicism represented by Spain and Protestantism represented by England.<sup>4</sup>

At this time there was being employed by Spain against the heretics within her realms what is known as the Spanish Inquisition. The Inquisition as generally employed throughout the Catholic world was a regular part of Church Government.<sup>5</sup> The basis of faith upon which the institution was operated, was that religious infidelity is a sin to be punished both in this world and in the world to come. But the extreme form, the one which made it particularly anathema to Protestants of northern Europe, was the Spanish Inquisition. As practiced by Spanish churchmen upon unbelievers even of their own nation it sifted out for destruction thousands of the strongest hearts and best brains, and thus had a tendency to bring upon the nation an intellectual blight.<sup>6</sup> In northern Europe the extreme operation of the Holy Office raised serious opposition and "the very name of the institution was not heard without a shudder."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> London Spectator, op. cit., p. 610.

<sup>5</sup> Archibald Wilberforce, History of Spain, (in Nations of the World, New York, 1898), pp. 94-95.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 95.

<sup>7</sup> Wolfgang Menzel, Germany (Nations of the World, New York, 1898), Vol. III, p. 946; Gossip, "Mournful Case of Cuba", in Fortnightly Review, Vol. LXIII, p. 838.

The discovery of America gave to Spain a new world, and she lost no time in occupying her new realms. It was a real conquest, a sweeping conquest when one considers the century in which it took place. Spanish language, Spanish forms of government and of church activities were extended to every part on which the Spaniard set his foot. For more than three centuries he ruled this new world. Absolutism is the term by which it is known to the historian: complete powers employed by officials sent out by the government, and no expression of popular opinion tolerated. Within this period Spain laid waste whole empires in the new world, and exterminated vast populations.<sup>8</sup>

By the advent of the Seventeenth century Spain and England represented different ideals of human relationships and of government.<sup>9</sup> In Spain the ruling power continued to be as in former centuries, from king to subjects. In England the opposite was being contended for and was soon to become the rule, the king received authority from his people. These very marked differences in the mother countries were noticeable in their colonies. Although selfishness, even heartlessness often entered into English

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<sup>8</sup>

William W. Sweet, History of Latin America (New York, 1919), p. 140.

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Kansas City Star, April 18, 1898, p. 4.

colonial enterprises, still the struggle for equal rights showed marked gains -- the right to own property secured by honest toil, the right to be freemen in a free land. In this way the traits of the mother countries were retained and by the middle of the eighteenth century the contrast between these two types had become even more noticeable in their colonial possessions.

Following the war of the American Revolution America was, from a diplomatic point of view, quickly accepted into the family of nations. Spain, however, was more tardy of recognition than were England, France and Holland, because the new nation was one of liberals in government. She alone of the nations of Europe seemed to sense the actual significance of establishing in the new world an independent nation of any politics whatever. She seemed to see in a dim way the eventual breaking away of the world from the ancient ideals of civilization. But even Spain did not see the near approach of the day America would disturb the world's balance of power.<sup>10</sup>

In the United States those ideals of individual rights which had been developed on the great frontier had

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John H. Latane, America A World Power (New York, 1907), pp. 303-320; Kansas City Star, April 19, 1898, p. 4.

culminated in a free America, and by the close of the nineteenth century had broadened till they comprehended conditions and situations of which the fathers had no dreams. The success of the move for human rights soon became evident to the world. The United States was a liberal republic because those principles of liberty that had appeared under bitter circumstances in Europe had been given, in America, opportunity for great development.

In this century America had been in antagonistic contact with the results of Spanish rule in Latin America. The more the people of the States witnessed the rule of Spain and, later, of Spanish American States the more they disliked it. So it "was to be expected that in such a question as that of Cuba, its base of reasoning would be the inherited views of many generations, and that its starting point would be that Spain was wrong".<sup>11</sup> There is so little in common between the Teutonic Americans and the Spanish Americans, almost nothing "except two names, the name America and the name republican", that diplomatic and economic relations have always been easily strained.<sup>12</sup> So when Americans had fully turned their attention to Spanish-Cuban

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<sup>11</sup> Chadwick, op. cit., p. 432.

<sup>12</sup> Sweet, op. cit., p. 253; Arthur E. Elliott, Paraguay (New York, 1931), pp. 69 and 77.

matters it was difficult to keep passion from taking the place of reason. Carnegie called the Spanish-American War "a war of passion started by reports of horrors of the Cuban revolution". Another said, "One wonders if the deep lust for conquest was not in our hearts in those days", and the historian called it "a war of impulse".<sup>13</sup>

A noted eastern journal referring to the American reaction toward the Cuban insurrection said, "The love of Freedom is so inborn in the American mind that the great majority of our people naturally sympathize with them (the Cubans) in their effort to throw off their shackles". Throughout the days of the insurrection and the war of 1898 expressions of this kind were of common occurrence. A free and self governing island of Cuba was the sentiment freely expressed, and sentiment rules all great events.<sup>14</sup>

In parallel directions these two types of modern ideals moved westward across the continent. The one broadened its pathway toward the south, the other pressed northward. The outstanding characteristics of each could be traced far back

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Carnegie, Autobiography, p. 361; White, Masks in a Pageant, p. 176; Woodrow Wilson, History of American People, p. 274.

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Boston Journal as cited in Literary Digest, Vol. XI (July 13, 1895), p. 303; The Forum as cited in Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (June 11, 1898), p. 697.

into the past. Within the nineteenth century they had clashed along the Rio Grande. By the close of that century they were again to come to grips.<sup>15</sup> The original source of that sympathy which was willing to shed American blood to give freedom to Cubans was in race and national ideals. The struggle was an inevitable clash between two types of civilization widely at variance.<sup>16</sup>

#### IV MATERIAL MOTIVES FOR INTERVENTION

The first real view Americans ever secured of Cuba was in the French and Indian War. In 1762 the British-American forces captured Havana, even then a flourishing city, and held it till after the treaty of 1763 after which England returned the island to its original possessors. But the conquest of the region had awakened the people of America to its possibilities, and from that date on down the decades there has been considerable attraction toward these parts, increasing as time has passed.

Jefferson, Monroe, and John Quincy Adams, all three looked forward to the time when Cuba would become part of the United States. Jefferson, after his success in the

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<sup>15</sup> Outlook, Vol. LIX (June, 1898), pp. 113-114; Detroit Tribune as cited in Literary Digest, Vol. XIV (December 19, 1896), p. 197.

<sup>16</sup> Paxson, The New Nation, pp. 258-275; Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (June 11, 1898), p. 695; Chicago Tribune, April 28, 1898, p. 6; Latane, The United States and Latin America, p. 133.

acquisition of Louisiana, came to look upon the island as being the most interesting of the future acquisitions to our system of states. Adams and Monroe looked upon both Cuba and Porto Rico as by nature really a part of the United States, and they felt that annexation was necessary for the integrity of the Union itself.<sup>1</sup> Following the annexation of Louisiana, Florida, Texas, and the Mexican cessions of 1848 and 1853, many other statesmen felt that Cuba should be the next to come within the territorial limits of the Union. Two outstanding arguments for this were, protection of the mouth of the Mississippi, and manifest destiny. Corollary to this was slavery extension.

The longing for possession of the island had become so great that by the time of Polk's administration, James Buchanan, secretary of state, tried to purchase the island from Spain, even offering a hundred million dollars for complete possession. The offer was turned down. By 1854 there was strong feeling that America would be justified in wresting the island by force from Spain. This found expression in what is now known as the Ostend Manifesto. In this Manifesto Pierre Soule, minister to Spain, John Y. Morgan, minister to France, and James Buchanan, minister to England,

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<sup>1</sup>

Latane, America's Foreign Policy, pp. 98 and 287; Millis, Martial Spirit, p. 12.

advised the United States Secretary of State, William L. Marcy, that if Spain could not be induced to sell Cuba, "then by every law, human and divine, we shall be justified in wresting it from Spain if we have the power". Marcy lost no time in letting it be known that such would not be the policy of the administration, but "this amazing bit of affrontery" represented the sentiment of many in America at that time.<sup>2</sup> The results of the Civil War, however, served to modify decidedly the attitude of Americans toward forcible seizure.

"The Cuban controversy has not been sought by the United States", said a famous historian writing in Harpers in June, 1898.<sup>3</sup> America was then at war with Spain, and foreign critics in particular were bitter in their censure of the United States, especially as to her avowed purposes for intervening in the matter of Cuba's political affairs. No one of them seemed to have any doubt but that the motive behind the move was territorial aggrandizement.<sup>4</sup>

Mr. Cleveland said in his message in December, 1896, that the spectacle of the mistreatment of Cubans was, "one

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<sup>2</sup> Adams, Foreign Policy, p. 266; Millis, op. cit., pp. 12-13.

<sup>3</sup> Hart, "A Century of Cuban Diplomacy", in Harpers Monthly Magazine, Vol. XCVII, p. 134.

<sup>4</sup> "Spanish Views", cited in Literary Digest, Vol. XV (July 3, 1897), p. 292; Hamburger Nachrichten as cited in Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (April 30, 1898), p. 532.

which could not but engage the attention of the United States both by reason of its geographical position and the enormous financial interests of the American people in the island". More than seventy-five years before this time President Madison wrote: "The position of Cuba gives the United States so deep an interest in the destiny even of that island that they could not be satisfied spectators at its falling into the hands of any European government".<sup>5</sup> Dominating as it does the narrowest point of the much travelled waterway between the Atlantic seaboard and the Gulf of Mexico, the position of the island rendered it increasingly important when viewed through the glasses of Americans.<sup>6</sup>

When in 1895 the second great uprising in Cuba broke out the greatest desire of Americans was to see Cuba free, but even at that late date the idea of annexation was strong in the minds of a few.<sup>7</sup> Even down to the close of the century Congress received petitions seeking annexation.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, by this time American sympathy for Cuba was for other reasons and did not include taking the island

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<sup>5</sup> Latane, United States and Latin America, pp. 84-85.

<sup>6</sup> Lingley, Since the Civil War, p. 385.

<sup>7</sup> The New York Sun as cited in Literary Digest, Vol. XI (July 13, 1895), p. 303.

<sup>8</sup> L. White Busby, Uncle Joe Cannon (New York, 1927), p. 186.

into the nation's possessions.<sup>9</sup> In 1895 the American Magazine of Civics even went so far in its efforts to learn the sentiment of the American people as to address a letter or inquiry to a number of prominent men asking each if he believed in annexation and, if so, by what means. A few of these favored annexation if accomplished by diplomacy. Many were opposed altogether, while others felt that if not now, it might be expedient at some future time.<sup>10</sup>

The New York Herald advocated annexation as the best reason for war with Spain. "Any other policy even under the sympathetic name of Cuban independence would be aggrandizement. A war for humanity would degenerate into a war for greed". So the Herald felt that at the bottom of the whole matter was the greed of territorial acquisition. In a few days, however, its views were modified.<sup>11</sup> The Baltimore News said we did not want to annex Cuba, but went on to say that annexation was what interference would doubtless amount to.<sup>12</sup> These two publications, like "big business" dreaded the interruption of the upward business trend of the time,

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<sup>9</sup> Paxson, Recent History of the United States, p. 234; Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (April 23, 1898), p. 482.

<sup>10</sup> American Magazine of Civics as cited in Literary Digest, Vol. XI (July 13, 1895), p. 337.

<sup>11</sup> New York Herald as cited in Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (April 23, 1898), p. 485.

<sup>12</sup> Baltimore News as cited in Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (February 26, 1898), p. 485.

and thus voiced a minority of considerable strength. But by April 19, 1898, the mass of Americans had almost abandoned any desire to annex the island of Cuba, however they might feel toward driving Spain from her ancient heritage.<sup>13</sup>

Economic disturbances based on want, or greed, or dire necessity have always been strong factors in pitting nation against nation, tribe against tribe. By the latter part of the nineties of the last century the economic factor was evident in Cuba. Several American agencies were drawing large profits from their investments in the island. European financiers were interested in the security of Spanish bonds. The Catholic church held millions of similar securities. Conflicting interests, centering either in the island of Cuba or in Spain herself, so muddled the economic situation that even the wiser men of the United States were greatly puzzled over the question of what America should do in the crisis in Cuban affairs. "It was not until the renewal of the insurrection in 1895" that American economic interests in Cuba were strong enough to wield an influence favoring interference. According to generally accepted data, Americans at that time had investments, "enormous financial

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Living Age, Vol. CCXVII (April 16, 1896), p. 505; Baltimore News as cited in Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (February 26, 1898), p. 243.

interests", in Cuba to the amount of \$50,000,000.<sup>14</sup> Our minister to Spain, Stewart L. Woodford, expressed himself as feeling sure that he could solve the problem "with justice to Cuba and protection to our great American interests".<sup>15</sup>

But while taking time to solve the problem destruction was taking its terrible toll. General Maximo Gomez on taking command of the Cuban insurgents had ordered suspension of work on plantations, then later laid waste the land hoping to starve out the Spaniards.<sup>16</sup> Later General Weyler instituted a policy of destruction even more comprehensive than that of Gomez. As soon as he had his concentration campaign well under way, he began, in connection with this, his campaign of devastation to starve out the Cubans. Between the policies of Gomez and Weyler American business on the island was almost ruined.<sup>17</sup> This destruction of property as well as loss of life was watched by the people of the United States, and by the beginning of McKinley's administration intervention, by force if necessary, had be-

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<sup>14</sup> Latane, America as a World Power, p. 6; Cleveland's Message, December 4, 1896.

<sup>15</sup> Rhodes, McKinley and Roosevelt, pp. 55-57; Millis, op. cit., p. 137.

<sup>16</sup> Latane, America a World Power, pp. 4-27; Funston, Memories of Two Wars, p. 99.

<sup>17</sup> James C. Malin, Interpretation of Recent American History (New York, 1926), pp. 68-88; Funston, op. cit., p. 926.

come almost a public demand, a demand audible even in Europe. "The Americans have some justice to their cause by reason of the interests at stake and for the sake of humanity.<sup>18</sup>

Not only was American business being destroyed in the island but a valuable commercial condition was being ruined.<sup>19</sup> Before the rebellion Americans were accustomed to send hundreds of shiploads of American products to be exchanged for those of Cuba. Thus people of America found their sugar and tobacco trade badly damaged. They wondered if they were to continue to suffer such losses indefinitely. Why should not the government intervene and restore commerce?<sup>20</sup>

Early in April, 1898, attention was called to the issuance of Cuban bonds both by the Junta in New York and by provisional President Masso in Cuba.<sup>21</sup> These bonds were sold cheap, but it was predicted that they would greatly advance in the event of Cuba's freedom. Bondholders would be losers if America did not intervene and free Cuba. This was a strong argument for war.<sup>22</sup>

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Independance Belgae as cited in Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (October 23, 1897), p. 773; Kansas City Star, June 14, 1898, p. 6.

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Standard History, Vol. VIV, p. 4425.

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Olcott, Life of McKinley, Vol. 1, p. 394.

<sup>21</sup>

Chicago Herald cited in Wichita Daily Beacon, (April 7, 1898), p. 4.

<sup>22</sup>

Chicago Tribune, January 13, 1898, p. 1.

Wall Street, however, was generally opposed to any form of intervention beyond the safety diplomatic kind. This stand was due largely to the rapid growth of business along almost all lines in the United States. As the pressure favoring intervention became greater upon the administration, Spanish bonds fell in value. By April 20, 1898, they were as low as 37 3/4. Anything in the nature of foreign securities was of uncertain value.<sup>23</sup> The Chicago Tribune said there was but one thing for the President to say for Wall Street's benefit: "Get thee behind me, Satan."<sup>24</sup>

When the Pope offered to mediate there appears to have been other interests, minor in importance no doubt, aside from his natural interest for peace. One of these was the fact that the church owned millions in Spanish bonds, the security of which depended upon conditions in Cuba. Should Cuba win there might be a question of their value, but should the United States step in and win against Spain, these bonds would be greatly impaired in value to put it mildly.<sup>25</sup> In sympathy both with the church and the Vatican many Roman Catholics in America opposed America's entrance into a war of intervention.

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<sup>23</sup> Kansas City Star, April 14, 1898, p. 4, and April 20, 1898, p. 1.

<sup>24</sup> The Chicago Tribune, March 14, 1898, p. 6.

<sup>25</sup> The Chautauquan, Vol. XXVII (June, 1898), p. 318.

In the Autumn of 1897 the Sagasta government of Spain made overtures looking toward autonomy for Cuba. Cuba was to assume the entire public debt charged against her by Spain, and no customs union was to be permitted between the island and the United States. This could not be considered under the economic ruin in the island, for the debt was by this time over \$400,000,000. Besides this, millions of Spanish bonds were secured by Cuban trade and were represented in this debt. By the time war was declared in 1898 this debt was estimated at \$600,000,000, a fearful burden.<sup>26</sup>

Those American capitalists who were directly interested in Cuba on account of investments there used all available influences to secure intervention. They took every advantage of the publications of the sensational press, and never failed to make the most of the humanitarian sympathies of Americans in this crisis. And when the Maine was sent to Cuba, politicians were set to talking and business began to fluctuate. "In event of a rupture" the battleship was in the right place.<sup>27</sup>

Many students of the situation in Cuba were persuaded that destruction of American investments and the ruin of

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<sup>26</sup> Kansas City Star, April 1, 1898, p. 1; J. H. Wilson, Under the old Flag (New York, 1912), Vol. II, pp. 402-423.

<sup>27</sup> Wichita Daily Eagle, January 28, 1898, p. 4.

commerce with Cuba presented the strongest argument "determining American intervention". The burden of neutrality, the dictates of commercial interests, the call of humanity, all are international reasons for any government to interfere in the affairs of another. Any one of these is strong.<sup>28</sup> So America went to war against Spain partly to make it possible for Americans to engage in business and hold property in a one time Spanish colonial possession. At the present writing (1931) United States citizens own more than a billion dollars of the islands wealth.<sup>29</sup>

#### V OUTRAGED DIGNITY: THE MAINE

In the winter of 1897-1898 while food and other supplies were being distributed among the reconcentrados in Cuba, frequent complaint was made of the unfriendly attitude of Spaniards toward those engaged in the various benevolent activities. Rioters also were causing trouble for Consul-general Fitzhugh Lee. Upon General Lee's request for a battleship, the Maine was sent to Havana.<sup>1</sup> On the night of February 15, 1898, this ship was destroyed while at anchor in the harbor and 266 of her crew were killed.

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Theodore Woolsey in Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (April 2, 1898), p. 392.

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Atlanta Constitution as cited in Literary Digest, Vol. XVI, (April 23, 1898), p. 485; Stewart, Latin America and the United States, p. 194; Kansas City Star, August 13, 1931, p. 1.

1 Wichita Daily Eagle. January 28, 1898, p. 4.

Immediately news of this disaster was telegraphed to Washington, and next day in no uncertain terms the papers of the land called attention to the catastrophe. Prominent headings attracted at once the attention of the reader: "Battleship Maine Blown Up"; "Hundreds of Lives Lost"; "Warship Maine a Total Wreck".<sup>2</sup> Under these and similar headings was a great variety of subheads all calling attention to the various phases of the calamity.<sup>3</sup> The news brought mourning into many neighborhoods, and officials at Washington were almost stunned. The effect upon diplomatic relations must not be overlooked or underestimated.<sup>4</sup>

The conditions under which the Maine had been sent to Cuba were not at all pleasant, and newspaper correspondents were not slow to recognize the gravity of the situation and to make use of its possibilities.<sup>5</sup> Neither Spanish officials nor Spanish populace had been friendly disposed toward the presence of the battleship in their harbor, and in various ways they had permitted this to become known.<sup>6</sup> The

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<sup>2</sup> Wichita Daily Eagle, February 16, 1898, p. 1; Millis, Martial Spirit, p. 108.

<sup>3</sup> Nevins, The Evening Post, p. 509; Millis, op. cit., p. 102.

<sup>4</sup> New York Daily Tribune, February 17, 1898, pp. 1-6; Bradstreet's as cited in Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (March 19, 1898), p. 333.

<sup>5</sup> New York Daily Tribune, February 3, 1898, p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Wichita Daily Eagle, February 18, 1898, p. 4.

claim was made through news agencies that few if any attempted to conceal the pleasure they felt over the explosion and consequent destruction.<sup>7</sup> Statements to the same effect were made later by American officials before the United States Board of Inquiry.<sup>8</sup> A western newspaper quoted prominent men who had visited the island as saying that the Spaniards no longer were denying that Spain was implicated in the ship's destruction.<sup>9</sup>

Under such conditions as then existed it was only natural that the people of the United States generally would lay the blame of the ship's destruction to Spanish treachery. The first question was, "Was this done by design?"<sup>10</sup>. Or, "How did it happen?"<sup>11</sup> At any rate it was deemed impossible as an accident.<sup>12</sup> At last negotiations moved rapidly. But fast as they moved they were altogether too slow "to placate

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<sup>7</sup> Wichita Daily Beacon, March 10, 1898, p. 1; Kansas City Star, February 23, 1898, p. 1.

<sup>8</sup> Army and Navy Register as cited in Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (April 16, 1898), p. 451.

<sup>9</sup> Wichita Daily Beacon, March 10, 1898, p. 6.

<sup>10</sup> Kansas City Star, February 16, 1898, p. 6.

<sup>11</sup> Literary Digest. Vol. XVI (February 26, 1898), p. 241.

<sup>12</sup> Kansas City Star, February 17, 1898, p. 1.

the impatient spirits" who pressed the government for action, immediate action.<sup>13</sup> Back of this and part of it also, was the vigorous activity of the newspapers, particularly the more wealthy and aggressive ones.<sup>14</sup> Not only did they publish their own findings but as fast as the government received dispatches bearing upon the matter these also with few exceptions were given to the public through their columns and all were handled in a variety of ways.<sup>15</sup> In whatever way they were reported and printed the fact remained that each day's news tended to make war seem a little nearer.

John D. Long, Secretary of the Navy, as late as 1903 said that the mystery of the loss of the Maine "remains yet to be solved".<sup>16</sup> This was said notwithstanding the findings of two courts of inquiry, the United States and Spanish. But so firm was the conviction fixed in the minds of the American people that they at once with quite a show of

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Wilson, History of American People, Vol. V, p. 273

14 Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (February 26, 1898), pp. 242-244.

15 Topeka Daily Capital, February 22, 1898, p. 4, Philadelphia Ledger as cited in Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (March 26, 1898), p. 368.

16 Rhodes, McKinley and Roosevelt, p. 48.

unanimity adopted the motto, "Remember the Maine", while at the same time they displayed a determination not to eliminate the Spaniards from the list of those charged with complicity in the outrage.<sup>17</sup>

In an interview with Robert T. Lincoln, Ex-secretary of War, that general is reported to have said, "on entering the harbor of Havana the Maine did so with full knowledge that it was a fortified harbor and took all chances of accident." Against this view, however, stood the opinion of Professor H. E. von Holst of Chicago University, authority on Constitutional History and on International Law, that in any case Spain was responsible "if it be true that the place of anchorage was assigned to the Maine by Spanish officials".<sup>18</sup> But, in the absence of authentic information, the generally accepted view of Americans was that the Maine was destroyed intentionally.<sup>19</sup> They could not much longer be held back. They believed Spain was guilty and they called for war, feeling that Spanish treachery must be punished.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Indianapolis News as cited in Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (February 26, 1898), p. 242.

<sup>18</sup> Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (March 5, 1898), p. 271.

<sup>19</sup> Kansas City Times as cited in Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (March 12, 1898), p. 302.

<sup>20</sup> Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (February 26, 1898), p. 242; Richardson, Messages and Papers, Vol. X, p. 603.

No stress or excitement had been brought upon the people of the United States since the Civil War that compared in force or strength to that which followed the destruction of the Maine, the climax of more than two years of disturbing international relations.<sup>21</sup> Following this disaster came the reports that Spaniards were in great rejoicing over the destruction of the ship and slaughter of its crew.<sup>22</sup> Popular indignation then became so intense that the people were with difficulty held in check.<sup>23</sup> Notwithstanding all this excitement it was a fact often remarked upon that the people of the United States were not to be stampeded even under stress of strong emotion.<sup>24</sup>

Throughout the century Americans had believed that Spain was not really friendly at any time toward the United States, hence it was comparatively easy for them to ascribe Spanish enmity and perfidy as the moving spirit back of the destruction of the Maine.<sup>25</sup> The memory of the Virginius affair was at that time quite vivid and of course gave color to the situation. Yet, in spite of everything, there were

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<sup>21</sup> J. H. Wilson, Under the Old Flag, Vol. II, p. 415; Nevins, The Evening Post, p. 508.

<sup>22</sup> Chicago Tribune, February 21, 1898, p. 1.

<sup>23</sup> Standard History of the World, Vol. VIII, p. 4228.

<sup>24</sup> Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (February 26, 1896), p. 242.

<sup>25</sup> Kansas City Times as cited in Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (March 12, 1898), p. 302.

some who were optimistic enough to publish the belief that  
there was little danger of war between the two nations.<sup>26</sup>  
As a background for this was the testimony of Captain Sigs-  
bee himself as to the graciousness shown by the local  
Spaniards at the funeral of the seamen who perished on the  
Maine.<sup>27</sup>

A Naval Court of inquiry into the cause of the destruc-  
tion of the Maine, appointed by the United States government  
made its report the latter part of March, 1898. Admiral  
William T. Sampson was the chairman, and the Court found  
that the loss of the ship was in no way due to the fault or  
negligence of its officers or crew. In the opinion of the  
court the ship was destroyed, primarily, by a submarine  
mine. This mine explosion in turn caused the explosion of  
two magazines within the ship. The court was not able,  
however, to fix the blame upon any person or persons.<sup>28</sup>

As to the testimony upon which the court's decision  
was based the Army and Navy Register had this to say: "The  
testimony shows four features which should have moved the  
President to a sterner disposition of the incident. One was

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<sup>26</sup> Wichita Daily Eagle, February 18, 1898, p. 4.

<sup>27</sup> Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (February 26, 1898), p. 241.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., April 9, 1898, p. 421; Congressional Record,  
55 Congress, 1 Session, Vol. 31, Part 2, February 17,  
1898, p. 1819; February 18, p. 1871; Ibid., Part 4,  
March 28, 1898, p. 3278.

the opposition of the Spanish authorities to the visit of the Maine; another, the unfriendly reception of the ship; three, the circumstances of the mooring position of the Maine was an unnatural one; the fourth, the condition of the wreck". This statement was given to the world April 16, 1898, just in time to add its weight to the reasons back of the clamor for war. In 1911 another official investigation was made. The Maine at this time was raised from the harbor, and then it was seen to the satisfaction of the investigators that the ship had been sunk by an outside explosion, not by one on the inside. Thus the view taken by the American Court in 1898 was sustained.<sup>29</sup>

Upon publication of the report of 1898 the American people seemed to throw aside all restraint. The demand for war was overwhelming.<sup>30</sup> All along the deed had been considered a grievous thing, but lack of official evidence had caused the millions to suspend judgment. Now all cause for restraint had been set aside. No American directly implicated had committed a crime, no one was guilty of cowardice. The honor of the nation remained unimpaired. Spain must be punished.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Adams, Foreign Policy, Millis, op. cit., p. 127.

<sup>30</sup> Latane, America's Foreign Policy, p. 506.

<sup>31</sup> New York Daily Tribune, February 21, 1898, p. 6.

The loss of the Maine and crew now became the overshadowing topic of interest. Already the American people were smarting under aspersions cast upon their chief executive by the interception and publication of a letter written by the Spanish Minister to the United States, Dupuy de Lome. They were in no mood to suffer passively in the face of a great calamity.<sup>32</sup> Yet even then the question was raised and went not unheeded, "In what respect would the exaction of freedom for Cuba atone to us for our loss?" In other words, what would America gain since Cuba free would never repair the loss? This loss was considered as above and beyond the question of Cuba.<sup>33</sup> When the President would be called upon to intervene there would be two shocks coming for Spain: one, when he would "intervene with force", the other, the shock of the demand made because of the loss of the Maine and her crew.<sup>34</sup>

In a prominent newspaper appeared this: "After all is said, the Maine is the chief cause of the war". The 266 Americans assassinated were worth more than all the Cubans

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<sup>32</sup> The Chautauquan, Vol. XXVII (June, 1898), pp. 89-96.

<sup>33</sup> Chicago Times-Herald as cited in Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (March 12, 1898), p. 304.

<sup>34</sup> Brooklyn Standard Union as cited in Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (March 19, 1898), p. 332.

slaughtered. So, too, thought millions of Americans.<sup>35</sup> In the light of added research, however, it must be said that the Maine disaster hastened the war, it did not cause the war.<sup>36</sup> All the misdeeds of the Spaniards while in control of the island, all the stories told of cruelties which she practiced upon the Cubans, these simply found their index in the destruction of the Maine and the death of her crew.<sup>37</sup> Because of this catastrophe and the multiplied misdeeds preceding it, Spain was forced to haul down her flag in the western world.<sup>38</sup>

## VI THE SHAPING OF AMERICAN OPINION

The modern newspaper, unquestionably a strong factor in public education, is largely a development of the nineteenth century. This was the century of the coming of railroads, telegraph systems, and of free public education. Remote parts were brought closer, and new ideals, broader

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Topeka Daily Capital, April 15, 1898, p. 4; Matheson, "United States and Cuban Independence", loc. cit., p. 825; Chicago Tribune, April 12, 1898, p. 12.

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Denver News as cited in Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (March 12, 1898), p. 302; Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (April 2, 1898), p. 391; The Outlook, Vol. XVII (April 23, 1898), p. 1004; Millis, op. cit., pp. 107 and 129.

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Kansas City Times, February 16, 1931, p. 1; Millis, op. cit., p. 114.

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New York Journal as cited in American Press Opinion, February 16, 1898, p. 429.

and richer than those of former days, had begun to govern the newspaper world. Manton Marble of the New York World maintained that the editor with no high ideals sinks to a low level, Pulitzer, his successor, considered the running of a newspaper as a "stewardship and trust, solely for the public good", and the New York Herald sent Stanley to find Livingston. The newspaper was developing a code of ethics.<sup>1</sup>

This expansion of the realms of duty and business called into action the correspondent or reporter. The Cuban trouble and the war with Spain caused him to be recognized as a world factor, a prime necessity. In this crisis he reached his highest degree of development unless we except the World War period. The telegraph and the reporter made a combination that was one of the marvels of the century. The immediate effect of this combination was observed in the increased size of headlines and in extra editions. A few words, often colored, would cover a large part of a page, and as reports came in by telegraph new editions would go out and the newsboy became busy.<sup>2</sup>

In order to keep up interest and compete with rivals many correspondents grossly exaggerated conditions or situ-

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<sup>1</sup> Lee, History of American Journalism, pp. 354 and 388; Kansas City Star, February 26, 1931, p. D; March 4, 1931, p. E.

<sup>2</sup> Lee, op. cit., pp. 364-367; Millis, Martial Spirit, p. 41.

ations in their reports, or even did much invention.<sup>3</sup> Thus what was known as the "New Journalism" had gained a mighty influence in world affairs. On both sides of the Atlantic it flourished, and even the conservative papers increased the size of their headings.<sup>4</sup>

As early as 1895 many newspapers had already taken up the cause of the Cubans and were even then demanding that the United States recognize them as belligerents.<sup>5</sup> That Cuba had far more cause for rebellion than America had in 1776 was proclaimed.<sup>6</sup> News of increasing atrocities reached the public through the press, and demands stronger than ever were made upon the government calling for vigorous action. By 1898 the American newspaper was becoming recognized as an active public institution.<sup>7</sup>

As the revolt against Spain continued and uncivilized deeds were committed by both sides, the news reached

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<sup>3</sup>Nevins, The Evening Post, pp. 508-510.

<sup>4</sup>Paxson, Recent History of United States, p. 233; Topeka Daily Capital, April 2, 1898, p. 1; Wichita Daily Beacon, January 12, 13, 14, 1898.

<sup>5</sup>Literary Digest, Vol. XI (September 14, 1895), p. 575.

<sup>6</sup>Philadelphia Press as cited in Literary Digest, Vol. XI (July 27, 1895), p. 362.

<sup>7</sup>White, Masks in a Pageant, p. 176; Public Opinion, Vol. XXIV (February 24, 1898), p. 229.

America almost daily and touched the chords of human sympathy.<sup>8</sup> Their inherent antipathy for anything Iberian was vastly enlarged and their sympathy for the Cubans was increased accordingly. The stories of suffering resulting from Weyler's policy were almost beyond belief as exploited by the sensational press, yet how eagerly read.<sup>9</sup>

Generally the papers of America at this time could be classed as conservative, or, at least not overly given to exaggeration in their reports of events coming from Cuban sources. Most of them, however, favored intervention if it proved the only way to settle the trouble while the minority were opposed, believing it possible to arbitrate successfully. If not, then they favored keeping out of the Cuban situation. In this group was found what was known in the last half of the nineteenth century as the German-American press. By the year 1890 these papers had become comparatively numerous, and as a rule they enjoyed good circulations. They were almost a unit in their opposition especially to armed intervention. The only important one among them favoring forcible intervention was the Morgen, controlled by Hearst.<sup>10</sup>

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Rhodes, McKinley and Roosevelt, p. 55; Millis, op. cit., p. 27.

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Olcott, Life of McKinley, p. 394; Millis, op. cit., p. 27.

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Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (March 5, 1898), p. 277.

Among those papers that were typically conservative yet not opposing intervention by force of arms when negotiation failed, was the Kansas City Star, owned and published by William Rockhill Nelson. A review of the issues of The Star in 1897-1898 impresses the reader with the fairness of the news and editorials, and shows headings not vastly different from those observed in the issues of fifteen and twenty years later. They were strong but modest in all respects.<sup>11</sup> Nelson was a picturesque figure among newspaper men, was aggressive but strictly fair and honest. He said of himself, "I've tried to be gentle and diplomatic, but I've never done well in my stocking feet".<sup>12</sup> It was such papers as The Star that really carried decision into the homes of America's reading millions.

After the close of the presidential campaign of 1896 the Cuban situation attracted more attention in the United States than any other. Many tales of adventure by America's young men made interesting reading and added zest to the situation.<sup>13</sup> Following the Maine disaster the situation was still further intensified, and "Remember the Maine" began to appear in increased size of headings. The yellow

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<sup>11</sup> The Kansas City Star, February 16, 17, 18, 1898, p. 1 each.

<sup>12</sup> Lee, op. cit., p. 376.

<sup>13</sup> Hawthorne, The United States, p. 1066; Topeka Daily Capital, April 15, 1898, p. 4.

press even enlarged upon the size of theirs. Correspondents hastened to Havana, many papers chartering boats to ply between Key West and that city. For several days extra editions were printed.<sup>14</sup>

The larger newspapers made special effort to throw light upon the discovery of the cause of the Maine disaster, for such it was generally considered, and one well known publication offered a large reward for information leading to the detection of the guilty party.<sup>15</sup> Excitement was intense, but even under those circumstances the greater part of the press was fairly conservative as to news published, and in editorials they advised caution on the part of their readers and patient waiting for proper findings.<sup>16</sup> But when Senator Proctor's statement was read by him before the United States Senate and then published throughout the land the incident served greatly to revive and intensify the feeling engendered by former reports concerning the situation on the unfortunate island. Sympathy in America now overflowed for the Cuban people.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Lee, op. cit., pp. 365-367.

<sup>15</sup> Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (February 26, 1898), p. 241; Millis, op. cit., pp. 110-111.

<sup>16</sup> Wichita Daily Eagle, February 23, 1898, p. 1; Topeka Daily Capital, April 15, 1898, p. 4.

<sup>17</sup> Standard History of the World, Vol. VIII, p. 4228; Outlook, Vol. IVIII (1898), p. 759; Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (March 26, 1898), p. 361.

At just about the time the American demand for intervention had become most imperative Pope Leo XIII offered his services as mediator between the United States and Spain. Protestant papers as a rule made strong objection to acceptance of this offer. Many of these papers felt that he long ago should have offered his mediation between Spain and Cuba. A few, however, expressed the belief that he had a right to make the offer just as he did make it. Opposition to Papal mediation generally was based upon recognition of "temporal sovereignty", and was strongly stated.<sup>18</sup>

During April 19-24 Spain and the United States definitely accepted the status of war. This meant, in the final outcome, that Spain was to give up her last vestige of claim to America. American newspapers were not slow to place the news of the situation as well as their optimistic predictions before their readers from modest headlines to outlandish sized "caps": the freedom of Cuba was a foregone conclusion, and the war of liberation which followed was just and honorable.<sup>19</sup>

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Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (April 30, 1898), pp. 531 and 558.

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Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (May 21, 1898), p. 623; Kansas City Star, April 2, 1898, p. 2; Topeka Daily Capital, April 2, 1898, p. 4; Ibid, April 20, 1898, p. 4.

In 1895 William Randolph Hearst had got control of the New York Journal. Hearst had developed a rabid variety of journalism, one of extremes. Sentimentality and exaggeration were the keys which opened the doors to thousands of readers, and his papers did not stop at real forms of duplicity whenever they deemed such to be necessary in order to secure the effect desired.<sup>20</sup> Like his great rival, Pulitzer, he realized that it was news and not editorials that sold papers.<sup>21</sup> A Californian, trained in the San Francisco Examiner, he did not hesitate to show his contempt for things eastern, however time may have mollified him since the Spanish War. He held the western man's aversion to customs and politics of Europe. Untrammelled journalism as well as unlimited personal liberty found in him one of its strongest advocates. Even to the present day he scores without mercy any national or international deals of a shady nature.<sup>22</sup> Yet he claimed that he never advocated reforms outside of the law or the provisions of the constitution.

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Paxson, op. cit., p. 233; Fortnightly Review, Vol. LXXXVIII, p. 919; Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (February 19, 1898), pp. 211-212; New York Journal as cited in Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (March 26, 1898), p. 367; Millis, op. cit., p. 67.

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William Allen White in Kansas City Star, March 4, 1931, p. E; George H. Payne, History of Journalism in the United States (New York, 1920), p. 307.

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Kansas City Times, September 3, 1930, p. 1; W. R. Hearst in The Chicago Herald-Examiner, December 13, 1930.

tion.<sup>23</sup>

After the destruction of the Maine the yellow press flared up more luridly than ever, and the New York Journal "knew immediately" that the vessel was blown up by a Spanish mine. Secretary John D. Long came in for bitter castigation, particularly from the Hearst organs, when, in an interview he had intimated that the element of Spanish responsibility had been eliminated from the incident of the destruction of the Maine. The Journal saw in this the success of Spain's perfidy, the perpetration of one great crime done in secret to overshadow the evidence of another still more open and notorious. "The appalling truth about Cuba was about to be made officially known the very day the Maine was blown up". The Journal was for Cuban independence at once.<sup>24</sup>

On one occasion Edwin L. Godkin of the Evening Post wrote: "A yellow journal office is probably the nearest approach, in atmosphere, to hell, existing in any Christian state". His chief indignation he poured out on the war press, especially the World and the Journal, two papers noted in particular for their illustrations, photographs

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Payne, op. cit., p. 372; Millis, op. cit., p. 68.

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Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (March 12, 1898), p. 302; New York Journal as cited in Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (February 26, 1898), p. 243.

and cartoons. Their sales on the streets were enormous. Later on, when victory had crowned America's efforts, the Post expressed itself to the effect that the whole war had been due to the active combination of the American sensational press with an equally unscrupulous majority in congress and "a weak executive in the White House".<sup>25</sup> That public sentiment had been greatly influenced by the sensational press at the time of the Cuban uprising is substantiated by history, although that it was unduly influenced is denied by many Americans of note.<sup>26</sup>

The Literary Digest was an able medium for news distribution, much read and commented on, even by the time of the Cuban rebellion of 1895. Its comments were accepted as truly representative of that publication's own views on the great question of the proper move for the United States at this juncture. Not only were there comprehensive extracts from a multitude of exchanges republished in the Digest but its own editorials were a regular accompaniment to these. The situation was reviewed from many angles and comments were freely offered. The Digest kept in close touch on the Cuban Situation with the leading publications and statesmen

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<sup>25</sup> Payne, op. cit., p. 307; Paxson, op. cit., p. 233; Nevins, op. cit., pp. 511, 515; Millis, op. cit., pp. 29 and 38.

<sup>26</sup> The Nation, February 24, 1898, p. 139; Rhodes, McKinley and Roosevelt, pp. 5-9; Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (May 21, 1898), p. 623.

of the world from the beginning of the rebellion in 1895 on down through the years that intervened between that time and the final settlement with Spain. In view of these facts one can see readily that this publication played a great part in shaping public sentiment in America during the closing days of the nineteenth century.

In February 1898 this publication gave a special write-up and an editorial on the Maine disaster. In this issue is quoted the dispatch of Captain Sigsbee followed by this comment, that, three days after the disaster the Navy Department made a report which showed that the Maine lost 246 men and 2 officers, 7 not being accounted for. Then, "The first question on the lips of everybody in this country was, how did it happen? Definite answer is wanting .... a more startling occurrence could scarcely be conceived in view of the state of feeling between the United States and Spain".<sup>27</sup> Later its readers were informed that newspaper discussions of the relations between the United States and Spain "covers a multitude of phases .... In the absence of official declaration, absolutely conflicting reports regarding the plans of the administration find their way into the public print".<sup>28</sup> And readers were told that a Madrid paper

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<sup>27</sup> Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (February 26, 1898), p. 241.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., March 12, 1898, p. 301.

still had hopes that McKinley and Sagasta might yet be able to hold their own "against the yellow American and Red Spanish press and the jingoes of both nations".<sup>29</sup> Like all reliable news agencies of the time, The Literary Digest was greatly interested in Senator Proctor's statement on the situation in Cuba and gave it a large amount of space. His statement "made conviction general that the situation is intolerable".<sup>30</sup>

Two interesting excerpts from the Digest follow: "Newspaper discussion on the relations of the United States and Spain covers a multitude of phases". "A large portion of the press of the country takes the position that circumstances place upon Spain the burden of proving herself innocent of complicity or lack of diligence". Added to these should be one already used, "In the absence of official declarations absolutely conflicting reports regarding the plans of the administration find their way into public prints".<sup>31</sup> In these three sentences we have the situation that confronted thinking, feeling Americans at that trying time in American history. The only wonder is that they were so nearly a unit in their conclusions and expressions of

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<sup>29</sup> Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (April 9, 1898), p. 442.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., March 26, 1898, p. 442; Millis, op. cit., p. 124.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., March 12, 1898, p. 301; Millis, op. cit., pp. 42-43.

sympathy as they were. The evident fairness of the Literary Digest at the time of this crisis in American history was both admirable and praiseworthy.

Thus the American newspaper and kindred avenues of news dissemination with a varied leadership and acknowledged prestige played their parts in the cumulation of events that led to the Spanish-American War.<sup>32</sup> As individual publications they seemed to travel different pathways, yet the journey's end was the same, liberation of Cuba from Spanish misrule. Extremists like The Journal and the Post as well as those of the Digest type were all striving toward the same end, peace on the island of Cuba.

At the same time those forces were favoring intervention in Cuban affairs others were operating and shaping public opinion in another direction. While the larger portion of the press was trying to weigh carefully all matters involved, there were many papers and other forces absolutely opposed to intervention, and all these had their followers. For instance, the German-American press as a rule were opposed, and this opposition was based largely on the premises, that, from commercial and business view points, intervention would prove a loss, because whatever the form it might take to begin with, the final result would be war. Therefore, intervention would not only prove to be a loss, but also

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Lee, op. cit., p. 338.

must be a failure from a humanitarian viewpoint in that Americans instead of Cubans must be the sufferers.<sup>33</sup>. The Cincinnati Volksblaat, as early as 1896 claimed that war with Spain would be simply a war of brutality, and it held to this view till the war was ended. Near the close of 1897 the Chicago Rundschau complained that although our finances were disorganized and our coast defenseless, still we were going into a war unjust on our part.<sup>34</sup> A few months later the New York Volksblaat insisted that it would be difficult to find a just cause to interfere in Cuba. Another at the time of the declaration of war said, "War swallows up gold in great quantities". Still another claimed both friends and enemies on each side, workingmen in particular, and for this reason protested against entering into war with Spain.<sup>35</sup> These papers represented a class of useful citizens and their views undoubtedly had great weight in several centers of population in the United States.

In this connection comments by certain foreign papers copied and widely published in America, are of interest for the reason that they undoubtedly had some influence upon the thousands who read clippings from them, and these readers

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<sup>33</sup> Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (April 16, 1898), p. 452.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., Vol. XV (January 9, 1897), p. 291.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., Vol. XVI (April 16, 1898), p. 452.

were among the thinking men and women of the land. From the Journal des Debats, Paris, we got this: "Nobody in the United States realizes what enormous sacrifices are needed to bring to its knees a nation as stubborn as the Spaniards, and nobody seems to see that this intervention has not a shadow of justice about it".<sup>36</sup> The Saturday Review of London was not quite sure that the southern states would remain loyal to the union if they were subjected to Spanish invasion. Its neighbor, The Scotsman, saw a coast line unprotected and much merchant traffic harrassed.<sup>37</sup> From our neighbor south of the Rio Grande we read this, "The conduct of the United States in the Cuban question is most hypocritical". That paper, the Telesfero sees in Spain an enemy hard to defeat.<sup>38</sup> The Heraldo of Spain claimed that the United States is like an upstart who thinks he can do as he pleases because he has a few dollars. The Hamburger Nachrichten told its readers that "this is the first time a transoceanic power boldly arises against a member of the European society of states".<sup>39</sup> As a very general rule foreign papers opposed intervention by America in Spanish-Cuban affairs.

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36 Literary Digest, Vol. XVI (March 19, 1898), p. 332.

37 Ibid., April 2, 1898, p. 414.

38 Ibid., April 9, 1898, p. 441.

39 Ibid., p. 444.

Other forces were at work in 1895-1898 shaping American opinion and sentiment. Those Americans who had financial interests being destroyed by the rebellion called loudly for intervention, naturally so, but the great financial interests were opposed to any intervention by means of force, the reason most prominent being that the United States was by 1897 rapidly recovering from the effects of the panic of 1893, and new enterprises were being inaugurated upon the basis of peace.<sup>40</sup> The influence of this force in diplomatic affairs was so readily recognized that opponents of intervention often were taunted with being under the influence of Wall Street.<sup>41</sup>

Foremost among prominent Americans who were not in favor of intervention by force was President Cleveland. Cleveland as an active, open minded executive had obtained a view of world affairs superior, possibly to that of most Americans of his day.<sup>42</sup> But Cleveland was the head of an isolated republic and his solution of the problem of the island was purchase.<sup>43</sup> Even after the sinking of the Maine

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<sup>40</sup> White, Masks in a Pageant, p. 177; The Chautauquan, Vol. XXVII (June, 1898), p. 318; Wichita Daily Eagle, March 16, 1898, p. 4; Philadelphia Press as cited in Literary Digest Vol. XV (December 18, 1897), p. 995.

<sup>41</sup> Army and Navy Journal as cited in Literary Digest, Vol. XVI, (April 16, 1898), p. 441.

<sup>42</sup> White, op. cit., p. 219; McElroy, Grover Cleveland, Vol. 11, p. 271.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 248.

he did not alter his belief that it would be unjust to declare war, and after war was declared he said that America would some day seek for a justification but would not find one.<sup>44</sup>

Cleveland not only was bound by the traditions of his country in political foreign relations, but he dreaded war's possible effect upon business recovery and expansion. His successor, McKinley, was anxious to see "the wheels begin to turn" and to continue to turn. As in the case of Cleveland he was constantly importuned to throw the nation into the Cuban struggle.<sup>45</sup> When he seemed to give ear to this then the world of business became alarmed and entered strong protests. But after all McKinley was sparring for peace. At the same time he earnestly desired to act according to the wishes of the masses. He saw the impossibility of a peaceable settlement and almost abruptly began to prepare for war.<sup>46</sup>

"Left alone, McKinley probably would have avoided a war as he -- had imagination enough to count the frightful

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<sup>44</sup>

Ibid., p. 274.

<sup>45</sup>White, op. cit., p. 176.

<sup>46</sup>Literary Digest, Vol. XV (December 18, 1897), p. 993; Carnegie, op. cit., pp. 361-362; White, op. cit., p. 177; Fred Funston, Memories of Two Wars (New York, 1911), p. 149; Congressional Record, 55 Congress, 2 Session, Vol. 31, part 4, April 11, 1898, pp. 3699, 3704; Millis, op. cit., p. 137.

cost of war as few of his associates did. Congress nevertheless was bent on war and the populace clamored for war. The will of the masses overbore the judgment of the President and had its way. War came. The whole thing presents fascinatingly interesting evidence of the popular control of foreign policy. Is it a good thing? From the depths of lethargy about their foreign policy and from an appalling abyss of ignorance on the subject, the American people suddenly determined to shape their own destinies in international relations."<sup>47</sup>

#### VII PUBLIC OPINION AS A CAUSE OF THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR: SUMMARY OF INFLUENCES

A careful study of United States history reveals this important fact: generally some phase of Cuban activity has been an issue in American politics and international diplomacy since colonial time. English, French and Americans have been attracted to the island by its strategic position, by its products, and by its position as a Spanish colony. When the former continental possessions of Spain had been recognized by the leading nations as free states, the Cubans began not only to display a semblance of intelligent

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<sup>47</sup>

Adams, Foreign Policy of the United States, p. 274.

interest in their own possibilities but also to ask relief from the mother country.

In 1868 they rebelled and a costly war of ten years was fought. Cuba was temporarily pacified by promises of better treatment from the Spanish government. Americans then resumed operations and began making investments in this island. But Spanish promises did not materialize. In addition to this drawback the United States by the Tariff of 1894 practically put Cuban sugar interests into bankruptcy. In 1895 the Cubans, not knowing which way to turn for relief, again rose in rebellion against Spain. In this uprising General Maximo Gomez inaugurated the cruelties which disgraced the pages of history, dark and bloody as were many of them already. In an effort to suppress the insurrection General Victonano Weyler employed even more cruel methods. The wrath of millions in America was then aroused and diplomacy was tried and called upon to make speed. But international etiquette prevailed, and consequent postponement of action became decidedly odious. So the war dragged on, and then economic interests became a great factor in negotiations. Some lines of business called for intervention while others opposed. Thus in 1898 those interested in commerce and in property in Cuba, and those who held stocks and bonds depending upon Cuban economic

conditions all called for intervention, even by force of arms. On the other hand was stable business, now rapidly expanding and gaining the confidence of the people, utterly opposed to intervention in any form which promised trouble. Contemporary to these were other forces operating with which the former group could work to advantage.

One of these forces was love of freedom, liberty and equality among men. Freedom for Cuba was fast becoming an object worthy of American thought and action. So long had the people of the United States enjoyed this condition that they were possessed by a strong desire to see all other people in the enjoyment of its blessings.

At this stage in the Cuban trouble came the destruction of the battleship Maine in Havana harbor and the death of 266 of her crew. Millions of Americans assigned Spanish treachery as the cause. But the loss of the Maine and destruction of her crew was not the cause of this outburst of feeling against Spain. Rather was it that this disaster furnished a vivid, a telling example denoting a deplorable state of affairs under which Spanish incompetency was operating.

The fear of acting too much upon impulse at a critical period in American history was not the strong reason for whatever hesitancy there had been among the people of the

United States in taking forcible possession of Cuba. Americans are a peace loving people. Till hope of settlement by diplomatic measures had fled, peace was the desire strongest in their hearts. Spain pursued her usual dilatory methods of attending to her foreign affairs, even in so serious a matter as the sinking of the United States battleship in the harbor of her island possession. She banked too much on America's love of peace. Stable business took advantage of this sentiment at home and action was delayed by writing up and talking up the many serious situations possible and probably should America intervene by armed force. The "Big Business" interests, the ultra conservative press of the country, and the conscientiously opposed portion of the nation represented an effective combination because, in a land of peace loving people, the arguments of these forces all very naturally had an immediate appeal to true Americans.

But back of all these forces making for peace or for war was another whose impact was irresistible, the force which made the war inevitable. Along the northern shores of the Gulf of Mexico two civilizations with few things in common, in many ways antagonistic, had met and halted -- for a brief period. Added to this was a world fast becoming one great commonwealth, and one has the situation involving Cuba in 1898. The original and fundamental reason for that display of sympathy willing to give its blood and treasure

that Cuba might be free was this deep-seated difference in civilizations.

Now, why did America intervene in Cuban affairs and precipitate the Spanish-American War? Not wholly to relieve the starving Cubans from the curse of their miseries; not largely even for the sake of investments in Cuba; not because certain national and world forces opposed intervention, or advocated it, as the case might have been; not because of passion or revenge; not alone because of the Maine disaster; not because newspapers printed their frightful stories under large headlines. Primarily it was because of fundamental differences in social, industrial, political, religious ideals -- in civilization itself. To this may be added the more evident reasons: Many Americans held investments in Cuban property, many held Cuban provisional government bonds, many were engaged in commerce with the island. This class of allied interests suffered frightfully and called for help. Opposed to these financial demands were the demands of stable business for uninterrupted peace in order to insure complete return to normal conditions, and the proverbial longing of Americans to live in peace.

But commercial and financial reasons alone were of minor importance. America was impelled to throw herself

into the fray because Cuba was suffering under the rule of a despotism; because of atrocities committed upon a helpless people near their own shores; because almost upon the threshold of the continent where freedom had won its greatest victories a people were calling for relief from tyranny; because the great American newspaper and the traveller and the investigator had told and retold the story of Cuba and the cause of her woes. The fundamental impulse was the sympathy of the people. The vast majority of Americans had weighed and balanced the evidence, and they offered their services freely toward putting an end to Spain's rule in Cuba -- in the name of civilization, in the name of humanity.

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