

# THE PROPAGANDA ACTIVITIES OF THE CUBAN *JUNTA* IN PRECIPITATING THE SPANISH- AMERICAN WAR, 1895-1898

## I

The causes for the Spanish-American War have been variously attributed to "Manifest Destiny," economic imperialism, the De Lôme-*Maine* incidents, and "yellow journalism." Besides the factors of military strategy and domestic politics, which have been too little emphasized by American historians, the propaganda activities of the Cuban *Junta* in urging American intervention in the Cuban crisis of 1895-1898 have been almost entirely neglected.<sup>1</sup> It is the purpose of this brief conspectus to show, for a restricted area,<sup>2</sup> the evident influence of the *Junta* in precipitating the war of 1898 and to suggest the need for a more exhaustive investigation of the subject.

In order to accomplish these objectives, it will be necessary at the beginning to outline the nature, organization, purpose, and principal methods of the agency which launched the Cuban revolt in February, 1895. The *Junta* was the general legation of the Cuban "Republic" abroad. It was first officially appointed in September, 1895, by the Constituent As-

<sup>1</sup> Horatio S. Rubens in a recent volume, *Liberty; the Story of Cuba* (New York, 1932), has written an interesting but romanticized account of the part played by the *Junta* in bringing about American intervention in Cuba. A brief summary of the *Junta's* activities during this period may be found in an article by George W. Auxier, "Middle Western Newspapers and the Spanish-American War, 1895-1898," soon to appear in the *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*.

<sup>2</sup> The material used as the basis of this article was derived primarily from the editorial pages of more than forty Middle Western newspapers. A large number of the *Junta's* propaganda pamphlets in the Hoes Collection at the Library of Congress, contemporary evidence in periodical literature, and the standard government documents were also utilized. In the present summary, however, only typical citations can be made. For a detailed treatment, consult George W. Auxier, "The Cuban Question as Reflected in the Editorial Columns of Middle Western Newspapers, 1895-1898," MSS, in the Ohio State University Library, Columbus, Ohio, 1938, pp. 59-148.

sembly that formed the insurgent government, which at the same time elected Tomás Estrada Palma its president and chief representative with authority to carry on diplomatic relations with other countries. For the last mentioned purpose it set up a "Cuban Legation" in the Raleigh Hotel at Washington, while its general headquarters were located at 120 Front Street in New York City.<sup>3</sup>

The *Junta* proper was composed chiefly of naturalized Cubans, living particularly in the cities along the Atlantic seaboard from Key West to New York City; whereas its American counterpart, the Cuban League, was made up principally of *bona-fide* American citizens whose pro-Cuban sympathies led them, under the direction of the members of the regular *Junta*, to organize affiliated clubs throughout the United States. These two organizations, working in close cooperation with the American press, had as their two-fold purpose the assistance of the Cubans through material and moral aid, both of which were imperative for insurgent success.<sup>4</sup>

This practical program was evolved by the leaders of the Cuban Revolutionary Party in the belief that their own aims could be achieved only through aid secured from the United States, whose economic, military, political, and humanitarian interests in the Caribbean might, in turn, at least be partially consummated by promoting Cuban freedom. The United States served, therefore, as fertile soil for the production of both material and moral aid. The Mid-West especially, whose imperialism was soon aroused by the events associated with the Cuban revolt, furnished a potentially productive psychological area in which the *Junta's* propaganda agents could cultivate the growth of pro-Cuban sentiment.

So with the patriotic zeal and the realism demanded by the exigencies of the situation, the Cuban *Junta* formulated quite early the methods designed to accomplish its aims. It fitted out filibustering expeditions and raised money to sup-

<sup>3</sup> *Encyclopedia Americana* (New York, 1937), XVI, 252.

<sup>4</sup> Marcus M. Wilkerson, *Public Opinion and the Spanish-American War; A Study in War Propaganda* (Louisiana State University Studies, No. 8, Baton Rouge, 1932), p. 56, *et passim*; Joseph E. Wisan, *The Cuban Crisis as Reflected in the New York Press, 1895-1898* (Columbia University Studies in History, Economics and Public Law, No. 403, New York, 1934), p. 70, *et passim*.

ply the Cuban chieftains in the island with the accoutrements of war. Through "Sympathy Meetings," carnivals, theatrical performances, public addresses, the facilities of a friendly American press, the publication of its own newspaper, and the systematic preparation and distribution of a deluge of propaganda pamphlets, it afforded moral aid, the total results of which contributed materially toward American intervention in April, 1898.

## II

The most important of the *Junta's* devices designed to render assistance to the insurgents, and the first to attract wide attention in the United States, was the practice of filibustering. The leadership of these enterprises was originally under the guiding genius of José Martí, who, in January, 1895, had so energetically launched the first of them against Spanish authority in Cuba. Unfortunately, Martí met a premature death in an insular skirmish in May, 1895, but the *Junta's* filibustering activities were subsequently carried on under the able direction of Estrada Palma. The "Cuban Legation," alluded to above, was soon established in Washington, where its Secretary, Gonzalo de Quesada, and its Counsel, Horatio S. Rubens, started a campaign to facilitate the procurement and distribution of aid to the insurgents by gaining for them, among other things, recognition of their belligerency by the United States government.<sup>5</sup> That the functions of this agency were propagandistic is apparent from the testimony of one of the most active members, who has recently admitted the fact in the following words:

We had in Washington a little war of our own which was to continue for three years, depending moreover on the progress of the real war in Cuba. This war in Cuba, in turn, depended on the war between the American Government incited by Spain, and the Expeditionary Department of the Cuban *Junta*, which had to supply the major war with a steady stream of munition supplies.<sup>6</sup>

General Máximo Gómez, commander-in-chief of the Cuban Army, early and continually emphasized the importance and

<sup>5</sup> Rubens, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109.

necessity of promoting filibustering as a means of sustaining the revolutionary movement,<sup>7</sup> and its power was admitted in the statement of the pro-Spanish ex-mayor of Havana, who, in attempting to discourage such aid, complained that the strength of the insurrection was derived "more than anything else from external aid" secured through such channels.<sup>8</sup>

Organized on American soil, these expeditions violated international law and the neutrality statutes of the United States. Realizing that she could never hope to suppress the Cuban revolt so long as the insurgents received military supplies through such methods, Spain invoked the rules of international comity, complained against the permissive attitude of American officials in condoning the expeditions apprehended, condemned the *Junta* and the American press for encouraging and abetting these unlawful enterprises, and sought, in accordance with her own prerogative, to intercept all suspicious vessels cruising in Cuban waters by maintaining a rigid naval patrol around the island.<sup>9</sup>

The efforts of the Spanish Government to prevent filibustering brought friction with the United States over a number of exasperating incidents. The most notable of these were the *Allianca* affair of March, 1895, and the *Competitor* case of April, 1896. Similar instances of less importance involved the *George W. Childs*, *Lark*, *Commodore*, *James Woodall*, *Laurada*, *Horsa*, *J. W. Hawkins*, *Nepenthe*, *Carry Lane*, *William Todd*, *Bermuda*, and *The Three Friends*.<sup>10</sup> Notwithstanding two neutrality proclamations issued by President

<sup>7</sup> George Reno, "Operating an 'Underground' Route to Cuba," *Cosmopolitan Magazine* (New York, 1886-1925), XXVII (August, 1899), 431.

<sup>8</sup> Don Sequendo Álvarez, "The Situation in Cuba," *North American Review* (New York, 1815-), CLXI (September, 1895), 362.

<sup>9</sup> *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States* (Washington, 1864-), 1895, Pt. II, 1193-1201; *ibid.*, 1896, 696, 711, 1209; *ibid.*, 1897, 502; *Harper's Weekly* (New York, 1859-1916), XXIX (September, 1895), 330.

<sup>10</sup> Marquis de Olivart, "Le Différend entre l'Espagne et les Etats-Unis au Sujet de la Question Cubaine," *Revue Générale de Droit International Public* (Paris, 1894-), V (1898), 358-422. M. Olivart compiled a list of thirty-six vessels which made seventy-one expeditions to Cuba between March, 1895, and April, 1898.

Cleveland (June 12, 1895, and July 27, 1896),<sup>11</sup> and the efforts of the Treasury Department's Coast Guard cruisers and revenue cutters to forestall the illegal departure of filibusters from American ports, more than sixty expeditions were launched between June 11, 1895, and November 30, 1897, according to a special report prepared by the Secretary of the Treasury.<sup>12</sup> Many others, officially unaccounted for, were made before, between, and after these dates. Although several of them were wrecked and some were driven back to American ports by storms, those that succeeded were sufficiently fruitful to keep the insurrection in the island alive for more than three years against the odds of a vastly superior Spanish army.

The progress of the *Junta's* filibustering activities was also accentuated by the encouragement which in many instances they received from the Federal courts in their disposition of the cases brought before them. In two notable cases, one in Florida and one in Delaware, this was especially apparent.<sup>13</sup> Editorial reaction to adverse decisions showed that the editors, too, favored the encouragement of filibustering under the circumstances.<sup>14</sup>

Political sanction even for material aid through filibustering was sought by the members of the "Cuban Legation" in Washington. Through a certain Lieutenant Rodgers, for example, they were able to meet and gain the ear of such influential figures as Senators Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts and Don Cameron of Pennsylvania.<sup>15</sup> It is doubtful,

<sup>11</sup> James D. Richardson, *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents* (New York, 1917), XII, 6023-24; *ibid.*, 6126-27.

<sup>12</sup> *House Document No. 326*, 55 Cong. 2 Sess.; Roy E. Curtis, "The Law of Hostile Military Expeditions as Applied by the United States," *American Journal of International Law* (New York, 1907-), VIII (January and April, 1914), 1-33; 224-53.

<sup>13</sup> Elbert J. Benton, *International Law and the Diplomacy of the Spanish-American War* (Baltimore, 1908), pp. 46-48, 56-57. Dr. Benton has an excellent discussion of the attitude of the courts in his chapter, "American Neutrality, 1895-1897." See also, *Yale Law Journal* (New Haven, Conn., 1892-), V, 283; *Ohio (Columbus) State Journal*, September 25, 1895; *Columbus Evening Dispatch*, September 26, 1896.

<sup>14</sup> *Omaha World-Herald*, October 25, 1895.

<sup>15</sup> Rubens, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

however, whether Lodge was stimulated solely by such contacts to advocate a more vigorous Cuban policy or openly, on that account, to wink at the illegal methods of the *Junta* in securing assistance for the insurgents. His literary efforts on behalf of the Republican party, nevertheless, revealed not only a bitter opposition to Cleveland's neutrality proclamations, but that he was willing enough to further the material solicitations of the *Junta* by flaunting the Federal statutes.<sup>16</sup> In any case, his activities worked to the advantage of the insurrection, and the close relationship between the *Junta's* political efforts and Cameron's Senate resolution, which strongly advocated the recognition of Cuban independence, suggests with what success the Cuban leaders sought to identify their own cause with that of the minority party in Congress.<sup>17</sup>

The sympathetic attitude of the American newspapers toward filibustering gave the *Junta* additional encouragement. Said a representative Middle Western paper: "Until notified of a state of war in Cuba or of a blockade we can't be held responsible to Spain for the doings of American citizens, nor can Spain exercise the right to stop our ships and search them even in her own ports."<sup>18</sup> In similar vein, the Indianapolis *Journal* asserted, while protesting Cleveland's warning to filibusters:

[This Government] . . . is not responsible for and, even if it wished, could not prevent the growth of popular sympathy with the insurgents. Spanish rule in Cuba is a political anachronism and a misfit, and neither international law nor international comity can prevent the American people from hoping that the revolution will succeed.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Henry Cabot Lodge, "Our Duty to Cuba," *Forum* (New York, 1886-), XXI (May, 1896), 285-86.

<sup>17</sup> *Congressional Record*, 54 Cong. 1 Sess., XXVIII, 25, 1552; Estrada Palma, "Appeal of the Cubans," and "The Real Conditions of Cuba," by Senator Proctor, printed jointly by the *Junta* as a propaganda pamphlet (New York, c. March, 1898), in the Hoes Collection at the Library of Congress.

<sup>18</sup> *Milwaukee Journal*, June 12, 1895.

<sup>19</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, June 15, 16, 1895. The same spirit was again reflected in an editorial stimulated by a speech made by Palma. (*Ibid.*, September 7, 1895.)

The Administration was further maligned by the *Detroit Journal* for failing to answer the popular demands for action on behalf of the Cubans. This paper also gave encouragement to numerous filibustering expeditions that were successfully launched.<sup>20</sup> Typical also of Middle Western editorial opinion, the Cincinnati *Enquirer* opposed the use of American battle-ships for the prevention of their departure,<sup>21</sup> and the Cleveland *Plain Dealer* even hoped that the Spanish patrol would mistakenly fire on one of them, thereby giving the United States a pretext for forceful intervention in Cuba.<sup>22</sup> Anyhow, commented the Minneapolis *Journal*: "The Government knows very well that these expeditions leave the North Atlantic seaports rather than Key West, where a pretended watch is kept for unlawful expeditions."<sup>23</sup> Similar sentiments expressed by other representative newspapers in the Middle West gave their encouragement to the practice of filibustering throughout the course of the insurrection.<sup>24</sup>

The sympathy of newspaper editors, the permissive attitude of Federal officials, and the favor of American politicians thus indicated that almost every circumstance favored the realization of the *Junta's* objectives. Even "Divine Providence" appeared to have made the necessary arrangements for the successful landing of filibusters in Cuba. A contemporary writer, for example, described the island as a "Guerilla Eden" where:

Nature seems purposefully to have accommodated West India filibusters with . . . observatories, in the form of the numerous small islands

<sup>20</sup> *Detroit Journal*, January 14, 1895, September 22, 1897.

<sup>21</sup> Cincinnati *Enquirer*, July 23 and October 3, 1895.

<sup>22</sup> Cleveland *Plain Dealer*, July 27, 1895.

<sup>23</sup> Minneapolis *Journal*, August 23, 1895.

<sup>24</sup> Cincinnati *Times-Star*, March 16, 1895; Cleveland *Leader*, April 1, 1895; Detroit *Free Press*, March 17, 1895; Cleveland *Plain Dealer*, March 15, 1895; Indianapolis *Journal*, March 15, 1895; Omaha *Daily Bee*, March 21, 1895; Chicago *Times-Herald*, March 22, 1895; Cincinnati *Enquirer*, April 8, 1895; Ohio (Columbus) *State Journal*, March 16, 1895; Kansas City (Missouri) *Journal*, March 17, 1895; Milwaukee *Journal*, June 12, 1895; St. Paul *Pioneer Press*, September 16, 1895; Minneapolis *Journal*, August 23, 1895; Detroit *Journal*, March 20, 1896; Chicago *Daily Inter Ocean*, May 21, 1896; Minneapolis *Tribune*, May 13, 1896; Chicago *Record*, December 26, 1896.

scattered along the West coast of Cuba, which enables a hidden privateer to watch the movements of the hostile [Spanish] gunboats.<sup>25</sup>

That the *Junta* took advantage of these natural factors, as well as those mentioned above, has been shown in the numerous accounts since written by participants in these unlawful enterprises.<sup>26</sup>

No accurate estimate of the amount of money raised in the United States by the *Junta* for the purchase of material supplies has ever been made. At the beginning of the revolt in February, 1895, it was supposed to have had at its disposal a fund of \$1,000,000.<sup>27</sup> The editor of a Mid-Western newspaper, as early as March of that year, conjectured that the fund amounted to \$3,000,000,<sup>28</sup> which was an approximation of the \$3,210,000 supposedly raised in support of the Ten-Years' War (1868-1878).<sup>29</sup> Whatever the amount, most of it resulted from American generosity, and so confident of this did the *Junta* become that eventually it proposed an American bond issue of \$10,000,000 redeemable ten years after Spain had been driven from Cuba. Although this scheme was regarded with official caution,<sup>30</sup> it was applauded editorially as offering an opportunity for Americans "to give practical expression of their sympathy"<sup>31</sup> and cited by the *Junta* as further proof that its provisional government was worthy of *de jure* recognition.<sup>32</sup> One of the most active Cubans engaged in soliciting funds for the *Junta* has recently stated that Richard Croker,

<sup>25</sup> Felix Oswald, "A Guerilla Eden," *North American Review* (New York, 1815-), CLXII (March, 1896), 380-89.

<sup>26</sup> Emory W. Fenn, "Ten Months with the Insurgents," *Century Magazine* (New York, 1870-), XXXIV (June, 1898), 302-07; Harold Bindloss, "A Cuban Filibuster," *Macmillan's Magazine* (London, 1859-1907), LXXVII (July, 1897), 143-49.

<sup>27</sup> For the sources of the *Junta's* funds see Horatio S. Rubens, "The Insurgent Government in Cuba," *North American Review* (New York, 1815-), CLXXVI (May, 1898), 560-69.

<sup>28</sup> *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, March 20, 1895.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, January 1, 4, 1897.

<sup>30</sup> *Senate Document No. 885*, 55 Cong., 2 Sess., 519-34. (Testimony of Benjamin J. Guerra, Treasurer of the *Junta*, before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, April 8, 1898.)

<sup>31</sup> *Milwaukee Sentinel*, April 17, 1896.

<sup>32</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, April 17, 1896.



then sachem of Tammany Hall, gave the *Junta* \$30,000 on one occasion from surplus campaign funds, “‘for the sick and starving Cubans’.”<sup>33</sup> This gift was undoubtedly an exceptional donation and the bond issue proved disappointing in its results, but the money collected for the support of the insurrection in the United States must have amounted to several millions of dollars. It is evident, moreover, that the main funds of the *Junta* were largely realized through the numerous small contributions solicited by its agents through the Cuban Leagues and its own membership.<sup>34</sup>

### III

Success in soliciting funds and promoting filibustering naturally depended upon arousing the sympathy of the American people. Financial aid and moral support, therefore, became inextricably interwoven with the numerous propaganda activities of the *Junta* from the outset of the insurrectionary movement in Cuba. Almost immediately after the rebellion was initiated the *Junta* organized its operations so as to give every possible opportunity for tangible expression of sympathy on the part of American citizens.<sup>35</sup> The facilities of the American press, as we have noted, were already at its disposal and, for conveying further assistance, a second vehicle was adopted in the device of rabble-rousing “Sympathy Meetings,” which occasionally took the form of Cuban carnivals or fairs. The technique was simple, yet psychologically sound: the stimulation of humanitarianism, with the expected response of American support of the Cuban rebels or eventual intervention on their behalf. The following prospectus of a typical “Cuban-American Fair” held at Madison Square Garden in May, 1896, adequately illustrates the manner in which the *Junta* hoped to effect its objectives:

<sup>33</sup> Rubens, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

<sup>34</sup> Cleveland *Plain Dealer*, December 16, 20, 22, 1896.

<sup>35</sup> Chicago *Daily Inter Ocean*, June 9, 1897.

"CUBA APPRECIATES SYMPATHY—SHE MUST HAVE ASSISTANCE."

**PROSPECTUS.**  
**GRAND CUBAN-AMERICAN FAIR**  
 — TO BE HELD AT —  
**Madison Square Garden May 25 to 30 (Inclusive) 1896**

AUTHORIZED BY THE CUBAN DELEGATION.

ALFRED CHASSEAUD, GENERAL MANAGER, MADISON SQUARE GARDEN, NEW YORK.

**OFFICE OF FAIR COMMITTEE:**

MADISON SQUARE GARDEN, NEW YORK CITY.

FIDEL G. PIERRA,	- - - CHAIRMAN	EMILIO DEL CASTILLO,	}	SECRETARIES
JOSE A. GUTIERREZ,	- - - TREASURER	RAFAEL NAVARRO,		

→\*PROSPECTUS.\*←

It is proposed by the friends of Cuba in the United States in a practical and effective manner to attest the sympathy that has so long been privately and publicly voiced through the medium of a great fair, national in its scope, to be held for one week, May 25th to 30th, 1896, at the Madison Square Garden, New York City.

The project has the official sanction and hearty co-operation of the Cuban Delegation. That this undertaking may be a success is the earnest wish of every sympathizer with the Cause of Cuba Libre; it has the prayers of fighting Cubans and the blessings of those who are dear to them.

The great Cuban-American Fair will present to every well-wisher that Cuba has in the United States or in the sister republic of Mexico the initial opportunity to do something that will actually help to raise the Spanish yoke from Cuba's neck and make her forever free.

The motto of those who have undertaken the huge but welcome task of carrying the Cuban-American Fair through to a monumental and unprecedented success is: "Cuba appreciates sympathy—she must have assistance." Therein is crystallized all the thought and thus is formulated in an effective outlet the many spoken and written good wishes and desultory effort of all of Cuba's friends.

The Fair will voice the gratitude of an oppressed and struggling people for the kindly feeling manifested by a neighboring nation while it makes known their greatest need and shows a way to aid.

Photostatic reproduction of one of the Junta's handbills announcing a Cuban-American Fair. Front and reverse views appear in order.<sup>30</sup>

The more frequently held "Sympathy Meetings" were promoted at opportune moments—usually just before Congress convened in December—in the most important cities throughout the United States. Middle Western newspapers gave unstintingly of their space and support to such assemblies at Chicago, Philadelphia, Cleveland, New York City, Cincinnati, Columbus, Detroit, and elsewhere. These gatherings were addressed usually by prominent local personages, or the

<sup>30</sup> The original of this document was found inside one of the Junta's propaganda pamphlets in the Hoes Collection at the Library of Congress. Internal evidence indicates that the pamphlet at one time belonged to Senator Henry Cabot Lodge.

local officers of the Cuban League, and invariably by the ubiquitous members of the *Junta*, whose itineraries are indelibly recorded on the pages of the metropolitan journals of the cities in which they made their appearance.

The first of these meetings in the Middle West, held at Chicago October 1, 1895, led the *Chicago Tribune* to urge other cities to "follow the example and roll up to Washington a tide of public opinion that shall sweep the sluggish men in the seats of Congress toward [Cuban] liberty."<sup>37</sup> And, when Philadelphia emulated the precedent set at Chicago by holding, in November of that year, an impressive pro-Cuban assembly at the Academy of Music, the *Tribune* had ample reason to applaud.<sup>38</sup>

The Philadelphia gathering, arranged by the local unit of the *Junta*, sent resolutions favoring the recognition of the "Republic" of Cuba to President Cleveland and both houses of Congress, they having been signed by an imposing array of committeemen, among whom was included no less a personage than John Russell Young, the Librarian of Congress. At the meeting, also, speeches sympathetic to Cuba were made by members of the Washington "Legation," and civic leaders of Philadelphia. Governor Claude Mathews of Indiana was invited to give his views of the Cuban situation in the principal address. Reported at full length in the *Philadelphia Times*<sup>39</sup> and reprinted later by the *Junta* as a propaganda pamphlet,<sup>40</sup> the Governor's speech was typical of Cuban feeling manifested by American sympathizers elsewhere. In tones of appealing oratory Mathews urged response to the plight of the downtrodden Cubans and warned this government against indifference and inaction in delivering Cuba from her oppressor. Regardless of the official duty of the

<sup>37</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, October 1, 1895. For further editorial comment see: *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, September 27, 1895; *Chicago Daily Inter Ocean*, September 30, 1895; *Ohio (Columbus) State Journal*, October 2, 1895; *Nebraska (Lincoln) State Journal*, November 2, 1895; *Milwaukee Journal*, October 1, 1895.

<sup>38</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, November 6, 1895.

<sup>39</sup> *Philadelphia Times*, November 22, 1895.

<sup>40</sup> Claude Mathews, "The Cuban Cause is Just; The Right Shall Prevail, and in God's Own Time Cuba Shall Be Free" (*Pamphlet*, Philadelphia, 1895), in Hoes Collection at the Library of Congress.

United States to observe the obligations of international law, he insisted that Americans as individuals might lend moral encouragement by "spanning the dividing waters with hopeful, generous sympathy and bid godspeed to the Cuban patriot in his sublime hope and holy ambition." "For," said the speaker, "his cause is just, the right shall prevail, and in God's own time Cuba will be free."<sup>41</sup> The citizens of the "city of brotherly love" were thereupon given an opportunity to please the Lord and assist the Cuban's "holy ambition" by contributing to the *Junta's* revolutionary funds.<sup>42</sup>

A few days later the same members of the Cuban *Junta* conducted a meeting of like import in Cleveland,<sup>43</sup> while Charles A. Dana, editor of the New York *Sun*, presided over another at Cooper Union in New York City.<sup>44</sup> During October, 1896, Secretary Gonzalo de Quesada, General Carlos Rolloff, and Dr. Henry Lincoln Zayas of the *Junta*, appealed for aid at a "Cuban Carnival" held at Music Hall in Cincinnati. Reporting the results of this demonstration editorially, the Cincinnati *Commercial Tribune* asked:

Can anyone wonder that the sympathies of the people whose independence was achieved under similar conditions should go out to those who are fighting for their freedom? Can anyone wonder that Dr. Henry Lincoln Zayas thrilled his audience as he told the story of Cuban wrongs and outrages? . . . Civilization will yet act on behalf of the downtrodden in . . . Cuba.<sup>45</sup>

In December of the same year "Cuban exiles" appealed to the people of Cleveland at another huge mass meeting,<sup>46</sup> and shortly thereafter such an assembly at Franklin, Indiana, was reported with favorable comment in the Indianapolis papers.<sup>47</sup> At Columbus in January, 1897, the local chapter of

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 9-16. Cf. this statement with the closing sentence of an article by J. Frank Clark, "Cuba's Struggle for Freedom," *Cosmopolitan Magazine* (New York, 1886-1925), XIX (October, 1895), 616.

<sup>42</sup> Rubens, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

<sup>43</sup> Cleveland *Plain Dealer*, November 3, 1895.

<sup>44</sup> Detroit *Journal*, November 29, 1895.

<sup>45</sup> Cincinnati *Commercial Tribune*, October 6, 1895; Cincinnati *Times-Star*, October 6, 1895.

<sup>46</sup> Cleveland *Plain Dealer*, December 2, 1896.

<sup>47</sup> Indianapolis *Sentinel*, December 17, 1896.

the Cuban League, which counted among its membership more than one thousand leading citizens of Ohio's capital, held under its auspices, at the Board of Trade Auditorium, one of the most interesting of the Cuban "Sympathy Meetings" convened in the Middle West. The local secretary, State Librarian Charles B. Galbreath, reported a successful assembly at which pro-Cuban speeches and prayers were delivered from a platform bedecked with American and Cuban flags and in the enthusiasm inspired through patriotic music rendered by the Fourteenth Regiment Band of the Ohio National Guard. Fidel G. Pierra spoke on behalf of the *Junta*, and a Colonel James Kilgourne, local president of the Cuban League, explained the combined objectives of these two organizations as designed:

. . . to secure for Cuba by all lawful, peaceful and honorable means, the political independence which her patriots are now endeavoring through tremendous sacrifice of treasure and life to gain; to encourage them with our sympathy and moral support; and to arouse the whole nation to demand the end of the campaign of devastation and murder in that island.

Other speakers for the occasion outlined specific methods for carrying out these purposes and the "sympathy and moral support" of the congregation was extended to the *Junta* in the following telegram which Secretary Galbreath dispatched to T. Estrada Palma, Delegate of the Republic of Cuba:

A public meeting representing the business, labor, religious and political interests of this city sends you greetings. May the merciful Father of all prosper the cause of liberty on your beautiful island. Long live the Republic of Cuba!<sup>48</sup>

Besides the numerous "Sympathy Meetings" in the Middle West<sup>49</sup> there is evidence in the amusement columns of many papers to show that the *Junta* also expanded its propaganda activities to include the stage as well as the platform. Hueck's theatre in Cincinnati, for example, advertised on one occasion a play, "Cuba's Vow," which was described as "The Great

<sup>48</sup> Columbus *Evening Dispatch*, January 26, 1897.

<sup>49</sup> Detroit *Journal*, February 19, March 21, and April 7, 1898.

Cuban War Play; A Story of Spain's Cruel Oppression of Cuba's Loyal Patriots."<sup>50</sup>

But the insurgents received even greater sympathy through the *Junta's* exploitation of American newspaper facilities than they did from the "Sympathy Meetings" or the theatrical performances mentioned above. The normal methods of collecting news concerning events in Cuba had been thwarted by an irritating Spanish censorship of press reports leaving the island, and the problem of gathering Cuban information played directly into the hands of the opportunistic *Junta*. Reporters for the New York papers, for instance, were encouraged to call each day at the *Junta's* headquarters, where they received *gratis* the "news" of the latest developments of the revolution. In Washington, the "Cuban Legation" performed a similar function for the papers of that city. Here newspaper correspondents besieged the *Junta's* quarters at the Raleigh Hotel for written matter about Cuba. "Demands for facts, historical references and news from the front poured in on Quesada. Day and night 'The Cuban Legation' at Washington worked." And, "wherever they could, Cubans encouraged the continuous spread of [pro-Cuban] feeling . . .," a participant in this new literature of propaganda recently admitted in explaining the source of Cuban war news.<sup>51</sup>

With the facilities of American newspapers at its disposal, the *Junta* formulated a very systematic propaganda program. It proceeded to develop a theme of Cuban success, attempted to create a corresponding belief in Spanish failure, and ex-

<sup>50</sup> Cincinnati *Commercial Tribune*, April 8, 1898, 10. The *Junta* also received much moral support from the following plays that were written and produced in the United States during the course of the Cuban insurrection: G. A. Kastelic, "Cuba Libre" (Chicago, 1895); James A. MacKnight, "Cuba Free" (New York, 1896); R. G. Taber, "A Cuban Rebel" (Greatkills, New York, 1895); Frederick H. De Candales, "Cuban Heroes" (Chicago, 1896); Henry J. Pain, "Cuba" (New York, 1896); James W. Harkness, Jr., "Cuba" (New York, 1896); George Reno, "Cuba" (New York, 1896); Ellen Chazel Chapeau, "Cuba" (Savannah, 1897); Charles W. Ressel, "Cuba Libre" (United States, 1897); James F. Milliken, "The Cuban Patriot" (New York, 1897); Petrino B. Mattia, "Cuba Libre" (Newark, New Jersey, 1897).

<sup>51</sup> Rubens, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-08, 202-09.

ploited American humanitarian sentiments through the circulation of atrocity stories.

The arguments advanced in support of the success theme were almost legion.<sup>52</sup> Upon the testimony of the *Junta*, Cuban victories over vastly superior Spanish forces were exaggerated;<sup>53</sup> American confidence in rebel strength was developed by eulogizing the abilities and exploits of the Cuban generals Máximo Gómez, Antonio Maceo, and Calixto García;<sup>54</sup> while every effort was made to prove the existence and stability of the de facto government in Cuba.<sup>55</sup> Secretary Gonzalo de Quesada of the New York *Junta*, President J. V. Fuentes of the Cuban League in Boston, and a "Cuban Merchant" at Philadelphia, for instance, were quoted by representative Middle Western newspapers as predicting, on similar grounds, a Cuban victory.<sup>56</sup> Contemporary magazine writers joined the newspaper editors by adding the arguments of climate, time, and justice.<sup>57</sup> The *Junta*, in its press releases, called special attention to Spanish "incompetence" as voiced by Hannis Taylor, Cleveland's ex-minister to Madrid, in the *North American Review*.<sup>58</sup>

In creating a belief in Spanish defeat, no opportunity was

<sup>52</sup> Minneapolis *Journal*, February 27, 1895; Cincinnati *Times-Star*, March 15, 1895; Saint Louis *Republic*, March 7, 1895; Milwaukee *Journal*, March 1, 1895; Kansas City (Missouri) *Journal*, February 24-March 16, 1895; Cleveland *Leader*, March 15, 1895; Columbus *Evening Dispatch*, February 26, 1895; Chicago *Times-Herald*, March 22, 1895; Sioux City *Journal*, September 1, 1895; Saint Paul *Pioneer Press*, December 25, 1895.

<sup>53</sup> Chicago *Record*, October 5, December 6, 1896; January 16, 29, 1897; Milwaukee *Journal*, November 7, 1896; Indianapolis *Sentinel*, April 6, 1896.

<sup>54</sup> For the pronouncements of Gómez see: Detroit *Journal*, December 10, 1895; January 11, February 15, 1897; Cleveland *Plain Dealer*, April 14, 1895, January 5, June 25, 1896, February 12, 1897; Columbus *Evening Dispatch*, December 26, 1895; Cincinnati *Enquirer*, January 21, 1896; Detroit *Free Press*, July 19, 1896; Omaha *World-Herald*, December 6, 1896. For Maceo's statements see: Sioux City *Journal*, December 13, 1896; Chicago *Record*, December 10, 1896, December 11, 1897; Ohio (Columbus) *State Journal*, December 16, 1896. For the observations of García see: Louisville *Courier-Journal*, March 24, 1898; Chicago *Daily Inter Ocean*, December 26, 1895.

<sup>55</sup> Milwaukee *Sentinel*, April 17, 1896.

<sup>56</sup> Kansas City (Missouri) *Journal*, May 3, 1895; Detroit *Journal*, October 8, 1895; Cincinnati *Times-Star*, August 5, 1895.

<sup>57</sup> Detroit *Journal*, April 12, 1897; J. Frank Clark, *op. cit.*, 607.

<sup>58</sup> Hannis Taylor, "A Review of the Cuban Question," *North American Review* (New York, 1815-), XLXV (November, 1897), 610-35.

lost to depict the inevitability of Spanish failure both at home and abroad. Efforts were made to strengthen the latter contention through the testimony of the Cuban generals who belittled the competence and exaggerated the failures of the Spanish captains-general, Martínez Campos, Valeriano Weyler, and Ramón Blanco; while, to make the former more apparent, the *Junta* emphasized the threat of the ultimate collapse of Spain on the Peninsula because of internal disintegration, political and economic.<sup>59</sup> Magazine articles, the testimony of important personages in Europe, the opinion of American writers, reports of "Cuban backfire" in Spain, the defeat of the Carlists in national elections, historical precedent, and Spanish corruption were all cited to prove the contention.<sup>60</sup> Spain was described as the "sick man of Europe" who was dying from the senility of a "querulous old age,"<sup>61</sup> and an editorial, "Spain's Weakness Our Opportunity,"<sup>62</sup> revealed to what extent the American press rejoiced in that weakness and suggests how perfectly the sentiment coincided with the objectives of the *Junta*. The internal collapse of Spain was prophesied during the "Ides of March" by one editorial which interestingly enough appeared on the same day that the notorious De Lôme letter was released to the American newspapers by the agents of the *Junta*.<sup>63</sup> The more realistic symphony of arguments predicting Spanish

<sup>59</sup> *Detroit Free Press*, April 3, 1896; *Cincinnati Commercial Tribune*, May 2, 1897; January 28, 1898; *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, September 12, 1896; *Chicago Record*, September 30, 1896; *Kansas City (Missouri) Journal*, August 2, 1896; *Chicago Tribune*, November 4, 1897; *Columbus Evening Dispatch*, January 28, 1896, October 28, 1897; *Chicago Daily Inter Ocean*, January 11, 1896; *Sioux City Journal*, November 18, 1895; *Nebraska (Lincoln) State Journal*, May 30, 1895; *Indianapolis Journal*, January 19, 1896; *Cincinnati Times-Star*, February 29, 1896; *Cleveland Leader*, May 12, 1896; *Milwaukee Journal*, November 24, 1896; *Detroit Journal*, May 11, 1897.

<sup>60</sup> *Nebraska (Lincoln) State Journal*, November 15, 1895; *Saint Paul Pioneer Press*, December 14, 1895; *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, August 7, December 30, 1896; *Milwaukee Journal*, September 21, 1896.

<sup>61</sup> *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, July 13, 1897. See also: John Foreman, "A Glance at Spain", *National Review* (London, 1883-), XXIX (April, 1897), 238-42; John Foreman, "Europe's New Invalid", *ibid.*, XXIX (July, 1897), 721-34.

<sup>62</sup> *Chicago Times-Herald*, November 22, 1897.

<sup>63</sup> *Cincinnati Commercial Tribune*, February 9, 1898.



defeat, however, was brought to a *grand finale* by strumming the strings of "Spanish bankruptcy."<sup>64</sup>

Through the vehicle of the American press the Cuban Revolutionary Party received moral sympathy, also, from the circulation of Spanish atrocity stories. The methods of warfare employed by the insurgents were undoubtedly as uncivilized as those used by the Spanish troops, yet the *Junta* exploited the natural disposition of the American editors to believe otherwise. A number of the stories of Spanish brutality were unquestionably originated by Cuban correspondents of American newspapers, such, for example, as the well-known "Evangeline Cisneros" case.<sup>65</sup> It is not difficult, nevertheless, to trace the source of many of them to the hand of Estrada Palma and the members of the Cuban *Junta*, who, until war was declared in April, 1898, received the coöperation of the editors in depicting Spanish barbarities through editorial, cartoon, and verse.<sup>66</sup>

The *Junta*, however, had other means for arousing sympathy for the insurgent cause. It had on the island a number of newspapers through which insurgent propaganda was distributed.<sup>67</sup> This reached the United States chiefly through *La Patria*, which was published in New York (1892-1898) and translations of which were circulated along the Atlantic seaboard, from whence its accounts of the progress of the revolt were dispatched to American editors in the hinterland. But more important, the *Junta* effected its purposes through a campaign of propaganda-pamphleteering that did not subside until its mission had been fulfilled. Some of these were written by members of the *Junta* in the United States or abroad.

<sup>64</sup> Minneapolis *Journal*, July 22, 1895; Cincinnati *Times-Star*, August 29, 1895; Indianapolis *Journal*, December 26, 1896; Detroit *Free Press*, March 16, 1897.

<sup>65</sup> Omaha *Daily Bee*, December 14, 1896, February 19, 1897; Chicago *Record*, April 14, 1896; Detroit *Journal*, March 13, 1896, May 17, 1897.

<sup>66</sup> Chicago *Times-Herald*, April 20, 1895; Columbus *Evening Dispatch*, November 22, 1895, December 14, 15, 1896; January 20, March 25, 1898; Kansas City (Missouri) *Times*, December 27, 1896; Cincinnati *Enquirer*, February 26, 1896; Saint Louis *Republic*, December 2, 1896; Chicago *Daily Inter Ocean*, April 29, 1896.

<sup>67</sup> Thomas W. Steep, "Cuban Insurgent Newspapers," *National Magazine* (Boston, 1894-), VIII (May, 1898), 147-50.

Others were adaptations of the writings of sympathetic Americans or consisted of pro-Cuban speeches by Cuban or American leaders, or pro-Cuban articles by American authors.<sup>68</sup> All of these items were circulated as propaganda pamphlets by the Junta and many of them were quoted in Middle Western newspapers.<sup>69</sup>

#### IV

The problem of evaluating the influence of the *Junta* in precipitating the Spanish-American War is a difficult one. In addition to the evidence of its influence from the foregoing data, the *Junta* was directly responsible for exposing the notorious De Lôme letter of February 9, 1898, and, by some, it was accused of complicity in the tragic and mysterious destruction of the *Maine* in Havana harbor six days later.<sup>70</sup> It openly opposed McKinley's attempt, through charitable intervention, to relieve the civilian population of Cuba during the Spring of 1898, because such action threatened to remove one of the chief grounds for insisting on American intervention. It informed him, also, just before war was declared,

<sup>68</sup> The following pamphlets, in the Hoes Collection at the Library of Congress, are typical illustrations of the propaganda activities of the *Junta*: Juan Guiteras, "The United States and Cuba" (*Pamphlet*, Philadelphia, 1895); Enrique José Varona, "Cuba Vs. Spain; Manifesto of the Cuban Revolutionary Party to the People of the United States of America" (*Pamphlet*, n.p., 1895); Fidel G. Pierra, "Facts About Cuba" (*Pamphlet*, n.p., 1895); "Cuba and the United States; Some Pertinent Facts Concerning the Struggle for Independence" (*Pamphlet*, Atlanta, 1897); "The Cuban Question in Its True Light" by "An American" (*Pamphlet*, New York, 1895); "The Revolution in Cuba" (n.p., c. 1896); "Cuban Revolution de 1895-1898" (Habana, 1898); Charles Henry Butler, "The Voice of the Nations" (*Pamphlet*, in *Cuba Must Be Free Series*, New York, 1898); "Address of Tomás Estrada Palma to the American People" (*Pamphlet*, n.p., c. February, 1897); Senator J. H. Gallinger, "For Cuban Independence" (*Leaflet*, n.p., c. 1896); Senator John T. Morgan, "Belligerent Rights for Cuba" (*Pamphlet*, Washington, D. C., 1897); W. D. Washburn, Jr., "Cuba and Spain; Our Plain Duty" (*Pamphlet*, Minneapolis, February, 1898); Clarence King, "Shall Cuba Be Free?" reprinted from *Forum* (New York, 1886-), XX (September, 1895), 50-65.

<sup>69</sup> Chicago *Tribune*, December 17, 1895; Saint Paul *Pioneer Press*, December 17, 1895.

<sup>70</sup> Rollo Ogden, "The De Lôme Letter," *Nation* (New York, 1865-), LXVI (February 17, 1898), 122; Rubens, *op. cit.*, pp. 287-92; Kansas City (Missouri) *Journal*, February 10, 1898; Omaha *Daily Bee*, February 10, 1898; Cleveland *Leader*, February 11, 13, 1898; Detroit *Free Press*, February 12, 1898; Milwaukee *Journal*, 10, 1898; Auxier, *op. cit.*, pp. 258-68.

that the Cuban Revolutionary Party would accept neither the proposed plan of autonomy nor any other solution of the Cuban question short of complete independence from Spanish authority.<sup>71</sup> Although the beet-sugar industry in the United States was probably the force back of it, the *Junta* claimed credit for the Teller Resolution which promised that Cuban independence would follow American intervention.<sup>72</sup>

Be this as it may, it cannot be doubted that the activities of the *Junta* here outlined stimulated the growth of sentiment in favor of the insurrectionary movement in Cuba and that by so doing they contributed toward the evolution of the policy that was later pursued by the United States on the Cuban question. The evidence here presented suggests, also, the need for a more comprehensive investigation into the relationship between the propaganda activities of the *Junta* and the causes for the Spanish-American War. There were, however, at least three other factors which, combined with the propaganda of the Cuban *Junta*, seem finally to have led to American intervention in the Cuban crisis. These were the basic interests of the United States in the Caribbean, Spanish violations of these interests, and the implications of the Cuban question in American politics.<sup>73</sup>

The alert *Junta* recognized and took advantage of all these forces. That it appreciated the American response to its own propaganda efforts is shown in the following telegram which, as early as 1895, Estrada Palma sent to a Middle Western editor:

<sup>71</sup> Milwaukee *Sentinel*, April 21, 1898. For the *Junta's* opposition to autonomy see: Louisville *Courier-Journal*, June 4, 1897; Cleveland *Plain Dealer*, November 28, 1897; Chicago *Times-Herald*, May 17, 1897; Saint Paul *Pioneer Press*, October 27, 1897; Indianapolis *Journal*, September 22, 1897.

<sup>72</sup> The relation of the beet sugar interests in the Middle West to the Teller Resolution is suggested by the comment of the following papers while the Teller Resolution was under consideration in 1898, and while the Cuban Reciprocity Treaty was being discussed during 1901-1902: Sioux City *Journal*, April 14, 20, 1898; Saint Paul *Dispatch*, March 29, 1898; Milwaukee *Sentinel*, April 17, 1898; Louisville *Courier-Journal*, September 20, December 19, 1901; Indianapolis *Journal*, January 28, 1902; Nebraska (Lincoln) *State Journal*, May 25, 1902; Detroit *Free Press*, October 22, 1901. For the *Junta's* claims see: Rubens, *op. cit.*, pp. 341-42.

<sup>73</sup> Auxier, *op. cit.*, and article cited in *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*.

We congratulate you and the people of the West for the noble stand you have taken, and we sincerely hope that your efforts on our behalf will be fruitful, as the cause of Cuba is the cause of freedom. No wonder that it should excite the universal sympathy of liberty-loving Americans.<sup>74</sup>

The fruits of the *Junta's* propaganda which followed later, in financial contributions, recruits, liberal interpretations of our neutrality laws, the establishment of a sentiment in Congress favoring the recognition of Cuban belligerency, and finally in armed American intervention, all showed that the *Junta* had indeed done its job well; perhaps too well to suit the interests of the insurgents, who so bitterly opposed the intervention resolution of April 21, 1898, because it failed to recognize the existence of their provisional government.<sup>75</sup>

GEORGE W. AUXIER.

Library of Congress.

<sup>74</sup> Cincinnati *Commercial Tribune*, December 15, 1895.

<sup>75</sup> Milwaukee *Sentinel*, April 21, 1898; Chicago *Daily Inter Ocean*, April 7, 1898; Cleveland *Leader*, April 7, 1898; Columbus *Evening Dispatch*, April 7, 1898.