

## The Martínez Campos Government of 1879: Spain's Last Chance in Cuba

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“THE Peace of Zanjón,” wrote Antonio María Fabié, “offered us the one occasion which contemporary history presented to leave America with glory and honor, but the directing classes and public opinion turned their backs on it because of ignorance, indolence, and bad faith, committing the gravest and most transcendental error of the nineteenth century.”<sup>1</sup> In these words Fabié characterized the tragic year of 1879 when Spain might conceivably have followed the leadership of General Arsenio Martínez Campos to initiate the comprehensive reform policies required to hold the allegiance of Cuba.

For a brief nine months Martínez Campos headed a Spanish ministry usually counted as merely an interim one sponsored for his own purposes by the great architect of Restoration Spain, Antonio Cánovas del Castillo. It was, however, a watershed in Spanish history. The controversies which it engendered broke the monopoly of politics by Cánovas' Liberal Conservative Party. Martínez Campos led the way to the pacific integration of the military into Restoration politics. But this brief government also witnessed the failure of Cuban hopes for fundamental change. The resultant disillusionment added strength to the independence movement. The trauma of 1898 was foreshadowed in the painful events of 1879. As always in history, the question arises, Could things have gone otherwise? Why did Spain lose this last chance to maintain herself in Cuba?

Most fundamental in the explanation of the course of events is the personal rivalry of Martínez Campos and Cánovas. It had begun at the very outset of the Restoration period. Martínez Campos' *pronunciamiento* at Sagunto, by which the restoration of Alfonso XII to

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1. *Cánovas del Castillo: Su juventud-su edad madura-su vejez* (Barcelona, 1928), p. 125.

the throne was effected, contravened Cánovas' wishes. It undercut the painful preparations of the civilian leader for a return of the Bourbons without the military intervention so characteristic of Spanish politics.<sup>2</sup>

This act of insubordination was not out of character for the general. Martínez Campos' military career in Africa, Mexico, Cuba, Valencia, and Catalonia had been a successful one, but one accompanied by continuing disagreement with superior authorities.<sup>3</sup> And Sagunto, too, was attended by success—the army generals adhered to Alfonso, and Cánovas was able to take over without bloodshed. The first acts of the Cánovas regime promoted Martínez Campos to the rank of lieutenant general and appointed him Captain General of Catalonia.<sup>4</sup> Conciliation to the opposition and a strong stand against excessive measures of repression accompanied successful military action and by November 2, 1875 Martínez Campos confirmed the pacification of the region.<sup>5</sup> In December 1875 the general was given command of the Army of the Right against the Carlists and once again combined dashing leadership with contending with his superior general. In the end he led a bold expedition to the extreme north, which established his forces on the French border. Before he completed his service in these last stages of the Second Carlist War Martínez Campos had achieved the rank of Captain General, the highest rank in the Spanish army. He had also won a popular prestige exceeding even that of the young king himself.<sup>6</sup>

It was, therefore, natural that the government should send its most prestigious general to seek an end to the long and troublesome

2. The best account of the restoration movement is still Arthur Houghton, *Les origines de la restauration des Bourbons en Espagne* (Paris, 1890). British and German Foreign Office records cited below underscore the effectiveness of Cánovas' efforts to obtain Alfonsist support abroad but also confirm the author's conclusion that without Sagunto the Restoration might have been considerably delayed.

3. Details of life and career in José Ibáñez Marín and Marqués de Cabriñana, *El General Martínez Campos y su monumento* (Madrid [1905]).

4. The promotion was made retroactive to separate it from Sagunto. *Ibid.*, pp. 117–8.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 209–14. Cf. Ildefonso Antonio Bermejo, *Historia de la interinidad y guerra civil de España desde 1868*, 3 vols. (Madrid, 1877), III, 1178–81.

6. *Ibid.*, III, 1296–1333; Ibáñez Marín, *Martínez Campos*, p. 230. The British ambassador, Austen Henry Layard, called Martínez Campos' campaign a serious gamble, but admitted that it succeeded and that the general received more enthusiastic acclaim when he accompanied the king on his triumphal entry into Madrid than did the monarch himself. Layard to Derby, Nos. 60, 66, 149, Feb. 9, 14, March 23, 1876. Records of British Foreign Office, Public Records Office, 72:1434. (Hereafter cited BFO with appropriate file numbers.)

insurrection in Cuba.<sup>7</sup> Probably Cánovas breathed a sigh of relief as his most troublesome rival was placed three thousand miles distant from the homeland. The relief was not to be of long duration!

The "Ten Years War" in Cuba had broken out in 1868 after the revolution of that year in Spain. Events had greatly altered the character of the revolutionary action on the island. Although it was always difficult to assess the numbers of the insurrectionists, it is unlikely that more than 20,000 men bore arms; but they received much assistance from the civilian population. Although guerrilla tactics continued to predominate, there were some encounters of sizeable armies, and in some of these, Spanish forces came to disaster. Black and mulatto fighters were considerably augmented in number; a formal revolutionary government established; and revolutionary military leaders with real élan and considerable ability appeared. Increasingly the focus of the revolt rested on independence rather than autonomy or reform, although the popular support for these alternative solutions of Cuban problems remained divided.<sup>8</sup>

Martínez Campos won the victory in Cuba which had been denied to so many predecessors. A number of factors explained this success. The end of the Carlist War at home allowed new reinforcements—24,000 had preceded him and an additional 14,000 accompanied him;

7. The difficult situation still existing in Cuba, the alleged incapacity of General Jovellar, and the concern of the Spanish government are reflected in Layard's reports to Derby, Nos. 264, 410, 420, May 20, October 3, 6, 1876, BFO 72:1437. The American ambassador Caleb Cushing noted Martínez Campos' bravery and "dash" and gave him credit for "the desire, and the genius, to win." Cushing to Fish, Nos. 321, 336, Oct. 3, 10, 1876. U.S. Department of State, Dispatches from U.S. Ministers to Spain, Doc. Film 436, Microcopy No. M 31, Reels 80, 81. (Hereafter cited U.S. State Dept. with reel numbers.)

8. The Spanish government emphasized the racial aspects of the struggle and made a clear impression on foreign representatives with this approach. See Layard to Derby, Feb. 12, 1876, BFO 185:585; Cushing to Fish, No. 777, Jan. 16, 1876, U.S. State Dept., reel 76; German ambassador in Madrid, Count von Hatzfeldt to German Foreign Office, Nos. 209, 214, Dec. 27, 28, 1875; No. 13, Jan. 3, 1877, Germany, Auswärtiges Amt, I.A.B.o., Acta betr. die Verhältnisse der Insel Cuba, Univ. of Michigan Microfilm 74-2889, Reel 95. (Hereafter cited GFO, Cuban Affairs.) Both Herminio Portell Vilá, *Historia de Cuba en sus relaciones con los Estados Unidos y España*, 4 vols. (Miami, 1969), II, 199-536, and Philip S. Foner, *A History of Cuba and its Relations with the United States*, 2 vols. (New York, c. 1963), II, 174-275 emphasize the development of a quest for independence during the Ten Years' War. But the divisions among revolutionary leaders, the failure of the insurrection to make real inroads into Cuba's western provinces, the enthusiasm which attended Martínez Campos' brief period as Captain General in Cuba, and the support which he later had in the Cortes raise serious doubts that the drive for independence had as yet obtained anywhere close to majority support.

so that he had approximately 70,000 effective forces under his command. He employed these forces in the first really effective anti-guerrilla warfare in which the Spaniards had engaged, dividing Cuba into eight commands, each with its own supply depot and hospital so that flying forces of lightly equipped men could search out—but not destroy—the insurgent forces.<sup>9</sup> To effect the second facet of his policy, conciliation, he initiated an open policy of “attraction,” offering amnesties and indulgences to the insurrectionists. This required money, since those who surrendered were fed and cared for and their leaders given transportation into exile.<sup>10</sup> The Cánovas government provided the reinforcements and the money, the latter obtained by the formation of a Hispanic Colonial Bank and the conclusion of a loan bearing very onerous conditions.<sup>11</sup> It is also clear that the home government had authorized Martínez Campos to negotiate directly with the revolutionary leaders, although the extent of the concessions he was entitled to offer remains uncertain.<sup>12</sup>

By February 10, 1878 Martínez Campos’ dual policy of decisive military action and direct, conciliatory negotiation with the insurrectionary leaders had eventuated in the debatable Peace of Zanjón. Although gratefully received both in Spain and Cuba, there were also critics. General Manuel Salamanca y Negrete, later to be Martínez Campos’ most bitter critic in the Cortes, was to call it “an accursed peace,” claiming it had been purchased, not won.<sup>13</sup> Its pro-

9. For the details of Martínez Campos’ military actions in Cuba see T. Ochando, *El General Martínez Campos en Cuba: Reseña político-militar de la última campaña (Noviembre de 1876 a junio de 1878)* (Madrid, 1878).

10. This was the source of General Salamanca’s later charges that the peace was bought, not won. The German ambassador reported continued difficulties in the fighting and the probability that the government would seek “to win over the chiefs of the insurgents by financial advantages.” Hatzfeldt to GFO, No. 209, Dec. 27, 1875; No. 13, Jan. 13, 1877. GFO, Cuban Affairs, Reel 95.

11. Melchor Fernández Almagro, *Historia política de la España contemporánea*, 2 vols. (Madrid, 1956), I, 323–4. Major resources were furnished by the Compañía Transatlántica, whose president was Antonio López y López, first Marqués de Comillas who became president of the new bank. Cushing, who was shocked at the interest rate involved, reported the participation of the wealthiest men in Spain—Manuel Calvo, José Zulueta, and the Marqués de Salamanca. Cushing to Fish, No. 1084, Aug. 12, 1876, U.S. State Dept., Reel 79.

12. See contrary viewpoints of Frederico Ochando and José de Elduayen, *Diario*, Congreso, 1879–80, IV, 1702–3, Feb. 6, 1880. Melchor Fernández Almagro reported that Cánovas was in disagreement with several clauses of the accord. *Cánovas, su vida y su política* (Madrid, 1951), p. 353.

13. Salamanca’s opposition to the peace began in the Congress on May 7, 1878 and continued through the whole discussion of the Cuban question. On July 15, 1879 came the charge that the peace was purchased, supported by allegedly “stolen” documents. *Diario*, Congreso, I, 622, 647.

visions were vague and ambiguous. The first article promised Cubans "the same political conditions, organically and administratively," which were enjoyed in Puerto Rico. This was followed by an amnesty for political offenders since 1868 under the aegis of "a forgetting of the past." Other terms provided for freedom to Asiatic colonists and to slaves who had served in the insurrectionary forces, a moratorium on compulsory military service until peace was fully established, and the promise that the government would facilitate the departure of those who wished to leave the island.<sup>14</sup>

General Máximo Gómez accepted the peace in the name of the Cuban revolutionaries and applied it everywhere except in those areas where the mulatto insurrectionist Antonio Maceo continued his tenacious opposition. But he, too, came to realize the hopelessness of the situation and, on May 9th, surrendered to Martínez Campos who allowed him to leave for Jamaica.<sup>15</sup> There were those among Martínez Campos' critics who believed there must have been secret clauses beyond the published terms of the peace treaty, but Martínez Campos repeatedly denied the allegation.<sup>16</sup> It must, however, have become obvious to those who negotiated with the general and his agent, General Luis Prendergast, that Martínez Campos envisaged extensive reforms in Cuban affairs during the period to follow.

Until Zanjón, administrative responsibilities in Cuba had been exercised by General Joaquín Jovellar. With the conclusion of the peace Martínez Campos replaced Jovellar as Captain General of the island and began the series of reports and personal letters which set forth far-reaching projects of reform, confronting Cánovas with a new Sagunto—a new crisis in which the general refused to heed the warnings of the civilian leader.<sup>17</sup>

14. Text, Ibáñez Marín, *Martínez Campos*, pp. 332–3.

15. Fernández Almagro, *Historia política*, I, 334–5. Maceo, the "Bronze Titan," had rejected the terms of the Peace of Zanjón in his famous "protest of Baraguá," but he and Martínez Campos shared a mutual respect. See Leonardo Grifal Peralta, *Antonio Maceo, análisis caracterológico* (La Habana, 1936), pp. 126–9.

16. William Fletcher Johnson, *The History of Cuba*, 3 vols. (New York, 1920), III, 300, lists a number of these supposed secret agreements and José Martí also spoke of "secret arrangements of Zanjón" in letters to Eligio Carbonell, Jan. 10, 1892; Fernando Figueredo, Jan. 15, 1892; Serafín Bello, Jan., 1892, *Obras completas*, 74 vols. (La Habana, 1936–1953), LXVI, 98, 101, 109. The author is inclined to accept Martínez Campos' repeated statements and assume that further reforms were suggested in oral conversations but not given written form.

17. Martínez Campos' telegrams and portions of his private communications with Cánovas and Minister of War Ceballos were read into the Cortes records during the lengthy debates which followed his fall. See Congress debates of July

The Governor General identified himself strongly with Cuban complaints and Cuban interests. The Peace of Zanjón, he said, must not be "a momentary peace" but "the beginning of a bond of common interest between Spain and her Cuban provinces." The Cubans must not be treated as second class citizens, "but put on an equality with other Spaniards in everything not inconsistent with their present conditions." He bitterly criticized the evils of prior Spanish administration—"the unfulfilled promises made to the Antilles during various periods," "the evils employed, the poor administration of justice," "the abuses of every sort, the failure to devote anything to the branch of economic development, the exclusion of the natives from every area of the administration," and "the belief of the governments that there was no other means available to them than terror." He also expressed his respect for the revolutionary leaders, including Antonio Maceo, "a mulatto who was once a mule driver and is today a general, who has immense ambition, much valor, and much prestige, and who hides under his rude courtesy a natural talent."

The general emphasized that peace could be preserved only at the cost of reform. A full study of the conditions of property, of slavery, of the penal code, of the Cuban support payments to Spain was in order and efforts must be made to advance public works and promote education. The most pressing need was that of tax reductions. He emphasized "the ill estate of public affairs, the misery in two departments, the poor and bad harvests of the Vuelta Abajo (which almost destroyed the tobacco for two years)" and warned that these conditions aided the maneuvers of some émigrés abroad and intensified "the fear and alarm of the conservative classes." This situation led him to suggest the reduction of the territorial contribution to ten percent in the rural areas. Recognizing that this would occasion financial problems, he nevertheless counted it unavoidable.

His reform proposals, however, centered on tariff reduction. He regarded Cuba's commercial situation as completely untenable—of its sixty-six million pesos of exports, fifty million went to the United States, which was now imposing high tariffs as a reprisal for those of Spain. Martínez Campos proposed the reduction of barriers between Cuba and the home country until the relationship was "almost that of the coastal trade (*casi a cabotaje*).” Spain, he stressed, must get

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16, 1879, *Diario*, II, 658, and Senate debates of March 11, 1880, *Diario*, III, 1225-9, 1231-2. Most are reproduced in Ibáñez Marín, *Martínez Campos*, pp. 335-75. The summary below indicates the strong tone of the correspondence.

its sugar, tobacco, and coffee from Cuba, not from France, Virginia, and Brazil. His advocacy of these measures was insistent. When letters from Cánovas indicated opposition, Martínez Campos' reply was vehement:

What advantages does Spain obtain by placing burdens on the products from here? . . . What reasons are there that a province, a part of the whole, rests under a restriction, a burden like this? . . . if it were because Spain produced sugar, coffee, and tobacco for its own consumption, it would be reasonable; but when these articles come from other countries because between the taxes they suffer here and the surcharges imposed upon them there they can't circulate within the home country, absurd, absurd, and absurd.<sup>18</sup>

Martínez Campos further indicated that if he could not be assured of the acceptance of his reform proposals by the home government, he was prepared to resign. Alternatively, he suggested that he give up the position of Governor General, retaining that of Captain General of the island, while Cánovas assumed the role of Minister of Overseas Territories and came to Cuba with a commission charged to investigate the needs of the island and provide for their remedy!

Meanwhile, within the limitations of his authority Martínez Campos initiated a fairly comprehensive series of reforms in Cuba. He convoked the first political assemblies since the time of Ferdinand VII, and political parties began their organization and preparation for elections of representatives to the Cortes. Lands confiscated from former insurrectionists were returned and those who volunteered on the side of Spain also received land. Railroad construction was increased; taxes on cattle, horses, and mules for agricultural production were reduced; aid was given to retrograde mountain areas; and there was some beginning in the reform of financial administration.<sup>19</sup> Although the content of the letters he sent back to Spain was not made public at this time, the thrust of the general for reform was clear and his popularity in Cuba was great.<sup>20</sup>

The strength and vigor of Martínez Campos' reform proposals shocked the Cánovas government. Not only had the general advocated tax reductions which would occasion enormous difficulties for the home country, he had also implied that taxation and trade concessions should be permanent. In the light of the enormous expense

18. *Diario*, Senado, March 11, 1880, III, 1226-7.

19. According to *El Imparcial*, Jan. 13, 1880.

20. Portell Vilá, *Historia de Cuba*, p. 18.

associated with the Carlist Wars at home and the Ten Years War in Cuba, Cánovas could not conceive how devastating deficits could be avoided. He realized fully that Martínez Campos' suggestions for commercial reform would run counter to the interests of powerful and influential economic groups at home.

The proposals of Martínez Campos came at a time when the Cánovas government found itself in a critical phase of its existence. Sagunto had been followed by the so-called *dictadura* during which Cánovas had first with the monarch's support and later with approval of the Cortes exercised a strong government seeking to safeguard the Alfonsist position. He engaged in a ruthless control of the press, took strong measures against republican or quasi-republican manifestations, and sponsored administrative reforms designed to strengthen control of local government. Elections of a constitutional Cortes had been managed by Francisco Romero Robledo, Cánovas' lieutenant, in a high-handed process which saddled Spain with the caciquismo which dominated its politics at least until 1923.<sup>21</sup> The Constitution of 1876, virtually written by Cánovas himself, was jammed through the puppet Cortes in spite of its narrow definition of religious freedom, its elimination of the right to trial by jury, and the omission of other guarantees of individual freedom which had formed part of the Constitution of 1869.

The years 1875, 1876, 1877, and 1878 rolled by without signs of a relaxation of the dictatorship; the suspensions and prohibitions of the opposition press did not decline; the interpretation of the constitutional promise of religious toleration was niggardly and restrictive; education was rigorously and harshly supervised; and Cánovas gave no sign of being willing to make possible "the pacific exchange" of authority about which he had talked both before and after Sagunto. Increasingly Cánovas reaped a harvest of criticism. His manner in the Cortes and in relationships with both opponents and supporters reflected a certain weariness with the continued buffetings of the political scene.

Under these circumstances Martínez Campos' advocacy of fundamental reforms in Cuban-Spanish relationships confronted Cánovas with a real dilemma. Could he allow Spain's most prestigious

21. Romero Robledo did not, of course, invent managed elections. For a recent study of caciquismo and its consequences, see Robert W. Kern, *Liberals, Reformers and Caciques in Restoration Spain, 1875-1909* (Albuquerque, 1974). A modern defense is found in Emiliano Aguado, *Don Manuel Azaña Díaz* (Barcelona, 1972), pp. 28 ff.



general to bombard the government at home with unfulfilled pleas for reform, so that a new insurrection, if it came, would discredit the civilian regime and underscore the prescience of the military? Could he bring Martínez Campos into his own government as Minister of War, as the general suggested in his correspondence, without creating enormous dissension within the cabinet and weakening his own prestige?<sup>22</sup>

Cánovas found a third and more devious expedient. Late in January, 1879 Martínez Campos was recalled from Cuba still expecting to enter Cánovas' cabinet as Minister of War. He arrived in Madrid on February 28th and a week later after a swirl of political consultations, found himself President of a cabinet with a strongly Cánovist tone. Cánovas had exerted his personal influence to bring two of his closest political followers into the cabinet—the Marqués de Orovio as Treasury Minister and the Conde de Toreno as Minister of Development (*Fomento*).<sup>23</sup> Also Cánovas' choice for Minister of Overseas Affairs, Salvador Albacete, received that crucial position. A former Moderado who had accompanied Queen Isabel II during the first stage of her exile, Albacete was a man of courtly manners and cultured background, but had no great ambition and lacked sufficient enthusiasm and preparation for the great task he assumed.<sup>24</sup> In retrospect the whole process of cabinet formation indicated Cánovas' intention to give Martínez Campos apparent responsibility for the conduct of government, including the effectuation of Cuban reforms, while effectively restraining him from carrying out the ambitious program he had projected while in the Caribbean. The general's assumption that Cánovas now intended to support his reform program evidenced his political naïveté.

22. The reports of the German ambassador Klaus Eberhard Theodor, Graf zu Solms-Sonnenwalde, reflect the worries of the Cánovas government. Manuel Silvela, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, informed him of Martínez Campos' recall on January 29th, saying it had been only intended to have the general stay a year in Cuba; Silvela did not mention any charge of maladministration, but Cánovas did so several weeks later saying the general wanted to place too heavy demands on Spain. In March after the cabinet change Silvela added the statement, "We are completely ruined by Cuba and in a terrible embarrassment." Germany, Auswärtiges Amt, I.A.B.O., Schriftwechsel mit der Gesandtschaft zu Madrid sowie mit anderen Missionen und fremden Kabinetten über die inneren Zustände und Verhältnisse Spaniens, National Archives, Doc. Film 3547, Reel 57, Solms to GFO, No. 11, Jan. 29; No. 21, Feb. 25; No. 25, March 13, 1879. (Hereafter cited GFO, Spain, Political.)

23. Indicated in Senate, March 9, 1880, *Diario*, II, 1192-3.

24. Martínez Campos had never met Albacete before this time. Statement, Senate, March 9, 1880, *Diario*, II, 1185. Characterization, Fabié, *Cánovas*, p. 123.

Martínez Campos' own political stance remained undefined. Many observers counted him close to the highly conservative Moderados—there had been talk that he resented Cánovas' somewhat cavalier treatment of the former Queen—and the Moderados looked to better relations with him than with Cánovas.<sup>25</sup> On the other hand, Martínez Campos' record both in Catalonia and Cuba had been a liberal one. Six months earlier the prestigious liberal newspaper *El Imparcial* had pointed to his liberalism in Cuba shown “not in words but in deeds, not in promises, but in realities. There [in Cuba] no periodicals are denounced, nor is there suspicion in respect to the democrats, nor special judgments and preferences in respect to this or that opposition group.” The general, said *Imparcial*, was “more liberal, more sympathetic to democratic tendencies” than Cánovas.<sup>26</sup>

Some of the liberal thrust was reflected in the early days of the Martínez Campos government. The new Minister of the Interior was Francisco Silvela, an able Madrid lawyer whose brother had been Minister of Foreign Affairs under Cánovas. One of the few political leaders of the era who preserved a reputation of impeccable integrity,<sup>27</sup> Silvela quickly aroused the ire of Romero Robledo with changes of personnel in the ministry and the transfer of a “Special Treasury of Beneficences” from the Interior Ministry to the Treasury.<sup>28</sup> Electoral instructions also accorded freedom of action to all citizens without a mention of legal or illegal parties.<sup>29</sup> After five years of silence the Progressive Democratic Party led by Cristino Martos met in Madrid, extended greetings to the exiled republican Manuel Ruiz Zorrilla, and, with some dissension, agreed to participate in the new elections.<sup>30</sup> Press denunciations continued, but were less numerous and the penalties were milder.<sup>31</sup>

25. See Layard's reports, No. 61, Feb. 9; No. 117, Mar. 7; No. 151, Mar. 24, 1876, BFO 72:1434, 5, 6. The general's sympathetic letters to the queen on May 13, Aug. 31, 1875 are found in Juan Ortega y Rubio, *Historia de la regencia de Doña María Cristina Habsbourg-Lorena*, 5 vols. (Madrid, 1905), I, 517–9. The Moderados displayed support for Martínez Campos in their first party meeting after the formation of the government and shortly afterwards the prominent Moderado, the Conde de Balmaseda, was named Captain General of New Castile. *Imparcial*, March 21, 24, 1879.

26. Sept. 11, 1878.

27. Enrique de Tapia, *Francisco Silvela, gobernante austero* (Madrid [c. 1966]).

28. *Imparcial*, May 21, 23, 1879.

29. *Ibid.*, March 12, 1879.

30. *Ibid.*, March 8, 1879.

31. *Imparcial* stressed the difference, Dec. 28, 1879, but its columns recorded more than forty-five press denunciations under Martínez Campos.

Although the Martínez Campos government appeared somewhat more liberal than that of Cánovas, both the general and the leader of the majority Liberal Conservatives talked of cooperation. The meeting of the party on May 31, 1879, prior to the opening of the Cortes, saw Martínez Campos paying tribute to the previous ministry and using the term "Conservative Liberal" in respect to the party to emphasize separation from its critics.<sup>32</sup> Cánovas, in turn, proclaimed that he would be "the first, the most loyal, the most subordinate, and the most firm" of the government's supporters.<sup>33</sup> But clouds appeared on the horizon as over 100 deputies in the newly elected Congress gave unqualified support to Romero Robledo and became increasingly hostile to Silvela.<sup>34</sup> Most personal friends of Martínez Campos who had campaigned for seats in the Cortes had been defeated,<sup>35</sup> and both Centrist and Constitutional opponents regarded the government as nothing but an interim expedient devised by Cánovas.<sup>36</sup>

The first session of the Cortes ran from June 1 to July 26, 1879. The debates were highlighted by General Salamanca's virulent attacks on the Peace of Zanjón.<sup>37</sup> Romero Robledo's supporters, "the Hussars of Antequera," gained much press notice for their hostility to Silvela.<sup>38</sup> The most significant action passed by with little notice. A royal decree of July 11th lowered the direct taxes on non-sugar plantations to sixteen percent and those on sugar plantations to two percent.<sup>39</sup> Discussion of the abolition of slavery began with Martínez Campos stressing the promises implied in the Peace of Zanjón and the deputy for Cuba Rafael María de Labra providing emotional sup-

32. *Ibid.*, May 31, 1879. The "Conservative" aspect of the party was subordinated until the elections of 1884.

33. *Ibid.* Reports of the statement varied slightly.

34. *Ibid.*, June 3, 1879.

35. Reported from *Los debates by Imparcial*, April 27, 1879.

36. By the opening of the Cortes, American Ambassador James Russell Lowell was already aware of the plan underfoot—"the desire being to neutralize or rather to annihilate Martínez Campos with as little inconvenience to the majority and with as much apparent undesignedness as possible." A little later he spoke of Martínez Campos' "good sense, good feeling and honest purpose," but compared him with General Grant in his political inexperience and wondered whether he might have the courage to dissolve the Cortes again and perhaps go on to reform the peninsula as well as Cuba! Lowell to Evarts, Nos. 186, 192, June 2, Aug. 19, 1879, U.S. State Dept., Reel 88.

37. *Diario*, Congreso, I, 247-8, 621-7, June 26, July 15, 16, 1879.

38. See debate, *Ibid.*, I, 307-19, July 1, 1879.

39. With this decree Cánovas began to fear his experiment with the Martínez Campos government was a dangerous one. *Ibid.*, IV, 1713-14, Feb. 6, 1880.

port.<sup>40</sup> Cánovas gave every evidence of keeping his promise of strong support and the session ended with charges that the ministry was a "protectorate" of the party leader.<sup>41</sup>

It was, however, clear to observers that beneath the surface serious differences divided the members of the majority party and the vacation period between the Cortes sessions indicated that the course of Cuban reforms would be a troubled one. Romero Robledo, already involved in a tiff with Silvela in the Cortes, was alleged to be strongly opposed to the abolition of slavery on the island.<sup>42</sup> His friendship and personal relationships with the owners of large sugar plantations was well known and the vacation period saw him receiving a tumultuous reception in Catalonia.<sup>43</sup> Cánovas reputedly favored the abolition of slavery in Cuba but opposed major commercial reform. His vacation period also took him to Catalonia, where he was received by his industrialist friend Manuel Girona and by Senator Fernando Puig y Givert, also an ardent defender of the cause of Catalán manufacturers. Under the auspices of his friends Cánovas visited factories and made inquiries into the causes of the industrial crisis then existing in Catalonia.<sup>44</sup> Widespread rumors also circulated of the strong dissidence of Treasury Minister Orovio and of the less pronounced opposition of the Conde de Toreno.<sup>45</sup>

Moreover, some of the strength of the government position was

40. Labra, July 3, 1879, *Ibid.*, I, 358-9; Martínez Campos, July 12, 1879, *Ibid.*, pp. 564-7. Labra was born in Cuba and served as a deputy for several districts of Cuba from this point on giving urgent support to the cause of emancipation and reform. But he stayed in the peninsula even after Cuba had finally achieved the independence he advocated!

41. During the course of the debates Cánovas had proclaimed, "General Martínez Campos and I... know each other so well that... nothing, absolutely nothing, can separate us." July 3, 1879, *Ibid.*, I, 367. But Constitutionalist deputy Carlos Navarro y Rodrigo warned of "embraces that smother individuals and protectorates that assassinate governments." *Ibid.*, I, 363-4, July 31, 1879.

42. *Imparcial*, Aug. 17, 1879. The German chargé reported that Romero Robledo was the son-in-law of a Cuban planter and placed Cánovas among the Málaga sugar growers (which Cánovas later denied). Shortly after the resumption of Cortes debates he prophesied: "at any rate it will now depend on the patriotism of the Spaniards, on the willingness of the individual to make the necessary sacrifice in behalf of the whole, whether Cuba remains a Spanish possession." v. Redern to GFO, No. 118, Nov. 14, 1879, GFO, Cuban Affairs, Reel 95.

43. *Imparcial*, Oct. 12, 1879. *La Epoca* described his reception with a chorus of 300 and an orchestra of 40 and visits to port works and steamers with Senator Puig, the Marqués de Monistral, and "empresa López." October 5, 10, 1879.

44. *Imparcial*, Oct. 11, 15, 22, 1879; *La Epoca*, Oct. 12, 13, 15, 1879.

45. *Imparcial*, Aug. 17, 18, 20, 1879.

sapped by a new outbreak of revolution in Cuba, the so-called "Guerra Chiquita" or "Little War."<sup>46</sup> Although the insurrection was of limited scope and government forces in Cuba took rapid and effective action, the fact that some of the participants had been involved in the negotiations for the Peace of Zanjón caused apprehension and undercut government pleas for observance of the Treaty.<sup>47</sup>

On November 3rd the Cortes resumed its work with Cuba, which highlighted the sessions. General Salamanca renewed his bludgeoning of the Pact of Zanjón.<sup>48</sup> The economic proposals of the government, looking to the end of tariffs on products from Spain by 1883 and the reduction of Cuban tariffs on the imports of foodstuffs, became known.<sup>49</sup> Martínez Campos sought to separate his program from any relationship to the Pact of Zanjón—his program, he said, derived not from the treaty but from Cuban necessities.<sup>50</sup> Behind the scenes there were arduous negotiations among party members. On November 16th Cánovas let it be understood that all party problems had been solved.<sup>51</sup> Presumably the Senate project for abolition would contain some modifications making it more palatable to Romero Robledo. It was, therefore, something of a shock when Martínez Campos raised new objections on November 20th—later events suggest that the principal issue was that of combining economic reforms with the abolition project.<sup>52</sup> By the report of friends Cánovas and

46. The new insurrection broke out late in August but public notice did not come until the reopening of the Cortes. Fernández Almagro, *Historia política*, I, 344–5. Cf. Hugh Thomas, *Cuba, the Pursuit of Freedom* (New York, 1971), p. 269.

47. Those opposed to reform exaggerated the size and scope of it and attached names of those not directly involved. Although José Maceo, his brother, was prominent, Antonio Maceo gave support only from outside Cuba as did also Máximo Gómez. See Luis Estévez y Romero, *Desde el Zanjón hasta Baire. Datos para la historia política de Cuba* (Habana, 1899), pp. 55–6.

48. *Diario*, Congreso, II, 1083 ff., Nov. 14, 1879.

49. Reported, *Imparcial*, Nov. 15, 1879. In the Congress Albacete stated that he must keep "la más exquisita reserva" in respect to the reforms. *Diario*, II, 1088, Nov. 14, 1879.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 1091. American Ambassador Lowell noted the growing opposition to reform and asserted, "The only firm conclusion I have been able to draw is that the gravity of the Cuban question is hardly yet understood in Spain, that one of the very few persons who seems to have some conception of it is General Martínez Campos, and that everything will depend on the ability he may show of impressing his opinion on others either by force of argument or by political pressure." Lowell to Evarts, No. 216, Nov. 11, 1879, U.S. State Dept., Reel 89.

51. At a luncheon meeting of about twenty persons including a number of Cuban representatives. *Imparcial*, Nov. 17, 1879.

52. *Ibid.*, Nov. 21, 1879.

Romero Robledo now considered themselves free to oppose the proposal and the fall of the cabinet seemed inevitable.<sup>53</sup>

That event was, however, temporarily postponed by a political truce for the king's second marriage, and negotiations among party leaders still continued. But the mood of the negotiators had worsened. Martínez Campos felt that the party magnates had been aware of his intentions when they asked him to take over the ministry and that their action had compromised *su propia dignidad*.<sup>54</sup> Cánovas was becoming increasingly impatient with the general's stubbornness. The parting of the ways came with an unsuccessful meeting on the night of November 27th.<sup>55</sup>

The dominance of the party chief was revealed a week later. On the night of December 7th the cabinet fell on the issue of the Cuban budget prepared by Albacete. Orovio led the opposition, charging that the budget was *indotado*, not covered by sufficient tax support to avoid a deficit. Toreno agreed, and Martínez Campos confronted also the unexpected defection of Silvela, who told him the project had no chance of passing the Cortes and that he wouldn't be willing to captain new elections.<sup>56</sup>

The resignation of Martínez Campos came at a time when the twenty-nine deputies and senators from Cuba and Puerto Rico were unanimously behind him and when General Ramón Blanco y Erenas had telegraphed news of progress in the suppression of the new insurrection in Cuba.<sup>57</sup> It also came in spite of hints by the king that he might support an alternate ministry headed by Martínez Campos—

53. Ibid.

54. Ibid., Nov. 23, 1879. As late as Nov. 24 Martínez Campos expressed his belief that there was no crisis, only "bad intelligence" among party members, which he expected to be resolved. *Diario*, Congreso, III, 1224-41.

55. *Imparcial*, Nov. 28, 1879.

56. Ibid., Dec. 8, 1879. Manuel Silvela, brother of Martínez Campos' Minister of the Interior and former Minister of Foreign Affairs under Cánovas, told the German ambassador that he had helped on the compromise on the slavery issue and was also making good progress on the tax matters when Cánovas suddenly lost patience and put up Orovio and Toreno to sabotage the general. Solms to GFO, No. 3, Jan. 7, 1880, GFO, Spain, Political Affairs, Reel 58. Lowell reported that nothing he had seen in Madrid matched the excitement surrounding the fall of the Martínez Campos government. If, he said, Cánovas had intended to neutralize the general, "it has wholly failed of its object, for during his administration and especially since the crisis he has shown himself so honest, right-minded, manly, and magnanimous that his popularity is now far greater than when he came back from Cuba." Lowell to Evarts, No. 222, Dec. 15, 1879, U.S. State Dept., Reel 89.

57. *Imparcial*, Dec. 8, 1879, reported complete suppression of the revolt in Las Villas.

obviously, without a strong leader for new elections, this would be useless.<sup>58</sup> An effort by the king to form an alternate ministry under the enigmatic quasi-Centrist José Posada Herrera met failure, and on December 9, 1879 Cánovas returned with a cabinet similar to that of the previous March.<sup>59</sup> The able but controversial José de Elduayen as Minister of Overseas Territories would now assume the task of resolving the sticky question of Cuban reform.

The new cabinet confronted a campaign of virulent recriminations surrounding the fall of the Martínez Campos government. In the Senate the fallen General did not hesitate to express his anger at the course of events.<sup>60</sup> Debates in the Congress were delayed by a ludicrous incident in which Cánovas, who had promised to meet opposition debate in the Senate, rudely left the lower house, "putting on his hat" and departing precipitately without, as the opposition deputies felt, showing proper respect for the House.<sup>61</sup> For over a month, as a consequence, they abstained from attendance until Cánovas offered a rather conciliatory explanation of the incident.<sup>62</sup> The height of the debate over Cuban reforms, therefore, stretched from the middle of January 1880 to the end of June of that year, carrying with it acrimonious personality clashes as much as a real discussion of issues and resulting in a major alteration of political alignments on the left of Cánovas' Liberal Conservative Party.<sup>63</sup>

On the side of personalities, Martínez Campos and Cánovas exchanged fire over a field of issues ranging from the significance of the Pronunciamiento of Sagunto to the circumstances surrounding the

58. Ibid., Dec. 8, 9, 1879. In the eyes of both domestic and foreign observers the king was, during this period, making efforts to free himself from the tutelage of Cánovas and to push toward the alternation of governments. See e.g., Sackville-West to Salisbury, Jan. 14, July 20, 1880, Nos. 8, 202, BFO 72:1565. Sackville-West believed that the situation actually endangered the throne.

59. *Imparcial*, Dec. 8, 9, 1879.

60. His comments on Dec. 10, 1879 were relatively brief; the real fireworks came in March, 1880. *Diario*, Senado, I, 537–8, 540.

61. The incident became known as the "Sombrerazo!" If the *Diario* is accurate, Cánovas' departure had been properly explained. *Diario*, Congreso, III, 1276–80, Dec. 10, 1879. Cf. *Imparcial*, Dec. 11, 12, 13, 1879.

62. Ibid., Jan. 27, 1880; *Diario*, Congreso, III, 1527–31. The law for the abolition of slavery in Cuba was passed while the Constitutionalists, Democrats, and most Cuban delegates were absent.

63. Spanish historians have too often searched for the rhetoric in these speeches rather than the facts, ignoring, for example, the carefully prepared speeches of Servando Ruiz Gómez, *Diario*, Senado, Dec. 13, 1879, I, 583; May 26, April 1, 2, 1880, IV, 1974–80, 2017–2111, 2116–23.

creation and fall of the Martínez Campos government.<sup>64</sup> During these debates Martínez Campos improved in oratorical style, competing with Cánovas, who was respected by both friends and foes for his mastery of the forensic game.<sup>65</sup>

The basic issues of Cuban reform came through somewhat less clearly than the personality struggles. The projected law for the abolition of slavery which had been drawn up under Martínez Campos was adopted by the Cánovas government and passed by the Cortes with little apparent change.<sup>66</sup> The freed slaves were placed under a "patronage" system amounting to police surveillance of ill-paid labor. Contrary to the expectation of the government, five Cuban senators opposed the project, explaining that the government had promised to submit its project of economic reforms at the same time.<sup>67</sup> In the final vote in the Senate only 148 members participated, less than half of the body and a debatable quorum.<sup>68</sup> Clearly the law involved considerable internal opposition on the part of the majority party. The sugar plantation owners still feared a loss of cheap labor without an assurance of a betterment of tax and market conditions.<sup>69</sup> A serious question raised by liberal Cuban leaders and Cristino Martos of the Spanish Progressive Democratic Party was that the law endangered the status of 30,000–40,000 free Negroes who might be included under the patronage system and even become subject to corporal punishment.<sup>70</sup>

64. The major debates came in the Senate although related to Cánovas' somewhat rude handling of the matter in the Congress. See *Diario*, Congreso, Feb. 6, 7, 1880, IV, 1712–17, 1725–36; Senado, March 9, 11, 13, 15, II, 1178–97; III, 1224–37, 1278–82, 1295–1309.

65. *Imparcial*, March 12, 1880. The German ambassador, Solms, found the whole affair like "a great theatrical event"—Martínez Campos did well but got confused after an hour and a half! Solms to GFO, No. 30, March 14, 1880, GFO, Pol. Affairs, Spain, Reel 58.

66. Martínez Campos' own conception of abolition was never clearly spelled out. The final law does not seem to match his optimistic prediction in a letter to General Blanco, Oct. 26, 1879, that the emancipation law would convince "the colored people that the Spanish nation is not only not slavist and marches rapidly to the extinction of the differences between races, but also that it pays more attention to the Negro race than the insurrectionists did at the beginning of the war." Quoted, Fernández Almagro, *Historia política*, I, 573, Apéndice no. 25. For the effects of the law see Franklin W. Knight, *Slave Society in Cuba during the Nineteenth Century* (Madison, 1970), pp. 172 ff.

67. *Imparcial*, Dec. 24, 1879.

68. *Ibid.*, Dec. 26, 27, 1879.

69. *Ibid.*, Jan. 31, 1880.

70. Speeches of Bernardo Portuondo, Feb. 4, 24, 1880, *Diario*, Congreso, III, 1661–70, 1990–2.



The debate over the economic reforms was much more complex and rancorous than the slavery issue. It made clear that the Martínez Campos government had fallen over the issue of a draft budget not yet placed into final form. Albacete stated in the course of the debates that he had proposed the continuation of the reduction in direct taxes on plantations which had been set forth in the royal decree of July 11, 1879 along with the gradual reduction of tariff duties over a five-year period. Rates on peninsular wheat imported into Cuba were also to be reduced in five years from the existing thirty-five percent *ad valorem* duty to free entry. Nothing in his program, he stressed, was actually anti-Catalán. His budget, he stated, had preserved the export taxes on sugar, and he maintained that with economies in the military budget and a renegotiation of the loan with the Hispanic Colonial Bank, there would have been not a deficit but a surplus.<sup>71</sup>

The most significant issue in Albacete's program was that of tariff reduction. Martínez Campos read into the record the vehement letters he had addressed to the home government from Cuba. The heart of his reform proposals had been the reduction of tariff barriers *casi a cabotaje*, almost to the level of the coastal trade, and Albacete's budget was clearly headed in that direction. In the discussions of Albacete's budget and in the later Cortes debates the *casi* dropped from the scene and *cabotaje* became an emotional platform, a *bandera* for its supporters and the target of its opponents. Since both Silvela and Martínez Campos had suggested the possibility of compromise on specific budget terms, it is clear that Orovio and Toreno, speaking in behalf of Cánovas, Elduayen, and other party leaders, opposed any suggestion of a possible adoption of the principle of *cabotaje*.<sup>72</sup> Undoubtedly the potential damage to Spanish sugar growers and Catalán manufacturers and shippers, with the consequent loss of their political support, weighed heavily in the decision of party leaders.

The issue of the Hispanic Colonial Bank was a complex one. It had provided the earlier Cánovas government with the last loan obtained in 1876 under very severe conditions—it was to be repaid in five years time at an interest rate of twelve percent and the bank was given first claim over all tariff duties collected over twenty-two and a half million pesos and was to be indemnified if the tariff were reduced. Harsh as these conditions were, critics recognized the poor

71. Ibid., IV, 1779–83, 1806–10, 1892–1902, Feb. 2, 14, 20, 1880.

72. Indicated by Silvela in Congress, Feb. 7, 1880, Ibid., pp. 1721–2.

state of government finances at the time as some justification and acknowledged the importance of the loan in bringing the war to a close. But one well informed critic raised the question whether the returns from the loan had come to the state in the form of hard money or, as he had heard, in the form of depreciated treasury notes! If the latter case were true, then enormous profits had accrued to those involved with the bank.<sup>73</sup>

The debate over the fall of the Martínez Campos government merged into the debate on the Cuban governmental budget presented by the Cánovas ministry. The author of this new budget, José de Elduayen, began the debate on it, but moved shortly afterwards to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, being replaced in the Ministry of Overseas Affairs by Cayetano Sánchez Bustillo.

Elduayen's budget was portrayed as setting forth the Cánovas reform program for Cuba, and did contain some notable concessions.<sup>74</sup> The basic budget set forth rates for direct taxes of sixteen percent for urban or industrial wealth, ten percent for agricultural. Export taxes on sugar coming to the peninsula were cancelled and those on other products reduced by ten percent. There was also a twenty-five percent reduction on import charges on primary foodstuffs. These concessions were, however, offset in part by surcharges to cover debt services and there was a lengthy section of the *dictamen* or justification of the budget which repudiated all concepts of *cabotaje* and defended the interests of peninsular sugar growers.<sup>75</sup>

Elduayen did succeed, probably by compromise concessions, in persuading three Cuban members of the Cortes commission to sign the budget proposal, although they took little part in the debates.<sup>76</sup> He also received grudging admission from opponents that some concessions had been made, although these same opponents found his budget as *indotado*, subject to deficits, as that of Albacete. Lacking in the budget or its support statement, however, was any tone of real

73. Ruiz Gómez, *Diario*, Senado, May 26, 1880, IV, 1879-80. Details of contract given by Elduayen in Congress, Feb. 5, 1880, *Diario*, III, 1680.

74. Text of budget, *Ibid.*, Apéndice Primero al Número 105, Feb. 19, 1880. The reforms were stated late, p. 11 of the *dictamen* and after many reservations. Sagasta was to say that the language of the reforms undercut their effect. *Ibid.*, V, 2225, March 5, 1880.

75. *Ibid.*, Apéndice Primero al Número 105, assertion of Cuban wealth, p. 8; rejection of *cabotaje*, pp. 9-10.

76. Charging that the signatures of the Cuban senators were purchased by special concessions were General Sanz, *Diario*, Senado, IV, 1274, March 13, 1880; and the Marqués de la Habana, *Ibid.*, IV, 1311, March 15, 1880.

concern for Cuban interests—rather it informed the Cubans that they were better off in many respects than peninsular Spaniards.<sup>77</sup>

One notable feature of the budget cancelled the loan contract with the Hispanic Colonial Bank, an action which Elduayen had earlier proposed. How the special clauses of that loan contract giving particular guarantees to the bank were negotiated was not disclosed, but the government undoubtedly paid some additional indemnity.<sup>78</sup> It also promised to initiate commercial negotiations with the United States for the reduction of import duties on wheat coming to Cuba (set at 12.5 percent) in return for a reciprocal reduction in U.S. sugar tariffs. These negotiations, however, dragged on to 1884 before bearing any fruit.<sup>79</sup>

Absent, of course, were any government proclamations of projects for reforming the Cuban administration, for reducing the dead weight of state bureaucracy there, for using Cubans in administrative posts, for cutting the salary differential between Cuban and Spanish administrative positions, for working for a conciliation of the races, and for bringing to the Cubans a sense of identification with the homeland. The small insurrection, virtually extinguished by the time of these debates, was used as an excuse for the continuation of emergency laws, and sterile arguments were set forth as to why the Constitution of 1876 did or did not apply in full to the island.

The cause of Cuban reform was dead before the beginning of this momentous debate. But the might-have-beens were strongly underscored. First and foremost was the fervent support given Martínez Campos by the Cuban deputies. One deputy dramatically portrayed the general's charismatic appeal as he proclaimed in the lower house:

It should not be said that he had no program. General Martínez Campos did not need to write and distribute programs; he was his own program; he was the personality most prominent in that situation, and he was nothing other than the [personification of the] reforms. . . .<sup>80</sup>

Secondly, the virtually unanimous support of the Spanish generals for Martínez Campos underscored their disillusionment with the

77. Castro in Congress, May 20, 1880, *Diario*, IV, 1851.

78. The general's brother, Miguel Martínez Campos, asserted that new payments had been made for the cancellation of this already profitable loan. *Diario*, Congreso, V, 2607–18, April 3, 1880.

79. Portell Vilá, *Historia de Cuba*, III, 39. Even then the treaty was not ratified and a second treaty of 1891 also failed to be ratified.

80. Bernardo Portuondo, *Diario*, Congreso, III, 1665, Feb. 4, 1880. Statements of other Cuban deputies were almost as rapturous.

struggle in Cuba.<sup>81</sup> The list of the general's "friends" included General José Gutierrez de la Concha, entitled the Marqués de la Habana for long and significant service there; General Blas de Villate y la Hera, Conde de Balmaseda, who had entered service in Cuba even earlier than Concha and left the ranks of the Moderados to support Martínez Campos; General Joaquín Jovellar, who had preceded Martínez Campos in his second term as Governor General; Generals Manuel Cassola and José Luis Riquelme, who had fought in Cuba; even the stiff and autocratic General José Laureano Sanz y Posse, who knew well the problems of Cuba from long experience in Puerto Rico; and, of course, Generals Luis Prendergast y Gordon and Luis Dabán, who had served with Martínez Campos in Cuba. General José López Domínguez gave early support for the sake of liberalism; his uncle, General Francisco Serrano, Duque de la Torre, had been an early advocate of Cuban reform and later gave Martínez Campos his personal support. The Duke of Tetuan and Admiral Francisco de Paula Pavía y Pavía had been loyal cabinet ministers under Martínez Campos.

Less convincing was the attitude of the Constitutionals and other anti-Cánovas groups. Although they spoke in behalf of the fallen general, there were some indications of reservations in respect to his program. During the following year they did take advantage of the opposition of Martínez Campos and his "friends" to create a new anti-Cánovas party and, with the help of the king's intervention established the first government of the Restoration period in opposition to Cánovas' Liberal Conservative Party.<sup>82</sup>

But the drive for Cuban reform had dwindled in the midst of peninsular politics. Although there was renewed lip-service to *ca-*

81. Most of the generals spoke in Martínez Campos' behalf in the Cortes. A subordinate issue was the dismissal of generals sympathetic to Martínez Campos who had tried to resign active posts so that they could take part in the political opposition.

82. The combination joined Constitutionals, Centrists, and Martínez Campos' "friends" among whom were two defectors from the Moderados. The father of one of Cánovas' biographers, Antonio María Fabié, was also a supporter of the general—see Fabié, *Cánovas*, p. 127; *Diario*, Congreso, VI, 3068–9, April 19, 1880. The king's role is clarified in the dispatches of the German ambassador, Solms, who had some significant interviews at this time. Originally irked by Martínez Campos' political role, the king intended to seek his removal from the Cortes. But when the military grouping of the general's "friends" formed, Solms carried to the monarch the personal warnings of the kaiser and the king's intervention came not at Cánovas' suggestion as often assumed, but on his own initiative. Solms to GFO, No. 6, Jan. 9, 1880 (very confidential), No. 92, June 14, 1880; von Bülow memo, No. A3890, Ems, June 28, 1880; Solms to GFO, No. 139, July 31, 1880; No. 15, Feb. 8, 1881. GFO, Political, Spain, Reel 58.

*botaje*, the implementation was niggardly and unsuccessful, and Martínez Campos, serving in successive cabinets and other political posts, did not return to Cuba until long after the outbreak of the ultimate revolt in 1895.<sup>83</sup> Long before then the charisma of the general had faded and the disillusionment of the Cubans set them on the path to independence.

The cause of Cuban reform had foundered on the shoals of internal Spanish politics. Cánovas, who was in so many ways a realistic statesman seeking to shake Spain loose from the ties of the dead past, fell far short of the mark of statesman on this issue. There were, of course, valid reasons for his shortcomings. First of all, the personal issue was significant. Cánovas considered his own prestige vital for the maintenance of the Restoration monarchy and Martínez Campos was a clear threat to that prestige. Secondly, Cánovas regarded the reduction of military influence as a prerequisite for stable government. His deep fear of military coups is evident throughout the early years of the Restoration. Martínez Campos had evaded his wishes at Sagunto. If he now became the savior of Spain in Cuba, the country might well begin another era of military caudillos. Thirdly, significant economic interests stood strongly opposed to change—the financial interests profiting on government loans; the wheat growers who feared the loss of the Cuban market to the United States; shippers who profited from Spain's differential flag duties by carrying the products of the United States to Spain where they were "nationalized" and carried back to Cuba under the Spanish flag for a cheaper entry than if they had come directly from the United States;<sup>84</sup> sugar interests who wished to develop peninsular production and peninsular refineries;<sup>85</sup> and Catalán industrialists who exploited the protected Cuban market rather than seeking to meet competition from abroad. And these interests had strong ties to formidable leaders of Cánovas' party—the cost of acceptance of Martínez Campos' program would

83. On the supposed *cabotaje* experiment, Estévez y Romero, *Desde el Zanjón*, pp. 122–3. Martínez Campos again carried reform ideas to Cuba in 1895, but found little support for them either in Cuba or in Spain. General Valeriano Weyler, who replaced him, called the Peace of Zanjón "excessively benevolent" and labeled Martínez Campos' policies "absurd." *Mi mando en Cuba (10 de febrero 1896 a 31 octubre 1897): Historia militar y política de la última guerra separatista durante dicho mando*, 5 vols. (Madrid, 1910–11), I, 73, 101.

84. Portell Vilá, *Historia de Cuba*, III, 109.

85. As Hugh Thomas shows, the sugar industry in Cuba had been quite adversely affected by the latter part of the Ten Years' War and entered in the 1880s into a crisis situation which weeded out many of the former small planters. *Cuba, the Pursuit of Freedom*, pp. 271–80.

have been the division of the Liberal Conservative Party which Cánovas had formed as the cornerstone of the new system, one of the two great parties he visualized as alternating in Spain.

Cánovas sought a compromise, but wearied as success neared. He kept close control over the king although the young monarch became increasingly concerned and finally did intervene. And, most serious of all, the exasperation of dealing with the powerful opposition led to a tone in the debates which wounded Cuban sensibilities. Romero Robledo once told Labra in the Cortes that Cubans should be glad to have from Spain her "name, language, banner, traditions, and the means to belong to a cultured and civilized country."<sup>86</sup> But the weakness of Spain's civilized impulses, the selfishness of her economic interests, and the lack of vision of her political leaders had been strikingly underscored in these events. Had Cánovas followed Martínez Campos' suggestion of heading a mission to Cuba for on-the-spot investigation of reforms, had he possessed the will and courage to make a real trial of Martínez Campos' *cabotaje*, had he had the vision and the self-abnegation to join his own charisma with that of Martínez Campos in fundamental economic reforms within Spain as well as in Cuba, both would have been enormously strengthened in the period that followed and the partnership might have endured.

86. *Diario*, Congreso, IV, 2057-70, Feb. 27, 1880. Some of Cánovas' language was also sharp, for example the phrase "insurrectos enemigos irreconciliables." *Ibid.*, p. 1736, Feb. 7, 1880.