

THE WHIGS AND THE LOPEZ EXPEDITIONS TO CUBA,
1849-1851:
A CHAPTER IN FRUSTRATING DIPLOMACY

The rallying cry of the "all-Cuba" movement in the 1850's was primarily a Democratic proposal, championed by the Southern wing of the party. In the Southern Democracy the political hierarchy clamored for acquisition of the island in order to buttress the fringes of the slave South and to prevent incorporation of a program of "Africanization" in the Spanish colony. By "Africanization" the spokesmen of slavery meant the introduction of any free labor system designed to supplant slavery. The most blatant efforts to seize Cuba came from the administration of Franklin Pierce, a Northerner who imbibed the "all-Cuba" rhetoric of his party's Southern wing and who sincerely believed that an aggressive and expansionist policy would turn public attention from the internal debate over slavery. But Pierce's Democratic predecessor, James K. Polk, also contemplated purchasing the island and actually presented an offer to Spain, only to encounter a vigorous Spanish rebuff.

When the Whigs triumphantly entered the White House with Zachary Taylor in 1849, they immediately shelved Polk's Cuban purchase scheme and attempted to introduce a cordial note into Spanish-United States relations. They encountered only diplomatic obstacles, failing to placate the Spanish and arousing criticism by refusing to help the Cuban rebel, Narciso López. When Millard Fillmore, who succeeded to the Presidency following Taylor's death in 1850, departed from office in 1853, he left behind a Cuban policy under attack from all sides. The history of these tribulations

in the Whig interregnum provides not only a partial record of the nation's Cuban policy but an illustration of the pitfalls and frustrations of diplomacy.¹

The basic formulation of a Cuban policy, written by John Quincy Adams in 1823, emphasized the island's strategic importance but guardedly called for American support of Spanish colonialism in order to prevent British intervention. Successive administrations followed Adams' logic by issuing reassurances to Madrid and by rejecting any Cuban revolutionary overtures. In the 1840's, however, the American government re-evaluated its "hands off" policy after observers sent back alarming reports of Cuban upheaval and British abolitionism, which presumably threatened to instigate political rebellion against Spanish rule and liberate the island's slaves. The Southern slaveholders, ever vigilant against the erection of "free Negro" republics in the Caribbean, interpreted British pressures in Madrid to terminate the slave trade as the prelude to a general emancipation. Cuban planters, moreover, saw the ending of the Cuban slave trade as a direct economic threat, and many longed for annexation to the United States, where the internal trafficking in slaves still thrived. The administration of John Tyler, who was determined to check the encroachment of British abolitionism in North America, looked upon Cuban annexation as a defensive measure necessary to protect Southern slavery.²

As the titular head of the American Democracy, Polk found himself under systematic pressure from party stalwarts who advocated the immediate purchase of Cuba. In May, 1848, the President met with Stephen A. Douglas and John L. O'Sullivan, a journalist

¹ For a more extensive account of US-Cuban affairs in the 1840s and 1850s see Basil Rauch, *American Interest in Cuba, 1848-1855* (New York, 1948); Robert C. Caldwell, *The López Expeditions to Cuba, 1848-1851* (Princeton, 1915); A. A. Ettinger, *The Mission to Spain of Pierre Soulé* (New Haven, 1937); Herminio Portell Vilá, *Narciso López y su época* (3 vols., Habana, 1930-1958); Philip Foner, *A History of Cuba and its Relations with the United States* (2 vols. thus far, New York, 1962); and the author's book, *The Cuban Policy of the United States* (New York, 1968).

² Foner, *A History of Cuba...*, I, 139, 140, 225-228. For a good discussion of the issue of "Africanization" and Cuban policy see Stanley Urban, "The Africanization of Cuba Scare," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, XXXVII (February, 1957), 29-46.

who had contributed "manifest destiny" to the repertory of historical slogans, and listened as each expressed his views on the positive benefits of Cuban absorption. Polk expressed no opinion to Douglas and O'Sullivan but, as his diary reveals, he favored annexation of Cuba as a state.³ During a subsequent cabinet meeting, Robert Walker, Secretary of the Treasury, earnestly recommended an offer to Spain of \$100 million for the island. The immediate danger, Polk wrote again in his diary, was the prospect that the British might occupy Cuba, a possibility that had frightened the Monroe administration a generation before.⁴

Of all the expansionists in Polk's cabinet, none was more optimistic about the positive values of Cuban annexation than James Buchanan, Secretary of State. The Pennsylvania Democrat gloried in the prospect that the island would prosper under American tutelage. Buchanan concluded, however, that the United States must not acquire Cuba without Spain's consent, a gesture to Spanish pride that would be forgotten conveniently in the Ostend Manifesto affair of 1854. Fifty million dollars was a fair price for the island, he noted, thus Spain could not refuse the generous offer of \$100 million!⁵

Obviously, these views excluded any detailed analysis of the plans and activities of Cuban rebels. In 1848 three Cuban revolutionists approached the President and spoke frankly about an imminent revolt, the purpose of which was the eventual annexation of the island to the United States. They talked of limited American intervention in certain strategic places, such as Cayo Hueso, in order to protect the interests of United States citizens. Eminent Cuban historians, particularly Herminio Portell Vilá, have inveighed against these revolutionaries and have accused them of trying to

³ Allan Nevins, ed., *Polk: The Diary of a President, 1845-1849* (New York, 1929), 321.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 321, 326.

⁵ Buchanan to Romulus Saunders, 17 June 1848, Instructions to American Ministers in Spain, Department of State Correspondence, National Archives, Washington D. C. Hereinafter this correspondence will be referred to as Instructions, Spain; or Despatches, Spain.

stifle the revolutionary aspirations of Narciso López, whose goal was Cuban independence, not annexation.⁶

Despite the efforts of his biographers to portray him as an heroic and tragic figure in the annals of the Cuban struggle for independence, López remains an enigmatic man. To Cuban zealots, he was the romantic and legendary warrior leading the oppressed against Spanish despotism; to the hierarchy of the Southern slavocracy, the front man for absorption of another slave state; to the newly-arrived immigrant, the Cuban equivalent of Louis Kosuth; and to the Whigs Taylor and Fillmore, a diplomatic headache. If revolutionary leaders are bred in poverty and oppression, then López was an exception, for his father was a Venezuelan landowner who tried to place his son in a comfortable niche in business. During the independence wars in Venezuela, López once aided a village in fighting off a Spanish attack, but later he joined with the Spaniards in order to avoid execution. In the royalist army he rose to high rank and, following the evacuation of Spanish forces from the mainland, was transferred to Cuba, one of the empire's last bastions in the western hemisphere. In Cuba, however, López witnessed the complicated bureaucracy and the economic backwardness of Spanish colonialism. Like other Creoles of his age, he admired the restlessness and dynamism of the United States. Other revolutionary groups, such as the Club de la Habana, were already operating in a sympathetic New York political climate and were pleading incessantly for American liberation of the island. For López, however, the annexationist fervor in the United States constituted only a potential source of money and men to be employed in his ultimate goal, independence. With that strategy firmly fixed in his mind, he came to American shores to promote the cause.⁷ In the summer of 1849, the first year of Whig rule in Washington, López and the various New York Cuban juntas worked feverishly to assemble men and supplies for an invasion. Each effort, however, terminated in dismal failure at the hands of a dilatory and dis-

⁶ Portell Vilá, *Narciso López y su época*, II, 16.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 33, 64-65; III, 721; Willis F. Johnson, *The History of Cuba* (5 vols, New York, 1920), III, 23-26.

trustful Club de la Habana or of a vigilant United States Navy, which was under strict orders from Taylor to prevent any filibustering expeditions. López' prospects for success now demanded transfer of revolutionary operations from New York to a more favorable base of operations, preferably in one of the Southern ports.⁸

Meanwhile, the new administration was busily reversing much of Polk's Cuban policy. Every President since Monroe had applied the "no-transfer" rule to Cuba, and Secretary of State John Clayton reiterated the American demand that Spain must not cede the island to a third power. But Polk's offer to purchase Cuba had met with an indignant refusal in Madrid, and the Whigs saw no reason to revive it.⁹ In June, 1850, the American Minister in Spain, Daniel Barringer, noted that withdrawal of American assurances to guarantee Spanish Cuba *by force* had produced a marked note of cordiality, for the effect of the guarantee had been to provoke counterassurances from the European powers who desired to block United States encroachment in the Caribbean.¹⁰

While the Spanish government doubtless suspected that these diplomatic overtures concealed a Whig plot to assist the Cuban revolutionaries, the Taylor—Fillmore administration remained alert to the problem of filibuster expeditions. The flimsiest suspicions aroused Clayton's vigilance, and he warned federal attorneys in New Orleans to prepare for a possible filibustering attack on Santo Domingo, San Francisco, or Yucatan.¹¹

An expedition composed of three ships disguised as emigrant vessels bound for California, and approximately 1 000 men, mostly Americans, did leave New Orleans in successive departures in late April and early May, 1850. The conspirators rendezvoused off Yucatan, armed themselves, and set out for Cuba in the *Creole* with the intention of raiding Matanzas, approximately 100 miles east of

⁸ Portell Vilá, *Narciso López y su época*, II, 209.

⁹ John Clayton to Daniel Barringer, 2 August 1849, Instructions, Spain.

¹⁰ Barringer to Clayton, 20 June 1850, Despatches, Spain.

¹¹ Clayton to Logan Hunton, U.S. Attorney, New Orleans, 8 August 1849, Department of State, Correspondence on the López Expeditions to Cuba, National Archives.

Havana. The actual landing was effected in Cárdenas, some fifty miles farther east, where the filibusters successfully entered the town but hastily retreated with a Spanish force in hot pursuit. The *Creole* barely escaped capture by a Spanish gunboat and gained the sanctuary of United States territorial waters at Key West on May 20.¹²

Obviously confident, López delivered himself up to the United States attorney in Savannah, Georgia, where he was charged with violations of the 1818 neutrality law, and demanded an immediate examination on *Sunday*. When the attorney requested a twenty-four hour postponement to gather evidence against the Cuban leader, he was overruled and López was released on the grounds that insufficient proof of a conspiracy existed. Henry Williams, the federal attorney in Savannah, expressed doubts that he would have been able to find anyone willing to testify to an overt act in violation of the neutrality laws.¹³ In Mobile the story was the same. The Spanish consulate was convinced that López was heading for that city, and the local federal attorney had been directed to arrest him. Once again, the evidence against the Cuban rebel—his purchase of the *Creole* in Mobile—proved too flimsy, and the Mobile attorney confessed that he had been unable to procure witnesses to testify against López and thus he had made no arrest. López headed on for New Orleans, where the order for his arrest had already arrived. Although the public there was critical of the Cuban and sympathetic to his “deluded followers,” the federal attorney wrote, López would probably be able to prove that he had founded no organization, made no enlistments, and delivered no commissions on United States soil.¹⁴

At last, López was arrested in New Orleans. The Department of State and Secretary Clayton apparently wished to employ every legal device to obtain a conviction. On June 9 he wrote:

¹² Foner, *A History of Cuba . . .*, II, 50-53.

¹³ Henry Williams to Secretary of State, 27 May 1850, Correspondence on the López Expeditions.

¹⁴ P. Hamilton, U.S. Attorney, Mobile, to Spanish vice-consul, 29 May 1849; Hamilton to Secretary of State, 31 May 1850; *ibid.*

The honor of the Government requires that no just effort be spared to bring him [López] to trial and punishment. The President instructs me to enjoin it upon you as you value the faith and character of your country to spare no pains to execute the whole law. Do you whole duty.

And again on June 10:¹⁵

Prosecute all the officers, . . . you can lawfully arrest, who belong to the Cuban expedition. I assure you that the honor of the Government imperatively requires that at least all the leaders, who helped to enlist or entice others into this infamous enterprize [*sic*] should meet with exemplary punishment. . . .

On June 22, López and thirteen Americans, including former governor John A. Quitman of Mississippi, were indicted by a New Orleans grand jury for violating the 1818 neutrality law. But no convictions were forthcoming, and, following several mistrials, Quitman and the others went free.¹⁶

Spanish officials continually berated the Whigs for an alleged failure to destroy the filibusters' organization in the United States. Excited by the prospects of a liberated Cuba, Americans generously provided aid and comfort to the rebels, the Spanish contended, while the federal government remained unwilling to prosecute violators of the neutrality laws. The vice-President, it was charged, indiscreetly had drunk a public toast to the imminent success of the revolutionists. It was of slight consequence that President Taylor had prevented the sailing of an expedition from Round Island in 1849, for the culprits had gone unpunished and thus the opportunity to demonstrate the fate awaiting all neutrality violators had been lost. The survivors of the Cárdenas expedition were already plotting a third invasion of Cuba.¹⁷ It was useless, the Spanish claimed, to rely on the American government and its impotent

¹⁵ Clayton to Logan Hunton, U.S. Attorney, New Orleans, 9, 10 June 1850, *ibid.*

¹⁶ Logan Hunton to Secretary of State, 22 June 1850, Correspondence on the López Expeditions; J. F. H. Claiborne, *Life and Correspondence of John A. Quitman* (2 vols., New York, 1860), II, 75.

¹⁷ Calderón de la Barca to Daniel Webster, 2 August 1850, Correspondence on the López Expeditions to Cuba.

neutrality laws. Accordingly, in October, 1850, Madrid revived the tripartite pact proposal, similar to Canning's scheme of 1825, by which France, Great Britain, and the United States guaranteed a Spanish Cuba.¹⁸

The Department of State had already authorized a search of the steamer *Creole*, which had carried the Cárdenas invaders to Cuban shores, but the report of the investigating officer noted that the inspection failed to produce any incriminating evidence.¹⁹ In the next few months Webster tried to follow the wanderings of another ship, the *Fanny*, which, he suspected, might contain rifles concealed in a false bottom to serve in another invasion. The *Fanny* appeared in New Orleans on January 31, 1851, and local officials posted guards to observe her movements and inspected the ship's manifest which indeed listed four crates of rifles.²⁰

López was planning another invasion, and rumors of it were circulating several months before it actually sailed. In March the British Minister, Sir Henry Lytton Bulwer, warned of the expedition which would involve about 1 000 young men from South Carolina, Georgia and Alabama, two steamers, guns, and approximately ten pieces of light artillery. According to Bulwer, the steamers would rendezvous off Mexico, and the first landings of 1 000 men would be followed by a second wave, numbering 2 000, already signed up in Texas.²¹ Informed that a portion of the expedition would sail from New York, the State Department warned the federal attorney there and authorized him to employ the land and sea forces of the United States of the militia to prevent the sailing of the expedition.²²

In Cuba, rebel forces purposely chose July 4 to proclaim Cuban independence and announced in the Manifesto of Puerto Príncipe that their goal was to place Cuba "under the protection and aus-

¹⁸ Barringer to Webster, 3 October 1850, Despatches, Spain.

¹⁹ Customs House, New York, 4 October 1850, Correspondence on the López Expeditions to Cuba.

²⁰ William Freret, Collector, Port of New Orleans, to Secretary of State, 1 February 1851, *ibid.*

²¹ Bulwer to Secretary of State, 10 March 1851, *ibid.*

²² Assistant Secretary of State to J. Prescott Hall, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District, New York, 23 April 1851, *ibid.*

pices of the United States, whose form of government we have adopted."²³ This uprising proved premature, for the instigators had hoped that their proclamation would coincide with a general invasion of the island by López and his followers. In fact, López was hastily marshaling his forces to take advantage of the unsettled conditions on the islands, and he finally set sail in August with about 435 men. He had had no word from Cuba and thus did not know that the Spanish command, alerted to the details of the conspiracy, had already decimated the ranks of the rebels on the island. When López landed at Bahía Honda, he and the Americans, including W. L. Crittenden, nephew of the Attorney General, were quickly surrounded by a superior Spanish force. Soon cut off from the main body of forces under López and, unable to reach their comrades, the Americans tried to leave Cuban waters, only to be picked up by a cruising Spanish warship. On Governor—General Concha's orders Crittenden and approximately fifty others in his command were court-martialed and shot on August 6. López was captured and garroted on September 1.²⁴

News of the expedition and the subsequent shootings naturally aroused a considerable amount of public excitement, and in New Orleans a frenzied mob invaded the Spanish consulate and ransacked its offices. The rebels reported that the Spanish had committed unspeakable atrocities on Crittenden and his comrades. One officer, a rebel manifesto alleged, had severed Crittenden's ears and placed them in a bottle.²⁵ The invaders appealed for another invasion to liberate the island and save the Cuban and American prisoners. But Fillmore was determined to prevent any further embarrassment to the administration, and on September 2 he ordered the following circular sent to federal attorneys in Galveston, Mobile, Savannah, Key West, New Orleans, Charleston, Philadelphia, and Providence:²⁶

²³ Manifesto of Puerto Príncipe, 4 July 1851, *ibid.*

²⁴ Details of this expedition are in Foner, *A History of Cuba...*, II, 58-62; and Rauch, *American Interest in Cuba*, 160-161.

²⁵ Manifesto of the Cuban rebels, 6 August 1851, Correspondence on the López Expeditions to Cuba; See also Webster to A. Calderón de la Barca, 13 November 1851, *ibid.*, and Johnson, *The History of Cuba*, III, 106-107.

²⁶ Circular, 2 September 1851, Correspondence on the López Expeditions to Cuba.

In consequence of the present feverish and unsettled state of the public mind, arising principally from circumstances connected with the recent armed expeditions against the Island of Cuba, it is deemed highly important that the District Attorneys and Marshals of the United States should be severally at their posts to prevent, as far as within their power, any violation of the law of 20th April, 1818. The President consequently directs, that, during the existing excitement and whilst there is reason to apprehend infractions of that statute, those functionaries should remain within their respective Districts prepared to execute their official duties promptly; and that those of them who are now absent should forthwith repair to their posts.

Crittenden and his 50 comrades had been interrogated, and the Spanish Minister to the United States, A. Calderón de la Barca, supplied the administration and Crittenden's uncle, Attorney-General John J. Crittenden, with translations of the proceedings. The younger Crittenden admitted that he had willingly joined López' command with the title of colonel but stated that he had journeyed to Cuba under the naive impression that the island was in complete rebellion against Spain. He had come to Cuba because he believed in the "right." One of his associates, William Horner, a native of Ohio, told a different story. Horner had joined the expedition in New Orleans while in an intoxicated state and later, after the landings, had taken no part in the fighting.²⁷

Following the executions of Crittenden and others in his party, the Spanish military command rescinded the original order, and the remainder of the Cuban and American prisoners were shipped to Spain. Their confinement and subsequent release illustrated much of the tragedy of the filibustering attempts. It also demonstrated the energetic efforts of the Taylor-Fillmore administration on behalf of Americans imprisoned in Cuba or Spain. More than a year before the last López expeditions, the Spanish had arrested a number of Americans suspected of importing gunpowder into Cuba. When news of this episode reached the Department of State, the American Minister to Spain sent a sharply-worded note to the Spanish Minister of State, protesting the presumed guilt of the

²⁷ Statements of W. L. Crittenden and William Horner, *ibid.*

arrested and pointing out that the officials rested their case only on circumstantial evidence.²⁸ The men were eventually released but only after considerable diplomatic pressure. The status of the López prisoners was decidedly different, for in this matter the Spanish had demonstrable proof of a conspiracy. With the capture and execution of López, the Spanish had proved that the Metropole controlled Cuba, Barringer wrote, and the immediate diplomatic ploy should be a plea for mercy rather than a stern warning to Madrid. The appeals of the prisoners for diplomatic intercession were supplicative and not assertive. We were deceived by López, the prisoners wrote to Barringer, who led us to believe that Cuba was engulfed in revolution and that our only duty would be to serve as the General's bodyguard. Once they had disembarked, the prisoners tried to leave Cuba but could not avoid Spanish patrols. They now asked a Spanish pardon for the sake of their families.²⁹

Barringer believed that the Spanish were holding the prisoners in anticipation of an official apology and indemnity for the damages committed by the New Orleans mob on the Spanish consulate in the aftermath of the Cuban executions. To strengthen the administration's plea for Spanish clemency, Webster penned a lengthy condemnation of López, who was now portrayed as a devious revolutionary who somehow had managed to induce naive American boys into a hopeless struggle. The 162 prisoners, soon to be committed to arduous labor in the mines, Webster believed, were misguided and ignorant human beings. Spanish clemency could not be interpreted as weakness, the Secretary assured his Madrid counterpart, and Spain must consider the feelings of the prisoners' families and friends.³⁰ Just how much the administration was willing

²⁸ Minister of State to Barringer, 6 May 1850; Barringer to Minister of State, 10 May 1850, Despatches, Spain.

²⁹ Barringer to Webster, 14 October 1851; Prisoners to Barringer, October, 1851; Despatches, Spain. A year later Abraham Lincoln told an audience that the filibusters had renounced the protection of the United States and that the Department of State had no right to demand legal satisfaction for Spanish maltreatment. Lincoln, Speech to Springfield Scott Club, 26 August 1852, in Roy Basler, ed., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (9 vols., New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1953), II, 153.

³⁰ Barringer to Webster, 17 November 1851, Despatches, Spain; Webster to Barringer, 26 November 1851, Instructions, Spain.

to distort the facts is illustrated in one of Barringer's notes to the Minister of State:³¹

The deceptive acts and gross misrepresentations practised upon their youth and inexperience... had so fatal an effect in imposing on youthful ardor and in creating a wild and mistaken enthusiasm in favor of assisting a people whom [sic] they had been fully but most falsely made to believe were in the midst of an armed rebellion to redress their supposed wrongs and change their form of government.

The denouement to the Taylor-Fillmore Cuban policy came the following year in a very famous instruction from the pen of Edward Everett, Webster's successor in the State Department and the "other" speaker at Gettysburg. During the diplomatic exchanges on the filibustering raids, the Spanish government had hinted that American failure to enforce the neutrality laws might leave Spain with no alternative but to seek a European guarantee of its Cuban colony. A similar proposal in 1825 had emanated from George Canning. The tripartite scheme of 1852 resulted from Spanish pressure in London. The Spanish wanted Great Britain, the United States, and France to disclaim any intentions of possessing Cuba and, in fact, to guarantee Spanish possession of Cuba. Spain's overtures came at a time when rebel sympathizers were desperately trying to fit out another expedition for a Cuban invasion. France had already demonstrated a desire to join such a pact and, indeed, had suggested the idea to Webster, but he had declined the invitation. French policy in this era aimed to protect the Caribbean area from any commercial or political encroachments by the Yankee giant. Preservation of the *status quo* in Cuba seemed to be the way to preserve traditional French interests. The French and British notes on the tripartite pact were identical and were presented simultaneously to Webster in April, 1852. His untimely

³¹ Barringer to Minister of State, 28 November 1851, Despatches, Spain. In subsequent conferences with the Minister of State, Barringer learned that the prisoner would be released once Spanish honor had been vindicated. On December 12, 1851, he reported that the Queen had granted a pardon for all the Americans, many of whom were destitute. Barringer to Webster, 8, 12 December 1851, *ibid.*

death in the fall meant that the United States reply would come from Everett, who rejected the tripartite pact with a ringing defense of America's right to expand in the Caribbean. In this famous note, Everett equated the importance of Cuba with the nation's security and, as John Quincy Adams had explained years before, stated that the United States would resist any European combinations that interfered with its Caribbean policy.³²

The Whigs won few public plaudits for their diplomatic stance. Condemned by the American Democracy, especially its more aggressive Southern wing, for a policy of moderation, the Taylor-Fillmore administration preserved peace with Spain but failed to achieve a popular solution to the Cuban problem. The *Democratic Review* proudly exclaimed that the next Presidential administration would not render the Navy "to the inglorious service of the blockade of our own shore,"³³ and Franklin Pierce was soon to proclaim an expansionist foreign policy in his inaugural. Nor have the Whigs fared well in the historiographical recounting of the Cuban expeditions of 1849-1851. In his multi-volume history of Cuban-American relations, Philip Foner accuses the Taylor-Fillmore administration of coveting Cuba but fearing that acquisition would destroy the Compromise of 1850 and would resurrect the internal slavery debate.³⁴ The strength of this thesis is weakened, however, whenever one considers that the Pierce government promoted the acquisition of Cuba in order to accomplish the same goal. Portell Vilá has contended that the Whigs refused to aid López and in fact worked against him because they recognized he would have prevented annexation. Such an interpretation, of course, lends support to Portell Vilá's primary argument that Ló-

³² For the background and evolution of the tripartite scheme of 1852 see the following: Webster to John Crampton, 29 April 1852, in William Ray Manning, ed., *Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States: Inter-American Affairs, 1831-1860* (Washington, 1939), VII, 75; A. P. Newton, "United States and Colonial Developments, 1815-1846," in *The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy*, II, 269-270; and Henry Blumenthal, *A Reappraisal of Franco-American Relations, 1830-1871* (Chapel Hill, N. C., 1959), 52.

³³ "General López, the Cuban Patriot," *United States Magazine and Democratic Review*, XXVI (February, 1850), 112.

³⁴ Foner, *A History of Cuba...*, II, 63.

pez was a crusader for Cuban independence and merely exploited the annexationist forces in the United States. Rarely do historians give much credit to the laborious diplomatic efforts of the Whigs to save the American prisoners of the López expeditions and to their persistent criticism of legal injustices in Spain's Cuban colony. Taylor and Fillmore never backed the Spanish to the wall as Pierce did in the *Black Warrior* and Ostend Manifesto affairs. In fact, the Whigs tried vigorously to keep the peace with Spain, to preserve American neutrality, to aid foolish young filibusters rotting in Spanish jails, to prevent European interference in the Cuban question, and to document the historical failure of Spanish colonialism in Cuba. Later generations in 1878 and 1898 would deliver similar indictments, but it would be the generation of '98 that would bring in the verdict.

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