

PASSAGE TO WAR:
A Missing Chapter in the Life of a Cuban Legend-
Jose Martí's Journey
To Join the Cuban Revolution of 1895

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ABSTRACT

Jose Martí compels historical interest for various reasons. Foremost, Cubans recognize Martí as the "Apostle" of Independence. In 1895 he died in combat at the age of forty-two. During his short lifetime, Martí contributed immensely to the corpus of Latin American literature and political thought. However, Martí is primarily honored for single-handedly organizing the revolution in which he perished.

Martí's passage to war, speaking geographically from where he began to where he landed, should have been a journey of no great challenge. It deserved no more press than it received. But as a snapshot in Martí's life his eleven-day journey appears intriguingly under-developed. Historians routinely cite Martí's departure from Montecristi, Dominican Republic, on 1 April 1895, and his eventual arrival in Cuba on 11 April 1895, as if, quite honestly, they have never looked at a map. From either Inagua or Hispaniola (islands in the Caribbean), Martí's destination, Cuba, was but a mere forty-six miles. Indeed, concerning his journey, history reflects only brief descriptions about Martí overcoming improbable odds or, even less than that, a wisp of dated facts. Therein lies a story.

The methodology for telling this story rests on primary sources. The story, through comparative analysis, challenges and seeks to clarify secondary sources.

Martí's untold story is, of course, multidimensional. Therefore, there are chapters about Martí's life; Cuba's revolutionary history; the United States' one-sided posture toward Cuba (as early as the first decade during the nineteenth century); Martí's compatriots; Spanish rule; and, yachts and ships and starting and stopping. It is an exciting and bizarre story and one with a happy ending. It is also true. And, it is a tale from which a legend emerged.

What originally attracted my interest in Martí's story arises from professional experiences as a United States' Licensed Ship Captain (Master of one hundred gross tons, sailing and towing endorsements, since 1991). Personal offshore-sea experiences happen to include all the specific areas referenced in the primary and secondary sources covering Martí's passage (including Cuba).

In historical context Martí's sea-wise hurdles--concerning port of departure to port of arrival--seemed exaggerated. Therein existed the seed from which grew the logical conclusion that there was more to the story than initially reported. Furthermore, those readings piqued my curiosity because of their authors' off-handed depiction of a captain's implicit loyalty to ship and crew in contrast with transporting armed insurgents into dangerous situations. For not only was the vessel and crew at risk from the "friendly" governments into whose territories they

sailed, but also anxiety had to abound surrounding the on-board presence of armed insurgents.

In addition to my experiences at sea, there are also my rather unique experiences from the opposite side from revolution--having been a two-term elected city commissioner in Dunedin, Florida (1987-1992). Whereby, in the small context that it was, I learned to have special appreciation for civil decorum in the midst of change. In addition to those real life experiences are also those from owning and operating a multinational business (1979-1991).

Aside from Martí's story, which begs to be told, is that my qualifications impelled me to be the one to attempt it. On the one hand, Martí's story satisfies thesis requirements for a Master's Degree in History. But, I also bring to the subject the talent to tell a good story. This I credit to a Bachelor of Arts Degree in English from Indiana University (Bloomington, 1976). Important also is a Master's Degree in Business Administration from the University of South Florida (Tampa, 1997). The former polishes my palate for appreciating and telling the story while the latter bears upon the material and theoretical understanding of what motivates societies.

The title to this story did not develop in a vacuum. On 25 March 1889, Martí's letter to the editor of the New York *Evening Post* defended Cuban patriots of the Ten Years' War (1868-1878). His letter delineated specifically the

Cuban patriots' resolve, which included examples of them overcoming nearly unbearable hardships. Among the examples rested especially Cubans' resolve to engage war in the first place with Spain, an overwhelming foe. Martí, in response to "weak Cuban character," disdainfully expressed to the editor that the patriots "knew in one day how to rise against a cruel government, to pay their passages to the seat of war with the pawning of their watches and trinkets." With that same kind of fervent resolve--a feeling drawn from the few historical snippets of his passage to war--Jose Martí persisted. Thesis or not, Martí's story has merit. He was a great American.

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DEDICATION

F. Lamar Pearson

Friend & Mentor—
Who Always Knew the Right Time for an
"Uncle Roy Story," who was also a great American.

INTRODUCTION

1 April 1895 is a memorable day in the chronicle of Revolutionary lore for Cuban Independence. That day Jose Martí--"the Apostle of Cuban Independence"¹--sailed from the shores of the Dominican Republic to join the revolution in Cuba, already underway. The direct distance between the two points was 137 miles. Five others sailed with Martí. Thus began, for that party of six, an eleven-day journey fraught with bungling, deception, treachery, and sightseeing.

Ironically, this historic incident eventually became preserved as legendary in a country's proud history, something not unusual in American history. Consider, for example, George Washington's passage across the Delaware River in 1776, which inspired hope for an eventually successful outcome in the American Revolution. Looking closely at that portentous hour in American history, one has to note uncomfortably that Washington's passage did not occur on just any randomly cold, wintry night, but on Christmas Eve. Note also that the Christian forefathers' passage across the river did not have the holy intention to pray for peace or such forgiveness with a likewise Christian enemy; nor did it even attempt to share in the

spirit of fellowship and merriment with the enemy caught sipping warm grog and, quite literally, with their pants down. That such an ironic American foray--eventually esteemed and reverently enshrined by the American artist Luetze in oils, on canvas, and framed²--should be eminently on its way into American memory is really not that uncommon.

Renown for all sorts of oddities with twisted or forgotten facts is frequently inscribed by nations able to write their own history. A curiously blurred line exists between the reality and the myth of a nation's history. Crane Brinton, an historical scholar on the subject of revolutions, expanded on this anomaly in his 1935 treatise, *The Anatomy of Revolution*:

Insofar as the memory of a revolution is actually incorporated in human emotions its real and abiding significance may well be the statistically false, or unreal, form it takes in such emotions, and in the moral stimulus--or solace--it provides. In one way or another, perhaps, all great revolutions end up in the custody of something like the Daughters of the American Revolution, or the *Legion d'Honneur*, or the *Istorik Marksist*. The legend is the fact, forever safe from the *naivetes* of the debunker.³

This passage does not indicate that artistic symbolism in history is worthless. Artistic symbolism more passionately reflects facts than any other to trust conveying the pathos of an historical event. Empathy for

the merit of the moment becomes lost without it. History then would have no more appeal than a string of mathematical equations. Martí's story indeed has pathos.

And the Cuban Revolution also has a Washingtonian symbol. An immortalizing portrait of Jose Martí hangs in the Cuban National Museum in Havana. He is portrayed rowing his heart out in a tumultuous sea off the shoreline of Cuba--dressed in a suit. Yet, one gleans segments from the overall historical significance behind that portrait that are relevant to this story. The most obvious arises from the adage that a picture is worth a thousand words, which normally it is. In this case, the story merits about thirty thousand.

This work will explore the unadorned facts of a remarkable saga. 1 April 1895--a day ironically regarded in the larger scope of Western history as April Fools' Day⁴--Cuba's legendary conquerors for Cuban Independence embarked as fare-paying passengers on an eleven-day passage to Cuba in a schooner prophetically named *Brothers*.

Other than a moderate amount of historical puffing to celebrate their arrival in Cuba, few instances of factual inaccuracy appear regarding the journey of these six men. In fact, what compels interest in the story is the absence of serious historical compilation. Their journey is a missing chapter in the history of the Revolution. It all but speaks out to be told. Not unlike Pirandello's, *Six*

*Characters in Search of an Author*⁵, from omission is a special opportunity to develop into an historical story an event of mythical proportion.

History is a scrapbook of pictorial flashbacks, each a story in itself. The historian's arrangement is discretionary and often defies chronological order to achieve the best elucidation. In that vein, the mosaic of Martí's passage will intersperse biographies and national histories.

Martí and his retinue's passage aboard the *Brothers* to invade Cuba compelled initial curiosity because it did not consist of a direct sail to the Cuban shore. His party's journey began from Montecristi in the Dominican Republic. The simplest option would have been either to trek directly west seventy miles across Haiti, or sail along its shoreline, and then span the mere forty-five-or-so miles to Cuba. Instead, they charted a northerly roundabout course through the Bahamas. It was, however, a course, which, to say the least, would have discouraged even the most dogged Spanish trackers.

Their strategy appears logical. They sailed almost due northwest about 137 miles to Inagua, an island located in the Bahamas about forty-five miles northeast of the eastern tip of Cuba. The insurgents likely assumed the Spanish would least suspect an invasion from the Bahama Channel (from the British Bahamas) rather than the Windward

Passage (from Independent Haiti). In Haiti, the Spanish knew quite well there sat a hostile government, which less than one hundred years earlier had won its independence from France in a bloody uprising.⁶ The revolutionaries' logic was also undoubtedly complemented with the knowledge that the Dominican Republic still harbored bellicose feelings toward Spain--for the Dominican Republic had won its independence from Spain in 1821.⁷

But in Inagua, quite to their surprise, the captain and crew of the *Brothers* left the revolutionaries stranded.⁸ That was the first domino to fall. Over the next ten days the intrepid-sixes' invasion took on even more ironic proportions.

After four days of rigmarole in Inagua, where they were unwelcome, the insurgents negotiated a high-priced ride aboard a fruit ship bound for Cape Haitian. But, instead of bending forty-six miles south and skirting the Cuban coastline so Martí's party could hop off, the *Nordstrand* beelined 115 miles for Haiti. Once again, the rebels were back on the island of Hispaniola, only thirty-six miles west of their beginning point. There, they killed time for four days.

On April 10, again aboard the *Nordstrand*, they embarked. Did their course sweep westerly 120 miles toward Cuba? No. The *Nordstrand* backtracked--straight to Inagua. Apparently, for the rebels, a moment of clarity blossomed.

Martí bought a rowboat for 100 pesos. It not only conveyed the party to Cuba but also provided incredible excitement.

On the afternoon of 11 April, with the revolutionaries and their *Navy One* on board, the *Nordstrand* steamed for Jamaica. In less than two hours, Cuba was in sight. And, as the *Nordstrand* steamed, so came they upon Cuba and the night upon them. On a darker than usual night, several miles from Cuba's eastern most shore, the *Nordstrand* hove to and lowered *Navy One* into a simmering sea fueled by a looming storm. The revolutionaries' sea skills were tested immediately. Chaos followed. Lost were their visibility, direction, rudder, oars, and tempers.⁹

It is understandable why key historians perceived Martí's passage as divine. For over eleven days the insurgents logged almost four times the distance from where they began on 1 April and the La Playita shoreline where the hapless rowboat scuttled in the wee hours of 12 April.¹⁰

Regardless of the approach from either of the two islands (Hispaniola or Inagua), the distance was at most a mere fifty miles. For such an interesting and puzzling journey to have received such scant attention from students of the Cuban Revolution, amounting from a sentence to a paragraph is, in itself, astounding.¹¹ After all, at the very least, the passage included, besides Jose Martí, another Cuban Revolutionary of significant historical stature, Maximo Gomez.

Fortunately, Martí and Gomez have left us their diaries. Supplementing the diaries are such chronicles as the United States' records of Documented Vessels; Lloyd's Register of Ships; and, Custom and Consul records from Key West, Matthew Town (Inagua, Bahamas), Cape Haitian, and Montecristi. Also, contemporary newspaper accounts--by-products of a notorious time in journalism--shed light on the event.¹² Finally, numerous history books and journal articles discuss the passage; each, apparently, condensed versions of the two diaries.

Martí and Gomez were two of three heroes of legendary proportion to emerge from the Cuban Revolution of 1895. The third, incidentally, was Antonio Maceo, already engaged militarily in Cuba--but, by just one day--before Martí and Gomez set sail on 1 April.¹³

Maceo's invasion was no less bizarre than Martí's and Gomez's. It was, however, considerably more direct, did not take as much time, and certainly did not include as much diplomacy. In that vein, Maceo's passage bears an easy summary.

Antonio Maceo intended to invade Cuba from Costa Rica aboard the steam ship, *Adirondack*, which was supposed to land him and twenty-two others in Cuba in March 1895. But, on 29 March, the captain "broke his promise" and "deposited" them 130 miles north of Cuba, in the Bahamas, on tiny, nondescript, Fortune Island.¹⁴ Maceo and his band

"prevailed" to charter a sailboat. They sailed due south, through a storm and right past Inagua, where, of course, in two days the Martí and Gomez invasion would begin to unravel. Finally, Maceo invaded near Baracoa on 31 March when the unlucky vessel crashed into the rocky shoreline--after one of his brigands "accidentally" killed the captain.¹⁵

The Cuban Revolution was planned to begin on 24 February 1895 in honor of an arguably failed Revolution known as the Ten Years' War, which occurred between 1868 and 1878. The Revolution of 1895, in fact, started on time.¹⁶ But all three of Cuba's legendary heroes--Martí, Gomez, and Maceo--arrived on the backside of the wave, more than a month late. It was not, of course, their intention.

For bad luck had already preceded. On 14 January a well-conceived and grand plan had simply gone interestingly and wildly awry. At Fernandina, Florida, the United States government impounded three chartered steam ships, the *Baracoa*, *Lagonda*, and *Amadis*. Each ship had intended to head in a different direction, and each was loaded with arms, ammunition, and men.¹⁷ So influential was this botched plan to Martí and Gomez's passage, as well as to Maceo's, that it will be discussed in greater depth later. Likewise important are facts about the Ten Years' War where Maceo and Gomez emerged as celebrities despite apparent defeat.

Martí, however, garnered no fame from the Ten Years' War. At its outbreak, he was only fifteen and not a revolutionary, but a student of literature. Yet his contribution to the War paled in comparison to the contribution it made to his growth and thought processes. As a result of coincidental involvement he was deported to Spain in 1871. He attended the University of Saragossa and earned degrees in law and philosophy in 1874.

Martí lived abroad, in Spain and elsewhere, for all but two of his ensuing twenty-one years. Ironically, his years abroad proved important to the successful outcome of the Revolution of 1895 and, thus, merit a broader look. Also, the Ten Years' War and the Fernandina debacle were important in bringing about the passage of the intrepid-six on 1 April--and in establishing Jose Martí's fame.¹⁸

Martí raised many eyebrows among his constituency when it became known he intended to rush head long into Cuba and onto the scene of war. He was the most productive revolutionary minister of 1895, and, as such, was safe from harm living abroad.¹⁹ Speculation throughout the years has coalesced around several reasons he may have decided to go. Not the least of these reasons centered upon Martí's own self-reflection, stung by accusations from within his own cadre, of reluctance to go where blood and grime meets dreams.²⁰

Courage was not Martí's motive at all. His powerful

pen thundered Herculean strength in a letter to the editor of the New York *Evening Post* of 25 March 1889. Martí, in a heart-wrenching defense, fended off criticism about the mettle of the Cuban people; their worthiness, and, to him, the abhorrent prospect of Cuba's annexation by the United States.²¹ In a masterpiece of prose, Martí utilized the opportunity to counter a previous editorial's allusions and direct references despicably aimed at the Cubans' inability to drive out Spain and, in particular, to the editorial's disparaging comments toward the Patriots of the Ten Years' War. Martí railed:

Because our halfbreeds and city-bred young men are generally of delicate physique, of suave courtesy, and ready words, hiding under the glove that polishes the poem the hand that fells the foe--are we to be considered as the [editorial] does consider us, an 'effeminate' people? These city-bred young men and poorly built halfbreeds knew in one day how to rise against a cruel government, to pay their passages to the seat of war with the pawning of their watches and trinkets, to work their way in exile while their vessels were being kept from them by the country of the free in the interest of the foes of freedom, to obey as soldiers, sleep in the mud, eat roots, fight ten years without salary, conquer foes with the branch of a tree, die²²

Martí died on 19 May 1895, a mere five weeks after arriving in Cuba. As if Martí's own "passage to the seat of war" was not enigmatic enough, mystery surrounds his death. No less than four accounts exist in newspapers and in Cuban and American history books.²³ Among the theories

no definitive evidence supports that Martí was on a suicide mission, presaging martyrdom, whereby he sacrificed himself into an impetus for Cuban success.²⁴ Nor does evidence support a theory that Martí was set-up for slaughter in the ambush that took his life.²⁵ All of the accounts' facts and theories do, however, support the conclusion that Jose Martí's death stemmed from bad timing. Martí was in the wrong place at the wrong time. Martí, the man, was not a legend when he died. Yet his death ignited a flame of unprecedented proportion in the Revolution: a flame that, indeed, lasts to this day.

Martí's only combat involvement was the instance in which he died. Preceding that was his incredible eleven-day passage to arrive at his fateful moment. His passage to war comprised approximately twenty-percent of his total paramilitary involvement and, thus, deserves inclusion among the histories involving this celebrated Cuban patriot.

Among early twentieth-century historical accounts of the Cuban Revolution, Jose Martí, though not obscure, was not front-and-center as other patriots. Increased scholarly interest concerning Martí during the latter half of the twentieth-century has, however, borne out his contribution as fundamental to the Cuban Revolution, and, as such, his fame has multiplied and become as secure in legend as it seems deserved in fact.

Among the remarkable facts surrounding this worldly man are that his acumen has notably augmented such disciplines as social science, literature, and politics. It seems, therefore, appropriate to add a more complete rendition of the events of this fateful eleven-day slice from Jose Martí's profound, yet short, forty-two-year life. The time has now come to consider more fully Jose Martí's epoch passage that, in the larger picture of Cuban independence, proved a Delaware-type crossing. So, debunk as it may--in the same vein America cites George Washington as "the father of our Country"--Jose Martí's paternal, apostolic, expedition set sail.

NOTES

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CHAPTER 2

CUBA'S REVOLUTIONARY LAUREATE

Jose Martí did not foresee his death when he sailed from Montecristi for Cuba on 1 April 1895. Martí was the consummate optimist. Today, sorrow surrounds the memory and legend of Martí because of his tragic death on 19 May 1895, while in the prime of life. Martí, forty-two at the time of his death, had accomplished much. Consequently, there is no mystery why speculation about deeds-undone should draw attention nearly equal to those of deeds-done. In 1927, Charles Chapman, a first-rate American historian, set the tone about Jose Martí when he wrote:

Thus perished the acknowledged Father of Cuban Independence. It seemed at the time like an irreparable loss, but it may well have been a fortunate, if lamentable, accident,--fortunate, because it gave the revolution the stimulant of a hero and a martyr,--fortunate possibly for the later republic and for Martí's own fame, since it prevented him from risking his reputation in the whirlpool of partisan politics, leaving him as perhaps the one figure of the Independence era, concerning whom all Cubans can unite in expressions of love and praise. And in the meantime the work he could have done was capably performed by Estrada Palma and his aides in New York. Martí's real task, that of organizing and inspiring the revolution, was already accomplished.¹

Whether Martí had lived or died, certainly, from his diary, he did not express any doubt about the ultimate success of the Cuban Revolution of 1895, namely, the abolition of Spanish rule in Cuba. Indeed, exhibiting little, if any, realism about what awaited him, Martí's diary from 1 April 1895 reads like an advertisement for a Caribbean cruise.²

Not so, however, does General Maximo Gomez's diary from the same day read.³ Martí and Gomez's differences emerged distinctly in what they wrote. Martí, a published poet and a renowned diplomat, departed toward war for the first time in his life.⁴ General Gomez, in contrast, was a crusty, sixty-year old, war-hardened pragmatist, who had survived decades of brutal and bloody combat.⁵ Gomez had for a very long time been on first name terms with death. For Martí there was no such familiarity. Until 1 April Martí's role in war and revolution had proved illusory and vicarious. Before Martí's departure with Gomez, his life consisted of offshore revolutionary party organizing, fund raising, writing, and political philosophizing--entirely, and safely, beyond the reach of bloody combat. Gomez's and Martí's diaries reflect much more than differing views of a journey. Their diaries focus on the contrasts between the men themselves--one who preached revolution and the other who practiced it.

How did Jose Martí--a petite, educated, and dapperly

dressed man--become included in a revolutionary excursion for which he was, in fact, so obviously ill suited? The answer has given rise to speculation among American historical scholars for over a century.⁶ Certainly, at birth Jose Martí did not seem likely to emerge as the "Apostle" and "Father" of Cuban Independence. His life was anything but focused toward revolution. And, were it not for a mere quirk of fate, Jose Julian Martí y Perez would have been born in Spain, instead of Havana, Cuba, on 28 January 1853. Jose Martí's father and mother were Spaniards.⁷ Martí's father, an official in the Spanish military, accepted Cuba as an assignment.⁸

The Latin American historian, Manuel Pedro Gonzalez, over a half-century ago, credited Jose Martí as the unique link between the northern and southern parts of the Western Hemisphere, in so much that he made "the spiritual and intellectual values of the United States known throughout the Hispanic World."⁹ Yet, Gonzalez also pondered an historical enigma he felt was all too evident, "Jose Martí is practically unknown to the North American people."¹⁰ Today, it is odd, if not ironic, that Jose Martí, a man of rare talent and fame, has much of his life awaiting analysis for more than a century after his death: "There is unfortunately as yet no first-class biography of Jose Martí."¹¹ But, as potent testimony to the stature of the man, Martí's deeds have loomed increasingly larger, much

larger, than his mortal life. Thus one can piece together a viable sketch of Martí's life from the numerous histories of Cuba's "Second War of Independence."¹²

Martí's superior intellect did not go unrecognized nor undeveloped in his early years. The precocious youth, through the kindness and guidance of his paternal godfather, attended the Municipal School for Boys in Havana.¹³ There he made the most of his early educational opportunities and, at the age of thirteen, gained acceptance into an elite private school, Colegio de San Pablo. Its Director was Rafael Maria de Mendive, a poet and journalist dedicated to "'furthering the advancement and improvement of the society' in which he lived."¹⁴ In October of 1868, the authorities arrested Mendive and imprisoned him as an activist in the "Ten Years' War," arguably, Cuba's First War for Independence.¹⁵ Accordingly, Martí, at age fifteen, focused increasingly on the social and political issues of his day. His life may well have turned on a simple expression of criticism, written in a private letter to a friend which fell into the wrong hands, about a fellow student who marched in a Spanish parade. Accounts about Martí, at age sixteen, have indicated no other reason for his arrest on 21 October 1869 and his subsequent sentence of six years at hard labor on 4 March 1870.¹⁶

Martí garnered no documentable fame during the Ten

Years' War in Cuba. Over the years, however, his fame as a participant in the War has grown.¹⁷ Martí's reputation in the War has rested largely on the premise that there was continuity between the Ten Years' War and the Revolution of 1895.¹⁸ Jose Martí, himself, did not hesitate to capitalize on a continuity premise in speeches and writings while he organized the influential Cuban Revolutionary Party between 1892 and 1895. The formation of this critically important organization was Martí's greatest revolutionary accomplishment.¹⁹ But, the fact remains, at the out-break of the Ten Years' War, Martí was only fifteen and not a revolutionary, but a student of literature.²⁰ And Martí's notable involvement in the First War apparently occurred more by accident than design.

Martí's prison sentence proved a door-opener to a worldly education. For six months he broke rocks in a stone quarry near Havana. Then, through the influence and aid of his father, the authorities commuted his sentence.²¹ Deported to Spain in January of 1871, he attended the Universities of Saragossa and Madrid, where he earned degrees in law and philosophy in October of 1874.²² From sledgehammer to quill, he accomplished these astounding feats before the age of twenty-two. Martí's involvement in Cuba in the Ten Years' War was, therefore, limited.

His actual involvement, however, pales when compared to what the War contributed toward his thought processes;

and, therefore, raises both a realistic connection with the First and Second War and a justification for Martí's place in the First War's history. Martí's sole contribution (which also drew praise from the literati in Spain) was a seething expose of Spanish treatment of political prisoners in Cuba.²³

Despite imprisonment, Martí, a young Cuban with Spanish roots, felt strongly about the island's relationship to Spain. At the outset he advocated reform rather than independence and had a staunch commitment to Cuban autonomy.²⁴ A turning point, however, occurred in November of 1871 when, without benefit of a trial, the Spanish authorities in Cuba executed eight medical students from Havana University, who, it seemed, had appeared innocently on the fringe of a political rally.²⁵

Martí's outrage at this atrocity did not help his reputation in Spain. He emerged solidly and expressively in favor of an outright independent Cuban republic and for democracy in Spain itself. Indeed, if any ambivalence had existed in Martí over three options for Cuba's fate which involved Spain--the status quo (with minor reform), autonomy (a major reform), or independence--that attitude disappeared. Martí apparently never favored acquisition of Cuba by the United States. In fact, while he lived in New York he adamantly opposed the United States' jockeying for territorial rights over Cuba.

Martí, after graduating from the Universities in Spain in 1874, fled Spain for France and, eventually, headed for Mexico in 1875.²⁶ Spain granted amnesty to the island's dissidents at the conclusion of the Ten Years' War in the Treaty of Zanjón in 1878.²⁷ Martí, then married,²⁸ returned to Cuba and became involved as an activist writing and speaking for Cuban independence. He lived in Cuba less than two years, briefly teaching and practicing law, when the authorities deemed him a conspirator in a haphazardly launched revolt in August, 1879.²⁹ Once again they deported Martí to Spain, leaving his wife and son behind in Cuba.³⁰ Martí's deportation this time held no prospects for education or university work. Rather, his destination was a Spanish prison. Fortunately, he escaped through France to New York in January of 1880.³¹

Jose Martí did not set foot on Cuban soil until fifteen years later when he and General Maximo Gomez landed on 11 April 1895. Yet, this second exile allowed him the opportunity to travel in Europe and Latin America. Martí performed consular duties for Argentina, Uruguay, and Paraguay in New York.³² Endowed with a remarkable ability to write, and versed in five languages, Martí quite often emerged on the edge and in the midst of social, political, and literary changes in Europe and South America during the late nineteenth-century.³³ His experiences convinced him of the merits of national unity in Latin America among Spain's

former colonies and of the need to develop unified confederate states, which he passionately hoped would one day include Cuba and Puerto Rico. Martí coined the term "Mother America" and "Our America" out of respect for the countries of Latin America. Martí referred to the United States as the "Other America."³⁴ He repeatedly advocated this theme of unity and nationalism in numerous speeches and writings, which, also, conveyed his passionate hope for independence, in spirit and fact, for Cuba.

Martí's commitment to an independent Cuba rested on his belief that the United States, since Thomas Jefferson's time, had positioned itself to acquire, one way or another, the island from Spain.³⁵ Tying together the United States' penchant for imperial expansion, its history of slavery and labor exploitation, and Spain's creaky empire, Martí espoused to all who listened and read that Cuba was at risk of forever continuing its economic hegemony and humanitarian subjugation merely under the name of another master if Cuba delayed in establishing its independence.³⁶ Martí also believed in a domino effect for the rest of Latin America if the United States acquired Cuba. With this belief, armed with his extraordinary knowledge of history and economics and his remarkable ability to communicate, Martí began telling his fellow countrymen in poetry, journals, speeches and news articles of the fate which awaited them.³⁷

Martí did not go unnoticed by the surviving revolutionaries of Cuba's Ten Years' War. Nor, to Martí's credit, did they go unnoticed by him. Thus he inspired a wealth of correspondence between himself and celebrated war heroes and others who shared his passion for an independent Cuba. To Martí, they were true patriots. To the ex-revolutionaries of the Ten Years' War, Martí represented the next generation of fighters. Inevitably, the movement for the second war for Cuban independence coalesced around Martí.

Throughout the 1880s, the population of displaced Cubans within the United States, alone, grew to an estimated 80,000.³⁸ They embraced each other, for the most part, and chose to live within Cuban émigré colonies. For example, colonies in the United States existed in Key West, New York, Tampa, Jacksonville, Philadelphia, Boston, Ocala, and New Orleans; elsewhere, there were Cuban émigré colonies throughout the Caribbean (Haiti, Dominican Republic, Jamaica), Central America, South America, and even Europe.³⁹

In 1892, Martí, based in New York, founded, edited and was the primary journalist for the revolution-arousing Cuban émigré newspaper, *Patria*.⁴⁰ As the voice of the revolution in the offing, *Patria* became the hub for circulating the philosophy of a revolution. It was also the source for specific news of interest of the émigré

communities, and, in particular, their communities' quite diverse, yet, all-important, patriotic clubs. *Patria* stimulated the growth of new clubs and consolidation of existing ones.

The clubs proved ideally and structurally suitable for unifying a democratic base within the colonies. The clubs, by means of *Patria*, became superb mediums for expressing wholesale consensus of thought among Cubans. Also, *Patria*, through applauding the successes of specific clubs, provided a splendid avenue to raise a revolutionary war chest. The circulation was widespread and survived on donations and virtually without subscriptions. *Patria* was widely read in households, churches, and, most importantly, aloud from the lectern during the workdays in the cigar factories--thus honoring a long standing Cuban tradition.⁴¹ *Patria* galvanized revolutionary-minded Cubans around an organized structure.⁴² Martí succeeded where others had failed. He unified a myriad of people and their distinct organizations under a single democratic banner known as the "Cuban Revolutionary Party."⁴³ *Patria* was its voice. And an independent Cuba was its *causus belli*.

Martí's success, however, went beyond mass appeal. He enlisted into the Cuban Revolutionary Party's structure the patriot-warriors of the Ten Years's War. Men, who, on the one hand, might have had militaristic ambition for governing afterwards. But, men, also, who had proven

themselves experienced leaders, knew how to fight, and who drew instant respect from those whom they commanded and those with whom they had to contend. These men--spread around the Caribbean, some living quite comfortably, yet still desiring an independent Cuba--included personalities such as Antonio Maceo in Costa Rica and General Maximo Gomez in the Dominican Republic.⁴⁴

Finally, for the stool to stand, it required three legs: Martí's greatest triumph was organizing support and forming clubs on the island, itself.⁴⁵ This was no small feat for a man who could not go to Cuba. Therein shown one of Jose Martí's noblest traits: remaining in contact, directly and, sometimes, indirectly, with people he met over the years. An especially notable example was the mulatto Cuban Juan Gualberto Gomez.⁴⁶ Martí, after the lifting of his exile in 1878, had practiced law with Gomez during his two years in Cuba. Gomez was the kingpin for receiving and distributing Party information throughout Cuba.⁴⁷

Martí's unique historical distinction is summed within three categories. First, his Cuban National Vision (written and adopted before the Revolution) specifically excluded a totalitarian-style of government and included a society of racial equality. Second, his success to organize congressionally and financially Cuban patriots (again, before the Revolution) throughout the United States

and Latin America, which included like-thinkers who were still in Cuba. And, third, his skill as a negotiator and leader (foremost, reflected in obtaining not just oral but written acceptance of the Cuban Revolutionary Party's vision and financial commitment from a diverse collection of civil and military Cuban patriots before the Revolution began).

That self-aggrandizement motivated Jose Martí seems explained away by the Latin American historian, Manuel Pedro Gonzalez: Martí's life "was one of perpetual renunciation of worldly goods and material benefits."⁴⁸ Although Martí's material impoverishment resulted from his own choices, Gonzalez poignantly expanded the analysis to include family estrangement as Martí's greatest sacrifice: "He lost his beloved son and his wife, because the latter refused to share his idealism and spirit of sacrifice."⁴⁹

In the same vein that United States' history credits and honors Thomas Jefferson for writing the Declaration of Independence and a newly-formed United States' Congress for the Bill of Rights, Cubans esteem Jose Martí for four similarly important contributions to Cuba's history. Of important note, like Jefferson and Congress, Jose Martí acquired signed-on acceptance in democratic form by the individual chapters of the Cuban Revolutionary Party of his four documents prior to the revolution.

The heart and soul of the Cuban revolution depended on

a civilian government, of democratic origin, already in place *prior to the revolution*. Martí's first important document was "The Tampa Resolutions" adopted by the Tampa émigré colony on 28 November 1891.⁵⁰ It was a preamble, much like a mission statement, which succinctly stated why a revolution in Cuba should occur.

The second document was the "Platform of the Cuban Revolutionary Party" adopted in January, 1892.⁵¹ It was a declaration of the revolution's intent. Most importantly, however, it spelled out Cuba's role after the revolution, citing, in particular, equal human rights for the Spanish population who wished to remain in Cuba and for Cuba's black population.

The third document, entitled "Secret Statutes of the Party," also gained acceptance in January, 1892.⁵² It defined the structure of the revolutionary party. Titled "Secret" because there was no intent for it to go beyond the party, itself. It outlined the associations that comprised the revolutionary party, in and outside of Cuba, delineating the organization's associations in a way that if enemies detected any one of them, they had no effective way to trace the others beyond that single one.

And, the fourth document, adopted in April, 1892, was "The Invitation to Puerto Rico" to join Cuba in revolution.⁵³ Included within each of the four documents was the urgency for moving forward with the revolution, not

just to remove Spanish rule, but to block the advance of the United States from absorbing Cuba, and thereby extending its influence deeper into the Caribbean.⁵⁴

American historical consensus is that Cuban Independence had little chance to occur at the time without Jose Martí, despite the United States' eventual intervention and the Spanish-American War. Jose Martí brewed the Revolution to a boil during his fifteen years of exile.

As for Gomez and Martí, it comes as no surprise that Martí, who was so very, very far removed from his normal way of life upon his arrival in Cuba in 1895, fell in battle within a mere five weeks. Nor is it a surprise that Gomez, a wily survivor, lived to nearly seventy-years old and died of natural causes in 1905.

To this day conflicting reviews surround Martí's death, which occurred in his one and only encounter with Cuban Spanish forces. From among the various accounts of his death, however, the most plausible exists in Charles Chapman's *A History of the Cuban Republic*, published in 1927.⁵⁵ Chapman recounted simply and logically why Martí joined--or, rather, got permission to join *Gomez's invasion*. There was no better spice-of-speech than for the Revolution's main man abroad to season his already effective fund raising appeals with the acclaim, *I have been to the scene of war and we are winning*.

By Chapman's account, Martí's fateful moment happened

while in the protective escort of fifty men acting under Gomez's order to conduct Martí to a safe harbor on the southern shoreline of Cuba. Martí, had he made it there, intended to travel to Jamaica and then back to the United States to resume the activities at which he was the most effective. Chapman's account, however, raised undocumented speculation by referring to an unnamed guide's "betrayal of Martí's excursion" and, consequently, the "Spanish ambush" which ultimately took his life and those of the entire escort party of fifty.⁵⁶

NOTES

Chapter Two

1. Chapman, *Cuban Republic*, 76.
2. Rafael Estenger, ed., Jose Martí, *Obras Escogidas* (Habana: Liberia Economica, 1953), 1213-14, (hereafter cited as Estenger, ed., Martí, *Obras Escogidas*).
3. Gomez, *Diario*, 285.
4. Ronning, *Martí and the Emigre Colony*, 10-15.
5. *Ibid.*, 10-15.
6. Thomas, *Cuba*, 317.
7. Philip Foner, ed. and Elinor Randall, trans., Martí *Major Poems*, 1: Foner said Martí's mother was "a girl from Spain." Juan de Onis, ed. and trans., *The America of Jose Martí, Selected Writings* by Jose Martí, (NY: Noonday Press, 1953), xi, (hereafter cited as Onis, *The America of Jose Martí*): "From 1871-1874 [Martí] wrote in Spain, the Spain of his parents"; Ronning, *Martí and the Émigré Colony*, 8: Ronning said Martí's father was from Valencia, Spain, and his mother was from the Spanish Canary Islands; Thomas, *Cuba*, 295: Thomas revealed Martí's mother was also from the Canary Islands, but, "part of Martí's childhood was passed in Spain. . . and besides Jose, [his parents had] six daughters."
8. Ronning, *Martí and the Émigré Colony*, 8; Thomas, *Cuba*, 295.
9. Manuel Pedro Gonzalez, *Jose Martí* (Chapel Hill: Un. of N.C., 1953), 72, (hereafter cited as Gonzalez, *Jose Martí*).
10. *Ibid.*
11. Thomas, *Cuba*, 1589; Onis, *The America of Jose Martí*, xi: "All [Martí's] literary out put, so varied, so haphazard, much of it unpublished or buried in publications of local circulation and in limited private editions printed in new York, was inaccessible to Hispanic readers until it was collected years after his death. Acquaintance with the work of Martí has consequently been slow and

difficult even in Spanish, and much more so in other languages."

12. Thomas, *Cuba*, 1588.
13. Foner, ed. and Randall, trans., Martí, *Major Poems*, 1.
14. Ibid.
15. Foner, ed. and Elinor Randall trans., Martí, *Our America*, 10; Thomas, *Cuba*, 245.
16. Ronning, *Martí and the Émigré Colony*, 9.
17. Chapman, *Cuban Republic*, 42-3.
18. Ibid.
19. Ronning, *Martí and the Émigré Colony*, 10-11; Horatio S. Rubens, "The Insurgent Government in Cuba," *The North American Review*, Vol. CLXVL (1898): 560.
20. Ronning, *Martí and the Émigré Colony*, 8.
21. Foner, ed. and Randall, trans., Martí, *Major Poems*, 1-2; Ronning, *Martí and the Émigré Colony*, 8-9; Thomas, *Cuba*, 295.
22. Foner, ed. and Randall, trans., Martí, *Major Poems*, 2; Ronning, *Martí and the Émigré Colony*, 9; Thomas, *Cuba*, 295.
23. Foner, ed. and Randall, trans., Martí, *Major Poems*, 2.
24. Foner, *Cuba*, v. II, 225-26.
25. Foner, *Cuba*, v. II, 225; Foner, ed. and Randall, trans., Martí, *Our America*, 60, fn. 8.
26. Thomas, *Cuba*, 295.
27. Chapman, *Cuban Republic*, 42; Thomas, *Cuba*, 296.
28. Thomas, *Cuba*, 296: Martí married Carmen Zayas Bazan in Mexico.
29. Thomas, *Cuba*, 296.
30. Foner, ed. and Randall, trans., Martí, *Major Poems*, 23.

His son, Jose Martí Zayas Bazan, was born in Havana on 12 November 1878.

31. Chapman, *Cuban Republic*, 75; Ronning, *Martí and the Émigré Colony*, 9.
32. Thomas, *Cuba*, 297, 300.
33. Foner, ed. and Randall, trans., Martí, *Our America*, 11; Thomas, *Cuba*, chap XXV.
34. Foner, ed. and Randall, trans., Martí, *Our America*, 26.
35. Thomas, *Cuba*, 87-8.
36. Foner, ed. and Randall, trans., Martí, *Our America*, 19, 25-6, 59.
37. Foner, ed. and Randall, Trans., Martí, *Major Poems*, 1-17.
38. Ronning, *Martí and the Émigré Colony*, 20.
39. *Ibid.*, 20.
40. *Ibid.*, 4, 67.
41. Ronning, *Martí and the Émigré Colony*, 110, 132-33.
42. *Ibid.*, 4, 80, 111, 132-33.
43. *Ibid.*, 58-61.
44. Rubens, "The Insurgent Government In Cuba," *The North American Review*, v. CLXVI (1898): 560; Philip Foner, *The Spanish-Cuban-American War and the Birth of American Imperialism 1895-1902* (NY: Monthly Review, 1972), v. I, xxii-iii, (hereafter cited as Foner, *The Spanish-Cuban-American War*).
45. Ronning, *Martí and the Émigré Colony*, 88; Horatio S. Rubens, *Liberty: The Story of Cuba* (NY: Brewer, Warren and Putnam, 1932), 31 (hereafter cited as Rubens, *Liberty*).
46. Ronning, *Martí and the Émigré Colony*, 9.
47. Rubens, *Liberty*, 31; Rubens, an American, felt drawn to the task of service, without pay, served as the Cuban

Revolutionary Party's Counsel throughout the entire revolution--see 25, 30-3 for appraisal of Martí's magnetism.

48. Gonzalez, *Jose Martí*, 73.

49. Ibid.

50. Foner, ed. and Randall, trans., Martí, *Our America*, 263-64.

51. Ibid., 265-67.

52. Ibid., 268-70.

53. Foner, ed. and Randall, trans., Martí, *Our America*, 281-82.

54. This theme is prevalent in Martí's writings. Moreover, patriots compounded it during his lifetime. Two significant documents are especially worth mentioning 1) "Cuba Must Be Free of the United States As Well As Spain: A Letter to Gonzalo Quesada (New York, October 29, 1889)"--a chapter in Foner, ed. and Randall, trans., Martí, *Our America*, 242-48. And, 2), perhaps the most quoted (and endeared) of Martí's anti-United States' words rested in his unfinished letter, found on the breakfast table the day before he was killed: "It is my duty to prevent. . . by the independence of Cuba, the United States from spreading over the West Indies and falling. . . upon other lands of our America. All I have done up to now, and shall do hereafter, is to that end." Foner, ed. and Randall, trans., Martí, *Our America*, 59.

55. Chapman, *Cuban Republic*, 76.

56. Ibid.

CHAPTER 3

DAY ONE, SIX MEN IN A YACHT

On 1 April 1895 Jose Martí and Maximo Gomez departed Montecristi and sailed to Cuba. They intended to lead the revolution, officially underway since 24 February. Four other insurgents accompanied them. None of the six were sailors. Martí and Gomez chartered a sailboat, the *Brothers*, outfitted with captain and crew, and planned to sail a roundabout course through the Bahamas.

The achievement of departure was neither facile nor free of fiasco. Indeed, the situation scarcely improved in the next eleven days. Despite obstacles, those past and those yet to come, the entire party reached Cuba on 11 April 1895. They did not arrive, however, on the wind or aboard the *Brothers*--but at the mercy of Providence in their own rowboat.

Scholarly accounts of Martí and Gomez's expedition have largely amounted to rewriting the same basic facts.¹ For the most part the facts are from Martí's diary, and, to a lesser extent, Gomez's. Historians have preferred quoting from Martí's, which for flamboyancy, far outdoes Gomez's.² Martí's rendition, translated into English on at least three separate occasions, has proved the most readily

acceptable and colorfully quotable (in Spanish and English)--in particular, his entry describing the stormy night the intrepid party rowed to Cuba:

The [crew of the *Nordstrand*] lowered the boat. It was raining hard as we pushed off. We set the wrong course. There were conflicting and confused opinions in boat. There occurred another down pour. The rudder lost. But we got on course. I took the forward oar. Salas rowed steadily. Paquito Barrero and the General [Gomez] helped in the stern. We strapped on our revolvers. We steered toward a clearing. The moon came up red behind a cloud. We landed on a rocky beach, La Playita. I was the last to leave the boat, bailing out water. I jumped ashore with great joy.³

Beyond Martí's famous quotation, Hispanic and English historians have given only passing interest to the party's eleven-day voyage. Gomez's version has almost completely lacked examination. He, incidentally, wrote a somewhat different story about the night they landed and implied that he, not Martí, was the captain of the rowboat:

Not a star shown in the sky. The squall made fast. The steamer [*Nordstrand*] stopped for a moment and quickly off-loaded our rowboat, arms, and equipment, and we six fell within; anyone would say that we were six crazy people.

The ship steamed off and we were abandoned, surrounded in enormous terror. None of us were sailors, and yet, we made use of the oars.

Martí and Cesar were at the bow and rowed very badly, yet furiously; the others were in the center, I held the rudder, which, no sooner than I understood it and aimed us on course, it broke-away and was lost.

The darkness was deep, and the showers got worse. We lost our course and could not see the shore well. We saw two men on shore and imagined they were Spanish guards; I reset our course, and despite all our misery and extraordinary fatigue, we managed to make way.

Providence did not desert us; the showers

calmed, the night cleared and the moon began to rise in the east.

We began to row with more mastery. Borrero and I used an oar for a rudder, and by pushing, we directed the boat with very good results.

[Our first choice] for disembarkation was not possible, there were jagged rocks that rose abruptly and the sea banged them with fury--we continued to row a little further. By good fortune we rounded a bend and found a cove, "The Playita." There we directed our boat, and luckily, to its beach.⁴

Historians have neglected some details. Their choices suggest they were simply in a hurry to get Martí (and Gomez) to Cuba--where, of course, the action was.

An historical narrative of Martí and Gomez's entire eleven-day journey typically reads along the following lines. Their invasion was, of course, intended to be stealthy. (Both, in fact, implied in their diaries that the Captain of the *Brothers* was privy to the plan.) The crew, however, changed their minds and bolted at the first opportunity, Inagua, British Bahamas. (There is an historical assumption that the crew knew the plan.) The captain (who did not emerge as a good man in either diary) used the excuse of short-handedness to nix the deal. He stranded the party in Inagua. A German fruit ship, the *Nordstrand*, saved the day. Now, in a truly summarized history, the *Nordstrand's* Captain attended directly to business and dropped the insurgents off in a rowboat three miles from the Cuban shoreline. Historians, in somewhat more thorough accounts, have noted that the *Nordstrand* zigzagged back and forth between Inagua, Hispaniola, and

Inagua (which is true) before Captain Loewe dropped his passengers.

A fresh examination of the original Spanish versions of both diaries for the answer to the question of *why a minor distance between two points required eleven days* reveals a story of conflict, courage, perseverance, and comedy.

Importantly, Martí and Gomez were not always on friendly terms. The day they met in New York, 18 October 1885, respect for one another dissolved rapidly and neither spoke to the other for nearly seven years. Their rift occurred over leadership. The substance of their meeting concerned the recent 1878 revolution in Cuba, known as the "Ten Years' War," a war in which Gomez had fought but not Martí.⁵

Martí intended for civilian leadership to direct the upcoming war they were planning: Gomez held out for military control. Exactly two days after they met, Martí withdrew his support with a lengthy, eloquent letter to Gomez--overflowing with symbolism and metaphor. "What are we, General," he asked rhetorically, "the brave and fortunate military leaders who, with whip in hand and spurs on the heels of their boots, are preparing to lead a people into war, only to lord it over them in the aftermath?"⁶

Insulted, but not outdone, Gomez ignored Martí's letter and instead dipped his pen in vitriol. "Martí," he

said, "cannot operate in any sphere without claims to dominate." Gomez also posed realistic comparisons between himself, "this old soldier," and the likes of Martí, "orators and poets."⁷

Martí had included a rebuttal conveniently in the resignation letter he had previously sent. But, Gomez, in the heat of the moment, probably tossed it away and missed the chance to read, "do you set out to suffocate thought even before finding yourself leading an enthusiastic and grateful people?"

Gomez, in fact, knew all too painfully that there was little room (if any) in war for philosophers and romantics. He wrote simply and clearly what he sought, "powder and bullets and men to go with me to the battlefields of my country to kill its tyrants."⁸

In reality, Martí and Gomez were as similar as they were different. Eventually, they came to terms over the notion that they needed each other. Beginning in 1892, Martí began to consolidate Cuban sentiment and fund a war chest the size of which amazed Gomez. Shrewdly enough, Martí's success and growing popularity did not come at Gomez's expense.

Martí knew Gomez was a popular warrior--in fact, Gomez was the very epitome of hardiness and honesty--and upon that perception Martí capitalized. Also, among potential Cuban revolutionaries of the time, there was little doubt

of Gomez accepting, if offered, command of the Revolutionary Army. However, Martí's constituency pondered, *how deeply did the feud between Martí and Gomez run?* Martí knew popular sentiment for the Party's Chief rested with Gomez. And the historian, Neal Ronning, implies the conclusion that throughout the growth period of the Cuban Revolutionary Party Martí tempered his philosophical lingo toward (1) mending fences and (2) putting words and thoughts into Gomez's brain and mouth. Safe and comfortable at his hacienda in Montecristi, Gomez remained mute on the subject of Martí.⁹

Finally, came their reunion. Martí traveled alone on 11 September 1892 to Montecristi to ask Gomez to assume Command of the Cuban Revolutionary Party, a position Gomez accepted. Indeed, Gomez went so far as to accept the role of Chief under civilian direction; but only until the war began, then he intended for the leadership and command to shift to him. Martí knew better than to try for too much too early. Below the surface there lingered past feelings. Gomez wrote of the occasion that he accepted Martí's proposal, "because he came in the name of Cuba."¹⁰

But Martí still had another shoe to drop, one of which Gomez was unaware. On 25 March 1895--exactly six days before they sailed on the *Brothers* for Cuba from Gomez's hacienda in Montecristi--Martí, purportedly, with Gomez's input, drafted the benchmark document, "Manifesto of

Montecristi." Gomez and Martí both signed it. The minute proportion to which Gomez contributed toward the draft is revealed in its first sentence, which was more than one hundred and fifty words.¹¹ In contrast, Gomez's pithy writing style bears a man who intended to have his position easily understood by anybody on the first reading.

Also, the Manifesto proposed a significantly different kind of war than the one just ended in 1878. The document philosophically outlined the war policy:

(1) The war would be civilized; (2) enlistment of the Negro population was necessary for victory, and the charge that the Negro race was a threat was perpetrated by the Spanish for the purpose of spreading fear of the revolution; (3) non-combatant Spaniards would never be the object of revenge, persecution, or extortion; (4) private rural wealth which did not intentionally hamper the revolution would be respected; and, (5) the revolution would introduce a new economic life in Cuba.¹²

The Manifesto also projected Cuban political and social life after the war but neglected to say precisely how to achieve this. Gomez revealed his true sentiments, ones at variance with the Manifesto, in orders he issued on 6 November 1895 (barely five months after Martí's demise):

Article 1. All plantations shall be totally destroyed, their cane and outbuildings burned and railroad connections destroyed.

Article 2. All laborers who shall aid the sugar factories. . . shall be considered traitors to their country.

Article 3. All who are caught in the act, or whose violation of Article 2 shall be proven, shall be shot.¹³

Ironically, neither Gomez nor Martí, technically

speaking, were Cuban. Gomez was a Dominican. Martí, although born in Havana, was of immediate Spanish heritage and spent part of his childhood in Spain when his parents returned. Eventually, however, his parents returned to Cuba. Also, Martí enjoyed exile in Spain as a Spaniard, at the behest of Spanish rule and in lieu of prison, for four years where he obtained college degrees.¹⁴

After leaving Spain in late 1874, Martí made his home in a host of countries (i.e., Guatemala for a year, Mexico for four years and the United States for fifteen years). Except for two years, directly after the end of his exile at the conclusion of the Ten Years' War in 1878, Martí never set foot on Cuban soil until he, Gomez, and the four insurgents rowed to the Cuban shoreline on 11 April 1895. Martí, himself, wrote to a friend in 1879, "If Cuba were not so unfortunate, I would love Mexico more than Cuba."¹⁵

Among Cuban patriots Jose Martí was not without critics. Yet, even they agreed he was indispensable. His preeminent leadership grew from organizing a myriad of Cuban émigré communities under one umbrella. Martí became the quasi-democratically elected "Civilian Delegate" (as he called himself) for the Cuban Revolutionary Party, the party he created.¹⁶ Through his leadership, punctuated by his awe-inspiring oratory and gifted pen, the Party emerged as the financial backbone for Cuba's decisive war for independence. Biblical prose described well what Martí

meant to the zealous followers. Neal Ronning admirably compiled an array in his historical work, *Jose Martí and the Emigre Colony in Key West*:

Esteban Borrero referred to him as "the Prophet, the Apostle, the Christ of the present revolution." And in 1895, the year of his death, another follower wrote that "when he made his pilgrimages. . .he went from triumph to triumph, acclaimed as a messiah, listened to as a prophet (Cruz 1895)." That year, of course, saw a great outpouring of anguish: Martí "was like Moses of antiquity, appointed to carry out the divine work of redemption of his people. . . [His death] has converted Boca de Dos Rios [the place of his death] into the Mount Golgotha of Cuban redemption" (Zayas 1895).¹⁷

Martí was no small man when it came to turning the playing tables a certain way. On 29 January 1895, two days before he left New York to rendezvous with Gomez, Martí had already issued (*and signed for Gomez*) the order which would officially launch the revolution in Cuba on 24 February. Horatio Rubens, legal counsel for the Cuban Revolutionary Party and friend and admirer of Martí, recorded in his memoirs a conversation just as Martí issued Gomez's order. The Rubens' narrative has helped significantly to understand Martí's mindset:

Martí [after initiating the order] would embark for [Montecristi], where he would meet General Gomez, and proceed to Cuba. I thought General Gomez might hesitate to go under certain transport conditions I foresaw might easily arise. Martí brushed that aside. "He will go; at any rate, I shall tell him, 'I am going, and I know you will go with me'."¹⁸

The transport issue aside, Rubens' recollection also contained the important fact that from the outset Gomez

strongly objected to including Martí in the invasion party. Martí, however, changed Gomez's mind. Rubens related that the untimely arrival of a newspaper during Martí's stay with Gomez provided a story which spoke too directly on the sensitive subject that Martí might send others where he did not have the courage to go. According to Rubens, this cinched the idea for Martí to sail with Gomez--come hell or high water. In the face of overwhelming determination Gomez relented.¹⁹

The same day they signed the Manifesto Martí fired-off a letter to Federico Henriquez (who was described by Philip Foner only as a prominent benefactor). Martí wrote:

I am writing to you with deep emotion in the silence of a home [Gomez's] about to be abandoned this very day for the good of my country. The least I can do in gratitude for this virtue--since I am thus accepting my duty instead of shirking it--is to face death, whether it awaits us on land or sea, in the company of one [Gomez] who, as a result of my efforts and out of respect for his own, as well as for the passionate spirit common to our lands, is leaving his loving and happy home to set foot in our enemy-ridden country with a handful of brave men. . . . Wherever my first duty may lie, in Cuba or abroad, there I will be. It may even be possible or necessary, as up to now it would appear, for me to do both. . . . I promoted the war; with it my responsibility begins, not ends."²⁰

Martí was a man possessed. Early on he determined for the revolution to succeed. With super-human energy he pushed forward to achieve the dream of a free and independent Cuba--and he did not care on whose toes he stepped. Yet, there was hardly a letter written which did

not include an interesting mixture of humility and subservience, bordering on obsequiousness.²¹ A significant failing in Jose Martí was his inability to understand that as a politician he would not be liked by everybody.²²

Albeit, he re-inspired contemporary Cuban heroes. For example, Antonio Maceo, like Gomez, was another no-nonsense kind of man with unfinished business from the Ten Years' War. Maceo had stubbornly refused to sign the peace pact in 1878. Instead, he went into exile in Costa Rica. Maceo was pure Cuban, a mulatto in whose veins flowed the blood of slaves and Spaniards. It took little persuasion for Maceo to return to Cuba.²³

But Maceo intended to return to the island in style, on a transport that reflected first rate appointment. Martí had only \$2,000 available to afford a venture while Maceo believed he required \$5,000. A rift occurred when Martí selected one of Maceo's men, Flor Crombet, to organize the invasion with the limited funds.²⁴

Martí shamed Maceo in a letter into setting aside his pride and style and invade Cuba in the name of patriotism, regardless of transport. At this juncture, and more notable in the letter than Maceo's pride and patriotism was, of all things, Martí foreshadowing the style in which he and Gomez would undertake:

Should you, in the height of your prestige, go with the brave men who are with you? But you tell me again that you require a sum which we have not; and as the sailing of you and your

comrades is indispensable, *be it in a cockle-shell or in a leviathan, you will be on board when they give you the cockle-shell* [italics added].²⁵

Coincidentally, on 25 March--perhaps around the same time Martí was twisting Gomez's arm into signing the Manifesto of Montecristi--Antonio Maceo and twenty-two others, disguised as field hands and fooling no one, departed Costa Rica for Cuba on board an American steam ship, the *Adirondack*.²⁶ He and his band arrived in Cuba on 31 March--one day before Martí and Gomez's departure. But as propitious as Maceo's arrival was for Cuban independence, his final transportation choice may well have proved decisively negative for Martí and Gomez when they arrived in Inagua.

Until recently, the premise held that around midnight on 1 April 1895, Jose Martí, Maximo Gomez, Francisco Borrero, Angel Guerra, Cesar Salas and Marcos del Rosario pushed off from the shore of Montecristi on the sailing ship *Brothers*.²⁷ But in Horatio Rubens' 1932 account the exact hour and precise means were not accurate. Yet these facts trickled into print, and thus shaped Martí and Gomez's journey. Rubens derived his facts from a story within a story involving the death of, all people, Antonio Maceo. On 7 December 1896 Maceo fell at El Cacahual. In the battle that took him also perished Maximo Gomez's son, Francisco. In a heroic struggle Francisco shielded Maceo with his body. He was nineteen. Upon Gomez fell the sad

task to write his wife, Bernada, the boy's mother. He alluded to the night he left Montecristi:

Before I left for Cuba in 1895, the boy said, "I know that you are soon going to Cuba; what are you going to do with me? [He was only 17.] I replied, "you stay here." The boy said, "duty compels me to go by your side. It is impossible that I do nothing but push off the vessel that is to carry you to sacrifice for the liberty of the country of my birth. . . [He was born in Cuba during the Ten Years' War.]

It was necessary for Martí to interfere and convince the boy. [Martí himself was killed on 19 May 1895.]

On that dark night, at midnight April 1, '95, none other than my five expeditionary companions could hear the kisses that I gave my sons Francisco and Maximito [who was 15], on the shores of Dominican waters; but the words that my son Francisco murmured in my ear, only God and I heard them. He said, "I shall die or be at your side."²⁸

Now, thanks to (a distant relative of Gomez's) Olga Lobetty Gomez de Morel's recent publication, *Jose Martí en Montecristi* (1999), there exists new information.

Francisco indeed pushed off the boat that carried the six insurgents for Cuba. It was a tender. He pushed it away from a deserted and craggy Dominican beach located a few miles south of Montecristi around 3 a.m., 2 April 1895, toward the anchored and waiting *Brothers*.²⁹ Also, that the insurgents' preoccupation was indeed for their loved ones that night, there is no doubt. On 1 April Martí wrote to his sixteen-year-old son, who still lived in Cuba with his mother, Martí's estranged wife of over fifteen years, Carmen Zayas Bazan:

Tonight I leave for Cuba: I leave without you,

when you should be by my side. As I leave, I think of you. If I disappear on the way, you will receive with this letter the watch chain that your father used in life. Good bye. Be fair. Jose Martí.³⁰

Martí died and never reunited with his son. But his son, Jose Martí, Jr., took up his father's cause.³¹ He left his mother in New York in 1896 where she was presumably in hot-pursuit of the proceeds of a \$50,000 life insurance policy on her deceased husband.³²

Martí left behind at least one impassioned devotee, however, when he departed Gomez's house--Gomez's daughter, Clemency, with whom he had taken sundry strolls during his six weeks in Montecristi. On the day he left, she drew from her long dark hair a blue ribbon. She told him to take it as a remembrance for "all the fire of so many thoughts, and one of the colors of our flag"; he "smiled deeply and handled it like something sacred" and said he would keep the token "next to the weakest part in his chest."³³

Before they left Gomez's house that night, Gomez's wife, two sisters (Regina and Maria de Jesus), and Clemency, packed for the group two days worth of provisions--dried meat, fruit, and coffee.³⁴ Their assumption for the voyage's duration was ample because sailing from anywhere along the shoreline of Montecristi for Cuba or Inagua required less than a day and one-half.³⁵

Their plan relied on precise timing. Until about

midnight on 1 April the tide flowed at Montecristi. On that tide, and under the cover of darkness, Captain Bastian slipped in unobserved. Once among the barrier islands--yet beyond the range of anyone's sight and, more crucially, where there was no threat of grounding on the receding tide--he anchored. Then, according to known facts, he sent a rowboat to fetch the insurgents at a prearranged location.³⁶

Once safely on board, the *Brothers* sailed on the ebb tide. The moment of relief--for captain, crew and insurgents--came after they cleared the shoals around the barrier islands of Montecristi. From there they entered the prevailing current and blessed trade wind which flows and blows along the northern coastline of Hispaniola--pushing boats, ships, and flotsam between the narrows of Cuba and the Bahamas.

Earlier that night, however, Martí and Gomez's plan began to unravel. Only five of the six insurgents left Gomez's house at midnight. They waited for Cesar Salas, the party's treasurer, for as long as possible.³⁷ Their decision to leave without him illustrates dramatically the truism that time and tide wait for no man.

Morel related that the group took a southwesterly route from Gomez's house--thus heading toward the direction of the nearby Haitian border. They turned down a road just beyond the railroad tracks that ran straight to the

Montecristi harbor. Commercial enterprises, customs' officials, and Spanish spies dotted the harbor.

These spies had specifically kept an eye on Martí and Gomez's whereabouts for sometime. There was nothing special about these men; such is the kind who commonly poked around docks to make a quick buck. Gomez, himself, credited them with higher status than they deserved when he used the word "spies." In reality they were just paid informants, if they were lucky enough to have anything to report to the Spanish Vice-consular official stationed in Montecristi. Certainly, had the insurgents attempted their departure at the docks, even (or especially) during the night, an eager swarm of thirsty informants existed to report the activities.

The party was detected despite their precaution. Just off of the road on the way to their rendezvous they overtook a "Haitian and disarmed him and bound him." Gomez was impatient to get to the waiting tender, which would have had no choice but to leave without them. Further he reflected "an evil humor." Gomez's bad mood resulted not only because one of his party was absent, but also because the missing one had all of the "disposable cash."³⁸

Through the process of elimination Morel deduced from the description in Martí's diary that the embarkation point was "The Beach of the Farm." It was the only coastline point flat enough for a tender to rendezvous with someone

and matched the time allotted for the party's horse and foot journey.³⁹ It was, also, as Martí related, a stretch brimming at high tide with eery green florescence, the pungent aroma of aquatic salt marsh, and knee and chest-high verdure with thistles and thorns.⁴⁰

Finally, by the light of a meager moon, they saw that the tender still waited. Not far away they heard a dog bark. Then, suspending even more the silence of the night, they heard coming toward them sounds of desperate rustling in the thick vegetation. In the nick of time, Cesar Salas emerged from the thickets, to everybody's relief.⁴¹ Gomez (a man of few words) cogently tallied in his diary:

After enormous expenses, defeats and obstacles--two months of suffering and torture--we six in the early morning have embarked. The place of our embarkation and my companions I will say later. We have thrown ourselves into the arms of an uncertain future and destiny. But we do so in compliance with our word. We are responding to Cubans who are already in arms, and I trust in Providence to reward us with success.⁴²

Alternatively, in his diary on 1 April, Martí perused a smorgasbord of sensory perceptions. Indeed, as a stand-alone piece of history, Martí's version of their embarkation has perplexing spots. He neglected to include topics like sailboats, rowboats, insurgent members, where and why they were there, and where and why they intended to go; although, his divulgence did remarkable fairness to the surf and flora. Another odd fact Martí included--and which seemed disturbingly out of place--was a peculiar and quaint

reference to the Haitian they caught:

Among the sea and plants and from under the depth
of heaven emerged a black Haitian. The man
ascended to his full beauty in the silence of
nature.⁴³

About the Haitian captive, little else was said, except
that Maximito ("with revolver in hand") took him to a port
near an inlet in a skiff (no other specifics were given).⁴⁴

They sailed away in the early morning hours, a soldier
and a poet. One of them with a score to settle and the
other with a vision: *Cuba Libre!*, a common cause linking
unlikely allies. Aptly, they sailed from near Montecristi,
where, on Columbus' first voyage, January of 1493, the
natives unwittingly presented him with the first nugget of
gold from the New World.⁴⁵ Thus began throughout the
Americas a train of economic and cultural exploitation.

In the ensuing five hundred years Cuba materialized as
Europe's most important waypoint. On Cuba's back, Spain
rode. Gomez's enemy was Spain--simple to understand, like
the man. Martí's enemy was far more complex.

NOTES

Chapter Three

¹. Johnson, *Cuba*, 14. Johnson appears the first to have compiled a comprehensive history of Cuba (in English) that included the Cuban Revolution of 1895 and a record of Martí and Gomez's trip. Johnson dealt with their journey in only several sentences and accurately wrote where and when the party landed in a "frail craft." But Johnson erroneously reported that Martí and Gomez invaded "with about 80 companions."

². The first history (in Spanish) appears to have predated Johnson's, but by how many years would only be an estimate since a publication date is not printed in the book: Rafael Guerrero, *Cronica De La Guerra De Cuba*, (Barcelona: Libreria Editorial De M. Maucci, Vols. I & II). As far as Martí and Gomez's invasion is concerned, Guerrero simply invited readers to accept that they arrived in Cuba a few days after Maceo, 68. But Guerrero gave considerable attention to Maceo's invasion, 62-4. Maceo's invasion, however, had been widely covered in the world press. In one sense Guerrero's oversight is understandable because details of Martí and Gomez's trip never made it into the public press anywhere. Essentially, if the world press printed it, Guerrero reprinted it. For example, he covered the seizure of the ships and Cuban materiel in Fernandina, Florida, 635. And, far better than most historians, he covered Jose Martí's death and both of Martí's burials, 115-33.

³. Foner ed. and Randall trans., Martí, *Our America*, 405-6, fn. 1, originally from Gomez, *Diario*, 289; Onís, *The America of Jose Martí*, 317; Thomas, *Cuba*, 316, fn. 1, originally from Martí, *Obras Completas*, Vol. XXI, 17.

⁴. Gomez, *Diario*, 327-28.

⁵. Shuler, trans., Lizaso, *Martí*, 259. Ronning, *Martí and the Émigré Colony*, 11-13.

⁶. Ronning, *Martí and the Émigré Colony*, 12; originally from Martí, *Obras Completas*, Vol. I, 177-79, 165.

⁷. *Ibid.*, 12-13; originally from Carlos Ripoll, *Jose Martí: letras y huellas desconocidas* (NY: Eliseo Torres, 1971), 90, 166.

⁸. *Ibid.*, 12.

⁹. Ronning, *Martí and the Émigré Colony*, 95.

- ¹⁰. Ibid., 97.
- ¹¹. Jose Martí, *Obra Y Vida* (Havana: Ministerio de Cultura, Ediciones Siruela, nd.), 199, (hereafter cited as Martí, *Obra Y Vida*).
- ¹². Foner, *Cuba*, 351.
- ¹³. Foner, *The Spanish-Cuban-American War*, Vol. I, 22, fn. 22, 313, originally from *Algunos Documentos Politicos de Maximo Gomez*, 15-16.
- ¹⁴. Thomas, *Cuba*, 296.
- ¹⁵. Ibid. Martí lived in Havana under a false name for one month in 1877, reportedly hated it, and moved to Guatemala.
- ¹⁶. Ronning, *Martí and the Émigré Colony*, 145. Ronning opines that Martí "was able to unite the far-flung émigré communities as no Cuban had ever been able to do until that time."
- ¹⁷. Ibid., 135, 167, originally from Manuel de la Cruz, "Martí," *Revista cubana* (1895), 29: 92-106; and, Lincoln de Zayas, "La apoteosis de Martí," *Revista cubana* (1895), 29: 143-50.
- ¹⁸. Rubens, *Liberty*, 74-5.
- ¹⁹. Ibid., 79. Rubens was not present for the exchange between Martí and Gomez but in his memoirs wrote a dialogue between them as if he were. He did not cite who the storyteller was. Also, the newspaper was unspecified and the writer was simply cited as a veteran of the Ten Years' War.
- ²⁰. Foner, ed. and Randall trans., Martí, *Our America*, 401-02.
- ²¹. Ronning, *Martí and the Émigré Colony*, 43, 73, 81, 85, 90-1, 123, 131, 136, 139-40, 142.
- ²². Ibid., 61, 63, 74, 138, 140-41, 143-44,
- ²³. Foner, *Maceo*, 148.
- ²⁴. Rubens, *Liberty*, 75.
- ²⁵. Ibid., 77.

- ²⁶. Foner, *Maceo*, 166-67.
- ²⁷. Juan J. E. Casassus, *La Invasión de 1895 (Gomez-Maceo)* (Habana: Asociación Nacional de Emigrados Revolucionarios Cubanos, c. 1953, republished in Miami: La Moderna Poesía, 1981), 50.
- ²⁸. Rubens, *Liberty*, 278.
- ²⁹. Olga Lobety Gomez de Morel, *Jose Martí en Montecristi* (Santo Domingo, República Dominicana: Editora Centenario, 1999), 182, (hereafter cited as Morel, *Martí en Montecristi*).
- ³⁰. Martí, *Obras Y Vida*, 198.
- ³¹. Rubens, *Liberty*, 306.
- ³². "Martí is Dead," *The New York Times*, 30 May 1895; "Mrs. Martí Arrives From Cuba," *New York Times*, 24 June 1895.
- ³³. Morel, *Martí en Montecristi*, 178.
- ³⁴. *Ibid.*, 178.
- ³⁵. The duration is the experienced opinion of this author.
- ³⁶. Morel, *Martí en Montecristi*, 182.
- ³⁷. *Ibid.*, 182.
- ³⁸. *Ibid.*, 179.
- ³⁹. Morel, *Martí en Montecristi*, 181.
- ⁴⁰. Jose Martí, *Obras Escogidas* (Habana: Librería Económica, 1953), 1213-14, (hereafter cited as Martí, *Obras Escogidas*).
- ⁴¹. Morel, *Martí en Montecristi*, 179.
- ⁴². Gomez, *Diario*, 285.
- ⁴³. *Obras Escogidas*, 1213.
- ⁴⁴. Morel, *Martí en Montecristi*, 179.
- ⁴⁵. Hart and Stone, *Cruising Guide*, 180.

CHAPTER 4

"PEARL OF THE ANTILLES"

Part I

On 1 April 1895 when Jose Martí sailed from the Dominican Republic to join the Cuban Revolution for Independence, the United States and Spain had already engaged in several attempts to transfer Cuba to the United States.¹ Jose Martí, the "Apostle" of Cuban Independence, dedicated the majority of his life to preventing that transfer. Martí did as much to prevent the United States from acquiring Cuba as he did to liberate the island from Spanish rule.² The United States and Spain were, for the most part, on friendly footing during this century of occasional negotiation over the island, particularly during the years of 1868 and 1895--the two incipient years of Cuban revolutions for independence.

When Martí departed Montecristi on 1 April he expected the schooner, *Brothers*, to carry him, Maximo Gomez, and four insurgents to Cuba. According to *Lloyd's Register of Sailing Vessels, 1895-96*, the *Brothers*, a wooden vessel, had at least two masts (as a schooner, and her rig ran fore and aft); but, she had no auxiliary power and only a single deck.³ According to Olga Lebetty Gomez de Morel, Captain

Bastian skippered the crew of three men. All told, there were ten men on board.⁴

Under "limp winds," Gomez recorded in his diary on 2 April, the *Brothers* sailed slowly for "33 hours to arrive at Inagua at 10 o'clock in the night on day three,"⁵ (a small Bahamian island forty-six miles north of Cuba). As the crow-flies, the vessel had sailed only 137 miles.⁶ Indeed, that was a slow voyage--an average of only four miles per hour.⁷

Martí was on the trip of a lifetime and had idle moments on his hands. Consumed by his mission and a consummate lecturer, he had a captive audience. So fervently did he hold forth that of the five who were not insurgents, only one, the black cook, David Caley, from the Turks and Caicos Islands (British, Caribbean), committed to continue the voyage beyond Inagua.⁸

Martí had a backlog of historical knowledge and personal experiences to share. He believed the United States intended to possess Cuba unless the Cubans obtained independence. He had lived in the United States, 1880-1895, and had a unique vantage to observe the United States' calloused opinion concerning Cuba and Latin American countries:⁹ "I have lived inside the monster and know its insides--and my weapon is only the slingshot of David."¹⁰ Further, Martí had traveled extensively, serving as consul for Argentina, Uruguay, and Paraguay in the

United States.

Jose Martí, a genius and literary geyser, worked as a teacher in Harlem--teaching English to black Americans as well as Latinos. He served as a journalist for the *New York Sun* to supplement his income. Overshadowing everything else, however, he warned fellow Latin Americans about their likely fate if the United States' imperialistic expansion ultimately included Cuba.¹¹ He zealously believed a domino effect would bring human subjugation and cultural meltdown throughout Latin America if the United States absorbed Cuba, the "Pearl of the Antilles."¹²

Jose Martí's concerted efforts evolved in his works, notably: *Our America* (about Latin America), *Inside the Monster* (about the United States), and *Ismaelillo* (an acclaimed book of poetry, renowned in Martí's own time).¹³ He did not abhor Spain; rather he took pride that Latin American culture had such deep roots. He did, however, deplore Spain's historical exploitation of Cuba, Cubans, and slaves. On board the *Brothers*, Martí surely explained why they were there.

Early opponents to Cuban independence were the white population.¹⁴ These folk feared a civil war of the type which had occurred in French Haiti in 1791.¹⁵ That successful revolt stemmed from unmercifully aggressive sugar production and racial imbalance--a balance vastly in favor of free Negroes and Negro slave labor.

At no time in Cuba's history had any accurate census occurred. Compounding this, a tax on slaves caused rampant under-reporting.¹⁶ The life expectancy of a Cuban slave was only ten years,¹⁷ yet, sugar production doubled approximately every ten years during the early nineteenth century.¹⁸ It increased to the extent that by 1850 Cuba had become the world's largest single sugar supplier.¹⁹ This increase resulted from slave labor rather than technological improvements.²⁰ Therefore, it logically followed, there was a steady and progressive, if unrecorded real growth in the ratio of free Negroes and Negro slaves to white Cubans. The memory of Haiti's bloody slave revolution haunted the days and nights of the sugar-growers and Spanish administrators.²¹

Among white Cubans the imbalance bred a strong reliance upon Spain. This relationship, however, had two streets. Spain depended on Cuba to replenish her always-depleted treasury, which resulted from Byzantine economic policies and Royal mismanagement.²² Thereupon, Spain pressured Cuba for increased sugar production. Consequently, the island acquired more slaves, becoming in essence a sugar and slave factory.²³

A governor-general had served as the chief executive of Cuba since the 1500s. This position, awarded by the crown to a Spanish noble, was an opportunity to acquire incredible wealth. Spain's policy, however, was to hold

colonial administrators on a short leash, and Spanish authorities often scrutinized and, even, criticized their Cuban governors.²⁴

But Spain had lost most of her New World Empire by 1825. Accordingly, scrutiny and criticism of hard-nosed tactics in Cuba mostly disappeared by 1830. Bribery to permit an illicit slave trade and the under counting of slaves to evade taxes became the *modus operandi*.²⁵ Thus, to augment the cash flow to Spain from tariffs and taxes, the position of governor-general generally went to that person who best governed unregulated.²⁶ Hand-in-glove, Spain capitalized on Cuba's fear of racial revolt and cemented both Cuban loyalty and lucre.²⁷

The United States, since Thomas Jefferson's administration, had wished to annex Cuba.²⁸ John Quincy Adams, Secretary of State during the Monroe administration (1817-1825), reflected best the position when he instructed Hugh Nelson, the United States' Minister to Spain, not to evacuate, but stay put when the European powers invaded Spain in 1823 to restore Spain's monarchy. Adams saw Cuba:

. . . as an apple, severed by the tempest from its native tree, cannot choose but to fall to the ground. . . incapable of self support, and can only gravitate toward the North American Union."²⁹

Adam's vision--referred to by Cubans ever since as the "la fruta madura" (the ripe fruit)--began to mature when the

United States government announced the landmark "Monroe Doctrine" on 2 December 1823.³⁰

The doctrine, never a law, just a presidential message to Congress, asserted the United States' adamant position against European expansion in the Western Hemisphere.³¹ This unilateral approach for the United States rebuffed a bilateral proposal from England and intended to prevent any European power from absorbing Cuba and save it for herself.³²

The United States had no intention for a European super-power, like Great Britain or France, to gain a strategic and potentially rich location so close to the United States' shores--especially a power intent on abolishing slavery.³³ If Cuba did not remain a Spanish colony but fell--by design or otherwise--then by virtue of the Monroe Doctrine, she came under the protective custody of the United States.³⁴

Spain perceived in 1830 Cuba not only as a cash cow but also as a launch site to reclaim her lost colonies throughout Latin America.³⁵ Spain's colonies, except for Cuba and Puerto Rico, had gained their independence in a reaction to the Napoleonic Wars when they installed military *juntas* during the first decade of the nineteenth century.³⁶ The *juntas* developed into self-governing bodies. Achieving independence, the new states abolished slavery to aid them in (1) their legitimate acceptance among European

powers; primarily because, (2) they had passed the need for slaves to mine depleted silver and gold mines. And, (3) their potential for sugar cane production was miniscule compared to Cuba's.³⁷ In general, the new nations also had a much smaller Negro population (due to attrition) which counteracted the kind of reliance Cuban Spaniards felt toward Spain.

Spain, however, was under enormous continental pressure because of her liberal policy toward slavery.³⁸ She also vacillated between a monarchy and a constitutional government, based expediently on those from whom she attempted to bargain assistance. The Spaniards gave, and then took away, hope from a divided yet growing faction of stalwart Cubans who anticipated free trade. These Cubans also hoped one day for Cuba to become a state of Spain and have seats in the Spanish Cortes.³⁹ But, there, too, slavery posed a paradox. Seats in the Spanish Congress reflected a head-count of sorts. Also, Spain depended too heavily on Cuban funds. Crooked Spanish officials, both in Cuba and in Spain, raked in untold sums of wealth from which they (like the mother country) had grown all too accustomed.⁴⁰ The status quo in Cuba prevailed.

Nevertheless, Spain was in a bind over slavery. Cuba's aristocracy insisted that she defend slavery. At the same time, Spain's European neighbors, upon whom her very government's existence depended and with whom she had

signed treaties to cease slave trading, insisted that she end slavery in Cuba.⁴¹

At this juncture Spain needed a friend. Accordingly, she sought to ally herself with the United States in the Western Hemisphere. The marriage between white Cubans, Spain, and the white southern population of the United States was a relationship based on slavery. By the end of the 1830s, slavery existed in the western world in only four locations: Brazil, Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the United States. This starkly contrasted with the reality that by the early 1800s the European powers, including Spain, had signed a treaty with the intent to abolish the slave trade.⁴² The United States did not sign on because her economy, like Cuba's, relied heavily on slave labor.

The fact was, however, the United States Constitution had abolished importation of slaves after 1808--yet, enforcement was impossible. Because the United States, for her own self-serving reasons, had not signed the treaty agreement with the European powers, her merchant ships possessed the legal right to evade treaty enforced measures on the high seas and to engage in illicit trading.⁴³ Consequently, a mutually beneficial arrangement developed between those with Spanish slave interests and United States' merchant flagships.⁴⁴

The United States, of course, had a mixed bag of prosperity based on human bondage. Southern slave states

feared that if abolition occurred in Cuba, the next likely, and unsettling, domino to fall was the United States.⁴⁵ Therefore, led by notable statesmen like the South Carolinian, John C. Calhoun--who viewed with interest preventing slave revolts in the United States and maintaining business as usual among the cotton producers and slave traders--United States' thinkers joined with Spain's.⁴⁶ Ironically, with such a teammate in the Western Hemisphere, Spain needed no enemies.

For example, in October of 1854 three European Ministers from the United States--Pierre Soule to Spain, John Mason to France, and James Buchanan (the next President of the United States, 1857-1861) to England--collaborated in Ostend, Belgium, to explain the failure of Soule to purchase Cuba from Spain.⁴⁷ Soule had acted under direction from the Pierce Administration (1853-1857).⁴⁸ The trio's written opinion, entitled the "Ostend Manifesto," became dubbed the "Manifesto of the Brigands."⁴⁹ The diplomats rationalized that the United States--for its economic well being and safety--ought immediately to invade Cuba and consolidate it before Spain's newly established, republican, revolutionary government abolished slavery.

The manifesto emphasized dramatically that a propitious moment for a Cuban invasion existed--Great Britain and France were, at the time, preoccupied with fighting the Crimean War. The *New York Herald* shared with

its readers the threesome's twisted justification and bizarre analogy: The diplomats argued, with straight faces, the inevitable filtering of ideological, political, and economic ill effects into the United States if abolition occurred in Cuba.⁵⁰ The solution was obvious: If your neighbor's house was on fire, and threatened yours, this was enough to "justify any individual in tearing down the burning house of his neighbor."⁵¹ Their appeal, but not their logic, failed.

The American slave states and Cuba's white planter class shortly embarked on a plan of their own.⁵² In 1856, only two years after the Ostend debacle, they set in motion a scheme to link a confederation of states throughout Central America. The Pierce Administration did not object, so the mercenaries began with an unsanctioned United States' invasion of Nicaragua by William Walker.⁵³ Walker received financial support from Cornelius Vanderbilt who stood to profit from his shipping lines throughout Central America.⁵⁴ The United States government rapidly recognized the sovereignty of Walker's puppet government in Nicaragua on 15 May 1856.⁵⁵

Walker intended to duplicate the method employed for acquiring Texas in 1845: (1) declare independence; and, (2) petition for statehood.⁵⁶ Nicaragua's newly recognized government, within four month's from its inception, "revoked the decree abolishing slavery set by the Federal

Constituent Assembly of all the Central American States,"⁵⁷ a decree in existence since 1824. Next, Nicaragua intended to serve as a staging site to annex Cuba.⁵⁸ Dissension, however, within Nicaragua's new regime, a worldwide abolitionist focus, and a disarming assault from Costa Rica, squashed the regime and its manifold plans.⁵⁹

Part II

Into that world of duplicity, tension, and intrigue, Jose Martí was born on 28 January 1853 in Havana. So, too, around that time, one chapter in American and Cuban history ended and another began.

A series of events rapidly challenged the status quo in Cuba and the United States. Abraham Lincoln won the Presidency. The South seceded before his inauguration in March 1861. Within a month civil war engulfed the United States. In 1863 news of President Lincoln's "Emancipation Proclamation" resounded throughout Cuba like an earthquake.

When the southern states lost their bid for independence, Cuban slaveholders' eyes turned to Spain. Spain, deeply in debt and divided by a host of growing internal failures, desired--more than ever--to keep Cuba and her proven source of cash.

Meanwhile, Cuban slave-sympathizers wore black armbands when they learned of President Lincoln's assassination in 1865.⁶⁰ And by 1868, Cuba, herself, was engulfed in a grotesque civil war. The war lasted ten

years. To this day Cubans remember it as the "Ten Years' War."⁶¹

In 1869 Jose Martí suffered arrest in Havana at the age of fifteen. The super sensitive authorities charged him with conspiring against Spain.⁶² In spite of meager evidence, the judge sentenced him to six years of hard labor in a stone quarry. Eventually, however, his sentence was commuted, and he was exiled to Spain. But there is irony in his arrest and exile. In Spain, he acquired ideas that propelled forward his revolution sentiments. He, like the phoenix, rose.

At the outbreak of the Ten Years' War, Cuba and Spain's economies relied as much as ever on sugar and slaves.⁶³ Cuba's political interests, like her economy, revolved around the influential and conservative planter class.⁶⁴

Cuba's population, however, consisted of a broad ideological mix, each with its own agenda. Common sentiment looked to Spain. Only a few Cubans any longer desired annexation by the United States.

The conservative planter class began the revolution for Cuban independence in 1868.⁶⁵ Little did they know the Pandora's box they opened. Spain had insulated them as much as possible from abolitionists and protected them from internal uprisings in the past.

Party division and union, however, depended on

specific issues. For a rapid settlement, the tricky part was, of course, the age-old issue of slavery. Cuban liberals quickly agreed with conservatives' primary desire for free trade. Yet, liberals preferred autonomy (staying within the Spanish realm) *AND* a planned-schedule for abolition. Bankrupt-Spain, of course, did not agree with free trade.

Autonomy also proved complicated when mixed with abolition. On this issue, conservatives and Spain aligned. Their alliance, however, was convoluted: for conservatives still yearned--nostalgically, if not blindly--to retain slavery.⁶⁶ Spain, tempered by Continental pressure--at least on the surface--sympathized with liberals on the slavery issue.⁶⁷

Despite these sympathies, Spain, with a better head for business, sided with Cuban conservatives over the shrinking supply of slave labor resulting from the outcome of the Civil War in the United States. Slave labor had shrunk through (1) attrition; (2) abolitionist-liberals buying and setting slaves free; and, (3) runaway slaves.

Mixed with the decay of slavery, Cuban conservatives wrangled because independent and cantankerous free wage earners bellyached about working conditions and human rights. These were the folk who replaced slaves.⁶⁸ Ironically, when conservatives called for independence, they failed to foresee that these folk, who annoyed them

the most, would emerge as liberal leaders and would rapidly and enthusiastically seize the chance for reform.⁶⁹

Liberals quickly out-numbered conservatives.⁷⁰ At this juncture, conservatives reconsidered with the mother country the genie they had let out of the bottle.⁷¹ But it was too late. In only a matter of months from the beginning of the revolution--and prompted by conservatives' reversal--liberals' ranks (which was a combination of blacks and whites) swelled with national pride and shifted from desiring autonomy to seeking an all-out independent republic.⁷²

For ten years these determined revolutionaries fought both the well-armed Spanish and the plantation owners' private armies with only machetes, torches, and out-dated pistols and rifles. They burned sugar fields to disrupt the economy⁷³, which resulted in mass suffering and starvation.⁷⁴ Yet, the insurgents endured and, in large part, remained galvanized. So impressed (and economically crippled) were both the Spanish and the Cuban planters that in 1878 Spain proposed a treaty.⁷⁵

The Ten Years' War marked the beginning of meaningful nationalism and unity among the lower stratum in Cuba and produced for the first time a union of Cuban whites and blacks fighting for a common cause.⁷⁶ It also made the United States aware that annexation of Cuba was not an easy prospect.

President Lincoln was Cuba's first United States hero. John Rawlins was Cuba's second.⁷⁷ In 1869 Rawlins, the United States' Secretary of War under President Grant, tried in vain--literally from his deathbed--to obtain belligerent status for the Cuban revolutionaries. Instead, the United States' Secretary of State, Hamilton Fish--with a greedy eye upon Cuba--succeeded where Rawlins failed.⁷⁸ He opposed Rawlins' efforts, a move that no doubt guaranteed the future of Martí and his followers in 1895.⁷⁹

The Ten Years' War produced four lasting effects in Cuba. First, was the timed and compensated abolition of slavery.⁸⁰ Second, was the Treaty of Zanjón, which promised autonomy with representation in the Cortes⁸¹--a promise Spain quickly broke in a deception which cost her the alliance of hard-line conservatives (and which helped seed the Revolution of 1895).⁸² Third, was the War produced an event in Cuban history which quickly became magnified into legend, the "Protest of Baragua":⁸³ Antonio Maceo, the Negro leader, better known among his countrymen as the "Bronze Titan,"⁸⁴ unequivocally refused to sign the Treaty of Zanjón and accepted exile. Fourth, was the War taught Cubans that Spain had not intended to sit at a treaty table except for the favoritism shown toward her by the United States.⁸⁵

But the United States had not abandoned its desire to absorb Cuba, whether Cubans liked it or not.⁸⁶ In the seventeen intervening years (1878-1895), the United States

made various overtures to wheedle Cuba from Spain.⁸⁷ During the same period, Cubans, and other Latin Americans, incubated movements to renew the War, only to have their plans fall apart for a host of reasons.⁸⁸ For example, Martí's Cuban Revolutionary Party decided to shelve meticulously financed and organized plans in 1892 and in the early months of 1894.⁸⁹

By the end of 1894, however, Cuban revolutionary sentiment had reached the flashpoint--with or without Martí's Revolutionary Party. Martí, on Christmas day, 1894, decided to link the Party's war chest with the impending revolution. He prepared to launch a three-pronged, well-organized and financed, assault into Cuba.

But Washington got wind of the plan. On 12 January 1895 the United States government quickly respected its neutrality agreement with Spain and, in full public view, impounded three chartered ships. Customs officials confiscated crates of nap-sacks, canteens, sabers, guns, and ammunition--just two days before the Party's ships were to rendezvous and depart from Fernandina, Florida.⁹⁰

Martí planned for the *Amadis* to go to Costa Rica and pick up Maceo; the *Baracoa*, to sail to Montecristi and acquire Gomez; the third, the *Lagonda*, to steam to Key West and provide transport for a Cuban contingent. Moreover, Martí intended for the elaborate assault--and important

materiel--to aid Party-sanctioned uprisings in each of Cuba's six provinces.⁹¹ By all appearances, Martí's revolution ended before it began.

Throughout the United States, newspapers devoted front-page coverage to the Party's tryst. This crushed Martí's spirit.⁹² The Party was also now financially broke. Funds (converted into arms)--and mostly collected one penny at a time from poor, yet devoted Cuban émigré laborers--rested behind sealed doors.

In so many cases involving Jose Martí an old-homespun adage applied: what counted most was not the size of the dog in the fight, but the size of the fight in the dog. Jose Martí's revolution had not ended; it had just begun. Eyebrows, in admiration and sympathy, raised across the United States, indeed, around the world, at the amount of stash off-loaded from those ships. Well-wishers and supporters from corners before unheard emerged for this little man, this poet, this revolutionary.⁹³ Even the United States government paused for a moment as rank and file Americans remembered the roots from which they sprang.

Staggered, but not broken, Martí regrouped. His determination proved invincible and inspirational. Faced with irreversible momentum in Cuba, and armed only with modest resources, Martí's sole option for influencing Cuban independence rested in swift, decisive action.⁹⁴ In his

memoirs of the event, Horatio Rubens recorded:

Therefore on January 29, 1895, Martí, and General "Mayia" Rodriguez, representing the Commander-in-Chief, Maximo Gomez, and General Enrique Collazo, representing the Island organization, jointly signed the order to fight.⁹⁵

The official date for the uprising was set for 24 February 1895, which, according to Rubens, "was selected partly because it coincided with the first carnival celebration."⁹⁶ History reflects a more important alternative reason: that date allowed Martí time to reorganize Maceo and Gomez's entry into Cuba. On 31 January Martí departed New York for Gomez's home in Montecristi. He arrived on 7 February. At some between Fernandina in January and Montecristi on 1 April, Jose Martí most likely thought, perhaps even uttered--although, not written anywhere--that, if need be, he intended to lead the invasion and row a boat all the way to Cuba. Martí, skilled neither as a warrior or a sailor, practically did both.

NOTES

Chapter Four

1. Foner, *Cuba*, v. II, 9. Foner began Chapter One stating what was ultimately at stake with Cuba--money: "The movement in Cuba for annexation to the United States began as early as 1810, when representatives of the wealthy planters entered secret negotiations with the U.S. Consul in Havana. In the interests of preserving the slave system, they were ready."
2. Philip Foner, ed. and Elinor Randall, trans., Jose Martí, *Inside the Monster* (NY: Monthly Press, 1975), 3, (hereafter cited as Foner, ed. and Randall, trans., Martí, *Inside the Monster*).
3. *Lloyd's Register of British and Foreign Shipping-- Volume II.-- Sailing Vessels* (London: 1895, republished in 1967 by Gregg Press), np, alphabetical ordered under "Brothers." She was built by A. E. Bethel in 1884 in Eleuthera, Bahamas, and owned by R. Gibson and Brothers. Her port of Registry was Nassau. Her length was 78.5' (adding the bowsprit); her beam was 26', and she drew about 5.5 feet.
4. Morel, *Martí en Montecristi*, 182.
5. Gomez, *Diario*, 285.
6. Distance and speed are reported in nautical miles (abbreviated, nm): 1 nm equals 6076.1 feet, essentially equivalent to one minute of latitude and equivalent to approximately 1.15 percent of a land or statute mile.
7. Morel, *Martí en Montecristi*, 182, (Morel concludes as much); and, from Martí's letter of 15 April 1895 to Gonzalo de Quesada and Benjamin Guerra, in which he summarized the journey, Martí, *Obras Completas*, vol. 7, 204-05.
8. Morel, *Martí en Montecristi*, 182; Martí, *Obras Completas*, vol. 19, 210.
9. Foner, ed. and Randall, trans., Martí, *Inside the Monster*, 15-45.
10. Foner, *Cuba*, v. II, 359, fn. 20, 378; letter to Manuel Mercado, 18 May 1895, Martí, *Obras Completas*, vol. I, 271.

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11. Foner, ed. and Randall, trans., Martí, *Inside the Monster*, 44.
 12. Foner, *Cuba*, v. I, 124; Foner, *Cuba*, v. II, 183; Foner, ed. and Randall, trans., Martí, *Inside the Monster*, 42.
 13. Foner, ed. and Randall, trans., Martí, *Inside the Monster*, 9: "Martí's writings, collected and edited by Gonzalo de Quesada y Miranda, fill seventy volumes. Even this edition is incomplete since there still remains uncollected material scattered in South American newspapers."
 14. Thomas, *Cuba*, 110.
 15. Foner, *Cuba*, v. I, 174.
 16. *Ibid.*, 65, 95 fn., 212.
 17. *Ibid.*, 189.
 18. Thomas, *Cuba*, 125-7
 19. Foner, *The Spanish-Cuban-American War*, v. I, xvi.
 20. Foner, *Cuba*, v. I, 173.
 21. *Ibid.*, 65, 73.
 22. *Ibid.*, 107.
 23. Thomas, *Cuba*, 109.
 24. Chapman, *Cuban Republic*, 26-9.
 25. Thomas, *Cuba*, 111.
 26. Chapman, *Cuban Republic*, 27.
 27. Foner, *The Spanish-Cuban-American War*, v. I, xvi.
 28. Chapman, *Cuban Republic*, 47-8; Foner, *Cuba*, v. I, 124-25.
 29. Foner, *Cuba*, v. I, 145.
 30. *Ibid.*, 149.

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31. Foner, *Cuba*, v. I, 148-9; Thomas, *Cuba*, 103.
 32. Chapman, *Cuban Republic*, 50-51
 33. *Ibid.*, 52-3
 34. *Ibid.*, 51-52.
 35. Foner, ed. and Randall, trans., Martí, *Inside the Monster*, 15.
 36. Foner, *Cuba*, v. I, 78-80.
 37. *Ibid.*, 81-3
 38. Thomas, *Cuba*, 165, 200.
 39. Chapman, *Cuban Republic*, 28-9.
 40. Foner, *Cuba*, v. II, 105, 16n, 366.
 41. Foner, *Cuba*, v. II, 76; Thomas, *Cuba*, 230-31.
 42. Thomas, *Cuba*, 60n, 61, 161, 200, 231.
 43. *Ibid.*, 60n, 231.
 44. *Ibid.*, 200.
 45. Thomas, *Cuba*, 222.
 46. *Ibid.*, 100, 209.
 47. Walter Millis, *The Martial Spirit* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1931), 12, (hereafter cited as Millis, *Martial Spirit*); Thomas, *Cuba*, 219, 224-5.
 48. Foner, *Cuba*, v. II, 98-9, 101-02, 104.
 49. *Ibid.*, 100.
 50. *Ibid.*, 101.
 51. Foner, *Cuba*, v. II, 100-101.
 52. Foner, *Cuba*, v. II, 109; Thomas, *Cuba*, 230.
 53. Thomas, *Cuba*, 227-28.

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54. Foner, *Cuba*, v. II, 109.
 55. *Ibid.*, v. II, 110.
 56. Thomas, *Cuba*, 220.
 57. Foner, *Cuba*, v. II, 112.
 58. *Ibid.*, v. II, 109.
 59. Foner, *Cuba*, v. II, 113.
 60. *Ibid.*, v. II, 134.
 61. *Ibid.*, v. II, 174.
 62. Thomas, *Cuba*, 295.
 63. Foner, *Cuba*, v. II, 219.
 64. *Ibid.*, v. II, 182.
 65. Thomas, *Cuba*, 245.
 66. Foner, *Cuba*, v. II, 194, 224.
 67. *Ibid.*, v. II, 220.
 68. Thomas, *Cuba*, 236-7, 239.
 69. Foner, *Cuba*, v. II, 189, 195; Thomas, *Cuba*, 247.
 70. Foner, *Cuba*, v. II, 174.
 71. Foner, *Cuba*, v. II, 192.
 72. *Ibid.*, 93-4.
 73. *Ibid.*, 194-5.
 74. Foner, *Cuba*, v. II, 195.
 75. *Ibid.*, 273-75.
 76. Foner, *Cuba*, v. II, 275. Thomas, *Cuba*, 270.
 77. Foner, *Cuba*, v. II, 203-11.
 78. *Ibid.*, 211 fn. Rawlins' efforts, although forgotten in

the United States, were not forgotten in Cuba: Cubans honored the centennial of his birth on 13 February 1931.

79. Foner, *Cuba*, v. II, 218-19; Thomas, *Cuba*, 270.

80. Foner, *Cuba*, v. II, 265.

81. *Ibid.*, 265.

82. *Ibid.*, 278, 289.

83. Foner, *Cuba*, v. II, 269-70.

84. Foner, *Maceo*, 1.

85. Foner, *Cuba*, v. II, 275; Thomas, *Cuba*, 270.

86. In 1879 a short-lived revolution erupted in Cuba, "The Little War," and was settled within a year. But historians indicated it permitted the period which marked an economic entrenchment and hegemony in Cuba by the United States of "monstrous" proportions: Foner, ed. and Randall, trans. Martí, *Inside the Monster*, 40; Millis, *Martial Spirit*, 16-19; Foner, *Cuba*, v. II, 296-98; Foner, *The Spanish-Cuban-American War*, v. I, xxviii-xxxiv; Thomas, *Cuba*, 262, 274-75 fn., 278, 288-91, 306-07.

87. Thomas, *Cuba*, 298 (for failed Spanish-Cuban compromises), 310-15; Chapman, *Cuban Republic*, 71-2.

88. Chapman, *Cuban Republic*, 42; Johnson, *Cuba*, 4-5; Ronning, *Martí and the Émigré Colony*, 12, 14.

89. Ronning, *Martí and the Émigré Colony*, 89, 99-100: Martí pulled the plug on what he felt was an ill-funded and short-staffed revolution set for 24 August 1892 by the "Cuban Convention," a sub-political party to his own Party in Key West. Foner, *The Spanish-Cuban-American War*, v. I, 1: On 14 December 1893 Martí set a general time for revolution in February 1894, but economic depression in the United States (1893-94) slowed émigré fund raising to a dribble, consequently reducing purchases of arms and ammunition.

90. Foner, *The Spanish-Cuban-American War*, 2-3; Thomas, *Cuba*, 305; Rubens, *Liberty*, 72-4.

91. Rubens, *Liberty*, 70-1.

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92. Ibid., 71-2.
 93. Rubens, *Liberty*, 74.
 94. Ibid., 74-5.
 95. Ibid., 75.
 96. Rubens, *Liberty*, 75.

CHAPTER 5

DAY FIVE, BANANA-BOAT-BOUND

The day before Martí, Gomez, and four insurgents left Montecristi to invade Cuba on 1 April 1895, Antonio Maceo and twenty-two of his fellow Cuban insurgents were stranded on a tiny island in the Bahamas. With little delay, however, they seized a sailboat, killed the captain, and crashed on a rocky northern shore of Cuba. The way he invaded Cuba says everything about Antonio Maceo. But historical reports of the assault are at variance.

Philip Foner concluded that Maceo "prevailed" to rent the sailboat, *Honor*, at Fortune Island, Bahamas. This proved necessary because the captain of the steamship *Adirondack* supposedly broke his promise to drop Maceo and his insurgents as they passed along the Cuban coastline on their way from Costa Rica. Foner, in an endnote, wrote: "In the confusion of the landing process the sailor who had commanded the boat was shot by one of the Cubans." Moreover, Foner appended, "Maceo declared it was an accident."¹

In his memoirs Horatio Rubens painted an even more veiled scene than Foner did when he wrote:

A Spanish war vessel was in sight, so the *Honor* was driven ashore on a rocky coast; a wave rising

under the stern impelled the craft well up on shore. While Maceo arranged matters with the captain, Corona [one of Maceo's men] was most unsuitably toying with a rifle. The weapon understandably, if unexpectedly, discharged and the bullet killed the captain.²

Clearly, in Ruben's account, neither Maceo nor Corona killed the captain, the bullet did; and, responsibility for crashing the *Honor* rested with the Spanish, who were in the right place at the wrong time.

Maceo's initial plan was to exit Costa Rica with his insurgents disguised as fare-paying migrant field hands. "When at sea," Foner wrote, "of course, the announced destination would be changed from Central America to Cuba."³ Now any captain would consider this a challenge to his command. Nevertheless, Foner's next sentence resumed: "If the captain and the crew of the vessel objected, they were to be confined until the end of the voyage."⁴ While Foner's reported rationale indeed engenders an image of nonviolence, the rationalization in fact fails to answer an important question: *who is going to drive the Adirondack if her Captain and crew are locked up?*

On 4 April 1895 (dateline: Havana, 3 April) *The New York Times* reported a little less delicate rendition of Maceo's invasion:

There had been trouble between the insurgents and the Captain [of the *Honor*] because he had refused to land them at the point designated by them. When the Captain refused to yield to their threats they killed him and threw his body overboard. . . [(Paraphrasing the rest of the

column) two of the *Honor's* crew was captured, but Maceo, Crombret and twenty-one insurgents made-off safely into the hills around Baracoa].⁵

Both historians, Foner and Rubens, cited *The Times* story as Spanish propaganda. Just the same, truth is in the heart of the beholder. The captain and crew of the *Brothers* may have placed some weight in stories such as *The Times* and thus yielded a reason why Martí and Gomez's invasion, disguised as a charter, ended so abruptly in Inagua.

Gomez's diary indicated the *Brothers* arrived in Inagua at 10 p.m. on 2 April. The captain went ashore on the morning of 3 April to "fix the papers."⁶ At 6 p.m. of the same day he and the crew refused to sail any further, only the "cook" remained.⁷ Foner and Rubens discounted the captain's integrity and blamed him for discouraging the crew and possible replacements. Rubens, unlike Foner, however, noted that the captain refunded his \$400 fee to Martí.⁸ News of Maceo's invasion almost certainly found its way to Matthew Town, which was the logical port for Martí and Gomez's arrival in Inagua, Bahamas.

Decades before, Matthew Town was a bustling port which saw the shipment of tons of salt from the island's mines. But a slump in the market after the American Civil War reduced Matthew Town to a pit-stop harborage for those en route to or from the Windward Passage. Both Inagua islands, Great and Little, are desolate and surrounded by shoals.⁹ Therefore, by elimination, the only harbor at

either island deep enough for the *Brothers* and the *Nordstrand* (on which the insurgents departed¹⁰) was Matthew Town, Great Inagua--forty-six miles northeast of Cuba.

Martí made three diary entries on 3 April 1895. First, oddly fascinated, he noted "rows of equally spaced flamencos, pink-chested with black under-wings flying in the heavens of the sky." Second, as the day went on, he wrote a four verse poem describing life's uncertainties. His third entry implied that the Captain or crew members had revealed to the authorities the nature of the insurgents' mission: "There is for a man nothing worse than to have no virtue."¹¹ But neither Gomez nor Martí's diaries included reasons for why the captain or crew disclosed the party's objective.

Gomez's entry on 3 April raised significant issues. In the morning when Captain Bastian went ashore he told the insurgents he intended to register the schooner for their "supposed" trip to Nassau. When the port authorities arrived and cursorily inspected the vessel, Gomez noted the insurgents were able "to hide the greater number of objects which would unveil [their] mission." However, he had grave suspicion of Captain Bastian, writing, "his distrust had dawned upon [them]."¹²

Gomez confirmed his suspicion when he wrote that "Bastian returned to the boat around 6 p.m. and [had them] surrender the revolvers the customs' authorities said they

saw." Moreover, "Bastian divulged two of the three crew were sorry and would not continue or return, leaving only the faithful cook."¹³

Martí wrote that while Bastian apprised them about the crew, Customs' Officials were "meticulously inspecting the vessel." Martí noted that had he not gained the Officials' confidence, "all of our arms would have been confiscated."¹⁴

Gomez summed up his April 3 entry with the words, "The situation was complicated."¹⁵ Indeed, the situation was very bad.

The insurgents charted the *Brothers* in Gomez's wife's name. Further, the vessel was bare boat chartered, which was independent of captain and crew.¹⁶ On 4 April Gomez summarized the insurgents' predicament:

We are separated from this unfortunate man [Bastian], but we are isolated, with a useless boat, without sailors, and in a port whose inhabitants deny us shelter.¹⁷

For Gomez and Martí to have rammed into the shoreline of Cuba, like Maceo, implied disaster for Gomez's wife and family. To make matters worse, all the insurgents needed was to recall that the schooner *Brothers*, Captain Bastian, and Bastian's hand picked crew was neither their first choice, nor expenditure, for departing Montecristi.

Getting stuck with Bastian and the *Brothers* was a misadventure in itself. On 1 April Martí posted a letter describing the unusual circumstances to Gonzalo de Quesada

and Benjamin Guerra in New York (the Cuban Revolutionary Party Secretary and Treasurer, respectively). Martí revealed before he fled New York at the end of January that he had failed to charter a boat or find a willing captain to transport the Montecristi contingent to Cuba.

Thus, while in Montecristi, he engaged John Poloney, yacht broker and captain, "in view of previous service for contraband trade" with Dominican rebels. From Poloney Martí chartered the schooner *Marijohn* in Gomez's wife's name for "2,000 Mexican dollars." He also paid him \$500 of a \$1000 captain fee to sail them to Cuba.¹⁸ For reasons related to "courage," Poloney and his crew reneged.¹⁹

Ironically, through Poloney's recommendation, Captain Bastian emerged. Bastian, however, refused to sail the *Marijohn*. Instead, he held out for the *Brothers*. So, for "\$700 in gold," Martí chartered the *Brothers*, once again--from Poloney. Martí, unable to get a refund for the *Marijohn* or the captain's fee, assured Quesada and Guerra of Poloney's service in the future.²⁰ Double-crossed, Martí and Gomez set their course for Cuba.

When it became apparent by 4 April in Matthew Town that Bastian and two of the three crew had jumped ship Martí went ashore to "solve the problem."²¹ His diary reflected the poverty of Matthew Town and the beautiful natural surroundings.²² His purpose ashore, however, proved modestly successful.

Bastian reportedly tagged along while Martí tried in vain to recruit sailors: Bastian "poisoned their will to accept the office he had declined."²³ Martí succeeded in befriending the Haitian Consul, M. Sarber, who confidently recommended they seek help from a "smuggler" called "Hopkins," the self-proclaimed "captain of the port."²⁴

Hopkins emerged in Martí's narrative a larger than life character: "a copper-colored, big-bellied, well-dressed, courteous young man with a noble soul." Hopkins boasted "he would sail anywhere if paid enough," because "he was the father of two families, blessed with two wives," yet, peculiarly enough, a "loyal soul." In spite of these credentials, Martí struck a deal with him. But Hopkins shortly reneged. Martí blamed Bastian. Hopkins, "hat in hand," sought to ease the blow of discouragement and, as an appeasement, gave Martí "an earthenware bottle of gin."²⁵ Unlike others, however, Hopkins stopped short of helping himself to the insurgents' funds.

Martí had real concerns that the revolutionaries' whereabouts were too obvious. By the third day they should have been in the Cuban interior. He correctly surmised their absence in Montecristi portended dreadful consequences: "Once warned, Spain could besiege us in Inagua, the unfortunate island without exit."²⁶

In fact, Spain was at the very moment on the lookout for them. The Spanish Vice-consul in Montecristi had wired

Cuba with details of the expedition, which he had purchased for ten pesos.²⁷

But Martí and his followers were not without allies. The Mayor of Montecristi insisted they departed for Haiti. To confuse matters more, and suspecting interception of his message, he wired the Dominican Consul in Cuba apologizing that he had not impeded Martí and Gomez's departure for Santiago.²⁸ Regarding Haiti, though, little did the Mayor know, but it would soon be the revolutionaries' hideout.

Meanwhile, the Spanish had a poorly protected Cuban coastline. On 3 April *The New York Times* summarized their ineffectiveness:

The Spanish gunboats are watching as large an extent of the coast as they can, but there are not many of them, and there will be many chances to elude their observation.²⁹

Specifically, the *New York Herald* on 1 April printed:

The steamer *Mascotte* arrived at noon today from Jamaica. Her officers reported that she almost circled the Island of Cuba, going south by Cape Maysi [approximately where Martí and Gomez landed on 11 April] and returning by Cape San Antonio, but at no time was a Spanish war ship sighted. They report the Cuban coast very poorly guarded and that nothing like a cordon or blockade is being maintained.³⁰

That Spain, herself, was aware of the deficiency the *Times* (London) recognized when on 11 March Madrid reported, "six cruisers and nine gunboats [were] being sent to Cuban waters."³¹ On 28 March the *New-York Daily Tribune* reported,

"the torpedo gunboats *Fillpinas* and the *Martin Allonzo Pinzon* and the cruiser *Castillia* received orders to proceed with all possible speed to Cuban waters."³² The news article did not indicate that the vessels had arrived.

Cubans were not without a reply to Spain's reinforcement, *The Florida Times-Union* (Jacksonville) reported on 2 April:

A prominent eastern shipbuilding firm has agreed to furnish the insurgents a torpedo boat at an early day which will be used to destroy the Spanish war vessels now cruising in Cuban waters.³³

Spain's naval presence in Cuba was, in fact, embarrassingly evident. On 13 March the *New York Herald* reported (as did newspapers throughout the entire country and most of the world) that a Spanish gunboat fired on an American steamship, the *Allianca*, in the Windward Passage.³⁴ Before that example cooled (for the *Times* (London) was still reporting the "affair" on 1 April³⁵) a Spanish gunboat "fired at the British steamship *Ethelred* off of Cape Maysi in the Windward Passage" on 3 April.³⁶

The *New York Herald*, in a sub-story about the British ship, discussed the important fact that Spain claimed a six-mile territorial limit, contrary to the internationally accepted three-mile limit. Thus, Spain had real concerns about Cuban international assistance and her own ineffectiveness at bottling-up the island as result of her

shortage of vessels for short coastal sprints.

So, against the backdrop of Maceo's deadly foray three days earlier, and on the day after the *Ethelred* incident, Jose Martí toiled 46 miles away to replace a captain and crew aboard a slow sailing boat to Cuba. "Upon Providence," Gomez invoked, the insurgents had cast themselves when they departed Montecristi.³⁷ Whether they were uncourageous or stopped by the hand of God, Martí persuaded no sailors to transport them aboard the *Brothers*.

The authorities at Matthew Town were justifiably anxious, because, technically, England and Spain were allies. At any time a Spanish vessel could have entered the harbor and no difficulty existed for them to obtain informants interested in earning a quick peso. Departing Inagua was imperative for the insurgents.

Gomez concluded succinctly on 4 April that a German fruit ship bound for bananas in Cape Haitian had arrived in port at 2 p.m. Again, with the help of the Haitian Consul, M. Sarber, the insurgents arranged with Captain Loewe, skipper of the *Nordstrand*, to take passage. Sarber also agreed to arrange for the return of the schooner *Brothers* to Poloney in Montecristi.³⁸

According to Martí, Sarber agreed to safeguard their *materiel*--himself, a "smuggler."³⁹ He stamped their passports.⁴⁰

Gomez recorded on 5 April only that the German

steamship departed at 6 p.m. Once again, placing their confidence in "Providence," they arranged to disembark in Cuba.⁴¹ When and where was not mentioned.

Martí, on the other hand, waxed eloquently about a freighter bearing balsa wood from Mobile; happy workers who sang while offloading her; and, the turquoise sea. Finally, he memorialized the attitude and even appearance of the loyal cook, "David, of the Turks Islands," noting, in particular, the exquisite supper he cooked for the insurgents' last night in Inagua.⁴²

The *Nordstrand*, bound for bananas in Haiti, departed on 5 April with the insurgents. They paid Captain Loewe \$1,000. The *Nordstrand* backtracked the course they had sailed only five days earlier.

Gomez recorded on 6 April that the insurgents arrived at 4 p.m.⁴³ They were now, once again, on the island of Hispaniola, less than 37 miles from their point of beginning.

NOTES

Chapter Five

- ¹. Foner, *Maceo*, 167, fn. 14, 299.
- ². Rubens, *Liberty*, 78.
- ³. Foner, *The Spanish-Cuban-American War*, 2.
- ⁴. Ibid.
- ⁵. "Insurgent Leaders Land: They Killed Their Boat Captain," *The New York Times*, 4 April 1895.
- ⁶. Gomez, *Diario*, 285.
- ⁷. Martí, *Obras Completas*, Vol. 7, 206.
- ⁸. Rubens, *Liberty* 80.
- ⁹. Hart and Stone, *Cruising Guide*, 152. Today, Morton Salt is the only commercial enterprise on Great Inagua and recreational harboage is discouraged.
- ¹⁰. Lloyd's, *Register of British and Foreign Shipping, Vol. I, Steamers, 1895-6* (London: Lloyd's Register, 1895-6), "Nor."
- ¹¹. Martí, *Obras Completas*, Vol. 19, 208.
- ¹². Gomez, *Diario*, 285.
- ¹³. Ibid.
- ¹⁴. Martí, *Obras Completas*, Vol. 7, 205.
- ¹⁵. Gomez, *Diario*, 285.
- ¹⁶. Martí, *Obras Completas*, Vol. 7, 205. .
- ¹⁷. Gomez, *Diario*, 286.
- ¹⁸. Martí, *Obras Completas*, Vol. 7, 205-207.
- ¹⁹. Rubens, *Liberty*, 80.

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- ²⁰. Martí, *Obras Completas*, Vol. 7, 207.
- ²¹. Gomez, *Diario*, 285.
- ²². Martí, *Obras Completas*, Vol. 19, 208.
- ²³. Ibid., 209.
- ²⁴. Morel, *Martí in Montecristi*, 184.
- ²⁵. Martí, *Obras Completas*, Vol. 19, 209-10.
- ²⁶. Martí, *Obras Completas*, Vol. 7, 205.
- ²⁷. Morel, *Martí en Montecristi*, 182.
- ²⁸. Ibid.
- ²⁹. "Rebels Bound For Cuba," *The New York Times*, 3 April 1895.
- ³⁰. "Cuban Rebels Gaining Ground," *New York Herald*, 1 April 1895.
- ³¹. "The Rising in Cuba," *The Times* (London), 11 March 1895.
- ³². "Cuban Revolt Spreads, Home Government Alarmed," *New-York Daily Tribune*, 29 March 1895.
- ³³. "Cubans Take a Convoy, Patriots to Procure a Torpedo Boat in This Country to Destroy Spanish Warships," Jacksonville, *The Florida Times-Union*, 2 April 1895.
- ³⁴. "Cannon Shot at Our Flag," *New York Herald*, 13 March 1895.
- ³⁵. "The United States," *The Times* (London), 1 April 1895.
- ³⁶. "Fired Across Her Bows," *New York Herald*, 4 April 1895.
- ³⁷. Gomez, *Diario*, 285.
- ³⁸. Ibid., 286.

³⁹. Morel, *Martí en Montecristi*, 183: Morel referred to him as "M. Sarber"; Martí, *Obras Completas*, Vol. 7, 205: Martí referred to him as "Barber."

⁴⁰. Martí, *Obras Completas*, Vol. 7, 205.

⁴¹. Gomez, *Diario*, 286.

⁴². Martí, *Obras Completas*, Vol. 7, 210.

⁴³. Martí, *Obras Completas*, Vol. 19, 208; Gomez, *Diario*, 286

CHAPTER 6

DAY EIGHT, FAMILIAR VIEWS

When Jose Martí and Maximo Gomez and four insurgents retreated on 5 April 1895, some thought "Providence"¹ had had a hand. Stranded in Inagua by the captain and crew of the *Brothers*, Martí and his companions--left high, dry, and vulnerable--felt like victims in a rising flood. Martí, however, was not the sort to wait for providential intervention. He was proactive, and a rescue vessel steamed into harbor at 10:00 a.m. on 4 April 1895.

The *Nordstrand* was a two-year-old 210-foot double-bottomed steel vessel built to Lloyd's specifications in Hamburg, Germany. She carried Lloyd's most prestigious ocean-going rating, +100A1, a state of the art triple expansion reciprocating steam engine provided her power.² The ship had departed from Jamaica on her way for bananas in Cape Haitian. Instead of Inagua, the captain could just as easily have sailed east around the northwest point of Hispaniola from the Windward Passage and steamed straight for Cape Haitian. For no particular reason, Captain Loewe chose otherwise, and this proved fortunate for the revolutionaries. The *Nordstrand* removed them from harm's

way twice as fast as the *Brothers* had sailed them into it.

Neither Gomez's nor Martí's diary, or any of Martí's letters, indicated Captain Loewe agreed to transport them to Cuba while he was in Inagua. Gomez's diary states as much:

At six o'clock on the afternoon of 5 April, placing our confidence in providence, we left aboard a German steamship. Finally, on board the ship, we arranged with the Captain to disembark in Cuba.³

In Inagua Captain Loewe probably bargained for no more than simply to transport six desperate passengers to Cape Haitian, a perfectly legitimate deal. First, Captain Loewe surely knew of the insurgents' prime intention, aware that Martí had already exhausted all opportunities on the island to recruit a new captain and crew to sail them to Cuba aboard the *Brothers*. Also, Captain Bastian, according to Martí, had thoroughly soured the islander's minds. Captain Loewe, thinking like a steward of a ship--and, in fairness, even like Bastian--initially hesitated. His first reason centered on the hubbub surrounding Maceo's murderous invasion only five days earlier. Also, the Spanish had fired on the English merchant ship, *Elthered*, on 2 April in the area Martí and Gomez intended to visit. News of stories like either of those traveled quickly from port to port--especially a busy port that lay but a few miles away from both occurrences.

While some captains lowered their standards for money, allowing armed insurgents on board on short notice seemed (if money alone were the issue) beyond Martí's and Gomez's budget. Another strategy emerged.

Martí and Gomez and their followers sought simply to get away from Inagua. Loewe provided the opportunity. The six also realized, if they intended to achieve phase two of the strategy, that they had to be on their very best behavior on the leg to Hispaniola. Good manners were a must.

Martí recorded the likely time and place he struck the deal with Captain Loewe for transportation to Cuba. On 6 April, while in route to Cape Haitian, Martí visited Captain Loewe's quarters, which he described in some detail:

The Captain's berth was constructed of rich mahogany and was like the basin of a fountain. The berth covered the drawers, which were full of charts. On the mantle piece above the desk, among magazines, newspapers and navigational aids, was the complete collection of Goethe and a novel by Gaudy. Presiding over his berth was the portrait of his wife, large boned, and as sweet looking as crystallized [hard] sugar-candy. In a corner was a collection of weapons: a hunting shotgun, two large daggers, a pistol, and two sets of manacles, chains, and shackles, toward which, the Captain indicated, "sometimes those are needed for the sailors." Along side his wife's picture was a woolen yarn embroidery, "embroidered by my wife," he said. It read, in [German] Gothic letters:

"In All Storms,

In All Distress,
May He Protect You,
The True God."⁴

There were no witnesses to Martí's conversation. Fluent in German, Martí had no problem conversing with the Captain. One can only conjecture at the dialogue between them and wonder how Gomez might have rendered it. Gomez did note, however, when the *Nordstrand* arrived at Cape Haitian at four o'clock in the afternoon, on 6 April, "[we] scattered among people so not to be noticed."⁵

Gomez reported later that he found "asylum with Mr. Mercier, an associate of Dr. Dellundé." Both had supported Cuban freedom fighters. Gomez wrote further that "Marcos del Rosario, the Dominican [and faithful aid] remained by his side," and went on, "I have been treated with the most exquisite amiability by this excellent man. The other companions, Jose Martí, Francisco Borrero, Angel Guerra, and Cesar Salas, lodged in different houses of friends." Gomez wrote, of the 7th and 8th, "the same and no news to report."⁶

Besides Martí's and Gomez's there is extant another first person account of the overall journey and, more specifically, the layover in Cape Haitian. Marcos del Rosario, General Gomez's aid, talked about it forty years later. His recollections appeared in a collection of

memoirs compiled by Cuba's Ministry of Culture.⁷ Marcos claimed the revolutionaries originally intended to sail to Key West, presumably, to take on board more insurgents. He offered no reason why they stopped in Inagua; however, as a stopping spot along the way, Inagua was perfectly reasonable.

Captain Bastian went ashore at Inagua "to clear the *Brothers* for Nassau." No doubt Bastian intended to create worthwhile cover if the band subsequently sailed for Key West or Cuba. Also, Marcos possibly made reference to the original Fernandina plan, which had instructions for Martí to board the *Baracoa*. In that event, Martí intended to sail first from Fernandina to Montecristi and meet Gomez's insurgents, to include Marcos. Then, once together, the plan likely included sailing plans to Key West and to recruit additional forces before heading to Cuba. Regardless of Marcos' intent, he dismissed Bastian as, "the damn captain of the schooner. . . a coward."⁸

Marcos provided valuable information about the insurgents' layover in Cape Haitian. He said Gomez "pretended to be ill, though nothing at all was wrong with him; he became a patient. Taken to "Dr. Dellundé, a medical friend of the Cubans," Marcos continued, "[I] did not see either the Doctor or the Doctor's young female servant [Lola] again; Martí and the others remained

hidden."⁹ The precise hideouts of Francisco Borrero, Angel Guerra, and Cesar Salas remain a mystery.

In contrast to Gomez's account, Martí was evasive. He did not refer to any business arrangement with Captain Loewe, the whereabouts of his companions, or even who they were. From a practical view his rationale was sensible--if what he wrote fell into the wrong hands. Martí passed the time in Cape Haitian writing about the goings-on outside his bedroom window.

On Sunday, 7 April, Martí wrote that he enjoyed a "strong, dark, black [cup of] coffee" while "fresh sunlight ascended on the other side of the window blinds." Below was "the neighborhood street market" where people "toiled" and danced the "chacharea." Street "merchants barked their wares, and fruit vendors sold star apples." Martí "sat with his back to the window writing" and "heard the ruffling of a "petticoat" and the "dragging of slippers on the cobblestone street."¹⁰

In the "distance" there were "tambourines and trumpets" and, lo, the "rain of yesterday had cleared," and "this was one of God's good days." There was the sound of "a cane on the sidewalk" and an "eloquent one preaching religion [in French]." Martí's translation, albeit, interpretation, conveyed an ardent political message quite like his own zeal for Cuban freedom. This drew Martí to

the window where he reported seeing a host of colorful people. There were boys laughing and beating drums. There was also a middle-aged woman dressed in her Sunday's-best, a hat, and around whose shoulders draped a shawl. In her "fine booties," she daintily "leaped over some muddy water," carrying a "Book of Devotions."¹¹

Finally, Martí described a "strapping young fellow in a pink tie, pants of pearl, and sporting an ivory fist cane." Martí dislodged from his diary "two soiled cards." On the "smaller" he had written "Mlle. Elise Etienne, Cape Haitian," and on the larger, "Mr. Edmond Ferere."¹² Martí made no reference regarding their involvement with Cuban freedom or the insurgents' layover in Cape Haitian. Also, elsewhere, there did not appear any historical reference about them. Perhaps they had a connection with the whereabouts of Gomez and Marcos's hideout or even that of the other three insurgents.

Martí made two diary entries on 8 April. His first contained an analogy to Cuba's struggle for independence with the North American Indians' "assimilation" and inevitable "cultural meltdown." He empathized with the Indians' "resistance," servitude, "emancipation," indoctrination, and subsequent "natural disappearance." Martí linked their extinction with Cuban's lack of well being and imminent fate. Martí's second entry echoed the

theme of his first but in more detail. He concluded his 8 April entry with glowing praise for "Tom, from St. Thomas, a loyal black servant of Dr. Dellunde's," who shuttled books back and forth for him from a "Haitian bookstore down on the corner."¹³

Meanwhile, guessing the whereabouts of Martí and Gomez was an interesting pastime for the western press. By 8 April the press had incorrectly reported Martí and Gomez had invaded Cuba no less than a dozen times. As early as February 26 the *New York Herald* concluded, "the news received last night from Cuba tells that [Martí and Gomez] have landed, for their arrival was to be the signal for the uprising."¹⁴ On the 27th, the *Herald* elaborated: "Martí left New York by the last San Domingo steamer about January 22, and he and General Gomez have landed in Cuba from San Domingo with a small band of leaders."¹⁵

William Randolph Hearst's San Francisco *Examiner* offered its own version of the invasion on the 27th: "Generals Martí and Gomez are at the head of the revolution. They reached the island from Vera Cruz, Mexico, on the 24th."¹⁶ That Martí attained the rank of "general" surely came as a surprise to some people. Hiding in Haiti in April, Martí and Gomez undoubtedly wished those first two stories were true.

Those stories only marked the beginning of speculation.

On 28 February reporters for the *New York Herald* and *The New York Times* reversed themselves and printed "[dateline:] Havana, Feb. 27, 1895.--The report that Generals Maximo Gomez and Jose Martí, the exiled revolutionary leaders, have landed in Cuba is absolutely untrue."¹⁷ But that did not end speculation. If anything, it fueled it. The next day, 1 March, *The Florida Times-Union* reported, "Tuesday's issue of *El Pals* ([Madrid's] government organ) confirms the report of the arrival on Cuban soil of General Martí and Maximo Gomez. It says that they are now in the neighborhood of Matanzas."¹⁸

On 15 March the *Tampa Morning Tribune* went further. "FRESH FROM CUBA: A provisional government had absolutely been organized and. . . General Martí was its president [and] General Gomez. . . chief of the army. The Cuban forces number 8,000 men all armed and equipped."¹⁹ If true, in February and March, it certainly would have pleased the insurgents, who, of course, in April, had scattered throughout Cape Haitian, waiting, and surely were wondering if Captain Loewe of the *Nordstrand* intended to fulfill his bargain. But on 15 March the revolutionaries were still in Montecristi and had as yet not even met Captain Bastian of the *Brothers*.

The *New York Herald*, showing more restraint than usual

in reporting Martí and Gomez sightings, waited until 21 March before it declared--*again*, "Cuban Patriots Land": "General Maximo Gomez Said to Have Reached Puerto del Padre with 200 Men."²⁰

Then, on 29 March, the *Herald* actually came closer than ever to getting the story right: "[reporting] What the Spanish Say; Martí and Gomez are at Montecristi, San Domingo, and Maceo is at Costa Rica."²¹

Yet, on the *same day* as the *Herald's* reversal, 29 March, the *New York Tribune* printed, "Maximo Gomez. . . presence in Cuba is confirmed, and he is now at the head of the uprising at Puerto Principe."²² On that day, Gomez, in Montecristi, had just chartered a *second* yacht in his wife's name, and Antonio Maceo, in the Bahamas, was preparing to steal a sailboat.

On 31 March the *Herald* once more proclaimed, "INSURGENT VICTORY, [smaller headline] Maximo Gomez Is Now Contemplating a General Advance Upon the Province of Puerto Principe." And, from Madrid, the *Herald* reported, "Maceo has arrived in Jamaica."²³ About the time the *Herald's* story was rolling off its presses Martí and Gomez were likely asking Gomez's wife, sisters, and daughter to prepare food for their trip to Inagua. Also, Maceo by then had already crashed the *Honor* into a rocky Cuban shore and,

with his band, was scrambling through the thickets seeking cover in Cuba.

On 1 April the *Herald* turned around, again. It quoted a Tampa source: "No official notice of the presence of Martí and Gomez has been made, and if they are on the island their presence is still kept secret."²⁴ In contrast, the *Times* (London) reported, 3 April, "that Maceo and Gomez have succeeded in landing on the island is officially confirmed."²⁵

Suddenly, on 6 April, stories in *The New York Times* and the *New York Daily Tribune* proved frighteningly accurate. *The Times'* headline read, "GOMEZ AWAITS AN ENGLISH VESSEL"²⁶ and went on to add what the *Tribune* said. The *Tribune's* headline read: "CUBAN REBELS DISPERSED, General Gomez Said to be in Haiti, Waiting to Get Across to Cuba."²⁷ Both stories included alarming facts. Such as, "General Gomez, the insurgent chief, *is awaiting on the north coast of Haiti an English vessel which is to convey him to Cuba* [italics added]." Only the bit about the "English vessel" was incorrect--the vessel was German.

The New York Times reported: "The announcement of the Haitian Government that Gens. Gomez and Martí would be arrested and imprisoned if found in the Black Republic is looked upon rather quizzically by patriots here." While

probably accurate that the Haitian government's true position was contrary to its words, a premium nevertheless existed for information to lead Spanish forces to Martí and Gomez. Considering that Spanish spies indeed existed, a noose, in fact, tightened as the insurgents arrived on that very day, 6 April, in Cape Haitian. Martí's and Gomez's whereabouts could only have been disclosed from sources in Inagua--unless, of course, the newspaper reports were simply good guesses.

The insurgents prepared to leave Haiti on 9 April. Gomez wrote in his diary: "I went to Dr. Dellunde's house at eight o'clock in the night, at nine o'clock we embarked for the same German steamship." They spent the night aboard the *Nordstrand*. Gomez wrote on 10 April,

We awoke still in port [at Cape Haitian]. The Captain informed us that the steamship would not be able to leave until after twelve. Aboard the steamship we left at two o'clock in the afternoon [10 April]--bound for Inagua to leave twenty-five workers; from there [the *Nordstrand*] would immediately set course for Port Antonio, Jamaica.²⁸

Martí, on 9 April, wrote neither about method nor means regarding the journey. Instead, he observed Dr. Dellunde's female servant: "Lola. . . crying on the balcony. We embarked." On 10 April, he wrote, "We departed the Cape. At daybreak [11 April] we arrived in Inagua. Heightened vigilance."²⁹

On 11 April, Gomez provided the answer to future curiosities. Like Martí, he wrote they arrived and awoke in Inagua. But, he elaborated, "the task of putting the workers ashore was done immediately." Then, he added, "the rowboat we had bought for 100 pesos was brought aboard [the *Nordstrand*]." ³⁰ Apparently, the insurgents had already decided to row into Cuba from the *Nordstrand*, either before departing Inagua for Cape Haitian on 6 April or while in Inagua on 11 April. In either case, the rowboat was not an after-thought while on board the *Nordstrand* as she steamed close in Cuban waters. The rowboat, at the very least, was a contingency. Purchasing it also proved how determined they were.

Martí, in a 15 April letter to Quesada and Guerra, the Revolutionary Party's secretary and treasurer in New York (whom he wrote after reaching the interior of Cuba), briefly alluded to the "good rowboat" they "purchased from Barbes" (the Haitian Consul) in Inagua. Yet, his allusion left some doubt as to the purchase date and said nothing of its price. But, his letter recapped the journey and, in particular, reflected on good and bad captains, Bastian and Loewe, respectively. It also glossed over the revolutionaries' unsuccessful and high priced charter boats. It noted also the critical role Barber played--who still possessed in his warehouse a large quantity of the

insurgents' arms and ammunition.³¹

Gomez included in his diary that the *Nordstrand* left Inagua at two o'clock in the afternoon on 11 April bound for Jamaica. By four o'clock "we could see the mountains of Cuba on the horizon." At eight o'clock "we were three miles off the south coast of Cuba, not very far from the Port of Guantanamo."³² Martí and Gomez doubtless felt they had traveled a circumnavigator course to get there; finally, they were close.

There has never lived a seaman who after finishing a voyage hasn't had something to say about the weather. And there is nothing like bad weather to season the uninitiated. Gomez reflected, "the night was gloomy, the sea was agitated, and the clouds seemed like a black funeral mantle wrapping and obscuring where we had to go."³³

Gomez described perfectly the first stages of a Caribbean squall. In defense of Captain Loewe's decision to off-load the insurgents in their rowboat, it bears pointing out that where a squall will go--a seasoned sailor can attest--is anybody's guess. As likely as it is to hit you, it can miss you. But, if it hits--in what honestly feels like a swift moment--temperature and winds viciously change from warm, eery calm, into cold, mile-a-minute blasts and the sea transforms into seven-foot steel walls

of water. The experience is unforgettable. The *Nordstrand*, like any vessel, was vulnerable. Caught in a squall, she risked losing steerage, or even worse, power. That close to shore portended her doom. A rowboat could at least bob about.

Martí's and Gomez's version of the upcoming chaos appeared in chapter three. The account from Marcos del Rosario now warrants a turn:

The [*Nordstrand*] left us in the sea and a storm was brewing. The night was very dark. None of us knew what to do or how to swim. Martí held the compass of the boat and the General [Gomez] the rudder. Waves battered us, the rudder tore off, and the sea carried it away. Moreover, the sea took away the duffel bag containing the General's things. The sea was terrible. The night grew darker. We could not see anything. Then we saw some lights far away. We believed they were Spanish troops; but they were fishermen. We fought with the sea that wanted to swallow us. It did not want us to land on the ground in Cuba. Finally, we saw the end of our journey, cliffs, then a headland. We hit and bounced. I climbed out; Martí followed and took my arm, and afterwards, General Gomez and the others. General Gomez jumped on one of the rocks on the beach; when he saw the firm ground, the end of the trip! he kissed the ground and crowed like a rooster! I tell you, he crowed like a rooster, and I said to myself, we are saved! After what we had come through I believed we could do anything. And Martí was very happy.

I did not know what we were going to do. We left the boat and began to walk, and later we found a road.³⁴

Martí and Gomez and their companions had finally arrived in Cuba. It took them eleven days to zigzag more

than 450 miles. What they did not know was worldwide political sympathy had grown. The *Times* (London) printed the following Philadelphia byline: "The Senate of Florida has adopted a resolution extending sympathy and encouragement to the Cuban insurgents.--Our *Correspondent*."³⁵

The reason for the growing sympathy had its roots in Spanish strong-arm tactics. On 12 April--the first full day Martí and Gomez were in Cuba--a *Herald's* headline read: "HAVANA A VOLCANO; Wholesale Arrests by the Spanish Continue, Many of Them Being Made Merely on Suspicion."³⁶ With a Madrid dateline of the 12th, the *Times* (London) reported a rare, new kind of grief: "The customary holy-week procession at Havana has been prohibited." And the *Herald* carried the following from Tampa, dateline, 12 April:

No particulars are known here of the arrest of members of a baseball team in Havana. It was a local nine going to play ball in the suburbs of Havana, and a passenger on the steamer from Cuba last night brought a rumor of their arrest on suspicion that they were insurgents.³⁷

As auspicious as their arrival was for Cuban freedom, it unfortunately marked for most of them the beginning of the end. In less than three fortnights Martí lay dead, gunned down by the Spanish while making his way through the mountains near Dos Rios. He intended to leave the island

and return to the United States where he had proven himself an effective organizer and fund-raiser. And, hardly two months later, on 17 July, Francisco Borrero died near the town of Altagracia in a railway raid with Gomez.³⁸

Historical records have not surfaced concerning Cesar Salas and Angel Guerra. Martí recorded the last mention of them on 14 April. On that evening Guerra built a sleeping structure from palm fronds for Martí and himself to sleep under while they bivouacked in the lush tropical Cuban jungle. Salas, on that evening, "mended" Martí's belt. Absent references about them in other records, they apparently perished in combat like Borrero, except their deaths failed to rate even so much as a footnote. Only Gomez and his trusted aide, Marcos del Rosario, survived the Cuban Revolution. Gomez died a peaceful death in Cuba in 1905. And Rosario outlived Gomez by 42 years and died in his sleep in Cuba at the age of 82 in 1947.

But thoughts of relief and celebration, during the night and in the early morning of the insurgents' arrival in Cuba, banished thoughts of gloom. By 14 April, news of Martí and Gomez's invasion had reached official circles. On 15 April (dateline, Havana, 14 April) the *New York Herald* finally got its story right: "GOMEZ IS IN CUBA, JOSE MARTI IS WITH HIM."

In an ironic twist of fate, the story captured to

perfection why Martí enjoyed the reputation he had and portended the foundation of his future legacy. The *Herald's* story, reading as much like a eulogy as a profile, summarized for the ages what Jose Martí meant to Greater America:

He is, perhaps, the greatest literary man living in Spanish-America. As a poet, prose writer and orator he has few equals. He organized the Cubans in foreign countries into the Cuban revolutionary party, and the present revolution is his work. He will probably be the head of the provisional government.

Martí is of medium height and slight build, having a magnificent head, a spacious forehead, dreamy eyes and a heavy black mustache. He is a man of tremendous energy and activity.³⁹

Jose Martí fell in battle on 19 May 1895. He summarized his own life in an unfinished letter, reportedly written on the day before he died:

It is my duty. . .to prevent, by the independence of Cuba, the United States from spreading over the West Indies and falling, with that added weight, upon other lands of our America. . .I have lived inside the monster and know its insides--and my weapon is only the slingshot of David.⁴⁰

Martí inspired others. Neither the movement for nor the story of Cuban Independence ended with Martí's death. And, in 1895 (through 1902), the United States did not emerge as the acquisitive villain Martí had feared. Compassion and sympathy for Cuban Independence simply went wild in the United States. The mood emerged in a range-war of sorts between rival publishers Joseph Pulitzer and

William Randolph Hearst. Each vied to out do the other for supreme newspaper circulation, and neither let the truth about Cuban matters interfere.

Martí's unfinished letter included a retrospect of his arrival in Cuba: "I arrived in a boat with General Maximo Gomez and four others. I was in charge of the lead oar during a storm, and we landed at an unknown quarry on one of our beaches."⁴¹

Martí's legacy has continued in extraordinary ways, one of them in a song. In 1959 Pete Seeger produced *Guantanamera*, an incredible folk ballad. He adapted it from a Cuban melody of the 1930s based on one of Martí's poems, *Ismaelillo*. Pete Seeger gave credit to Jose Martí on the label. Later on, Joan Baez, Arlo Guthrie, and Bob Dylan--to name only a few--also produced renditions. It is a beautiful song, and while its title might not be familiar to everyone, the melody surely is. Overall, it has ranked as one of the most performed songs of all time.⁴² The first four lines, in Spanish, come straight from Martí's first stanza:

Yo soy un hombre sincero
De donde crecen las palmas,
Y antes de morirme quiero
Echar mis versos del alma.

[I am an honest man
From where the palms grow
Before I die I want my soul,
To shed its poetry].

Martí wrote the poem in solitude in 1891 in the Catskill Mountains of New York while he prepared to represent Uruguay at the International Monetary Congress in Washington.⁴³ Through the years this poem has emerged as his most famous. There is little wonder why. For the poem makes the presence of Martí palpable. His passion for freedom, devotion toward others, and intellect are genuinely felt. Martí was mortal. But his compassion endures:

My manly heart conceals
The pain it suffers; sons of
A land enslaved live for it
Silently, and die.

I understand, keep still,
Cast off the versifier's pomp,
And hang my doctoral robes upon
A withered tree.⁴⁴

Jose Martí's "passage to war"⁴⁵ was apparently inevitable.

NOTES

Chapter Six

- ¹. Gomez, *Diario*, 286.
- ². Lloyd's, *Register of British and Foreign Shipping*, Vol. 1, *Steamers*, 1895-6 (London: Lloyd's Register, 1895-6), "Nor."
- ³. Gomez, *Diario*, 286.
- ⁴. Martí, *Obras Completas*, Vol. 19, 210.
- ⁵. Gomez, *Diario*, 287.
- ⁶. Ibid., 286.
- ⁷. Martí, *Obras Y Vida*, 203.
- ⁸. Ibid.
- ⁹. Ibid.
- ¹⁰. Martí, *Obras Completas*, Vol. 19, 211.
- ¹¹. Ibid.
- ¹². Ibid.
- ¹³. Martí, *Obras Completas*, Vol. 19, 212.
- ¹⁴. "Exiled Leaders Land," *New York Herald*, 26 February 1895.
- ¹⁵. "Have Faith in Gomez," *New York Herald*, 27 February 1895.
- ¹⁶. "Battle for Cuba's Freedom," San Francisco, *Examiner*, 27 February 1895.
- ¹⁷. "Cuban Provinces in a State of War; Discredits the Reports; Denies that Martí and Gomez Have Landed--," *New York Herald*, 28 February 1895. "Gomez and Martí are Invisible," *The New York Times* February 1895.
- ¹⁸. "Spain is Now Scared," Jacksonville, *Florida Times-Union*, 1 March 1895.

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19. "FRESH FROM CUBA," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, 15 March 1895.
 20. "Cuban Patriots Land," *New York Herald*, 21 March 1895.
 21. "What the Spanish Say," *New York Herald*, 29 March 1895.
 22. "Rushing Troops to Cuba, Spain May Send 100,000 Men," *New York Tribune*, 29 March 1895.
 23. "INSURGENT VICTORY," *New York Herald*, 31 March 1895.
 24. "Cuban Rebels Gaining Ground," *New York Herald*, 1 April 1895.
 25. "The Revolt in Cuba," *The Times* (London), 5 April 1895.
 26. "GOMEZ AWAITS AN ENGLISH VESSEL," *The New York Times*, 6 April 1895.
 27. "CUBAN REBELS DISPERSED," *New York Daily Tribune*, 6 April 1895.
 28. Gomez, *Diario*, 286.
 29. Martí, *Obras Completas*, Vol. 19, 215.
 30. Gomez, *Diario*, 327.
 31. Martí, *Obras Completas*, Vol. 7, 206.
 32. Gomez, *Diario*, 327.
 33. Ibid.
 34. Martí, *Obras Y Vida*, 203.
 35. "The Revolt in Cuba," *The Times* (London), 13 April 1895.
 36. "HAVANA A VOLCANO," *New York Herald*, 12 April 1895.
 37. "Ball Players in Trouble," *New York Herald*, 13 April 1895.
 38. Rubens, *Liberty*, 115.
 39. "GOMEZ IS IN CUBA, JOSE MARTÍ IS WITH HIM," *New York*

Herald, 15 April 1895.

⁴⁰. Foner, *Cuba*, v. II, 359.

⁴¹. Foner, ed. and Randall trans., Martí, *Our America*, 442.

⁴². Benjamin Filene, *Romancing the Folk: Public Memory & American Roots Music* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 297; Pete Seeger, *The World of Pete Seeger* (NY: Columbia, 1973 [sound recording]); *Smithsonian Folkways World Music Collection* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian, 1997 [sound recording]).

⁴³. Foner, ed. and Randall trans., Martí, *Inside the Monster*, 44.

⁴⁴. Foner, ed. and Randall trans., Martí, "I am an honest man," *Major Poems*, 58.

⁴⁵. Jose Martí, "Letter to the Editor," *New York Evening Post*, 25 March 1889.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Jose Martí's impact on Cuba's struggle for independence proved essential. After the Ten Years' War Cubans quickly became convinced that an amicable, long term, reconciliation with Spain was unlikely and unprofitable. Spain continued her all too familiar course of political and economic drift. She delayed, and then reneged, on promises to Cubans for representation in the Cortez and for Cuban autonomy. The Treaty of Zanjón, intended to end the War, confirmed nothing more than an armistice.

Succeeding the Treaty, Spain, with tariffs, wrenched profits from the hands of plantation owners and virtually robbed food from off of the tables of the working class. Spain's financial reliance on the island rendered its population's existence nothing more than conscripts in a military controlled agricultural factory. Civil rights became more than ever the Governor-General's prerogative. Unwittingly, Spain only succeeded in galvanizing Cubans into favoring outright independence.

The United States wavered between sympathy and greed. Rank and file Americans sympathized with Cubans and, in a

preponderance of cases, aided and abetted them. The federal government, however, poised for opportunity throughout the nineteenth-century, longed to possess the island and, thus, deviously projected an alliance with Spain which all too often foiled Cuban independence movements. Cubans failed in gaining their independence in 1878 not for lack of will, but for ways and means.

Martí's parents returned to Spain when he was six. During a half-dozen of Martí's impressionable years he had witnessed Spain's intolerable treatment of Cubans and the unmerciful treatment of slaves. Martí's parents again relocated in Cuba before the Ten Years' War. Martí, blessed with curiosity and compassion, excelled in school until arrested at the outbreak of the War by the Spanish on trumped-up charges of treason. Spain, obviously with an eye upon nurturing, drew him back to the mother country for a university education. But this time evil carried the seeds of its own destruction.

He returned to Cuba under Spain's general blanket of amnesty in 1878, a learned man devoted to Cuban independence. Neither Spain nor the United States guessed the dimensions of Martí's will and the potential of his growing, harnessed, power. In appearance, he was a disarming, diminutive man, and through education, simply a lawyer and a poet.

By 1880, Martí was once again in exile. For Cubans

that was a benchmark moment toward Spain's downfall. It also began a reversal for whatever chance there was for the United States to annex the island. Where leaders before Martí concentrated their efforts within, he had to consolidate backing beyond Cuba's borders. He educated citizens and governments throughout Latin America about the domino effect, as he called it, if the United States annexed Cuba. The consequences of annexation, he wrote, betokened a false democracy; the sort which bestowed unprecedented poverty and humiliation on the lower class, such as he had seen while living in the United States for fifteen years.

Martí single-handedly created the Cuban Revolutionary Party in 1891 while living in New York. He proclaimed the Party's aim week in and week out in its circular, *Patria*, another of Martí's creations. As its chief editor and primary reporter, he shared his philosophy as well as Spain's and the United States' exploits. The paper circulated free of charge to hundreds of Cuban factions throughout a dozen countries (even secretly in Cuba), into thousands of homes, and readers read it aloud from the lectern in cigar factories, a time honored tradition. Anyone who desired Cuban independence, and especially those who did not, knew Jose Martí's name. He wrote and spoke clearly and beautifully in five languages. Many Cubans considered him their Messiah.

The Ten Years' War produced many Cuban military heroes. The most famous were Antonio Maceo and Maximo Gomez. By 1895 they were older and wiser, but also in exile. Martí coaxed them from retirement. In *Patria* he built upon their popularity, banked on their legacies, and bet on their futures. Martí's gamble paid off. Once again, they proved themselves giants in 1895.

Martí's own journey to the revolution in 1895 actually began long before 1 April, which marked the night he left Gomez's house and set foot on the schooner, *Brothers*, moored close to a craggy beach near Montecristi. His journey did not really end when he eventually stepped from the rowboat onto Cuban soil on 11 April, which marked his first physical contact with the island in more than fifteen years. Nor, when he was killed at Dos Rios on 19 May, did his benefaction for Cuban independence conclude, which only marked then the beginning of a spiritual power that proved far greater than his mortal contribution.

Frequently during his life, he rose from ashes like the phoenix. When the United States derailed the Fernandina Plan in January of 1895, instead of abjectly resigning his Party's cause, Martí quickly retrenched and regrouped. Stripped of funds and munitions, Martí rallied and proved to stalwart Cuban insurgents, already engaged in war with Spain on the island, that they had allies. He said, by whatever means necessary, he, Gomez, and Maceo

would come to their aid in a rowboat. Ironically, such was the dimension of his commitment, and, in reality, he carried out his commitment.

When looked at strictly in terms of time and distance Martí's eleven day passage to war had its lighter moments. It also included a fair share of intrigue and resentment. Mostly, however, the journey epitomized the resilience, perseverance, and mettle of six dedicated Cuban revolutionaries. In many instances during the journey Martí demonstrated he did not have the military ability of Gomez and others in the boat. But Martí's passage also showed that orchestrating the Cuban independence movement on the grand scale had little chance without him. Martí's lack of military prowess probably caused his death. But his exemplary courage more than justified his title as General. Jose Martí defeated the enemy. He is the apostle of Cuban Independence and the memory of what he stood for lives throughout Latin America today, indeed, throughout the world. Jose Martí was a great American.

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