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# VOLUNTEERS OF THE SPANISH EMPIRE

(1855-1898)

Fernando J. Padilla Angulo

A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance with the requirements  
for award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Arts.

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## ABSTRACT

*Volunteers of the Empire (1855-1898)* explores the history of the Volunteer units that existed in Cuba, Puerto Rico, Santo Domingo, and the Philippines during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. These units were closely associated with the continuity of Spanish sovereignty, and to understandings of the empire as an extension of the Spanish Nation. The Volunteers have traditionally been considered the private militia of the Spanish colonial elite, politically conservative, and made up almost exclusively of Spaniards from the metropolis, the so-called *peninsulares*. This thesis challenges this view and explores the history of the Volunteers in a new light. Principally drawing on unpublished documents consulted in Spain, Cuba, and Puerto Rico (encompassing military records, letters, and memoirs), this thesis explores four main aspects: the reasons that motivated the creation of the Volunteers, the participation of colonial societies, the Volunteers' relationship with the Spanish authorities, and their social and political cohesion. In a major revision of the existing historiography, this thesis demonstrates that both *peninsulares* and creoles participated in the Volunteers. This heterogeneity meant that the Volunteers' relationship with the Spanish authorities fluctuated between loyalty and confrontation depending on the challenges posed to the colonial *statu quo* by the colonial policy designed in Madrid. The Volunteers were also diverse in social (there were *peninsulares* and creoles, working-class, middle-class and affluent members), and political terms. Conservatives, liberals, republicans, and socialists filled their ranks. The cohesive principle of the Volunteers resided in adherence to the idea of the Spanish Nation's unity, rather than in loyalty to the imperial authorities. This thesis argues that the Volunteers can be held to represent the ambivalent relationship between Nation and Empire, something which is still poorly understood in the Spanish case despite recent advances. It reveals the existence of a loyalist sentiment among significant sectors of the colonial societies, inviting us to reconsider the political and social dimensions of the struggles for independence in the Spanish colonies.

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## **AUTHOR'S DECLARATION**

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes* and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

SIGNED:

DATE: 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2018

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## AUTHOR'S NOTE

There are place names mentioned in this thesis that are either rarely used today, have been legally changed, or are popularly used but not officially recognised. I have chosen to use these traditional names because they were in common use during the period of time covered by this thesis, and often are the only form used in primary sources. In some cases, they are still commonly used by Spanish speakers. This decision is not intended to contradict the utmost respect that I hold for the current official names of cities, regions or countries. Hence, I use Puerto Príncipe instead of Camagüey, Santo Domingo instead of Dominican Republic, Fernando Poo instead of Bioko, and Spanish Sahara instead of Western Sahara. In the case of Haiti, I only use Saint-Domingue when discussing the period before 1804, when it was given its current name. Whenever a single name can refer to a city and a region or a country, this is duly explained in footnotes.

Regarding the names of persons discussed, I have always respected the original or traditional form, except for monarchs, which are translated into English, respecting the custom. Hence, Elizabeth II or Alphonse XII instead of “Isabel II” or “Alfonso XII”.

Spanish political nomenclature has been literally translated, instead of adapted to the British custom. Hence, I have used deputy instead of member of parliament, minister instead of secretary, and president instead of prime minister. In 19<sup>th</sup> century Spain, the head of Government was called *presidente del Consejo de Ministros* (president of the Ministers' Council), commonly known as *presidente*, or president in English. The head of State was either the monarch or a regent. During the First Republic (1873-1874) the *presidente* was both head of State and Government.

## INTRODUCTION

This thesis explores the untold history of some of the people that stood by the Spanish Empire during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is a study of Spanish Loyatism in the colonies through the study of the Volunteers, a civilian militia that was first created in Cuba in 1855 and became an inherent element of Spanish imperial structure through the expansion of this model to Santo Domingo (1863), Puerto Rico (1864), and the Philippines (1896). The Volunteers became a bulwark of Spanish imperialism in the Caribbean and Asia, and the end of their history coincided with Spain's withdrawal from her old empire in 1898.<sup>1</sup> The Volunteers were the armed wing of the staunchest version of Spanish nationalism in the colonies: the *integrismo*, named for the defence of the integrity of a Spanish Nation that would encompass both the metropolitan territory and the imperial possessions. In a way, the Volunteers embodied this idea of Spain as an empire and a nation at the same time, for alongside the *peninsulares* (men born in metropolitan Spain), thousands of men born in the Spanish Antilles and the Philippines served in their ranks. Thus, this research is a contribution to the history shared by Spain and the nations that emerged from her *fin-de-siècle* imperial collapse.

In this regard, this research is an innovative contribution to the historiography of the Spanish Empire that was left after the independence of the bulk of the old American empire in the 1820s.<sup>2</sup> Spanish Loyatism in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines is an almost unexplored field by historians, with some brilliant exceptions. In fact, the study of Loyatism in the Spanish colonial context remains a fertile ground to be cultivated, though recently there have been thorough studies focused on the wars for independence in colonial Spanish America, with a great interest in the heterogeneity of Royalism, the role of the imperial administration, the Royalist Armies, and the effects of the Napoleonic invasion and the response by Spanish Liberals on both sides of the Atlantic. The studies by Brian R. Hamnett and Marcela Echeverri or Julio Albi de la Cuesta are perhaps the best-known examples of this trend.<sup>3</sup> Thanks to the advances of these pioneering works, the

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<sup>1</sup> The dissolution of the Volunteers in Santo Domingo came with the withdrawal of Spain by July 1865, after a brief period of re-annexation to the old metropolis (1861-1865).

<sup>2</sup> For an overview on Spanish colonial historiography, see Christopher Schmidt-Nowara. "After 'Spain': A Dialogue with Josep M. Fradera on Spanish Colonial Historiography", in Antoinette Burton (ed.). *After the Imperial Turn. Thinking with and through the Nation*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003, pp. 157-169. Although this text is fourteen years old at the time of writing, many of its considerations still apply.

<sup>3</sup> Julio Albi de la Cuesta. *Banderas olvidadas. El Ejército realista en América*, Madrid: Instituto de Cooperación Iberoamericana, 1990; Marcela Echeverri. *Indian and Slave Royalists in the Age of Revolution: Reform, Revolution, and Royalism in the Northern Andes, 1780-1825*. New York:

study of Loyalism, for which a relatively abundant literature exists regarding the British case, still offers a wide range of opportunities in the case of Spain's post-1820s empire.<sup>4</sup>

This study is also a contribution to the wider field of Global History, which still today remains a largely unexploited approach for historians of Spain and Latin America, as pointed out by Matthew Brown.<sup>5</sup> This research on the Volunteers engages with a series of issues (war, migration, slavery, and politics) that affected Spanish Loyalists from the Caribbean to Asia through Spain, and which also concern Global History. In this sense, this thesis is also informed by the approach to Global History taken by Sebastian Conrad. Rather than an object of study, Conrad considers Global History an approach. He stresses the possibilities of integration in a fluid conception of time and space. This implies how agents (societies, governments, armies, social, sexual or political movements, companies) underwent similar processes or faced similar challenges at different levels of time and space.<sup>6</sup> In fact, Spanish Loyalism can be considered in a wider sense, as more concretely can the Volunteers, as a fertile ground for establishing connections and comparisons between groups of people committed to one purpose (the defence of the Spanish Empire) that underwent similar processes under a same imperial structure at different times throughout the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In Cuba, Puerto Rico, Santo Domingo, and the Philippines, the Volunteers were the consequence of undergoing processes of migrations from Spain, nation and empire-building, and anti-colonial movements. There is no doubt that for those who lived through it, the history of the Volunteers was necessarily framed in a global context. In this sense, Conrad's approach to Global History can be understood as a necessary tool for understanding the Volunteers as a phenomenon of integration within the Spanish imperial context.

Volunteering is a permanent element in the history of imperial warfare. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Spain itself sent volunteer battalions to Morocco and Cuba during the 1860s and 1870s. France conquered its African empire with volunteer soldiers (for instance, the

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Cambridge University Press, 2016; Brian R. Hamnett. "Mexico's Royalist Coalition: The Response to Revolution, 1808-1821". *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 1980, vol. 12, No. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas B. Allen. *Tories: Fighting for the King in America's First Civil War*. New York: Harper Collins, 2010; Wallace Brown. *The King's Friends: The Composition and Motives of the American Loyalists Claimants*. Providence: Brown University Press, 1965; John Crawford & Ian McGibbon (eds.). *One Flag, One Queen, One Tongue. New Zealand, the British Empire and the South African War, 1899-1902*. Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2003; Austin Gee. *The British Volunteer Movement, 1794-1814*. London: Clarendon Press, 2003; Maya Jasanoff. *Liberty's Exiles. The Loss of America and the Remaking of the British Empire*. London: Harper Press, 2011.

<sup>5</sup> Matthew Brown. "The Global History of Latin America". *Journal of Global History*, 2015, vol. 10, No. 3, pp. 365-386.

<sup>6</sup> Sebastian Conrad. *What is Global History?* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016, pp. 62-114.

Foreign Legion), and thousands of men from Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand volunteered to fight against the Boer Republics in South Africa. But the Volunteers this thesis deals with were a different kind of unit. The Volunteers of the Spanish Antilles and the Philippines were made up of men from the metropolis and the colonies, who combined their regular jobs with unpaid military service and were recruited locally. Thus, they were different from the men that voluntarily joined the professional French Army units to conquer Algeria or that were organized *ex professo* during the Second Boer War (1899-1902) and disbanded thereafter.

In the British Empire, more concretely in the Cape Colony and Ireland, there were militias with similar characteristics to the Spanish Volunteers. In the Cape Colony, a Volunteer Force (1853-1910) was created to reinforce military control over the territory. These Volunteers were recruited from among the Cape's British settlers and fought as auxiliary forces during the Zulu and Boer wars. In Ireland, the Ulster Volunteer Force (1913-1920) was organized by Northern Irish Protestants in order to defend British rule, counter the projects by the British Government to grant Ireland its home rule and later the attempts by the Irish nationalists to put British rule to an end.<sup>7</sup> Paradoxically, the Ulster Volunteers undermined the authority of the British Government by trying to impose their vision of Britishness in Ireland. This recalls the Volunteers' role against the Spanish Government's reformist projects for the Antilles during the 1868-1878 period, as will be seen in the third chapter.

With this thesis, I aim to answer four main historiographical questions. Firstly, why there was a militia such as the Volunteers in the Spanish imperial context of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Secondly, to what degree the colonial societies participated in the creation and consolidation of the Volunteers as the armed wing of Spanish Loyalism. Thirdly, to determine what was the relationship between the Volunteers and the colonial authorities in a context of decline for the Spanish Empire. Fourthly, to examine whether the Volunteers were a homogeneous group that represented a coherent political project. In a way, these questions might be summed up in one: are the Volunteers a product of the ambivalent relationship and interconnectedness between nation and empire in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Spanish context?

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<sup>7</sup> Robert Kee. *The Green Flag. A History of Irish Nationalism*. London: Penguin Books, 2000, pp. 478-484 (first published by Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1972).

There are two main reasons that enticed me to research the Volunteers to try to answer this question. The first one is to fill a historiographic vacuum by taking a fresh approach to the history of the Spanish Empire; the second is to question the veracity of a longstanding assumption regarding the Volunteers.

The historical importance of the Volunteers has not raised the attention of historians, with just a few exceptions. This is particularly paradoxical in the Cuban case, for the Volunteers' central role as an opposing force to Cuban independence has largely been recognised by historiography. However, only the relatively recent works by Marilú Uralde Cancio and María Dolores Domingo Acebrón, who focused on the formative years of the Volunteers and their role during the Ten Years' War (1868-1878) respectively, can be counted on.<sup>8</sup> For the Puerto Rican case, I count on the brief study by Luis González Cuevas, whereas no study has been written on the Volunteers in the Philippines and Santo Domingo.<sup>9</sup> Prior to these studies, no monographic work was written on the Volunteers for more than a century. Further, the existing 19<sup>th</sup> century literature on the Volunteers is often closer to propaganda than to historical research, as some of the books were written by members of this militia with an unconcealed laudatory tone.<sup>10</sup>

It can be understood that the reason for this historiographic vacuum is that neither in Spain nor in her former colonies, have historians been willing to assume the implications of the Volunteers' history. Somehow the Volunteers are an uncomfortable episode in the shared history of Spain and the nations that emerged from the imperial collapse of 1898, for they represent the ambivalent relationship between empire and nation in the Spanish case. The frontier between both was unclear during the lifetime of the Volunteers, just as it was during the revolutionary processes that ended up in the independence of most of Spanish America in 1810-1825. In the Spanish imperial political culture, the American territories were considered as extensions of the nation. The philosopher Gustavo Bueno even considered that, in the Spanish case, the empire created

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<sup>8</sup> María Dolores Domingo Acebrón. *Los Voluntarios y su papel contrarrevolucionario en la Guerra de los Diez Años en Cuba, 1868-1878*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 1996; Marilú Uralde Cancio. *Voluntarios de Cuba española, 1850-1868*. Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 2011.

<sup>9</sup> Luis González Cuevas. *¿Defendiendo el honor? La institución de voluntarios en Puerto Rico durante la guerra hispanoamericana*. San Juan: Ediciones Puerto, 2014.

<sup>10</sup> Luis Otero Pimentel. *Memoria sobre los Voluntarios de la isla de Cuba. Consideraciones relativas a su pasado, su presente y su porvenir*. Havana: La Propaganda Literaria, 1876; José Joaquín Ribó. *Historia de los Voluntarios cubanos*, 2 vols. Madrid: Imprenta y Litografía de Nicolás González, 1872-1877; Rafael Rosado y Brincau. *Bosquejo Histórico de la Institución de Voluntarios en Puerto-Rico*. San Juan: Imp. de la Capitanía General, 1888.

the nation.<sup>11</sup> The importance of interconnectedness between empire and nation has been pointed out by historians who work on the Spanish American wars for independence, such as François-Xavier Guerra, Jaime E. Rodríguez, Roberto Breña, Tomás Pérez Vejo, Antonio Feros or Brian Hamnett, and this thesis follows this approach.<sup>12</sup> This thesis contributes to this field of study, for the persistence of the intermingled national and imperial projects after the 1820s remains an almost unexplored field. The Volunteers came to embody this relationship as the armed wing of the ideology that advocated for the *integridad nacional* between Spain and her empire.

Having said that, it should also be remarked upon that considering the empire as an extension of the nation was not a unique feature of Spanish political culture. The emergence of national and imperial projects in Europe during the 19<sup>th</sup> century generated debates on the true extension of nationhood. For instance, in Britain, advocates of “Little England” and “Greater Britain” debated over the true extension of Britishness, especially regarding the White Dominions of Canada, Australia or New Zealand.<sup>13</sup> In the case of France and Portugal, some of their African colonies became part of the national territory over the 20<sup>th</sup> century and participated in the national political institutions.

Although the literature in Spain on the empire lost in 1898 is abundant, it has generally focused on issues such as the economic relationship, slavery, and colonial policy. The history of Spanish nationhood in the Empire is absent, and it has only been approached from the institutional perspective through the integration of the colonies into

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<sup>11</sup> Gustavo Bueno. *España frente a Europa*. Barcelona: Alba Ediciones, 1999, p. 164.

<sup>12</sup> Roberto Breña. *El imperio de las circunstancias. Las independencias hispanoamericanas y la revolución liberal española*. Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2012, pp. 21-40; Antonio Feros. *Speaking of Spain. The evolution of race and nation in the Hispanic world*. Harvard University Press: Cambridge (Massachusetts) & London, 2017, pp. 232-277; François-Xavier Guerra. *Modernidad e independencias: ensayos sobre las revoluciones hispánicas*. Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2000, pp. 232-238; Brian R. Hamnett. *The End of Iberian Rule on the American Continent, 1770-1830*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017, pp. 72-106; Tomás Pérez Vejo. *Elegía criolla. Una reinterpretación de las guerras de independencia hispanoamericanas*. Ciudad de México: Tusquets Editores, 2010; Jaime E. Rodríguez O. “We are now the true Spaniards”. *Sovereignty, Revolution, Independence, and the Emergence of the Federal Republic of Mexico, 1808-1824*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012 (first published as *Nosotros somos ahora los verdaderos españoles. La transición de la Nueva España de un reino de la Monarquía Española a la República Federal Mexicana*, 2 vols. Zamora: El Colegio de Michoacán/Instituto Mora, 2009), pp. 7-33.

<sup>13</sup> Similar debates took place in imperial nations, such as France and Germany, but also by nations with no sovereign State, such as in the case of Czechs and Hungarians. Hannah Arendt. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. Sand Diego, New York, and London: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1973 (first published in New York: Schocken Books, 1951), pp. 222-266; Stuart Ward. “Transcending the Nation: A Global Imperial History?”, in Burton, *After the Imperial Turn*, pp. 44-56.

the metropolitan political system.<sup>14</sup> In fact, the Spanish national narratives have still not incorporated the cases of Cuba and Puerto Rico, despite *integrismo* being undeniably the Antillean expression of Spanish nationalism.<sup>15</sup> In a 1997 article, the US-born Spanish historian Enric Ucelay-Da Cal considered Cuba the birthplace of Spanish nationalism in the form of *integrismo*.<sup>16</sup> This view has remained the exception rather than the norm, but there are recent works that point in the same direction. For instance, Albert García Balañá explored the ways in which both Spanish nationalists in Spain and Cuba explicitly supported imperial projects in Africa and Santo Domingo.<sup>17</sup> In this sense, this thesis is a contribution to this historiographic approach which considers both Spain and the Antilles the core members of the Spanish national and imperial projects.

I consider that two different one-hundred-year-long historiographical approaches may explain the lack of a narrative that integrates empire and nation. Firstly, the loss of the empire in 1898 generated a vivid debate focused on its impact on Spain's state of decline, rather than on the reasons for the colonial failure.<sup>18</sup> The intellectuals that starred this debate were known as *Generación del 98*, thus stressing the deep impact that the defeat of 1898 had on Spain's conscience.<sup>19</sup> It became a commonplace among Spanish

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<sup>14</sup> Inés Roldán de Montaud. *La Restauración en Cuba. El fracaso de un proyecto reformista*, Madrid: CSIC, 2000.

<sup>15</sup> For instance, Cuba and Puerto Rico are completely absent in the referential study on Spanish nationalism during the 19<sup>th</sup> century by José Álvarez Junco, *Mater dolorosa: la idea de España en el siglo XIX*. Madrid: Taurus Ediciones, 2001. Only recently the topic of Spanish nationalism in the Americas has been addressed, though restricted to the wars for independence in 1810-1820, Manuel Lucena Giraldo. "La nación imperial española y las revoluciones americanas de 1810". Antonio Morales Moya, Juan Pablo Fusí & Andrés de Blas Guerrero (coord.). *Historia de la nación y del nacionalismo o español*. Madrid: Galaxia Gutenberg, 2013, pp. 217-243.

<sup>16</sup> Extending his argument, he argues that beyond Spanish nationalism, the replicating nationalist voices from the Spanish periphery (Catalonia, the Basque Country, and to some extent Galicia) owe much of their configuration to the struggles for and against independence that took place in Cuba during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Enric Ucelay-Da Cal. "Cuba y el despertar de los nacionalismos en la España peninsular". *Studia Historica. Historia contemporánea*, 1997, No. 15, pp. 151-192.

<sup>17</sup> Albert García Balañá. "Patriotismos trasatlánticos. Raza y nación en el impacto de la Guerra de África en el Caribe español de 1860". *Ayer*, 2017, No. 106, pp. 207-237.

<sup>18</sup> For an overview of the debate on Spain's decline after 1898 see Helen Rawlings. *The Debate on the Decline of Spain*. Manchester and London: Manchester University Press, 2012, pp. 91-110.

<sup>19</sup> The term *Generación del 98* was first coined in 1934 by the Spanish poet Pedro Salinas, and later spread by Pedro Laín Entralgo (1908-1991) in his *La generación del noventa y ocho*. Laín Entralgo considered that the dominant thought among the members of this *Generación* was the desire to rediscover the essence of Spain through the Castilian landscape, and to escape from imperial adventures for which they thought Spain was not politically, technologically and militarily prepared. Some of the most prominent members of this group of intellectuals were Miguel de Unamuno, Pío Baroja, Ramiro de Maeztu, Ángel Ganivet, Joaquín Costa, Manuel and Antonio Machado, Valle-Inclán, and Azorín. Pedro Laín Entralgo. *La generación del noventa y ocho*. Madrid: Diana Artes Gráficas, 1945, pp. 21-43.



intellectuals to consider that the imperial adventures had been a major cause of Spain's decline. Consequently, Spain should focus on its inner *regeneración* (regeneration) and rid itself of any colonial burden.<sup>20</sup> In this context, the Volunteers were a reminder that alongside the empire, in 1898 Spain lost part of what many in the Peninsula considered part of the national territory. Hence, the Volunteers might have been painful reminders of the defeat. Secondly, throughout a good deal of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was an ongoing debate on the essence of Spain, focused on the country's nationhood after the loss of the empire, rather than in relation to the colonial past. Since Cuba and Puerto Rico were no longer members of the Spanish map, they have been neglected from the debate. These factors have made it difficult for scholars to integrate the history of the imperial territories lost in 1898 into the Spanish national narrative. The boundaries between nation and empire regarding Spain, Cuba and Puerto Rico were extremely permeable. The Volunteers, a militia created in the imperial territories for the defence of the Spanish Nation, is a clear example of this.

In the case of Cuba and Puerto Rico, I consider that the shortage of studies on the Volunteers relates to the quest for nationhood of these two islands since 1898, with very different outcomes and many nuances. Their historiographies' vision of their colonial past has generally followed the scheme of two nations struggling for their liberation against their colonial master, Spain. The very existence of the Volunteers is a direct challenge to this viewpoint. The documents held in archives largely show that thousands of Cubans and Puerto Ricans served in the Volunteers for the defence of the Spanish nation in the Antilles. David Armitage considers that "any great revolution is a civil war", a reality which is often rejected by the revolutionary narrative.<sup>21</sup> This is the pattern followed by historians in both the Antilles, especially in Cuba due to the history of wars for independence and the revolution of 1959, which differs from Puerto Rico's colonial relation with the United States since 1898. The Volunteers have been largely considered simply as the *peninsular* agents on the ground of the most intransigent Spanish colonialism, and as alien to local society. Denying the participation of the Antillean societies in the Volunteers has been a strategy for building the vision of Cuba and Puerto Rico as nations struggling for their

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<sup>20</sup> The *Regeneracionismo* was a late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries' Spanish intellectual movement focused on detecting the causes of Spanish decline and proposing solutions for the modernization of the country. A recent overview on *Regeneracionismo* in Andreu Navarra Ordoño. *Regeneracionismo. La continuidad reformista*. Madrid: Ediciones Cátedra, 2015.

<sup>21</sup> David Armitage. "Every Great Revolution is a Civil War", in Keith Michael Baker & Dan Edelstein (eds.). *Scripting Revolution: A Historical Approach to the Comparative Study of Revolutions*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015, pp. 57-68.

freedom since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Trying to challenge this view in the Cuban academia proves challenging still today. As a personal experience, an invitation to present the initial results of this thesis at Cuba's National Library in September 2015, was finally cancelled for my "troublesome findings" about the existence of thousands of Cuban-born Volunteers. However, this historiographical nationalism has lately been challenged by some brave Cuban historians. For example, in his 2012 book on *integrismo*, José Abreu Cardet considered that "the *integristas* are part of our history. Many Cubans of today have an *integrista* forebear [who was] as convinced [of his cause] as his *mambí* [supporter of Cuban independence] great-grandfather".<sup>22</sup> This is a simple and thorough way to argue that the Volunteers belong to the history of Cuba just as much as the elements that fought for independence. The same could be said regarding Puerto Rico.

This thesis presents novel research on the Volunteers. For the first time, it offers a global perspective on the phenomenon of the Volunteers. The thesis is fundamentally focused on the Cuban and Puerto Rican scenarios, but it also explores the short-lived presence of the Volunteers in the Philippines and Santo Domingo. The reason for this is that whereas the Volunteers had a relatively long history in Cuba (43 years) and Puerto Rico (34), they only existed for two years in Santo Domingo and the Philippines. Hence, Cuba and Puerto Rico provide a wider field in which to explore the role of the Volunteers as agents of the empire and nation.

This thesis is largely built on mostly unpublished material consulted in archives ranging from the national to the local level in Spain, Cuba, and Puerto Rico. The information generated by the Volunteer units plays an essential role, but the collection of primary sources that inform this study has been widened to private letters and memoirs from Volunteers, but also of those who challenged Spanish rule in Cuba and Puerto Rico, as well as newspapers and the material produced by the Spanish administration and its agents in the overseas and in the metropolitan territories. Most of these sources have not previously been consulted by historians. In building the thesis I have also relied on the referential historiography regarding the relationship of Spain and the colonies on issues such as colonial administration and politics, commercial relations, struggles for independence, slavery, and the labour movement, just to name the most important.

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<sup>22</sup> José Abreu Cardet. *Apuntes sobre el integrismo en Cuba, 1868-1878*. Santiago de Cuba: Editorial Oriente, 2012, p. 4.

This study is structured into five chapters. The first one offers an overview of some of the most characteristic features of the Volunteers: military training and duties, uniforms and weapons, and especially their demographic profile. Contrary to what historiography has traditionally claimed, that the Volunteers were a militia overwhelmingly made up of *peninsulares*, this thesis argues that there was a remarkable presence of Creoles in the Volunteers, especially in Cuba and Puerto Rico. Building on primary sources (Ministry of War and the Volunteers' own documents) never consulted before, I conclude that in Cuba and Puerto Rico, the Creoles represented about half of the Volunteer force, forming the majority in the rural areas, whereas in the main cities the *peninsulares* were the dominant element. The information on the origin of the Volunteers in Santo Domingo and the Philippines is virtually non-existent, but I argue through indirect sources that most of the Volunteers were of *peninsular* extraction due to the small number of them that existed in both countries.

In chapter two I analyse the creation, consolidation, and expansion of the Volunteers in the period 1855-1868. I argue that the Volunteers were created in 1855 to strengthen Spanish rule in Cuba against the movement that wanted to annex the island to the United States. The Volunteers were the expression of the emergence of the *peninsulares* that came to dominate the island's politics and economy and created powerful communities in the island's main cities by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century at the expense of the Creole elite. Whereas businessmen were the Volunteer officers, the immigrant working-class filled their ranks. The consolidation of the Volunteers as a permanent element of the Spanish defensive system in Cuba was closely linked to their support for imperial adventures in Morocco and Santo Domingo in the 1860s. Once the annexationist threat was gone, the Volunteers' unclear role in times of peace was redefined through an imperialist stance that translated into financial and logistical support for Spanish military efforts elsewhere. In relation to this, the Volunteers became an element associated with the same Spanish imperialist structures when the same model of militia created in Cuba in 1855 was also established in Santo Domingo (1863) and Puerto Rico (1864) for the defence of Spanish rule.

Chapter three explores the role of the Volunteers during the revolutionary period known as *Sexenio Revolucionario* (1868-1874). In six years, Spain saw Queen Elizabeth II dethroned, a regency (1868-1871), the reign of Amadeus I (1871-1873), and the First Republic (1873-1874). During the *Sexenio* the Antilles also underwent changes and suffered lingering upheavals. Cuba lived its first war for independence (1868-1878), and Puerto Rico

experienced deep reforms such as political assimilation to the metropolis (1869) and the abolition of slavery (1873). I argue that the Volunteers reinforced their role as the armed wing of *integrismo* in both islands, which did not always collaborate with the Spanish authorities when the latter tried to alter the status quo through reformist policies. This was precisely the case for the *Sexenio* governments, which generally tried to implement reforms in the Antilles. During these years, the Volunteers also intensely engaged with Cuban society by integrating thousands of Creoles into their ranks, especially in the countryside. Thus, the Volunteers were a demonstration that the *integrismo* concerned *peninsulares* as well as Creoles, thus overcoming a certain historiographic tendency to associate the Spaniards with counter-revolution and Creoles with the revolution in the Americas.<sup>23</sup> The heterogeneity of the Volunteers was also expressed by the class tensions that began to emerge during the war, expressed in the labour demands of working-class Volunteers against their employees in Havana.

Chapter four examines the adaptation of Cuba's Volunteers to the new scenario created during the interwar period that went from the end of the Ten Years' War (1878) to the beginning of the last war for independence in 1895, and the role of their Puerto Rican colleagues against the local powerful autonomist movement during the 1880s. I argue that the legacy of the 1868-1878 war greatly determined the evolution of the Volunteers in Cuba and Puerto Rico. Whereas in the latter the Volunteers enjoyed a relative stability due to the island's general situation, in the former the Volunteers underwent a difficult adaptation to peace. The assimilation of both islands to the metropolitan political system meant the appearance of political parties that relatively marginalized the Volunteers from Antillean politics. Instead of remaining a central element of Spanish politics in the Caribbean, the Volunteers became a repressive force when deemed necessary by the *integristas*, such as in Puerto Rico against the autonomists in 1887. However, though the Volunteers were associated with the *integrista* forces, the importance of militias tends to ebb away in a political party system. The Volunteers even became a force to be bargained with in metropolitan politics in the early 1890s, as will be seen. In Cuba, distinct problems originated from the legacy of the war. The devastation of the countryside during the war severely affected the mostly Cuban-born peasant Volunteers in the rural areas, largely neglected by the authorities despite plans to rebuild these with agricultural colonies. Also,

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<sup>23</sup> This is, for instance, the approach by the Mexican historian Romeo Flores Caballero, who considers the Spaniards as agents of counter-revolution in Mexico during the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. See Romeo Flores Caballero. *Revolución y contrarrevolución en la Independencia de México, 1767-1867*. Mexico City: Océano, 2009.

the growing influence of an organized labour movement and the influx of *peninsular* conscripts into the Volunteers complicated the relationship with the Spanish authorities, who would not find a clear redefinition of the Volunteers' military role during peacetime, even if the fight against banditry offered a good opportunity.

Chapter five investigates the role of the Volunteers during the wars that brought the Spanish Empire to its end in the Caribbean and in Asia: the Cuban war for independence (1895-1896), the Filipino Revolution (1896-1898), and the Spanish-American War (1898). I argue that the Volunteers became again an important element for the Spanish defensive system in the islands during these wars. In Cuba, their wide presence in rural areas was vital for the war that was fundamentally fought in the countryside for and against the protection of agricultural wealth. Often, the Volunteers were the only Spanish troops available in the countryside, which made them priority targets for the insurgents. The Volunteers also took part in the most dramatic event of the entire war for independence: the forced concentration of thousands of peasants that ended up in the death of nearly 10% of the island's population. The chapter shows that the Volunteers' role in this drama was ambivalent, for they participated as victimizers, but also as victims in a highly complex situation caused by the strategies of the Spanish and the Cuban rebel sides.

The inherent association of the Volunteers with 19<sup>th</sup> century Spanish imperialism had another expression with the creation of the Volunteers in the Philippines in 1896 in the context of the Filipino Revolution (1896-1898). Even in a context so different from Cuba and Puerto Rico in terms of demography and socio-economic structure, the Volunteers appeared as a bulwark of *integrismo* during the final years of Spanish domination in the archipelago. The Cuban and Puerto Rican examples were imitated in the Asian colony, yet with a particularity: The Volunteers were segregated by race between units of *peninsulares* and of native Filipinos. This was the adaptation of the same model in a different context.

Finally, in this chapter, I also explore the role of the Volunteers during the war against the United States that took place between April and August 1898 in Cuba, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico. Their military role clearly depended on the performance by the Spanish regular Army. Wherever these forces resisted, the Volunteers resisted. Wherever they collapsed, the Volunteers followed and even joined the enemy in some cases. I consider that desertions especially affected the Volunteers born in the overseas territories, who feared that after a foreseeable Spanish defeat they might suffer reprisals from their fellow countrymen that had supported independence.

## CHAPTER I. AN OVERVIEW OF THE VOLUNTEERS

This chapter aims to answer two very basic questions. The first is what the Volunteers did, and who they were. The answer to the first question will explore issues such as their organization, military duties of the Volunteers, their military training, their weapons, and uniforms. This will offer an overview of the Volunteers' organization, and some of the characteristics of their relationship with the military authorities, their *esprit de corps*, and their relations with local societies. To do this, this section will examine the *reglamentos* or regulations of the Volunteers in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and of the Philippines' native companies. The archipelago's Spanish Volunteers had their own *reglamento*, but I have not been able to consult the relevant documents.<sup>1</sup> The Volunteers in Santo Domingo lacked a *reglamento*, but according to the existing evidence their organization was based on the Cuban model.<sup>2</sup>

The second question has to do with who the Volunteers were or rather, where they came from. Who were the men that donned the Volunteers' uniform in Cuba, Puerto Rico, Santo Domingo, and the Philippines? Were they migrants from metropolitan Spain, sons of the colonies, or a mixture of both? What was their racial background? These questions, though they may seem simple, do not have an easy answer. The basic source of information available for determining the backgrounds of the Volunteers—the military records—are fragmented and incomplete.

Nonetheless, trying to answer this question is worth the effort, for its potential implications regarding the nationhood of the territories that made part of the Spanish Empire prior to 1898, and regarding the very concept of the Spanish Nation as well. According to the archives consulted, nearly half the Volunteers in Cuba were Cuban-born. In Puerto Rico, the presence of Creole Volunteers is proved. In Santo Domingo, the evidence suggests that the presence of local Volunteers was rather small. Finally, in the Philippines, the Volunteers were theoretically segregated between units of Europeans and native men.

Analysis of the 'national' background of the Volunteers forces us to rethink the boundaries between Nation and Empire in the fin-de-siècle Spanish case. Indeed, the data found show us that these boundaries were blurry rather than well-defined. In other words,

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<sup>1</sup> The only existing copy is kept at the National Library of the Philippines, in Manila. *Reglamento provisional de los cuerpos de Voluntarios de Filipinas*. Manila: Imp. de Amigos del País, 1897.

<sup>2</sup> AGMM, Ministerio de la Guerra, "Organización y aprobación del uniforme del Batallón de Voluntarios de Santo Domingo (1863-1865)", sig. 5664.5.

the idea of belonging to the Spanish nation went well beyond the limits of the Iberian Peninsula and reached a considerable part of the societies of Cuba and Puerto Rico. The presence of Cubans and Puerto Ricans in a militia of civilians committed to the defence of the Spanish Nation and its empire in exchange for no economic compensation is proof of that. Hence, our thesis is an invitation to reconsider the well-established historiography on the evolution of the national projects in Spain and its overseas dominions. Works of reference on this topic largely omit the existence of this transatlantic sense of a Spanish community. For instance, the idea of the Spanish Nation in the imperial territories is totally absent in the work by José Álvarez Junco on the evolution of the Spanish nationality during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the former Spanish territories, this vision is mirrored regarding the emergence of the Cuban and Puerto Rican nations. For the US-based Cuban historian Louis A. Pérez, Jr., by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the idea of a Cuban nation had already been forged in opposition to Spanish rule.<sup>3</sup> In the case of Puerto Rico, historians have often argued that Spanish Loyalists were almost exclusively *peninsulares*.<sup>4</sup>

I argue that whereas this approach to the issue of nationality in Spain, Cuba, or Puerto Rico is partially valid, it does not embrace the complexity of their societies. It is true that by mid-19<sup>th</sup> century a strong and distinctive sense of nationality different to the Spanish had persuaded wide segments of the Cuban and Puerto Rican populations, and that the sentiment of belonging to the Spanish Nation was stronger in the Peninsula.<sup>5</sup> However, I argue that a sense of identification with the Spanish Nation also existed among wide sectors of Cuban and Puerto Rican societies. Their presence among the Volunteer ranks is proof thereof. Santo Domingo and the Philippines were particular cases in their own right. For different reasons, the Volunteers in these countries were overwhelmingly *peninsulares*. The short period of reincorporation of Santo Domingo into the Spanish Monarchy (1861-1865) had not allowed for the development of a sense of belonging to the Spanish Nation. In the Philippines, the sense of Spanish nationhood was restricted to the

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<sup>3</sup> Louis A. Pérez, Jr. *Cuba. Between Reform & Revolution*. New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995 (first published in 1988), pp. 105-155.

<sup>4</sup> Olga Jiménez de Wagenheim. *Puerto Rico. An Interpretive History from pre-Columbian Times to 1900*. Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1998, pp. 137-192.

<sup>5</sup> Of course, this does not mean that nationalization in Spain was not contested. By the 1880s and 1890s there were incipient nationalist movements in Catalonia and the Basque Country, whereas some historians have argued that the working-class were only weakly incorporated into the idea of a Spanish nation. Xosé M. Núñez Seixas. "Nación y nacionalismos en la España contemporánea", in Manuel Menéndez Alzamora & Antonio Robles Egés (eds.). *Pensamiento político en la España contemporánea*. Madrid: Trotta, 2013, pp. 275-312; Manuel Tuñón de Lara. "Nacionalismos y la lucha de clases en la España contemporánea". *Iglesia viva: revista de pensamiento cristiano*, 1981, No. 95-96, pp. 429-446.

tiny community of *peninsulares* or of Filipinos of Spanish descent, whereas the Spanish culture remained alien to most of the archipelago's population.

### 1. What did a Volunteer do?

According to the *reglamentos*, the Volunteers were created to collaborate with the regular forces in keeping public order and defending Spanish sovereignty. This was reflected with little variations in the regulations of Cuba's (1856, 1869, 1892), and Puerto Rico's Volunteers (1870, 1888). The Volunteers of Santo Domingo and the Spanish Volunteers of the Philippines probably functioned in a very similar way to their colleagues in the Antilles. In Cuba, the Volunteer units were organized into sections, companies, battalions, and regiments of infantry, cavalry, artillery, and Marines. Infantry always represented the bulk of the Volunteers. In Puerto Rico and the Philippines there were only infantry units. The lack of artillery or cavalry units is not mentioned in their *reglamentos* but was probably caused by the hilly orography of both countries, which recommended the use of foot soldiers rather than cavalry. The number of sections, companies, battalions, and regiments was left to the convenience of the Captain General, who decided over their creation and dissolution. Since 1869, the *Segundo Cabo* was officially appointed *Subinspector General de Voluntarios*. Only in the *reglamentos* of Puerto Rico (1888) and the Philippines (1897) are the number of units mentioned: 14 battalions and a loose company, and 30 companies respectively.

The organization of the units was quite like the Army. The basic operative unit was the company, which was made up of a captain, 2 1<sup>st</sup> lieutenants, 2 2<sup>nd</sup> lieutenants, 5 sergeants, 13 corporals, 1 bugle, and 80-126 volunteers. A company had 3 sections (of ca. 25-40 men), a battalion had 6-8 companies, and a regiment had 2 battalions. Sections were commanded by a 2<sup>nd</sup> lieutenant or a lieutenant, companies by a captain, battalions, and regiments by a colonel. Coordinating all the units, the *Segundo Cabo* or vice-captain general was appointed from 1869 *Subinspector General de Voluntarios*. Advising the *Subinspector General*, there was a *Plana Mayor General* on each island, made up of Volunteers: a colonel, a lieutenant colonel, two majors, and five captains.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> *Reglamento para los cuerpos de Voluntarios de la isla de Cuba*. Havana: Imprenta del Gobierno y Capitanía General, 1869, cap. I, art. 1-7; *Novísimo Reglamento del Instituto de Voluntarios de la Isla de Cuba aprobado por Real Decreto de 7 de julio de 1892; Comentado y anotado con numerosas disposiciones, formularios y apéndices conteniendo la parte de las Ordenanzas del Ejército aplicable a los mismos; el Tratado 2º del Código de Justicia Militar y el Reglamento de Voluntarios de Puerto*



All the Volunteers had to be men between the ages of 16-18 and 40-50 (depending on the island), and Spaniards, with the exception of the native Filipino Volunteers. This included all the free inhabitants of Cuba and Puerto Rico, but only a minority in the Philippines. They had to be economically self-sufficient, and able to afford their own weapon, uniform, and horse (in the case they joined a cavalry unit). Contrary to what has often been argued, former convicts or men of “bad reputation” were not allowed into the Volunteers. Active members of the Army, the Navy and the administration could only join the Volunteers after their retirement.<sup>7</sup> In fact, former Army officers and sergeants who stayed in the colonies often joined the Volunteers with the ranks they had reached in the Army.

The military preparation was quite basic. According to the *reglamentos* of 1856, 1869 (Cuba), and 1870 (Puerto Rico), the only military training was provided on holiday days between November and January. This coincided with the *zafra*, or sugar harvest when the commercial activity of Cuba came to a halt because the island’s main export, sugar, was being collected. This is a reminder of the fact that people employed in commerce were the backbone of the Volunteers. While their shops and companies were in a state of low activity, the Volunteers could better combine their regular jobs with military training. This calendar did not fit with the activities in the countryside, which were more intense precisely during the months of the *zafra*. The influx of thousands of peasants to the Volunteers after 1869 resulted in the units in the countryside not following this calendar. Accordingly, the *reglamentos* of 1888 (Puerto Rico) and 1892 (Cuba) changed the military training calendar, leaving the decision to the Captain General.

Military training consisted of learning the Volunteers’ *reglamento*, basic military training such as foot drills, marksmanship and taking care of weaponry. Such a basic military training usually produced no great fighters. In fact, the low preparation of the Volunteers was often denounced by the military authorities who had to count on them for taking part in military operations. The Volunteers were prepared enough to patrol the

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*Rico, é índices cronológico y alfabético*. Havana: P. Fernández y Compañía, 1892, cap. I, art. 1-21; *Reglamento para los cuerpos de Voluntarios de la isla de Puerto Rico*. San Juan. Imprenta del Gobierno y Capitanía General, 1870, cap. I, art. 1-6; *Isla de Puerto-Rico. Reglamento para los cuerpos de Voluntarios de la misma, aprobado por Real Orden de 10 de julio de 1888*. Puerto Rico: Imp. de la Capitanía General, 1888, cap. I, art. 1-6.

<sup>7</sup> Uralde Cancio. *Voluntarios de Cuba española*, pp. 73-77; *Reglamento para los cuerpos de Voluntarios de la isla de Cuba* (1869), cap. II, art. 8-20; *Novísimo Reglamento del Instituto de Voluntarios de la Isla de Cuba* (1892), cap. II, art. 22-27; *Reglamento para los cuerpos de Voluntarios de la isla de Puerto Rico* (1870), cap. II, art. 7-19; *Reglamento para los cuerpos de Voluntarios de [Puerto Rico]* (1888), cap. II, art. 7-19.

cities, garrison military hospitals, prisons, and forts, but not to fight a war. The military preparation in the countryside was still irregular, but better than in the cities. After all, peasants were familiar with firearms for hunting and knew the terrain perfectly.<sup>8</sup>

During peacetime, the Volunteers' main military duties were to garrison forts, prisons, military hospitals, and to take part in parades alongside the Army. Apart from the parades, which were performed on some holidays, the rest of the duties were performed generally once a week. This is, every Volunteer had to be on duty at least once per week. During wartime, their duties in the cities were rather the same. In the countryside, however, the Volunteers had a direct role in military operations.

The Volunteers were recruited and operated locally. They could not be deployed to serve outside their town unless they were mobilized by the Captaincy General during wartime. Mobilization often only affected Volunteer units in big cities and consisted of the forcible deployment of companies to the countryside. During the mobilization, the Volunteers had to abide by the same strict discipline as the regular soldiers, but also theoretically received a small stipend, which nevertheless was often never received.<sup>9</sup>

Evidence suggests that the Volunteers were weak combatants when fighting alone. When a town was attacked by the rebels during the wars for independence in Cuba, the Volunteers often surrendered when they were the only defenders. This attitude might also be explained by the fact that, in the countryside, the Volunteers were Cuban peasants who feared retaliation against them, their families and their properties. In fact, if captured in combat, these Cuban Volunteers faced an almost certain death, for the insurgents considered them as traitors. However, when these troops fought alongside the regular Army, they often proved reliable forces, being used to perform auxiliary tasks, or even to hold the line alongside regular soldiers. The better preparation of the regular soldiers and the very presence of the Army encouraged the Volunteers to intensify their performance.

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<sup>8</sup> *Reglamento para los cuerpos de Voluntarios de la isla de Cuba*. Havana: Imprenta del Gobierno y Capitanía General, 1856, cap. II, art. 1-2; *Reglamento para los cuerpos de Voluntarios de la isla de Cuba* (1869), cap. V, art. 27-33; *Novísimo Reglamento del Instituto de Voluntarios de la Isla de Cuba* (1892), cap. VI, art. 51-58; *Reglamento para los cuerpos de Voluntarios de la isla de Puerto Rico* (1870), cap. V, art. 26-32; *Reglamento para los cuerpos de Voluntarios de [Puerto Rico]* (1888), cap. V, art. 26-32.

<sup>9</sup> *Reglamento para los cuerpos de Voluntarios de la isla de Cuba* (1856), cap. I, art. 1-8; *Reglamento para los cuerpos de Voluntarios de la isla de Cuba* (1869), cap. VI, art. 34-43; *Novísimo Reglamento del Instituto de Voluntarios de la Isla de Cuba* (1892), cap. VII, art. 60-72; *Reglamento para los cuerpos de Voluntarios de la isla de Puerto Rico* (1870), cap. VI, art. 33-42; *Reglamento para los cuerpos de Voluntarios de [Puerto Rico]* (1888), cap. VI, art. 33-42.

It is important to mention that the Volunteers received no salary or stipend unless they were mobilized. The only Volunteers to receive an allowance were the *cabos furrieles* (corporals which took care of administering the units' funds), and the members of the military band, for they were often required to perform on holidays, at bullfights, or special events.<sup>10</sup> In fact, they had to provide their own uniform and weapons. Often, the Volunteer colonels, commanders of the battalions, were affluent members who paid for the uniforms and weapons of their men. On other occasions, officers collected money to pay for the uniforms and weapons of their men. In the countryside it became a common practice that neighbours collected money to pay for the uniforms and weapons for the local Volunteers.

The uniform of the Volunteers was quite similar in Cuba and Puerto Rico. It was made of cotton and consisted of white trousers and a blue-striped white jacket, with a panama hat decorated with a Spanish-flag-coloured cockade, military boots, and belting. There were minor differences, especially on the jacket cuffs and flaps, where they bore their rank insignia and the symbol of their branch (infantry, cavalry, artillery, Marines) and unit (battalion or company nº).

Weaponry was not standardised, but for infantry forces it usually consisted of a long firearm (fundamentally Remington, but also Peabody, Minié, or Chassepot), and a machete. Artillery Volunteers had a short firearm (pistol or revolver), whereas cavalry units were armed with a long firearm (shorter than that of foot soldiers), a sabre, and more rarely, spears. Officers of all branches were armed with a pistol or a revolver, and a sabre. Weapons were bought by private companies or the Spanish Ministry of War.<sup>11</sup> A particularity of the Volunteers was that they could keep their weapons at home. However, when they left the militia, they had to give it up to the military authorities.<sup>12</sup>

The companies of Filipino native Volunteers, created in 1897, functioned quite differently. They were divided into "locals" and "mobilized". The former had to be men of 18-50 years, and the latter 20-40. In both cases, the Volunteers received the same stipend

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<sup>10</sup> *Reglamento para los cuerpos de Voluntarios de la isla de Cuba* (1869), cap. XIII, art. 133-142; *Novísimo Reglamento del Instituto de Voluntarios de la Isla de Cuba* (1892), cap. XII, art. 155-165; *Reglamento para los cuerpos de Voluntarios de la isla de Puerto Rico* (1870), cap. XIII, art. 131-138; *Reglamento para los cuerpos de Voluntarios de [Puerto Rico]* (1888), cap. XIII, art. 136-146.

<sup>11</sup> For instance, the Ministry of War Budget for 1871-1872 included 1 million *pesetas* to build Remington rifles that were to be bought by Cuba's Volunteers. *Gaceta de Madrid*, 18-04-1872, p. 172.

<sup>12</sup> In small towns the weapons had to be given to the closest *Comandancia Militar* (military command), in Havana and Manila to the *Maestranza de Artillería* (Artillery headquarters and factory) and to the *Comandancia de Artillería* (Artillery headquarters) in Puerto Rico. Domingo Acebrón. *Los Voluntarios*, pp. 35-36; Ribó. *Historia de los Voluntarios cubanos*, p. 477; Uralde Cancio. *Voluntarios de Cuba española*, pp. 68-73.

as the native Filipinos serving in the Spanish Army. Since the authorities did not rely on the loyalty of these men, all their weapons (a Freire-Bull rifle and a *bolo*, or traditional Filipino dagger) was provided by the military authorities and kept in barracks, not at home. Also, all their officers had to be active members of the regular Army. The thirty companies created in 1897 consisted of 5 officers and 219 soldiers, who were always embedded into regular Army battalions. The native Volunteers were often used as skirmishers and pathfinders for the regular soldiers.<sup>13</sup>

## 2. Who were the Volunteers?

The basic source of information about the background of the Volunteers comes from the membership lists and the individual military records kept at Spain's General Military Archives of Madrid and Segovia respectively. A thorough examination of all the thousands of men that served in the Volunteers in Cuba, Puerto Rico, Santo Domingo, and the Philippines between 1855 and 1898, would give us the exact background map of these men.

However, these lists are incomplete and non-standardized, as they lacked a concrete regulation. Some companies and battalions recorded their men in detail, including their name, surname, birthplace, age, rank, profession, and in some case, even their race. Others only recorded their full name, age, and rank. And for others, the lists have simply been lost. There is also an additional difficulty for the researcher. Whereas most of Cuba's Volunteers records have been kept at the General Military Archive in Madrid, the detailed membership list of their colleagues in Puerto Rico, Santo Domingo, and the Philippines have not been kept for reasons unknown.

Thus, the information collected for this thesis, until now unpublished in an academic treatise, regarding the background of the Volunteers is not complete and very fragmentary. Hence, this thesis has thoroughly explored indirect sources, both primary and secondary, such as military reports, memoirs, personal letters, and newspapers, which give us some hints about the Volunteers' background. However, due to the lack of information regarding the records for the Volunteers in Puerto Rico, Santo Domingo, and the Philippines, the information on the Cuban scenario is far more detailed than in the other cases.

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<sup>13</sup> *Reglamento de las Compañías de Voluntarios Indígenas creadas por Decreto de 16 de Octubre de 1897*. Manila: Tipo-Litografía de Chofré y Comp.<sup>ª</sup>, 1897, pp. 4-21.

## 2.1. Cuba

It is impossible to establish the exact number of men that donned the uniform of *Voluntario* between the creation of this militia in 1855, and its dissolution in 1898. However, they certainly were tens of thousands. Five years after their creation, in 1860, there were already ca. 12,000 of them.<sup>14</sup> During the Ten Years' War, their numbers peaked at 80,000, dropping to 60,000 during the interwar period that preceded the war of 1895-1898, when the Volunteers reached up to 85,000 men.

Throughout their history of over forty years, the ranks of the Volunteers in Cuba reflected the society in which they had originated. Far from the traditional opinion that the Volunteers were fundamentally a militia of *peninsulares*, the ranks of these men were Cuban-born as much as they were metropolitan Spaniards. Writing in 1872, the New York-based Spanish journalist and former *Voluntario* José Ferrer de Couto considered that out of the 80,000 Volunteers, over 52,000 were born in Cuba.<sup>15</sup> Despite this datum, to establish the exact percentage of Cubans and *peninsulares* among the Volunteers is virtually impossible due to the reasons given in the pages above.

Nonetheless, there seems to have been an informal spatial division between the urban and the rural areas of the island. Whereas the members' lists of the companies and battalions in the cities tended to show a predominance of *peninsulares*, the men born in Cuba were usually countryside Volunteers for the most part. This was the result of the configuration of the Cuban society from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Most of the migrants from metropolitan Spain settled in the cities and found employment in commerce, transport, and cigar-making. This was the bedrock of the Volunteers in urban Cuba. In the

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<sup>14</sup> More concretely 11,802. They were organized into ten battalions, 30 loose companies, and 51 sections of infantry (7,278 men), and 11 squadrons, and 193 sections of cavalry (5,524 men). *Cuerpos de Voluntarios de la Isla de Cuba. Escalafón general de señores jefes, oficiales y sargentos por el orden de antigüedad en 1º de enero de 1860*. Havana: Imprenta del Gobierno y Capitanía General, 1860, p. 13.

<sup>15</sup> José Ferrer de Couto (1820-1877) was a native of Galicia who settled in New York in 1860 after following a career as a soldier and journalist in Spain. He wrote extensively on the Spanish colonization of the Americas and in favour of slavery. He created the Spanish Government-funded *El Cronista de Nueva York* in 1863 as a platform to defend Spain's interests in the United States. He was also an intelligence agent of the Spanish consulate in New York where there was an active Cuban nationalist exile community. By the end of 1868 he joined Havana's Artillery Volunteer Battalion and fought during the first stages of the Ten Years' War. José Ferrer de Couto. *Cuba puede ser independiente: folleto político de actualidad*. New York: Imprenta de "El Cronista", 1872, pp. 85-86; Daniel Fernández de Miguel. *El enemigo yanqui. Las raíces conservadoras del antiamericanismo español*. Zaragoza: Geneuve Ediciones, 2012, pp. 44-48; Otero Pimentel. *Memoria sobre los Voluntarios*, p. 71; Andrés Sánchez Padilla. *Enemigos íntimos. España y los Estados Unidos antes de la guerra de Cuba (1865-1898)*. Valencia: Publicacions de la Universitat de València, 2016, p. 62.

countryside, alongside thousands of slaves and former slaves in the sugar-producing areas, Cuban-born free peasants—popularly known as *guajiros*—worked in agriculture, especially in the tobacco and coffee fields, which did not rely to a large extent on enslaved manpower. Most of the Volunteers in the countryside were *guajiros*.

To establish the exact percentage of *criollos* and *peninsulares* in the Volunteers is impossible. Quite often, the units' membership lists did not disclose information on the birthplace of their members. Fortunately, this was not always the case. A partial review of the Volunteer units in Havana during the Ten Years' War, shows us that the percentage of *peninsulares* tended to be 70-90%.<sup>16</sup> In the countryside area of Guantánamo, in eastern Cuba, on the contrary, the Cubans usually represented 55-95%. Areas which combined an important urban centre with a vast agricultural vicinity followed the same tendency.<sup>17</sup> This was the case of the city of Matanzas and its hinterland. Whereas in the city the *peninsulares* represented nearly 70% of the Volunteers, in the nearby rural area the Cubans comprised over 55%.<sup>18</sup>

As to the years of the war of 1895-1898, the percentages remained much the same. Yet still, many units did not include information on the birthplace of their members. Just as in the previous war, the traditional assumption was to consider that these men were merely migrants from metropolitan Spain. However, the study of this war by John Lawrence Tone highlighted that the presence of Cubans among the Volunteers was far from a rarity. The data consulted here point in the same direction. Considering that the member lists do not always provide the information, I have resorted to the lethal casualties list published by the Spanish Ministry of War during the conflict. After having checked the complete list of 60,000 entrances, it was found that almost 1,800 Volunteers died during the war, of whom ca. 44% were Cuban-born.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> The data are taken from surveys of AGMM, Ultramar, Capitanía General de Cuba, Subinspección General de Voluntarios, cajas 3526-3530.

<sup>17</sup> The data are taken from surveys of AGMM, Ultramar, Capitanía General de Cuba, Subinspección General de Voluntarios, cajas 3658-3660.

<sup>18</sup> The data are taken from Benito González del Tánago. *Estadística de los Voluntarios existentes en 31 de julio de 1869 en Matanzas, Cabezas, Ceiba-Mocha, Corral-Nuevo, Canasí, Guanábana, Sabanilla del Encomendador, Bolondrón, Unión de Reyes, Madruga, Güira de Macuriges y Alacranes, con expresión de las clases, nombres y apellidos, edad, pueblos y provincias de donde son naturales*. Havana: Imprenta La Intrépida, 1869.

<sup>19</sup> The data are taken from the *Diario Oficial del Ministerio de la Guerra*, published by the Ministry of War between 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1896 and 7<sup>th</sup> June 1900. These lists cover the entirety of the war, between February 1895 and December 1898.

Regarding race, the Volunteers reflected the Cuban population's composition and hierarchization. During the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Cuba was a white-dominated diverse society. So were the Volunteers. Since the conquest and colonization of the Americas, the Spaniards had established a system of *castas* giving different legal status to people of European, indigenous American, and African descent. The Spaniards (whites) were the privileged group that held political, social, and economic power in the colonial societies of Spanish America. They were followed by the free yet subservient *indios*, and the unfree Africans, who only gradually were granted the means to achieve personal liberty. The social boundaries between the *castas* were less rigid than the legal statuses, and over the centuries sexual intercourse between the different groups produced growing numbers of *mestizos*, mulattoes, and *zambos*. The *castas* legal system was abolished by the Cádiz Constitution (1812), but the social-hierarchic dynamics established by three centuries of colonial practices outlived its legal abolition.<sup>20</sup> Hence, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Cuba was a society in which whites had the upper hand. Black Cubans were only gradually granted freedom until slavery was finally abolished in 1886. Of course, the very definition of "white" and "black" was often problematic in a diverse colonial society such as Cuba's. The "racial" distinction could have been clearer when referring to *peninsulares* or people born in Africa. Regarding families with a long presence in Cuba, the concept of "white" and "black" often depended on the phenotype and social status, and perception, rather than on the actual ethnic background.

In quantitative terms, whites and blacks were the bulk of Cuba's population. In 1846, whites made up 47.4% and blacks 52.6 respectively. In 1899 the balance had shifted to 66.1% white and 32.2 black. This "whitening" process was the result of a conscious policy aimed at increasing the number of whites on the island. This was achieved through the massive arrival of Spanish immigrants during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Apart from whites and blacks, there was also a minority of Chinese 'coolies', which reached a peak of 3.3% in 1877, and a tiny community of Taínos, the island's original inhabitants, at the eastern tip of Cuba, near the towns of Baracoa and Guantánamo.<sup>21</sup>

Among whites, there were also hierarchies. The population of Spanish descent was made up of *criollos*, or Creoles (born in the Americas) and *peninsulares* (born in

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<sup>20</sup> Feros. *Speaking of Spain*, pp. 189-231; David Sartorius. *Ever Faithful. Race, Loyalty, and the Ends of Empire in Spanish Cuba*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2013, pp. 21-51.

<sup>21</sup> The information on the demographic percentages is taken from Joan Casanovas. *Bread, or Bullets! Urban Labor and Spanish Colonialism in Cuba, 1850-1898*. Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 1998, p. 54, table 10.

metropolitan Spain). The privileged position of the former began to be contested by the massive arrival of the latter from the 1830s. During the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, *peninsulares* gradually came to dominate administration, commerce, and politics in Cuba, despite never reaching more than 10% of the population. The Spanish authorities considered the *peninsulares* a key element for controlling Cuba, as the *criollos'* loyalty to Spain was considered doubtful. The paramount role of Creoles in the independence of Spanish America was in the back of the minds of colonial governors throughout the century. The creation of the Volunteers must be understood in relation to this social hierarchy, for its very inception was aimed at arming the *peninsulares* and marginalizing the *criollos* from the military system. However, as will be seen throughout the thesis, matters proved to be much more complex as there was also a strong Spanish *criollo* Loyalism.

To establish the percentage of whites and blacks/mulattoes in the Volunteers is impossible, for the documentation produced by the units only rarely disclosed information about the racial background of their members. However, all the evidence suggests that the Volunteers were predominantly white. The first organizers of the Volunteers in 1855 were mostly wealthy *peninsulares* linked to commercial activity, who recruited their employees, often *peninsulares* as well. But after the start of the Ten Years' War in 1868, a wave of *criollos* joined the Volunteers, especially in the countryside, as Spanish rule was seriously threatened. Thus, at least since 1868, the bedrock of the *Voluntarios* was the immigrant community of *peninsulares* and white Cuban peasants.

The presence of black and mulatto Volunteers is also well documented. This is consistent with the argument of David Sartorius, who considers that until 1898 there was a minority of Cubans of African descent who considered that they could be granted more civil rights under the Spanish rule.<sup>22</sup> A *Batallón de Voluntarios movilizados de color* was created in 1869, and there were units of "coloured" Volunteers throughout the wars fought between 1868 and 1898.<sup>23</sup> The number of black Volunteers in some units was quite relevant. Out of the hundreds of Volunteers member lists consulted, only one disclosed their racial background. In 1876, the Volunteers infantry section of Cuartón del Indio (a small village

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<sup>22</sup> Sartorius. *Ever Faithful*, pp. 187-216.

<sup>23</sup> For instance, the black civil rights activist Rodolfo de Lagardère created on 24<sup>th</sup> April 1898 the *Voluntarios de Color* and the *Batallón Urbano de Color de La Habana*. AGMM, Ultramar, Capitanía General de Cuba, Subinspección General de Voluntarios, caja 4690; Gil Gelpí y Ferro. *Historia de la revolución y guerra de Cuba*. Havana: Tipografía de la Gaceta Oficial, 1887, p. 161; Sartorius. *Ever Faithful*, pp. 214-215.



near the town of Guantánamo) reported that a third of its members were of African descent. In the nearby village of Palma de San Juan, evidence was even found of an African-born Volunteer (from “Guinea”), probably a former slave.<sup>24</sup>

## 2.2. Puerto Rico

Unlike in the Cuban case, the member lists of the Volunteer units in Puerto Rico have not been kept. Understandably, this is an unsurmountable barrier that impedes the offering of any precise data on the presence of *peninsulares* and Puerto Ricans in the smaller of the Spanish Antilles. Thus, I have resorted to secondary references that nonetheless tell us a story similar to the Cuban scenario.

As in Cuba, though in smaller numbers, thousands of men donned the Volunteers’ uniform in Puerto Rico since their creation in 1864 and their dissolution after the occupation of the island by the United States in 1898. By 1884 there were 4,700 Volunteers on the island.<sup>25</sup> By 1890, the estimates ranged between 5,000 and 6,000 members.<sup>26</sup> Thanks to a thorough publication that includes the name and rank of the Volunteers—though not the birthplace—it is known that by 1896, there were exactly 7,135 Volunteers in Puerto Rico.<sup>27</sup> At the time of the US declaration of war on Spain in April 1898, their numbers peaked at 7,930.<sup>28</sup>

As for the Cuban case, the historiography has tended to consider Puerto Rico’s Volunteers as little less than the ‘militia of the *peninsular* merchants’.<sup>29</sup> However, primary and secondary sources reveal that both Puerto Ricans and *peninsulares* joined the *Voluntarios*. Their very creator, José Ramón Fernández, marquis of La Esperanza, was a Puerto Rican landowner and sugar producer who relied on the powerful community of

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<sup>24</sup> Out of 87 men, of whom 85 were Cuban-born, 6 were *pardos* (Mulatto), and 22 *morenos* (Black). AGMM, Ultramar, Capitanía General de Cuba, Subinspección General de Voluntarios, caja 301.

<sup>25</sup> *Ejército de Puerto-Rico. Estado militar de todas las armas é institutos y escalafón general de los jefes, oficiales, sargentos 1º de Infantería en 1º de enero de 1884*. Puerto-Rico: Imprenta y Litografía de la Capitanía General, 1884, p. 7.

<sup>26</sup> See, for instance, the 1889-1890 debate on the right to vote for the Volunteers in Cuba and Puerto Rico. *Diario de las Sesiones de Cortes*, 22-04-1890, p. 4493.

<sup>27</sup> *Provincia de Puerto Rico. Instituto de Voluntarios de la Isla de Puerto Rico. Estado militar y escalafón general de los Sres. Jefes, oficiales, médicos, capellanes, músicos mayores, sanitarios en activo, supernumerarios, honorarios y exentos de servicio en 1º de marzo de 1896*. San Juan: Est. Tip. de Francisco J. Marxuach, 1896, p. 15.

<sup>28</sup> Ángel Rivero Méndez. *Crónica de la Guerra Hispano-Americana en Puerto Rico*. Madrid: Sucesores de Rivadeneyra, 1922, p. 450.

<sup>29</sup> Astrid Cubano Iguina. *El hilo en el laberinto. Claves de la lucha política en Puerto Rico (siglo XIX)*. San Juan: Ediciones Huracán, 1990, p. 61.

*peninsulares* that controlled commerce in San Juan—the island’s capital—for the organization of the first Volunteer battalion in 1864.<sup>30</sup> Over the years, more Volunteer companies and battalions were created throughout the island, incorporating Puerto Ricans as well as *peninsulares*. In 1888 a fifth of the Volunteer officers was born in Puerto Rico.<sup>31</sup> As for the rank-and-file *Voluntarios*, the presence of natives of the island was probably much higher. The Puerto Rican Spanish Army officer Ángel Rivero Méndez acknowledged the presence of many of his fellow countrymen in the Volunteers’ militia.<sup>32</sup>

Other indirect sources seem to point in the same direction. For instance, in the Autumn of 1895 the military commander of Ponce, the island’s second most important city, reported to the captain general in San Juan that most of the Volunteers in his area were employed as coffee-pickers, a job usually conducted by Puerto Rican peasants of Spanish or mixed Taíno-Spanish descent, popularly known as *jíbaros*.<sup>33</sup> Thus, though lacking precise numbers, the presence of Puerto Ricans among the Volunteers can be inferred. Besides, the existence of these *jíbaro* Volunteers in the countryside indicates that the spatial distribution seen for Cuba’s Volunteers (*peninsulares* in the cities, Creoles in the rural areas) was also valid for the Puerto Rican case.

As to the racial composition of the Volunteers in Puerto Rico, no reference was found to the presence of men of African descent in their ranks, unlike in the Cuban case. This is rather surprising, for non-Whites represented ca. 40% of the island’s population by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>34</sup> Despite the limited sources, it might be suggested that this

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<sup>30</sup> AHN, Ultramar, 5457, exp. 23. José Ramón Fernández y Martínez (1808-1883) was born in San Juan to a Spanish Navy officer and a Puerto Rican mother. He was a sugar and rum producer, owning ca. 200 slaves and several *haciendas*, most notably ‘La Esperanza’ (Manatí), becoming Puerto Rico’s first sugar producer. He contributed economically to the African War (1859-1860), promoted the creation of the San Juan 1<sup>st</sup> Volunteer Battalion in December 1864, and founded the Conservative Liberal Party (Unconditional Spanish Party since 1880) in 1870. He was appointed Marquis of La Esperanza (1869) and was granted the *Cruz de Isabel la Católica* (1871). AHN, Ultramar, 5457, exp. 23; Alejandro Ynfesta. *El marqués de la Esperanza, jefe del partido español de Puerto-Rico*. San Juan: Tipografía de González, 1875; Reece B. Bothwell. *Orígenes y desarrollo de los partidos políticos en Puerto Rico*. San Juan: Editorial Edil, 1987, pp. 4.

<sup>31</sup> Rosado y Brincau. *Bosquejo Histórico*, pp. 235-312.

<sup>32</sup> Rivero Méndez. *Crónica de la Guerra*, pp. 449-455.

<sup>33</sup> The Taínos were the inhabitants of Puerto Rico (which they called *Borikén*) at the arrival of the Spaniards in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. AGMM, Documentación de Puerto Rico, sig. 5202.20; Fernando Picó. “Genealogía del sudor: la procedencia de algunos jornaleros agrícolas del café en el Puerto Rico del siglo XIX”. *Iberoamericana. América Latina, España, Portugal: Ensayos sobre letras, historia y sociedad. Notas. Reseñas iberoamericanas*, 1997, vol. 21, No. 67-68, pp. 20-28.

<sup>34</sup> According to the census of 1887, out of a total population of 798,565 inhabitants, Whites numbered 474,933 (59.5%), Mulattoes 246,647 (30.9%), and Blacks 76,985 (9.6%). Luis A. Figueroa. *Sugar, Slavery, and Freedom in Nineteenth-Century Puerto Rico*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005, p. 48.

was caused by the early identification of the Puerto Rican autonomists and nationalists with the cause of abolitionism, thus decreasing considerably the rate of support among the Puerto Ricans of African descent.<sup>35</sup> In opposition, the Volunteers were considered the armed wing of the landowning class that defended slavery until its abolition in 1873.<sup>36</sup>

### 2.3. Santo Domingo

The existence of the Volunteers in Santo Domingo was brief (1863-1865) and completely linked to the reincorporation of the Spanish-speaking part of La Hispaniola into the Spanish Crown (1861-1865). The records of the Volunteers there are scarce and fragmented. Again, no record of their members is to be found in the Spanish Military General Archive, where all military records are theoretically preserved.

I have only been able to document two companies of Volunteers, in the cities of Santo Domingo and Santiago de los Caballeros.<sup>37</sup> Hence, the Dominican Volunteers would have probably numbered around two hundred men. Since no list of members exists, no precise data can be established on their numbers nor on their origin. However, I argue that they were a mixture of Spanish officers and Dominican rank-and-file, due to the scarce Spanish migration to the country and the existence of a pro-Spanish community among Dominican merchants in the capital city.

The only members' list found refers to the 22 officers of the Volunteer company created in the city of Santo Domingo. All of them were Spanish officials, former soldiers, and businessmen recently arrived in Santo Domingo, apart from a few members of the Dominican Pou family, owners of the main trading company in Santo Domingo.<sup>38</sup> This very document also states that most of the rank-and-file Volunteers had been recruited

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<sup>35</sup> Ileana Rodríguez-Silva. "Abolition, Race, and the Politics of Gratitude in Late Nineteenth-Century Puerto Rico". *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 2013, vol. 4, No. 93, pp. 621-657.

<sup>36</sup> Christopher Schmidt-Nowara. *Empire and Antislavery. Spain, Cuba, and Puerto Rico, 1833-1874*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1999, pp. 144-153.

<sup>37</sup> The only information found is that the Ministry of War rewarded 12 of them in June 1864 for their gallantry during combats in August and September 1863. The decorations were *Cruces de María Isabel Luisa* awarded to one sergeant, one corporal, and ten soldiers. AGMM, Ministerio de la Guerra, sig. 5665.23.

<sup>38</sup> The members of the Pou family were Juan Pou, Salvador Pou, and José Mana Pou. AGMM, Ministerio de la Guerra, "Organización y aprobación del uniforme del Batallón de Voluntarios de Santo Domingo (1863-1865)", sig. 5664.5.

from among commercial employees, which was restricted to Dominican citizens until the annexation to Spain in 1861.<sup>39</sup>

Thus, it can be considered that the composition of the Volunteers in Santo Domingo was a direct consequence of the weak popular support among Dominicans for the reinstated Spanish rule. At least among the officers of the Volunteers, only a group of local merchants donned the uniform, whereas most of their comrades-in-arms were Spaniards that had recently arrived with the Spanish state apparatus.

#### 2.4. Philippines

The existence of the Volunteers in the Philippines was brief and exclusively related to the Filipino Revolution (1896-1898). This militia was created in September 1896 at the very beginning of the uprising and was dismantled in August 1898 when the Spaniards capitulated to the new ruler of the archipelago: The United States.

In terms of composition, the Volunteers in Asia's only Spanish colony presents a unique case in comparison to their colleagues in the Caribbean. In the Philippines, the Volunteers were a militia segregated between Spaniards (either *peninsulares* or Filipino-born, created in September 1896) and *indígenas*, or pre-Hispanic ethnicities of the archipelago (created in October 1897). I consider that this ethnic division was a consequence of the demographic context of the Philippines in the context of the Spanish Empire. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Filipino archipelago was a territory ruled by a tiny minority of Spaniards and populated by an overwhelming majority of natives with a weak integration into the Spanish culture. Although most Filipinos had adopted Catholicism by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (with the exception of important Muslim populations in the southern sub-archipelagos of Mindanao and Sulu), only a minority was able to speak Spanish.<sup>40</sup> It was estimated that by 1876 the whole archipelago had a population of ca. 6.2 million people, of which little less than 20,000 were of Spanish origin.<sup>41</sup> Thus, it is

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<sup>39</sup> José Serulle Ramia & Jacqueline Boin. "Evolución económica de la República Dominicana, 1844-1930", in Frank Moya Pons. *Historia de la República Dominicana*. Madrid: CSIC/Academia Dominicana de la Historia / Ediciones Doce Calles, 2010, p. 160.

<sup>40</sup> Antonio Quilis. "La trayectoria de la lengua española en Filipinas". *El lejano oriente español: Filipinas (siglo XIX): actas*. Seville: Cátedra "General Castaños", 1997, pp. 751-768.

<sup>41</sup> J. Jimeno Agius. *Población y comercio de las Islas Filipinas*. Madrid: Est. tip. de El Correo, 1884, p. 14. On migration of Spaniards to Manila in the 19<sup>th</sup> century see Xavier Huetz de Lempis. "La faible émigration des espagnols vers les Philippines : vastes projets et maigres réalisations des dernières années de la colonisation espagnole, 1881-1898", in María Dolores Elizalde Pérez-Grueso (ed.). *Las*

considered that the lack of a strong community of Spanish descent, and the weak integration of most Filipinos into the Spanish culture (among other things, most were unable to speak Spanish) unlike in Cuba and Puerto Rico, was the cause of the segregation of the Volunteers between Spaniards and native Filipinos. Doubts about Filipinos' loyalty to Spain might have also caused the segregation of Volunteer units.

The lack of membership records makes estimating the number of Volunteers a difficult task. However, a pamphlet published in 1903 considered that the companies of *peninsular* Volunteers summed up to 5,000 men throughout the Philippines.<sup>42</sup> Although there were units of this kind created in several cities, the only relatively complete records that can still be consulted belong to the Manila Volunteers. By late July 1898, shortly after the US siege of the city, there were slightly over 2,000 Volunteers in the capital of the Philippines.<sup>43</sup> As to the *Voluntarios indígenas*, it is known that shortly after their creation in October 1897 there were 6,000 of them distributed into thirty companies, although these numbers diminished due to the desertion of many of their ranks to the rebel cause.<sup>44</sup> Thus, it is considered that the Volunteers in the Philippines, both Spaniards and natives, gathered at least 11,000 men-at-arms.

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*relaciones internacionales en el Pacífico (siglos XVIII-XX): colonización, descolonización y encuentro cultural*. Madrid: CSIC, 1997, pp. 201-214.

<sup>42</sup> Elías Martínez Nubla. *Los voluntarios de Ultramar. El Libro Azul. Apuntes para la Historia*. Madrid: Imprenta del Fomento Naval, 1903, p. 5.

<sup>43</sup> AGMM, Documentación de Filipinas, sig. 5342.65; sig. 5342.71; sig. 5342.67; sig. 5342.66.

<sup>44</sup> *Reglamento de las Compañías de Voluntarios Indígenas*, p. 12.

**Table 1. Number of Volunteers (1850s – 1890s)**

	Cuba <sup>45</sup>	Puerto Rico <sup>46</sup>	Santo Domingo	Philippines <sup>47</sup>
1850s	23,686 (1856)	-	-	-
1860s	12,802 (1860) 35,000 (1868) 70,000 (1869)	800 (1864)	Unknown	-
1870s	80,000 (1872)	ca. 4,500	-	-
1880s	66,000 (1889)	4,700 (1884)	-	-
1890s	70,000 (1895) 90,000 (1897)	7,930 (1898)	-	5,000 (1898) Spaniards 6,000 (1898) Natives

### 3. Conclusions

The results of this chapter bring us to consider that some of the traditional views on the Volunteers need to be reviewed in depth. Far from being a militia of *peninsulares*, the makeup of the Volunteers was the result of the societies where they had been created. The role of *peninsulares* was certainly important, but there was also a remarkable presence of *criollos*, especially in Cuba and Puerto Rico. The Volunteers of Santo Domingo and the Philippines were the exception. In these cases, their short-lived experience and their demographic background made the Volunteers a conjunctural rather than a well-grounded phenomenon.

For their part, the long history of the Volunteers in Cuba and Puerto Rico produced a pattern which can be considered distinctive of this militia of unpaid men-at-arms. In both cases, both Creoles and *peninsulares* joined their ranks. However, these two elements seem not to have been evenly distributed throughout both islands. Whereas the Volunteer

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<sup>45</sup> The figures are taken from Otero Pimentel. *Memoria sobre los Voluntarios*, p. 10 (1855); *Cuerpos de Voluntarios de la Isla de Cuba*, p. 13 (1860); Eugenio Vandama y Calderón. *Colección de artículos sobre el Instituto de Voluntarios de la isla de Cuba*. Havana: Imprenta Militar, 1897, p. 48 (1868); Luis Navarro. *Las guerras de España en Cuba*. Madrid: Ediciones Encuentro, 1998, p. 28 (1869); Otero Pimentel. *Memoria sobre los Voluntarios*, p. 71 (1872); Tesifonte Gallego y García. *Cuba por fuera (apuntes del natural)*. Havana: La Propaganda Literaria, 1890, p. 229 (1889); A+B, *Apuntes en defensa del honor del Ejército*, Madrid, Est. Tipográfico de Ricardo Fe, 1898, p. 39 (1895); Arturo Amblard. *Notas coloniales*. Madrid: Ambrosio Pérez y Compañía, 1904, p. 163.

<sup>46</sup> The figures for Puerto Rico are taken from González Cuevas. *¿Defendiendo el honor?*, pp. 59-64 (1864); *Ejército de Puerto-Rico* (1884), p. 7 (1884); Rivero Méndez. *Crónica de la Guerra*, p. 450. (1898).

<sup>47</sup> The figure for the Philippines is taken from Martínez Nubla. *Los voluntarios de Ultramar*, p. 5.

units in the cities remained largely in the hands of the *peninsulares*, in the rural areas the Creoles made up most of the *Voluntarios*.

This spatial distribution implies another consequence. In the cities, the Volunteers were largely employed in the commercial, industrial or transport sectors, which began to be dominated by *peninsulares* from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, due to the wave of migrants coming from metropolitan Spain. For their part, the Volunteers in the countryside seem to have been mostly employed in the agricultural sector as free workers in the sugar, tobacco and coffee industries.

In terms of race, the Volunteers were non-segregated militias, though predominantly white. The exception was the case of the Philippines. Unlike the Antilles, in the archipelago, most of the population was alien to Spanish culture, and people of Spanish descent represented only a tiny minority. Thus, potential Volunteers had to be Spaniards, born either in metropolitan Spain or in *Ultramar*.<sup>48</sup> In Cuba, however, the presence of Cuban Volunteers of African descent is well documented, though it is difficult to establish their percentage due to the scarcity of sources documenting the racial background of these men.

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<sup>48</sup> This was reflected in the *reglamentos* of the Volunteers in Cuba (1856, 1869 and 1892), and Puerto Rico (1870, 1888).

## CHAPTER II. CREATION, CONSOLIDATION, AND EXPANSION (1855-1868)

This chapter addresses three basic yet fundamental questions regarding the history of the Volunteers. The first deals with the reasons for the creation of a militia such as the Volunteers in Cuba in 1855. The second deals with the ways in which the Volunteers became consolidated as a permanent element of the Spanish defensive system. Closely related to this question, the third explores the expansion of this type of militia from Cuba to Puerto Rico and Santo Domingo in the context of Spanish military interventions in the Caribbean during the 1860s.

This thesis argues that the Volunteers were created to strengthen the Spanish military system in a context in which the possession of the island of Cuba was coveted by powerful groups in the United States, in collaboration with some elements of the Cuban economic elite. The creation of the Volunteers is also analysed as a manifestation of the Spanish authorities' surreptitious will to replace the Cuban elite in the island's defensive system and rely instead on the powerful group of *peninsulares*. Thus, its creation arose as one of the indirect effects of the marginalisation of Cuba from the Spanish national system that began with the exclusion of the Cuban representatives from the Spanish Congress of Deputies in 1836.<sup>1</sup>

Whereas Cuba was *de jure* a Spanish province, it was *de facto* ruled as a colony. This very contradiction, by which Cubans could be implicitly, yet not explicitly, expelled from power, allowed thousands of them to find a way to integrate into the new militia. Thus, the Volunteers came to represent a strong loyalist community in Cuba, certainly dominated by *peninsulares*, but in which Cubans had their say as well. The presence of these Cuban loyalists in the militia reinforced the wish of the Spanish authorities to marginalize the Creoles from the defence of the island.

The consolidation of the Volunteers in Cuba is also considered to be intimately linked to the imperial structure of Spain. Firstly, the Volunteers became a permanent element of the Spanish defensive system in Cuba within a wider set of military reforms carried out by the Captaincy General to make the defence of Cuba more affordable and with a greater degree of participation by the local society. Secondly, another factor influencing consolidation was the series of adventures undertaken by Spain under the presidency of

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<sup>1</sup> From 1834 to 1923, and since 1978 the Spanish Parliament is formed by the Congress of Deputies (lower house) and the Senate (upper house).



Leopoldo O'Donnell (1858-1863), who had an important support in Cuba after having been its captain general between 1841 and 1846.<sup>2</sup> The war against Morocco (1859-1860), and the reincorporation of Santo Domingo (1861-1865) generated an enthusiastic popular support at home that was echoed in the overseas territories. In Cuba, the Volunteers actively supported Spain's colonial campaigns. This support served two main causes: on the one hand, it strengthened the idea of Cuba as an integral member of the Spanish Nation; on the other, it allowed the Loyalists to gain momentum before the authorities, in a context in which the status quo was being contested by sectors of the Cuban elite pushing for profound changes regarding the relationship between the island and metropolitan Spain. In this context of political dispute and military adventures in the Caribbean, the Volunteers came to be regarded by the Spanish authorities as a loyal militia that could temporarily replace the military personnel deployed to the warzones. This double aspect of the support towards Spain's expansionist ventures, explains the implementation of Cuba's Volunteer model in Puerto Rico and Santo Domingo.

### 1. The Annexationist Backgrounds

The creation of the Volunteers took place in Havana on 12<sup>th</sup> February 1855, the result of a decree by Cuba's Captain General José Gutiérrez de la Concha (1854-1859).<sup>3</sup> He wanted to engage the civilians in the defence of the Spanish sovereignty in Cuba when it was at risk. And in February 1855 it was. On the 6<sup>th</sup> of that very month, a conspiracy by the Cuban Creole elite aimed at annexing the island to the US was uncovered. Thus, the Volunteers were created to strengthen the defences of the island alongside the Army and the Navy in the face of such a threat.

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<sup>2</sup> Leopoldo O'Donnell y Jorís (1809-1867) was one of the leading political and military figures of 19<sup>th</sup> century Spain. He was president of the Spanish Government on three occasions (1856, 1858-1863, and 1865-1866), and minister of Foreign Affairs, Navy, Overseas, and War offices in different governments between 1854 and 1866. He took part in Liberal and Conservative conspirations before 1854, when he created the Liberal Union party, attempting to merge the moderate wings of both political traditions. As a military man, he took part in the First Carlist War (1833-1840) and the African War (1859-1860). A recent biography by F. Martínez Gallego. *Leopoldo O'Donnell. Biografía breve*. Madrid: Ediciones 19, 2017. An analysis on the supports gathered by Leopoldo O'Donnell in Cuba in Carmen García García. "Relaciones y vínculos de poder de un general isabelino: O'Donnell y los antecedentes de la Unión Liberal". *Ayer*, 2017, No. 105, pp. 51-75.

<sup>3</sup> *Gaceta de La Habana*, 12-02-1855.

### 1.1. Changing Tide in Cuba

Between the 1820s and the 1860s Cuba underwent an intense process of re-hispanization that especially affected the urban landscape of the island and its political and economic structures.<sup>4</sup> The Cuban elite created by the sugar-based economic boom of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century began to be replaced by an emerging elite of *peninsulares* and some associated Cuban lineages. In the lower strata of society, the arrival of migrants from metropolitan Spain also changed the urban labour landscape, as the *peninsulares* began to take over jobs that traditionally employed free Cubans of African descent.

The creation of a Cuban elite, which the Cuban historian Manuel Moreno Fraginals called *sacarocracia* (or ‘sugar aristocracy’), was associated with the boom of the sugar-producing industry in Cuba, mostly due to the collapse of sugar production in the French colony of Saint-Domingue after the slaves’ Haitian Revolution (1791-1804).<sup>5</sup> Cuba replaced Saint-Domingue as the world’s main sugar producer, thus creating a powerful elite on the Spanish island.<sup>6</sup> The Haitian Revolution meant an opportunity for Cuba and an admonition of the dangers associated with slavery at the same time. It had allowed Cuba to become a major sugar producer but had also shown the perils of an uncontrolled slave population.<sup>7</sup> However, the Spanish rule could potentially solve both problems. Spain allowed the slave trade even after legally abolishing it in 1820, provided the military presence to keep the slaves under control, and ended its monopoly on the Cuban economy in 1818, allowing a flourishing trade with the United States.<sup>8</sup> These are the main reasons why the elites of Cuba

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<sup>4</sup> Manuel Moreno Fraginals. *Cuba/España, España/Cuba. Historia común*. Barcelona: Crítica, 1995, pp. 220-231; Pérez, Jr. *Cuba. Between Reform & Revolution*, pp. 70-103.

<sup>5</sup> Julio Le Riverend. *Historia económica de Cuba*. Barcelona: Ariel, 1972, 147-157; Manuel Moreno Fraginals. *El ingenio. Complejo económico social cubano del azúcar*. Barcelona: Crítica, 2001 (first published in Havana, Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1964, 3 vols.), pp. 27-86; *Cuba/España*, pp. 145-156.

<sup>6</sup> Manuel Barcia. “Un coloso sobre la arena’: definiendo el camino hacia la plantación esclavista en Cuba, 1792-1825”. *Revista de Indias*, 2011, vol. LXXI, No. 251, pp. 53-76.

<sup>7</sup> Ada Ferrer. “Noticias de Haití en Cuba”. *Revista de Indias*, 2003, vol. LXIII, No. 229, pp. 675-694; *Freedom’s Mirror. Cuba and Haiti in the Age of Revolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014, pp. 189-235; Carrie Gibson. “‘There is no doubt that we are under threat by the Negroes of Santo Domingo’: the spectre of Haiti in the Spanish Caribbean in the 1820s”, in Matthew Brown & Gabriel Paquette (eds.). *Connections after Colonialism. Europe and Latin America in the 1820s*. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2013, pp. 223-235.

<sup>8</sup> Christopher Schmidt-Nowara. “Bartolomé de las Casas and the Slave Trade to Cuba circa 1820s”, in Brown & Paquette. *Connections after Colonialism*, pp. 236-249. For the activities of the illegal slave trade merchants see Martín Rodrigo y Alharilla. “Spanish Merchants and the Slave Trade: From Legality to Illegality, 1814-1870”, in Josep M. Fradera & Christopher Schmidt-Nowara (eds.). *Slavery and Antislavery in Spain’s Atlantic Empire*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2013, pp. 176-199.

and Puerto Rico remained loyal to the Spanish Crown during the wars for independence in Spanish America (ca. 1810-1825).<sup>9</sup>

However, in a process thoroughly studied by José G. Cayuela and Ángel Bahamonde, the privileged position of this landowning Creole elite began to be seriously challenged from the 1830s by the emergence of a new elite of merchants, mostly *peninsulares*, but also Cuban-born and Spanish American Loyalists.<sup>10</sup> Because of their support for the integrity of the Spanish Nation, which included Cuba, this elite came to be known as *integrista*.<sup>11</sup>

The loss of the continental Spanish empire by 1825 had driven thousands of *peninsulares* and American Loyalists out of the continent and into Cuba, and Puerto Rico to a lesser extent.<sup>12</sup> This influx was strengthened by a continuous migration from metropolitan Spain to Cuba, which mostly settled in the cities and found employment in the commercial sector, but also in a series of relatively skilled jobs such as coachman, stevedore, bricklayer, and cigar maker. As shown by Joan Casanovas, the arrival of this migration meant that the labour force of Havana, Matanzas, and other major cities comprised a working sector dominated by *peninsulares*, having displaced the free Cubans of African descent.<sup>13</sup>

Thanks to their links with metropolitan Spain and the continuous arrival of new members, the *peninsulares* came to dominate commerce in Cuba by the second third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They distributed the Cuban exports and controlled the imports. More importantly, since Cuba lacked a modern banking system, these merchants often became moneylenders to the Creole landowners. The abusive interest rates and the high costs of modernizing and increasing sugar production, often ended up in the sugar mills being seized by these merchants, thus expanding their interests into the sugar industry. The

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<sup>9</sup> Hugh Thomas. *Cuba. La lucha por la libertad*. Barcelona: Debolsillo, 2011 (first published as *Cuba. The Pursuit of Freedom*. London: Pan Macmillan, 1971), pp. 93-110.

<sup>10</sup> This does not mean, however, that there was the neat division between Cuban landowners and *peninsular* merchants for which Cuban historiography has tended to argue. There were also *peninsular* landowners and Cuban merchants whose political loyalties were not always defined by their birthplace. See Martín Rodrigo y Alharilla. "Hacendados versus comerciantes. Negocios y práctica política en el integrismo cubano", in Francisco Morales Padrón (coord.). *III Coloquio de Historia Canario-Americana; VIII Congreso Internacional de Historia de América (AEA), 1998*. Las Palmas de Gran Canaria: Cabildo de Gran Canaria, 2000, pp. 647-663.

<sup>11</sup> Ángel Bahamonde & José G. Cayuela. *Hacer las Américas. Las elites coloniales en el siglo XIX*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1992, pp. 15-52.

<sup>12</sup> Pérez, Jr. *Cuba. Between Reform & Revolution*, pp. 95-96.

<sup>13</sup> Casanovas. *Bread, or Bullets!*, pp. 15-42; Rosario Márquez Macías. "La Habana en el siglo XIX. Una visión a través de la emigración". *Ubi Sunt? Revista de Historia*, 2008, No. 23, pp. 13-21.



Image 1. Julián de Zulueta was a leading member of Cuba's *integrista* elite and one of the organizers of the Volunteers in 1855. Ribó, *Historia de los Voluntarios Cubanos*, vol. I, p. 254.

humble social background of these men was compensated by their upward social mobility through marriage with women of well-to-do Cuban families, who became their economic and political allies. This was the case, for instance, of the Basque Julián Zulueta (whom can be seen donning the uniform of Volunteer colonel in image 1), the biggest slaveowner and sugar producer of mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Cuba.<sup>14</sup> It was also the case of José Eugenio Moré, a New Granadian (present day Colombia) who settled with his family in Cuba in 1820 after being expelled by the revolutionary government following the independence of his native land.<sup>15</sup>

Their economic ascendancy also translated into political predominance during the administration of Captain General Miguel Tacón (1834-1838). Tacón, politically considered

<sup>14</sup> Julián de Zulueta y Amondo (1814-1878) settled in Havana in 1832 to work for his uncle, whose businesses he inherited. He became Cuba's biggest slaveowner and illicit slave trader, and one of the most important landowners by the 1860s. He also entered politics. He was Havana's mayor (1864-1876), and was appointed life senator in 1877, although he never took the oath. His commitment to the defence of Cuba was longstanding. In 1837 he joined the *Batallón de Voluntarios Distinguidos del Comercio*, and in 1850 he organized the *Batallón de Buenos Vecinos*. He joined Havana's 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion in 1866 as its colonel. He was bestowed the positions of marquis of Álava and viscount of Casablanca (1875) for his services to Spain. AGMS, leg. Z-267; AS, ES.28079.HIS-0009-09. A biography in Eduardo Marrero Cruz. *Julián de Zulueta y Amondo: promotor del capitalismo en Cuba*. Havana: Unión, 2006.

<sup>15</sup> José Eugenio Moré de la Bastida (1807-1890) was born in Santa Marta (Viceroyalty of New Granada, today in Colombia) to Royalist parents, and settled in Santiago de Cuba in 1820 after the independence of *Gran Colombia*. He began his business career as a merchant, later buying several sugar mills and promoting the construction of the railway Cruces-Sagua la Grande (Las Villas). On 13<sup>th</sup> February 1855 he was appointed captain of the 1<sup>st</sup> Havana Volunteer Battalion's 8<sup>th</sup> Company and was promoted to colonel—the highest rank possible within the Volunteers—on 14<sup>th</sup> February 1873. He was granted the *Gran Cruz de Isabel la Católica* (1876) and was made Count of Casa Moré (1879). He was also president of the *Círculo de Hacendados* (1879). See Villa. *Álbum biográfico*, pp. 14-18; *Gaceta de Madrid*, No. 105, 15-04-1879; *La Ilustración española y americana*, 15-11-1890, p. 291; AHN, Ultramar, 4740, exp. 67; Leida Fernández Prieto. *Espacio de poder, ciencia y cultura en Cuba: el Círculo de Hacendados, 1878-1917*. Madrid: CSIC/Universidad de Sevilla/Diputación de Sevilla, 2008, p. 54; Ángel Bahamonde & José G. Cayuela. "La creación de nobleza en Cuba durante el siglo XIX". *Historia Social*, 1991, No. 11, pp. 56-82.

a Liberal, felt a deep distrust towards the Creoles due to his experiences during the wars for independence in New Grenada. Contrary to his predecessors, Tacón relied on the new elite for political and economic advice, excluding the old Cuban elite from the spheres of power.<sup>16</sup> This exclusion from power was aggravated by the establishment of a Liberal regime in Spain in the 1830s. Due to the incompatibility between institutional slavery in the Antilles and a Liberal system in metropolitan Spain—where slavery had been abolished in 1811—the metropolitan Liberals decided to exclude Cuba and Puerto Rico from the Spanish laws. Thus, in 1836 the elected representatives of Cuba and Puerto Rico were not allowed to take a seat in the Spanish Congress.<sup>17</sup> Only a year later, the new Constitution declared that both islands should be ruled by ‘special laws’ (that nevertheless were never passed). The legal corpus of the Antilles remained the set of laws known as *Leyes de Indias* (mostly untouched since 1680), and the *ultima ratio* represented by the Captains General, who had been granted discretionary powers by the Crown in 1825.<sup>18</sup> Thus, Cuba and Puerto Rico, although *de jure* members of the Spanish Nation, were *de facto* excluded from it as participants.

According to José Antonio Piqueras Arenas, this exclusion was not perceived as particularly negative by the different elites in Cuba. In fact, the elite of *peninsulares* and their Cuban allies preferred the Captains General to keep their power, whereas the old Cuban elite trusted that this exclusion might mean an open door to a sort of autonomy and the guarantee of the survival of slavery.<sup>19</sup> However, the promised ‘special laws’ were not even discussed in Madrid, whereas the exclusion of the old Cuban elite from the spheres of power was only aggravated during the administration of Tacón’s successors. The administration was further not particularly open to the Cubans, as most of the officials on the island were *peninsulares*. In 1844, a visitor from the United States considered that “The native of Cuba

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<sup>16</sup> Thomas. *Cuba*, pp. 130-133; María José Vilar. “Un cartagenero para Ultramar: Miguel Tacón y el modelo autoritario de la transición del Antiguo Régimen al liberalismo en Cuba (1834-1838)”. *Anales de Historia Contemporánea*, 2000, No. 16, pp. 239-278.

<sup>17</sup> Josep M. Fradera. *Gobernar colonias*. Barcelona: Ediciones Península, 1999, pp. 71-93; “Include and Rule: The Limits of Colonial Policy, 1810-1837”, in Brown & Paquette. *Connections after Colonialism*, pp. 64-86; *La Nación Imperial. Derechos, representación y ciudadanía en los imperios de Gran Bretaña, Francia, España y Estados Unidos (1750-1918)*, vol. I. Barcelona: Edhasa, 2015, pp. 751-848.

<sup>18</sup> M.<sup>a</sup> Paz Alonso Romero. *Cuba en la España liberal (1837-1898)*. Madrid: Centro de Estudios Políticos y Constitucionales, 2002, pp. 17-22; Javier Alvarado Planas. *La Administración Colonial española en el siglo XIX*. Madrid: Centro de Estudios Políticos y Constitucionales, 2013, pp. 13-40; Josep M. Fradera. *Colonias para después de un imperio*. Barcelona: Edicions Bellaterra, 2005, pp. 220-252.

<sup>19</sup> José A. Piqueras Arenas. *Sociedad civil y poder en Cuba. Colonia y poscolonia*. Madrid: Siglo XXI de España Editores, 2005, pp. 80-92. For an overview of the relationship between Cuba’s captains general and the local and metropolitan elites see José G. Cayuela Fernández. “Los capitanes generales de Cuba: élites coloniales y élites metropolitanas (1823-1898)”. *Historia contemporánea*, 1996, No. 13-14, pp. 197-222.

[...] sees himself almost entirely excluded from all offices under government, the army, and the church, and regards with no favourable eye those who are thus sent to mend their fortunes at his expense”.<sup>20</sup> It almost seemed that there was “no place for Cubans in Cuba”.<sup>21</sup>

The keystone that maintained the Spanish regime in Cuba was slavery. Nonetheless, even its survival seemed precarious due to the mounting pressure from Britain to abolish the slave trade. After the abolition of slavery in its empire in 1833, Britain actively repressed the illicit slave trade between Africa and the Americas, which could have put the Cuban sugar industry in danger.<sup>22</sup> In fact, the British consular agents in Havana actively promoted the abolitionist ideal, and apparently conspired towards a general slave revolt in 1843-1844.<sup>23</sup> Although the uprising never took place, the fear that Spain might not be able to resist the British pressure to end the slave trade was real and well-grounded. For instance, in 1845 the Spanish Congress passed a law aimed at repressing the slave trade, after intense British pressure. However, the Spanish authorities in Havana continued to tolerate the arrival of enslaved Africans, thus perpetuating tensions with the British Government.<sup>24</sup>

Being excluded from power, and fearing that slavery might come to its end, the old Cuban elite began to look for alternatives that could guarantee both slavery and political participation outside the Spanish Monarchy. The most evident example of the combination of Liberal principles and the existence of slavery was to be found in the neighbouring United States. Thus, the efforts of the Cuban elite, who felt excluded from power, to try to annex the island to the American Union.

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<sup>20</sup> John George F. Wurdermann. *Notes on Cuba*. Boston: James Munroe and Company, 1844, pp. 196-199, quoted in Louis A. Pérez, Jr. (ed.). *Slaves, Sugar, & Colonial Society. Travel accounts of Cuba, 1801-1899*. Wilmington: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1992, p. 228.

<sup>21</sup> Pérez, Jr. *Cuba. Between Reform & Revolution*, p. 98.

<sup>22</sup> For the British role in the end of slavery in Cuba see David Murray. *Odious Commerce. Britain, Spain and the Abolition of the Slave Trade*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980, pp. 72-91.

<sup>23</sup> This conspiracy is known as “The conspiracy of the ladder”, named after a torture method used against the slaves that had allegedly taken part in it, Michele Reid-Vázquez. *The Year of the Lash. Free People of Color in Cuba and the Nineteenth-Century Atlantic World*. Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 2011, pp. 42-67; Murray. *Odious Commerce*, pp. 133-180.

<sup>24</sup> Franklin W. Knight. *Slave Society in Cuba during the nineteenth century*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1970, pp. 137-153.

## 1.2. The Annexationist Momentum

The annexationist project can be understood as a desperate attempt to perpetuate slavery in a context of retreat for the “peculiar institution” in the Americas.<sup>25</sup> Elsewhere in the Caribbean region, slavery was abolished in the colonies of Britain (1833) and France (1848), Colombia (1851) and Venezuela (1854). By the 1850s, slavery in the Americas only existed in the Spanish territories of Cuba and Puerto Rico, Brazil, the Dutch colonies, and the United States.<sup>26</sup> The plan to annex Cuba to the US to protect slavery went against the dominant abolitionist tendency in an attempt to reverse the fate of an institution that already seemed doomed by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

The idea of annexing the island to its northern neighbour might seem logical in the context of the territorial expansion of the United States. After all, the US had acquired Louisiana from France (1803), Florida from Spain (1819), and had just annexed the northern half of Mexico (1848) and was expanding continuously westwards to the Pacific Ocean.<sup>27</sup> As for Cuba, the US interest was almost as old as its independence, for Cuba had been the key to the Caribbean due to its geographical location since the Spanish conquest in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In 1809, President Thomas Jefferson summed up this interest in the island by stating that Cuba “can gravitate only towards the North American Union which by the same law of nature cannot cast her off its bosom”.<sup>28</sup>

However, to secure slavery through its annexation to the United States was rather unlikely. In fact, the very existence of slavery had proven an unsolvable problem that confronted the northern and southern US states throughout the country’s process of territorial expansion. Every new land acquisition by the Union opened intense debate about the status of slavery in the new US territory. During the 1850s North and South were only able to reach a series of feeble compromises, establishing a fragile equilibrium that proved

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<sup>25</sup> This was a way to refer to slavery popularized in the 1830s by the US statesman and political theorist John C. Calhoun (1782-1850), a staunch defender of slavery and the US states’ right to secede from the Union. See William W. Freehling, *The Road to Disunion: Secessionists at Bay, 1776-1854*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.

<sup>26</sup> Jeremy Black, *Slavery. A New Global History*. London: Constable & Robinson, 2011, pp. 192-229.

<sup>27</sup> For the US expansion at the expense of the Spanish-speaking countries of the Americas see Ramiro Guerra y Sánchez, *La expansión territorial de los Estados Unidos a expensas de España y de los países hispanoamericanos*. Havana: Editorial Nacional de Cuba, 1935, pp. 182-281; Luis Martínez-Fernández, *Town Between Empires. Economy, Society, and Patterns of Political Thought in the Hispanic Caribbean, 1840-1878*. Athens & London: The University of Georgia Press, 1994, pp. 11-57.

<sup>28</sup> José Ignacio Rodríguez, *Estudio histórico sobre el origen, desenvolvimiento y manifestaciones prácticas de la idea de la anexión de la isla de Cuba á los Estados Unidos de América*. Havana: Imprenta La Propaganda Literaria, 1900, pp. 50-63.

unsustainable when the southern states began to secede from the Union in 1860 aiming to protect slavery, paving the way to the Civil War (1861-1865).<sup>29</sup>

Despite this context, the annexationist Cuban elite began to take steps towards the union with the United States in 1847. This very year, a group of *sacarócratas* led by Miguel de Aldama, created the *Club de La Habana* to coordinate the annexationist movement. It was indispensable to find some support in the US, where a *Junta Cubana* was opened in New York and New Orleans for that purpose. Certainly, the cause of the annexation of Cuba was positively received by some sectors in the US, both in the North and the South. On the one hand, the equilibrium between both sections of the country could be broken in favour of the South, should Cuba have joined the Union as a new pro-slavery state. On the other, for the industrious northern states, the entry of Cuba could mean a new market for their goods free of the high customs tariffs imposed by the Spanish Government. The annexationist discourse could have found fertile ground in the United States, where the Monroe Doctrine (“America for the Americans”) still permeated its self-perceived vision as the guarantor of American independence against the European colonial powers.<sup>30</sup> So fertile was the ground that the Cuban annexationist lobbyists reached the US President James K. Polk (1845-1849), who offered to buy Cuba from Spain on behalf of the *Club de La Habana* members in 1848.<sup>31</sup>

The firm refusal by the Spanish Government meant that the transaction was unfeasible, thus paving the way for a violent alternative. This was a turning point. According to Tom Chaffin, although the annexation still enjoyed some popular support, the US Government was not willing to embark on a military operation against a nation with which it had peaceful relations, especially when Britain and France were against a change of the

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<sup>29</sup> The dispute over the status of slavery in the newly-acquired territories taken from Mexico in 1848 led to the Compromise of 1850, which among other considerations, stated that the implementation of slavery was to be decided by popular vote in each new territory. The failure of this Compromise became evident after the Nebraska-Kansas Act (1854), when pro-slavery and abolitionist settlers engaged in a quasi-civil war within these two territories, known as ‘Bleeding Kansas’ (1854-1861). See Bruce Catton. *The Civil War*. Boston and New York: Mariner Books, 2004; James M. McPherson. *Battle Cry of Freedom. The American Civil War*. London: Penguin Books/Oxford University Press, 2013, pp. 47-202.

<sup>30</sup> Jay Sexton. *Empire and Nation in Nineteenth-Century America*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2011, pp. 85-122. Also see Walter Johnson. *River of Dark Dreams. Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom*. Cambridge & London: Harvard University Press, 2013; Matthew Karp. *This Vast Southern Empire. Slaveholders at the Helm of American Foreign Policy*. Cambridge & London: Harvard University Press, 2016.

<sup>31</sup> The *Club de La Habana* offered the US Government \$100 million to purchase Cuba from Spain. Tom Chaffin. *Fatal Glory. Narciso López and the First Clandestine U.S. War against Cuba*. Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1996, pp. 11-15.



status quo in the Caribbean.<sup>32</sup> For both countries, it was more desirable to keep Cuba under the control of a weak nation, rather than seeing it in the hands of the expanding United States.

Nonetheless, the Cuban annexationists were determined to push their plan forward and continued to prepare an armed expedition against Cuba, yet in precarious conditions. Unable to find a US Army officer to lead the expedition, they finally contacted the former Spanish Army general Narciso López, a man opposed to Spain's rule in Cuba after having been dismissed from a political office in 1843 by the Spanish Government.<sup>33</sup>

Lack of support for the annexation was not only a problem in the US but especially in Cuba. Narciso López launched two expeditions against Cuba in May 1850 and August 1851 but failed to raise the Cuban population against the Spanish authorities. The lack of popular support for the attempted uprisings made it evident that the idea of annexing the island to the United States had barely permeated into the Cuban population beyond the small circle of *sacarócratas* of the *Club de La Habana*. In fact, there were barely any Cubans in the expeditionary force commanded by Narciso López. Most of his mercenaries were US citizens and German and Hungarian veterans of the European Liberal revolutions of 1848.<sup>34</sup> Hence, the popular support that Narciso López and the annexationists envisioned for their project, was almost inexistent. The invasions of 1850 and 1851, however, did spur some sort of popular armed participation. They drove a few thousand Loyalists to take up arms to reject the plans to annex Cuba into the United States.

## 2. A Precedent: the *Milicia Voluntaria de Nobles Vecinos*

The mobilization of civilians organized into militias for the defence of Spanish sovereignty in the Americas was not new in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Leaving aside the *Milicias Disciplinadas* (which combined conscription with volunteering), during the wars for

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., pp. 44-72.

<sup>33</sup> Narciso López (1797-1851) was born in Venezuela and pursued a military career in the Spanish Army, first during the war for independence in his native land (1810-1823), and later in metropolitan Spain fighting in the First Carlist War that confronted Liberals and supporters of the *Ancien Régime*. In 1840 he was appointed governor of the Cuban sugar-producing town of Trinidad but was dismissed from office in 1843 by the captain general Leopoldo O'Donnell (1841-1846). This fact turned Narciso López into an enemy of Spain's presence in Cuba. Herminio Portell Vilá. *Narciso López y su época*, vol. I. Havana: Cultural, 1930, pp. 142-154.

<sup>34</sup> Portell Vilá. *Narciso López y su época*, vol. III, pp. 483-495.

independence in Spanish America (1810-1825), units which bore the name of *Voluntarios* appeared in different parts of the continent. Such units have been identified in New Spain, Venezuela, and Peru. Although a thorough study of these units is still to be made, it has been found that some of their characteristics significantly resemble the Volunteer units created in Cuba in 1855. For instance, their members were *peninsulares* as well as Creoles, mostly employed in commerce, and fought as auxiliary forces of the Royal Army until their dissolution as the American territories became independent.<sup>35</sup>

Following a similar pattern, there had also been a project to organize such a unit in Havana in 1837. Due to the political crisis that opened the proclamation of the 1812 Spanish Constitution in Santiago de Cuba by the local governor in 1836, the Captain General Miguel Tacón began to recruit a militia of 1,500 men from among the most loyalist elements of Havana's commercial elite: the *Batallón de Voluntarios Distinguidos del Comercio*. Among them, Julián de Zulueta, a prominent Basque merchant and landowner, who would later take part in the creation of the Volunteers in 1855. This new militia was only organized on paper, for it was given neither weapons nor uniforms as it was dissolved by mid-1837 as the situation in Santiago de Cuba was rapidly controlled by the Captain General. Nonetheless, a stark difference with the volunteer units that fought in continental America was that the Creoles were *de facto* absent from this battalion, reflecting Tacón's deep distrust regarding Cubans' loyalty to Spain.<sup>36</sup>

Considering this background, it is hardly surprising that the Spanish authorities thought again about mobilizing loyal civilians when Narciso López launched his annexationist attacks against the island in 1850 and 1851. Although an irrelevant enterprise in military terms, Narciso López's expeditions caused the birth of armed civilian Loyalism in Cuba, which was an important element of the island's history during the second half of

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<sup>35</sup> Some of these units were the *Voluntarios Distinguidos de Fernando VII* in Mexico City and Veracruz, the *Patriotas Voluntarios Distinguidos del Sr. D. Fernando VII* (Orizaba), and the *Voluntarios Españoles de la Provincia de Tabasco*. AGN, Indiferente Virreinal, Indiferente de guerra, año 1804-1806, caja 1728, exp. 027; año 1810, caja 2788, exp. 002; año 1811, caja 1934, exp. 007; Jesús Ruiz de Gordejuela Urquijo. "Los Voluntarios de Fernando VII de Ciudad de México. ¿Baluarte de la capital y confianza del reino?". *Revista de Indias*, 2014, vol. LXXIV, No. 262, pp. 751-782; J. F. Heredia. *Memorias del regente Heredia (de las Reales Audiencias de Caracas y México)*. Madrid: Editorial América, 1916, p. 282; Andrés García Camba. *Memorias del general García Camba para la historia de las armas españolas en el Perú, 1809-1821*. Madrid: Editorial América, 1916, p. 479; Martín Rodrigo y Alharilla. *Indians a Catalunya: capitals cubans en l'economia catalana*. Barcelona: Fundació Noguera, 2007, p. 84.

<sup>36</sup> Nicomedes Pastor Díaz & Francisco de Cárdenas. *Galería de españoles célebres contemporáneos, ó biografías y retratos de todos los personajes distinguidos de nuestros días en las ciencias, en la política, en las armas, en las letras y en las artes*, vol. III. Madrid: Boix, Editor, 1843, p. 44.

the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The annexationist attacks against Spain's sovereignty on the island sparked a reaction among the *integristas*, who decided to rally around the Spanish authorities and create a militia: the *milicia voluntaria de Nobles Vecinos*. The creation of this militia was another element of the rising power of the *integrista* elite, whereas the old Cuban elite supported the failed annexationist attempts by Narciso López.

On his first expedition, Narciso López's men landed in the town of Cárdenas and ransacked it on 19<sup>th</sup> May 1850, until they were expelled by two Army battalions sent from Havana by Captain General Federico Roncali (1848-1850).<sup>37</sup> Fearing that the expedition might get hold of some territory, and willing to declare their support to the authorities, the Loyalists in Havana demonstrated before the captain general asking him permission to create a militia in order to replace the Army units that had been sent to chase López's men.<sup>38</sup> Prominent members of the *integrista* elite led the petition and thought of the *peninsular* migrants as the potential militiamen. The latter would fill the ranks, whereas the former would become the officers of the militia, as well as the providers of uniforms, weapons, and the funds necessary to organize it.<sup>39</sup>

This proposal was positively received by the captain general, who created the *Milicia Voluntaria de Nobles Vecinos* on 21<sup>st</sup> May 1850.<sup>40</sup> Four infantry battalions were created in Havana, commanded by members of the emerging *integrista* elite, such as Julián de Zulueta or the Cuban-born Count of San Esteban de Cañongo, whereas the ranks were mostly filled by the working-class *peninsulares*.<sup>41</sup> The example was soon followed in other cities throughout Cuba, even in areas where the presence of *peninsulares* was weak, such as Pinar del Río or Manzanillo, where Cuban-born men filled the ranks. In total four infantry battalions plus four spare companies were created throughout the island.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Cárdenas is a coastal town located in the Matanzas province, 150km east of Havana. For a detailed account of the attack on Cárdenas see Herminio Portell Vilá. *Historia de Cárdenas (edición del centenario)*. Havana: Talleres Gráficos "Cuba Intelectual", 1928, pp. 97-126.

<sup>38</sup> According to Jacobo de la Pezuela, as much as 13,000 *integristas* demonstrated before the palace of the Captains General, in Havana. See Jacobo de la Pezuela. *Crónica de las Antillas*. Madrid: Rubio, Grilo y Vitturi, 1871, p. 116.

<sup>39</sup> Portell Vilá. *Narciso López y su época*, vol. II, pp. 390-391.

<sup>40</sup> *Gaceta de La Habana*, 21-05-1850, p. 1.

<sup>41</sup> The Cuban Count of Fernandina was appointed colonel of the *Nobles Vecinos*. Jacinto Larrínaga (*peninsular*) was made commander of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Julián de Zulueta (*peninsular*) of the 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Count of San Esteban de Cañongo (Cuban) of the 3<sup>rd</sup>, and Manuel Izquierdo Villavicencio (*peninsular*) of the 4<sup>th</sup>. *Diario de la Marina*, 21-05-1850, p. 1.

<sup>42</sup> Beyond the four battalions created in Havana, Trinidad, Matanzas, Puerto Príncipe and Cienfuegos created one battalion each. Besides, in Cárdenas, where the expedition of Narciso López landed, two companies were created. Santiago de Cuba, Manzanillo, and Pinar del Río created one

The creation of these battalions in different cities of Cuba was a symptom that Loyalism in Cuba was not exclusive to the *peninsulares*. However, Captain General Roncali deeply distrusted the Cubans. In fact, shortly after the creation of the *Nobles Vecinos*, he wrote to the Ministry of War, in Madrid, asking for permission to create a militia of 30,000 men, yet “only *peninsulares*, for I do not trust in handing over weapons to the natives”.<sup>43</sup> Explicit support for Narciso López’s attempt had been almost inexistent among the Cuban population. Roncali probably feared that the unrest towards Spain was more widespread among the Cubans.

Arming the Cubans was not Roncali’s only concern, for he also feared the volatility of a militia of armed working-class *peninsulares*. The growing importance of the labour organization in Havana, fed by the constant influx of migrants from metropolitan Spain, could have found an influence in the ranks of the *Nobles Vecinos*. In case of a clash of interest between the authorities and the workers, the latter could direct their weapons against the former. Thus, despite the threat of a new annexationist attempt against Cuba not having disappeared, the captain general decreed the dissolution of the *Nobles Vecinos* on 24<sup>th</sup> September 1850.<sup>44</sup>

The fact that the *Nobles Vecinos* was dissolved because of the captain general’s distrust rather than of the theoretical likelihood of a new annexationist attempt was confirmed in the summer of 1851. In July, two landowners and *Milicias Disciplinadas*’ officers took up arms in an uprising in central Cuba. This was followed by the landing of Narciso López with 600 mercenaries at Bahía Honda (60 km west to Havana) on 12<sup>th</sup> August.<sup>45</sup> These *Milicias Disciplinadas* had been created in Cuba almost a century before, mostly made up of Creoles. By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, they were in a clear state of decay, deprived of a clear military role and lacking the confidence of the Spanish authorities due to the involvement of some of their members with anti-Spanish conspiracies.<sup>46</sup> The

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company each. In total, there were ten battalions and four companies of the *Nobles Vecinos* created throughout Cuba. G., M. & M-C. *Novísimo Reglamento del Instituto de Voluntarios de la Isla de Cuba*, p. VI; Uralde Cancio. *Voluntarios de Cuba española*, p. 23.

<sup>43</sup> The War minister was the Lieutenant General Francisco de Paula Figueras (1847-1851), a veteran of the Peninsular War (1808-1814) and the First Carlist War. Antonio Pirala. *Anales de la Guerra de Cuba*. Madrid: Felipe González Rojas Editor, 1895, vol. I, p. 78.

<sup>44</sup> *Gaceta de La Habana*, 24-09-1850, p. 1; *La Nación*, 29-10-1850, p. 2.

<sup>45</sup> AHN, Ultramar, 4645, exp. 9; Portell Vilá. *Narciso López y su época*, vol. III, pp. 378-435.

<sup>46</sup> The *Milicias Disciplinadas* were first created in Cuba in 1763, after the British occupation of Havana the year before. For their origin see Juan Marchena Fernández. *Ejército y milicias en el mundo colonial americano*. Madrid: Editorial MAPFRE, 1992, pp. 190-210; Allan J. Kuethe. “Las Milicias Disciplinadas en América”, in Allan J. Kuethe & Juan Marchena Fernández (eds.). *Soldados del Rey: el ejército borbónico en América colonial en vísperas de la independencia*. Castellón de La

annexationists had clearly worked on widening their support network in Cuba, coordinating an uprising within the island and an expedition launched from the US.

On this occasion, the Captain General José Gutiérrez de la Concha (1850-1852) reactivated the *Nobles Vecinos*, for the Army garrison was scant and the threat posed by a combined uprising needed a bigger fighting force. The *Nobles Vecinos* played a crucial role in crushing the expedition. For instance, the battalion reactivated in Pinar del Río, the area where Narciso López landed, collaborated alongside the regular Army in defeating the expeditionary force by late August 1851, in what was the first armed action of the *Nobles Vecinos*.<sup>47</sup> On 1<sup>st</sup> September 1851, Narciso López and another ten leaders of the invasion were executed in Havana.

The attitude of Gutiérrez de la Concha regarding the participation of civilians in the defence of Cuba differed from that of his predecessor. He had trusted the *Nobles Vecinos* for military operations. This was particularly significant, as many of the men of the Pinar del Río battalion were Cuban *guajiros*. On a public speech the day before Narciso López's execution, the captain general gave a speech in which he praised the participation of the *Nobles Vecinos* in repelling the expedition, and acknowledging the role played by the Cuban members of the Pinar del Río battalion.<sup>48</sup> This reflected the good relationship that existed between the captain general and the *integrista* elite. The former secured the continuity of the slave trade and granted the latter business opportunities, whereas the *integristas* offered the captain general their loyalty and a defensive contribution through the *Nobles Vecinos*.<sup>49</sup> In fact, Gutiérrez de la Concha aimed to make the *Nobles Vecinos* a permanent element of the Spanish defensive system in Cuba within a wider set of military reforms for the island.<sup>50</sup>

However, the unstable political scene in metropolitan Spain had Gutiérrez de la Concha replaced by two Captains General who were much less willing to compromise with the interests of the *integrista* elite. The instructions of the new Spanish Government,

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Plana: Publicacions de la Universitat Jaume I, 2005, pp. 101-126. The involvement of the members of the *Milicias Disciplinadas* with the pro-independence movement had previously occurred during the wars for independence in continental America. See Juan José Benavides Martínez. *De milicianos del Rey a soldados mexicanos. Milicias y sociedad en San Luis Potosí (1767-1824)*. Madrid: CSIC, 2014, pp. 361-377.

<sup>47</sup> ANRC, Asuntos Políticos, leg. 222, sig. 121.

<sup>48</sup> AHN, Ultramar, exp. 58, *Gaceta Extraordinaria de La Habana*, 31-08-1851, p. 1.

<sup>49</sup> For a view on the illicit slave trade's business activities by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century in the Atlantic world see John A. E. Harris. "Circuits of wealth, circuits of sorrow: financing the illegal transatlantic slave trade in the age of suppression, 1850-66". *Journal of Global History*, 2016, No. 11, pp. 409-429.

<sup>50</sup> José G. Cayuela Fernández. *Bahía de Ultramar. España y Cuba en el siglo XIX. El control de las relaciones coloniales*. Madrid: Siglo XXI de España Editores, 1993, pp. 139-152.

controlled by the most conservative wing of the Moderate Party, was to increase the power of the State against the growing power of the *integrista* elite.<sup>51</sup> The new Captains General Valentín Cañedo (1852-1853) and José Manuel de la Pezuela (1853-1854), not only tried to effectively end the illicit slave trade but also to dissolve the *Nobles Vecinos*, for they deeply distrusted the existence of a militia of armed civilians that were not constrained by military discipline.<sup>52</sup>

Nonetheless, in a context where the annexationist threat was still active, the new Spanish authorities finally decided not to dissolve by decree the *Nobles Vecinos*. Instead, they were left to wither, not allowing for the recruitment of new members and barely letting them carry out military exercises. However, the experiences of 1850 and 1851 against the expeditions of Narciso López, had created the powerful basis of a militant *integrismo* that would reappear in 1855.

### 3. The creation of the Volunteers and Ramón Pintó's conspiracy

Although it was never carried out, the plot headed by Ramón Pintó, which was uncovered in February 1855, was the most important plot to end Spanish rule in Cuba before the Ten Years' War. Pintó's real aim remains unclear, but after it no more plans to annex Cuba *manu militari* to the US were made. More importantly to the present concern, it marked the creation of the Volunteers and the definitive establishment of this armed *integrista* militia as a permanent element of the Spanish defensive system on the island.

Ramón Pintó's real conspiratorial goal is not clear. Whether it was to annex Cuba to the US or to declare the island's independence from Spain, it is known that it had strong

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<sup>51</sup> The Moderate Party (1834-1874) was the conservative force that dominated Spanish politics during the reign of Queen Elizabeth II (1843-1868), especially during the period known as *Década Moderada* (1843-1854). Ideologically, it represented the conservative wing of Spanish Liberalism, and defended strong powers for the Monarch, restricted political rights, a centralized State, and free trade. For a monography of this party, see Francisco Cánovas Sánchez. *El Partido Moderado*. Madrid: Centro de Estudios Políticos y Constitucionales, 1982.

<sup>52</sup> M. Estorch. *Apuntes para la historia sobre la administración del Marqués de la Pezuela en la isla de Cuba, desde el 3 de diciembre de 1853 hasta 21 de setiembre de 1854*. Madrid: Imprenta de Manuel Galiano, 1856, pp. 20-29; Uralde Cancio. *Voluntarios de Cuba española*, pp. 34-37. On the captains generals' relationship with slavery during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century see José G. Cayuela Fernández. "Los capitanes generales ante la cuestión de la abolición (1854-1863), in Francisco de Paula Solano Pérez-Lila & Agustín Guimerá Ravina (ed.). *Esclavitud y derechos humanos: la lucha por la libertad del negro en el siglo XIX: Actas del Coloquio Internacional sobre abolición de la esclavitud, Madrid 2-4 de diciembre, 1986*. Madrid: CSIC, 1990, pp. 415-454.

links with annexationist elements in the US South. According to the inquiries by the Spanish authorities, the former governor of Mississippi, John A. Quitman (1835-1836 / 1850-1851) was meant to command a mercenary force to invade the island. However, the plot's leader, the Catalan Ramón Pintó, was a well-known Liberal and cultural promoter in Havana who advocated for the abolition of slavery, which was precisely the institution that the annexationists both in Cuba and the US southern states had been wanting to protect.<sup>53</sup> The only certainty about the conspiracy was that it aimed to put Spain's rule in Cuba to an end. And the Volunteers were created precisely to secure Spanish sovereignty in Cuba.

On 6<sup>th</sup> February 1855, the conspiracy was uncovered in a context of great political tension in Cuba. Only a few months before, in October 1854, the US ambassadors to Spain, Britain, and France had published the *Ostend Manifesto*, which vowed to annex Cuba to the US either by an agreement with Spain or by a military intervention.<sup>54</sup> It was a statement of intent rather than a well-organized plan. In fact, the US Government finally discarded the idea of annexing Cuba because of the northern US states' opposition to it, for the Manifesto distilled a sheer pro-slavery spirit. Despite its not finally being implemented, the Manifesto was a signal that the annexation of Cuba still had powerful advocates in the American Union. The menace of an armed expedition against Cuba was taken for granted on the island. Only three days after uncovering the plot, the Spanish authorities announced that they had learned that a force of 2,500 men was ready to sail for Cuba from different points in the US.<sup>55</sup> On 15<sup>th</sup> February, Cuba's main newspaper, the *Diario de la Marina*, assured that 'no one doubts that the expedition will arrive'.<sup>56</sup>

The expedition never arrived, since the detention of Ramón Pintó by the Spanish authorities thwarted the plans, but the news of the extent of the conspiracy's network was no less worrying. It was estimated that a force of at least 1,400 men distributed throughout Cuba was ready to take up arms, backed by the *Caja de Ahorro* (Cuba's first savings bank) and by the annexationist elite that had supported the expeditions of Narciso López.<sup>57</sup> Thus, on paper, it was a powerful conspiracy with a wide network of interests involved.

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<sup>53</sup> Vicenç Bernades. *Ramon Pintó. Una conspiració a la Cuba colonial*. Barcelona: Edicions La Paraula Viva, 1975, pp. 157-169.

<sup>54</sup> Lars Schoultz. *Beneath the United States: A History of U.S. Policy Toward Latin America*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998, pp. 39-58.

<sup>55</sup> *Gaceta de La Habana*, 9-2-1855, p. 1.

<sup>56</sup> *Diario de la Marina*, 15-02-1855, p. 2.

<sup>57</sup> Bernades. *Ramon Pintó*, pp. 40-43.



Image 2. Cuba's Captain General José Gutiérrez de la Concha, who created the Volunteers on 12<sup>th</sup> February 1855. Ribó. *Historia de los Voluntarios cubanos*, vol. II, p. 248.

In this context, Captain General José Gutiérrez de la Concha (whom can be seen in image 2, p. 46) who had recently returned to Cuba, revived his project involving the civilian population in defence of the island. Consequently, on 12<sup>th</sup> February 1855, he issued a decree creating the Volunteers. All the Spanish men, both *peninsulares* and Cuban-born, between the ages of 18 and 50, could voluntarily join the newly created militia to defend Spanish sovereignty and secure public order in Cuba.<sup>58</sup>

Back in Cuba, the inactive ranks and officers of the *Nobles Vecinos* became the basis for the Volunteers. The *integrista* elite and the working-class *peninsulares* were the bedrock of the Volunteers, repeating the scheme of the *Nobles Vecinos*. Thus, this new militia was somehow the armed wing of the *integristas*. However, due to the magnitude of Ramón Pintó's conspiracy, and fearing the invasion of several thousand mercenaries, the recruitment soon took on a bigger dimension than in 1850 and 1851. Companies and battalions of infantry and cavalry were created throughout Cuba, and it thus became a true island-wide movement. By late April 1855, the Volunteers reported having ca. 24,000 men-at-arms.<sup>59</sup> Most of them were concentrated in the west of the island, which concentrated a majority of the island's population and economic production.

Due to their impressive numbers, the Volunteers soon became a social phenomenon to be reckoned with, especially considering that they outnumbered the 16,000-strong regular Army garrison stationed in Cuba. In case of divergence between the policies of the authorities and the Volunteers, the latter could also use their coercive power to push forward their agenda, especially in Havana where the Spanish power in Cuba resided. This

<sup>58</sup> *Gaceta de La Habana*, 12-02-1855, p. 1.

<sup>59</sup> The numbers were disclosed by the captain general during a military parade in Havana on 30th April 1855. More precisely, there were 15,663 infantry and 8,023 cavalry Volunteers. Otero Pimentel. *Memoria sobre los Voluntarios*, p. 10.



does not mean that such a heterogeneous group as the Volunteers, where industrial tycoons and working-class people gathered, had a common agenda. All the Volunteers, however, were united in their staunch support of Spanish sovereignty. Thus, the plot headed by Ramón Pintó was a potential threat to their presence in the island, for it aimed at ousting Spain from Cuba. Hence, the Volunteers intensely demanded the execution of Ramón Pintó and his closest collaborators.<sup>60</sup>

Pintó's fate was precisely the excuse used by the Volunteers to demonstrate their coercive capacity in front of the authorities. Perhaps due to the old friendship between the captain general and Pintó, the former opposed the idea of executing him, a position that was shared by the military court which processed the conspirators, who were acquitted in the first instance. This sparked mounting pressure by the Volunteers against the authorities. The campaign to execute Pintó was especially intense in Havana, where the Volunteers carried out public meetings and informal military parades where toasts for the death of Pintó were made. At a coffee house in Havana, the Volunteer captain Costa gave a speech promising his comrades that Pintó's fate was certain, for they would do it with their 'own hands' should the captain general spare Pintó.<sup>61</sup> This was an open threat to Gutiérrez de la Concha's authority and an expression of the Volunteers' reliance on their coercive power.

Aware of the Volunteers' willingness to kill Pintó, the captain general decided to avoid a rebellion in Havana by taking Pintó before the courts for the second time. On this occasion, a new military jury sentenced Pintó to being executed. On 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1855, the execution of Ramón Pintó in front of the fortress of La Punta was witnessed by thousands of *habaneros*. Alongside the Army and Civil Guard troops that escorted Pintó and protected the area, there was a squad of Volunteers.<sup>62</sup> These men had finally won their tour de force against the captain general.

The outcome of the Ramón Pintó affair could have been interpreted as a relative political defeat for the captain general, as he initially opposed the execution. However, he understood the Volunteers were a military necessity for the defence of Spanish rule in Cuba

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<sup>60</sup> Bernades. *Ramon Pintó*, pp. 125-132.

<sup>61</sup> Justo Zaragoza. *Las insurrecciones de Cuba. Apuntes para la historia política de esta isla en el presente siglo*, vol. II. Madrid: Imprenta de Manuel G. Hernández, 1873, p. 673.

<sup>62</sup> Bernades. *Ramón Pintó*, p. 146.

in a context where annexationist plots were still being organized in the US. To tackle these plots, the collaboration of the loyalist elements in Cuba was paramount.

### 3.1. A Militia of *peninsulares*?

The creation of a militia like the Volunteers was consistent with the wider plan for military reform envisioned by the captain general José Gutiérrez de la Concha (1854-1859). One of his main tasks was to reform the almost chronically short-of-funds Cuban treasury. As a metropolis, Spain was virtually unable to provide funds for its Antilles. The war for independence against France (1808-1814), the loss of the American empire, the First Carlist War (1833-1840) and decades of continuous political instability, had left the Spanish economy in a ruinous state. Hence, the Spanish Government expected Cuba not only to be self-sufficient but to contribute to the Spanish treasury.<sup>63</sup> In order to alleviate the pressure on the island's treasury, the captain general planned to establish in Cuba a smaller yet better equipped regular Army and Navy. He also envisioned a greater participation of Cuba's society in the defence of the island, for this would foster loyalty towards Spain and narrow the gap between *peninsulares* and Cubans that had been forming since the days of Captain General Miguel Tacón (1834-1838).<sup>64</sup>

These were precisely the core arguments of a report he sent to the Spanish Ministry of War on 20<sup>th</sup> June 1855. He argued that the Cuban treasury lacked the means to maintain an Army of 40,000 men, which was deemed necessary to successfully face a military invasion launched from the US. Hence, the Volunteers were a reliable substitute for the soldiers the State was not prepared to pay for.

The captain general desired to address the widening gap between Cubans and *peninsulares* extant since Miguel Tacón's government, for both had joined and were an integral part of the Volunteers.<sup>65</sup> This was especially true outside Havana, where most of the Volunteers were *peninsulares*. Certainly, the men from metropolitan Spain also participated

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<sup>63</sup> Before the independence of New Spain (1821), Cuba's budget was covered by the *situado* (contribution) coming from that viceroyalty. After 1821, the island's treasury was only fuelled by the revenues raised from exports, mostly sugar, and custom tariffs applied on imports. For the *situado* of New Spain see Carlos Marichal & Johanna Von Grafenstein (cords.). *El secreto del imperio español: los situados coloniales en el siglo XVIII*. Mexico City: El Colegio de México / Instituto Mora, 2012.

<sup>64</sup> Cayuela. *Bahía de Ultramar*, pp. 16-27 & 178-204.

<sup>65</sup> AGMM, Ultramar, Capitanía General de Cuba, caja 2634, carpeta 72-3, subcarpeta 72-3-1.

in the organization of the Volunteers throughout Cuba. In Santiago de Cuba, a city where the *peninsulares* represented a relatively small community, the backbone of the Volunteers was represented by metropolitan Spaniards employed in commerce.<sup>66</sup> For instance, this was the case of a lingerie shop owner, Facundo Bacardí, a Catalan migrant from Sitges who would go on to establish the rum-producing Bacardí Company in 1862.<sup>67</sup>

The participation of Cubans had been a reality since the very inception of the Volunteers, despite the historiography tending to see it as a force exclusively made up of *peninsulares*.<sup>68</sup> To join the Volunteers was not only a question of social prestige, for the Havana *integrista* elite that controlled the Cuban economy was the driving force that created the Volunteers. It was also a way to establish good relations with political power. For instance, in the city of Santa Clara, the Cuban landowner Pedro Nolasco González-Abreu created the local cavalry squadron after only ten days of the captain general's decree establishing the Volunteers.<sup>69</sup> Beyond being a member of the local elite, González-Abreu is known for being the father of Marta Abreu, a philanthropist that favoured the cause of Cuba's independence during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>70</sup>

The very existence of the Volunteers must be understood as a symptom of the diverse loyalties that existed in Cuba by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. They were created to counter the annexationist plans supported by part of the Cuban elite. However, the presence of both Cubans and *peninsulares* in their ranks revealed the existence of a loyalism that was by no means exclusive to the community of metropolitan Spaniards that had settled in Cuba.

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<sup>66</sup> Maritza Pérez Dionisio. "La inmigración hispana en Santiago de Cuba (1868-1898). *Estudios de historia social y económica de América*, 1996, No. 13, pp. 427-448.

<sup>67</sup> AGMS, leg. B-585, exp. 30. For a history of the Bacardí Company see Tom Gjelten. *Bacardí and the Long Fight for Cuba. The Biography of a Cause*. New York: Viking, 2008.

<sup>68</sup> Áurea Matilde Fernández Muñiz. *España y Cuba 1868-1898. Revolución burguesa y relaciones coloniales*. Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1988, pp. 134-156; Uralde Cancio. *Voluntarios de Cuba española*, p. 22.

<sup>69</sup> BNC, CM Abreu, No. 91, 94 & 324.

<sup>70</sup> Marta González-Abreu y Arencibia (1845-1909) was a well-respected philanthropist from the city of Santa Clara. Among other enterprises, she promoted the construction of railways in Central Cuba and helped to fund the war for Cuban independence of 1895-1898. For a biography of Marta Abreu, see Josefina Toledo Bénédict. *Marta Abreu. La caridad como energía creadora*. Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 2014.

#### 4. Consolidation

The consolidation of the Volunteers as a permanent element of the Spanish defensive system in Cuba must be understood in relation to the imperial structure of Spain in the Caribbean. Firstly, they became a permanent element of defence in Cuba within a wider context of military reforms carried out by the Captain General José Gutiérrez de la Concha. Secondly, they consolidated their role during a context of Spanish colonial adventures in Africa and the Caribbean, as a pro-imperial militia.

##### 4.1. The Captain General's Military Reforms

Reforming the defensive system in Cuba was a priority for Captain General José Gutiérrez de la Concha (1854-1859). The core aims of the reform were to count on a smaller yet properly equipped Army, less costly to the treasury, and to foster the participation of local society in the defence of the island.<sup>71</sup> The creation of the Volunteers must be understood in relation to this latter aspect. However, it also reflected the ascendance of *integrismo* in Cuba, closely related to the emergence of the *integrista* elite and the community of working-class *peninsulares*.

Fostering the participation of Cuban society in the defence of the island was another basic element of the military reforms planned by Gutiérrez de la Concha. Considering that this meant the use of civilians for paramilitary purposes, loyalty to Spain was a cardinal element in the recruitment of militiamen. This did not seem a problem for the mobilization of free Cubans of African descent, whose participation in the army, which dated back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, had been banned in 1844 after an alleged slaves' conspiracy had been thwarted by the authorities. Between 1854 and 1857 the captain general created the *Milicias de Color*.<sup>72</sup> The issue of loyalty seemed more troublesome regarding white Cubans. The role of *criollos* in Spanish America's independence, and the support of part of the Cuban elite for annexation to the US (including the collaboration of several *Milicias Disciplinadas*' officers

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<sup>71</sup> Cayuela. *Bahía de Ultramar*, pp. 178-205.

<sup>72</sup> Herbert Klein. "The Colored Militia of Cuba: 1568-1868". *Caribbean Studies*, 1966, vol. 6, No. 2, pp. 17-27; María del Carmen Barcia Zequeira. "Los batallones de pardos y morenos en Cuba (1600-1868)". *Anales de Desclasificación*, 2004, vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 1-16.

with Narciso López), only increased the Spanish authorities' distrust towards Cubans. This was the reason why these militias had been left virtually to wither.<sup>73</sup>

In this context, the Volunteers seemed a militia especially fit for the context to follow. Firstly, it was made up exclusively of unpaid volunteer civilians. Taking this into account, the recruits must have been driven by a loyalty to Spain and a sincere desire to serve. Cubans and *peninsulares* participated alike under the same regulations, and their financial support was to be found among the *integrists* elite, and thus did not represent any cost to the Treasury. The *Milicias Disciplinadas*, on the contrary, was a conscript militia dominated by Creoles who received a stipend from the Treasury. Conscription meant that Cubans who might not be supportive of Spanish rule could be recruited forcibly. As seen in the previous paragraph, some of these men took part in uprisings against Spain. Instead, the Volunteers were apparently made up of enthusiasts and represented no burden for the Treasury. Hence, on 24<sup>th</sup> April 1856, the Volunteers became a permanent element of the Spanish defensive system in Cuba. That very day, the Captaincy General approved their militia regulations or *reglamento*. In the first article of its first chapter, the *raison d'être* of the Volunteers is clearly stated: 'the main object the Volunteer Battalions have been created for, and the main obligation of their members, is to maintain the order and public tranquillity of the towns: the armed defence of the rights of the Mother Country and our queen Doña Elizabeth II with one's life if necessary'.<sup>74</sup>

The *reglamento* set the basic rules for the organization and military instruction of the Volunteers. It stated that 'Spaniards from both hemispheres' between 18 and 50 years old with "a proper behaviour" could join the militia, which was to have infantry and cavalry units. Contrary to the *Milicias Disciplinadas*, which resorted both to conscription and volunteering, the Volunteers were exclusively made of men who voluntarily decided to join the militia. This was meant to be a measure to assure the loyalty of the members, for Cubans discontented with Spanish rule would hardly join a unit so closely associated with the most radical forms of Spanish nationalism. As to the military instruction, it was rather basic, mostly consisting of basic weaponry training and drilling. As to the command structure,

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<sup>73</sup> Eladio Baldovín Ruiz. *Cuba. El desastre español del siglo XIX*. Astorga: Akrón, 2010, pp. 120-122.

<sup>74</sup> María Isabel Luisa de Borbón y Borbón-Dos Sicilias (1830-1904) was Queen of Spain (1843-1868). Her reign was marked by the consolidation of the Liberal regime, political instability and the predominance of Army generals in politics. She was deposed in 1868 during the so-called revolution of *La Gloriosa* and lived as an exile in France until her death. For a recent biography see Isabel Burdiel. *Isabel II. Una biografía*. Madrid: Taurus, 2010. *Reglamento para los cuerpos de Voluntarios de la Isla de Cuba*, cap. I, art. 1.

the *Segundo Cabo*, or the captain general's second-in-command, was instituted as general sub-inspector of the Volunteers. However, direct command was bestowed upon the units' officers. Although vague, the *reglamento* of 1856 marked the consolidation of the Volunteers as a permanent element of the Spanish defensive system in Cuba.

#### 4.2. Supporting the Spanish Imperial Adventures

The consolidation of the Volunteers was also possible thanks to their support in a series of imperial adventures carried out by Spain between the late 1850s and the mid-1860s. These adventures were a series of colonial campaigns promoted by the Spanish Government headed by Leopoldo O'Donnell (1858-1863) and his party, the Liberal Union, aimed at strengthening Spanish national unity and claiming Spain's role as a colonial power.<sup>75</sup> Stephen Jacobson has called these campaigns "micro-military adventures", for their discrete territorial ambitions and motivations mostly related to the country's declining prestige.<sup>76</sup>

More concretely, Cuba's Volunteers explicitly supported the war against Morocco (1859-1860), and the reincorporation of Santo Domingo into the Spanish Monarchy (1861-1865). Between the thwarted annexationist plot headed by Ramón Pintó (1855) and the breakout of the Ten Years' War in 1868, the Volunteers had no clear military use as Cuba faced no direct threat. Thus, their support for the Spanish imperial adventures allowed the Volunteers to claim their loyalty to Spain, and to contribute to the country's military effort to gain the favour of the authorities.

This was especially important after the annexationist Cuban elite had abandoned their plans, due to the failure of Ramón Pintó's conspiracy. Instead of trying to push forward its agenda of political and economic reforms outside Spain, the former annexationist elite tried to explore the possibility of achieving reforms within the Spanish Monarchy. Thus, during the terms of the Captains General Francisco Serrano (1859-1862) and Domingo Dulce (1862-1866), the former annexationist elite, now reformist, sought the support of the

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<sup>75</sup> Nelson Durán. *La Unión Liberal y la modernización de la España isabelina. Una convivencia frustrada 1854-1868*. Madrid: Akal Editor, 1979, pp. 87-134.

<sup>76</sup> Stephen Jacobson. "Imperial Ambitions in an Era of Decline: Micromilitarism and the Eclipse of the Spanish Empire, 1858-1923", in Alfred W. McCoy, Josep M. Fradera & Stephen Jacobson (eds.). *Endless Empire. Spain's Retreat, Europe's Eclipse, America's Decline*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2012, pp. 74-91.

Spanish authorities, which had traditionally sided by the *integrista* elite.<sup>77</sup> In a context where the Captains Generals were the *ultima ratio*, and without a system of established political parties, lobbying was the only way to defend any political agenda before the power that ruled Cuba.

In this context, to rally around the authorities and to show a firm disposition to collaborate in national projects was crucial to claiming a role in Cuba. The Volunteers' loyalty paid off, for it was rewarded by the recognition of the authorities and helped to keep the units active during a period where their military use was unclear. This is an aspect omitted by Uralde Cancio in her book on the Volunteers before the Ten Years' War.<sup>78</sup> However, the existence of a pro-imperial movement in Cuba has recently been pointed out by García Balañá, who considers that supporting the imperial adventures of Spain was a way to defend Spanish sovereignty on the island.<sup>79</sup> In the same line, it is argued here that the Volunteers are a clear example of this support, which at the same time helped them to consolidate their role within the Spanish defensive system.

The war against Morocco (1859-1860) proved a most successful colonial campaign. Essentially, this was a war about Spain's prestige, ignited by the attack on the Spanish garrison of the North African enclave of Ceuta by a group of Moroccans.<sup>80</sup> Although the country only gained commercial benefits and a tiny geographical expansion of its enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla, it sparked a wave of national enthusiasm both in metropolitan Spain

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<sup>77</sup> Francisco Serrano y Domínguez (1810-1885) was a leading military and political figure in 19<sup>th</sup> century Spain. He was head of government (1868-1869) and State (1869-1871, and 1874). Politically considered a Liberal, he actively participated in the creation of Leopoldo O'Donnell's Liberal Union in 1854, and in the toppling of Queen Elizabeth II in 1868. As a soldier, he only participated in the First Carlist War. A recent biography is Trinidad Ortúzar. *El general Serrano. Biografía breve*. Madrid: Ediciones 19, 2017. Domingo Dulce y Garay (1808-1869) fought in the first and second Carlist wars (1833-1840 and 1846-1849). He was also involved in the Liberal Union and the revolutionary coup against Elizabeth II in 1868. He was Cuba's captain general in three occasions (1862-1866, 1866, and 1868-1869). A biography in Joaquín Buxó de Abaigar. *Domingo Dulce. General isabelino*. Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1962.

<sup>78</sup> Uralde Cancio. *Voluntarios de Cuba española*, pp. 52-56.

<sup>79</sup> García Balañá. "Patriotismos trasatlánticos", pp. 207-237.

<sup>80</sup> Juan Antonio Inarejos Muñoz. *Intervenciones coloniales y nacionalismo español. La política exterior de la Unión Liberal y sus vínculos con la Francia de Napoleón III (1856-1868)*. Madrid: Sílex, 2007, pp. 15-42.

and her colonies.<sup>81</sup> In the words of an Army officer, “nothing was more popular in Spain than the war against the Moors”.<sup>82</sup>

In Cuba, this war also struck an imperial chord. According to *La América*, “each one of our Army’s victories is celebrated in the ever-faithful island of Cuba with demonstrations of immense joy”.<sup>83</sup> The Volunteers played a prominent role in these demonstrations. Among other events, they organized a masquerade at Havana’s impressive Tacón theatre, and a raffle for the men serving in Africa.<sup>84</sup> They also organized events that explicitly referred to the support to the Spanish cause and the Spanishness of Cuba. For instance, during a bullfight in Havana, both the arena and its surrounding streets were decorated with Spanish flags. Quite remarkably, the Volunteers, and not the police, kept public order during the bullfights.<sup>85</sup> The setting, the event, and the participation of the Volunteers were a clear act of Spanish nationalist affirmation, for bullfighting was deeply “associated with Spain”.<sup>86</sup>

Another demonstration of support for Spain’s war in Morocco was aiding the men fighting in Africa economically through donations. These donations were not exclusive to the Volunteers, not even of the *integristas*. Members of the Cuban elite that had flirted with annexationism also took part in the donations as a mean to reconcile with the Spanish authorities. For instance, Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, a lawyer, and landowner from the eastern town of Bayamo donated a 4% of his income for the Spanish military effort in Morocco.<sup>87</sup> A few years later, Céspedes would lead the Cuban insurgent forces that declared the island’s independence in 1868 that marked the beginning of the Ten Years’ War. The

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<sup>81</sup> Albert García Balañá. “The Empire Is No Longer a Social Unit’: Declining Imperial Expectations and Transatlantic Crises in Metropolitan Spain”, in McCoy, Fradera & Jacobson (eds.). *Endless Empire*, pp. 92-106.

<sup>82</sup> These words were written by Nicolás Estévez Murphy (1838-1914), an infantry officer who fought in the wars in Morocco (1859-1860), Santo Domingo (1861-1865), and Cuba (1868-1878). He quit the Army after the execution of eight Cuban medical students by the Volunteers in Havana, which will be seen in the next chapter. Politically he was involved in republican conspiracies during most of his adult life. It has been speculated the he might have provided the Anarchist Mateo Morral the bomb with which he tried to kill the King Alphonse XII and his wife Victoria Eugenia in Madrid in 1906. Nicolás Estévez. *Mis memorias*. Madrid: Tebas, 1975 (first published in 1899), p. 48.

<sup>83</sup> *La América* was a Madrid-based bi-monthly magazine created by the Cuban reformist lobby established in the Spanish capital. *La América*, 08-02-1860, p. 4.

<sup>84</sup> ANRC, Asuntos Políticos, leg. 53, exp. 1.

<sup>85</sup> *Boletín de loterías y de toros*, 23-08-1869, p. 2.

<sup>86</sup> Louis A. Pérez, Jr. “Between Baseball and Bullfighting: The Quest for Nationality in Cuba, 1868-1898”. *The Journal of American History*, 1994, vol. 81, No. 2, p. 505.

<sup>87</sup> *La América*, 24-01-1860, p. 16.



support of the considered “Father of the Fatherland” for the imperial Spanish campaign in Africa has been concealed by traditional historiography.<sup>88</sup>

For the Volunteers, which by 1860 were already 12,000 men-at-arms throughout the island, the donations were a transversal demonstration of loyalty to Spain, which included all its members regardless of their social position.<sup>89</sup> The social and geographical composition of the Volunteers was reflected by the donations to the war effort in Morocco. Just to mention a few examples, Corporal Tomás Abreu of Santiago de Cuba, donated 4 pesos per month during 1860 for the sustainment of a soldier fighting in Morocco. The Matanzas Volunteer Battalion, commanded by the Cuban-born Cosme de la Torriente, contributed with 5,088 pesos. The four infantry Volunteer battalions of Havana gathered over 37,000 pesos.<sup>90</sup> In total, the Volunteers gave over 273,000 pesos for the war in Africa.<sup>91</sup> The fact that these donations came from all over the island is a good indicator of the existence of both an *esprit de corps* and the Volunteers’ commitment to Spain’s role in Africa, which at the same time reinforced Spanish sovereignty in the colonies as well.

All this support for the Spanish military effort in Morocco was not followed by the direct participation of many Volunteers in the war. In fact, according to the records, only 36 men left Cuba to join the Spanish Army in Morocco, of whom just a handful were Volunteers.<sup>92</sup> Nevertheless, there were plans to use the Volunteers as a model militia to create a unit in Cuba to be dispatched to Morocco. In September 1860, the Cuban-born secretary of Queen Elizabeth II, Martín de Arredondo y Olea, suggested to the Ministry of War the creation of a Volunteer battalion of “Blacks and Mulattoes” to be sent to Africa. Concretely, he suggested that these men could garrison the Moroccan cities occupied by the Spanish troops after the war ended in April 1860. But above all, he envisioned these Volunteers as a “Cuban contribution to the glory of the Nation”.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> For instance, Herminio Portell Vilá did not mention this in his classic biography of Céspedes. See *Céspedes, el padre de la Patria cubana*. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1931, pp. 40-56.

<sup>89</sup> More concretely, there were 11,802 Volunteers by 1860. They were organized into ten infantry battalions, 30 loose companies, and 51 sections (7,278 men), and 11 cavalry squadrons and 193 sections (5,524 men). *Cuerpos de Voluntarios de la Isla de Cuba*, p. 13.

<sup>90</sup> *La América*, 24-01-1860, pp. 12-16.

<sup>91</sup> Martínez Nubla. *Los Voluntarios de Ultramar*, p. 38.

<sup>92</sup> ANRC, Reales Decretos y Ordenanzas, leg. 216, exp. 237.

<sup>93</sup> Martín de Arredondo y Olea was a native of the city of Trinidad de Cuba (province of Santa Clara). According to the report he sent to Madrid, he was one of the Queen’s honorary secretaries. ANRC, Asuntos Políticos, leg. 53, exp. 1; Sartorius. *Ever Faithful*, p. 91.

The project of sending Volunteers of African descent to Morocco never took place. However, it is relevant to the idea that inspired Arredondo's report. For the first time, the Volunteers were considered as a model militia to be used for Spain in her colonial campaigns outside Cuba. Thus, beyond being a permanent element of the Spanish defensive system on the island, they were thought of for the first time as a militia that could play a role in its imperial dimension. The idea of sending Cuban Volunteers to fight in Africa also engaged with the practices of Spanish nationalism of the 1860s. In the Peninsula, units of Basque and Catalan volunteers were raised and sent to fight to Morocco alongside the regular Army, whose victories were celebrated by demonstrations of enthused popular nationalism.<sup>94</sup> Thus, supporting Spain's imperial ambitions was a way to reinforce the Spanish nationalist discourse in Cuba.<sup>95</sup>

The Volunteers' commitment to Spain and her empire was also demonstrated through donations that were not exclusively linked to military adventures. For instance, they donated 10,000 pesos for the creation of barracks for invalided soldiers in Havana, or ca. 28,000 for the reconstruction of Manila after the earthquake that almost destroyed it in June 1863.<sup>96</sup> Showing solidarity towards the Philippines was a way to underpin the idea of *integridad nacional* between the different parts of the empire. But it was a war in the Antilles that would consolidate the Volunteers within the Spanish defensive system: the war in Santo Domingo (1863-1865), which took part in the context of the re-annexation of that country into the Spanish Monarchy (1861-1865). Returning to the direct rule of the old Mother Country was the option defended by part of the Dominican elite—represented by General Pedro Santana—as the solution for the chronic instability of the country and the threat of Haitian expansionism.<sup>97</sup> However, the opposition to Spanish rule of other groups gathered around Buenaventura Báez, and the resistance of the US to the biggest change in the status

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<sup>94</sup> Mercedes Braunstein Franco. "Els voluntaris catalans a la Guerra d'Àfrica (1859-60). *L'Avenç*, 1999, No. 237, pp. 76-79; Arturo Cajal Valero. "La participación de los Tercios Vascongados en la Guerra de África (1859-1860)". *Revista de Historia Militar*, 2012, Año LVI, No. 112, pp. 125-195; Albert García Balañá. "Patria, plebe y política en la España isabelina: la guerra de África en Cataluña (1859-1860)", in Eloy Martín Corrales (coord.). *Marruecos y el colonialismo español (1859-1912): de la guerra de África a la "penetración pacífica"*. Barcelona: Edicions Bellaterra, 2002, pp. 13-78.

<sup>95</sup> García Balañá. "Patriotismos trasatlánticos", pp. 207-237.

<sup>96</sup> Martínez Nubla. *Los Voluntarios de Ultramar*, p. 38. For the Manila earthquake, see Susana María Ramírez Martín. *El terremoto de Manila de 1863: medidas políticas y económicas*. Madrid: CSIC, 2006.

<sup>97</sup> Luis Alfonso Escolano Jiménez. "El comienzo de las relaciones diplomáticas entre España y la República Dominicana en 1855". *Revista Complutense de Historia de América*, 2011, vol. 37, pp. 277-299; Inarejos Muñoz. *Intervenciones coloniales*, pp. 63-74; Cristóbal Robles Muñoz. *Paz en Santo Domingo (1854-1865). El fracaso de la anexión a España*. Madrid: CSIC, 1987, pp. 9-61.

quo of the Caribbean since the Haitian independence of 1804, fuelled a nationalist uprising against Spain that ended with the withdrawal of the Spanish troops in May 1865.<sup>98</sup>

Evidence suggests that the war in Santo Domingo was not as popular among Volunteers as the war against Moroccans. They probably feared that waging a war against a nation so close geographically and culturally to Cuba might have a negative impact on the island. Fighting the Dominicans could have a bad effect on Cuban reformists who now trusted they would gain more political and economic rights under Spain. A major factor to be reckoned with was the United States. Although the country was embroiled in the civil war, as the conflict went on and the North's victory seemed more imminent, it was clear that the US would not tolerate the Spanish presence in Santo Domingo.<sup>99</sup> Hence, this was another source of potential trouble for Spain in the Antilles. If the financial contribution can be taken as a measure to reckon the Volunteers' support for this war, the fact that they donated less than 30,000 *pesos* for the Dominican campaign is quite telling (whereas they had contributed with ca. 275,000 for the Moroccan war).<sup>100</sup>

Despite this, and although the outcome of the war in Santo Domingo was a setback for Spain's imperial aspirations to a stronger presence in the Caribbean, the Volunteers did contribute to the war effort, which helped to consolidate them as a permanent element of the Spanish defensive system in Cuba. In fact, just as had been considered during the war against Morocco, there were plans to send Volunteers to fight in Santo Domingo. On April 1864, a Volunteer officer in Havana, the Catalan Baudilio Vila, sent a report to the Spanish Ministry of War, while military operations were still ongoing in Santo Domingo. Vila suggested recruiting men from among the already existing Volunteer units to create a 600-strong *Batallón de Voluntarios del Príncipe de Asturias* and send it from Cuba to Santo Domingo under his direct command, for he had some military experience as a former member of the National Militia in Barcelona.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Robles Muñoz. *Paz en Santo Domingo*, pp. 244-249.

<sup>99</sup> Martínez-Fernández. *Torn Between Empires*, pp. 161-170.

<sup>100</sup> Martínez Nubla. *Los Voluntarios de Ultramar*, p. 38.

<sup>101</sup> The National Militia was a paramilitary force first created in 1820, and closely associated with the most progressive wing of Spanish Liberalism. Baudilio Vila recalls in his report to the Ministry of War his participation in the uprising against the Moderate Party-controlled Spanish Government that took place in Barcelona between August and November 1843. Later, during the Ten Years' War, he became involved in the transportation of slaves and cattle confiscated from the Cuban insurgents by the Spanish authorities. AGMM, Ministerio de la Guerra, "Propuesta de creación de un Batallón de Voluntarios en Cuba para Santo Domingo (1864)", sig. 5664.6; AHN, Ultramar, 4366, exp. 8. For an overview of the National Militia, see Juan Sisinio Pérez Garzón. "La Milicia Nacional", in VVAA. *Sagasta y el liberalismo español*. Madrid: Fundación BBVA, 2000, pp. 137-148.

Unfortunately, although Vila's proposal could not be traced, it can be assumed that a type of volunteer force was organized in Havana to be sent to Santo Domingo. At the National Archives of the Republic of Cuba, in Havana, there is a file named 'organization of a volunteer battalion for the war in Santo Domingo', which was unfortunately inaccessible at the time of conducting research in Cuba, in Autumn 2015.<sup>102</sup> Thus, although it cannot be established who these volunteers organized in Havana and sent to Cuba were, it is certain that such a force, whatever its composition, was sent to the Dominican war, for the Spanish newspapers informed in November 1864 that the sending of the Volunteer battalions from Havana had been suspended.<sup>103</sup>

Another way the Volunteers contributed to the military effort in Santo Domingo was through logistics. Due to its vicinity to La Hispaniola, Santiago de Cuba became a platform used to send and receive troops and goods to and from Santo Domingo.<sup>104</sup> This role allowed the local Volunteers to claim their role in the Spanish defensive system. Since most of the local Army garrison had left for Santo Domingo, the Volunteers assumed its tasks during the duration of the war, as well as organized a structure of support for the men fighting in Santo Domingo. This included sending spirits and cigars, but more importantly, the transport of the sick soldiers returning from Santo Domingo to the military hospitals of Santiago de Cuba. This task was extremely dangerous, due to the infectious nature of the tropical diseases present. A group of 65 men, out of the 1,400 Santiago de Cuba Volunteers, was selected to carry out the transportation.<sup>105</sup> In total, it is estimated that the Santiago de Cuba Volunteers transported more than 10,000 men between August 1863 and July 1865.<sup>106</sup>

The efforts of the Volunteers were praised by the authorities and gained them the recognition of the Crown. Their contribution helped their consolidation as a permanent militia in Cuba. In fact, Captain General Domingo Dulce (1862-1866) informed the Ministry of War about the Santiago de Cuba Volunteers' efforts. He advised that giving some official recognition to their contribution would raise their morale and would help to consolidate their role in Cuba. As a result, 23 of the Volunteers were awarded military decorations by the Crown in December 1865, seven months after the end of the war.<sup>107</sup> After that war, the

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<sup>102</sup> ANRC, Gobierno Superior Civil, leg. 1668, exp. 8399.

<sup>103</sup> *La Discusión*, 04-11-1864, p. 2.

<sup>104</sup> José de la Gándara. *Anexión y guerra de Santo Domingo*, vol. II. Madrid: Imp. de "El Correo Militar", 1884, pp. 200-228.

<sup>105</sup> AGMM, Ministerio de la Guerra, sig. 5636.25.

<sup>106</sup> AHN, Ultramar, 4717, exp. 1.

<sup>107</sup> AHN, Ultramar, 4697, exp. 43.

Volunteers had clearly consolidated their role thanks to the recognition of the Spanish authorities in Havana and Madrid of their efforts during the war.

## 5. Expansion

The contribution of the Volunteers to the Spanish military efforts in Morocco and Santo Domingo helped to consolidate their role in the defensive system of Cuba, as well as serving as a tool to affirm Spanish sovereignty in the Caribbean. Despite plans to send Volunteers to Africa and Hispaniola never taking place, due to the war in Santo Domingo the model of the Volunteers was replicated in Santo Domingo and Puerto Rico.

### 5.1. Santo Domingo

The history of the Volunteers in Santo Domingo, unexplored by historiography, goes hand in hand with the Spanish re-annexation of the country (1861-1865), and the consequent arrival of Spanish merchants and civil servants to the newly occupied territory. Since Spain withdrew from Santo Domingo in 1821, the Dominican support for the Spanish presence was constrained to a tiny elite of politicians and merchants.<sup>108</sup> Hence, the backbone of the Volunteers in Santo Domingo had necessarily to be the Spaniards who began to disembark in the country after the annexation became effective in May 1861. Spain's weak presence in Santo Domingo also explains the fact that the existence of the Volunteers in this country was restricted to Santo Domingo city, the country's capital. It has only been possible to track a Volunteer section created in Santiago de los Caballeros, the country's second most important city.<sup>109</sup>

The first proposal to create a Volunteer company came from a group of *peninsular* merchants established in the city of Santo Domingo. On 26<sup>th</sup> June 1861, they asked for the creation of two Volunteer companies after Dominican nationalists had attacked the town of Las Matas de Farfán at the Dominican-Haitian border.<sup>110</sup> The fact that these *peninsulares*

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<sup>108</sup> Frank Moya Pons. *The Dominican Republic. A National History*. Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2010 (first published in 1998), pp. 185-199.

<sup>109</sup> AGMM, Ministerio de la Guerra, sig. 5664.4.

<sup>110</sup> The report was sent to Cuba's Captain General, Francisco Serrano (1859-1862), who forwarded it to the Ministry of War in Madrid. The Ministry gave its permission to create the companies on 26<sup>th</sup> July 1861. AGMM, Ministerio de la Guerra, sig. 5664.9.

were willing to create two companies (ca. 200 men) after an attack on a Spanish position, reflects the difficulties that Spain encountered in the country to impose its rule, but also the existence of a relatively important colony of *peninsular* merchants. Just as in the Cuban cities, these men were to be the backbone of the Volunteers in Santo Domingo.

It is difficult to quantify the number of *peninsulares* in Santo Domingo by the time of the annexation. However, since the Dominican-Spanish treaty of 18<sup>th</sup> February 1855 aimed to increase Spain's presence in the country, the number and importance of the *peninsulares* had been growing.<sup>111</sup> By 1861, they already controlled the commerce of mahogany and tobacco in Santo Domingo city and the surrounding area.<sup>112</sup> Another important contingent of *peninsulares* was represented by the civil servants who were appointed as administrators of Santo Domingo.<sup>113</sup> In fact, theirs was the initiative to create a Volunteer battalion in Santo Domingo city, after the Dominican nationalists attacked the country's second most important city, Santiago de los Caballeros on 24<sup>th</sup> February 1861, and regular troops had to be sent from Santo Domingo city.<sup>114</sup> On 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1863, Santo Domingo's Captain General Felipe Ribero y Lemoyne (1862-1863) officially called for the creation of a Volunteer battalion in the capital city.<sup>115</sup>

Just as in Havana in 1855, when the Spanish authorities thought that the arrival of an annexationist military expedition was imminent, the fear that the Spanish Army would be overcome by the insurgents was the cause of the creation of a Volunteers battalion. Thus, the experience of Cuba had been taken as the model for the civilian participation of the defence of the Spanish rule in Santo Domingo. These civilians necessarily had to be *peninsulares*, for the Dominican population generally opposed the Spanish re-annexation

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<sup>111</sup> By the end of 1860 there were about 2,000 Spaniards living in Santo Domingo. Luis Alfonso Escolano Jiménez. *La rivalidad internacional por la República Dominicana y el complejo procesal de su anexión a España (1858-1865)*. Santo Domingo: Archivo General de la Nación, 2013, pp. 243-262; Robles Muñoz. *Paz en Santo Domingo*, pp. 9-22.

<sup>112</sup> Serulle Ramia & Boin. "Evolución económica de la República Dominicana", p. 150.

<sup>113</sup> Robles Muñoz. *Paz en Santo Domingo*, pp. 127-163.

<sup>114</sup> According to the Madrid-based newspaper *La Discusión*, the initiative was born among "members of the Royal Audience, Government officials, merchants, employees, and neighbours of this city [Santo Domingo]". *La Discusión*, 07-04-1863, p. 2.

<sup>115</sup> According to the report sent by the captain general to the War minister on 17<sup>th</sup> May 1863, the 22 officers and non-commissioned-officers were civil servants (10), merchants (5), owners (5), and 1 officer from the *Cuerpo de Reservas*, the military body created to gather the officers and soldiers of the Dominican Army that had accepted the Spanish rule over the country. AGMM, Ministerio de la Guerra, sig. 5664.4.

of their country as Frank Moya Pons has shown.<sup>116</sup> Consequently, Spanish civil servants and merchants formed the backbone of the Volunteers in Santo Domingo.

Little is known of the military activity of these Volunteers. The records kept at the General Military Archive, in Madrid, are only related to the organization of the battalion. It seems likely that the Volunteers of Santo Domingo were never activated militarily outside of the city, where most of the military action took place. For instance, no military action of the Volunteers is described in one of the most detailed works on that war, written by the last Spanish captain general of Santo Domingo, José de la Gándara y Navarro.<sup>117</sup> Even though its dissolution is not mentioned either, it appears evident that it took place when the Spanish troops evacuated the country between May and July 1865.

## 5.2. Puerto Rico

One of the effects of the war in Santo Domingo was the creation of a Volunteer battalion in San Juan, Puerto Rico's capital, on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1864, following the model of Cuba's Volunteers. The idea to emulate the Cuban Volunteers was suggested by the Puerto Rican sugar baron José Ramón Fernández to Captain General Félix María de Messina (1863-1865). Fernández was the most prominent figure of the commercial elite—mostly made up of *peninsulares*—that dominated San Juan. They recruited around 500 of their employees, also mostly *peninsulares*, and gave them uniforms and weapons, creating the first Volunteer battalion. Following the Cuban model, the promoters of the battalion also became its first officers. José Ramón Fernández was appointed its colonel.<sup>118</sup> The official reason for creating the Volunteers was the fact that half of Puerto Rico's Army garrison was fighting in Santo Domingo. Thus, the Volunteers were supposed to replace these men during the war.<sup>119</sup> The Volunteers of Puerto Rico were linked to the imperial projection of Spain from their very inception. The island was a fertile ground for the Spanish imperial discourse. During Spain's war in Morocco (1859-1860) the very elite or merchants that would later create the

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<sup>116</sup> Adriano Miguel Tejada, "Estado, política y gobierno, 1795-1808", in Moya Pons. *Historia de la República Dominicana*, pp. 408-409.

<sup>117</sup> Gándara. *Anexión y guerra de Santo Domingo*.

<sup>118</sup> González Cuevas. *¿Defendiendo el honor?*, pp. 59-64.

<sup>119</sup> Rosado y Brincau. *Bosquejo Histórico*, pp. 11-12.

Volunteers coordinated alongside the Captaincy General a donation of 360,000 pesos for the Spanish soldiers fighting in Africa.<sup>120</sup>

The organization of the Volunteers in Puerto Rico was also a result of the ascent of the elite of merchants and landowners, mostly made up of *peninsulares*, which dominated the island's economy by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Certainly, there was never a mass migration from Spain to Puerto Rico, but Astrid Cubano Iguina demonstrated that the tiny community of *peninsulares* came to dominate credit and commerce in Puerto Rico at the expense of the declining landowning Creole elite. In a way, the Volunteers represented the rising power of the *peninsulares* that controlled commerce.<sup>121</sup>

The creation of the Volunteers also sent a powerful political message. The elite of *peninsulares* and their closest Puerto Rican allies (such as José Ramón Fernández, the promoter of the idea) would use their loyalty to the Spanish authorities to defend their privileged status within society. To a certain extent, José Ramón Fernández and his colleagues began to promote the idea that the Volunteers were also necessary to defend Spanish authority, since there were groups of *criollos* that might conspire against Spain. Due to the emergence of the merchant elite of *peninsulares* and the decline of the Puerto Rican landowners, there was certainly some discontent towards the way Spain ruled Puerto Rico among the propertied and educated circles. These groups had never conspired against Spanish sovereignty, and there was no serious plot to oust Spain by 1864. In Puerto Rico, there had never been an annexationist or nationalist movement aimed at severing ties with Spain. On this island, the main political aspiration of wide echelons of Creole society was to have better conditions under Spanish rule. Despite this, the elite of *peninsulares* exploited the tiniest expression of discontent with the Spanish authorities to justify the creation of a militia of armed Loyalists.

Only a tiny minority of Puerto Ricans openly advocated for the independence of the island.<sup>122</sup> The two leading voices of the Puerto Rican nationalist movement were the

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<sup>120</sup> AGPR, Gobernadores Españoles, caja 60; *Gaceta de Puerto Rico*, 05-01-1860; Herminio Flores Onofre. *Donaciones y voluntarios a las guerras de Marruecos durante la segunda mitad del siglo XIX*. MA Thesis, #260. San Juan: Centro de Estudios Avanzados de Puerto Rico y el Caribe, 2008, p. 101.

<sup>121</sup> Cubano Iguina. *El hilo en el laberinto*, pp. 49-74.

<sup>122</sup> Luis González Vales. "The Challenge to Colonialism", in Arturo Morales Carrión (ed.). *Puerto Rico. A Political and Cultural History*. New York and Nashville: W. W. Norton & Company/American Association for State and Local History, 1983, pp. 108-125.



physician Ramón Emeterio Betances and the landowner Segundo Ruiz Belvis.<sup>123</sup> During the second half of 1864, they circulated a manifesto calling all the *peninsulares* living on the island “scum” and “thieves”. Considering that the Army garrison in Puerto Rico had sent almost half its personnel to Santo Domingo, the manifesto urged the islanders to start an uprising against Spain, for “there are no soldiers in the island [...] and a *jíbaro* and his machete are worth twenty Spaniards”.<sup>124</sup>

The reality was, however, that no one answered the call, and peace in Puerto Rico remained unperturbed. Nonetheless, rumours of an imminent uprising reached San Juan and were exaggerated by the elite of *peninsulares*. They even falsely accused a Puerto Rican officer serving in the Spanish Army, Luis Padial y Vizcarrondo, of preparing an armed uprising for the mere fact of having expressed publicly some disagreement with the way the authorities ruled the island.<sup>125</sup> Padial was expelled from the island by the captain general despite the accusation being ungrounded. Nevertheless, the Volunteer battalion was created on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1864.<sup>126</sup>

Not really believing in the likelihood of an uprising, the captain general and *peninsular* merchants based in San Juan used the Betances and Belvis manifesto, and the rumours accusing Luis Padial of conspiring against Spain, as an excuse to tighten their control over the island. The peace in Puerto Rico was not threatened by any nationalist conspiracy. On a report sent to the Ministry of War, Captain General Félix María de Messina wrote that he had stopped the organization of the Volunteers for the ‘peace was secured, and they were not necessary’.<sup>127</sup>

The Volunteers were left almost inactive since the Spanish troops returned from Santo Domingo to Puerto Rico in May 1865, after Spain had relinquished its sovereignty over that country.<sup>128</sup> The only known activity of the Volunteers during the war was to send

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<sup>123</sup> Ramón Emeterio Betances was the son of a Dominican landowner established in Puerto Rico. He studied medicine at the University of Paris and advocated for the complete abolition of slavery. Segundo Ruiz Belvis was the son of a well-to-do family of Creole landowners. A lawyer educated in Spain, and abolitionist, he was member of Mayagüez’s City Council at the time of the manifesto. Salvador Brau. *Historia de Puerto Rico*. San Juan: Editorial Coquí, 1966 (first published in New York: Appleton & Company, 1904), pp. 258-260.

<sup>124</sup> Lidio Cruz Monclova. *Historia de Puerto Rico (siglo XIX)*, t. III, vol. I. Río Piedras: Ediciones Universitarias, 1962, pp. 367-368; Francisco A. Scarano. *Puerto Rico. Cinco siglos de Historia*. Bogotá: McGraw-Hill Interamericana, 1993, pp. 431-433.

<sup>125</sup> AHN, Ultramar, 1134, exp. 50; Brau. *Historia de Puerto Rico*, pp. 259-260.

<sup>126</sup> Rosado y Brincau. *Bosquejo Histórico*, p. 12.

<sup>127</sup> AHN, Ultramar, 5457, exp. 23.

<sup>128</sup> González Cuevas. *¿Defendiendo el honor?*, pp. 64-65.

3,000 pesos, shoes and clothing to the soldiers fighting on the neighbouring island.<sup>129</sup> After 1865 the alliance between the captain general and the elite of *peninsulares* that created the Volunteers exerted an oppressive control over Puerto Rico. Consequently, some members of the Puerto Rican landowning elite began to conspire against Spanish rule, which would crystalize into the uprising of September 1868 as will be seen in the next chapter.

## 6. Conclusions

As has been shown, the creation, consolidation, and expansion of the Volunteers were intimately related to the imperial framework of the Caribbean during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The Volunteers were created to defend Spanish sovereignty over its oldest imperial possessions (Cuba and Puerto Rico). Their status was consolidated due to their identification with Spain's imperial adventures of the 1860s. Also, in relation to the latter, the model of the Volunteers as a militia first implemented in Cuba, was exported to Santo Domingo and Puerto Rico.

The creation of the Volunteers in Cuba in 1855 can only be understood in relation to the annexationist projects aimed at making the island another state in the American Union. The Volunteers were first organized to strengthen Spanish military capacity in Cuba during a context in which the annexationist movement organized military expeditions aimed at changing the island's status quo.

Firstly, and in relation to the previous point, the Volunteers were also the expression of the new system of defence envisioned by the Captain General José Gutiérrez de la Concha (1854-1859). Part of this new system consisted of a greater participation of the civilian society in the defence of the island, in the form of militias that would not represent a new burden to the stressed Cuban treasury. The cost of organizing the Volunteers was paid by the battalion's officers, and often by the rank-and-file themselves.

The Volunteers must also be understood as an expression of the emerging power of the *peninsulares* in mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Cuba, as well as the Cuban society's complex relations to political loyalty. The authorities sought to replace the old Creole-manned militias with a new militia dominated by the *peninsulares*. In the urban areas, where the *peninsulares*

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<sup>129</sup> AGMM, Documentación de Puerto Rico, sig. 5169.2 & 5169.4.

dominated, it became clear that Spanish Loyalism was not exclusive to the men born in metropolitan Spain. Almost since its very inception, White Cubans joined the Volunteers, especially in the rural areas.

Secondly, the consolidation of the Volunteers is explained by their explicit support of Spain's colonial adventures in Morocco and Santo Domingo during the 1860s. In a context of stability in Cuba, and of a growing influence of the Cuban reformist elite—formerly annexationist—in relation to the Spanish authorities, supporting the imperial projects of Spain through the Volunteers was an approach the *integristas* took to legitimise their position on the island. This support was expressed via donations, but also by directly engaging with the logistical needs of the Spanish troops returning to Cuba from the Dominican warfront. This behaviour justified the Volunteers' role in the defensive system of the island to the authorities, both in Havana and Madrid.

Thirdly, due to their support of Spain's campaigns outside Cuba, the Volunteers became an inherent feature of the military practices of Spanish colonialism in the Caribbean. These forces cost almost nothing to the State, were self-funded, and had shown their identification with Spanish sovereignty in the Antilles. Conditioned by the briefness of Spain's annexation of Santo Domingo (1861-1865), the Volunteers appeared as another element of the Spanish colonial structures deployed over the newly acquired possession. Because of the war in Santo Domingo, the Volunteers model was also implemented in Puerto Rico. As in Cuba in 1855, the creation of the Volunteers in Puerto Rico in 1864 was aimed at strengthening Spanish military control over the island during a period in which its defences had been weakened due to the demand for soldiers in the Dominican campaign. Puerto Rico's Volunteers were first organized by a powerful elite of *peninsular* merchants, which used this militia to secure their privileged position by raising suspicions about the loyalty of the Puerto Rican landowning elite. Thus, both in Cuba and Puerto Rico, the Volunteers played a military role for the authorities and served a political purpose for the elite of *peninsulares* created around colonial commerce.

The Volunteers were thus a force with a dual dimension, local and imperial. On the one hand, they represented the support of part of the local Antillean societies for the Spanish presence in the region. They defended Spain's sovereignty in Cuba and Puerto Rico and were committed to the re-annexation of Santo Domingo. On the other hand, they became an inherent element of the Spanish imperial strategy in the Caribbean. The Spanish authorities used the Volunteers to reinforce their grip over the islands and profited from

their logistical and financial support during the campaigns in Morocco and Santo Domingo. Hence, the Volunteers are an expression of the Spanish national and imperial projects in the Caribbean.

### CHAPTER III. AGAINST THE REVOLUTION (1868-1878)

Reflecting on the assassination of eight innocent medical students, perpetrated in Havana on 27<sup>th</sup> November 1871 by the Volunteers, the Cuban scholar Juan Luis Martín in 1942 considered this militia to have been 19<sup>th</sup> century Cuba's own "Fascist party". Martín considered them the equivalent of Italy's *Fasci di Combattimento*, Germany's SS, and Spain's *Falange*. More importantly, he also described the Volunteers as the private militia of the Spanish slaveholding and commercial elite in Cuba, which recruited these men from among their employees—poorly educated *peninsulares* settled in Havana, who were used to terrorize both the Cubans and Spaniards who wanted to change the colonial status quo.<sup>1</sup>

Leaving aside the 'Fascist' epithet, Martín's brief description of the Volunteers has been traditionally shared by historians.<sup>2</sup> This chapter will argue that it is only a partially valid interpretation in some respects for the period 1868-1878. It is, as well, an interpretation that is excessively Havana-centred, a common flaw in the historiography on Cuba, as pointed out by Moreno Friginals (a similar view has been given regarding the Volunteers in Puerto Rico, though they have drawn much less attention from historians).<sup>3</sup>

Though still predominant, this interpretation of the Volunteers has lately been contested, mostly by Cuban historians. This study builds on their critique. On a recent study on Cuban reformism, Mercedes García Rodríguez recognised that the extent of this militia spread well beyond the peninsular community in Havana, yet without completely abandoning the traditional view.<sup>4</sup> Abreu Cardet, on his study on *integrismo* during the Ten Years' War, has shown the important presence of Cuban Volunteers as an integral element to the forging of the Cuban nation as the insurgents.<sup>5</sup> In the United States, Tone and

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<sup>1</sup> Juan Luis Martín. *Los Voluntarios de 1871. Un partido fascista en Cuba en el siglo XIX (Resumen de conferencias dictadas ante la R. L. "Fraternidad y Constancia"*. Havana: 1942, pp. 1-10.

<sup>2</sup> José Antonio Piqueras Arenas. *La revolución democrática (1868-1874). Cuestión social, colonialismo y grupos de presión*. Madrid: Ministerio de Trabajo y Seguridad Social, 1992, p. 302. Similar interpretations of the Volunteers can be found in Juan B. Amores. *Cuba y España, 1868-1898. El final de un sueño*. Pamplona: Editorial de la Universidad de Navarra, S.A., 1998, pp. 79-85; Domingo Acebrón. *Los Voluntarios*, pp. 53-56; "Los cuerpos de voluntarios en la Guerra de los Diez Años en Cuba, 1868-1878". *Historia y Sociedad*, 1997, Año IX, pp. 51-77; Fernández Muñiz. *España y Cuba*, pp. 134-156; Piqueras Arenas. *La revolución democrática*, pp. 300-313; Roldán de Montaud. *La Restauración en Cuba*, pp. 25-43; Uralde Cancio. *Voluntarios de Cuba española*, pp. 77-80.

<sup>3</sup> Moreno Friginals. *Cuba/España*, p. 85; González Cuevas. *¿Defendiendo el honor?*, pp. 64-71. Prior to this, there was only another study of the Puerto Rican Volunteers by Rafael Rosado y Brincau. *Bosquejo Histórico*.

<sup>4</sup> Mercedes García Rodríguez. *Con un ojo en Yara y otro en Madrid. Cuba entre dos revoluciones*. Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 2012, pp. 104-117.

<sup>5</sup> Abreu Cardet. *Apuntes sobre el integrismo*, p. 5. The *integristas* were the defenders of the *Integridad Nacional*, many of whom were Volunteers. The *mambí* was a nickname given to Cuban

Sartorius have also argued that Spanish Loyalism in Cuba went well beyond the community of *peninsulares*.<sup>6</sup>

Drawing from both the traditional and the revised interpretation of the Volunteers, this chapter argues that they were a counterrevolutionary yet highly heterogeneous phenomenon. They certainly opposed the potential changes streaming from the revolutions of 1868 in Spain and her Antilles, however by no means should they be considered merely a Spanish slave owners' urban militia of peninsular workers. In fact, the revolutionary period opened in the Spanish Antilles in 1868 marked for the Volunteers not only an expansion of its model from Cuba to Puerto Rico, but also the inclusion of thousands of Creoles into their ranks. Whereas before 1868 the Volunteers had been a force basically made up of *peninsulares*, during the war in Cuba the Volunteers expanded geographically throughout the island, incorporating thousands of Cuban-born men who chose to defend the continuity of Spanish Cuba against other Cubans who fought for the creation of an independent nation.

There were remarkable differences, particularly in Cuba, among the Volunteers regarding their spatial distribution. In the cities, they were indeed mostly *peninsulares* employed in commerce, the tobacco manufacturing industry, and other semi-skilled jobs. In the countryside, the Volunteers were predominantly Cubans working in agriculture. Moreover, the heterogeneity of the Volunteers was also reflected in the often-conflictive relationship that existed between the working-class rank-and-file *Voluntarios*, and their middle-class and affluent officers, who often happened to be their employers. This factor shaped the power relationship established between the working-class Volunteers, their officers, and the Spanish authorities, swinging from confrontation to collaboration, both in the Antilles and in metropolitan Spain.

To show the counterrevolutionary and heterogeneous character of this militia, this chapter deals with the response of the Volunteers in Cuba and Puerto Rico to the challenges posed by the revolutionary process that the Spanish Empire underwent after 1868. To do this, this chapter will offer an overview of class divisions within the Volunteers, for the political consequences it had. Then, it will answer three main questions. The first one deals with the strategies they adopted to oppose this very revolutionary process, both

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rebels, originally applied to the Dominicans who fought against the Spanish domination in the war of 1863-1865. See *La Época*, 11/03/1865, p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> Sartorius. *Ever Faithful*; John Lawrence Tone. *War and Genocide in Cuba (1895-1898)*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006, p. 9.

in the Antilles and in Spain. The second one addresses the impact of the class conflict in shaping the Volunteers' reaction during this period. The third one examines the military role played by this militia during Cuba's Ten Years' War.

### 1. Class Divisions Within the Volunteers

As seen in the previous chapters, the Volunteers were a heterogeneous force only united by their commitment to the continuity of Spanish rule in the Antilles. Before 1868 this was a militia dominated by *peninsulares*, but with the outbreak of the war, thousands of *criollos* joined it, as will be seen later in this chapter. However, class was the main factor that divided the Volunteers at the start of the war.<sup>7</sup> Class differences also translated into different political cultures, views, and practices. The Volunteers were made up of men that belonged to upper, middle, and lower classes. As will be shown throughout this chapter, the different classes engaged in an intense struggle for political, social and economic power, all within the rubric of *integrismo* during the revolutionary period of 1868-1878, especially in Cuba. This division proved a key element in the understanding of how the Volunteers resisted the challenges posed by the revolutionaries in Madrid and the Antilles.<sup>8</sup> In Puerto Rico, class differences among the Volunteers were not as acute. The absence of war and the virtual non-existence of an industry did not allow social and political tensions to grow as exacerbated as became the case in Cuba. Thus, in the smaller of the Spanish Antilles the Volunteer elite generally managed to effectively control the whole of the Volunteers.

In 1868 the Volunteers were still an urban phenomenon, both in Cuba and Puerto Rico. Chief officers and officers (colonels and majors) were for the most part members of the commercial, financial, landowning elite, as well as former Army officers and civil servants of the colonial administration's highest ranks.<sup>9</sup> They were predominantly *peninsulares* who had settled in the Antilles during the 1820s and 1830s, thriving

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<sup>7</sup> For class E. P. Thompson's definition is followed, of class as a "social and cultural formation, arising from processes which can only be studied as they work themselves out over a considerable historical period". *The Making of the English Working Class*. London: Penguin, 1980 (first published in 1963), p. 11.

<sup>8</sup> Roldán de Montaud. *La Restauración en Cuba*, pp. 30-35.

<sup>9</sup> According to Cuba's Volunteers' 1869 *reglamento*, active members of the administration or the Army could not be Volunteers. *Reglamento para los cuerpos de Voluntarios de la isla de Cuba*, cap. II, art. 20. In Puerto Rico, however, active civil servants and Army officers could join the Volunteers, as the 1870 *reglamento* did not mention any explicit prohibition in this regard. Domingo Acebrón. *Los Voluntarios*, pp. 53-56.

economically due to their involvement in the slave, sugar, and commercial trades. In Cuba, their leading figure was the Basque sugar baron, financier, and slaveowner Julián de Zulueta, and in Puerto Rico the *criollo* José Ramón Fernández, the island's major sugar baron and slaveowner, both of whom were discussed in the previous chapter. Despite the opposition of these upper-class Volunteers to the reforms promised by the revolutionary government of *La Gloriosa*, some of them were well connected with the new regime in Spain. For instance, the foreign minister's brother, Ramón López de Ayala, was captain of Havana's 4<sup>th</sup> Volunteers Battalion.<sup>10</sup> This group was also well connected to the local Cuban elite through marriage, as most of them were wedded to *criollas* that belonged to the island's old elite. This was a group deeply committed to the continuity of slavery, and a protectionist economic policy that kept the Antilles as captive markets for Spanish goods they commercialized. Their opposition to the reforms promised by Madrid aimed to limit and restrict them as much as possible, trying to find a compromise with the Spanish authorities. Their views were often conveyed through the *Diario de la Marina*, Cuba's most important newspaper of the day. This *integrista* elite tried to dominate the Volunteers and use them to push forward their agenda, but the lower echelons often escaped their control, as this chapter will show.

Beneath this group, there were the middle-class Volunteers. They were also predominantly *peninsulares* who had arrived in the Antilles in the 1840s and 1850s and often had also married Cuban and Puerto Rican women. Most of them were shopkeepers and owners of small businesses (such as bakeries, taverns or transport companies), as well as cigar-making company owners. A good example of these men was the Catalan José Gener Batet, who had migrated to Cuba in the 1840s, and after working for a few years as tobacco grower, established in Havana his own cigar-making company, *La Escepción*, which produced the famous *Hoyo de Monterrey* cigars, still much appreciated by cigar aficionados to this day.<sup>11</sup> In the 1870s he was captain of Havana's 6<sup>th</sup> Volunteer Battalion and was known for his radical opposition to any form of Cuban nationalism or reformism. In fact, the political views of these middle-class Volunteers tended to be far more intransigent and much more nationalistic than the upper-class Volunteers. *La Voz de Cuba*, owned by the Asturian journalist and Volunteer Gonzalo Castañón, tended to

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<sup>10</sup> Ribó. *Historia de los Voluntarios cubanos*, vol. I, p. 334.

<sup>11</sup> *El Moro Muza*, 31-03-1870, pp. 1-2.



represent the political views of this group.<sup>12</sup> These men coveted the superior social, cultural, and economic position of the *integrista* and Cuban elites. During the war, they saw the opportunity to claim a greater share of power through violence. Politically, this group was highly heterogenous. There were monarchists, as well as republicans, conservatives, and liberals, but all were radically committed to the continuity of Spanish rule. It was often the case that they supported the revolution of 1868 in Spain but not the colonial reforms it promised, as these were often perceived as a threat to Spain's presence in the Antilles. Rather than by politics, they were defined by their social position. Beyond opposing the political changes promised by Madrid and the *insurgents*, these middle-class Volunteers were also driven by an intense desire to ascend socially and economically. They considered the declining old Cuban elite as the most vulnerable enemy, for they had been displaced by the *integrista* elite from political power and were not supported by Spanish authorities. During much of the war, these Volunteers attacked the lives and properties of this Cuban upper-middle class. Repressing this class and seizing their property required the indispensable collaboration of the working-class Volunteers, who would provide the brute force and the numbers. The influence of middle-class over working-class Volunteers was remarkable, both as officers and employers.

Working-class Volunteers represented the lowest social echelons of this militia. They were mostly young *peninsulares* (usually from Galicia, Asturias, Catalonia, and the Canary Islands) who had recently migrated to the Antilles and were usually employed by middle-class Volunteers as shop assistants, store clerks, coachmen carters, cigar-makers, stevedores, or carters.<sup>13</sup> They were relatively isolated from *criollos*, spending long hours "behind the counter" with their *peninsular* employees and tending to socialise with fellow countrymen. Also, due to their young age, they were generally not married, which was the usual way to integrate into the local society. This isolation often generated fierce anti-Creole sentiments, which were used by middle-class Volunteers to direct their violence against the old Cuban reformist elite.<sup>14</sup> They were generally poorly educated, and their political views often shaped by their employers and *La Voz de Cuba*. However, as this chapter will show, since the 1860s these working-class Volunteers began to develop a

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<sup>12</sup> J. R. Betancourt. *Las dos banderas. Apuntes históricos sobre la insurrección de Cuba. Cartas al Excmo. Sr. Ministro de Ultramar. Soluciones para Cuba*. Seville: Establecimiento Tipográfico del Círculo Liberal, 1870, p. 63; García Rodríguez. *Con un ojo en Yara y otro en Madrid*, pp. 109-117.

<sup>13</sup> In 1869-1870, 71.25% of *peninsular* Volunteers in Havana and Matanzas came from these regions. Manuel Moreno Friginals & José J. Moreno Masó. *Guerra, migración y muerte (El ejército español en Cuba como vía migratoria)*. Colombes: Ediciones Júcar, 1993, p. 97.

<sup>14</sup> Fernández Muñiz. *España y Cuba*, pp. 135-156.

greater class consciousness through their involvement in Cuba's organized labour movement, which was *de facto* constrained to Havana. For instance, the island's first labour newspaper, *La Aurora*, had been created in 1865 by the Asturian cigar-maker and Volunteer Saturnino Martínez.<sup>15</sup>

The reason for the intransigence of the lower-class Volunteers in the big cities is difficult to determine. It might have been caused by their generally poor education, and relative isolation from Cuban society, at least during their first years on the island. As pointed out by Áurea Matilde Fernández, most of the Volunteers in the big cities were young peninsular migrants, mostly employed in the commercial sector by other *peninsulares*, who often happened to be their relatives. Their working conditions tended to be quite harsh, spending long hours behind the counter, and often living in the shop backroom, with little contact with Cubans outside of their working hours. They often came to see in every Cuban a suspected rebel, who would potentially thwart the *peninsulares'* goal of making a living on the island. Thus, these young men were easy prey for the radical rhetoric of *La Voz de Cuba*, which called for the 'extermination' of the rebels.<sup>16</sup>

## 2. A Triple Revolution: Spain, Cuba, and Puerto Rico

In the early autumn of 1868, Spain and her colonies in the Antilles underwent three apparently unrelated revolutionary processes.<sup>17</sup> In the metropolitan territory, on 17<sup>th</sup> September a coalition of the Progressive Party, the Liberal Union, and the Democratic Party, led by General Juan Prim, started a revolution against Queen Elizabeth II (1843-1868) for her explicit support of the conservative Moderate Party.<sup>18</sup> In less than two weeks,

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<sup>15</sup> Casanovas. *Bread, or Bullets!*, pp. 80-81.

<sup>16</sup> *La Voz de Cuba*, 30-01-1869, p. 1.

<sup>17</sup> Although it has not been proved, several authors have suggested that Juan Prim and Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, leaders of the revolutionary uprisings in metropolitan Spain and Cuba respectively, might have coordinated their actions. See Moreno Friginals. *Cuba/España*, p. 232-233; García Rodríguez. *Con un ojo en Yara y otro en Madrid*, pp. 43-44.

<sup>18</sup> Juan Prim y Prats (1814-1870) was a leading figure in 19<sup>th</sup> century Spain. A veteran of the first and second Carlist wars, he began to be considered a military hero for his role during the war against Morocco (1859-1860), and the Mexican campaign (1861-1862), during which he averted a war against the Mexican Government of Benito Juárez. He became president (1869-1870) and War minister (1868-1870). He was also a representative for the Progressive Party at the Congress of Deputies (1841-1869). In the colonial sphere, he was captain general of Puerto Rico (1847-1848). For a biography of Juan Prim see Emilio de Diego. *Prim. Mucho más que una espada*. Madrid: Editorial Actas, 2014; Rafael Olivar Bertrand. *Prim*. Madrid: Tebas, 1975. For a study on the Progressive Party see Jorge Vilches. *Progreso y libertad: el Partido Progresista en la revolución liberal española*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 2001.

*La Gloriosa*—as this revolution came to be known—ousted both the Queen and the Moderates, who had dominated Spanish politics intermittently since 1843.<sup>19</sup> The political period that *La Gloriosa* opened is known as *Sexenio Revolucionario* or *Democrático* (1868-1874).

The liberal regime envisioned by the men of *La Gloriosa* failed after six years, for the Democrats saw it as a starting point, whereas the Progressives and the Liberal Unionists thought it an accomplished goal.<sup>20</sup> The new regime was further debilitated by four main issues: a profound internal division surrounding the type of State desired (Monarchy or Republic), a chronic political instability in the Peninsula, slavery, and a separatist war in Cuba. Consequently, the regime born in September 1868 was extremely unstable. In only six years, Spain had a Regency (1868-1871), a Monarchy (1871-1873), a Republic (1873-1874), and twenty heads of government. Besides the war in Cuba, the country also underwent two civil wars: The Third Carlist War (1872-1876), and the *Rebelión Cantonal* (1873-1874), a federalist republican uprising that aimed to restructure the State from below.<sup>21</sup>

At the same time, the Antilles were shaken by two revolutions aimed at ending the political relationship with Spain. On 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1868, Puerto Rico underwent its first uprising for independence, known as *Grito de Lares*. It did not escalate into a full-fledged war, as it was quickly quelled by forces loyal to the Spanish Government. In Cuba, on the contrary, the uprising led by Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, known as *Grito de Yara* (10<sup>th</sup> October 1868), turned into a long war that devastated the island: The Ten Years' War. The traumatic experience of this war paved the ground for the abolition of slavery, and was the foundational moment for Cuban nationalism, according to Jorge Ibarra.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, it also shaped the way in which Spanish Loyalism, with its armed wing, the Volunteers, would operate during the last decades of the Spanish presence in America.

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<sup>19</sup> The only two parentheses to the Moderate Party power were the *Bienio Progresista* (1854-1856) and the *Gobierno Largo* of Leopoldo O'Donnell's Liberal Union (1858-1863). See Durán. *La Unión Liberal y la modernización de la España isabelina*; V. G. Kiernan. *The Revolution of 1854 in Spanish History*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1966.

<sup>20</sup> Miguel Tuñón de Lara. *Estudios sobre el siglo XIX español*. Madrid: Siglo XXI de España Editores, 1971, pp. 141-145.

<sup>21</sup> Raymond Carr. *Spain, 1808-1975*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982, pp. 305-346; Josep Fontana. *La época del liberalismo*, in Josep Fontana, Josep & Ramón Viralles (dir.). *Historia de España*, vol. VI. Barcelona and Madrid: Crítica-Marcial Pons, 2007, pp. 351-408.

<sup>22</sup> Jorge Ibarra. *Ideología mambisa*. Havana: Instituto del Libro, 1967; pp. 9-76.

The aim of the Antillean revolutions was clear: to sever ties with Spain. The revolutionary goals of *La Gloriosa* were more imprecise. There was only a vague consensus within the new ruling elite that more political and individual rights ought to be granted. This, of course, included the free inhabitants of Cuba and Puerto Rico. Nonetheless, the debates on people's rights also alluded to the unfree inhabitants of the Antilles: ca. 400,000 slaves in Cuba, and ca. 40,000 in Puerto Rico. These were the main issues that the Overseas Minister Adelardo López de Ayala pledged to address.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, the vagueness of goals and complex issues regarding the Spanish rule in the Caribbean rendered more difficult the elaboration of a coherent policy.

In the Antilles, there was only a vague consensus between *integristas* and *reformistas* on the need to abolish slavery, and to grant more political rights to the free inhabitants of Cuba and Puerto Rico, in the form of assimilation or of colonial autonomy. The disagreement centred on how and when to implement the reforms. The most reluctant regarding the rapid implementation, or even any implementation at all, were the *integristas*. For them, the political and social changes pledged by the overseas minister were an open door to independence and for the outright abolition of slavery, if not a slave revolt, as Piqueras Arenas pointed out.<sup>24</sup>

### 3. The Volunteers as a Counterrevolutionary Force

From the Autumn of 1868 onwards, the *integristas* in Cuba and Puerto Rico were engaged in an active counterrevolutionary effort. Cuba's *integristas* opposed two revolutions simultaneously, *La Gloriosa* in Spain and the *Grito de Yara* at home. In the island, their strategy was clear: to fight any movement aimed at severing ties with Spain. As to the new regime established in Madrid, the position was more complex. The uneven result of the anti-Spanish uprisings in Cuba and Puerto Rico determined not only Madrid's set of reforms for these islands but also the strategies with which the Antillean *integristas* tried

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<sup>23</sup> García Rodríguez. *Con un ojo en Yara y otro en Madrid*, pp. 62-64; Zaragoza. *Las insurrecciones de Cuba*, vol. II, pp. 734-736. The Overseas Ministry was created in 1863 to deal with Spain's colonial policy. It was dissolved in 1899 after Spain had lost all its imperial possessions outside Africa. Agustín Sánchez Andrés. *El Ministerio de Ultramar. Una institución liberal para el gobierno de las colonias, 1863-1899*. La Laguna: Centro de la Cultura Popular Canaria, 2007, pp. 43-64. For López de Ayala as overseas minister see Casildo Rodríguez Serrano. "Adelardo López de Ayala y el Ministerio de Ultramar", in Felipe Lorenzana de la Puente (coord.). *España, el Atlántico y el Pacífico y otros estudios sobre Extremadura*. Llerena: Sociedad Extremeña de Historia, 2013, pp. 237-250.

<sup>24</sup> Piqueras Arenas. *La revolución democrática.*, pp. 259-269.

to prevent them from being implemented.<sup>25</sup> The escalation of the Cuban uprising into a fully-fledged war tempered the implementation of any major reforms. How to end the armed conflict became grounds for a confrontation between the Spanish Government and *integristas*. The Government considered that a generous set of reforms would end the war. The *integristas*, on the contrary, considered that no reforms should be implemented until the rebels gave up their weapons.<sup>26</sup> The new Constitution, passed on 6<sup>th</sup> June 1869, granted a temporary solution: no reforms would be implemented in Cuba and Puerto Rico until they sent representatives to the Spanish Parliament.<sup>27</sup> Cuba would not elect its deputies and senators until the war was over, but a peaceful Puerto Rico could do so.

In Puerto Rico, the swift quelling of the *Grito de Lares* introduced a different scenario. Local *integristas* could not openly oppose the implementation of reforms as there was no war on the island, or else this would have meant an open confrontation with the new government. Nonetheless, the *integristas* considered that these reforms should be as limited as possible, for they believed that the possibility of another uprising was real. In fact, they accused the local reformists of harbouring anti-Spanish sentiments and plans. Thus, the *integrista* strategy was to condition Government policy towards the island, rather than to radically oppose it. Cubano Iguina called it “conservative reformism”.<sup>28</sup>

Though the scenarios in Cuba and Puerto Rico were quite different, the *integristas* of both islands rallied the Volunteers around the idea of the *Integridad Nacional*. This was a principle that considered Cuba and Puerto Rico members of the Spanish nation, rather than colonies. The advocates of *Integridad Nacional* wanted to keep Spain and her Antilles united, regardless of the political regime in Spain.<sup>29</sup> In real terms, the agenda of the *integrista* elites in Cuba and Puerto Rico was clearly directed against the reformist tendencies of the Spanish revolutionary government. As will be seen, the units of Volunteers were instrumental in the *integrista* strategy against the reforms.

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., pp. 295-299; Roldán de Montaud. *La Restauración en Cuba*, pp. 1-10.

<sup>26</sup> Segundo Rigal. *A nuestros hermanos de la península*. Havana: 1871; Roldán de Montaud. *La Restauración en Cuba*, pp. 10-25.

<sup>27</sup> *Constitución democrática de la Nación española*. Madrid: Imprenta de “El Imparcial”, 1869, título X, art. 108; Alonso Romero. *Cuba en la España liberal*, pp. 36-38.

<sup>28</sup> Cubano Iguina. *El hilo en el laberinto*, pp. 59-70.

<sup>29</sup> Consuelo Naranjo Orovio. “Hispanización y defensa de la integridad nacional en Cuba, 1868-1898”. *Tiempos de América: Revista de historia, cultura y territorio*, 1998, No. 2, pp. 71-92.

### 3.1. Volunteer Terror in Cuba

In the Autumn of 1868, Cuba's *integristas* were caught between two revolutions, in Madrid and in Oriente (eastern Cuba).<sup>30</sup> Nonetheless, the instability of the central Government and the scarce regular troops that Spain had in Cuba, allowed the Volunteers to achieve a dominant position they had never enjoyed before. Having only 8,000 regular soldiers ready for combat, on 17<sup>th</sup> October 1868 Captain General Francisco Lersundi (1867-1868) called the Volunteers to organize new companies to help him defeat the insurrection.<sup>31</sup> Lersundi wanted to deploy the army's soldiers to fight the rebels and use the Volunteers to replace the troops in the cities and use them to repress the *laborantes*, as the agents of the insurgency, who provided the rebels logistic aid from the cities, were known.<sup>32</sup> The call was a great success, and only a month later there were more than 35,000 Volunteers at arms throughout Cuba.<sup>33</sup> By April 1869, they were more than 70,000.<sup>34</sup> This was a third of Cuba's white males over 16.<sup>35</sup> This was possible thanks to the wave of *criollos* that joined the Volunteers throughout the island. This is an aspect that will be addressed further later in this chapter.

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<sup>30</sup> The proclamation of independence in María Victoria López-Cordón. *La revolución de 1868 y la I República*. Madrid: Siglo XXI de España Editores, 1876, pp. 114-115. Several of the rebel leaders, like Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, and Francisco V. Aguilera, were seriously indebted to the money-lending company Ramírez y Oro, from Manzanillo (Oriente). AHN, Ultramar, 4417, exp. 90; 4349, exp. 48; 4347, exp. 63.

<sup>31</sup> Francisco Lersundi Hormaechea (1817-1874) was a veteran of the First Carlist War. Politically aligned with the Moderate Party, he was briefly president of the Council of Ministers (1853), minister of State (1853), War (1853, 1856, 1863-1864), and Navy (1856-1857). He was also a lifelong member of the Senate (1853-1868). After returning to the Peninsula in 1868, he went into self-imposed exile in France because of his firm support for the dethroned Queen Elizabeth II.

<sup>32</sup> This nickname originated from an article published by the Cuban journalist Rafael María Merchán (1844-1905) in the Havana-based reformist newspaper *El País* on November 15<sup>th</sup>, 1868 entitled "Laboremus", in which Merchán advocated for an independent Cuba. Eleuterio Llofrui y Sagrera. *Historia de la insurrección y guerra de la isla de Cuba*, vol. I. Madrid: Imprenta de la Galería Literaria, 1871, p. 51.

<sup>33</sup> There were 14,720 army soldiers, 640 Civil Guards, 1,000 firemen, and 3,400 men from the old *Milicias Disciplinadas*, according to Vandama y Calderón. *Colección de artículos*, p. 48. Though with reserves, as data for 1868 is lacking, to these 19,760 men can be added the 11,802 Volunteers existing in 1860. *Cuerpos de Voluntarios de la Isla de Cuba*, p. 14.

<sup>34</sup> Navarro. *Las guerras de España en Cuba*, p. 28. They were organized into 351 units of infantry (41 battalions, 162 companies, and 81 sections), cavalry (13 regiments, 38 squadrons, and 16 sections), and artillery (1 mounted brigade). Vandama y Calderón. *Colección de artículos*, p. 14. The speech of Lersundi to the Volunteers can be consulted in Otero Pimentel. *Memoria sobre los Voluntarios*, pp. 48-49.

<sup>35</sup> By 1869, the white male population over 16, which made up the bulk of the Volunteers, consisted of 90,000 Cubans and ca. 105,000 *peninsulares*, according to José María García de Arboleya. *Tres cuestiones sobre la isla de Cuba. ¿De dónde venimos? ¿Dónde estamos? ¿Adónde vamos?* Havana: Imprenta del Tiempo, 1869, pp. 14-15.

The *integristas* perceived that it was the Volunteers who represented their interests, rather than the Army. The regular soldiers were commanded by a captain general appointed by officials in Madrid, whereas the Volunteers were controlled by local interests. Consequently, several local institutions contributed with money. For example, both the Spanish Bank of Havana and the Havana Bishopric paid for the expenses of 500 Volunteers for three months, probably thinking that the war would soon be over.<sup>36</sup>

Fears of a reformist captain general came true in January 1869, with the appointment of Domingo Dulce (Jan.-Jun- 1869) by the Spanish President Juan Prim (1869-1870). Dulce was a Liberal who had taken part in *La Gloriosa*. He firmly believed that political representation and individual rights would convince Cuban rebels to give up the fight.<sup>37</sup> One of Dulce's first measures was to organize a meeting between the *integrista* and *reformista* elites, guided respectively by the landowners and slaveholders Julián de Zulueta (colonel of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Volunteer Battalion) and Miguel de Aldama, who had conspired to annex Cuba to the US in 1848.<sup>38</sup> The aim was to build a common front against the insurgents, based on reforms under Spanish sovereignty. This attempt was thwarted by incompatible strategies. The *integristas* would not have reforms without peace, whereas the *reformistas* would not have peace without reforms.<sup>39</sup>

The power of these Volunteers lay in their numbers. In Havana, a city of 210,000 inhabitants by 1869, they were 9,000 men, the only armed men available to the

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<sup>36</sup> On 17th November 1868, the *Banco Español de La Habana* gave 45,000 pesos for the sustainment of 500 Volunteers for three months. By 1872 the *Banco* had already given 150,000 pesos for the Volunteers mobilized to the battlefields, according to Gil Gelpí y Ferro. *Álbum histórico fotográfico de la guerra de Cuba desde su principio hasta el reinado de Amadeo I*. Havana: Imprenta "La Antilla" de Cacho-Negrete, 1872, p.85-86; Inés Roldán de Montaud considers that by 1869 the *Banco Español* had already given 155,000 pesos, *La banca de emisión en Cuba (1856-1898)*. *Estudios de Historia Económica*, No. 44. Madrid: Banco de España, 2004, p. 68. As for the church's contribution, it donated ca. 32,000 pesos. AHN, Ultramar, 4390, exp. 68. For the attitude of the Catholic Church in Cuba during the Ten Years' War see Rigoberto Segre Ricardo. *Iglesia y nación en Cuba (1868-1898)*. Santiago de Cuba: Editorial Oriente, 2010, pp. 182-241. For the monetary system in Spain before 1868 see Javier de Santiago Fernández. "Antecedentes del sistema monetario de la Peseta". *VII Jornadas Científicas sobre Documentación Borbónica en España*, Madrid: Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2013, pp. 367-388.

<sup>37</sup> Buxó de Abaigar. *Domingo Dulce*, pp. 163-189.

<sup>38</sup> Chaffin. *Fatal Glory*, pp. 11-23. Aldama's palace currently hosts the Cuban History Institute. After that, Dulce granted Aldama a force of 50 armed men to protect his property, BNC, CM Ponce, No. 445.

<sup>39</sup> During his first days as captain general, Domingo Dulce issued the decrees promising that Cuba would elect its own representatives to the Parliament in Madrid, establishing the freedoms of press and reunion, releasing all political prisoners, and calling for an amnesty offer for all the rebels who gave up in forty days counting from 12<sup>th</sup> January onwards. Olivar Bertrand. *Prim*, pp. 490-497.

authorities.<sup>40</sup> Despite his weak position, Dulce pushed forward his reformist plans and issued a proclamation on 12<sup>th</sup> January declaring that the island would elect representatives to the Spanish Parliament, granting freedom of speech and reunion, and calling for an amnesty for the Cuban rebels.<sup>41</sup> This offer to the rebels and the reformists was unacceptable to the radicalised middle-class and working-class Volunteers. Aware of Dulce's defencelessness, by the end of January 1869, these men started a wave of violence in Havana with a strong symbolic message directed against Dulce as much as against their actual victims.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> January, the Volunteers attacked the Villanueva theatre, during the performance of a Cuban nationalist-themed play, killing 1 and injuring 18. On the 24<sup>th</sup>, they ransacked the *Café del Louvre*, a meeting point for affluent young nationalist Cubans, usually university students. Right after attacking the *Louvre*, they looted the nearby impressive residence of Miguel de Aldama, the reformist leader, beating his black servants and raping one of them.<sup>42</sup> These attacks can be considered to symbolize a clear rejection of Dulce's reformism, represented by the openly nationalist play at the Villanueva theatre. It is also argued that the attacks might have been motivated by social resentment, especially against the well-to-do students of the *Louvre* and Aldama's palace.

The Volunteers' violence evidenced that the understanding between *integristas* and *reformistas* envisioned by Dulce, was almost impossible. Indeed, the tension between *peninsulares* and nationalist Cubans in Havana ran high.<sup>43</sup> Acts of violence between the two groups were not uncommon. A Spanish policeman even reported to Dulce that, in some areas of the city where they were a minority, and especially in neighbourhoods with a strong Afro-Cuban community, the life of the "honest men, especially the *peninsulares*, hung by a thread".<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Carlos de Sedano y Cruzat. *Cuba desde 1850 á 1873. Colección de informes, memorias, proyectos y antecedentes sobre el Gobierno de la Isla de Cuba, relativos al citado periodo y un apéndice con las Conferencias de la Junta Informativa de Ultramar, celebradas en esta capital en los años de 1866 y 1867*. Madrid: Imprenta Nacional, 1873, pp. 152-153.

<sup>41</sup> García Rodríguez. *Con un ojo en Yara y otro en Madrid*, pp. 124-136.

<sup>42</sup> AHN, 4933, exp. 1, No. 93 & 94. Roldán de Montaud. *La Restauración en Cuba*.

<sup>43</sup> Gabriela dalla Corte Caballero & José Luis Luzón. "Espacio criollo y espacio colonial: los voluntarios y la batalla de La Habana en la Guerra de los Diez Años", in Centro de Investigaciones de América Latina (comp.). *De súbditos del rey a ciudadanos de la nación (Actas del I Congreso Internacional Nueva España y las Antillas)*. Castellón de La Plana: Universtat Jaume I, Servicio de Publicaciones, 2000, pp. 339-368.

<sup>44</sup> ANRC, Asuntos Políticos, leg. 58, exp. 11.



Dulce's situation was extremely weak, with an ongoing war in Oriente, violence in Havana he was not able to control, and a lack of support from his Government. His complaints to Madrid against the Volunteers' violence, were blatantly replied to by Adelardo López de Ayala: The Volunteers were the only force in Havana, and their officers had generously contributed to the Cuban treasury.<sup>45</sup> Dulce was alone against the Volunteers.

Considering his weak position, the captain general opted to try to appease the Volunteers by adopting a harder line against the reformists and rebels.<sup>46</sup> In April he revoked the freedoms granted by the decree of 12<sup>th</sup> January and deported 250 suspected *laborantes* to the Spanish colony of Fernando Poo, in the Gulf of Guinea, escorted by two dozen Volunteers. The deported were mostly liberal professionals and university students, representing Havana's Cuban educated middle-class who supported wider reforms for Cuba, but not necessarily independence. In the tense atmosphere of 1869, having shown discontent towards Spain's rule on the island was a reason for the *integristas* to consider anyone an enemy of Spain.<sup>47</sup> Another measure that attempted to control the Volunteers was the publication of a new *reglamento* (21<sup>st</sup> April 1869), which was not well received by the Volunteers for the wide attributions granted to the captain general. His second-in-command, the *Segundo Cabo*, was to be appointed vice-inspector of Volunteers, having the power to create or dissolve units, as well as appointing or dismissing Volunteer officers.<sup>48</sup> However, his most important gesture towards the Volunteers was the creation of the *Consejo de Bienes Embargados* on 17<sup>th</sup> April 1869, which would confiscate the properties of the *laborantes* and the rebels fighting for a free Cuba.<sup>49</sup> The corrupt Spanish administration in Cuba soon made the *Consejo* a hotspot for abuses and generalized corruption. As Alfonso W. Quiroz exposed, quite often the embargoed property ended up in the hands of prominent *integristas* with enough money to bribe the *Consejo's* officials.<sup>50</sup> The symbolism of the *Consejo* was strikingly powerful: it represented the transfer of property from Cuban *reformista* and *independentista* supporters to *integrista* hands. On

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<sup>45</sup> RAH, CCR, 9/7536, doc. 88 & 100.

<sup>46</sup> The repression against the Creoles has been studied by Alfonso W. Quiroz. "Integrista overkill: The Socioeconomic Costs of 'Repressing' the Separatist Insurrection in Cuba, 1868-1878". *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 1998, No. 78, pp. 261-305.

<sup>47</sup> AHM-M, Ministerio de la Guerra, sig. 5602.14.

<sup>48</sup> *Reglamento para los cuerpos de Voluntarios de la isla de Cuba* (1869), cap. II, art. 8-20.

<sup>49</sup> See *Disposiciones relativas a bienes embargados e incautados a los infidentes*. Havana: Almacén de papel y efectos de escritorio de Castro Hermanos y Compañía, 1874.

<sup>50</sup> Alfonso W. Quiroz. "Corrupción, burocracia colonial y veteranos separatistas en Cuba, 1868-1910". *Revista de Indias*, 2001, vol. LXI, N. 221, pp. 91-111; RAH, CCR, 9/7536, doc. 156.

13<sup>th</sup> July 1869 *La Voz de Cuba*, a popular newspaper among the Volunteers' most radical elements, expressed it blatantly: "The traitors have enough goods to pay for the hardships undergone by the loyal".<sup>51</sup> It became a symbol of the Spanish oppressive rule that the advocates of Cuban independence were fighting against.

From its very inception, middle-class Volunteers took part in the *Consejo*. At least two of their men, Segundo Rigal and Mamerto Pulido, were members of the first *Consejo*'s board.<sup>52</sup> However, rather than appease the Volunteers, it gave them a tool for rapid enrichment they were not willing to dispense with. In fact, the measures taken by Domingo Dulce against the corruption generated around the *Consejo* ended up precipitating his forcible resignation as captain general.

In the city of Cienfuegos, the head of the *Consejo* local branch, the Havana-born Colonel González Estéfani, had been openly tolerating the illicit expropriation of embargoed properties by local sugar and trade barons, many of whom were Volunteer officers. When Captain General Dulce removed him in May 1869, these men spurred a coordinated action with Volunteers from other towns such as Santa Clara, Matanzas, and Havana. Thousands of them gathered in Havana, appearing in their uniforms before the captain general's palace on 30<sup>th</sup> May, asking for Dulce's resignation. Groups of other civilians and army officers supported their request. The isolation of Dulce became evident when the scant army force guarding the palace refused to disperse the Volunteers. Consequently, Dulce stepped down and left for Spain on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1869.<sup>53</sup>

Dulce's resignation meant a great victory for the Volunteers. Without a shot, they had forced the representative of the Spanish revolution out of Cuba. After the expulsion, the real power in Cuba was held by the Volunteers, rather than by captains general. Indeed, only days after Dulce's departure, many city councils throughout Cuba, governed until then by reformists, were forcibly seized by the Volunteers. For instance, in mid-June 1869 in Cienfuegos, the Volunteers physically expelled the reformists from the city council and appointed their colonel, the Basque Agustín Goytisolo, a sugar baron with investments

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<sup>51</sup> *La Voz de Cuba*, 13-07-1869, p. 2.

<sup>52</sup> The composition of the *Consejo* was as follows: President, Dionisio López Roberts, Political Governor of Havana; speakers, Juan Atilano Colomé, Mamerto Pulido, and Count of Pozos Dulces; representatives of the Havana City Council José Cabarga, Juan Poey, J. Pedroso; landowners and businessmen representatives Fernando Illas, Bonifacio Blesa Jiménez, and Segundo Rigal; representative of the Cuban treasury, Agustín Genon; and the secretary Justo Zaragoza. *El Pensamiento Español*, 13-05-1869.

<sup>53</sup> García Rodríguez. *Con un ojo en Yara y otro en Madrid*, pp. 138-154; Pirala. *Anales de la Guerra de Cuba*, vol. I, pp. 548-549.

in the shipping industry, as the new mayor.<sup>54</sup> This was just an expression of the power they gained during Dulce's term and after his expulsion. The Volunteers not only wanted influence over the Captainty General but also at the local level, where power lay in the *ayuntamientos* or city councils. Thus, the forcible replacement of the captain general was followed by the violent removal of many mayors, who for the most part were Cuban reformists. The Volunteers' aim was to control all centres of power in Cuba.

Having expelled the captain general, and effectively controlling most of the city councils, the most radical *integristas* proceeded to institutionalize their power, and on 11<sup>th</sup> June 1869, the *Casino Español de La Habana* was created.<sup>55</sup> The *Casinos* were spaces of sociability and relatively discreet political debate that developed in Spain and the American countries with sizeable Spanish communities.<sup>56</sup> Officially, Havana's *Casino Español* was a mere space of socialization for the *integrista* community, but soon became the headquarters of the *integrista* elite and the Volunteers, and a "parallel authority", according to Manuel Espadas Burgos.<sup>57</sup> Most of the Volunteer officers in Havana became members of the *Casino*. The members of the *Casino's* board were usually chief officers and officers of the Havana Volunteers.<sup>58</sup>

Due to its weakness, the Spanish Government opted to accept the *integrista* role, rather than to open a second front in Cuba. Thus, Dulce's successors were to be accepted by the men of the *Casino Español*. Antonio Caballero de Rodas (1869-1870), the Count of Valmaseda (1870-1872), and Francisco Ceballos (1872-1873) were all made honorary Volunteers and often appeared in public donning the Volunteer uniform. Caballero de Rodas even chose a personal guard of Volunteers.<sup>59</sup> This very captain general even decreed

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<sup>54</sup> Martín Rodrigo y Alharilla. *Los Goytisolo. Una próspera familia de indianos*. Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2016, pp.96-97.

<sup>55</sup> Domingo Acebrón. *Los Voluntarios*, pp. 42-51.

<sup>56</sup> The first *Casino* in Spain was the *Casino de Madrid* (1836), yet the model was imported from Italy. For the origin of the *Casinos* see María Zozaya Montes. "El origen dieciochesco de los casinos españoles y su raíz italiana", in Francisco Núñez Roldán (ed.). *Ocio y vida cotidiana en el mundo hispánico moderno*. Seville: Universidad de Sevilla, 2007, pp. 617-630.

<sup>57</sup> Indeed, the *Casino Español* had a permanent hall for activities related to the Volunteers, Art. 9 of the *Fórmula o minuta de la escritura que habrá de otorgarse y bases bajo las cuales ha de constituirse la sociedad El Casino tan pronto como se halle suscrita la mitad de las acciones fijadas en el artículo tercero*. Havana: Imprenta del Avisador Comercial, 1872; Manuel Espadas Burgos. *Alfonso XII y los orígenes de la Restauración*. Madrid: CSIC, 1990, pp. 285.

<sup>58</sup> María José Portela Miguélez. *Redes de poder en Cuba en torno al partido Unión Constitucional, 1878-1998*. Cádiz: Servicio de Publicaciones Universidad de Cádiz, 2004, pp. 176-191.

<sup>59</sup> The escort was called *Compañía de Guías* and was commanded by the Cuban-born José Olano y Caballero, Otero Pimentel. *Memoria sobre los Voluntarios*, pp. 70-71.

in February 1870 that all the *Consejo de Bienes Embargados* local branches must have Volunteer officers among its members.<sup>60</sup>

Having recognised such a privileged position, the Volunteers in Havana may have felt entitled to determine who the enemies of Spain were, and proceed accordingly. For instance, on 12<sup>th</sup> April 1871, they prevented Jacinto María Martínez, Bishop of Havana, from entering the city on his way back from Rome, falsely accusing him of connivance with the Cuban rebels.<sup>61</sup> From his temporary exile in the United States, Martínez declared on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1871 to *The New York Herald*: “The Volunteers have all the power and intervention in the island, and oblige the governor to do whatever they want”.<sup>62</sup> In fact, the acting Captain General Buenaventura Carbó did not intervene in the affair, fearing the rage of the 9,000 Volunteers of Havana.<sup>63</sup>

The Volunteers were utterly committed to fight any possible negotiations between the Spanish Government and the insurgents. They wanted a complete defeat of their enemies, not a reconciliation with them. Anyone trying to break a deal between sides was deemed a traitor and could even be executed. This was the fate of the Cuban poet Juan Clemente Zenea, who was captured by the Puerto Príncipe Volunteers on New Years’ Eve 1870, right after a meeting he had with the rebel president Carlos Manuel de Céspedes. According to Mercedes García Rodríguez, Zenea had been contacted as double agent by the Spanish Government, and was trying to break a deal between Madrid, the rebel government in Cuba, and its representatives in New York based on autonomy for the island and the disarmament of the Volunteers. This was unbearable for the Volunteers, for they regarded autonomy as the first step towards independence, and their disarmament the excuse that would allow the rebels to annihilate them. Despite showing a safe-conduct given by the Spanish Government, Zenea was handed over to Havana’s Volunteers, and was executed on 25<sup>th</sup> August 1871 in Havana.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Zaragoza. *Las insurrecciones de Cuba*, vol. II, p. 813, note 7.

<sup>61</sup> Jacinto María Martínez. *Los Voluntarios de Cuba y el Obispo de La Habana, ó historia de ciertos sucesos que deben referirse ahora, y no después, y los refiere el mismo Obispo, Senador del Reino*. Madrid: Imprenta á cargo de D. A. Pérez Dubrull, 1871, pp. 167-173.

<sup>62</sup> AHN, Ultramar, 4934, exp. 2.

<sup>63</sup> Zaragoza. *Las insurrecciones de Cuba*, vol. II, pp. 587-588.

<sup>64</sup> Juan Clemente Zenea Fornaris (1832-1871) was one of the most renowned poets of 19<sup>th</sup> century Cuban literature. A supporter of Cuban independence since a young age, he went into exile in the United States in 1852-1854, returning to Cuba after being pardoned by the Spanish Government. In 1865 he settled in New York where he collaborated with the Cuban exile community that promoted the island’s independence. After a brief period in Mexico, he was contacted by the Spanish Government in 1869 through Nicolás de Azcárate, a well-known Cuban reformist who advocated



Image 3. Captain Ramón López de Ayala commanded the firing squad that executed the eight medical students in Havana on 27<sup>th</sup> November 1871. Ribó. *Historia de los Voluntarios cubanos*, vol. I, p. 415.

The peak of the Havana Volunteers' violence took place on 27<sup>th</sup> November 1871, with the assassination of eight young University of Havana medical students.<sup>65</sup> Alongside 29 other classmates, they were falsely accused of profaning the tomb of Gonzalo de Castañón, editor of the *integrista* newspaper *La Voz de Cuba*, and a Volunteer himself.<sup>66</sup> After a first trial, which had the students acquitted, members of the 5<sup>th</sup> Volunteer battalion, led by Captain Felipe Alonso, surrounded the courts and forced the judges to repeat the trial and to accept 9 of them as members of the jury.

Lorenzo Pedro, president of the *Casino Español* and a Volunteer officer himself, published an article in the *Diario de la Marina*, calling on the Volunteers to calm down, and let the judges do their job.<sup>67</sup> Despite this, the second trial went on, sentencing eight randomly selected the students to death. 27 other students were imprisoned, and 2 were acquitted. José Gener, captain of Havana's 6<sup>th</sup> Volunteer Battalion, read the sentence.<sup>68</sup> The firing squad was directed by Captain Ramón López de Ayala, who can be seen donning the uniform of Havana's 4<sup>th</sup> Volunteer Battalion in image 3.<sup>69</sup> Since the assassination of Gonzalo Castañón (30<sup>th</sup> January 1870), a

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for an autonomous Cuba within Spain. García Rodríguez. *Con un ojo en Yara y otro en Madrid*, pp. 282-324.

<sup>65</sup> The eight students were Anacleto Bermúdez, Carlos Augusto de Latorre, Pascual Rodríguez y Pérez, Carlos Verdugo, Ángel Laborde, Eladio González y Toledo, José de Marcos y Medina, and Alonso Álvarez de la Campa. The two latter were sons of peninsular Volunteer officers. Fermín Valdés Domínguez. *El 27 de noviembre de 1871*. Havana: Imprenta "La Correspondencia de Cuba", 1887, pp. 45, 54 & 91.

<sup>66</sup> Castañón was assassinated in Key West (US) by Matías Orozco, a Cuban nationalist émigré, after the former challenged to a duel the editor of *El Republicano*, a Cuban nationalist paper based in that same Florida town. A first-hand account of the event is Juan Ignacio de Armas y Céspedes. *Combate de Russell House o muerte de Castañón en Key West el 31 de enero de 1870*. New Providence: Im. del Nassau Times, 1870.

<sup>67</sup> *Diario de la Marina*, 27-22-1871; *El Voluntario de Cuba*, 14-12-1870.

<sup>68</sup> A brief biography of José Gener can be consulted in Rafael Villa. *Álbum biográfico de jefes de Voluntarios*. Havana: Tipografía "La Universal" de Ruiz y Hermanos, 1888, pp. 52-54.

<sup>69</sup> Valdés Domínguez. *El 27 de noviembre de 1871*, pp. 38, 39, 45 & 50.

true idol for the most intransigent Volunteers, his followers had been looking for revenge.<sup>70</sup> This might explain the active participation of José Gener, Ramón López de Ayala, and Felipe Alonso, who were close friends of Castañón.<sup>71</sup> However, the victims' profile and the attitude of some Volunteers leads to the argument made here that this crime was also motivated by social resentment. The profile of the university students (middle-class educated Cubans) was the same of the theatre-goers of the Villanueva theatre and the customers of the *Café del Louvre*. Hence, whereas personal revenge might have been the motivation for the friends of Gonzalo Castañón, hatred towards the upper-middle class might have fuelled the fury of working-class Volunteers.

The anger that these working-class Volunteers might have felt towards the well-to-do students, meant they did not even spare the life of a Volunteer's son. One of the executed students, Alonso Álvarez de la Campa, was the son of a well-known peninsular merchant and officer of Volunteers. Right before the execution, Felipe Alonso, Castañón's friend, told the young student: 'Ah, *Alonsito*, not even your father's millions will be able to spare you a bullet in the head!'.<sup>72</sup> These words could be interpreted as a macabre statement of the brute force of these radical Volunteers directed against the influence and economic success of some of their comrades-in-arms. Hence, the execution of the medical students was a consequence of the extremism and radicalism of some Volunteers, but also a symbolic gesture against the dominant echelons of society.

Far from condemning it, the most radical *integrista* press claimed that the execution of the students was a rightful act of vengeance for the profanation of Castañón's tomb. On the very day of the assassination, 27<sup>th</sup> November 1871, *Diario de la Marina*, *La Voz de Cuba*, and *La Constancia* published a joint article in which they called the Volunteers to respect law and justice, but in which they wrote that all "Spanish hearts are full of anger against these dirty hyenas [the students]".<sup>73</sup> These radical Volunteers would not be deterred by the authorities or the opinions of their comrades-at-arms, which did not approve of such savage actions. The assassination was not gratuitous, but symbolic.

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<sup>70</sup> Gelpí y Ferro. *Álbum histórico fotográfico*, pp. 327-334.

<sup>71</sup> Indeed, Felipe Alonso was to be one of the seconds of Gonzalo Castañón in the duel he had arranged with the director of *El Republicano*. Valdés Domínguez. *El 27 de noviembre de 1871*, p. 181; Vital Fité. *Las desdichas de la Patria. Políticos y frailes*. Madrid: Imprenta de Enrique Rojas, 1899 p. 59.

<sup>72</sup> Valdés Domínguez. *El 27 de noviembre de 1871*, p. 20.

<sup>73</sup> Juan de Ariza was director of *Diario de la Marina*, José E. Triay of *La Voz de Cuba*, and Gil Gelpí y Ferro of *La Constancia*. *La Voz de Cuba*, 27-11-1871, p. 1; Valdés Domínguez. *El 27 de noviembre de 1871*, pp. 60-62.

The students were but the scapegoat with which the lower echelons of the Volunteers, the most radical, showed their determination to claim their stake of power in Cuba.

In fact, the assassination was widely condemned all over Cuba, Spain, and abroad, even by fellow Volunteers and *integrista* groups. Cuban-born Colonel Francisco de Acosta y Albear, a retired army officer who had raised a Volunteer battalion in 1869, strongly labelled the perpetrators as “social scum... which have caused more damage to the national cause than all the *laborantes* together”.<sup>74</sup> In the Peninsula, even Barcelona’s *Círculo Hispano-Ultramarino*, the foremost representative of the colonial lobby in Spain, asked for the acquittal of the students still in prison, which was granted by the Crown on 9<sup>th</sup> May 1872.<sup>75</sup> Thus, this crime committed by a group of the Havana Volunteers was far from representative of the spirit of the whole militia or the *integristas*.

### 3.2. Resisting Changes in Puerto Rico

As in Cuba, the Volunteers of Puerto Rico were the armed wing of *integrismo*. They were committed to the defence of Spanish sovereignty and the status quo. Nonetheless, the relatively peaceful situation of Puerto Rico after the revolutionary autumn of 1868, conditioned the ways in which the Volunteers defended the interests of the *integristas*.

Once the possibility of a war had been halted by the rapid quelling of the so-called *Grito de Lares* (23<sup>rd</sup> September 1868), the political debate in Puerto Rico focused on two main issues: how to assimilate the island to the Spanish political system, and how to abolish slavery. The *integristas* were against these changes, whereas their political opponents, the *reformistas*, favoured them. The many captains general appointed by the Spanish Government for short terms of office alternated between supporting the former or the latter. This was a cause of deep instability, reflected in the fact that between 1868 and 1874 Puerto Rico had seven captains general: José Laureano Sanz (1868-1870), Gabriel Baldrich (1870-1871), Ramón Gómez Pulido (1871-1872), Simón de la Torre y Ormaza (1872), Joaquín Enrile Hernán (1872-1873), Juan Martínez Plowes (1873), and Rafael Primo de Rivera y Sobremonte (1873-1874). This constant change of governors was caused by

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<sup>74</sup> Francisco Acosta y Albear. *Compendio histórico del pasado y presente de Cuba y de su guerra insurreccional hasta el 11 de marzo de 1875, con algunas apreciaciones relativas á su porvenir*. Madrid: Imprenta á cargo de Juan José de Las Heras, 1875, p. 104.

<sup>75</sup> AHN, Ultramar, 4731, exp. 4.

political instability in Spain and had a negative effect on the tense situation created in Puerto Rico after the Lares uprising, which sparked the reactivation of the Volunteers.

Although the first Volunteer battalion in Puerto Rico had been created in December 1864, it had been almost inactive since its inception. Thus, the creation of the Puerto Rican Volunteers was *de facto* triggered by the *Grito de Lares*. This was an uprising of nearly 600 peasants commanded by landowners in the town of Lares. After declaring the Republic of Puerto Rico on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1868, they arrested all the peninsular merchants in town, looted their shops, and proceeded to the nearby town of San Sebastián del Pepino, where they were subdued by a mixed force of the Army and *Milicias Disciplinadas*, a militia created in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, mostly composed of creoles.<sup>76</sup> Knowing of the fate of their fellow countrymen in Lares, the *peninsulares* of the nearby towns of Arecibo, Aguadilla, and Camuy, took up arms and organized companies of Volunteers.<sup>77</sup> The uprising only lasted for a week, and by December 1868 all its members were either imprisoned or in exile.<sup>78</sup>

The rebellion failed because it lacked popular support, and the Spanish forces acted swiftly.<sup>79</sup> Nonetheless, it was a sign of a certain level of discontent against Spanish rule. Gervasio Luis García considered that the peasants that joined the rebellion were motivated by opposition to a system of forced employment known as the *libreta*.<sup>80</sup> As to the

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<sup>76</sup> See José Pérez Morís & Luis Cueto y González Quijano. *Historia de la insurrección de Lares, precedida de una reseña de los trabajos separatistas que se vienen haciendo en la Isla de Puerto-Rico desde la emancipación de las demás posesiones hispano-ultramarinas, y seguida de todos los documentos á ella referentes*. Barcelona: Establecimiento Tipográfico de Narciso Ramírez y C<sup>o</sup>, 1872; Olga Jiménez de Wagenheim. *Puerto Rico's revolt for independence: El Grito de Lares*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1985. These *Milicias Disciplinadas* had been created at the end of the 18th century and were mostly recruited from among Puerto Rican peasants. See Luis E. González Vales. "Las milicias disciplinadas. Guardianes de la soberanía española en Puerto Rico", in Rafael del Pino y Moreno, Gonzalo Anes y Álvarez de Castrillón (coord.). *La América hispana en los albores de la emancipación: actas del IX Congreso de Academias Iberoamericanas de la Historia*. Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2005, pp. 433-452; Nelson R. González Mercado. *Auge y decadencia de las Milicias Disciplinadas*. PhD. Thesis #37. San Juan: Centro de Estudios Avanzados de Puerto Rico y el Caribe, 2005.

<sup>77</sup> Pedro Puig y Pi was appointed captain of a company in Arecibo, José Ignacio Corujo in Camuy, and Francisco Juliá Palmeta in Aguadilla. AHN, Ultramar, 5457, exp. 23; Rosado y Brincau. *Bosquejo Histórico*, pp. 11-18; González Cuevas. *¿Defendiendo el honor?*, pp. 64-69; David Jou i Andreu. *Els sitgetans a Amèrica i diccionari d"Americanos"*. Sitges: Grup d'Estudis Sitgetans, 2008, pp. 313-314.

<sup>78</sup> Jiménez de Wagenheim. *Puerto Rico*, pp. 163-176; Pérez Morís & Cueto y González Quijano. *Historia de la insurrección de Lares*, pp. 95-135.

<sup>79</sup> Brau. *Historia de Puerto Rico*, pp. 264-265; González Vales. "The Challenge to Colonialism", pp. 110-112.

<sup>80</sup> The *libreta* was a system by which the authorities forcibly turned the unemployed peasant workforce into cheap labour. See Juan Gualberto Gómez & Antonio Sendras y Burín. *La isla de Puerto-Rico. Bosquejo Histórico (desde la conquista hasta principios de 1891)*. Madrid: Imprenta de José Gil y Navarro, 1891, pp. 76-78; Brau. *Historia de Puerto Rico*, pp. 264-265; Gervasio Luis García.



landowners' participation, Cubano Iguina argued that they were drawn in by their fear of losing their properties to the peninsular merchants. In fact, due to the absence of banks in Puerto Rico, these merchants were also money-lenders when the landowners needed capital to cover the costs of harvesting or buying new land. Quite often, when the debts could not be paid back, sugar and coffee crops, but also their plantations, ended up in the hands of these peninsular merchants.<sup>81</sup>

Another consequence of Lares for the Volunteers was that they gradually came to substitute the Disciplined Militias, which had an established record of defending Spanish rule on the island.<sup>82</sup> The reason was that several of the Lares' rebels had served in the Militias and that most of its members were creoles.<sup>83</sup> The Volunteers, on the contrary, were perceived by the Spanish authorities as a new loyal militia dominated by *peninsulares*.<sup>84</sup> Consequently, while the Militias were not allowed to recruit new members, new units of Volunteers were created throughout the island.<sup>85</sup> In spite of this, the expulsion of Domingo Dulce by the Havana Volunteers was an example too dangerous to be repeated, and the first *reglamento* of the Puerto Rican Volunteers (issued on 5<sup>th</sup> August 1869), was harsher in terms of discipline than in Cuba, assimilating them to the army and ensuring dependence on the military authorities.<sup>86</sup>

This was the situation found by José Laureano Sanz (1868-1870), the captain general appointed by the Spanish Government to implement the reformist policy promised by *La Gloriosa*. However, he would soon side with the *integristas*. They did not constitute a political party, but a group of powerful merchants, landowners, and officials, mostly *peninsulares*. Their leader was a Puerto Rican, the island's biggest sugar producer, José Ramón Fernández, appointed Marquis of La Esperanza on 5<sup>th</sup> February 1869.<sup>87</sup> They opposed the assimilation of Puerto Rico into the metropolitan political system and the

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*Historia bajo sospecha*. San Juan: Publicaciones Gaviota, 2015, pp. 127-137; AGPR, Fondo Municipal de Arecibo, caja 49.

<sup>81</sup> Cubano Iguina. *El hilo en el laberinto*, pp. 35-39.

<sup>82</sup> They had, for instance, rejected the British attack to San Juan in 1797. Héctor Andrés Negroni. *Historia militar de Puerto Rico*. Madrid: Editorial Siruela, 1992, pp. 108-117.

<sup>83</sup> González Mercado. *Auge y decadencia de las Milicias Disciplinadas*, p. 112.

<sup>84</sup> Labor Gómez Acevedo. *Sanz, promotor de la conciencia separatista en Puerto Rico*. Río Piedras: Editorial Universitaria, 1974, pp. 214-220.

<sup>85</sup> New companies were created in the towns of Caguas, Río Piedras, Carolina, Hato Grande, Ciales, and the military departments of Aguadilla, and Humacao. Rosado y Brincau. *Bosquejo Histórico*, pp. 19-29.

<sup>86</sup> *Isla de Puerto-Rico. Reglamento para los cuerpos de Voluntarios de la misma*, cap. VII, art. 43-75; González Cuevas. *¿Defendiendo el honor?*, p. 68.

<sup>87</sup> Ynfiesta. *El Marqués de la Esperanza*, p. 17.

abolition of slavery. Assimilation meant giving a voice to the *reformistas* through the election of representatives to the Spanish Parliament, and also press and assembly freedoms. As for the abolition of slavery, they feared that it would spur a race war, and would hamper the export economy, though, in fact, it had a limited importance in comparison to Cuba.<sup>88</sup> Whereas in Cuba 25% of its population was enslaved by 1868 (400,000 people), Puerto Rico had a less than 6.5% slave population (40,000 people).<sup>89</sup>

The *integristas*' opponents were the *reformistas*, a group of intellectuals, who unlike their Cuban colleagues, were decidedly abolitionists, and had never conspired against Spanish rule. Some of their leaders, such as José Julián Acosta or Julián Vizcarrondo, were well connected with liberal politicians in metropolitan Spain and had been instrumental in the establishment of the Spanish Abolitionist Society, as shown by Christopher Schmidt-Nowara.<sup>90</sup>

The first challenge posed by political assimilation was the election of representatives to the Spanish Parliament for the first time since the expulsion of the Antillean deputies in 1837.<sup>91</sup> Since the *peninsulares* were the backbone of the *integristas*, and they represented only 2% of Puerto Rico's population, their political success depended on electoral manipulation, in connivance with the captains general.<sup>92</sup> Thus, in the elections of 15<sup>th</sup> January 1869, the *integristas* won 8 of the 11 seats that Puerto Rico sent to the Congress of Deputies. Among them, there were the Marquis of La Esperanza and Colonel Juan Bautista Machicote of the San Juan Volunteer battalion.<sup>93</sup> Although 11 deputies in a Spanish Parliament of 352 seats could do little, the *integristas* would send a firm voice against the reforms to Madrid.

This victory gave the *integristas* little influence in altering Madrid's policy in Puerto Rico. Amid accusations of electoral manipulation, Captain General Sanz was replaced by the liberal Gabriel Baldrich (1870-1871). In just a few months, Baldrich established the local *Diputación Provincial*, employed reformists in the administration,

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<sup>88</sup> AHN, Ultramar, leg. 5164; Cruz Monclova. *Historia de Puerto Rico*, t. II, vol. II, pp. 285-287.

<sup>89</sup> Schmidt-Nowara. *Empire, and Antislavery*, pp. 16 & 38.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 100-125.

<sup>91</sup> Piqueras Arenas. *Sociedad civil y poder en Cuba*, pp. 80-82.

<sup>92</sup> AHN, Ultramar, 1134, exp. 52; Brau. *Historia de Puerto Rico*, pp. 267-269; González Vales. "The Challenge to Colonialism", pp. 112-113; Jiménez de Wagenheim. *Puerto Rico*, pp. 176-178;

<sup>93</sup> The conservative elected deputies were Luis Antonio Becerra y Delgado, José Ramón Fernández, Juan Antonio Hernández Arbizu, Juan Bautista Machicote Irisarri, Sebastián Plaja y Vidal, Juan Antonio Puig, Manuel Valdés Linares, and Francisco de Paula Vázquez y Oliva. The reformists were Román Baldorioty de Castro, José María Pascasio Escoriaza Cardena, and Luis Ricardo Padial Vizcarrondo. ACD, Serie documentación electoral: 61, No. 18.

embarked on a campaign against corrupt officials, and allowed the creation of political parties.<sup>94</sup> Under Baldrich's supervision, the elections of 20<sup>th</sup> June 1870 were clean. The Conservative Liberal Party (*integristas*) suffered a severe defeat, clinging onto only 2 out of the 15 deputies sent to Madrid.<sup>95</sup>

The lessons that the *integristas* could have taken from the election were evident. On the one hand, the electoral victory of 1869 had not translated into real power on the island. On the other, non-manipulated elections on the island meant a landslide victory for the Liberal Reformist Party (*reformistas*). Hence, to protect their agenda, the *integristas* would need to practice politics outside of parliament. If they wanted to control Puerto Rican politics, the captain general needed to be an ally, and Baldrich was not. They decided to oust him and began a campaign against him. The *Eco Mercantil*, the main *integrista* newspaper, bitterly criticised Baldrich for protecting the *reformistas*.<sup>96</sup> At the same time, the Volunteers throughout the island began to parade more often, aiming to intimidate their opponents. This necessarily created tension, which often caused incidents. For instance, in the town of Ciales, the local company of Volunteers was stoned by a group of drunken men on 17<sup>th</sup> February 1871 after it had sworn allegiance to the new King of Spain, Amadeus I (1871-1873).<sup>97</sup>

Despite Baldrich's complaints to Madrid against the Volunteers, they continued their campaign of intimidation.<sup>98</sup> The most serious incident occurred on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1871, when an accidental shot by a Volunteer in San Juan sparked a massive street fight between the Volunteers and a group of blacks and mulattoes of the area who had shouted at them. The brawl ended up with the Volunteers randomly beating reformist suspects and

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<sup>94</sup> The *Diputaciones Provinciales* were an administrative organism which acted as the local government of the Spanish provinces. Jesús Lalinde Abadía. *La administración española en el siglo XIX puertorriqueño*. Seville: Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos de Sevilla, 1980, pp. 147-150; AHN, Ultramar, 5094, exp. 19; 5113, exp. 4, 19, 46, 50, 51, 55, & 56.

<sup>95</sup> Bothwell. *Orígenes y desarrollo*, pp. 3-4. The two conservative deputies were the former Captain General, José Laureano Sanz y Posse, and Juan Antonio Hernández Arbizu. The 13 reformists were José Julián Acosta y Calvo, José Antonio Álvarez Peralta, Román Baldorioty de Castro, Julián Blanco y Sosa, José Facundo Cintrón, Manuel Corchado y Juarbe, Eurípides de Escoriaza, Gregorio Ledesma y Navajas, Luis Ricardo Padial Vizcarrondo, Francisco Mariano Quiñones, Joaquín María Sanromá. ACD, Serie documentación electoral, 65, No. 4.

<sup>96</sup> The editor of the *Boletín Mercantil de Puerto-Rico* was José Pérez Morís, a native of Asturias who had been a reformist in Cuba but adopted an intransigent stance after the *Grito de Yara*, settling in Puerto Rico and working as a telegraph official for the Spanish administration. Brau. *Historia de Puerto Rico*, pp. 269-270.

<sup>97</sup> Rosado y Brincau. *Bosquejo Histórico*, pp. 36-37.

<sup>98</sup> In a letter to the Overseas Minister Víctor Balaguer on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1871, he wrote that he was probably going to take 'forceful dispositions' after the elections'. BVB, Epistolario, sig. 7102075.

shouting out against the captain general. As this dangerously resembled the events of January 1869 in Havana, Baldrich declared a state of siege in San Juan for three days, taking the army to the streets, and rapidly controlling the situation. However, the Spanish Government wanted to avert a repetition of Dulce's expulsion, and by September 1871 Baldrich was replaced by Gómez Pulido.<sup>99</sup>

Unlike what happened in Cuba after the expulsion of Dulce, Baldrich's substitution did not translate into *integrista* control of Puerto Rico. In fact, more captains general committed to the reformist agenda were sent to Puerto Rico. In that scenario, the options for the *integristas* to dominate Puerto Rican politics were to promote a change of government in Madrid or to acquire allies against the captain general. They chose to join forces with the Cuban *integristas*, and the conservatives in metropolitan Spain (as will be seen in the next section) and to use the press against the captains general, often employing a menacing tone. For instance, on 21<sup>st</sup> January 1873, the *Boletín Mercantil* reminded Captain General Joaquín Enrile (1872-1873) that the 'true Spaniards' (for the *integristas*) would always be willing to use the Volunteers to make sure that Puerto Rico remained part of the Spanish nation, should the authorities fail to do so.<sup>100</sup>

This thorny relationship would be particularly tense during 1873. The reason was the proclamation of the First Spanish Republic (11<sup>th</sup> February), and the abolition of slavery in Puerto Rico (22<sup>nd</sup> March). The abolition was not a surprise, as it was the logical consequence of the gradual transition to free labour sanctioned by the Moret Law (4<sup>th</sup> July 1870).<sup>101</sup> Besides, the abolition was enacted on moderate terms: the 2,000 slaveholders would be compensated, the ca. 30,000 freed slaves would have to work for their masters for a period of three years, and they would not enjoy political rights for five years.<sup>102</sup> The *integristas* would try to thwart its full implementation.

Lidio Cruz Monclova argued that they feared the freed slaves would take revenge against their former masters. Additionally, they thought that as in the postbellum US, the

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<sup>99</sup> AHN, Ultramar, 5113, exp. 5.

<sup>100</sup> *Boletín Mercantil*, 21-01-1873. I would like to thank the CIH-UPR for allowing me to consult the digitized collections of the *Boletín Mercantil*.

<sup>101</sup> Concepción Navarro Azcúe. *La abolición de la esclavitud negra en la legislación española, 1870-1887*. Madrid: Ediciones Cultura Hispánica/Instituto de Cooperación Iberoamericana, 1987, pp. 37-123. For a succinct overview of the abolitionist process in the Spanish Empire see José Antonio Piqueras Arenas. *La esclavitud en las Españas. Un lazo transatlántico*. Madrid: Los Libros de la Catarata, 2012, pp. 234-251.

<sup>102</sup> Díaz Soler. *Historia de la esclavitud negra en Puerto Rico*. San Juan: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, pp. 349-371.

black population might be granted political rights in the future, for the benefit of the *reformistas*, who had a well-known abolitionist record.<sup>103</sup> The *integristas* were also afraid that should their opponents become dominant in Puerto Rican politics, they would have the Volunteers dissolved. In January 1872 the Puerto Rican reformist representatives in the Spanish Congress had formally asked the government for the dissolution of the Volunteers.<sup>104</sup>

The strategy followed by the *integristas* to thwart complete abolition, was to pretend that there was a serious threat to Spanish sovereignty on the island and that all *reformistas* were conspirators. For instance, on 13<sup>th</sup> February 1873, a group of Volunteers and Civil Guards seized the country house of Cayetano Estrella, near Camuy, alleging that the *reformistas* that regularly met there were conspiring against Spain.<sup>105</sup> The *reformistas* were armed, and the assault ended with 12 of them being killed, several arrested, plus a Volunteer and a Civil Guard injured.<sup>106</sup>

The actual purposes of the Camuy *reformistas* are unknown, and there were even rumours that the story had been manufactured by the *integristas*, according to Salvador Brau.<sup>107</sup> Whatever the case, it was conveniently exploited by the *Boletín Mercantil*. It published several articles for a few days after the Camuy events, claiming that this proved ‘a new Lares’ was on its way.<sup>108</sup> The Volunteers were presented as the eternal saviours of the Spanish *integridad nacional*.<sup>109</sup>

The Camuy affair did not represent a victory for the *integristas*, though. Despite public speeches praising their collaboration with the Civil Guard, Captain General Martínez Plowes did not trust them entirely. He feared that the Volunteers might have been exaggerating news of supposed anti-Spanish conspiracies to claim a greater influence and undermine his authority. After all, Martínez Plowes was a man sent by the First Spanish Republic, which had recently abolished slavery and given more political rights to Puerto Ricans. The memories of Havana’s Volunteers’ behaviour in 1869 were still too

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<sup>103</sup> Cruz Monclova. *Historia de Puerto Rico*, t. II, vol. I, pp. 257-278; John Hope Franklin. *Reconstruction after the Civil War*. Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 1961, pp. 104-126.

<sup>104</sup> *Altar y Trono*, 28-01-1872.

<sup>105</sup> The Civil Guard (*Guardia Civil*) is a rural police corps created in metropolitan Spain in 1844 still existing to this day. It also operated in Cuba (1851-1898) and Puerto Rico (1869-1898). See Negroni. *Historia militar de Puerto Rico*, pp. 125-126.

<sup>106</sup> AHN, Ultramar, 5103, exp. 62 & 63; Rosado y Brincau. *Bosquejo Histórico*, pp. 57-60.

<sup>107</sup> Brau. *Historia de Puerto Rico*, p. 272.

<sup>108</sup> *Boletín Mercantil*, 11-02-1873.

<sup>109</sup> *Boletín Mercantil*, 19-02-1873, 21-02-1873, 23-02-1873.

fresh. In April 1873, Captain General Martínez Plowes wrote to the overseas minister that he was trying to keep the Volunteers under control.<sup>110</sup> Quite cleverly, the captain general took a sugar-coated measure to achieve this. On 4<sup>th</sup> March 1873, he issued a decree making the Volunteers “reserves of the Army”. In that very decree, he praised the Volunteers for their loyal services to Spain but reminded them that they must abide by military discipline, and only the supreme authority on the island (the captain general) was to decide on the gravity of the rumours and threats that circulated around the island. He warned that he would not tolerate disturbances caused by these very rumours.<sup>111</sup> The *reglamento* of 1870 established that causing public disorder for no apparent reason could be punished with arrest for a few days, or expulsion from the Volunteers. However, Martínez Plowes reminded them that he could decide whether a Volunteer must be judged by a military court, and according to the army ordinances, the punishment for public disorder would be imprisonment.<sup>112</sup>

So far, all the strategies adopted by the *integristas* had failed. Neither electoral participation nor the tension strategy had functioned for them. With the proclamation of the First Republic, their situation only worsened. In fact, the captain general appointed by the Republic, Rafael Primo de Rivera (1873-1874), was a well-known liberal who worked intensely to implement a reformist policy on the island.<sup>113</sup> In just a few months, he decreed freedom of the press (30-04-1873), of public gatherings (13-05-1873), and the Municipal Law (25-07-1873), which sanctioned the appointment of mayors by popular election. All of this benefited the *reformistas*, for it allowed them to express the popular support they had in the press and at the polling stations.<sup>114</sup> Aware that they could never beat them, the

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<sup>110</sup> Martínez Plowes had to keep a delicate balance between the reforms promised by the Spanish Republic to Puerto Rico (abolition of slavery and more civil rights), and the pressures from the local *integristas*. The overseas minister at that time was José Cristóbal Sorní y Grau (1813-1888) who served briefly between February and June 1873. AHN, Ultramar, 5113, exp. 16; Gelpí y Ferro. *Historia de la revolución y guerra de Cuba*, pp. 257-258.

<sup>111</sup> *Provincia de Puerto Rico. Instituto de Voluntarios*, p. 19; González Cuevas. *¿Defendiendo el honor?*, pp. 70-71.

<sup>112</sup> The Volunteers could be judged by a military court, and according to the army ordinances instead of their *reglamento*; in cases of war, sedition, or under any circumstance deemed as grave by the captain general. *Reglamento para los cuerpos de Voluntarios de la isla de Puerto Rico*, cap. VII, art. 72.

<sup>113</sup> Rafael Primo de Rivera y Sobremonte (1813-1902), born in Montevideo when it was still part of the Spanish Empire, was directly involved in the revolution of *La Gloriosa* (1868), and held several military appointments in Cuba and Puerto Rico. In metropolitan Spain he was captain general of Andalusia and Valencia, where he quelled a Federalist uprising in 1869. AHN, Ultramar, 5113, exp. 21.

<sup>114</sup> Cruz Monclova. *Historia de Puerto Rico*, t. II, vol. II, pp. 278-373.

*integristas* decided to abstain from participating in elections.<sup>115</sup> This meant that the *reformistas* would have the monopoly of the representatives in Madrid, the *Diputación Provincial*, and the city councils.<sup>116</sup>

Despite abstaining electorally, the *integristas* were determined to take back control. Having failed in all their strategies, they concluded that the problem lay in Madrid. To prompt a change of policy in Puerto Rico, it was necessary to change the regime in Madrid. This was a conclusion shared by the *integristas* in Cuba, and the conservatives in Spain opposed to the political situation inaugurated in *La Gloriosa*. Consequently, they decided to coordinate their efforts to change Spain's political regime.

#### 4. The Institutional Framework of Transatlantic *integrismo*

*Integristas* conducted their counterrevolution in the Antilles but also forged alliances with groups with similar interests in the transatlantic space that connected Cuba, Puerto Rico, Spain, and American countries where there were sizeable communities of Spanish migrants. The extension of political representation and profound social reforms promised by the Overseas Minister Adelardo López de Ayala in October 1868 were seen as a threat by the *integristas* in the Antilles. They understood that these were open doors to the independence of Cuba and to the abolition of slavery.<sup>117</sup>

In metropolitan Spain, a strong opposition to the *Sexenio* was gradually taking shape around the Moderate Party that had been kicked out of power in September 1868, and initial supporters of the revolution disappointed with the incapacity of the new regime to stabilize Spain. Local industry was also opposed to the *Sexenio*, due to the free trade policy advocated by the Treasury Minister Laureano Figuerola (1868-1869). The flour industry in Castile, wheat in Andalusia, and most notably Catalan textiles depended on protectionism to keep Spain and the Antilles as captive markets for their products.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> *Boletín Mercantil*, 25-04-1873.

<sup>116</sup> In fact, the decision to abstain was taken in August 1872, but was confirmed after the arrival of Rafael Primo de Rivera. During his term, the elections for the Spanish Parliament were held on 10<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> May 1873, and for the *Diputación Provincial* on 6<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> October 1873. Bothwell. *Orígenes y desarrollo*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>117</sup> García Rodríguez. *Con un ojo en Yara y otro en Madrid*, pp. 62-64; Zaragoza. *Las insurrecciones de Cuba*, vol. II, pp. 734-736.

<sup>118</sup> Jordi Nadal. *El fracaso de la revolución industrial en España, 1814-1913*. Barcelona: Ariel, 1975, pp. 189-225; Jordi Maluquer de Motes. "La burguesia catalana i l'esclavitud colonial: modes de producció i pràctica política". *Recerques: Història, economia, cultura*, 1974, No. 3, pp. 83-126; Martín Rodrigo y Alharilla. "Cataluña y el colonialismo español (1868-1899)", in Salvador Calatayud

Among them, there were numerous *peninsulares* who had settled back in Spain after having accumulated fortunes in the Antilles, where they still had significant interests, known as *indianos*.<sup>119</sup> All these opposition groups in Spain began to gather around the idea of restoring the monarchy to Prince Alphonse, son of the queen dethroned in 1868, Elizabeth II. This project was also shared by the *integristas* in Cuba and Puerto Rico. As Manuel Espadas Burgos exposed, both groups coordinated efforts to end the political instability started in 1868 and restore the Bourbon dynasty.<sup>120</sup>

In order to push forward this agenda, the efforts to dismantle the regimes of the *Sexenio* were being articulated across an “imperial spatiality consisting of networks”, following a concept taken from David Lambert and Alan Lester in their study of networks in the British Empire.<sup>121</sup> To push forward their interests, *alfonsinos* in the Peninsula and *integristas* in the Antilles created institutions to articulate their strategy against the *Sexenio*. The Cuban *integristas* took the lead with the creation of the *Casinos Españoles*, shortly imitated thereafter in Puerto Rico. Later, the *alfonsinos* organized the *Círculos Hispano-Ultramarinos* in Spain. Both were closely related to the Volunteers.

The most radical elements of the Volunteers, the middle and working-class members, also created their own mechanisms of alliances with similar groups in Spain and some South American countries, most notably Argentina, where Spanish migrant communities sympathised with their intransigent position against the insurgency. Their means were humbler than the *integrista* elite’s. Rather than establishing institutions, these Volunteers carried out campaigns to disseminate their political views through books and the press.

#### 4.1. *Casinos Españoles*

The *Casino Español de La Habana* was created on 11<sup>th</sup> June 1869 by three peninsular merchants, Juan Toraya, Antonio C. Tellería, and Rufino Sainz, and a Treasury official,

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Giner (coord.). *Estado y periferias en la España del siglo XIX. Nuevos enfoques*. Valencia: Universitat de València, 2009, pp. 315-356; Antón Costas Comesaña. “El viraje del pensamiento político-económico español a mediados del siglo XIX: la “conversión” de Laureano Figuerola y la formulación del librecambismo industrialista”. *Moneda y Crédito*, 1983, No. 167, pp. 47-70.

<sup>119</sup> Áurea Matilde Fernández Muñiz. “Los indianos: su incidencia en la economía peninsular y en la política colonial”. *Trocadero: Revista de historia moderna y contemporánea*, 1992, No. 4, pp. 21-36.

<sup>120</sup> Espadas Burgos. *Alfonso XII y los orígenes de la Restauración*, pp. 271-299.

<sup>121</sup> David Lambert & Alan Lester. *Colonial lives across the British Empire: imperial careering in the long nineteenth century*. Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2006.



Juan de Ariza. They were middle-class Volunteers who envisioned the *Casino* as a power centre with which to pressure the Spanish authorities and challenge the *integrista* elites dominant position. The *Casino* imitated the formula of other *Casinos Españoles* which already existed in other American countries, such as Mexico and Argentina.<sup>122</sup> Purportedly, the aim of the *Casino Español de La Habana* was to “provide a meeting venue for all these persons [Spanish loyalists], to address privately the issues that concern the moral and material interests of the country [Spain], promote and collaborate with projects that favour and provide its members means of instruction and leisure; everything within the law and always helping the action of the authorities”.<sup>123</sup> Actually, the *Casino Español* truly was the political centre for radical *integristas* and the headquarters of the Volunteers.<sup>124</sup> Soon, a network of 31 *Casinos* had been created throughout Cuba, being coordinated from Havana.<sup>125</sup> Their members were often also Volunteers.

The success of the *Casinos*, with their rapid spread throughout Cuba and their growing influence, was soon coveted by the *integrista* elite. After a period where this elite disputed its control with the middle-class Volunteers that created it, the *Casinos* finally came under the control of the wealthy *integristas* in 1872, when Julián de Zulueta was appointed their president. This was possible due to the removal of captain general Blas Villate in 1872. The elite’s representative in Madrid, Manuel Calvo, had been lobbying for this in Madrid since 1870. Villate was perceived as a threat by the elite. He was supported by a majority of the most radical Volunteers and had publicly denounced the corruption of the wealthiest *integrista* groups before the Spanish Government.<sup>126</sup>

Once the elite controlled the *Casino*, rather than expelling the middle-class members, it opted to integrate the middle-class *integristas* into the lower positions of the

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<sup>122</sup> For an overview of Spanish associationism in America, see Juan Andrés Blanco Rodríguez. “Aspectos del asociacionismo en la emigración española a América”, in Juan Andrés Blanco Rodríguez (ed.). *El asociacionismo en la emigración española a América*. Salamanca: UNED Zamora / Junta de Castilla y León, 2008, pp. 9-30.

<sup>123</sup> BNE, HA/71063. *Reglamento del Casino Español de La Habana*, 1893, Art. 1.

<sup>124</sup> Fernández Muñiz. *España y Cuba*, pp. 156-163.

<sup>125</sup> Other *Casinos* were established in Matanzas, Cárdenas, Santiago de Cuba, Cienfuegos, Trinidad, Guantánamo, Guanajay, Remedios, Colón, Manzanillo, Caibarién, Baracoa, Santiago de Las Vegas, Gibara, Bemba (Jovellanos), Isla de Pinos, Limonar, Santa Clara, El Recreo, Alacranes, Bejucal, San Antonio, Sagua la Grande, Sancti Spíritus, Holguín, Placetas, Hato Nuevo, and Morón. Ribó. *Historia de los Voluntarios cubanos*, vol. I, pp. 571-586; Mayela Velázquez Díaz. “El legado social hispano en Guantánamo: el Casino Español”, in José Manuel Azcona Pastor & Israel Escalona Chadez (dir.). *Cuba y España. Procesos migratorios e impronta perdurable (siglos XIX y XX)*. Madrid: Dykinson, 2014, pp. 144-161.

<sup>126</sup> Fernández Muñiz. *España y Cuba*, p. 158.

board.<sup>127</sup> The social profile of the *Casino*'s directors had changed, but not their purpose. It became a centre of greater influence thanks to the prominent social position of its leaders. The *Casino Español* exerted a great influence on both captains general and the Spanish Government, as well as advising them on the Cuban situation. For instance, the *Casino* became instrumental in the appointment and removal of captains general.

The *Casino* was a centre of power that could not be ignored. For instance, even President Juan Prim (1869-1870), politically considered a liberal, often consulted with the presidents of the *Casino* about the convenience of certain policies for Cuba.<sup>128</sup> But the *Casino* put the interests of *integrismo* before any other consideration. For instance, Manuel Espadas Burgos argued that the men of the *Casino Español* might have organized the assassination of President Juan Prim in December 1870, for there were insistent rumours that he was trying to sell the island to the United States.<sup>129</sup>

The firm position of the *Casino Español* as the centre of Cuban *integrismo* was maintained throughout the *Sexenio Democrático* and beyond. Coinciding with the visit to Cuba of the First Republic's Overseas Minister Santiago Soler y Pla (1873-1874) in November 1873, the *Casino* reaffirmed its compromise to keep Cuba out of the upheaval that irresponsible reforms might bring. This attitude was praised by the *integrista* press. The *Diario de la Marina* considered the *Casino* the firmest stronghold of Spain in Cuba, whereas the staunchly *integrista* newspaper *La Voz de Cuba* considered that Cuba would be Spanish for as long as the Volunteers and the *Casino Español* existed.<sup>130</sup> Both the Volunteers and the *Casinos Españoles*, the armed wing and political headquarters of *integrismo* respectively, were the bulwarks of Spanish Cuba against the reformist policies envisioned by the First Republic.<sup>131</sup>

The initiatives of the Cuban *integrismo* were replicated in Puerto Rico. In 1871 a *Casino Español* was established in San Juan by the same elite that created the Volunteers

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<sup>127</sup> Portela Miguélez. *Redes de poder en Cuba*, p. 176.

<sup>128</sup> BNE, sig. HA/10478(24), *Carta del Presidente del Casino Español de La Habana, de 15 de noviembre de 1869, al Excmo. Sr. D. Juan Prim, Presidente del Consejo de Ministros, 1869.*

<sup>129</sup> Espadas Burgos. *Alfonso XII y los orígenes de la Restauración*, pp. 285-291; Juan Pando Despierto. "Las conversaciones Prim-Sickles: España-Cuba-Estados Unidos en 1868-1870". Juan Pablo Fusi & Antonio Niño Rodríguez (coord.). *Antes del desastre: orígenes y antecedentes de la crisis del 98*. Madrid: Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 1996, pp. 359-378. Recently, Juan Pérez Abellán has argued that the Regent Francisco Serrano plotted to kill President Prim, to become King of Spain. *Matar a Prim*. Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 2015, pp. 131-145.

<sup>130</sup> Alfonso Rodríguez Aldave. *La política ultramarina de la República del 73*. Havana: Nuestra España, 1940, p. 37; Roldán de Montaud. *La Restauración en Cuba*, pp. 91-93.

<sup>131</sup> Francisco Martí Gilabert. *La Primera República Española, 1873-1874*. Madrid: Ediciones Rialp, 2007, pp. 77-84.

in 1864. Its aims and purposes were the same as the Havana *Casino*: staunch defence of the *integridad nacional* against the reformists in Spain and in Puerto Rico. In fact, the influence of the Cuban *Casino* over his Puerto Rican colleague was not merely theoretical. Juan de Ariza, one of the founders of the Havana *Casino*, also became a leading member of the Puerto Rican branch.<sup>132</sup> Also, the relationship between the *Casino* and the Volunteers in Puerto Rico was as close as in Cuba. In fact, the founders of the *Casino* were almost the same men that had created the first Volunteer battalion in San Juan in December 1864, like its first president, the Marquis of La Esperanza.<sup>133</sup>

Nonetheless, due to the weaker position of the Puerto Rican *integristas* in comparison to their Cuban colleagues, the *Casino* did not have as much influence over the Captaincy General. However, it did act as a lobby in defence of its members' interests. For instance, in October 1877 it formally asked the Government to reduce the tariff applied to the Puerto Rican sugar entering Spain, for many sugar barons were members of the *Casino*.<sup>134</sup>

#### 4.2. *Círculos Hispano-Ultramarinos*

Just as the *integristas* had created their own organizations in the Antilles, the groups with interests in the Antilles created their own version in metropolitan Spain: the *Círculos Hispano-Ultramarinos*, aimed at defending the Antillean market, financially supporting the Spanish soldiers and Volunteers in Cuba, and opposing the outright abolition of slavery.<sup>135</sup> The creation of the *Círculos* was a reaction to the Moret Law (4<sup>th</sup> July 1870), which paved the way for the gradual abolition of slavery.<sup>136</sup> In a way, the *Círculos* created in the Peninsula were similar to the *Casinos* created in the Antilles. Both were clubs, but the *Círculos* explicitly served as a platform with which to defend the colonial interests, lacking the educational or socialization purposes of the *Casinos*.

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<sup>132</sup> In January 1875, he was member of the *Casino Español de Puerto Rico* committee which organized the celebrations for the coronation of Alphonse XII as King of Spain. *La Época*, 04-01-1875.

<sup>133</sup> See Jaime M. Pérez Rivera. *Asociacionismo, prensa y cultura entre los inmigrantes españoles de San Juan, 1871-1913*, Ph.D. Thesis. Río Piedras: Universidad de Puerto Rico, Recinto de Río Piedras, 2002, pp. 82-144.

<sup>134</sup> AHN, Ultramar, 6302, exp. 2-5.

<sup>135</sup> Maluquer de Motes. "La burguesia catalana i l'esclavitud colonial", pp. 116-119.

<sup>136</sup> This law established that all the slaves over 60, and those born after September 1868 should be immediately freed, Espadas Burgos. *Alfonso XII y los orígenes de la Restauración*, pp. 286-289.

The first *Círculo* was created in Madrid in November 1870 by the Marquis of Manzanedo, an *indiano* that had made a fortune in Cuba as a slave trader. According to its *reglamento*, it was required that its members had lived in the Antilles and still maintained some interests there.<sup>137</sup> Its first president was José Laureano Sanz, Puerto Rico's former captain general who had been removed in January 1870 for his excesses in repressing the *reformistas*. Due to personal issues, Sanz was soon replaced by Manzanedo in 1871. The model of the *Círculo* was rapidly copied, and by the end of 1872, there were eleven of them in Spain.<sup>138</sup> The most important of the *Círculos* was Barcelona's (est. December 1870), due to the foremost importance of commercial relations with the Antilles for Catalan industry, mainly textiles.<sup>139</sup> The creation of the Barcelona *Círculo* had been promoted by the *Fomento del Trabajo Nacional*, the main employers' association created in 1869 to fight against the free trade policy of the Treasury Minister Laureano Figuerola.<sup>140</sup> Its first president and vice-president were José Güell and Antonio López, respectively. Güell had been Spain's most remarkable advocate for protectionism, and López the country's most important shipbuilding tycoon of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>141</sup>

Apart from the shared interests of the *Casinos* and the *Círculos*, there were personal connections too, which helped to establish the latter, and to keep the links with the former. Juan Bautista Machicote, who had been colonel of the Puerto Rican Volunteers' first battalion, and co-founder of the *Casino Español* in San Juan, became a member of

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<sup>137</sup> Rafael Portell de Pasamonte. "Don Juan Manuel Manzanedo y González, I Duque de Santoña, I Marqués de Manzanedo". *Monte Buciero*, 2004, No. 10, pp. 87-102; José Gregorio Cayuela Fernández & Ángel Bahamonde Magro. "Trasvase de capitales antillanos y estrategias inversoras. La fortuna del Marqués de Manzanedo (1823-1882)". *Revista Internacional de Sociología*, No. 1, 1987, pp. 125-148.

<sup>138</sup> The *Círculos* had been created in Madrid, Barcelona, Cádiz, Zaragoza, Seville, Málaga, Santander, Valencia, Avilés, Bilbao, and Cáceres. Fernández Muñiz. *España y Cuba*, p. 159.

<sup>139</sup> See Maluquer de Motes. "La burguesía catalana i l'esclavitud colonial"; Carlos Martínez Shaw. "Los orígenes de la industria algodonera catalana y el comercio colonial", in Gabriel Tortellà & Jordi Nadal Lorenzo (coord.). *Agricultura, comercio colonial y crecimiento económico en la España contemporánea: actas del Primer Coloquio de Historia Económica de España, Barcelona, 11-12 Mayo 1972*. Barcelona: Ariel, 1974, pp. 243-267; *La Convicción, 28-12-1871*. The revenues originated in the illicit slave trade had also been important for the booming Catalan industry. See José Miguel Sanjuan. "El tráfico de esclavos y la élite barcelonesa. Los negocios de la Casa Vidal Ribas", in Lizbeth J. Chaviano Pérez & Martín Rodrigo y Alharilla (eds.). *Negreros y esclavos. Barcelona y la esclavitud atlántica (siglos XVI-XIX)*. Barcelona: Icaria, 2017, pp. 131-158.

<sup>140</sup> It had been created by Pedro Bosch y Cabrús, as a successor organization to the *Instituto Industrial de Cataluña*, created in 1848 by the *indiano* José Güell y Ferrer to promote protectionist policies, Espadas Burgos. *Alfonso XII y los orígenes de la Restauración*, p. 288.

<sup>141</sup> Martín Rodrigo y Alharilla. "Los marqueses de Comillas, 1817-1925", in Carmen Almodóvar Muñoz (ed.). *Presencia de Cuba en la historiografía española actual*. Madrid: Ediciones Doce Calles, pp. 141-154; Jaume Vicens Vives. *Industrials i Polítics (segle XIX)*. Barcelona: Ediciones Vicens Vives, 1991 (first published in 1958), pp. 337-344.

Madrid's *Círculo*.<sup>142</sup> In Seville, the former Volunteer and member of Havana's *Casino Español*, Rafael Torres-Pardo, gave a passionate speech in the local *Círculo* in April 1872 defending their former comrades-at-arms from the attacks that kept coming from the reformist Spanish press.<sup>143</sup>

Though the *Círculos* pretended not to be political beyond the defence of the *integridad nacional*, it became overwhelmingly dominated by the *alfonsinos*, as Eloy Arias Castañón showed in his study of Seville's *Círculo*.<sup>144</sup> This gave the *Círculos* an ideological cohesion around issues such as the defence of slavery or the return of the Bourbons. This meant the *de facto* exclusion of the republicans, who had historically been proposing the abolition of slavery.<sup>145</sup>

The cohesion of the *Círculos*, therefore, was the result of the collusion between the *integristas* and the *alfonsinos*. This became even more evident with the creation of the *Liga Nacional*, a last attempt to tackle the abolition of slavery in Puerto Rico. Though its economic impact was limited, due to the relatively slight importance of enslaved labour for the island's economy, the members of the *Círculos* feared that the measure would soon be extended to Cuba, where slavery was still profitable.<sup>146</sup> The *Círculo* of Madrid created the *Liga Nacional* (7<sup>th</sup> February 1873) to coordinate all the *Círculos* and present a joint front against the government.<sup>147</sup> The *Liga* organized demonstrations and presented thousands of signatures against the abolition of slavery. The end of slavery in Puerto Rico, however, was a strategic compromise for the government, and parliament finally passed the law

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<sup>142</sup> *Memoria que presenta á los señores socios del Centro Hispano-Ultramarino de Madrid el Presidente Excmo. Sr. Marqués de Manzanedo. 20 de enero de 1873*. Madrid: Imprenta de Andrés Orejas, 1873, p. 31; AHN, Ultramar, 5457, exp. 23.

<sup>143</sup> Rafael Torres-Pardo. *Discurso en defensa de los Voluntarios de Cuba, leído en la Junta General del Círculo Hispano-Ultramarino de Sevilla y su provincia, celebrada el 14 de abril de 1872, por D. Rafael Torres-Pardo, socio del mismo*. Seville: Imprenta de Salvador Acuña y compañía, 1872, pp. 3-8; AHN, Hacienda, 3147, exp. 96.

<sup>144</sup> Eloy Arias Castañón. "El Centro Hispano-Ultramarino de Sevilla y la Guerra de Cuba (1872-1881)". *Actas del II Congreso Internacional de Historia Militar*, vol. III. Zaragoza: Servicio de Publicaciones del EME, 1988, pp. 213-229.

<sup>145</sup> For instance, the republican deputy Baldomero Lostau was kicked out of the first Barcelona *Círculo*'s meeting for having defended the abolition of slavery in the Antilles. *La Igualdad*, 02-02-1872, pp. 2-3. Baldomero Lostau Prats (1846-1896) was elected to the Congress for the districts of Gracia (1871-1872) and Vilafranca del Penedés (1893-1894), ACD, Serie documentación Electoral, 62, No. 10 & 107, No. 8.

<sup>146</sup> Rebecca J. Scott. *Slave emancipation in Cuba. The transition to free labor, 1860-1899*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000 (first published in 1985), pp. 77-110.

<sup>147</sup> Espadas Burgos. *Alfonso XII y los orígenes de la Restauración*, pp. 285-288; Maluquer de Motes. "La burguesia catalana i l'esclavitud colonial", pp.119-122.

abolishing forced labour in Puerto Rico on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1873. Having failed to secure slavery in Puerto Rico, the *Liga Nacional* was dissolved shortly afterwards.<sup>148</sup>

The most important outcome of the *Liga Nacional* was the identification of interests between *integristas* and *alfonsinos*. At the same time as they were defending their vested interests in the Antilles, the members of the *Liga* had been actively working for the return of the Bourbon dynasty to Spain. Both *alfonsinos* and *integristas* believed that a conservative government under the restored monarchy of Prince Alphonse would bring peace and stability to Spain and Cuba. In a way, the profile of the *Liga Nacional* members was the same that supported the Bourbon's restoration to the throne on 31<sup>st</sup> December 1874: a mixture of politicians, army officers, civil servants, and middle-class businessmen disappointed with the evolution of the 1868 regime, and conservatives that had never participated in it.<sup>149</sup> The *Liga's* president Francisco Serrano (the regent in 1868-1871), and the vice-president Adelardo López de Ayala (overseas minister 1869-1870) were among the men disappointed by the *Sexenio* regime's inability to stabilize Spain. Among the conservative politicians that never took part in it was Antonio Cánovas del Castillo, the mastermind behind the proclamation of Alphonse XII, and architect of the most stable regime in modern Spain, the Restoration (1874-1923).<sup>150</sup>

The convergence of interests between *integristas* and *alfonsinos* therefore gave the Restoration a clearly Antillean background, to paraphrase Manuel Espadas Burgos.<sup>151</sup> After stabilizing Spain, the first Restoration Government, led by Cánovas del Castillo,

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<sup>148</sup> The Government headed by Manuel Ruiz Zorrilla (June 1872 – February 1873) not only had a compromise with the Puerto Rican *reformistas*, but also considered that it would convince the Cuban rebels to give up their fight. Eduardo Galván Rodríguez. *La abolición de la esclavitud en España. debates parlamentarios, 1810-1886*. Madrid: Dykinson, 2014, pp. 166-187.

<sup>149</sup> Melchor Fernández Almagro. *Historia política de la España contemporánea*, vol. I. Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1968, pp. 242-247; Carr. *Spain, 1808-1875*, pp. 348-355; Espadas Burgos. *Alfonso XII y los orígenes de la Restauración*, pp. 357-398; Ramón Villares & Javier Moreno Luzón. *Restauración y Dictadura*. Josep Fontana & Ramón Villares (dir.), *Historia de España*, vol. VII. Barcelona and Madrid: Crítica/Marcial Pons, 2009, pp. 5-24.

<sup>150</sup> Antonio Cánovas del Castillo (1828-1897) is one of the leading figures in Spanish modern history. He presided over the Spanish Government for seven different terms between 1874 and 1897 and had previously been Minister of the Interior (1864) and for Overseas (1865-1866). Initially involved with Leopoldo O'Donnell's Liberal Union, he created the Conservative Party in 1874, with which he shaped the Restoration regime. Carr. *Spain, 1808-1875*, pp. 348-355; José Luis Comellas. *Cánovas*. Madrid: Ediciones Cid, 1965, pp. 147-212; Jesús Neira. "El régimen político de la Restauración". *Cánovas y la vertebración de España*. Madrid: Fundación Cánovas del Castillo, 1998, pp. 35-78. Also see Javier Tusell Gómez & Florentino Portero. *Antonio Cánovas del Castillo: el sistema político de la Restauración*. Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2007; Carlos Dardé. *Cánovas y el liberalismo conservador*. Madrid: Gota a Gota Ediciones, 2013.

<sup>151</sup> Espadas Burgos talked about a 'Cuban background', Espadas Burgos. *Alfonso XII y los orígenes de la Restauración*, pp. 271-299.

victoriously put an end to the Third Carlist War.<sup>152</sup> Once the peninsula was peaceful, military efforts could be focused on Cuba.<sup>153</sup> During the three years that followed Alphonse XII's proclamation, Spain could send to Cuba ca. 80,000 soldiers, who in collaboration with roughly the same number of Volunteers, ended the war on 10<sup>th</sup> February 1878 with the so-called *Pacto del Zanjón* with the rebel army.<sup>154</sup>

With the Conservatives of Antonio Cánovas del Castillo in power in Madrid (1874-1881), the Spanish Government implemented a series of profound reforms in Cuba. These reforms were not perceived as a threat by the *integristas*, for they did not harm their interests. Cuba was assimilated to the Spanish political system, as was Puerto Rico in 1869, and given the right to elect representatives to the Spanish Parliament. However, the electoral census, more restricted than in the Peninsula, assured the predominance of the *integrista* elite, representing the biggest fortunes, by leaving them with the right to vote. Also, the island was divided into six provinces, each with its own *Diputación Provincial*, dominated by the *integristas* since their very creation.

A major reform introduced by the Restoration was the abolition of slavery in Cuba, legislated by the Congress on 13<sup>th</sup> February 1880. It was a relatively smooth transition to free labour, for abolition did not mean immediate freedom for the slaves. A *Ley del Patronato* established a period of eight years during which the former slaves (ca. 230,000 in 1880) were forced to work for their former owners in conditions that powerfully resembled unfree labour.<sup>155</sup> *De facto*, slavery in Cuba had been destroyed by the Ten Years' War. Thousands of slaves achieved freedom by joining the insurrection, a good deal of the agricultural system in eastern Cuba had been shattered, and the costs of maintaining enslaved workers (including feeding, security, and fears of a new rebellion), convinced the slaveowners to accept a such a transition towards the use of free labourers.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> For the presence of *Carlismo* in the Spanish Empire see Fernando J. Padilla Angulo. "El carlismo en Ultramar", in Daniel Montaña & Josep Rafart (eds.). *Fronteres del carlisme: del Berguedà a Ultramar. IV Simposi d'Història del Carlisme. Avia, 7 de maig de 2016*. Avia: Centre d'Estudis d'Avia, 2016, pp. 209-229.

<sup>153</sup> Josep C. Clemente. *Las guerras carlistas*. Madrid: Sarpe, 1986, pp. 184-197; Julio Aróstegui, Jordi Canal & Eduardo González Calleja. *El carlismo y las guerras carlistas*. Madrid: La Esfera de los Libros, 2003, pp. 76-85.

<sup>154</sup> Casanovas. *Bread, or Bullets!*, pp. 119-124; Navarro. *Las guerras de España en Cuba*, pp. 87-112; Otero Pimentel. *Memoria sobre los Voluntarios*, p. 177.

<sup>155</sup> The period of eight years of *patronazgo* ended earlier, in 1886, when there were only 25,000 *patrocinados* left in Cuba. Scott. *Slave Emancipation in Cuba*, 127-141; Knight. *Slave Society in Cuba*, pp. 154-179; Galván Rodríguez. *La abolición de la esclavitud en España*, pp. 195-221.

<sup>156</sup> Scott. *Slave Emancipation in Cuba*, pp. 111-124.

Consequently, the *integristas* in the Antilles and the colonial lobbies in the Peninsula felt secure and protected by the Conservative government. Between 1876 and 1881 all the *Círculos Hispano-Ultramarinos* were dissolved. The first was Madrid's *Círculo*, for its members, mostly former officials of the Spanish administration in Cuba and army chiefs, were mainly concerned with bringing a conservative regime to power, and that was achieved in 1875.<sup>157</sup> The last *Círculo* to dissolve was Barcelona's, for its members, basically, Catalan *indianos* with a strong interest in the Antillean economies, were clearly interested in securing an economic policy friendly to their interests from the government. Only a few months after the delicate issue of slavery had been settled, the *Círculo Hispano-Ultramarino de Barcelona* dissolved in January 1881. Explaining this decision to President Cánovas del Castillo, the *Círculo's* president, José Munné, considered that the *Círculos* were no longer necessary, since the Government was making the reforms required to boost the Cuban economy, and they felt their property was well protected.<sup>158</sup>

#### 4.3. Popular Counterrevolutionary Strategies

Middle-class Volunteers also developed their own strategies to spread their views and forge alliances beyond the Antilles. Their lower economic and social position did not allow them to create institutions or to exert a determinant influence over the Spanish Government or the influential colonial lobbies of the Peninsula. Unlike the *integrista* elite, they lacked a coherent policy or the will to produce a regime change in Spain. In fact, in the articles and books they produced there was barely any explicit support for the monarchy as a system or for the Bourbon restoration. There was instead a constant defence of the *integridad nacional*, and often liberal and republican claims. This represents an open contradiction, for whereas these men often supported the liberal revolution in Spain, they rejected the colonial reforms envisioned by the governments in Madrid.

The best example of this contradiction is represented by *Las Glorias del Voluntario*, published by the journalist José E. Triay in 1869 in Havana, but aimed at potential readers in Spain. A freemason and a republican, he praised the liberty given to the Spanish people by *La Gloriosa* and considered the Volunteers heirs of Rafael de Riego, the colonel that

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<sup>157</sup> *El Imparcial*, 21-01-1876, p. 2.

<sup>158</sup> *Diario oficial de avisos de Madrid*, 26-01-1881.



imposed the Cádiz Constitution over Ferdinand VII in 1820.<sup>159</sup> At the same time, he defended the existing status quo and tried to convince his readers that the abolition of slavery, a major promise of *La Gloriosa*, would ruin the island. Despite this contradiction, the main aim of the book was to try to link the fight of the Volunteers in Cuba with the struggle for freedom in 1868 Spain and thus gain support for their fight among liberals and republicans in the Peninsula.<sup>160</sup>

The Volunteers must have certainly been relatively popular in Spain since the beginning of the war. For instance, cheap Volunteer-shaped paper dolls were sold in Barcelona since early 1869.<sup>161</sup> There were also popular Volunteer-themed novels in Spain throughout the 1870s, such as J. Álvarez Pérez's *Aventuras de tres Voluntarios*, which narrated the adventures of three *peninsular* Volunteers in the Cuban war.<sup>162</sup> Even a *habanera* song was composed in 1873 to honour the Cuban Volunteers.<sup>163</sup> The Volunteers were also regularly mentioned in the popular press. All these were examples of popular culture which could potentially reach important audiences in the Peninsula. It could thus be argued that the Volunteers indeed enjoyed some degree of acceptance in the Peninsula.

But the Volunteers also received harsh criticisms from Spain for their violent methods in Cuba, especially among republicans, who considered that more civil and political rights rather than repression would end the war in Cuba. On 17<sup>th</sup> June 1870, the republican Francisco Díaz Quintero declared at the Spanish Congress that he considered

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<sup>159</sup> Rafael de Riego led a *coup d'état* in 1820 which inaugurated the so-called *Trienio Liberal* (1820-1823) a period during which Spain had a liberal regime aimed at dismantling the *Ancien Régime*. Ever since, Riego has been a symbol of Spanish republicanism.

<sup>160</sup> José E. Triay was a native of Andalusia who settled in 1860 in Cuba, where he developed a long career as a journalist in *integrasta* newspapers such as *La Voz de Cuba* (he became its director after the assassination of Gonzalo Castañón in 1870) and *El Español* (Sagua La Grande). On 27<sup>th</sup> November 1871 he supported the execution of the medical students from the pages of *La Voz de Cuba*. He was also an active member in Cuban society. In the 1880s he became president of the *Sociedad Andaluza de Beneficencia de La Habana* and joined the Masonic lodge *Unión Española* (Santa Clara). After 1898 he remained on the island, becoming director of *Diario de la Marina* and creating the Cuban Press Association. He passed away in Madrid during a visit to Spain in 1907. José E. Triay. *Las Glorias del Voluntario. Ecos nacionales*. Havana: Imprenta La Intrépida, 1869; *La Correspondencia de España*, 01-11-1885, p. 2; *Boletín de Procedimientos*, 14-04-1896, p. 8; *El Imparcial*, 30-08-1900, p. 2; *El Liberal*, 06-03-1907, p. 3.

<sup>161</sup> Cuba's Volunteers were represented alongside mounted artillery soldiers and the Catalan Volunteers that had been dispatched to Cuba in early 1869. ANC, Fons ANC1-160 / Pere Grañén i Raso, sig. 0978.

<sup>162</sup> J. Álvarez Pérez was a relatively well-known author who published several novels set in the colonial contexts of the Antilles and Africa. His novel on the Volunteers was meant to be read by low-income readers, as it only costed 4 *reales* in Madrid, and 5 in other provinces. *Aventuras de tres Voluntarios (guerra de Cuba)*. Madrid: Medina y Navarro Editores (year unspecified).

<sup>163</sup> It was called *Los Voluntarios de Cuba* and was composed by Isidoro Hernández. BNE, MC/298/41.



Image 4. José Gener started the campaign against the Congress member Díaz Quintero. *El Moro Muza*, 31-07-1870, p. 1.

the Volunteers a stain on Spain's history in America, for having executed a priest accused of having blessed a rebel flag a year before.<sup>164</sup> Díaz Quintero's speech provoked an immediate reaction by hundreds of Volunteers and their supporters in Cuba, Spain, and in the Spanish migrant communities in the Americas.<sup>165</sup>

The first reaction was publishing letters in the main newspapers vindicating the Volunteers' honour and disapproving Díaz Quintero's speech. The first letter was published in early July at *Diario de la Marina* by Captain José Gener, who claimed that "without the Volunteers, the Spanish flag would not wave in the Morro castle", and that the Volunteers were "Spaniards willing to lose everything before letting the enemies of their motherland triumph".<sup>166</sup> Captain Gener became a popular character among Cuba's *integristas*, even appearing in the front page of *El Moro Muza* (image 4), a satirical weekly magazine very popular among Volunteers.

The hundreds of letters that followed were collected and published by the journalist and Volunteer Joaquín de Palomino at the end of 1870, aimed at showing the support received by the Volunteers in the Antilles and Spain.<sup>167</sup> Concerned by public opinion in Spain regarding the Volunteers, in October 1870 Palomino created a newspaper in Madrid entitled *El Voluntario de Cuba*, aimed at propagating the idea that the Volunteers were true patriots and not criminals through articles and news on the Volunteers' main military actions in Cuba. This newspaper was financially supported from

<sup>164</sup> In April 1869, Francisco Esquembre, presbyter of Yaguaramas (Cienfuegos), received the rebel leader Germán Barrios, and blessed both him and his men. He was arrested by the Volunteers and executed in April 1870. AHN, Ultramar, 4402, exp. 55.

<sup>165</sup> AHN, Ultramar, 4726, exp. 33. The speech of Francisco Díaz Quintero in *Diario de Sesiones de las Cortes Constituyentes*, N° 308, 17-06-1870, p. 8906.

<sup>166</sup> *Diario de la Marina*, 02-07-1870, p. 2.

<sup>167</sup> Joaquín de Palomino Guzmán had previously owned *El Eco del Comercio*, a newspaper focused on Havana's commercial interests. Joaquín de Palomino. *Merecido ramillete que dedican los Voluntarios de la isla de Cuba al mal aconsejado diputado a Cortes Díaz Quintero, formado con las protestas, manifestaciones y composiciones poéticas publicadas en los periódicos de esta capital y precedido de varias dedicatorias en prosa y verso*. Havana: Imprenta y Encuadernación "Sociedad de Operarios", 1870; AHN, Ultramar, 4657, exp. 49.

Havana by Suárez Martínez Vigil and other middle-class Volunteers, but it was short-lived due to the tiny number of subscribers and closed in January 1871.<sup>168</sup>

Opinions disapproving of the Volunteers' methods strongly intensified after the assassination of the medical students of 27<sup>th</sup> November 1871. Francisco Salmerón y Alonso labelled the Volunteers brutal and cowardly for their involvement in this affair at the Congress.<sup>169</sup> Ventura Olavarrieta, a former Volunteer, and conservative deputy answered Salmerón by proclaiming his former comrades' role as the guarantors of Spain's presence in Cuba and accusing Salmerón of receiving "filibuster's gold", implying that he collaborated with the insurgents.<sup>170</sup> This was the Volunteers' usual response to criticisms. Anyone disapproving of their behaviour was considered a traitor to Spain. In November 1872 the former Artillery Volunteer Francisco Matías Ruiz y López published *Cuba y sus enemigos* in which he accused Díaz Quintero, the republicans and abolitionists of defending the insurgents' cause in Madrid, and hence of being traitors to Spain.<sup>171</sup>

Despite the Volunteers' efforts to counter critical voices, the echoes of the assassination of the medical students reached South America. On 28<sup>th</sup> December 1872 the Buenos Aires newspaper *La República* published an article by Florentino González entitled "Cuba y las repúblicas americanas", which intensely disapproved of Spanish policy in Cuba.<sup>172</sup> As well as supporting Cuba's independence and calling all Hispanic American republics to fight for it, he called the Volunteers "mere assassins".

This caused outrage among the Spanish community in Buenos Aires. Enrique Romero Jiménez, the editor of *El Correo Español*, a popular newspaper among Spanish immigrants, encouraged his fellow countrymen to give Florentino González a due response. Between January and February 1873 his newspaper published dozens of letters

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<sup>168</sup> *El Voluntario de Cuba*, 18-01-1871, p. 1.

<sup>169</sup> Salmerón gave the speech on 14<sup>th</sup> October 1872, during a debate on the Volunteers' role in the war. He was brother of Nicolás Salmerón, the future president of the First Republic in the summer of 1873. *Diario de Sesiones de las Cortes Constituyentes*, Nº 26, 14-10-1872, p. 537.

<sup>170</sup> Olavarrieta, a native of Lluvia (Asturias), had been lieutenant of the first *Batallón de Voluntarios ligeros de La Habana*, and close friend to Gonzalo Castañón, editor of *La Voz de Cuba*. Llofriu y Sagrera. *Historia de la insurrección y Guerra de la isla de Cuba*, vol. II, p. 574; *Diario de Sesiones de las Cortes Constituyentes*, Nº 27, 15-10-1872, p. 569.

<sup>171</sup> Francisco Matías Ruiz y López. *Cuba y sus enemigos. Defensa de los Voluntarios de la isla de Cuba contra los ultrajes proferidos en las Cortes españolas en detrimento de su honra publicada en la prensa de la Corte y de provincias*. Madrid: Imprenta de Lázaro Maroto, 1872, pp. 5-30.

<sup>172</sup> Florentino González was a Colombian politician and journalist who participated in a failed assassination plot against Simón Bolívar in 1828. In 1872 he was law professor at the University of Buenos Aires. Matthew Brown. *The Struggle for Power in Post-Independence Colombia and Venezuela*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, p. 76.

by Spanish migrants defending the Spanish struggle in the Antilles.<sup>173</sup> The articles and letters exchanged between the Spanish *El Correo Español* and the pro-Cuban independence *La República* reached a crescendo. Romero even urged the Argentinian President Domingo Sarmiento (1868-1874) to force *La República* to apologize, or else he would “break up the social peace in Buenos Aires between the Spaniards and the Cuban insurgency-supporters”.

One of the most striking letters was written by Manuel Barros, a former Volunteer who had settled in Buenos Aires after leaving Havana. His letter is one of the most extreme examples of radical *integrismo* found here. He rejected all the criticisms received by his former comrades-at-arms, writing that “I would have executed not only eight students of medicine but forty”. He also considered that most Cubans supported Spanish rule.<sup>174</sup>

Romero continued with his campaign and accused Norberto Ballesteros, the head of the Spanish diplomatic legation in Buenos Aires of cowardice, for he was as “useless and ignorant as most of the diplomatic service appointed by the revolution of 1868”.<sup>175</sup> To remove Norberto Ballesteros, *El Correo Español* collected 6,700 signatures, which were sent to Cuba’s Captain General Blas Villate (1870-1872), who was very popular among the Volunteers, so that he could present the removal proposal in the Spanish Parliament.<sup>176</sup> This shows that similar views and attitudes of middle and working-class *peninsulares* were shared by part of the Spanish émigré community in Argentina. They supported Spanish rule in Cuba, disapproved of *La Gloriosa*, and threatened to use violence if necessary to achieve their goals. A social class solidarity should also be considered, as both the radical Volunteers in Havana and the men that supported them in Buenos Aires were young working-class men.

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<sup>173</sup> Españoles residentes en la República Argentina. *Álbum dedicado a los heroicos Voluntarios de Cuba*. Buenos Aires: Establecimiento tipográfico de *El Correo Español*, 1874.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 37-41.

<sup>175</sup> Españoles residentes en la República Argentina. *Álbum dedicado a los heroicos Voluntarios*, pp. 15-18.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 45-68; Domingo Acebrón. *Los Voluntarios*, pp. 67-69.



Image 5. José Joaquín Ribó, author of *Historia de los Voluntarios Cubanos* (1872-1877). Ribó, *Historia de los Voluntarios Cubanos*, vol. II, p. 593.

The radical pro-Volunteer propaganda seems to have faded away after 1873-1874 when the *integrista* elite came to control the *Casinos Españoles* and impose its power in Havana. Of course, the class and political divisions among the Volunteers continued, but the voices of the middle and lower strata were not allowed to propagate their views, apparently. The works of the Volunteers that were published afterwards reflected the views of the *integrista* elite, but also tended to praise the patriotism and bravery of the rank-and-file Volunteers.

This was praised, but not given voice. This is the case, for instance, of the Volunteer José Joaquín Ribó's (whose portrait can be seen in image 5, p. 106) *Historia de los Voluntarios Cubanos*, published in two volumes between 1872 and 1877, and dedicated to the *Casino Español*.<sup>177</sup> Ribó's approach to the Volunteers' history attempted to keep the balance between the rank-and-file and the elite Volunteers, stressing the issue that united the Volunteers: *integridad nacional*.<sup>178</sup>

The same concept can be found in *Álbum de los Voluntarios*, a poetry book published in 1874 by the Cuban-born Volunteer Fernando C. Moreno Solano. It is a collection of poems on the most popular issues among the Volunteers, with verses devoted to the rank-and-file Volunteer, the members of the *Casino Español*, Spain, Cuba, and the *Integridad Nacional*. Above all, it was a chant to the "Spanishness" of Cuba. The very metrics and thematic treatment were inspired by the *romancero viejo*, a collection of orally transmitted popular stories which are the basis of Spanish popular poetry. Moreno stresses

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<sup>177</sup> José Joaquín Ribó Palandaries was a Catalan journalist who studied law in Madrid, where he started a career as journalist working for *El Eco de la Patria* (1863-1871). He was nephew of Víctor Balaguer, a Liberal politician and overseas minister. While in Cuba (1871-1873) he joined Havana's 5<sup>th</sup> Volunteer Battalion. He published several novels and books on Spanish history and politics, such as *Cuatro palabras sobre la cuestión de Méjico y el General Prim* (1862), and *Postrimerías de la insurrección cubana* (1871). AHN, Universidades, 4649, exp. 13; BVB, epistolario, sig. 7103958.

<sup>178</sup> Ribó. *Historia de los Voluntarios cubanos*, pp. 595-597.

in almost every poem his condition as Volunteer and “good and proud Cuban loyal to his mother Spain”.<sup>179</sup>

The campaign by the radical Volunteers to propagate their ideas had gone a long way. When the radical Volunteers had the upper hand in Havana (ca. 1869-1872), their propaganda was markedly popular and rather exalted, stressing the Volunteers’ patriotism and zeal in repressing whom they perceived as “enemies of Spain”. Since 1872, when the *integrista* elite took control of the *Casino Español* and emerged as the commanding group in Havana, the pro-Volunteers propaganda assumed a more conciliatory tone. It began to stress the idea of patriotism and *Integridad Nacional* avoiding extremisms. The book by the Army officer Luis Otero Pimentel *Memoria sobre los Voluntarios* (1876), or Ribó’s *Historia de los Voluntarios cubanos* second volume (1877) are good examples of this moderated pro-Volunteer literature.<sup>180</sup>

The public voice of the middle-class and working-class Volunteers had been somehow silenced by the *integrista* elite. But their radicalism did not fade away. Instead, their views and demands were expressed by different means.

## 5. The Volunteers and Labour Movement

Beneath the *integrista* elite that controlled the *Casinos Españoles* and filled the Volunteer officer ranks, there were thousands of working-class rank-and-file Volunteers who have seldom been studied by scholars. If one considers that per company, there were 108 troopers and 23 Volunteers with some degree of command, it could be argued that ca. 65,000 of the 80,000 Volunteers in Cuba in 1872 were workers and peasants.<sup>181</sup> It is,

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<sup>179</sup> Fernando C. Moreno Solano was a native of Matanzas. In 1857 he was convicted by the Spanish Government for falsification. By 1860 he had settled in Madrid, where he created *La Isla de Cuba*, a reformist newspaper. In Spain he also entered politics, and in 1868 he joined the Federal Democratic Republican Party created right after *La Gloriosa* revolution. In the early 1870s he settled in Cárdenas (Cuba), where he joined the Volunteers Chasseurs Regiment and tried to fulfil a literary career as a poet. Fernando C. Moreno Solano. *Álbum de los Voluntarios*. Cárdenas: Imprenta “El Comercio” de E. Trujillo, 1874; AHN, Ultramar, 1715, exp. 2; *Revista hispano-americana*, 12-02-1865, p. 2; *La Discusión*, 19-11-1868, p. 3.

<sup>180</sup> Luis Otero Pimentel (1834-1920) was a Spanish Army officer with a long experience in Cuba. During the 1895-1898 war he was military governor of Manzanillo (Santiago de Cuba province). He collaborated with *Diario de la Marina* and wrote several novels and history books, as well as poems in both Spanish and Galician, such as *Semblanzas caballerescas o las nuevas aventuras de Don Quijote de La Mancha* or *As campanas de Duxame*.

<sup>181</sup> José Ferrer de Couto. *Cuba puede ser independiente*, pp. 85-86. According to the *reglamento* of 1869, each company consisted of 1 captain, 2 lieutenants, 2 2<sup>nd</sup> lieutenants, 1 1<sup>st</sup> sergeant, 4 2<sup>nd</sup>

however, difficult to know the percentage of either. Nonetheless, the number of working-class urban Volunteers must have been high, for in Havana only, there were 19,000 Volunteers by 1876.<sup>182</sup>

In Havana, the professional profile of these rank-and-file Volunteers was quite defined: peninsular migrant, usually employed by fellow *peninsulares* as a shop assistant, stevedore, coachman, or cigarmaker.<sup>183</sup> Above this echelon, sergeants and low-ranking officers (lieutenants and captains) were often lower-middle class and middle class *peninsulares*, who usually owned their own shop or small business, such as bakeries, or hardware stores. No consensus on the reasons why they would join the Volunteers exists. Manuel Espadas Burgos considered that they were driven by sincere patriotism.<sup>184</sup> Mercedes García Rodríguez, for her part, argued that these humble *peninsulares* joined the Volunteers in exchange for a small stipend.<sup>185</sup> However, this stipend never existed, for it is not contemplated in the *reglamento* of 1869 and evidence of it has not been found here.<sup>186</sup> Instead, there were a variety of reasons for joining the Volunteers. Although an identification with the idea of the *integridad nacional* might have convinced some young men to step forward, here it is considered that better employability options and social prestige were the most important factors for a *peninsular* migrant to join the Volunteers, an idea also shared with Uralde Cancio.<sup>187</sup> In any case, patriotic sentiment might have been boosted by belonging to the Volunteers, in combination with gaining social status and relating to the dominant group.

According to the testimony of some of these Volunteers, to join this militia was almost a natural step upon settling in Cuba. The Catalan Narciso Maciá recalled joining the 1<sup>st</sup> Artillery Volunteer battalion in Havana in 1873 at the age of 18 alongside his brother, persuaded by the owner of the shop where he was employed, a fellow Catalan, who was a lieutenant colonel in that unit. He recognised that donning the uniform, taking part in military parades, and carrying a weapon, increased his patriotism.<sup>188</sup> The same hierarchy

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sergeants, 2 1<sup>st</sup> caporals, 6 caporals, a bugle, and 108 troopers, *Reglamento para los cuerpos de Voluntarios de la isla de Cuba* (1869), cap. I, art 3.

<sup>182</sup> Otero Pimentel. *Memoria sobre los Voluntarios*, p. 177; Casanovas. *Bread, or Bullets!*, pp. 119-124.

<sup>183</sup> Over 90% of the *Centro de Dependientes de La Habana* (a shopkeepers' trade union) members were *peninsulares*. Moreno Friginals. *Cuba/España*, p. 267.

<sup>184</sup> Espadas Burgos. *Alfonso XII y los orígenes de la Restauración*, pp. 283-285.

<sup>185</sup> García Rodríguez. *Con un ojo en Yara y otro en Madrid*, p. 111.

<sup>186</sup> It is not contemplated in any of the *reglamentos* (1856, 1869, 1892). The Volunteers only received a stipend in case they were mobilized and assimilated to the same conditions of the regular army troops.

<sup>187</sup> Uralde Cancio. *Voluntarios de Cuba española*, p. 60.

<sup>188</sup> Narciso Maciá y Doménech. *Vida y obra (1855-1933)*. Havana, 1954, p. 11.

of trading companies was often reproduced in the Volunteer companies. For instance, Captain Antonio Ferrer y Robert of Santiago de Cuba's 2<sup>nd</sup> Volunteer Battalion recalled that the overseers in his shop were sergeants in his company, and his shopkeepers were troopers.<sup>189</sup>

The reproduction of these hierarchies might have given more cohesion to the Volunteer companies but did not avert social tensions. On the contrary, many Volunteers were active members of the labour movement in Cuba, especially among the cigarmakers.<sup>190</sup> Indeed, belonging to the Volunteers gave these men a sense of unity, cohesion, solidarity, and organization inherent to the service-at-arms. The leader of the labour movement in Havana during the 1860s and 1870s was himself a Volunteer, Saturnino Martínez, an Asturian migrant employed in the Partagás tobacco factory as a cigarmaker. He had been promoting the creation of workers' associations at least since 1865 from the pages of *La Aurora*, Cuba's first workers' newspaper.<sup>191</sup>

The social and labour situation of workers in Havana worsened with the breakout of the war. The living conditions created by the Ten Years' War spurred the creation of labour associations. A higher tax pressure on the local industry to finance the war resulted in lower wages for the employees and shrinking income for the companies. This caused class tensions that partially explain the episodes of violence of 1869-1871 by the Volunteers, as already seen. Amidst this tension, both employers and employees began to organize for the defence of their own interests. The tobacco manufacturing industry, which employed ca. 30,000 people throughout Cuba, particularly felt the tax pressure caused by the war. It became a sector where internal tensions between employers and employees were strongly felt. In 1870, the cigar factory owners created the Central Guild of Havana Tobacco (*Gremio Central de Tabaco de La Habana*), which lobbied in Spain for the defence of its members' interests.<sup>192</sup> Only two years later, in 1872, their employees founded Cuba's first trade union, the Cigar Selector's Protection Society (*Sociedad Protectora del Gremio de Escogedores*), devoted to the defence of their members' interests in Cuba.<sup>193</sup> In a consideration shared here with Joan Casanovas, these working-class *peninsulares* who happened to be

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<sup>189</sup> AHMS, Fons Josep Carbonell i Gener, "Companyia de Voluntaris de Santiago de Cuba".

<sup>190</sup> Casanovas. *Bread, or Bullets!*, pp. 97-126.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 80-81.

<sup>192</sup> Gremio Central del Tabaco en La Habana. *Informe del Comité permanente del Gremio Central del Tabaco en La Habana al Congreso solicitando la exención del pago de contribución municipal a las fábricas de tabacos puros y de cigarros*. Havana, 1871, pp. 1-10.

<sup>193</sup> Casanovas. *Bread, or Bullets!*, p. 109.



Volunteers assuredly brought with them from the Peninsula the labour culture of trade unions that began to grow from the 1870s.<sup>194</sup>

Another strategy was to take their labour claims from the guilds to the streets. On 11<sup>th</sup> September 1872, the coachmen of Havana, mostly *peninsulares*, many of whom were members of the 5<sup>th</sup> Volunteer Battalion, went on a strike, seriously disturbing the traffic of people and goods in a city which already had 210,000 inhabitants. This action caused great alarm among the authorities since the Volunteers had the right to keep weapons at home and carry them at any time with their militia uniform, making clear their potential power.<sup>195</sup> Quite rightly, Moreno Friginals labelled the Volunteers ‘workers at arms’.<sup>196</sup>

However, solidarity was not universal among the Volunteers. Nor were these men sharply divided between powerful businessmen and their workers. In between, there was a middle-class of shop owners and self-employed Volunteers, who usually filled the officers’ low ranks, from second-lieutenant to captain. The affirmative actions of the labour movement, such as strikes, affected their businesses as much as the company owners. In fact, these actions were regarded as perilous to the cohesion of the Volunteers, and a lack of patriotism by these middle-class Volunteers. The coachmen’s struggle was just an example. For instance, the Catalan José Gibert, a bakery-owning Volunteer lieutenant, was quite critical of the coachmen’s strike. In a letter to his family back in Spain, he considered that the strike was caused by the captain general’s order to regulate transport coach fares, and by the propaganda spread by infiltrating agents of the International Workers’ Association (AIT) who had come to Cuba to disseminate their ‘terrible ideas’.<sup>197</sup> Although no evidence has been found of the presence of AIT among the strikers, it was a cause of worry even among the small propertied Volunteers that their working-class comrades had been infiltrated by communist agents.<sup>198</sup>

These ideological divisions meant that the Volunteer labourers defended their class interests separately by trade, rather than converging into a single trade union. This was the logical consequence of the distinct working conditions of cigarmakers, coachmen, bakers, and other trades. The Volunteer labourers did create mutual insurance companies as a common response to economic hardships and to provide some security to their

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<sup>194</sup> Casanovas. *Bread, or Bullets!*, pp. 71-96; Josep Termes. *Anarquismo y sindicalismo en España (1864-1881)*. Barcelona: Editorial Crítica, 2000 (first published in 1965), pp. 285-295.

<sup>195</sup> Moreno Friginals. *Cuba/España*, p. 249.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 242.

<sup>197</sup> Xavier Mas Gibert. *Cartes de L’Havana, 1872*. Canet de Mar: Els 2 Pins, 2013, p. 137.

<sup>198</sup> Casanovas. *Bread, or Bullets!*, pp. 110-111.

members, and Havana was no exception. The socially progressive ideals of the First Spanish Republic, proclaimed in February 1873, facilitated the creation of these associations. For instance, in September 1873, Captain General Cándido Pieltain approved the creation of *La Integridad Nacional*, which offered financial aid to the Volunteers and their relatives undergoing economic strain.<sup>199</sup>

The creation of this insurance company leads to the argument that there was a distinct identity of Volunteer workers in Havana, based on their twofold condition of labourers and militiamen.<sup>200</sup> The defence of their concrete labour claims might not have been unified for practical reasons, but the aid to the needy Volunteers was. This argument is also based on the fact that *La Integridad Nacional* was not controlled by the *Casino Español* or other regional clubs, which also had social aid schemes for their members.<sup>201</sup> Away from the *integrista* elite-controlled *Casinos* and regional associations, working-class Volunteers opted to create their own independent means of mutual help.

## 6. The War Outside Havana: A Cuban Civil War.

Outside Havana and other major cities, the conflict was quite different. It was a clash of property and the political and social future of Cuba. Ada Ferrer argued that, for the insurgents, it was a fight for ending Spanish rule as much as for getting rid of slavery.<sup>202</sup> They understood that it was necessary to destroy Cuba's wealth to defeat Spain: from big sugar mills to the properties of peasants loyal to Spain. On the loyalist side, it became a fight for the preservation of Spanish rule and property, including slavery, an argument made by Abreu Cardet and agreed with here. He also argues that the very need to protect their properties, drew thousands of Cuban peasants to join the Volunteers outside Havana, with which this thesis clearly agrees.<sup>203</sup> This was the reason that may have driven the majority of *criollos* to join the Volunteers. Evidence suggests though that there was a

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<sup>199</sup> BNC, Folleto C-1, No. 1, *La Integridad Nacional. Asociación Patriótica de Socorros a la Benemérita Clase de Voluntarios. Reglamento*, Havana, Imprenta del "Avisador Comercial", 1873; RAH, CCR, 1238, 2-12-1873, 1f; T. V, f. 269.

<sup>200</sup> Evidence suggests that the mutual associations had some echo in other parts of Cuba. For instance, on 7<sup>th</sup> December 1882 the Volunteer veterans the *Compañía Voluntarios Veteranos Reserva de Holguín* created their own insurance company for Volunteers suffering economic strains. AHPSC, leg. 2875, exp. 14.

<sup>201</sup> Gallego y García. *Cuba por fuera*, pp. 197-212.

<sup>202</sup> Ada Ferrer. *Insurgent Cuba. Race, Nation, and Revolution, 1868-1898*. Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1999, pp. 15-42; Ibarra. *Ideología mambisa*, p. 51.

<sup>203</sup> Abreu Cardet. *Apuntes sobre el integrismo*, pp. 70-76.

minority of insurgents disappointed with the revolution, or who feared reprisals by the Spaniards, who defected from the *mambís* and joined the Volunteers.<sup>204</sup>

One of the main effects of war was the influx of thousands of *criollos* into the Volunteers. In May 1870, Captain General Caballero de Rodas reported to Madrid that Cuban peasants were joining the Volunteers in their hundreds.<sup>205</sup> This means that the Cuban population did not rally unanimously behind the idea of removing Spain from the island. On the contrary, it was split between those who fought for and against this. In fact, the Ten Years' War can be analysed as a war for independence as much as a civil war between Cubans.

Detailed study of the Volunteer battalions shows just how the Cuban population was split during the Ten Years' War, contrary to what has often been claimed.<sup>206</sup> José Ferrer de Couto, an *integrista* journalist, and former Volunteer claimed that at least 52,000 Cubans had joined the Volunteers by 1872.<sup>207</sup> Although it is extremely difficult to establish the exact numbers of the Cuban Volunteers—not all the units kept detailed records of their members—the surviving evidence suggests that the Cuban-born Volunteers presence in the rural areas was important and even dominant.<sup>208</sup> In big towns, however, the Volunteers were often *peninsulares*.

In the area around the city of Matanzas in western Cuba there were ca. 3,000 Volunteers by 1869. 75% of them were *peninsulares* in the city, but in nearby small towns, such as Sabanilla del Encomendador or Corral Nuevo, the Cubans formed more than half the numbers.<sup>209</sup> In the same area, the Colón's Cavalry Volunteer Regiment (550 men), was mostly made up of Cubans.<sup>210</sup> The same pattern was repeated in eastern Cuba, the centre of the revolutionary war. In villages, such as Cuartón del Indio and Tiguabos (around the

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<sup>204</sup> RAH, CCR, 462, letter to the overseas minister, 24-06-1870, 11 f; T. III, ff. 168-178v.

<sup>205</sup> RAH, CCR, 402, letter to the overseas minister, 15-05-1870, 5 f; T. III, ff. 105-109.

<sup>206</sup> For example, see Ramiro Guerra. *La guerra de los 10 años*, vol. I. Havana: Editorial Cultural, 1950, pp. 150-181; Ibarra. *Ideología mambisa*, pp. 42-58; Pérez, Jr. *Cuba. Between Reform & Revolution*, pp. 135-136; Fernando Redondo Díaz. "La Guerra de los Diez Años (1868-1878)", in *La presencia militar española en Cuba (1868-1895)*. Madrid: Centro de Estudios Superiores de la Defensa, 1996, pp. 33-65.

<sup>207</sup> Ferrer de Couto. *Cuba puede ser independiente*, pp. 85-86.

<sup>208</sup> Abreu Cardet. *Apuntes sobre el integrismo*, pp. 70-76.

<sup>209</sup> The data are taken from González del Tánago. *Estadística de los Voluntarios*.

<sup>210</sup> Ribó. *Historia de los Voluntarios cubanos*, vol. I, p. 449.

city of Guantánamo), the Cubans represented 97% and 100% respectively. In the city itself, the *Húsares de Pando* consisted of 55% of *peninsulares*.<sup>211</sup>

From the starting months of the revolution, the nature of the conflict had the characteristics of a civil war. In that sense, the siege of the city of Holguín (Oriente), is quite telling. Between 17<sup>th</sup> October and 6<sup>th</sup> November 1868, the rebel forces, commanded by Julio Grave de Peralta, put his native city under siege.<sup>212</sup> Only after a few days after the attack began, the only Spanish stronghold left was *La Periquera*, the house of Francisco Rondán, a local merchant loyal to Spain. Several hundred other Loyalists (a mix of Army personnel, Volunteers, and their families) took refuge in Rondán's house and collaborated in its defence, commanded by the Army Colonel Francisco Camps y Feliu. Camps recalled a few years later that most of the people inside *La Periquera* were Cubans. Among them was Julio Grave de Peralta's grandmother, Josefa Cardet de Martínez, who died during the siege.<sup>213</sup> Only a few months later, one of these Cuban Loyalists, the journalist Antonio José Nápoles Fajardo, published a work on the siege of Holguín.<sup>214</sup> Antonio José was the brother of Juan Cristóbal, a Cuban nationalist poet known as *El Cucalambé*, who had his properties seized by the *Consejo de Bienes Embargados* in 1873.<sup>215</sup> This shows how the war often split Cuban families down the middle.

The existence of these Cuban Loyalists negated the rebels' claim that the revolution was a fight between Cubans and Spaniards.<sup>216</sup> The insurgent commanders usually offered them either defection to the Spanish forces or death. During the campaign against Guantánamo (1871), another Loyalist stronghold in Oriente, the rebel general Máximo

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<sup>211</sup> AGMM, Ultramar, Capitanía General de Cuba, Subinspección General de Voluntarios, caja 3007, Voluntarios de Guantánamo.

<sup>212</sup> For an overview of the Spanish strategy during the earlier period of the war (1868-1870) see José Abreu Cardet. "La defensa del Imperio: Cuba 1868-1870". *Tebeto: Anuario del Archivo Histórico Insular de Fuerteventura*, 1994, No. 7, pp. 159-174.

<sup>213</sup> Francisco de Camps y Feliú. *Espanoles é insurrectos. Recuerdos de la guerra de Cuba*. Havana: Imprenta de A. Álvarez y Comp., 1890, p. 396. Another account of the siege was written by Antonio José Nápoles Fajardo, a native of Holguín and brother of the nationalist poet Juan Cristóbal, popularly known as *El Cucalambé: El sitio de Holguín*, Havana, 1869.

<sup>214</sup> See Antonio José Nápoles Fajardo, *El sitio de Holguín*, Havana, 1869.

<sup>215</sup> AHN, Ultramar, 4436, exp. 109. Despite his support for Cuban independence, between 1858 and 1862 Juan Cristóbal was employed by the Spanish administration in Santiago de Cuba, AHN Ultramar, 66, exp. 3. A recent study on *El Cucalambé* in Olga Portuondo Zúñiga. *Un guajiro llamado El Cucalambé: imaginario de un trovador*. Havana: Ediciones Unión, 2011.

<sup>216</sup> On his proclamation calling for a general uprising (10<sup>th</sup> October 1868), Carlos Manuel de Céspedes repeatedly spoke on behalf of the Cuban people. The whole declaration is in Francisco Pi y Margall. *Historia de España en el siglo XIX: sucesos políticos, económicos, sociales y artísticos, acaecidos durante el mismo, detallada narración de sus acontecimientos y extenso juicio crítico de sus hombres*, vol. IV. Madrid: Miguel Seguí Editor, 1902, p. 879.

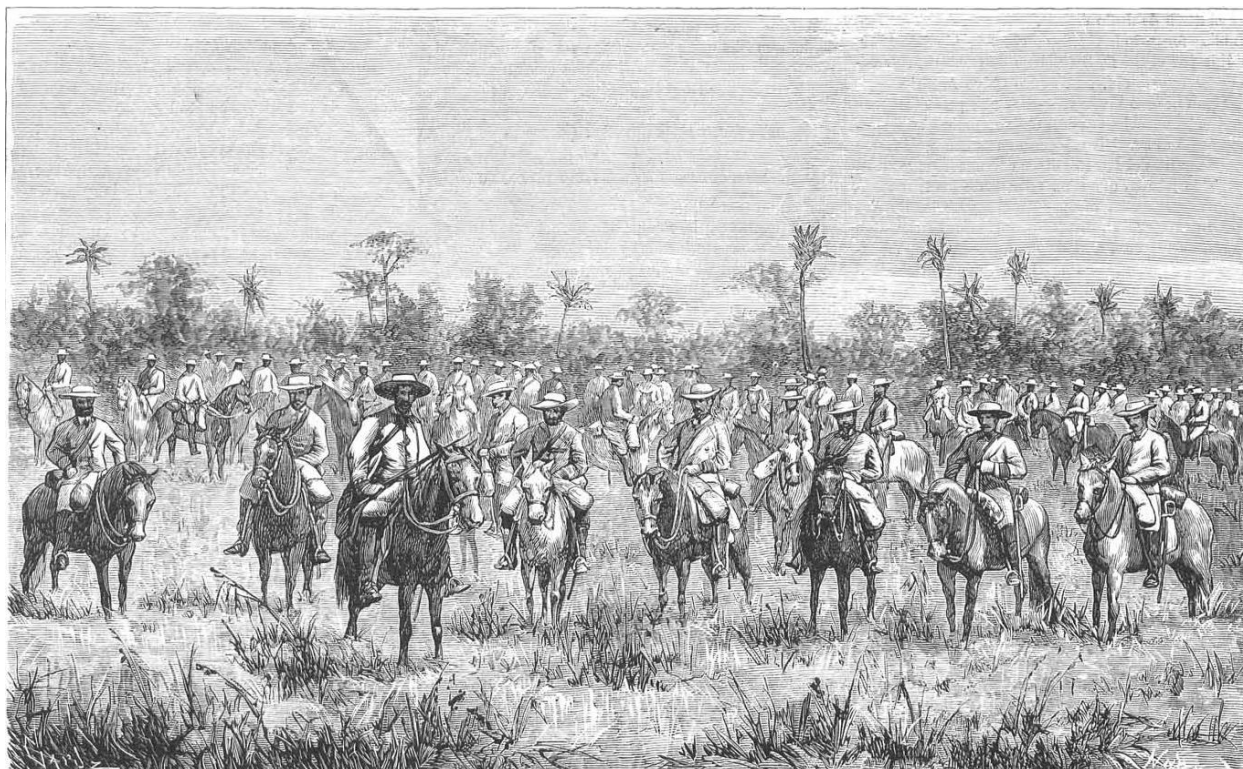


Image 6. The Volunteers exploring the Cuban countryside. *La Ilustración española y americana*, 30-12-1876, p. 404.

Gómez issued a call to his ‘fellow countrymen of Guantánamo’ compelling them to join the insurgency, or else face death.<sup>217</sup> The message was clear: the Cubans defending Spain to the very last would not be forgiven. This attitude by the insurgents towards the Spanish loyalists powerfully recalls the “War to Death” against all Spaniards proclaimed by Simón Bolívar in 1813.<sup>218</sup> The difference was that whereas Bolívar promised clemency to all Americans and death to all *peninsulares*, regardless of their loyalty, the *mambís* would kill any Cuban supporting the cause of Spain.

### 6.1. Useful Troops

Archival resources reveal that contrary to what historiography has often claimed, the Volunteers played an active military role throughout the war.<sup>219</sup> They were not only in garrison prisons, military hospitals, and forts but were also deployed to chase the rebel army in the countryside, as can be seen in image 6. The first Volunteer battalions organized *ad hoc* to fight alongside the regular Army were created on 17<sup>th</sup> November

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<sup>217</sup> Pedro Pablo Rodríguez. *La primera invasión*. Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 2012, pp. 113-114.

<sup>218</sup> See Manuel Hernández González. *La guerra a muerte. Bolívar y la campaña admirable (1813-1814)*. Santa Cruz de Tenerife: Idea, 2014.

<sup>219</sup> Fernández Muñiz. *España y Cuba*, pp. 135-156; Maluquer de Motes. “La burguesía catalana i l’esclavitud colonial”, p. 116; Piqueras Arenas. *La revolución democrática.*, pp. 300-315.

1868.<sup>220</sup> Their organizer was Francisco de Acosta y Albear, a Cuban landowner who had served in the Spanish Army since 1827 and decided to organize a Volunteer battalion after the *Grito de Yara*.<sup>221</sup>

The Volunteers were crucial in averting the insurrection from spreading to western Cuba, and in defending the Spanish positions in eastern Cuba, where the rebels had their

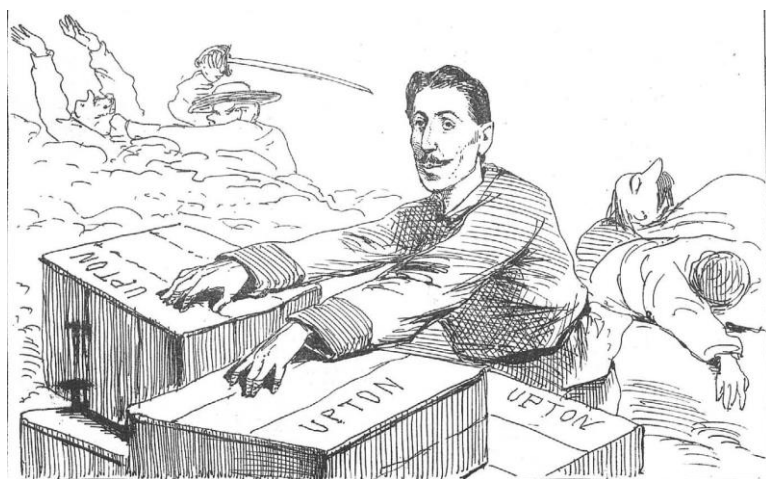


Image 7. Captain Aurelio López del Campo commanded Maniabón's Volunteers during the capture of the *Upton*. *El Moro Muza*, 26-06-1870, p. 4

main operational base.<sup>222</sup>

For instance, the first attempt to bring the war westwards was quelled by the *Voluntarios Chapelgorris* of Guamutas on 10<sup>th</sup> February 1869 in Jagüey Grande (Matanzas), as recorded by José Joaquín Ribó.<sup>223</sup> In the east, the Volunteers helped the regular Army to keep the

cities and major towns under Spanish control. Throughout the war, the insurgents attacked all the towns in Oriente, save Santiago de Cuba and Gibara, a Loyalist stronghold surrounded by the revolution.<sup>224</sup>

Local Volunteers were of great use to the Spanish military commanders, due to their thorough knowledge of the terrain. For instance, a group of Cuban fishermen from La Isabela (Las Villas, in Central Cuba) formed a company of Volunteers deployed to patrol the coast.<sup>225</sup> Theirs was a vital task, for the insurgents used the rocky coast of that area to smuggle weapons and mercenaries into rebel territory, mostly coming from the US, Jamaica, and Haiti.<sup>226</sup> For instance, on 14<sup>th</sup> June 1870, the Volunteers from the coastal town of Maniabón, commanded by Captain Aurelio López del Campo, captured the *George S. Upton* on the beach. This was a ship sent from the US by Cuban exiles, loaded with men

<sup>220</sup> The battalions were called *Orden* and *España*. RAH, CCR, 9/7536, doc. 104.

<sup>221</sup> AGMS, leg. A-210; Gelpí y Ferro. *Álbum histórico fotográfico*, p. 65.

<sup>222</sup> Navarro. *Las guerras de España en Cuba*, pp. 22-37.

<sup>223</sup> Ribó. *Historia de los Voluntarios cubanos*, vol. 1, pp. 450-451.

<sup>224</sup> Abreu Cardet. *Apuntes sobre el integrismo*, pp. 37 & 82-85.

<sup>225</sup> Ribó. *Historia de los Voluntarios cubanos*, vol. 1, p. 459.

<sup>226</sup> María Dolores Domingo Acebrón. "El tráfico de armas durante la guerra de los Diez Años (1868-1878)", *Tebeto: Anuario del Archivo Histórico Insular de Fuerteventura*, No. 3, 1990, pp. 91-132.

and weapons for Belisario Grave de Peralta, the rebel leader in the Holguín region.<sup>227</sup> The capture of the *Upton* became highly popular among *integristas*, making it to one of the pages of *El Moro Muza* (image 7). The Volunteers were also used to protect some of the key infrastructure in the countryside. For instance, the Volunteers from Puerto Príncipe, in the Camagüey region, protected the railway line that linked this city of the interior to the port of Nuevitas. Keeping the railway open was vital for the region's livestock industry, which exported its cattle through Nuevitas' port to other parts of Cuba.<sup>228</sup>

## 6.2. The Decree of Mobilization

The Volunteers' biggest contribution in terms of men to the military effort came at a critical period. This was a compulsory contribution ordered by the superior military authority. On 10<sup>th</sup> February 1874, Captain General Joaquín Jovellar (1873-1874) decreed the mobilization and deployment to the warzone of 10% of the Volunteers for a period of 6 months.<sup>229</sup> This decree was a military need for Jovellar. The years of 1873-1874 were critical for Spain. The proclamation of the Republic on 11<sup>th</sup> February 1873 had only worsened the political instability the country had been living in since the revolution of 1868. Also, besides the Cuban war, there were two ongoing wars on the Peninsula: The Third Carlist War, and the *Rebelión Cantonal*. This meant that the already limited Spanish military resources could pay little attention to the war in Cuba.<sup>230</sup>

On the island, the situation was extremely tense. The rebellion was not abating, and the capture by the Spanish Navy in October 1872 of the American ship *Virginus*, which transported 175 men, weapons and ammunition for the rebels, brought Spain and the US to the brink of war. The cause was that alongside four Cuban rebel leaders, 27 members of the ship's crew, including US and British citizens, had been executed in Santiago de Cuba. To avoid war, the Spanish Government agreed to return the ship to the US authorities and

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<sup>227</sup> BNC, CM Pérez No. 2017, vol. A.

<sup>228</sup> For instance, the military records of the Volunteer Melitón Castelló Anglada report that the railway was severely attacked on 20<sup>th</sup> July 1869, when the *mambises* tried to cut Puerto Príncipe off from Nuevitas to seize the town. I am indebted for this information to his great-grandson Osvaldo Betancourt, who gave me Castelló's personal military records.

<sup>229</sup> *Gaceta de La Habana*, 11-02-1874.

<sup>230</sup> For instance, the First Republic was only able to send 23,000 men to Cuba, whereas between 1868 and 1872 over 73,000 Spanish soldiers had been sent to crush the Cuban rebellion. Moreno Friginals & Moreno Masó. *Guerra, migración y muerte*, p. 99.

to pay a compensation of \$80,000 for the executions.<sup>231</sup> This was understood as a betrayal by the Havana Volunteers, who organized demonstrations against the Spanish Government for this agreement, between November and December 1873. The Volunteers demanded that no compensation should be given to the US or British Governments, for their citizens who participated in the *Virginus* expedition were helping to subvert Spanish sovereignty in Cuba. They demonstrated, donning their uniforms and producing their weapons, claiming that they were ready to defend the island in case the United States declared war on Spain.<sup>232</sup>

These demonstrations did not escalate, as Cándido Pieltain was replaced by Joaquín Jovellar, a man respected by the *integristas*, because of the *Virginus* affair. He enjoyed a good reputation among the *integristas* for his honesty and known conservative political inclinations.<sup>233</sup> He assured the Volunteers of his firm commitment to defend Spanish rule in Cuba at any cost and asked them for a demonstration of patriotism in times of need. The decree of 7<sup>th</sup> February was implemented with no incidents.<sup>234</sup> It mobilized ca. 8,000 Volunteers. Since not all of them had any military experience, Jovellar decided to organize auxiliary companies of *Voluntarios movilizados*, and embed them into regular army battalions.<sup>235</sup>

The mobilization could have caused a serious disruption in the lives of the Volunteers. Most of them were labourers and peasants who could not afford to leave their jobs for half a year. The absence of them from their workplace for a prolonged period would have also caused a serious problem to their employers, who often happened to be their Volunteer officers. However, the pragmatism and flexibility of the Volunteer

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<sup>231</sup> See Richard H. Bradford. *The Virginus Affair*, Boulder, Colorado Associate University Press, 1980; José Manuel Sevilla López. "Cuba 1873. La captura del 'Virginus'. El incidente Burriel-Lorraine". *Revista de Historia Militar*, 2017, Año LXI, No. 122, pp. 185-247.

<sup>232</sup> Maciá y Doménech. *Vida y obra*, pp. 11-15.

<sup>233</sup> The executions took place between the 3<sup>rd</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> November 1873, and Jovellar assumed the Captaincy General on 5<sup>th</sup> November. Martí Gilabert. *La Primera República Española*, pp. 77-84.

<sup>234</sup> Gelpí y Ferro. *Historia de la revolución*, p. 281.

<sup>235</sup> The mobilization of the Volunteers was only a part of the 10<sup>th</sup> February decree. It also ordered that all the Spanish men (this included both *peninsulares* and Creoles) in Cuba between the ages of 25 and 45 that were not serving in the army or the Volunteers, should register as reservists in the Disciplined Militias, an old militia of conscripts created in Cuba in 1763. Another measure was the creation of the Coloured Disciplined Militias, which would recruit its members among free black men. The decree also ordered the organization of two Volunteer cavalry regiments to protect the sugar mills, tobacco and coffee farms in Santiago de Cuba, Guantánamo and Las Villas, and to garrison Puerto Príncipe, Holguín, and Manzanillo. The aim was to use the Volunteers to cover at least two thirds of the garrisons throughout the island, and to deploy Volunteer gunners and engineers to man the artillery positions and to manage the forts. Otero Pimentel. *Memoria sobre los Voluntarios*, pp. 152-156.



companies provided the solution. Each battalion usually had 100-200 men who had served in the army, according to the Cuban-born Volunteer Colonel Francisco de Acosta y Albear. Quite often, the Volunteers who did not want to fulfil their military duties, paid these men a few pesos so that they would substitute them, even though this contravened the regulations.<sup>236</sup>

Most of the Volunteers that were mobilized after 7<sup>th</sup> February 1874 were army veterans, and they contributed to the success of the Spanish forces. In Las Villas (central Cuba), 1,800 of them were deployed to cover the *trocha* Júcaro-Morón. This was a fortified line that separated western Cuba from the eastern half, aiming at isolating the rebellion in the eastern part.<sup>237</sup> Although Máximo Gómez, the insurgency leading general, managed to cross the *trocha* on 6<sup>th</sup> January 1875, his plan to bring the war to western Cuba failed.<sup>238</sup>

## 7. Conclusions

The Volunteers were a decisive force in shaping the political limits of the revolutionary period opened in Spain and her Antilles in 1868 and ended in 1875 with the restoration of the Bourbon dynasty in Spain and Puerto Rico, and with the Peace of Zanjón in 1878 in Cuba. This militia, with the financial strength of its chief officers, and the impressive numbers of its rank-and-files, not only conditioned the intensity with which the colonial programme of *La Gloriosa* could operate in the Antilles, but also, contributed to the undermining of the regimes that succeeded the revolution of 1868 and the final restitution of the Bourbons in Spain.

In Cuba (with less intensity in Puerto Rico) the coercive capacity of the rank-and-file Volunteers in the big cities proved a powerful tool to repress anticolonial nationalism. Their ferocity also made them a threat to the authority of the Spanish Government in the Antilles through the captains general. This, in its turn, facilitated the emergence of an already existing class struggle within the Volunteers, between the wealthy officers, and the working-class rank-and-file members. In this regard, the existence of a war situation,

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<sup>236</sup> The regular military duties of the Volunteer consisted in serving as sentinels in military hospitals, prisons, and their own barracks. Acosta y Albear. *Compendio histórico*, pp. 24-26.

<sup>237</sup> Luis de Sequera Martínez. "Las trochas militares en las campañas de Cuba (1868-1898)". *Revista de Historia Militar*, Año XL, No. 81, 1996, pp. 107-146.

<sup>238</sup> Navarro. *Las guerras de España en Cuba*, pp. 85-87; Evaristo Martín Contreras. *Los Voluntarios de la Isla de Cuba. Reconocimiento de su heroísmo y vindicación a su honor*. Valladolid: Imprenta, Librería Estéreo-galvanoplastia y Taller de Grabado de Gaviria y Zapatero, 1876, p. 25.

which occurred in Cuba but not in Puerto Rico, seems to have been a crucial factor in determining the level of intensity at which this double conflict (Volunteers vs. Authorities and Officers vs. Rank-and-Files) was expressed. Other factors were the lack of a powerful industry in Puerto Rico that demanded a strong working class and weak immigration from Spain. Hence, in a peaceful situation, and lacking a strong community of working-class *peninsulares*, the Volunteers of Puerto Rico showed a much lower profile than their colleagues in Cuba.

The war factor also shaped the military role of the Volunteers and evidenced the existence of a powerful Creole Loyalism in the case of Cuba, and a passive acceptance of Spanish sovereignty in Puerto Rico. In areas little or unaffected by the war, such as western Cuba and Puerto Rico, the Volunteers comprised basically a militia of *peninsulares* used by the military authorities to exert a coercive role, but in the areas directly affected by the war, the Volunteers had a profile dominated by the Creole element and were directly involved in the military operations.

The degree of control of the Spanish authorities over the Volunteers greatly depended on the identification of projects between the *Integristas* in the Antilles and the metropolitan Government. This is how the urban Volunteers operated. When this identification was weak, in other words caused by plans to implement deep political reforms or abolish slavery, the Volunteers acted as a rebellious force. When the identification was evident, such as after the end of the Federal Republic in January 1874, the Volunteers acted as a strong force loyal to the Government. The attitude of the Volunteers in the rural areas was generally loyal to the authorities. Far from the political and labour disputes of the main cities, the Volunteers of the countryside supported much of the war effort of the militia, acting as an auxiliary force to the regular Army.

Linked to this, the fluid movement of ideas and people between Madrid, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and even Argentina, around the Volunteers, lead to the consideration here of this militia as the representation of a conservative colonial and national project for Spain and the Antilles (the *Integridad Nacional*), built around the interconnected shores of the Atlantic space.

## CHAPTER IV. ADAPTING TO PEACE (1878-1895)

This chapter addresses the question of how the Volunteers adapted to the new context introduced in Cuba and Puerto Rico after the peace of 1878, and the strategies they followed to try to remain a central element of the Spanish defensive system. This is a question that remains completely unexplored by historiography regarding the Cuban case and to a large extent neglected as to Puerto Rico.<sup>1</sup> Following the general approach of the thesis, this chapter explores the strategies adopted by the Volunteers in both Cuba and Puerto Rico, in relation to the events in Spain. In this sense, this chapter also contributes by offering an integrated view of the Spanish Antilles, for Cuba and Puerto Rico have traditionally been studied separately.

Regarding the interwar period, historians have also tended to focus on the growing discontent towards Spanish rule. For instance, Louis A. Pérez, Jr. has considered this period as a mere lapse between two wars, a “fateful interlude”, due to the persistence and the reorganization of the independentist movement both in Cuba and in exile.<sup>2</sup> Cubano Iguina viewed the same period in Puerto Rico through the lens of the rising of a powerful autonomist movement, as an expression of growing disaffection towards Spain.<sup>3</sup> Inés Roldán de Montaud centred the focus on Spain’s failure to properly assimilate both islands into the political system of the Restoration.<sup>4</sup> Throughout the interwar period there certainly was a growing disaffection in the Antilles towards Spain, which proved unwilling to truly incorporate Cuba and Puerto Rico into the metropolitan political system and unable to cope with its worsening economic situation. This chapter instead focuses on the untold story of the strategies adopted by the Volunteers to resist the anti-colonial trend and to adapt to the new political situation brought about by the failed assimilationist attempt by Spain. These are the main historiographic contributions of this chapter.

The argument will be presented that due to the end of the war in Cuba in 1878 and the implementation of party politics in Cuba and Puerto Rico, the Volunteers lost the momentum they had enjoyed during wartime. In Cuba, the absence of armed conflict made the military role of the 80,000-strong Volunteers at least unclear, and the role of Puerto Rico’s Volunteers as deterrents of nationalist conspiracies at least unnecessary.

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<sup>1</sup> González Cuevas. *¿Defendiendo el honor?*, pp. 69-82; Rosado y Brincau. *Bosquejo Histórico*, pp. 63-151.

<sup>2</sup> Pérez, Jr. *Cuba Between Empires*, pp. 3-39.

<sup>3</sup> Cubano Iguina. *El hilo en el laberinto*, pp. 85-150.

<sup>4</sup> Roldán de Montaud. *La Restauración en Cuba*, pp. 113-572.

Also, the newly created political parties replaced the Volunteers at the centre of *integrista* political power. Clausewitz famously wrote that “war is politics by other means”. During wartime, armed forces are the main political actors. During peacetime, political forces are the main actors.

The legacy of the revolutionary period of 1868-1878 greatly shaped the strategies followed by the Volunteers in Cuba and Puerto Rico, as well as their outcomes. The Ten Years’ War devastated Cuba’s countryside and severely damaged the economic power of the *integrista* elite. This had two major consequences for the Volunteers. First, it caused a major disruption in the living conditions of the thousands of peasant Volunteers. Second, the decline of the *integrista* elite translated into the colonial authorities assuming the initiative regarding the militia, and the re-emergence of social tensions among the Volunteers. The strategies followed by the Volunteers to find a new role in Cuba were mostly designed by the Spanish authorities: military-agricultural colonies, fighting against banditry, allowing Spanish conscripts to fulfil their military service in their ranks, and using the Volunteers as an electoral force. The social tensions that re-emerged were mostly caused by the economic crisis that persisted during much of the interwar period and the growing participation of Volunteers in the labour movement.

The Volunteers in Puerto Rico underwent a different process. Since the island had not suffered a war, the power of the *integristas* remained intact. In fact, the end of the revolutionary experiments of the period 1868-1874 after the establishment of the Restoration in 1875, affirmed the control of the *integristas* over local power and their influence over the captaincy general. Their economic power was also mostly untouched, remaining in control of most of the sugar industry and monopolizing commerce thanks to the network of *peninsular* merchants. But this power was challenged by a growing autonomist movement, economically sustained by a thriving coffee industry, and fuelled by discontent regarding the paramountcy of *integristas* in Puerto Rican politics and the economy. This challenge had the Volunteers back at the centre of the fight for power. To cope with the ascendancy of autonomists, and amidst rumours of plans to start an uprising against the *peninsulares* (duly exploited by the *integrista* press) the *integristas*, in alliance with the captains general, resorted to the Volunteers to impose their power. Accordingly, they reclaimed their role as *integrismo*’s armed wing.

This chapter draws on mostly unpublished primary sources collected at archives and libraries in Spain, Cuba, and Puerto Rico. Additionally, for the historiographical

support, it has relied on the most relevant works on topics such as agricultural colonies, politics in the Spanish Antilles, and banditry in Cuba.<sup>5</sup> This chapter's structure is divided into three main sections. The first one deals with Volunteer involvement in a project aimed at reconstructing the countryside in Cuba: the military-agricultural colonies. These colonies were the authorities' response to an extended preoccupation with recuperating Cuba's agriculture.<sup>6</sup> This was an endeavour in which the military and civilian authorities nevertheless had divergent aims. Whereas the former aimed at creating peasant communities loyal to Spain, the latter sought to dominate the rebuilding of the agricultural system. The focus will be on the impact these diverse projects had on the Volunteer involvement in the military-agricultural colonies. This section, related to the unrest in the Cuban countryside, will also briefly explore the Volunteers' participation in the short-lived war for independence known as the Little War (1879-1880).<sup>7</sup> The second part analyses the impact that the political assimilation of Cuba and Puerto Rico into the metropolitan system had on the Volunteers, and how they came to be used for electoral purposes by the Spanish Government and the Antillean political parties.<sup>8</sup> The third and

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<sup>5</sup> Among others, for agricultural projects, Consuelo Naranjo Orovio, "Trabajo libre e inmigración española en Cuba, 1880-1930", *Revista de Indias*, No. 195-196, 1992, pp. 749-794; "Hispanización y defensa de la integridad nacional", pp. 71-92 was consulted. For politics in Cuba and Puerto Rico, Roldán de Montaud. *La Restauración en Cuba*; Portela Miguélez. *Redes de poder en Cuba*. Also Enrique Pérez Cisneros. *El reformismo español en Cuba*. Madrid: Editorial Verbum, 2002; and Alonso Romero. *Cuba en la España liberal*. For the fight against banditry, Louis A. Pérez, Jr., *Lords of the Mountain: Social Banditry and Peasant Protest in Cuba, 1878-1918*, Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press, 1989; Manuel de Paz Sánchez, José Fernández Fernández & Nelson López Novogil. *El bandolerismo en Cuba (1800-1933)*. *Presencia canaria y protesta rural*, vol. I. Santa Cruz de Tenerife: Centro de la Cultura Popular Canaria, 1994; Imilcy Balboa Navarro. *La protesta rural en Cuba: resistencia cotidiana, bandolerismo y revolución (1878-1902)*. Madrid: CSIC, 2003.

<sup>6</sup> Naranjo Orovio. "Trabajo libre e inmigración española en Cuba", pp. 749-794; Balboa Navarro. "Tierras y brazos. Inmigración, colonización y fuerza de trabajo. Cuba, 1878-1898". *Illes i Imperis*, 2002, No. 6, pp. 67-76; "Asentar para dominar. Salamanca y la colonización militar. Cuba, 1889-1890". *Tiempos de América*, 2001, No. 8, pp. 29-46; "Colonización e inmigración. Dos realidades enfrentadas en la Cuba de fin de siglo", in Francisco Morales Padrón (coord.), *III Coloquio de Historia Canario-Americana, VIII Congreso Internacional de Historia de América (AEA) (1998)*. Las Palmas de Gran Canaria: Cabildo de Gran Canaria, 2000, pp. 452-470; "Tierras y brazos. Inmigración, colonización y fuerza de trabajo. Cuba, 1878-1898". *Illes i Imperis*, 2002, No. 6, pp. 67-76; "La inmigración como forma de presión política: Polavieja, los hacendados y la colonización por la vía militar: Cuba, 1878-1892". *Illes i Imperis*, 2004, No. 7, pp. 135-156.

<sup>7</sup> The term 'Little War' (*Guerra Chiquita*) was used since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Cuban journalist Herminio Leyva y Aguilera published a collection of articles on that war entitled *El movimiento insurreccional de 1879 en la provincia de Santiago de Cuba. (La Guerra Chiquita)*. Havana: Imprenta y Papelería "La Universal", 1893. Francisco Pérez Guzmán & Rodolfo Sarracino. *La Guerra Chiquita: una experiencia necesaria*. Havana: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 1982, pp. 178-254; Baldovín Ruiz. *Cuba*, pp. 251-259.

<sup>8</sup> For the historiographic support, Roldán de Montaud. *La Restauración en Cuba*; Portela Miguélez. *Redes de poder en Cuba* was used. Also consulted were Pérez Cisneros. *El reformismo español en Cuba*; and Alonso Romero. *Cuba en la España liberal*; Cubano Iguina. *El hilo en el laberinto*, pp. 77-150; "Puerto Rico", in José Varela Ortega (dir.). *El poder de la influencia. Geografía del caciquismo en*

last section explores the debates and possible solutions aiming to give the Volunteers a clear military role in Cuba in times of peace.<sup>9</sup>

### 1. Reconstructing Cuba

Between 1877 and 1895, when the last war for independence broke out, there were plans to reconstruct Cuba's countryside, as it had been mostly devastated during the Ten Years' War.<sup>10</sup> Within Cuba, the only agents with the capacity to embark on such a project were the landowners and the colonial authorities.<sup>11</sup> However, their projects were not compatible: whereas the former aimed to attract a cheap labour force and expand sugar production, the latter prioritised the creation of loyalist rural communities over agricultural revitalization.<sup>12</sup>

The landowners planned a controlled colonization of the land that would increase their agricultural properties. For instance, José Eugenio Moré, Count of Casa Moré and co-founder of the Volunteers in 1855, submitted a project in 1879 proposing the import of 30,000 Chinese indentured servants and 10,000 *peninsulares* paid for using the island's budget.<sup>13</sup> The Havana Volunteers' Colonel Francisco F. Ibáñez, Count of Casa Ibáñez, a peninsular merchant, and landowner, asked for the creation of 50 sugar mills throughout the island which would be manned by 1,000 families brought in from metropolitan Spain.<sup>14</sup>

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*España (1875-1923)*. Madrid: Marcial Pons/Centro de Estudios Políticos y Constitucionales, 2001, pp. 541-557; Bothwell. *Orígenes y desarrollo*, pp. 1-49.

<sup>9</sup> For Cuban banditry, texts relied on include Pérez, Jr., *Lords of the Mountain*; "Vagrants, Beggars, and Bandits: Social Origins of Cuban Separatism, 1878-1895", *The American Historical Review*, vol. 90, No. 5, 1985, pp. 1092-1121; Paz Sánchez, Fernández Fernández & López Novegil. *El bandolerismo en Cuba*, vol. I; Balboa Navarro. *La protesta rural en Cuba*; "Libertos, vagos y bandoleros: la reglamentación del trabajo tras la abolición de la esclavitud (Cuba, 1886-1895). *Relaciones: Estudios de historia y sociedad*, 2011, vol. 32, No. 127, pp. 87-116; "Entre lo real y lo imaginario: el bandolerismo rural en Cuba en la segunda mitad del siglo XIX". *Contrastes: Revista de historia moderna*, 2001-2003, No. 12, pp. 43-62.

<sup>10</sup> Out of 100 sugar mills in Oriente in 1868, there were only 39 left in 1880. In Puerto Príncipe, in central Cuba, the 100 sugar mills of 1868 had been reduced to 1 in 1880. Le Riverend. *Historia económica de Cuba*, p. 453-458; Pérez, Jr. *Cuba. Between Reform & Revolution*, pp. 129-136.

<sup>11</sup> Naranjo Orovio. "Trabajo libre e inmigración española en Cuba", pp. 749-794.

<sup>12</sup> Balboa Navarro. "Colonización e inmigración", pp. 452-470.

<sup>13</sup> AHN, Ultramar, 278, exps. 2 & 3; *Cuerpos de Voluntarios de la isla de Cuba*, p. 35; Naranjo Orovio. "Hispanización y defensa de la integridad nacional", p. 77.

<sup>14</sup> AHN, Ultramar, 340, exp. 15.; Francisco Feliciano Ibáñez, *Observaciones sobre la utilidad y conveniencia del establecimiento en esta isla de Grandes Ingenios Centrales para salvar nuestra agricultura é industria azucarera por el aumento de producción y disminución de gastos y bases para la formación de una Compañía para la fácil realización de este objeto*. Havana: Imprenta y Lit. Obispo, 1880, p. 27; Consuelo Naranjo Orovio & Armando García González. *Racismo e inmigración en Cuba en el siglo XIX*. Aranjuez: Ediciones Doce Calles/FIM, 1996, pp. 175-178; César Aenlle. *De todo un poco*. Havana: Imprenta Mercantil de los Herederos de Spencer, 1889, pp. 31-35. Previously,

In this respect, the Volunteer officers that adhered to this goal shared the view of their colleagues of the *Círculo de Hacendados*, an association aimed at representing, defending, and protecting the interests of the island's landowning elite, both peninsular and Cuban.<sup>15</sup>

Before these plans, the first project to establish military agricultural colonies was sanctioned shortly before the end of the war. The Royal Decree of 28<sup>th</sup> October 1877 promoted the creation of colonies, settled in order of preference by army veterans and Volunteers who had been demobilized from military operations, civilian loyalists who had lost their property due to the war, and former rebels who had asked for pardon.<sup>16</sup> With the explicit purpose of 'averting another rebellion in Cuba', these colonies were meant to mix all these elements rather than establishing separate settlements. These colonies were to consolidate the pacification of Oriente, where groups of rebels that had rejected the Zanjón pact, for it granted neither independence nor the abolition of slavery, only laid down their weapons by May 1879 after being defeated by the Spanish troops.<sup>17</sup>

The Volunteers in the countryside were considered ideal material for the colonies, for they were mostly peasants and Cubans, thus an integral part of the rural society. For instance, in Cuartón del Indio (Guantánamo), 85 out of the 87 local Volunteers were Cuban peasants.<sup>18</sup> However, the man appointed as governor of Oriente after the war, Field Marshall Camilo García de Polavieja (1879-1881) saw these men as a potential source of trouble.<sup>19</sup> Shortly before assuming the governorship, he reported to Captain General Ramón Blanco (1879-1881) that wide areas of rural Cuba were under a 'latent state of

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in 1871, Ibáñez had presented another project to import agricultural workers from Annam (current Vietnam), AHN, Ultramar, 94, exp. 23.

<sup>15</sup> Fernández Prieto. *Espacio de poder*, pp. 55-78.

<sup>16</sup> *Gaceta de Madrid*, 28-10-1877, No. 501, p. 303.

<sup>17</sup> Most famously, the mulatto Antonio Maceo, one of the main rebel military commanders during the war, publicly rejected the pact in the *Protesta de los Mangos de Baraguá* (15<sup>th</sup> March 1878). Ibarra. *Ideología mambisa*, pp. 105-126; José Mármol. *Antonio Maceo Grajales. El Titán de Bronce*. Miami: Ediciones Universal, 1998, pp. 59-72; Pérez Guzmán & Sarracino. *La Guerra Chiquita*, pp. 59-71.

<sup>18</sup> AGMM, Ultramar, Cuerpo de Voluntarios, caja 3557, "Cuartón del Indio". In the nearby village of Tiguabos, all the 36 Volunteers were Cuban-born and peasants. See AGMM, Ultramar, Cuerpo de Voluntarios, caja 3557, "Tiguabos".

<sup>19</sup> Camilo García de Polavieja (1838-1914) was a leading military figure in Spain's 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries with a long career in the colonies. A veteran of the African War (1859-1860), the Ten Years' War, the Thirst Carlist War, and the Little War (1879-1880), he was appointed captain general of Cuba (1890-1892) and the Philippines (1896-1897). He also briefly served as War minister (1899) and became Chief of Staff of the Army (1904-1906). After 1898 he unsuccessfully tried to start a political career with the support of the Catalan bourgeoisie. See Alfredo López Serrano. *El general Polavieja y su actividad política y militar*. Madrid: Ministerio de Defensa, 2001.

insurgency'.<sup>20</sup> Polavieja considered this state to exist because the 'weapons of the Volunteers in the countryside have not been collected properly, and God knows where they might end up'.<sup>21</sup>

Although these Volunteers had proved mostly loyal to Spain, there had been some desertions during the war, especially in the areas most dominated by the rebellion in Oriente.<sup>22</sup> In fact, some of the insurgent leaders had previously been Volunteer officers themselves, such as Francisco Vicente Aguilera and Calixto García.<sup>23</sup> Nonetheless, Polavieja not only distrusted the Creole Volunteers but the whole Cuban population. Despite the decisive contribution of Cuban loyalists to the Spanish victory in 1878, Polavieja argued that all the Blacks and Mulattoes, plus half the Whites, supported the idea of a Cuba free of Spanish rule.<sup>24</sup> Consequently, Polavieja sought to neutralize as much of the threat as possible.

### 1.1. The Volunteers and the Little War (1879-1880)

Polavieja's distrust as to the fate of post-Zanjón Cuba proved right, and in August 1879 a new war for independence, known as the *Guerra Chiquita*, broke out in Oriente. It was based on the rejection of the Zanjón agreement and was organized by the Cuban nationalist exiled community in New York and waged by rebel veterans of the previous war. The swift and firm reaction of the troops under Polavieja, forced the capitulation of the rebel leader, Calixto García, in September 1880.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> At the time of writing the letter, Polavieja was governor of Puerto Príncipe (1878-1879). Letter to Captain General Ramón Blanco Erenas (1879-1881), 4<sup>th</sup> June 1879, AGI, Diversos, Leg. 9B, No. 155. Ramón Blanco y Erenas (1833-1906) was a veteran of the Dominican War (1863-1865) and the Third Carlist War. He was appointed captain general of Cuba (1879-1881, and 1897-1898), and the Philippines (1893-1896). Francisco López Casimiro. "Ramón Blanco Erenas, capitán general de Cuba y la masonería". *Boletín de la Real Academia de Extremadura de las Letras y las Artes*, 2009, t. 17, pp. 109-122.

<sup>21</sup> The letter, written on 4<sup>th</sup> July 1879, is reproduced in Camilo García de Polavieja. *Relación documentada de mi política en Cuba. Lo que vi, lo que hice, lo que anuncié*. Madrid: Imprenta de Emilio Minuesa, 1898, pp. 43-48.

<sup>22</sup> For instance, several dozens of Volunteers defected to the rebel Jiguaní Regiment. See ANRC, Donativos y Remisiones, leg. 474, exp. 10., and leg. 477, exp. 40.

<sup>23</sup> Francisco Vicente Aguilera (1821-1877), was captain of the Bayamo (Oriente) company of Volunteers in 1860. See *Cuerpos de Voluntarios de la isla de Cuba*, p. 34. Calixto García was second lieutenant (*alférez*) in the local section of Volunteers in Ojo de Agua (Oriente) before 1868. Abreu Cardet. *Apuntes sobre el integrismo*, p. 48, note 137.

<sup>24</sup> ANRC, Donativos y Remisiones, leg. 474, exp. 10; id., leg. 477, exp. 40.

<sup>25</sup> Baldovín Ruiz. *Cuba*, pp. 251-259; Enrique Collazo. *Desde Yara hasta el Zanjón. Apuntaciones históricas*. Havana: Tipografía de "La Lucha", 1893, pp. 139-156; José Luis Prieto Benavent. "La Guerra



This new war reinforced Polavieja's distrust towards the Cubans, including the Volunteers, who suffered neglect by the Spanish authorities in the rural areas. They were mostly left alone by the regular army throughout the war. This meant that in many small towns, a section of Volunteers (30-50 men), poorly armed and barely militarily trained, had to face a force of 200-500 insurgents. Consequently, these Volunteers felt undervalued by the Spanish authorities. The mostly peninsular urban Volunteers were still trusted for the protection of key infrastructure in the cities, though they saw little military action.<sup>26</sup> Some of their well-connected officers did still become highly valuable sources of information and influence. For instance, the Catalan Cástulo Ferrer Torralba, colonel of Santiago de Cuba's 2<sup>nd</sup> Volunteer Battalion, a coffee producer and railway investor, provided Polavieja with accurate information on the whereabouts of the rebel forces and convinced several affluent young Creoles not to join the rebellion.<sup>27</sup>

Yet in the countryside, the situation was starkly different. Polavieja relied on regular Army soldiers rather than on Volunteers to crush the rebels. He approached the war as a conflict of manoeuvre and not position. This means that army columns chased the rebels while the Volunteers were left alone to defend the small towns.<sup>28</sup> The Volunteers were in a general state of dismay, distrusted by the authorities they owed obedience to, and harassed by the rebels who threatened their lives unless they joined the insurgency. They felt rather abandoned by the authorities. The result was the biggest desertion in their history when between 9<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> September 1879 over 1,200 Volunteers joined the rebels

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Larga y las consecuencias de la Paz del Zanjón”, in Manuel Moreno Friginals (coord.). *Cien años de historia de Cuba (1898-1998)*. Madrid: Editorial Verbum, 2000, pp. 11-34; Pérez Guzmán & Sarracino. *La Guerra Chiquita*, pp. 178-254.

<sup>26</sup> For instance, Captain Antonio Ferrer Robert of Santiago de Cuba's 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion's 3<sup>rd</sup> Company kept a diary through most of the war in which not a single military action is reported beyond the kidnapping of the Corporal Evaristo Caballero y Silveira on the *hacienda* owned by Orestes Ylisastigui near Daiquirí beach, near Santiago de Cuba. See AHMS, Fons Josep Carbonell i Gener, “Companya de Voluntaris de Santiago”.

<sup>27</sup> Cástulo Ferrer y Torralba (1833-1913), a native of Sitges (Catalonia), settled in Santiago de Cuba in 1846, and returned to Spain in 1898. Due to his involvement with the Volunteers and loyalist politics in Cuba he was awarded military decorations several times by the Spanish Government. Jou i Andreu. *Els sitgetans a Amèrica*, pp. 290-291. The correspondence between Ferrer and Polavieja can be found at AGI, Archivo de Camilo García de Polavieja y del Castillo, Diversos, 9B, R. 1, D.57. Due to his services, Polavieja proposed Cástulo Ferrer to receive the *Gran Cruz del Mérito Militar blanca* and the *Gran Cruz de Isabel la Católica* to the Ministry of the Overseas on 18<sup>th</sup> August 1880, AHN, Ultramar, 4786, exp. 9.

<sup>28</sup> Throughout the war, more than 28,000 fresh troops arrived from metropolitan Spain. Navarro. *Las guerras de España en Cuba*, pp. 115-128.

in Oriente. For instance, on the 9<sup>th</sup> ca. 800 Volunteers from El Arpón defected to the rebels. Only four days later, 400 Volunteers from Mayarí followed the same path.<sup>29</sup>

According to Francisco Pérez Guzmán and Rodolfo Sarracino, this desertion was caused by discontent towards the Spanish authorities rather than by sincere support for independence.<sup>30</sup> This coincides with the appreciation of Polavieja, who had found that the Volunteers resented some of the privileges granted to the capitulated rebels after Zanjón, such as tax exemptions and land allotments.<sup>31</sup> Thus, the attempt to appease the rebellion in Cuba by rewarding the former rebels and neglecting the loyalists backfired. In fact, this could be regarded as the logical reaction of men that had put their lives at stake for being loyal to Spain during the war in Oriente, Cuba's rebel stronghold. In fact, the desertion was a clear signal that the policy of attracting the rebels on equal or even better terms than the Loyalists had failed. A possible way to readdress the loyalty of the Volunteers in the countryside would, therefore, be to engage them in the creation of agricultural-military colonies.

## 1.2. The Volunteers and the Military-Agricultural Colonies

The military colonies, which according to Consuelo Naranjo Orovio aimed to “turn rebel Cuba Spanish”, commenced with weak foundations.<sup>32</sup> Despite Polavieja's reluctance, the project went on and five colonies were created in Oriente during his term (1879-1881), added to one he had created as governor of Puerto Príncipe (1878-1879).<sup>33</sup> Both the total numbers and the participation of the Volunteers were rather modest though. Six years after being created, the colonies only hosted 61 Volunteers plus their families, out of 364 men with their families. Similarly, these Volunteers were mostly Cubans of African descent.<sup>34</sup> In the colony of Jibacoa (near Manzanillo, Oriente) 37 out of the 144 settlers were Volunteers. At least 35 of them were Cubans, of whom 28 were black.<sup>35</sup> The massive

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<sup>29</sup> El Arpón was a small village north of Santiago de Cuba, whereas Mayarí is located nearby the city of Holguín. Both towns belonged to the province of Santiago de Cuba. See Pérez Guzmán & Sarracino. *La Guerra Chiquita*, pp. 201-202; Navarro. *Las guerras de España en Cuba*, pp. 123-125.

<sup>30</sup> Pérez Guzmán & Sarracino. *La Guerra Chiquita*, pp. 203-204.

<sup>31</sup> This assessment can be found in the letters that Polavieja sent to the Overseas Minister Salvador Albacete (1879) during November and December 1879. See BNC, CM Guerra, No. 10.

<sup>32</sup> Naranjo Orovio. “Hispanización y defensa de la integridad nacional”, pp. 71-91.

<sup>33</sup> Balboa Navarro. “La inmigración como forma de presión política”, pp. 133-155.

<sup>34</sup> Jibacoa, Zarzal, El Congo, Calicito, Vega Botada, and Guantánamo. Out of the 364 settlers, 356 were Cuban, and 239 Black. Balboa Navarro. “Tierras y brazos”, pp. 69-70.

<sup>35</sup> In the settlement, there were 144 Cubans, and 2 *peninsulares*. By race, 9 Whites, and 139 Blacks. *Ibid.*, p. 69.

presence of African-descended peasants here not only indicates the main racial background of the rural population in eastern Cuba but also the racial diversity of the Volunteers in this part of the island.<sup>36</sup>

Such slow progress was due to an inefficient bureaucracy, and informal land ownership in Oriente.<sup>37</sup> The *reglamento* that established the organization of the colonies (1877) had two institutions involved in the process: the *Inspección de Montes*, and the *Juntas de Socorro*. The former was part of the national administration and had to demarcate the land allotments to be granted. The latter depended on city councils, organized land distribution, and in some cases, were controlled by Volunteers officers.<sup>38</sup> For instance, in Manzanillo (Oriente), the branch was presided over by Lieutenant Juan de Meza.<sup>39</sup> However, by 1881, four years after the Royal Decree on the military colonies, the delimitation of land in Manzanillo had still not been completed.

By the mid-1880s, Polavieja's colonies were considered a failure. Despite the efforts of a special commission created in Madrid in 1881 to reactivate the colonization, its projects were never implemented due to weak confidence in the military settlements by the authorities on the ground.<sup>40</sup> Gradually, the colonies began to fade away, and the landowners' enterprise of importing a cheap workforce from metropolitan Spain began to take the lead.<sup>41</sup>

Despite the relative failure of the agricultural colonies thus far, the Volunteers would play a central role in the attempt to revive these colonies envisioned by Captain General Manuel Salamanca y Negrete (1889-1890), a role that has not been noted by the

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<sup>36</sup> In 1860, Blacks (both free and enslaved) represented 85% of the rural population in eastern Cuba. See Sartorius. *Ever Faithful*, pp. 98-127. For the racial composition of Oriente's population see Javier Laviña. "Santiago de Cuba, 1860: esclavitud, color y población", *Boletín de la Asociación de Geógrafos Españoles*, 1992-1993, No. 15-16, pp. 17-32.

<sup>37</sup> This was a permanent complain by Polavieja. For instance, see García de Polavieja. *Relación documentada*, p. 17; ANRC, Gobierno General, leg. 46, exp. 1959, and leg. 48, exps. 2137 & 2138.

<sup>38</sup> Because city councils had generally been handed back to Cubans after 1878, Polavieja distrusted their alleged loyalty to the Spanish authorities. *Gaceta de Madrid*, No. 536, p. 622, 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1877; García de Polavieja. *Relación documentada*, p. 50.

<sup>39</sup> ANRC, Gobierno General, leg. 39, exps. 1634, 1636 & leg. 46, exp. 1956.

<sup>40</sup> The members were: President, Lieutenant General and MP Manuel Fernández Cassola; Members of the Board: Senator León Crespo de la Serna, Field Marshall and MP Manuel Armiñán y Gutiérrez; *idem* Antonio Dabán y Ramírez de Arellano, Colonel and MP Bernardo Portuondo y Barceló, MPs Julio Apezteguía, Rafael Ruiz Martínez, José Ramón Bethencourt, Francisco Cañamaque, José Ferreras, Field Marshall José Velasco y Postigo, Brigadiers Andrés López de Vega, and Rafael Hernández de Alba. Secretary: José Álvarez Pérez (administrative director of the Overseas Ministry), AGMM, Ultramar, caja 3078, "Establecimiento de Colonias Militares en Ultramar, 1883".

<sup>41</sup> Naranjo Orovio. "Hispanización y defensa de la integridad nacional", pp. 749-794; Balboa Navarro. "Colonización e inmigración", pp. 452-470.

existing literature. Salamanca believed that better organization might make these colonies a success. He advocated less reliance on the regular army, due to the high costs, and more on the local elements of defence, most notably the Volunteers.<sup>42</sup> He proposed a plan of colonization aimed at combining the immigration of *peninsulares* with the creation of loyalist communities.<sup>43</sup> Firstly, Salamanca resorted to metropolitan migrants to settle the new colonies.<sup>44</sup> Secondly, all the male settlers between the ages of 18 and 50, were to join the Volunteers.<sup>45</sup>

The lingering problem of an inefficient and slow bureaucracy, nonetheless, impeded Salamanca's colonies. Despite having created seven settlements hosting 887 people in just over a year, the mismanagement of the authorities had them in a complete state of neglect.<sup>46</sup> So much so, that most of Salamanca's settlers ended up abandoning the colonies and finding jobs in Havana or as cheap labourers in the sugar mills.<sup>47</sup> After almost twenty years of attempts, the military colonies had clearly failed. Although other Captains General like Polavieja (1890-1892), and Alejandro Rodríguez Arias (1892-1893) tried to retrieve the project, the military settlements had been a failure due to the authorities' mismanagement. The Volunteers and their families, alongside the other settlers, were not provided with the seeds, farm implements, and proper housing promised by the authorities, causing many of them to abandon the colonies and settle in the cities, where there were more work opportunities.<sup>48</sup>

## 2. The Volunteers and New Politics

The creation of political parties in the Antilles—in 1869 in Puerto Rico, and 1878 in Cuba—meant the displacement of the Volunteers from the centre of politics. Whereas during wartime they had been at the nucleus of loyalist power in the Caribbean, during peacetime

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<sup>42</sup> AHN, Ultramar, 247, exp. 7.

<sup>43</sup> Balboa Navarro. "Asentar para dominar", pp. 29-46. See also the report sent by M. Salamanca to the Overseas Ministry on 20<sup>th</sup> August 1889, AHN, Ultramar, Sección Fomento, leg. 247, No. 7.

<sup>44</sup> Despite Cuba becoming a less attractive destination due to an economic crisis and potential political instability, which were eroding the Spanish imperial projection, between 1886 and 1890, over 97,000 *peninsulares* still migrated to the island. See García Balañá, "The Empire is no longer a social unit", pp. 92-103. Besides the 97,000 migrants, more than 27,000 soldiers were stationed in Cuba, a part of whom tended to settle in the island after having finished their military service. Moreno Friginals & Moreno Masó. *Guerra, migración y muerte*, p. 121.

<sup>45</sup> Balboa Navarro. "Asentar para dominar", p. 33.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>47</sup> AHN, Ultramar, leg 174, 13.

<sup>48</sup> García de Polavieja. *Relación documentada*, p. 324; AFAM, leg. 489, carpeta 8, Alejandro Rodríguez Arias a Antonio Maura, 20-06-1893.

they became just another, although still important, element. Besides, their close relationship with the most conservative sectors opposed to the reforms complicated their relationship with other actors in Antillean politics that represented wider echelons of the local society.

Roldán de Montaud and Cubano Iguina have respectively studied the implementation in Cuba and Puerto Rico of the political system established in Spain since 1875, known as the Restoration.<sup>49</sup> Whereas in metropolitan Spain the two dominant parties were the Conservative and the Liberal, in the Antilles the political arena was disputed between the forces that demanded wider reforms and autonomy and those who opted for limited political and social reforms, stressing loyalty to Spain.<sup>50</sup> Both forces shared a consensus on the need for basic economic reforms and the continuity of Spanish sovereignty. Their main difference laid in which element they accentuated. The forces that demanded outright independence, which were virtually non-existent in Puerto Rico but considerable in Cuba, operated outside the system—most notably from exile in the United States—as they were not legally allowed in Spain and the Antilles.<sup>51</sup>

The first political stance was represented by the Puerto Rican Autonomist Party (1870), and the Autonomist Liberal Party (1878) in Cuba.<sup>52</sup> They mostly attracted Creole professional liberals and some landowners.<sup>53</sup> Antillean Conservatism was represented by

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<sup>49</sup> Alonso Romero. *Cuba en la España liberal*, pp. 46-205; Roldán de Montaud. *La Restauración en Cuba*; also see Pérez Cisneros. *El reformismo español en Cuba*, pp. 46-151; For Puerto Rico, see Cubano Iguina. “Puerto Rico”, pp. 541-558; González Vales, “The Challenge to Colonialism”, pp. 108-125; Scarano. *Puerto Rico. Cinco siglos de Historia*, pp. 513-546; Luis Mattei Filardi. *En las tinieblas del colonialismo. “Cien metros” de historia puertorriqueña*. San Juan: Ediciones Nóema, 2015 (first published in 2014), pp. 79-96.

<sup>50</sup> Alonso Romero. *Cuba en la España liberal*, pp. 46-51; Fernando Bayón Toro, *Elecciones y partidos políticos de Puerto Rico (1809-1976)*, Madrid, Instituto de Cultura Hispánica de Madrid, 1977; Bothwell. *Orígenes y desarrollo*, pp. 1-49; José A. Piqueras Arenas. *Sociedad civil y poder en Cuba. Colonia y poscolonia*. Madrid: Siglo XXI, pp. 157-164; Roldán de Montaud. *La Restauración en Cuba*, pp. 121-155.

<sup>51</sup> The referential study on Cuban nationalism in the US is still Gerald Poyo. *With All, and for the Good of All: The Emergence of Popular Nationalism in the Cuban Communities of the United States, 1848-1898*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1989. Also see Paul Estrade. “El papel de la emigración patriótica en las Guerras de Independencia de Cuba (1868-1898). *Tebeto: Anuario del Archivo Histórico Insular de Fuerteventura*, No. 11, 1998, pp. 83-102.

<sup>52</sup> The Autonomist Liberal Party (*Partido Liberal Autonomista*) was first created in 1878 as the Liberal Party (*Partido Liberal*) but adopted its new name in 1881 when it openly embraced the autonomist ideal. The Puerto Rico Autonomist Party (*Partido Autonomista Puertorriqueño*) was created in 1870 as the Reformist Liberal Party (*Partido Liberal Reformista*) but was renamed in 1887 when it officially adopted autonomy as its main political goal.

<sup>53</sup> On the Cuban Liberal Party (later ‘Autonomist Liberal Party’) see Marta Bizcarrondo & Antonio Elorza. *Cuba/España. El dilema autonomista, 1878-1898*. Madrid: Editorial Colibrí, 2001, pp. 121-198; Marta Bizcarrondo. “El autonomismo cubano. Las ideas y los hechos (1878-1898)”. *Historia Contemporánea*, 1999, No. 19, pp. 69-94; Luis Miguel García Mora. “La fuerza de la palabra. El

the Unconditional Spanish Party (1870) in Puerto Rico and the Constitutional Union (1878) in Cuba. Both were fundamentally supported by the well-to-do businessmen (tobacco producers, sugar barons, landowners, merchants), administration officials, and army officers. Although both had Creole clientele embedded in these sectors, most of the members herein were *peninsulares*, according to historiography.<sup>54</sup>

The Constitutional Union and the Unconditional Spanish Party, whose followers were known as *incondicionales*, grew out of the same social sectors as had the Volunteers decades earlier.<sup>55</sup> Often, their leaders were or had been Volunteer officers.<sup>56</sup> José Eugenio Moré, leader of the Cuban Constitutional Union (1878-1890), was also Havana's 1<sup>st</sup> Volunteer Battalion's colonel, having joined the militia in 1855.<sup>57</sup> In Puerto Rico, José Ramón Fernández, marquis of La Esperanza, leader of the *incondicionales* (1871-1880), had created the local Volunteers in 1864.

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autonomismo en Cuba en el último tercio del siglo XIX". *Revista de Indias*, 2001, vol. LXI, No. 223, pp. 715-748. For the Puerto Rican Reformist Liberal Party (later 'Puerto Rican Autonomist Party') see Astrid Cubano Iguina. "El autonomismo en Puerto Rico, 1887-1898: notas para la definición de un modelo de política radical", in Consuelo Naranjo Orovio, Miguel A. Puig-Samper & Luis Miguel García Mora (eds.). *La nación soñada, Cuba, Puerto Rico y Filipinas ante el 98: actas del Congreso Internacional celebrado en Aranjuez del 2 al 28 de abril de 1995*. Madrid: Ediciones Doce Calles, 1996, pp. 405-416; "Política radical y autonomismo en Puerto Rico: conflictos de intereses en la formación del Partido Autonomista Portorriqueño (1887)". *Anuario de estudios americanos*, 1994, vol. 51, No. 2, pp. 155-173.

<sup>54</sup> On the Cuban Constitutional Union, see Inés Roldán de Montaud. *La Unión Constitucional y la política colonial de España en Cuba (1868-1898)*. Madrid: Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 1991, PhD Thesis 91/296; Portela Miguélez. *Redes de poder en Cuba*. On the Puerto Rican Conservative Liberal Party (*Partido Liberal Conservador*) created in 1870 and renamed 'Unconditional Spanish Party' (*Partido Incondicional Español*) in 1880 there is no recent bibliography. However, some information can be consulted in Cubano Iguina, *Puerto Rico*, pp. 541-558; Bothwell. *Orígenes y desarrollo*, pp. 1-49; Bayón Toro. *Elecciones y partidos políticos de Puerto Rico*, pp. 190-212; José Julián Acosta. *Los partidos políticos. Artículos publicados en "El Progreso"*. San Juan: Imprenta y Librería de Sancérrit, 1875; Francisco Mariano Quiñones. *Historia de los partidos reformista y conservador de Puerto-Rico*. Mayagüez: Tipografía Comercial, 1889, pp. 22-23.

<sup>55</sup> There were, however, some identified exceptions. For instance, José Suárez García (1849-1888) who had migrated to Cuba from Asturias, was a captain of Volunteers in the town of Güines (Havana) during the Ten Years' War. He created the autonomist committee in Güines and became its secretary. He also contributed to establishing the autonomist newspaper *La Unión*. His funeral was a demonstration of popular mourning, being attended by both his autonomist and Volunteer colleagues. Raimundo Cabrera. *Cuba and the Cubans*. Philadelphia: The Levytype Company, 1896, p. 366.

<sup>56</sup> The leaders of the Constitutional Union were the Colombian-born José Eugenio Moré (1878-1890), the peninsular Vicente Galarza (1890-1892), and the Cuban-born Julio de Apezteguía (1892-1898). Portela Miguélez. *Redes de poder en Cuba*. The Puerto Rican José Ramón Fernández was the leader of the Unconditional Spanish Party (1871-1880), succeeded by the Basque Pablo Ubarri (1880-1894), after whom the party remained with no clear leader. Bothwell. *Orígenes y desarrollo*, pp. 4-40.

<sup>57</sup> Villa. *Álbum biográfico*, pp. 14-18.

In the Antilles, much more markedly than in metropolitan Spain, politics remained a patrician activity.<sup>58</sup> The electoral census was even more restricted than in the peninsula, and most of the population, including the rank-and-file Volunteers, was excluded from participating in politics.<sup>59</sup> According to the electoral law of 1878, the electoral census was based on tax contributions. In the Antilles, it especially considered urban taxes over rural contributions. This benefited the mostly urban community of *peninsulares*, who tended to vote for conservatives.<sup>60</sup> For instance, in the city of Güines (Havana province), there were 500 *peninsulares* among a population of 13,000, yet they represented 90% of the electoral census.<sup>61</sup> The Volunteers took part in politics as an element of Antillean conservatism to be used against autonomists. According to María José Portela Miguélez, alongside political parties, they became one more element of power for the *integristas*, alongside the *Casinos Españoles*, publications such as *Diario de la Marina* in Cuba, or the *Boletín Mercantil de Puerto-Rico*. The identification of the Volunteers with the Antillean conservatives complicated their future with regards to politics both at the local and national level, especially because of their involvement repressing the autonomist movement. The Volunteers were used by the Constitutional Union in Cienfuegos (Cuba) to violently disband an autonomist meeting in October 1886.<sup>62</sup> In Puerto Rico, the *incondicionales* actively supported the *Compontes*, a repressive wave that Captain General Romualdo Palacios (1887) launched against the autonomists in the summer of 1887.<sup>63</sup> Both in Cuba

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<sup>58</sup> The patrician nature of Spanish politics, common in 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe, was thoroughly studied by José Varela Ortega. *Los amigos políticos: partidos, elecciones y caciquismo en la Restauración (1875-1900)*. Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2001 (first published by Alianza Editorial, 1977). Also see Neira. “El régimen político de la Restauración”, pp. 35-73.

<sup>59</sup> For instance, in 1889, the electoral census in metropolitan Spain included 20.92% of males over 25 (the only group eligible to vote), in Cuba 3.82%, and in Puerto Rico 0.52%, see S. Andrés. *La reforma electoral en nuestras Antillas*. Madrid: Imprenta de la “Revista de España”, 1889, p. 23.

<sup>60</sup> The Royal Decree of 9<sup>th</sup> June 1878 established that Cuba and Puerto Rico should adopt the electoral law of 20<sup>th</sup> July 1877, with the difference that the tax contribution which enabled the vote to males over 25 years old, was 125 *pesetas* in the Antilles, instead of 25 as in metropolitan Spain. This resulted in the Constitutional Union and the Unconditional Spanish Party winning all the elections in Cuba and Puerto Rico until 1898, when male universal suffrage was established. See Inés Roldán de Montaud. “Política y elecciones en Cuba durante la Restauración”. *Revista de Estudios Políticos*, 1999, No. 104, pp. 245-287.

<sup>61</sup> Cabrera. *Cuba and the Cubans*, p. 192.

<sup>62</sup> David Sartorius. *Ever Faithful*, pp. 157-186.

<sup>63</sup> Bizcarrondo & Elorza. *Cuba/España*, pp. 154-197; Portela Miguélez. *Redes de poder en Cuba*, pp. 169-197; Sartorius. *Ever Faithful*, pp. 177-186. Lieutenant General Romualdo Palacios y González (1827-1908) was appointed general governor and captain general of Puerto Rico on 17<sup>th</sup> January 1887. He took part in the African War (1859-1860) and was appointed *Segundo Cabo* (vice-captain general) of Cuba by the Spanish Republic on 4<sup>th</sup> September 1873. Only a month later was appointed captain general of Valencia. He was awarded the *Gran Cruz de San Fernando* (1883)—the highest Spanish military decoration—and the *Gran Cruz de Carlos III* (1899). In 1899, being director of the Civil Guard, he retired from active service. Politically, he was considered a radical democrat for his

and Puerto Rico, the Volunteers continue to be the armed wing of *integrismo* even after the emergence of party politics.

### 2.1. Repressing the Autonomists: the Puerto Rican “*componetes*”

The *componetes* were a series of arrests and tortures carried out against Puerto Rican autonomists between August and September 1887. Captain General Romualdo Palacios ordered this repression and relied on the Volunteers and the Civil Guard to conduct it physically.<sup>64</sup> According to Antonio S. Pedreira, the *componetes* aimed to crush the Puerto Rican reformists who for the first time had openly embraced the autonomist ideal in the Ponce assembly of May 1887.<sup>65</sup> The “*componetes*” were certainly a demonstration by the Captaincy General and the *integristas* that they would not tolerate the emergence of a political movement that questioned the status quo.

The affair started on 21<sup>st</sup> August 1887, when the Puerto Rican Policarpo Echevarría, *incondicional* mayor of Juana Díaz and Volunteer captain, published an article in *Boletín Mercantil* claiming he had discovered several anti-Spanish organizations throughout the island that planned to kill all the *peninsulares* in Puerto Rico.<sup>66</sup> He wanted all the

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early involvement as a conspirator in the Progressive Party against Queen Elizabeth II (1843-1868), and his active participation in *La Gloriosa* of September 1868. See *Gaceta de Madrid*, No. 247, 04-09-1873, p. 1597; No. 327, 23-11-1883, p. 571; No. 17, 17-01-1887, p. 157; No. 40, 09-02-1899, p. 506; Juan Mañé Flaquer. *La revolución de 1868 juzgada por sus autores*. Barcelona: Imprenta de Jaime Jepús, Editor, 1876, p. 143; Antonio Pirala. *Historia contemporánea. Anales desde 1843 hasta la conclusión de la última guerra civil*, vol. III. Madrid: Imprenta y Fundación de Manuel Tello, 1876, p. 90.

<sup>64</sup> AHN, Ultramar, 5143, exps. 15-19.

<sup>65</sup> The Reformist Liberal Party (1870) decided to abandon reformism and adopt autonomism in the Ponce assembly of 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> May 1887. See Lidio Cruz Monclova. *Historia del año de 1887*. Río Piedras: Ed. Universitaria, 1958, pp. 157-197; Astrid Cubano Iguina. “Política radical y autonomismo en Puerto Rico: conflictos de interés en la formación del Partido Autonomista Portorriqueño (1887)”. *Anuario de estudios americanos*, 1994, vol. 51, No. 2, pp. 155-173; Antonio S. Pedreira. *El año terrible del 87. Sus antecedentes y sus consecuencias*. San Juan: Biblioteca de Escritores Puertorriqueños, 1937, pp. 26-40.

<sup>66</sup> The *Boletín Mercantil* published the first article on 21<sup>st</sup> August 1887, claiming that a secret organization called *Los Mojados*, supported by the autonomists, was plotting to kill all the *peninsulares* in the town of Juana Díaz. See *Boletín Mercantil*, 21-08-1887; Pedreira. *El año terrible del 87*, p. 43. Among the *integrista* press that made a similar accusation were *La Bandera Española*, and *La Integridad Nacional*, see Gómez & Sendras y Burín. *La isla de Puerto-Rico*, p. 168. Policarpo Echevarría joined the Spanish administration in Puerto Rico in 1850, becoming Juana Díaz’s mayor in 1868. He was considered one of the most intransigent members of the Unconditional Spanish Party, and a close friend to its leader, Pablo Ubarri. In 1888, he was captain of the 10<sup>th</sup> Volunteer Battalion’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Company, stationed in Juana Díaz. He created the company back on 28<sup>th</sup> February 1872. AHN, Ultramar, 5117, exp. 30; Rosado y Brincau. *Bosquejo Histórico*, p. 42; *Ejército de Puerto-Rico. Estado militar de todas las armas e institutos y Escalafón General de todos los Jefes y Oficiales de Infantería*. Puerto-Rico: Imprenta de la Capitanía General, 1888, p. 71.



*peninsulares* to rally with the Unconditional Party, thus alienating from autonomism a small but powerful sector of Puerto Rico's society. Though the real existence of these organizations was doubtful at the very least, the tension between *autonomistas* and *integristas* was palpable, precisely for the *integrista* attempt to crush the autonomist movement.

It seems, indeed, that there was growing yet still minor support for autonomism among *peninsulares*. This was precisely what Echevarría wanted to stop with his article. For instance, a former Volunteer, the Asturian journalist Francisco Cepeda, director of *Revista de Puerto Rico*, an autonomist journal, had called the Volunteers "social scum" in November 1886, shortly after the attendants at a Volunteer's funeral were stoned in the city of Ponce by a group allegedly close to the autonomists.<sup>67</sup> There were certainly Puerto Ricans among the Volunteers, but they were often associated with *peninsulares* because of the prominent role played by this group in the militia. Rather than a conflict between *peninsulares* and *criollos*, the power conflict in 1880s' Puerto Rico was between *integristas* and *autonomistas*.

Following Echevarría's article, and a report by the Civil Guard captain of Juana Díaz, which theoretically confirmed the existence of a conspiracy to kill all *peninsulares*, Captain General Palacios issued a communication on 5<sup>th</sup> September 1888 warning that he would not tolerate the "political ideas that promote these criminal acts". He meant autonomism. Palacios used the Civil Guard and the Volunteers to detain hundreds of autonomists, torture them, and block any communication between the island and the Peninsula.<sup>68</sup> What followed was a wave of support by the *incondicionales* from all over

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<sup>67</sup> Francisco Cepeda, a native of Asturias, was a republican journalist who had directed several publications in the Peninsula, Cuba, and Puerto Rico. In 1872, he was Volunteer of Sagua La Grande's 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, in Cuba, and owner of the newspaper *El Sagua*. Later, he defended autonomy for the island as director of *La Revista Económica de las Antillas* (1877-1882), until he was deported by the authorities in June 1882. He propagated the same ideas during his Madrid period in *La Revista de las Antillas* (1882-1886), until he settled in Puerto Rico in 1886, where he created the *Revista de Puerto Rico*, and joined the Puerto Rican Autonomist Party from its very creation in May 1886. During the *comportes*, Cepeda was imprisoned in Ponce and tortured, and forced to retract the articles in which he denounced the Civil Guard for torturing the autonomists. Condemned to prison for 'crimes against the Fatherland', he was finally acquitted by Puerto Rico's Court on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1888. Gómez & Sendras y Burín. *La isla de Puerto-Rico*, pp. 142-143; Ribó. *Historia de los Voluntarios cubanos*, vol. I, p. 286; Quiñones. *Apuntes para la historia de Puerto Rico*. Mayagüez: Tipografía Comercial Aduana, 1888, pp. 52-53; *Revista de Puerto Rico*, 6-11-1886; Rosado y Brincau. *Bosquejo Histórico*, pp. 122-129.

<sup>68</sup> On 30<sup>th</sup> August 1887, a Civil Guard lieutenant colonel sent a report to Captain General Palacios assuring that he had arrested in Juana Díaz Cristiano Aponte, Cleto Mangual and fifty other Puerto Ricans belonging to *Los Secos*, supposedly another anti-Spanish society which was preparing the massacre of all the local *peninsulares* and the proclamation of the Republic of Puerto Rico. At first,

Puerto Rico. It is difficult to know whether the *incondicionales* truly believed there was a conspiracy, but the fact is the *compontes* seemed to have been popular among the *integristas*. Without exception, all the Volunteer units and local committees of the Unconditional Party sent telegrams to Palacios supporting his actions.<sup>69</sup> The messages praising Palacios for the *compontes* shows that *integristas* were well established all over the island and that the *compontes* enjoyed some degree of popular support. The *incondicionales* might have enjoyed more popular support than has been often admitted by historiography, which has tended to see them as a phenomenon centred in San Juan and closely controlled by captains general, as pointed out by Cubano Iguina.<sup>70</sup>

There was, of course, also a powerful movement against the *compontes*. The autonomists felt outraged and waged a campaign against the repression. The *Revista de Puerto Rico* was the only publication that denounced the *compontes* within the island, causing the detention of Francisco Cepeda. Denouncing the repression outside Puerto Rico was more difficult, as Palacios had cut all communications with the Peninsula, but thanks to a young autonomist who managed to escape to Spain and spread the word, the *compontes* were first denounced in the Spanish Congress on 12<sup>th</sup> October 1887 by the Puerto Rican Julio Vizcarrondo, causing Romualdo Palacios' removal in early January 1888.<sup>71</sup> This was a severe blow for the *integristas*. Their bid for crushing autonomism with brutal repression had failed, as the Spanish Government was not willing to tolerate such action. Madrid feared that autonomists might want to retaliate, reinforcing the discontent

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Judge José García de Lara, from the Puerto Rican Audience, acquitted all the detainees, but he was quickly replaced by García de Paredes, a well-known local *integrista* that accused them of plotting against Spain. Cruz Monclova. *Historia del año de 1887*, pp. 199-345; Pedreira. *El año terrible del 87*, pp. 44-45; Francisco Mariano Quiñones. *Apuntes para la historia de Puerto Rico*, pp. 65-80; *Revista de Puerto Rico*, 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1887.

<sup>69</sup> AGPR, Asuntos Políticos y Civiles, "Felicitaciones de varios pueblos de los comités del Partido Incondicionalmente Español por los sucesos de Juana Díaz y Ponce, 1887"; *Manifestaciones del elemento español de Puerto-Rico con motivo de los sucesos de Juana Díaz*. Puerto Rico: 1887.

<sup>70</sup> Bothwell. *Orígenes y desarrollo*, pp. 19-20; Cubano Iguina. "Puerto Rico", pp. 541-558; Bolívar Pagán. *Historia de los partidos políticos puertorriqueños, 1898-1956*, vol. I. San Juan: Librería Campos, 1959, pp. 8-15.

<sup>71</sup> Julio Vizcarrondo Coronado (1829-1889) was a Puerto Rican abolitionist and politician who had been instrumental in the creation of the Spanish Abolitionist Society in 1864. A member of the Puerto Rican Reformist Liberal Party (later Autonomist), on the elections of 4<sup>th</sup> April 1886 he was elected representative for the city of Ponce in the Congress in Madrid in 1886-1889. See Schmidt-Nowara. *Empire, and Antislavery*, pp.100-125; ACD, *Diario de las Sesiones de Cortes*, Serie Documentación Electoral, 103, No. 6. The young autonomist who told Vizcarrondo about the *compontes* was Juan Bautista Arrillaga Roqué, who in 1910 wrote his memoirs: *Memorias de antaño*. Ponce: Tip. Baldorioty, 1910, pp. 16-17 & 154-155.

towards Spain that might end up in their resorting to violence as a means to achieve their objectives.

These fears were well-grounded. The detainees were duly freed by December 1887, but the *compointes* had exacerbated the tension between *incondicionales* and *autonomistas*. Autonomist groups retaliated during the Spring of 1888 against the Mayor Policarpo Echevarría and several other *incondicionales* involved in the repression, by burning his home and attacking his properties.<sup>72</sup> The autonomists also began a boycott campaign against the *integrista*-owned commercial houses, which happened to belong mostly to *peninsulares*, which lasted intermittently until the US invasion of July 1898.<sup>73</sup>

Far from crushing the autonomist movement, the *compointes* widened the gap between *incondicionales* and *autonomistas* that had existed since the beginning of an articulated political life in Puerto Rico in 1869 when the island was assimilated to the Spanish political system and made difficult any potential political transaction. The Volunteers had played a central role in this affair. They collaborated with the authorities in the repression and showed their explicit support for such a measure. During peacetime, violence backfired. Rather than reinforcing Spanish rule and the *integristas*' privileged position, the *compointes* strengthened the autonomist movement and undermined the economic position of the staunchest supporters of Spain's presence in Puerto Rico.

## 2.2. The Volunteers and the Right to Vote

From their inception, the Volunteers had become a powerful symbol with contradictory political readings. For the forces supporting the status quo (Spanish Government, *integrista* elite), they were the "bedrock of Spanish nationality" in the Antilles, despite the excesses that they committed.<sup>74</sup> The forces that aimed to change the system from within (reformists, autonomists), considered the Volunteers the embodiment of Spanish rule's

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<sup>72</sup> *Puerto-Rico por dentro. Cartas abiertas, por XXX. Julio y agosto de 1888, con la sentencia dictada por la Audiencia de Puerto-Rico en 2 de junio de 1888.* Madrid: Imprenta de José Gil y Navarro, 1888, p. 24; Cruz Monclova. *Historia de Puerto Rico*, t. III, vol. I, pp. 204-205 & 273.

<sup>73</sup> Fernando Picó. 1898. *La guerra después de la guerra.* San Juan: Ediciones Huracán, 2013 (first published in 1987), pp. 36-39.

<sup>74</sup> On 26<sup>th</sup> February 1869, the Overseas Minister Adelardo López de Ayala (1868-1869) replied to Cuba's Captain General Domingo Dulce that despite the Volunteers' violent excesses, committed against the *reformistas* in Havana, they were a necessary force to sustain Spanish rule in Cuba. See RAH, CCR, 9/7536, doc. 88 & 100.

dark side: repression and abuse. Puerto Rican Reformist representatives in the Congress formally requested their disarmament in 1871.<sup>75</sup>

The Restoration regime assimilated the Antilles into the metropolitan political system after 1878. Whilst still granting more restricted rights to their inhabitants, this reinforced the ambivalence of the Volunteers' position. A good example included the debates on the electoral reform project for the Antilles presented in 1889 by the Overseas Minister Manuel Becerra (1888-1890), aimed at increasing the Antillean electoral census, which gave the right to vote to the Volunteers in Cuba and Puerto Rico. The project was first presented before the Congress of Deputies on 15<sup>th</sup> February 1889, and the clause including the Volunteers' vote on 15<sup>th</sup> June 1889. However, it was not discussed until 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1890. Although it was passed by the Congress, it was rejected by the Senate after the fall of the Liberal cabinet to which Becerra belonged in July 1890.<sup>76</sup>

The proposals were particularly offensive for the Cuban and Puerto Rican autonomists. The Volunteers, as the armed wing of *integrismo*, represented the political movement that had long opposed major reforms in the Antilles, including male universal suffrage, which had been a historic complaint of the autonomists. Becerra's project meant nothing less than giving the Volunteers the right they had long stood against. The project also came at a time when the Congress was discussing the universal male suffrage law for the Peninsula, which was finally passed on 26<sup>th</sup> June 1890.<sup>77</sup> This was one of the main achievements of the long Liberal Cabinet presided by Práxedes Mateo Sagasta (1885-1890).<sup>78</sup> However, it was not extended to the Antilles until 1898, as the authorities feared

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<sup>75</sup> In December 1871, the Puerto Rican reformist representatives in the Congress of Deputies presented a project asking for the disarmament of the Volunteers in Puerto Rico. In the words of Julio E. Blanco, leader of the proposal, the Volunteers were an 'unnecessary force' and were made up of 'social scum', ACD, *Diario de las Sesiones de Cortes*, 22-01-1872, p. 34. For the Cuban reformists' similar petitions during the Ten Years' War see García Rodríguez. *Con un ojo en Yara y otro en Madrid*, pp. 336-342.

<sup>76</sup> Manuel Becerra y Bermúdez (1820-1896) was a liberal politician that had actively participated in the revolutionary movements of 1854-1856 and 1868-1874. After the return of the Bourbons in December 1874, he joined the Liberal Party lead by Práxedes Mateo Sagasta. He was Minister of the Overseas (1869-1870, 1888-1890, and 1894) and Public Works departments (1872-1873). Luis Estévez y Romero. *Desde el Zanjón hasta Baire. Datos para la historia política de Cuba*. Havana: "La Propaganda Literaria", 1899, pp. 651-655; Roldán de Montaud. "Política y elecciones en Cuba", pp. 245-287.

<sup>77</sup> The complete legislative material on the 26<sup>th</sup> June 1890's electoral reform in Domingo Vivanco y Argüelles. *La reforma electoral. Ley electoral para diputados á Cortes en la península de 26 de junio de 1890 aplicable á las elecciones de concejales y de diputados provinciales, precedida de un Índice de sus títulos y capítulos y seguida de un Repertorio alfabético con notas y observaciones*. Madrid: Imprenta de los Hijos de J. A. García, 1890.

<sup>78</sup> Práxedes Mateo Sagasta y Escolar (1825-1903) was a leading character of Spanish modern history. Alongside Antonio Cánovas del Castillo, Sagasta was the main political figure of the Restoration.

that it would translate into landslide victories for the autonomists.<sup>79</sup> Becerra's project did not tend towards universal male suffrage, but rather to the increase of the electoral census in favour of the Antillean conservative parties. Reflecting a few years later, the Cuban author Luis de Estévez y Romero considered that Manuel Becerra had well deserved to be considered a 'recalcitrant enemy of the Cubans for his Volunteers' vote project.'<sup>80</sup>

To secure the *integrista* vote, Becerra's project gave the right to vote to practically all civil servants, retired Army and Navy officers, mercantile society members (whom as seen earlier were the bedrock of the urban Volunteers), and most controversially, it wanted to give the right to vote to the Volunteers too, although not on equal terms. In Puerto Rico, all the Volunteers with more than six years of service would become voters regardless of rank. In Cuba, only officers with the same length of service, or decorated rank-and-file members, would be eligible to vote.<sup>81</sup>

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He presided over the Spanish Government on seven occasions between 1871 and 1902. Initially associated with radical Liberalism during the *Sexenio Revolucionario* (1868-1874), he accepted the monarchic restoration of Alphonse XII in 1874, and created the Liberal Party in 1880, which alternated power with the Conservatives until the coup of Miguel Primo de Rivera in 1923. A relatively recent biography in José Luis Ollero Vallés. *Sagasta. De conspirador a gobernante*. Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2006.

<sup>79</sup> This was the reason the project presented by Becerra's predecessor, Víctor Balaguer (1886-1888) was rejected. It would have given the right to vote to wider layers of Antillean society deemed pro-autonomist. The project was presented on 15<sup>th</sup> June 1887 to the Congress but was never discussed due to the conservatives' opposition. The proportion between voters and adult male population was: in metropolitan Spain 1/21, in Cuba 1/51, and in Puerto Rico 1/250. Roldán de Montaud. *La Restauración en Cuba*, pp. 370-373; Víctor Balaguer. *Memoria que precede á los dos volúmenes de documentos que publica el Excmo. Sr. D. Víctor Balaguer acerca de su gestión en el Ministerio de Ultramar durante el desempeño de su cargo como ministro del ramo desde 11 de octubre de 1886 hasta 14 de junio de 1888*. Madrid: Imprenta y Fundición de Manuel Tello, 1888, pp. 33-34; S. Andrés. *La reforma electoral*, p. 11. Víctor Balaguer y Cirera (1824-1901) was a Catalan historian, writer, and politician who served as overseas minister (1871, and 1886-1888), Public Works (1872), always in Liberal cabinets. He was a member of the Congress representing the Catalan district of Vilanova i La Geltrú (1869-1884), and Havana (1884-1886). ACD, Serie Documental Electoral, 60, No. 8.

<sup>80</sup> Luis Estévez y Romero (1849-1909) was a Cuban lawyer, and sugar producer, husband to the philanthropist Marta Abreu (1846-1909), daughter to the Volunteer Major Pedro Nolasco Abreu who was seen in the first chapter. After the end of Spanish sovereignty in Cuba, Luis Estévez was appointed secretary of justice by the US military government (January-June 1900), presided over the conservative Cuban National Party and became vice-president of the first government of the Republic of Cuba (1902-1905). After leaving the cabinet, he retired to Paris where he committed suicide shortly after the death of his wife. Estévez y Romero. *Desde el Zanjón hasta Baire*, p. 535. For a biography, see M. García Carófalo y Mesa. *Marta Abreu Arencibia y el Dr. Luis Estévez y Romero. Estudio biográfico*. Havana: Imprenta y Librería "La Moderna Poesía", 1925.

<sup>81</sup> Becerra's proposal planned to grant the right to vote to all the civil servants with a salary over 100 pesos, tax payers who contributed with a minimum of 8 pesos (tax on rural property) or 12 (for urban property), all the army and navy officers both active and retired, all the mercantile companies' members, and all the Volunteers. ACD, *Diario de las Sesiones de Cortes*, Appendix No. 6, 15-06-1889; Roldán de Montaud. *La Restauración en Cuba*, pp. 414-419; Estévez y Romero. *Desde el Zanjón hasta Baire*, pp. 362-368.

This discrimination even within the Volunteers was explained by the strong perceived loyalism and whiteness of the 5,000 Puerto Rican Volunteers in comparison to their 66,000 Cuban colleagues, who had social, racial, and class divisions within them as seen in the previous chapter.<sup>82</sup> This was pointed out by the opponents of the project, such as the autonomist deputies for Puerto Rico Rafael María de Labra, and José Celis Aguilera. They denounced it as a blatant attempt at discriminating against the autonomists, for whereas ‘all of the Puerto Rican Volunteers are conservatives, in Cuba, there are notable pockets of liberal Volunteers in Las Villas and Oriente’.<sup>83</sup> In fact, since the creation of the Unconditional Party in 1870, it was an unwritten rule that only the *incondicionales* could join the Volunteers in Puerto Rico.<sup>84</sup> Overall, Labra and the other autonomist deputies rejected the project for the huge impact it would have had on the Puerto Rican electoral census. Labra reckoned that its approval would give the right to vote to 5,000 Volunteers over a census of 24,000. In Cuba, the impact would have been ever greater, for the Volunteers with the right to vote might have gone up to 40,000 for a census of 98,500 voters in the whole island.<sup>85</sup>

Though it is impossible to establish the actual potential support the autonomists enjoyed among the Volunteers, due to the small number noted in the electoral census in the Antilles (3.82% of the population in Cuba, and 0.52% in Puerto Rico), the same argument was used by the advocates of the project.<sup>86</sup> General Luis Manuel de Pando, a Constitutional Union deputy for Santiago de Cuba, considered that the Volunteers had rendered great services to Spain. He observed that the very existence of these liberal Volunteers was proof that the project was not partisan.<sup>87</sup> Pando, however, omitted the fact

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<sup>82</sup> AGMM, Documentación de Puerto Rico, sig. 5195.1; Gallego y García. *Cuba por fuera*, p. 229.

<sup>83</sup> Rafael María de Labra y Cadrona (1840-1918) was a Cuban-born autonomist politician who extensively wrote on Spanish colonial affairs. He entered the Congress of Deputies in 1871, where he represented Puerto Rican and Cuban constituencies between 1872 and 1899. In the legislature 1886-1890 he represented Sabana Grande (Puerto Rico). ACD, *Diario de las Sesiones de Cortes*, No. 140, 17th April 1890, p. 4312. See Catherine Davies & Sarah Sánchez. “Rafael María de Labra and *La Revista Hispano-Americana* 1864-1867: Revolutionary Liberalism and Colonial Reform”. *Bulletin of Spanish Studies: Hispanic Studies and Researches on Spain, Portugal and Latin America*, 2010, No. 87 (7), pp. 915-938. José de Celis Aguilera (1826-1898) was a Puerto Rican politician who had participated in the Lares uprising in September 1868. Later, he rejected independentism and defended a total political assimilation with metropolitan Spain as leader of the Puerto Rican Liberal Reformist Party (1883-1887). He represented Puerto Rico twice in the Congress: San Juan district (1873-1874) and Vega Baja (1887-1890). ACD, *Diario de las Sesiones de Cortes*, 21-04-1890, pp. 4434-4439; ACD, Serie Documentación Electoral: 103, No. 6.

<sup>84</sup> Rivero Méndez. *Crónica de la Guerra*, p. 450.

<sup>85</sup> ACD, *Diario de las Sesiones de Cortes*, 22-04-1890, p. 4493.

<sup>86</sup> Andrés. *La reforma electoral*, p. 23.

<sup>87</sup> Luis Manuel de Pando y Sánchez (1844-1927) was a soldier that took part in the Ten Years’ War, and the Cuban War (1895-1898). He was appointed Governor of Pinar del Río (1877-1878), and

that these rank-and-file liberal Volunteers would only be granted the right to vote in cases where they had been awarded military decorations.

After two months of debate, the project was passed by the Congress of Deputies in Madrid on 5<sup>th</sup> May 1890 but was rejected in the Senate by early July as the Liberal cabinet of President Sagasta fell due to the controversial involvement of the president's wife in the construction of a railway in Cuba.<sup>88</sup> The new Conservative cabinet (1890-1892), led by Antonio Cánovas del Castillo, was not willing to push forward a Liberal minister's project and dismissed it. The Volunteer reaction to the project's failure was of complete calmness, even though some of their officers claimed to consider their right to vote to be unnegotiable.<sup>89</sup>

In the Antilles, the Volunteers made no effort to stand for their right to vote. In any case, it remained as a lingering issue in Spanish politics, ready to be used by Conservatives and Liberals rather than by the Volunteers themselves. It would be Antonio Maura, the new overseas minister (1892-1894) under the Liberal cabinet headed by Sagasta (1892-1895), who would definitely bury the Volunteers' vote project.<sup>90</sup> Maura was a politician committed to implementing a wide set of reforms in the colonies, aimed at giving more political rights to their inhabitants but keeping them under Spanish sovereignty.<sup>91</sup>

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Santiago de Cuba (1881-1885). During the legislature 1886-1890 he was representing Santiago de Cuba. ACD, *Diario de las Sesiones de Cortes*, 18-04-1890, p. 4362.

<sup>88</sup> Fernández Almagro. *Historia de la España contemporánea*, vol. II, pp. 123-127; Javier Rubio. "Cánovas ante el gran reto antillano", in Emilio de Diego García *et al.* *Cánovas y la vertebración de España*. Madrid: Fundación Cánovas del Castillo, 1999, pp. 199-232.

<sup>89</sup> For instance, on 29th May 1890 *El Correo Militar* published an article by the Volunteer Colonel Eugenio Vandama y Calderón, who considered that the right to vote was a well-deserved reward for the many 'generous and continuous services rendered by the Volunteers to the motherland'. *El Correo Militar*, 29-05-1890, p. 1.

<sup>90</sup> Antonio Maura was a major political figure in Spain's modern history. A member of the Liberal (1881-1902) and the Conservative (1902-1925) parties, he presided over the Spanish Government for five terms between 1903 and 1922. Apart from Overseas (1892-1894), he also took charge of Justice (1894-1895) and Interior Departments (1902-1903). See Antonio Pérez Delgado. *Maura*. Madrid: Ediciones Tebas, 1974; Francisco J. Romero Salvadó. "Antonio Maura: From Messiah to Fireman", in Alejandro Quiroga & Miguel Ángel del Arco (eds.). *Right-Wing Spain in the Civil War Era: Soldiers of God and Apostles of the Fatherland, 1914-1945*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2012, pp. 1-26.

<sup>91</sup> These reforms have attracted considerable attention from historians, often being considered as Spain's last chance to prevent a new war for independence in Cuba, and henceforth the disintegration of the Spanish Empire. See James Durnerin. *Maura et Cuba. Politique coloniale d'un ministre liberal*. Besançon: Annales Littéraires de l'Université de Besançon/Les Belles Lettres, 1978; Emilio de Diego García, "¿La última oportunidad política en las Antillas?", in Emilio de Diego García (dir.). *1895, la guerra en Cuba y la España de la Restauración*. Madrid: Editorial Complutense, 1996, pp. 99-118; Pérez Cisneros. *El reformismo español en Cuba*, pp. 116-128; Fernando Maura. "Autonomía para Cuba: el proyecto Maura (1893)". *Razón española: Revista bimestral de pensamiento*, 2014, No.

Within this reformist mindset, Antonio Maura wanted to impede any potential political manipulation of the Volunteers. For instance, the new electoral reform project presented on 28<sup>th</sup> December 1892 did not feature the privileged vote for the Volunteers, although of course, their members could still vote should they meet the general requisites to be a voter.<sup>92</sup> Another measure was the prohibition of the Volunteers holding public offices in the city councils, thus consciously breaking a link with local political power that had been common since the Ten Years' War.<sup>93</sup> A gesture towards the Volunteers was the inclusion of their most veteran colonel into the *Consejo de Administración*, an advisory council for the Captains General.<sup>94</sup> Like Becerra's before him, Maura's project also excluded the majority of common Volunteers from active political participation.

To sum up, the direct link between the Volunteers and politics that had predominated since the Ten Years' War and was reinforced with the implementation of the Restoration Monarchy in the Antilles, was seriously threatened by the end of the interwar period (1878-1895). They were deprived of local political power, and it had become clear that the Government was unwilling to make them a privileged electoral group. The Constitutional Union was fiercely opposed, even warning Maura that the effect of this on the Volunteers might endanger Spanish rule in areas where Cuban nationalists were in a majority.<sup>95</sup> As a sign of protest, the Constitutional Union committee in Santiago de Cuba resigned *in toto* in August 1893.<sup>96</sup>

Yet despite rumours that the Volunteers were preparing violent demonstrations against the authorities, there was no movement among the Volunteers, who had generally

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184, pp. 169-184; Javier Tusell Gómez. "Maura: una propuesta para la solución del problema de Cuba", in José Ramón Cervera Pery *et al.* *La presencia militar española en Cuba (1865-1905)*. Madrid: Ministerio de Defensa / Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos, 1995, pp. 111-124.

<sup>92</sup> Only in Cuba, the electoral census went from 21,265 to 50,511, Roldán de Montaud. "Política y elecciones en Cuba, p. 275; Pérez Cisneros. *El reformismo español en Cuba*, p. 120; AHN, Ultramar, 4944, leg. 19; *Gaceta de Madrid*, 28-12-1892.

<sup>93</sup> Ramón Barrios, governor of the Western Region and Havana Province, stated that due to this measure he had had to replace several mayors, among them Santiago de los Baños', who had hold the office since 1869 and was the local Volunteer battalion's colonel. See AFAM, leg. 358-1, carpeta 5, Ramón Barrios a Antonio Maura, 28-02-1893.

<sup>94</sup> The *Consejo de Administración* members were to be the captain general, the archbishop of Santiago de Cuba, the Commander of the Navy in Cuba and Puerto Rico, the *Segundo Cabo*, and the provincial deputies that had been re-elected, Pérez Cisneros. *El reformismo español en Cuba*, pp. 123-124.

<sup>95</sup> Román Martínez, head of the Constitutional Union in Santiago de Cuba, told Maura that the effects of his reforms had 'deeply affected the Volunteers', and that the consequences could be 'deplorable', AFAM, leg. 166, No. 10, letter from Román Martínez to Antonio Maura, 12-11-1893.

<sup>96</sup> *El Noticiero Balear*, 17-08-1893, p. 3.



accepted Maura's reforms.<sup>97</sup> The dissociation between the Constitutional Union's claims, and the Volunteers' attitudes, seemed to indicate a considerable distance that had opened between the Volunteers and the *integrista* political elite. It does not mean that the Volunteers had necessarily accepted Maura's thesis, but rather that they shied away from open confrontation with reformists and autonomists. Besides, the conditions of the right to vote discussed under Minister Becerra's project neglected numerous echelons of Volunteers: all the non-decorated rank-and-file members with less than six years of service. Also, the right to vote might have been less a concern for the thousands of peasant Volunteers, mostly Cubans, who are considered here to have been more affected by the neglected condition of the countryside than by political manoeuvring in Havana and Madrid.

### 3. An Unclear Military Role

After having played a central role in the Antilles during the Ten Years' War, the Volunteers had to redefine their role in the Spanish imperial context in times of peace. After the Pact of Zanjón, the Volunteers were faced with the pre-1868 situation, where only their involvement in supporting the imperial adventures in Morocco (1859-1860) and Santo Domingo (1861-1865) had legitimized their existence. The war in Cuba had also legitimized the Volunteers in Puerto Rico as a deterrent force to secure Spanish rule and prevent the any eventual uprisings spreading on the island. Consequently, after 1878, because they lacked a clear military role, service in the Volunteers became less appealing, their *raison d'être* at least dubious, and their morale low.

The ways in which the Volunteers both in Cuba and Puerto Rico attempted to redress their decline were similar, though with different outcomes. A good example of this divergence was the impact of the military service law of 11<sup>th</sup> July 1885, which allowed the conscripts to serve their duty in the Volunteers instead of the regular Army or the Navy. The impact of this measure on each island reflected the differing situations of the Volunteers in Cuba and Puerto Rico.

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<sup>97</sup> AFAM, leg. 335-1, carpeta 5, telegram from Captain General Alejandro Rodríguez Arias to Antonio Maura, 12-06-1893.

### 3.1. The Challenges of Peace

After the pact of Zanjón in Cuba, there was an excess of men-at-arms. The solution to reduce the number of regular Army soldiers was relatively easy: their units could be merged or dissolved, and the soldiers shipped back to the Peninsula.<sup>98</sup> The 85,000 Volunteers, however, presented a problem.<sup>99</sup> Whereas the units created during the war could be dissolved, their members could be neither stripped of their Volunteer uniform nor shipped somewhere else, for these men were civilians not subjected to military laws during peacetime.<sup>100</sup>

The victorious colonial state attempted to square this circle. Throughout 1878 several units of Volunteers were dissolved, and the officers that had been mobilized were offered the possibility of joining the regular army or being recommended for appointments in the island's administration, by the Royal Decree of 7<sup>th</sup> November.<sup>101</sup> Joining the army could mean being sent to the Peninsula or to other Spanish colonies, however, so this measure scarcely appealed to men who had generally settled at a young age in Cuba, had a regular job, and often had started a family in the Antilles.<sup>102</sup>

In Puerto Rico, the Volunteers were affected by low morale due to the absence of a concrete military purpose, and insignificant membership in comparison to Cuba. By 1884 there were only ca. 4,700 Volunteers on the island, for a population of 810,000.<sup>103</sup> Without a clear military threat, service in the Volunteers, which meant having to combine a regular job with unpaid military service, had become unappealing. Attempting to redress the situation, the Basque Pablo Ubarri, colonel of the San Juan's 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion and leader of the

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<sup>98</sup> Whereas in 1878 the Army had 75,000 men in Cuba, by 1880 the numbers had been cut to 30,000. The whole process of the Army restructuring in Cuba has been studied by Andrés Mas Chao. *Evolución de la infantería en el reinado de Alfonso XII*. Madrid: Servicio de Publicaciones del EME, 1989, pp. 158-181.

<sup>99</sup> Otero Pimentel. *Memoria sobre los Voluntarios*, p. 177.

<sup>100</sup> The loss of the Volunteer status was only contemplated for those members who had violated the militia's rules. *Reglamento para los cuerpos de Voluntarios de la isla de Cuba* (1869), art. 64, p. 22.

<sup>101</sup> Mas Chao. *Evolución de la infantería*, pp. 165-166; *Gaceta de Madrid*, 8-11-1878, No. 512, t. IV, p. 373.

<sup>102</sup> For instance, in 1877 58% of the men of the Tiguabo's Infantry Volunteers Section were married, AGMM, Ultramar, Capitanía General de Cuba Subinspección General de Voluntarios, caja 3057, "Sección de Voluntarios de Tiguabos".

<sup>103</sup> In comparison, by 1877 Cuba there were ca. 85,000 Volunteers for a population of ca. 1,435,000 inhabitants. This means that the ratio of Volunteers/inhabitants was 1/16 in Cuba, and 1/172 in Puerto Rico. Figueroa. *Sugar, Slavery, and Freedom*, p. 48, table 2.1; Fe Iglesias. "El censo cubano de 1877 y sus diferentes versiones". *Santiago*, 1979, No. 34, pp. 167-214; *Ejército de Puerto-Rico* (1884), p. 7.

*incondicionales*, suggested to Captain General Eulogio Despujols (1879-1881) a symbolic measure: rewarding all the local Volunteers with a medal to foster their social status.<sup>104</sup>

The *Medalla a la Constancia* (Medal to Constancy) was consequently approved, and given to several thousand men representing all the island's Volunteer units in a public ceremony in front of El Morro, the iconic fortress that has protected San Juan's bay since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, on 11<sup>th</sup> March 1881.<sup>105</sup> According to the *integrista* newspaper *Boletín Mercantil*, the ceremony was an enthusiastic demonstration of loyalism and a proof of the Volunteers' good shape.<sup>106</sup> However, it did not attract new recruits. In December 1884, Captain General Luis Dabán (1884-1887) urged the officers to recruit more men and to improve military preparations, which had been generally neglected. A good example was Ponce's battalion, which was not dissolved, merely due to the bad image this would have presented of *integrismo* in a city with a powerful autonomist movement.<sup>107</sup>

Because the Volunteers were the armed wing of the *incondicionales*, and hence a force that could be used against the autonomists, Captain General Dabán closely collaborated with Pablo Ubarri, leader of the Unconditional Party, in the revitalization of the Volunteers.<sup>108</sup> A means to increase the Volunteers' popularity was to recount their history. The Army officer Rafael Rosado y Brincau was commissioned by the Captaincy General to write his *Bosquejo histórico de la Institución de Voluntarios en Puerto Rico*, published in 1888. This book offered a laudatory version of the Volunteers and insisted on its key role in keeping Puerto Rico Spanish.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Pablo Ubarri Capetillo (1824-1894) was a native of Santurce (Basque Country) who settled at a young age in Puerto Rico. He was associated with the merchant community that first organized the Volunteers on the island in 1864 and became the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion's colonel in 1874. In 1880, he succeeded the Puerto Rican José Ramón Fernández, marquis of La Esperanza, as leader of the Unconditional Spanish Party. Also, he was president of the *Diputación Provincial*, the *Casino Español de Puerto Rico*, and member of the *Banco Español de la Isla de Puerto Rico*. Due to his services to Spain, he received the *Condado de San José de Santurce* in 1880, among several other decorations. During the 1880s and until his death his business interests mostly focused on the trams and railways, which he introduced in Puerto Rico. Jesús Martín Ramos. "Bosquejo histórico-biográfico de Pablo Ubarri y Capetillo, Conde de San José de Santurce", in Octavio Ruiz-Manjón Cabeza & María Alicia Langa Laorga (eds.). *Los significados del 98: la sociedad española en la génesis del siglo XX*. Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 1999, pp. 201-212.

<sup>105</sup> The medal had been created by a Royal Decree in 27<sup>th</sup> August 1880. AHN, Ultramar, 5114, exp. 12; Rosado y Brincau. *Bosquejo Histórico*, pp. 71-83; González Cuevas. *¿Defendiendo el honor?*, pp. 72-77.

<sup>106</sup> *Boletín Mercantil*, 24-03-1881.

<sup>107</sup> AGMM, Documentación de Puerto Rico, sig. 5179.24, 5199.2, 5202.2; Rosado y Brincau. *Bosquejo Histórico*, pp. 95-105.

<sup>108</sup> Rosado y Brincau. *Bosquejo Histórico*, pp. 125-151.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 153-161.

Yet, the most important task in revitalizing the Volunteers was their reorganization. Twenty years after the creation of Puerto Rico's first Volunteer battalion in San Juan in 1864, there were now eight battalions for each of the island's military regions.<sup>110</sup> The vague Volunteer *reglamento* of 1869 and their lack of a concrete purpose had shaped a militia with serious deficiencies in terms of uniformity, the state of their weaponry, military training, and membership.<sup>111</sup> Willing to improve their situation, Captain General Dabán created a committee in November 1886 including army officers and representatives of the Volunteers to study plausible solutions.<sup>112</sup>

Within a year, the committee wrote a new *reglamento* that was submitted to the Ministry of War in Madrid and sanctioned by a Royal Decree on 10<sup>th</sup> July 1888. The eight battalions were turned into fourteen, with similar numbers, clear norms as to the possession of weapons, which usually was afforded by the Volunteers themselves, and military training.<sup>113</sup> The number of Volunteers increased by 20%, from 4,412 men in 1884 to 5,328 in 1888, at least enough for an island that had no serious external threat and already had a regular Army garrison aided by the Civil Guard.<sup>114</sup>

The *reglamento* of 1888 ensured a much more organized, coordinated, and fit force of Volunteers in Puerto Rico, and increased its members by almost 1,000 men. It remained in force practically untouched until the dissolution of the militia in 1898 at the end of

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<sup>110</sup> The battalions' organization dated back to 20<sup>th</sup> October 1874 and was as follows: 1<sup>st</sup> in San Juan, 2<sup>nd</sup> in Bayamón, 3<sup>rd</sup> in Arecibo, 4<sup>th</sup> in Aguadilla, 5<sup>th</sup> in Mayagüez, 6<sup>th</sup> in Ponce, 7<sup>th</sup> in Guayama, and 8<sup>th</sup> in Humacao. Their numbers oscillated from 8<sup>th</sup> Humacao's 355 men, to 5<sup>th</sup> Mayagüez 856. González Cuevas. *¿Defendiendo el honor?*, p. 71; *Ejército de Puerto-Rico. Estado militar...* (1884), p. 7.

<sup>111</sup> In 1886, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, in San Juan, still had 497 12mm Chassepot rifles with their bayonets, bought to Italy in 1870. However, these rifles had no ammunition, for its production had ceased in 1875, after it had been the basic rifle of the French soldier during the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871). AGMM, Documentación de Puerto Rico, sig. 5193.3; Roger Ford. *The World's Great Rifles*. London: Brown Books, 1998, p. 23.

<sup>112</sup> The committee was presided over by Juan Contreras y Martínez (*Segundo Cabo*, or Captaincy General second-in-command), Colonel Juan Álvarez Arenas (Staff Chief), Colonel Fernando Alameda Liancourt (Engineers deputy inspector), Colonel Luis López Ballesteros (infantry), Major Eduardo Valera y Vicente (artillery), Lieutenant Colonel Pablo Ubarri (1<sup>st</sup> Volunteer Battalion), Lieutenant Colonel Bernardo Pérez Méndez (2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion), Lieutenant Colonel Manuel González Fernández (3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion), Lieutenant Colonel Ulpiano Valdés (8<sup>th</sup> Battalion), and the Secretary Lieutenant Colonel Juan de Zbikowski y Tello (infantry), Rosado y Brincau. *Bosquejo Histórico*, pp. 130-131.

<sup>113</sup> The new battalions' organization was: 1<sup>st</sup> San Juan, 2<sup>nd</sup> Bayamón, 3<sup>rd</sup> Río Piedras; 4<sup>th</sup> Arecibo, 5<sup>th</sup> Aguadilla, 6<sup>th</sup> Mayagüez, 7<sup>th</sup> Maricao, 8<sup>th</sup> Sábana Grande, 9<sup>th</sup> Ponce, 10<sup>th</sup> Coamo, 11<sup>th</sup> Guayama, 12<sup>th</sup> Hato Grande, 13<sup>th</sup> Humacao, 14<sup>th</sup> 'Tiradores de la Altura' in Utuado, plus an independent company in the island of Vieques. *Isla de Puerto-Rico. Reglamento para los cuerpos de Voluntarios* (1888); Rosado y Brincau. *Bosquejo Histórico*, pp. 143-151.

<sup>114</sup> *Ejército de Puerto-Rico* (1884 and 1888).

Spanish rule in Puerto Rico. Undoubtedly, other factors helped the new *reglamento* to become a success. Firstly, their modest numbers (ca. 5,000 men) and the size of Puerto Rico (3,515 sq. miles, in comparison to Cuba's 42,426 sq. miles) made the fulfilment of orders of joint manoeuvres easier in logistical terms. Secondly, a clear leadership purpose which coincided with the leader of the *incondicionales*.<sup>115</sup> Pablo Ubarri Capetillo was the mastermind behind the whole process of reorganization of Puerto Rico's Volunteers, which he saw as inextricably united to his Unconditional Spanish Party.<sup>116</sup> Thirdly, due to the smaller scale of sugar and tobacco production, and the small workforce needed by coffee farms, Puerto Rico had no proletariat as such by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>117</sup> This meant that, lacking an organized labour movement, the cohesion of the Volunteers was not hampered by internal disputes between labourers and employers and between troopers and officers. In Cuba, however, the situation was rather different.

### 3.2. Less Motivated Recruits: The Military Service Law of 1885

The military service law of 11<sup>th</sup> July 1885 introduced a change that could theoretically benefit the Volunteers: it allowed the *peninsulares* that had been serving in the Volunteers for at least one year to fulfil their military service in their units instead of joining the army or the navy, where the service lasted for four years.<sup>118</sup> The service period in the Volunteers was longer (six years), but it would be spent at home, and it would not be as intense militarily as in the Army or the Navy.

According to Fernando Puell de la Villa, military service became increasingly more unpleasant for young Spanish men during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, due to the

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<sup>115</sup> José Ramón Fernández y Martínez, Marquis of La Esperanza (1870-1880), and Pablo Ubarri Capetillo, Count of San José de Santurce (1880-1894), *Cubano Iguina*. "Puerto Rico", pp. 541-557.

<sup>116</sup> Rosado y Brincau. *Bosquejo Histórico*, pp. 235-239; AHN, Ultramar, 5100, exp. 12, 13, 19, 34; 322, exp. 4, 5; 428, exp. 48-52, 54.

<sup>117</sup> Before the US invasion, the labour movement in Puerto Rico consisted basically of recreational and mutual societies, such as the *Círculo de Recreo y Beneficencia* (San Juan, 1872), or the *Sociedad Amigos del Bien Público* (San Juan, 1873). Also, it was close to autonomism rather than to the socialist or anarchist trends that did not enter the island until the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The first labour organization, the *Federación Regional de los Trabajadores de Puerto Rico*, was created in October 1898, under the first US military government. Gervasio L. García & A. G. Quintero Rivera. *Desafío y solidaridad. Breve historia del movimiento obrero puertorriqueño*. San Juan: Ediciones Huracán, 1982, pp. 13-34. For the role of coffee in developing Puerto Rico's agricultural industry see Laird W. Bergad. *Coffee and the Growth of Agrarian Capitalism in Nineteenth Century Puerto Rico*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983.

<sup>118</sup> *Gaceta de Madrid*, 13-07-1885, No. 194, additional article No. 3, p. 123. This only affected *peninsulares*, for Creoles were not subjected to compulsory military service.

harsh conditions conscripts had to face in campaigns such as the Santo Domingo War, or the Ten Years' War, where more than 80,000 Spanish soldiers had died.<sup>119</sup> In order to avoid the hardships of military service, thousands of young Spaniards migrated to other areas of Hispanic America or French Algeria instead of settling in Cuba or Puerto Rico, where they were still required to do military service. García Balañá has concluded that this was a sign of the decline of Spanish imperial culture, for young *peninsulares* preferred to settle outside Spanish national territory rather than serve in the army or the navy.<sup>120</sup>

The law of 1885 successfully reversed the migration ratio to Cuba.<sup>121</sup> The impact of this measure, however, was barely noticeable in Puerto Rico, for its poor economic development had never attracted great waves of *peninsulares*.<sup>122</sup> Consequently, no more than a dozen new Volunteers benefited from the 1885 law in the Puerto Rican battalions.<sup>123</sup> In Cuba, however, the law had rather different consequences. Existing evidence shows that these incomers had a negative impact on the moral and martial spirit of the Volunteers. In a letter to his uncle back in Sitges dated in October 1885, Jaime Cañameras y Ferrer, a young rank-and-file member of Santiago de Cuba's 1<sup>st</sup> Volunteer Battalion, considered that many of his young peninsular colleagues were joining the Volunteers 'for the sole purpose of avoiding military service in the regular army, and lacked the motivation necessary to fulfil their duties effectively.'<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Fernando Puell de la Villa. *El soldado desconocido. De la leva a la "mili" (1700-2012)*. Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2012, pp. 251-258.

<sup>120</sup> Between 1882 and 1885 106,813 Spaniards had migrated to Hispanic America, but less than half this number (47,886) had settled in Cuba. In French Algeria, there were 114,320 Spaniards in 1881, which went up to 157,560 in 1889. AHN, Ultramar, 120, exp. 5; García Balañá. "The Empire is no longer a social unit", pp. 92-103; Nicolás Sánchez-Albornoz. "La emigración española a América en medio milenio: pautas sociales". *Historia Social*, 2002, No. 42, pp. 40-57; Moreno Friginals & Moreno Masó (1993), p. 121; Eloy Martín Corrales. "La emigración española en Argelia". *Awraq: Estudios sobre el mundo árabe e islámico contemporáneo*, 2012, No. 5-6, pp. 47-63.

<sup>121</sup> 89,868 *peninsulares* migrated to Cuba in 1886-1890, for 60,817 in 1881-1885. Moreno Friginals & Moreno Masó. *Guerra, migración y muerte*, p. 121.

<sup>122</sup> In fact, they were never more than a tiny minority. According to the *integrista* peninsular journalist José Pérez Morís, in 1860 there were only 13,104 *peninsulares* for a population of 600,233 (2.2%), whereas in 1899, right after the end of Spanish rule, they were only 7,690 for a total census of 953,243 (0.8%). See Cubano Iguina. *El hilo en el laberinto*, table 1, p. 156, taken from US War Department, *Report on the Census of Puerto Rico, 1899*, Washington D.C., Government Printing Press, 1900, pp. 34, 43, 62, 94; Pérez Morís & Cueto y González Quijano. *Historia de la insurrección de Lares*, p. 223. For a brief overview of Puerto Rico's economy at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, see Ángel G. Quintero Rivera. "Background to the Emergence of Imperialist Capitalism", in Adalberto López & James Petras (eds.). *Puerto Rico and Puerto Ricans: Studies in History and Society*. New York, London, Sydney, Toronto: John Wiley & Sons, 1974, pp. 87-117.

<sup>123</sup> In 1886, only 9 out of the 806 members of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, stationed in San Juan, were conscripts benefiting from the 11<sup>th</sup> July 1885 law. See AGMM, Documentación de Puerto Rico, sig. 5193.3.

<sup>124</sup> I thank Lluís Riudor Gorgas for letting me consult the private correspondence of his great-grandfather Antonio Ferrer Robert.

One of the consequences of the influx of conscripts into the Volunteers was the increase in social protests in the cities with a strong presence of *peninsulares*, especially Havana. The young men reinforced the populist nature of the urban Volunteers, bringing forms of social protest to Cuba. These young *peninsulares* also brought ideas of socialism and (to a less extent) anarchism, which further radicalized and politicized the Cuban labour movement.<sup>125</sup> For instance, one of these young *peninsulares* was the Basque Ramiro de Maeztu, who would later be known as a leading figure of Spanish conservative thought but arrived in Cuba as a socialist.<sup>126</sup> Shortly after having settled in Havana, where he worked as a shop assistant, he joined the Volunteers in 1893 and became involved in the city's thriving labour movement.<sup>127</sup> In a time of deep economic crisis in Cuba, with no less than 20,000 unemployed people in Havana (out of ca. 250,000 inhabitants in the late 1880s), labour demands were often mixed with demonstrations against the endemic corruption of the colonial administration.<sup>128</sup>

The mixture of *integrismo*, anti-corruption and social demands reinforced the “plebeian nationalist” character of the Volunteers.<sup>129</sup> In fact, their allegiance to the Spanish

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<sup>125</sup> Casanovas. *Bread, or Bullets!*, pp. 203-221; Frank Fernández. *El anarquismo en Cuba*. Madrid: Fundación de Estudios Libertarios Anselmo Lorenzo, 2000, pp. 23-46; Pérez, Jr. *Cuba. Between Reform & Revolution*, pp. 132.

<sup>126</sup> Ramiro de Maeztu y Whitney (1874-1936) was a referential figure in Spanish conservative thought and a member of what was known as *Generación del 98*. He is best known for his book *Defensa de la Hispanidad* (1934), in which he theorised on the spiritual and cultural unity of the Spanish-speaking peoples. Born into a relatively well-to-do family, to a Cuban father and a British mother, he devoted most of his life to political thought and journalism, being a correspondent in Britain for several Spanish newspapers during the First World War. Between 1928 and 1930 he was Spain's ambassador in Argentina. Initially a Socialist, he gradually approached the conservative ideals which developed into a reactionary ideology during the Second Spanish Republic (1931-1936). He directed the conservative journal *Acción Española* and became a member of the Congress of Deputies for the monarchic *Renovación Española* party (1933-1936). Due to his conservative ideology and opposition to the Second Republic, he was assassinated by republican militiamen in Madrid in October 1936, during the Spanish Civil War. For a biography see Pedro Carlos González Cuevas. *Maeztu. Biografía de un nacionalista español*. Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2003.

<sup>127</sup> Maeztu joined the *Batallón de Voluntarios de Chapelgorris del Cerro* in May 1893. This battalion was mostly made up of Basque immigrants. By April 1895, once the war had broken out, he was still a member of the company but was apparently on leave in Spain. AGMS, leg. M-147.

<sup>128</sup> Jean-Philippe Luis. “Les employés : une horde prédatrice ?”, in Jean-Philippe, Luis (ed.). *L'État dans ses colonies. Les administrateurs de l'empire espagnol au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle*. Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2015, pp. 227-252. Corruption in the Spanish imperial administration was widespread, not only in Cuba. For instance, see Xavier Huetz de Lemps. “Un cas colonial de corruption systémique : les Philippines à la fin du XIX<sup>e</sup> Siècle”. *Illes i Imperis*, 2014, No. 16, pp. 135-146.

<sup>129</sup> According to Andreu Miralles, a combination of populism and nationalism had been the bedrock of the middle-class and proletarian Spanish democrats and republicans' reaction against the abuses of the Moderate Party Governments during the 1840s. Xavier Andreu Miralles. “El pueblo y sus opresores: populismo y nacionalismo en la cultura política del radicalismo democrático, 1844-1848”. *Historia y política: ideas, procesos y movimientos sociales*, 2011, No. 25, pp. 65-91. Philip G. Nord has noted similar tendencies in the Paris shopkeepers' political culture during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Philip

Nation was used to legitimize their demonstrations against those who they perceived as elitist, corrupt, colonial civil servants, who undermined Spain's rule in Cuba and damaged the interest of working-class Volunteers. This combination of nationalism with social demands was not unique to Cuba, of course. For instance, a similar example can be found in the *Boulangist* movement in France (1885-1889), whose supporters considered the Third Republic an elitist, corrupt and anti-national regime.<sup>130</sup> Havana's working-class Volunteers had very similar thoughts on the colonial authorities in Cuba.

Strong social unrest erupted between 23<sup>rd</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> August 1887, when ca. 5,000 young workers, mostly young peninsular Volunteers who were probably benefiting from the 1885 law, demonstrated in central Havana for four days demanding the removal of acting Captain General Sabas Marín (1887-1889) for his blatant connivance with corrupt officials. The demonstrators requested the arrival of Manuel Salamanca, who had already been appointed as the new captain general but was being stalled in the Peninsula by the Government for having declared to a Spanish newspaper that he was going to eradicate corruption in Cuba.<sup>131</sup> Since the Volunteers retained the right to bear arms at home, the authorities were extremely wary of provoking their anger, for the situation could easily evolve, for example, into something similar to the expulsion of Captain General Domingo Dulce by the Volunteers in June 1869. Finally, the situation was defused thanks to the use of regular cavalry to ward off the demonstrators, and the collaboration of the Volunteer officers in assuaging the anger of their subordinates.<sup>132</sup>

This event was understood as a clear demonstration that corruption in Cuba was being tolerated by the Spanish Government and promoted by members of the *integrista* elite.<sup>133</sup> It showed a growing capacity for social unrest within the Volunteers, partially due to the influx of new peninsular recruits, and the discrepancy between the rank-and-file

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G. Nord. *The Politics of Resentment. Shopkeeper Protest in Nineteenth-Century Paris*. New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 2009, pp. 261-301. Also see Albert García Balañá. "Clase, Pueblo y Patria en la España liberal: comunidades polisémicas y experiencias plebeyas en la Cataluña urbana, 1840-1870", in Fernando Molina Aparicio (coord.). *Extranjeros en el pasado. Nuevos historiadores de la España contemporánea*. Vitoria: Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad del País Vasco, 2009, pp.97-128.

<sup>130</sup> Michel Winock. *Histoire de l'extrême droite en France*. Paris: Seuil, 1994, pp. 51-82.

<sup>131</sup> *El Resumen*, 6-8-1887; Casanovas. *Bread, or Bullets!*, p. 183. Francisco Moreno. *El país del chocolate (la inmoralidad en Cuba)*. Madrid: Imp. de F. García Herrero, 1887, p. 5. Corruption, of course, was not unique to the Spanish Empire. In fact, corruption was an inherent element of imperial structures. See Jonathan Saha. *Law, Disorder and the Colonial State. Corruption in Burma, c.1900*. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2013, pp. 16-46

<sup>132</sup> ANRC, Asuntos Políticos, leg. 105, exp. 4; Casanovas. *Bread, or Bullets!*, pp. 183-185.

<sup>133</sup> This precisely was the denunciation of the peninsular journalist Francisco Moreno: *El país del chocolate*, pp. 14-39.



and their officers (who were often involved in corruption cases at the time).<sup>134</sup> In 1890, Captain General Manuel Salamanca declared that ‘all the Volunteers in here [Havana] and in the provinces, are absolutely with me’, and that his true enemies were the members of the *integrista* elite.<sup>135</sup> Quiroz considered that this visible corruption discouraged many Cubans from continued loyalty to Spain.<sup>136</sup> Agreeing on this point, it should be added that corruption was also eroding the loyalty of the Volunteers towards the authorities.

Undoubtedly, the influx of conscripts and corruption altered the cohesion of the Volunteers and their relationship with the authorities. In 1898 Polavieja recalled that when he assumed the Captaincy General of Cuba in August 1890, he had not seen in the Volunteers ‘the good spirit they used to have. Peace had undermined their enthusiasm, and politics had them divided; within their troopers, there were already socialists and anarchists, and because of these, separatists too.’<sup>137</sup>

Polavieja’s suspicions might have been exaggerated, but there were indeed Volunteers who were actively participating in Socialist and Anarchist platforms, as has been pointed out by Joan Casanovas and Frank Fernández.<sup>138</sup> Nonetheless, less politicised labour associations of cigar makers and shopkeepers remained the centre of the *peninsulares’* labour movement in Havana.<sup>139</sup> As seen in the previous chapter, the Volunteers in Havana had already been engaged in labour demands during the Ten Years’ War. Upon this foundation, the combination of administrative crises, corruption during the interwar period, and repression of any labour movement expression under Polavieja meant that now they welcomed socialist and even anarchist ideals.

A chance for Polavieja to implement his methods occurred shortly after his arrival in Cuba. On 11<sup>th</sup> October 1890, the coachmen of Havana went on strike and were soon joined by tram and cab drivers, cigar makers, bakers and other trades dominated by

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<sup>134</sup> AGMM, Subinspección General de Voluntarios, caja 2997, 2998.

<sup>135</sup> Among others, Salamanca explicitly mentioned men such as José Eugenio Moré and Leopoldo de Carvajal, Marquis of Pinar del Río, both Volunteer officers and members of the Constitutional Union. AFAM, leg. 488, carpeta 14, carta del general Salamanca al presidente del Consejo de Ministros (Práxedes Mateo Sagasta); Villa. *Álbum biográfico*, pp. 15-17 & 21-24.

<sup>136</sup> Quiroz. “Corrupción, burocracia colonial y veteranos separatistas en Cuba, 1868-1910”, pp. 91-111.

<sup>137</sup> García de Polavieja. *Relación documentada*, pp. 76-77.

<sup>138</sup> Joan Casanovas reports on a peninsular Volunteer, Eduardo González Bobés, who gave a speech in the Labour Congress held on 15<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> January 1892 in Havana, in which anarchist theories predominated without explicitly rejecting the idea of separation from Spain. Casanovas. *Bread, or Bullets!*, pp. 217.

<sup>139</sup> Rubén Lahullier Chaviano. “La transformación de los espacios de sociabilidad en la Cuba finisecular: el caso de la Asociación de Dependientes del Comercio de La Habana (1880-1898)”. *Minius: Revista do Departamento de Historia, Arte e Xeografía*, 2006, No. 14, pp. 171-190.

*peninsulares*, demanding better salaries, lighter regulations, and fewer taxes.<sup>140</sup> In short, Havana was facing the likely prospect of a general strike.

Coachmen were a particularly mobilized group of workers, mostly made up of young *peninsulares*, many of whom were Volunteers.<sup>141</sup> In his reports to the Overseas Minister Antonio María Fabié (1890-1891), Polavieja explicitly blamed the conscripts that were undertaking their military service with the Volunteers as the instigators and organizers of the strike.<sup>142</sup> He also noted that the use of other Volunteers to quell them was no option, for he was unsure of their loyalty. This could have terrible consequences for public order, since ‘every Volunteer has a rifle and 70 cartridges at home’. Polavieja insisted on the necessity of placing the conscripts of the 1885 law into regular army battalions, as he considered them a destabilizing element for the Volunteers. As this was rejected by the Ministry of War, Polavieja opted to use regular soldiers to replace the strikers and threatened the Volunteer officers with revoking their privileges in case they were not able to convince their subordinates to give up. The strike was eventually called off after four days.<sup>143</sup>

Again, the Volunteers had shown that they retained their capacity to mobilize different trades and coerce the authorities. Polavieja, who now believed that ‘in Cuba, everything conspires against Spain’, distrusted the Volunteers in the cities just as much as he had distrusted their colleagues in the countryside when he was appointed as governor of Oriente back in 1879.<sup>144</sup> Polavieja did not suggest the suppression of the Volunteers, however but rather coincided with some voices within the Volunteers that demanded a complete reorganization of the militia. He probably preferred to reorganize the Volunteers

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<sup>140</sup> José Luis Luzón. “Estado, etnias y espacio urbano: La Habana 1878”. *Boletín americanista*, 1991, No. 41, pp. 137-150; Casanovas. *Bread, or Bullets!*, table 8, p. 39.

<sup>141</sup> On 11<sup>th</sup> September 1872, they had gone on strike, paralyzing Havana’s transport for a few days. Manuel Moreno Friginals indicated that most of these men were members of the 5<sup>th</sup> Volunteer Battalion. In 1881 they would create their own mutual insurance company, the *Sociedad de Socorros Mutuos de Cocheros Blancos*. This society offered financial assistance in case of accidents, medical assistance, burial; and a ticket back to the Peninsula if necessary. ANRC, Gobierno General, leg. 97, exp. 4468; Moreno Friginals. *Cuba/España*, p. 249.

<sup>142</sup> Antonio María Fabié Escudero (1832-1899) was a lawyer, journalist, and historian who entered politics as a member of the Congress of Deputies in 1863. He was a conservative under the banners of the Moderate Party and the Conservative Party after 1874. In 1898 he published *Mi gestión ministerial respecto á la isla de Cuba*, in which he recalled his experience as overseas minister.

<sup>143</sup> AGMM, Ministerio de la Guerra, sig. 5851.19; Casanovas. *Bread, or Bullets!*, pp. 210-211.

<sup>144</sup> AGMM, Ministerio de la Guerra, sig. 5851.19.

rather than to suppress them because of the limited presence of the regular army in Cuba. In 1889, there were only 22,517 regular soldiers against more than 60,000 Volunteers.<sup>145</sup>

### 3.3. Cuba's Volunteer *reglamento* of 1892

The need to reorganize the Volunteers in Cuba seems to have been widely recognised by the early 1890s. There was not a consensus on how to do it though. The Volunteers not only had the problem of what role to play in the military system. There were also serious problems of a lack of military discipline. The Volunteer Captain Alejandro Menéndez Acebal, a former Army officer, considered that the relaxation of military spirit was one of the main problems the Volunteers faced. To contribute to remedying this, he wrote in 1890 a *Cartilla del Voluntario*, an informative booklet in which he stressed the importance of knowing the ordinances, respecting the officers, and fulfilling their military duties properly.<sup>146</sup>

In a similar tone, the Volunteer officer Eugenio Vandama y Calderón argued in 1890 that the Volunteers had become a source of chaos: veterans and motivated patriots were sharing service with unmotivated young conscripts, the urban Volunteers still fulfilled their duties of protecting key infrastructures, but in the countryside, they had no real purpose.<sup>147</sup> He also noted that too many *oficiales supernumerarios* were enjoying the privileges of the uniform without having to perform any service.<sup>148</sup> Vandama advocated for

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<sup>145</sup> Casanovas. *Bread, or Bullets!*, table 9, p. 45.

<sup>146</sup> A native of Asturias, Menéndez Acebal was captain of the 1<sup>st</sup> Chasseurs Volunteers Battalion of Cárdenas (Matanzas province). He was also the editor of *El Eco de Cárdenas*, an *integrista* newspaper. See Alejandro Menéndez Acebal. *Cartilla del Voluntario*. Cárdenas: Establecimiento Tipográfico, 1895, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (first published in 1890), pp. 9-13.

<sup>147</sup> Eugenio Vandama y Calderón was born in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria in 1849, and settled in Havana in 1865, where he was employed in commerce. He joined the Volunteers on 10<sup>th</sup> January 1869, having seen several armed actions throughout the Ten Years' War, which earned him multiple military decorations. He became commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Artillery Volunteer Battalion in July 1886. He was also an active member within the Canarian community in Havana. By 1887 he was treasurer of the *Asociación Canaria de Beneficencia y Protección Agrícola*. See Villa. *Álbum biográfico*, pp. 33-35; Vandama y Calderón. *Colección de artículos; Diario de Tenerife*, 15-04-1887, p. 2.

<sup>148</sup> The *oficiales supernumerarios* were honorary Volunteers who undertook no military service, but contributed with a stipend for the membership which was used to sustain the companies' regular costs, such as uniforms, repair rifles, etc. The main reason for joining the Volunteers as an *official supernumerario* was the social status and the reputation given by this militia. For instance, this was the case of Segundo Álvarez, co-owner of the cigar factory *La Corona*, and president of the *Cámara de Comercio*, who in November 1891 paid 20 pesos as *capitán supernumerario* of a Volunteer battalion in Havana. As a curiosity, it is worth mentioning that *La Corona*, established in 1845, moved to Miguel de Aldama's palace in Havana, that the Volunteers ransacked in 24<sup>th</sup> January 1869. ANRC, Donativos y Remisiones, leg. 418, exp. 29; García de Polavieja. *Relación documentada*, p. 251; J. C. Prince. *Cuba illustrated with the biography and portrait of Christopher Columbus containing*

a different role for the Volunteers. He envisioned them being turned into a reserve of the regular army made up of only Spanish conscripts, both *peninsulares*, and Cubans of all races between the ages of 18 and 40. Vandama wished to make the Volunteers a regular Army in all but in name, in the guise of a colonial militia, similar to some of the units that major empires had in their colonies, such as Britain and France.<sup>149</sup> For instance, the British settlers in the Cape Colony created the semi-professional Volunteer Force in 1853, which took part in the colonial campaigns in South Africa throughout the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>150</sup> Since the conquest of Algeria that began in 1830, France maintained an *Armée d'Afrique* made up of segregated units of European and Muslim soldiers, such as the *Chasseurs d'Afrique* or the *Tirailleurs Algériens* respectively.<sup>151</sup>

The Spanish authorities in Cuba also shared the concern that the Volunteers ought to be reorganized, though in the other direction. For this purpose, a commission created by Captain General Polavieja made up of Volunteers and Army officers, elaborated a new *reglamento* to replace the norm of 1869, which was finally sanctioned on 7<sup>th</sup> July 1892.<sup>152</sup> Vandama's project to make the Volunteers the army's colonial reserve did not materialize. The *reglamento* of 1892 made the Volunteers neither the reserve army nor established a recruitment of conscripts. The Filipino-born War Minister Marcelo Azcárraga Palmero (1890-1892), considered that the creation in Cuba of an army reserve that did not exist in Spain could have thorny political implications, in the sense that the island was taking a different path from the Peninsula. Besides, Polavieja feared that conscripting Cubans would mean incorporating into the Volunteers thousands of separatists and giving them military training.<sup>153</sup> However, the new *reglamento* gave the Volunteers a more defined

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*also general information relating to Havana, Matanzas, Cienfuegos, and the island of Cuba with illustrations and maps together with an Anglo-Spanish vocabulary.* New York: Napoléon Thompson & Co., 1893-1894, p. 121; *Gaceta de La Habana*, 28-04-1871.

<sup>149</sup> In this aspect, Vandama coincided with the Army Major Julio Álvarez Chacón, who since 1882 had been defending the necessity of creating a reserve force for the Army, made of volunteers and conscripts that would operate as an auxiliary force. Julio Álvarez Chacón. *España gran potencia por su organización militar*. Santiago de Cuba: Sección Tipográfica del E.M. de la Comandancia General, 1882, pp. 41-44; Vandama y Calderón. *Colección de artículos*, pp. 45-66. The debate on the necessity of a colonial army for Spain continued after the loss of Cuba. For instance, see Alberto Bru Sánchez-Fortún. "El debate sobre el ejército colonial en España: 1909-1914". *Revista de Historia Militar*, 2012, Año LVI, No. 112, pp. 65-124.

<sup>150</sup> Thomas Pakenham has studied the importance of the British militias formed in the Cape Colony during the Second Boer War (1899-1902) in the victory over the Boers. "The Contribution of the Colonial Forces", in Crawford & McGibbon. *One Flag, One Queen, One Tongue*, pp. 58-73.

<sup>151</sup> For an overview of French Army in Africa, see Anthony Clayton. *France, Soldiers and Africa*. London: Brassey's Defence Publishers, 1988.

<sup>152</sup> *Manual de Instrucción Militar y Reglamento comentado para el Instituto de Voluntarios de la Isla de Cuba*. Havana: Imprenta del Diario del Ejército, 1892.

<sup>153</sup> AGI, Diversos, 13, R.2, D.7.

organization, and clarified several aspects regarding promotions, punishments, and duties that facilitated the coordination within the units and among them. The *reglamento* of 1892 attempted to tackle the problems in the *esprit de corps* and military capacity originating in the influx of young *peninsular* conscripts according to the law of 1885, and the growing class tensions among the Volunteers caused by the labour movement.

### 3.4. Bandits and the Road to a New War

By the early 1890s the Volunteers in Havana were increasingly becoming more involved with the labour movement and participating in expressions of social unrest, but their colleagues in the countryside had long been facing an endemic phenomenon that ran in parallel with the devastation of the Cuban countryside after 1878: banditry. This is an aspect of Cuban history about which literature is abundant and can be understood as the popular response to the destruction of rural Cuba during the Ten Years' War and its subsequent crisis.<sup>154</sup> Beyond a popular characterization conforming to Eric Hobsbawm's 'social bandit' thesis, Cuban banditry was also politically motivated, for many of its actors openly supported independence.<sup>155</sup> Banditry was primarily a phenomenon that affected western Cuba, as its richer sugar plantations were a more attractive prey for bandits, although works by Louis A. Pérez, Jr. and Imilcy Balboa Navarro demonstrate that it reached Oriente too, and persisted until the 1930s.<sup>156</sup> However, for Polavieja, these bandits only used their support for Cuban independence as a screen to legitimize their crimes.<sup>157</sup>

This might well have been the case, but the truth is that there were many links between banditry in Cuba and the nationalist émigré community in the US, principally located in New York and Florida. The 1890s were years of intense work for this community in its efforts to make Cuba independent. In 1890 they commissioned Antonio Maceo, a veteran commander of the Ten Years' War to visit Cuba and try to start a new uprising.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> See Pérez, Jr. *Lords of the Mountain*; Paz Sánchez, Fernández Fernández & López Novegil. *El bandolerismo en Cuba*, vol. I; Balboa Navarro. *La protesta rural en Cuba*; Rosalie Schwartz. *Lawless Liberators: Political Banditry and Cuban Independence*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1989, pp. 19-50.

<sup>155</sup> Eric Hobsbawm. *Bandits*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1981 (first published in 1969), p. 17.

<sup>156</sup> Balboa Navarro. *La protesta rural en Cuba*; Pérez, Jr. *Lords of the Mountain*.

<sup>157</sup> Letter to War Minister Marcelo Azcárraga Palmero, 19-06-1892, AGI, Diversos, Archivo de Camilo García de Polavieja y del Castillo, Diversos, 19.

<sup>158</sup> Antonio Maceo Grajales (1845-1896) was one of the leading figures of the Cuban struggle for independence, and the Cuban of African descent to reach the highest rank in the Cuban rebel army (*Lugarteniente General*, a rank created *ex professo* in order not to recognise him as lieutenant general because of racist prejudices). The son of a Venezuelan Royalist soldier who fought against

And in 1892 the leader of the Cuban exile community in the US, José Martí, created the Cuban Revolutionary Party in Florida.<sup>159</sup> Banditry was another way to propagate the independentist ideal in Cuba. The Cuban exile community financially aided some of the most important bandits in Cuba, such as Manuel García, who claimed he was waging an economic war against Spanish colonialism.<sup>160</sup>

But banditry was not at all that popular in the countryside. It affected small land-proprietors who had historically collaborated with the authorities in suppressing social unrest in the countryside.<sup>161</sup> The collaboration of Volunteer *guajiros* in chasing bandits can be traced back to the 1850s.<sup>162</sup> The Volunteers were perfect for the task of operating in the countryside against irregular forces, because they knew the terrain and belonged to the local communities.<sup>163</sup>

Banditry had been affecting the Cuban countryside since the end of the war. However, the authorities did not address it as something more than a problem of public order until the arrival of Polavieja to Cuba's Captaincy General (1890-1892), who declared a state of war in five of the six Cuban provinces in September 1890.<sup>164</sup> Polavieja created a

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Simón Bolívar in the 1820s, he became leader of the rebels in eastern Cuba during the Ten Years' War. In 1879 he famously rejected the Pact of Zanjón's terms (*Protesta de Baraguá*) and spent the interwar period (1879-1895) as an exile in several countries in the Caribbean and Central America, where he promoted the cause of Cuba's independence. In 1895 he landed in Cuba to lead Oriente's rebels and died in combat in December 1896. Mármol. *Antonio Maceo*, pp. 91-99. Also see Carlos Ripoll. *Antonio Maceo: pensamiento y vida*. New York: Dos Ríos, 1996.

<sup>159</sup> José Julián Martí Pérez (1853-1895) is considered Cuba's national hero. Born in Havana into a *peninsular* family, he was sentenced to forced labour (1869-1871) for having allegedly mocked a Volunteer company. He went into exile to Spain (1871-1875), where he studied Law and Liberal Arts. Between 1875 and 1895 he lived as an exile in several countries in the Americas and developed a brilliant career as a journalist, writer, and foremost promoter of Cuban independence. He was the founder of the Cuban Revolutionary Party (1892) and the mastermind behind the island's last war for independence (1895-1898). Jorge Mañach. *Martí el apóstol*. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1968 (first published in 1942), pp. 198-205; Pérez, Jr. *Cuba. Between Reform & Revolution*, pp. 143-155; Rubén Pérez Nápoles. *Martí. El poeta armado*. Madrid: Algaba Ediciones, 2004, pp. 249-279; Piqueras Arenas. *Sociedad civil y poder en Cuba*, pp. 219-227.

<sup>160</sup> Pérez, Jr. *Lords of the Mountain*, pp. 3-57; Schwartz. *Lawless Liberators*, 98-120.

<sup>161</sup> On his report on the state of Cuba in 1852, Captain General José Gutiérrez de la Concha (1850-1852) wrote that '*The guajiros of Cuba have always been the first and foremost repressive force against the Black people uprisings: among them we find the plantation overseers who control the govern of the slaves, and whom consequently are entitled to carry on the punishments...*'. José Gutiérrez de la Concha. *Memorias sobre el estado político, Gobierno y administración de la isla de Cuba*. Madrid: Establecimiento Tipográfico de D. José Trujillo, 1853, p. 24.

<sup>162</sup> AGMM, Ultramar, caja 3194, Febrero 1880; Paz Sánchez, Fernández Fernández & López Novegil. *El bandolerismo en Cuba*, vol. I, pp. 89-101.

<sup>163</sup> Gallego y García. *Cuba por fuera*, p. 216.

<sup>164</sup> The provinces were Pinar del Río, Havana, Matanzas, Santa Clara, and Oriente. Only Puerto Príncipe was spared from the measure due to its low presence of bandits. In fact, Polavieja only extended the state of war to Oriente, that had been previously declared by Captain General Sabas

sophisticated anti-banditry organism: the *Gabinete Particular* (1890-1893).<sup>165</sup> It was an autonomous organism that coordinated the efforts of the army, Civil Guard, and Volunteers.<sup>166</sup> It also bribed bandits and their protectors, such as the former *mambí* general Julio Sanguily, who collaborated with Polavieja while publicly opposing Spanish rule.<sup>167</sup>

The Volunteers protected infrastructure from bandits and took part in joint patrols with the Civil Guard and the army, which conducted most of the operations.<sup>168</sup> This participation was not always well organized. Often, town mayors asked the Volunteers to establish permanent patrols, but since these men had to combine their service with regular jobs, the situation often became unsustainable. When the mayor of Tapaste (Havana province) asked the local Volunteer section to patrol the area for ten hours a day, the Lieutenant Gerónimo Rodríguez answered that though “donning the uniform and defending the Nation is an honour for the Volunteers [...] but my men are poor peasants and shopkeepers, who have to work hard every day to maintain themselves and their families. Hence, it would be extremely difficult for them to keep this service for much longer”.<sup>169</sup>

According to the documentary evidence, the Volunteers generally rendered good services. However, Polavieja distrusted some of their commanders in the rural areas, for

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Marín (1887-1889) in the other four provinces between 16<sup>th</sup> April and 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1888. Paz Sánchez, Fernández Fernández & López Novegil. *El bandolerismo en Cuba*, vol. I, pp. 161-225.

<sup>165</sup> It was created on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1890 and disestablished on 8<sup>th</sup> October 1893 by Captain General Emilio Calleja (1893-1895), who considered that it was no longer necessary despite the persistence of banditry. Paz Sánchez, Fernández Fernández & López Novegil. *El bandolerismo en Cuba*, vol. I, p. 226-236; José Joaquín Gallego Jiménez. “La protesta rural y los mecanismos para su represión por parte del Gobierno del Capitán General Camilo García de Polavieja en Cuba: (1890-1892)”. *Americanía: revista de estudios latinoamericanos de la Universidad Pablo de Olavide de Sevilla*, 2011, No. 1, pp. 219-234.

<sup>166</sup> For the history of the Civil Guard in Cuba see François Godicheau. “La Guardia Civil en Cuba, del control del territorio a la guerra permanente (1851-1898)”. *Nuevo Mundo Mundos Nuevos*, 2014 (online): <https://nuevomundo.revues.org/67109> [consulted 25-05-2017].

<sup>167</sup> However, Polavieja and the members of the *Gabinete Particular* did not entirely trust Sanguily, for they feared he was playing a double game. This was the case of Polavieja himself, and Antonio del Moral, Governor of the Western Region and Havana Province. AGI, Diversos 19, D.7, “Parte reservado de 10 de diciembre de 1890”; AFAM, leg. 334, carpeta 3, letter from Antonio del Moral to Antonio Maura, 28-02-1893; Manuel de Paz Sánchez, “Julio Sanguily y Garritte (1846-1906) y los alzamientos de febrero de 1895 en el Occidente de Cuba”. *Revista de Indias*, 1996, vol. LVI, No. 207, pp. 387-428.

<sup>168</sup> AGM, Ultramar, Capitanía General de Cuba, caja 3195, Bandolerismo 1890-1895, Comandancia Militar de Guanabacoa, 11 de Septiembre de 1890; caja 3195, Bandolerismo 1890-1895, Compañía de Bomberos de San José de las Lajas, 10 de diciembre de 1890; caja 3195, Bandolerismo 1890-1895, Comandancia Militar de San Antonio de los Baños, 3 de marzo de 1891; caja 3195, Bandolerismo 1890-1895, Comandancia Militar de San Antonio de los Baños, 3 de marzo de 1891; caja 3007, Güines, 1887, Comandancia Militar de Güines, Nota 5.

<sup>169</sup> AGM, Ultramar, caja 3195, Bandolerismo 1890-1895, Comandancia Militar de Jaruco, 15-09-1890.

he considered that they were conniving with the bandits and supported a free Cuba as well.<sup>170</sup> The existing evidence seems to contradict his suspicions, for there is only one case reported but with no political connections. Eustasio Méndez Rey, commander of the Volunteers in Las Vueltas (Havana province), took part in the kidnapping and assassination of a landowner with the sole purpose of extorting the family.<sup>171</sup> Any connection with separatism seems unlikely, for some thousand Havana Volunteers, who had historically been the backbone of *integrismo* in Cuba, demonstrated in the capital asking for the commuting of the death penalty, which was nonetheless enforced on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1891.<sup>172</sup>

Banditry continued even after the outbreak of a new war in February 1895. Polavieja's successor in the Captainty General, Emilio Calleja, dissolved the *Gabinete Particular* in October 1893, to convey a false image of calmness in Cuba. Banditry was part of a state of latent insurgency in the countryside. The most notorious of the bandits, Manuel García, the self-entitled 'general of Cuba's western department' and 'King of the Cuban Fields', who even rhetorically declared war on Spain in April 1891, continued to pillage the rural areas in western Cuba while claiming that he was fighting for national liberation.<sup>173</sup> He was shot and killed by a Spanish column in Ceiba Mocha (Matanzas province) on the 24<sup>th</sup> February 1895, the day the last war for Cuban independence truly started.<sup>174</sup> With the death of the most famous of the Cuban bandits, the fight against banditry gave way to a full-scale war.

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<sup>170</sup> Paz Sánchez, Fernández Fernández & López Novegil. *El bandolerismo en Cuba*, vol. I, p.230.

<sup>171</sup> AGI, Archivo de Camilo García de Polavieja y del Castillo, Diversos,19, D.10; Paz Sánchez, Fernández Fernández & López Novegil. *El bandolerismo en Cuba*, vol. I., pp. 265-275; Schwartz. *Lawless Liberators*, pp. 210-212.

<sup>172</sup> *El León Español*, 01-09-1891.

<sup>173</sup> The proclamation was issued in Melena del Sur (Havana province) on 27<sup>th</sup> April 1891. It was written in Spanish and in broken English, allegedly to reach an audience in the United States. Interestingly, he grounded his declaration in the lack of fulfillment of the Pact of Zanjón, the importation of Chinese immigrants instead of White ones, the scarce presence of Cubans in the administration, high taxes, and some other minor demands. Instead of declaring outright independence, Manuel García proclaimed the *República de Cuba* annexed to the United States and asked the US Government for help and Remington rifles. AGI, Archivo de Camilo García de Polavieja y del Castillo, Diversos,19, D.9.

<sup>174</sup> Otero Pimentel. *Memoria sobre los Voluntarios*, pp. 147-148; Paz Sánchez, Fernández Fernández & López Novegil. *El bandolerismo en Cuba*, vol. I., pp. 206-224.



#### 4. Conclusions

The interwar period of 1878-1895 studied in this chapter was a time of continuities and discontinuities for the Volunteers. Some tendencies that had begun during the Ten Years' War were accentuated, whereas others were profoundly changed by the war.

The nature of the Volunteers as the armed wing of the Cuban and Puerto Rican *integristas*, which was firmly established during the war, continued after the peace of 1878 due to their close relationship with the Antillean conservatives of the Constitutional Union and the Spanish Unconditional Party. However, the very implementation of a political party system and the absence of a military situation displaced the Volunteers from the central role they had played in 1868-1878. During the war, the most hard-line *integrismo* had found in the Volunteers a means with which to express their opposition to separatism and to shape Spanish politics in Cuba and Puerto Rico. After wars, political parties replaced the armed forces in the political struggle. *Integrismo* fundamentally channelled its agenda through the political parties and their representatives in Madrid. The Volunteers became just one of the Antillean conservatives' political tools, a resort to older ways of doing things.

The Volunteers' internal cohesion was also severely damaged, especially in Cuba by the existence of a strong labour movement. The voice of the lower echelons of the urban Volunteers became ever stronger throughout this period. The influx of young *peninsulares*, with their subsequent introduction of socialism and anarchism to the island, combined with a dire economic crisis, radicalized the message and objectives of the working-class Volunteers that participated in the Cuban labour movement. The lack of developed industry in Puerto Rico and a miniscule number of young *peninsulares* that arrived there averted this process and maintained the cohesion of the Volunteers.

The major disruption caused by the Ten Years' War was the devastation of the agricultural and social fabric of Cuba's countryside. The deficient response of the authorities to rural communities' problems created profound unrest among the peasant Volunteers. This was expressed through defection in the Little War and could not be assuaged by the military-agricultural colonies. Nevertheless, the loyal collaboration of the rural Volunteers in crushing a genuine expression of popular country unrest, namely banditry, was an indicator of the surprising resilience of loyalism among Cuban Volunteers in this period.

During the interwar period (1878-1895), the Volunteers struggled to find their role in the defensive system of the Spanish Caribbean after the traumatic experience of the war of 1868-1878. Nevertheless, they remained a part of this system. Due to the assimilation of Cuba and Puerto Rico into the Spanish political system, with the creation of political parties, the Volunteers lost a good deal of the influence they had enjoyed during the war. The conflict's legacy of social unrest and economic crisis also contributed to the relative decay of the Volunteers. They managed to survive these huge challenges however and to adapt to the new situation. Their resilience is a good proof of the strength of *integrismo* during the interwar period, even while the Spanish Empire was under threat from many sides in the Americas.

## CHAPTER V. THE VOLUNTEERS AND THE END OF THE SPANISH EMPIRE

(1895-1898)

Between 1895 and 1898, Spain faced anticolonial wars in Cuba (1895-1898), the Philippines (1896-1898), and Puerto Rico (1898), which ended up with the military intervention of the United States in April 1898, and the termination of the old Spanish Empire. After this war, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines fell under the American aegis, the United States emerged as a new colonial power and Spain lost its empire, entering a political, military and national crisis of known as the *Desastre del 98* (or Disaster of '98).<sup>1</sup> These events have attracted much attention from scholars, for obvious nationalist and post-imperial reasons.

The Volunteers played a crucial role in this process, which is not well understood by historiography. Thousands of them fought in Cuba, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico, both against the anticolonial armies and the United States' invading forces. In the Philippines, they fundamentally contributed to the defence of Manila, against which most of the military operations were directed. In Cuba, they defended the cities, the key infrastructure (railroads, harbours, etc.), and agricultural property which was the main target of the rebels. They defended the sugar mills and tobacco farms, whereas the regular army carried out most of the military operations. In Puerto Rico, where war only arrived with the US troops, the Volunteers were a key element in assisting the regular army in preparing for war against the new imperial power.

This chapter is a history of the Volunteers during the colonial wars that ended the Spanish Empire. It argues that despite the weakening of Spanish rule at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Volunteers were the symbol of a relatively strong Loyalism, which persisted even when State control was weak. Indeed, it is understood that the central military role played by the Volunteers during the wars was a sign of the State's weakness. Spain sent ca. 230,000 men to Cuba and the Philippines during the war and faced no more than 30,000 irregular fighters in each colony, where the Spanish Army was held in check for more than three years until the US intervention determined the result of the war.<sup>2</sup>

By exploring this uncharted period of the Volunteers' history, this chapter is an innovative contribution to the historiography on the demise of the Spanish Empire. It

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<sup>1</sup> Carlos Serrano. "Conciencia de la crisis, conciencias en crisis". Juan Pan-Montojo (coord.). *Más se perdió en Cuba. España, 1898 y la crisis de fin de siglo*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1998, pp. 335-403.

<sup>2</sup> Enrique de Miguel Fernández. "Discurso de apertura del XXXI curso de Historia y Cultura valenciana: las tropas españolas en la guerra de Cuba. De las estimaciones especulativas a la cuantificación". *Anals de la Real Acadèmia de Cultura Valenciana*, 2010, No. 85, pp. 243-271.

offers the history of the most militant Spanish Loyalism—by focusing on the Volunteers—during the last years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century from a transnational perspective. In this respect, it offers an inclusive history of the last years of the Spanish Empire following the global approach of Carlos Serrano, or of Josep Maria Fradera and Schmidt-Nowara on other topics and periods.<sup>3</sup> Traditionally, the historiography has addressed these wars as separate conflicts, giving an overwhelming importance to the war in Cuba and the conflict of 1898 against the United States.<sup>4</sup> There is a vast literature in this mode, mostly from US historians.<sup>5</sup> Using the Global History approach, the Volunteers are used here to understand these conflicts as one interconnected war on several fronts.

This chapter has used a vast amount of unpublished material found in archival research in Madrid, Havana, Santiago de Cuba, San Juan de Puerto Rico, as well as some local archives in Spain. This chapter relies fundamentally on documents produced by the Volunteers, but has also used abundant documentation such as memoirs, personal letters, and newspapers produced by other key actors in the Spanish military and administrations, and by the anti-colonial elements who fought against the Volunteers.

With this framework in mind, approaching the wars as one conflict, and focusing on the strength of Loyalism, and the weakness of the State, this chapter has been structured into four sections.

The first of these topics is the military role played by the Volunteers as a defensive element, particularly in the Cuban and Filipino warzones. Their participation in the war is often neglected by the historiography, despite the Volunteers representing almost a third of all Spanish forces in Cuba. Only relatively recently, Tone briefly pointed out the importance of the Cuban loyalists that fought on the Spanish side.<sup>6</sup> In the case of the Volunteers in the Philippines, this is an entirely new literature on the Spanish-American War. Thus, this section has been built almost entirely on primary sources and

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<sup>3</sup> Josep Maria Fradera. *Colonias para después de un imperio*; Schmidt-Nowara. *Empire, and Antislavery*; Carlos Serrano. *Final del Imperio. España 1895-1898*. Madrid: Siglo XXI de España Editores, 1984.

<sup>4</sup> Antonio Elorza & Elena Hernández Sandoica. *La Guerra de Cuba (1895-1898)*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1998; Baldovín Ruiz. *Cuba*, pp. 369-563; Navarro. *Las guerras de España en Cuba*, pp. 133-215.

<sup>5</sup> Philip S. Foner. *The Spanish-Cuban-American War and the Birth of American Imperialism*. New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 2 vols., 1972; Ivan Musicant. *Empire by Default. The Spanish-American War and the Dawn of the American Century*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1998; G. J. A. O'Toole. *The Spanish War. An American Epic 1898*. New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1984; Tone. *War and Genocide*; David F. Trask. *The War with Spain in 1898*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1981.

<sup>6</sup> Tone. *War and Genocide*, p. 9.

contemporary accounts of the war. In the case of Puerto Rico, mostly primary sources were used in constructing the main contribution of the chapter: the effect the Cuban war had on the Volunteers before the US invasion of July 1898. For their role during the Spanish-American War, the recent study by González Cuevas was consulted, as well as the classic on that very war by Ángel Rivero Méndez, who gave some detailed information about the Volunteers.<sup>7</sup>

The second section deals with the Volunteers as targets of the Cuban revolutionaries, because of their being composed of small units sparsely distributed throughout the territory. The Volunteers guarded the small towns and rural property the rebels sought to destroy. They also had the weapons and even the men that the *mambís* desperately needed. This section has mostly relied on the studies on the Cuban war, memoirs by both Spanish and *mambí* soldiers, and by the documents generated by the Volunteer units themselves, found in the General Military Archive in Madrid, and in the National Archives in Havana.

The third section assesses the most controversial episode of these wars, the relocation of Cuban peasants into concentration camps ordered by Captain General Valeriano Weyler in 1896 that lasted until March 1898. It was the worst chapter of the war, with more than 150,000 people killed, or 10% of the population of Cuba. Despite the immense proportion of the tragedy, until recently there had only been a few accounts, all produced by Cuban historians, which had bestowed upon the Spanish forces the entire responsibility for such a high death toll. However, more recently, the studies by Tone, and especially by Andreas Stucki, have profoundly reshaped our understanding of the tragedy.<sup>8</sup> They have shown that, although with a different kind of involvement, both the Spanish and insurgent forces were responsible for the tragedy that took the life of one in ten Cubans. In that line, it will be seen that the Volunteers were both perpetrators and victims of the concentrations.

Finally, this chapter deals with the Volunteers' role in the Spanish strategy during the war against the United States (April-August 1898) in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. By using the existing literature and primary accounts by Volunteers, the main

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<sup>7</sup> González Cuevas. *¿Defendiendo el honor?*; Rivero Méndez. *Crónica de la Guerra*.

<sup>8</sup> Andreas Stucki. *Las guerras de Cuba. Violencia y campos de concentración (1868-1898)*. Madrid: La Esfera de los Libros, 2017 (or. *Aufstand und Zwangsumsiedlung. Die Kubanischen Unabhängigkeitskriege (1868-1898)*). Hamburg: Hamburger Edition 2012), pp. 90-98; Tone. *War and Genocide in Cuba*, pp. 153-179.

military operations and the Volunteers' behaviour are identified and analysed in the course of this conflict that brought the old Spanish empire to an end.

## 1. The Volunteers and the Imperial Defensive System

Spain undertook a huge military effort between 1895 and 1898. Indeed, since the onset of the war in Cuba in February 1895, and the US declaration of war in April 1898, Spain sent ca. 200,000 soldiers to Cuba, and ca. 26,000 to the Philippines. These 226,000 men were supplemented by thousands of Volunteers that fought in Cuba (ca. 85,000), Puerto Rico (ca. 8,000), and the Philippines (ca. 5,000).<sup>9</sup> This section will focus on the role played by these ca. 98,000 men-at-arms. First, a brief overview is given of their role during the first stages of the war in Cuba. This will be examined in further sections, followed by their participation in the Philippines and Puerto Rico until the invasion of the US forces in May and July 1898, respectively.

### 1.1. Cuba

On 24<sup>th</sup> February 1895, a new war of independence began in Cuba with the 'Cry of Baire', a small town in Oriente, replicated in uprisings throughout the island. This new rebellion had been organized under the leadership of two veterans of the Ten Years' War, Máximo Gómez and Antonio Maceo, and the political guidance of José Martí, the intellectual that created the Cuban Revolutionary Party in 1892 whilst in exile in the US. This new attempt at the liberation of Cuba was built on a profound disaffection against Spain growing among the Cuban population. The failure of both the low-tariff agreement between Spain and the US (1891-1894) and the ill-fated reformist plan advocated by the Overseas Minister Antonio Maura (1892-1894) had convinced wide sectors of the Cuban population that a better political and economic situation was unattainable under Spain's rule.<sup>10</sup>

The initial reaction by the Spanish authorities was not to give too much importance to the uprising, as the insurgent movement in western Cuba was rapidly quelled. Captain General Emilio Calleja (1893-1895) had been well aware of the war preparations since

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<sup>9</sup> For a complete account of the expeditions sent from metropolitan Spain see Baldovín Ruiz. *Cuba*, pp. 423-471.

<sup>10</sup> Elorza & Hernández Sandoica. *La Guerra de Cuba*, pp. 161-179; Louis A. Pérez, Jr. *Cuba Between Empires, 1878-1902*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1983, pp. 3-38; José Antonio Piqueras Arenas. *Cuba, emporio y colonia. La disputa de un mercado interferido*. Madrid: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2003, pp. 303-308.

October 1894.<sup>11</sup> This inaction allowed the insurgency to spread in Oriente's countryside, as the Spanish regular Army remained within the cities.<sup>12</sup> From the very beginning of the war, the *mambís*, or rebel troops, began to recruit men and to harass the only Loyalist forces that stood against them in rural areas: the Volunteers. The day after the start of the war, the Volunteers from El Caney, only 10km from Santiago de Cuba, defended the town from attacking forces.<sup>13</sup> By February 1895, the Volunteers in Cuba were still an impressive force of ca. 60,000 members distributed throughout the island.<sup>14</sup>

The lack of regular military presence in the countryside, though, necessarily weakened the forces that stood loyal to Spain. After all, the Volunteers in Oriente's countryside were peasants-at-arms, with poor military training, located in a region where insurgency against Spain had historical support. Fearing the reprisal of the *mambís* and not expecting any assistance from the regular troops, units of Volunteers opted not to directly confront the insurgency. The rebels were not particularly well armed or disciplined but enjoyed great mobility (they were often cavalry troops) and could attack by surprise. Often, groups of 200-300 rebels attacked villages defended by a section of Volunteers, which consisted of ca. 30 men. For instance, when a group of 500 rebels was approaching the town of Veguitas, Captain Cayetano de la Maza of the local Volunteer company found that none of his men responded to his call to gather and organize the defence of the town. After asking for instructions from the military commander of nearby Manzanillo, the only answer he received was to "act following your instinct and patriotism". De la Maza decided to disable all the weapons and ammunitions he held so that the insurgents could not use them.<sup>15</sup> This event is quite telling of the state of

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<sup>11</sup> As early as 7<sup>th</sup> October 1894, Captain General Emilio Calleja (1893-1895) had warned the Overseas Minister Antonio Maura (1892-1894), that he had received information regarding plans for a new uprising that Máximo Gómez was organizing from Santo Domingo. General José Lachambre, governor of the Santiago de Cuba Province, had also informed the captain general that veterans of the Ten Years' War, such as the Sartorius brothers and Guillermon Moncada, were recruiting people in Oriente for a new war. The captain general, however, decided not to arrest them as they had not violated the law yet. AGP, Sección Reinados, Fondo Alfonso XIII, caja 12.1832, exp. 15-A: "Telegramas entre el Gobernador General de Cuba y el ministro de Ultramar", 07-10-1894, 23-02-1895, and 24-02-1895.

<sup>12</sup> For an overview of the war in eastern Cuba see José Abreu Cardet & Juan José Tartaglia Redondo. "La Guerra del 1895 en el Oriente de Cuba". Rafael Sánchez Mantero (coord.). *En torno al "98": España en el tránsito del siglo XIX y XX: actas del IV Congreso de la Asociación de Historia Contemporánea*. Huelva: Universidad de Huelva, Servicio de Publicaciones, 2000, pp. 435-448.

<sup>13</sup> ANRC, Donativos y Remisiones, leg. 418, exp. 63.

<sup>14</sup> Eugenio Antonio Flores. *La guerra de Cuba (apuntes para la Historia)*. Madrid: Tipografía de los Hijos de M. G. Hernández, 1895, p. 333.

<sup>15</sup> The attack took place in early March. The rebel leaders Esteban Tamayo and Bartolomé Masó commanded the *mambí* force, which operated between the towns of Yara and Veguitas, near the coastal town of Manzanillo. After Captain Cayetano de la Maza had destroyed 150 Remington rifles

bewilderment of the Spanish authorities in the areas directly threatened by the insurgency. Faced with a clear act of insubordination by the Volunteers, the authorities did not know how to react and only relied on the common sense of their men-on-the-ground.

The Cuban situation looked unsustainable from Spain, where mounting pressure for a firm military reaction caused the fall of the Liberal cabinet headed by Práxedes Mateo Sagasta (1892-1895). In March 1895, the Conservatives of Antonio Cánovas del Castillo assumed power.<sup>16</sup> The man chosen as the new captain general was Arsenio Martínez de Campos (1895-1896), in the hope that he would pacify the island for the second time, repeating the occasion he had guided the Spanish troops to victory in 1878.<sup>17</sup>

## 1.2. Puerto Rico

Puerto Rico was not directly involved in the war in Cuba until the US invasion in July 1898, but it was affected from its beginning. The island contributed to the war effort by sending to Cuba several battalions of the local garrison, as well as supplies to the fighting troops and mobilizing the Volunteers to patrol the coast.<sup>18</sup> Despite the relatively peaceful situation in Puerto Rico, the fear of an uprising on the island had the Captain General Antonio Dabán (1892-1895) taking preventive measures.<sup>19</sup>

In effect, Cuban nationalist rhetoric had always included the liberation of Puerto Rico. In the original manifesto of José Martí's Cuban Revolutionary Party, it was stated that the aim of the party was to "achieve [...] Cuba's total independence, as well as promoting and helping Puerto Rico's".<sup>20</sup> This idea was echoed by some exiled Puerto Rican intellectuals, most notably Eugenio María de Hostos, and Ramón Emeterio Betances, the foremost promoter of the island's independence since the 1860s.<sup>21</sup> During the war, a few

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and 10 ammunition boxes, only the humanitarian intervention of Esteban Tamayo prevented his men from shooting him. *El Eco de Sitges*, 24-03-1895.

<sup>16</sup> Fernández Almagro. *Historia política de la España contemporánea*, vol. II, pp. 237-243.

<sup>17</sup> During his first term as captain general of Cuba, Arsenio Martínez de Campos (1878-1879) reached the Peace of Zanjón (10<sup>th</sup> February 1878) that ended the Ten Years' War.

<sup>18</sup> The battalions were all infantry: Colón No. 23, Valladolid No. 21, Alfonso XIII, No. 24, Patria No. 25, and the Puerto Rico Provisional Battalion No. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. AGMM, Documentación de Puerto Rico, 5170.1.

<sup>19</sup> Antonio Dabán y Ramírez de Arellano (1844-1902) was a soldier politically considered close to the Liberal Party. He represented Santiago de Cuba (1879-1881) and Tafalla (1886-1887) at the Spanish Congress and was Director of Security (1886-1887) under the Liberal cabinet headed by Práxedes Mateo Sagasta (1885-1890).

<sup>20</sup> José Martí. *Obras completas*, vol. I. Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1975, p. 259.

<sup>21</sup> Paul Estrade. "La nación antillana: sueño y afán de 'El Antillano' (Betances)", in Naranjo Orovio, Puig-Samper & García Mora (eds.). *La Nación Soñada*, pp. 23-36; M.<sup>a</sup> Dolores González-Ripoll



hundred Puerto Ricans joined the Cuban rebel army, and a 'Puerto Rican Section of the Cuban Revolutionary Party' was created in New York by Julio J. Henna.<sup>22</sup>

Nonetheless, the independence of Puerto Rico was always the dream of a minority, and no serious attempt was made to rebel against Spain. This, of course, did not preclude the existence of social and political discontent. Cubano Iguina studied the social and political tensions caused by the Spanish colonial system on the island, which usually benefited the propertied class of landowners and merchants. This class was often represented by *peninsulares* and Puerto Rican members of the Unconditional Spanish Party, and often also Volunteers. Nevertheless, she concluded that loyalty to Spain was predominant among Puerto Ricans, although acknowledging a growing disaffection among the rural population.<sup>23</sup>

This disaffection was especially strong in the southwest of the island, with its capital in Ponce. The detection of a Cuban revolutionary agent in that city in June 1895 set the alarms ringing in the Captaincy General.<sup>24</sup> From that moment, the documents generated by the Spanish authorities reveal a genuine desire to isolate Puerto Rico as much as possible from the Cuban revolutionary influence. Indeed, they feared that the existing tensions could explode into open rebellion against Spain were the insurgents to gain a stable presence on the island.

To impede the presence of Cuban revolutionary agents, it was vital to seal the coast from unwanted arrivals of men, weapons, or ideas. For that purpose, beyond tight control of the maritime traffic coming in and out Puerto Rico, the Volunteers were mobilized to patrol the coast, alongside the Army and the Civil Guard.<sup>25</sup> The Volunteers already made up a significant element of the Spanish forces in Puerto Rico: for 8,200 regular soldiers, there were 7,135 Volunteers.<sup>26</sup> A great advantage of the Volunteers in comparison to the

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Navarro. "Independencia y antillanismo en la obra de Hostos", in Naranjo Orovio, Puig-Samper & García Mora. *La Nación Soñada*, pp. 37-48.

<sup>22</sup> Negroni. *Historia militar de Puerto Rico*, pp. 305-306.

<sup>23</sup> Cubano Iguina. *El hilo en el laberinto*, pp. 145-150.

<sup>24</sup> The Military Commander of Ponce Julio Soto Villanueva reported to Captain General Antonio Dabán that he had received a letter from a Spanish agent in New York, informing of the presence of a Cuban revolutionary agent in that Puerto Rican city. AGMM, Documentación de Puerto Rico, 5145.38.

<sup>25</sup> AGMM, Documentación de Puerto Rico, 5202.3. The men of the battalions that were mobilized, the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup>, covered the area of Bayamón, Sabana Grande, Ponce, and Coamo, thus most of the Southwest and part of the North coasts. AGMM, Documentación de Puerto Rico, 5201.4.

<sup>26</sup> *Provincia de Puerto Rico. Instituto de Voluntarios*, p. 15; Luis González Vales. "La campaña de Puerto Rico. Consideraciones histórico-militares", in *El Ejército y la Armada en 1898: Cuba, Puerto*

regular soldiers was their even presence throughout the island. The army, on the contrary, was only present in the cities of San Juan, Ponce, and Mayagüez, plus a few nearby towns.<sup>27</sup> Also, the Volunteers were the men who were most familiar with the Puerto Rican geography and society, as their ranks were generally made up of Puerto Rican peasants or *peninsulares* long established on the island.<sup>28</sup> Captain General Antonio Dabán decreed their mobilization on 13<sup>th</sup> September 1895.<sup>29</sup>

To be mobilized away from home for a few days, however, posed a problem for these men, who depended on their daily work. Mobilization implied a small allowance, but it rarely arrived. The impression was that the military authorities had a widespread contempt for the rural Volunteers, if not of open distrust for the Puerto Ricans' loyalty to Spain. A Spanish staff officer wrote after the war that 'the abyss between Creoles and *peninsulares* in the island was as deep as in Cuba, even among the Army officers'.<sup>30</sup> This perception is quite symptomatic of the treatment that the Puerto Rican Volunteers could expect from some members of the military authorities on the island.

Throughout the Autumn of 1895, Julio Soto Villanueva, Military Commander of Ponce, reported to the Captaincy General the problems their men were suffering. The rainy season had blocked many roads, thus leaving some of them isolated in remote areas. More importantly, the stipend that was granted to the mobilized Volunteers, due since September, only began to arrive by mid-December 1895. This, in its turn, made finding Volunteers for service at the coast rather difficult, especially during the coffee harvest, for many of them were employed in the coffee industry.<sup>31</sup>

The defensive military role of the Volunteers in Puerto Rico remained practically unaltered until the US invasion on 25<sup>th</sup> July 1898. However, groups of exiled Puerto Ricans, aided by their Cuban colleagues, continued to plot.<sup>32</sup> Their main problem was the lack of

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*Rico y Filipinas, I Congreso Internacional de Historia Militar*, vol. I. Madrid: Ministerio de Defensa, 1999. p. 262.

<sup>27</sup> *Anuario Militar de España*. Madrid: Tipografía e Imprenta del Depósito de la Guerra, 1895, pp. 170-172.

<sup>28</sup> Puerto Rican historians, however, have tended to consider the Volunteers an almost uniquely force of *peninsulares*. See Cubano Iguina. *El hilo en el laberinto*, p. 61; González Vales. "La campaña de Puerto Rico", p. 262.

<sup>29</sup> *Provincia de Puerto Rico. Instituto de Voluntarios*, p. 18.

<sup>30</sup> Francisco Larrea y Lisa. *El desastre nacional y los vicios de nuestras instituciones militares*. Madrid: Imprenta del Cuerpo de Artillería, 1901, pp. 66-67. The book, however, is signed with Larrea's pseudonym EFEELE.

<sup>31</sup> AGM, Documentación de Puerto Rico, sig. 5202.20.

<sup>32</sup> On 20<sup>th</sup> October 1896, the Spanish minister in Caracas (Venezuela) reported to Sabas Marín, captain general of Puerto Rico, confidential information about the plot for an invasion of the island,

popular support for a rebellion against Spain. This was the main reason that a short-lived uprising, known as *Intentona de Yauco*, failed. Between 24<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> March 1897, two gangs of a few dozen men each took up arms in Yauco, a town in southwest Puerto Rico, which were swiftly quelled by the Civil Guard and the local Volunteers.<sup>33</sup> This town was the centre of a thriving coffee-producing industry, mostly controlled by Corsican migrants who identified only weakly with Spain.<sup>34</sup> The mastermind of the failed insurrection was a Puerto Rican landowner of Corsican ancestry, Antonio Mattei Lluveras. He had recruited Cuban and Dominican agents to organize the armed rebellion but could not convince more than one hundred Puerto Ricans to join the effort. The fact that the local Volunteers helped the Civil Guard to quell the rebellion, was a symptom that an open rebellion against Spain was still an unlikely outcome in Puerto Rico.

### 1.3. Philippines

As previously in Cuba (1855) and Puerto Rico (1864), the Philippines' Volunteers were created to counter an armed struggle against Spanish rule. Only eight days after the Cry of Balintawak (23<sup>rd</sup> August 1896), which started the Filipino Revolution against Spain, the first two 'Loyal Volunteer' battalions were created in Manila by captain general Ramón Blanco. The promoters of the idea were the community of *peninsulares* and Filipinos of Spanish descent organized around Manila's *Casino Español*, and the Spanish clergy, led by the archbishop of Manila, Fr. Bernardino Nozaleda.<sup>35</sup> They imported to the archipelago

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organized by Cuban, Puerto Rican, and Dominican revolutionaries in Santo Domingo, in which the former President of Venezuela Juan Pablo Rojas Paúl (1888-1890) was involved. AGMM, Capitanía General de Puerto Rico, sig. 5146.21.

<sup>33</sup> Negroni. *Historia militar de Puerto Rico*, pp. 306-307. Eight men from the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion's 2<sup>nd</sup> Company were decorated for their performance in quelling the Yauco rioters: Major Lucas Solivellas Vicens, Captain Juan Fernández Menéndez, Sergeants Juan Ruiz Manzano and José Calazán Feliciano, Corporal Juan Cros Balcons, and Volunteers Manuel Toral Blanco and Diego Negroni, AGMM, Capitanía General de Puerto Rico, sig. 5610.12.

<sup>34</sup> For the coffee industry in Yauco, see Bergad. *Coffee and the Growth of Agrarian Capitalism*, pp. 145-203.

<sup>35</sup> Bernardino Nozaleda (1844-1927), a native of Asturias, arrived in the Philippines in the early 1860s, becoming archbishop of Manila (1891-1902) until his return to Spain in 1902. In 1903 he was proposed by the Spanish Government as archbishop of Valencia, sparking a campaign against him by the Liberal press. The newspapers accused him of holding anti-Spanish sentiments for having stayed in Manila after 1898, while at the same time considering him a butcher for having allegedly supported the execution of José Rizal. He recalled the creation of the Loyal Volunteers in *El Siglo Futuro*, 20-02-1904, p. 2. For the "Nozaleda Affair" see Vicente Cárcel Ortí. "Nombramiento y renuncia del arzobispo de Valencia Fr. Bernardino Nozaleda y Villa". *Archivo Dominicano: Anuario*, 1987, No. 8, pp. 193-314.

the model of Volunteers already existing in Cuba and Puerto Rico.<sup>36</sup> Their creation was meant to mitigate the weak Spanish presence in the colony, despite it dating back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>37</sup> For centuries, the Philippines had been administered *de facto* by the Spanish Catholic religious orders, rather than by the Crown officials.<sup>38</sup> Only after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, which shortened the trip to Manila from six months to one, Spain began to increase its presence in the archipelago.<sup>39</sup> This presence was also boosted by the real possibility of losing these territories to another colonial power. Indeed, in 1885 Germany threatened to occupy the Caroline Islands, an archipelago in the Pacific Ocean that was governed from Manila, which had been under theoretical Spanish control since the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>40</sup> Although the threat finally did not materialize, the so-called *crisis of the Carolines* sparked a wave of interest in Spain regarding the country's colonial presence in Asia and Oceania. This wave also reached the Spanish Antilles. For instance, Havana's *Casino Español* started a fundraising effort among its members—many of whom were Volunteers—aimed at contributing to the military expansion of Spain in the islands recently coveted by the German Empire.<sup>41</sup> Another expression of this renewed interest in Spain's Asian colony was the General Exhibition of the Philippines Islands held in 1887 in Madrid, which aimed to attract capital for the development of the archipelago.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> According to the Barcelona-based newspaper *La Dinastía*, the creation of a Volunteer battalion had already been discussed at the *Casino Español* by March 1896, due to the constant visits of groups of Filipino nationalists to the US Consul in Manila. *La Dinastía*, 03-09-1896, p. 3.

<sup>37</sup> For a general history of the Philippines, see Lourdes Díaz-Trechuelo. *Filipinas. La gran desconocida, 1565-1898*. Pamplona: Ediciones Universidad de Navarra, S.A., 2001; María Dolores Elizalde, Josep M. Fradera & Luis Alonso. *Imperios y Naciones en el Pacífico*, 2 vols. Madrid: CSIC, 2001; Luis H. Francia. *History of the Philippines: From Indios Bravos to Filipinos*. New York: The Overlook Press, 2010.

<sup>38</sup> María Dolores Elizalde Pérez-Grueso & Xavier Huetz de Lemps. "Un singular modelo colonizador: el papel de las órdenes religiosas en la administración española de Filipinas, siglos XVI al XIX". *Illes i Imperis*, 2015, No 17, pp. 185-222.

<sup>39</sup> Josep M. Delgado. "Menos se perdió en Cuba'. La dimensión asiática del 98". *Illes i Imperis*, 1999, No. 2, pp. 49-64; Carmen Gallego Fresnillo. "El sexenio español y el Extremo Oriente: Filipinas", in María Dolores Elizalde Pérez-Grueso (ed.). *Las relaciones internacionales en el Pacífico (siglos XVIII-XX): colonización, descolonización y encuentro cultural*. Madrid: CSIC, 1997, pp. 375-394.

<sup>40</sup> María Dolores Elizalde Pérez-Grueso. *España en el Pacífico. La colonia de las Islas Carolinas, 1885-1899. Un modelo colonial en el contexto internacional del imperialismo*. Madrid: CSIC/Instituto de Cooperación para el Desarrollo, 1992, pp. 29-44; Agustín R. Rodríguez González. "La crisis de las Carolinas". *Cuadernos de historia contemporánea*, 1991, No. 13, pp. 25-46.

<sup>41</sup> Leopoldo Carvajal, president of the *Casino Español*, wrote on 5<sup>th</sup> October 1885 to President Antonio Cánovas del Castillo that the *Casino*'s members had already collected 50,000 golden pesos which were at the disposal of the island's Captain General at the Spanish Bank of Havana. AHN, Archivo Antonio Cánovas del Castillo, 2543, exp. 68.

<sup>42</sup> The main promoter of the exhibition was the Overseas Minister Víctor Balaguer (1886-1888), an outstanding representative of colonial interests in Spanish politics. He wrote *Islas Filipinas (memoria)* (1895) aiming at promoting interest in the Philippines in the Peninsula. Luis Ángel

Despite this increased interest in the Philippines, effective Spanish rule was virtually constrained to Manila and a few outposts distributed throughout the archipelago, thus leaving vast areas outside of Spanish control. The Philippines were still populated by dozens of different ethnicities, scarcely hispanized, mostly Catholic though with important pockets of Muslims in the archipelagos of Mindanao and Joló, who rejected the Spanish presence until the early 1890s when a series of military campaigns quelled the resistance.<sup>43</sup> In Luzón, the biggest and most important island, where Manila is located, the dominant ethnicity were the Tagalog, who became the bedrock of the nationalist movement.<sup>44</sup> However, unlike in Cuba, Filipino nationalism was still incipient at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>45</sup> The archipelago was a set of thousands of islands where a sense of a united anti-Spanish and anti-colonial nationalism could hardly have taken ground.<sup>46</sup> This was the main reason a force such as the Volunteers had not been necessary before 1896 in the Philippines, for Spanish rule was weak but mostly uncontested, save for some sporadically anticolonial outbursts.<sup>47</sup>

In this context, the Spanish Empire in the Philippines depended on the collaboration of the local Filipino and religious elites. The clash between the local power and the Spanish clergy shaped the ways in which the Filipino nationalists sought to overcome their subservient relation with Spain.<sup>48</sup> The most prominent of them, known as

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Sánchez Gómez. *Un imperio en la vitrina. El colonialismo español en el Pacífico y la exposición de Filipinas de 1887*. Madrid: CSIC, 2003, pp. 29-38.

<sup>43</sup> W. R. Retana. *Mando del general Weyler en Filipinas. 5 Junio 1888 – 17 Noviembre 1891. Apuntes y documentos para la historia política, administrativa y militar de dichas islas*. Madrid: Imprenta de la Viuda de M. Minuesa de los Ríos, 1896, pp. 328-335; Luis E. Togores Sánchez. “La última frontera: el establecimiento de la soberanía española en el país moro”, in Elizalde, Fradera & Alonso. *Imperios y Naciones en el Pacífico*, vol. II, pp. 675-698; Isaac Donoso Jiménez. “El desarrollo del mundo meridional filipino en el siglo XIX: el difícil encaje de la población musulmana”, in María Dolores Elizalde Pérez-Grueso & Xavier Huetz de Lempis (coord.). *Filipinas, siglo XIX: coexistencia e interacción entre comunidades en el Imperio español*. Madrid: Polifemo: 2017, pp. 427-456.

<sup>44</sup> For the role of ethnicity in the Filipino Revolution see Leonard Y. Andaya. “Ethnicity in the Philippine Revolution”, in Florentino Rodao & Felice Noelle Rodríguez (eds.). *The Philippine Revolution of 1896: Ordinary People in Extraordinary Times*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2001, pp. 49-82.

<sup>45</sup> For an overview of nationalism in the Philippines during the 19<sup>th</sup> century see María Dolores Elizalde. “El sueño de la nación filipina. 1812-1896”, in María Dolores Elizalde Pérez-Grueso (ed.). *Problemas en la construcción nacional de Filipinas, India y Vietnam*. Barcelona: Edicions Bellaterra, 2013, pp. 37-82.

<sup>46</sup> For a brief general overview of the Philippines between the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, see Josep M. Delgado. “Filipinas en transición, 1850-1950”, in María Dolores Elizalde & Josep M. Delgado (eds.). *Filipinas, un país entre dos imperios*. Barcelona: Edicions Bellaterra, 2011, pp. 27-48.

<sup>47</sup> Luis E. Togores Sánchez. “Antecedentes y causas de la revuelta tagala de 1896-1897”, in Emilio de Diego García & Demetrio Ramos (dir.). *Cuba, Puerto Rico y Filipinas en la perspectiva del 98*. Madrid: Editorial Complutense, 1997, pp. 127-146.

<sup>48</sup> Local politics was the way for the native Filipino elite to integrate into the Spanish imperial structure in the Philippines. See Juan Antonio Inarejos Muñoz. “Reclutar cacique: la selección de

the *Ilustrados*, educated in the Philippines and in Europe, attempted to forge a sense of Filipino nationality, create a political culture based on the European State model, and prepare the archipelago for a peaceful transition towards independence.<sup>49</sup>

The most notorious of the *ilustrados* was José Rizal (1861-1896), who created in 1892 the *Liga Filipina*, a clandestine organization aimed at structuring a peaceful political movement for the emancipation of the Philippines.<sup>50</sup> However, the purely colonial regime that existed in the archipelago, which denied the Filipinos political rights that had been granted to Cubans and Puerto Ricans, eventually convinced many Filipinos of the impossibility of getting any reform under Spanish rule. After the colonial authorities closed the *Liga Filipina* in 1893, some of its members, led by Emilio Aguinaldo, created the *Katipunan*, a secret organization with which to prepare an armed uprising against Spain.<sup>51</sup> Thanks to the network of Filipino freemasonry in the archipelago, intensely implicated in the emancipation of the colony, the *Katipunan* began to grow in the provinces around the city of Manila from its headquarters in the city of Cavite, the seat of the Spanish fleet in

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las elites coloniales filipinas a finales del siglo XIX”. *Hispania. Revista española de Historia*, 2011, vol. LXXI, No. 239, pp. 741-762; “La influencia moral en Asia. Práctica política y corrupción electoral en Filipinas durante la dominación colonial española”. *Anuario de Estudios Americanos*, 2012, vol. 69, No. 1, pp. 199-224; “Los procedimientos de elección de los gobernadorcillos de ‘igorrotos’ en Filipinas a finales del siglo XIX”. *Revista Complutense de Historia de América*, 2014, vol. 40, pp. 255-276; *Los (últimos) caciques de Filipinas. Las élites coloniales antes del 98*. Granada: 2015; María Dolores Elizalde Pérez-Grueso & Xavier Huetz de Lemps. “Poder, religión y control en Filipinas. Colaboración y conflicto entre el Estado y las órdenes religiosas, 1868-1898”. *Ayer*, 2015, No. 100, pp. 151-176; Luis Ángel Sánchez Gómez. “Élites indígenas y política colonial en Filipinas (1847-1898)”, in Naranjo Orovio, Puig-Samper & García Mora. *La Nación Soñada*, pp. 417-428; Benedict Anderson. *The Age of Globalization. Anarchists and the anticolonial imagination*. London and New York: Verso, 2013 (first published as *Under Three Flags*, 2005), pp. 123-167. For the commercial aspect of the colonial relation see J. A. Larkin. *Sugar and the Origins of modern Philippine Society*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993, pp. 46-53; Filomeno V. Aguilar. *Clash of Spirits: The History of Power and Sugar Planter Hegemony on a Visayan Island*. Honolulu: The University of Hawaii Press, 1998, pp. 156-188.

<sup>49</sup> See Wenceslao E. Retana. *Vida y escritos del Dr. José Rizal*. Madrid: Librería General de Victoriano Suárez, 1907.

<sup>50</sup> José Rizal (1861-1896) is considered the Philippines’ national hero. He was a *mestizo* of native Filipino, Spanish and Chinese descent. He was a physician who studied in the Philippines, Spain, France, and Germany. In 1884 he became a Freemason in Madrid and became an ardent opponent of clerical influence in the Philippines. He wrote two famous novels in which he criticised the Spanish colonial abuses: *Noli me tangere* (1887) and *El filibusterismo* (1891). Hélène Godet-Goujat. “La Liga Filipina, creada por José Rizal en 1892, como balance político y base de un programa nacional para Filipinas”, in Naranjo Orovio, Puig-Samper & García Mora. *La Nación Soñada*, pp. 79-84; Díaz-Trechuelo. *Filipinas*, pp. 318-320; Anderson. *The Age of Globalization*, pp. 129-133; Martín Rodrigo y Alharilla. “La ‘cuestión Rizal’: memoria del gobernador general Despujol (1892)”. *Revista de Indias*, 1998, vol. 58, No. 213, pp. 365-384.

<sup>51</sup> Susana Cuartero Escobés. “El nacionalismo independentista del Katipunan”, in Fusi & Niño Rodríguez (eds.). *Antes del desastre*, pp. 225-234; Díaz-Trechuelo. *Filipinas*, pp. 320-322; Carmen Molina Gómez-Arnau. “Apuntes sobre el Katipunan”. *Revista española del Pacífico*, 1996, No. 6, pp. 47-70.

the Philippine and South China Seas.<sup>52</sup> Since the paramountcy of the Catholic Church in the Philippines was a major source of discontent among Filipino nationalists, it is hardly surprising that local masonry acted as a vehicle for propagating the idea of ending colonial rule. Masonry also allowed for a network of secret lodges, which were to duly prepare the insurrection against Spain.<sup>53</sup>

This was the context when the insurrection began in August 1896. To cover an archipelago of 7,000 islands and more than 7 million inhabitants, Captain General Ramón Blanco (1893-1896) only had 18,000 men at his disposal.<sup>54</sup> Manila, the main target of the insurgents (ca. 20,000 men), had a garrison of just 1,500 regular soldiers, of whom 1,000 were native Filipinos.<sup>55</sup> The high percentage of native soldiers was a source of alarm for their leaders rather than of confidence, for the memories of the Cavite mutiny in 1872 were still fresh among the Spanish community. In that year, a group of Filipino soldiers in the Spanish Army, in connivance with native priests, attempted to raise the native population against the Spanish community.<sup>56</sup> Although the mutiny was rapidly quelled, it was a serious admonition of the precarious position of the Spaniards in the Philippines.

At a months' distance in time from Spain, arming the *peninsulares* in Manila and creating units of Volunteers likely seemed a sensible measure to reinforce the city's defences. Indeed, the *Casino Español* did insistently request the captain general to approve the creation of Volunteers.<sup>57</sup> Nonetheless, Blanco was very reluctant to hand them weapons, for he feared they could end up being used against him, probably keeping in mind the fate of Captain General Dulce in Havana in 1869, according to the contemporary

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<sup>52</sup> Díaz-Trechuelo. *Filipinas*, pp. 316-318; Hermenegildo Franco Castañón. "El apostadero de Filipinas: sus años finales". *El Ejército y la Armada en 1898: Cuba, Puerto Rico y Filipinas*, vol. I, pp. 345-374.

<sup>53</sup> Leoncio Cabrero. "Las interferencias de la masonería extranjera en Filipinas en la segunda mitad del siglo XIX". *Revista de Indias*, 1998, vol. LVIII, No. 213, pp. 519-527.

<sup>54</sup> Mas Chao. *La guerra olvidada de Filipinas*. Madrid: Editorial San Martín, 1997, pp. 29-44.

<sup>55</sup> Ramón Blanco. *Memoria que dirige al Senado dirige el general Blanco acerca de los últimos sucesos ocurridos en la isla de Luzón*. Madrid: Establecimiento Tipográfico de "El Liberal", 1897, pp. 88-89.

<sup>56</sup> In 20-22<sup>th</sup> January 1872, ca. 200 Filipino soldiers of the Cavite garrison took up arms against Spain, in what was the first attempt to declare the independence from Spain in Filipino history. The mutiny ended up with the execution of 13 of the soldiers involved, plus three Filipino priests allegedly involved: José Burgos, Mariano Gómez, and Jacinto Zamora. Manuel Rolandi Sánchez-Solís. "La algarada de Cavite de enero de 1872: El primer intento independentista filipino fracasa en el Fuerte de San Felipe y en el Arsenal de Cavite". *Revista de Historia Militar*, 2008, No. 104, pp. 201-256.

<sup>57</sup> Apparently, the *Casino Español de Manila* had first suggested the creation of Volunteer units in March 1896, due to the insistent rumours of an upcoming uprising against Spain. *La Dinastía*, 03-09-1896.



Image 8. Manila's Loyal Volunteers, 1896. Photo: G. Slernberg. AGMM, F.09200.

Spanish journalist Rafael Guerrero.<sup>58</sup> Indeed, the relationship between Ramón Blanco and the Manila *peninsulares* was far from good. Even the Archbishop Bernardino Nozaleda (1889-1898), surreptitiously accused the captain general of being a freemason, and of collaborating with the *katipuneros* that wanted to overthrow Spanish rule.<sup>59</sup>

Finally, perhaps wanting to rebuff these accusations, Ramón Blanco created two battalions on 31<sup>st</sup> August 1896 known as *Leales Voluntarios* (Loyal Volunteers), a company of which was taken a collective photograph shortly after its creation (image 8).<sup>60</sup> The military records consulted at the Spanish National Archives show that most of these men were either merchants, officials or retired army personnel.<sup>61</sup> They were directly interested in the continuity of Spanish rule and in some cases had military training. These Volunteers were used to protect some key infrastructure (military hospitals, jails, fortresses, roads, and telegraph lines), quite in the same way as their colleagues were doing in Cuba, as well as patrolling Manila Bay. Apparently, their performance was satisfactory, and by

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<sup>58</sup> Rafael Guerrero. *Crónica de la guerra de Cuba y de la rebelión de Filipinas*, vol. IV. Barcelona: Tip. Hispano-Americana, 1898, p. 32.

<sup>59</sup> Díaz-Trechuelo. *Filipinas*, p. 322.

<sup>60</sup> The decree was issued at the *Gaceta de Manila* on that very day, whereas the battalion began to operate on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1896. Blanco. *Memoria que dirige al Senado*, pp. 40-42.

<sup>61</sup> See, for instance, AHN, Ultramar, 5304, exps. 14, 73, 129.



November 1896 two more units were created: the *Guerrilla de San Rafael*, and the *Guerrilla del Casino Español*.<sup>62</sup> The ca. 1,500 Volunteers were deployed to reinforce the military presence in the outskirts of Manila, to provide a liaison between the Malacañang Palace (the seat of the Captaincy General) and the Cavite Arsenal, and to chase the insurgents from Manila Bay.<sup>63</sup> The success of the Loyal Volunteers was soon known in other parts of the archipelago. According to the documentation kept at the General Military Archive in Madrid, despite the weak presence of *peninsulares* outside Manila, new units were created in towns like Iloilo or Mindoro, and in the countryside, often including loyal native Filipinos.<sup>64</sup> The model was also extended to the recently-conquered islands of Mindanao and Joló, to keep the local Muslim population in order.<sup>65</sup>

Nevertheless, the situation in Manila was still desperate. The provinces surrounding the city had mostly fallen into the hands of the rebels, who had agents within the city walls, and reinforcements were unlikely to arrive from Spain in the short term.<sup>66</sup> An army officer recalled that the *peninsulares* lived in a permanent state of fear, constantly carrying pistols.<sup>67</sup> Consequently, the situation of the captain general began to look fragile. Despite dozens of executions, he was unable to quell the rebellion and to control the area around Manila. Lacking the support of the Spanish Government and the Manila *peninsulares*, Blanco was replaced by Polavieja on 13<sup>th</sup> December 1896.<sup>68</sup>

The *peninsulares* of Manila, including the Volunteers, hoped that Polavieja would be implacable with the rebels, and pressed him to carry on with the legal process against José Rizal, who had been falsely accused of being involved in the Katipunan armed struggle.<sup>69</sup> Polavieja, who had previously been Cuba's captain general (1890-1892), was well aware of the potential perils posed by a militia like the Volunteers.<sup>70</sup> According to the

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<sup>62</sup> Blanco. *Memoria que dirige al Senado*, p. 33.

<sup>63</sup> AGMM, Ultramar, CGF, caja 5305, *Guerrilla de San Rafael*.

<sup>64</sup> AHN, Ultramar, 5330, exp. 11; AGMM, Ultramar, CGF, caja 5305, *Sección de Voluntarios de Mindoro*.

<sup>65</sup> Blanco. *Memoria que dirige al Senado*, p. 33.

<sup>66</sup> The state of war was declared in the provinces of Manila, Bulacán, Pampanga and Nueva Écija (30<sup>th</sup> August 1896), Morong (23<sup>rd</sup> October 1896), Zambales and Bataan (30<sup>th</sup> December 1896). AHN, Ultramar, 5356, exp. 4; Mas Chao. *La guerra olvidada de Filipinas*, pp. 29-57.

<sup>67</sup> Ricardo Burguete. *¡La Guerra! Filipinas (memorias de un herido)*. Barcelona: Casa Editorial Maucci, 1902, p. 70.

<sup>68</sup> Pilar Lozano Guirao. "Filipinas durante el mandato del General Camilo García de Polavieja". *Anales de la Universidad de Murcia. Letras*, 1983, vol. 41, No. 3-4, pp. 95-131.

<sup>69</sup> Anderson. *The Age of Globalization*, pp. 160-164.

<sup>70</sup> As seen in the previous chapter, he had to face several strikes during which the Volunteers threatened to use their weapons should their demands remained unattended. For the labour conflicts in 1890s Havana see Casanovas. *Bread, or Bullets!*, pp. 178-202.

Manila-based Spanish journalist W. E. Retana, the Volunteers spread the word that should Polavieja impede Rizal's execution, they would send him back to Spain and kill Rizal themselves.<sup>71</sup> Finally, Polavieja decided to offer them a scapegoat in José Rizal, who was executed on 30<sup>th</sup> December 1896 in Manila, with a notable presence of the Volunteers in the military parade that preceded the execution.<sup>72</sup>

Despite the many differences between the Philippines and the Antilles, the Manila Volunteers had shown an attitude notably resembling their colleagues in Havana. They were a necessary defensive tool for captains general, but a threat as well. In political terms, their opposition to any movement deemed to undermine Spanish rule was just as radical as it had been in Havana. Their role in the process and execution of José Rizal powerfully recalls the assassination of the medical students in Havana in November 1871. In both cases, they sacrificed a scapegoat to assuage their anger against the elements they regarded as enemies of Spain. In Manila, as in Havana, the Volunteers had the capacity to condition the policy of the authorities regarding the repression of the movements aiming to alter the colonial status quo.

It is remarkable to note the many similarities between the Volunteers in the Philippines and their colleagues in the Caribbean, especially considering the completely different context of the Asian colony in terms of society or economy. As in Cuba and Puerto Rico, the Manila Volunteers were the armed wing of Spanish *integrismo*. Also, in terms of organization, the *Casino Español* functioned as the dynamizing centre of the Volunteers, as well as a social centre for the *peninsulares* capable of exerting a certain political pressure on the Spanish authorities. The composition of the Volunteers in Manila, Havana, and San Juan was similar. An elite of businessmen and high-ranking officials filled the officer ranks, whereas the rank-and-file were mostly recruited from among the working-class *peninsulares*, often related to the former via employment. In both scenarios, in Asia and the Caribbean, the Volunteers were an auxiliary force as well as a threat to the Spanish authority.

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<sup>71</sup> Retana. *Vida y escritos del Dr. José Rizal*, p. 447.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 430; *La Voz Española*, 30-12-1896.

## 2. The Volunteers as a Target for the Insurgency

Due to their historical presence throughout Cuba, the Volunteers were a permanent target for the insurgency. In the cities, where most of the Volunteers were *peninsulares*, the agents of rebellion tried to exploit any frictions between these men and the authorities. The *laborantes* wanted not to attract the Volunteers to the insurgency, but to create conflict between these men and the Captaincy General. Memories of the events of 1869 were only a reminder that Volunteers were staunchly committed to the *integridad nacional*, not always to colonial authorities. In the countryside, where the Cuban element predominated, the *mambís* permanently targeted the Volunteers. The Volunteers had more units scattered throughout the Cuban countryside than the army, thus becoming the first defence against the insurgents' main strategy: to destroy the island's economic infrastructures. Quite famously, the second-in-command rebel leader Antonio Maceo declared that "to annihilate Cuba, is to defeat the enemy".<sup>73</sup> The strategy of the *mambís* was to conduct a guerrilla warfare aimed at making it clear that Spain was no longer capable of controlling the violence and making the island unprofitable for the metropolis. The insurgents avoided direct clashes with the regular army, harassed the population loyal to Spain, and destroyed property.<sup>74</sup> The military leader of the insurgency, Máximo Gómez, summed it up: 'it is necessary to destroy Cuba to make it free'.<sup>75</sup>

The numerous Volunteer units scattered throughout the countryside were priority targets for the rebels. In many small towns, the Volunteers were often the only defenders and generally were barely militarily trained. For instance, in Sagua de Tánamo, a town in Oriente, the town's 75 Volunteers organized a permanent force of 50 men plus a reserve of 25. Most of these men were peasants who depended on their neighbours' charity to survive since their military duties barely allowed them to work.<sup>76</sup> The *mambís* were fully devoted to waging war, Volunteer peasants had to combine their regular jobs with the armed defence of their towns, lives, and properties. The insurgents deemed that their weapons and ammunitions could be taken easily. Besides, the rebels considered that since there were thousands of Cubans serving in the Volunteers, they could be induced or forced

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<sup>73</sup> Luis de Armiñán. *Weyler*. Madrid: Editorial "El Gran Capitán", 1946, p. 89.

<sup>74</sup> Tone. *War and Genocide*, pp. 57-68.

<sup>75</sup> This phrase forms part of a broader reflection by Máximo Gómez on the necessity of destroying Cuba's economy and infrastructure, in a letter sent to the rebel colonel Andrés Moreno on 6<sup>th</sup> February 1897. BNC, CM Gómez, No. 6.

<sup>76</sup> The city council gave them 1 *peso* per day for six days, which was not enough to provide for food. To remedy this, 16 neighbours collected 326 *pesos* to maintain the Volunteers for two weeks, the time they reckoned it would take an Army force would arrive. AHPSC, leg. 737, exp. 7.

to join the insurgency. It must be considered that for most Volunteer peasants, Cuba was the only land they knew. Unlike the *peninsulares*, they generally had no family in Spain they could go back to. All their family and goods were in Cuba. Also, if captured in combat, Cubans loyal to Spain were generally assassinated by the *mambís*, who considered these men traitors. However, they could be pardoned if they joined the insurgency. Therefore, the presence of regular troops in small towns was so vital for the military performance of the Volunteers. Fighting alongside an Army battalion meant that the chances of resisting the attack were much higher. Instead, for a company (120-150 men) or even a section (30-50) of Volunteers, having to resist a *mambí* force (usually 400-500 men) on its own, defeat was much more likely. Thus, the stronger was the presence of the army, the better the military performance of the Volunteers against the insurgents.

From the outset of the war in Cuba, the *mambís* tried to exploit any possible conflict between the Volunteers and the authorities. This is hardly surprising, for a certain tension between the Volunteers and those Captains General prone to implementing reforms in the island had always been evident. Martínez de Campos was a man associated with reformist policy, for he ended the Ten Years' War in 1878 with a compromise with the rebels based on political and social reforms. The events of June 1869 against Captain General Domingo Dulce, the killing of the medical students in November 1871, and the strikes against Captain General Polavieja in October 1890 as seen in previous chapters were regular reminders of the delicate equilibrium that existed between the Volunteers and the military authorities.

The weakness of the Spanish military presence at the beginning of the war provided the insurgents a chance to try to break that equilibrium. On 19<sup>th</sup> May 1895, having only 15,000 regular soldiers—half of whom were sick, Captain General Arsenio Martínez de Campos decreed that the conscripts called in 1892-1894 who were serving in the Volunteers, now had to join the regular army.<sup>77</sup> This had a negative effect on young men that had joined the Volunteers precisely to avoid military service in the army. Seeking to exploit the discontent, rebel agents in Havana rapidly circulated a text accusing Martínez de Campos of abusing the Volunteers and calling them to take up arms against Spain.

The chances of luring the Havana Volunteers, mostly *peninsulares*, to join the rebellion were virtually non-existent. They had always been the most genuine representation of the most radical form of *integrismo* that utterly opposed the

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<sup>77</sup> *Gaceta de La Habana*, 19-05-1895.

independence of Cuba. They might have acted against the authorities in the past, but never against the idea of a Spanish Cuba. Thus, the pamphlet circulated by the *laborantes* in Havana was rather clumsy propaganda. It was rapidly contested on 24<sup>th</sup> May 1895 by the captain general. In a personal message directed to the Volunteers, he reminded them of their services to Spain and stressed the necessity of their standing together in times of peril.<sup>78</sup> There is no evidence of any Havana Volunteer defecting to the insurgency during the war. However, the authorities were not willing to allow the circulation of *mambí* propaganda among the Volunteers.

However, there were signs that the Volunteers' morale could have been better. Not many men were joining the militia. The conservative *Diario de la Marina*, Havana's most widely circulated newspaper, issued an article in late June 1895 calling for more men to join the Volunteers. Quite verbosely, the newspaper called on the young Spaniards to imitate the deeds of the French that rallied to defend the Revolution in 1789, the Union volunteers of the US Civil War, and the fellow countrymen that took up arms against the French Army in Madrid on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1808.<sup>79</sup> However, it seems that the morale of the Volunteers could not be lifted by an article. The captain general accepted a negotiation of the terms of the mobilization decreed on 19<sup>th</sup> May to encourage enlistment. Instead of being incorporated into regular army units, as was initially planned, the mobilization would consist of drafting ca. 150 Volunteers and deploying them to reinforce the sugar mills' garrisons located within the province of Havana.<sup>80</sup> They probably feared the voluble nature of the Volunteers. Again, the Volunteers had imposed their will on the superior authorities.

In the countryside, where the army presence was scant and the percentage of Cubans in the Volunteers higher, evidence shows that the insurgents had infiltrated the Volunteers before the uprising. Ricardo Batrell Oviedo, a young Black Cuban rebel, recalled after the war that a Volunteer smuggled weapons to the rebels in Sabanilla del Encomendador (Matanzas) when they first launched their insurrection in March 1895.<sup>81</sup> Whether these weapons were handed to the rebels voluntarily or by force is difficult to tell. A rather scarce army presence and the harassment of the rebel forces could bring many Cubans to collaborate, or at least, not to join the Volunteers. Infiltration of the

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<sup>78</sup> ANRC, Asuntos Políticos, leg. 84, exp. 24.

<sup>79</sup> *Diario de la Marina*, 22-06-1895.

<sup>80</sup> *El Eco de Sitges*, 26-05-1895.

<sup>81</sup> René González Barrios. *Apuntes autobiográficos de la vida de Ricardo Batrell Oviedo*. Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 2014, pp. 8-10.

*mambís* into the Spanish forces is a topic worthy of further research, as it remains an unexplored field.

This situation was only worsened by Arsenio Martínez de Campos' strategy of distributing the troops throughout Cuba's geographical area, to defend the island's infrastructures and to gain the landowners' support.<sup>82</sup> Under Martínez de Campos, the Spanish troops became weak everywhere, and strong nowhere. It resulted in poorly-defended sugar mills and railroads and small towns left alone, where the only defence was now the Cuban Volunteers, who were often badly fed and ill-trained. In the sugar-producing area of Matanzas, sugar mills were defended by garrisons of 15-20 Volunteers who usually had to defend their position against bands of 50-100 *mambises*. The military training of the Volunteers, who it must be remembered had to combine their regular jobs with unpaid military duties, was not always suitable in facing these situations. Also, because the insurgents were in control of wide areas of the countryside, it was often difficult to supply the garrisons with food and munitions, forcing the Volunteers to seek food in the areas around the sugar mills.<sup>83</sup> The failure of the use of Volunteers to defend the agricultural property soon became evident, as the insurgency began to occupy wider areas of the countryside, where loyalty to Spain became a difficult position to take. In fact, it often occurred that the *peninsulares* living in the countryside were assassinated for the mere fact of being born in metropolitan Spain.<sup>84</sup> In a letter to President Antonio Cánovas del Castillo, in July 1895, Martínez de Campos confessed that 'the few Spaniards that there are on the island, only dare to call themselves as such in the cities', and that 'there are only a few men that still want to join the Volunteers in the countryside'.<sup>85</sup>

These words seem to have accurately depicted the situation, which was precisely the result of Martínez de Campos' policy. The vulnerability of the Spanish presence in the countryside allowed the insurgency to consolidate the rebellion in Oriente, and to begin the most daring military action of the entire war: the *Invasión de Occidente*, or invasion of

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<sup>82</sup> Tone. *War and Genocide*, pp. 113-122.

<sup>83</sup> In the sugar heartland of Matanzas, the sugar mills were often defended by groups of 15-20 Volunteers, badly fed and supplied. See AGMM, Capitanía General de Cuba, Asuntos Generales, Gobierno Militar de Matanzas, Destacamentos, cajas 3079, 3080, 3081.

<sup>84</sup> José Moure Saco, a conscript soldier in the Spanish Army, recalled that in 1896 his column found near the town of Tuinicú a bag containing the quartered body of an Asturian peasant, killed by the *mambís* for the sole fact of being a *peninsular*. José Moure Saco. *1102 días en el Ejército español. Recuerdos de un soldado en la Guerra de Cuba*. Havana: Ediciones Boloña, 2001, p. 41.

<sup>85</sup> AGP, Sección Reinados, Fondo Alfonso XIII, caja 12.832, exp. 9: "carta de Arsenio Martínez de Campos a Antonio Cánovas del Castillo, 25-07-1895"; Elorza & Hernández Sandoica. *La Guerra de Cuba*, pp. 194-195.

western Cuba.<sup>86</sup> This action, led by Máximo Gómez and Antonio Maceo, swept across Cuba from east to west, between October 1895 and January 1896.<sup>87</sup> Although the rebels took no major city during the campaign, their biggest success was to bring the war to western Cuba, the centre of Spanish power on the island, where Havana and most of the agricultural production was located. The *Invasión* also revealed the Spanish inability to defend the countryside. Indeed, despite the rebel invaders trying to avoid direct confrontation with the Spanish troops as much as possible and conquering no important town, they made their presence felt by burning cane fields and sugar mills, blowing up railways, cutting telegraph lines, and looting towns, which were often defended by Cuban Volunteers.<sup>88</sup>

Small towns were particularly attractive for the insurgents, for the weak defence posed by Volunteers, the scarce presence of regular troops, and the possibility of looting shops and houses in their search for weapons, clothing, food, women, and recruits. The response of the Volunteers, and the entire civilian population, often depended on the support of the regular army and was determined by the fact that they could expect no mercy from the rebels in the event of being caught in combat. As Tone wrote in detail, the rebels felt a deep hatred for the Cuban Volunteers, regarding them as traitors to the cause of a free Cuba.<sup>89</sup> Unless they joined the rebel forces, the Cuban Volunteers could expect to be killed by their fellow countrymen if captured.<sup>90</sup> Simply possessing travel documents issued by the Spanish authorities could lead to loyalist Cubans being killed by the insurgents.<sup>91</sup>

Consequently, in the absence of regular troops, they often surrendered to the *mambís*. For instance, on 6<sup>th</sup> January 1896, four companies of the Volunteers of the Santiago de los Baños Volunteer Battalion, the town's only defenders, surrendered to the men of Antonio Maceo and gave up ca. 500 rifles plus ammunition. Quite tellingly, the Volunteers decided not to resist the attack after the pleas of their fellow townsfolk, who

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<sup>86</sup> This term, which means 'invasion of the West', was coined during the war. See Tomás Estrada Palma. *La invasión de Occidente. Partes oficiales*. New York: Imprenta "América", 1896.

<sup>87</sup> The most complete account of the invasion was written in 1909 by a Spaniard that fought for the *mambís*, José Miró Argenter. See José Miró Argenter. *Cuba: crónicas de la guerra*. Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1970 (first published in 1909), pp. 116-281.

<sup>88</sup> Tone. *War and Genocide*, pp. 139-152.

<sup>89</sup> Tone. *War and Genocide*, pp. 139-141.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 145-152.

<sup>91</sup> The *mambí* officer Enrique Loynaz del Castillo recalled having hanged two Cubans in Colón (Matanzas) in July 1897, for the mere fact of bearing two Spanish *salvoconductos* (safeguards). Enrique Loynaz del Castillo. *Memorias de la guerra*. Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1989, p. 497.

yelled at them that to resist would mean having the town burnt down by the rebels.<sup>92</sup> By giving up their weapons, they had also probably avoided death. This might cause one to reconsider the supposed popular support for the invasion sustained by Cuban chroniclers of the time and since. The war was imposed by the insurgency upon the inhabitants of western Cuba. Refusing to fight the invaders did not necessarily mean support for an independent Cuba. For instance, none of the Volunteers in San Antonio de los Baños decided to join the rebel ranks.<sup>93</sup>

When the Volunteers fought alongside the Army, their performance was sharply different. On 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> February 1896, the Volunteers from Candelaria (Pinar del Río province), alongside 50 regular soldiers, resisted a 30-hour attack by Antonio Maceo's men. Some of the Volunteers were Basque, but most were Cuban, many of whom were Black and Mulatto, who donned the typical Basque beret of their comrades-at-arms. Their combative attitude had Maceo, a mulatto, yelling to his men to cut the throat of the Black Volunteers should they capture the town. This menace possibly intensified the defence, which was labelled as 'heroic' by the *mambí* chronicler José Miró Argenter.<sup>94</sup> Despite having taken the outer defences, and burnt several houses, the rebels withdrew after realising the impossibility of taking the town. Candelaria was an example of the good fighting skills of the Volunteers fighting alongside army units. It was also a demonstration of the divisions in the Cuban society during the war, for Cubans had fought on both sides in Candelaria.

The cases of San Antonio de los Baños and Candelaria are just two examples of the type of war that was fought in Cuba during Martínez Campos' term, and the *Invasión de Occidente*. This was a guerrilla war, in which the Spanish Army poorly defended the countryside, often leaving it to the sole protection of the Volunteers. The Volunteers alone could hardly repeal the rebels' thrust, whereas the support of the Army often resulted in a successful defence.

The overall military situation in Cuba, however, was not going well for Spain. The cities remained under Spanish control, but the countryside was largely a domain of *Cuba Libre*. The letter to Cánovas del Castillo had shown that Arsenio Martínez de Campo lacked the courage to conduct a harsher type of war, which would require concentrating peasants,

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<sup>92</sup> AGMM, Ultramar, Capitanía General de Cuba, Subinspección General de Voluntarios, caja 3001, Encausados Sumariados, 1896.

<sup>93</sup> Miró Argenter. *Cuba: crónicas de la guerra*, pp. 222-229.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 328-342.



deemed necessary to win the war. Either voluntarily or forcibly, rural populations provided information and logistics to the rebels. In any guerrilla war, the collaboration of the rural inhabitants proves vital for the insurgency. For that task, Martínez de Campos recommended Valeriano Weyler, a soldier with vast military experience in the colonies. He had fought in Santo Domingo, in Cuba, and had been captain general of the Philippines (1888-1891).<sup>95</sup> Also, the rebel forces inflicted upon the Spanish Army two humiliating defeats at Peralejo (14<sup>th</sup> July 1895) and Mal Tiempo (15<sup>th</sup> December 1895) on its way to western Cuba.<sup>96</sup>

The second half of 1895 showed the Spanish forces' incapacity to tackle the invading rebel forces, bringing panic to the supporters of a Spanish Cuba, and rendering the continuity of Martínez de Campos untenable. In Havana, rumours of a coup against Martínez de Campos began to circulate by late 1895. By January 1896 sabre rattling in the Volunteer battalions in Havana became dangerously persistent.<sup>97</sup> The opposition to the captain general in Havana was shared in Madrid, especially in the conservative circles and the government. Eventually, the decision to wage a more brutal war was taken in Madrid, and on 10<sup>th</sup> February 1896, Valeriano Weyler assumed the Captaincy General of Cuba.

### 3. The Volunteers and the Peasants' Concentration

The arrival of Valeriano Weyler to Cuba meant a dramatic change in the type of war waged in Cuba. A veteran soldier, experienced in colonial warfare, he advocated for harsher methods to fight the insurgency.<sup>98</sup> His strategy rested on two pillars. First, he advocated concentrating the dispersed army units into relatively large columns (ca. 200 men) to chase the rebel forces, thus leaving the defence of the countryside to the Volunteers (including Volunteers who had been mobilized from the cities) and other irregular units.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Valeriano Weyler y Nicolau (1838-1926) was a veteran of the Dominican War (1863-1865), the Ten Years' War, and the Third Carlist War. He had also been the captain general of the Philippines (1888-1891). Before being sent to Cuba, Weyler had fiercely repressed the terrorist activities of the Anarchist movement in Barcelona as captain general of Catalonia (1893-1896). He also served twice as Chief of Staff of the Army (1916-1922, and 1923-1925). Politically considered a Liberal, he also served as war minister on three occasions between 1901 and 1907, and navy minister (1905). Gabriel Cardona & Juan Carlos Losada. *Weyler. Nuestro hombre en La Habana*. Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1997, pp. 15-153.

<sup>96</sup> Miró Argenter. *Cuba: crónicas de la guerra*, pp. 137-146; Tone. *War and Genocide*, pp. 73-80, 123-128;

<sup>97</sup> Stucki. *Las guerras de Cuba*, p. 100.

<sup>98</sup> Cardona & Losada. *Weyler*, pp. 178-199.

<sup>99</sup> Apart from the Volunteers who defended their own towns in the rural areas, by September 1897 there were ca. 22,000 Volunteers who had been mobilized from the cities to the countryside.

Second, the relocation of the entire peasant population into fortified areas, aimed at depriving the enemy of the logistical support it often found among the rural communities, either voluntarily or forcibly.<sup>100</sup>

This section will focus on the Volunteers' role during the relocation of the rural inhabitants, for this was undoubtedly the most controversial measure conducted during the war. The Volunteers certainly took part in it as auxiliary forces to the regular army units that conducted the eviction of the peasants to fortified areas and towns. It consisted of the concentration of ca. 400,000 peasants, of whom between 155,000 and 170,000 perished due to starvation and maladies, according to Jordi Maluquer de Motes.<sup>101</sup> This meant that ca. 10% of the Cuban population died because of the concentration, which earned Weyler the nickname of 'butcher', given by the pro-Cuban independence press in the United States.<sup>102</sup> Formally, the concentrations lasted from February 1896 to March 1898, when Weyler's successor, Ramón Blanco, decreed their formal end.<sup>103</sup>

The existing literature on how it was carried out, scarce in comparison to the impact of the concentration, has tended to focus exclusively on the responsibility of the Spanish authorities for the tragedy. This is, for instance, the approach by Francisco Pérez Guzmán and Rafael Izquierdo Canosa.<sup>104</sup> The latter argued that the goal of the concentration was to 'exterminate the Cuban population'.<sup>105</sup> However, the more recent study by Stucki shows that the concentration had a much more complex reality, in which both the Spanish and the Cuban rebel forces had their share of responsibility for the

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Valeriano Weyler y Nicolau. *Mi mando en Cuba (10 Febrero 1896 a 31 Octubre 1897). Historia militar y política de la última guerra separatista durante dicho mando*, vol. V. Madrid: Imprenta, Litografía y Casa Editorial de Felipe González Rojas, 1910, p. 42.

<sup>100</sup> Stucki. *Las guerras de Cuba*, pp. 106-129; Tone. *War and Genocide*, pp. 153-178.

<sup>101</sup> His is the most accurate study on the concentration's casualties. Jordi Maluquer de Motes. *España en la crisis de 1898: de la Gran Depresión a la modernización económica del siglo XX*. Barcelona: Península, 1999, p. 39.

<sup>102</sup> Tone. *War and Genocide*, 153-178.

<sup>103</sup> The first concentration decree, issued on 16<sup>th</sup> February 1896, was meant for the jurisdiction of Sancti Spiritus (Santa Clara province), and the provinces of Puerto Príncipe and Santiago de Cuba. On 21<sup>st</sup> October 1896 the concentration extended to the provinces of Havana, Matanzas, Pinar del Río, and all of Santa Clara, thus covering the whole island. The first decree allowing the *reconcentrados* to return to their homes was issued by Ramón Blanco on 13<sup>th</sup> November 1897, and the formal end arrived on 30<sup>th</sup> March 1898.

<sup>104</sup> Raúl Izquierdo Canosa. *La reconcentración, 1896-1897*. Havana: Ediciones Verde Olivo, 1997, p. 11; Francisco Pérez Guzmán. *Herida profunda*. Havana: Ediciones Unión, 1998. Also see Aisnara Perera Díaz & Augusto Rosquete Méndez. "La reconcentración en Bejucal: análisis demográfico". *El 98 en las fuentes documentales, 1898-1998*. Havana: Archivo Nacional de Cuba, 2000, pp. 1-30; María Julia Martínez Alemán & Lourdes Sánchez González. *Weyler y la reconcentración en la jurisdicción de Remedios*. Santa Clara: Ediciones Capiro, 2000.

<sup>105</sup> Izquierdo Canosa. *La reconcentración*, p. 11.

tragedy of having one in ten Cubans killed. Stucki considers events beyond the formal concentration decreed by Weyler.<sup>106</sup> In fact, it was a twofold process. On the one hand, there was a forcible concentration conducted during Weyler's term (February 1896 – October 1897). On the other, there was an ongoing flow of refugees towards the cities, fleeing from the hardships of the war and the harassment from the rebel forces. There was also an internal migration of peasants towards the insurgency-controlled areas fleeing from the Spanish repression and their policy of forced concentration.<sup>107</sup>

The focus here will be on the Volunteers' participation in the movement of refugees towards the Spanish-controlled areas. They acted as auxiliary forces to the regular army units that conducted the eviction of the peasant communities toward fortified areas and towns. According to Francisco Pérez Guzmán, abuses of men, women, and children were frequent.<sup>108</sup> The Volunteers' share of responsibility in the tragedy is undeniable. Some Volunteers were also victims of the war, who used the concentrations as a possibility to escape from the harassment of the *mambís*.

One of the provinces most deeply affected by the horrors of the war was Pinar del Río, in the westernmost part of Cuba. This province consisted mostly of small towns, and its economy heavily depended on the tobacco-growing industry, traditionally manned by Cuban peasants of Canary Islander descent.<sup>109</sup> During the war, it was devastated. From when the troops of Antonio Maceo invaded the province in January 1896, until the death of the rebel leader in December of that very year, Pinar del Río was the centre of constant military action between Spanish troops and insurgent forces that burnt down or ransacked most of the towns.<sup>110</sup>

Despite having far more men than the rebels, the Spanish forces were unable to expel the rebels from Pinar del Río. More than 16,000 Spanish regular soldiers were incapable of defeating the 4,000 *mambís*, cavalry forces commanded by Antonio Maceo. Their high mobility and skilful management of attacks by surprise allowed them to destroy

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<sup>106</sup> Stucki. *Las guerras de Cuba*, pp. 29-38.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 90-98.

<sup>108</sup> Josep Conangla. *Memorias de mi juventud en Cuba. un soldado del ejército español en la guerra separatista (1895-1898)*. Barcelona: Ediciones Península, 1998, p. 174; Miró Argenter. *Cuba: crónicas de la guerra*, pp. 629-637; Pérez Guzmán. *Herida profunda*, pp. 39-59;

<sup>109</sup> See Mario Luis López Isla. *La aventura del tabaco: los canarios en Cuba*. Santa Cruz de Tenerife: Centro de la Cultura Popular Canaria, 1998.

<sup>110</sup> Miró Argenter. *Cuba: crónicas de la guerra*, pp. 420-508 & 523-654; Tone. *War and Genocide*, pp. 179-192.

farms and ransack towns throughout 1896.<sup>111</sup> As in eastern Cuba, the Spanish forces were widely disseminated throughout the territory, and the rebels only attacked a town when they outnumbered the defenders. One estimate was that there were 12,000 Volunteers in the province, remaining trapped in an enclosed warzone and stuck in their hometowns.<sup>112</sup> Faced with this situation, Valeriano Weyler decided to enclose the rebel troops within the province with the construction of the Mariel-Majana *trocha*, a military line that isolated the province from the rest of the island, seeking to ‘cleanse’ the area of rebel forces.<sup>113</sup>

Part of Weyler’s strategy was to concentrate the peasants, which in Pinar del Río formally began on 21<sup>st</sup> October 1896. By the end of 1897, out of a population of more than 225,000 inhabitants, at least 35,000 had been *reconcentrados*.<sup>114</sup> It is difficult to establish how many had been forcibly concentrated, and how many had taken shelter in the Spanish-controlled areas. However, it is evident that for some one hundred loyalists, being concentrated was a chance to protect their lives.<sup>115</sup> This was the case for the *reconcentrados* in the fortified town of Dimas, a small town on the northern coast of Pinar del Río.

Thanks to the discovery of an unpublished report by Lino Galán, military commander of Dimas, it can now be stated that a few hundred loyalists had been concentrated in that town, whereas most of the peasants had either joined or assisted the *mambís*.<sup>116</sup> According to Galán, the mass defection had been caused by the fear of an imminent rebel victory, rather than a sincere support for an independent Cuba. Thus, this was a way to avoid retaliation. Therefore, confidence in the Spanish forces’ real chances to

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<sup>111</sup> Manuel Piedra Martel. *Mis primeros 30 años*. Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 2001 (first published in Minerva, 1943), pp. 97-100.

<sup>112</sup> Amblard. *Notas coloniales*, p. 163.

<sup>113</sup> The construction of the Mariel-Majana *trocha* (ca. 50km long) began on 18<sup>th</sup> March 1896 to lock Maceo’s men into the province. During Weyler’s term, ca. 15,000 soldiers garrisoned the line. Miró Argenter. *Cuba: crónicas de la guerra*, pp. 242; Weyler. *Mi mando en Cuba*, vol. I, pp. 131-139.

<sup>114</sup> The total number of *reconcentrados* was much likely higher. The estimate of the Pinar del Río governor only covered 10 of the 25 towns that made up the whole province. In response to Captain General Ramón Blanco’s request for reports on the state of the *reconcentrados* in November 1897, Pinar del Río’s Governor informed him of the bad state of the people affected. He reckoned that the province had lost at least half of its population. AGMM, Ultramar, caja 5809, exp. 1, letter from the governor of Pinar del Río to Ramón Blanco, 28-11-1897.

<sup>115</sup> For a recent review of the *reconcentración*, see Fernando J. Padilla Angulo. “La reconcentración en Cuba (1895-1898): un pasado incómodo”, in Fernando Puell de la Villa & David García Hernán (eds.). *Los efectos de la guerra. Desplazamientos de población a lo largo de la Historia*. Madrid: Instituto Universitario General Gutiérrez Mellado-UNED, 2017, pp. 295-317.

<sup>116</sup> AGMM, Ultramar, Capitanía General de Cuba, Subinspección General de Voluntarios, caja 4123, Dimas.

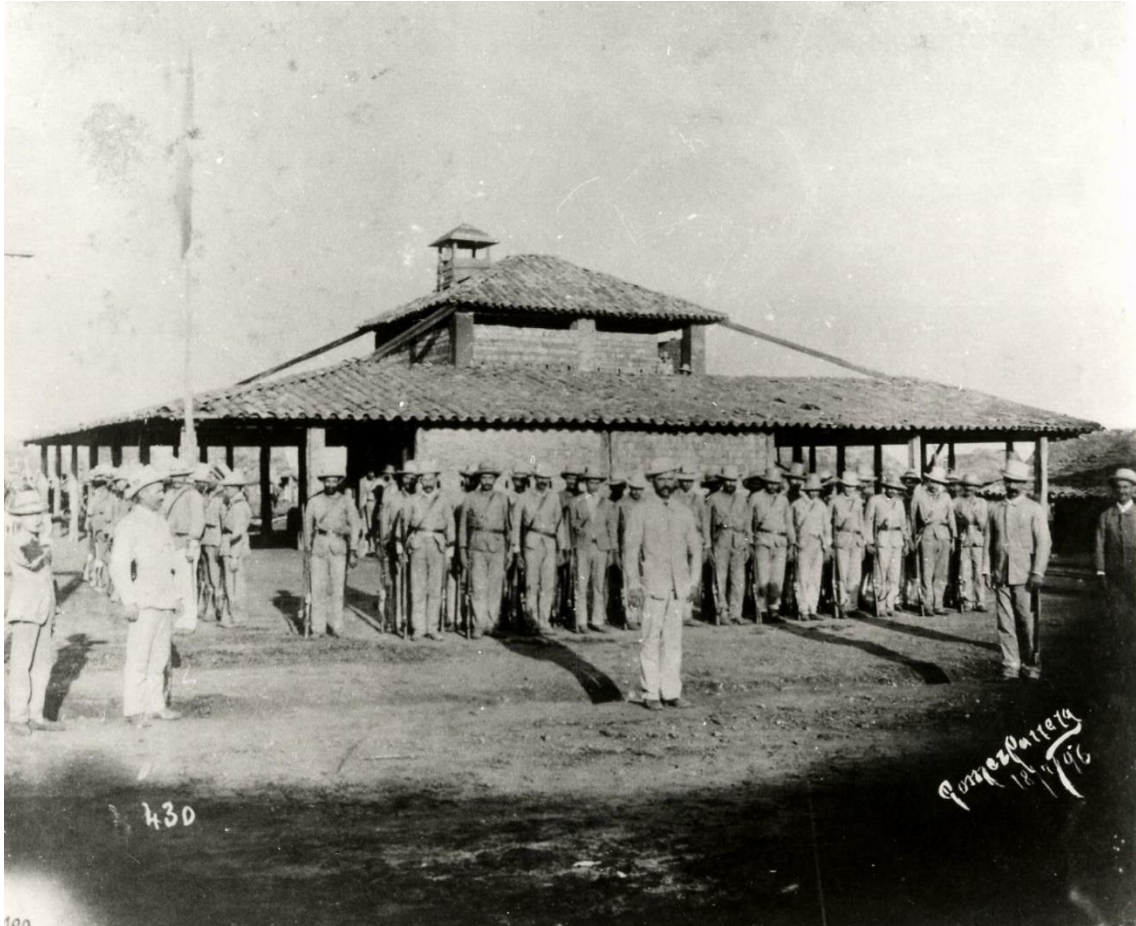


Image 9. The Volunteers of Dimas in front of the Tejar fort. This picture was taken on 18<sup>th</sup> July 1896, and first published by the Havana-based magazine *La Caricatura* on 30<sup>th</sup> July 1896. Photo: Gómez Carrera. AGMM, F. 05953.

quell the insurgency was low. Consequently, only a minority of refuge-seekers settled in Spanish-controlled areas.

According to the report, most of Dimas' refugees were Cuban Volunteers and *guerrilleros* with their families.<sup>117</sup> They were people who particularly identified with the Spanish cause, who believed they would face certain death if caught by the rebels. Even before the concentration decree of October 1896, the loyalists that had taken refuge in Dimas probably chose this location because it had some regular troops and a gunboat protecting the area. Since mid-1896, Dimas began to attract more loyalists from the nearby towns of Mantua, Remates, Bajas, and Guane. These men and their families contributed to their own alimentation and defence since their arrival. They not only ploughed the crop

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<sup>117</sup> The guerrillas were irregular units, mostly made up of Cuban peasants. George Bronson Rea. *Facts and Fakes about Cuba. A Review of the Various Stories Circulated in the United States Concerning the Present Insurrection*. New York: George Munro's Sons, Publishers, 1898, p. 51.

zones established around the town but also surrounded the town with a barbed-wire fence and built several forts, one of which can be seen in image 9.

The existence of a place like Dimas was a challenge to the insurgency's political project. Throughout the report, Lino Galán informs of several attacks by the *mambís*, most especially on the outer forts and the crops. It is most probable that the rebel forces, which often ran out of food, pillaged the crops to feed their ranks. Stucki's analysis suggests that these attacks were also aimed at depriving Cuban loyalists the means to survive and their shelter, such as their crops and fortified towns, which had to be defended by the *reconcentrados* themselves.<sup>118</sup>

This means that close to no support was received by the Spanish authorities, beyond the scant presence of regular troops. The *reconcentrados* had to provide their own food and defence. Nonetheless, it seems that Dimas was a success, and it kept attracting more loyalists. In the report, Lino Galán confessed that "due to the arrival of new people, we cannot fit them into the town". Thus, new crop areas and fortified settlements were built around the original area of Dimas, most notably in Tumbas de Estorino. Another reason to consider it a success was the absence of food requests, as it seems that Dimas and the other settlements had become self-sufficient. One of them, Bartolo, had even appointed a mayor, and its authorities seriously evaluated the construction of a telegraphic line to connect all the settlements around Dimas.<sup>119</sup> The settlement consolidated, and even after the formal end of the concentration (30<sup>th</sup> March 1898), the town continued to exist to this day.

Dimas is an example of the complexity of the tragedy suffered by the Cuban population during the period of *reconcentración*. Its dramatic death toll (ca. 10% of Cuba's population killed) is undeniable, considering all the documentary evidence. The abuses inflicted upon the population during the forcible relocation by the Spanish authorities undoubtedly contributed to the ca. 170,000 people killed. However, the history of Dimas challenges the traditional view of the concentration, for it reveals evidence of the share of responsibility attributable to the insurgent, who caused a wave of internal migrants in different directions, and a reminder that, in many aspects, the war for independence can be understood as a Cuban civil war.

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<sup>118</sup> In fact, the harassment to the *reconcentrados* was part of the insurgents' strategy. Stucki. *Las guerras de Cuba*, pp. 185-193.

<sup>119</sup> AGM, Ultramar, Gobiernos Militares de La Habana y Pinar del Río, Memoria sobre la reforma de la Comandancia de Dimas, caja 3223.

The *reconcentración* nearly emptied the Cuban countryside of peasants and Spanish forces, concentrating both in towns and military positions. Meanwhile, the insurgency controlled vast areas of rural Cuba, although the destruction of Cuba's agricultural system had seriously affected the combative capacity of the *mambís*.<sup>120</sup> Throughout most of 1897, the war entered a less intense period, in which the shortage of food and casualties caused by illnesses were the major problems for both sides. The insurgents kept control of the countryside, and the Spanish forces remained entrenched in the cities, which were barely attacked by the *mambises*. In a situation of stalemate, the military operations were halted. This can also be observed in the Volunteer units' military records, which barely record any important actions during 1897 beyond irregular attacks on their position by small enemy parties. The only military action of some relevance was the falling of Victoria de Las Tunas on 14<sup>th</sup> August 1897 to the insurgents, which became the sole city taken by the *mambís* throughout the war.<sup>121</sup> By the end of that year, however, the urban colleagues of the Volunteers entered a period of agitation against the Spanish authorities, due to major changes in the political and military conduct of the war.

#### 4. Opposing the Reforms

Although the removal of peasants had almost brought the war to a halt, its devastating costs on human lives and rural property were fuelling public opinion in the United States against Weyler and the continuity of Spain in Cuba. Weyler's methods paved the road for the war between the United States and Spain, as argued by Philip S. Foner, David Trask, and Tone.<sup>122</sup> The press, most notably the *New York Journal* and the *World*, owned by the magnates William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer respectively, started a sensationalist campaign against Spain's presence in Cuba.<sup>123</sup> This permeated to the US public, which voted in as president the Republican William McKinley (1897-1901), who was

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<sup>120</sup> Laird W. Bergad. *Cuban Rural Society in the Nineteenth Century: The Social and Economic History of Monoculture in Matanzas*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990, pp. 151-195.

<sup>121</sup> The importance of taking Las Tunas was symbolic rather than military, because it was the seat of one of Cuba's 32 *jurisdicciones*. However, it is usually seen by Cuban historians as the proof of the insurgents' imminent victory even before the US intervention in April 1898. Rolando Rodríguez. *La toma de Las Tunas: derrota definitiva de las armas españolas en Cuba*. Las Tunas: Editorial Sanlope, 2013, pp. 15-83.

<sup>122</sup> Foner. *The Spanish-Cuban-American War*, vol. I, pp. 281-310; Tone. *War and Genocide*, pp. 225-238; Trask. *The War with Spain*, pp. 1-29.

<sup>123</sup> Sylvia L. Hilton. "The Spanish-American War of 1898: Queries into the Relationship between the Press, Public Opinion and Politics". *REDEN: Revista Española de Estudios Norteamericanos*, 1994, No. 7, pp. 71-87; John Patrick Leary. "America's Other Half: Slum Journalism and the War of 1898". *Journal of Transnational American Studies*, 2009, No. 1, pp. 1-33.

a firm advocate of intervention in Cuba.<sup>124</sup> The new administration was full of rhetoric against Spain, and for the expansion of the United States. The Vice-Secretary of the Navy, Theodore Roosevelt, the Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, and the Admiral Alfred T. Mahan were among the staunchest advocates for the creation of a US empire at the expense of a weak rival like Spain.<sup>125</sup> In fact, since the early 1890s the US Navy Department had been planning an imperial expansion which included not only Cuba but also Puerto Rico and the Philippines as parts of a chain that would allow the US to dominate the seas from the Caribbean to the South China Sea through an already projected Panama Canal.<sup>126</sup>

In September 1897, the new administration posed Spain an ultimatum: unless Madrid ended the *reconcentración*, granted Cuba political autonomy, and ended the war, the United States would intervene.<sup>127</sup> This, of course, meant the military invasion of Cuba. Throughout 1897, the Republican-controlled Congress openly debated events in Cuba, and the possibility of recognising the belligerent status of the insurgents was seriously contemplated.<sup>128</sup>

In Spain, although these demands were formally rejected, Antonio Cánovas del Castillo's Conservative cabinet (1895-1897) was aware that not meeting at least some of them would probably lead to a war against the United States. Thus, the Spanish Congress began to debate a set of reforms presented by the Government in February 1897.<sup>129</sup> This project was thwarted by the assassination of President Cánovas by an Italian anarchist on

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<sup>124</sup> Until then, the US policy towards Cuba had been reluctant to intervene. During the Democrat administration of Grover Cleveland (1893-1897) the US policy had generally consisted in offering mediation between Spain and the Cuban insurgents. For instance, on 4<sup>th</sup> April 1896 the Secretary of State Richard Olney sent a note to Spain's plenipotentiary minister in Washington D.C. Enrique Dupuy de Lôme, proposing to open negotiations with the Cuban insurgent government based on the idea of wide autonomy for the island within the Spanish monarchy, Amblard. *Notas coloniales*, pp. 208-217; Richard F. Hamilton. *President McKinley, War and Empire*, vol. I. New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 2006, pp. 105-147.

<sup>125</sup> Evan Thomas. *The War Lovers. Roosevelt, Loge, Hearst, and the Rush to Empire, 1898*. New York, Boston and London: Little, Brown and Company, 2010, pp.31-61; Tone. *War and Genocide*, pp. 239-249.

<sup>126</sup> This geostrategic theory had been developed by Alfred T. Mahan in his book *The Influence of Sea Power upon History (1660-1783)*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1890.

<sup>127</sup> This ultimatum was presented to the Spanish Government on 18<sup>th</sup> September 1897 by Stewart L. Woodford, the US ambassador to Madrid. Foner. *The Spanish-Cuban-American War*, vol. I, pp. 217-218.

<sup>128</sup> Hamilton. *President McKinley*, vol. I, pp. 213-238.

<sup>129</sup> On 4<sup>th</sup> February 1897, the Government retrieved the reformist project presented by the former Overseas Minister Buenaventura Abárzuza, on 25<sup>th</sup> February 1895, Elorza & Hernández Sandoica (1998), pp. 285-306; John L. Offner. *An Unwanted War: the Diplomacy of the United States and Spain over Cuba, 1895-1898*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992, pp. 37-53.



8<sup>th</sup> August 1897.<sup>130</sup> Knowing that the Conservative Party had no leader strong enough to replace Cánovas, the Regent Queen Maria Christina (1885-1902) called the Liberal Práxedes Mateo Sagasta to assume the presidency in October 1897.<sup>131</sup>

The coming to power of the Liberal president profoundly changed Spanish policy in the Antilles. Contrary to Cánovas del Castillo, who relied on a military solution for Cuba, Sagasta believed that the war should have a political solution, which necessarily meant meeting some of the US's demands: ending the concentrations and granting political autonomy. The man chosen to bring the new policy to Cuba was Captain General Ramón Blanco y Erenas (1897-1898).<sup>132</sup> Only weeks after his arrival in Cuba as captain general, Blanco allowed the *reconcentrados* to return to their villages if they were in areas controlled by the Spanish troops (13<sup>th</sup> November 1897), and the Government granted Cuba and Puerto Rico a generous political autonomy (25<sup>th</sup> November 1897).<sup>133</sup> The inclusion of Puerto Rico responded to the agreement the metropolitan Liberal Party and the Puerto Rican Autonomist Party had reached in 1896, consisting of political support in exchange for autonomy in case the metropolitan Liberals came to power.<sup>134</sup>

Although these measures were deemed necessary by the Government to secure peace in Cuba and to avoid war against the United States, the Antillean *integristas* saw

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<sup>130</sup> Antonio Cánovas del Castillo (1828-1897) was shot by Michele Angiolillo at the Santa Águeda spa in Cestona (Basque Country). Angiolillo, a London-based Italian anarchist, decided to assassinate Cánovas del Castillo in retaliation for the *Proceso de Montjuich*. This was a trial which sanctioned the execution in April 1897 of 5 Anarchists and the imprisonment of another 19. They had been accused of perpetrating a bomb attack that killed 12 and injured 35 on 7<sup>th</sup> June 1896 in Barcelona. On his way from London to the Basque Country, Angiolillo made contact in Paris with Ramón Emeterio Betances, the representative of the Cuban insurgents in France, who gave him some financial aid. I am deeply grateful to Francisco J. Romero Salvadó for this information, which will appear in his forthcoming book *¿Quién mató a Eduardo Dato? Comedia política, tragedia social*. Granada: Comares, 2019. Also see Ángel Herrerin López. "1893: año clave del terrorismo en la España de la Restauración". *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma, Serie V, Historia Contemporánea*. 2008, t. 20, pp. 71-91; Demetrio Ramos. "El antillanismo extremista: Betances y los 'velos' que cubrieron la muerte de Cánovas", in De Diego García & Ramos. *Cuba, Puerto Rico y Filipinas*, pp. 73-110; Tone. *War and Genocide*, pp. 232-233. For the *Proceso de Montjuich* see Antoni Dalmau i Ribalta. *El procés de Montjuïc. Barcelona a finals del segle XIX*. Barcelona: Base/Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2010.

<sup>131</sup> Fernández Almagro. *Historia de la España contemporánea*, vol. II, pp. 7-23.

<sup>132</sup> Ramón Blanco y Erenas, Marquis of Peña Plata, had already been Cuba's captain general (1879-1881), and had recently been the captain general of the Philippines (1893-1896).

<sup>133</sup> José Trías Monge, chief justice of the Supreme Court of Puerto Rico (1974-1985) considered in 1997 that the autonomy granted by Spain in 1897 "was much greater in several aspects than what the United States has been willing to concede up to the present". *Puerto Rico. The Trials of the Oldest Colony in the World*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997, p. 13.

<sup>134</sup> As a part of the agreement, the Autonomist Party became the Puerto Rican branch of the Liberal Party, with this losing its status as an independent party. This caused the secession of the 'Orthodox Autonomists', led by José Celso Barbosa, who rejected an absorption by a Monarchical metropolitan political party. Bothwell. *Orígenes y desarrollo*, pp. 30-32.

them as a concession to the ‘Yankees’ and the autonomists, who had traditionally been considered as treacherous. However, the fact that Cuba was undergoing a war, and Puerto Rico was not, determined the intensity with which the *integristas* opposed both autonomy and the dismantling of the practice of *reconcentración*.

In Puerto Rico, the Volunteers took no action against autonomy. This was partly caused by the split of the Unconditional Party over its very implementation. Considering the close links between the *incondicionales* and the Volunteers, the party division also resulted in the political division of the Volunteers. Initially, the Unconditional Party’s rejection of autonomy had caused the split in November 1897 of the Unconditional Party of the Progressive Left, which openly accepted autonomy.<sup>135</sup> It was led by Vicente Balbás Capó, a Puerto Rican journalist, former *incondicional* deputy, and Volunteer major.<sup>136</sup> This new party aspired to participate in autonomist politics. The fact that the autonomy regime had been negotiated between the Spanish liberals and the Puerto Rican autonomists without the participation of the *incondicionales*, meant that rejecting autonomy might lead them to complete isolation. Thus, the Unconditional Progressive Left Party accepted the new political situation and aspired to avoid political marginalization by becoming an active participant in the new regime.<sup>137</sup> Only in order to stop the defections to the new party, Pedro Arzuaga, leader of the Unconditional Spanish Party since September 1897, imposed the acceptance of autonomy by early-December 1897.<sup>138</sup> Hence, despite their initial reluctance and a split, *incondicionales* accepted the new political regime for the island while seeking to become an interlocutor of the Liberal Party in the Peninsula. Under these circumstances, the Volunteers followed the path taken by the *integrista* political leaders and took no action against autonomy.

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<sup>135</sup> Vicente Balbás, Grandón and González Rivero, organizers of the *Partido de Izquierda Progresista Incondicional*, informed the captain general of the establishment of the new party on 7<sup>th</sup> November 1897. *La Correspondencia Militar*, 08-11-1897, p. 3.

<sup>136</sup> Vicente Balbás Capó had been elected to the Spanish Congress for the *incondicionales* in the elections of 5<sup>th</sup> March 1895 and 5<sup>th</sup> April 1896 representing the district of Mayagüez (Puerto Rico). ACD, Serie Documental Electoral, 107, No. 42; Rivero Méndez. *Crónica de la Guerra*, p. 86.

<sup>137</sup> This party only changed after the proclamation of autonomy on 25<sup>th</sup> November 1897. Only a few months earlier, *La Integridad Nacional*, the newspaper owned by Vicente Balbás Capó, had been very critical with the autonomists, who were considered to have an endless list of requests from the Spanish Government. *La Integridad Nacional*, 07-02-1897, p. 2.

<sup>138</sup> Pedro Arzuaga, a merchant and lieutenant colonel of San Juan’s 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, was elected president of the party on 26<sup>th</sup> September 1897. Arzuaga and Víctor Ochoa, president and a board member respectively, had an interview in Madrid with Overseas Minister Segismundo Moret, during which they expressed their acceptance of autonomy, although did not renounce their principles of permanent union with Spain, *La Época*, 27-09-1897, p. 2; *El Globo*, 22-12-1897, p. 1.

In Cuba, however, the war had made these political compromises much harder to achieve. The local *integrista* party, the Constitutional Union, had always rejected autonomy, and it was confident in the possibilities it had to reverse the situation. During the days of Weyler in Havana and Cánovas del Castillo in Madrid, the *constitucionales* had been the privileged political actors in Cuba. The strategy of an uncompromising, harsh war against the insurgency had been supported by the most intransigent elements of the *integristas*.<sup>139</sup> The new policy of the Liberals and Ramón Blanco was thus a major setback to their aspirations. As for the Cuban Autonomist Party, it had never been as popular as its Puerto Rican counterpart and was rather marginalized by Weyler for he distrusted the party's real commitment to the Spanish cause.<sup>140</sup> The *integristas*, including the Volunteers, were not willing to tolerate the coming to power of a new regime in which the autonomists held power.

The Cuban American historian Louis A. Pérez, Jr. labelled the *integrista* opposition to autonomy in Cuba as the “rebellion of the loyal”.<sup>141</sup> Historiography has traditionally considered that the *integristas*' rejection of autonomy was one of the reasons for its failure, alongside the Cuban insurgency's rejection of any agreement with the Spanish Government that was not based on the island's independence.<sup>142</sup> Although it falls outside the remit of this thesis, it is considered here that the very concept of the failure of autonomy in Cuba should be revised. Between the decree of autonomy of 25<sup>th</sup> November 1897 and the US declaration of war against Spain on 25<sup>th</sup> April 1898, the number of *mambís* giving up arms and accepting autonomy would grow despite the death threats from rebel leaders Máximo Gómez and Calixto García.<sup>143</sup> Also, evidence has been found that relevant members of the Cuban insurgent government, the so-called *República en Armas*, did try to negotiate a peace agreement with the Spanish authorities on the basis of autonomy.<sup>144</sup> Although most of the *mambí* commanders fiercely condemned the mere possibility of negotiation, the evidence is that hundreds of insurgents, alongside their families, began to surrender to the Spanish authorities. Just around Manzanillo, in March 1898, more than

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<sup>139</sup> Roldán de Montaud. *La Restauración en Cuba*, pp. 617-628.

<sup>140</sup> Bizcarrondo & Elorza. *Cuba/España*, pp. 351-401.

<sup>141</sup> Pérez, Jr. *Cuba Between Empires*, pp. 139-153.

<sup>142</sup> Estrada Palma, the Cuban Revolutionary Junta representative to the US Government, considered that the only answer to autonomy was “independence or death”, BNC, CM Arred, No. 157, letter from Tomás Estrada Palma to Francisco Arredondo, 05-11-1897.

<sup>143</sup> AGMM, Ultramar, Capitanía General de Cuba, caja 5791, exp. 25.

<sup>144</sup> Camilo Campos, informer of Captain General Ramón Blanco in Manzanillo (Oriente), was brokering interviews between the authorities' representatives and Domingo Méndez Capote, vice-president of the Cuban rebel government, AGMM, Ultramar, Capitanía General de Cuba, caja 2535, carpeta 14.20, letter from Camilo Campos to Ramón Blanco, 07-04-1898.

170 people quit the insurgency and accepted autonomy within the Spanish Monarchy.<sup>145</sup> Even some high-ranking officers gave up their fight, such as the *mambí* brigadier Juan Masó Parra who capitulated alongside 120 of his men in January 1898.<sup>146</sup> Thus, here it is considered that it was the US military invasion, and not the *integrista* or the *mambí* opposition to it, that was the real cause of the failure of Cuban autonomy. Some authors have argued that even the *mambí* leaders' rejection of autonomy was promoted by the US Government, which was eagerly interested in its failure.<sup>147</sup> A consolidated autonomy in Cuba would have meant the continuity of Spanish rule.

Even though US intervention is argued here to be the main cause of the failure of the autonomist project, it is true that the *integristas* mobilized against autonomy from its very inception. The Volunteers were often used to show discontent against the authorities. This was a purely urban reaction, related to the traditionally unruly nature of the urban Volunteers. This mobilization was directed against autonomy, press freedom and the measures taken by Captain General Ramón Blanco to assuage the appalling living conditions of the *reconcentrados*.<sup>148</sup>

Although the war was fought in the countryside, the situation in the cities was critical too. The arrival of thousands of *reconcentrados*, coupled with food shortages, spread the idea that the victory of the insurgency might be likely. In this context,

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<sup>145</sup> Manzanillo's military commander, Lieutenant Colonel Luis Otero Pimentel, reported that between 7<sup>th</sup> March and 6<sup>th</sup> April 1898 72 *mambises*, 62 women, and 108 children quit the insurgency and accepted Spanish sovereignty. AHPSC, Gobierno Provincial, leg. 743, exp. 25. Apart from his military career, Luis Otero Pimentel (1834-1920) also developed a writing career in Cuba, including *Memoria sobre los Voluntarios de la isla de Cuba* (1876).

<sup>146</sup> Juan Masó Parra was not the only officer. Accompanying him there were the lieutenant colonels Augusto Feria, and José del Carmen Hernández, the majors Feliciano Quesada, Saturnino León, and Victoriano Gómez, the captain Santiago Carrera, five lieutenants, and 110 soldiers. The surrender took place on 20<sup>th</sup> January in Sancti Spíritus (province of Santa Clara). All these men took their weapons and ammunition with them to the Spanish authorities. During the act of accepting Spanish sovereignty, they hailed the regent Queen Marie Christine, Spanish Cuba, and autonomy. After this act, Juan Masó Parra joined the Spanish Army as colonel and organized a brigade named *Cuba española*. AHPSC, Gobierno Provincial, leg. 743, exp. 37; *La Unión Constitucional*, 26-04-1898. All the details of the capitulation in Enrique Ubieta. *Efemérides de la Revolución Cubana*, vol. I. Havana: La Moderna Poesía, 1911, pp. 129-130.

<sup>147</sup> Agustín Sánchez Andrés. "Entre la espada y la pared. El régimen autonómico cubano, 1897-1898". *Revista Mexicana del Caribe*, 2003, Año/Vol. VIII, No. 16, pp. 7-41.

<sup>148</sup> The US consul in Matanzas reported to his colleague, the general-consul in Havana, John Fitzhugh Lee, that Adolfo Porset, former governor of Matanzas province, was holding meetings with government officials, the army, Civil Guard, Volunteers, and local leaders of the *integrista* Constitutional Union party to plot against the captain general, and organize attacks against foreign consulates and nationals—basically US citizens—and to create a state of instability in Matanzas. The information was confirmed by a report sent on 6<sup>th</sup> December 1897 by the governor of Matanzas to the captain general, AGMM, Ultramar, Capitanía General de Cuba, caja 5791, exp. 40.

autonomy was interpreted by the most radical elements of *integrismo* as a signal of weakness, hence a step towards the defeat of Spain. Anger at the captain general became evident as early as Christmas Eve 1897. Amidst the celebration of that holiday in Havana's Parque Central, groups of young men, among them several Volunteers, began to shout "Long Live, Spain! Long Live Weyler! Long Live the Volunteers! Down with autonomy!" in front of the headquarters of *Diario de la Marina*, for it had accepted the new autonomous regime.<sup>149</sup> Just as during the Ten Years' War, the republicans in the Peninsula were generally very critical of the Volunteers' demonstration of radical patriotism against the authorities. *La Iberia*, a Madrid-based republican newspaper, considered this demonstration "a bothersome protest by a monopoly that will soon go; this is the last convulsion of the *agiotistas* [usurers] that do not want to lose their power".<sup>150</sup>

The most serious incident occurred on 12<sup>th</sup> January 1898, in Havana. On that day, about a hundred *integristas*, including Volunteers and army officers, took to the streets shouting, 'Long Live Weyler' and 'Death to autonomy'. After having broken windows and doors on their way, the group ended up ransacking the premises of *El Reconcentrado* and *La Discusión*, two newspapers that openly criticised the *integristas* for their opposition to the measures taken by the captain general and threatened to loot the headquarters of the *Diario de la Marina*.<sup>151</sup>

The involvement of the Volunteers in these events seems to have been evident, and the objective of ousting Captain General Ramón Blanco cannot be discarded as the real motivation for the violent demonstration. The Havana-based *peninsular* lawyer Arturo Amblard recalled that only two of the Volunteer chiefs were at the captaincy general's palace during the riots. The rest only came when the *Segundo Cabo*, or second-in-command after Ramón Blanco, called for them, for it became all too evident that their involvement in the riots could have easily ended up with the toppling of the captain general. However, not all of the Volunteers approved of these demonstrations, which only undermined the authority of Spanish power. The Volunteers were certainly committed to the continuity of Spanish sovereignty in the Antilles, but some of them considered that attacking the captain general was not the best way to secure it. This was particularly the

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<sup>149</sup> The demonstrators initially refused to leave the area, as requested by the police. The protest was finally dissolved after the mounted unit of the *batallón de Orden Público* charged against the rioters, sabers in hand. *La Lucha*, 25-12-1897, p. 2.

<sup>150</sup> *La Iberia*, 28-12-1897.

<sup>151</sup> On 11<sup>th</sup> January 1898 *El Reconcentrado* published an article entitled "Fuga de granujas" ("Flight of the Rascals"), in which some well-known *integristas* were accused of making money out of the *reconcentrados* disgrace; *El Reconcentrado*, 11-01-1898, p. 1; Tone. *War and Genocide*, p. 240.

case with the middle and upper-middle class Volunteers, who considered that Blanco's projects must at least been given a chance. There were even some Volunteer officers who supported autonomy.<sup>152</sup> It is quite telling that the colonel of the Volunteer cavalry regiment, whose members tended to be more affluent than the infantry units, obliged his colleagues to collaborate and order their men to call off the demonstration.<sup>153</sup> The loyalty of this regiment was not shared by most of their colleagues but certainly shows that the Volunteers were not a homogeneous group which univocally rejected autonomy.

The most radical elements of the Havana Volunteers were plotting to oust Ramón Blanco because of his plan to dismantle Weyler's policy of harsh measures against the rebels and the autonomists. Unlike their Puerto Rican colleagues, the Cuban *integristas*, especially in Havana, were not willing to accept the new political situation. They feared that the establishment of autonomy was a step towards independence and that it would be interpreted by the *mambises* as a sign of Spain's weakness, not generosity. The *integristas* also considered that autonomy was not enough to calm the United States' desire to intervene in Cuba. In a situation that recalled the context of 1869, the *integristas* felt trapped between autonomy, the insurgents, and the likely possibility of a US invasion. The Volunteers violent reaction to this was an expression of panic. This was the interpretation of an anonymous Cuban nationalist agent in Havana who witnessed the demonstration in January 1898. He considered that although the demonstrations had been 'impressive', the *integristas* feared that the United States would go to war against Spain and that consequently Spain would be ousted from Cuba.<sup>154</sup>

These fears were well grounded, for a war between Spain and the United States because of Cuba was becoming increasingly likely. In both countries, the press sustained an inflammatory campaign calling for a military clash, although it is not clear whether the administrations were committed to avoiding or provoking conflict.<sup>155</sup> John L. Offner considered that the war was an unwelcome yet unavoidable conflict for both

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<sup>152</sup> Ricardo Calderón y Pontisi was alderman at Havana's City Council for the Autonomist Party and lieutenant colonel of Havana's 5<sup>th</sup> Volunteers Battalion. He resigned on the 12<sup>th</sup> January after some of his men invaded the Palace of the Captains General's courtyard and remonstrated against Blanco. Calderón. Cabrera. *Cuba and the Cubans*, p. 192; Weyler. *Mi mando en Cuba*, vol. V, p. 535.

<sup>153</sup> The only officers were the colonels of the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion and the Cavalry Volunteer Regiment. Amblard. *Notas coloniales*, pp. 291-292.

<sup>154</sup> The letter was sent from Havana on 8<sup>th</sup> February 1898 by 'No. 12' to 'Fiacre', two pseudonyms whose real names are ignored, BNC, CM Lufriu, No. 49.

<sup>155</sup> Sara Núñez de Prado Clavell. "La prensa y la opinión pública española en torno al 'desastre'", in Fusi & Niño Rodríguez (coord.). *Antes del desastre*, pp. 453-464; Rosario Sevilla Soler. "¿'Opinión pública' frente a 'opinión publicada'? 1898: la cuestión cubana". *Revista de Indias*, 1998, vol. LVIII, No. 212, pp. 255-276.

Governments. Serrano argued that, since the war was deemed inevitable, the Spanish Government was convinced that possession of Cuba was now unsustainable and agreed to give up the island after a short but honourable conflict with the United States, rather than being defeated by the irregular insurgent Cuban forces.<sup>156</sup>

Whatever the case, which is not the object of this study, the United States found its *casus belli* with the explosion of the *USS Maine* at Havana harbour on 15<sup>th</sup> February 1898. This ship, which was sent by late January to Cuba's capital allegedly to protect the lives and properties of the US nationals on the island, was blown up either by accident or following an inside job, killing more than 300 members of her crew.<sup>157</sup> The US press, most notably, Hearst's *Journal* and Pulitzer's *Globe*, hurried to falsely accuse Spain of having had a direct hand in the explosion, henceforth asking for a military intervention to expel the country from Cuba.<sup>158</sup>

The reaction in the United States to the explosion of *USS Maine* vastly increased the anti-US feelings which already existed among the *integristas* in Cuba. An agent of the revolution based in Havana informed a colleague in New York that groups of Volunteers rejoiced in Havana after it blew up because of the loss of American lives.<sup>159</sup> The *integrista* press began a campaign criticising the United States, accusing its government of using the case of the *reconcentrados* and *USS Maine* as mere pretexts to conquer the island. An article published in the Havana-based newspaper *Los Voluntarios* considered that the only concern of McKinley and the Cuban exiles in the US was the expulsion of Spain, not the welfare of the Cuban people.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Offner. *An Unwanted War*, pp. 127-159; Serrano. *Final del imperio*, pp. 32-37.

<sup>157</sup> The debate on the real cause of the explosion remains unsolved. However, a technical analysis of the explosion by the US Navy Admiral Rickover in 1976 demonstrated that it was not caused from the outside, but rather from the inside of the ship, thus practically discarding the case for a Spanish hand. H. G. Rickover. *How the battleship Maine was destroyed*. Washington D.C.: Naval History Division/Department of the Navy, 1976, pp. 75-91. The Spanish journalist Agustín Remesal offered a complete revision of the different theories: *El enigma del Maine. 1898. El suceso que provocó la Guerra de Cuba. ¿Accidente o sabotaje?* Barcelona: Plaza & Janés Editores, 1998, pp. 181-223.

<sup>158</sup> Thomas. *The War Lovers*, pp. 209-229.

<sup>159</sup> The letter was sent on 19<sup>th</sup> February 1898 by "El Monje", brother to the *mambí* officer Raoul Arango, to an unknown female agent of the revolution based in New York. BNC, CM Arango, No. 59.

<sup>160</sup> *Los Voluntarios*, 27-03-1898, p. 2. *Los Voluntarios* was a newspaper created in 1895 in Havana to defend the interest of the Volunteers. It was closed shortly after the armistice between Spain and the US in August 1898. In 1898 its director was Mario Lacorte, one of the early promoters of cycling in Cuba, member of Havana's *Sport Club* and director of the magazine *El Ciclista. El Deporte Velocipédico*, 24-06-1896, p. 4.

In any case, Captain General Ramón Blanco tried to avoid US military intervention in Cuba by meeting the most important demand of McKinley's Government: that Spain put the war against the insurgents to an end. Blanco decreed a unilateral ceasefire on 10<sup>th</sup> April, which was nonetheless disregarded by the insurgents as they had not been consulted and had never accepted any proposal of the kind. Despite this gesture by Spain towards the demands posed by the US Government, after intense diplomatic activity throughout March and most of April, the US Congress declared war on Spain on 25<sup>th</sup> April 1898, even though military operations had already begun on the 20<sup>th</sup> April with the US Navy blockade of Cuba.<sup>161</sup>

## 5. War Against the United States

The performance of the Volunteers during the war between Spain and the United States was diverse, ranging from effective fighting to desertion, not always to the enemy, but certainly away from the frontline. This was the case in the Cuban, Puerto Rican, and Filipino scenarios, and was directly related to the performance of the regular army and the ability of the Spanish authorities to handle the situation.

### 5.1. Cuba

At the start of the war against the US, the Volunteers in Cuba were still an impressive force of ca. 90,000 men that collaborated with the regular Army (115,000 men) in the defensive preparations against the expected US invasion.<sup>162</sup> As early as 20<sup>th</sup> April 1898, Captain General Ramón Blanco decreed the mobilization of the Volunteers in order to create new companies to be embedded into the regular infantry battalions.<sup>163</sup> In Havana, where the situation of the troops was already desperate due to the lack of ammunition and food

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<sup>161</sup> Trask. *The War with Spain*, pp. 30-59; Julián Companys Monclús. *De la explosión del Maine a la ruptura de relaciones diplomáticas entre Estados Unidos y España (1898)*. Lérida: Estudi General de Lleida, 1989, pp. 46-126.

<sup>162</sup> Arturo Amblard considered that by late-1897 there were 90,214 Volunteers distributed throughout Cuba as follows: 28,616 in Havana province (20,124 in the capital), 12,163 in Pinar del Río, 11,316 in Matanzas, 20,682 in Santa Clara, 1,867 in Camagüey, and 9,889 in Oriente. See *Notas coloniales*, p. 163. More recently, María Magdalena Fernández-Peña Bernaldo de Quirós considered that there were 86,000 Volunteers in Cuba. See *La oligarquía indiana, Asturias-Cuba: opinión pública y propaganda (1898-1899)*. Ph.D. Thesis. Madrid: Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2014, p. 161.

<sup>163</sup> The embedding of the mobilized Volunteers into the regular Army was a regular practice, for it was considered that their military performance could be improved under the command of army officers. ANRC, Asuntos Políticos, leg. 240, exp. 21.



caused by the US Navy blockade, new units of Volunteers were created.<sup>164</sup> Retired Navy personnel and the strong community of Catalan migrants, for instance, created their own Volunteer companies.<sup>165</sup> Throughout the island, the Volunteers were a key element in the defensive strategy organized by the military authorities, as in many towns they were the majority if not the sole Spanish garrison. From east to west, Cuba's Volunteers contributed to the *Juntas de Defensa* with financial aid and their physical work by digging trenches and building forts.<sup>166</sup> Thus, during the spring of 1898, whereas the regular troops were generally gathered around the most important cities, the defence of small towns still depended on the Volunteers. In the cities, their role was generally constrained to upholding public order. For instance, in Santiago de Cuba, they were supposed to defend official buildings in case of alarm.<sup>167</sup>

However, the real test of the Volunteers' commitment to the defence of the island took place in Santiago de Cuba, where the fate of the war was sealed. The campaign to take the city began on 26<sup>th</sup> June with the landing of the US invading force and ended on

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<sup>164</sup> According to the Army General Luis María de Pando, the armoury of Havana had only 2,000 rifles, which were meant to supply 26,000 troops in the province of Havana, and 14,000 in Pinar del Río. Also, the armoury could only count on 20 rounds of ammunition per Remington rifle, which was the weapon used by the Volunteers. Luis M. de Pando. *Documento presentado al Senado por el Excmo. Sr. Senador D. Luis M. de Pando en 22 de octubre de 1898*. Madrid: Imprenta y Fundación de los Hijos de J. A. García, 1899, p. 16. For the situation in Havana during the US Navy blockade see María del Carmen Barcia Zequeira. "El 98 en La Habana: Sociedad y vida cotidiana". *Revista de Indias*, 1998, vol. LVIII, No. 212, pp. 85-99.

<sup>165</sup> The *Batallón de Voluntarios Marineros* was created on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1898. Its colonel was the Navy officer Enrique Freixes and it was made up of six companies of 150 men each. It was dissolved on 29<sup>th</sup> August 1898, two weeks after the war's end. AGMM, Ultramar, Capitanía General de Cuba, caja 4690, "Voluntarios Marineros General Blanco". The *Compañía de Voluntarios Catalanes* was created on 31<sup>st</sup> May 1898 and consisted of a captain, two lieutenants, plus 72 men. AGMM, Ultramar, Capitanía General de Cuba, caja 4690, Voluntarios de La Habana. Voluntarios Catalanes.

<sup>166</sup> For instance, in Artemisa (Pinar del Río province), whilst the soldiers of the *Batallón de Vergara* defended the town, the Volunteers from Guanajay's 6<sup>th</sup> Company, the Artemisa Volunteers, and a section of Havana's 6<sup>th</sup> Volunteer Battalion built the forts and the trenches. There was also a new system of contributions. Whereas the propertied classes had to pay higher taxes to afford the defensive system, the unpropertied ones had to contribute with their physical work. AGMM, Ultramar, Capitanía General de Cuba, caja 3223. In Gibara (Oriente), the local Volunteers and the *Casino Español* closely collaborated with the Military Commander to organize the town's defences. For instance, the *Junta de Defensa* of Gibara was created by Carlos Moreno, the local Military Commander, at the *Casino Español* on 30<sup>th</sup> April 1898. It was presided over by himself, and among the members there were the harbour captain, the mayor, the local priest, the judge, and the Volunteer Colonels Antonio Fernández, Casimiro de la Torre, Cándido de Leyva, José H. Beola, José A. Garrido, Rufino Vega, Juan Camps, José Almarza, Francisco Fránquiz, and Atanasio G. Riancho. That very day, the local *Casino Español* collected 9,000 pesos for the war effort, and issued a call exhorting all men capable of bearing arms to join the Volunteers. AGMM, Ultramar, Capitanía General de Cuba, caja 3691; *Suplemento a la Legalidad*, 30-04-1898.

<sup>167</sup> On 15<sup>th</sup> May 1898 the city's Governor José Toral ordered the Volunteers to protect the seats of the Regional Government and the City Council in case of alarm. AHPSC, Gobierno Provincial, leg. 2875, exp. 25.

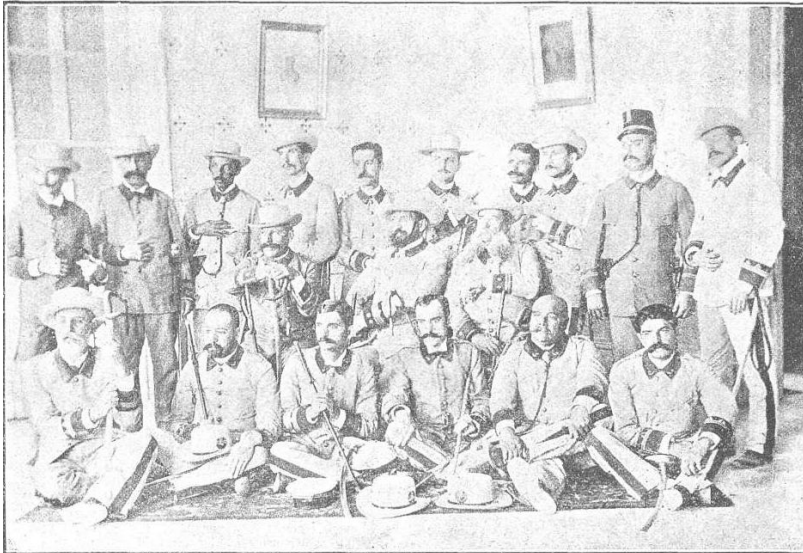


Image 10. Chief and officers of Santiago de Cuba's 1<sup>st</sup> Volunteer Battalion. *La Ilustración ibérica*, 29-08-1896, p. 554.

14<sup>th</sup> July 1898 with the surrender of the Spanish troops at Santiago de Cuba. The main military operations consisted of the battle for the outer forts of Santiago located in El Caney and San Juan Hill (1<sup>st</sup> July), and the naval battle of the bay of Santiago (3<sup>rd</sup>

July), where the Spanish fleet under the command of Admiral Pascual Cervera was sunk by the US fleet led by Rear Admiral William T. Sampson.<sup>168</sup> It is estimated that a 45,000-strong US invading force faced ca. 15,000 Spanish defenders, including roughly 2,000 Volunteers from Santiago 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> battalion, whose chiefs and officers can be seen in image 10.<sup>169</sup> The US troops counted on the aid of ca. 3,000 *mambises* on the ground, commanded by Calixto García, with combat experience gained from three years of fighting. However, these men were prevented from taking direct action and were relegated to a mere auxiliary force of the American troops in this conflict by Major General Shafter, commander of the US Army expedition.<sup>170</sup>

Volunteers took part in all the military operations, but their performance was generally considered weak and unreliable by the army officers. For instance, the Spanish

<sup>168</sup> Admiral Pascual Cervera y Topete (1839-1909) was a veteran Navy officer who had participated in colonial campaigns in Africa, the Philippines, and Cuba. He had also been Minister of the Navy during the Liberal cabinet headed by Práxedes Mateo Sagasta in 1892-1893, and member of the Senate in three different terms between 1893 and 1909. For a biography of Admiral Cervera see Ángel Luis Cervera Fantoni. *El desastre del 98 y el fin del imperio español. Visión inédita del Almirante Cervera*. Madrid: Editorial Biblioteca Nueva, 2016. Rear Admiral William Thomas Sampson (1840-1902) was a veteran of the US Civil War and prior to the Spanish-American war had held several appointments at the Naval Academy and the Naval Department.

<sup>169</sup> For the Santiago de Cuba campaign see Baldovín Ruiz. *Cuba*, pp. 533-550; Elorza & Hernández Sandoica. *La Guerra de Cuba*, 417-451; Foner. *The Spanish-Cuban-American War*, vol. II, 388-405; Musicant. *Empire by Default*, pp. 352-515; O'Toole. *The Spanish War*, pp. 254-352; Trask. *The War with Spain*, pp. 194-335.

<sup>170</sup> William Rufus Shafter (1835-1906) was a veteran of the American Civil War and the Indian Wars. Before being appointed chief of the expedition against Cuba, he was commander of the Department of California. Enrique Collazo. *Los americanos en Cuba*. Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1972 (first published by Imprenta y Papelería C. Martínez y Cía., 1905, 2 vols.), pp. 219-236; Pérez, Jr. *Cuba Between Empires*, pp. 211-228.

Army officer Severo Gómez Núñez wrote that the Volunteers deserted whenever they had the chance and abandoned Santiago de Cuba when the Governor José Toral allowed civilians to leave the city (4<sup>th</sup> July 1898), when combat against the American besiegers intensified. Gómez Núñez argued that the Volunteers removed their uniforms and abandoned the city disguised as civilians. In times of war, the Volunteers were considered soldiers, so a permit granted on 4<sup>th</sup> July to leave the town did not include the Volunteers.<sup>171</sup> The evidence contradicts Gómez Núñez because not all the Volunteers left Santiago. When the Governor Linares allowed the evacuation of the civilians, the Catalan Volunteer Jaume Sans recalled that most of his comrades-at-arms left for the countryside with their families disguised among the civilians, alongside most of the town's 25,000 inhabitants, but a few hundreds of his comrades-at-arms remained in the city. According to Sans, by the 6<sup>th</sup> of July, there were less than 1,000 civilians in Santiago, plus 13,000 starving and short-of-ammunition defenders, including around 500 Volunteers.<sup>172</sup> Their low morale was not dramatically different from the regular soldiers'. Their military efficiency and their commitment to the defence of the city only faded away over subsequent days, when it became clear that the men defending Santiago de Cuba had no chance of lifting the siege.<sup>173</sup>

In the battles at El Caney and San Juan Hill, in which ca. 1,000 Spanish troops (including regular soldiers and Volunteers) faced a 15,000-strong force, the Volunteers put in an outstanding performance, in line with the combat spirit of the regular troops.<sup>174</sup> No desertion was recorded, and 40 Volunteers died while covering the retreat of the regular troops, and their wounded and dead, from the fort of Canosa in San Juan Hill.<sup>175</sup> However, as the days passed by, the shortages of food, weapons, and ammunition became graver, and the morale of the defenders grew weaker. The US attackers met with fierce resistance and were as much affected by dysentery as the defenders, but the situation within the city

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<sup>171</sup> Severo Gómez Núñez was an artillery major at the time of the Cuban war and director of the Havana-based military newspaper *Diario del Ejército*. Severo Gómez Núñez. *La Guerra Hispano-Americana. Santiago de Cuba*. Madrid: Imprenta del Cuerpo de Artillería, 1901, p. 61.

<sup>172</sup> David Jou i Andreu. *El 98 vist pels sitgetans. Memòries de Jaume Sans sobre el setge americà a Santiago de Cuba*. Sitges: Ajuntament de Sitges, 1999, pp. 57-58.

<sup>173</sup> For the morale of the Spanish soldiers during the colonial wars, see Manuel Montero García. "La moral militar de los soldados españoles durante las guerras coloniales, 1895-1898". *Revista de Historia Militar*, Año LXI, 2017, No. 121, pp. 199-233.

<sup>174</sup> Collazo. *Los americanos en Cuba*, pp. 155-218; Musicant. *Empire by Default*, pp. 390-431; Trask. *The War with Spain*, pp. 225-256.

<sup>175</sup> Ironically, this action was recorded by Severo Gómez Núñez, who in the same book has accused all the Volunteers of leaving Santiago de Cuba before the final attack by the US troops. See *La Guerra Hispano-Americana. Santiago de Cuba*, p. 145-147.

was desperate, especially after Major General Shafter, commander of the US troops, announced the bombardment of the city within 24 hours on 4<sup>th</sup> July.

To avoid unnecessary bloodshed, and following orders from the Spanish Government, the city surrendered on 14<sup>th</sup> July, on the condition that the insurgents were not granted access to the city. José Toral and the defenders that remained within Santiago feared reprisals from the men they had fought for more than three years. Calixto García, the leader of the *mambís* surrounding Santiago staunchly opposed this request, the strongest military presence of the US Army enforced it and prevented the rebels from entering Santiago when it was given up by the Spanish forces on 17<sup>th</sup> July 1898. Thus, ironically the men that had purportedly landed in Cuba to aid the Cuban nationalists in achieving their independence, ended up protecting the lives and properties of the Spanish loyalists. This was received as a relief especially by the Volunteers, who unlike the army soldiers, had their families and jobs well established in Santiago de Cuba. After the occupation, confraternization between the Volunteers and army soldiers and American troops was prevalent in the city, whereas the *mambises* were still camped outside Santiago de Cuba.<sup>176</sup>

## 5.2. Puerto Rico

The performance of the Volunteers in Puerto Rico was like that of their Cuban colleagues, although the war on this island lasted just three weeks and lacked any major military action. The Volunteers participated in the preparations for conflict as soon as the US declared war on Spain. On paper, they were ready to resist the invasion alongside the Army. There were 7,331 Volunteers alongside ca. 8,000 regular soldiers.<sup>177</sup> In San Juan, the Puerto Rican Vicente Balbás Capó created the *Batallón de Tiradores de Altura*, made up of well-known *incondicionales* of the capital city and Volunteer veterans.<sup>178</sup> Throughout the island, new sections and companies were created, despite the lack of resources in some areas. For instance, a force of *Voluntarios Macheteros* was created in early May, made up

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<sup>176</sup> Pérez, Jr. *Cuba Between Empires*, pp. 212-217.

<sup>177</sup> Rivero Méndez. *Crónica de la Guerra*, p. 449-455.

<sup>178</sup> This battalion was created on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1898, two days before the declaration of war. AGMM, Documentación de Puerto Rico, 5195.1; Rivero Méndez. *Crónica de la Guerra*, p. 86.

of *jíbaros* (Puerto Rican peasants) solely armed with machetes, and several mounted Volunteer guerrillas, as we can see in image 11 (p. 202).<sup>179</sup>



Image 11. Mounted Volunteer guerrilla in Yauco (Puerto Rico), commanded by Lieutenant Rafael Colorado. Rivero Méndez. *Crónica de la guerra*, p. 193.

A positive consequence for the Volunteers was that, due to the peril of a US invasion, they came to be regarded as a genuine defence force, gaining prestige. The Puerto Rican Army officer Ángel Rivero Méndez recalled that many autonomists, both Puerto Rican and *peninsulares*, that had previously held a negative conception of the Volunteers, began to join the militia.<sup>180</sup> From the declaration of war (25<sup>th</sup> April 1898), the autonomist press began a campaign attacking the US for wanting to sever the centuries-old ties between Puerto Rico and Spain. On 13<sup>th</sup> May 1898, Luis Muñoz Rivera, Chief of the Autonomist Cabinet (1898) and leader of the Puerto Rican Autonomist Party (1887-1898) published an article entitled “Long Live Spain!” in his newspaper *La Democracia*, in which he called all Puerto Ricans to gather around the Spanish flag and defend their nationality against the “Yankee aggressor”.<sup>181</sup> The autonomists stood for wider political rights for

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<sup>179</sup> The first company of the *Voluntarios Macheteros de Puerto Rico* was created in the town of Juncos (25<sup>th</sup> April). Other companies were created in San Juan (4<sup>th</sup> May) and Maunabo (12<sup>th</sup> May). AGMM, Documentación de Puerto Rico, sig. 5146.33.

<sup>180</sup> Rivero Méndez. *Crónica de la Guerra*, p. 450.

<sup>181</sup> Luis Muñoz Rivera (1859-1916) was a Puerto Rican journalist, poet, politician, and a major figure of autonomism. Despite his defence of Spanish sovereignty during the war, he collaborated with the US authorities in Puerto Rico after 1898, becoming a member of the Puerto Rican House of Representatives (1906-1910) and Resident Commissioner of Puerto Rico in front of the US Congress (1911-1916). Throughout the US occupation, Muñoz Rivera defended a wide autonomy for Puerto

Puerto Rico, but within Spain. This was constantly reinforced in the autonomist press throughout the war against the United States, whose intervention threatened to put Spanish sovereignty to an end. This might explain why, by July, there were already over 9,000 members of the Volunteers.<sup>182</sup>

The land invasion by US troops arrived on 25<sup>th</sup> July 1898, but the first action of the war in Puerto Rico was the bombardment of San Juan on 12<sup>th</sup> May. The attack killed five people, and it had a tremendous psychological effect, for Puerto Rico had not suffered an attack since the failed British invasion of 1797. During the bombardment, the Volunteers efficiently protected La Fortaleza, the seat of the Captaincy General, and defended some key areas.<sup>183</sup> Though the aim of the US fleet was to test the defences of San Juan, the bombardment provided a good opportunity for the Volunteers to demonstrate their military capacity and reliability for the campaign to come.

When the invading force commanded by the general Nelson A. Miles landed on 25<sup>th</sup> July 1898 in Guánica, the entire Spanish defence force quickly collapsed, including the Volunteers.<sup>184</sup> The location for the invasion was strategic because this area of southwest Puerto Rico was where anti-Spanish feeling was most widespread.<sup>185</sup> The invaders found “there was great disaffection toward the Spanish cause among the citizens and the volunteers”.<sup>186</sup> Indeed, there was a contagious wave of desertions among the Volunteers in the wake of Miles’ incursion. Some cases were particularly surprising, including rank-and-file Volunteers and men who held political office for the Unconditional Spanish Party. For instance, oral histories suggest that Florencio Santiago, *incondicional* mayor of Coamo and colonel of Volunteers, had breakfast at his house with the Spanish commander Rafael

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Rico as a necessary step towards independence. For a biography of Muñoz Rivera, see Mack Reynolds. *Puerto Rican Patriot: The Life of Luis Muñoz Rivera*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1969. *La Democracia*, 13-05-1898, p. 2.

<sup>182</sup> Larrea y Lisa. *El desastre nacional*, p. 73.

<sup>183</sup> AGMM, Documentación de Puerto Rico, sig. 5171.13.

<sup>184</sup> Nelson A. Miles (1839-1925) was a veteran of the US Civil War and the Indian Wars and was the last Commanding General of the United States Army (1895-1903). For a biography, see Peter R. De Montravel. *A Hero to His Fighting Men, Nelson A. Miles, 1839-1925*. Kent: The Kent State University Press, 1998.

<sup>185</sup> Francisco A. Scarano argued that this area received non-Spanish migrants during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, whose links with Spain were generally weak. Also, this region of Puerto Rico heavily depended on sugar exports, much more dependent on the US than on the Spanish market. *Sugar and Slavery in Puerto Rico Plantation Economy of Ponce, 1800-1850*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984, pp. 79-102.

<sup>186</sup> Fitzhugh Lee, Theodore Roosevelt & Joseph Wheeler. *Cuba’s Struggle against Spain with the causes of American intervention and a full account of the Spanish-American War: including final peace negotiations*. New York: American Historical Press, 1899, p. 556.

Martínez Illescas, and lunch with US Army Captain Anderson.<sup>187</sup> Ángel Rivero Méndez argued that the weak Volunteers response to the invasion was caused by decisions taken by the military authorities in San Juan. For example, the very day of the invasion (25<sup>th</sup> July), all the young conscripts (ca. 500) serving in the Volunteers were ordered to leave the militia and join regular army battalions. A day later, the army troops from the southwest began to evacuate their positions towards San Juan, and the Volunteers were ordered to gather in the seats of the military districts, leaving numerous towns entirely unprotected. Consequently, fearing that their families and properties could fall prey to reprisals from either the US troops or bandits, many of these Volunteers refused to leave their towns and deserted.<sup>188</sup> As a result, the Captaincy General decided to destroy their weapons and to dismantle most of the Volunteer units scattered throughout the island.<sup>189</sup>

The weak performance of the Volunteers was also observed during the only military clash of the Puerto Rican campaign, the battle of Aibonito (9<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> August 1898). After having withdrawn from the southwest, the Spanish regular troops gathered in Aibonito, in the mountainous interior, to stop the US column on its way to San Juan, the capital. The only Volunteers that stood alongside Spanish forces were roughly a third of Ponce's 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, whereas the rest had mostly defected or even begun to collaborate with the US forces as scouts.<sup>190</sup> The battle was still undecided when the armistice of 12<sup>th</sup> August between Spain and the US was declared.

Faced with desertions and abandonment of military duties, some Spanish Army officers accused the Puerto Rican Volunteers of having been treacherous and cowards. Francisco Larrea y Lisa considered that these men had not 'fulfilled their duty'.<sup>191</sup> Shortly after the war, the Army Major Julio Cervera Baviera wrote that the Puerto Rican Volunteers had only been a source of trouble and disturbance during the war, for they 'had never been

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<sup>187</sup> I would like to give thanks for this information to Lindy Usera Fernández, great-grand-daughter of Florencio Santiago, who told me this in Puerto Rico in December 2015. According to the literature, this may well be possible. The lunch took place on 9<sup>th</sup> August 1898, right before the start of the battle for the Asomante pass, midway between Guánica and the island's capital, San Juan. This information was also collected by Rivero Méndez. *Crónica de la Guerra*, p. 241-242.

<sup>188</sup> Rivero Méndez. *Crónica de la Guerra*, pp. 449-455.

<sup>189</sup> For instance, this was ordered to Colonel Puig of the Yauco Volunteers on 26<sup>th</sup> July 1898. Yauco had seen a thwarted anti-Spanish uprising in 1897, and the authorities probably distrusted the local Volunteers. Rivero Méndez. *Crónica de la Guerra*, p. 203.

<sup>190</sup> AGMM, Documentación de Puerto Rico, sig. 5175.14 & 5173.23; Larrea y Lisa. *El desastre nacional*, pp. 195-212; Rivero Méndez. *Crónica de la Guerra*, pp. 427-439.

<sup>191</sup> Larrea y Lisa. *El desastre nacional*, p. 73.

relied upon for the defence' of the island.<sup>192</sup> The Puerto Rican officer in the Spanish Army Ángel Rivero Méndez considered these opinions as a mere pretext to charge the Puerto Ricans with the responsibility for the military defeat.<sup>193</sup>

In fact, just as in Cuba, the performance of the Volunteers in Puerto Rico was closely related to the efficiency and support of the regular army. Only two days after the invasion on 25<sup>th</sup> July 1898, the army garrison in Ponce and the nearby towns evacuated the area to gather in central Puerto Rico. Thus, the defence of the towns was left to the Volunteers. It should be considered that these men barely had military training, were unpaid, and were trapped between a US force of 30,000 men and the disaffection of part of the people they were supposed to defend. Thus, it is hardly surprising that they tended to give up their weapons as the American soldiers advanced.

Puerto Rican historiography has tended to explain this behaviour in terms of political disaffection towards Spain.<sup>194</sup> This is a valid yet a partial explanation. Regarding the Volunteers, their performance should be linked directly to the army's behaviour. The Spanish defensive system in Puerto Rico rapidly collapsed after the American invasion. Thus, a militia of barely trained civilians-at-arms could have hardly stood against an impressive advancing force of 30,000 men.

Fear of reprisals by the anti-Spanish Puerto Ricans also explains the attitude of the Volunteers towards the invading force. After the evacuation of the Spanish soldiers, the American troops became their new protectors, as studied by the late Puerto Rican historian Fernando Picó.<sup>195</sup> For instance, on 29<sup>th</sup> July 1898, only two days after the occupation of the town of Yauco, the American soldiers prevented the local Volunteers from being lynched by their fellow townspeople.<sup>196</sup> In Ciales, the shop owned by the

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<sup>192</sup> Julio Cervera Baviera (1854-1927) was a prominent military man in 19<sup>th</sup> century Spain. Before the Spanish-American War, he took part in campaigns to increase Spain's influence in Morocco and Spanish Sahara in the 1880s. Because of his explorations he wrote *Expedición al interior de Marruecos* (1884) and *Geografía militar de Marruecos* (1884). He was also a radio and wireless telegraphy pioneer in Spain. Julio Cervera Baviera. *La defensa militar de Puerto-Rico*. San Juan: Imprenta de la Capitanía General, 1898, pp. 8-9; VVAA. *Julio Cervera y la telegrafía sin hilos*. Madrid: Ministerio de Defensa y Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad, 2015.

<sup>193</sup> Rivero Méndez. *Crónica de la Guerra*, p. 452 & 473.

<sup>194</sup> María de los Ángeles Castro Arroyo. "¿A qué pelear si los de Madrid no quieren? Una versión criolla de la guerra del 98 en Puerto Rico". *Revista de Indias*, 1997, vol. LVII, No. 211, pp. 657-694; Gervasio Luis García. "El 98 sin héroes ni traidores", in Ivonne Acosta Lespier. *El 98. Debates y análisis sobre el centenario en las Tertulias Sabatinas*. San Juan: Editorial LEA, 1999, pp. 133-162.

<sup>195</sup> Picó. *1898. La guerra después de la guerra*, pp. 145-160.

<sup>196</sup> Rivero Méndez. *Crónica de la Guerra*, p. 217.



brothers Sariego, who were former Volunteers, was attacked on 29<sup>th</sup> September.<sup>197</sup> In Coamo, the former Volunteer Florencio Santiago was confirmed as mayor by the US Army General Ernst, who issued a decree prohibiting any reprisals against the Volunteers or *incondicionales*, or any known supporter of Spain, as long as they respected the new situation.<sup>198</sup> Hence, fear of reprisals from their fellow countrymen might also explain the scarce resistance posed by the Volunteers in front of the United States invading forces.

From the perspective of the US invading force, the collaboration of Spanish loyalists was also vital for ruling a recently conquered territory. Most of the mayors, civil servants, policemen, merchants and company owners were *incondicionales*, and often *peninsulares*. The success of US occupation greatly depended upon these men, at least initially, when the Americans had no governing structure on the island.<sup>199</sup> Ironically, they ended up being protected by the very people they were meant to fight.

### 5.3. Philippines

The role played by the Volunteers in the archipelago during the war between Spain and the United States was more discrete in comparison with their counterparts in Cuba and Puerto Rico. They lacked the numerical force to impose any political agenda on the Spanish authorities. Hence, the Volunteers shared the fate of the rest of the Spanish forces. However, the Volunteers were an inspiration to the Captain General Fernando Primo de Rivera (1897-1898), who created the native Volunteers to try to attract native Filipinos to the Spanish cause at the end of 1897, when military operations were halted by a truce in the archipelago. This segregated native militia was a unique case in the history of the Volunteers in the wider Spanish imperial context. It was the result of the deep ethnic differences that existed between the Philippines and the Spanish Caribbean. This represented a rather late project to engage the local population with the defence of the Spanish Philippines that was thwarted by US intervention.

The native Volunteers were created at a time when peace seemed close in the Philippines. Their creation was part of the Spanish strategy envisioned to end the war.

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<sup>197</sup> AGPR, Fondo del Tribunal Superior de Guayama. Serie Criminal. Caja 529, exp. sin título, pieza 1 (sumario 420 de 1898); Fernando Picó *Al filo del poder. Subalternos y dominantes en Puerto Rico, 1739-1910*. Río Piedras: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1993, pp. 161-171.

<sup>198</sup> Rivero Méndez. *Crónica de la Guerra*, pp. 246-247.

<sup>199</sup> Pérez, Jr. *Cuba between Empires*, pp. 211-228; Picó. 1898. *La guerra después de la guerra*, pp. 161-200.

Captain General Fernando Primo de Rivera (1897-1898) had been working to change the conduct of the war since his arrival to Manila in April 1897.<sup>200</sup> He wanted to increase the participation of native Filipinos in the Spanish military control of the archipelago. In a report sent to the Spanish Government in October 1897, Primo de Rivera wrote that he wanted to “conquer the country with the country”. Primo de Rivera also considered the native Volunteers a solution to save resources for the Treasury, as it was much cheaper to organize them than to prepare regular army units in the Peninsula and send them to the Philippines.<sup>201</sup> This meant using Filipino men to control their own land. The native Volunteers were the keystone of this strategy.

Primo de Rivera tested his strategy by allowing the creation of native Volunteer units throughout the Philippines from his arrival in Manila in April 1897.<sup>202</sup> These troops seemed to be loyal auxiliaries to the regular Army, and on 29<sup>th</sup> October 1897, he formally instituted them by publishing the *Reglamento de Voluntarios Indígenas*.<sup>203</sup> Although Primo de Rivera did not explicitly mention it, the Cuban and Puerto Rican cases were a clear inspiration for the Filipino Volunteers, according to the *reglamento*. The organization was almost identical. The idea was to integrate men that could influence their communities into the Spanish defensive system groups, while at the same time avoiding the costly organization and expedition of battalions made up of Spanish conscripts in the Peninsula.<sup>204</sup> However, in order to train these new units and to keep them under control, the native Volunteers were attached to regular army battalions as auxiliary companies.<sup>205</sup> Thus, between the end of 1897 and the US intervention started in May 1898, the native

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<sup>200</sup> Fernando Primo de Rivera (1831-1921) was a veteran of the Third Carlist War. He had already served as captain general of the Philippines in 1880-1883. His second term lasted from 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1897 to 11<sup>th</sup> April 1898. He was also war minister on three occasions under Conservative cabinets (1874-1875, 1907-1909, and 1917).

<sup>201</sup> The report was sent directly to President Práxedes Mateo Sagasta on 13<sup>th</sup> October 1897. Among other reasons, Primo de Rivera also considered that to create a force of 20,000 native Volunteers would only cost 600,000 pesos, which was the cost of sending several regular Army battalions to the archipelago from Spain. AGMM, Documentación de Filipinas., sig. 5324.42. For the relation between the use of native troops and lower military costs in the colonial context, see V. G. Kiernan. *European Empires from Conquest to Collapse, 1815-1960*. London: Leicester University Press/Fontana Paperbacks, 1982, pp. 138-141.

<sup>202</sup> Fernando Primo de Rivera y Sobremonte. *Memoria dirigida al Senado por el Capitán General D. Fernando Primo de Rivera y Sobremonte acerca de su gestión en Filipinas*. Madrid: Imprenta y Litografía del Depósito de la Guerra, 1898, pp. 111-118.

<sup>203</sup> The document was presented on 16<sup>th</sup> October 1897 and approved on the 29<sup>th</sup>. AGMM, Documentación de Filipinas, sig. 5322.44.

<sup>204</sup> AGMM, Capitanía General de Filipinas, caja 5306, “Minuta del capitán general al ministro de la Guerra”, 07-11-1897.

<sup>205</sup> The complete list of the native Volunteers and the Army battalions they were attached to in AGMM, Capitanía General de Filipinas, caja 5306 & 5308.

Volunteers generally remained loyal to Spain in a situation in which the revolution was latent, but not extinguished.

Primo de Rivera's strategy seemed to be working by the end of 1897. After intense negotiations with delegates of the Filipino rebel commanders, both parties signed the Pact of Biak-na-Bato (14<sup>th</sup> December 1897).<sup>206</sup> The leader of the revolution Emilio Aguinaldo agreed to stop the armed struggle in exchange for a generous sum of money and exile in Hong Kong.<sup>207</sup> The US declaration of war against Spain, however, completely altered the situation. Since March 1898 the US consuls in Hong Kong and Singapore began to negotiate with Emilio Aguinaldo the recommencement of the revolution, and on 1<sup>st</sup> May 1898, the US fleet commanded by Rear Admiral Dewey destroyed the Spanish fleet under the command of Admiral Montojo at Manila Bay.

The native Volunteers were deeply affected by the Spanish defeat at Manila Bay. It was a major blow to the Spanish military reputation in the Philippines, followed by the resumption of the revolution as a part of the US strategy to dominate the archipelago.<sup>208</sup> Most of the native Volunteers deserted to the insurgency, thus shattering the Spanish strategy of "conquering the country with the country". Only a minority of them, most notably the Macabebes commanded by the *mestizo* Eugenio Blanco, joined the remaining Spanish troops on their way to Manila, which was already completely isolated from the rest of the archipelago by 7<sup>th</sup> June 1898, when the siege of the city by the Filipino and US troops began.

The loyalty of some the native troops in the Spanish forces was doubtful at the very least, except for the Civil Guard. José Toral, a *peninsular* Volunteer who lived through the siege of Manila, recalled that the *Carabineros* (a police force of around 400 in charge of fighting smuggling) was "undermined by separatism".<sup>209</sup> This shows that the anti-colonial sentiment was widespread among the Filipino population, even among the men whose *modus vivendi* depended on the Spanish presence in the archipelago. Coercion might have also been a reason these troops joined the insurrection. As in Cuba, the native Filipinos

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<sup>206</sup> The delegate of the revolutionary leaders was the Filipino lawyer and historian Pedro A. Paterno, who advocated for the political assimilation of the Philippines into the Spanish Monarchy. See Primo de Rivera y Sobremonte. *Memoria dirigida al Senado*, pp. 121-158.

<sup>207</sup> Mas Chao. *La guerra olvidada de Filipinas*, pp. 146-161.

<sup>208</sup> Reynaldo C. Ileto. "The Birth of the Filipino Revolutionary Army in Southern Tagalog, Luzón, 1898". *El Ejército y la Armada en 1898: Cuba, Puerto Rico y Filipinas. I Congreso Internacional de Historia Militar*, vol. I. Madrid: Ministerio de Defensa, 1999, pp. 281-306.

<sup>209</sup> Toral. *El sitio de Manila*, p. 188.

that stood loyal to Spain could expect no mercy from insurgents. Outright execution was the common fate of these men in cases of being captured in combat.<sup>210</sup>

When the Republic of the Philippines was proclaimed by Emilio Aguinaldo on 12<sup>th</sup> June 1898, the *Carabineros* and the Pampanga Volunteers gathered in Manila rioted against the Spaniards, being followed by other native Volunteer units throughout the Philippines. This riot was aimed at provoking a popular uprising in favour of independence.<sup>211</sup> Although the uprising was rapidly quelled by the *peninsulares* of the Loyal Volunteers, it had evidenced the weakness of the Spanish military position even within Manila, the seat of colonial power in the Philippines. After the siege began, the situation of the Spanish Volunteers alongside the regular forces was desperate: they were trapped between the besieging forces, unreliable native allies, and the US troops that landed near Manila between the 30<sup>th</sup> June and 25<sup>th</sup> July, commanded by General Wesley Merritt.<sup>212</sup>

The 2,000 Volunteers left in Manila, mostly Spaniards, were ready to take part in the defence of a city that still had a 13,000-strong garrison and impressive 16<sup>th</sup> century fortresses.<sup>213</sup> However, no relief force could be expected to arrive from far-flung Spain. Most of its Atlantic fleet had been destroyed at the battle of Santiago de Cuba, and the British closed the Suez Canal to the Spanish fleet sent to reinforce the Philippines.<sup>214</sup> To carry on with the fight to the very end would have caused unnecessary bloodshed in Manila. A decree issued by Captain General Fermín Jáudenes on 5<sup>th</sup> August to the soldiers and Volunteers seems to indicate that he had already been negotiating the terms of surrender with the Americans.<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> Ulpiano Herrero y Samp Pedro. *Nuestra prisión en poder de los revolucionarios filipinos. Crónica de dieciocho meses de cautiverio de más de cien religiosos del centro de Luzón, empleados en el ministerio de las almas*. Manila: Imprenta del Colegio de Santo Tomás, 1900, p. 61.

<sup>211</sup> The forces rioted that day were the *Carabineros* (a constabulary force) and the Volunteers from Pampanga, a region in Luzón. Burguete. *¡La guerra!*, p. 195.

<sup>212</sup> Mas Chao. *La guerra olvidada de Filipinas*, pp. 206-220.

<sup>213</sup> The *Guerrilla del Casino Español* reported having 213 men by 29th July, the *Escuadrón de Voluntarios de Manila* 87 men, the *Guerrilla de San Miguel* 488, and the *Batallón de Leales Voluntarios de Manila*, 1,279 men. AGMM, Documentación de Filipinas, sig. 5342.65; sig. 5342.71; sig. 5342.67; sig. 5342.66.

<sup>214</sup> Britain generally supported the US during its war against Spain. Conservative Prime Minister the Marquess of Salisbury (1895-1902) considered Spain one of the 'dying nations' that ought to be removed from the colonial race over Asia and Africa. Agustín R. Rodríguez González. *Tramas ocultas de la guerra del 98*. Madrid: Actas, 2016, pp. 241-253; Andrew Roberts. *Salisbury. Victorian Titan*. London: Phoenix, 2000 (or ed. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999), pp. 689-693.

<sup>215</sup> Captain General Fermín Jáudenes (24<sup>th</sup> July – 13<sup>th</sup> August 1898) reminded the soldiers, sailors and Volunteers that the siege had already been going on for two months, and that in the future they

Historians, both in Spain and the United States, have tended to believe that what followed was a mock battle for Manila.<sup>216</sup> The city surrendered to the US troops on 13<sup>th</sup> August, just a day after the armistice between Spain and the United States. In fact, the military actions during the siege consisted of small-scale skirmishes and the progressive withdrawal of the Spanish forces from their outer defensive lines. However, according to Trask, Jáudenes' main concern was to avoid the occupation of Manila by the Filipino fighters of Emilio Aguinaldo. He not only feared the looting of property and retaliation against loyalists but also wanted to avoid the shame of having to surrender the city to the very people to whom Spain had claimed to be bringing a civilizing mission.<sup>217</sup> Indeed, colonial prejudice shaped the way Spaniards and Americans handled the transfer of power. Rather than handing Manila, which had been the seat of Spanish power in the Philippines since 1561, to the Filipino insurgents, who they considered barbarous and uncivilized, Jáudenes surrendered the city to the US forces, representatives of a civilized nation, according to the standards of the day.

Eventually, the US troops entered Manila on 13<sup>th</sup> August 1898, and on the 14<sup>th</sup> Captain General Jáudenes and General Wesley Merritt issued a joint decree by which all the Spanish forces, including the Volunteers, had to return to their barracks and be put under the direct command of US Army officers, whereas the civilians were allowed to leave Manila.<sup>218</sup> Just as with the surrender of Santiago de Cuba on 16<sup>th</sup> July 1898, the occupation of the city by the US troops rather than by the insurgents was probably felt as a relief for the Spaniards in Manila, including the Volunteers. According to the capitulation agreed between the Spanish and American commissioners, the Volunteers could stay in Cuba if

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could proudly claim to have taken part in the defence of Manila. In a way, Jáudenes was telling the defenders that they had bravely fought, but that the fight had to be over. AGMM, Documentación de Filipinas, sig. 5344.18; Ignacio Salinas y Angulo. *Defensa del general Jáudenes*. Madrid: Imprenta y Litografía del Depósito de la Guerra, 1899, pp. 61-65.

<sup>216</sup> Jesús Dávila Wesolovsky. "Las operaciones en Luzón. Asedio y defensa de Manila. Mayo-agosto 1898". *El Ejército y la Armada en 1898...* (1999), pp. 307-344; Musicant. *Empire by Default*, pp. 541-585; Pedro Ortiz Armengol. "La campaña militar en Filipinas: año 1898", in *El Ejército y la Armada en 1898: Cuba, Puerto Rico y Filipinas. I Congreso Internacional de Historia Militar*, vol. I. Madrid: Ministerio de Defensa, 1999, pp. 375-384; Luis E. Togores Sánchez. "El asedio de Manila (mayo-agosto 1898). 'Diario de los sucesos ocurridos durante la guerra de España con los Estados Unidos, 1898'". *Revista de Indias*, 1998, vol. LVIII, No. 213, pp. 449-498; Trask. *The War with Spain*, pp. 417-422.

<sup>217</sup> Trask. *The War with Spain*, pp. 412-422.

<sup>218</sup> AGMM, Documentación de Filipinas, sig. 5344.60.

they gave up their weapons to the US forces and promised not to fight against them during the war.<sup>219</sup> With the presence of US troops, their lives and properties were secured.

The surrender of Manila was nevertheless certainly a bitter experience for the men who had fought to keep the Philippines under the aegis of Spain.<sup>220</sup> The Volunteer José Toral recalled that after seeing the US flag waving over the fort of Santiago, which had guarded the city since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, he thought ‘the sacrifice is consummated. The flag that the strong arm of Legazpi [the Spanish conquistador that took the city in 1561] nailed into this soil, has now fallen from the weak arms of our authorities’.<sup>221</sup> More than three centuries and a half of Spanish history in the Philippines had come to an end.

## 6. The Dissolution of the Volunteers

The fate of the Volunteers was the fate of Spain in the Americas. After Spain’s military defeat by the United States, the Volunteers disappeared alongside the old Spanish Empire in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines, as sanctioned by the Treaty of Paris (10<sup>th</sup> December 1898). Whilst the Spanish and US legations in Paris discussed the terms of the peace agreement between September and December 1898, hundreds of units of Volunteers were dismantled.

In the Philippines, this process seems to have taken place in a disorderly fashion, as no evidence of a formal order of dissolution by the Spanish authorities was found. This was probably caused by the fact that neither the Spanish nor the Americans entirely controlled the archipelago after the surrender of Manila on 14<sup>th</sup> August 1898. In fact, vast areas of the country were controlled by the Filipino revolutionaries that had proclaimed the Republic of the Philippines, and who would soon begin to wage a long and cruel war against the United States for control of the archipelago. The Manila Volunteers probably

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<sup>219</sup> The Spanish and US commissioners met on 16<sup>th</sup> July 1898 near Santiago de Cuba, under a ceiba which has been known as *Árbol de la Paz* (Peace Tree) ever since. For the Spaniards, on behalf of General Toral, governor of Santiago de Cuba, the commissioners were Brigadier General Federico Escario and Lieutenant Colonel Ventura Fontán. On behalf of Major General W. Shafter, commander of the US expeditionary force, there were Major General J. Wheeler, Major General W. Lawton, and 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant S. D. Midley. Roberto Mason was the interpreter. Bacardí y Moreau. *Crónicas de Santiago de Cuba*, vol. X. Santiago de Cuba: Tipografía Arroyo Hermanos, 1924, pp. 112-113.

<sup>220</sup> For the fate of the Spanish community in the Philippines after 1898, see Florentino Rodao. “De colonizadores a residentes. Los españoles ante la transición imperial en Filipinas”, in Elizalde & Delgado. *Un país entre dos imperios*, pp. 251-297.

<sup>221</sup> Toral. *Memorias de un Voluntario*, pp. 190-191.

dissolved after the decree of 14<sup>th</sup> August, ordering all the Spanish forces to obey the new rulers. By then, most of the native Volunteers had already defected to the insurgency.

In Puerto Rico, the order to dismantle the Volunteer units was issued by Captain General Ricardo Ortega y Díez on 5<sup>th</sup> September 1898, in the midst of a smooth transition between the Spanish and US authorities that began shortly after the armistice of 12<sup>th</sup> August. According to González Cuevas, most of the Volunteers returned to their homes, whereas a minority asked to 'follow the fate of the [Spanish] Army', and even settled in Spain after the United States took formal possession of Puerto Rico on 18<sup>th</sup> October 1898.<sup>222</sup>

The dismantling of the Volunteers in Cuba proved more complicated than in Puerto Rico. At the time of the armistice, Spanish forces still controlled all the cities, whereas insurgents controlled most areas of the countryside and the US forces were firmly established in Santiago de Cuba and Guantánamo Bay (where they retain a military base at the time of writing). Beyond this logistical problem, the fear of retaliation by the *mambís* made an orderly dissolution of the Volunteer units practically impossible, especially in the areas where they had been the only Spanish force for a long time. After all, the Spanish regular soldiers would be repatriated to Spain, whereas the Volunteers were reluctant to leave their hometowns where they had family and often property. Perhaps trying to avoid the panic that a total disarmament would have caused among the Volunteers, Captain General Ramón Blanco ordered on 26<sup>th</sup> August 1898 that the casualties or defections in the Volunteers would not be replaced by new members.<sup>223</sup> Thus, the Volunteers began a slow process of dissolution that only ended on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1899, when Adolfo Jiménez Castellanos, Cuba's last captain general (1898-1899), handed the control of the island to the US Army General Leonard Wood after almost four centuries of Spanish rule.

## 7. Conclusions

The Volunteers were a key element in the defensive system of the Spanish Empire during the colonial wars that took place in Cuba, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico between February 1895 and August 1898. They were the necessary link between the military authorities and the local communities in a context of guerrilla warfare. In all the warzones, the Volunteers often became the only Spanish force in areas where the army presence was

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<sup>222</sup> González Cuevas. *¿Defendiendo el honor?*, pp. 161-169.

<sup>223</sup> ANRC, Asuntos Políticos, leg. 240, exp. 21.

weak, if not nonexistent. In most of Cuba, they made up joint garrisons. In the Philippines, the native Volunteers were also conceived as a source of influence in areas where the local communities were largely alien to Spanish culture and control.

The evidence presented here demonstrates that the military performance of the Volunteers in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines depended on the support received by the regular troops. The Volunteers were men who had to combine their jobs with unpaid military service, and generally had limited combat training. Thus, wherever the Spanish Army controlled the situation and fought efficiently, the Volunteers proved to be a reliable force. On the contrary, the collapse of the regular Spanish troops or the evacuation of entire areas often resulted in the surrender of the Volunteers to the *mambís*, the US troops or the Filipino rebels.

The Volunteers attest to the relative strength of Spanish Loyalism in Cuba and Puerto Rico, and to a certain extent in the Spanish-controlled areas in the Philippines. In Cuba, despite decades of a growing anticolonial nationalist sentiment, and the erosion of the legitimacy of Spanish rule, the Volunteers still gathered an impressive force of ca. 65,000 men at the beginning of the war, and wherever they enjoyed the support of the regular Army, fiercely opposed the advance of the *mambís*. Had support for independence been as widespread as some Cuban historiography sustains, the war would probably have ended much earlier. In Puerto Rico, where no serious attempt against Spain was made before the US invasion, thousands of Puerto Ricans joined the Volunteers during the preparations for the war against the United States. The collapse of their defences only came after the Spanish Army withdrew from most of the territory, and when the Volunteers' lives and properties were threatened by bandits and fellow countrymen that threatened to retaliate only after the defeat of Spain was evident.

The Volunteers remained a key element of the Spanish imperial culture to the very end in 1898. This is considered here to be symbolized by the creation of the Volunteers in 1896 in the Philippines. Even though this archipelago was only weakly controlled by Spain, and the the concept of a Spanish Nation was generally culturally, politically and demographically alien to Filipino society, the community of *peninsulares* and Filipinos of Spanish descent imitated the practices of their Cuban and Puerto Rican colleagues with the creation of the Volunteers.



## EPILOGUE

The end of the Volunteers was paradoxical. The prominent role they had played in Cuba and Puerto Rico for almost half a century, and for a short time in the Philippines, was only comparable to the swiftness with which they disappeared. As a militia, the Volunteers completely disappeared during the autumn of 1898. Their fate was signalled by the end of the Spanish Empire in the Caribbean and Asia. The Volunteer veterans did not create any association to recall their days of service, neither in Spain nor in Cuba, Puerto Rico, or the Philippines. The reason for this is unclear. The former Volunteers that settled in Spain after the war had in common a life in the Antilles or the Philippines, and an active service in the defence of the Spanish Empire. Perhaps the fact that most *peninsulares* remained in the lost empire after 1898 explains the absence of an association in Spain. In Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines, the absence is much more clearly understood. The Volunteers were associated with the most intransigent form of Spanish Loyalism, *integrismo*. At the very least, such a strong reminder of their ties with Spain's power was unwelcome in territories that had just undergone an anti-colonial war (Cuba and the Philippines), or where a new ruler had replaced Spain *manu militari* (Puerto Rico).

As individuals, the fate of the Volunteers after 1898 was as varied as the paths taken by these men. They did not act as a group but rather sought to protect their own personal interests. To track their lives after 1898 would require following the evolution of thousands of former Volunteers after the war. It is not known how many of them settled in Spain after 1898 or remained in the former colonies. Enrique San Miguel, who published detailed research on the repatriation of Army soldiers, considers that a good deal of the Volunteers, both *peninsulares*, and Creoles, left for Spain during the Autumn of 1898, but that most of them returned to the former colonies.<sup>1</sup> However, he gives no figures. Thus, this represents a research study to be undertaken.

Nevertheless, it is thought that most of the Volunteers, both Creoles, and *peninsulares*, remained in Cuba, Puerto Rico, or the Philippines. A Cuban nationalist that lived in Santiago de Cuba throughout the war, recalled that after the city's capitulation to the US forces, the Spanish Government offered a free repatriation to all the Volunteers who wished to do so, but only 'some of them took that opportunity'.<sup>2</sup> Certainly, the Spanish newspapers show the arrival of Volunteers to the Peninsula between late-1898 and

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<sup>1</sup> De Miguel Fernández. "Las tropas españolas en la guerra de Cuba", p. 257.

<sup>2</sup> This anecdote was recalled by José Joaquín Hernández y Mancebo on *Memorias de un bloqueo*, published on Emilio Bacardí y Moreau. *Crónicas de Santiago de Cuba*, vol. X, p. 369.

early-1899, but nothing indicates an exodus of thousands of men. Maya Jasanoff, in her study of British Loyalists during and after the war of American Independence, established that at least 60,000 loyalists and 15,000 slaves left the United States after 1783, representing around 2.40% of the Thirteen Colonies' population.<sup>3</sup> If the same percentage were applied, only in the case of Cuba (ca. 1,6 million inhabitants) and Puerto Rico (ca. 850,000), where there was a sizeable community of *integristas* and ca. 95,000 Volunteers by the end of 1898, this would have meant an exodus of ca. 60,000 people. Nothing seems to indicate a relocation of such a magnitude in the case of the Spanish loyalists after the loss of the empire.

How the Volunteers rebuilt their lives afterwards is also a research question to be addressed. Citing again the case of the British Loyalists in America, Jasanoff showed that a fifth of them settled in Britain, whereas the rest left for British colonies such as Canada, Australia, the Bahamas or India.<sup>4</sup> An expanding British Empire offered such opportunities to the loyalists who left their native land. In 1898 Spain was an empire in retreat, if it could still be considered an empire at all. The only reminders of its past as a colonial power were the African enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla, a tiny presence in Spanish Sahara, and the island of Fernando Poo in the Gulf of Guinea. All these territories functioned as military outposts, not as places where civilians could rebuild their lives. Consequently, the options for the Volunteers after 1898 were rather simple: either settling in Spain or remaining in the land they were, whether this was Cuba, Puerto Rico, or the Philippines.

A few examples can be offered showing the diverse ways in which the Volunteers reoriented their lives after the dissolution of the militia. Some of them decided to stay in the former colonies. The Catalan Narciso Maciá y Doménech, who had been a lieutenant in the Artillery Volunteer Battalion, remained in Havana with his Cuban wife and children, where he became a successful businessman and presided over the *Casino Español* in the 1920s.<sup>5</sup> The Puerto Rican Vicente Balbás Capó, San Juan's *Batallón de Tiradores de Altura*'s former major, representative at the Congress, and journalist, devoted his life after 1898 to the cause of the Spanish language, the Catholic faith, Roman Law, and the independence of Puerto Rico from the United States as a way to preserve the Spanish identity of the island. Due to his campaigns in defence of the Spanish legacy on the island against the US cultural influence, he was awarded several civilian decorations by the Spanish Government

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<sup>3</sup> Maya Jasanoff. *Liberty's Exiles*, pp. 357-358.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 313-342.

<sup>5</sup> Maciá y Doménech. *Vida y obra*, pp. 28-61.

and even regained Spanish citizenship in 1923.<sup>6</sup> It should be remembered that only the *peninsulares* kept their Spanish citizenship in the former colonies after 1898. Some others proudly highlighted their past as Volunteers. As late as May 1931, the *peninsular* Isidoro Yboleón signed a document in favour of the recently abdicated King Alphonse XIII issued by the most conservative elements of the Philippines' Spanish colony, highlighting that he had been a Volunteer captain as a proof of his loyalty to Spain and the Bourbon dynasty.<sup>7</sup>

There was no generalized retaliation against the Volunteers in the former colonies, but the coexistence of these men with those who had fought against them was not always easy, at least for a short period after the war. Their future in *Ultramar* after the end of Spanish sovereignty was certainly a concern for the Volunteers. In September 1898 the chiefs of the Volunteer units in Havana held a meeting to discuss this. They agreed, among other points, to ask the Spanish Government that all the Volunteers who wished so should be repatriated to Spain for free and advised the Volunteers to be cautious.<sup>8</sup> It was sensible advice. In December 1899 the mayor of a small town near Santiago de Cuba reported that two former *guerrilleros* had been threatened by their neighbours for having hailed Spain, the Spanish guerrillas, and Weyler.<sup>9</sup> Since the mayor could not secure these men's lives, he asked the US governor to remove them from the town. There were no Volunteers involved in this episode, yet it illustrates the atmosphere in a rural community of eastern Cuba after 1898. A wave of reprisals against the Volunteers did take place in Puerto Rico, where no armed struggle against Spain had existed since the short-lived uprising of Lares (September 1868). In fact, between 1868 and 1898 the military participation of Puerto

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<sup>6</sup> In 1899 he created the *Partido Oportunista* with which to fight for the island's independence, once reincorporating Puerto Rico into Spain was deemed unfeasible. He also opposed the US military occupation in the pages of the *Heraldo de las Antillas*, the renamed version of the *Heraldo Español* he had created before 1898. A staunch opponent of US cultural influence in Puerto Rico, he wrote *Puerto Rico a los diez años de americanización* (1910). *Unión Ibero-Americana*, February 1923, p. 24; Ana Isabel Benito Sánchez. "Determinantes instituciones de la reivindicación autonomista en Puerto Rico". *Revista de Humanidades Tecnológico de Monterrey*, 2008, No. 24, p. 114.

<sup>7</sup> *Voz española*, 09-05-1931, p. 8. Isidoro Yboleón had been living in the Philippines at least since 1883, when he was called on to perform military service in the archipelago. *Diario oficial de avisos de Madrid*, 23-04-1883, p. 1. The Spanish community in the Philippines was generally conservative, coming to support the Francoist side during the Spanish Civil War. For this aspect see Florentino Ridao. *Franquistas sin Franco. Una historia alternativa de la guerra civil española desde Filipinas*. Granada: Editorial Comares, 2012.

<sup>8</sup> *El Correo Español*, 24-09-1898, p. 2.

<sup>9</sup> The Cuban-born mayor of El Cristo Enrique Fournier reported this incident to the US military governor of Santiago de Cuba on 12<sup>th</sup> December 1899. Apparently, two former *guerrilleros*, "Chucho" Guerra and Higinio Pérez had stormed into the house of Josefa Suárez shouting "Long live Spain, the Spanish guerrilleros and Weyler!". He asked the authorities to remove them from the town, since he could not secure their safety due to their neighbours' threats. AHPSC, Gobierno Provincial, leg. 514, exp. 17.

Ricans was always devoted to the defence of Spanish sovereignty. Between late-1898 and early-1899 groups of bandits from the rural areas assaulted the shops owned by *peninsulares*, many of whom were former Volunteers. The late Puerto Rican historian Fernando Picó considered these attacks a popular reaction against the unwanted result of the Spanish-American war by which Puerto Rico became a colony of the US, and against the previous social and economic system of Spanish dominance represented by the Volunteers. In fact, since the 1890s there had been a growing resentment among Puerto Rican autonomists against *peninsulares* for their dominant position in commerce, and against the Volunteers for their ferocious repression of the autonomists during the *componetes* of 1887. The crisis of 1898-1899 only provided the context that unleashed this accumulated tension. Thus, the US troops that had come to Puerto Rico to expel the Spaniards, ended up protecting their lives and properties. Tranquillity soon returned to the island.<sup>10</sup>

Some Volunteers decided to start afresh in Spain for different reasons, either political, economic, or both. Enrique de Miguel considered that no less than 5,000 Volunteers left Cuba after the Spanish defeat.<sup>11</sup> Captain Melitón Castelló Anglada, who had served in Puerto Príncipe's Volunteer Battalion for thirty years and owned a hardware store in that city, was well integrated into Cuban society through marriage to a local woman. Despite this, this Catalan left the island in December 1898 for he "would not stay in a country where the Spanish flag is not respected". Shortly afterwards, in April 1900, Melitón Castelló died in Barcelona. His wife and children returned to Cuba, but she rejected an appointment as a teacher offered by the Cuban Ministry of Education for the sake of his husband's memory.<sup>12</sup> Some Cuban-born Volunteers also decided to settle in Spain. For instance, Sixto Bravo, from Santiago de Cuba, arrived in La Corunna in September 1898, after having taken part in the defence of his native city against the US and *mambí* troops in July of that very year. Since his *hacienda* had been destroyed by the insurgents and his Spanish sentiments were well known in an area dominated by

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<sup>10</sup> Picó. 1898, pp. 201-207.

<sup>11</sup> Enrique de Miguel Fernández. *Azcárraga, Weyler y la conducción de la guerra de Cuba*. Ph.D. Thesis. Castellón de La Plana: Universitat Jaume I, 2011, p. 221, footnote No. 372.

<sup>12</sup> I am indebted to Melitón Castelló's Cuban great-grandson, Osvaldo Betancourt Sanz, for this information. Like his Volunteer forebear, Osvaldo also left Cuba for political reasons almost a century after his great-grandfather.



Image 12. The Macabebe Volunteers arriving to Barcelona in 8<sup>th</sup> June 1900. Photo: Laureano. *La Ilustración Artística*, 18-06-1900, p. 402.

nationalist sentiment, he considered that staying in Cuba was not an option.<sup>13</sup> A curious case was represented by the Macabebes, a group of Filipino Volunteers commanded by the *mestizo* Eugenio Blanco, who remained loyal to Spain to the very last. After the loss of the Philippines, the Macabebes were sent to the Marianas Islands, in the Pacific Ocean, because Blanco had been appointed governor by the Spanish Government. For a few months, these native Filipinos were the last representatives of the Spanish Empire in the Marianas, until the islands were handed over to Germany in November 1899.<sup>14</sup> Once back in the Philippines, some Macabebes collaborated with the US Army during the Filipino-American War (1899-1902).<sup>15</sup> But some others rejected serving the country that had ousted Spain from the Philippines. Eugenio Blanco rejected a military appointment offered by the US colonial government and decided to sail to Spain with a few hundred of his former

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<sup>13</sup> His situation was so desperate upon arriving in Spain, that La Corunna's military governor bought him a ticket for Madrid so that he could look for employment there. *La Correspondencia de España*, 20-09-1898, p. 2.

<sup>14</sup> Spain sold the Marianas and Carolinas islands to Germany in the Spanish-German Treaty of 12<sup>th</sup> February 1899. *La Ilustración Artística*, 03-09-1900, pp. 571-573; Belén Pozuelo Mascaraque. "Los Estados Unidos, Alemania y el desmantelamiento colonial español en el Pacífico: el caso de las islas Marianas". *Anales de Historia Contemporánea*, 1998, No. 14, pp. 147-168.

<sup>15</sup> The US Army maintained the basic structure of the *Voluntarios Macabebes*, creating the Macabebe Scouts which fought for the Americans throughout the war against the Filipino nationalists. Dennis Edward Flake. *Loyal Macabebes. How the Americans Used the Macabebe Scouts in the Annexation of the Philippines*. San Fernando: Holy Angel University Press, 2009, pp. 33-68.

Macabebe Volunteers, arriving in Barcelona in June 1900 hoping to rebuild their lives.<sup>16</sup> A portrait of these men can be seen in image 12 (p. 218), taken aboard the steamship *Alicante* shortly after their arrival to Spain. It is unclear whether they stayed in Spain or returned to the Philippines, but to this day they are remembered by a street name in Madrid: the *calle de los Voluntarios Macabebes* in the popular La Chopera neighbourhood. To this day, it is Spain's only public space that remembers the Volunteers.

As to the treatment received by the Volunteers from the Spanish State after 1898, it was generally marked by neglect, abandonment, and disdain. As to the men who remained in Cuba, Puerto Rico or the Philippines, both *peninsulares* and Creoles, they were not granted any compensation. The contempt suffered by the Volunteers born outside metropolitan Spain was even deeper, for they lost their Spanish citizenship in accordance with the Treaty of Paris (10<sup>th</sup> December 1898), by which the representatives of Spain and the United States negotiated the aftermath of the war.<sup>17</sup> The *peninsulares* that remained in Cuba, Puerto Rico, or the Philippines, however, were given the option of keeping their citizenship. Thus, the *peninsulares* were denied any compensation, but the Creoles also lost the citizenship they had fought for.

The situation of the Volunteers that decided to leave for Spain did not greatly vary from the fate suffered by the regular Spanish soldiers and sailors after 1898. The Spanish press reflected the miserable conditions of their repatriation which lasted from September 1898 to February 1899.<sup>18</sup> Back in Spain, due to their generally poor health conditions, many of the men that fought in *Ultramar* were compelled to beg on the streets or claim a pension that would never arrive.<sup>19</sup> In this sense, the rank-and-file Volunteers were deprived of any financial aid or compensation by the State. Since they were not members of the regular army or navy, they were not included in the share of the budget devoted to giving meagre

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<sup>16</sup> *La Ilustración Artística*, 18-06-1900, pp. 402.

<sup>17</sup> Only in 1901, the Cubans, Puerto Ricans, and Filipinos who had lost the citizenship in 1898, could regain it if they had been appointed in any administrative or military position by the Spanish Government before the Treaty of Paris. *Gaceta de Madrid*, 12-05-1901, Año CCXL, No. 132, T. II, p. 563.

<sup>18</sup> María Antonia Fernández Jiménez. "La repatriación de los soldados españoles en la prensa del momento. Imágenes de una tragedia del 98", in Mirta Núñez Díaz-Balart (dir.) & Antonio Rojas Friend (Coord.). *El día después. España y sus excolonias tras el Desastre del 98*. Madrid: Editorial Argés, 1998, pp. 153-169.

<sup>19</sup> In Córdoba, the veterans of the Cuban war often depended on charity from the population and the church to survive. This situation was extensive in the rest of Spain. Patricio Hidalgo Nuchera. "Cuando pintan bastos'. De la derrota naval al drama de los repatriados en la Córdoba de 1898", in Patricio Hidalgo Nuchera (coord.). *Andalucía y la repatriación de los soldados en la guerra del 98*. Seville: Fundación Pública Andaluza Centro de Estudios Andaluces, 2010, pp. 37-82.

allowances to the veterans of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. The only financial aid given by the State to the rank-and-file Volunteers was the right to a free ticket back to Cuba, Puerto Rico, or the Philippines, granted by a law in April 1900.<sup>20</sup> However, those who joined the Volunteers to comply with their military service, and had not extinguished this, were relocated in army units until its completion. Thus, it may be inferred that the Spanish State would rather promote the migration of the young veterans than having to financially support thousands of men likely deemed a burden for a bankrupt nation.

Only the Volunteer chiefs and officers who settled in Spain after 1898 received some compensation. They were the only Volunteers that coordinated their efforts to defend their interests. On 19<sup>th</sup> March 1899, they created a committee in Madrid aimed at lobbying before the Ministry of War. It was supported by the former captains general Arsenio Martínez de Campos and Ramón Blanco.<sup>21</sup> Due to their pressure, the Volunteer chiefs and officers were somehow equated to the regular army and navy officers and were recognised the right to a pension on 11<sup>th</sup> April 1900 more than a year and a half after the end of the war.<sup>22</sup> Nonetheless, a series of requisites included in the law left many Volunteers ineligible for the pension. This caused hundreds of them to demand their pension from the Ministry of War, with uneven success, at least until 1910.<sup>23</sup> In 1903 Elías Martínez Nubla, a magistrate and former Volunteer Cavalry major in Manila, denounced the fact that out of the ca. 15,000 Volunteer chief officers and officers that had served in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines during 1895-1898, only 320 were eligible for a pension according to the law of 11<sup>th</sup> April 1900. Also, their pension represented 70% of the allowance given to their army and navy colleagues. In this respect, Martínez Nubla recalled that although the Volunteers did not join the militia for money, the bullets of the enemy did not distinguish regular soldiers from Volunteers either.<sup>24</sup> It is known that Martínez Nubla met in 1903 with the war minister to negotiate better conditions for his comrades-

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<sup>20</sup> *Diario Oficial del Ministerio de la Guerra*, 12-04-1900, p. 157-158.

<sup>21</sup> Martínez de Campos and Blanco were appointed honorary presidents. The members of the committee were Colonel Luis Ramos Izquierdo (president), Colonel Juan Malo Parra (vice-president), Captain Juan Bravo (first secretary), 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Julio A. Domínguez (second secretary), Major Guillermo Castelví, captains Vicente Díez and Juan de Urquía (members of the board), and captain Juan Mateo (deputy member of the board). *El Día*, 20-03-1899, p. 2.

<sup>22</sup> The law that recognised the Volunteer chief officers and officers' right to a pension was signed by the Regent Queen on 11<sup>th</sup> April 1900. The details in *Diario Oficial del Ministerio de la Guerra*, 12-04-1900, pp. 157-158.

<sup>23</sup> The last demand found in this research was made by Antonio Asensio Pérez, who had served in Puerto Rico's Volunteers between 1897 and 1898 after a long career in the Army Medical Corps. *Diario Oficial del Ministerio de la Guerra*, 09-07-1910, p. 121.

<sup>24</sup> Martínez Nubla. *Los Voluntarios de Ultramar*, p. 20.

at-arms to no avail.<sup>25</sup> The compensation by the state remained unaltered after the law of April 1900.

In another area, political participation proved to be a controversial activity for the Volunteers who remained in the former colonies. As a collectivity, they had no voice. More widely, the creation of political parties that might defend a return to Spanish sovereignty or that would represent the interest of the *integristas* was not even considered. The integration of the people that had supported Spanish rule into the new regimes, either in the form of new sovereign states (Cuba) or US colonies (Puerto Rico and the Philippines), came at the price of renouncing any form of collective political identity. The integration of those who wanted to actively participate in politics was thus made individually through the new political parties that represented the social and ideological divisions of any given society. The individual right of former Volunteers to participate in politics was nonetheless not accepted by all actors. In Puerto Rico, some elements of the Republican Party, mostly former radical autonomists who advocated for the island to become a new US state, considered that former *integristas* should not be allowed to participate in politics under the US regime, fortunately to no avail. Thus, former Volunteers and members of the Spanish Unconditional Party participated in the different political parties created after 1898, although they tended to support options that fought for wide autonomy or outright independence from the United States.<sup>26</sup>

As a military concept, however, the Volunteers outlived 1898. The creation of a militia of civilians-at-arms might also have served the needs of the Republic of Cuba. For instance, during the uprising of Black *mambí* veterans known as *Guerrita de los Independientes de Color* that took place in eastern Cuba in 1912, the Government created a Volunteer Battalion in Guantánamo to fight the Black rebels, as well as a *Voluntarios de Occidente* battalion sent from Havana, and Volunteer units in several small towns of the area.<sup>27</sup> It is significant that the Cuban Government chose the very name of Volunteers,

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<sup>25</sup> According to a Madrid-based newspaper, Elías Martínez Nubla met on 20<sup>th</sup> December 1903 with the Minister Vicente Martitegui (1903-1904) on behalf of a *Comisión de Jefes y Oficiales movilizados*. *El Heraldo de Madrid*, 21-09-1903, p. 2.

<sup>26</sup> Vicente Balbás Capó. *Puerto Rico a los diez años de americanización*. San Juan: Tip. Heraldo Español, 1910, pp. 397-400 & 415-419.

<sup>27</sup> The war (May-July 1912) was caused by the illegalization of the *Partido de los Independientes de Color*, which stood for the rights of the Cubans of African descent, as the Cuban electoral law of 1910 prohibited the participation of racially-based political parties. The war caused between 2,000 and 6,000 victims, mostly rebels. For an overview of this conflict, see Rolando Rodríguez. *La conspiración de los iguales. La protesta de los Independientes de Color en 1912*. Havana: Imagen Contemporánea, 2010.



profoundly identified with Spanish *integrismo*, to name these militias. The name was not the only resemblance. The members of the Volunteers created in 1912 were young men that had to combine their regular jobs with unpaid military service chasing the rebels.<sup>28</sup> The creation of this militia in 1912, during the first years of a Republic that was still forging its national identity, may indicate that the Volunteers were not considered an entirely alien Spanish concept, but a model deeply rooted in Cuban history.

These Volunteers were dissolved in 1912 after having quashed the rebellion, but a new project to organize a *Cuerpo de Voluntarios de la República de Cuba* was presented to President Fulgencio Batista (1940-1944) in 1942. On this occasion, a group of army officers considered that Cuba's defensive capacities ought to be strengthened in the context of the Second World War. Cuba's position as an ally of the United States might make the island a target for the German U-Boats that patrolled the Atlantic.<sup>29</sup> The project was not finally approved, but it is worth considering the persistence of the Volunteers as a concept for a militia in Cuba as an area worth studying.

In Puerto Rico, the legacy of the Volunteers as a militia also outlived 1898. In 1906 a group of Puerto Ricans who favoured the Americanization of the island tried to create a militia made up of young volunteers who would have needed to afford their own uniforms and weapons and would combine their regular jobs with unpaid military service in a force meant to be the reserves for the US Army in Puerto Rico. This militia was not finally created because of the US military authorities' dislike of the idea of arming Puerto Ricans. However, amidst the necessity of reinforcing the defences of its Caribbean colony in the context of the First World War, the Puerto Rican branch of the National Guard of the United States was created in 1917. This was only possible after the implementation of the Jones Act (1917), which granted Puerto Ricans US citizenship, thus allowing them to serve in the US armed forces, which included the National Guard, or to be conscripted if necessary.<sup>30</sup>

Due to the politically charged background of the Volunteers, which had been considered the armed wing of Spanish *integrismo*, the US authorities wanted to consider

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<sup>28</sup> Carlos Forment Rovira. *Crónicas de Santiago de Cuba*, vol. II. Santiago de Cuba: Ediciones Alqueza, 2005, pp. 27-35; Aline Helg. *Our Rightful Share: The Afro-Cuban Struggle for Equality, 1886-1912*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995, pp. 204-225.

<sup>29</sup> ANRC, Secretaría de la Presidencia, leg. 6, exp. 46.

<sup>30</sup> Rogers M. Smith. "The Bitter Roots of Puerto Rican Citizenship", in Christina Duffy Burnett & Burke Marshall (eds.). *Foreign in a Domestic Sense. Puerto Rico, American Expansion, and the Constitution*. Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2001, pp. 373-388; Trías Monge. *Puerto Rico*, pp. 67-76.

Puerto Rico's National Guard as heir of the *Milicias Disciplinadas*. Despite these militias having been dismantled in the 1870s, their historical association with Creoles was more convenient for the policy of erasing Puerto Rico's Spanish identity conducted by the United States after the invasion of 1898.<sup>31</sup> However, the Volunteers and the National Guard are similar in certain ways. Both were used by the regular army as a reserve force, and both play a political role. The Volunteers embodied the support for Spanish rule among a part of Puerto Rican society. The National Guard is an example of the support by part of the Puerto Rican people for ever closer ties between the island and the United States amidst a context where the status of Puerto Rico has been contested since the US military conquest of 1898.

Thus, although the Spanish Volunteers vanished from history in 1898, the idea of a militia of civilians-at-arms to serve as the regular army reserve and to defend a political cause outlived in the Antilles after the end of Spanish sovereignty. In this regard, exploring the links between the men who donned the Volunteers uniform before 1898 and the creation of the new Volunteers in Cuba in 1912, and the US National Guard in Puerto Rico in 1917 might reveal new paths and suggest new interpretations of the history of the Antilles after the end of the Spanish Empire, through the persistence of some of its imperial legacies. The idea of the Volunteers as a militia might have survived the collapse of the Spanish Empire after all.

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<sup>31</sup> Negroni. *Historia militar de Puerto Rico*, pp. 387-388.

## CONCLUSIONS

This thesis aimed to demonstrate that the Volunteers were an expression of the ambivalent relationship between Nation and Empire in the Spanish context of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The boundaries between these two concepts were rather permeable. This was the consequence of the existence of a strong Spanish Loyalism, or *integrismo*, especially in Cuba and Puerto Rico, of which the Volunteers were the most militant form. In a way, the Volunteers were the embodiment of the ideal of a Spanish imperial nation, since their ranks were filled by men born both in the metropolitan as well as in the overseas territories. Study of this group, which has been ignored by many scholars, has allowed some key questions to be answered here regarding Spanish imperial history.

First, the question of why there was a militia such as the Volunteers in the Spanish imperial context of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The very existence of the Volunteers was linked to the survival of Spanish sovereignty in the territories that were left after losing the bulk of the empire, because of the wars for independence in Spanish America in the 1820s: Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and briefly Santo Domingo. The creation of the Volunteers in Cuba in 1855 was aimed at strengthening the defensive capacities of the Spanish authorities, faced with a threat posed by a movement supported by some sectors both in Cuba and in the United States to annex the island *manu militari* to the American Union. Because of their effectiveness, the Volunteers became permanent elements of the Spanish defensive system in Cuba that were widely used by the Spanish authorities during the three wars for independence on this island between 1868 and 1898. The same scheme was repeated in the Philippines during the Filipino Revolution (1896-1898), where the Volunteers were created to strengthen Spanish sovereignty in the archipelago and fought, alongside the Spanish regular army, the forces that threatened to bring Spanish dominance in the Asian colony to an end. The Volunteers were created to defend the status quo and fight any attempt at altering the colonial relationship between Spain and her imperial possessions. This was the basic concept that also explains the expansion of the model of the Volunteers to Puerto Rico in 1864 and the Philippines in 1896. It is notable that the Volunteers opposed not just movements aimed at severing the ties between Spain and the colonies, but any political movement aimed at altering the status quo. For instance, whereas there were powerful pro-independence movements in Cuba and the Philippines, in Puerto Rico this was extremely insignificant. On this island, the continuity of the status quo was only questioned by the autonomist movement, which advocated for self-government for the Puerto Ricans yet within the wider framework of the Spanish

Nation. Despite this allegiance to Spain, the Volunteers in Puerto Rico were used by the local *integristas* to repress the autonomists, as seen during the *compointes* in 1887.

It is also remarkable that the role of the Volunteers in relation to Spanish sovereignty in an imperial context was not only defensive but also offensive. That is, the Volunteers not only defended their lands from forces that wanted to alter them but also were used to impose Spanish sovereignty in places where it was long gone. An example of this is the creation of the Volunteers in Santo Domingo after the reincorporation of this former Spanish colony to the Monarchy in 1861. In this territory, where the Spanish had been absent for almost half a century since the independence of 1821, the Volunteers became an inherent element of the Spanish imperial administration almost from its very implementation. The Volunteers in Santo Domingo present a unique case, for it was conditioned by the short-lived Spanish administration (1861-1865), and the inexistence of a local community of *integristas*. Consequently, the Volunteers in this country had a weak relationship with local society, as their men were recruited almost exclusively from officials and merchants recently arrived from metropolitan Spain, Cuba, or Puerto Rico. The Dominican case is another expression of the inherent relationship between the Volunteers and defence of the Spanish sovereignty in the imperial context of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and sheds light on the more celebrated examples elsewhere.

Second, there is the question of the degree to which societies of Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines participated in the creation and consolidation of the Volunteers as the armed wing of Spanish Loyalism. The Volunteers were a type of militia in which both *peninsulares* and men born in the overseas territories participated. Consequently, the Volunteers became the embodiment of the very idea of an imperial Spanish nation that embraced the metropolitan territory and the overseas possessions. This stemmed from the fact that one of the requisites for joining the Volunteers was to be Spanish citizen, a status granted to all the free inhabitants of the Spanish Antilles and the people of Spanish ancestry in the Philippines. Whereas the political relationship between Spain and her empire after 1820 had in many aspects an undeniably colonial nature, it is worth remembering that Cuba and Puerto Rico were *de jure* Spanish national overseas territories (their free inhabitants were Spanish citizens, had representation in the Spanish Parliament, they were considered provinces just like the rest of Spain and the metropolitan laws were applied although with some adaptations), whereas the Philippines were always considered a colony until the end of the Spanish rule in 1898. This differentiation in terms

of citizenship between Cuba and Puerto Rico on the one hand and the Philippines on the other was also reflected in the local characteristics of the Volunteers.

In Cuba and Puerto Rico, the Volunteers presented some common features. In quantitative terms, the men born in metropolitan Spain tended to dominate in the units created in the urban spaces, whereas the natives of the Antilles tended to be the majority in the companies and battalions located in the rural areas. This spatial distribution also affected the professional background of the Volunteers. Whereas in the cities the men employed in commerce became the bedrock of the Volunteers, in the rural areas most of their members were Cuban and Puerto Rican peasants employed in the agricultural industry or independent owners of small tracts of land. *Grosso modo*, it could be said that the dominant profile of the Volunteers in places like Havana or San Juan was a *peninsular* immigrant employed by a fellow *peninsular* in the commerce trade. In the countryside of Cuba or Puerto Rico, most of the Volunteers were peasants working either their own lands or employed in the sugar, tobacco, or coffee industries.

In the Philippines, the situation was rather different. The Asian archipelago presented demographic characteristics radically different from the Spanish Antilles. Whereas a majority of the population in Cuba and Puerto Rico was of Spanish ancestry, and the Spanish culture (the basics of language and religion) was hegemonic even among the population of African descent that had adopted it through the centuries, though with a profound syncretism, the Philippines had a fragmented society with fewer links to the Spanish culture. The community of Spanish descent was rather small, and knowledge of the Spanish language was constrained to a minority of Filipinos related to the colonial administration. Spain's deepest cultural penetration in the archipelago was the Catholic faith, followed by most Filipinos, though there were important pockets of Muslim communities in the southern islands. Consequently, the Volunteers in the Philippines were a segregated militia. The potential recruits were limited to the tiny community of Spaniards (including the members of Spanish families born in the archipelago) mostly concentrated in the capital, Manila, and a few other cities. The participation of the native Filipinos in the Volunteers came about through a separate avenue. Drawing on the same model of militia, units of native Filipino Volunteers were created in 1897, though all the new units were attached to regular army units to keep them under tighter control.

From the participation of both *peninsulares* and Creoles in the Volunteers, two main inferences can be made. Firstly, the support for any form of Spanish Loyalty was

not constrained to the communities of *peninsulares* established in Cuba or Puerto Rico. On the contrary, thousands of Creoles joined the Volunteer efforts in repressing the movements that wanted to alter the relationship between Spain and the Antilles, either through reforms or outright independence. An example of this can be found in the repression of the Puerto Rican autonomists, or Cuban nationalists during the wars for independence.

Secondly, the existence of thousands of Creoles in the Volunteers lead to the argument here that the struggles for independence in Cuba should be considered as much civil wars as wars for national emancipation. This is a consideration historically rejected by the historiography, but which has been supported by historians more recently in relation to the wars for independence in Spanish America in the 1820s. For instance, Pérez Vejo considers that the wars for independence in Spanish America (1810-1825) were true civil wars between Americans, not conflicts between pre-existing American nations and Spain or between Creoles and *peninsulares*.<sup>1</sup> The wars in Cuba should be regarded as the last example of these Spanish American civil wars. However, the nationalist character of the wars in Cuba should not be rejected either. This is, for instance, the view of Tone: “The Cuban War of Independence was both a war of national liberation and a civil war about the meaning of *Cubanidad*”.<sup>2</sup> Consideration of this idea also brings up the recent study on civil wars by the British historian David Armitage. He considers that “Without sovereignty and its external recognition, it seems, there can be no *civitas*, and hence no ‘civil’ war”.<sup>3</sup> In the case that concerns us, the sovereignty was Spanish, and the *civitas* was Cuba. The question was whether Cuba should attain its own sovereignty, or should it remain under the Spanish one? The Volunteers were just one of the sides that contested the future of the community they belonged to. This was a question first and foremost debated within Cuban society, where the boundaries between Cubans and *peninsulares* were blurry rather than neat. Most of the island’s inhabitants were of Spanish ancestry, and the Cuban supporters of independence were often the sons of *peninsulares* who supported the union with Spain. For instance, the mastermind of Cuban independence, José Martí, was the son of a Spanish Army soldier from Valencia, in the Peninsula, and a woman from the Canary Islands.

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<sup>1</sup> Pérez Vejo. *Elegía criolla*, p. 111.

<sup>2</sup> Tone. *War and Genocide*, p. 145.

<sup>3</sup> David Armitage. *Civil Wars. A History in Ideas*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017, p. 219.

The strong presence of Creoles in the Volunteers must not conceal the fact that the *peninsulares* played a prominent role in the creation, configuration, and evolution of the Volunteers. In fact, the creation of the Volunteers was linked to the emergence of the elite of *peninsulares* that came to dominate Cuban politics and its economy since the 1840s. It should be remembered that the Spanish authorities in Cuba first created the Volunteers in 1855, aiming at establishing a militia of *peninsulares* that would marginalize the Creoles from the defence of the island. Thus, the unexpected participation of Creoles in the Volunteers was only allowed by the fact that White Cubans were legally Spanish citizens, and the authorities could not bar them from joining the new militia. Throughout their history, *peninsulares* were overrepresented in the Volunteers. This was a consequence of their dominant position in the economy of the Spanish Antilles, where they enjoyed a virtual monopoly over commerce. The affluent businessmen that first organized the Volunteers were mostly *peninsulares*, who also tended to recruit men for the militia from among their employees, also often born in metropolitan Spain. Although thousands of Creoles were members of the Volunteers, and they came to dominate in the countryside, the *peninsulares* played a leading role in the militia's history as organizers and commanders.

Third, the relationship between the Volunteers and the Spanish authorities was ambivalent. The Volunteers represented a double-edged reality for the colonial Spanish authorities. On the one hand, they were a militia absolutely identified with the defence of the status quo and the continuity of Spanish sovereignty. On the other, they were a force of citizens-at-arms that might be manipulated to impose the agenda of certain elements of *integrismo* which were not always collaborative with the authorities.

The Volunteers often proved a reliable auxiliary force for the Spanish authorities. In the 1850s and 1860s, they played a coercive role against Cuban annexationists and supported the Spanish military effort in colonial campaigns in Morocco and Santo Domingo by means of financial and logistic aid. During the wars in Cuba and the Philippines they generally proved a loyal auxiliary force for the regular Spanish troops. In fact, a great deal of the upholding of public order in cities and fighting in rural areas was conducted by the Volunteers. Certainly, the military preparation of these men, who had to combine their regular job with unpaid military service, was improvable but was enough to perform as useful auxiliary forces to the army. However, their military capacity highly depended on the concordant performance by the regular army. This became particularly clear during the last war for Cuban independence (1895-1898). Wherever the regular

troopers stood their ground, the Volunteers were efficient fighters. When the Army's performance was weak or even non-existent, the Volunteers tended to collapse, and even to join the insurgents in some cases. Thus, the Volunteers reflected the Spanish general military capacity at any given moment.

The episodes of confrontation between the Volunteers and the authorities directly depended on the colonial policy dictated by the Spanish Governments and the internal tensions that existed within the Volunteer ranks. The best examples of this occasional confrontation were the pressure of the Havana Volunteers on the authorities to execute the plotter Ramón Pintó in 1855, the ousting of captain general Domingo Dulce in 1869, the pressure against the reformist policy dictated by the Spanish Government in Puerto Rico during the early 1870s, and the opposition to Cuban autonomy in 1898. The common denominator was the Spanish authorities' intention to change the status quo via reforms. Thus, rather than exclusively defend Spanish sovereignty, the Volunteers stood for the continuity of a status quo, in which Spanish sovereignty was a *sine qua non* element, of course. This status quo could be summed up as a situation in which the *peninsulares* dominated commerce and the colonial administration. Consequently, all the episodes of confrontation took place in the urban spaces, where the *peninsulares* predominated. In fact, opposition to the authorities' reformism came from the Volunteers' lower social strata. This is easily understandable, since the metropolitan immigrant employed in commerce, or occupying just a minor position in the administration, might have his position threatened should the Cubans or Puerto Ricans be given more participation in public affairs, or should changes in the economic relationship alter the quasi-monopolistic position of the *peninsulares* in commerce. Supporting the defence of these privileges, the development of the labour movement in Cuba also strengthened this use of the Volunteers as a tool to push forward the class agenda of the lower strata of the militia. An example of this is the presence of armed Volunteers in strikes taking place in Havana in the early 1870s and 1890s. By contrast, the absence of a labour movement in Puerto Rico explains the fact that the local Volunteers never carried out a confrontation with the authorities similar in scale to the events caused by their colleagues in Havana.

To summarize, the main contributions of this thesis to historiography are, first, that the creation of the Volunteers must be understood in relation to the annexationist threat to Spanish sovereignty in Cuba, the weakness of the Spanish State on the island,



and the emergence of a powerful elite of *peninsulares* and some of their Creole allies. The Volunteers were intended to strengthen Spain's grip over Cuba, and to replace the *criollos* from the Spanish military system. In relation to this, their open support for Spain's colonial campaigns in Africa and the Caribbean during the 1860s, allowed the Volunteers to consolidate in Cuba and to expand their model to Santo Domingo and Puerto Rico. Second, this thesis demonstrates that the Volunteers reflected the societies they were born in. This was a militia where *peninsulares* and *criollos* participated alike, though with a different spatial distribution. The former predominated in the urban spaces, whereas the latter were the majority in the countryside. Also, the Volunteers were a non-segregated militia. Most of the members were white, but there were also Volunteers of African descent. The Philippines was the exception, for Europeans and native Filipinos were organized into segregated units. Third, the relationship between the Volunteers and the Spanish authorities alternated between collaboration and defiance. When the Volunteers perceived that the authorities represented their interests (basically a firm commitment to maintaining the status quo), they behaved loyally. When the authorities were willing to introduce reforms that could alter the colonial relationship (such as more political rights, autonomy, or the abolition of slavery), the Volunteers in the urban areas tended to stand in open defiance of Spain's authority. Fourth, ideologically, the Volunteers were only united by their commitment to the *integridad nacional*, which considered Spain and her colonies as members of the same nation. Beyond this point, they were a highly heterogeneous group in political terms. The internal ideological differences often resulted from social divisions. Volunteers from the highest echelons of society tended to be moderately conservative and monarchist. Volunteers that belonged to middle and lower strata of society, tended to be radically nationalist, often embracing liberal and republican ideals. These Volunteers represent a sound example of populist nationalism, committed to the idea of the Nation, but not always to the authorities that theoretically represented it. These divisions were particularly marked in the urban areas. In the countryside, the Volunteers were much less politically-driven and generally presented collaborative behaviour with the Spanish authorities.

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ANRC	Archivo Nacional de la República de Cuba (Havana)
BNC	Biblioteca Nacional de Cuba “José Martí” (Havana)

#### Mexico

AGN	Archivo General de la Nación (Mexico City)
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#### Puerto Rico

AGPR	Archivo General de Puerto Rico (San Juan)
BUPR	Biblioteca de la Universidad de Puerto Rico (Río Piedras)
CIH-UPR	Centro de Investigaciones Históricas-Universidad de Puerto Rico (Río Piedras)

#### Spain

ACD	Archivo del Congreso de los Diputados (Madrid)
AFAM	Archivo de la Fundación Antonio Maura (Madrid)
AGI	Archivo General de Indias (Seville)
AGMM	Archivo General Militar (Madrid)
AGMS	Archivo General Militar (Segovia)
AGP	Archivo General de Palacio (Madrid)
AHMS	Arxiu Històric Municipal (Sitges)
AHN	Archivo Histórico Nacional (Madrid)
ANC	Arxiu Nacional de Catalunya (Sant Cugat del Vallès)
AS	Archivo del Senado (Madrid)
BNE	Biblioteca Nacional de España (Madrid)
BVB	Biblioteca Víctor Balaguer (Vilanova i La Geltrú)
RAH	Real Academia de la Historia (Madrid)

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