

1998

Traces of 1898 in Cuba Today

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Recommended Citation

Masud-Piloto, Félix (1998) "Traces of 1898 in Cuba Today," *Diálogo*: Vol. 3 : No. 1 , Article 4.
Available at: <https://via.library.depaul.edu/dialogo/vol3/iss1/4>

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Traces of 1898 in Cuba Today

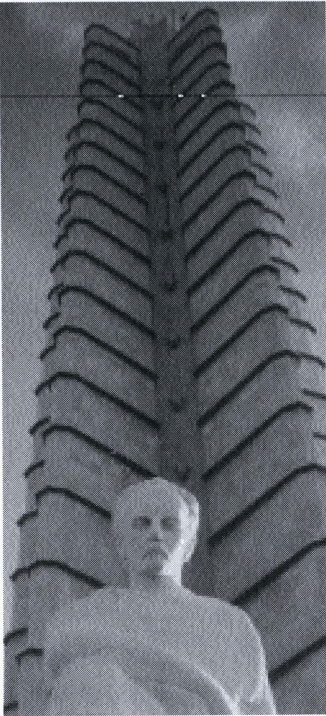
BY FÉLIX MASUD-PILOTO

Anyone who visits Cuba, and specially Havana, quickly notices that the war of 1898 and its repercussions for Cuban history are visible almost everywhere. From the many streets that bear the name of war of independence leaders; Agramonte, Céspedes, Gómez, Martí, Maceo, to the many monuments and museums dedicated to the conflict, and of course, upon arrival at the José Martí International Airport. The photographs on these pages, taken in Havana during the months of January and December 1997, provide a glimpse, however brief, of how Cuba continues paying homage to the martyrs of its war of independence and to proudly display its symbols

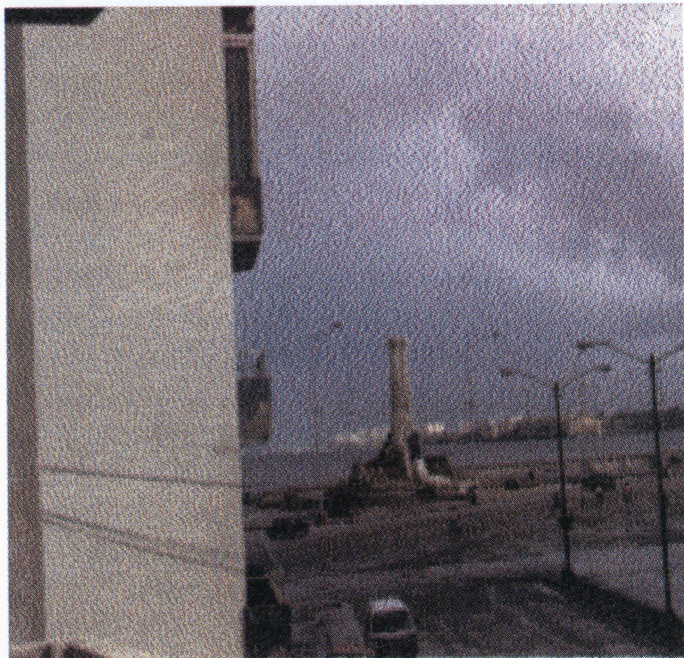
of nationalism and sovereignty.

Although every photograph tells its own story, none has as much poignancy and symbolism than the remains of the

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monument to the battleship U.S.S. Maine. For almost 60 years, the two vertical concrete columns served as a perch for a giant American bald eagle, the most recognizable—and in Cuba's case the most feared—symbol of U.S. imperialism. During the nation-wide celebration following the triumph of the Cuban Revolution in 1959, an angry crowd shouting nationalist slogans, knocked off the giant bronze eagle from its perch. The crowd cheered happily as the eagle broke apart upon impact with the pavement.

The elimination of the American bald eagle from Havana's landscape symbolized the end of an era of United States meddling in Cuban affairs. Today the eagle's broken wings are on permanent display in Havana's Museum of the Revolution, housed in what was, until 1959, the residential Palace. ■

Superior: Alas del Águila Imperial

Left: Memorial a Martí

Bottom Left: Monumento al Maine