



# CUBA: WAR AND PEACE

A brief history of Cuba-US relations

UNIT I: Pre-History-1952



## Unit I Lecture Format:

Please read Chapters 1-4

### Cuba, A History

by Sergio Guerra Vilaboy and  
Oscar Loyola Vega.

Answer the Essential Questions  
corresponding to the text and  
lecture content herein.

## GEOGRAPHY is destiny:



Cuba's situation as a Caribbean island 90 miles from the SE coastline of the U.S. defines its culture and history.

### Key Factors:

- Tropical Climate
- Adjacency to the Americas
- Plague of Repeat Invasions



## Chapter 1: Natives to Slavery

Native people migrated from Mississippi and Florida regions and South/Central Americas:

Guanahatebeys, Siboneys, Tainos inhabited Cuba 10,000 years.

Farmed: tobacco, corn, yucca, fish.

Complex societies wiped out when Columbus arrived, 1492

Spaniards brought no women, so bi-racial children born to Indian mothers were given higher status.



## Spanish arrival October 1492

“The fairest island human eyes have yet beheld! It is certain that where there is such marvelous scenery, there must be much more from which profit can be made.”

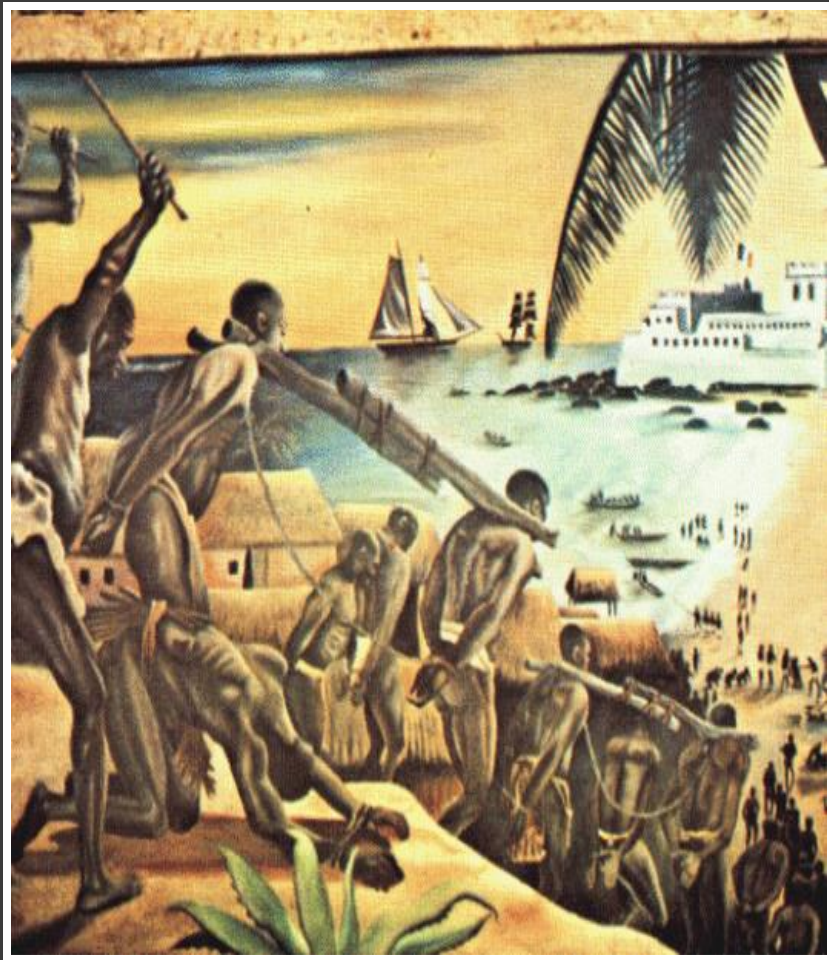
– Chris Columbus, 1492

Spanish monarchs looking for gold and silver initially focused on Dominican Republic.

Cuba later became of interest in early 1500s.







**Imperialist island politics:** set stage for internal factionalism.

Spanish monarchs unilaterally gave Indian land grants to émigrés and operated under a European feudal model.

Contradictions between lack of title, duties owed and right to land created conflict, hindering economic development.

Natives fared poorly with feudal labor system.

African slaves were imported and plantation economy developed.



## ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

In what ways does the early history of Cuba's indigenous people compare to the Native American experience of the U.S. colonial period?





## ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

In what ways does the early history of Cuba's indigenous people compare to the Native American experience of our own colonial period?

Indigenous people are displaced and exploited by explorers funded by European monarchs competing for empire.

Land and resource appropriations benefit the invading peoples and their descendants.

Legal systems, economics and power distribution based on racism and brutal suppression of dissent.





## ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

What were the main industries and products upon which Spanish settlers built their fortunes in Cuba during the late 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries?



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**Cattle:** 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries

**Tobacco:** minimal labor and high demand in Europe creates lucrative.

**Sugar:** expands slavery, railroads and greater cultural innovations.

Cuba became a mono-crop exporter, and dependent upon foreign markets.



## ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

Explain the expansion of slavery and the plantation system of production during the 18<sup>th</sup> century.





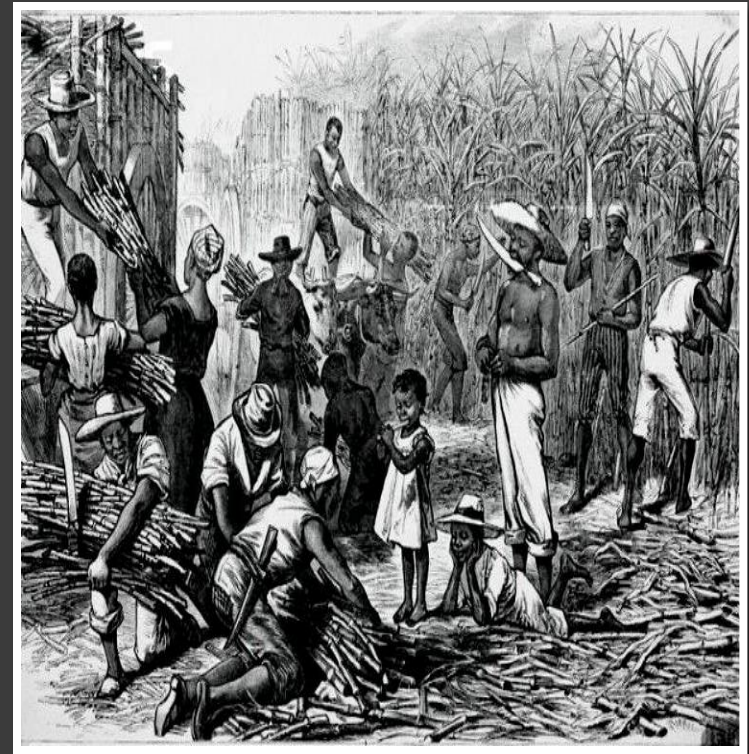
## ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

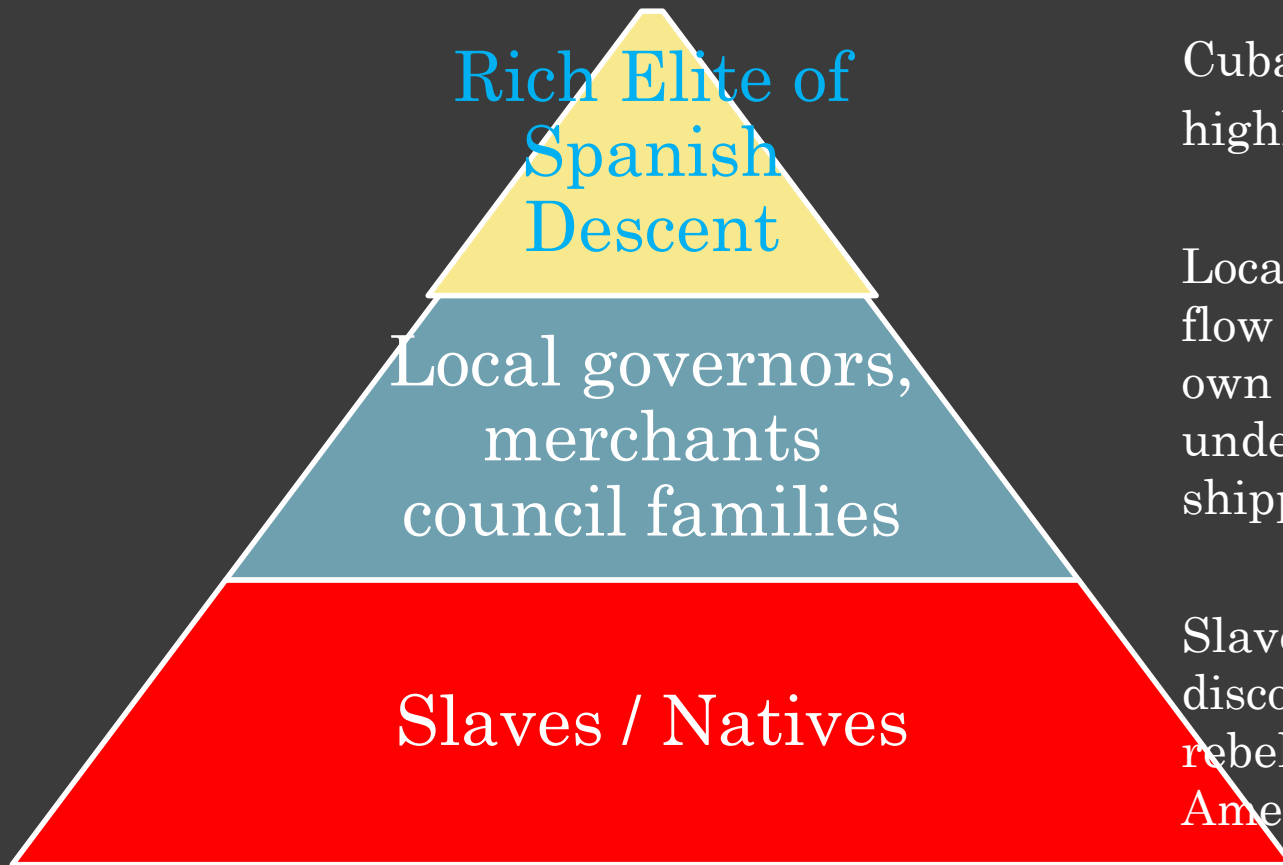
Explain the expansion of slavery and the plantation system of production during the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Extension of plantation system due to several factors:

1. Concentration of capital in Havana elite
2. “Enlightened Despotism” of Spain
3. Links between local governors and Spain
4. 1804 Haitian Revolution destroyed coffee and sugar production
5. Rapid increase in slave importation
6. Large amount of land available for development

Wealth becomes concentrated in the hands of an elite dependent on foreign markets, creating a deeply unstable social order.





Cuban Criollo Economy:  
highly unstable.

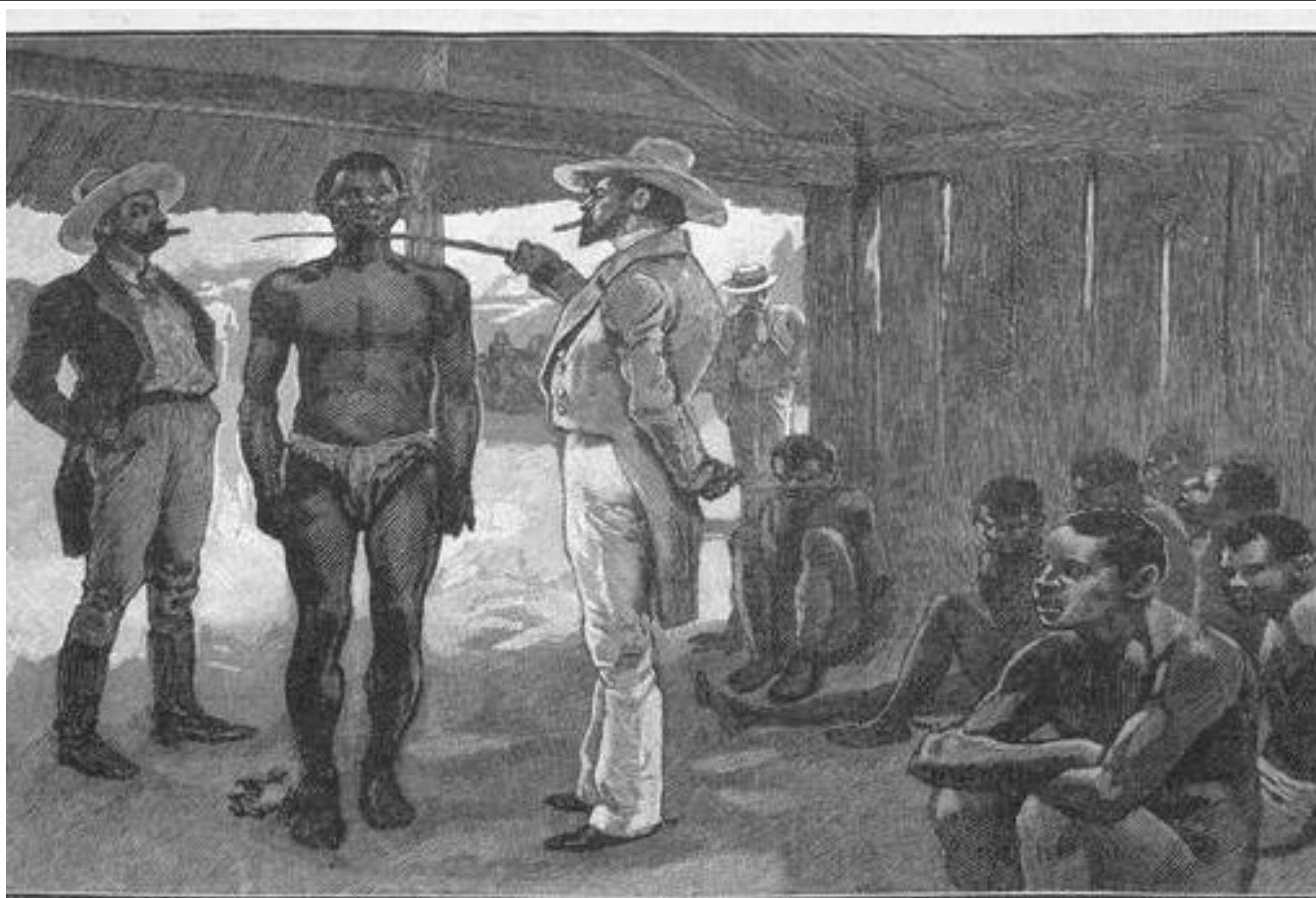
Local people excluded from the  
flow of capital developed their  
own “work around”  
underground economies in  
shipping and smuggling goods.

Slaves increasingly  
discontented and inspired by  
rebellions elsewhere in Latin  
America and Caribbean.

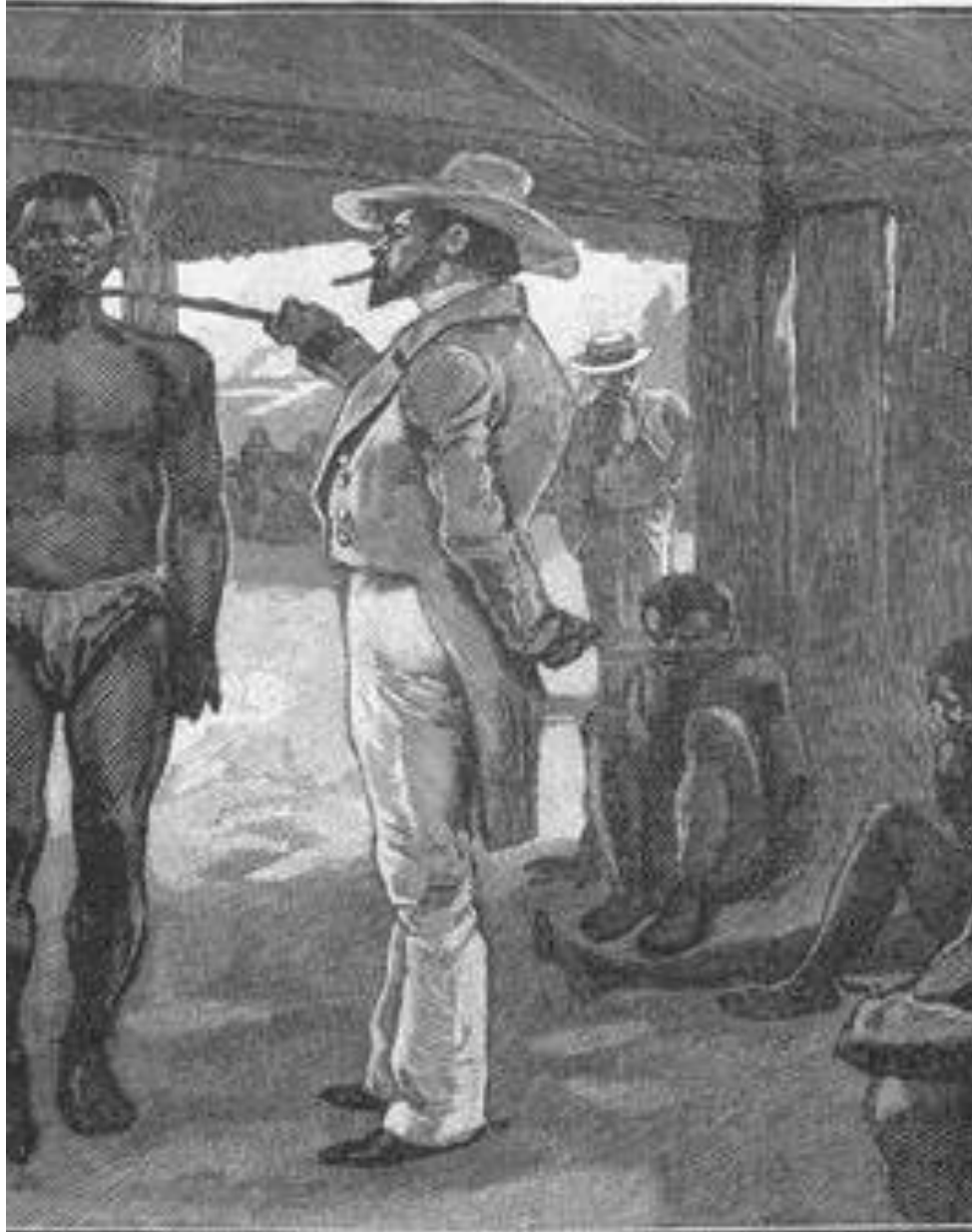
**KEY:** Innovation against scarcity and creative resistance to  
oppression became a cultural value for all levels of society.

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Many slaveholding elites were educated in Enlightenment principles and advocated a “bourgeois reformism” which claimed rights of self-determination for colonies removed from the European “mother country.”

Principles of “life, liberty and property” did not extend to the slaves who were perceived as sub-human.

## Chapter 2: Wars of Independence

Early 1800s: Reform movements influenced by several forces:

**Annexation:** motivated by a desire to share in perceived U.S. benefits.

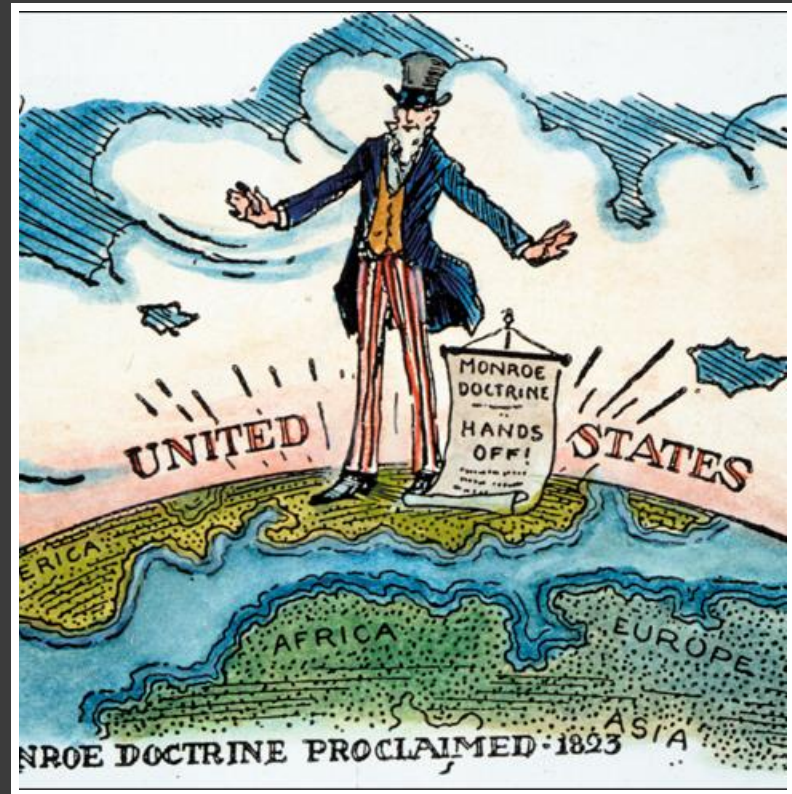
Odd bedfellows:

pro-slavery elites

anti-slavery progressives

**Independence:** influenced by

- literature/ poetry
- increased education
- 1804 Haitian revolution
- Latin American revolutions (ie; Simon Bolivar 1820, Miguel Hidalgo 1810)



1808: Pre-empting the Monroe Doctrine, U.S. President Thomas Jefferson declares Cuba *“the most interesting addition which could be made to our system of states.”*





## Cuba: Independence Highlights

1823: Monroe Doctrine: declares any European meddling in western hemisphere as an act of aggression.

1824: *El Habanero*, the first Cuban revolutionary newspaper was published in Philadelphia by Priest Felix Varela.

1850: Venezuelan filibuster in Cardena raises Cuban flag in a failed attempt to liberate Cuba from Spain.

**1868-1878 Ten Year's War:**  
“Grito de Yara!” Cry for Liberty begins with a freeing of slaves.



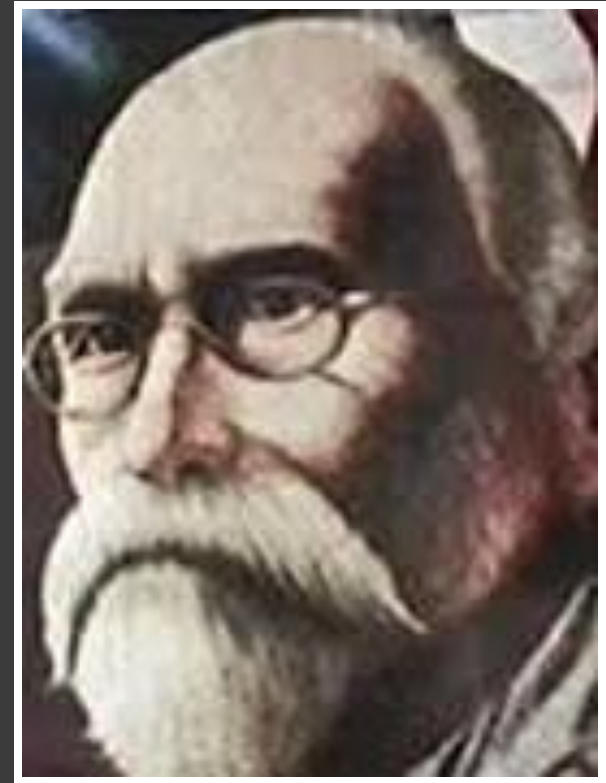
## Legendary Forces of 10 Years' War:



**Carlos Manuel de Cespedes:**  
poet, lawyer and plantation owner declares Grito de Yara, frees his slaves.



**Antonio Maceo:**  
“The Bronze Titan” a mulatto fighter defied death on innumerable occasions.



**Maximo Gomez:**  
formidable general of the “Mambi army” favors a “scorched Earth” policy against Spain.

Ten Year's War ended in a lackluster agreement called the **Zanjon Pact**.



- Recognized freedom of slaves and Chinese workers
- Promised reforms (which never happened)
- Maceo's army of "Mambi's" refused to accept its terms and attempted to keep fighting.

Overall, the war and the lack of fulfillment of revolutionary aims guaranteed a fresh generation of resistance.



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By 1886, the end of slavery and low sugar prices forced old Cuban oligarchy to sell out to U.S. interests.

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, U.S trade with Cuba was larger than US trade with all of Latin America combined.

U.S. held a monopoly on Cuba's cash crop, and began purchasing raw sugar only.

Cuban sugar mills became obsolete.

Over 100,000 Chinese sugar laborers competed with African-natives for scarce work.





Over time, Cuba became exploited by forces of unregulated capitalism and western monopolies.

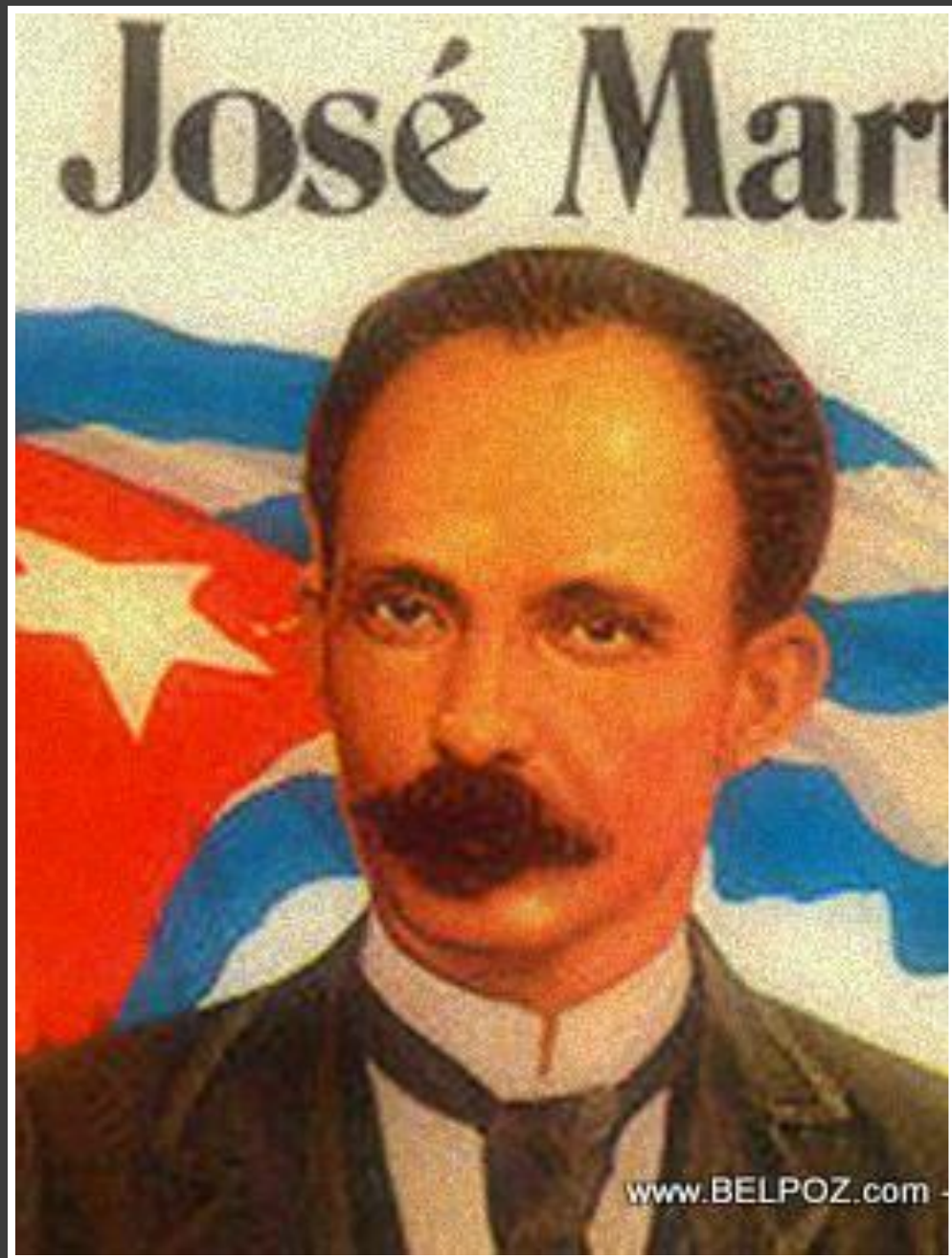
Repeated failures of reform movements and independence battles created generations of people imbued with a sense of justice denied by foreign occupiers.

The next revolutionary battles would succeed in expelling the Spanish....with the U.S. as its replacement.

The U.S. viewed itself as “saving” Cuba from a villainous Spain.

## ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

Who was Jose Marti? How did he contribute to destabilizing Spanish control of Cuba?





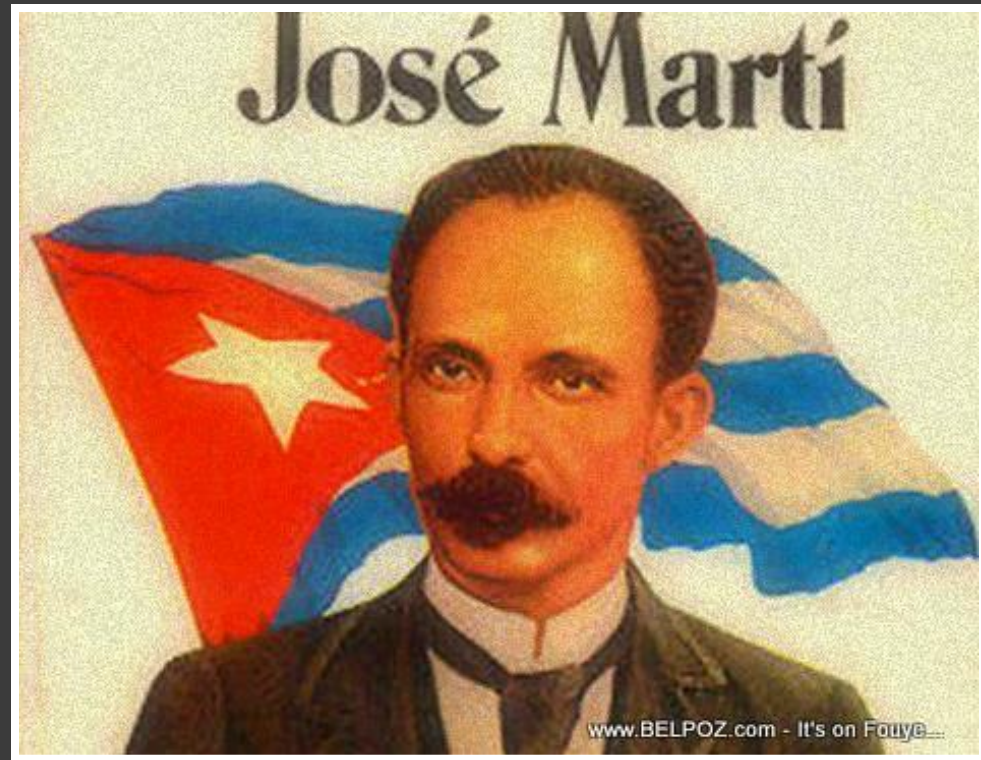
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Poet, patriot, visionary and intellectual, Jose Marti was exiled in 1871 and spent 20 years abroad fomenting his revolutionary ideas in Guatemala, US and Mexico.

Dedicating himself passionately to the resistance cause, he and comrades began the PRC (Cuban Revolutionary Party), raised an army of 40,000 rebels and launched an attack against the Spanish in 1895.

Marti was killed in battle, becoming a revolutionary martyr, inspiring thousands to fight for independence.



Spanish fought brutally to hold on to their colony, implementing a genocidal policy of “**Reconcentracion**” forcing ordinary people into camps to break the underground resistance movement. Over 200,000 citizens were starved or tortured to death.

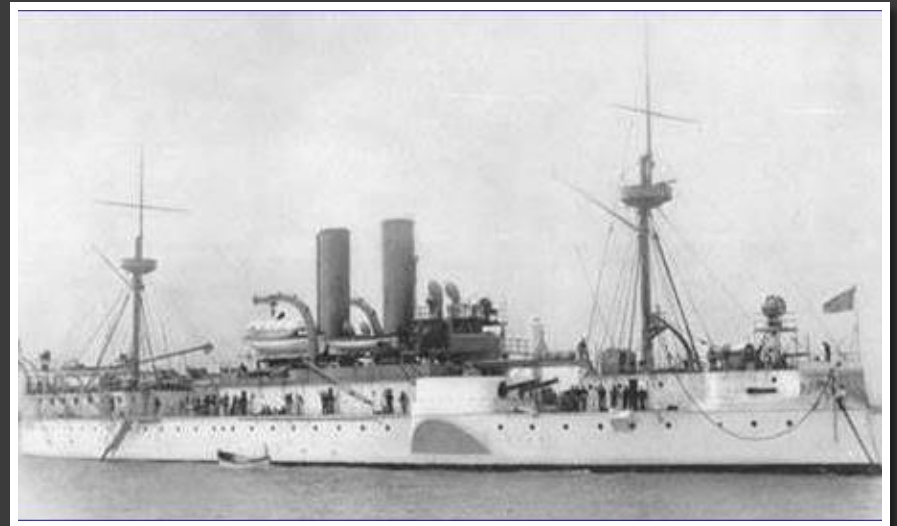


## ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

Why did the U.S. enter the fight between Cuba and Spain?

U.S. officials had been eyeing Cuba as a lucrative resource.

President William McKinley took an active role in propagandizing support for military intervention in Cuba with the yellow journalism of William Randolph Hearst and John Pulitzer, sensationalizing the “evil Spaniards” to the U.S. public.



The US Battleship Maine was sent to Havana in 1898 on a pretext of protecting American citizens, but was sabotaged by terror attack in the Havana Harbor, killing 266 US sailors. Spain denied involvement; others claim it was a deliberate provocation by U.S. forces. but the true cause remains one of history's great unsolved mysteries.





Enter the U.S. military in Cuba,  
February 1898

The Maine debacle inflamed public sympathies for intervention and the U.S. offered Spain \$30 million for Cuba. When Spain refused, the US demanded full withdrawal of the Spanish from Cuba.



Spanish-American War resulted in U.S. acquisition of Puerto Rico, Cuba and the Philippines.

Although the Mambi army fought the main battles, the Spanish surrendered instead to the U.S.



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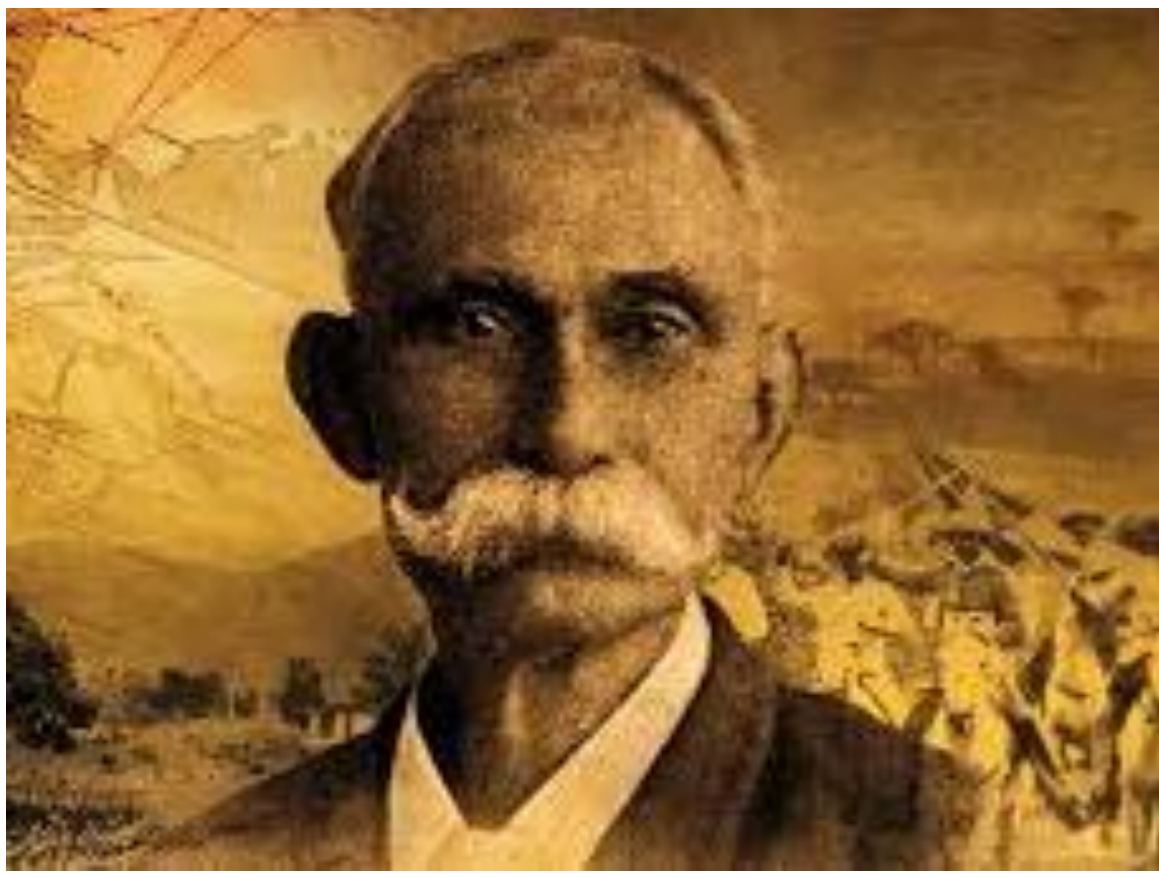


1900 Post-Spanish-American War political cartoons lampoon US benevolence.

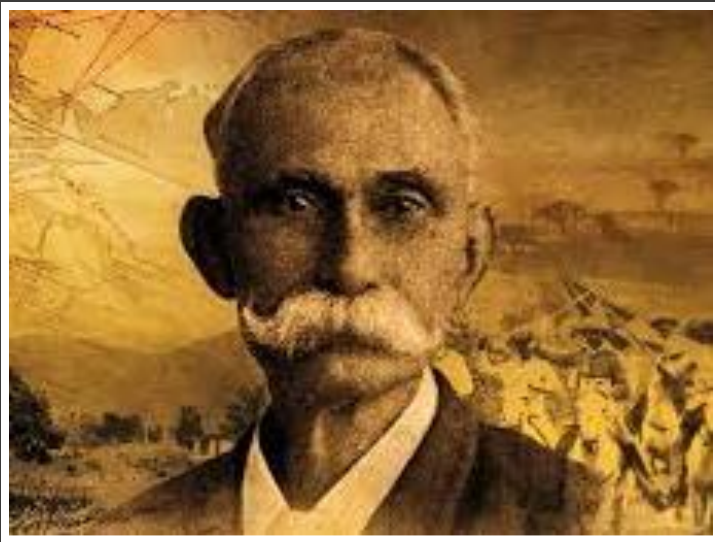
Widespread skepticism about the U.S. motives for intervening in Cuba fostered ongoing resentment amongst the Cuba people.

The “independence” granted in 1902 did not foster conditions favorable to a functional democracy.





**ESSENTIAL QUESTION:**  
What did Maximo Gomez mean when he said that “Cuba was neither free nor Independent” after the war?



## ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

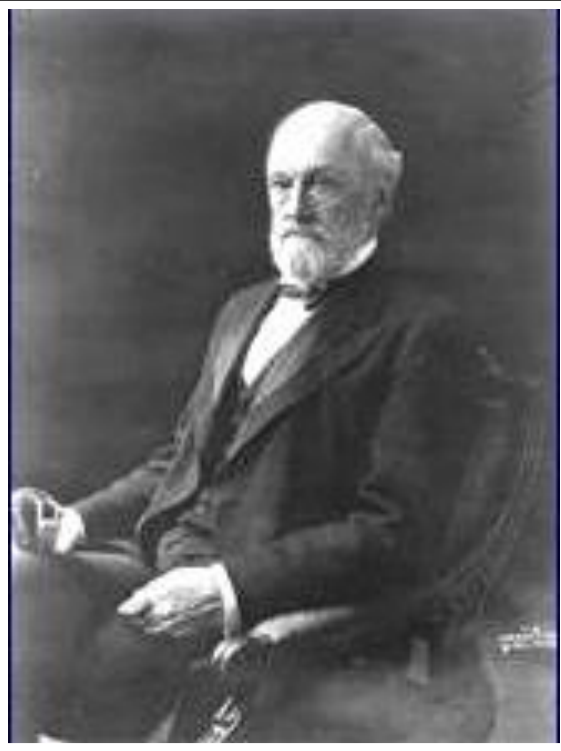
What did Maximo Gomez mean when he said that “Cuba was neither free nor independent” after the war?

December 12, 1898 Peace Treaty to end the Spanish-Cuban-American War was signed in Paris with no Cubans present.



To appease enraged Cuban nationalists, the U.S. drew up a Constitution promising Cuba a quasi- Independence, Nov. 1900.

Senator Orville Platt attached a rider to the U.S. appropriations bill which President McKinley approved and Cubans were forced to either accept or remain under U.S. military occupation indefinitely.



## ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

What were the terms of the Platt Amendment?

### Platt Amendment (1900)

1. Cuba was not to enter into any agreements with foreign powers that would endanger its independence.
2. The U.S. could intervene in Cuban affairs if necessary to maintain an efficient independent govt.
3. Cuba must lease **Guantanamo Bay** to the U.S. for naval and coaling station.
4. Cuba must not build up an excessive public debt.





## Chapter 3: Republic and Sovereignty

May 20, 1902 Cuba became an independent republic, but remained woefully unprepared for U.S.-style democracy.



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Because the U.S. was the largest consumer of Cuban sugar, it exercised undue leverage in setting prices for purchase.

As demand for sugar boomed and busted throughout WWI, the Great Depression and WWII, Cuba's national economy became vulnerable to U.S. purchase power.



SUGAR CANE PLANTATION.



## ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

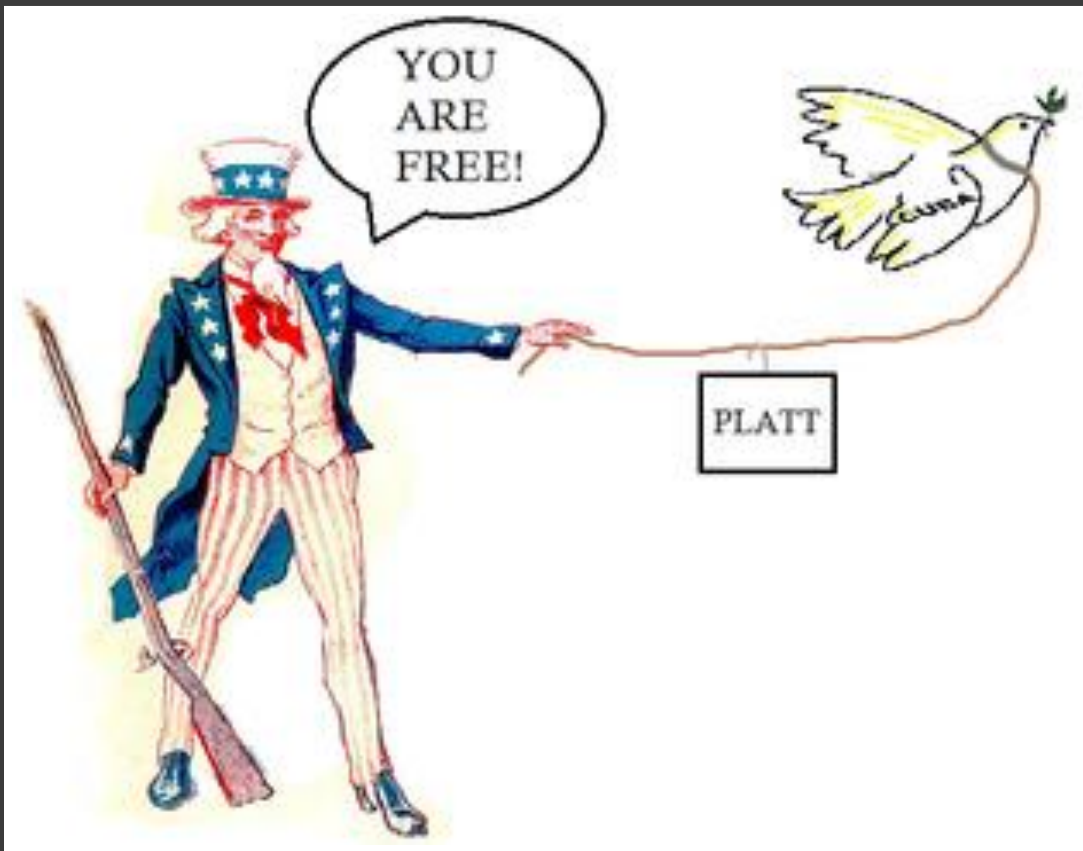
In what ways did Cuba's sugar economy create unstable dependencies upon U.S. markets?

**Political Result:** 50 years of corrupt, weak Cuban leaders called upon U.S. military intervention to suppress internal dissent.

**Economic Result:** post-war economic growth was phenomenal; by the 1920s, US companies owned 2/3 of Cuba's farmland and most mineral resources. Sugar and rum production boomed and busted depending upon U.S. consumption.

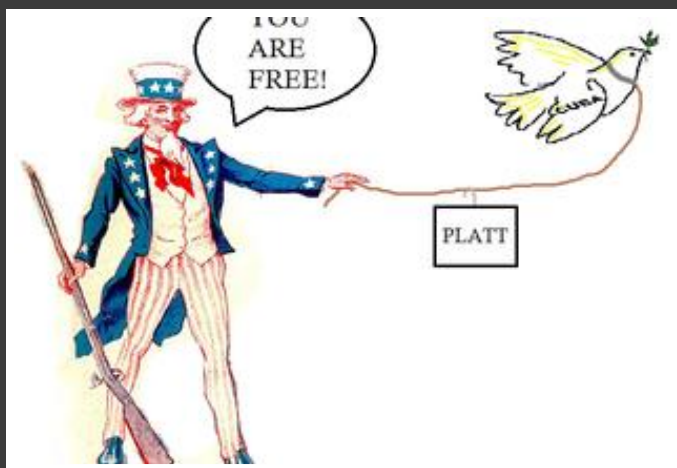
Prohibition in the U.S. (1913-1933) created opportunity for mafia gangsters like Meyer Lanksy and Al Capone to profit from a wealthy tourist sector seeking alcohol, prostitution, gambling in Havana.





## ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

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Mass protests against the 1920s sequential oligarchies initially lacked a coherent action plan. Factionalism allowed the foreign-backed government to rule with impunity.

Great Depression economic woes were so severe, “odd-bedfellows” became unified people against the Machado leadership.



**Activists demanded economic and social reforms designed to increase Cuban economic autonomy, limit foreign interference and create equal opportunities for women.**



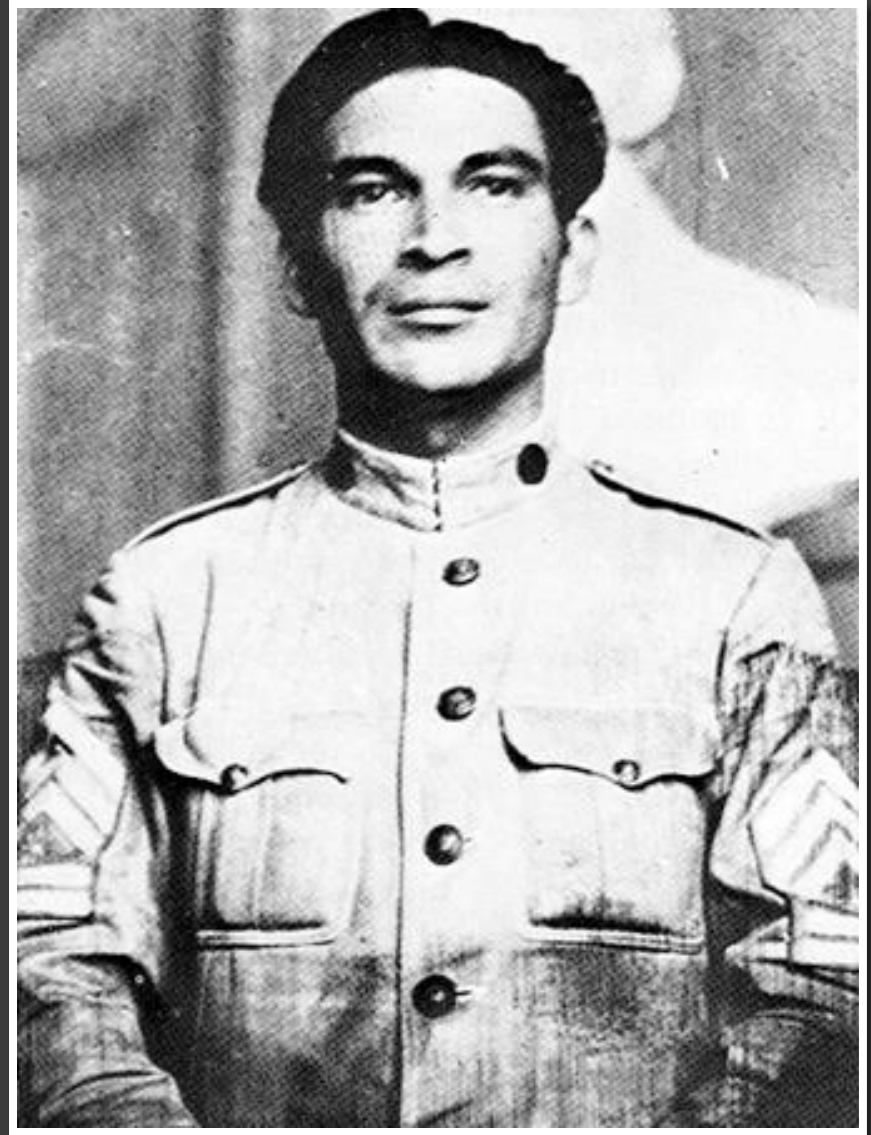
## ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

Who was Fulgencio Batista? How did he position himself in the 1930's power struggle in Cuba and during World War II?

The economic instability caused by the Great Depression, President Machado proved incapable of ruling.

The crisis caused unity amongst activists, academics and student groups who enlisted the help of the military to reform the government.

In an uprising known as the "*Revolt of the Sergeants*," Cuba's military general Fulgencio Batista took over the government on September 4, 1933.



## "Revolt of the Sergeants"

The coup overthrew the government and ineffectual administration of Gerardo Machado.

1933 marked the beginning of the army's influence as an organized force in the running of the government with **Fulgencio Batista** at its helm.

Batista proceeded to make various social reforms and enacted the most liberal Constitution Cuba has experienced before or since.



# Constitución 1940



*Movimiento Patriótico  
Cuba Libre*

CLUBES PATRIOTICOS  
NEW YORK

## Cuba's 1940 Constitution

- 8 hour work day
- Laws requiring at least 50% of all workers in a workplace to be Cuban
- Electricity and gas prices reduced
- Women given the right to vote
- Cuban Electric company was nationalized.

**Although none of these reforms had US approval, the populist measures appeased the Cuban population temporarily.**





Dennvudlow

[www.delcampe.net](http://www.delcampe.net)

## ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

What was the U.S. response to the 1933 instability in Cuba?

**Franklin Delano Roosevelt** was moderately isolationist in his foreign policy until the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

Nonetheless, his affirmation of a “Good Neighbor Policy” towards Cuba allowed deployment of military vessels and an activist ambassador, **Benjamin Sumner Wells** to help “mediate” the various factions and restore stability.

## FDR's "Statement of Good Neighbor Policy" August, 13, 1933

Latest advices are to the effect that domestic disturbances, including acts of violence, are occurring in some parts of Cuba among certain elements of the population. In these circumstances, I feel constrained as a matter of special precaution and solely for the purpose of safeguarding and protecting the lives and persons of American citizens in Cuba, to order certain vessels to points on the Cuban Coast.

The change of Government now taking place in Cuba is in entire accord with the recognized Constitution and laws of that country, and no possible question of intervention or of the slightest interference with the internal affairs of Cuba has arisen or is intended by this precautionary step to protect, if necessary, the lives of American citizens, pending the restoration of normal conditions of law and order by the Cuban authorities.

I am giving strict instructions accordingly to the Commanders of each vessel.

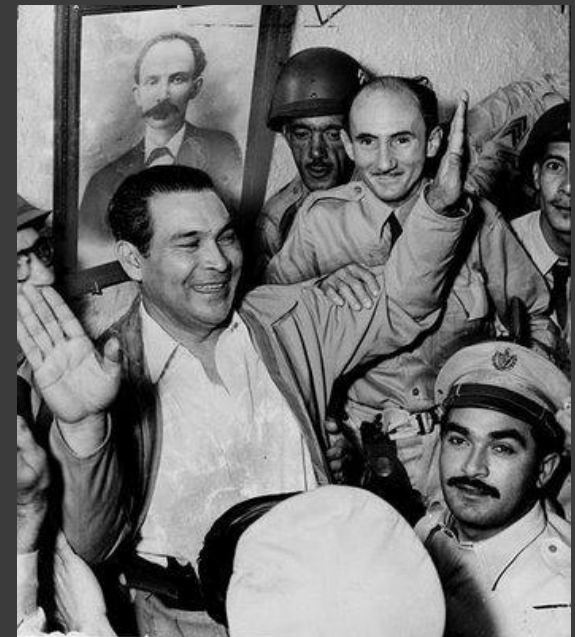
The American people deeply sympathize with the people of Cuba in their economic distress, and are praying that quiet and strict order may soon prevail in every part of Cuba. The American Government will lend all aid feasible, through constituted Cuban authorities, for the relief of the distressed people of the island.

Batista was alternately “brutal and shrewd.”

Very aware of his precarious position, he acceded to reforms and set about implementing the Constitution before handing over power to the inept President Martin.

During WWII, he attempted to abide by the U.S. Good Neighbor Policy, railing against fascism while ignoring his own suppression of dissent.

Batista was known to order political assassinations and “disappearances” of opposition leadership.







**Fulgencio Batista's** commitment to democracy and due process did not last.

After stepping down in 1944, he consolidated his authority with deals promising paybacks for Mafia assistance and seized power in a bloodless coup, 1952.

Time Magazine featured Batista on the April 1952 cover with the caption:

**“Cuba's Batista: He got past democracy's sentries”**



Batista's audacious cancellation of the 1952 national elections infuriated the followers of a charismatic young lawyer and popular candidate, **Fidel Castro**.

Batista was strongly condemned by leadership within Cuba, but U.S. recognition of him as a legitimate leader served to radicalize the revolutionary goals of the opposition.

The commitment to forever rid Cuba of foreign interference was solidified.



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