

## The Schism of 1868 and the Growth of Cuban New York

LISANDRO PÉREZ

### ABSTRACT

The outbreak of the Great War (1868-1878) was a turning point in the history of the Cuban presence in New York City. The war created for the first time a significant schism between *peninsulares* and *criollos*, and although Havana's *criollo* elites were largely at the margins of the conflict, they nevertheless were compelled to leave, spearheading an exodus that transformed both the size and the character of the Cuban community in New York, making it by far the largest Hispanic community in the city. This period established a pattern that would be repeated by subsequent waves of Cubans arriving in the U.S. well into the twentieth century.

Keywords: Cuba, Cuban history, New York, migration, 1868-1878 War, Cubans in New York City, Cubans in the U.S., José Manuel Mestre, Miguel Aldama.

### RESUMEN

La Gran Guerra (1868-1878) marcó un momento clave en la historia de la presencia cubana en la ciudad de Nueva York. La guerra creó, por primera vez, una

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Lisandro Pérez, Professor and Chair of the Department of Latin American and Latina/o Studies of John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York. His latest research project is on the Cuban community in New York in the 19th Century.

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profunda división entre peninsulares y criollos, y aunque la élite criolla habanera se encontraba al margen del conflicto, se vio obligada a abandonar la isla, encabezando así un éxodo que transformó el tamaño y carácter de la comunidad cubana de Nueva York, impulsándola a convertirse en la comunidad hispana más grande de la ciudad. Este período estableció un patrón que se repetiría en subsiguientes olas migratorias de cubanos a Estados Unidos hasta bien entrado el siglo veinte.

Palabras clave: Cuba, historia de Cuba, Nueva York, migración, Guerra 1868-1878, cubanos en Nueva York, Cubanos en EE.UU., José Manuel Mestre, Miguel Aldama.

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As José Manuel Mestre made his way through the bustling streets of Havana to the Palace of the Captain Generals, he was wondering why he had been summoned there for a meeting with the Military Governor. He was hopeful, however, that the Governor would be announcing the beginning of a new era in Spain's relationship with its colony.<sup>1</sup> Such an announcement, Mestre felt, was exactly what was needed. It was October 24, 1868, and he sensed that the political situation in the island was at a critical moment, "on the road to desperation," he wrote to a friend, "and it is to be feared that everything will end gravely and in a decisive schism" (Rodríguez 1909: 99).

Mestre was a prominent lawyer and professor who had married into an influential and wealthy landowning family. For him and for other members of Havana's *criollo* elite, the new Madrid government represented the last hope of avoiding the "decisive schism" that loomed on the eastern horizon. On October 10, the landowners in the valley of the Cauto River, centered on the city of Bayamo, declared independence, freed their slaves, and formed an army and a government. The eastern elites had endured generations of neglect from colonial authorities. They had few sentimental or economic ties to Spain. To them, colonial rule meant only oppression and taxes. Without a great dependence on slavery and sugar and therefore devoid of an economic stake in the continuation of the colonial or slave regime, eastern patricians had no use for annexationist or reformist formulas (Moreno Fraginals 233). The only thing that made sense to them was independence, and unlike their cautious Havana compatriots who feared the consequences of violence for their economic interests, the easterners had relatively little to lose and were willing to risk all of it.

A war had started. Although he had not been told the purpose of the October 24 meeting with the Governor, Mestre was hoping that it was a response to that threat

and that the Governor would be communicating to prominent members of Havana's society the Spanish government's intention to extend its liberal reforms to the island.

Governor Francisco Lersundi was disliked in the colony. He was a man with an authoritarian disposition and brusque demeanor who was intolerant of any discussion of the island's colonial status. He announced at the meeting on October 24, to Mestre's astonishment, that his administration had the means necessary to punish the "rebels and agitators" and suppress the uprising. The time for talk was over, he said, and abruptly ended the meeting.

The brief meeting of October 24, 1868 was a turning point, or more accurately, a point of no return for Cubans such as José Manuel Mestre. After that he "submitted to the inevitable," (Rodriguez 1989: 386) and supported the armed movement started by the easterners, most of whom he did not know personally. The "decisive schism" he had feared would soon envelop the island, and it would take Mestre, and many other Cubans, to New York.

## 1. THE SCHISM

Reacting to the eastern insurrection, the colonial authorities unleashed a wave of repression and terrorism spearheaded by the *voluntarios*, a paramilitary corps of loyalists who were ready to fiercely defend Spanish-owned properties, ruthlessly assert colonial control, and put the rebellious Cubans in their place. With the financial support of some of the wealthy Spaniards in the island, *voluntarios* were recruited in Spain with promises of bonuses once the rebellion was defeated (Marrero 286). Their numbers reached 35,000 by the time Lersundi was recalled to Madrid in December 1868. The *voluntarios* ran amok, provoking various violent episodes in Havana against perceived sympathizers of the insurrectionists and unleashing a wave of terrorism throughout the city that cost the lives of even women and children (Ponte Domínguez 159-163; Marrero 296-297).

Madrid authorized General Domingo Dulce, Lersundi's successor, to issue two repressive edicts on February 12, 1869. One reinstated controls on political expression, especially the press. The other spelled out what would henceforth be considered treasonous acts, to be judged by military tribunals. These included rebellion, conspiracy, sedition, harboring or supporting rebels and criminals, subversive expressions of any form, political assembly or association, and alterations of the public order (Marrero 300-301).

In Havana and other cities, the *voluntarios* zealously went about applying the new repressive measures. Two hundred and fifty men, most of them professionals and members of the upper and middle classes, were rounded up and imprisoned. Dulce

was authorized by Madrid to deport them to the Spanish colony of Fernando Póo, a small island on the Gulf of Guinea. Among the deportees were seventeen property holders, fifty-two clerks, nine lawyers, three brokers, two bankers, seven sugar plantation administrators, three dentists, seven teachers, four druggists, four engineers, three justices of the peace, six physicians, an architect, five sugar masters, four surveyors, the president of a gas company, and even “a painter of history” (Rodríguez 1871: 38-39).<sup>2</sup>

Believing that the insurrection was financially supported by many affluent Cubans, Dulce decreed on April 1 an embargo of all the property and assets of Cubans who were rebels, deportees, or exiles, extending it later to just about any property owner whose allegiances were suspect and who were not living in their estates. The embargo made it impossible for property owners to live from assets they had in the island. A Commission was established to implement the edict and identify those Cubans who would be subject to its provisions. Eventually, nearly four thousand Cubans had their properties embargoed. The historian Leví Marrero identified by name more than two thousand (322-338). The original edict in April named sixteen, among them José Manuel Mestre (Llaverías 1941: 11).

The decisive schism that Mestre feared had now come to pass, with a swiftness and intensity that he could not have anticipated. Up until that time, Cubans had formed part of Spanish colonial society despite the broken promises of greater autonomy, the festering resentments, the conflicts, the expeditions, and the conspiracies that had long created tensions between Cubans and Spaniards. Cubans had even occupied administrative positions in the colonial government. When prominent members of Havana’s society were summoned to the Palace of the Captain Generals, as they were on that October 24, 1868, Cubans such as Mestre were part of the gathering. But in the few months that followed that meeting, everything changed, and members of Havana’s *criollo* elite, who even at the eleventh hour had hoped to avoid violence, were forced to cross the Rubicon and support the rebellion. The schism of 1868 would have consequences that would last the rest of the century, consequences that helped to shape Cuban New York.

## 2. THE EXODUS

Justo Zaragoza was one Spanish colonial official who bemoaned the abuses and “lamentable indiscretions” committed against Cubans due to “zealotry or lack of intelligence on the part of lower-level officers” (374). In his memoirs he observed that in the first few weeks of 1869 the most evident result of the terrorism of the *voluntarios* and the repressive measures of the Dulce administration was:

the spectacle of an emigration so numerous and vertiginous that there were days in which ship tickets were violently disputed and even the cargo holds of ships leaving Havana were filled with passengers. (Zaragoza 374)

Families from throughout the island, according to Zaragoza, arrived in Havana prepared to sail on the next ship out. He estimated that from February to September of 1869 two to three thousand families left every month (Zaragoza 374). As Secretary to the colonial government, he was in a position to know: his office was responsible for issuing passports. During the last week of January 1869 he personally signed passports for 299 families (Zaragoza 774).

People were leaving to wherever they could book passage, but no doubt New York was the preferred destination. The developments in Cuba, especially the deportations and the embargo, had targeted elite families, many of whom had previous trade and financial connections to New York and who were likely to have visited or even lived in the city previously. Furthermore, it was in New York where many of those families had accounts with financial institutions, a critical consideration if their properties in Cuba had been embargoed. Those who did not have such accounts quickly sought to establish them. Antonio de la Fuente on February 13, 1869, wrote from Havana a letter to one of Manhattan's leading import and investment firms, Moses Taylor and Company, on behalf of a friend, a Manuel B. Moré, who "wished to place in the control of a totally trustworthy house some funds to attend to the expenses of his family in the event that the abnormal circumstances on this island make it advisable to leave here temporarily." De la Fuente, presumably a client of Taylor, indicated that Moré was not fortunate to have any relations or connections in New York.<sup>3</sup>

Passenger ships from Havana to New York that for years carried Americans as well as Cubans were now arriving in Manhattan's piers filled to capacity with just Cuban families. The year 1869 set a record in the number of Cuban and Spanish passengers disembarking in New York from ports in the island (*Ancestry*). March was the busiest month. It was on the fourth of that month that the ship *Eagle* arrived from Havana carrying 171 passengers, the largest single shipload of passengers from Cuba that year. The *Eagle*, which for years made regular biweekly runs to Havana, normally carried some fifty passengers.

Some of the entries in the *Eagle's* manifest were already familiar names among Cuban New Yorkers (*Ancestry*). There were, for example, seven Moras on board, including Fausto, who in 1859 had become a U.S. citizen, had a residence on East 13<sup>th</sup> Street, and formed part of the family's downtown merchant firm. The transnational nature of many elites who had long conducted business in New York meant that in

1869 they were once again traveling to Manhattan, as they had done many times before. This time, however, they were departing Cuba essentially as refugees with no idea of when, or if, they would be able to return.

The *Eagle* also brought to New York about a dozen members of the Valdés-Fauli family, headed by José Valdés Fauli, a lawyer who months before had taken part in meetings with Mestre and others to further the reformist agenda in Havana (Marrero 217). Valdés-Fauli had served not only as director of the *Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País*, one of the most important cultural organizations of the island, but also as president of the University of Havana (Roldán Oliarte 1026). The Valdés-Fauli family aboard the *Eagle* also included members of José's second wife's family, the Chappotins (*Ancestry*; Santa Cruz y Mallen 175). As Zaragoza noted, large extended families filled most of the ships leaving Havana (374). The Valdés-Fauli were typical of the social class origins of many of the emigrants: upper class Cubans active in the academic, intellectual, and professional circles that formed the core of the Havana reformist movement and were therefore exposed and targeted by the repression.

Another family that arrived in New York exactly one month before the Valdés-Fauli provides the best example of how the climate in the island impacted the Cuban intelligentsia. In 1868 there were probably few intellectual and academic figures in Cuba of the stature of Antonio Bachiller y Morales. Already fifty-six years of age, he was a senior professor at the University of Havana and dean of its philosophy department (Calcagno 93). On February 4, 1869, Bachiller y Morales arrived in New York aboard the *Columbia* (*Ancestry*). He was accompanied by his wife and five of his six surviving children, ranging in ages from twenty to twenty-seven, a son-in-law, three grandchildren, and four nephews (*Ancestry*; Santa Cruz y Mallen 64-65).

That voyage of the *Columbia* also took to New York another prominent figure of Cuban reformism who, like Mestre, was left with little choice but support the rebellion. José Morales Lemus had been one of the most active members of the ill-fated *Junta de Información* that met in Madrid in 1867, an initiative that held out the false promise of instituting far-reaching reforms in the way Spain ruled the island. Morales Lemus also played a central role in the founding in 1863 of *El Siglo*, a Havana newspaper that despite the constant vigilance of Spanish censors managed to establish itself as the reasoned voice of the reformists, printing the views of some of the leading Cuban intellectuals of the day.

Morales Lemus attended the fateful meeting with Governor Lersundi (Rodríguez 1909: 113). After that, as happened with all prominent Cubans with a history of activism on behalf of changing the colonial regime, his life took a dramatic turn. The constant harassment of the *voluntarios* and the possibility of imprisonment

and deportation prompted him to board the *Columbia*. One month later, his friend and *protégé*, Jose Manuel Mestre, joined him in New York.<sup>4</sup> José Morales Lemus' name was the first one was among the original sixteen names listed in Dulce's edict of April 1 embargoing the properties of enemies of the Spanish state (Llaverías 1941: 11).

The list of affluent families and prominent individuals who appear on the manifests of ships leaving Cuban ports for New York during 1869 is endless.<sup>5</sup> More members of the Mora clan arrived in New York in two separate sailings of the *Morro Castle* during July and August. The large Angarica-de La Rua family, leading Freemasons, came in two groups, one disembarking in New York from the *Morro Castle* on March 13 and the other aboard the *Columbia* on April 27. A week earlier, on April 21, the *Morro Castle* took to New York seven members of the Madan family, as well as nine members of the Govín family. The head of the Govín family, Félix, had already arrived with his wife on April 15 on the *Eagle*. More members of the Govín family traveled months later, in August, aboard the *Missouri*. The manifest of the *Columbia*, which reached New York on September 2 listed three large families headed by merchants. The next sailing of the *Columbia* from Havana, which arrived in Manhattan on September 25, carried a large contingent of the Socarrás-Duque de Estrada family of Puerto Príncipe, most of them women and children, as well as several servants (Santa Cruz y Mallen 330-332). The following month the *Morro Castle* took to New York the noted educator and writer Francisco Calcagno (Roldán Oliarte 833-834).

Families were not choosy about the ships they boarded, sailing on what whatever vessel would take them out of Cuba. Those departing from port cities other than Havana frequently had to book passage on cargo ships that had only limited accommodations for passengers. The Portuondo family, for example, was among the thirteen passengers arriving in New York on May 6 aboard the *Burnbrae* from Santiago de Cuba. The following day, the Boitel family disembarked in Lower Manhattan from the *Lizzie*, which had left Remedios with only ten passengers, most of them members of the family. A young Fidel Pierra, who years later would emerge as an important figure in New York's Cuban community, was among the ten passengers who arrived on April 16 aboard the *Blanche* from Guantánamo.

Many individuals and families who eventually settled in New York did not necessarily arrive there directly from Cuba. This was true, of course, of many of the prisoners deported to Fernando Póo. They did not stay long in the small island in the Gulf of Guinea. It was not a penal colony, so the deportees were not confined and once there many made arrangements for transportation to Europe and the United States (Saluвет; Balmaseda). Among the deportees who made their way to New York

was Carlos del Castillo, a sixty-one year old banker from eastern Cuba who in the 1850's was director of a savings institution in Havana and had creatively arranged for the financing of various rebellions and conspiracies against the Spanish (Marrero 201). Prior to his deportation, del Castillo had accumulated with Moses Taylor and Company ninety-five thousand dollars in U.S. government bonds, purchased and managed for del Castillo by the New York financial firm (*Moses Taylor Papers*). As with many other Cubans who were arriving in the city, del Castillo lived comfortably in New York on the nest egg he had prudently built for years through remittances to U.S. financial institutions, especially the Taylor Company. Despite the loss of their properties in Cuba, many New York Cubans were far from being penniless exiles.

The most prominent member of Havana's *criollo* elite to arrive in New York in 1869 was no stranger to the city. He was a frequent visitor, with substantial financial accounts in the city: Miguel Aldama. He led one of the island's wealthiest families and also exerted influence over the group of Havana intellectuals and academics that comprised the reformist movement, occasionally helping to finance some of their activities, including the establishment of the reformist newspaper *El Siglo*, to which he was the principal financial contributor (Llaverías 1937: 15-16; Álvarez Pedroso 83). Yet despite his wealth and influence, Miguel Aldama was powerless to avert the crisis of 1868-1869 and like most Cubans, he was swept up in its wake.

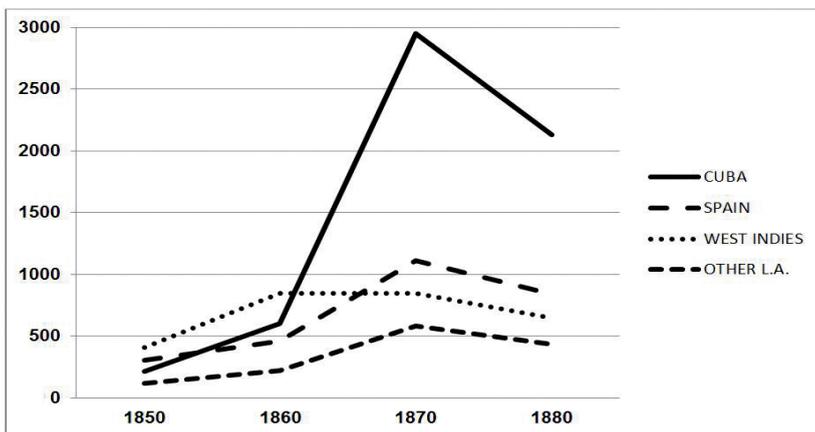
Aldama left Havana aboard the *Morro Castle*, which arrived in New York on May 10, 1869. It is likely he left clandestinely, because his name does not appear on the passenger manifest, which does list most of his family, including his daughters, his father Domingo, and his son-in-law and nephew Leonardo del Monte.<sup>6</sup> Once Aldama departed, the Spanish government promptly embargoed all his property in accordance with the decree that had been issued in April by Governor Dulce. Given the extent of his holdings in Cuba, it was a severe economic blow, but Aldama had anticipated this contingency. One historian, citing a source close to Aldama, indicated he may have had as much as 700,000 dollars in assets in New York at the time of his migration (Abad 176). An 1872 ledger sheet in the Moses Taylor Papers has an entry of 100,000 dollars in the name of Miguel Aldama.

There is no better summary of the consequences of the 1868 schism than the sentence handed down by a Spanish Military Tribunal in 1870 (Marrero 318; Llaverías 1941: 34-35). More than fifty Cubans were sentenced to be executed by public garroting for their role in the rebellion, including those who supported it from abroad. Very few of the sentences could be immediately applied, since virtually none of the condemned was living in Havana or any other city or town in Cuba where the

Spanish could apprehend them. Many on the list were on the battlefields in the island, and it seemed as if the rest were in New York. Miguel Aldama, Leonardo del Monte, José Manuel Mestre, José Morales Lemus, José María Mora, Antonio Mora, Carlos del Castillo, were just a few of the New Yorkers due to have their necks squeezed by a tourniquet if they set foot in Cuba. There were no activists or reformists left in Havana. The economic, intellectual, and academic elites that had long formed the core of the push for annexation, autonomy, reform, or self-determination were now in New York.

### 3. CUBAN NEW YORK IN 1870

The year 1870 opened the most tumultuous decade in the history of Cuban New York, as the war in Cuba resonated in the streets of the city. When the 1870 U.S. Census was taken, the Cuban-born population in what are now the five boroughs surpassed 2,700 persons, more than quadrupling its size since the 1860 Census.<sup>7</sup> About eighty-eight percent lived in Manhattan. In Figure 1 below the number of Cuban-born persons is compared with those New York City residents who were born in regions which wholly or in part are places of origin of what we consider today the “Hispanic” population. The impact of the sudden exodus from a Cuba torn by conflict is evident as the number of Cubans far surpasses all other Hispanic groups. The chart confirms that, despite the subsequent twentieth-century trends in the migration of Hispanic nationalities to the city (notably Puerto Rican and Dominican), the development of nineteenth-century Hispanic New York is primarily a Cuban story.



**Figure 1.** Place of Birth of the Hispanic Population of New York City  
Source: U.S. Decennial Censuses, 1850-1880

The outbreak of the war in 1868 was responsible for substantially accelerating the decades-old pattern of Cuban migration to New York. In 1868 and 1869 that migration was spearheaded by the Havana *criollo* elite that found themselves persecuted once the easterners decided that Cuba's colonial status had to be settled with bullets and not reforms or negotiation.

But wealthy elites were not the only ones caught up in the wave of abuses, violence, and lawlessness that started sweeping Cuba in 1868. It was a war in which everyone was forced to choose sides, and one did not have to be sentenced to death or have one's property embargoed to feel threatened by the scope and intensity of the forces that had been unleashed in the island.

One measure of the war's effects was the significant presence of women and children among Cubans in New York. Political upheavals that compel people to leave their countries generally result in migration flows with a fairly large number of families, compared with labor migrations, which are usually composed almost entirely of single men. In 1870, slightly more than forty percent of all Cuban-born New Yorkers was female, and children under eighteen represented more than a fourth of the population, a fairly high proportion considering it includes only Cuban-born children and not those born in New York to Cuban parents.

Among those women and children were the wives, widows, mothers, and children of those fighting in the eastern battlefields. They too sought refuge in New York. The most emblematic was the family of José Ramón Simoni, a sixty-year old physician the census found living in the 22<sup>nd</sup> Ward, on Sixth Avenue, just south of Central Park (U.S. Bureau of the Census). Living with Dr. Simoni in New York were his wife Manuela, 50, their son José Ramón Jr., 22, and Manuela's niece Victoria Ginferrer, 16. Also in the household were the Simonis' two married daughters with their children. The oldest, Amalia, twenty-five years old, had an infant son, Ignacio Ernesto, and was pregnant with a second. The other daughter, Matilde, was twenty-four and had a two-year old son, Arístides.<sup>8</sup> Both of Dr. Simoni's sons-in-law were in Cuba. Amalia was married to Ignacio Agramonte y Loinaz, a young patrician, not yet thirty years old, who had led the Camagüeyanos into the war and with the rank of Major General was their foremost military leader. Dr. Simoni's other daughter, Matilde, was married to Ignacio's cousin Eduardo Agramonte, also a combatant in Camagüey (Santa Cruz y Mallen 12-13; Guerra y Sánchez 89-90, 256-257; Marrero 304). Needless to say, the Agramonte cousins were near the top of the list of those to be executed in the event of their capture (Llaverías 1941: 34). Dr. Simoni was not on any list, but no doubt he left

Cuba fearing for the safety of his daughters and grandchildren. A few years later, both of Dr. Simoni's daughters would be widows: Ignacio and Ernesto were killed in battle.

The Simonis were not the only members of Ignacio Agramonte's family who felt compelled to take refuge in New York. The 1870 census found his mother, María Filomena Loynaz, 46, living with her sister-in-law and Ignacio's aunt Mercedes Agramonte, 45, and with Ignacio's brother, Enrique, 25, at 104 W. 20<sup>th</sup> Street, between Sixth and Seventh Avenues, in the Sixteenth Ward. There were also four teenagers in the household, probably nephews and nieces of María Filomena (U.S. Bureau of the Census; Santa Cruz y Mallen 13).

#### 4. CUBAN NEW YORK AND THE END OF THE WAR

Cuban New York was dominated by the pall of war. The war was in Cuba, but it was also in New York, where families grieved for their lost or missing loved ones and where the intensity of émigré separatist activities reached a fever pitch, resulting, most prominently, in deep and acrimonious fissures within the community that would prove fatal to the cause of independence (Pérez 2013: 40-54).

Throughout most of the 1870s New York's Cuban population grew dramatically. The initial exodus was spearheaded by prominent elites, especially plantation owners in the Havana region who had figured prominently in the annexationist and reformist movements of the past. But as the war dragged on most Cubans who settled in New York are unknown to history. They were men, women, and children who left Cuba and in New York did not have sizable bank accounts and probably did not concern themselves with abstract concepts of independence and sovereignty, but rather with escaping a war-torn country and shaping their lives in a city they now called home, a place that could be promising, exciting, and frightening. There were artists painting their canvasses and musicians playing their instruments. There were white Cubans, Afro-Cubans, and Chinese Cubans, and even former house slaves who in a new country were still serving their white masters in uptown mansions. And, in growing numbers, there were cigar makers plying their trade in the city's burgeoning cigar manufacturing industry. By the 1870's New York had become a center for the manufacture of cigars made from Clear Havana leaves. The growing popularity of the Cuban leaves helped to greatly expand the city's cigar industry, to the point that Manhattan and Brooklyn together had by far the largest number of tobacco-related establishments of any city in the United States, becoming, as Burrows and Wallace, noted "the capital of the North American cigar industry" (742). A detailed tobacco industry directory published in

1872 listed 1,486 cigar manufacturers (excluding dealers and importers) in Manhattan and 406 in Brooklyn. Cigars were also being produced in Astoria, Jamaica, and Long Island City (*A Directory of the Tobacco Trade of the United States, Great Britain, and Germany*).

One estimate placed the number of cigar workers in the city at 2,800, most of them German Jewish immigrants, the group most responsible for the growth of New York's cigar industry (Schneider 54). The expanding industry, however, started attracting cigar makers from Cuba, especially as conditions in the island deteriorated rapidly. Furthermore, Cuban cigar makers enjoyed a certain cachet as the cigars made from Clear Havana leaves became the priciest and most sought-after cigars in the city. Thomas J. Rayner, for example, the owner of the "Smoke" cigar factory at 102 Liberty Street, advertised that his cigars were "manufactured by CUBAN workmen of ALL HAVANA TOBACCO equal in quality, style, and fragrance" to the cigars manufactured in Havana but at more reasonable prices than the imported product (*Universal Tobacco Dealers Directory for the Year 1867*).

The trend towards a greater "proletarianization" of Cuban New York was accelerated with the end of the war in 1878. The Pact of Zanjón, the agreement that officially ended the conflict, contained a guarantee of amnesty by the Spanish, which meant that Cubans in New York could return to the island. Many did, as evidenced by the decline shown in Figure 1 in the Cuban population of the city in 1880. Although the Pact of Zanjón made no mention of the disposition of embargoed properties, many of those who returned were doing so with the hope of recovering what they had lost, hence most of the returnees were no doubt former property owners. But for those Cuban New Yorkers who were laborers, cigar workers, former slaves, domestic workers, and even some real estate investors and professionals, life in New York had meant new opportunities to improve their lives. They had nothing to recover and nothing to gain by returning to a Cuba ravaged by war.

Henceforth, Cuban New York would be a more diverse community, economically, socially, and racially, helping to set the stage for the rise of the popular nationalism that José Martí, who arrived in New York in 1880, was able to marshal into a movement for Cuban independence (Poyo 95-111).

## 5. CONCLUSION

The schism of 1868 produced an exodus from Cuba that multiplied the number of Cubans living in New York to the point that the city's Cuban population far outnumbered other Hispanic nationalities. Although the Cuban presence in the

city dates to the early nineteenth century, when prominent exiles from the island, such as Father Félix Varela and the poet José María Heredia sought refuge in New York, the exodus of 1868-1869 is the first of the many distinct large-scale migration waves that have characterized the flow of Cubans to the United States to this very day. Viewed through a contemporary lens, the exodus of 1868-69 shares several characteristics with most of the subsequent twentieth-century waves: 1) initiated by elites in response to specific threats to their interests; 2) an eventual and evolving diversification in the socioeconomic profile of the migrants in response to a more generalized sense of deteriorating conditions on the island; 3) the importance of political actions in creating the context for departure; 4) an abiding interest in recovering the homeland through a change in its existing political regime; and 5) a political activism that is factious and largely ineffective in influencing the destiny of the island.<sup>9</sup> Although the scholarly literature on Cuban New York, with some notable exceptions, overwhelmingly favors the analysis of the era of Martí and the Partido Revolucionario Cubano, the period defined by the Great War (1868-1878) saw the development of a community of Cubans in New York that was larger and in many ways more interesting and complex than any subsequent settlement of Cubans in that city.

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## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> That morning of October 24, Mestre wrote a letter to Miguel Aldama, who was in New York, expressing his expectations about the meeting, although admitting he did not know the purpose of it (Rodríguez 1909: 101). Unless otherwise noted, this biography by Rodríguez is the source for the most of what is presented here on the meeting of October 24.
- <sup>2</sup> There were also students, cigar makers, a tailor, carpenters, clergymen, shoemakers, and a variety of other occupations.
- <sup>3</sup> It appears that Taylor and Company was able to help out Mr. Moré, for the company records indicate that from 1869 to 1881 he was a client who made regular remittances to his account, asking Taylor to invest the funds in the U.S.
- <sup>4</sup> I have not been able to find an entry for Mestre in the New York Passenger Lists, but José Ignacio Rodríguez, who knew Mestre well, asserts that on March 13, 1869 he boarded in Havana a ship headed for New York (Rodríguez 1909: 123).
- <sup>5</sup> All references here to ships and passengers are taken from *New York Passenger Lists*, previously cited.
- <sup>6</sup> There are many Aldamas on the manifest and not all the first names are legible. Diana Abad asserts that Aldama left in June, but does not provide the source. The best evidence that Aldama was indeed aboard the *Morro Castle* on May 2 is a May 20 letter from José Antonio Echeverría in Havana to José Manuel Mestre in New York which reads: "I am sure you greeted with satisfaction the arrival of Miguel and his family" (José Ignacio Rodríguez Papers).
- <sup>7</sup> This figure was arrived at from a manual tabulation of the census schedules retrieved by a search using place of birth in U.S. Bureau of the Census. This figure is considerably higher than the 1,565 that the U.S. Bureau of the Census reported in its 1872 printed report as the Cuban-born population in Manhattan and Brooklyn. While my figure may be slightly inflated by possible duplications produced by the 1870 recount, every attempt was made both by me and by *Ancestry* to eliminate those duplications which in any case would have involved only persons who changed their residence during the five months between the two counts.
- <sup>8</sup> The Simonis were enumerated for the first time on January 4, 1871 as part of the 1870 census recount. Amalia gave birth to her daughter Herminia in New York on February 20, 1871 (Santa Cruz y Mallén 13-14). The

Simonis were probably not in New York when the first 1870 count was taken in the Twenty-Second Ward in late June and early July 1870. Mrs. Simoni and her son José Ramón Jr. arrived in New York on August 9, 1870 aboard a cargo ship, the *Rapidan*, from Havana. I was unable to find a record of the arrival of Dr. Simoni and his daughters, all of whom may have left clandestinely aboard the *Rapidan* or another vessel at about the same time as Mrs. Simoni.

<sup>9</sup> For analyses of these characteristics in the contemporary Cuban American presence in the United States (Grenier and Pérez; Pérez 2007).