




A LITTLE WAR

 The Treaty of Zanjón, which ended the Ten Years War, gave Cubans a small measure of self-government, but the Spanish government soon ignored or bypassed the treaty. Wealthy Cuban landowners continued to support Spain as their only means of keeping their slaves, who together with the poorer farmers greatly outnumbered them. In short, nothing changed.

On November 22, 1878, Martí's son, José, was born, and Martí now had family responsibilities. He tried to practice law, but he was denied a license because of his past prison



record. He found work as an assistant in the office of a distinguished Cuban lawyer, Nicolás Azacarte, who had also been an exile in Mexico. Also working in Azacarte's office was Juan Gualberto Gómez, a revolutionary writer who had not given up on the cause of true Cuban independence. Soon he and Martí were turning out pamphlets that promoted the cause of a free Cuba.

The revolutionary spirit was still alive in Cuba, and veterans of the war who had fled abroad, formed a Cuban Revolutionary Committee. The headquarters of this organization was in New York City, and from there the committee issued a call for all Cubans to work for the cause of independence. Many Cubans answered this call by setting up underground organizations in Cuba to assist in any future uprising.

Martí was beginning to regret that he had ever returned to Cuba. He wrote:

I was not born to live in these lands. Exile in one's country is a thousand times more bitter for those, like myself, who have found a home in exile. Here I do not speak, nor write, nor do I have the energy to think.¹

In his speeches, he began to refer to Cuba as "our nation."² and became ever more insistent that the only solution to the country's problems was complete freedom from Spain. He became more

and more aggressive, once stating that rights were “to be taken, not requested; seized, not begged for.”³ Havana’s Captain General Ramón Blanco was in the audience when Martí made that statement, and he said later, “That Martí is a madman—but a dangerous madman.”⁴

On August 26, 1879, revolutionary feelings reached their peak when hundreds of farmers and slaves attacked the Spanish stronghold in Santiago de Cuba. Riots and demonstrations against the government broke out all over Cuba. *La Guerra Chiquita* (The Little War) as it was called, was soon almost crushed. The government moved to prevent any further uprisings by imprisoning all known troublemakers and clamping down on all publications and public meetings. Martí’s friend and fellow revolutionary Juan Gualberto Gómez was imprisoned, and Martí seemed fated to be next. Some politically powerful people came to his support, however, and the captain general agreed to a compromise. Martí could escape imprisonment if he would renounce his revolutionary views and support the Spanish colonial government. Martí replied, “Tell the General that Martí is not the kind of man that can be bought.”⁵

Martí was again deported to Spain. His wife, who disapproved of his revolutionary views, chose to stay in Cuba with their infant son. Martí’s



marriage was failing, but he did not allow this to deter him from his activities in behalf of Cuba's independence. This time, he stayed in Spain only a few months and then simply walked away. He went to France, and from there he took a boat to New York. From now on, New York was to be his base. He would not return to Cuba until he felt that the time was ripe for revolution.