

appear to rouse any responsive thrill in the minds of the great European nations although they are always ready to go into fruitless hysterics over some alleged Armenian atrocity'.¹

The statistics of the American Red Cross published in March 1898, were the most influential and widely publicized facts available on the Australian scene. Though in fact greatly exaggerated, they confirmed and emphasized the profile of suffering built up by the earlier overseas literature: Weyler's reconcentrado policies had resulted in the death of 425,000 neutral Cuban country folk it was claimed, while 200,000 more were said to be 'living skeletons'. Dr. Lesser's grisly assessments heightened Australian press indignation.²

Many now agreed with the sober judgement of the British Spectator (12 February 1898) that 'the wretched island is tormented beyond belief'. Sympathy was expressed for the miserable boy soldiers of Spain. In excess of 50,000 Spanish troops were quoted as lying sick in Cuban hospitals. For a Spain now obviously suffering as much as the Cubans themselves, the 'game was not worth the candle' was the opinion of more than one paper.³

From the middle of 1896, the Australian press took an increasing interest in the parallel struggle in the Philippines. The South Australian Register whose editorials on foreign matters often took a large view, was one that thought the news of an insurrection in favour of autonomy in a group of important and fertile islands only 700 miles from New Guinea 'of exceptional interest' to Australian people, bringing 'active hostilities on a large scale closer to Australia than they have ever in the past been brought'.

¹Age, 23 Aug. 1897. The Times did not bestir itself until eight months after the Australian editorial. See The Times, 15 Apr. 1898 and the Economist, 16 Apr. 1898, for the recognition of the parallel between Armenia and Cuba.

²E.g. Editorials in Argus, 25 Mar. 1898; Leader, 26 Mar. 1898; Bendigo Advertiser, 16 Apr. 1898.

³See editorials in Courier, 26 Mar. 1898; Leader, op.cit.; Daily Telegraph (Sydney), op.cit.

It was concerned that the 'Monster Mother' Spain, who devoured her colonial children instead of suckling them, would send her warships through the Arafura Sea. It further condemned that power for keeping a quarter of the population of $4\frac{1}{2}$ to 7 million Filipinos as slaves.¹

An interest now began to be taken in the attractive physical facts concerning the Philippines. James Bell held that 'few countries in the world vie with the 1,200 islands in processing the essentials valuable to a commercial nation'. Not only were there good harbours and easy water transit, but alluvial gold and many other minerals as well as precious woods, fruits and other plantation crops, cereals and animal products made up the picture of Filipino wealth.² To Queensland papers, destruction of this potentially valuable economy with its 'mild-mannered and easily governed population' - despite the opportunity presented for developing a Queensland tobacco industry - was a tragedy. Worse, it awoke that bogey of all Queenslanders - a Japanese takeover.³ In time the sufferings and ordeals of Filipino civilians and the estimated 50,000 rebels were to receive a circulation and credibility almost equal to Cuba's more widely publicized troubles. Only the faultiness of Hong-Kong sources, due to cable difficulties and Spanish censorship of news, rendered press reactions less consistent and regular.⁴

The statistics of the true extent of Cuban and Filipino suffering have for long remained vague. The Australian press shared in the dissemination of myths and inaccuracies. The important thing is that the figures were quickly believed and rarely questioned. In themselves they provided the most important indictment of Spanish colonial rule. Such a conviction was only very indirectly the result of the

¹South Australian Register, 25 August 1896.

²Geelong Times, 28 Nov. 1896.

³E.g. Brisbane Evening Observer, 30 Nov. 1896.

⁴See for example, Mt. Alexander Mail, 1 Dec. 1896; Mercury, 3 Dec. 1896.

MELBOURNE PUNCH.



MAP SHOWING THE POSITION OF THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS

Melbourne Punch, 5 May 1898.

efforts of Hearst, Pulitzer and the New York 'Yellow Press'. Conscious distortion of this kind was avoided by the Australian press. Supposedly conservative and reputable English sources were quoted almost exclusively on Cuba's condition (Puerto Rico and the other Spanish colonies were virtually ignored). But both the conscious and unintentional bias and exaggeration of these sources was enough to provide the basis of an anti-Spanish attitude.¹

Some pro-Spanish attitudes revealed themselves during the period 1895-98. Some were merely a reaction against American means - the internationally illegal use of filibusters, or American ends - the creation of another 'Black Republic'. But sympathy for Spain's massive military effort in the face of severe domestic problems was also an active factor. Others were appalled either at America's blatant rejection of the Spanish proposals for Cuban autonomy or the national guilt which many had quickly placed on Spain over the sinking of the Maine. Not only did Spain also appear to have the approval of Europe in general to support her colonial claims, but there were many even in Australia who were sorry to see Spanish pride, chivalry and tradition so humbled on the international scene.

Most of the early form of sympathy for Spain was due to the annoyance caused by illegal American-based filibustering activity. John Farrell² and Alfred Douglass³ were but two who objected to the Argus description⁴ of the capture of the filibuster Comodore (January 1897) as 'treacherous' on the part of the Spaniards. They should be able to give as well as they receive was their opinion.

¹On the modern statistical estimates see Hugh Thomas, Cuba, The Pursuit of Freedom (London, 1971), pp.316-55, 0.414. On the New York press see Joseph E. Wisan, The Cuban Crisis as Reflected in the New York Press 1895-1898 (New York, 1934) especially pp.21-6, 33-4, 187-90, 233-4, 390-5, 455-60. The best overall summary of the Cuban situation is Lester D. Langley, The Cuban Policy of the United States (New York, 1968), Ch.4.

²Daily Telegraph (Sydney), 7 Jan. 1897.

³Geelong Advertiser, 7 Jan. 1897.

⁴Argus, 7 Jan. 1897.

The Catholic Melbourne Advocate's sympathies were racial and religious. 'We have no wish to see Spain deprived of Cuba', it wrote, and

see no good reason why she should be. Her rule in Cuba may be, on some points, indefensible, but she is not unwilling to right any existing wrongs and the Cubans have no claims to independence that enlist our sympathy for the present struggle. From our point of view, it is preferable that Spain should not be weakened than that an inferior race of coloured people should be allowed to set up an independent kingdom.

This conservative-racist attitude was not confined to Catholics.¹

While some conservatives were concerned with maintaining a fragile status quo, others like John Farrell even condoned Spanish cruelty in the pursuit of that goal. To refuse medical attention to Cuban prisoners belonged to the 'true logic of war' by speeding results, Farrell considered. 'The ruthless Spaniard is therefore the true warrior who plays this grim game on the all-in principle.' Pro-Catholic sympathizers also believed that Protestant America was wrongfully prolonging Cuba's agony.²

Sydney's Catholic Freeman's Journal vigorously rebutted the Sydney Morning Herald's accusation regarding the Spanish use of 'Inquisition' techniques. First, it attacked the credibility of the charges 'furnished forth months ago by the Star from a Hong-Kong source' tainted with German prejudice. Second, it suspected the Free Trade press of now using those charges to woo New South Wales' Catholics away from the Protectionist convictions of their influential Catholic press (which would now obviously share in Spanish discredit, given its previous championing of that country). Further, it mounted a counterattack. It regarded Protestants as guilty of the use of 'rack and thumbscrew'

¹Advocate, 9 Jan. 1897.

²Daily Telegraph (Sydney), 30 Jan. 1897 - the most pro-Catholic of all Australia's major dailies, due perhaps to Farrell's influence.

as Catholics had ever been and blamed Kingsley and Froude for having popularized the ridiculous English anti-Spanish tradition. To associate dubious reports of present Spanish actions and Catholicism in general was slanderous. The Protestant position was hypocritical: the actions of the English in Ireland and India, the Germans in Zanzibar, the Dutch in the East Indies and the New Zealand treatment of the Maoris proved this. 'But Spain has only to protect her colonial possessions after the same fashion to furnish occasion for ignorant and silly aspersions on the Catholic Church.'¹ Though this may be considered another episode in the continuing sectarian debate, New South Wales' Catholic protectionists nonetheless derived evident satisfaction eighteen months later, following George Reid's free trade party defeat by Lyne's protectionists (July 1898).

Other non-Catholic conservatives attempted to balance their estimates of Spain. The Argus praised Spain's 'splendid sacrifices' and 'incredible exertions' overseas given her poverty and decadence at home. With common estimates of the Cubans themselves as most unflattering, a line was taken in mid-1897 that if the rebels could not be placated, then they should be swiftly crushed by Spain in the interests of international peace and commerce.²

More immediate sympathy for Spain's plight came with the news on 10 August 1897 of the assassination by Golli, an Italian anarchist, of the ex-Spanish Conservative Premier, Senor Canovas del Castillo. He was praised as able, honest and resolute - insanely struck down by Spanish anarchists in the course of his duty. One paper feared his death would be 'prelude to a series of events disastrous to the peace of Spain'. Even at this comparatively late stage the authors of a repressive conservative regime were not without their Australian defenders. Fear of the possible

¹Freeman's Journal, 6 Feb. 1897; ref. to Sydney Morning Herald, 28 Jan. 1897.

²Argus, 25 May. 1897.



"I DO PERCEIVE HERE A DIVIDED DUTY."

The Catholic Church in Spain and the British Government in Spain.

Melbourn Punch, 5 May 1898.

disappearance of Spain through a combination of internal revolt and external attack, was a potent factor keeping sympathy for her alive. Some Victorian papers expressed a vague fear that they would lose Spanish investment capital in their colony.¹

A number of events now resulted in Australian press testimonies to Spain's national integrity. The departure of correspondents from Cuba was taken as a sign by the Australian press that the Spanish autonomy proposals of the new Liberal Ministry led by the aging but trusted Praxedes Mateo Sagasta were expected to render revolt unnewsworthy. After the Maine disaster in February, a large element of the Australian press insisted that it was 'hardly likely' that Spain would 'have recourse to assassination in order to adjust their differences with other states' and preferred to place the blame on either fanatical Royalists in Cuba or some unknown accidental cause.²

By 18 April, few Australian could have been unaware of the sympathies of the Continental press toward Spain.³ Some continental Europeans living in Australia - especially newly-arrived Spaniards or monarchists, may have been swayed by the diplomatic and financial bias of German, Austrian and Jewish interests asserting themselves on Spain's behalf.⁴ But little evidence suggests this and beside, their influence on opinion in Australia would have been negligible. Continental Europeans formed only 2 per cent of the total population of Australia at the time of her nationhood in 1901.

¹For comment see, Sydney Morning Herald, 10 Aug. 1897; Advertiser 10 Aug. 1897; South Australian Register, 10 Aug. 1897; Advocate, 14 Aug. 1897. M. Hart's tribute in the New York Herald - 'Canovas Del Castillo: El Gran Espanol' reappeared in the Australasian Review of Reviews, 15 Oct. 1897, pp.475-6.

²Editorials in, Argus, 4 Jan. 1898; Herald, 12 Feb. 1898; Launceston Examiner, 7 Mar. 1898; Freeman's Journal, 16 Apr. 1898.

³Even remote papers like Budapest's Posten Lloyd were quoted by the Australian press for their attitudes.

⁴Despite attempts by European powers not to offend America, the impression in Australia was one of almost open European assistance to Spain. See, J.A.S. Grenville, Lord Salisbury and Foreign Policy (London, 1964), Ch. IX; C.S. Campbell, Anglo-American Understanding, 1898-1903 (Baltimore, 1957), pp.30-40. Cable perceptions of secret diplomacy were responsible for this misleading impression in the Australian press. Some historians, especially G.L. Beer, The English-Speaking Peoples, Their Future Relations and Joint International Obligations (New York, 1917), have perpetuated this.

Of these 74,253 Europeans, only 515 (or .4 per cent) were Spanish. As well, there were 1,902 Austro-Hungarians, 3,358 Russians, 3,592 French and 5,678 Italians. Germans formed the largest group - 38,352.¹ One suspects however, that many of these people migrated as far as Australia through a basic lack of sympathy with the monarchism and militarism of their own countries. Undoubtedly among those who were determinedly anti-American, there must have been many who now found themselves pro-Spanish.

Some Australians could not have but been touched by the evident loyalty of individual Spaniards to their mother country. As clear underdog in the coming struggle, they undoubtedly struck a responsive chord. Spanish delusion was revealed in an Argus interview with J. Luffman, director of the Horticultural Gardens at Burnley, a former resident of Malaga who had traversed Spain by foot:

The Spaniard has a supreme confidence in himself and his country (he said), but it is founded on ignorance. Even well-educated Spaniards are deplorably ignorant of the outside world. They do not realise the strength of the great nations of the earth, nor their own comparative impotence. They are eager for war because they do not know its risks.²

In the face of this, much could be understood, if not forgiven. The Brisbane Courier,³ whose editorialist had for long agonized over the question of which side was 'right', could not in the end blame Spaniards for believing officials of their own country. If Spaniards were told that the facts on Cuba were distorted by enemies; that the Maine was a plot or an accident; that illegal American filibustering

¹Commonwealth Year Book (No. 1, 1908), p.168, gives figures for 1901. Numbers for 1898 would have been slightly smaller.

²Argus, 18 Apr. 1898.

³Courier, 18 Apr. 1898.

was a connivance with the insurgents and charges of incompetence against Spanish officers a scandal against the nation, how could they gainsay it? Even those who hated Spaniards could sympathize with this view. Others were more frankly disgusted with the nations of Europe - Britain in particular - for allowing America a free hand to batter Spain into submission.¹

Despite this evidence of some pro-Spanish sentiment, Spain was nonetheless enormously unpopular in Australia. First among the reasons for this was the Spanish colonial practice of an administration based on exploitation rather than nurture. This was resented by Australian editors who were in the process of shedding evidence of their inferior colonial status and among whom, paternal-liberal concepts of governance were enjoying high esteem. Next, overseas press charges of martial incompetence convincingly substantiated the Australian press belief that suffering on both sides was being needlessly prolonged by a power of superior race, numbers and technology, employing ineffective means. Most damaging to the Spanish case were the continual reports of employment of cruelty by starvation and torture. These were readily believed (in the face of Spanish attempts to suppress the reports) by a predominantly Protestant-British population containing strong anti-Catholic, anti-Spanish elements already aroused to indignation at unrevengeed Armenian atrocities. Finally, a social and political-Darwinist element depicted Spain as an old, decadent monarchist power forced to give way by the 'laws of nature' to the younger, more virile democratic power of America. Australian xenophobia was appealed to in assessments of a 'treacherous' Latin type. These factors, combined with the

¹E.g. South Australian Register, 18 Apr. 1898. A similar assessment was made on the British scene, a little too late to influence Australian opinions: e.g. Saturday Review, 9, 23 Apr. 1898, pp.480 and 545 respectively.

weight of immediate events, conspired against any favourable view of Spain by the majority of Australian journals.

From the start it was recognized that the insurgents were fighting for an aim with which any Anglo-Saxon could identify: the right to self-government. J.L. Brient, editor of the Daily Telegraph,¹ was quick to suggest that the United States and Britain 'should join hands for the common benefit of civilization' in helping to provide it. By August 1896, the Melbourne Age² was among those who had recognized the importance of the 'Ever-Faithful Isle' to Spain. 'In trade, revenue, banking, investment and military career opportunities it deserved the title "Pearl of the Antilles"', he thought.

When we add to all those material inducements to hold the island at any cost the haughty pride of the Spanish hidalgo, it is obvious that no effort will be spared to retain possession of this almost sole remnant of the once wealthy colonies of Spain...At the same time it is equally certain that among all classes [in Cuba] with the single exception of the government employees, there is a general widespread distrust too at the greed, arrogance and tyranny of the Spanish office holder.

Reports about Weyler's concentration camps highlighted the cruelty and short-sightedness of Spanish policy. Spain's special failures had been of temperament - in want of adaptability and passionate resort to force, and of limited imagination in not understanding the processes of colonial growth and change.³ Nonetheless some press recognition was granted Spain for her 'splendid' past colonial

¹Daily Telegraph (Sydney), 17 July. 1896.

²Age, 14 Aug. 1896. Continental Europeans were generally regarded as infinitely inferior colonizers to Anglo-Saxons at this time. See A.E. Campbell, op.cit., pp.148, 152; Bradford Perkins, The Great Rapprochement, op.cit., p.87. Both authors quote The Spectator, LXXX, 7 May 1898, pp.645-6. Perkins also notes Winston Churchill's superior attitude to Spanish colonizing attempts in his 1895 report on Cuba in A Roving Commission: My Early Life (London, 1930).

³Daily Telegraph (Sydney), 11 Sept. 1896; Sydney Morning Herald, 12 Sept. 1896. Australia's 4th of July editorials constantly reminded Australians of how bad British colonial policy could itself be.

achievements, which in the opinion of one paper deserved to rank with the works of Clive and Hastings in India.¹

The Queensland Times was one that presented the theory that unlike more idealistic Australian socialists, Cuban revolutionaries were really only after a better sharing of the 'stealings' of government.²

By the end of 1896, Spain had forfeited the racial sympathy of the most senior Australian metropolitan press opinion leader, the Sydney Morning Herald.³ The paper denied that Spain was fighting 'for the supremacy of the white race' as some of her overseas defenders were declaring. Her colonial malpractice - banning Cubans from high office-holding, placing discriminatory tariffs on Cuban goods, imposing harsh government and frustrating local autonomy, were reasons for denying Spain honour as a champion of western colonial liberalism. 'Apply these conditions to a British colony and who would give such a system a year's existence?' it asked, let alone the 400 years of Spanish practice. Expressed on the day that news of Cleveland's anti-imperialist message to Congress⁴ and the death of the insurgent leader Maceo reached Australia (11 December 1896) - at a time when events favoured Spain - this editorial was an important indication of the determined anti-Spanish stance being increasingly adopted by the liberal-conservative press.⁵

¹E.g. Queenslander, 7 Nov. 1896.

²Queensland Times, 24 Oct. 1896.

³Sydney Morning Herald, 11 Dec. 1896. Probably referring to the article by G. Fitzmaurice in the New Review (reprinted in part in the Review of Reviews, 20 Sept. 1896) defending the Spaniards as 'civilizers'.

⁴It is possible that the ambiguous bellicosity of Cleveland's Message may have encouraged Australian aggressiveness. While cables pictured the message as uninterfering, the complete text can be interpreted another way. See Foreign Relations of the United States (Washington, Government Printing Offices, 1897), pp. XXIX-XXXVI, passim.

⁵British journals' reactions were obviously exerting an increasingly powerful influence on Australian attitudes, see Geoffrey Seed, op.cit., pp. 258-9.

From the beginning of 1897, Australian editorial opposition stiffened. Spain's contempt toward the Cuban desire for local government was given fresh emphasis with the unyielding reply of the Duke De Tetuan, Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs to Richard Olney: 'Spain must be the sole judge of the reforms necessary to be carried out in her colonies.'¹ Tasmania's Charles Davies, who was usually Tory-elitist in his attitudes, now believed that America, having compared the conduct of Spain's colonies with Britain's in that area, had found them damningly anti-progressive.²

It was commonly believed that the whole reform programme of Canovas's Conservative Party was too little, too late. Nonetheless, even papers with liberal sympathies believed that if they could find the proposals at all acceptable they should do so. The reason was that the Cubans were considered in Australia as 'only half civilized' and like those in 'neighbouring islands under the Republican flag [were] not ripe for self-government'. Thus the depressing example of Haitian misgovernment acted to make Spain's own misrule appear as the lesser of two evils.³

But such reforms were not formally offered until after the Sagasta Ministry took office in October 1897. It was the quick and decisive rejection of the autonomy offer by the insurgents that convinced the Sydney Morning Herald and others that the cause of the Cuban 'Republic' would now survive and prevail.⁴

Following the assassination of Canovas, irritation at Spain's colonial intentions was caused in Australia by the Spanish suggestion to found an international colony for

¹E.g. Brisbane Evening Observer, 18 Dec. 1896.

²Mercury, 15 Jan. 1897. See also, Methodist (Melbourne), 19 Feb. 1897.

³See, Sydney Morning Herald, 8 Feb. 1897; Launceston Examiner, 9 Feb. 1897.

⁴Sydney Morning Herald, 14 Oct. 1897.

anarchist convicts. The Sydney Morning Herald, anticipating a site in the South Seas, quickly reminded Spain that it would be considered 'an unfriendly and an unneighbourly act towards the colonies of Australasia' to implement such a proposal. As nothing came of it, the matter was soon dropped.¹

Just before the onset of the Spanish-American War, most Australian papers viewed the colonial situation as hopeless. The unrestrained arbitrary powers of Governor-General Blanco would render autonomy 'a fictitious independence'. Cuba would get no relief 'except at the point of a bayonet'. The dilemma remained as to what to do with a Cuba once rid of Spain - an unenviable American problem due to its racial and political connotations.²

Attempting to understand the reasons prompting ordinary Spaniards to fight, Brisbane's Courier concluded that it would only be because they were 'so accustomed to their bad politics that they cannot understand the American abhorrence of the mis-government in Cuba'.³ Flushed with the hopeful liberalism of Jubilee Year, the Telegraph concluded that Cuba's being denied 'such freedom in managing their own affairs as we have in New South Wales', had been the cause of all the present troubles.⁴

Beside the complaints regarding colonial exploitation, the most persistent charge made by Australians was that of military incompetence. Spain's inability to bring the struggle to a clear decision, as well as the military means

¹Sydney Morning Herald, 18, 24 Aug. 1897. See also Review of Reviews, 15 Oct. 1897.

²Leader, 29 June 1897; Brisbane Evening Observer, 30 Mar. 1898.

³Courier, 21 Apr. 1898.

⁴Daily Telegraph, 29 June, 1897. Queen Victoria's great Diamond Jubilee Celebrations took place at the end of June 1897 in London and were attended by the Australian Colonial Premiers. In Australia they were followed with intense interest.

employed, gave rise to the continuing bad publicity which so damaged their image.

Only ineptitude and an excessively defensive posture could explain how (what was by 1898) 200,000 regular Spanish troops, could be held down by around 40,000 active irregular guerilla insurgents in an area the size of Ireland. As in the previous decade of rebellion, it was believed that the island's devastation would come more quickly than victory. Though Spain had shipped men and material most efficiently, the rot lay in the army, where initiative was lacking and entrenchments too thin.¹ Some Australian papers, reviving memories of their own dashing first foreign venture, pointed by way of contrast to the well-organized British forces moving into the Sudan at this time.²

Disgust took on a deeper dimension with a realization of the means of attrition being used by Weyler. The Telegraph castigated the struggle as 'about the savagest and most disgustingly brutal war waged during modern times between white men'.³ To this racial confusion - for by no means were all the combatants Caucasian - was added the irony of the Empire's own use of concentration camps within the next five years, against an even more homogeneously European population.

Some believed that Spain was headed for the same catastrophic defeat at the hands of natives using inferior weapons but superior tactics, as had befallen another Latin race, the Italians, at Adowa, Abyssinia (1 March 1896). Those who saw that neither Spain nor Cuba could gain the upper hand in the military struggle believed rather that,

¹E.g. Editorials in West Australian, 11 July 1896; Daily Telegraph (Sydney), 17 July 1896; Argus, 22 Aug. 1896.

²Omdurman was to crown British Sudanese efforts on 2 Sept. 1898. For the story of the N.S.W. Contingent's farcical and portentous attempt to avenge Gordon's death see Barbara Penny, 'The Age of Empire: An Australian Episode', Historical Studies, Vol. II, 1963-65, pp.32-42.

³Daily Telegraph (Sydney), 31 Aug. 1896.

'the time has come when for decency's sake, some healthy power should step in and draw the helpless combatants off'.¹

How would Britain have handled the problem of Cuba? The Geelong Times thought it knew: 'She would have sent a detachment of a squadron to Cuba, would have landed about 5000 bluejackets and the insurrection would have collapsed a couple of days after the ships arrived'.² Again ironically, the words illustrate the ignorant optimism gained by belief in British arms (which had just conquered the Ashanti) and the easy arrogance that could be assumed by one of Britain's colonies not yet confronted by a determined guerilla force in difficult terrain. For despite the death of the rebels' 'Garibaldi' - Maceo, it was obvious that the forces would rally around their other leaders Gomez and Garcia to fight again now that the rainy season had ended and they were so close to Havana. More cynically, the revolutionaries were regarded as enjoying soldiering better than farming and the Spanish it was believed, would fight on as long as tax monies supported them, rather than return to unemployment at home.³

Despite the Melbourne Herald's chiding of those of its contemporaries who appeared more eager to settle the affairs of others abroad than pressing problems of their own at home,⁴ the Australian press nonetheless continued to offer judgements and advice on the military level. Adelaide's Advertiser agreed with the London Times.⁵ Both thought Spain's military salvation lay in more vigorous offensive generalship following up its victories; the defence of Cuba's coastline against filibustering and the implementation of the death penalty against Americans involved in it --

¹For example, editorials in Geelong Times, 28 Nov. 1896; Daily Telegraph, 3, 5 Dec. 1896; Mercury, 3 Dec. 1896. As Mahan put it in a later reflection: 'It had become apparent to military eyes that Spain could not subdue the island, nor restore orderly conditions. The suffering was terrible, and was unavailing,' Lessons of the War With Spain (Boston, 1918), pp.225-7.

²Geelong Times, 23 Dec. 1896.

³See comment in Herald, 21 Dec. 1896; South Australian Register, 14 Dec. 1896.

⁴Herald, 24 Dec. 1896.

⁵Advertiser, 25 Dec. 1896.

altogether a harsh editorial in the interests of peace, to be issued on Christmas Day.

Some preferred to see the Canovas reform-proposals of February 1897 as an admission by Spain of exhaustion, if not defeat. Their rejection, the intensive lobbying of the 'Cuban Party' in the American Congress, the renewed call for recognition of the rebels' belligerent rights by the Senate and the internal squabbling within the Spanish Conservative party, all told a different story. The press suspected (and T.G. Alvord's article in the Forum corroborated) that the Cubans were in a far stronger military position than Spanish reports indicated. Indeed, they were probably in control of the provinces of Oriente, Camaguey and Las Villas. Alvord also observed during his four months in Cuba that the Spanish military effort was not serious: 150,000 soldiers were on passive garrison duty, shooting was wild, marching aimless, café generals at saturation point and 30,000 officers idled their time in the towns. In electing a president to their internationally unrecognized Cuban republic the insurgents has issued 'the most direct challenge' yet to Madrid. With this development, the idea of General Weyler undertaking a successful campaign against an intervening United States was 'too grotesque for a circus'.¹

At first some hopes were entertained for General Blanco who replaced Weyler under the new Sagasta Ministry in October. It was believed he might act as an 'energetic and humane dictator', for 'what is wanted', asserted the Sydney Morning Herald, 'more at the present moment than even a constitution is the means of making a livelihood and

¹Comment in Mount Alexander Mail, 5 February 1897; Daily Telegraph (Sydney), 6 Feb. 1897; Argus, 25 May 1897; Australasian, 4 Sept. 1897; Age, 1 Sept. 1897; Advertiser, 16 Sept. 1897; Sydney Morning Herald, 15 Sept. 1897; Herald, 24 Sept. 1897.

reduction of sickness and mortality'.¹ Blanco appeared to fit the heroic mould when he was reported to have burnt Esperanza, the rebel seat of government. Almost alone among its conservative peers, the Telegraph hoped that the American fleet's presence in West Indian waters would restrain Spain from going 'too far in its victorious anger' - the others desiring that fleet in Chinese waters to help Britain there.²

Many papers believed that this resurgent Spanish militarism had been responsible for the loss of the Maine. The Geelong Times was typical of those who dismissed the explanation of an accidental mine as 'absurd'.³ At best an increasing number of papers were charging Spain with military negligence and irresponsibility following the report of the American naval commission examining the explosion's cause. Upon receiving news of Spain's naval rebuilding programme, papers questioned how funds could be so readily raised for this purpose in a country supposedly near bankruptcy. Most now believed that Spain would fight America over Cuba as much from a desire to forestall domestic rebellion - like the King of Greece the year before against Turkey - as from a sense of misguided honour, and to assuage 'the hot blood of old cavaliers which still ran in the veins of the present generation'.⁴

At this point, Australian press opinion regarding Spanish militarism was in a cleft stick. All along accused of a failure of élan, the most vociferous criticism followed a restoration of military morale. With other factors, it revealed an underlying bias toward the Cuban cause.

¹Sydney Morning Herald, 27 Oct. 1897.

²Daily Telegraph (Sydney), 26 Jan. 1898; this was in step with the opinion of London's Daily Chronicle, (which it modelled itself on somewhat) but the opinion was expressed earlier than the British paper (7 Apr. 1898). See also Herald, 27 Oct. 1897.

³Geelong Times, 1 Mar. 1898.

⁴See comment in South Australian Register, 16, 29 Mar. 1898; Mt. Alexander Mail, 17 Mar. 1898; Launceston Examiner, 31 Mar. 1898; Age, 31 Mar. 1898; Courier, 4 Apr. 1898; Ballarat Star, 7 Apr. 1898.

Most damaging of all the charges brought against Spain was that of cruelty. Such accusations were quickly taken up by the leading opinion-makers in New South Wales and Victoria and provoked a debate involving anti-Catholicism and anti-Spanish feeling. Though vague and often exaggerated, the accusations were frequently believed because of the more credible corroborative press materials seemingly involving insensitivity and incompetence in colonial and military matters.

By forbidding the harvesting of sugar and coffee crops in an attempt to flush out the rebels through starvation, it was argued that Weyler was simultaneously condemning innocent civilian women and children to death by cutting them off from their means of livelihood. With awareness of this, sympathy for Spain dwindled further.¹

One of the fiercest indictments came at the end of 1896, from the Bendigo Evening Mail.² Spain had dropped her religious mask to reveal a ferocity as great as that of the heathen Turk. If reports of the use of the thumb-screw and rack, midnight assassinations and death by slow torture were correct then,

Spain had forfeited all right to exist as a Government or nation, certainly all claim to rule dependencies....Any nation whose civilization is more than skin deep should support [America] in her threatened rescue and extend it to all populations subject to the same wrongs.

These makings of another press crusade, appealed as in the case of the Americans, to proper Victorian Protestant humanitarianism as it existed in the antipodes.³

Some conservative papers doubted the veracity of these reports. The Argus for example, admitted they were 'partisan', but noted that 'true or false, they are believed.'

¹Daily Telegraph, 31 Aug. 1896.

²Bendigo Evening Mail, 22 Dec. 1896.

³E.g. Weekly Times, 26 Dec. 1896. Most religious papers played down this aspect, however.

Spanish rule, it is said, baffled and despairing, has ceased to be civilized and reverted to barbarism.¹ As noted, the Sydney Morning Herald was prepared to believe these derogatory reports because they were 'generally credited in Europe'.² It based its attack on the treachery of Filipino Dominican and Franciscan friars and believed 'the tools of the Inquisition have never been allowed to grow quite out of date in Spain'. These inflammatory remarks intensified sectarian controversy in Australia during the next two years.³

The Melbourne Herald provides an interesting example of evidencing. For the existence of a 'Black Hole' of Manila in which 59 prisoners suffocated in a single night, evidence from Hong Kong and Singaporean papers and 'an English merchant' at Manila was used. For the judgement of Weyler as 'exterminator', and sham poseur as 'champion of Spanish trade', the long letter of an English observer to the London Times (1 October 1897) was cited.⁴

Far from contradicting this evidence, most papers sought to explain it in terms of 'national temper' or history. Thus the Sydney Morning Herald:

At one end of the Mediterranean, Spain, at the other end, Turkey. Truly these two extremes do not seem to belong to the comity of European nations. Someone says that Africa begins at the Pyrenees and in the light, or rather darkness of these recent acts of official savagery, the saying seems to be fully justified.⁵

Throughout 1897, many pro-Empire Australian papers called for British action, even intervention, especially in the Philippines where it was believed a potential Japanese takeover needed to be forestalled.⁶

¹ Argus, 27 Sept. 1897. Nonetheless the Age and the Adelaide Advertiser were also guilty in the eyes of Catholics of jumping to conclusions.

² Sydney Morning Herald, 28 Jan. 1897.

³ E.g. Freeman's Journal, 6 Feb. 1897.

⁴ Herald, 11 Dec. 1896, 25 Nov. 1897.

⁵ Sydney Morning Herald, 21 Dec. 1896.

⁶ E.g. Melbourne Punch, 24 Dec. 1896; Mt. Alexander Mail, 1 Dec. 1896; Queenslander, 2 Jan. 1896; Review of Reviews, 20 Jan. 1898.

A small section of the Australian press came as close as it ever would to an arrogant 'Yellow Press' of its own, in the editorial of the Ballarat Star - undoubtedly the most over-ripe expression of Australian indignation:

There is not a Christian community on the face of the earth that would not experience satisfaction at witnessing the great drama of the United States undertaking to wipe out once and forever the last vestige of Spanish rule from America. There cannot be a scintilla of sympathy with Spain in her misfortunes and if these should result in her total obliteration from the map of Europe as a nation, it could only be regarded as the just judgement of Heaven for centuries of the most hideous and abominable crimes that have ever darkened with blood the pages of history... [Spain's] last foothold...has been simply a catalogue of ruthless brutalities upon people driven to despair by misgovernment and indifference to human suffering...When was Spain ever known to keep faith or to be touched by a feeling of pity?...There's a limit to human endurance collectively no less than individually. Mankind is weary of beholding this blood-gorged nation still prowling in search of victims. If ever a sacred federation was conceived it would be a Brotherhood of Man formed for the extinction of Spain.

Her effacement at the hands of America should be '...complete ...pitiless and inexorable' and this would evoke '...universal applause and gratification'. With this, a certain element of the press joined what it believed was a developing Anglo-Saxon crusade.¹

In an age which endorsed Social Darwinism, considerable opinion was ranged against 'losers' in the scramble for Empire. As it became increasingly more evident that Spain would soon join those international losers a rationale centering on national degeneracy was built up concerning her.

¹Ballarat Star, 26 Mar. 1898; see Langley, op.cit., p.110 on Cuban intervention as a popular crusade. George W. Auxier in 'Middle Western Newspapers and the Spanish-American War, 1895-1898', Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XXVI (March 1940), illustrates how excited rural-populist newspapers (geographically distanced from America's east) could become, with examples paralleling this editorial.

At first Spain was condemned as 'untrustworthy'. Not only had she once chained Columbus and recently disgraced the chivalrous General Campos, but now the savage General Weyler had been installed in his place. Defects in national character were commonly cited as reasons for Spain's falling from first to last place in the realms of Empire in the course of 400 years, as well as explaining all her errors of judgement.¹

Many believed that the Latin character had been put in its place once again by the superiority of the English race. Thus the Mt. Alexander Mail:

...the whole nation flames and boils and surges with a mad passion of enthusiasm directed against the progeny of these English bulldogs...who had forced the nation [Spain] down, down upon its knees to poverty and wreck.²

Now the country would be no match for a more vigorous Anglo-Saxon rival (America) with her boundless energies and incomputable resources.³ By the time war broke out, many had joined critics like Bonsal and Shaw⁴ in condemning the 'vain and vulture-like Don'.

Perhaps Spain was unfortunate in being lumped so definitely with 'fin de siecle' aristocratic degeneracy contrasted with progressive American democracy. With the overwhelming pressure of adverse propaganda in the English-speaking press against Spain, it was almost inevitable in which direction Australian press sympathy would travel.⁵

¹ See comment in Barrier Miner, 4 Mar. 1896; Sydney Morning Herald, 12 Sept. 1896; Queenslander, 7 Nov. 1896, 26 Dec. 1896.

² Mt. Alexander Mail, 8 Apr. 1898.

³ For example see, Ballarat Star, 13 Apr. 1898; Australian Star, 18 Apr. 1898; Argus, 18 Apr. 1898; South Australian Register, 20 Apr. 1898.

⁴ Stephen Bonsal, The Real Condition of Cuba Today (New York, 1897), esp. pp. 23-4, 111-2. His ideas achieved added circulation through the Review of Reviews where Albert Shaw gave them special prominence.

⁵ John Grenville assures us that national prejudice of this kind has not decreased since 1898: 'National Prejudice and International History', pam. (Leeds, 1968), p. 21.

What debate remained among editorialists concerned the international legality of American filibustering expeditions; the nature of Spanish military strength; Spanish performance in the Philippines and the character of Spain's rulers.

Given the costly international legal precedent of the Alabama claims, it was natural that Australian opinion was long opposed to the sort of informal military assistance being rendered Cuban rebels by various filibustering expeditions. Especially was this so where Americans who were involved, were mostly escaping the consequences of those activities which had cost the British people many millions of pounds sterling.¹

Each crisis in turn - The Competitor (May 1896); The Three Friends (December 1896); The Commodore (January 1897) and others following, awoke a chorus of support or detraction - mostly the latter - from the Australian press. Whether those Americans captured deserved the death penalty was the main point of contention. Australians sympathetic to the cause of the Cuban 'Republic' were opposed to it, while those who supported Spanish attempts to introduce reforms viewed the harsher alternative as the only effective deterrent. Use of the Monroe Doctrine as an American justification was again debated. Some claimed its misuse; others that the British had already endorsed its extension to include Cuba as an American sphere of influence. American magazine reports of filibustering were either applauded for their obvious panache, or condemned for their larrikin attitude toward existing notions of international law.

¹The debate can be traced in the following: Argus, 13 May 1896; 7 Jan. 1897; 19 Apr. 1898; Weekly Times, 16, 23 May 1896; Age, 14 Aug. 1896; 13 May 1897; 18 Apr. 1898; Launceston Examiner, 16 Sept., 21 Dec. 1896, 22 Nov. 1897; Review of Reviews, 20 Sept., 20 Oct. 1896; Mercury, 9, 19 October 1896; Ballarat Star, 22 Dec. 1896; Advertiser, 25 Dec. 1896; Brisbane Evening Observer, 4 Jan. 1897; Daily Telegraph (Sydney), 6, 7 Jan. 1897; Geelong Advertiser, 7 Jan. 1897; Advocate, 9 Jan. 1897; Sydney Morning Herald, 11 Nov. 1897; Bendigo Advertiser, 16 Apr. 1898.

Further, American actions were condemned by some for causing internal difficulties for the Spanish government while those who defended them did so on the grounds of defence of American 'interests'. Australian press opinion mostly concurred with McKinley's articulation of these interests in his Congressional Message (11 April 1898) and his sudden decision for war based on those interests.¹ As the Age rationalized it a week later: the older, stricter view of international law which held every State to be sovereign in itself was giving way to the newer rule that a nation should be sovereign 'so long as the operations of that state are confined in their effort to the limits of national territory'. America had the precedents of Greece, Turkey, Mexico and Egypt in its favour, and only the Virginus incident against it.²

Now Australian liberal-conservative press opinion was prepared to endorse the new interpretation of international law. Nothing reflects better the direction of the flow of Australian sympathies than this sudden shift of legal viewpoint favouring America against Spain.³

A prolonged debate centred on Spanish military prospects. Much of it was based on ignorance, prejudice and

¹For McKinley's Message see Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States (1898, Government Printing Office, 1901), pp.750-60.

²The filibuster Virginus was captured 31 October 1873 and 53 of the crew, including Americans were shot. American Secretary of State, Hamilton Fish, attempted to use it as a pretext for American intervention in Cuba's 'Ten Years War', but was unsuccessful in arousing European backing: Allen Nevins, Hamilton Fish (Vol.II, 1936), p.671, passim. T.G. Shearman's 'International Law and the Cuban Question', The Outlook, LVIII (16 Apr. 1898), p.987, arrived too late to affect the Australian debate.

³'Progressive Imperialists had oft been careless of the niceties of international law if it meant achieving an end': Alec Campbell, 'The Spanish-American War', History Today, VIII (1958), p.239.

the operation of imponderables.¹

At first, there was much opinion in Australia expressed in favour of Spain's military chances against America. Spain's past reputation as a fighting nation was not lightly put aside. Nor were her recent successes against the insurgents of Cuba and the Philippines in early 1898. As well as her greater experience in jungle fighting and as a naval power, it was expected that her present desperation and appeal to national honour would call forth greater effort. Rothschild's naval gift to Spain and the evident financial and diplomatic sympathy of France and Germany gave extra credibility to Spain's military chances. A short war might just see Spain triumph against an ill-trained and ill-prepared America.

But Spain's support dwindled as war approached. The Argus was typical of those who believed it was the most incredible folly for Spain to take on alone a power of 'seventy millions of perhaps the most intelligent and enterprising people on earth', whose new ships of the Oregon class were claimed to be the most powerful afloat. Beside, economic disparities and political dissension in Spain, made her no match for America's resources and renewed sense of national unity. Most Australians placed great store in Yankee ingenuity and energy in overcoming initial handicaps. Spain's detractors believed her Continental

¹The debate appears in the following: Argus, 21 Aug. 1896; 18, 20, 21 Apr. 1898; Geelong Advertiser, 22 Dec. 1896; 11 Apr. 1898; Geelong Times, 23 Dec. 1896; Age, 26 Dec. 1896, 1 Jan., 23 Aug., 1 Sept., 22 Oct. 1897, 7, 21 Jan. 1898; Weekly Times, 26 Dec. 1896; Melbourne Punch, 31 Dec. 1896; Brisbane Evening Observer, 13 Sept. 1897; Herald, 18 Mar., 2 Apr. 1898; Maitland Mercury, 19 Mar. 1898; Leader, 9 Apr., 16 Apr. 1898; Courier, 2, 12 Apr. 1898; Advertiser, 19 Mar. 1898; Review of Reviews; 20 July 1897; Advocate, 25 Sept. 1897; Sydney Morning Herald, 16 Apr. 1898; Bendigo Advertiser, 11 Apr. 1898; South Australian Register, 1 June 1897; Australian Star, 18 Apr. 1898; Mt. Alexander Mail, 20 Apr. 1898. Stateman's Year Book for 1895, 1896, 1897, used as references.

backers would not rally to her and that if they did, Britain by immediately taking the side of America, was more than a match for such a combination. Further, they maintained that militarily Spain had proved herself to be lethargic, inept and unimaginative and many of her troops were sick. Strategically, in terms of supplies of material and maintenance of communications, she was disadvantaged by fighting so far from home and her ships had few coaling stations.

Nonetheless, Spain's internal difficulties and her uncertain political future, especially of the noble Queen Maria Christina, aroused some pangs of sympathy during 1897 - the year in which Britain's great monarch received affectionate regards from the colonies of Australia.¹ This feeling was counteracted by the debate on the future of the Philippines, from which Spain emerged as an insufferable future overlord. As with the legal issue, a sharp turning away from the contemplation of a Spanish victory coincided with a more partisan backing of America as war neared.

Turning now to consider Australia's attitudes and reactions toward America, we can see that sometimes the debate is complementary. However, America presented its own distinctive case and stimulated more comment in Australia than did Spain. Many old themes treated previously were again raised, but viewed in a new perspective. The change in attitude toward America derives much of its meaning from an understanding of the attitudes expressed toward Spain.

¹British sympathy was much greater at the official level for the Queen Regent, see C.S. Campbell, *op.cit.*, pp. 25-6.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE COMING OF WAR (1895-1898):

THE CASE FOR AMERICA IN AUSTRALIA

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE COMING OF WAR: 1895-1898

THE CASE FOR AMERICA IN AUSTRALIA

Anti-American attitudes and reactions in Australia were quite widespread and continued throughout the three years under discussion. They focused on two phenomena whose growth and development were distasteful to Australians. These were the continuing American jingoism, now translated into a new American international style and its vehicle, the 'Yellow Press',¹ representing a new American journalistic tone.

Though objections were raised regarding both means and ends in the new American diplomacy, adverse comment at first concentrated on means. American jingoism toward England had caused irritation in Australia. Since early 1896 Yankeephobes such as Davies trenchantly criticized American 'paper warriors', 'saloon orators' and 'firebrand Yanks' who traded in 'cheap heroics' against Englishmen, having been frustrated in their early designs on Cuba.² The new and bellicose developments in American foreign policy received such a bad press in Australia because Englishmen first felt their bite.³

At an early stage, critics like the Brisbane Worker⁴ and others noted that America's ship-building programme would result in America 'continually standing on the edge of international troubles which have cost ten times as much as an unnecessary fleet'. This was sad, John Farrell believed, because

¹'Yellow Journalism' derived its name from the yellow ink first used in comic strips, especially the 'Yellow Kid' in Pulitzer's New York World. Hearst took it up and by 1898 the term was synonymous with sensational journalism in popular papers. Australian papers did not carry comic strips in their papers at this time.

²Mercury, 4 Jan. 1896.

³See for example, Launceston Examiner, 6 Mar. 1896. Britain ran similar comments e.g. Saturday Review, 'The Blatant American', LXXXV, p.546.

⁴Brisbane Worker, 22 Jan. 1898.

no country in the world, no aggregation of modern people has had such an opportunity of setting an example of peace as the United States was given before she took to building warships, cultivating a foreign policy and in pretended solicitude for the spirit of Monroeism, breaking the spirit of it into small bits.

He concluded prophetically:

It is not good business to have a number of foreign complications in hand [with] more to follow...a position into which the American navy will more firmly (and dangerously) wedge the Republic as time goes on.¹

The Navy League in London even suggested that Australian interests would ultimately collide with America's over that country's ambitions toward Hawaii.²

Stead, in the Australian Review of Reviews, treated American filibusterers harshly. To him they were 'professional ruffians and atrocity-mongers, uncivilized blackmailers' typical of 'Yankee barbarism'. By contrast in this respect, the Spanish became in his eyes a 'renowned, heroic and unvanquished people'.³ The Launceston Examiner blamed American brusqueness in this regard on her isolation from foreign politics, developing 'indifference, if not arrogance...calculated to wound the susceptibilities of a nation like Spain'.⁴

To Australian commentators, America was flirting with a policy dangerous to world peace. The prospect of a Continental combination backing Spain might precipitate war, if only to put America in its place. German Hohenzollern sympathy with Spain for traditional reasons was as well recognized as was that country's hostility toward Monroeism. To the Argus,

there is peril in the position of a democratic people unequipped for a great war, yet perpetually straining at the leash, held in the tiring hands of their Executive. Some day the leash may break or the grasp upon it suddenly relax.⁵

¹Daily Telegraph, 4 Mar. 1896.

²Argus, 26 January, 1898.

³Review of Reviews, 20 Sept. 1896, commenting on Bloomfield's 'Cuban Expedition'.

⁴Launceston Examiner, 21 Dec. 1896.

⁵Argus, 29 Dec. 1896.

The success of the Three Friends filibuster (December 1896) indicated to other conservative newspapers how much pressure the encouraged jingoes could assert on the American scene.¹

Some of these conservatives were prepared to applaud when this annoying jingoism was checked. The Duke of Tetuan's diplomatic rebuff was an occasion for this. America's 'undignified' actions were being answered with 'something of the old haughty and resolute Spanish temper'. But when the Duke's resignation was demanded in the Cortes (May 1897) some blamed General Lee, America's Consul General in Havana for having engineered it. Others were more critical of Republican policies being implemented by McKinley, when a retreat from Cleveland-style Monroeism had been predicted.² The President's threat that unless Spain subdued her possessions by October, America would feel justified in intervening, aroused the Argus and others: 'No more "forward" policy than this can be imagined', it wrote. 'No slight could be offered which it is less possible for even a decadent power to brook without humiliation'. For some editors, America was going too far.³

In an editorial entitled 'Those Irritating Americans', the South Australian Register mitigated its criticism of such forwardness by claiming that the way of wisdom regarding America was to gain 'increasing insight into the purely evanescent nature of American ebullitions of feeling and the make-believe of Washington politics'.⁴ Others were less tolerant. One paper believed that ironically, America was assisting in the Cuban's downfall by forcing Spain to redouble its military efforts against them.⁵ British sources were equally critical. Smalley agreed that America's final notice to Spain though long delayed, was cruelly short when

¹South Australian Register, 29 Dec. 1896.

²E.g. Daily Telegraph (Sydney), 19, 21, 30 Jan. 1897; Sydney Morning Herald, 1 Apr. 1897; Age, 31 May 1897.

³Argus, 27 Sept. 1897.

⁴South Australian Register, 30 Sept. 1897.

⁵Daily Telegraph (Sydney), 12 Oct. 1897.

it came, especially as Spain would be only too pleased to find a means of withdrawing its troops with honour.¹ After the Stock Market dropped following the American announcement, some were displeased enough to suspect manipulation by speculators of the Sugar Trust.²

When Senorita Evangeline Cisneros was rescued by Karl Decker and reporters of Hearst's New York Journal, many scoffed at the new international role created for journalists.³

Upon the Maine being ordered to Havana on a 'friendly call' (26 January 1898) as the cables described it, many were openly sceptical. 'You know the sort of "friendly call"' scoffed 'Aliquis' in the Telegraph:

The sort of call that is also made when some infuriated citizen calls on his neighbour and exhibiting a loaded pistol at full cock, remarks that he has just dropped in to express a hope that the baby is well.

The transparent menace of the 'big sea-going pugilist' was not lost on astute observers.⁴

Among the cables delayed from America by a week's failure of the overland line to Darwin, was news of Senor Dupuy De Lome's derogatory letter and the 'profound sensation' its publication had aroused in New York. The

¹Advertiser, 29 Oct. 1897, quoting London Times.

²Sydney Morning Herald, 11 Nov. 1897.

³Daily Telegraph (Sydney), 30 Nov. 1897. See also Review of Reviews, 15 Dec. 1897. The Cisneros rescue, publicised by the New York Journal, 10 Oct. 1897, headlined: 'An American Newspaper Accomplishes at a Single Stroke What the Best Efforts of Diplomacy Failed Utterly to Bring About in Many Months'. The paper claimed that the rescue from Havana of a girl who had been imprisoned for defending her virtue against the advances of a Spanish Officer was 'The Greatest Journalistic Coup of this Age'. Miss Cisneros had accompanied her father into exile following his imprisonment for complicity with the insurgents. When she arrived in New York, there was a huge reception for her at Madison Square Garden and she was introduced to the President. For an account, see Walter Millis, The Martial Spirit, pp.82-4.

⁴Daily Telegraph (Sydney), 28 Jan. 1898.

private communication of the Spanish Minister at Washington had contained criticism of McKinley as 'weak and catering to the rabble...a low politician who desires to leave a door open to me and to stand well with the jingoes of his party.'¹ As the letter had been stolen from the mails in Havana and released to Hearst's New York Journal by the Cuban junta, the incident aroused only contemptuous criticism in Australia. Memories of similar indignities through partisan trickery attending the expulsion of the British ambassador Lord Sackville-West in 1888, were a continuing source of Yankeeophobia after the passage of a decade. The Sydney Morning Herald was shocked:

...except in America, there is hardly a case extant of an Ambassador being disgraced by means of a trick....With these developments of 'smartness' in diplomatic relations with the United States, the corps diplomatique at Washington will soon need to be composed of Sherlock Holmeses,

it wrote.² In the eyes of Australians, in strong contrast to British reaction, the episode did not redound to American honour.³

Even the Maine catastrophe a week later (15 February 1898) failed to arouse immediate sympathy among those still soured by the De Lome revelations. The Australian Star blamed 'American bluster' for what had happened. The Maine's presence had been a thinly-veiled threat. 'Zed' in 'Day by Day' in that paper remarked: 'If the tragedy assists to make the American eagle a trifle more modest, it will not have been altogether in vain'. Taking a vicious side-swipe at the loquacious American Consul in Sydney, he

¹Text of the letter published in Age's American correspondent's letter, sent 18 February, arriving 26 March. Translation slightly different from later versions. See H. Wayne Morgan, William McKinley and His America (Syracuse, New York, 1963), p.356 for a critique.

²Sydney Morning Herald, 17 Feb. 1898. See also Review of Review: 15 Apr. 1898, pp.395-7.

³C.S. Campbell, op.cit., pp.27-8, makes a strong case for British press sympathy toward America over the De Lome affair. These differing reactions highlight the individuality of Australia's press. See also B.A. Reuter, Anglo-American Relations During the Spanish-American War (New York, 1924), p.68.

asked: 'Now will Colonel Bell kindly deliver one of his well known lectures on "Explosions"?'¹ Though more kindly disposed toward the hapless Bell, 'Niemand' of the Telegraph echoed 'Zed's' sentiments precisely. If sobering, 'it may result in a thousand times as many lives being saved as have been lost' (260 officers and men had been lost in the mysterious explosion).² The Australasian claimed 'it is scarcely a favourable moment for a powerful American cruiser of nearly 7,000 tons to steam into Havana as a friendly guest'.³ The Sydney Morning Herald harshly reminded the public that danger was the 'business' or 'duty' of sailors in war vessels and that Australian sympathy was 'strangely incongruous' with this fact.⁴

Irony suffused the judgements of Melbourne's Herald also. While S.V. Winter, the proprietor, was in Europe throughout most of 1898, his editor Lt.Col. Reay believed that American hopes for 'benevolent neutrality' in a Spanish-American conflict might be 'as doubtful....as the justice of the American cause (for)...Britishers are hardly likely to run at the heels of the Jingo war chariots'.⁵ Commenting cynically over a month later on McKinley's assurance that he would not become responsible for an 'unholy war', that paper remarked: 'It is remarkable how invariably this sort of thing precedes a wholesale cutting of throats.'⁶

Melbourne's Catholic newspaper, the Advocate, continued to insist that it could see no clear cause for war in the Maine incident. It preferred to see America accept compensation'...without making the crime an excuse for territorial aggrandisement'. For:

His long and eager desire to possess Cuba explains, but does not justify, the part Uncle Sam has played in this affair. His good qualities are many, but his character is not faultless.

¹ Australian Star, 18 Feb. 1898. The paper viewed Bell as a 'wind-bag' ready to lecture on any topic, regardless of expertise.

² Daily Telegraph, 21 Feb. 1898.

³ Australasian, 19 Feb. 1898.

⁴ Sydney Morning Herald, 23 Feb. 1898.

⁵ Herald, 12 Feb. 1898.

⁶ Herald, 18 Mar. 1898.

The paper was conscience-bound to blame America (which had refused the prospect of papal arbitration) and not Spain for the friction. Though sentimentally attached to America, it condemned an American-initiated war as 'an unholy one... aggressive and covetous... unjust and reprehensible'. A clear division of Catholic sentiment presented itself - partly for a Catholic power and partly for an Anglo-Saxon one. This contradiction dogged Australian Catholic sentiment.¹

But even the great dailies with a Protestant bias were dour. Some reminded Americans of the cruelties they had inflicted on their own Indians and compared their present altruism as that of the wolf with regard to the lamb.² One paper described the Republican platform on foreign matters (St. Louis, June 1896) as comparable with 'France electing her chief officer on a platform pledging him to use his influence to make Great Britain give independence to Ireland'.³ Many pointed out that certainly Spain's rearmament indicated how little she trusted America's intentions.⁴ A number of commentators thereby accentuated American hypocrisy.

Frederick Greenwood, influential former editor of the Pall Mall Gazette and St. James Gazette - a freelancing conservative journalist - published a widely quoted article, 'The World's Unrest' in the Argus. He criticized, among other things, America's obsession with the Civil War:

Month after month, year after year there is an increasing outpouring of historiettes commemorative of the awful butcheries called battles which for many good reasons would be better remembered in silence. Only a craving for national glory can account for the unending celebration of the slaughter of Americans by Americans and it is this same hankering no

¹Advocate, 19, 26 Mar., 9 Apr. 1898.

²E.g. South Australian Register, 29 Mar. 1898.

³E.g. Age, 31 Mar. 1898.

⁴E.g. Launceston Examiner, 7 Apr. 1898.

doubt, which on several occasions of late, has turned half the population of the United States into a war party.

Greenwood predicted that this jingoism would soon project America onto the world stage.¹

Ignoble aspects of American expansionism continued to be aired. The Bendigo Independent reminded Australians that 'the United States system of government is not the best in the world' and that 'there is probably as much suffering and iniquity in New York and Chicago as there is in Cuba'.² Comparisons were also local. The violence and disorder of the American Congressional proceedings (April 1898) were far in excess of any such colonial crudities of a parliamentary nature it was noted. Some joined with the London Times which condemned the noisy legislature as a 'national disgrace' by encouraging avenging factions. The American Senate - already highly unpopular in Australia - was blamed for needless bellicosity. Many continued to hope that the 'fearful price' America would be forced to pay for active intervention would quieten this high-handed ebullience. It was regretted that, in the process, so many not responsible for Cuban miseries would themselves suffer.³

Other criticisms were registered. As ever, the Hobart Mercury spearheaded the most trenchant of the attacks. America's actions were prompted by a desire for military and naval glory 'which has become so marked a characteristic of the American people', it wrote. Further, international law was a thing which the United States had never observed while it did not suit them, the paper charged. 'From the

¹Argus, 9 Apr. 1898. Frederick Greenwood (1830-1909). A conservative, he influenced public affairs most between 1865-1880 when he used his pen to support Disraeli against Gladstone. He had always supported Salisbury. In 1875 Greenwood played a large unofficial role in Britain's purchase of Suez shares.

²Bendigo Independent, 13 Apr. 1898.

³See, Australian Star, 15 Apr. 1898; Bendigo Advertiser, 16 Apr. 1898; Argus, 18 Apr. 1898; Daily Telegraph, 18 Apr. 1898; Courier, 19 Apr. 1898; Newcastle Morning Herald, 18 Apr. 1898; Capricornian, 9 Apr. 1898.

outset...they have done pretty much as they darned pleased', ignoring the '...decencies of international life'. It therefore viewed Jenkins' Ear as being as valid an excuse for war at this point as was the Maine.¹ While not condoning American actions, others believed that the United States was caught in a trap of its own policy-making. Republicans had to press on with their 'large policy' or lose face. But there were those who maintained that the real jingoes were the 'Popocrats' defeated in the 1896 election. Their motives in recognizing a Cuban republic was as much to embarrass the Republicans as from their own conviction.² To the West Australian, as to others, intervention under the more oppressive Weyler regime was thought to make more sense than during the more conciliatory occupation by Blanco.³

Even the generally agreed upon strategic motive for intervention was attacked in the end, and by the Argus, one of its erstwhile supporters. Thus:

...if Cuba is the key to the American position, Jamaica is the key to Cuba; the Bahamas the key to Jamaica and so we may travel on to Newfoundland and the Isle of Man. The strategists make every place of value,

the paper complained, 'and they are to be called in as expert witnesses and not as judges'.⁴ Militarism in general was attacked by the Bendigo Independent. The creation of a military structure might 'for years to come be a menacing element in the Republic'. War would also endanger the unity of the Republic by exacerbating class and sectional divisions, it warned. That paper registered the strongest aversion to American jingoism on the Australian scene. Americans were 'a singularly tetchy, pugnacious, shooting and knifing people' desiring '...pageant and excitement... sensationalism on a grand scale...and holocausts of corpses

¹Mercury, 18, 19 Apr. 1898.

²E.g. Courier, 18 Apr. 1898; Launceston Examiner, 18 Apr. 1898.

³West Australian, 18 Apr. 1898. See also Ballarat Courier, 19 Apr. 1898; Argus, 21 Apr. 1898. Senator Proctor's address to Congress convinced that paper that the Democrats had been for war since 18 March 1898.

⁴Argus, 21 Apr. 1898.

swimming in streams of blood'. They were 'a people ready to popularise McKinley if he casts all judgement to the winds and goes in blindly for slaughter'. This view of the socialist John Gregory Edwards echoed the earlier criticism by De Lome.¹ The recently founded Bendigo Evening Mail of Robert Walker (1894), with a mildly radical policy of its own, likewise complained. 'The American Eagle is likely to become ridiculous over the Cuban affair', it wrote. 'He began to screech too soon and he is screeching too long'. Written on 20 April, this was one of the last criticisms of jingo politics as such. Within a week, militarism - or jingo politics in practice, would be the main focus of anti-American comment in the Australian press.²

America's thrusting new international jingo style was therefore criticized by the Australian press from 1895 to 1898 for its nature and motives, its excessive brashness, its foolish and dangerous lack of military backing, its timing and finally, its breach with tradition and imponderable results.

Australian editors also criticized the tangible vehicle of American jingoism - the 'Yellow Press'. There were several reasons for this, among them, an aversion to the exaggeration and violence of the American character and a preference for more restrained and 'responsible' English journalistic models. A concern to stress issues rather than news presentation, and a natural press conservatism regarding the new press forms, similarly operated to bring about such an adverse attitude toward the 'Yellow Press'. Finally, the absence of either the pre-conditions of a malleable reading public or a ruthless circulation war, dulled the prospect of such colourful journalism being duplicated on the Australian scene.

The attack on the tone of sections of the New York press was opened in the first week of January 1898, by the

¹Bendigo Independent, 20 Apr. 1898.

²Bendigo Evening Mail, 20 Apr. 1898.

sober Launceston Examiner. That paper found reporting of filibustering escapades 'bombastic and overbearing in the extreme'. It reminded its readers that not all American newspapers were as flattering to the British as was being supposed by the press of the Australian mainland. Some American editors were openly predicting that Britain's commercial greatness would be America's in a matter of time. Support for the English was one of mere temporary expediency - Americans actually posed a long-term threat to Australian interests.¹ This impression was reinforced by the Age's New York correspondent. It became evident that British goodwill toward America was not as widely reciprocated as Australians imagined.²

Further disillusion with the New York press was to follow. William Randolph Hearst's offer of a reward for the discovery of the perpetrators of the Maine outrage was condemned by the Telegraph as being

hard to conceive a more obvious and deliberate insult to the Spanish Government...provoked... from no other motive than the desire of a newspaper proprietary to obtain wider advertisement and circulation for its journal... and...dishing its rivals at any price.³

Such 'wild allegations' regarding 'Spanish treachery' evoked widespread repulsion. The 'shoddy theatricalism' of printing in red ink caused the Brisbane Evening Observer to declare:

...it is difficult to realise a journalism so demented as to print its papers in ink the colour of a cockpit just fresh with gore. The whoop of the mobs which are yelling in France for Jewish blood [the Dreyfus case] finds something more than an echo in America over a wrecked gunboat.⁴

¹Launceston Examiner, 4 Jan., 26, 28 Feb. 1898.

²Age, 19 March 1898. Letter sent 30 Jan. 1898. See also, Geelong Advertiser, 23 Feb. 1898.

³Daily Telegraph (Sydney), 1 Mar. 1898.

⁴Brisbane Evening Observer, 1 Mar. 1898.

Even the Age's American correspondent found the 'gross extravagances and palpable exaggerations' of the New York press disconcerting.¹

This comparison with the French 'gutter press', which had been condemned in Australia for over a decade, indicated 'perverse and depraved taste' existing in America. Davies held it was enough to 'make the observer doubtful of democracy and even question the value of modern journalistic developments'. Hearst's reward was 'bribing unscrupulous men to manufacture evidence'.² Surely there could be 'no worse taste and no more ignoble procedure', remarked the Argus. It was clearly unworthy of a 'great nation'. The worst aspect was that in copying and surpassing the abusive tone of the Madrid journals, America was creating a fevered public opinion which might put irresistible pressures on the government. The arrival of more examples of these papers on the eve of war aboard the R.M.S. Moana (Melbourne, 17 April 1898) confirmed the worst fears that Hearst and Pulitzer were between them monopolising Cuban news sources and distorting the general situation. The Philadelphia Ledger was praised by some as an example of a sober contrast to the New York press. For, as the Argus (itself often accused of war-mongering by its rivals) put it: 'War should come as a painful duty, to be honourably faced and bravely discharged and not, as the jingoes of all countries seem to think, as a relaxation or a pleasure'.³ In its diplomatic and journalistic forms, recrudescant jingoism provoked anti-American sentiment on the Australian scene.

¹Age, 26 Mar. 1898. Letter written 18 Feb. 1898. On that day the New York Journal's circulation reached 1,036,140 (see Wisan, op.cit.) - the high water mark in the circulation war with Pulitzer. The Argus's New York correspondent confirmed this judgement - 18 Apr. 1898.

²Mercury, 2 Mar. 1898.

³Argus, 2 Mar., 12, 18 Apr. 1898. See also, Daily Telegraph (Launceston), 3 Mar. 1898.

Yet several factors combined to make America popular in Australia on the eve of the outbreak of the Spanish-American war. A bedrock of sympathy existed due to Anglo-Saxon racial ties so widely publicized during the arbitration excitement. The belief that Spain's colonies would be better off both economically and politically under America helped counteract criticism of America's more selfish motives. Most impressive was the altruism of American concern to prevent further suffering. Strategic interests also played their part in creating a climate of approval for American action. In these ways, acknowledgement of American selfishness became muted and American virtue was able to gradually appear in the best light.

As early as February 1896, the Advertiser regarded America's willingness to recognise insurgents' belligerent rights as justified on humanitarian grounds in the eyes of international law.¹ Another paper believed at the end of that year that

no doubt if the question were submitted to the mass of the American people, there would be an overwhelming majority in favour of active intervention, for the Americans regard the people of Cuba much as the mass of Englishmen regard the Armenians.²

The Armenian precedent helped prepare Australian opinion for American intervention in Cuba. America's tradition of achieving liberty from a Mother Country through force, also helped acceptance of the notion of American sympathy for Cuba's plight.³

The attitude firmed that it was America's duty to remove Spain from the international scene. 'Uncle Sam's Sick Man' was Stephen Bonsal's⁴ description in the Review of Reviews, a theme taken up by Albert Shaw and

¹ Advertiser, 17 Feb. 1896.

² West Australian, 11 July 1896.

³ See, Weekly Times, 26 Dec. 1896; Daily Telegraph (Sydney), 26 Jan. 1898.

⁴ Stephen Bonsal, 1865-1951, was an American journalist, New York's correspondent in several locales including China 1895; Cuba, 1897-8; Philippines, 1901 and Venezuela 1903. In 1913 he became secretary to the Governor General of the Philippines.

others as a fitting indictment. A justification for using ruthless, even illegal means, to achieve humanitarian ends was echoed by 'progressive' elements in the Australian press. The rescue of Senorita Cisneros typified this tendency which received its most effective publicity in the Review of Reviews, a crusader for altruistic interventionism.¹ Precipitant events such as the De Lome letter, or the Maine disaster, could not obscure the fact for some that:

It would be as just and generous a war as has ever been undertaken by any country...How the Americans, lashed to their duty...by probably the most cleverly conducted and most brilliant press in the world, could have refrained from declaring war against Spain, is somewhat of a mystery.²

The case building up for America was making it an 'irrepressible conflict' for some Australian editors.³

'Who is Cuba's Neighbour?' asked the leading editorial of the Brisbane Courier at the end of March 1898. Given the death of a population 'almost equal to that of Queensland out of a population something like that of Queensland and New South Wales combined' and the imminent death of half as many more, 'are facts so tremendous at the close of this nineteenth century, which may be called the century of humanity that we cannot and dare not escape the question of responsibility and of succour'. Europe had clearly failed to prevent a similar tragedy in Armenia, but now

...the civilized world looks...to America to step in and end the Cuban horror...it is clearly America's place to render...succour... For the time there will be outcries from a

¹Review of Reviews, 20 July, 1897, p.104, 15 Dec. 1897, pp. 768-77: 'A Romance of the Pearl of the Antilles'.

²Daily Telegraph (Sydney), 29 June, 1897.

³See e.g. Launceston Examiner, 25 Sept. 1897; Argus, 27 Sept. 1897; Newcastle Morning Herald, 9 Dec. 1897; Geelong Advertiser, 10 Jan. 1898; South Australian Register, 6 Jan. 1898; Leader, 26 Mar. 1898; Bendigo Independent, 28 Mar. 1898.

humiliated nation and from all who put sovereignty before humanity; but the ultimate verdict of history will be on the side of the deliverer.¹

The West Australian similarly believed that:

...even in a peace-loving age, the doctrine finds but small acceptance that all wars are unjust and undesirable and should America decide to unsheath the sword against Spain the general verdict of the most enlightened public opinion will be that she is fighting in the cause of humanity and civilization. With much less reason has Great Britain intervened again and again to restrain the cruelty and oppression of Indian princes and so-called Kings in Africa. Her mission it has been declared, was not conquest, but good government and stable laws for the people whom she came to free...No sufficient reason can be advanced why America should not accept a no less beneficent mission in Cuba.

Remarkably, both these editorials expressing very similar viewpoints were written on the same day in Colonial capitals 3,000 miles apart.²

This growing consensus of Australian conservative-liberal press opinion, so unwilling to grant other foreign powers the right to copy the paradigm of British interventionism, revealed once again its underlying racial and political bias. Further, publicists now made it appear as hypocrisy that Australia should refuse to accede to this American

¹Courier, 28 Mar. 1898.

²West Australian, 28 Mar. 1898. This unanimity may have been a common response to either the Red Cross revelations and/or the 'able, well-informed and dispassionate' article on Spanish cruelty in February's Blackwood's (mentioned in the Courier, 29 Mar. 1898). As the article in The Spectator, LXXX, 19 Mar. 1898, revealed, Anglo-Saxons seemed to be thinking the same everywhere at this time, on this issue. In a sense Australian opinion now joined that of formerly condemned American jingoes like H.C. Lodge, 'Our Duty To Cuba', Forum, XXI (May 1896), pp.286-7, thus affirming the notion of 'Progressivism by the Sword'. For similar approving British opinion at this exact time, see C.S. Campbell, op.cit., pp.28-30, especially Hay's perceptions.

interventionism. Worse, it would be a crime against Anglo-Saxon values for America not to intervene.

The consensus increased further in the month that followed. Readers were asked to 'imagine Australia with Cuban conditions in Tasmania or New Caledonia'. It was claimed that appeals to the higher conscience of Christian civilization would commend American intervention to 'all neutral and unprejudiced nations' and the 'sympathy of all right-minded individuals' as the 'shortest or even the only way to peace'. Two precedents particularly informed the commentary: Egypt, occupied in 1882 as one of the first acts of Britain's 'New Imperialism', was cited as a case where Britain had remained as a custodian of good government. The failed Jameson Raid (1896), ostensibly undertaken to relieve the 'helpless women and children of Johannesburg', was similarly quoted. In both cases a desire to share not only the glory, but the burden of Empire was evident.¹

Consequently, a willingness to accept the primacy of the humanitarian motive as described in McKinley's Message to Congress calling for war powers (11 April), was evident almost everywhere in the press.² Further, few were willing as war approached, to challenge the accuracy of the figures on Cuban suffering, or to believe that the American Naval Commission's findings on the external nature of the explosion were wrong, or that America's Cuban Consul, General Lee was exaggerating the picture of Cuban suffering.³ Thus the bulk of the Australian press aligned its estimate of the 'true' nature of the situation behind America's and Britain's and against the counter-views of most of the presses of Spain, Austria, Germany, Russia, Italy and France.

¹ See comment in, Brisbane Evening Observer, 30 Mar. 1898; Australasian, 2 Apr. 1898; Maitland Mercury, 6 Apr. 1898; Courier, 7, 13, 18 Apr. 1898.

² E.g. Melbourne Punch, 31 Mar. 1898; Ballarat Star, 13 Apr. 1898; Australian Star, 14 Apr. 1898; Daily Telegraph, 15 Apr. 1898; Freeman's Journal, 16 Apr. 1898; Newcastle Morning Herald, 16 Apr. 1898.

³ Foreign Relations of the U.S., 1898, Washington, 1901, pp. 750-60. Lee later elaborated his indictment in an article 'Cuba Under Spanish Rule: Personal Impressions of the Island, the People, of the Government and the War for Freedom', McClure's, XI (June, 1898).

America it was thought, was now assuming a role that Britain would have taken, given a similar chance of lodging a practical 'humanitarian protest against ruthless tyranny'. For Cuba's plight 'would move a heart of stone', there having been 'incidents connected with the present rebellion which have stirred the imaginations and aroused the sympathies of not merely the whole American people, but of those in the great world without'. Once again blood had proved thicker than water,

and although the cool, calculating logical Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Australian will not be able to approve altogether of the methods employed by Cousin Jonathan, or his eagerness to fight when fighting could be avoided, they will with all their hearts pray that victory may rest with the Stars and Stripes.¹

The fabled 'caution and good sense' of the American people was taken as an added reason why the instincts of that people, now pressing the Executive and the Legislature to war, could be trusted.²

'Progressive' editorial opinion in Australia, which ranged through the spectrum of conservative-nationalist-imperialist-racialist-socialist convictions as did progressives in America and Britain, came out overwhelmingly in favour of intervention on humanitarian grounds. Thus common interests of Australian progressives in altruism and reform both at home and abroad was consistently promoted.³

¹South Australian Register, 16 Apr. 1898.

²Daily Telegraph (Launceston), 21 Apr. 1898.

³Since 1952 a reassessment of progressives has revealed their varied nature. W.E. Leuchtenburg, P.C. Kennedy, S. Haber and A.E. Campbell maintain that progressives were also imperialists on the American scene. Bernard Semmel affirms this opinion for the British Progressives. Barton J. Bernstein and F.A. Leib disagree with the view of Progressives as conservatives. D. Coles warns against semantic confusion in labels for the Australian as well as the Anglo-American cases. This thesis confirms the Leuchtenburg-Haber synthesis of progressives as Imperialists. See comment Chapter One for background and bibliography for references.

America's obvious huge trade and investment losses in Cuba and the conviction that efficient American business methods would lead to commercial prosperity for the Spanish colonies added their weight to the other justifications in America's favour.

The strong commercial ties of the United States and Cuba were evident to Australian editorialists who examined the statistics. Given that 82 per cent of Cuba's trade went to America and only 11 per cent to Spain, many papers believed war was justified to protect such material interests. Others declared that Cuba could only benefit from American annexation and should be America's reward for assistance rendered; though most still complained of the unnatural extension of the Monroe Doctrine that this would entail. Many believed that the best way out of the dilemma for both countries, was for Spain to recoup her losses by selling Cuba to America. The prospect of this happening seemed enhanced by McKinley's election. Some predicted that the new President would not detract from his impulse for renewed domestic American prosperity by encouraging a costly and disruptive war and would therefore push harder for the peaceful solution which purchase suggested.¹ As the South Australian Register put it: 'the Cuban lamb would be better off as part and parcel of the American wolf than as the maltreated pet of the unsympathetic Don'.²

The Philippines came to be considered a special economic prize: 'one of the grandest possessions of any of the Anglo-Saxon races', as one paper described it. Though it was criminal that unimaginative Spain had been allowed to retain possession for so long, it was noted that even that country had extracted about £1,500,000 worth of goods from the islands yearly and had sold them a similar figure in imports. The natives themselves had few champions as self-developers. With the Cubans, the Filipinos were considered

¹See editorials in, West Australian, 11 July 1896; Bendigo Evening Mail, 22 Dec. 1896; Mt. Alexander Mail, 22 Dec. 1896; Geelong Advertiser, 22 Dec. 1896; Advertiser, 25 Dec. 1896; Mercury, 19 Mar. 1897; Age, 31 May 1897; Maitland Mercury, 19 Mar. 1898.

²South Australian Register, 29 Mar. 1898.

by Australians as 'a lazy and cowardly admixture of a race...a pretty bad lot', incapable of realizing the full potential of their rich possessions. By contrast optimists like the Mt. Alexander Mail (from the failing economy of Victoria's Castlemaine) optimistically predicted a boom in the Philippines, following an American or British takeover. 'Is not a marvellous country like this a prize worth winning, one sufficient to repay all the cost of war?' it asked.¹

Queensland papers - in particular the Brisbane Evening Observer² - were insistent that if it were possible, Japan and Germany should be frustrated in their obvious desire to establish any sphere of influence which included the Philippines. If this development was inevitable, it was viewed as preferable that the Japanese should be particularly discouraged from settling any further south than the Philippines, as John Douglas³ had just raised the Australian alarm concerning the Japanese presence in Thursday Island. The prospect of a Japanese version of the 'Monroe Doctrine' applying to the Philippines deeply disturbed much Australian opinion, as did the British diplomatic encouragement to Japan.

Probably for ethnocentric as well as political reasons, opinion on American designs for Cuba and the Philippines, especially the latter, benefited from incipient Australian anti-Japanese and anti-German feeling. The knowledge gleaned by cable that American businessmen were anti-interventionist disarmed critics of American selfishness. It was clear that progressive opinion in Australia, while favouring American business dynamism, clearly placed economics behind humanity in its estimate of American justifications. Yet with Adolph Ochs' revived

¹Mt. Alexander Mail, 22 Dec. 1896, 8 Apr. 1898. See also Geelong Times, 28 Nov. 1896; Geelong Advertiser, 11 Apr. 1898; Herald, 5 Jan. 1897; Age, 28 Dec. 1896; Daily Telegraph, 3 Sept. 1897.

²Brisbane Evening Observer, 30 Nov. 1896.

³John Douglas (1828-1904), Premier of Queensland 1877-1879, formerly Agent-General for Queensland in London, still contributed articles to his old employer, the Brisbane Courier in his capacity as returned appointed Government Resident and Magistrate at Thursday Island (1889-1902).

New York Times most believed: 'Spain blocks the way to peace and commerce. She must go.'¹

Almost a maxim among those who thought of foreign matters at all, was the conviction that any strong, proud country of European stock would want to possess those islands proximate to it. Both Australia and New Zealand prematurely revealed such an interest for all the reasons pertinent to the 'New Imperialism'. Among the most persuasive of the arguments forming the new rationale of empire, were those presented to a wide reading public by the American theorist Alfred Thayer Mahan, in favour of strategy. They struck a responsive chord in Australia.²

For over a generation, most papers in Australia had recognized America's interest in Cuba. The new assertiveness of the Monroe Doctrine, the growing United States' fleet and the island's proximity (100 kilometres) made it comparable with Tasmania, New Guinea or New Zealand in Australian geopolitical thinking.³ German interests in Spanish Cuba were therefore nonsense, claimed the Australian Star, seeking to shift the focus of American resentment.

The people of America will not allow the fate of an American territory to be determined by a State in the middle of the European continent on

¹Quoted in Argus, 21 Apr. 1898. Mid-western American editorial opinion was also against Spanish mercantilism, see Auxier, op.cit., p.533. The economic motive has been given primacy in the works of W.La Feber and W.A. Williams - the 'Wisconsin School' of the 'new left'. However, Australian press opinion stressed humanitarianism as the primary U.S. rationale for intervention.

²Alfred Thayer Mahan (1840-1914). From 1884 as a lecturer on history and strategy at the United States Naval War College at Newport, Rhode Island, he expounded the idea of sea-power as the key to national expansion and greatness. Australians absorbed his viewpoints in books and articles (especially Harper's) from 1890 onward. The Interest of America in Seapower was published in 1897. Mahan it appears, developed and popularized the ideas of Admiral Stephen B. Luce, his patron: J.A.S. Grenville and G.B. Young - Politics, Strategy and American Diplomacy (New Haven, 1966), pp.1-38. See also W.E. Livezey, Mahan on Sea-Power (Oklahoma, 1947).

³West Australian, 11 July 1896; Brisbane Evening Observer, 18 Dec. 1896.

the other side of the great Atlantic Ocean and if this latest piece of German bluster proceeds from the German Emperor, it will probably cost him even greater humiliation than the historic message to President Kruger.¹

Monroeism thus translated into terms of existing Australian resentments (German New Guinea and German trade) was readily assimilated.

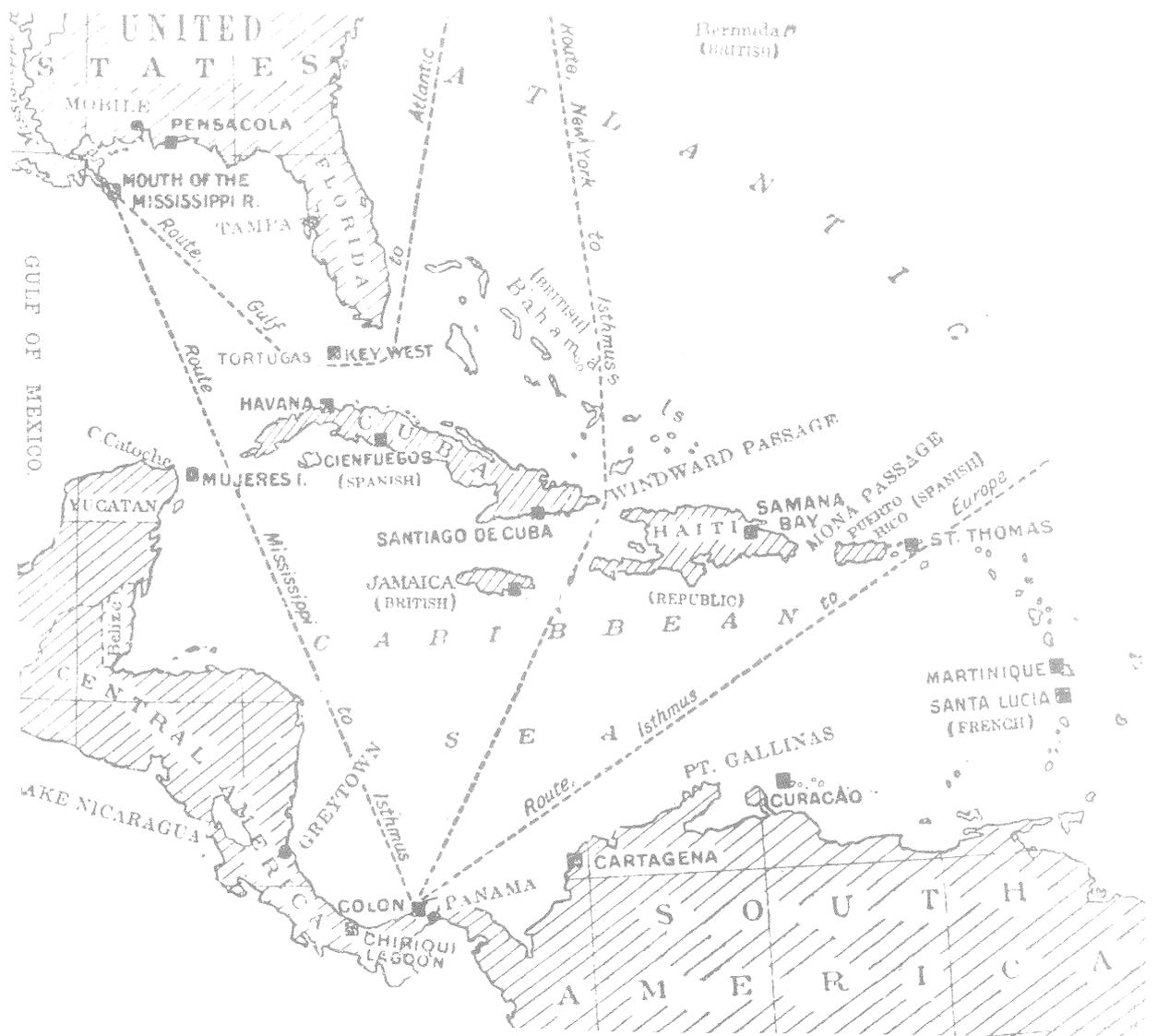
Sir Langdon Bonython's paper agreed with the estimate of the London Times' foreign editor, Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace, that Cuba was the 'Constantinople of the West' - the most important of the Antilles. Its position in the Mexican gulf athwart the route between the mouth of the Mississippi and Panama - threatening or protecting the Anglophobe southern and western states, was its leading feature and made it a special case to American interests for traditional as well as future considerations.² The appeal of 'Manifest Destiny' was again voiced as being among those reasons best justifying American expansion.³

Mahan's most effective publicist in Australia was the Argus:

¹ Australian Star, 20 Dec. 1896.

² Advertiser, 17 Feb., 25 Dec. 1896.

³ 'Manifest Destiny' had earlier (1830-50) referred to the idea that fate had decreed the inevitable physical expansion of the U.S. to the Pacific. It was given a new form by John Fiske, American publicist of Social Darwinism, in an article in Harper's, Mar. 1885. He maintained that Anglo-Saxons due to the logic of 'survival of the fittest' were destined to rule over less gifted races and bring civilization and peace to the entire globe. Josiah Strong's (1885), John W. Burgess's (1890) and James K. Hosmer's (1890) works further expounded this idea to Australians. Carl Schurz's caution on 'Manifest Destiny', pp. 737-46, Harper's October 1893, though prematurely anti-annexationist, more closely reflected Australian estimates of American aspirations. A debate on whether the new 'manifest destiny' was a continuation of the old has been conducted between Julius W. Pratt (Chicago) and Frederick Merk (Harvard). The Advertiser and others implied a territorial right and an ideological justification: a mixture of old and new concepts.



THE SCENE OF WAR.

Australasian, 23 April 1898.

Keen interest by the United States in the future of Cuba is no new thing (it wrote). It is the eagerness of an heir watching for the reversion which he accounts his by right. And the war party has recently received powerful aid from that master of naval tactics, Captain Mahan, who has been urging upon his countrymen that Cuba is as essential to the defence of the States and several of their main lines of communication with the outer world as Ireland is in the case of Great Britain.

Summarizing Mahan's views of the Caribbean as being America's Mediterranean and Cuba's position as being 'unique' in the possession it gave of easy interior lines between two harbours on opposite sides of the island - checking the risk of blockade - the Argus concluded:

Sooner or later it is evident that the United States will strike a blow for the prize upon which their gaze has been fixed so long and which they have now been taught to believe essential to the safety of their great maritime routes. Its acquisition will place them upon a naval equality (so far as mere position goes) with any of the other powers which still hold stations in these waters. With the expansion of American interests overseas and the virtual sovereignty she has already claimed over the projected canal, this equality will become necessary to her and the American nation will be easily brought to view it as worth a sacrifice to secure.¹

In this way, the strategic argument was accepted in Australia as an integral part of the United States' conception of its own national interest - one that was both consistent in ends and changing in means.²

¹Argus, 5 Apr. 1898.

²See further comment in, Newcastle Morning Herald, 18 Apr. 1898; Maitland Mercury, 18 Apr. 1898. Both the latter are examples of papers which considered the Argus 'Melbourne's leading Daily'. In general, Walter La Feber, The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898 (New York, 1963), pp.90-1; Allan Westcott (ed.), Mahan on Naval Warfare (Boston, 1941), p.108; Captain W.D. Puleston, Mahan: The Life and Work of Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan, U.S.N. (New Haven, 1939), pp.94-5 cover the strategic side adequately.

The Maine catastrophe (15 February 1898) evoked sympathy for America in Australia. Papers such as the Geelong Advertiser allowed their natural bias to lead them to favour the quick assumption 'that the work of destruction was that of an enemy'. It believed '...those who know the Spanish character can understand how a plot may have been entered into to destroy the vessel'.¹ Most of the Australian press, considering it wise to suspend judgement pending the publication of the findings of the American Naval Commission, nonetheless believed with the South Australian Register that 'Britons throughout the Queen's vast empire will sincerely condole with the families...suddenly bereft'. This, because 'the citizens of the United States are more to us than strangers'.²

On the day that news of the disaster was received, the last Federal Convention being held in Melbourne³ interrupted its proceedings to send President McKinley a combined message from the Premiers through the New South Wales Premier, George Reid (18 February):

They (the Premiers) desire to convey through you to the American nation and especially the relations of those stricken down by the sad calamity, the earnest and sincere condolence and sympathy of the people of their colonies.

The reply the next day from W.R. Day, Acting Secretary of State, was in

grateful acknowledgement of the touching condolences of the Australian Premiers. In the presence of such overwhelming sorrow, sympathy like this from our kindred beyond the seas touches the American heart very deeply.⁴

The Barrier Miner was among those who felt 'It is only in the hour of peril or calamity that we feel [the] true

¹Geelong Advertiser, 18 Feb. 1898.

²South Australian Register, 18 Feb. 1898.

³This session finished the task of revising the draft constitution in March 1898. See J.A. La Nauze, The Making of the Australian Constitution (Melbourne, 1972), pp.203-39.

⁴Telegram's texts in cables e.g., Argus, 21, 22 Feb. 1898. My emphasis.

significance of the sentiment of kinship so frequently heard expressed.¹

George Reid accentuated this renewed racial sympathy even further in his defence of the Premiers' message. He had been attacked by some (particularly his old enemy, the Melbourne Punch) for 'blowing his own trumpet' in not sending the message through normal channels - either the Colonial Governors, Agents General or the British Secretary of State. He was asked by reporters (22 February) why he had not taken sufficient satisfaction in Sir Julian Pauncefote's expression of 'intense and universal' sympathy expressed toward Americans in their loss, or in the messages of the Queen, the British Prime Minister and the Prince of Wales. Reid's reply was spirited. He spoke of '...a calamity practically to the close relations of the Australian people' and asked,

what would be said of a critic who, when a calamity happened to a member of the same family, hesitated to convey his sympathy until he could find some opportunity of doing it through someone more loosely connected with the bereaved?

The Argus however, was one that found the American reply 'very gratifying' and viewed the two telegrams as putting 'in a more vivid light than any yet presented, the feelings of kinship which do animate members of the great Anglo-Saxon races...'²

The Weekly Times agreed that despite the carping, the Premiers' cable was

a direct and cordial recognition of the Australians by the United States and it voices clearly the sentiment that Australians and

¹Barrier Miner, 22 Feb. 1898.

²Argus, 23 Feb. 1898. My emphasis. Melbourne Punch, 3 Mar. 1898, p.179, published a cartoon showing Lord Brassey complaining to Reid trumpeting sympathy to Uncle Sam across the waters: 'George, what is this - sympathy or advertisement?'

Americans are kindred people. A fine message has evoked a still finer and more touching reply.¹

As much as anything, the exchange revealed the hesitant assertion of an independent Australian identity, seeking as on other occasions to communicate in its own way and in its own right directly with a fellow Anglo-Saxon relation on a new and friendly basis.²

The critical Chinese situation (December 1897-April 1898) made for an upsurge of friendly feeling toward America. Britain's apparent diplomatic assurances regarding Cuba were seemingly returned with a new feeling of gratitude and co-operation on America's part, it was believed. In fact, such assurances did not exist in the form the Australian press contemplated. Undoubtedly, American fellow-feeling was exaggerated, especially in relation to American intentions regarding support for Britain in China. Nonetheless, the expectation of a defensive alliance of the two powers against a possible coalition of European enemies in a struggle for the governance of and commerce of the world gave point and urgency to much of Australian press concern for America in early 1898.

Australian editorialists presented conflicting viewpoints on the desirability of America's fostering another Caribbean 'Black Republic' and on the selfishness of America's motives. As well, the nature of America's real military strength and the role of McKinley in the crisis were debated.

Throughout 1896 and 1897, considerable Australian debate centred on whether America would allow Cuba to become another 'Black Republic' in the Caribbean if given her

¹Weekly Times, 26 Feb. 1898.

²A year before the Maine occurred the American correspondent of the Sydney Morning Herald (13 Feb. 1897) made the remarkable prediction that McKinley would fervently wish for a chance event to 'mark out a particular course as an inevitable necessity'.

freedom. Whereas it was believed that America would prevent the creation of another Haiti¹ - a 'hell on earth' as the Times' Havana correspondent and Sir Spencer St John called it; the problems remained of how to prevent renewed civil war in Cuba and an infusion of 'extremely low type of blacks' into America following liberation. Not only Australian, but American and European opinion was split on the efficacy of annexation, given the need to establish order in Cuba without exacerbating the prospect of future discord within America through the 'colour question'.²

Confusion over ends and means continued until the 'Teller Amendment' of 20 April 1898 was passed by Congress, disclaiming any intention on the part of the United States to exercise sovereignty or control over Cuba, leaving government to the Cubans after restoring peace. This solution made intervention in Cuba costly and idealistic in the opinion of Australian editors, but solved the problems posed by annexation. The authority of Edward John Phelps, former United States ambassador in London and Lord Bryce, was quoted extensively against a takeover.³ As the Bendigo Independent put it '...the restless, ignorant and ill-conditioned Cubans would be a constant thorn in the side of the clever and go-ahead Americans'.⁴ Past precedent indicated that attempting to govern a mixed African, Spanish and Indian population could be disastrous, especially as the former Mayor of Havana, Don Segunda Alvarez had already pointed out in the North American Review⁵

¹Prejudice against Haiti had been in evidence since the 1830s and 1840s when a succession of revolutions occurred. By 1887 conditions were very bad on the island following the island's virtual bankruptcy in paying France an indemnity of 90 million francs. Prejudice was deepened by the historian Froude's derogatory observations. By 1889, Australian papers had decided that coloured republics were dismal failures. E.g. Age, 13 Aug. 1889.

²Editorials in, West Australian, 11 July 1896; Queensland Times, 24 Oct. 1896; Herald, 21 Dec. 1896; Singleton Argus, 30 Dec. 1896; Launceston Examiner, 9 Feb. 1897; Age, 31 May 1897.

³Courier, 12 Apr. 1898. Bryce quoted from New York Outlook interview.

⁴Bendigo Independent, 13 Apr. 1898.

⁵Don Segunda Alvarez, 'The Situation In Cuba', North American Review, Vol. 161 (September 1895), pp. 362-4.

that such governance, whatever its potential genius, would not be welcomed. Significantly, the Philippines were left out of the discussion.¹

Granted that there would be limited economic benefits, was America motivated by selfish considerations? The answers in the Australian press were various.

America had now worked itself into the awkward position of being unable to turn any profit from intervention short of annexation. Policing autonomy would be at best a thankless task and undoubtedly a troublesome one. Some editors, by noting the powerful lobbying of the tobacco and sugar interests in Congress and contrasting it with the reluctance of East coast businessmen to intervene, illustrated how American material interests blew hot and cold by turns on the issue. Albert Shaw was one who looked frankly to the southern and western sections of the United States to perform a distasteful moral duty, so obviously less attractive to Americans when shorn of its profit motive. Australian editors became openly angered at the devious diplomacy of General Woodford, America's Minister at Madrid, who on 22 September 1897 had presented a clear ultimatum to Spain and as promptly denied it. Some suspected that America was unwilling to fight for a good cause, regardless of cost.²

¹Australian Star, 13 Apr. 1898; Newcastle Morning Herald, 16 Apr. 1898; South Australian Register, 20 Apr. 1898.

²For editorials relating to this, see, Geelong Times, 28 Nov. 1896; Geelong Advertiser, 22 Dec. 1896, 11 Apr. 1898; Daily Telegraph (Sydney), 28 Dec. 1896; Queenslander, 16 Jan. 1897; South Australian Register, 14 Dec. 1896; Review of Reviews, 20 July 1896, p.104; Sydney Morning Herald, 23 Sept. 1897; Argus, 27 Sept. 1897.

Australia's Free Trade press constantly accused the Protectionist Republicans of seeking a quarrel to divert attention away from monopolistic economic abuses at home brought on by the new high tariffs.¹

Like Napoleon III before Sedan, the party in power feel that the domestic affairs of their country will soon demand a serious reckoning unless they embroil their countrymen in a foreign quarrel and then appeal for support on the grounds of patriotism

wrote the South Australian Register.² American belligerence was based on 'a growing desire...to emerge from the chrysalis state and take a place as one of the powers of the world and to become a large manufacturing and exporting nation', wrote the Launceston Examiner.³

But the situation remained confusing: war could either worsen class, economic and sectional tensions, or alternatively unite the country. Democrats were either selfless crusaders, unalloyed jingoes or devious Machiavels attempting to embarrass the Republicans. Cuba could be either a course of profit or a costly millstone. 'Sentiment and greed' became the shortest summary of America's mixed motives.⁴ Such argument over the degree of idealism or self-interest as motives for American

¹ Unfortunately, Geoffrey Blainey in 'The Scapegoat Theory of International War', Historical Studies, Vol.15, No. 57, Oct. 1971, pp.72-87, does not deal sufficiently with this interesting example.

² South Australian Register, 30 Sept. 1897.

³ Launceston Examiner, 7, 10, 31 Mar. 1896, 2, 18 Apr. 1898. See also Melbourne Punch, 31 Mar. 1898; Argus, 13 Apr. 1898; Bendigo Advertiser, 16 Apr. 1898; Herald, 20 Apr. 1898.

⁴ Robert E. Osgood, Ideals and Self-Interest in America's Foreign Relations (Chicago, 1953), pp.42-57, takes up these issues.

involvement has continued to the present day.¹

Despite general enthusiasm for him following his victory over Bryan in the 1896 election, McKinley had remained for Australians, as for others, something of an unknown quantity. Only as the rush of events forced the American executive to decisive action did Australian opinion attempt to focus on the man and his use of the office. In doing so, editors joined a historical debate which still continues.²

Given the precedent of Cleveland's anti-imperialism, many papers expected him to resist the aroused public opinion of his country as effectively as Salisbury was doing in Britain during the China crisis. To withhold aggression should be the 'common-sensed' policy of a 'peace-loving statesman like McKinley', thought the Queensland Times.³ Others feared that with Sagasta, he might 'be the creature of fate and of an excited populace', following the release of the Naval Commission's findings. As Smalley described it (and most agreed), the President held 'the keys of the situation'.⁴

McKinley's message to Congress on the 11 April 1898, instead of clarifying the situation, at first made it more

¹As Robin Winks has pointed out in his chapter 'Imperialism' in A Comparative Approach to American History (Voice of America, 1968), p.291, these contradictory motives worked in a similar way in European imperialism to make any 'entire people appear to be hypocritical'.

²All the strands of the Australian debate have been taken up in American works, especially John L. Offer's unpublished Ph.D. 'President McKinley and the Origins of the Spanish-American War' (Pennsylvania State, 1957); Paul S. Holbo, 'Presidential Leadership in Foreign Affairs: William McKinley: the Turpie-Foraker Amendment', American Historical Review, LXXII (July 1967), pp.1321-35. McKinley is defended from older charges of weakness (Halle, Pratt, Millis, Wisan and others) by his biographers, Margaret Leech, In The Days of McKinley (New York 1959) and H. Wayne Morgan, William McKinley and His America, op.cit., summarized in the same author's America's Road to Empire (New York, 1965), esp. pp.60-3.

³Queensland Times, 31 Mar. 1898.

⁴E.g. Advocate, 26 Mar., 16 Apr. 1898; Freeman's Journal, 16 Apr. 1898; Tocsin, 24 Feb. 1898.

ambiguous. During the week in which Congress deliberated on whether to give McKinley war powers, the Australian press grappled with the new realities of sudden Presidential bellicosity; the constitutional relationships involved in the United States decision-making process and the likely nature of that decision.

Criticism took much of its lead from the London Times whose cabled view was that the Executive, by leaving the decision for war to the Congress, had renounced responsibility. Remembering the Crimean crisis, the Argus likened McKinley to '...another Earl of Aberdeen... wringing his hands at the idea of war (while allowing) the nation to drift and events to shape themselves'.¹ At the 'crisis of his fate' the President had shown himself weak, believed the Sydney Morning Herald.² South Australia's metropolitan dailies defended his admirable caution and desire to follow correct government procedure thus appearing, constitutionally at least, 'absolutely in the right'.³

That war had actually been made inevitable and not avoided, became daily more clear. Congress, it was now believed, was sure to declare for war and McKinley had only shifted the onus of decision. 'Open, unmistakable and humiliating' retreat was now viewed as the alternative. The Australian Star criticized the Message as 'opportunist... instinct with the spirit of a magnified policeman'.⁴ Maurice Low, described in the Australian press as 'one of the ablest... writers of current history', highlighted McKinley's dilemma in February's National Review: respond to Congress and country and declare war, or respond to the anti-war policies of commerce and finance?⁵ Many believed that the situation had now gone too far for even a Cleveland to master. Astute observers gathered that war had been declared in all but name and fleet movements seemed to confirm this judgement. Now the Argus concluded of McKinley:

¹Argus, 31 Mar., 13, 14 Apr. 1898.

²Sydney Morning Herald, 13, 21 Apr. 1898.

³South Australian Register, 13 Apr. 1898; Advertiser, 13, 16, 18 Apr. 1898.

⁴Australian Star, 13 Apr. 1898.

⁵Age, 14 Apr. 1898.

He is really an unknown quantity and every friend of humanity will hope that events will take a favourable turn for him and that in any case he will be found equal to his difficulties, which must be great and to his responsibilities which in any case must be enormous.¹

Comment for the week 13-20 April centred on the fascinating prospect of a constitutional deadlock between President and Congress - especially the Senate - over the decision for war. Some commentators believed that Australian constitution-makers had been afforded a lesson in the wisdom of creating a strong, responsible executive allowing for prompt decision-making and avoiding the possibility of an American-style confrontation with the Legislature over divided powers. The Senate's back-down in the face of strong counter-opinions from the Lower House, similarly provided an illuminating illustration of how an Upper House need not be unresponsive to the popular will.²

In this way a strong executive and a flexible Senate were further confirmed in the minds of many Australians as commendable elements in the Australian constitution in contrast to the American experience.³ Many could not escape the judgement that McKinley, by calling on Congress for a decision, had done little to enhance the powers of his office or establish a reputation as a strong leader.

Why was Australian editorial opinion so interested in the naval and military detail surrounding the conflict? Even in a country obsessed with defence, did it reflect a more general climate of opinion of the times when the chief participants - battleships - were considered the most powerful index of national might? Was it a technical

¹ Argus, 16, 21 Apr. 1898. McKinley is still relatively opaque. He left few revealing papers.

² This and other strands of the debate on McKinley can be traced in the following: Sydney Mail, 2 Apr. 1898; Newcastle Morning Herald, 5, 16 Apr. 1898; Sydney Morning Herald, 13, 21 Apr. 1898; Courier, 13, 20 Apr. 1898; Brisbane Evening Observer, 13 Apr. 1898; Launceston Examiner, 13 Apr. 1898; Ballarat Star, 13 Apr. 1898; Bendigo Independent, 13 Apr. 1898; Leader, 16 Apr. 1898; Geelong Advertiser, 16 Apr. 1898; Daily Telegraph, 15, 18 Apr. 1898; Weekly Times, 16 Apr. 1898; Bendigo Evening Mail, 20 Apr. 1898.

³ For American constitutional parallels see Erling Hunt, American Precedents in Australian Federation (New York, 1930), pp. 99-167. Australian ideas on American executive powers were confused.

curiosity concerning the performing capacity of the other new paraphernalia of battle - torpedoes, submarines, mines, guns, armour? Was the interest more atavistic - a test of the physical, moral and racial calibre of the two opponents? Was it perhaps merely entertainment - the desire to watch from afar, some great international game? Was it a morbid fascination with the prospect of witnessing a larger nation pounding to death a smaller, weaker one, thus performing a national catharsis - a purging by Aristotelian 'pity and terror'? Or was it more 'down to earth' - a genuine concern that by involving Europe, the war would involve Australia willy-nilly in Britain's train?

Whatever the reason - and comment suggests a mixed combination of the above elements - the military and naval debate involving estimates of America's chances, was, in the eighteen months before the outbreak of war, something of an academic exercise. For most believed in and hoped for American victory, in the light of her overwhelming relative resources and supposed racial superiority.¹ The only doubt remaining was whether Spain would be capable of sustaining a

¹The following contain much of the debate: Geelong Advertiser, 22 Dec. 1896; Brisbane Evening Observer, 13 Sept. 1897, 21 Apr. 1898; Launceston Examiner, 7 Mar. 1898; Geelong Times, 16 Mar., 19 Apr. 1898; Daily Telegraph, 19 Mar. 1898; Sydney Morning Herald, 24 Mar., 18 Apr. 1898; Ballarat Courier, 7 Apr. 1898; Advertiser, 18 Apr. 1898; West Australian, 18 Apr. 1898; Leader, 9 Apr. 1898; Bendigo Independent, 13 Apr. 1898; Newcastle Morning Herald, 16 Apr. 1898. This paper predicted by 11 days Commodore Dewey's top-secret departure from Mirs Bay, China, to fight Admiral Montojo at Manila Bay (1 May 1898). In fact McKinley himself was not as generally ignorant on the Philippines as has been popularly portrayed by H.H. Kholstaat (1923) and others. He contemplated on 25 Feb. and finally ordered 24 Apr. (executed 27 Apr.) Dewey's sailing: Richard W. Leopold, 'The Emergence of America as a World Power; Some Second Thoughts' in Braeman, Bremner and Walters (eds), Change and Continuity in Twentieth Century America (Ohio, 1964), footnote, p.26.