Chapter 21
The Restored Constitutional Monarchy, 1875-1899

The reorganization of the Spanish polity in 1875-1876 was largely the work of one man, Antonio Cánovas del Castillo, who headed the regency council brought to power by military coup. Cánovas was a professional politician as well as a noted amateur historian. His political career and thinking had been formed in good measure by helping to develop O'Donnel's Liberal Union, and his goal was to establish a workable constitutional monarchy, the bases for which he conceived to be a responsible constitutional crown and a parliament capable of genuine authority. This would require a liberalization of the Isabeline system, which had failed because the crown was capricious and authoritarian and the political system too narrow and exclusive.

The restoration of constitutional monarchy was assisted by the political exhaustion of the country in 1875. Republicanism was discredited and moderate opinion was willing to accept a tolerant monarchist regime, abetting the legal institutionalization of the new government. Cánovas had, however, opposed the monarchist coup by the military, preferring a legal transition, which subsequently had to be worked out by a new constituent Cortes elected in 1876. These elections were held under the democratic suffrage of the 1869 constitution, restored temporarily as the law of the land. The Cánovas government, however, distinguished sharply between legal and illegal activity. Only those parties, groups, and newspapers that accepted the principle of constitutional monarchy under the Bourbon dynasty had the right to free activity. Elements which did not, such as republicans and Carlists, were largely suppressed. The government used a great deal of pressure against antidynastic groups in the 1876 elections, forcing most of them to withdraw. This resulted in large-scale abstention, officially announced as 45 percent. The new parliament contained an overwhelming government majority based on Cánovas's Liberal Conservative party (the first adjective having been chosen to indicate that it did not propose a simple reversion to the Isabeline regime). There was considerable continuity between the new chamber and its predecessors before 1873, nearly half the deputies having sat under the democratic monarchy of D. Amadeo.

The main work of the Cortes was adoption of a new monarchist constitution, a draft of which had already been prepared by a commission of notables. It reduced the suffrage to adult males who paid twenty-five pesetas annual land tax or fifty pesetas annual industrial tax. The new document declared that sovereignty resided "in the Cortes with the King"--a somewhat ambiguous compromise--and gave the crown the rights of permanent veto, appointment of ministers, and calling of elections. Once appointed, however, ministers were responsible to the Cortes, not the crown. The 1876 constitution reestablished full central control over local government and administration and abolished trial by jury. A Senate was restored, with half its members to hold lifetime seats and be appointed by the crown, the other half to be elected indirectly and corporatively.

The new constitution recognized Catholicism as the official religion, while granting toleration, though not the right of public announcement and proselytization, to adherents of all other religions. Catholic supervision of public education was restored, including a degree of censorship over publications and over curricula in higher education. Nevertheless there were strong Catholic and papal protests against
the toleration of other religions and the retention by the state of general control over schools, especially colleges and universities.

Despite the dissatisfaction of clericals, Carlism went into serious decline after its defeat in 1876. This was accelerated by urbanization, social and economic change, the nominal success of the new system, and the attraction of most Catholic opinion to the regime. The Carlists developed serious personal divisions, and a struggle over party leadership led to the secession of many of the ultraclericals led by Ramón Nocedal. Rejecting the Carlist dynasty for supposed liberal deviations, they organized a faction called Integristas, propounding a radical doctrine of pure theocracy, integrating invertebrate modern society under the "reign of Jesus Christ." The Integristas thus restricted themselves to a small fringe of Catholic ultras.

Orthodox Carlists survived as a small minority based on regional and family tradition. By the end of the century their leader was a Galician orator, theoretician, and organizer, Juan Vázquez de Mella. He was an ardent propagandist who helped to develop a slightly more empirical political philosophy, based in part on regional rights and the adoption of a system of Catholic corporatism somewhat similar to the doctrines of Mun in France and Vogelsang in Austria.

**Caciquismo and the Structure of Restoration Politics**

The political system of the Restoration rested on oligarchy, articulated through the alliance of provincial political factions and boss control. This latter aspect--domination of local affairs and elections by district bosses and oligarchs--gave rise to the general label *caciquismo* that was later used to describe the structure of local politics. Yet criticism of boss rule, fraud, and coercion reached its peak only after the turn of the century, when such practices were already diminishing significantly. It is now appreciated that something in the nature of caciquismo was almost inevitable in a country which, according to the 1879 census, still registered only 28 percent general literacy. Not dissimilar systems had functioned in England at the beginning of the century, in France under the July Monarchy, and in parts of the United States during the years of the Spanish Restoration, though the nominal level of literacy and civic culture was higher in these countries during the years in question.

The new governing system was intended to benefit the possessing classes, but not in such exclusive fashion as the Isabeline regime, which had been based primarily on Madrid finance and the big landed interests. Cánovas intended to make the Restoration regime sufficiently flexible and comprehensive to represent all significant economic interests, giving it greater breadth and solidity than its predecessor. The major fraud in the regime's economic administration was the tax collection system, which despite the reforms of the 1840s and the existence of a centralized state system remained in fact largely decentralized. Registration and assessment were in the hands of local boards subject to all manner of pressure and manipulation. In 1883 it was discovered that 35 percent of the arable land in Seville province had simply disappeared from the local tax rolls.

Cánovas's Liberal Conservative party was set up hastily in 1875 on a rather centralized basis through administrative appointments in the provinces. Cánovas exercised general personal control over the affairs of five southeastern provinces (Málaga, Granada, Jaén, Almería, and Murcia) and paid particular interest to patronage in most of the rest of the south. Other Conservative foci were Aragón and Old Castile (with the exception of Madrid). Catalonia, on the other hand, was at first occupied by what was almost an administrative dictatorship. Catalans had played an active role in Republicanism (in 1873 thirty-two of the forty-nine provincial governors had been Catalans), but in the quarter-century after 1875 only 1 percent of the top regional administrators named to positions in Catalonia were Catalans.

One of the salient figures of the new regime was Cánovas's minister of the interior, Francisco Romero Robledo, an ex-Radical who emerged as the most notorious electoral manipulator of late-nineteenth-
century Spain. It was he who engineered the Cortes balloting of 1876 in which the number of opposition seats was held to 58 compared with the 333 for the Liberal Conservatives. Three months later, in April 1876, he established an administrative sub-section, the "Dirección General de Política y Administración," primarily to handle elections and patronage.

Cánovas resigned the leadership of the government after three years in order to allow new elections to be held. He was succeeded very briefly by General Martínez de Campos, the savior of the dynasty in 1874 and pacifier of Cuba. Martínez de Campos was a national hero to whom government might briefly be trusted; his prestige helped to serve as a guarantee of orderly elections, and as prime minister he could obtain parliamentary ratification of the peace terms he had negotiated earlier in Cuba.

The elections of 1879 were the first conducted under the restricted censitary suffrage of the new constitution. Originally the vote was given to approximately 850,000 people, or 5.1 percent of the population, which compared favorably with other west European countries at similar stages. (In Italy only 2.2 percent could vote at that time.) Representation was broadest in the regions where land was most widely distributed -- Old Castile, Aragón, Navarre, Madrid, and Galicia, and much more restricted in latifundist districts and in the larger towns. During the early 1880s, for reasons that are not entirely clear, the suffrage lists contracted approximately 7 percent.

In 1879 the ministry of the interior was occupied by a conscientious younger Conservative luminary, Francisco Silvela, who reduced considerably the government pressure in elections. Thus even under restricted suffrage the Conservative majority dropped by forty seats. The main opposition, Sagasta's Constitutional party, while flailing against what it termed "an egoistic and exclusivist oligarchy," strengthened its position as second most powerful by more than doubling its representation to fifty-six seats.

Cánovas then returned to power at the close of 1879 and governed for fourteen months more. The major achievement of this ministry was passage of a law in 1880 abolishing slavery in Cuba. All the while, opposition to the Conservatives' monopoly of political power was growing. Cánovas was willing to accept the principle of a two-party system but continued to doubt the reliability of Sagasta's Constitutionalists. The latter, however, expanded their base in 1880 by joining with a dissident faction of some of the more liberal of the Conservatives led by Martínez de Campos to form the Liberal Fusionist party. The Fusionists were pledged to accept the rules of the game, and the regime, as a loyal opposition, and demanded an opportunity to share power.

The beginning of the two-party system in Spanish politics in 1881 was expedited by the political discretion of the new king, Alfonso XII. He had grown up as an exile in England and had learned much from the errors of his mother. From the very moment of his coronation in 1875 the slight, tubercular Alfonso XII proved a model constitutional monarch. Within months of the formation of the first significant loyal opposition group, D. Alfonso called them to power by appointing a Fusionist ministry under Sagasta in February 1881.

The outstanding achievement of the first Sagasta government was abolition of censorship, leading to the extremely liberal Press Law of 1883, which largely governed freedom of speech in Spain until 1936. Complete freedom of ideas was also introduced in higher education, and de facto permission was given for trade union and working class organization, resulting in the first major proletarian activity since the Restoration began.

The immediate goal of the Fusionists was new elections. Those of 1881 returned a heavy majority for the Fusionists, almost identical in size to that of the Conservatives two years earlier and the result of a similar government manipulation. There was one notable difference, however: Sagasta wanted to attract the more moderate and reasonable of the small democratic and progressive groups to loyal participation in the system. Government pressure in the larger towns, which tended to vote for the more
"advanced" candidates, was lessened, and the representation of the democratic groups increased from fourteen to thirty-two.

During the two and a half years of the first Sagasta government the Fusionist administration worked to set up a broader, more effective political organization. In 1881-1882 the government annulled the election of more than 700 municipal councils in Spain in order to bolster party strength at that level. This was not, however, merely a [493] matter of arbitrary interference but part of an attempt to open up local and provincial affairs, which had been almost completely dominated by the Conservatives for six years. A new law of 1882 greatly broadened male suffrage for municipal and provincial elections, so that nominal electoral democracy for males henceforth existed on the local level. As a result, the major electoral contests of the 1880s and early 1890s took place in municipal and provincial politics. Conversely it was later charged at times that the Liberal Fusionists were in fact more corrupt than the Conservatives because they catered to a wider variety of interests. Some of their reforms merely broadened the scope of caciquismo. A new court law of 1882 provided that nearly half the local and provincial judges be appointed by local administrators. No professional qualifications were placed on these offices, and during the next two or three decades there were numerous complaints of the corruption or incompetence of the local judiciary. Protest against malfeasance in elections and in government administration was common throughout the Restoration period. Between 1883 and 1890 more than thirty-five hundred cases, great and small, were examined by the courts. Nearly four hundred convictions resulted, an indication that the nominal caciquismo was not entirely immune to the rule of law.

Though the Sagasta government began to lay the basis for a broader Liberal party and a program of moderate reform, it accepted the rules of the Restoration system and did not attempt major constitutional or institutional changes. Bound by obligations to the regime and keeping in mind the experience of the Republic, Sagasta resisted demands from the left to immediately institute universal male suffrage. This brought the splitting off in 1881-1882 of the most liberal wing of the party, which formed the Liberal Dynastic Left under General Serrano and Francisco Posada Herrera, former lieutenant of O'Donnell. On the other hand, the Conservatives still distrusted Sagasta and the Fusionists and stood ready to block further reforms. Beset by foes on both sides, harassed by several minor republican armed revolts and a rash of anarchist activity among the lower classes, Sagasta resigned in October 1883. The king then granted power to a Dynastic Left ministry, headed by Posada Herrera, which proposed to institute universal male suffrage and reform the Senate. A government Commission on Social Reform was promptly established, but on the key issue of universal suffrage the Fusionist majority brought down the government within three months.

Cánovas returned to power at the beginning of 1884 and immediately conducted new elections, with Romero Robledo exerting maximal pressure for votes from the ministry of the interior. Official abstention was only 28 percent, but in fact many of the Fusionists [494] themselves failed to contest the elections. The Conservatives claimed 318 of the 392 Cortes seats, the republican and democratic groups were almost completely eliminated (5 seats), and the Dynastic Left and Fusionists were left with 36 and 31 seats respectively. Meanwhile Cánovas had succeeded in bringing the Catholic Union party, representing ultraclericals, and the moderate fringe of the Carlists to join the Conservatives, who for the first time were able to present a united front of Spanish conservatism.

Cánovas's political leadership seemed stronger than ever in 1884-1885, but the illness and death of the scrupulous Alfonso XII in November 1885 threatened crisis. Tubercular and somewhat debauched, the king died prematurely without a male heir, though a son, also named Alfonso, was born posthumously several months later. The Conservative oligarchy stood little chance of governing alone, whereas a strong and reliable two-party system of loyal opposition had not yet been firmly established. The day before the king's death, Cánovas visited Sagasta and an agreement was reached for cooperation in a
two-party system of constitutional monarchy. The Conservative leader realized that in a politically still unsettled country, a reliable Liberal government stood a better chance of consolidating a constitutional regency under the queen regent, Alfonso's Habsburg widow María Cristina, until the regular succession could be resumed. The day after Alfonso's death Cánovas resigned and María Cristina appointed Sagasta prime minister.

**Sagasta's Reform Ministry, 1885-1890**

Without delay, Sagasta completed negotiations to bring in most of the Dynastic Left and several other small liberal factions, and it was in the winter of 1885-1886 that the broader Liberal party finally emerged. The new elections of 1886 were controlled by government manipulation only slightly less than those preceding. The Liberals did, however, content themselves with 278 deputies, the fewest for any government party since the Restoration, and the Conservatives were allowed 56, more than any opposition party had yet been permitted.

During the next four years Sagasta's long ministry completed the official liberalization of the constitutional monarchy. Between 1887 and 1890 it restored trial by jury, established a formal law of associations that legalized trade unions, completed a new Civil Code (a Criminal Code had been adopted in 1882 and a new Commercial Code in 1885), and crowned its reforms by restoring universal male suffrage in 1890. Sagasta himself was not enthusiastic about the latter [495] step, but went along to maintain harmony with the more liberal elements of the party.

The nominal success of the Liberals helped to complete the ruin of republicanism. Castelar officially espoused democratic reform under the monarchy in 1888. For the next generation republicanism was reduced to regional and personal factionalism. Only the exiled Ruiz Zorrilla maintained a militant banner, still trying vainly to excite the army to rebellion against the monarchy.

The army had ceased to function as a special political force since the Restoration. Such had been the case whenever a coherent political system managed temporarily to achieve civic stability. This did not mean that the military leadership played no role in politics, for leading generals were given Senate seats and exercised a small degree of influence. Moreover, as an institution the army remained largely immune to civilian regulation. The officer corps was reduced slightly, several new academies and technical journals were established, and some effort was made to professionalize the military, but these changes went only halfway. Most of the army budget still went for officers' salaries, while equipment and training were abysmal. Major reforms were blocked by vested interests.

By 1890 a two-party parliamentary system had been institutionalized in Spain. This corresponded to the earlier English experience, to the "rotativist" system in Portugal, and to the contemporary destra and sinistra under "transformismo" in Italy (though the Italian groups did not function as organized political parties). The Spanish turno system has frequently been denounced as a sham for corrupt oligarchy, but in fact it was a major civic accomplishment. There were noteworthy differences between Liberals and Conservatives, and their achievement of a system of cooperation and alternation was leading to a period of genuine constitutional monarchy that combined order with liberty and could carry out basic reforms.

Sagasta's long government lasted slightly more than four and a half years. It came to an end because it had completed its main program and because the Conservatives were restive to return to power. The immediate cause of Sagasta's resignation was an intrigue by the dissident Conservative Romero Robledo (at the time head of a small, personalistic Reformist party) to spread rumors of a major financial scandal in which the prime minister's wife was supposedly involved. The queen regent, Maria Cristina, was extremely grateful to Sagasta for having stabilized affairs after the death of Alfonso XII and was eager to spare him what she feared might be major embarrassment. She asked for the government's resignation, and Cánovas returned to power in July 1890.
Stagnation of Restoration Politics in the 1890's

It was in accord with Cánovas's doctrines of order and equilibrium that the first elections under the new provisions of universal male suffrage would be conducted by a Conservative government. The new minister of the interior, the high-minded Francisco Silvela, number-two leader of the party, relaxed some of the customary government pressures, and in the larger cities the elections were conducted fairly honestly. The Conservative victory of 253 seats in the 1891 elections was the lowest yet for a government party under the Restoration. The Liberals were allowed to come up to 74—a new high for the loyal opposition—and the republicans won 31 seats, mainly in the cities. The opposition margin would have been higher save for abstention among illiterate southern peasants and even more among urban workers influenced by anarchist doctrines, together with the influence of caciques in rural districts and the practice of buying votes directly, which was apparently initiated in 1891.

The new Conservative government passed a strongly protectionist tariff (1891) and initiated a few modest measures of social reform, but broke down over intraparty politics. Cánovas finally came to a parting of the ways with the right wing of the Conservatives, the former Catholic Unionists, whose leader left the government. He then broadened his base, however, by bringing the Romero Robledo faction back into the Conservative fold, but to his dismay this soon led to a complete split. After the prime minister continued to back certain of Romero Robledo's henchmen who controlled an extremely corrupt municipal council of Madrid that was involved in a major financial scandal, the fastidious Silvela walked out of the government and the party, carrying many Conservatives with him. The government lost half its votes and failed in a parliamentary test of confidence. Sagasta returned to power in December 1892.

By that time public esteem for Cánovas (never a popular figure) had dropped considerably. In 1892 there were protests against central domination in parts of Catalonia, Andalusia, the Basque region, Asturias, and Galicia. The question of local government—its honesty and autonomy—was now becoming a paramount issue. In Catalonia economic expansion, a revival of vernacular culture, and expanded middle-class wealth and power were giving rise to a regionalist movement. This drew strength from localism, the remnants of federalism, vestiges of Catalan Carlism, but most of all from new Catalan economic and civic development. The first concrete expression of political Catalanism was the "Bases de Manresa" of 1892, a program drawn up by intellectuals and professional men calling for regional autonomy.

The question of local government came to the forefront not simply because of centralization or corruption—one or the other or both were evident in nearly every other government of the time—but even more because of the gross inadequacy and inefficiency of local services. In matters of sanitation, communication, housing, roads, and education, Spain was falling farther behind than it need have, even in terms of comparative economic strength. This was not altogether the fault of government; lack of mobilization among the middle classes brought a lack of civic impetus for reform and development. What was done in the larger cities was done mainly by private enterprise, and it was insufficient. In turn, rigid centralization meant that the major decisions had to be taken on the national administrative level, and the modest share of taxes returned to local government was insufficient to meet needs.

Many of the dissatisfied elements in the middle classes were not opposed to the basic structure of government per se but simply wanted more attention to their local interests. They, in turn, greatly distrusted the swelling notes of radicalism in lower class affairs and sometimes looked on local self-government as a surer instrument of control. Most of the twenty or so local government reform plans presented between 1892 and 1907 proposed devolution of partially corporate—not strictly inorganic mass democratic—suffrage upon the local middle classes and economic groups to enable them to handle their affairs more efficiently. The essentially conservative tint of many of these projects deprived them of support by liberals and republicans, splitting potential reform interests.
After the two-party turno system had become established in the 1890s it faced a temporary impasse. The two alternating parties were both associations of more or less entrenched interests—though the interests varied somewhat—while Spanish society had not developed sufficiently vigorous new autonomous elements to sustain major reform in the decade after 1890. Social and civic development was highly unbalanced geographically, with the most active regions on the northern and northeastern seabords, a stable, self-contained agrarian society in the north-center, and a static, backward, socially unbalanced, acivic region in the south. Proponents of further reform were divided by region, ideology, and personality. Thus the two main parties were able to bargain and manipulate their way through government for another decade and more with little change.

The most liberal feature of the Spanish parliamentary system was not the democratic suffrage—which simply was not going to function in a still illiterate peasant society—but the organization of parliamentary operations. The Standing Orders of the Cortes provided for minority representation on all legislative committees, with rights that came close to a veto of all proposals. This assured legislative influence for the parliamentary minority, not in the interest of reform but of opposition to change. It had been arranged in 1876 in order to conciliate the minority excluded from executive power, and was one of the principal concessions designed to avoid the exclusiveness of the Isabelleine regime that had made representative government impossible. Yet this very structure of the parliament tended to make it immobile. Oligarchic parliamentarianism tried to avoid total exclusiveness but made genuine parliamentary reform by the majority more difficult. Narrowly participatory immobilism would not in the long run substitute for authentic representation, yet majoritarian reform was feared as too one-sided or radical.

The Cánovas-Sagasta oligarchies, for all their limitations, did represent the main social and economic interests of the country, at least of the 1870s and 1880s. Their real insufficiency lay not in their original nature but in their failure to expand and reform themselves, incorporating new goals and interests from the 1890s on. Yet the society was still insufficiently educated beyond local personalism and amoral familialism to generate broadly based reform interests. The first of the genre of "disaster" reformist books, Lucas Mallada's *Los males de la patria*, published in 1890, labeled caciquismo correctly as not a cause but an effect of the social, economic, and educational backwardness of the country.

Social and educational development were necessary to reform the political system, but it was the task of the government to encourage social, economic, and educational improvement. Something was accomplished in economic development between 1875 and 1890. Foreign capital was attracted for industrialization, Catalan production expanded, and agrarian exports rose considerably. The greatest failure was in education, where Spain had the lowest per capita budget in Europe. This was mainly compensated for by the church, which, with state support, provided much of the country's basic education. Altogether, the literate proportion of the population rose from perhaps 35 percent in 1877 to 44 percent by 1900, putting Spain just ahead of Russia, Portugal, and the Balkans.

Disproportionate expenditures on the army and navy to maintain Spain's security have been frequently pointed to as the major example of sterile employment of state funds. The point here is not that Spain did not need relatively as much or as good a military establishment as it possessed—what it possessed was extremely weak, and it undoubtedly needed some form of national protection—but that what it had was grossly inefficient and cost several times its worth. Internal conflict had resulted in the creation of a partly autonomous military establishment, and nearly half the state budget was perforce wasted on fruitless expenditures.
When he formed a new government at the close of 1892, Sagasta found himself momentarily popular as a result of the general reaction against Cánovas. His ministry called new elections early in 1893. In their first opportunity to administer universal male suffrage the Liberals differed little from the Conservatives. The same sort of government pressure was used against opposition candidates in the countryside, and the government Liberals gained the customary top-heavy majority--281. After the split in their party, some Conservatives abstained; Cánovas's group returned only 44 deputies, and Silvela 17. The moral victors, however, were the deputies of the newly formed Republican Union. The government followed what was now becoming the standard practice of more or less keeping hands off the elections in the larger towns, and the Republican Union gained about one-fourth the urban seats, or 33. Together with the 14 deputies of Castelar’s Possibilists (ex-republican reformists), this amounted to well over 10 percent of the Cortes seats and victory for more than 60 percent of all the republican or Possibilist candidates who ran. The republican groups were still poorly united, however, and were unable to follow up on this victory for the remainder of the decade. Most of the Possibilists joined the Liberals and thus gained a seat in the Sagasta government.

A major factor in blocking change during the 1890s was the Cuban problem, which had a paralyzing effect on Spanish affairs. The final Cuban rebellion started in January 1895, and its consequences drove the Sagasta ministry from office. Cánovas's last government, from 1895 to 1897, was probably his most corrupt--not because interference and fraud were worse than ten or twenty years earlier but because the society had made cultural, economic, and educational progress and was less willing to tolerate abuses. Because of the Cuban crisis and because the Cortes was only two years old, the customary calling of elections by an incoming government was postponed, after the Liberals had agreed to support temporarily, or at least to refrain from upsetting, the new Conservative cabinet. In domestic affairs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Percent of illiteracy</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>1860</td>
<td></td>
<td>76</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>72</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1887</td>
<td></td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1887</td>
<td>Over 10 years</td>
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<td>1900</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>6 years and over</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1900</td>
<td>7 years and over</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1911</td>
<td></td>
<td>70</td>
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Cánovas no longer had any policy save to try to cement the remaining power of those Conservatives more or less loyal to him. The Romero Robledo gang was brought into the new ministry, while Cánovas concentrated his ire on the "disloyal" Silvela. Silvela's Constitutional Union party of opposition Conservatives was gaining much support among the ordinary Conservative following on the basis of its stand for honest government and a degree of decentralization, along with the usual calls for national unity and support of Catholicism. The group did well in the May 1895 municipal elections, resulting in wholesale cancellation of results in some districts. Sagasta had recently done the same thing, but the Conservatives' falsification of municipal elections was carried out on a broader scale and gave control of key cities to representatives of the Romero Robledo spoils apparatus. This led to an informal protest union of *hombres honrados* ("honest citizens") supported by Liberals, Silvelists, and republicans, climaxed by an attempt on the life of the protest leader.

The agreement with the Liberals having broken down, Cánovas conducted new elections in April 1896. These were the most dishonest in twelve years. Many republicans abstained, so the main target of government persecution was the Silvelists, whose leader was probably now more popular than Cánovas among rank-and-file Conservatives. The government party then won the customary overwhelming victory. This enabled the Cánovas ministry to dominate parliament, but it still had no other policy than to repress the Cuban revolt and maintain the status quo in Spain. These final years of Cánovas's career were a time of growing tension and uncertainty, marked by increased restiveness among the lower classes and gory anarchist atrocities in Barcelona that led to police repression and the beginning of a polarization of society.

[501] *Economic Development, 1877-1900*

The Restoration period was a time of notable, though by no means spectacular, economic development. The basis for a modern industrial system finally emerged, though Spain was still far from a "take off" or "long spurt" phase of industrialization. There was considerable growth in the general economy during the decade 1877-1886, but the 1890s were relatively depressed, a slow but fairly steady expansion following during the years 1900-1913. The greatest commercial expansion came in the period 1880-1891.

The country's number one industry was still Catalan textiles. Spain was already nearly self-sufficient in textiles, and from 1886 on became a net exporter in that sector. Catalan production tripled between 1868 and 1889. Cottons benefited especially from the complete opening of the Cuban market after 1882, but there was also a boom in woolens; by the 1880s Catalonia had the third largest regional woolens industry in Europe. After 1890 the main problem would be overproduction. This was due not merely to the narrowness of the Spanish domestic market, but also to the fact that the Catalan textile industry never completed its managerial and technological transformation. It could not compete on the major world markets, and its export trade relied in large measure on the protected preserve of Cuba. Fearing open competition with foreign industry, Catalan mills produced at high prices mainly for the greater Spanish market, whose absorptive capacity was limited. The resulting imbalance resulted in intermittent crisis from the 1890s on.

Spain played a major world role in mining exports. The principal item was iron ore, production of which nearly tripled between 1880 and 1900. The peak year was 1899, in which nearly nine and one-half million tons were sent abroad. Copper was also important, and Spain became the leading copper exporter in Europe. There was a great increase in domestic coal production, which tripled between 1870 and 1900.

If wine and agriculture had stimulated the capital formation behind Catalan textiles a century earlier, iron ore exports did much the same for Basque metallurgy. Production of iron and steel began to achieve significant proportions in the 1880s. Injection of British capital (belatedly following the reform of investment regulations in 1869) also played a role, but the chief factors were Vizcayan
entrepreneurship and the initial profits of massive ore exports.

Table 9. Spanish Railway Construction, 1856-1901

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<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Kilometers of track laid</th>
<th>Annual average</th>
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<tr>
<td>1891-95</td>
<td>1,293</td>
<td>258.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895-1901</td>
<td>1,854</td>
<td>370.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Railway construction increased once more after 1875, and during the next quarter-century the track network doubled. By the 1880s an expanding economy was providing a greater volume of traffic and making a more rational use of the system possible.

The Restoration was a boom period for wine and olive oil exports. After French vineyards were ravaged by phylloxera, Spain temporarily dominated the international wine market. Wine export reached its height in the ten years 1882-1892, but in the 1890s the same disease began to afflict Spanish cultivation. Exports declined by more than 40 percent and never regained their previous importance. The increase in olive oil exports was less pronounced, but reached a temporary high point after the turn of the century.

Table 10. Changes in Agricultural Tillage and Productivity, 1800-1900

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crop</th>
<th>Thousands of hectares sown</th>
<th>Annual production (thousands)</th>
<th>Average yield per hectare</th>
<th>National per capita production</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1800</td>
<td>1860</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td>1800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>2,900</td>
<td>5,100</td>
<td>7,700</td>
<td>18.3qm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cereals</td>
<td>6,100</td>
<td>9,000</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>29.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vineyards</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>1,450</td>
<td>3.85hl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olives</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>859</td>
<td>1,360</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*One quintalmetrico equals one hundred kilos.

This was a period of declining grain cultivation and production. The marginal lands pressed into tillage during the earlier part of the century were relatively unproductive, and their yield could not compete
with cheap foreign imports after 1882. Grain acreage declined 20% percent between 1860 and 1900 as marginal land was retired. Yield per hectare increased by approximately the same percentage, but the Spanish average of 6.92 quintales of wheat per hectare compared very poorly with other parts of western Europe. Even in Italy the yield had stood at 9 quintales as early as 1870.

The first Restoration tariff, in 1876, maintained the general level established by the liberal tariff of 1869, but struck out the clause it had contained limiting the import tax on any kind of goods to 15 percent of value. The Conservatives became more and more a high tariff party, while some Liberals, supported by large merchants and the main commercial interests, were still free-trade advocates. The first Sagasta government of the Restoration negotiated a more liberal commercial treaty with France in 1882, but the Conservatives sealed the controversy with the steep protective tariff of 1891, which united both urban industrial and rural grain-producing interests. By 1906 Spain had the highest tariff barriers in Europe.

**Population Trends**

The population continued the expansive trend normal to the period, rising from 16,622,000 in 1877 to 18,594,000 in 1900. As in many of the poorer regions of Europe, the level of growth was reduced by a comparatively high rate of emigration, for in absolute figures the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were the greatest period of emigration in Spanish history. Between 1882 and 1914 approximately one million emigrants left the country. The heaviest rate of departure was from the Canaries and the northern coastal regions, and the two main goals of emigration were Argentina and Brazil.

Social and occupational change in this period was slow but fairly continuous. Occupation ratios were altered as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>1877 census</th>
<th>1887 census</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary sector (agriculture)</td>
<td>70 percent</td>
<td>66.5 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary sector (industry)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary sector (services)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Culture**

Serious thought about law, institutions, and government during the second half of the eighteenth century in Spain was increasingly dominated by varieties of organicist theory which sought to harmonize and correct or reform the ideology of doctrinaire individualist liberalism that had reigned during the first half of the century. The best known of these organicist doctrines was the Krausist philosophy of pantheism, harmony, and balanced development that had taken root in the 1850s and 1860s. In 1876 the pedagogical leader of this movement, Francisco Giner de los Ríos, was able with his colleagues to officially establish an Institución Libre de Enseñanza, and it became the most influential teacher-training school in Spain. By the end of the century Krausism dominated the academic intelligentsia, and Krausist professors were influential among Liberal party and moderate republican leaders.

The two other major branches of organicist thought were Neo-Thomist philosophy and the Catalan "historical school" of law and institutions. Catholic Neo-Thomists, influenced by the Neo-Thomist revival in Italy, occupied key chairs of philosophy and endeavored to make Catholic policy in Spain more flexible and effective within liberal society, playing a key role in the late-nineteenth-century Catholic revival. The Catalan historical school, influenced by Herder and Savigny, stressed the importance of tradition and historic balance in legal institutions, defending what remained of the Catalan legal system.
The period's greatest polymath was Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo (1856-1912), whose three principal multivolume works were La ciencia española (1876-1879), Historia de los heterodoxos españoles (1880-1882), and the Historia de las ideas estéticas en España (1883-1884). Menéndez Pelayo's voluminous writings were marked by an accomplished literary style, broad documentation, and a fervently Catholic spirit. He stood as the champion of Catholic traditionalism in Spanish culture and, while often polemical in manner, was always concerned with humanist studies, strove for comprehension of other positions, and was accessible to dialogue.

Modern science slowly began to register some slight accomplishment in Spain toward the end of the century, with the work of Santiago Ramón y Cajal in histology and Eduardo Torroja in geometry. Historical study made important advances, particularly in Eduardo Hinojosa's work on the history of law, and in the investigations of Julián Ribera into Hispano-Muslim society and of Antoni Rubió i Lluch into medieval Catalonia.

During the late nineteenth century, naturalism became a dominant motif in Spanish literature, as the Spanish novel moved from the costumbrismo of the preceding generation through the thesis novel that emphasized psychology (Juan de Valera, Pedro Antonio de Alarcón) to the naturalist themes of Emilia Pardo Bazán and, above all, Benito Pérez Galdós. Pérez Galdós was one of the two or three greatest social and historical novelists of nineteenth-century Europe.

His multivolume Episodios nacionales recreated successive stages of nineteenth-century Spanish life, while his major works were rivaled only by those of Balzac as treatments of society. There was also noticeable a more genuine cultural self-consciousness in Spanish letters and a more direct debate about common European cultural trends on the one hand and the specifically castizo, or native Spanish, on the other.

Spanish music was quite feeble during these years, despite the fact that Spanish themes were being used by leading composers in Germany and Russia. The most important development was the rise of the national operetta form, the zarzuela, in the work of such composers as Barbieri, Bretón, and Chapí. Spanish painting revealed no significant achievements until after the turn of the century. The Restoration period was highlighted by the rediscovery of the landscape and after 1900 by naturalistic forms. The chief artists of the period were from the north and northeast: Darío de Regoyos, the Catalans Santiago Rusiñol and Ramón Casas, and the Valencian Joaquín Sorolla.

During the second half of the century there developed a growing cultural and political self-consciousness in the major regions of Spain. It stemmed from the cultural romanticism of an earlier generation that had stressed the historical and the particular, from new historical study that was bringing out regional differences and identities, and from an esthetic awareness of the quality of the countryside and the physical environment. The rediscovery of the region was part of the general nineteenth-century awakening of cultural, regional, ethnic, and national identities. As in all other parts of Europe, it began by taking a cultural and specifically literary form. The first great movement of regional culture was the Catalan Renaixença, beginning slowly with a revival of literature in the Catalan vernacular in the 1830s and 1840s. In 1859 Catalanist litterateurs officially restored the jocs florals (poetry contests) of the late Middle Ages, and in the following generation Catalan literature began to blossom. The term renascence for the cultural revival was derived in part from the newspaper La Renaixença, founded in 1871, that became its principal spokesman. The great strength of modern Catalan literature has been its poetry. By the end of the nineteenth century the outstanding lyric, epic, and dramatic poets in Spain were writing in Catalan, not Castilian--the canon Mossen Jacint Verdaguer, author of the great epic poems L'Atlàntida (1876) and Canigó (1886), the dramatist Angel Guimerá, whose outstanding plays were Mar i Cel and Terra Baixa, and the lyricist Joan Maragall. A late figure of unique achievement was the expressionist architect Antoni Gaudí, the outstanding
Spanish architect of the early twentieth century.

There was a similar revival of regional self-consciousness and vernacular literature in Galicia, but on a lesser scale. In Galicia, as in Catalonia, there emerged during mid-century a school of romantic regionalist historians who tended to exaggerate the accomplishments of and the injustices done their native region. Galician poetry contests were inaugurated at Santiago de Compostela in 1875, and a "Biblioteca gallega" began publishing a new series of fifty-two titles in 1885. As in Catalonia, the brightest facet of the Galician literary revival was its poetry. A number of poets of varying literary and ideological orientation emerged; the only one of outstanding literary value was the lyricist Rosalía de Castro, whose work was filled with Galician *saudade*, sadness, longing. Galician regionalism began to assume modest political dimensions with the publication of Alfredo Brañas's *El regionalismo* (1889), which proposed a new system of regionalist federalism.

There was also a minor Valencian *renaixença* during the late nineteenth century, producing a new generation of writers in the Valencian dialect of Catalan. Valencia also brought forth a regional literature in Castilian, mainly in the series of novels published by Vicente Blasco Ibáñez between 1894 and 1902. In general, however, regional feeling was less strong in the Levant than in Catalonia, the Basque country, or even Galicia. The major Valencian writers of the turn of the century—"Azorín" and Gabriel Miró—wrote in Castilian and in the mainstream of all-Spanish culture.

Literature in the Castilian language expressed a more moderate regionalist culture that was not directed toward any potentially political concern. Prime manifestations of this were the novels of José Ma. de Pereda about the land and people of Old Castile, the Galician novels of Pardo Bazán, and Armando Palacio Valdés's Asturian novels.

### The Emergence of Political Catalanism

Catalonia had played no special role in Spanish politics during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Regional political self-consciousness burst forth in the 1830s, provoked by the three-way split in Spanish affairs between Carlists, Moderates, and Progressives. The struggle for and against the new liberal system and the issues of centralization versus local self-government led to a high degree of effervescence in Catalonia between 1835 and 1843, but during the Isabelline regime there was little or no sense of Catalanist political particularism. Key regional issues—mainly economic concerns and the question of local self-government—were fought out in the framework of all-Spanish problems. During the mid-century years, specifically Catalanist feeling had been concentrated on cultural activity, and the literary *renaixença* was the work of a small elite of the middle and upper classes. The first book to appear on what would become known as the Catalan problem was Juan Illas Vidal's very moderate *Cataluña en España* (1855). Juan Cortada's subsequent *Cataluña y los catalanes* (1860) was more particularistic, with a degree of romantic nationalist inspiration.

The struggle for local self-government that had been pressed by Progressives and Democrats since the 1830s and 1840s took on a more distinctly regionalist character under the democratic monarchy of D. Amadeo and the First Republic. Catalan ultra-liberals were especially active in the Federal Republican movement, and it was a former Republican, Valenti Almirall, who founded a Centre Català early in the 1880s to support regional political as well as cultural interests. Almirall's *Lo Catalanisme* (1886) was the first clear exposition of Catalan political nationalism, though it was couched in terms of close federal association with the rest of Spain.

The wealthy upper-middle and upper classes in Catalonia provided little support for either local self-government or the cultural *renaixença*, so that no daily newspaper was published in Catalan until Almirall established one in 1879. At that time, however, Catalonia was the richest region in Spain in terms of the number of voluntary associations. Some of these, such as the workingmen's choirs of Josep Clavé, helped popularize Catalan culture among certain sectors of the lower classes. A link with the
upper classes was forged by the newspaper editor and critic Mañé Flaquer, one of the most influential commentators in Catalonia during the 1870s and 1880s. Mañé Flaquer publicized a form of conservative regionalism, based on tradition, culture, and the protection of established local interests, which he called \textit{fogueralisme}. The need to provide greater shelter and encouragement for Catalan economic development was expressed in the \textit{Memorial de greuges} (complaints) presented to the government by Catalan business leaders in 1885 in protest against proposals for reducing the tariff.

By the late 1880s a new political orientation was emerging among moderate and conservative political and economic interests in Catalonia. This can be explained by the difference in economic structure between semi-industrial Catalonia and a still largely rural Spain. The Restoration regime, despite its accomplishments, was unable to provide local government and administration at the level required by a rapidly modernizing society. Though Catalan industry lived off the domestic market for the most part, the feeling grew that the disparity between the social, economic, and cultural development of Catalonia and most of the rest of Spain was holding Catalonia back. Active middle class elements in the cultural revival and in the business community were reaching the conclusion that middle class interests in Catalonia must take full control of their destinies in order to achieve complete development. In 1887 some of the more conservative and practical members of the Centre Català split off to form a separate Lliga de Catalunya. Two years later a major campaign was waged to win concessions for Catalonia in the new Spanish commercial code. New support was drawn from ultra-Catholic and post-Carlist elements. Carlism had been very strong in the less-developed, rural parts of the region, and in the last years of the century ultra-Catholics began to look toward the regionalist movement in opposition to their main enemy, the centralized liberal state. This attitude was best expressed by the bishop of Vich, Torras i Bages, whose \textit{La Tradició catalana} (1892) praised the greater religious fidelity of Catalan society.

Political Catalanism finally emerged in the 1892 "Bases de Manresa," the manifesto of regionalist intellectuals and professional men that called for political and administrative autonomy and greater support for Catalan economic development. The movement was socially moderate and rejected the democratic republicanism that had been associated with Almirall's group. It acquired an official theoretician in Enric Prat de la Riba, whose "Catechism" of 1894 defined Catalonia as the fatherland of Catalans and Spain as merely the state system operating as the enemy of the fatherland. The Catalanist movement was not separatist, but demanded regional autonomy on the basis of a corporate suffrage, complete control over regional civil and criminal affairs, and a specific limit on the military obligations of Catalans within the Spanish system.

\textit{Foreign Affairs during the Restoration Period}

Government leaders after 1875 avoided involvement in the major diplomatic and military issues of Europe, while demonstrating extreme touchiness at any point in which other powers impinged on Spanish interests. Cánovas defined his policy as one of "contraction" (\textit{recogimiento})--by contrast with O'Donnell, or even Prim--but emphasized that it was not one of isolation. The three main concerns of Spanish government abroad were the overseas empire in both the Caribbean and the Pacific, relations with northwest Africa (primarily Morocco), and with increasing vagueness, relations with Portugal. After 1875 there were still a few surviving voices that advocated a policy of "peninsularism" (some sort of union between Spain and Portugal), but this was more or less associated with subversion or revolution, and the very mention of union was carefully avoided by the two governments.

After O'Donnell's "long government," Spain had shown little active interest in Moroccan affairs, but under the Restoration a handful of \textit{afrocanista} advocates slowly became more vocal. The Real Sociedad Geográfica, founded in 1876, devoted considerable attention to Africa. The Sociedad Española de Africanistas y Colonistas was formed in 1883 and was complemented to some extent by \textit{La Estrella de Occidente}, a bicultural revue in both Castilian and Arabic published by a circle in Granada. Several
small groups of Franciscans did a little missionary work in Morocco during those years, as well. The territories of Río de Oro (later called the Spanish Sahara) and Río Muñi (Spanish Guinea), south of Morocco down the African coast, had been granted to Spain earlier by treaty and during these years were formally occupied. The goals of the africanistas were to build on these territories and on the existing Spanish presidios on the north Moroccan coast to establish a special relationship between Spain and Morocco, upholding the makhzen (the current Sultanate) as a client of Spain while keeping other European powers out. Little interest was generated in Spain, however, and Spanish policy remained basically passive.

It was understood that the only vital concern was the overseas colonies. Spanish policy made no attempt to build agreements or alliances with other powers to protect them, however. It was felt that such association would cause more harm than good, and that the remainder of the Spanish empire would be most secure if Spain remained diplomatically contracted within its own little sphere. Intermittent pressure from the United States over Cuba was a source of anxiety, but after the end of the Grant administration Spanish leaders believed that overt American intervention in the Spanish Antilles was unlikely. During the 1880s the only incident was an incursion by the German navy into the Spanish-held Caroline islands in the western Pacific in 1885. This aroused great resentment among Spaniards and was settled by arbitration in favor of Spain.

There were Liberal party leaders, however, who felt that Spanish diplomacy must be more active and associate itself with major powers. Spain's only potential enemy in Europe was judged to be France, because of the French record of intervention in Spanish affairs during the past two centuries. The Third Republic was a source of apprehension that it might subvert the monarchy, while conversely French monarchist legitimists had made themselves objects of hostility because of their support for Carlism. The restored monarchy cultivated good relations with Germany as a counterweight to France, but Bismarck had no interest in becoming involved in the affairs of southwestern Europe. The Liberal Segismundo Moret, foreign minister under Sagasta's long government, did arrange a Mediterranean defense pact with Italy in 1887, thus hoping to associate Spain indirectly with the Triple Alliance, but the agreement has been termed a model of vagueness and involved no concrete obligations.

**The Cuban Disaster**

Spain's only significant overseas possession was Cuba. Control of the island was deemed important partly for economic reasons but even more as an article of prestige. It was genuinely feared by Cánovas and other key leaders that final loss of empire would produce so grave a trauma that it would bring the collapse of the regime and of the dynasty. The peace settlement that ended the Ten Years War in 1878 had promised Cuba the same system of municipal autonomy that existed in Puerto Rico. A reform party had been formed in Cuba during the 1860s, seeking commercial freedom and local autonomy, and the subsequent Autonomist party sent a small delegation to the Spanish Cortes under the Restoration system. Though all slavery was ended by 1886, the promised municipal autonomy was never instituted. The Autonomists finally withdrew from the Madrid parliament after flagrant electoral fraud and manipulation in Cuba.

It has been observed not inaccurately that Cuba was to Spain as Ireland was to England during this period. Control of both islands dated from the "old," sixteenth-century empires of the two powers. Just as the "Irish lords" formed a powerful imperial interest group, so there were important Spanish social and economic concerns in Cuba. Considerable money was invested in the plantation economy, and Catalan commerce, particularly, benefited greatly from the protectionist system, 60 percent of Catalan exports going to Cuba. The Cuban "Orangemen" were the españolistas, the "Spanishist" elements, swollen by emigration from the peninsula in the nineteenth century, that had built the Cuban middle class. These immigrant lower-middle-class bureaucrats and shopkeepers were the backbone of the Unión Constitucional dedicated to keeping Cuba Spanish. For most people in Spain, however, the key
issues were neither social nor economic, but the patriotic and emotional appeal of sustaining the Spanish flag.

[511] Despite the españolismo of much of the Cuban middle classes, one of the main problems was that Cuba's natural market was the United States. The Spanish economy, on the other hand, could neither absorb exports nor provide necessary imports at the right prices. To this economic conflict was added the growing sentiment of Cuban patriotism among at least a large minority of the local population. Cubans charged that Spain exploited the island through taxes, the tariff system, and an undeniably corrupt administration. Spanish government spokesmen insisted that after military and administrative costs were reckoned Cuba was actually a financial liability to the Spanish government, which may well have been true.

Sagasta's colonial minister in 1893, Antonio Maura, introduced a proposal that would have given Cuba a single-chamber representative assembly for the entire island to legislate on internal affairs, an advisory council to assist the captain-general, and a system of genuinely autonomous municipal government. Even Sagasta, however, refused to support the measure, and other interests were unalterably opposed, forcing Maura's resignation. A more moderate autonomy law was finally passed at the beginning of 1895, ten days before the final Cuban revolt began, but by then it was too late.

The Cánovas ministry of 1895 to 1897 adopted an intransigent hard line under pressure from the Romero Robledo gang and various patriotic, ultraconservative elements. The silvelistas, alone among major domestic political groups, urged concessions, but they were ignored on factional grounds. Martinez de Campos, victor in 1878, was sent as captain general to repeat his earlier feat, but found support for independence in Cuba much broader than twenty years before. He urged conciliation and compromise, and so was replaced in 1896 by Valeriano Weyler, who had a reputation for being the toughest, most efficient general in the Spanish army. By 1897 nearly a quarter million troops had been poured into Cuba; they faced not an ordinary military conflict but one of the first of modern colonial guerrilla wars. Weyler accepted the situation for what it was, cordoned off areas of the island, and began to relocate part of the rural Cuban population in reconcentraciones where they were safe from the rebels. Within Spain, public opinion generally supported a hard line, in the country's principal outpouring of patriotic feeling during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Cuban rebels were viewed as traitors, and it was generally felt that any negotiations or concessions should be preceded by a military victory that would make Spanish sovereignty clear.

The victory was slow in coming. Weyler penned the rebels within the eastern half of the island but could not destroy them. Much of the Cuban economy was systematically wrecked by the insurgents in a [512] scorched-earth policy, and the suffering of part of the civilian population became extreme. The racial antagonisms between blacks and whites that were expected to split the rebel movement never became especially serious. By mid-1897 the more liberal Spanish political opinion was growing restive. Just as the "yellow press" in the United States harped on Spanish atrocities (most of which were in fact committed either by rebels or by Cuban españolista volunteers), the Spanish liberal press grew increasingly critical of the slowness of Weyler's program. In July 1897 Moret, one of the three top Liberal party leaders, came out for immediate autonomy.

In the following month Cánovas was murdered by an Italian anarchist at a Basque summer resort. The assassination may have been encouraged by Cuban agents, but it was primarily a protest against the repression of anarchist terrorism within Spain. It led to a change in policy, for no Conservative could replace Cánovas. After a brief transition ministry, Sagasta returned to power in October 1897. His government replaced Weyler with a less vigorous commander and finally passed the old autonomy bill, but by that time Cuban dissidents would accept nothing short of independence.

Pressure from the United States mounted steadily, and the mysterious explosion of the USS Maine in
Havana harbor in February 1898 made war between the United States and Spain almost inevitable. The Sagasta ministry did everything it could to avoid the conflict, even granting the unilateral armistice to the Cubans that the American government demanded. Its only salvation would have been to relinquish Cuba completely and immediately, but no Spanish government would capitulate under pressure. The Sagasta ministry accepted the conflict as an ineluctable test of honor. Though Spanish opinion rallied almost completely to the national cause, creaking, obsolescent Spanish warships were easily blasted out of the water in both the Caribbean and the Pacific by the sleek, powerful new American fleet. Cánovas had once vowed that Spain would fight "to the last man and the last peseta," but after the destruction of the navy the war was over. The United States, whose government was determined to settle the Cuban problem once and for all, deprived Spain of all its Caribbean and Pacific possessions, but it did not solve the Cuban problem. Puerto Rico and the Philippines passed under American sovereignty, while the lesser Pacific islands were transferred to Germany. The struggle for Cuba had cost Spain its navy, 50,000 military deaths (nearly all from disease), and its national self-respect. The Spanish disaster of 1898 was part of the series of humiliations suffered by the weaker states of southwestern Europe in the increasingly rugged imperial competition of that decade; it corresponded to the British Ultimatum to Portugal in 1891 and the Italian disaster at Adowa in 1896. Each of these precipitated a domestic crisis, and in Spain the Restoration regime sank to its nadir.

**Bibliography for Chapter 21**


