

THE YARA UPRISING

Following, we present to you the Manifesto given on October 10, 1868 by Carlos Manuel de Céspedes in his sugar refinery “La Demajagua” located near the town of Manzanillo. This event marks the first step in the struggle for Cuban independence from Spain.

“Manifesto of the Revolutionary Board of Cuba intended for all fellow citizens as well as all other nations.

As we rise in arms against the tyrannical Spanish Crown, we state to the world the reasons why we choose to do so. We seek the greater good, fully cognizant that such an objective will come at a steep price, a price that must be paid in the present day so that we can build a better tomorrow.

Nobody can deny that Spain rules Cuba with an iron as well as a bloody fist. Not only does Spain not respect private property but also chooses to tax it at whim. In addition, Spain represses all political, civil and religious freedoms while simultaneously forcing Cuban sons and daughters to exile in foreign lands or risk summarily execution by military commissions that rule in a time of peace, all while lessening the power of the civil government.

Spain has prohibited public gatherings unless sanctioned by a military authority and one cannot comment on the evils of life without being branded a

rebel, all while insisting in the total silence and acquiescence of the Cuban people.

This land of ours is loved and respected by all nations which surround us. None of them are our enemies; therefore, we need not an army or a navy, entities which exhaust the public wealth. Yet, Spain forces upon us armed forces that have no other objective than to submit the Cuban people to an iron yoke.

Therefore, Cubans can not talk, can not write, can not think, can not welcome into our midst guests sent by other sister lands. Spain has offered countless of times to respect the rights of Cubans but we have not seen one single point of evidence of the fulfillment of that promise. Moreover, it offers the mockery of a vestige of representation so as to hide the overwhelming charges it imposes on us.

Seemingly in danger of losing our farms, our lives, as well as our dignity, we must risk those very same assets in order to recoup our rights as men and since we can not do so by our words, we will do so through battle.

When a people reaches the point of degradation and misery that Cubans find themselves in, no one can criticize the use of force in order to free oneself from such captivity. The prior examples of the greatest of nations authorizes such a step. Cuba can not be deprived of the rights enjoyed by other nations. And it



Javier De Céspedes, el tataranieto de Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, en frente de La Demajagua donde su antepasado dio el Grito De Yara. En Julio de 2002, Javier viaja a Cuba con dos propósitos. Primero, para poner su mano en la Campana de la Libertad y cumplir una promesa echa a su abuela, su vínculo personal a la historia de Cuba de hacer lo mismo que ella hizo antes de salir de Cuba para el exilio. Segundo, en su capacidad como Presidente del Directorio Democrático Cubano, Céspedes viaja a Cuba para ofrecerle a estudiantes disidentes en la isla soporte moral y para también continuar la tradición de su familia de solo regresar a la madre patria en oposición a la tiranía.

Javier de Céspedes, great-grand child of the Cuban patriot Carlos Manuel de Céspedes in front of his ancestor's La Demajua sugar mill and where the latter launches de Yara Uprising. On July of 2002, the younger De Céspedes returns to the island with two objectives. First, to fulfill a promise made to his grandmother to ring the same bell she rang before leaving Cuba for political exile. Secondly, De Céspedes, in his capacity as President of the Cuban Democratic Directory, meets with Cuban dissident students to offer his support as well as to continue the tradition of his family never to return to the motherland unless is with a purpose to oppose tyranny

can not consent to be told to simply continue to suffer. It behooves other civilized countries to use their influence to help an innocent, sensible and generous people to free themselves from the yoke of a barbaric oppressor. We ask those countries for help as we ask the same to our God. We are not driven by hatred or ambitions, we only seek to be free and equals, as God intended all men to be.

We dedicate ourselves to those two principles, that men are free and equal. We love tolerance, order and justice in all walks of life, we respect the life and property of all peaceful citizens even, if they are Spaniards, and we seek universal suffrage because that assures the sovereignty of the people. We wish for the gradual eradication-albeit under indemnification-of slavery, free trade with those nations that will act in kind, national representation as it pertains to the enactment of laws and the imposition of taxes and the religious observance of human rights because we will then reach greatness in our future and because we are convinced that under Spanish rule, we will never achieve those aims.

In view of our moderate objectives, in view of our current misery, what noble heart would oppose the blessed end state which we seek? Which civilized country would not condemn Spain when she thinks it acceptable that in order to deprive us of our innate rights, it is appropriate to spill the blood of our most courageous sons?

No, Cuba can no longer belong to a power that, like Cain, sacrifices her own brother and, like Saturn, devours her own son. Cuba aspires to be a great as well as civilized nation and to extend a friendly hand and a loving heart to all other countries. If Spain were to agree to free Cuba, we would look at her sort of like a sister from the same mother. However, if she persists in our servitude and extermination, she will have to slit our throats and the throats of those who will follow before it achieves her objective of making Cubans a herd of slaves”.

Manzanillo, October 10, 1868. Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, Commander in Chief.