

# 1924 Election

## Introduction

When Machado was elected to office in 1924 it was not a great year to become president of Cuba. Sugar<sup>1</sup> prices had dropped precipitously from their 1919 peak<sup>2</sup>, some army units, not satisfied with the outcome of the elections, were in rebellion in the provinces, disgruntled Cubans based in the United States were an ongoing problem as they refused to recognize Machado's election. Cuba's nascent political system was in a shambles and there was very little effective leadership attempting to hold Cuba back from political chaos.

In a 1924 report, the American Chargé observed that President Zayas was campaigning as hard as he could for another term as a Conservative and two time former president Mario Menocal was quite active in his own campaign for (re-) election all the while claiming to be "unalterably opposed to re-election."<sup>3</sup> At the same time military revolts were brewing in the provinces and an active and unhappy labor movement brought island transportation to a halt. Toward the end of May 1924, a railroad strike against United Railways grew to include strikes against both the

---

<sup>1</sup> Sugar was Cuba's economic lifeblood, employing the vast majority of Cubans and providing their only significant source of foreign currency. This dependency was exacerbated by the fact that the United States was the only significant trading partner Cuba had in 1924. This economic dependency was addressed by Machado with some success, as this paper attempts to illustrate.

<sup>2</sup> The price of sugar in 1919 was unsustainably high due to the war in Europe (which ended in 1919) and the movement of American and other farmers into the sugar market, especially with sugar beets.

Cuban Railroad and the Cuba Northern Railroad, and “the transportation of the whole island was completely paralyzed.” This lasted until mid June 1924.<sup>4</sup> Army rebellions, provoked solely by dissatisfaction with the outcome of the elections, broke out in Santa Clara province and Cuban exiles promoted scattered forays from their bases in the Florida Keys, especially Long Key and Loggerhead Key.<sup>5</sup> On May 10, 1924 the Cuban Embassy protested the use of New York State as a military home base used by armed insurrectionists against the Cuban government.<sup>6</sup> In early May, Zayas, attempting to get the revolutionaries to quiet down, offered them amnesty.<sup>7</sup>

Regarding the role of the Cuban Congress amidst military rebellions, general strikes, and a presidential campaign, US Chargé Engbert could only report that “there has been no change from the habitual comatose state of the Cuban Congress and it has not even come to life long enough to muster a quorum for the purpose of adjourning.”<sup>8</sup> Cuba clearly had an immature “constitutional democracy” and I mention that because “democratic processes” are one of the main points Machado’s enemies bring up in their attempts to justify their own positions. To say that Machado was a “bad democrat” really is not saying anything unique about the vast majority of participants in Cuba’s political arena.

---

<sup>3</sup> C. Vanft Engbert to Secretary of State, July 3, 1924, Havana, 837.00/2523.

<sup>4</sup> C. Vanft Engbert to Secretary of State, July 3, 1924, Havana, 837.00/2523.

<sup>5</sup> Cuban Embassy in Washington to US Secretary of State Charles Evan Hughes, May 1924, Washington, 837.00/2496.

<sup>6</sup> Embassy of Cuba to Secretary of State, May 10, 1924, Washington, 837.00/2499.

<sup>7</sup> Starbuck to Secretary of State, May 7, 1924, Cienfuegos, 837.00/2498.

<sup>8</sup> Engbert to Secretary of State, July 18, 1924, Havana, 837.00/2525.

### **Fight for the Liberal Party in 1924**

Carlos Mendieta, a famous war hero who had developed a strong base in the Liberal Party, assumed that he would be his Party's nominee in the 1924 presidential election. But another Liberal party leader outstaged him. Machado's hard work and personal charisma caught Mendieta off guard. Through determination, legwork, endless meetings, and political caucusing, Machado swayed the majority of Liberal supporters to back his candidacy. By meeting and convincing Liberal politicians, Machado managed to secure enough votes to assure him the Liberal Party nomination.

As the day for the official nomination approached, Mendieta grew increasingly jealous and his faction began to declare opposition to Machado, even though he was the party's candidate. In order to placate Mendieta's forces, Machado identified a number of prominent Mendieta supporters who would be a part of his government should he win office. One of them, Carlos de la Rosa, Mayor of Cardenas, became Machado's Vice-Presidential nominee.<sup>9</sup> The Cuban newspaper El Heraldo de Cuba refers to de la Rosa as a Mendieta partisan chosen to unite the party.<sup>10</sup> Despite Machado's efforts to reach out and compromise, only one Mendieta supporter made a speech for party unity. Most Mendieta supporters continued to oppose Machado. El Heraldo de Cuba reported that, while Machado chose a perfect compromise candidate in de la Rosa, and was "calmly" seeking the Presidency, "radical elements" of the Liberal party "want[ed] to triumph by all means, and with violence if necessary."<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> Havana Post, Cuban Press, from "La Discussion," as reported in Havana Post, August 1, 1924, p. 4.

<sup>10</sup> Havana Post, Cuban Press, from "El Heraldo de Cuba," as reported in Havana Post, August 1, 1924, p. 4.

<sup>11</sup> Havana Post, Cuban Press, from "El Heraldo de Cuba," as reported in Havana Post, August 1, 1924, p. 4.

Mendieta played the role of victim vis a vis Machado,<sup>12</sup> and declared that he was really the one the people wanted. Despite a losing battle, Mendieta continued to push for the Liberal nomination. On July 24, La Discussion reported that the split in the Liberal party was so serious that Mendieta and his followers were refusing to support their own party's nominee during the Presidential election. They declared that come election day Liberal party members who had backed Mendieta would not vote for their own Party's nominee (Machado).<sup>13</sup> The newspaper noted that these men had earlier vowed to support their own party's nomination, but apparently they were expecting Mendieta to win, and subsequent to Mendieta's loss, refused to support Machado. Papers reported Mendieta as "on the war path." Apparently a supporter of Mendieta, La Discussion maintained "from the very outset" that "the Liberal masses wanted Col. Carlos Mendieta as their candidate" and at the end of July reported that his followers "maintained themselves firm in their decision of 'Mendieta or none.'" On August 8, La Discussion reported that Mendieta was "far from accepting the Liberal Party" decision and "with a large group of partisans has retired and will not support Machado."<sup>14</sup>

This Liberal party split was cause for optimism in President Zayas' camp. With a split in the opposition party, he was sure he could beat Machado in the general election. Zayas also reneged on his promise to support Menocal in the 1924 election and campaigned vigorously for a second term. Menocal, despite two consecutive terms in office and being rejected by his own party in 1920 and in 1924 did not give up his pursuit for a third term. El Triunfo reported that the "friends and partisans of

---

<sup>12</sup> Havana Post, July 1, 1924, p. 4.

<sup>13</sup> Havana Post, Cuban Press, from "La Discussion," as reported in Havana Post, July 30, 1924.

<sup>14</sup> Havana Post, Cuban Press, from "La Discussion," as reported in Havana Post, August 8, 1924.

Menocal have never acted openly and sincerely and their campaign in favor of the nomination . . . ha[d] been very unsuccessful."<sup>15</sup> Alfredo Zayas, plotting his own re-election, did not suspend El Sol and El Heraldo as he previously did when they opposed his administration, nor did he deport any opponents that summer.<sup>16</sup>

Several papers, including La Discussion and the Havana Post, expressed doubts that Machado would be able to get elected with a split in his party.<sup>17</sup> "The Liberal Party," the Havana Post warned, "can triumph only if united and if a spirit of cordiality exists." For this election, unity and cordiality remained in short supply.

As the time drew near for the parties to officially nominate their respective candidates, newspapers began calling for them to openly present detailed and coherent platforms; Cuban politics were notorious for focusing on winning without any accompanying issues. Some papers had advocated specific programs. Some papers requested specific new policies from the candidates. The Avisador Comercial called for a new reciprocity treaty with the United States.<sup>18</sup> Diario de la Marina called upon the Conservatives and Liberals, the only two parties of any substance, for the first time to offer real platforms to the public. They should "perhaps for the first time in the history of Cuban politics, offer the country an ample program of their plans and policies." In earlier elections "only vague and ambiguous programs were drafted, or none at all."<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> Havana Post, July 31, 1924, p. 4.

<sup>16</sup> Zayas had suspended these two papers. El Sol a supporter of Machado. Zayas had deported Aldo Baroni the previous summer for opposition to his government. Havana Post, Cuban Press, "El Sol," August 1, 1924, p. 4.

<sup>17</sup> Havana Post, "La Discussion," as reported in Havana Post, July 31, 1924.

<sup>18</sup> Avisador Commercial and quoted in the Havana Post, Cuban Press, July 31, 1924, p. 4.

<sup>19</sup> Havana Post, August 1, 1924, p. 4. See also Diario de la Marina, "Machado-La Rosa Quedaron Ayer" July 31, 1924, page 1

Machado was the only candidate to publish a detailed platform in 1924 which was summed up in the slogan "Water, roads, and schools." His persistent and effective slogan encapsulated his plan for Cuban reform, a plan implemented to an astonishing degree in light of the accomplishments of other Cuban presidents. Machado did issue a platform: a solid, nationalistic, program for Cuban economic growth which emphasized independence from foreign influences. Immediately upon receiving the Liberal nomination, Machado called, first and foremost, for the abolition of the Platt Amendment. His method for achieving this goal was prudent and productive. The Havana Post reported that "his prime goal was to improve conditions in Cuba to such an extent that she would be universally respected and that a revision of the permanent treaty with the United States would be made possible, annulling the Platt Amendment."<sup>20</sup> Machado added to this his strong desire to "consolidat[e] the national wealth of the nation by improving the means of communications and protecting national industries."<sup>21</sup>

### **Menocal**

Meanwhile, former President Mario Menocal was still itching to get back into office. Menocal campaigned for Conservative support. President Zayas, even though already holding the office of the President could not win a substantial Conservative following for a second term. Menocal approached a leader of one of the military rebellions, Colonel Federico Laredo Bru, who was the founder and leader of the Veterans and Patriots Party, a much smaller, but active organization. Menocal offered

---

<sup>20</sup> Havana Post, "Liberal Choice States Policy: Machado Says His Aim is to Annul Platt Amendment," August 1, 1924, page 1.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, page 1.

him the Vice-Presidential slot on a combined Menocal-Laredo Bru ticket if he would back him for president on the Conservative ticket. Laredo Bru accepted.<sup>22</sup>

In early August 1924, Menocal won formal support of the Conservative Party while President Zayas could only fall back on support from the Popular Party (which he originally formed in 1920).<sup>23</sup> Zayas was rejected by the Conservative Party<sup>24</sup> as they turned back to Menocal in their primary election. Menocal and Laredo Bru corresponded regarding the fall election and the general state of affairs in Cuba. Bru emphatically insisted upon a revolution against the current government. This was by no means unique in the history of the Cuban republic. Machado had been involved in earlier years as well, and they were a result of the low expectations of a constitutional system and general mistrust of elections. Few Cuban presidential elections occurred without fraud, claims of fraud, direct US intervention, or other unconstitutional suspicions. Menocal agreed to a military revolt, but wished to postpone any revolution until around October 28, 1924 when he (Menocal) was to visit Santa Clara. Bru worked on publishing a revolutionary manifesto. The whole purpose of the revolution was to postpone the autumn presidential elections and incite American military intervention.<sup>25</sup> American's had intervened during election turmoil in 1906 and again in 1917 and there was little reason not to attempt this gambit once it was clear that one's own political hopes had been dashed by the election cycle. It was easy to claim fraud, stir up a military revolt, and entice or even incite the Americans to intervene. For political hopefuls who could achieve power by the ballot, that was certainly an option (if one cared little for consitutional processes anyway). In the

---

<sup>22</sup> Enoch Crowder to Secretary of State, July 31, 1924, Havana, 837.00/2527.

<sup>23</sup> Enoch Crowder to Secretary of State, August 12, 1924, Havana, 837.00/2538.

<sup>24</sup> Enoch Crowder to Secretary of State, 31 July 1924, Havana, 837.00/2527.

<sup>25</sup> Enoch Crowder to Secretary of State, October 19, 1924, Havana, 837.00/2561.

1933 Revolution, Americans seem to have caught on to this ploy and, against all expectations, refused to intervene militarily in Cuba during the upheaval of Machado's last years. So, Menocal traveled to the provinces and visited Colonel Quero, who was commander of all the army forces in Camaguey. Quero visited Menocal's quarters and Menocal detained the Colonel and ordered Quero to place all of his forces under Menocal's command with a signed written order or else he would be shot to death. One of Quero's lieutenants heard of this and ordered Menocal to release Quero or he would order his troops to attack Menocal's location with all the forces at his command. Menocal relented and released Colonel Quero, failing to achieve the provincial military coup he sought.<sup>26</sup>

Provincial military rebellions were useful as leverage against incumbent governments – it put the squeeze on them to negotiate or risk further disturbances or even American intervention. It was not necessary to march to Havana and arrest a sitting president in order to make these gambits worthwhile. Cuba's short history since independence showed that the cost of failure were low – perhaps exile or a short term in prison with the hopes of establishing a reputation as a caudillo in ones own right.

On June 28, Machado claimed he had the support of the Liberal Party. He feared his opponents within the party (including Mendieta) were willing to split the party in order to deny him a victory.<sup>27</sup> At the end of July 1924, the Liberal party formally nominated Machado as its candidate for the 1924 presidential election. Despite the complete rejection of Machado by Mendieta, Machado persisted in

---

<sup>26</sup> Enoch Crowder to Secretary of State, October 16, 1924, Havana, 837.00/2564. Despatch #885; also 837.00/2580.

<sup>27</sup> El Heraldo, Havana newspaper, June 28, 1924, 837.00/2520.

selecting Mendieta supporter de la Rosa as his Vice-Presidential running mate – he refused to rescind the olive branch meant to heal a badly divided party.

## **Zayas**

President Zayas was losing support within his own Conservative party. In the primary vote in April 1924, he lost five of six provinces. Menocal, who could not get his own party to support him in 1920, was gaining momentum among Conservative Party members.<sup>28</sup> Zayas officially withdrew from the presidential race on August 25, 1924. Enoch Crowder, American Ambassador to Cuba, noted that “when [Zayas] took office, he found education, sanitation, public works, and roads at their lowest ebb since the birth of the Republic, and now all these are admittedly even worse than they were.”<sup>29</sup>

Meanwhile, Zayas still faced substantial problems with portions of the military unwilling to take his orders as they attempted to influence political events. For example, Major Arsenio, a very strong supporter of Menocal<sup>30</sup> was transferred from Oriented to Pinar del Rio in order to reduce his influence.<sup>31</sup> Later, Ortiz would

---

<sup>28</sup> Enoch Crowder to Secretary of State, April 21, 1924, Havana, 837.00/2491.

<sup>29</sup> Crowder to Secretary of State, August 26, 1924, Havana, 837.00/2544. Despatch #838.

<sup>30</sup> Ortiz was later accused of organizing the murder of several people under Machado’s administration, and Machado was forced to relieve him of command. It is worth noting that Ortiz was a Menocal supporter, and his independent and insubordinate military leadership preceded Machado’s first presidential administration.

<sup>31</sup> Enoch Crowder to Secretary of State, August 22, 1924, Havana, 837.00/2542 Despatch #836.

be accused of crimes of brutality while Machado was in office and Machado would relieve him of command in Santa Clara on June 2, 1933.<sup>32</sup>

### **Mendieta**

In this confusing and divided election environment, Carlos Mendieta, himself a Liberal, withdrew his support from the Liberal nominee -- Machado -- and allied with Mario Menocal. Menocal, a Conservative, had already formed an alliance with Laredo Bru who was the leader of the Veterans and Patriots Party. Zayas turned his support to Machado with the smaller (relative to the Liberal and Conservative parties) Popular Party. In late June, Carlos Mendieta withdrew from the Presidential race on the grounds that "corrupt influences were working against him."<sup>33</sup> and claimed that Zayas only wanted to keep himself in power. Mendieta casually warned that the Liberal Party had twice previously risen in rebellion against Conservative governments.<sup>34</sup>

### **Machado's Triumph**

The middle class son of Portuguese immigrants residing in Santa Clara province, Machado's rise to power and fame began locally as a businessman and local leader after the war for independence during which he served as an aide to a general. Lacking a university education, he never the less learned enough about Cuban society

---

<sup>32</sup> Welles to Secretary of State, June 2, 1933, Havana, 837.00/3535.

<sup>33</sup> Engbert to Secretary of State, July 1, 1924, Havana, 837.00/2518.

and politics to leverage his political, military and business contacts into a successful bid for president.<sup>35</sup> His charm appeared irresistible and his hard work against a better known opponent (Mendieta) rewarded him with the Liberal candidacy for president in 1924.

Cubans turned out for one of the most fairly conducted elections in Cuban history in the fall of 1924.<sup>36</sup> Machado, by all accounts, won the election by running a straightforward, honest, and open election. After skillfully convincing fellow Liberals to nominate him, he took his platform to the people: "water, roads, and schools, three urgent needs which had been neglected by [his] predecessors."<sup>37</sup>

On election day, Machado won and Menocal (seeking his third term as president) protested the results as illegal.<sup>38</sup> US Ambassador Enoch Crowder offered an apt comparison of the elections of 1920 and 1924:

In the legal proceedings of the 1920 elections where majorities were relatively small and involved about two-thirds of the voting precincts, the charges made were military and police intimidation and fraud evidenced by acts of violence. It seems impossible in view of the decisive majorities obtained Saturday [1924] and the absence of intimidation to secure from the courts a decree of nullification of returns in sufficient number to affect results.<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> Enoch Crowder to Secretary of State, July 3, 1924, Havana, 837.00/2525 No. 779.

<sup>35</sup> More about his personal life is in Chapter 13, "Personal Life."

<sup>36</sup> Luis E. Aguilar, Cuba 1933: Prologue to Revolution, p. 55.

<sup>37</sup> Machado MSS, Box 1, Folder 8, II-19,20. Richter Library, University of Miami.

<sup>38</sup> Enoch Crowder to Secretary of State, November 3, 1924, Havana, 837.00/2574.

<sup>39</sup> Enoch Crowder to Secretary of State, November 3, 1924, Havana, 837.00/2576 (M488 R16).

Machado won five of six provinces with no serious disturbances and with an “overwhelming majority” of the votes cast for him.<sup>40</sup> It should be noted that in this campaign, both Machado and Menocal -- seeking his third term as president -- campaigned against re-election. Menocal sought the status quo regarding US relations while Machado argued for a substantial modification of the treaty terms<sup>41</sup> (which he eventually succeeded in obtaining).

The Platt Amendment to the US-Cuban Treaty of 1903 gave the United States the right to intervene for the “preservation of Cuban independence” and the preservation of “life, property and individual liberty.” Construed broadly, this could mean that America was the guarantor of last resort for a peaceful, stable, prosperous and free Cuba while also meaning that the United States could intervene at will, undermining Cuban sovereignty. It forbade Cuba from accepting loans, negotiating treaties or granting military bases to any nation except the United States. This clause could be played both ways – Cuban leaders learned to use it to their advantage by requesting American intervention when they seemed powerless of effect whatever political outcome they seemed intent on achieving. American leaders learned that this amendment wasn’t always a great deal because while “legally” allowing US intervention, such intervention could cost more than it was worth. From the 1890’s through the 1920’s American expeditions in Latin America had taught them that exercising imperial power wasn’t always worth the price one paid in making enemies on one’s borders nor the seemingly ineffectiveness of military solutions. By the time Machado became president, anti-interventionist sentiment had develop an influential following in American leadership circles, and once Franklin Roosevelt became

---

<sup>40</sup> Enoch Crowder to Secretary of State, November 7, 1924, Havana, 837.00/2581.

<sup>41</sup> Enoch Crowder to Secretary of State, March 24, 1925, Havana, 837.00/2589.

president of the United States in early 1933 he promulgated a theory of non-intervention. Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy's first test case would be the Cuban Revolution of 1933, and despite strong pleas for intervention from both American diplomats (Sumner Welles) and Cuban leaders (Menocal and Mendieta) the American policy of non-intervention prevented a military re-occupation of the island. Never the less, the threat of intervention itself was enough to sway most governments in Latin America, and Cuba's frequent experiences with American forces prevented any serious Cuban politician from discounting American direct action. So strong was this shadow of American force that some historians have argued that the Platt Amendment itself undermined Cuban democracy because no one believed Cubans would be left to sort things out in their own way and develop the institutionalized strength of an independent government to rule Cuba without American support. The Platt Amendment alone does not encompass the full range of American influence. The proximity of the States and the sheer scale of American diplomatic, military and economic ties to Cuba has tied Cuba to the US. This is especially true while Cuba's economy was so directly tied to sugar imports alone as a means of national sustenance.

### **Machado Inherits Unstable Government**

At the time of Machado's election to the presidency, the United States openly warned Cuba of further intervention<sup>42</sup> because it had failed to maintain a viable tax and revenue system, bankrupting not only the Cuban government, but failing to cover the interest on American loans. American bankers had close ties with the State Department and influential policy contributors during the era of Dollar Diplomacy.

---

<sup>42</sup> Machado Collection, II-14.

Much of economic malaise can be attributed to the decline in sugar prices upon which the Cuban government was highly dependent for revenue production, and most sugar mills in Cuba had a strong American investment component as well as the railroad lines which hauled the cane to the mills and the raw sugar to the ports. Enoch Crowder put the situation to Machado in rather plain language:

The government of the United States has no other interest than to save Cuban finances, reorganize the administration of the customs and guarantee that the interests on the foreign loans will be paid. My appeals to Dr. Zayas have not been successful and you are taking possession of the government at a critical time, without a cent in the Treasury, and I think it will be very difficult for you to straighten out all this rapidly, however great your will to do so may be.<sup>43</sup>

Crowder then advised Machado to go to Washington to convince the American president that he was serious about reform. Machado went to the American capital, and extracted a promise from President Calvin Coolidge not to intervene until the new Cuban administration had a reasonable time to clean up the mess left by three administrations of corrupt Conservative leadership.

During his pre-inaugural visit to the United States Machado then pointedly explained to US President Coolidge that Cuba looked forward to the termination of the Platt Amendment at the earliest possible date. One may surmise this was more than electoral posturing since Machado had already won the election. Challenging the United States on the cornerstone of their Cuban policy was a bold move for the newly elected president, but he felt it necessary to change the conditions of the relations both to establish the differences between his own Liberal government and previous

---

<sup>43</sup> Machado Collection, II-15.

Conservative governments who had been very cozy with the Americans. To all parties it was becoming increasingly clear that the Cuban nation could not pursue its own interests when the legitimacy of each government and the economic well being of the nation depended fundamentally on the whims of Washington. Not only did the Platt Amendment stifle internal Cuban political development, but it effectively prevented any countervailing political or economic alliances Cuba may have wished to make with European nations. The American government could interpret heavy foreign investment or other alliances as threatening Cuban independence and intervene, never mind the fact that Cuban independence was extremely leveraged vis a vis the United States.

### **Securing His Flanks**

Securing the support of the Cuban legislature became Machado's first priority once the Cuban people had elected him. Machado was well aware of political opposition to his election amongst long established party leaders. Even leaders of his own party, such as Mendieta, refused to support him. The Conservatives were no less a threat; they had controlled the government since 1912 and were used to the emoluments, legal and otherwise, of office. Machado had to win Congressional support and get Congress to back his program.

Machado's tactics were effective. First, he used the national lottery to coax cooperation from Congress. He awarded them concessions, "which consisted in the distribution of lucrative lottery collectorships which gave Congressmen the franchise to sell lottery tickets at thirty to fifty percent above the regular price."<sup>44</sup> Second,

---

<sup>44</sup> Roberto O. Hernandez, "The Second Administration of President Machado," M.A. Thesis, Georgia State University, 1971, p. 35. Hereafter: Hernandez, "The Second Administration of Machado."

Machado changed the electoral code of 1919<sup>45</sup> to forbid the reorganization of political parties. This would keep Mendieta, Menocal, and Zayas -- all currently out of power -- from usurping the political process to regain power or undercutting Machado's government. All three of them failed to win support within their own parties and doubtless had plans to circumvent their unpopularity by splitting or "re-arranging" the parties as all three had previously done. This law secured not only Machado, but legislators in both parties from challenges by disgruntled losers. Considering not only the vicious political climate, but the very real threat of military rebellion (from both Menocal and Mendieta) this measure seems reasonable. This also had the intentional effect of protecting legislators from a similar challenge. In this way, Machado secured his political flanks so that he could proceed with his process of national reconstruction.

### **Conclusion**

The Cuban government as well as the competing political parties were rife with turmoil, doubt and uncertainty about the future when Machado ran for office in 1924. Zayas' government faced rebellion in the provinces and was abandoned by his own Conservative party. The Conservatives turned back to Menocal, twice president and notoriously corrupt, who allied himself with a group of military rebels. Mendieta lost his lead among Liberals as Machado emerged from his underdog status. Mendieta then refused to abide by his own party's choice and formed a new party to fight Machado. Yet by all accounts, Machado overwhelmingly and fairly won the election. These two defeated politicians, rejected by their own party and at the polls,

---

<sup>45</sup> This was established by Enoch Crowder and his so called "Honest Cabinet" which Machado refers to as the "Cabinet of Intervention."

would form the core of Machado's opposition in the future. Mendieta eventually (with help from of the United States) would replace Machado. In light of the military rebellions brewing in the provinces in 1924, a tendency toward circumventing democratic processes when disappointed (through armed rebellion, party fratricide, and public renunciation of electoral results when unfavorable), and subtle threats from Menocal and Mendieta to resort to violence, Machado would later decide that his efforts to re-elect himself were hardly harmful to Cuban democracy. On the contrary, he would see himself as a bulwark against petty rebellion and institutional graft since he thought of himself as the only real alternative to the pre-1924 climate of graft, ineffectiveness, American dominance, and a resurgent Menocal. When one understands that Machado's primary political opposition from 1928 through 1933 was Mendieta, Menocal and some university students, one can understand why he doubted the ability of those men to provide a positive alternative for Cuba's future.