

The Press And The Spanish American War Political Cartoons of the Yellow Journalism Age

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In the winter of 1897, the American Newspaper Publisher's Association held its annual convention in New York City. There was little on its agenda that would indicate that a conflict about to involve Americans and more to the point, American journalism, would change the character of the field forever. The great city daily was about to emerge as a major player in world affairs from both an economic and political perspective. Although history has portrayed the great newspaper battles of the late Victorian Age as a conflict between two giants of questionable motive, William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer, in reality the turmoil more correctly centered on the pathway that journalism itself would take. On one side was the Hearst-Pulitzer approach driven by the always present fever that sought bigger and more profitable circulation figures, an approach that often threw caution and fact to the wind. On the other stood the newspaper model which claimed it would only publish "All The News That's Fit to Print." The legacy left by the *New York Journal*, *The World New York* and the *New York Times* can still be found today in many of the nation's quickie tabloids and the August press of the big city newsroom (Campbell, 2004:190).

The rise of a successful and always combative daily journalism in the country's major cities was directly connected to a number of significant inventions that had come upon the heels of the emergence of lithography in the late 1820s. By the time the nation celebrated its centenary with a fair to end all fairs in Philadelphia, technological advances made the United States the world leader in communication innovations. As the giant Corliss engine puffed and huffed in Machinery Hall, the R. Hoe and Company press, one of only 23 in the world at that time, was printing information without the intervention of human hands on a continuous sheet of paper four and one half miles long running through the machine at the incredible rate of 750 feet per minute. According to John Nerone and Kevin Barnhurst, some New York dailies were so fascinated with the performance of the press that they delivered their printer's plates to Machinery Hall and produced the day's editions in a city in another state (Barnhurst and Nerone, 2001:186-187).

However, the Hoe press did not stand alone in tributes paid to new technology by newspaper barons. They were equally impressed with improvements in work efficiencies contributed by the typewriter, the telegraph, the recent but expensive half-tone process in photography, and advances in engraving. Ironically, few paid attention to the white haired inventor down the

hall who was demonstrating a talking machine to anyone who was curious enough to listen. It would not be until the early years of the 20th Century that one of Pulitzer's editors, Charles Chapin, would introduce Bell's telephone to big city newsrooms (Morris, 2003:154-155).

By the time that Hearst and Pulitzer went after each's other's professional throats in 1895, the Hoe press of the 1876 era was considered a dinosaur. The presses of the mid 1890s now allowed for multiple editions to be printed along with large and extensive Sunday supplements, some of which were published in part in color. Markets were extended as well. America's vastly overbuilt railway system could quickly transport the rapidly produced daily journal over ever increasing distances. Slowly but surely, the front page of most major dailies which had remained fairly static in approach for over a decade began to feature fewer and fewer words and more and more visuals (Barnhurst and Nerone, 2001:195).

Visual content was no stranger to any of the major newspaper owners in the mid 1890s. In fact, the use of illustration as a vehicle for newspaper journalism extended as far back as 1842 when the *Illustrated London News* made its first appearance on May 14 in the British capital's streets. The journal's editor Henry Ingram declared with conviction that his newspaper would only publish illustrations that met with his personal, journalistic objectives, namely the promotion of Britain's imperial interests, an appreciation of the country's magnificent architecture as well as the reverence which was to be paid to both literature and history (Brown, 2002:14-15). Around the corner one could find the home of Ingram's only potential competitor, *Punch Magazine*. The magazine made its first appearance on July 17, 1841 with Henry Mayhew and Mark Lemon as editors. From the outset it was intended to be a humorous, satirical journal with pointed opinion supplemented by illustrations. In its early years, written dialogue was its primary focus. As time progressed during the Victorian Age, *Punch* evolved as primarily an illustrated journal with a mandate to afflict the comfortable and comfort the afflicted (Herbert, 1952:back page).

The recipe for successful illustrated journalism was brought to American shores by a young British engraver with a wanderlust. After three years of hawking gloves for one of his uncles, he succeeded in landing a position at the *Illustrated London News*. Henry Carter, soon to be chief of engraving at the newspaper, decided to keep his public name Frank Leslie. His nom de plume would soon be on the front pages of a number of illustrated journals published in New York City. Carter had come to the conclusion that the success of the *Illustrated London News* would prevent any potential competitor from challenging the newspaper. In fact one such player, the *Pictorial Times* died a fiery death in 1848 with a debt of 20,000 pounds (Brown, 2001:17).

The young and ambitious Frank Leslie did not enter a world without competitors. *Gleason's Pictorial Drawing-Room Companion* was well

established in the United States. But like the *Illustrated London News*, it did not have any pretense to be a journal with any serious intentions. In January of 1852, Gleason's ran an advertisement seeking out experienced engravers. Leslie who had been working with P. T. Barnum responded to the call. Nonetheless, it took him some six years after emigrating to the United States to launch his first of many enterprises. In January 1854, *Frank Leslie's Ladies Gazette of Fashion and Fancy Needlework* was published for the first time. And finally on December 15, 1855, the journal synonymous with his history in American journalism, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* finally came into being (Brown, 2001:22-23).

Until his death on January 10, 1880, Frank Leslie continued to build a publishing empire with a number of different titles. But, as his widow discovered when she inherited his many creations in 1880, Frank Leslie was a far better engraver than he was a business person. Eventually even *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* became the property of *Judge* magazine in 1889 and the name of Frank Leslie disappeared into history. The fate of the Leslie publications was not isolated. The *New York Daily Graphic* which first appeared in 1873 discontinued publication in 1889. In Canada, the Desbarats publishing house which specialized in illustrated newspapers was out of the business by 1890.

The decline of the illustrated newspaper provided the growing daily newspaper market with an incentive to include more pictures in the press. New reproduction methodologies began to gradually replace the need for engravers of the Frank Leslie type. Halftone reproduction techniques while allowing the reproduction of fairly good grayscale pictures were still quite expensive to use on a regular basis in the daily press. As a consequence, by 1895, William Randolph Hearst began to gather around him a group of talented illustrators who would provide his *New York Journal* with extensive drawings not only of life in America's biggest urban conglomeration and as we shall see, they would also tell the tale of the Spanish American War just as effectively as any reporter who wielded a pen and pounded out words on a typewriter and just as graphically as any photographer who worked the scene.

There is no doubt that neither Hearst or Pulitzer started the second Cuban uprising which began in 1895 but they certainly fanned the flames. There is now considerable doubt that Hearst, after sending artist Frederic Remington to a seemingly tranquil Havana, did not spout the words "you furnish the pictures and I'll furnish the war" after Remington reported he could find no evidence of any conflict on the island (Campbell, 2006:137). But that did not mean that the New York press, especially that owned and operated by Hearst and Pulitzer was passive. In fact, the continuing quest for independence from Spain was never far from the surface of the island just 90 miles off the coast of Key West. When the smoke finally cleared in the spring of 1898, the greatest casualty would prove to be the truth as Philip Knightley's

study of war correspondents demonstrates (Knightley, 1975:58-59).

Americans had become accustomed to the turmoil just off their southern shores. Cuban patriots had fought the Spanish before in a series of conflicts called the Ten Years War between 1868 and 1878. The end of the conflict had not resulted in Cuban independence but to keep the fragile peace, Spain had agreed to a number of concessions, namely the abolition of slavery in Cuba. Spain was not the only nation with a vested interest in what happened to and in Cuba. The United States had invested heavily in the Cuban economy through duty free imports of Cuban grown and processed sugar. All of that changed with the Wilson-Gorman tariff of 1894 which imposed import duties on Cuban sugar. The planters were helpless as the devastating impact rippled through the countryside and cities alike. To all intent and purpose, Cuba was a one crop economy and sugar was that crop. As a consequence of the turn of events, the crusade for independence once again rose with increasing intensity (Folkerts and Teeter, 1998:267). While Cuban guerillas struck Spanish fortifications from hideouts in the hills and mountains, an increasingly nervous America watched on.

Unlike the centers of cultural and political life in Europe, namely London, Paris, Berlin, and Madrid to name a few, Washington was not an imperial power with extensive colonial holdings. In some circles, this affirmed the belief especially within the ranks of the Republican Party that America portrayed significant weakness on the world stage, a weakness it was determined to rectify. Of course, this position ignored the fact that while Europe was basking in the sun of external empire, American imperialism, while internal, was continually expanding from the Atlantic seaboard to Pacific. Imperialists conveniently forgot that the Louisiana purchase had considerably added to American territory, and of course, later on Alaska, Hawaii, Guam, and Puerto Rico would fall under the stars and stripes (Blackbeard, 1995:109-110). But extra territorial dreams still played a significant role in the America psyche, a factor that would soon be exploited very carefully and with explosive results, first by William Randolph Hearst and not too soon afterwards by Joseph Pulitzer.

Having fought Cuban rebels once before, Spain showed no reluctance to a repeat performance when the second uprising took place. In response, the Spanish government dispatched one Valeriano Weyler to Cuba with orders to crush the rebellion once and for all (see **Fig. 1**).

Weyler, it was reputed, did not have a heart or a soul and some of his dictates would certainly fall in line with that assertion. Weyler correctly detected that the main rebel support lay in the rural communities where contact with the rebel forces was persistent. His plan was to separate the rebels from their constituency. To this end, he relocated thousands of farmers to camps on the edge of the major towns and cities. The results were disastrous. One quarter of the internees died from malnutrition and disease and the rebel forces kept

on fighting (Folkerts and Teeter, 1998:267).

Weyler had become the icon for savagery across the United States. Hearst, of course, was prepared to take advantage of the soldier's reputation. In February 1897 in a harbinger of things to come, the *New York Journal* published an extensive story written by Richard Harding Davis in which Spain was accused of sending officers to strip search three young women on a ship in Havana harbor just before it sailed for points north. Hearst went over Davis' dispatch word by word and called upon his artist Frederic Remington to sketch the conflict. The illustration showed a uniformed Spanish officer investigating a very naked young woman. The story had two significant consequences. First, was the claim by Davis that the incident as painted by Remington never took place, and second, Davis left Hearst's employ and tipped off Pulitzer that the tale bore no credence (Folkerts and Teeter, 1998:270). It was an embarrassing moment for Hearst, but it did not deter him from charging onward to exploit the horrors of warfare in Cuba.

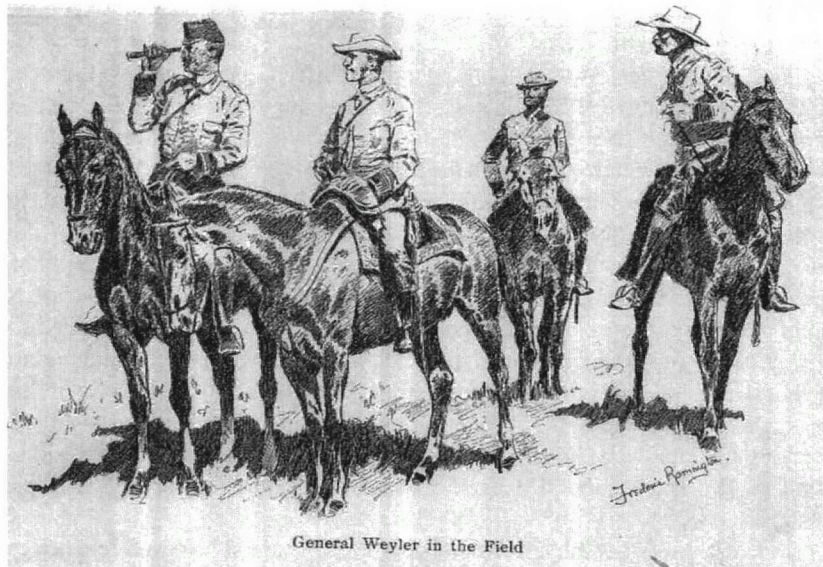


Fig. 1.

Falsehood or not, the American people taking their cue from Hearst, poured contempt on the way that Weyler was running the Spanish occupation of Cuba. The Captain-General became the subject of a number of demonstrations which also demanded that the American government intervene on behalf of the starving population of Cuba. Weyler was mocked in effigy and in one instance, the subject was wrapped in a Spanish flag and set on fire on the front steps of Pulitzer's *The World New York*. Both Hearst and Pulitzer could not afford to ignore these events even had they wanted to do so, and

they did not (Blackbeard, 1995:110).

It would not prove to be the American government, at least not in 1897 who would provide some embarrassment to the Spanish authorities. Once again that gambit would belong to William Randolph Hearst. On Aug. 17, 1897, the *New York Journal* published the story of one Evangelina Cosio y Cisneros, a young and quite attractive Cuban woman who happened to be the daughter of a rebel who had considerable experience fighting Spaniards in both the 1868 and 1895 versions of the Cuban uprisings. Suspecting that she was working on a plan to rescue him from a Spanish jail, the authorities arrested her on suspicion of treason. Hearst, who sensed that women in distress made good, saleable copy, took up the woman's cause with a vengeance.

He sent a reporter named Karl Decker to Cuba with orders to rescue her from the clutches of the "vicious" Spaniards. Decker took a room not far from the prison and succeeded in sawing through the bars on Evangelina's cell obviously undetected. Disguised as a young boy, she made her way out of the prison to freedom in the United States. Once in Hearst's backyard, she became an instant celebrity, thanks to the publisher. Hearst organized a rally at Madison Square Garden for his new found heroine. He sponsored a reception in Washington which President William McKinley chose to attend. Following all of this hoop-la, Hearst funded a cross country tour for Evangelina focusing on women's clubs. But when she had served her purpose for Hearst's newspaper, she quietly faded away from the stage of celebrities never to be heard of again (Ward, 1997:273; Blackbeard, 1995:113).

In the months leading up to the Spanish American war the jingoism apparent in the New York press grew to unsurmountable heights. Evangelina y Cisneros was only one of many so called victims of Spanish chicanery to get front page treatment by both Hearst and Pulitzer. But it was one incident that finally triggered the basically pacific President McKinley to give up the ghost of a negotiated settlement and intervene militarily in the Cuban conflict. The incident would turn out to be the largest loss of life in the confrontation between Spain and The United States.

It was the night of Feb. 15, 1898 when the world turned upside down. Pulitzer's man in Cuba was having a casual dinner with his wife in a restaurant not far from the Havana waterfront. Sylvester Scovel was a veteran of the New York press and in his most recent incarnation he had agreed to cover the Cuban uprising for *The World New York* and Joseph Pulitzer. He had a distinct advantage over other members of the journalistic crew on the island. His basic command of the Spanish language endeared him to the rebel leadership and opened avenues for reporting that others would be denied. But the events that took place in Havana harbor that night was open for all to witness, language notwithstanding.

Scovel was cut from the very cloth that made a good yellow journalist. He waded through the blood and gore of the insurrection and reported his

findings in a most graphic manner. He allegedly witnessed the savage interrogation of a young woman while on a reporting mission in the provinces adjoining the capital city. Scovel reported that a Spanish officer was attempting to extract secrets from the woman who, while refusing, was subjected to more and more indignities at the hands of the soldier. Finally, after losing patience, the inquisitor took out his sword and proceeded to slash his victim to death blow by blow (Wilkerson, 1932:34).

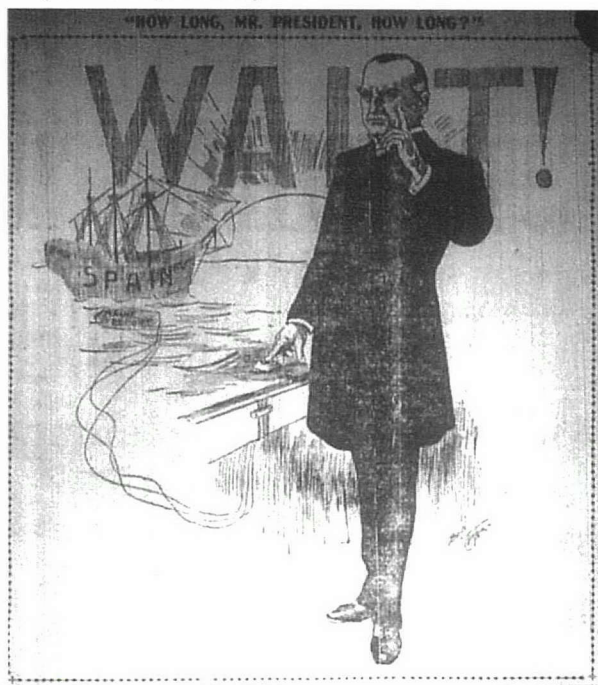


Fig. 2.

It should come as no surprise that Scovel was not only accustomed to witnessing extreme violence, he also knew the sales value of reporting it. As Scovel and his wife were chatting over the table in the restaurant, a loud blast, the sound of an extensive explosion rocked the reporter and his wife in their chairs. Then, Scovel heard a chorus of horrible sounds emerging from the harbor area. An American battleship, the U.S.S. Maine which had been sent to Cuba to keep an eye on the Spaniards, was no longer. Approximately 266 American sailors went down with the vessel to the bottom of the bay. In his first dispatch home, Scovel stuck to facts. The next day, he did not and *The World New York* published his headline which read "Maine Explosion Caused By a Bomb or Torpedo" (Brian, 2001:229). The patient waiting as seen in this cartoon (Fig. 2) from the New York Journal of March 22, 1898 was no longer an

option for President McKinley who came to the conclusion that should he wish to be re-elected, he needed to go to war with Spain.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to make out the signature of the artist who sketched this cartoon in the *New York Journal*, but it does appear to be the work of Bob Carter, one of the crew that Hearst brought to the newspaper when he purchased it in 1895. Although not identified in the text, the person with his finger on the detonator is likely Senator Redfield Proctor, a Republican from Vermont who was the most vocal critic of McKinley's refusal to move against Spain. In a speech to Congress on March 17, 1898, Proctor was successful in his mission to get both the political establishment and American business leaders behind the war campaign. As with most situations when a nation goes to war, sides are taken and issues defined. Taking a middle ground was no longer an option. Sitting on the fence was tantamount to treason.

The Maine disaster was tailor made for the likes of Hearst. He sensed that with proper application, American public opinion could be swayed to favor military intervention in Cuba. Of course, there were the usual benefits for the publisher, namely increased war coverage with increasing circulations and thus increasing revenues. In many ways, the time was opportune for American intervention although anti-war sentiment was still alive and well in the country. The eminent Kansas newspaper editor William Allen White was strongly opposed to intervention in the beginning but eventually he too became a hawk (Ward, 1997:282).

But America's war experience was some three decades behind and a new and increased naval presence indicated that a bit of battle experience would not necessarily be a bad thing. In particular, Spain, the intended target, was poorly equipped with a small army and navy. As it would play out, once the United States set foot in Cuba, Spanish capitulation was not far behind. As well, the concept of Manifest Destiny in spite of all of its faults had been fueled by the rise of an increasingly sophisticated industrial sector which we noted earlier paraded in front of the country with the centennial exhibition in Philadelphia (Ward, 1997:280-281).

As much as support for the possibility of war was needed on the plains of Kansas and in the rural areas of the South among others, it was more important to get American business on side. American capitalism was not particularly pacifist when it came to imposing its will on others, but it was sensitive to the possibility that financial losses could be fairly high should a war break out and last for any amount of time in Cuba. American business had sided with McKinley's desire to resolve the Cuban uprising by peaceful negotiation if for no other reason than to protect the one hundred million dollars that it had invested in the islands's economy. In the final analysis, American business wanted its Cuban investments governed by American not Spanish standards.

As much as the business community saw its reluctance to endorse

wholly a conflict as a financial consideration, for Hearst, it was a moral matter. His target became the denizens of Wall Street which began with this unsigned cartoon (**Fig. 3**) published on March 2, 1898, a few days after the sinking of the *Maine* and two weeks before another American battleship, the U.S.S. *Oregon* left San Francisco to take up the duties originally assigned to the *Maine*. It was the first of a number of drawings that would exhort the financial markets to respond specifically to the tragedy of the *Maine*.



Fig. 3.

The illustration questions the moral agendas of Wall Street bankers and investors who, if you accept the approach taken by the artist, should be roundly condemned profiting on human misery and specifically the suffering of Americans. The reaction should be of no surprise that this attitude would arise in the Gilded Age, a period in history when the more rapacious approaches to the practice of capitalism seemingly prevailed. Both Hearst and Pulitzer felt that they were addressing the concerns of the lower strata in society which made unveiled attacks on vested interests good reading.

Two days after the vultures picked the bones of the wreckage of *Maine* clean, Walt McDougall offered his view (**Fig. 4**) about the reluctance of American business to support a war footing in Cuba. Heralding the expansion and modernization of the U.S. fleet, McDougall mused about what would happen if American business decided that war was a good thing in which to participate. This drawing could easily be re-titled "How To Make Money from Military Adventures. Absent of course is any suggestion which appeared in the Hearst and Pulitzer newspapers that one of the fundamental objectives of American military intervention in the dispute was the potential enforcement of human rights. Did business care about such matters? In McDougall's world, apparently not.

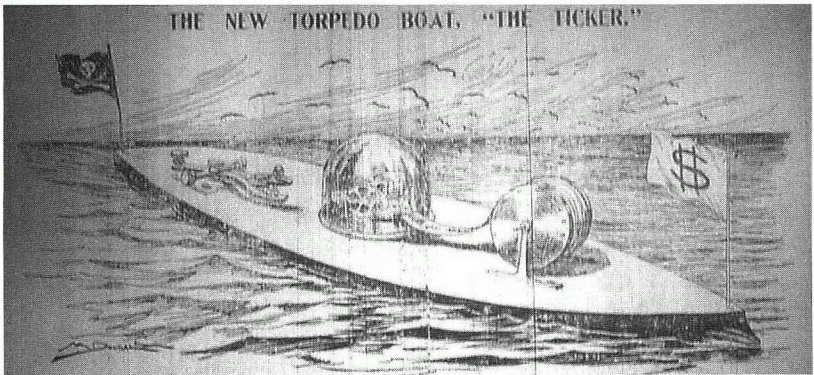


Fig. 4.

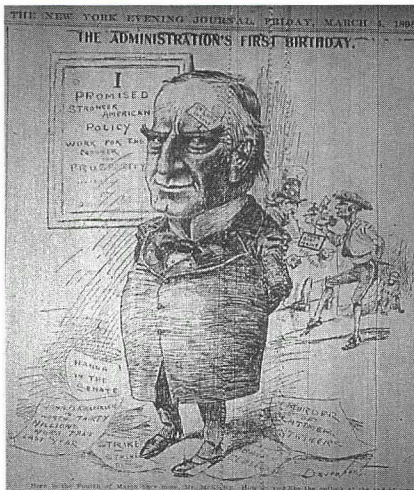


Fig. 5.

If there were one single villain in the dispute who appears on the editorial pages of Hearst's *New York Journal* more than once it was the Cleveland based Mark Hanna. In this sketch (Fig. 5) which appeared on March 4, 1898, Hanna is pictured as a despised political fixer whose accomplishments and crimes are well documented. Hanna has chosen to come to town in this *New York Journal* political cartoon to celebrate the first anniversary of the McKinley administration. But to Homer Davenport, his mission is far more sinister. Hanna's supposedly nefarious political track record is

documented in the pieces of paper lying on the ground. It is not a happy set of events. In the meantime, in the background we see the rising conflict between the United States and Spain that Hanna and his fellow business men are trying to avoid.

The assault on Hanna and his cronies did not let up as the tensions in Cuba increased. In yet one more Homer Davenport offering (Fig. 6) published on March 17, 1898, Hanna, dressed in a suit made of dollar bills, is actively preventing the American eagle from exercising its just intervention in the Cuban-Spanish conflict. Not only is the bird imprisoned by a large ball and chain, it is also prevented from speaking or making any kind of noise in protest by a padlock on its beak. Again, as was the case in many Davenport cartoons on the subject of intervention in Cuba, President McKinley is treated with some respect and is not depicted as the evil manipulator. That honor remains

with the people around the president and in particular Mark Hanna.

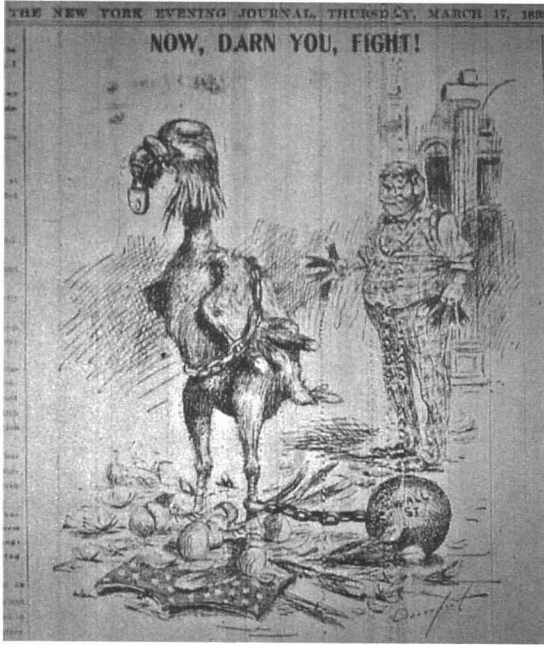


Fig. 6.

As happens in many military campaigns, the enemy becomes the object of derision. As part of the propagandistic effort, the adversary must be seen as eminently defeatable. There are many ways to accomplish this end, some of which employ tactics that have little or no relationship with the truth of the matter. As with factors such as all news channels in the modern age, it was the “duty” of the Gilded Age newspaper to exploit such events to increase circulation and eventually turn that into more advertising revenue. This should come as no surprise. It has been a tradition in war time since time eternal (Compton, 2004:176).

The attack can be carried out in a number of ways. Captain General Valeriano Weyler took care of the evil doer aspect. In World War I, the young and flourishing Universal Studios made a silent film on Kaiser Wilhelm which they entitled *The Kaiser: Beast of Berlin*. The film was distributed free of charge to major cinemas in the country’s big cities complete with 15 x 18 inch frame cutout which pictured the emperor threatening a young woman with his sword (Brennen and Hardt, 1999:193). This kind of activity pointed to the leadership of one’s adversary and was based in the approach that in order to fight a moral and honorable land such as the United States, one must somehow or other lack the basic instincts for goodness which most of us cherish.

Another approach, one often used by political cartoonists, was to picture the party on the other side of the fence in some form of degrading and humiliating fashion. This is the theme in this Walt McDougall cartoon (Fig. 7) published in the *New York Journal* on March 3, 1898, just on the eve of the invasion of Cuba by American forces. At this point in time, the conflict had not passed into outright violence from a campaign filled with nasty remarks and various forms of insult. Here McDougall reflects on a sense of indignity about statements coming out of the United States and turns them on their respective heads. About one week after this cartoon appeared in the *New York Journal*, Congress passed a bill allocating \$56 million with a mandate to strengthen the military. The road to Santiago had been opened.

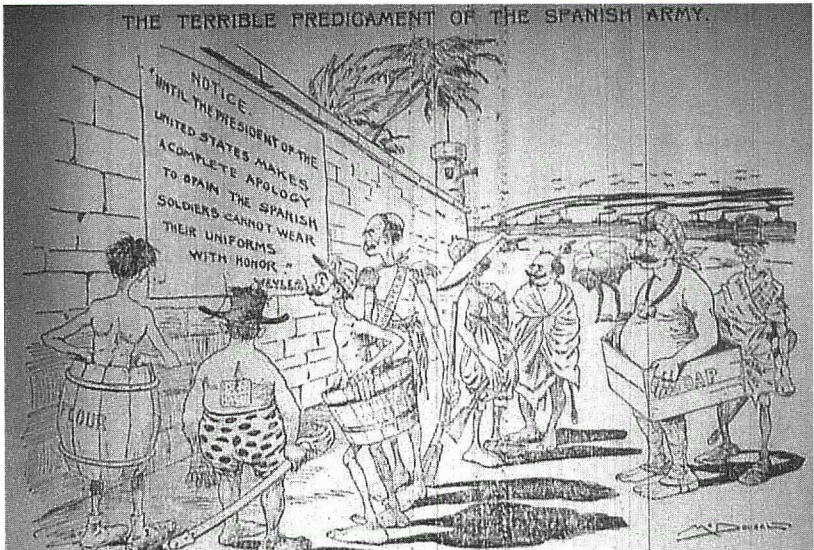


Fig. 7.

Any discussion concerning visual commentary in the closing years of the 19th Century would be remiss if it did not include some of the works of Richard F. Outcault, creator of the Yellow Kid. Although the cartoonist was better known for his illustrated commentaries on life in those parts of New York that did not have to deal with the “problems” of affluence, he too was not immune to the pressures that people such as Hearst and Pulitzer brought to the question of the crisis in Cuba. Outcault’s contributions to the war effort came in a series of drawings called “The Huckleberry Volunteers” which appeared in the *New York Journal* during those weeks, in particular in April, when it was certain that war with Spain was inevitable.

In the spring of 1898, Outcault was working as editor for the newspaper’s comics page as well as a contributor to the highly successful weekend color newspaper. It was here that the concept of the Huckleberry Volunteers first

appeared. The group, outcasts just like the kids in Hogan's Alley, were allegedly preparing to join the Cuban conflict to fight on behalf of the rebels under General Gomez who continued to operate in the hills and mountains. Outcault wanted to use some of the same concepts and characters which had appeared in the Sunday edition of the *Journal* in a daily comic strip. Hearst agreed to the project on the provision that no characters owned by the *Journal* itself appeared on a regular and daily basis. As a result, the drawings appeared in black and white. The first panel which appears here (Fig. 8) was published on April 8, 1898. The concept and format was that he had used in previous cartoons of the Yellow Kid, plenty of characters, lots of signs, a multitude of words and general, visual confusion (Blackbeard, 1995:120).



Fig. 8.

Very little escaped Outcault's eye especially when it came to drafting commentary on the role of Spain in Cuba. Even after Captain-General Weyler returned to Spain under diplomatic pressure from the United States, he continued to appear in comics like the "Huckleberry Volunteers." The volunteers and the Yellow Kid both come face to face with this icon of evil in part of the series which appeared on April 18, 1898. All apparently survived the confrontation.

The series did not have the lasting power of Outcault's earlier works, in particular because it was directly related to a series of incidents which were governed by time and place. The last panel appeared in the newspaper on April 22, 1898, the same day that the president ordered a blockade of Cuba when Spain refused an American ultimatum to abandon its occupation of the

country. The war was on. In the sketch here (Fig. 9), the “Huckleberry Volunteers” celebrate the envisaged victory over Spain by being treated to free drinks in front of the Hotel Cuba Libre. This is virtually no sense that any violence has taken place and that people, especially Cubans, have lost their lives in the conflict to date.



Fig. 9.

War fever was followed by real war and the New York press did not let up on its coverage of events once American forces landed in Cuba. It is one thing to advocate a war when no blood is being shed; it is quite another to keep morale at its highest point both in the armed forces carrying out the military action and the folks back home who are reading the daily accounts of battle and fearing for their loved ones. In general, the sketches which appeared in particular in the *New York Journal* under the signatures of Bob Carter, Homer Davenport, Jimmy Swinnerton, and the rest of the large crew of artists hired by Hearst were almost sanitary. None depicted any casualties. If there were deaths to report, they were in most cases Spanish. Even the local residents seemed to be exempt from the consequences of battle. This cartoon (Fig. 10) which appeared on May 9, 1898 is representative of the genre which appeared during the short few weeks of battle. It is not difficult to divide the good guys from the bad guys.

Ironically it was not until April 25, 1898 that war was formally declared. Fearing the worst for colonial powers within shooting range of the American military, Portugal declared itself neutral between Spain and the United States.

Brazil at least would be safe for the time being. On the following day, the Spanish, who had offered a moratorium on their conflict with the local rebels, cancelled the cease fire orders. And as this cartoon (Fig. 11) from the *New York Journal* of May 16, 1898 declares, there was a good scrap in sight. In fact, the scrap was already under way.

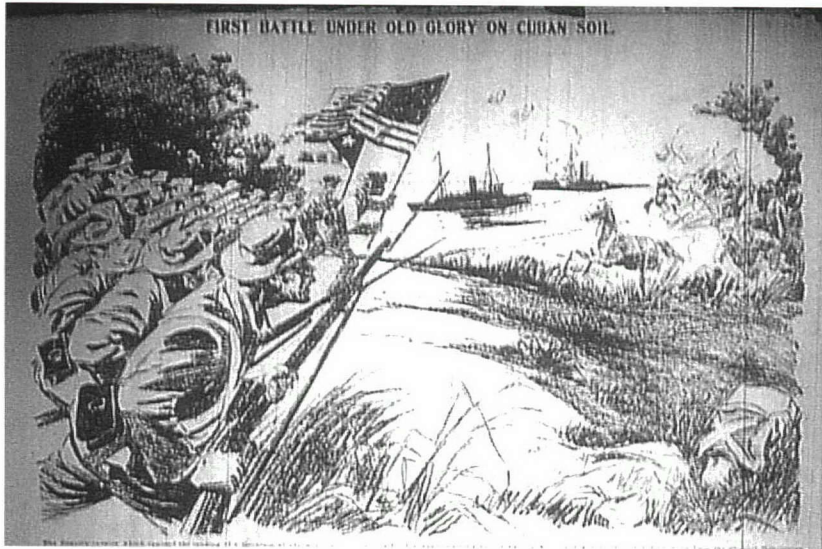


Fig. 10.



Fig. 11.

Halfway around the world, part two of the battle between Spain and the United States was rushing to a conclusion. U.S. Commodore George Dewey took on the Spanish flotilla in Manila Bay (Fig. 12) and in a short six hours, he

had destroyed the Spanish fleet and any hopes that Spain may of had of retaining its colonial presence both in North America and in Asia. On Aug. 12, 1898, the governments of the United States and Spain signed a peace treaty in Washington D.C. The following day, American troops defeated the remaining Spanish contingents in the Philippines. The war had ended, and this fellow who feared the consequences of opening a second front in Asia in June of 1898, no longer had anything to fear.

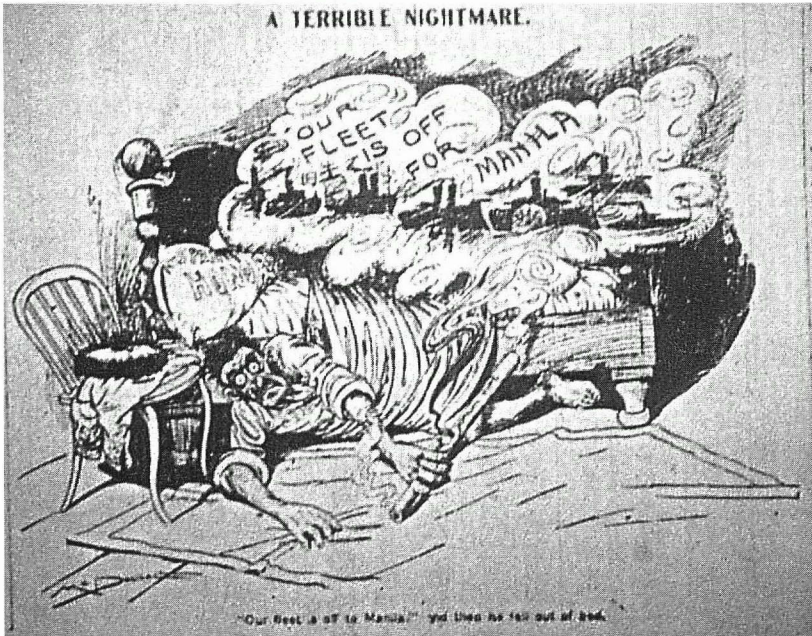


Fig. 12.

So how should a critical observer approach the role of political cartoons in a conflict that was totally one sided? About two decades ago, Charles Press offered the suggestion that in reality there are three elements that can explain any political cartoon.

One is the picture of reality that artists present to us as the essence of truth.... A second is a message, sometimes very sketchily implied as to what they recommend ought to be done on behalf of the deserving. Finally through artistic technique and allegorical imagery, the artist creates a mood telling us how we should feel over what is happening-amused, chagrined, or any one of the pedal stops to outrage (Press, 1981:62).

It would be very difficult to support the notion that Hearst's illustrators in general were particular in the way they interpreted the truth. In essence, what one sees in reviewing many of the drawings especially in the *New York*

Journal was an attempt to create what we would now call propaganda. Although the instances are numerous, one in particular stands out, the drawing by Frederic Remington that precipitated the resignation of Richard Harding Davis from the Hearst organization and Davis' temporary defection to Pulitzer. Yet, in the final analysis, the cartoons of the Spanish American War in general were quite benign in comparison to the written text. There appeared to be few attempts to create visuals of the many so called atrocities that were attributed to Captain-General Weyler. The closest one came was in yet another drawing by Remington which depicted the death of a young Cuban rebel in front of a Spanish firing squad. But, this was an illustration of an event rather than a direct political commentary, although it must be admitted that anyone viewing the picture would undoubtedly draw politically based conclusions.

The press analysis is more in keeping with his second observation which is closely related to his third point. There is little doubt that Homer Davenport, Bob Carter, Jimmy Swinnerton, and the rest of the crew of illustrators at the Hearst newspaper were charged with whipping up support not only for the declaration of war but for the continued presence of the American military in Cuba once the Spanish had been confronted. Here the analysis is much easier to define. Hearst had long been an advocate of invading Cuba and removing the Spanish. Other New York newspapers did not share his zeal for war. It was only when cornered in a vicious war for readership that Pulitzer also began to publish jingoistic columns. But unlike Hearst, the Pulitzer papers gave more space to articles than to drawings.

The pointed aspect of the pro-war message is most apparent in the cartoons that were published before McKinley finally broke down and asked Congress to declare war on Spain. From the beginning, even in the few drawings in this article, one can sense the heat of the debate. The exaggerations found in the articles were not overly apparent in the illustrations, but there was little doubt that Hearst readers were being asked to lay their convictions on the line and follow the publisher into the heat of battle. On that point, he certainly succeeded.

The final note in the press observation deals with emotion. There is a clearly identifiable set of rogues who would dare to oppose a mission for justice if you accept the Hearst line. In essence, in the cartoons leading up to the declaration of war and the interim period between the sinking of the U.S.S. Maine, there are really two enemies, the financial denizens of Wall Street and the Spanish government and occupying forces in Cuba. Both were to be equally vilified and they were with the clear intent of creating a public backlash. Once McKinley decided to go to war, the objection by American based critics such as the Wall Street gang becomes neutralized. It is now in the nation's best interest regardless of what one thinks to support solidarity and therefore the war effort.

William Randolph Hearst did not create political cartooning although

his biographers claim that he achieved more enjoyment discussing issues with Davenport and company than he did with the editorial staff. He did exploit the power of the picture and set the tone for what was to follow, a world in which illustrations and words took their proper place as part of the journalistic culture on an equal footing. Journalism was going through a period of great turmoil and growth and the cartoons that appeared in the New York press, and in particular in the *New York Journal*, were part of a new and exciting wave.

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