The Cuban Revolution

A critical perspective

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Contents

Chapter 1: The Cuban Revolution: an Anarchist Perspective

Between reactionary "pro-Batistianos" and "revolutionary Castroites," an adequate assessment of the Cuban Revolution must take into account another, largely ignored dimension, i.e., the history of Cuban Anarchism and its influence on the development of the Cuban labor and socialist movements, the position of the Cuban anarchist movement with respect to the problems of the Cuban Revolution, and libertarian alternatives to Castroism.

Today's Cuban "socialism" differs from the humanistic and libertarian values of true socialism as does tyranny from freedom. There is not the remotest affinity between authoritarian socialism or its Castro variety and the libertarian traditions of the Cuban labor and socialist movements.

The character of the Latin American labor movement – like the Spanish revolutionary movement from which it derived its orientation – was originally shaped, not by Marxism, but by the principles of anarcho-syndicalism worked out by Bakunin and the libertarian wing of the International Workingmen's Association – the "First International" – founded in 1864.

The Latin American labor movement was, from its inception, greatly influenced by the ideology and revolutionary tactics of the Spanish anarcho-syndicalist movement. Even before 1870, there were organized anarchist and anarcho-syndicalist groups in Buenos Aires, Argentina; Mexico, Santiago, Chile; Montevideo, Uruguay; Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo, Brazil.

In 1891, a congress of trade unions in Buenos Aires organized the Federacion Obrera Argentina which was in 1901 succeeded by the Federacion Obrera Regional Argentina (FORA-Regional Labor Federation of Argentina) with 40,000 members, which in 1938 reached 300,000. The anarcho-syndicalist La Protesta, one of the best anarchist periodicals in the world, founded as a daily in 1897, often forced to publish clandestinely, is still being published as a monthly.

In Paraguay, anarcho-syndicalist groups formed in 1892 were in 1906 organized into the Federacion Obrera Regional Paraguaya. The anarcho-syndicalist unions of Chile in 1893 published the paper El Oprimido (The Oppressed). In the late 1920s the Chilean Administration of the IWW numbered 20,000 workers. Before then, many periodicals were published and the labor movement flourished. The journal Alba, organ of the Santiago Federation of Labor, was founded in 1905. The anarchist and anarcho-syndicalist groups and their publications were very popular with the workers in San Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica (where the anarchist paper Renovacion first appeared in 1911).

To illustrate the scope of the anarcho-syndicalist movement in Latin America, attention is called to the organizations participating in the syndicalist groupings, convened by the FORA of Argentina in Buenos Aires. Besides the FORA, there were represented Paraguay, by the Centro Obrera Paraguaya; Bolivia, by the Federacion Local de La Paz and the groups La Antorcha and Luz y Libertad; Mexico, by the Pro-Accion Sindical; Brazil, by the trade unions from seven constituent provinces; Costa Rica, by the organization, Hacia la Libertad; and the Chilean administration of the IWW. These examples give only a sketchy idea of the extent of the movement. (sources: The

Anarchist historian Max Nettlau's series of articles reprinted in Reconstruir, Rocker's Anarcho-Syndicalism, India edition, pgs. 183-184; no date)

Insofar as the history of anarcho-syndicalist movements in Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Brazil, and other Latin American lands are concerned, there is a voluminous literature in Spanish, and some, though by no means enough, works in English. Unfortunately there is scarcely anything, in any language, about the history of Cuban Anarcho-Syndicalism.

The anarcho-syndicalist origins of the Cuban labor movement and its influence is substantiated by the Report on Cuba, issued by the conservative International Bank for Reconstruction and Development:

> ... in the colonial days, labor leadership in Cuba came largely from anarcho-syndicalists of the Bakunin school. A strong thread of their ideology with its emphasis on 'direct action', its contempt for legality, its denial that there can be common interests for workers and employers, persists in the Cuban labor movement in modern times ... it must be remembered that nearly all popular education of working people on how an economic system works and what might be done to improve it, came first from the anarcho-syndicalists ... (quoted in Background to Revolution: Development of Modern Cuba; New York, 1966, p. 31, 32)

Even the communist historian Boris Nikirov concedes that

> ... the labor movement of Cuba has had a long tradition of radical orientation. Anarcho-Syndicalist influence was important from the late 1890's to the 1920's (quoted ibid. p. 135) [Anarcho-Syndicalist influence certainly spans a longer period.]

Even less is known about the anarcho-syndicalist roots of the Puerto Rican labor movement, which as in Cuba, traces back to the latter half of the 19th century. The editor of the excellent anthology of labor struggles and socialist ideology in Puerto Rico, A.G. Quintero Rivera asks:

> ... who even in Puerto Rico knows about readers in tobacco workrooms? [as in Cuba and Florida, workers paid readers to read works of social and general interest to them while they made cigars] Who knows that Puerto Rican study groups in the first decade of this century studied the works of the [anarchists] Bakunin, Kropotkin, Reclus and the history of the First International Workingmen's Association ... that as early as 1890, Bakunin's Federalism and Socialism was published by anarchist groups in Puerto Rico and widely read by the workers? ...

Quintero informs the reader that in 1897, the anarchist, Romero Rosa, a typographer, was one of the "principal founders of the first nationwide union in Puerto Rico – the Federacion Regional Obrera." Together with Fernando Gomez Acosta, a carpenter, and Jose Ferrer y Ferrer, also a typographer, Romero Rosa founded the weekly Ensayo Obrera to spread anarcho-syndicalist ideas among the workers.

Louisa Capetillo, the Emma Goldman of Puerto Rico, whom Quintero calls a "legendary figure in the history of the Puerto Rican labor movement," was a gifted speaker and organizer who addressed countless meetings all over Puerto Rico in the late 1890s and early 1900s. She championed women's rights and preached free love (further defying convention by wearing pantaloons).

A prolific writer, Louisa Caprtillo wrote – in Spanish – such libertarian essays as: Humanity in the Future; My View of Freedom; Rights and Duties of Woman as Comrade, Mother and Free Human Being. She also wrote and spoke extensively on art and the theater and carried on an extensive correspondence with foreign anarchists.

Between the years 1910 and 1920, anarchist and syndicalist periodicals were published in Puerto Rico and syndicalists carried on an intense agitation and militant action in labor struggles. (source: Lucha Obrera en Puerto Rico; 2nd edition, 1974, pgs. 1, 14, 34, 153, 156, 161.)

The example of Puerto Rico illustrates how little is known about the anarcho-syndicalist origins of the labor and socialist movements in the Caribbean area. This work tries to trace the remarkable influence of anarchism in the development of the Cuban revolutionary movement and to present the anarchist view of the Cuban Revolution.

Chapter 2: Castro's Friendly Critics

From Waldo Frank to Rene Dumont

The repercussions of the Cuban Revolution are still being felt in Latin America and throughout the world. The character of the Revolution is being passionately debated. Many of Castro's original leftist and liberal supporters who have witnessed the gradual degeneration of the Revolution into a totalitarian dictatorship have been forced, much against their inclinations, to accept this disappointing reality. In the process of accounting for the degeneration, these friendly critics clarify certain crucial facts about the Cuban Revolution which confirm the libertarian position, although most of them vehemently deny that this is indeed the case.

Still others, the more fanatical pro-Castroites, in trying to explain the dictatorial measures of the regime, fall into the most glaring contradictions – which serve only to emphasize the unpleasant facts they try to camouflage. A few typical examples are arranged chronologically to illustrate the progression of events.

Waldo Frank's Cuba: A Prophetic Island (New York, 1961) is particularly disappointing because he had always been a consistent anti-state communist, strongly influenced by libertarian ideas, which he amply demonstrated by his sympathetic attitude towards the CNT (anarcho-syndicalist union confederation of Spain). That Frank with 40 years study of Spanish and Latin American history should have allowed his pro-Castro euphoria to becloud his judgement to the point where he could not recognize the obvious earmarks of a dictatorship in the making is unpardonable.

Although Frank was granted a two year subsidy by the Cuban government to write his book, he insists that his "only obligation was to seek the truth as I found it" (Preface). Nevertheless Frank's "unbiased" evaluation of Castro's personality and achievements rivals the tributes heaped upon Stalin by his sycophants. Thus:

> ... the Chevrolet rolled into the first streets of Matanzas ... the crowd blocking Castro's way had, somehow, the shape of Casto ... and what was the shape of Castro? Was it not Cuba itself? (p. 79) ... in his exquisite sensibilities ... Castro is less the poet and the LOVER ... to call Castro a dictator is dishonest semantics ... (p. 141, Frank's emphasis)

In the very next paragraph Frank unwittingly marshalls crushing arguments against himself. Castro will not tolerate criticism:

> ... he likes to have intellectuals around him, not so much to discuss ideas as to fortify his actions and ideas ... (p. 141) [in other words, Castro must, like Stalin, surround himself with fawning flatterers] Castro is not a dictator, [but] ... there always comes a time, when leaders must dare, for the people's sake, to oppose the people ... (p. 62) ... there are times of nation ferver when an opposition press becomes a nuisance

> … [just because there are no elections in Cuba] … the opposition slanders Castro. [How dare they call him] "'totalitarian' 'communist'!?" (p. 16)
>
> … [In spite of Frank's pro-Castro obsession, traces of anarcho-syndicalist influence come through] … the Cubans do not know that mere natiuonalization of their industries is no goal, that it may enthrone a bureaucracy even more rigid than capitalist possession. Nationalization is not necessarily true socialization, an end which demands [that there be workers in each industry to run these industries in coordination with the other sectors of the economy]. (p. 134)

Does Frank indict Castro for instituting nationalization? By no means! On the contrary, he considers that Castro summary

> … act of nationalization was an intelligent, courageous deed … to defend the Cuban Republic against those hostile forces that would destroy it … (p. 134) [Frank is even afraid] that … technicians from the Soviet Union will bring with them the communist ideology … equally alien, equally unwelcome … (p. 136) [But Frank hastens to dispel such fears] … the leaders are GOOD and what they are attempting to do is GOOD … they will tell you in plain words that they have not overthrown the overlordship of the United States in order to submit to a new master … the Soviet Union or anyone else … (p. 136) (Frank's emphasis)

Unfortunately, it turns out that the "good" men destined to save Cuba from totalitarian domination are themselves authoritarian communists: Armando Hart, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, and irony of ironies! Castro himself, a few days after the American publication of Frank's book, confessed that "I am a Marxist-Leninist and will remain one until the last day of my life."

In spite of Castro's own statement that the so-called peasant cooperative farms (granjas del pueblo) are modeled after the Russian style "Kolkhozes," Frank still nurtures the forlorn hope that the:

> … cooperative farms and industries of Cuba could well become the nuclei of a radical syndicalism, developed from the tradition of anarcho-syndicalism, which has long appealed to Spanish and Hispanic workers … far more than the crude kolkhoz within communism, libertarianism might flourish within a revived syndicalism … (p. 186)

In early 1963, members of the Cuban Libertarian Movement in Exile (CLME) addressed a letter to Pablo Casals, a co-sponsor of the Spanish Refuge Aid Committee, informing him that Waldo Frank, also a co-sponsor, had been commissioned by the Cuban Government to write a book in which he eulogized Castro. In its Bulletin for April 1963, the CLME published Casals' reply:

> … like you, I too believe that all lovers of freedom … must condemn all dictatorship, "right," "left" or whatever the name … I feel strongly the anguish of the unfortunate people of Cuba, who, having suffered under the dictatorship of Batista, are now, anew, being subjected to the dictatorship of his successor, Fidel Castro … as to the attitude of Waldo Frank and his support of the Castro regime, I will immediately request the Spanish Refugee Aid Committee to order a thorough investigation of your charges, and if – as it seems – Waldo Frank violates the ideals of the organization, he be removed as member and co-sponsor … With best wishes, Pablo Casals.

In 1964 Monthly Review, a Marxist-Leninist journal, published a special 96 page essay, Inside the Cuban Revolution, written by Adolfo Gilly, a fanatical "left wing" pro-Castro Argentine journalist who lived among the Cuban people for more than a year. Although Gilly acknowledges the deformation of the Cuban revolution, he is "... still unconditionally on the side of the Revolution." (preface, p. vii) Gilly was nevertheless bitterly denounced by Castro. The following excerpts from his essay best illustrate the kind of muddled thinking which leads to the most glaring contradictions by "leftist" Castroite critics:

Statement: "the State defends the position ... and concrete economic interests of the functionaries, the State itself, the Party and the union bureaucracy ... the people have no direct power ... the State creates and defends positions of privilege." (p. 42) *Contradiction: "The State is the workers' very own" (p.46)*

[i] Statement: "Just as there has not appeared in the Cuban leadership any tendency that proposes self-management, neither has there appeared any which looks to the development of those bodies which in a socialist democracy express the will of the people; soviets, workers' councils, unions independent of the State, etc. ..." (p. 40-41) *Contradiction:* "... in Cuba the masses feel that they have begun to govern their own lives ..." (p. 78)

Statement: "When it comes to decisions of the government, it never allows dissent or criticism or proposals for change ... nothing can be published without permission ..." (p.28) *Contradiction:* "There is no country today where there is greater freedom and democracy than in Cuba." (ibid.)

Like Gilly, the editors of the Monthly Review, Leo Huberman and Paul Sweezy, also combine extravagant praise with what adds up to a devastating indictment of the Castro regime:

> ... the success achieved by the Cuban Revolution ... the upsurge of mass living standard to create a quantity and quality of popular support for the Revolutionary Government ... and its supreme leader Fidel Castro ... has few, if any, parallels (Socialism in Cuba; N.Y., New York, 1970, p. 203, 204) ... there have been remarkable achievements in the economic field and there will be even more remarkable ones in the future ... (p. 65)

Huberman and Sweezy then inadvertantly deny their own statements:

> nearly everything is scarce in Cuba today (p. 129) ... there is the continuing difficult economic situation. Daily life is hard, and after ten years many people are tired ... tending to lose confidence in the leadership's ability to keep its optimistic promises ... the ties that bind the masses to their paternalistic government are beginning to erode ... (p. 217-218)

While the examples of the alleged economic "achievements" are indeed rare, the catastrophic collapse of the economy and the mass discontent for which the "Revolutionary Government" is directly responsible are overwhelmingly documented. (see pgs. 74, 81, 82, 86, 103, 107, 200, 205-207, 217-220)

> To create material incentives and reduce absenteeism the Revolutionary leadership, to its everlasting credit ... has at no time committed the folly of restoring the capitalist wage system in which ... whoever works harder gets more ... Castro is quoted: "to offer a man more for doing his duty is to buy his conscience with money." (p. 145)

A few pages later, Huberman and Sweezy again refute themselves. The Revolution can be saved only if the capitalist wage system is restored. Now, the "... Revolution cannot afford to rely exclusively on political and moral incentives"; it will even have to resort to semi-militarization of work!" (p. 153)

The assertion that the "... Cuban Revolution has resorted to very little regimentation" is refuted in the same paragraph:

> ... there are doubtless evidences of this in the large-scale mobilizations of voluntary labor ... indeed, there are already signs of this regimentation in the growing role of the army in the economy bringing with it military concepts of organization and discipline ... an example of this is the Che Guevara Trail Blazers Brigade, organized along strictly military lines [which] has been clearing huge amounts of land ... (p. 146) Cuba's system is clearly one of bureaucratic rule ... [nor has the government worked out] an alternative ... (p. 219-220)

For Huberman and Sweezy, the realization of socialism is, in effect, based upon the omnipotence of the State. The people are not the masters but the servants of the "revolutionary" leadership who graciously grant them the privilege of sharing "in the great decisions which shape their lives..." (p. 204)

To ignore the lessons of history and expect rulers to voluntarily surrender or even share power with their subjects is – to say the least — incredibly naive.

Herbert Matthews – foreign correspondent and later a senior editor of the New York Times, now retired – was granted his sensational interview with Fidel Castro in the Sierra Maestra on February 17, 1957. Matthews has since then been welcomed to Cuba and granted interviews with Castro and other leaders. His attitude towards the Castro dictatorship resembles that of the doting parent who inflates the virtues of his offspring and invents excuses for the child's transgressions.

> ... Fidel's personality is overwhelming. He has done many things that enraged me. He has made colossal mistakes ... but we must forgive him, he has to deal with difficult problems which no man could have tried to solve without making errors and causing harm to large sectors of Cuban society... (p. 4)

Not the least of the privileges accorded to despots is the right to make mistakes at the expense of ordinary mortals.

How Castro, who is "... a great orator ... the greatest of his times," is "not able to express his emotions" (p. 44) is a peculiar failing that Matthews does not deem it necessary to explain.

Although his latest work (a big 486 page volume, Revolution in Cuba; New York, 1975) contains a great deal of valuable information about the situation in Cuba, it suffers from his clumsy efforts to reconcile his unabashed admiration for Castro with the brutal, bitter facts. Out of the chaotic mass of contradictions, absurdities and distortions, startling facts about the degeneration of the Cuban Revolution emerge. A few examples:

Castro is a dictator. His revolution is "autocratic," but it is still – strangely enough – "... a government by consensus, based upon popular support ..." The support comes from the members of the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR) comprising "almost every able bodied

adult in Cuba … everyone PARTICIPATES in the Cuban Revolution…" But this grass-roots consensus which is not "a democracy … has nothing to do with civil liberties …" (p. 15, Matthews' emphasis)

It should be obvious that a regime that has "nothing to do with civil rights" is by definition a dictatorship. It soon becomes apparent that this is indeed the case. Matthews notes that "… many Cubans are uneasy over the fact that the CDR [this model of participatory democracy] … is now completely under the control of the Communist Party of Cuba …" (p. 15, Matthews' emphasis)

> … we Americans think of the Rights of Man in civic terms: equality before the law, non-discrimination, freedom of the press, sacredness of the home … In Cuba, as in Latin America, individual rights are cherished too (p. 7) But on page 129, Matthews reverses himself: "… I do not believe that the Cubans cared enough about civic freedoms to fight for them … the emphasis is not on civil liberties but on personal attributes: personal dignity, preservation of family life…

Matthews, however, tries to camouflage the fact that personal attributes cannot be exercised in Cuba because the State regiments the life of the individual from the cradle to the grave. He unintentionally documents this fact in his chapter on the Cultural Revolution.

On the flimsy and insulting pretext that the "… Cuban people do not have the Anglo-Saxon mania for privacy …" Matthews tries to minimize the fact that "Cuba is a goldfish bowl." (p. 15)

"Castro made the mistake at his Moncada trial in 1953 and in the Sierra Maestra in 1957, of promising to implement the liberal democratic constitution of 1940." (p. 40) Castro did not make a mistake. He knew full well and later openly confessed (in his "I am a Marxist-Leninist" speech, Dec. 1, 1961) that Batista could be overthrown and his clique come to power, only on the basis of a democratic program acceptable to the anti-Castro bourgeoisie, The Church and other non-radical forces. "… in the circumstances [comments Matthews] to get them to accept revolution was an … impossibility …" (p. 125) Castro is an astute politician. He did not make the mistake of antagonizing these elements by prematurely initiating expropriation of property and other radical measures. He waited until his regime was strong enough to neutralize, and if necessary, smother the opposition.

Matthews even tries to condone Castro's atrocities. For him the crimes committed by the Castro regime in the first ten years of the Revolution – 1959-1970 – "has only historic meaning today … they were in Fidel's breathtaking word [?] an apprenticeship …" (p. 2) In short, the Dictator was learning his trade at the expense of his victims!

In connection with the restoration of the death penalty and the execution of prisoners without a fair trial, Matthews asserts that "… I was in Cuba twice while executions were going on and I did not then, nor ever, hear or read of an innocent man being condemned …" (p. 134) But Matthews himself unwittingly presents overwhelming evidence to the contrary:

> … I felt critical over the summary nature of Cuban trials. Herman Marks, a native of Milwaukee, reportedly with a criminal record, was the executioner at the Cabanas fortress in Havana … he became a captain in Che Guevara's column. He was used to avoid killing by Cubans. He was like a butcher killing cattle in an abatoir … (p. 135) … ordinary courts lost much of their authority. Lawyers who defended those accused of being counter-revolutionaries ran the danger of prosecution themselves … (p. 143). Habeas corpus was suspended in 1959. (p. 142)

> … the evidence in the Matos case [see below] could not stand up in a Western court of law … but we must not blame the dictators … this was a Cuban court of law in the midst of a perilous revolution … the vilification of Castro in the Matos case is unjustified … (p. 142) The prisons were filled to overflowing. The interrogation rooms of the G2, Castro's secret police, were scarcely less vile than the torture chambers of Batista's SIM … there were more prisoners now than Batista ever had … (Hugh Thomas quoted by Matthews, p. 142)

It is impossible to understand how Matthews, in view of his own evidence, could deny that such atrocities did take place and then reverse himself. His attitude is all the more incomprehensible, when in respect to the Matos case, he, at the request of Matos' family, tried to intercede with Castro on their behalf and his plea was ignored. (see p. 142)

Castro's refusal to honor "his repeated promises to hold elections for a multi-party democratic government" is justified on the pretext that this outrageous violation of elementary rights would crystallize a "strong congressional opposition to Castro's revolutionary policies at every step." But Castro is a better dictator than Franco was because "he never perpetuated the hypocrisy of a plebiscite as in Franco Spain …"! (p. 147)

After revealing that "Havana University was stripped of whatever autonomy remained to it in July 1960 and purged … and two thirds of the professors went into exile …", Matthews tries to condone these crimes because "… as with so much happening, unscupulous means had to be used to achieve desirable ends …" As is means can ever be separated from ends! Matthews himself admits that the "University became an organ of the Marxist-Leninist government, but it also became a disciplined, serious, center of learning, which in the 1970s is undergoing an extraordinary rebirth …" (p. 183)

With respect to the criminal mismanagement of the economy and the proliferation of a new bureaucracy, Matthews gives examples:

> … the Central Planning Board (Jucesplan) was created to control the economy as a whole but it did little of practical value … Fidel, Che, and a few others had the real authority which they failed to coordinate or use systematically … There was a decline in the national income … too many cattle were slaughtered in 1961, bringing severe shortages from 1962 onwards … rationing of foodstuffs was instituted in the summer of 1961 … something had gone seriously wrong with the economy. Even in World War II, there was no need for rationing … Che Guevara, the Minister of Industry, reported many errors … much of what they were planning was impossible. Naturally a huge bureaucracy evolved … (pgs. 167-169)

Reasonable people, taking into account the accumulating mountain of evidence, naturally came to realize that the Cuban Revolution was over. Not Mathews. His faith remains undimmed: "… they were all so young! The group had any amount of faith … honesty and energy …" Mathews comes to the ridiculous conclusion that although the "economy was failing … the Revolution was succeeding …" The blundering despots who are largely responsible for the collapse of the Revolution "… put the Revolution on the rocky, unevenly advancing path it has followed since then …" (p. 167-169)

Reviewing all the vast literature about the Cuban Revolution is beyond the scope of this work. We center our discussion on Rene Dumont's analysis because it is by far, the most profound, and

especially, because it is, in important areas, relevant to the position of the Cuban anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists – a position formulated long before Dumont's two books were published. (see his Cuba: Socialism and Development; New York 1970, and Is Cuba Socialist? New York 1974)

We will summarize Dumont's critique of Castro and his policies; the libertarian content of his constructive proposals; and how he departs from the libertarian implications of his work and contradicts himself.

Dumont's Critique

From the jacket blurb of Is Cuba Socialist? we gather that the significance of Dumont's book lies not so much:

> ... in his richly detailed ... devastating portrait of economic disorder and militarization but [primarily because it] comes from a friend of the Revolution, who at earlier times praised Castro's efforts to create a socialist nation ... Dumont, a distinguished agronomist, a veteran [pro-communist] activist, who in the 1960's paid [on Castro's invitation] several long visits as an expert adviser to, and sympathizer with, Castro's Cuba...

The book "created a sensation throughout Europe" because for Dumont to dispute the infallibility of Castro, or even dare deny the socialist nature of the Cuban Revolution, is, for the Castroites, a heresy comparable to a papal encyclical questioning the existence of God. The phrasing of the chapter headings alone, constitutes a devastating indictment of the Castro regime:

STATIST: CENTRALIZATION: HERETICAL REVOLUTION
CENTRALIZED PLANNING WITH BUREAUCRACY: 1961-1968
THE PARTY: DESIGNATED RATHER THAN ELECTED
THE STATE: SUBORDINATED TO THE PARTY?
COMMUNISM: A MILITARY SOCIETY OR PERSONAL POWER
AN AGRARIAN DRILL FIELD: THE GUEVERA BRIGADE
THE DEATH OF THE FARM
THE ARMY APPRAISES POETS
NEW MAN OR MODERN SOLDIER?
RE-STALINIZATION: PRIVILEGES AND THE NEW BUREAUCRACY
PROTO-SOCIALISM WITH A NEW FACE
IS CUBA SOCIALIST?

That the answer is a resounding NO!, can be gathered from the text, which also explains why both Dumont and his books are banned in Cuba. What follows is a representative selection of Dumont's critical remarks. (Unless otherwise noted, all quotations are from Is Cuba Socialist?)

Workers and Unions

> ... note should be taken of the diminishing role of the unions which are due to disappear entirely since the state is – in principle – supposed to be the State of the

> workers ... (p. 52) The government's decisions seem to be intended FOR the people, but it was not government BY the people ... they used to have a capitalist boss, and now they have another boss ... the State. (p. 22, Dumont's emphasis)

Dumont quotes Armando Hart, a member of the political bureau of the Popular People's (Communist) Party who speculated hopefully that it would be a good idea:

> ... if all the labor force were in encampments, like columns of soldiers ... the development of the Cuban economy would be accelerated by the militarization of the labor force ... it is toward this that we must work ... (p. 94)
>
> In mid-1969, ... the Minister of Labor warned that severe measures would be taken against ... undisciplined work, absenteeism, and negligence ... a month later, in September, the government promulgated a law under which each new worker must have a dossier and work book in which will be noted the places in which he works, his comings and goings, etc. (p. 114)

The Boss

> ... the number one man in Cuba is Castro. Castro is Prime Minister of the Revolutionary Government, Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, and First Secretary of the Cuban Communist Party ... As an official, one's job depends upon Castro's confidence and on personal conections ... leadership of the essential agencies is placed in the hands of men in whom the Boss [Castro] has confidence (p. 51) ... Cuban society remains authoritarian and hierarchized; Fidel maneuvers it as he sees fit. The result is a militaristic society ... (34)
>
> In public everybody is for Castro. In private his partisans are less numerous. Everybody goes to the demonstrations in the Plaza de la Revolucion. It is obligatory (p. 59) ... Castro has confidence only in himself. He is no longer content with claims to military and political fame. He has to feel himself the leader in both scientific research and agricultural practice [about which he knows next to nothing] (p. 107) Nobody dares oppose him if he wants to hold his job. (p. 108) ... when he throws his beret on the ground and flies into one of his rages, everybody quakes and fears reprisals ... (p. 111)

Censorship and Spying

> There exists vigilance [spying] with the increasing control of neighborhoods by the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution [CDRs] standing in for and helping the police. Everybody belongs to the CDRs, unless he wants to miss out on many advantages... Capitalism robs the worker of his dignity ... Police inquisition in the Cuban Revolution again denies it to the poorest worker ... (p. 119) [In exposing press censorship, Dumont quotes Marx] "... the censored press CONSTANTLY lies." I challenge Granma to publish this [Marx's] sentence ... [Granma is the official organ of the Communist Party of Cuba.]

Dumont cites the case of Heberto Padilla, the renowned Cuban poet and former editor of Granma. Padilla had been relieved of his editorial post because he commented favorably on the work of Guillermo Cabrera Infante, a prominent poet, who was at that time out of favor with the Party.

In 1968 Padilla was awarded the Casa de la Americas literary prize for his collection of critical poetry Out of the Game (two examples are reprinted below). The Writers Union published the book, including their disclaimer, charging that the poems were against the Revolution. Padilla's verses were judged Counter-Revolutionary by Granma and the weekly newspaper of the Cuban Army, Verde Olivo (Olive Green – color of the uniform).

On March 27, 1971, Padilla was jailed for 37 days. He was also denied work for a year. His case aroused a world-wide storm of protest by prominent pro-Castro and other intellectuals and writers. Dumont in true Stalinist fashion confesses that he was guilty of adopting "counter-revolutionary" attitudes and in the words of Dumont "... providing information to CIA agents like myself and K.S. Karol (p. 120ff.; Karol is a friendly critic of Castro, was like Dumont invited to visit Cuba by Castro, and author of Guerillas in Power).

Out of the Game

The poet, get rid of him
He has nothing to do around here
He does not play the game
lacks enthusiasm
He does not make his message clear
does not even notice the miracles.
He spends the whole day thinking
always finds something to object to
That fellow, get rid of him
Remove the party pooper
the summer malcontent
who wears dark glasses in the new dawn
of time without history
He is even out of date
He likes only the old Louis Armstrong
Humming, at most, a song of Pete Seeger
He sings 'Guantanamera' through clenched teeth
No one can make him talk
No one can make him smile
each time the spectacle begins

Instructions for Admission into a New Society

In the first place: optimism.
Secondly: be correct, circumspect, submissive.
(Having undergone all the sports tests)
and to finish, march
as do all the other members:
one step forwards
two or three backwards:
but always applauding

Education

> … the new man is a model soldier, ever obedient to his leaders … children are enrolled in organizations as soon as ten years old … young teachers are subjected to programs that smack of the convent and the barracks: 'WORK AND Shut Up!' 'The Leaders Are Always Right!' 'Fidel Doesn't Argue!' (p. 122) Technological training was under the control of the Vice-Minister of the Armed Forces. Military training was given at all levels. By the time they are eight, young people are marching in step … (p. 92)

Cuba: A Military Dictatorship

> … In Cuba the military are taking over command of the economy … (p. 179) … it is becoming clearer and clearer that the army is transforming Cuban society. (p. 8 of the new 4) Militarization was urged not only to eliminate inefficiency and disorganization, but to cope with the passive resistance of a growing number of workers. (p. 100)
>
> … it became increasingly difficult to distinguish between the Communist Party and the army, since they both wore uniforms and carried revolvers … This sort of Cuban communism is devilishly close to army life … This military society … follows a path leading away from participation of the people; it leads to a hierarchized society with an authoritarian leadership headed by Castro who decides all problems, political, economic and technical … (p. 112-113)

Agriculture is Militarized

Under the heading Agrarian Reform Law and Cooperatives, Dumont deplores that the

> … estates confiscated in 1960 were cooperatives in name only … they were state farms … by August 1960, after my second visit, the cooperative formula was definitively set aside without those involved being advised or consulted (p. 22) [Dumont quotes law 43]: "the INRA [National Institute of Agrarian Reform] will APPOINT their administrators … and the workers will accept and respect [whatever commands the INRA] will dictate." (p. 47) [Dumont remarks that] "the workers have the mentality

> of paid employees … their boss is the state." (p. 22) [Dumont concludes that] "Cuban agriculture is certainly becoming more and more militarized … all important jobs are entrusted to the army, headed by a Major, Captain or a First Lieutenant." (p. 96)

Dumont's Libertarian Socialist Proposals

The typical attitude of the Marxist-Leninist left toward the Cuban Revolution was perhaps best summarized in one of its well known organs the New Left Review (issue #3, 1960) in the course of an ecstatic review of Cuba: Anatomy of a Revolution by Huberman and Sweezy, editors of the Marxist-Leninist Monthly Review:

> … as a result of the final period of nationalization completed this past October, Cuba has become a sovereign socialist state … the first nation to have achieved socialism without benefit of Marxist-Leninist orientation…

Dumont rejects this brand of "socialism." He does not equate socialism with nationalization. Although a professed Marxist-Leninist, Dumont touches on anarchist themes insofar as he advocates a decentralist voluntaristic variety of socialism, not only because it is desirable, but also because it is eminently more practical than nationalization and other authoritarian alternatives. As an expert agronomist, Dumont concentrates on the problems of the agrarian revolution. But his general conclusions are applicable to the whole economic setup. He insists that "… socialism demands true popular participation at all levels of decision making…" (p. 140)

> … an agrarian socialism does not require collectivization from above … I sought a solution that would tend to more decentralization, more responsibility at the base … self-management of basic units … (p. 97) [To stimulate the creativity of the individual and encourage him to take the initiative in the self-management of a cooperative society] … socialism must learn to be more respectful of his dignity and therefore of his autonomy. (Cuba: Socialism and Development, p. 161)
>
> … the moral incentive would be respect for his individuality as a worker, the irreplaceable feeling on the part of the worker that he is PARTICIPATING in the management of the enterprise, that he PERSONALLY contributes to the decisions about the nature and quality of his work … more initiative, more autonomy, more responsibility … (Is Cuba Socialist? p. 137; emphasis Dumont's)

In Russia the anarchists bitterly criticized the Bolsheviks because they extirpated the grassroots voluntary organizations and set up a state dictatorship. Dumont, too, does not think:

> … it is a good idea to suppress pre-revolutionary cooperatives which are useful for the training of management personnel [and believes that] the cooperative formula … applies to handwork, distribution, small-scale industry, shops, services, etc. [where] the workers take better care of the material belonging to the group than that which belongs to the state … (Cuba: Socialism and Development, p. 163)

Under headings like "An Agrarian Socialism With Little Work Collectives;" "A Multiplicity of Socialist Patterns of Change" (Cuba: Socialism and Development, p. 160-170) Dumont's proposals read almost like excerpts from Kropotkin's anarchist classic, Fields, Factories and Workshops:

> … in 1960 I suggested that the hypertrophied city of Havana be surrounded with a 'green belt' of market gardens and fruit farms as far as the adaptability of land and availability of water allowed. I urged a second concentric belt for the production of sweet potatoes, potatoes, plantains, etc. and that a dairy farm should be established. Other cities could have adopted the same plan … I even suggested a plan by which each major agricultural unit could supply itself with a significant portion of its food supply. The prolongation and aggravation of scarcities only emphasized the value of this project which was never undertaken. (Is Cuba Socialist? p. 33)
>
> … if every family that wanted to had been able to have a small garden plot, it could have raised a good portion of its own food … (p. 66.) The workers would organize their own work themselves. The farm groups would evolve not so much as giant cooperatives as TOWARD A FEDERATION OF SMALL COOPERATIVES. … (Socialism and Development, p. 160; emphasis Dumont's)

Dumont: Spurious Libertarian

Unfortunately, Dumont's modifications negate his libertarianism and render his work useless to arrest the deformation of the Revolution and guide it in a libertarian direction. He makes this unmistakeably clear:

> … Democratic Centralism which elsewhere has too often been the cover [read consequences] for totalitarianism, which would take on a new meaning [back to Lenin the architect of "communist" tyranny]. Within this structure [cooperatives] the top echelon [i.e. the state] would be responsible for the economic plan … for the allotment of state funds [which gives the state life and death power over the cooperatives simply by granting or witholding funds] … the heads of cooperatives would be APPOINTED [until] such time as they were elected within a cooperative framework [until as in Russia the State "will wither away"?] (Cuba: Socialism … p. 160; our emphasis)

Wanted: A Libertarian Caudillo

Dumont unwittingly endorses de facto paternalism on the part of Castro. For example:

> … if Castro could rid himself of his mystics and utopians and surround himself with real representatives of the people, he [Castro the savior] COULD LEAD the Cuban People to prosperity … (p. 122; our emphasis) … [Since Castro] … would not accept control from below because he enjoyed personal power too long to GIVE IT UP GRADUALLY … it is therefore up to the country's political leaders, especially Raul Castro, Dorticos, Rafael Rodriguez, Armando Hart and Blas Roca, to advise Castro to do so IF THEY HAVE THE COURAGE AND IF THEY REALIZE THAT THE PRESENT PERSONAL DICTATORSHIP may lead to catastrophe … (p. 140-141, Dumont's emphasis)

Since they have neither ”the will nor the courage” to take Dumont’s advice, the situation is hopeless. Is it at all likely that these hardened, cynical politicians who make up the ”innermost ruling group,” would, no more than Castro himself, ”accept control from below,” since they too ”enjoyed power too long to give it up gradually”? Is it at all likely that this ”communist bourgeoisie … which clings to power by flattering Castro,” whose very lives depend on Castro’s good will, would summon up ”the courage” to correct Castro? (p. 141)

That a realistic observer like Dumont could entertain the faintest hope that these puppets would willingly sacrifice themselves, is hard to understand. Especially, when Dumont himself cautions us ”not to forget that despotism and its paternalistic variety has always been badly enlightened … and power corrupts …”, and in the very next paragraph flatly contradicts himself be suggesting that the remedy for Castro’s de facto ”… absolute monarchy is a more modern version of what I will simplify in calling … LIMITED IF NOT CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCHY …” (p. 141, our emphasis)

Disregarding contrary evidence such as: the massacre of the Kronstadt sailors; the exile, persecution and murder of political prisoners by Lenin’s secret police and other crimes for which Lenin is directly responsible; Dumont, nevertheless asserts that the ”… freedom of discussion and popular control advised [but never practised] by Lenin has been forgotten by the Castroites … Lenin’s theory of democratic centralism has been interpreted to justify the unlimited dictatoship of personal power …” (p. 116)

Dumont, like the other Marxist-Leninists, whitewashes Lenin’s crimes. He ignores the incontestable fact that it was Lenin himself who set the precedent followed on a wider scale by his successor Stalin. Dumont’s remedy for the chronic afflictions of the Castro regime does not even begin to measure up to his excellent diagnosis.

Like his colleague K.S. Karol, Dumont assumes a similar self-contradictory attitude in respect to the Chinese Revolution, oscillating between extravagant praise and severe criticism:

> … developing countries will most certainly find in China the basis for a new faith in Man and in his possibilities for progress. Socialist consciousness has attained a very high level … the people are almost exclusively concerned [not with personal affairs but] with the general interest …

Dumont then contradicts himself devastatingly exposing the true character of Mao’s despotism:

> … fundamental decisions, such as foreign policy and the economic plan are all made by the top hierarchy and a small minority of managers … without consultation or intervention of the famous ’popular’ control called for [but never practiced] by Lenin …

Dumont then immediately proceeds to justify these outrageous violations of elementary rights by pointing to the ”… hypocrisy of the false friends of democracy …” As if one evil automatically justifies another Dumont:

> … salutes the devotion of the Chinese rulers to the welfare of the nation and the workers … if we prefer for OUSELVES more freedom of information and only formal democracy, IT IS SURELY NOT FOR US TO PRESCRIBE WHAT IS BEST FOR THE CHINESE …

(above quotes from L'Utopie ou la Mort; Paris, 1973, pgs. 156-158; Dumont's emphasis)

If Dumont were consistent, he would at least add that the totalitarian despots who rule China also have no right to "prescribe what is best for" THE CHINESE PEOPLE.

Like Dumont, the other loyal leftist critics of the Cuban Revolution do not realize that their own analysis leads inevitably to the conclusion that NO STATE CAN EVER PLAY A REVOLUTIONARY ROLE. It is their inability to grasp this fact. It is their orientation that enmeshes the Marxist-Leninists in a series of massive and insoluble contradictions. Their writings project a distorted, utterly false image of the Cuban Revolution; they are never a guide to meaningful alternatives.

Chapter 3: The Character of the Cuban Revolution

A Non-Social Revolution

The myth, induced by the revolutionary euphoria of the pro-Castro left, that a genuine social-revolution took place in Cuba, is based on a number of major fallacies. Among them is the idea that a social revolution can take place in a small semi-developed island, a country with a population of about eight million, totally dependent for the uninterrupted flow of vital supplies upon either of the great super-powers, Russia or the U.S. They assume falsely that these voracious powers will not take advantage of Cuba's situation to promote their own selfish interests. There can be no more convincing evidence of this tragic impossibility than Castro's sycophantic attitude toward his benefactor, the Soviet Union, going so far as to applaud Russia's invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, a crime certainly on a par with the military coup in Chile, which Castro rightfully condemned. To assume, furthermore, that the Cuban social revolution can be miraculously achieved without simultaneous uprisings in Latin America and elsewhere, is both naive and irresponsible.

Nationalization Versus Socialism

To equate nationalization of the economy and social services instituted from above by the decree "revolutionary government" or a caudillo, with true socialism is a dangerous illusion. Nationalization and similar measures, under the name of "welfareism," are common. They are widespread, and in many cases deep-going programs, instituted by democratic "welfare" states or "benevolent" dictators as an antidote to revolution, and are by no means equivalent to socialism.

Russia and Cuba: Two Revolutions Compared

Another fallacy about the nature of the Cuban Revolution can perhaps be best illustrated by contrasting the early stages of the Russian Revolution of 1917 with the Cuban events. Analogies between the Russian and Cuban Revolutions–like analogies in general–fail to take into account certain important differences:

Czarism was OVERTHROWN by the spontaneous revolts of the peasant and proletarian masses only after a prolonged and bloody civil war.

In Cuba, the Batista regime COLLAPSED WITHOUT A STRUGGLE for lack of popular support. There were no peasant revolts. No general strikes. Theodor Draper (and many other observers) argues persuasively that since there were at least "500,000 agricultural workers in Cuba" there could not have been many peasants in a

> . . . guerrilla force that never amounted to more than a thousand. . . there was nothing comparable in Cuba to the classic peasant revolution led by Zapata in Mexico in 1910. . . there was no national peasant uprising. Outside the immediate vicinity of the guerrilla forces, revolutionary activity, in the country as a whole, was largely a middle class phenomenon, with some working class support, but without working class organizations...(Castroism: Theory and Practice; New York, 1965, p. 74-75) [This takes on added significance when we consider that the unions comprised ONE MILLION out of a total population of about six million when the Revolution began, Jan. 1, 1959.]

In Russia, the masses made the social revolution BEFORE the establishment of the Bolshevik government. Lenin climbed to power by voicing the demands of, and legalizing the social revolutionary DEEDS of the workers and peasants: "All Power to the Soviets," "The Land to the Peasants," "The Factories to the Workers," etc. In Cuba, Castro, for fear of losing popular support, carefully avoided a social-revolutionary platform–assuming that he had one. Unlike Lenin, he came to power because he promised to put into effect the bourgeois-democratic program.

History is full of unexpected twists and turns. Ironically enough, these two different revolutions had similar results: Both Lenin and Castro betrayed their respective revolutions, instituted totalitarian regimes and ruled by decree from above.

The well-known anarcho-syndicalist writer and activist, Augustin Souchy, makes a cogent comparison between the Spanish Revolution (1936-1939) and the Cuban Revolution (both of which he personally witnessed):

> . . . while in Spain, the confiscation of the land and the organization of the collectives was initiated and carried through, by the peasants themselves; in Cuba, social-economic transformation was initiated, not by the people, but by Castro and his comrades-in-arms. It is this distinction that accounts for the different development of the two revolutions; Spain, mass revolution from the bottom up; Cuba, revolution from the top down by decree . . . (see Cuba. An Eyewitness Report, below)

Which brings to mind the celebrated phrase of the "Apostle" of Cuban independence Jose Marti: "To Change the Master Is Not To Be Free."

Revolution the Latin American Way

The Cuban Revolution draws its specific character from a variety of sources. While not a Latin American "palace revolution" which produced no deep seated social changes, it nevertheless relates to the tradition of miltarism and bogus paternalism of Latin American "Caudillismo," the "Man on Horseback." "Caudillismo"–"right" or "left," "revolutionary" or "reactionary"–is a chronic affliction in Latin America since the wars for independence initiated by Simon Bolivar in 1810. The "revolutionary caudillo" Juan Peron of Argentina, catapulted to power by "leftist" army officers, was deposed by "rightist" military officers. Maurice Halperin calls attention to the ". . . expropriation of vast properties in Peru in 1968 and in Bolivia in 1969 by the very generals who had destroyed Cuban supported guerrilla uprisings in their respective countries. . . " (The Rise and Fall of Fidel Castro; University of California, 1972, p. 118)

The militarization of Cuban society by a revolutionary dictatorship headed by the "Caudillo" of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro follows, in general, the Latin American pattern. Like other revolutionary Latin American "Caudillos, " Castro would come to power only on the basis of programs designed to win the indispensable support of the masses. Edwin Lieuwen marshalls impressive evidence:

> . . . In Chile in 1924, Major Carlos Ibanez established a military dictatorship [that] was notably successful in combining authoritarian rule with policies aimed at meeting popular demands for greater social justice. Successful but short lived revolutions took place during 1936 under the leadership of radical young officers inspired by ideas of social reform and authoritarian nationalism. . In Bolivia a clique of radical young officers came to power. Major David Toro and Colonel German Busch successfully headed regimes that had social revolution as their goals. . . they catered to

the downtrodden and pledged to build a new nation. Toro and Busch based their dictatorial regimes on attempts to win mass support ... (Arms and Politics in Latin America; New York, 1961, pgs. 60, 62, 78, 79)

When in 1968, a "revolutionary" military Junta seized power in Peru, the new military government proclaimed the fundamental principle underlying all "radical" military regimes":

> . . . the final aim of the State, being the welfare of the nation; and the armed forces being the instrument which the State uses to impose its policies, therefore, . . . in order to arrive at collective prosperity, the armed forces have the mission to watch over the social welfare, the final aim of the State... (quoted, Modes of Political Change in Latin America, ed. Paul Sigmund, New York, 1970, p. 201)

Dr. Carlos Delgado, Director of the Information Bureau of the Revolutionary Government of Peru, after stressing that the revolution was " . . . initiated from above" by decree, boasted that the dictatorship in "...the last four and a half years" accomplished more for the betterment of the people than in the "whole epoch of Republican rule." The revolution was hailed, boasted Delgado, even by the French Marxist thinker, Henri Lefebvre, as one of the most important historical events of the contemporary world..." (see Reconstruir, anarchist bi-monthly, Buenos Aires, Nov.-Dec. 1974)

There is an umbilical connection between militarism and the State, fully compatible with, and indispensable to, all varieties of State "socialism"–or more accurately State Capitalism. George Pendle (and other observers) with respect to Peron's social and welfare programs initiated to woo mass support concludes that:

> ...Peron's National Institute of Social Security...converted Argentina to one of the most advanced countries in South America. . . it was not surprising that the majority of workers preferred Peron to their traditional leaders...they felt that Peron accomplished more for them in a few years than the Socialist Party achieved in decades...(Argentina; Oxford University Press, London, 1965, pas. 97, 99)

. . . In Havana Premier Fidel Castro proclaimed three days of mourning and Cuban officials termed Peron's death a blow to all Latin America. . .(New York Times, July 2, 1974) This cynical proclamation was not made solely for tactical reasons, but in recognition of the affinity between the Casro and Peron regimes. As early as 1961, there were already informal contacts between Che Guevara and Angel Borlenghi "... a number two man in Peron's government and his Minister of the Interior for eight years ... Che told Borlenghi that there's no question about it that Peron was the most advanced embodiment of political and economic reform in Argentina ... and under Che's guidance a rapport was established between the Cuban Revolution and the Peronist movement ... Che has in his possession a letter from Peron expressing admiration for Castro and the Cuban Revolution and Che had raised the question of inviting Peron to settle in Havana . . . " (quoted by Halperin, from Ricardo Rojo's work, My Friend Che; ibid. p. 329-330)

> Herbert Matthews supplements Rojo's revelations:...the Argentine journalist Jorge Massetti who went into the Sierra Maestra in 1958, became friends with Guevara. He was trained for guerrilla warfare in the Sierra Maestra and in 1964 was killed in a guerrilla raid in Argentina . . . Massetti was credited with convincing Guevara that Peronism approximated his own ideas. Hilda Gadea–Guevara's first wife–wrote that for Ernesto Guevara, the fall of Peron Sept. 1955 was a heavy blow. Che and Massetti blamed it,...'on North American Imperialists'...(ibid. p. 258)

[Carmelo Mesa-Lago notes the connection between State Socialism and militarism. Castro enthusiastically hailed] " . . . the Peruvian Social Revolution as a progressive military group playing a revolutionary role. . ." (Cuba in the 1970s: University of New Mexico Press, 1975, p. 11]) In an interview, Castro emphatically maintained that social revolution is compatible with military dictatorship, not only in Peru, but also in Portugal and Panama.

[When the military junta in Peru] took power...the first thing they did was to implement agrarian reform which was MUCH MORE RADICAL than the agrarian reform we initiated in Cuba. It put a much lower limit on the size of properties; organized cooperatives, agricultural communities; . . . they also pushed in other fields–in the field of education, social development, industrialization. . . We must also see the example of Portugal where the military played a decisive role in political change. . .and are on their way to finding solutions. . . we have Peru and Panama–where the military are acting as catalysts in favor of the revolution. . . (Castro quoted by Frank and Kirby Jones, With Fidel; New York, 1975, p. 195-196)

[The evidence sustains Donald Druze's conclusion that] . . . the programs of modern 'caudillos' embodies so many features of centralism and National Socialism, that it almost inevitably blends into communism...(Latin America: An interpretive History; New York, 1972, p. 570)

Militarism flourishes in Cuba as in latin America. Castro projected militarism to a degree unequalled by his predecessor, Batista: total domination of social, economic and political life. In the Spring of 1959, a few months after the Revolution of January 1st, Castro, who appointed himself the "Lider Maximo" ("Caudillo") of the Revolution and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, promised to cut the size of the army in half and ultimately to disband and replace it by civilian militias and police. "The last thing I am," said Castro, "is a military man . . . ours is a country without generals and colonels. . . "

Within a year after the disintegration of the Batista Army, Castro turned Cuba into a thoroughly militarized state, with the most formidable armed force of any in Latin America. For the

first time in Cuban history, compulsory military service was instituted. Now, Cuba has adopted the traditional hierarchical ranking system of conventional armies. The Cuban army differs in no essential respect from the armies of both "capitalist" and "socialist" imperialist powers.

"Communism" a la Castro

Insofar as relations with the communists are concerned, Theodore Draper notes the striking resemblance between the policies of Batista and Castro:

> . . . Batista paid off the communists for their support, by among other things, permitting them to set up an official trade union federation, the Confederacion de Trabajadores de Cuba (CTC) with Lazaro Pena as its Secretary-General. In 1961, Castro paid off the communists for their support, by, among other things, permitting Lazaro Pena to come back officially as Secretary General of the CTC...(ibid. p. 204)

If we accept at face value Castro's conversion to "communism," his "communism" embodies the Latin American version of Stalinism, absolute personal dictatorship. But "Caudillos" are not primarily ideologues. They are, above all, political adventurers. In their lust for power, they are not guided by ethical considerations, as they claim. In this respect, there is no essential difference between capitalist states and "revolutionary socialist states." All dictators conceal their true visage behind the facade of a political party, paying lip service to goals supposedly popular with the masses. Castro became a "communist" because he considered that his survival in power depended on cementing cordial relations with his saviors, the "socialist" countries (former enemies) and by extension with Batista's former allies, the domestic "communists." To promote his ends, Castro established relations with Franco Spain and the Vatican. Nor did he hesitate to side with the Arab oil magnates–lords over their impoverished subjects–in the mid-east disputes, or to endorse the Russian invasion of Czecho-Slovakia.

The Real Revolution Is Yet To Come

Albert Camus observed:

> . . . the major event of the twentieth century has been the abandonment of the values of liberty on the part of the revolutionary movement, the weakening of Libertarian Socialism, vis-a-vis Caesarist and militaristic socialism. Since then, a great hope has disappeared from the world, to be replaced by a deep sense of emptiness in the hearts of all who yearn for freedom... (Neither victims Nor Executioners)

Whether Castro is working out his own unique brand of "Cuban Socialism" is a relatively minor question. Even if Castro had no connection with the communist movement, his mania for personal power would lead inevitably to the establishment of an "independent" totalitarian regime. What is decisive is that the Cuban Revolution follows the pattern established in this century by the aborted Russian Revolution of 1917. This pattern is the counter-revolution of the State.

Chapter 4: The Ideology of Spanish Anarchism

To understand the character of Cuban anarchism it is first necessary to summarize the main principles of Spanish anarcho-syndicalism from which the Cuban revolutionary movement derives its orientation. These principles were formulated by Bakunin and the libertarian sections of the old "First" International Workingmen's Association (IWMA) founded in 1864. Francisco Tomas, one of the organizers of the Spanish Region of the IWMA, reported that "...relations with the Cuban sections were frequent after 1881..." (Max Nettlau: Reconstruir; Jan. 15, 1975)

The Declaration of Principles of the International Alliance of Socialist Democracy, drafted by Bakunin in 1868 could be called the "Magna Carta" of Spanish Anarchism. The most relevant paragraph reads:

> . . . The Alliance seeks the complete and definitive abolition of classes and the political, economic, and social equality of both sexes. It wants the land and the instruments of labor like all other property [not personal belongings] to be converted into the collective property of the whole society for the utilization [not ownership] by workers: that is, by agricultural and industrial societies [unions] and federations. It affirms that existing political and authoritarian states, which are to be reduced to simple administrative functions dealing with public utilities, must eventually be replaced by a worldwide union of free associations, agricultural and industrial...

Bakunin stressed that the organization of the free society must be based on the " . . . various functions of daily life and of different kinds of labor . . . organized by professions and trades. . . " (Program of The International, 1871) He envisioned that the "free productive associations"' which will include members of cooperatives, community and neighborhood groups, cultural associations etc., will voluntarily organize "according to their needs and skills." They will eventually "... transcend all national boundaries and form an immense world-wide federation..." (Revolutionary Catechism 1866)

The Resolution of the Basel Congress of the IWMA (1869) after repeating that the wage system must be replaced by the "federation of free producers . . ." sketched out a form of organization, which, in the main, corresponded to the structure of the libertarian economy established in wide areas during the Spanish Revolution of 1936-1939:

> ...the structure of the new economy was simple: Each factory organized a new administration manned by its own technical and administrative workers. Factories in the same industry in each locality organized themselves into the local Federations of their particular industry. All the local Federations organized themselves into the local Economic Council of the territorial community in which all the work places were

> represented [coordination, exchange, sanitation, culture, transportation, public utilities and the whole range of public services including distribution of commodities by consumer cooperatives and other associations.] Both the Local Federations of each industry and the Local Economic Councils were organized regionally and nationally into parallel National Federations of Industry and National Economic Federations… (Diego Abad de Santillan, anarchist writer, Minister of Economy of Catalonia during Spanish Revolution. Por Que Perdimos la Guerra; Buenos Aires, 1940, p. 82)

Adapting Bakuninist conceptions to Spanish conditions the Spanish anarcho-syndicalists between the founding Congress of the Federation of the Spanish Region of the IWMA (Barcelona, 1870) and the Madrid Congress of 1874, worked out the basic principles and organization of Spanish anarcho-syndicalism. (Rejecting the artificial national boundaries imposed by capitalism and the State to segregate and divide the workers into hostile camps, the IWMA designated its affiliated organizations of different countries as "Regional Federations of the IWMA") Briefly stated, the leading principles could be formulated in the following manner:

The working class must build a new world based on workers' self-management of the economy, collective ownership and administration of social wealth, full individual, sexual and cultural freedom based upon the principle of federalism. Federalism means coordination through free agreement, locally, regionally, nationally and internationally constituting a vast coordinated network of voluntary alliances embracing the totality of social life. Under federalism the associated groups and organizations reap the benefits of unity while still exercising autonomy within their own spheres. Through federation the people expand the range of their own freedoms.

This can be accomplished only by the Social Revolution which will forever do away with private property in the means of production and distribution; abolish the State and its satellite institutions, the armed forces. the church, the bureaucracy and all forms of domination and exploitation of man by man. ". . .on the ruins of capitalism, the State and the Church we will build an anarchist society; the free association of free workers' associations …"

Parliamentary action, collaboration with any form of the State is rejected:

> . . . all governments are evil. To ask a worker what kind of government he prefers is to ask him what executioner he prefers. . . the great United States Republic is an example. There is no king nor emperor, but there are the giant trusts: the kings of Gold, of Steel, of Cotton…

While the means of production, (land, mines transportation, etc.) must become the property of the whole society, " . . . only the workers' collectives will have the use of these facilities…" In this respect differing from true communism where goods and services will be distributed according to NEED.

In such a society the authoritarian institutions which foster the " . . . spirit of nationalism and break the natural solidarity of mankind…" will disappear to be replaced by the world-wide commonwealth of labor. The free society will ". . . harmonize freedom with justice and achieve solidarity…" (quotes are from Anselmo Lorenzo's El Proletariado Militante, pgs. 80, 81, 178, 179, 192. Mexico City, Ediciones Vertice, no date)

The revolutionary "direct action" tendency in the Spanish labor movement has always rejected parliamentarianism and class collaboration with the employers and the State in favor of direct

action on the economic front. The tactics of the general strike, partial strikes, passive "folded arms" strikes, the boycott, sabotage and insurrections were developed by the workers in the course of bitter class struggles long before the founding of the IWMA. The IWMA itself arose in response to the need for international solidarity in strikes.

Clara E. Lida and other historians trace the ideas and tactics of revolutionary syndicalism in Spain from the early 1800s to the revolution of 1854 and the great Catalonian general strike a year later, 15 years before the organization of the IWMA in Spain. (Anarquismo y Revolucion en Espana, Madrid, 1972) The lessons learned in the course of bitter class struggles made the Spanish proletariat receptive to the ideas of Bakunin. They were inspired by the great watchword of the IWMA: "The emancipation of the working class is the task of the workers themselves."

Bakunin formulated a fundamental principle of anarcho-syndicalism: that in the process of struggling for better conditions within existing capitalist society and "studying economic science... the worker's organizations bear within themselves the living seeds of the new social order which is to replace the bourgeois world ... they are creating not only the ideas, but also the facts of the future itself..." (quoted, Rudolf Rocker, Anarcho-Syndicalism, p. 88 India edition)

At the Basel Congress of the IWMA the Spanish delegates (and the other libertarian sections) also emphasized the twofold task of anarcho-syndicalism: the unions of the workers must not only carry on the daily struggle for their economic, social and cultural betterment within the existing exploitative system. They must prepare themselves to take over the self-management of social and economic life and become the living cells of the new, free society.

The structure of the Federation of the Spanish Region was designed to assure the greatest possible amount of freedom and autonomy commensurate with indispensable and effective coordination. To prevent the growth of bureaucracy there were no paid officials. All union affairs were coordinated after working hours. When this was not possible delegates were paid only for the time lost away from work. The power of the Federal Commission and the General Congresses were strictly limited only to carrying out the instructions of the membership never to set policy. Decisions had to be ratified by the majority of the membership. The agenda for conferences, congresses of local, provincial and national assemblies were prepared and thoroughly discussed months in advance. In line with this tradition the CNT (National Confederation of Labor) with over a million members in 1936, had only one paid official–the General Secretary.

The Madrid Congress of the CNT (Dec. 1919) unanimously adopted an anarchist-communist Declaration of Principles stating that "...in accord with the essential postulates of the First International (IWMA) the aim of the CNT of Spain is the realization of Comunismo Libertario..." (Jose Peirats: La CNT en la Revolucion Espanola-Toulouse, 1951, p. 5) The Declaration of Principles of the IWMA reorganized by the anarcho-syndicalists in 1922 also proclaimed tnat "...its goal is the reorganization of social life on the basis of Free Communism. . . "

Strongly influenced by the ideas of Peter Kropotkin who worked out the sociology of anarchism the anarchist Isaac Puente (killed on the Saragossa front during the Spanish Civil War–1936-1939) envisaged the structure of an anarchist society on the basis of "From each according to his ability; to each according to his needs."

> ... Libertarian Communism is the organization of society without the state and without capitalism. To establish Libertarian Communism it will not be necessary to invent artificial social organizations. The new society will naturally emerge from "the shell of the old." The elements of the future society are already planted in the old

> existing order. They are the Union [in European usage, the Syndicate] and the Free Commune [sometimes called "free municipality"] which are old, deeply rooted, non-statist popular institutions, spontaneously organized, and embracing all towns and villages in urban and rural areas. Within the Free Commune, there is also room for cooperative associations of artisans, farmers and other groups or individuals who prefer to remain independent or form their own groupings to meet their own needs [providing, of course, that they do not exploit hired labor for wages]..."

"... the terms 'libertarian' and 'communism' denote the fusion of two inseperable concepts, the indispensible prerequisites for the free society: collectivism and individual freedom..." (El Communismo Anarchico)

Although the impact of Spanish anarchist ideas on Cuban labor was indeed great it is not to be inferred that they were artificially grafted to the Cuban revolutionary movewent. These ideas were adapted to Cuban conditions. Anarcho-syndicalist principles were accepted, not because were imported from Spain (the masses did not know where these ideas came from) but because they corresponded to the asperations and experiences of the Cuban workers on Cuban soil.

Chapter 5: Anarchism in Cuba: the Forerunners

Both anarchist ideas and the development of the Cuban labor movement trace back to the middle of the nineteenth century. Even today's Cuban communists recognize that:

> ...in spite of the efforts of Paul Lafargue (Marx's son-in-law, stationed in Spain) and other marxists, the proletariat of the peninsula (Spain and Portugal) were strongly influenced by anarchist and anarcho-syndicalist ideas. And these ideas carried over to Cuba in the last quarter of the 19th and first quarter of the 20th century, decisively influencing the Cuban labor movement which was invariable anarchist. . . " (Serge Aguirre; Cuba Socialista–a Castroite monthly–September, 1965.)
>
> . . . During the whole epoch (from the 1890s until after the Russian Revolution) it was the anarcho-syndicalists who led the class struggles in Cuba, and the anarchist ideological influence that prevailed. . .)" (Julio de Riverend, Cuba Socialista, Feb. 1965)

Anarchism in the Colonial Period

In Cuba the anarchist movement did not, as in some countries, develop independently of the labor movement. They grew so closely together that it is impossible to trace the history of one without the other the forerunners and organizers of the Cuban labor movement were the Spanish anarcho-syndicalist exiles who in the 1880s came to Cuba. It was they who gave the Cuban labor movement its distinct social revolutionary orientation, spreading the anarcho-syndicalist ideas of Bakunin and the Spanish internationalists–men like Enrique Messinier, Enrique Roig San Martin, and Enrique Cresci.

One of the early labor organizations was the Sociedades Economicos de Amigos del Pais (Economic Society of the Friends of the Country). We lack detailed information about the ideology of the Association of Tobacco Workers of Havana organized in 1866–but it was vaguely syndicalistic. The workers were passionately interested in self-education. The tobacco workers of Havana (like their countrymen in Florida) paid readers to read works of general interest to them while they worked. During the reader's rest period they avidly discussed what they had learned. An employer rash enough to interfere with these proceedings would be unceremoniously escorted from his premises.

In 1885, an informal federation of unions, Circular de Trabajadores de la Habana (workers' clubs) was organized. Two years later, it held a Congress in which two opposing groups, "reformists versus radicals" heatedly debated the future orientation of their organization.

The anarchist propaganda groups stressed the necessity for organization along anarcho-syndicalist lines, rejecting Marxian ideas on the necessity for parliamentary-political action by

social-democratic political parties. In 1886, the Workers' Center was founded to spread the ideas of anarcho-syndicalism through its organ El Productor, (The Producer) founded and edited by the anarchist Enrique Roig San Martin.

In 1892, the first Workers' Congress celebrated the First of May by demonstrations for the independence of Cuba, which provoked the premature closing of the Congress by the Spanish authorities. The resolutions for the independence of Cuba were drafted by the anarchists Enrique Cresci, Enrique Suarez and Eduardo Gonzalez. The congress approved a resolution stating that " . . . the working class will not be emancipated until it embraces revolutionary socialism, which cannot be an obstacle for the triumph of the independence of our country. . ." (quoted by Maurice Halperin: The Rise and Fall of Fidel Castro, University of California 1972, p. 4)

Around 1874 the revered "apostle" of Cuban independence, Jose Marti, frequently referred to anarchist groups named for Fermin Salvochea, Bakunin and others. In his paper, La Patria, he printed articles by the anarchist Elisee Reclus and others. Marti wrote:

> ". . . we live in a period of struggle between capitalists and workers. . . a militant alliance of workers will be a tremendous event. They are now creating it. . . " (quoted Halperin, ibid. p. 6-7)

The anarchist Carlos M. Balino, active among the tobacco workers of Florida, was an associate of Jose Marti. And the Enrique Roig Club included the anarchist and socialist supporters of Marti. We cite these facts to demonstrate the social-revolutionary character of the independence movement which was not merely nationalistic.

Enrique Messenier became the first president of the Liga General de Trabajadores, organized by the anarchists in the 1890s. This period also marked general strikes of longshoremen in Cardenas, Regla and Havana. The Liga conducted the first general strike for the eight hour day, which was brutally suppressed by the government.

A contemporary intimate account of the state of the Cuban anarchist movement during the crucial years preceding independence can be gleaned from the report of Pedro Esteve, a pioneer of the 20th century anarchist movement which flourished in the United States. (A Los Anarquistas de Espana y Cuba; Reported to the International Anarchist Congress, Chicago 1893; published by El Despertar, Paterson, New Jersey, 1900.) Esteve was in close touch with the Cuban anarchists in Cuba and with the Spanish anarchist exiles in Cuba. The following remarks were based upon a frustrated propaganda tour cut short by the police after a three month stay.

> The authorities tried to cripple, and if possible, extirpate our movement, not by outright violence–which would have aroused a storm of protest–but by a no less effective, persistent and devilishly clever campaign of petty harassments (landlords were pressured not to rent premises for our meetings.) While not resorting to open censorship, our weekly La Alarma was forced to suspend publication. It reappeared under the name Archivo Social and was again suppressed. Our Circulo de Trabajadores Workers' Center was closed down on false charges concocted by the "sanitation inspectors" etc., etc.)

The attentats of Emil Henry and other anarchist terrorists which precipitated the brutal persecution of the anarchist movement in Europe, likewise became the pretext for the Cuban government's crackdown on our movement...

Esteve recounts the effects of racism on the healthy development of the Cuban labor and socialist movements, for, in spite of the abolition of slavery and proclamation of equal rights, rampant racial discrimination was still common.

> . . . not even the exemplary conduct of the anarchists who unfailingly welcomed the negroes on equal terms at meetings, schools and all other functions on a person to person basis, sufficed for a long time to shake the belief that all whites were their natural enemies... Nevertheless we continued our agitation with dedication and attracted to our ranks genuine proletarian elements. We held meetings in various Havana neighborhoods and in other cities and villages. We were invited to explain our ideas in non-academic popular schools, and in our Center, we gave popular courses in sociology and other subjects...we also initiated other projects of workers' education...at the invitation of workers in the La Rosa de Santiago cigar factory, I gave a well received talk on anarchism . . . these are only a few examples...little by little, anarchists who had been inactive for a long time returned, and new adherents came to us . . . our movement revived slowly, but on firmer foundations...

Struggle for Independence: 1868-1895

1868 marked the beginning of the ten-year guerrilla war for independence from Spanish colonial domination, "El Grito de Yara. " On October 10, 1868, Carlos Manuel de Cespedes, a wealthy sugar plantation owner in Oriente province attacked the village of Yara with less than 40 men. The attack was repulsed and only 12 men survived. "El Grito de Yara," ("The Call To Rebellion") became the symbol and watchword of the struggle for independence. More than 200,000 militants were killed in the ten-year war, uncounted thousands were wounded. Total casualties could not be estimated. The most prominent military leaders of the independence movement were General Maximo Gomeiz Gomez and Antonio Maceo. In 1869 Cespedes was elected President of the Provisional Republic. This, and El Grito de Yara earned him the title "Father of Independence."

Spain sent General Valeriano Weyler, "The Butcher," to extirpate the independence movement. He locked hundreds of thousands of men women and children into concentration camps. In Havana alone, 52,000 people perished. In rebel areas, cattle and crops were destroyed to starve out the freedom fighters and their families. The peasants retaliated by burning down vast Spanish owned sugar plantations. Weyler was recalled to Spain in 1879.

After the abolition of slavery in 1880, the big landlords expected the Spanish government to compensate them for the losses entailed by the emancipation of the slaves. But the condition of the workers remained practically unchanged. The Revista de Agricultura wrote:

> . . . A worker in a sugar mill camp awoke at 2 a.m., drank a glass of hot water for breakfast, worked till 11 a.m. After a two hour lunch break the worker went back and worked till 6 p.m., ate supper and then worked several hours more. . . (quoted in Castro organ Cuba Socialista clipping–no date)

Anarchists in the Struggle for Independence

The most militant elements in the insurrections of 1895 for the independence of Cuba were primarily the peasants (and to a relatively Iesser extent the numerically inferior urban workers). From the beginning to the end of the war for independence the international anarchist movement supported the revolts, and many young anarchists came to Cuba to fight with the Cuban people. Many anarchists were in the forefront of these struggles, among them Rafael Garcia, Armando Andre (one of the commanders of the rebel army, later murdered by the Machado assassins) and Enrique Cresci.

Anarchist participation in the independence struggles was based upon the following considerations: For the exploited, oppressed masses, bourgeois independence was of secondary importance. For them, abolition of colonial despotism also signified the end of their age-long servitude, and with it, the inauguration of a new era of economic equality, social justice and personal freedom. The people's struggle for independence simultaneously took on a social-revolutionary character. Anarchist propaganda, and above all ACTION, encouraged the masses to turn the struggle for political independence into the struggle for the Social Revolution.

Cuban Independence: The Expansion of U.S. Imperialism

The U.S. imperialists feared the social-revolution of the Cuban people as much as their Spanish colonial and domestic exploiters. In this connection the views of two well qualified historians are well worth quoting:

> . . . during the negotiations for the treaty of peace after the victory over Spain [in the Spanish-American War, 1898] Spain expressed fear that if left to itself the island…might be prey to frequent revolutions with the result that neither property nor personal rights would be protected. To save Cuba from the possible consequences of 'premature' independence, Spain wished to have the United States keep at least a degree of control sufficient to insure order. . . (Chester Lloyd Jones; quoted in Background to Revolution, New York, 1966, p. 63)

Professor Jones points out that the United States shared Spain's fear of Revolution in Cuba and agreed to "…discharge its obligations under international law. . . " (p. 64)

And Professor William Appleton Williams sums up the true motivations of U.S. imperialism in respect to Cuban independence:

> . . . the United States sought the prompt and permanent pacification of the island. . . . to insure military control. . . and facilitate and safeguard United States economic predominance … the United States thereby set itself in opposition to the Cuban revolutionaries as well as the Spanish government … Cuba was to be reconstructed along lines satisfactory to the United States, and only finally handed over to the Cubans after such vital limits on their freedom of action and development had been established to insure indefinite American predominance … (quoted in anthology Background to Revolution; pgs. 188-190)

Independence to the Outbreak of World War I: 1898-1914

With the defeat of Spain in the Spanish-American War, Cuba became an independent republic. It was the revolutionary masses of Cuba, the humble peasants and urban workers, who by their heroism undermined Spanish rule and made possible the easy victory of the United States.

Between 1898 and 1902, the American military occupied and governed Cuba on the pretext that a transition period was necessary to prepare Cuba for self-rule. The American troops left after the first presidential election. But the Platt amendment of 1901 granted the U.S. the right to intervene in Cuban affairs and permanently occupy the Guantanamo Bay naval base. (The administration of the Isle of Pines was revoked in 1925.)

Tomas Estrada Palma was elected President of the new republic in 1902. His fraudulent re-election in 1906 and the "liberal" coup which deposed him created the pretext for the second intervention of U.S. troops. The administration of Palma's successor Jose Miguel Gomez (1909-1912) was incredibly corrupt. He boasted, "...in all my life, I have been jovial in spirit, with a smile on my lips. . ." Hubert Herring remarks: " ..with a smile, Gomez emptied the treasury and allowed his Cuban and American cronies to fatten on concessions. . . " (History ol Latin America; New York, 1955, p. 401) The new independent republic turned out to be just, or almost as reactionary as the deposed colonial despotism of Spain. Scarcely less bitter was the struggle between the oppressed people of Cuba and the corrupt new State with its bureaucracy and its military and police forces.

In the Spring of 1900, during the United States occupation, the group publishing El Mundo Ideal (The Ideal Society), invited the well known anarchist Errico Malatesta to tour Cuba and speak to the workers and peasants. But the Government expelled him. Upon leaving Cuba Malatesta wrote a farewell letter to his Cuban comrades, from which we excerpt the following passages:

> ". . . Upon leaving this country for which I harbor a strong affection permit me to salute the valiant Cuban workers, black and white, native and foreign, who extended me so cordial a welcome ...
>
> ". . . I have, for a very long time, admired the self-sacrifice and heroism with which you have fought for the freedom of your country. Now I have learned to appreciate your clear intelligence, your spirit of progress and your truly remarkable culture, so rare in people who have been so cruelly oppressed. And I leave with the conviction that you will soon take your place among the most advanced elements in all countries fighting for the real emancipation of humanity . . . "
>
> ". . . I assume that the libertarians fighting against the existing government will not put another government in its place; but each one will understand that if in the war for independence this spirit of hostility to all governments incarnated in every libertarian, will now make it impossible to impose upon the Cuban people the same Spanish laws, which martyrs like Marti, Cresci, Maceo, and thousands of other Cubans died to abolish..."
>
> (Solidaridad Gastronomica–Anarcho-Syndicalist food workers union organ, Aug. 15, 1955)

In 1902, Havana tobacco workers, organized by Gonzales Lozana and other anarchists, called a general strike, the first under the Republic. This action, the famous "strike of the apprentices,"

sought to end the exploitation of apprentices, whose status had been, in effect, that of indentured servants bound to their employers for a given period. The tobacco workers were joined by the Havana port workers. The government tried to break the strike by force, provoking a violent battle in which twenty workers were killed. Using the threat of U.S. intervention, the government finally broke the strike.

The period between 1903 and 1914 was marked by many strikes in which the anarchist actively participated. Among the more important we list:

1903. During a major strike of sugar workers, the anarchists Casanas and Montero y Sarria were murdered by order of the then Governor of Las Villas Province, Jose Miguel Gomez, later President of Cuba. The long Moneda General Strike, led by the anarchists (Feb. 20th to July 15th) was called because the workers refused to accept payment in devalued Spanish pesetas. They demanded payment in American dollars worth more in purchasing power. Also in 1907, the anarchist weekly Tierra! was severely persecuted for inciting a railway strike for the eight hour day and other demands. The Tobacco workers again went on strike, this time for 145 days. They were joined by maritime, construction and other workers.

1910-1912. Anarcho-syndicalists played an important part in the strike of Havana and Cienfuegos sewer workers of June 1910. The bitter 1912 restaurant and cafe workers strike also involved anarchist militants. One of the most active strikers was Hilario Alonso. Other strikes of the period included the bricklayers strike for the eight hour day; the railway workers' strike; the violent Havana tunnel workers strike and the deportation of Spanish anarchists and syndicalists who were particularly militant.

During these years the anarchist movement flourished. The weekly Tierra! with its excellent articles from the pen of the most distinguished Cuban and Spanish writers; the libertarian journal, El Ideal, and the widespread circulation of works by Elisee Reclus, Kropotkin and other anarchists in popular priced editions.

This period also marked the significant growth of the workers' cooperative movement in which the anarchists were very active. Payment of a moderate monthly fee gave workers the use of recreation and cultural facilities, medical services and other benefits. The movement reached a total of 200,000 members. In spite of the opposition of industrialists, the workers organized producers' and consumers' housing and other cooperatives.

The anarchists also spearheaded the organization of agrarian cooperatives, a movement which the Castro government crushed in favor of State farms. The libertarian movement of Cuba had always given top priority, not only to the organization of urban workers, but also to peasant struggles. They built up peasant organizations throughout Cuba–in San Cristobal, Las Placios, Pinar del Rio–wherever there was the slightest opportunity. In Realengo 18, yentas de Casanova, Santa Lucia and El Vinculo anarchist militants like Marcelo Salinas, Modesto Barbieto, Alfredo Perez and many others fought bravely. Our unforgettable comrades Sabino Pupo Millan and Niceto Perez were militant peasant revolutionaries in the immense sugar plantations of Santa Lucia, and in Camaguey. During this period, and at least up to 1925, anarchists were the only militants influential among sugar workers. Millan was murdered October 20, 1945, by paid assassins of the Monati Sugar Company for stirring peasant resistance and organizing peasant cooperatives. Perez was also assassinated; the Peasant Federation of Cuba commemorated the date of his murder as "The Day of the Peasant: a day of struggle for the demands of the hungry and exploited agricultural workers."

Russian Revolution to the Machado Dictatorship: 1917-1925

The termination of World War I and the Russian Revolution fired the imagination of the advanced sections of the labor and radical movements around the world. Many anarchists expected an immediate revolution and the realization of the just society worldwide. In 1919 a number of Cuban anarchists, succumbing to the revolutionary euphoria, issued a manifesto in favor of joining the communist Third International, dominated by the Bolshevik Party.

But with more complete and reliable information, and a more sober obiective analysis of Russian events, the Cuban anarchist movement entered a new phase. Enthusiasm for the Russian Revolution died out as the dictatorial outrages of the Bolsheviks became obvious and as critical comments from Kropolkin, Voline, Berkman and other anarchist refugees in Europe and elsewhere reached Cuba.

The years between 1917 and 1930 marked bitter and widespread class struggles: local and national strikes for more wages, the eight hour day, union recognition, campaigns against obligatory military service; tremendous demonstrations against scarcity and the high cost of living, etc. All these manifestations of popular rebellion called forth government persecution of the radical movement. Spanish anarchists were deported, halls closed down one day by the police were reopened the next; papers suspended one day, reappeared the next day under another name. In spite of the repressions, hundreds of young men and women joined the anarchist organizations.

The anarchists were feverishly active, above all in the labor unions among the tobacco workers, bricklayers and masons, gypsum workers, bakers, engineers, railroad workers, factories etc. The libertarians published the weeklies, Nueva Aurora and Labor Sana; the magazines, El Progreso, Voz del Dependiente (clerks), El Productor Panadero (bakers), Nueva Luz (New Light), Proteo, El Libertario, and other periodicals.

This agitation and strike activity resulted in the organization of the Havana Federation of Labor, and much later, the National Labor Federation of Cuba. Both these organizations adopted anarcho-syndicalist forms of struggle and organization. Here is a partial listing of the main events:

1918–Bloody strike of the Havana construction workers. Invoking the 1893 anti-anarchist law, the government tried to extirpate the anarchist influence in labor organizations by imprisoning anarchist organizers and activists on trumped-up charges of sedition and conspiracy to overthrow the state. The police opened fire on a demonstration called by workers, unions against the high cost of living.

1920–In April a national congress was called under the auspices of the Havana and Pinal Pinar del Rio Federation of Weavers, in which many anarchists held important posts. Corruption in government was rife. (In 1921, for example, Alfredo Zayas, nicknamed ”the Peseta Snatcher” by his victims, was elected President of Cuba.)

1924–A congress of anarchist groups united all the anarchist tendencies into the newly organized Federacion de Grupos Anarquistas de Cuba. The tiny scattered papers were consolidated into one really adequate, well edited, well produced periodical. The new journal Tierra! (Land) attained a wide circulation, until forced to suspend publication by the Machado dictatorship. (Tierra! continued publication intermittently till the late 1930s).

One of Tierra’s most brilliant collaborators, Paulino Diaz, took a very prominent part in a workers’ congress held in Cienfuegos, which laid the basis for what later (1938) became the Confederation of Cuban Workers (CTC). But the anarchists never controlled the CTC, which

became, and remains to this day, a quasi-governmental agency, dominated successively by the Grau San Martin, Batista, and Castro governments.

The first General Secretary of the National Confederation of Cuban Workers (CNOC) was the anarchist typographer, Alfredo Lopez. There were also socialist and communist groups in the CNOC. The growth of the anarchists had been severely curtailed as a result of the struggles under the regime of President Menocal, by deportations to Spain, and by police repression. Recognizing the need for a better organized and more efficient labor movement, the anarchists reorganized the craft unions on an industrial basis–based on factories and industries–regardless of crafts.

The anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists practically controlled one of the strongest unions in Cuba, Sindicato de la Industria Fabril (Brewery Union–SIF). With the cooperation of the anarchist groups, the anarcho-syndicalists also organized sugar cane and railway workers' unions in the province of Camaguey.

1925–A vicious campaign to obliterate preponderant anarchist influence in the SIF was launched by the Machado government which accused the anarchist militants Eduardo Vivas and Luis Quiros of poisoning the beer in a strike against the Polar Brewing Company. The Subsequent scandal prepared the way for an all-out offensive against the union and the anarchist movement. All of the organizers were persecuted. Some anarchist organizers went into hiding. Others were jailed and foreign-born anarchists deported. A few were driven to commit suicide.

But in spite of all the atrocities, the great mass of workers, who during the years still retained their libertarian spirit and approach to problems, continued to organize and spread anarcho-syndicalist ideas. When in 1925, at the Congress of the Cuban National Confederation of Labor (CNOC), in Camaguey, some agents of the employers proposed the expulsion of the anarcho-syndicalists, the Congress, far from approving expulsion, expelled those who made the motion for expulsion of the anarcho-syndicalists. In the same year (1925), paid assassins of the employers shot and killed the anarchist Enrique Varone, the most effective organizer of sugar and railway workers in Camaguey and Oriente provinces. The anarchists also organized the peasants and rural industrial workers into the Sindicato General de Trabajadores de San Cristobal, Province of Pinar del Rio.

The Dictatorship of Machado: 1925-1933

On May 20th 1925, General Gerardo Machado, a semi-literate power-mad despot (later known as the notorious "Butcher of Las Villas") became President of Cuba. His election campaign was a well organized brainwashing publicity stunt. Posing as a paternalistic, benevolent democrat, he was, at first, immensely popular. Scarcely a dissenting note marred the chorus of universal acclaim. But the anarchist weekly Tierra! published a magnificent editorial ending with the words:

> ... We go with the common people, with the masses; but when they follow a tyrant: then we go alone! Erect! With eyes raised high toward the luminous aurora of our ideal!

In conjunction with the agitation in the University of Havana, ten people founded the Cuban Communist Party. The Party attracted intellectuals, students, and few workers. Until the mid-1930s it had little influence in labor circles. The Party was temporarily outlawed in 1927.

The Machado regime formed a government-sponsored union, Union Federativa Obrera Nacional (United National Federation of Labor–UFON) and forced all the legitimate labor organizations underground.

The anarchist labor movement was sadistically suppressed. Alfredo Lopez, the General Secretary of the CNOC (mentioned above) was thrown into the sea to be devoured by sharks. The long struggle for control of the CNOC ended in 1930-31, when the communists, in league with the Machado government, connived by the foulest means to seize Control of the CNOC and the labor movement.

Nevertheless' throughout the many popular upheavals of the 1920s and 1930s, the anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists played a significant role. After the government suppression of the CNOC they were among the principal organizers of the independent and militant Confederacion General de Trabajadores (General Confederation of Labor.)

The bloody dictatorship of Machado was overthrown by a general strike and insurrection. The strike began with the walkout of the trolley and bus unions. While the communists controlled the bus union, the trolley workers' union was strongly influenced by the anarcho-syndicalists. The Havana Federation of Labor called a meeting of all unions to organize the general strike and elected a number of anarchists to the strike committee, among them Nicosio Trujillo and Antonio Penichet.

Day by day the strike grew into a formidable threat to the government. In a last ditch attempt to stay in power and break the strike, Machado gained the support of the Communist Party and in exchange for its cooperation Machado promised to legalize the Party and allow its bureaucrats to control several labor unions. The communists accepted Machado's offer and tried to break the strike. They failed. The strike precipitated the fall of Machado in spite of the efforts of the communists and their leader Cesar Vilar, to help him stay in power.

The Federation of Anarchist Groups issued a manifesto exposing the treason of the communists and urging the workers to stand fast in their determination to overthrow the tyrant and his lieutenants. We reprint extracts from the manifesto as translated in the organ of the Industrial Workers of the World, The Industrial Worker, Chicago, October 3, 1933.

Manifesto to the Cuban Workers and the People in General

The Anarchist Federation of Cuba, conscious of its responsibility in these times of confusion, feels obliged to expose before the workers–and public opinion–the base actions of the Communist Party. . . We believe that the truth is the most powerful weapon, and that is the weapon we use. We want everybody to know the truth. Here it is…

On August 7th (1933), when the general strike against Machado and his regime had the whole island in its grip, Machado was frightened and foresaw his imminent fall…At this juncture, the so-called "Central Committee" of the communist party controlled puppet union, National Labor Confederation [CNOC] . . . with the full authority of its Communist leaders offered and arranged an agreement with the Machado government. . .

The day after the machine gun massacre of unarmed people by the Machado assassins the Communist labor fakers were transported in luxurious cars provided by the military officers and Machado's Secretary of War to a banquet with Machado in the most expensive luxury restaurant

in Havana–El Carmelo. At the banquet, Machado agreed to recognize the Communist Party legally, and grant other requests. . .

The communists made frantic appeals to the workers to go back to work because the employers granted their demands But the workers (including even the Havana bus and transportation union, controlled by the communists) refused. They decided to obey only their own conscience and to continue resistance until the Machado regime is overthrown or forced to flee.

Machado and his communist allies retaliated. No labor union was allowed to meet. The Havana Federation of Labor [FOH, founded by the anarcho-syndicalists], to which the largest number of non-political labor unions were affiliated, could not meet because it did not have a signed authorization from the government. Only the communists, thanks to their betrayal, were allowed to meet. Armed with revolvers while all others were forbidden to hold or carry arms and constitutional rights were suspended, the communists held meetings, rode in automobiles burning gasoline supplied by the army because the filling stations were closed by the strike…

. . in conclusion we want the workers and the people of Cuba to know that the rent for the offices of the communist party labor front the CNOC is paid by the Machado regime, that the furniture was forcibly taken away from the Havana Federation of Labor offices with the permission and active help of Machado's Secretary of War…

Chapter 6: The Batista Era

On August 12, 1933, Carlos Manuel de Cespedes, former Ambassador to Washington became President of Cuba (he bore the same name as his father who the was the first President of the Provisional Republic of Cuba in 1869–see above) In spite of the all out support of the U.S., his regime collapsed after being in office only 21 days. Cespedes was overthrown by the famous "sergeants revolt" (Sept. 4, 1933) led by the then unknown Fulgencio Batista y Zaldivar.

Fulgencio Batista was born in 1902 in Oriente Province. His father was a peasant laborer on a sugar plantation. In 1921, he enlisted as a private in the Cuban army, where he learned typing and stenography. In 1932 Batista became a military court stenographer with the rank of sergeant .

Batista's Revolutionary Junta took power on the basis of a democratic program summed up in the following extract:

> Economic reconstruction of the national government and political process on the basis of a Constitutional Convention to be held immediately.
>
> Immediate elimination from public life of parasites and full punishment for the atrocities and corruption of the previous Machado regime.
>
> Strict recognition of the debts and obligations contracted by the Republic.
>
> Immediate creation of adequate courts to enforce the measures above mentioned.
>
> Undertake all measures necessary…towards the creation of a new, modern, democratic Cuba.

Batista promoted himself to the rank of Colonel and Commander in Chief of the Armed forces. Batista was the de facto dictator of Cuba and ruled through a succession of puppet presidents (seven in all). The civilian, Dr. Ramon San Martin (a professor of medicine), was appointed Provisional President of Cuba by Batista's junta. His administration in line with Batista's democratic program, enacted a number of reforms (eight hour day, women's suffrage, repeal of the notorious Platt Amendment, legalizing U.S. intervention in Cuban affairs, etc.)

Batista lost the 1944 presidential election to Grau San Martin's Autentico Party and with the millions stolen from the Cuban treasury retreated to his Florida Estate in 1950. Presidential elections in Cuba were scheduled for June 1952. The favorite candidate to win was Roberto Agramonte, Professor of Sociology in the University of Havana. Agramonte belonged to the Ortodox Party (Partido del Pueblo Ortodoxo). The Ortodoxos wanted a return to the original principles of the Autentico Party whose leaders were Presidents Grau San Martin (1944-1948) and Carlos Prio Socarras (1948-1952). [Fidel Castro was an active member of the Ortodoxo Party, whose leader Eduardo Chibas, in despair over the failure of the reform program and the corruption of Cuban institutions–in the midst of a radio program – committed suicide, August 1951]

In the meantime Batista prepared the ground for his return to Cuba and seizure of power; he spent huge sums to get himself elected Senator from Las Villas Province; he planted his men in the mass organizations (some of them were communists who worked with him previously). He organized support in the army, the governmental bureaucracy among the landlords, industrialists, and the bankers. He cleverly took advantage of the widespread venality and colossal corruption of former administrations and promised democratic reforms. (For example, just before President Grau Sa in n Martin was about to be tried for misappropriation of $174,000,000 in public funds during his administration, thieves broke into the Havana Court House and stole the records.) The presidential elections scheduled for June 1952 were never held. On March 10 1952, Batista staged his coup d'etat and seized power.

The Communists and Batista

In January 1940, the Comintern sent representatives to purge and Stalinize the Cuban Communist Party. Francisco Caldero, (a self-educated cobbler, who rose to prominence in the Cuban Party and in the Castro regime, under the name of Blas Roca) became the new secretary of the Party. After the Seventh Congress of the Comintern (Third International) decreed the "popular united front" alliance with bourgeois organizations, the Cuban Communist Party established close relations with Batista.

In November 1940, the communists supported Batista's candidates in the elections to the Constituent Assembly. In return for their support, Batista allowed the communists to organize and control the government sponsored union, Cuban Confederation of Labor (CTC Confederacion de Trabajadores de Cuba). The first Secretary General of the CTC was Lazaro Pena–who, ironically, enough, held the same post in the Castro regime. In exchange for these favors the communists guaranteed Batista labor peace. In line with the Communist Party's "Popular Front Against Fascism" policy, the alliance of the Communist Party with the Batista was officially consumated when the Party joined the Batista government. The Communist Party leaders Carlos Rafael Rodriguez and Juan Marinello (who now hold high posts in the Castro government) became Ministers Without Portfolio in Batista's Cabinet. To illustrate the intimate connections between the communists and Batista, we quote from a letter of Batista to Blas Roca, Secretary of the Communist Party:

> June 13,1944
>
> Dear Blas,
>
> With respect to your letter which our mutual friend, Dr. Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, Minister Without Portfolio, passed to me, I am happy to again express my firm unshakeable confidence in the loyal cooperation the People's Socialist Party [the then official name of the Communist Party of Cuba] its leaders and members have given and continue to give myself and my government. . . Believe me, as always,
>
> Your very affectionate and cordial friend,
>
> Fulgencio Batista

In the electoral campaign the Communist candidates won ten seats in the Cuban parliament and more than a hundred posts in the Municipal councils.

In line with their pro-Batista policy the communists joined Batista in condemning Fidel Castro's attack on the Moncada Barracks (July 1953 – the anniversary of the attack is a national holiday in Castro Cuba)

> . . . the life of the People's Socialist Party (communist). . . has been to combat . . . and unmask the putschists and adventurous activities of the bourgeois opposition as being against the interests of the people. . . (reported in Daily Worker, U.S organ of the Communist Party, August 10, 1953)

Throughout the Batista period the communists pursued two parallel policies: overtly they criticized Batista and covertly they cooperated with him.

The Crisis of the Labor Movement and the Anarchists: 1944-1952

The anarcho-syndicalist militant Ernesto Barbieto outlined the problems of the Cuban Labor Movement and the position of the anarchists in an article, Los Libertarios Vuelvan (The Libertarians Return: Estudios–anarchist monthly–Havana, March, 1950)

After the bloody repression of the Machado dictatorship, the libertarian militants most active in the labor movement were severely persecuted or forced into exile, and the anarchist influence was consequently considerably weakened. Another major reason for the decline was state intervention, de facto control of the labor movement.

The exclusion of the anarchists left the field open for Stalinists, reformists and professional politicians to widen and tighten their grip on the unions. The democratic phraseology of the politicians gave the proletariat the illusion that they were actually masters of their destiny. This illusion was further fostered by granting certain immediate demands, obtained without struggle or sacrifices. The workers did not realize that a coalition of employers, the state and the labor politicians made these concessions only to stave off militant action by the workers and above all, to strengthen their own positions and influence in the unions.

For these concessions the proletariat paid a very high price; direct interference and de facto state control of their unions, the virtual destruction of legitimate, independent labor organizations like the General Confederation of Workers [CGT]. And the vehicle for this monopoly was the state sponsored Cuban Confederation of Labor [CTC] [controlled by the Communist-Batista coalition]. It was this threat that galvanized the militants of the Libertarian Association of Cuba [ALC] and other independent labor organizations to rally the workers in defense of the autonomy and independence of the labor movement, to expel the labor politicians and arouse the revolutionary consciousness of the working class.

The Third National Libertarian Congress was called (March 11-22, 1950) to reorganize the libertarian labor movement and adopt concrete radical measures enabling its militants to again orientate and play a decisive part in the regeneration of the Cuban labor movement. The Congress approved the follovving resolutions:

> A) fight against the control of the labor movement by bureaucrats, political parties, religious sects, and class-collaborationists
>
> B) extend the influence of the libertarians by actively participating in the daily struggles of the urban and rural workers for better wages and working conditions.

C) encourage workers to prepare themselves culturally and professionally not only to better their present working conditions, but also to take over the technical operation and administration of the whole economy in the new libertarian society.

D) educate the workers to understand the true meaning of syndicalism, which must be apolitical, revolutionary and federalist, which will help prevent authoritarian elements to institute a tyrannical type of unionism, actually becoming an agency of the state.

On tactical problems the Congress resolves to work actively with the workers of the CGT, the only legitimate national labor orgallization with syndicalist tendencies, and which is most responsive to the real needs of the workers.

To warn the workers that the CTC is a state-sponsored union, supported by the Stalinite faction and allied labor fakers; that the CTC is a pseudo-proletarian organization without a trace of revolutionary ideas, spirit or practice; that the CTC is entirely dominated by dictatorial political parties and a corrupt leadership.

(signed) Ernesto Barbieto

Partial Listing of Libertarian Activities in Cuba in the 1950s (Article in Views and Comments, organ of Libertarian League, New York, Spring 1965)

In the mid and later 50s, the Libertarian Association of Cuba (ALC) had functioning local groups (delegations in Havana. Pinar del Rio, San Cristobal, Artemisea Artemisa, Ciego de Avila, and Manzanillo, as well as a heavy scattering of members elsewhere). Their sympathizers and influence were in complete disproportion to their actual membership. Anarcho-syndicalist groups consisted usually of a few members and a larger number of sympathizers existed in many local and regional unions as well as in other organizations. The following is s partial listing (from one exiled comrade's memory) of the libertarian activities and influence in the six provinces of Cuba. The listing is by provinces and municipalities from west to east.

Province of Pinar Del Rio

City of Pinar del Rio–There was a delegation of the ALC that coordinated the activities in the province and which on occasion ran local radio programs. In addition, our comrades influenced and participated in the leadership of the following unions: tobacco workers, food workers, electricians, construction workers, carpenters, transport workers, bank employees and medical workers. The magazines of the tobacco, bank workers and electricians unions were edited by libertarians.

San Juan Martinez–Libertarians influenced and led the tenant farmers union which covered a large agricultural zone.

Viñales–A comrade pharmacist personally influenced various activities of local civic institutions.

San Cristobal–There was a delegation of the ALC whose members influenced and led the Municipal Agrarian Association, the Sugar Workers Union and the Association of Tobacco Harvesters, exerting also some influence among metal workers and commercial employees.

Artemisa–There was a delegation of the ALC. The libertarians influenced and led the Tobacco Workers Union (one of the strongest in Cuba) having also some influence in Transport, sugar and food industries as well as among high school students. The group also had occasional radio programs.

Province of La Habana

City of La Habana–Seat of the National Council of the ALC, which also functioned as the Local Delegation. Edited the newspaper El Libertorio Libertario (formerly Solidaridad) which had been able to appear with but few interruptions since 1944. There were occasional radio programs and some books and pamphlets were published.

There were weekly forums at the headquarters and public mass meetings were occasionally held in La Habana and other points throughout the country. Our comrades influenced and participated in the leadership of the following unions: Electricians, food workers, transport, shoemakers, fishermen, woodworkers, medicine, metal and construction. To a lesser degree their influence was felt amoing the dockers, slaughterhouse workers, movie industry, graphic arts, and journalists, as well as in the Naturist Association and the Spanish Republican Circle. In the food workers sector, the libertarian group published a monthly periodical Solidaridad Gastronomica for over eight years without interruption. Libertarians wrote regularly for the publications of the unions of other industries imparting what doctrinal orientation they could. Sporadically, it was possible to influence various professional and student organizations.

Arroyo Naranjo–In this town our comrades influenced and led the Parents, Neighbors and Teachers Association, the Progressive Cultural Association and the Consumers Cooperative.

Santiago de las Vegas–Here our members sparked the ”Mas Luz” Library, and the Cultural Lyceum.

San Antonio de los Baños–Influence in the Workers Circle and among the tobacconists.

Province of Matanzas

City of Matanzas–Some influence in the textile, graphic arts and bank employees unions as well as in the Spanish Republican Circle.

Limonar–Strong influence in the Sugar Workers Union.

Cardenas–Some influence among commercial employees and in the Sccondary School.

Colon–Influence in the tobacco workers union.

Itato–Intluence and leadership in salt workers union.

Province of Las Villas

Santa Clara–Some influence in the electricians union.

Camajuani–Influence in the tobacco selectors union.

Zaza del Medio–Some influence in the Association of Tobacco Harvesters.

Isabela de Sagua–Some influence in the dockers union.

Sancti Spiritus–Influence in the unions of construction workers and medicine, and also in the Association of Secondury School Students.

Province of Camaguey

Camaguey–Strong influence in the Agrarian Federation and some in the railway workers union and journalists.

Jatibonico–Strong influence in the Sugar Workers Union and in the peasants" association.

Ciego de Avila–There was a delegation of the ALC which for a time maintained a daily radio hour. Influence in the peasants association, medical workers union and among the sugar workers of the Steward and Estrella Centrals.

Santa Cruz del Sur–Influence in peasant organizations and in the Santa Marta sugar central.

Moron–Influence in the sugar central Violeta. Active among the tobacco harvesters of Tamarindo and in the Agricultural Union of Florencia.

Nuevitas–Traditionally this zone has always had strong libertarian tendencies. Together with Moron it can be considered the cradle of the strong anarcho-syndicalist movement of the 20s. For decades there was no other socio-political movement in the region. In the 40s there was an active ALC delegation in Nuevitas that took the initiative in the formation of various unions and of the local peasants association which was the best known peasants' organization of the island. It seized a large extension of uncultivated farmland establishing the Cooperative of Santa Lucia. In the ensuing struggle with the landlords and the Government, there were killed and wounded on both sides including one ALC member. The peasants won and retained possession of the land.

Province of Oriente

Santiago de Cuba–Strong influence in the food workers union and some in textiles and transport.

Victoria de las Tunas–Some influence in the sugar workers union.

Holguin–At one time there had been a delegation of the ALC–some influence remaining in local unions.

Bayamo–Some influence among electricians and in the Peasants Association.

Palma Soriano–Influence in the Union of Commercial Employees.

Manzanillo–Delegation of the ALC with influence among food workers and carpenters.

Contramaestre–The Miners union here had been organized and was still influenced by the libertarians.

San Luis–Some influence among bakers, commercial employees and sugar workers.

Guantanamo–Many years ago the Coffee Producers Cooperative of Monte-Rus was organized by libertarians and since then the anarchist influence has remained strong in the area, especially among the sugar workers and peasants.

During the struggle against Batista those of our comrades not then in prison or who had not been forced into exile by being too well known as enemies of the tyranny, were in the forefront of the struggle in many localities.

When Batista collapsed, there were in the Province of Pinar del Rio attempts by several peasant groups under libertarian influence to establish agricultural collectives. These were set up by the local people who seized the land they had been working. However the Government of Fidel Castro promptly saw the danger to itself of such action and crushed the collectives by force. State farms have been established in their place. Big Brother felt he knew best!

The Role of the Libertarian Movement in the Anti-Batista Struggle

This is the title of an article published in El Libertario (organ of the anarcho-syndicalist Libertarian Association of Cuba [ALC] July 19, 1960 Scarcely a year later, the anarchist press and groups were suppressed by the Castro "revolutionary government."

> . . .The ALC was from the very beginning in the midst of the battle against The Batista regime. On March 10, 1952, when Batistats hordes staged their 'coup d'etat' to seize Cuba, the ALC proposed the full fighting solidarity of all revolutionary organizations to reorganize armed resistance and repulse the Batista troops. But the cowardice and demoralization of the Socorras government–"It is too late. We must avoid bloodshed"–gave Batista an easy victory. Later the blood flowed in torrents! Not for an instant did the ALC relax in the struggle to topple Batista.
>
> In 1956, the ALC published a pamphlet Projecciones Libertarias denouncing the disastrous policies of the Batista government and stating our position. In a speech delivered to the CTC Cuban Confederation of Labor National Council (1957) our comrade Moscu on behalf of the ALC openly attacked the top-heavy leaders who controlled the CTC, accusing them and their lieutenants of outrageous corruption. His speech was widely reported in the Cuban press. Later that year (1957) the ALC published a manifesto–50,000 copies–publicly exposing the filthy maneuvers and corruption of the labor movement, clearly explaining the position of the ALC.
>
> The ALC at all times welcomed and made its premises available to the underground militants and rebel organizations. Thus, on December 31, 1958, we hid in our hall–in spite of the risks–a young man hunted by the police for allegedly violent acts committed in Marianao against the Batista regime.

> Most of our comrades were active in the insurrectionary movement: The Directorio, Obrero Revolucionario, The Federation of University Students, etc., etc. Our hall was often the gathering place for many rebels belonging to other organizations. It was even used by the Castro 26th of July Movement to train men in the proper use of firearms. And our hall became a distribution center for mountains of anti-Batista literature.
>
> Literally hundreds of our comrades were persecuted, tortured, driven into exile, murdered. Here are a few:
>
> Boris Santa Coloma; killed July 26, 1953 in the celebrated Castro-led attack on the Moncada Barracks. Aquila Iglesias; exiled. Alvarez y Barbieto, exiled. Miguel Rivas; disappeared. Roberto Bretau; prison. Manuel Gerona; prison. Rafael Serra; tortured. Modesto Barbieta, Maria Pinar Gonzalez, Dr. Pablo Madan, Placido Mendez, Eulegio Reloba and his sons, Abelardo Iglesias, Mario Garcia and his son: all of them in prison, tortured and in some cases barely escaping assassination. Isidro Moscu; imprisoned and left for dead after brutal tortures. With Moscu, a numerous group of comrades were also imprisoned and tortured for preparing an armed insurrection in the province of Pinar del Rio.
>
> Our hall was raided many times by the Batista police. Shootings took place. Comrades were arrested and brutally beaten. Books and organization records were confiscated. But in spite of all these atrocities, our movement, after truly heroic sacrifices, survived to carry on the struggle with undiminished dedication…

As Batista became more and more tyrannical, more and more people joined the opposition, until by far the bulk of all classes (each for reasons of their own) rose against him and his corrupt regime. When Batista could no longer depend even on the armed forces which had always sustained him, his regime collapsed. On January 1st, 1959, he and his entourage fled Cuba.

The Cuban anarchists were jailed, tortured, driven into exile by successive governments. The ”communists” and the corrupt politicians powerfully backed by Machado and Batista, took advantage of the persecution of the anarchists to seize control of the labor movement. Now, again hounded and outlawed by the Castro dictatorship, the ranks of the anarcho-syndicalists have been reduced to a mere handful of dedicated militants. The Cuban anarcho-syndicalist movement has in a century of struggle written a glorious, indelible page in the history of the revolutionary movement, from which new generations of fighters will continue to draw inspiration.

(Note on sources–Aside from references noted in the text, information for this chapter was derived from a series of powerful articles by the Cuban anarchist, Justo Muriel, printed in an the organ of the Libertarian Federation of Argentina, Reconstruir; Buenos Aires, numbers 39-41 Dec.-April 1966; articles in various issues of Solidaridad Gastonomica–organ of the anarcho-syndicalist food and cafe workers union, El Libertario, organ of the Libertarian Association of Cuba, Havana, the anarchist papers Ahora and Combat, published in Cuba in the 1940s and 1950s; conversations with Cuban anarchists; files in the Centre International de Recherches sur l’Anarchisme, Geneva, and some data from the International Institute for Social Research, Amsterdam.)

Chapter 7: The Revolution in Perspective: the Economic Background

To arrive at an objective assessment of the character of the Cuban Revolution, and the validity of the claims made both for and against it, it is first necessary to examine the economic background. The information here assembled is meant to dispel widespread misconceptions and establish the facts.

Cuba, the largest of the Caribbean islands, with an area of 44,218 square miles, is greater in area than Austria, Hungary, Belgium, Israel, Israel, Iceland, or Ireland. Its population in 1961 was 6,900,000 with an annual birth rate of 2.3% as against the U.S. rate of 1.7%. By the 1970's Cuba's population reached 8,400,000. About 73% of the population is white; 12% black and 15% mestizo. Density of population was 153 inhabitants per square mile in the 1960s. The island was densely populated, but because of the high proportion of arable land, was not overcrowded.

To better understand the social-economic background of the Cuban Revolution it is necessary to take into account class differences in rural Cuba. In this connection the views of Ramiro Guerra are well worth quoting:

> . . . Cuba was precisely NOT a peasant country. . . to talk of Cuba's "peasantry" as if the population were an undifferentiated mass of impoverished peasant landowners is to miss entirely the complexity of rural Latin America. Peasants who by a swift process of sugar plantation developments have been transformed into rural proletarians are no longer PEASANTS...there were, in 1953, 489,000 agricultural wage workers in Cuba and only 67,000 unpaid family laborers who were the wives and children of the small-scale land owners, the highland peasantry, Los Guajiros of Cuba. . . the big sugar plantations are an urbanizing force within which the rural population must concentrate itself densely. . . by standardizing work practices, the plantations create a factory situation–albeit a rural one. And factories in the field are urban in many ways, even though they are not in cities. A rural proletariat working on modern plantations inevitably become culturally and behaviorally distinct from the peasantry...its members have no land. Their special economic and social circumstances lead in another direction. They prefer standardized wage minimums, adequate medical and educational services, increased buying power, etc...when it is noted that there were more than 489,000 agricultural laborers in Cuba in 1953...a gross indication of the difference between peasantry and rural proletariat is provided us. . . (quoted by Sidney W. Mintz in the anthology Background to Revolution; New York, 1966, p. 182-183)

These views are confirmed by the fact that the agricultural laborers, primarily in the sugar plantations, constituted one of the strongest and most numerous federations affiliated to the Cuban Confederation of Labor (CTC).

Cuba, the "Pearl of the Antilles," though by no means a paradise, was not, as many believe, an economically backward country. Castro himself admitted that while there was poverty, there was no economic crisis and no hunger in Cuba before the Revolution. (See Maurice Halperin: The Rise and Fall of Fidel Castro, University of California, 1972, pgs. 24, 25, 37)

Armando Hart, a member of Castro's innermost ruling group, made the extremely significant observation that:

> . . . it is certain that capitalism had attained high levels of organization, efficiency and production that declined after the Revolution. . . (Juventud Rebelde, November 2, 1969; quoted by Rene Dumont, Is Cuba Socialist?, p. 85)

Paul A. Baran, an ardent pro-Castroite in the equally ardent Monthly Review pamphlet, Reflections on the Cuban Revolution (1961) substantiates what every economist, as well as amateurs like Castro, has been saying:

> ...the Cuban Revolution was born with a silver spoon in its mouth. . .the world renowned French agronomist, Rene Dumont, has estimated that if properly cultivated as intensively as South China, Cuba could feed fifty million people. . . the Cuban Revolution is spared the painful, but ineluctable compulsion that has beset preceding socialist revolutions: the necessity to force tightening of people's belts in order to lay the foundations for a better tomorrow. . .(p. 23)

Theodore Draper quotes Anial Escalante, (before he was purged by Castro) one of the leading communists, who admitted that:

> ...in reality, Cuba was not one of the countries with the lowest standard of living of the masses in America, but on the contrary, one of the highest standards of living, and it was here where the first great . . . democratic social revolution of the continent burst forth. . . If the historical development had been dictated by the false axiom [revolutions come first in poorest countries] the revolution should have been first produced in Haiti, Colombia or even Chile, countries of greater poverty for the masses than the Cuba of 1958. . . (quoted in Draper's Castro's Revolution: Myths and Realities; New York, 1962, p. 22)

The following statistics indicate the rate of production before the Revolution (Jan. 1,1959). (Sources are two United Nations publications: Economic Study of Latin America, 1957, and the Statistical Annual, 1961. The third source is The University of Miami Cuban Studies, reported in the journal Este y Oeste, Caracas, Jan. 1969)

Agricultural Production

1949-1951 compared with 1957-1958

Commodity ..... % of increase

raw sugar 11

plantains 30

rice 120
leaf tobacco 50
potatoes 28
flour 114

Industrial Production–non-Sugar

% of increase
cement 55.5
fertilizer 48.8
cotton 33.6
sulfuric acid 32.3
artificial silk 18.1
rubber goods 65.5
construction 120.8
gas and electric 157.5
manufactures 118.7
(source, University of Miami Cuban Studies reported in Este y Oeste)

> ...according to the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, total agricultural production in 1969, 10 years after the Revolution, was 7% below that of 1958...(Carmelo Mesa-Lago, Cuba in the 1970s; University of New Mexico Press, 1974, p. 56)

As for sugar production, Halperin writes that while it is true that:

> . . . in 1961, by harvesting uncut sugar cane left over from previous years, Cuba produced close to seven million metric tons of sugar, the largest crop in history. Production, however, fell sharply in the following eight years, averaging well below the yields in the decade preceding the Revolution [1949-1959]. . .per capita production of sugar in 1945 was about 30% higher than in 1963. . . In the 1950s, on the average, a labor force of 500,000 working three months produced 500,000,000 tons of sugar, forty tons per man year. In the 1970 harvest, 500,000 persons working twelve months producd 8.5 million tons of sugar, or only seventeen tons per man year. . . (ibid. p. 62, 241, our emphasis)

Cuba was NOT a one crop country. In 1957, sugar represented only 27% of total agricultural income. Growing crops were only PARTIALLY listed above. Cattle raising, (per 100 head) increased from 3884 to 6000 in 1958 (University of Miami Studies)

> ...before Castro, Cuba was one of the richest underdeveloped countries in the world, with Gross National Product, per-capita income in the mid 1950s of $360, Cuba was well ahead of Japan ($254 per-capita) and Spain ($254 per-capita)... (Robert Blackburn, quoted in the anthology Fidel Castro's Personal Revolution: 1953-1973; New York, 1975, p. 134)

Cuba had one automobile for every 39 inhabitants, compared with Argentina's one for every 60 and Mexico's one for every 91 people.

Cuba had one radio for every 5 people, second in Latin America only to Argentina with one for every 3 inhabitants.

the wage rate for industrial workers in Cuba was the highest in Latin America (as of 1957) and 9th highest in the world.

agricultural wages were the highest in Latin America

Cuba's mortality rate of 7 per thousand was the lowest in Latin America. Its infant mortality rate was by far the lowest.

Cuba had one doctor for every 1,000 inhabitants, exceeded only by Uruguay with one for every 800, and Argentina for every 760 people.

Cuba ranked fifth in Latin American manufacturing.

Though living standards were much lower than in the U.S., Canada and Western Europe, Cuba's was the third highest in Latin America, and almost as high as Italy's.

Cuba had more railroads per square mile than any other country in the world.

Its one telephone for 38 persons was exceeded only by the U.S. with one for every 3 and Argentina with one for every 13; way ahead of Russia's with one for every 580 people.

It must be borne in mind; however, that statistics can be misleading and conditions were by no means as rosy as implied. Favorable comparison with the already low living standards of Latin America does not mean that the Cuban unskilled workers (and far less the peasants) enjoyed a SATISFACTORY standard of living. To be a little better off than the WORST does not signify that it is the BEST. There is another, darker side to this picture. Compared to American standards, Cuba's per-capita income was 1/5 of the average U.S. income: far lower than in any of the Southern states.

The big minus sign of the Cuban economy is that it is not self-sustaining in the indispensable paraphernalia of modern life. Cuba is totally dependent for the uninterrupted flow of vital supplies; oil, coal, iron and steel, trucks and buses, cars, chemicals, sophisticated machinery etc. And it was precisely this hopeless and impossible attempt to make Cuba a highly industrialized country without these vital resources, that just about wrecked the Cuban economy. Cuba has not yet recovered from this catastrophic, totally unpardonable miscalculation, taken against the advice of qualified economic experts. Castro and his staff of fumbling amateurs, were forced to abandon this suicidal policy, but they still persist in meddling with things the know absolutely nothing about.

These serious drawbacks notwithstanding, Cuba is far from being a totally undeveloped country with a primitive economy. Given intelligent use of its natural wealth of resources, the potential for raising the living standards of its population is almost limitless. On this point there is no doubt. That the Castro "revolutionary" regime, far from developing these potentials, has not even equalled the admittedly inadequate standards attained before the revolution, is unfortunately also true.

Distribution of the national income was not balanced. The lower standard of living of the agricultural laborers was particularly atrocious, especially during the "dead season" between sugar harvests:

> . . . the standard of living of the privileged classes of the cities [writes Dumont] was in violent contrast with the misery of the peasants . . . who were unemployed an average of 138 days a year . . . the unemployed numbered 250,000 even in the middle of the harvest season on the sugar plantations. . .(Cuba: Socialism and Development, p. 14)

And C. Wright Mills informs us . . . "that only 3% of peasant 'Bohios' [huts] had indoor toilets. Two thirds of the children were not in any elementary school and most of those that were, dropped out . . . in 1950, 180,000 children began first grade, less than 5000 reached eighth grade. . ." (Listen Yankee!; New York, 1960, p. 44-45)

It is well worth noting, as one observer remarked, " . . . that a substantial fraction of the town population were [like the rural proletarians] also very poor. . . squatters were living in shacks, and there were slum tenements. In 1953, no less than one fifth of families lived in single rooms and the average size of these families was five. . . taking the urban and rural population together, 62% of the economically active population had incomes of less than $75 a month. . . " (Dudley Sears in Background to Revolution, ibid. p. 213)

The Castro government is directly responsible for the awful economic situation of the Cuban people. The rising standard of living is a myth. Rene Dumont, the distinguished agronomist and economist, marshalls overwhelming evidence that Castro and his bumbling amateurs wrecked the economy of Cuba. There is no serious disagreement on this point:

> . . .Cuba's shortages of food and other necessities are to a large extent due to the dogmatism of its leaders. . . in 1963, the harvests were 25% lower than in 1960 although the number of days worked had been rising rapidly. . . The standard of living in Cuba remained stationary in 1961, and with strict rationing, went down perhaps 15% to 20% in 1962. . . There are still, as I had seen in Santa Clara in 1960, no recognition of the difficulties involved in managing an economy . . . they were not trained and badly prepared. . . professors at the Institute of Technology did not even know the names of the most common plants or their requirements…the government is increasingly calling for more effort and sacrifices as well as the acceptance of increased authority…despite constant reorganization, it is unable to put its house in order…(Is Cuba Socialist? pp. 100, 20, 92, 149, 29, 206.)
>
> The economic consequences of transforming reasonably productive cattle and dairy farms and other agricultural enteprises into notoriously inefficient "people's" farms was predictably catastrophic…to the thousands of law-abiding families evicted without warning, it appeared to be an arbitrary act of brutality. . .
>
> [The peasants retaliated; Halperin writes that:] the impression obtained in usually well-informed government circles that over a period of several years, some 50,000 troops were engaged in liquidating peasant disaffection…a sizeable military effort had been under way to put down the uprising, which was not finally liquidated until well into 1964…Castro reminisced about "the uprisings that occurred mainly, but not

> exclusively, in the Escambray Mountains. . . organized groups existed all over the island…there were 1,000 bandits in the Escambray Mountains alone." (Halperin, ibid. p. 283, 284. Halperin credits the Castro quote to Granma, June 13, 1971)

Maurice Halperin also reports that:

> "…food riots occurred in a number of towns in the western provinces, including Cardenas, a sizeable urban center and seaport about 100 miles east of Havana. Here at a mass meeting, June 17, 1962, President of Cuba Dorticos had to be protected by tanks during a speech he made to calm the inhabitants…" (The Rise and Decline of Fidel Castro; Univ. of California, 1974, p. 162)

In addition to the Cardenas riots, the Bulletin of the Cuban Libertarian Movement in Exile (Miami, June 1962) reports that:

> . . . in El Cano, a little town in Havana Province, violence was so great that the authorities did not even try to suppress it. But afterwards, the authorities took revenge by expropriating furniture and personal belongings . . . Food riots also occurred in Cienfuegos…[in view of the fact that these]…sacrifices have been going on since 1961 and have been unbearable for the Cubans [Dumont asks:] To what extent has a ruling class the right to impose its singleminded conceptions of the future–and to impose it in so disorganized a manner–that the results are further aggravated? (ibid. p. 70-71)

Dumont, we are sure, will agree, in view of his own analysis, that economic disaster is not the cause, but only a symptom of the inner degeneration of the Cuban Revolution.

Chapter 8: Anonymous Heroes of the Revolution

On a par with the vulgar display of Lenin's embalmed corpse, the deliberate deification of Castro and his tiny band of disciples in the Sierra Maestra obscures the exploits of the mass of anonymous heroes and almost forgotten resistance groups who brought about the downfall of Batista.

After Castro's deservedly celebrated, ill-fated attack on the Moncada Barracks (July 26, 1953) the Matanzas garrison was stormed by a group of heroic young militants from the Autentico Party (April 1956). All the attackers were massacred and many have not yet been identified. There were many other incidents.

Now, Castro brazenly and falsely takes credit for the daring assault of the Revolutionary Student Directorate on the Presidential Palace to kill Batista (March 13, 1957) in which all the raiders (including the leader, Jose Antonio Echeverria) were massacred. Herbert Matthews. the pro-Castro journalist, reveals that:

> . . . Fidel was not consulted and did not approve (he heard about it indirectly). Castro called it a useless expenditure of blood…he was afraid that Echeverria would become a rival hero and revolutionary leader…the issue of Bohemia for May 28, 1957, in which Castro expressed his criticisms, would be embarassing for him if resurrected, because Echeverria and other victims became martyrs of the Revolution. March 13 is commemorated every year as a glorious landmark of Castro's revolution…[Those who survived the attack on the palace set up an independent guerrilla force in the Escambray Mountains, the "Second Escambray Front"] (Revolution in Cuba; New York, 1975, p. 89; our emphasis)

One of the bloodiest battles of the anti-Batista rebellion took place on September 5, 1957. The Naval Base of Cienfuegos, 200 miles from Havana, was captured by navy mutineers and civilian underground group members. The sailors distributed weapons to the people in the area. There was supposed to be a simultaneous uprising in Havana, which miscarried probably for lack of coordination (although a dozen bombs were exploded). Air and ground reinforcement finally dispersed the rebels after bitter door-to-door fighting. An eyewitness reported that "…a common grave was dug by a bulldozer in the cemetery and I saw 52 bodies dumped into it. Officials said they were bodies of men killed in battle. . . " The revolt was crushed, but a second front had been opened near Sierra de Trinidad, only 60 miles from the vital communications center of Santa Clara.

The same observer graphically depicts the exploits of the spontaneously organized underground movement that blanketed Cuba with an intricate network of militant activities:

> . . .the rebel underground stepped up its sabotage and terroristic activities throughout the country, including Havana. Homemade bombs would explode intermittently

> at different points in the Capital and people would be driven from motion picture ”heaters and other places of amusement. Fire bombs were also employed, and show windows of stores suffered from the impact of the explosions. Rebel bands harassed army outposts and even ventured into towns to capture arms. [Havana was without water for three days and the airport was completely gutted by fire.] . . . buses, both in cities and on highways, trucks carrying freight and merchandise, passenger and freight trains, railroad and highway bridges, public buildings and homes and businesses of ”Batistianos” were blown up or burned as part of the agitation and terror designed to maintain a constant state of alarm. . .
>
> Real terror was answered by the government with tenfold reprisals. Bodies of men and boys were found hanging from trees or lamposts or lying lifeless in automobiles with grenades on their persons, to convey the impression that they were caught in terrorist acts . . . there was hardly a communist among those detained... (Jules Dubois: Fidel Castro; Indianapolis, 1959, p. 182, 183)

While Castro's guerrilla group was occupied 300 miles away, the Directorio Revolucionario opened the independent Second Escambray Front in the Escambray Mountains MANY MONTHS before Batista fled Cuba (Jan. 1, 1959). The city of Cienfuegos was this time besieged for weeks by the Second Escambray Front. This time the attack succeeded. The Batista troops surrendered Cavo Cayo Loco Naval Base and the rebels took over the whole city (population 60,000).

All Cuba was in the flames of revolt. Powerfully reinforced by massive expenditionary landings of war materiel, financed and manned by exiled Cuban militants, the fall of Havana, and all of Cuba was inevitable WITHOUT the intervention of Castro's little group of rebels. Castro's campaign undoubtedly expedited the fall of Batista, but his efforts were by no means the decisive factor.

The reasons are obvious. Out of 82 Castro guerrillas who landed from the Granma on Dec. 2, 1956, only about 20 escaped to the Sierra Maestra mountains. Professor Maurice Halpern, an expert on Cuban affairs who spent six years in Castro's Cuba (1962-1968) sums up the situation:

> . . .As Fidel himself explained on January 18, 1960, as late as June 1958 his 'army' consisted of 300 men; and when he began his final offensive in August he had 800 men. . . In fact what are termed 'battles' in the reminiscences of rebel leaders were skirmishes with rarely more than a score or two guerrillas involved and frequently fewer. This does not detract from the. . . heroism displayed by the men in combat, but does provide perspective on the [degree] of involvement. . . (The Rise and Decline of Fidel Castro; University of Calfornia, 1972, p. 37-38)

And K.S. Karol demonstrates the insignificant role of Castro's tiny band in the anti-Batista resistance as contrasted with the decisive role played by the great masses of the Cuban people:

> . . . the urban front was by far the most important and the 'guerilleros'. . . played a subordinate part. It was the cities which supplied the 'guerilleros' with arms, money, information and provisions; and from start to finish the vast majority of 'guerilleros' were recruited in the towns. It was the towns which, in February 1957, launched a great publicity campaign in favor of the 'sierra' [mountain fighting bands] inflicting

> serious blows to Batista's prestige. . .and waged an efficient political and military campaign of their own. . . (Guerrillas in Power; New York, 1970, p. 164-165)

BEFORE Castro landed in Cuba, Dec. 2, 1956, while his boat, the Granma, was still at sea en route to Mexico, the 26th of July Movement led by Frank Pais, with little resistance, virtually took over Santiago de Cuba. Revolt flared all over Cuba. In April 1956, there was a Batista army uprising led by the Batista Minister of Education, Major Jose Fernandez, a captain in the regular army, and Colonel Ramon Barquin, Military attache to Washington. Julio Camacho Aquilar and Jorge Soto assisted by three Americans, staged a foray at the eastern end of the Sierra Maestra near the U.S. Guantanamo naval base.

There were already groups of rebels scattered in the Sierra de Cristal before Raul Castro arrived. They joined him later. Matthew tells that "...Che Guevara had the task of imposing Castro's authority over three or four groups of Guerrillas fighting on their own in the mountains south of Havana. . ." The Guerrillas were already fighting the Batista troops before Guevara "arrived to impose Castro's authority over them." In 1958, ". . . Roman Catholic priests and leaders were showing sympathy for Castro and opposition to Batista. The church hierarchy came out for Batista's resignation. Both Fidel and Raul had priests and protestant ministers with them. . . "

Raul Castro encountered no opposition when he came to the Sierra de Cristal in March 1958; bands of Guerrilla fighters were already there. And very effective groups from the Student Directorio were fighting in the Sierra de Trinidad. (Source: Matthews, ibid. pp. 73, 74, 76, 100, 102, 107)

Barely able to survive in the Sierra Maestra wilderness, Castro's isolated group could even with the greatest difficulty function only on the periphery of the vast popular resistance movement convulsing Cuba. Almost entirely shut off from the outside world, there could be no direct contact with the other anti-Batista organizations: not even with Castro's "own" 26th of July Movement, a fact which Castro's second-in-command Ernesto Che Guevara repeatedly deplores:

> . . . we wanted closer contact with the 26th of July Movement. Our nomad existence made it practically impossible to contact the members. . . (p. 35) Fidel did not have a radio then and he asked a peasant to lend him his. . . (p. 51) Peasants were not yet ready to join the struggle, and communication with the city bases was practically nonexistent. . .(p. 18–all quotes from Episodes of the Revolutionary War; Havana, 1967)

It is necessary to correct the erroneous impression that either Castro's 26th of July Movement or the anti-Batista organizations, constituted a unified body based upon a clearly defined program and a common ideology. The fact is that Castro did not control the rank and file membership, and certainly deserves no credit for their achievements. What Theodore Draper writes about the composition of the 26th of July Movement is also true in respect to the rest of the anti-Batista opposition:

> . . .The 26th of July Movement was never homogeneous, and the larger it grew in 1957 and 1968, the less homogeneous it became. It included those who merely wished to restore the bourgeois constitution of 1940 and those who demanded a 'real social-revolution.' It attracted those who admired and those who detested the United

> States. It took in fervent anti-communists and ardent fellow-travelers... (Castro's Revolution;New York, 1961, p. 75)
>
> Guevara not only deplores " . . . the lack of ideological [but also] lack of moral preparation of the combatants. . . the men who would find the flimsiest excuses to justify their demand to be released, and if the answer was in the negative, desertion would follow. . . in spite of the fact that deserters [would be immediately] ...executed and desertion meant death...(p. 61)." In another place, Guevara complains that Castro's Sierra Maestra combatants "...had neither ideological awareness nor 'esprit-de-corps'..." (p. 35, 23) "...due to the lack of discipline among the new men. . .it was necessary to establish a rigid discipline, organize a high command and set up a Staff...(p. 91) Fidel addressed the troops urging a more strict discipline. . .he also announced that crimes of insubordination, desertion, and defeatism were to be punished by death. . . " (p. 23)

These, and similar remarks scattered throughout Guevara's book, reveal a great deal about the true nature of Castro's ARMY. We emphasize the word ARMY to demonstrate that an allegedly voluntary association of dedicated idealists, in which a member who avails himself of his right to resign is called a "deserter" and shot on sight differs in no essential respect from any other traditional army of disciplined conscripts. Castro's military conduct is wholly consistent with his domineering personality. Commandante (now General) Castro and his officers, true to form, have turned Cuba itself into a MILITARY STATE.

With the flight of Batista, Castro moved swiftly to consolidate his own power and neutralize or eliminate the other revolutionary organizations with whom he did not want to share power. The other rebel groups anticipated this and acted accordingly. Before Castro arrived in Havana from the Sierra Maestra, the Revolutionary Directorate, with 500 rifles, 5 machine guns and armored tanks taken from the San Antonio de Lo's Banas los Baños Arsenal near Havana, occupied the University of Havana Campus and turned it into an armed camp. (See the eyewitness account of Jules Dubois, Fidel Castro, p. 353) Together with the fighters of the Second Escambray Front, the students also occupied the Presidential Palace–the seat of government.

When Castro and his escorting force arrived in Havana, the rebels refused to evacuate the Palace and turn it over to his newly-appointed President of the Republic, Manuel Urrutia. They were outraged because Castro had set up his own "Provisional Government" in Santiago de Cuba without consulting and without the consent of other revolutionary groups which had been fighting against Batista. They did not trust Castro. His verbal assurances that he would not seize power and would respect the rights of other anti-Batista groups and tendencies were not enough.

Castro made united front agreements when it suited his purposes, and broke them when he saw fit. In speaking of the Pact, based on the Sierra Manifesto, Guevara contends that Castro was justified in breaking it because some of the provisions were rejected by the other groups. The Pact was broken only five months after it was signed because the other organizations (which Guevara calls the enemy) " . . . broke the Pact when they refused to acknowledge the authority of the Sierra [of the Castro band]" (ibid. p. 88).

According to Guevara and Castro the phrase "...here in the Sierra Maestra we will know how to do justice to the confidence of the people, meant that Fidel and only Fidel knew how. . . " (ibid. p. 88) Guevara cynically acknowledges that Castro & Co. did not intend to honor the agreement in the first place. (p. 86)

Castro brazenly arrogated exclusive monopoly of power to his own 26th of July Movement (which Castro identified with his own person): " . . . Iet it be known, [he proclaimed] that the 26th of July Movement will never fail to guide and direct the people from the underground and the Sierra Maestra. . ." (Dubois, p. 206)

After he came to power, Castro liquidated all resistance groups which he could not control. He disbanded the Directorio and the Second Escambray Front by persecuting its members or mollifying some of its leaders. (Castro appointed Faure Chomon, one of the leaders of the Directorio, Ambassador to Russia and later other posts) He disbanded the Civic Resistance Movement, headed by his once close friend Manuel Ray, who later left his post as Minister of Public Works in Castro's Government. Through his stooge, Rolando Cubela, Castro dominated all groups who questioned his dictatorship, accusing them of "counter-revolution."

Castro finally ended by purging "his" own party, the 26th of July Movement. One of Castro's vociferous apologists at that time, the French writer Simone de Beauvoir, explained that Castro purged his own party " . . . because it was petty bourgeois and could not keep pace with the Revolution after Castro took power. . .the party had to go, to be replaced by reliable elements. . . " (See Yves Guilbert: Castro L'Infidele; Paris, 1961, p. 170) These elements, of course, were the Communist Party and Castro's entourage of sycophants.

The mass exodus from Cuba, before emigration almost was cut off, reached the staggering figure of more than half a million and included tens of thousands of anti-Batista workers and peasants. Thousands of political prisoners who fought against Batista overflow the jails of Cuba. Absenteeism, slowdowns on the job, sporadic protests, instantly squelched, and other manifestations of popular discontent, demonstrate that the revolt of the obscure anonymous masses against tyranny cannot be permanently stamped out by Batista, or his successor, Fidel Castro.

Ingrained legends are exceedingly hard to dispel. But historic justice should still be accorded to the neglected and persecuted fighters fought and continue to struggle so valiantly for the freedom of Cuban people.

Chapter 9: The Cuban Revolution: Anarchist Eyewitness Reports

The Cuban Revolution: A Direct Report by Augustin Souchy

Augustin Souchy is a veteran German Anarcho-Syndicalist. He was a delegate of the German Syndicalist Union to the Red International of Trade Unions (a Russian Communist Party front set up to dominate the world labor movement) in Moscow 1921. During the duration of the Spanish Civil War and Revolution (1936-1939) he was in charge of the International Information Bureau of the Spanish Anarcho-Syndicalist National Confederation of Labor (CNT) and in other capacities. Souchy observed at first hand the rural libertarian collectives and urban socialization and wrote extensively on this subject. He is an outstanding authority on collectivization, cooperatives and other problems of agrarian organization.

With the Franco victory in Spain and the coming of World War II, Souchy lived as a refugee in France. He came to Mexico in 1942 and for many years traveled extensively in Latin America, Israel, etc. to study at first hand rural collectivization and cooperative experiments in semi-developed countries.

In 1960, Souchy toured Cuba, gathering direct information about the Cuban Revolution, particularly agrarian cooperatives and land reform measures set up by the Castro government. Although his reports were in many respects very favorable, the authorities could not tolerate adverse criticism, however well intended. The printing of Souchy's observations was prohibited, and Souchy himself left Cuba just in time to escape arrest. His articles were published in pamphlet form, by the excellent libertarian bi-monthly Reconstruir (Testimonial Sobre la Revolucion Cubana; Buenos Aires, December, 1960)

This pamphlet falls into two parts. The first is Souchy's over-all evaluation of the Cuban Revolution. It was written when Castro's gradual moves toward full-fledged totalitarian rule first became apparent. While acknowledging what turned out to be the Revolution's temporary positive aspects, Souchy's observations reflected his growing concern about the authoritarian deformation of the Cuban Revolution. The second part, a direct report of his visits to various peasant "cooperatives," government "collectives," etc. is a concise critique of the disastrous consequences of Castro's Agrarian Reform program. Since "Agrarian Reform" is considered the Revolution's major achievement, Souchy's analysis takes on added significance. [S.D.]

Part One: Overall Evaluation of the Revolution

The Cuban Revolution is much more than a mere political change in the form of government. The Revolution initiated a vast economic-social transformation, which to a certain extent resembles what took place in Spain after the 19th of July, 1936 [beginning of the Civil War]. There are, nevertheless, certain important differences. While the Spanish Revolution, in the period of struggle

against the existing order as well as the period of social-political reconstruction, was the work of the great masses of workers and peasants, the Cuban Revolution was propelled by a minority of self-sacrificing dedicated revolutionaries. . . The character of both revolutions springs from these differences.

In Cuba, the old professional army was replaced by workers' and peasants' militias [this is no longer the case]. The Revolution attacked the economic poverty of the masses, cultural backwardness and expropriated big private enterprises.

In Spain, the masses organized collectives. In Cuba, the state created and controlled cooperatives. In Cuba, as in Spain, rents were lowered in the cities, but in respect to changes in rural property, there was an important difference... While in Spain, the confiscation of the land and the organization of the collectives was initiated and carried through by the peasants themselves; in Cuba social-economic transformation was initiated not by the people, but by Castro and his comrades-in-arms. It is this distinction that accounts for the different development of the two revolutions; Spain, mass revolution from the bottom up; Cuba, revolution from the top down by decree–i.e. Agrarian Reform Law, etc.

The old motto: "The Emancipation of the Working Class is the Task of the Workers Themselves," is still eminently relevant. The Cuban Revolution will advance only with the participation of the people and only if the revolutionary spirit will penetrate all social stratums. Centralizing tendencies exist in every revolution and can be dangerous for liberty. The surest way to prevent centralization of power in the hands of a few, is the initiative and action of the masses of the people. In Cuba, the revolutionary fighters, the men of the Sierra Maestra, constituted a strong fighting force, and it was they, not the professional militants who "temporarily" constituted the new government.

The new regime came to power on a wave of popular enthusiasm and admiration for the heroic fighters. . . But enthusiasm comes and goes. Emotions are fickle. A power acquired by past exploits, however heroic, is not a firm base for the establishment of a permanent government. And if in the course of events, as is always the case, certain discontented popular groupings threaten or question the leadership, the "de facto" government, to remain in office, and carry out its program, resorts to threats of outright violence. The inevitable consequence of this situation is revolutionary terror, whose classical representatives are Robespierre and Stalin. . .

The revolutionary government of Cuba is making enormous efforts to legitimate and justify its existence by enacting deep and popular economic and social changes. The liquidation of the old corrupt administration, 50% reduction of the salaries of the new ministers, drastic reduction in rents, telephone and electric rates, construction of new hygienic housing for the masses, the installation of public beaches and recreation centers, and finally, the crowning of all these reforms by the Agrarian Reform Law, are enthusiastically applauded by the majority of the Cuban people and the whole world. . .

But in the radiant revolutionary springtime [Souchy wrote before the storms of winter] there are some dark clouds and shadows: censorship of the press, unilateral indoctrination by radio and television, the new foreign policy which is placing the country under the de facto domination of red imperialism, and above all, the organization of a state dominated economy, are naturally not liked by the people [in spite of propaganda to the contrary!. One has but to speak to Cubans in all walks of life, in the Capital and in the provinces, to plainly see the growing disillusionment and discontent. An infinite number of workers, thousands of people who have always fought for freedom now oppose the policies and conduct of the government. . .

The Cuban Revolution achieved great social progress for the people, with a rapidity unmatched in any other Latin-American country. But all this is not the work of the people themselves. We must insist that the Revolution is rapidly turning into a dictatorship. The dictators, Mussolini, Peron, Perez Jimenez, (and how many others!) to justify their tyrannies and glorify their names, also built houses etc. for the poor, (public works in Russia).

The social-economic agrarian revolution achieved by INRA [National Institute of Agrarian Reform] are truly remarkable. Protected by privileged legislation the INRA is the most powerful State

Monopoly not only in Agriculture, but almost all economic activity. INRA is Cuba's number one trust.

Part Two: *"We Visit the New Rural Cooperatives"*

Moncada

The road to the Sierra is very rough. In certain places our jeep almost overturned and so detracted somewhat from the pleasure of viewing the beautiful panorama of hills and beautiful valley with its luxurious tropical flora. After some hours of difficult travel, we reached the shore of a stream. A group of peasants were harvesting malangas and we soon learned that they belonged to a cooperative.

"We decided ourselves to work collectively," declared one of the peasants, "Work together is so much easier than working alone. Before we worked because we were hungry, but now, we work because we really enjoy it. We share our income equally and expect good results." He beamed with joy.

We were escorted to the "Bohio" (hut) of the peasant Nicola's Pacheo. His courteous wife, with typical Cuban hospitality, served coffee. . .The modest "guajero" (peasant) could not give much of an explanation about the organization of the cooperative, and the other peasants, even less so. The peasants knew only about their work. For more information we had to wait for the arrival of the sergeant who represented the INRA.

The sergeant finally arrived. He made no reference to the cooperatives, but spoke only about the orders he received from his bosses, the higher executives of the district INRA. He offered no new details, but merely repeated what we already learned about other cooperatives. Though lacking positive constructive information, his remarks were interesting from a negative point of view. Cuba is the only Latin American country in which agrarian cooperatives are managed by military personnel.

If the sergeant were wearing a Russian uniform, the impression that we were conversing with a supervisor of a Sovkhoz [Russian State Farm] would have been perfect. Except for the team working on the outskirts of the village itself, we got the feeling of the standard routine procedures of an immense impersonal organization with branches all over the country, whose watchword is "Bread is more important than Freedom. "

But we must never forget that there are two different freedoms! National freedom which refers to the autonomy of a nation, and personal freedom which is much more important. In brutally oppressed countries, with violent upheavals, and little or no experience of national sovereignty, the first national autonomy, is more valued than the second, freedom of the individual. Cuba belongs to the first. Bread there is, but we must point out on the basis of the most meticulous observation,

that the rationing of human freedom has already begun. [Souchy, of course, wrote before the full impact of the disastrous economic policies of the revolutionary government brought about acute shortages and rationing of food products that before were always in plentiful supply.|

Between Bayamo and Manzanillo

The Sheltered city of Bayamo was one of the provision points for the rebels of the Sierra Maestra while they were fighting the Batista dictatorship. Situated in the fertile valley, Bayamo, the commercial center of a rich agricultural area, is today the district headquarters of the INRA. Most of the land is owned by relatively more affluent proprietors, but the creation of cooperatives by the INRA is making rapid progress. The 8 cooperatives in the district consist of 11,858 hectares (one hectare is about 2 1/2 acres) worked by 2,700 agricultural laborers.

The administrator, Senor Carbonell, is a young man full of energy and enthusiasm for the Revolution. The army is inextricably interwoven into the whole INRA network. The army is deemed indispensable to the proper functioning of this gigantic and complex organization. The soldiers help to build houses and do other useful work. But as in all armies, a lot of time and labor is wasted on perfectly useless, even socially harmful projects.

There is also a well-equipped machine shop for the repair of agricultural machinery. The district INRA headquarters called a meeting to arrange the expansion of facilities to include the manufacture of certain agricultural tools and equipment. In addition to the workers, the meeting was also attended by the district manager, two lawyers, and two army officers.

The plans for the organization of an industrial cooperative to be managed by the INRA were presented to the meeting. When the workers asked about wages, the manager replied that wages were of secondary importance and that to speed up the industrialization of Cuba, certain sacrifices will have to be made for the sake of the revolution. The workers plainly showed that they did not like the project. Finally, the exasperated administrator laid down the law: with or without the consent of the workers, the ”cooperative” project will be organized as planned. The lawyers drew up the necessary legal documents and the cooperative was officially established.

The cooperative will be patterned after the state enterprises of the ”socialist countries” behind the ”iron curtain.” The Ministry of the Economy will organize production and distribution and manage all nationalized enterprises. And the workers will, if the ”revolutionary” bosses allow it, be given a restricted share in management. The economic situation of the workers will be more or less the same as in privately owned enterprises.

Statization of Manzanillo Shoe Factories

In Manzanillo, in addition to fisheries, there are also many small shoe workshops, equipped with old machines, manufacturing shoes for the regional market. Wages were low and there were few, if any, wealthy employers.

After the Revolution conflicts broke out when the workers demanded labor laws providing minimum wages, social security and other benefits. Revolution came to the shoe industry. The employers voluntarily gave up ownership and decided to work together on equal terms with their former employees. The small workshops were consolidated into the newly organized Shoe Manufacturing Collective of Manzanillo.

A quarter century before, during the Spanish Revolution, similar collectives were established in Spain. In Catalonia, the Levante and Castille, the isolated workshop collectives later organized themselves into socialized industries. These developments were based upon the old libertarian tradition that gave the Spanish Revolution its distinctive character.

Unfortunately, this popular initiative of the Manzanillo shoe workers was soon squelched. The Manzanillo section of the Communist Party was against free cooperatives which clashed with their authoritarian ideas. They therefore urged Russian style absorption of the voluntarily collectivized workshops by the INRA. This proposal was enthusiastically endorsed by the INRA bureaucrats, and the cooperative shoe industry was taken over.

This destruction of the cooperative is not an isolated example of how a movement which began by abolishing private ownership to establish free cooperatives, was finally swallowed up by the state agency INRA, indicating the fast growing trend toward the Russian variety of state capitalism mislabeled "socialism."

The Primavera (springtime) Rice Cooperative

Cuba consumes enormous quantities of rice. To meet demand, great stocks of rice must be imported. As part of the campaign to make Cuba self-sufficient in rice by placing great new areas under cultivation the district INRA organized the Primavera rice-growing cooperative. The hundreds of new "cooperators" will be lodged in barrack-like structures equipped with two-decker beds and fed in one huge dining hall. While displaying the new accommodations, the manager went into raptures about how the new cooperative will improve production while bettering quality.

The improvements will no doubt increase production. In other parts of the world, similar projects under approximately the same conditions and procedures are in operation: there too, the workers sleep in barracks and eat in huge dining halls supplied by the companies. The only new or original feature of this semi-militarized labor army is the name "cooperative;" a description that no true cooperative anywhere will accept.

I visit an elementary school. Childrn are marching, chanting: "Una–Dos–Tres–Cuarto–Fi–Del–Castro." (one-two-three-four etc.) The proud Principal exclaims: "Behold! Tomorrow's soldiers of The Revolution! And this beautiful rebuilt school was once an old, ugly army barracks." Alas! The Principal does not realize how little things have really changed–how the old military spirit still remains.

The Hermanos Saenz Cooperative

When the Vice Minister of the Soviet Union, Mikoyan, visited Cuba, Castro, to impress him with the achievements of the revolution, showed him the Hermanos Saenz cooperative–the pride of the new Cuba. The Hermanos Saenz cooperative, in Pinar del Rio province, is named after two brothers, 15 and 19 years old, who were tortured and murdered by Batista's executioners.

The cooperative was organized and built by the INRA. INRA advanced construction and operating finances. The complex consists of 120 elegantly landscaped houses for the tobacco workers and their families. A typical dwelling consists of three bedrooms, a dining room, tile bathroom and a fully equipped kitchen. The buildings are "functional," but the roofs are too low and the

old peasant "bohios" (cottages) are better ventilated. Apart from this, we must praise the revolutionary government for its efforts to wipe out slum housing.

The cooperators make no down payment, nor are there wage deductions. Construction and maintenance costs are paid for, not by the individual cooperator, but collectively from the profits of the tobacco industry. The Hermano Saenz debt to INRA will probably be paid quickly–about six to ten years. In other places a worker who wants to own a house would have to make monthly payments for 15 to 20 years.

The pride of the cooperative is the magnificent new school, with its spacious gardens and playgrounds, an auditorium, an immense dining hall and fully equipped kitchens where wholesome meals are prepared for the children.

San Vincente

On the day when Castro inaugurated the new School of the Hermanos Saenz cooperative a group of 20 peasants of the tiny village of San Vincente petitioned Castro to help them form a cooperative and new housing. The peasants had been tenant farmers who were forced to hand over two thirds of their crops to the landlord. They had no money, no farm machines, no fertilizers. As Castro promised, the INRA immediately began the construction of a new cooperative village for the 20 peasant families of San Vincente. With the help of the revolutionary army and the peasants themselves, construction was completed in the record time of only two months. The individual peasants do not own the property of the cooperative nor the agricultural equipment. They hold shares in the cooperative. The cooperative (like the rest of the rural economy) is not administered by the peasants, but by the INRA in accordance with a national plan. The "cooperative" is actually financed by wages, disguised as "advances" [payments for construction, maintenance and equipment furnished by INRA] paid to the peasants by their de facto employer, INRA.

My guide, the bearded revolutionist, Captain Alvarez Costa, provincial delegate of INRA, furnished me with information about the cooperatives in his district. It seems that in the Cuban cooperatives the peasants sacrifice their autonomy in exchange for economic security. Although the economic situation of the peasant "cooperator" is better than before, it is nevertheless inferior to that of the free cooperator, particularly from the moral point of view. "Is there not a danger (I asked my guide) that this situation would create a dangerous dilemma: bread without freedom or freedom without bread?"

The captain, conceding that such a dilemma is indeed possible, replied:

. . . our Revolution is based upon the concepts formulated by Fidel Castro. If we build cooperatives, those who benefit must accept the conditions stipulated. There are hundreds of different cooperatives in our province. Some sell their products to INRA, others in the free market etc... In general, the cooperatives are directly administered by INRA. However, in this district, the cooperative in the village of Moncada works collectively, on its own initiative. I suggest that you see how it works.

The School City: *"Camilo Cienfuegos"*

In the field of education the Castro regime is inordinately proud of what it considers its greatest achievement: the construction of Ciudad Escolar–School City–an immense complex named after the great hero of the Revolution Camilo Cienfuegos. The complex is being built at the foot of the

Sierra Maestra Mountains, Castro's famed stronghold. This grandiose project, meant to astonish the world, was conceived while Castro's guerrilla band was still being hunted by the Batista army.

Although the construction was begun only a few months ago, many buildings have already been erected. The project is truly unique. It will accommodate 22,000 children of both sexes from 6 to 18 years of age; most of them from peasant families in the Sierra Maestra region. The complex will consist of 42 units, each with a capacity of 500 pupils, including dining rooms, class rooms, 4 athletic fields, a motion picture theater and swimming pool. The central kitchen will prepare meals for all the 22,000 students. . .

The project will be financed by the government and built by INRA. 9,000 hectares [about 25,000 acres] will be devoted to the growing of rice, malangas, beans and other vegetables, and the raising of cattle, poultry etc. The pupils themselves will do the work, and all this vast area will serve as a school for agriculture. It is expected that the products will pay for the education and subsistence of the students without a state subsidy. Thus, 22,000 young people will live by their own labor.

One of the officials boasted: "This will be the greatest educational project ever built." But quite a few highly qualified educators voiced serious misgivings about the educational value of the project. A well known teacher whom I interviewed declared:

> educationally speaking, to construct an educational apparatus of this magnitude is pure insanity. It would have been far better to build a school in every village in the Sierra Maestre region and the schools would at the same time constitute a local cultural center and a separate technical agricultural school could far more easily and usefully be erected in the provincial capital. . .

The opinion of the veteran teacher makes sense. To separate 22,000 children from their homes and parents is to deprive the children of the love, affection, and maternal care which is indispensable for their emotional and mental health. The close rapport between the old and the new generations will be loosened and perhaps irretrievably severed. The whole scheme is based on erroneous and distorted concepts. The aim of education is not only the accumulation of technical-scientific knowledge, but also to introduce the youth into the life of adults. In social life, there should be no artificial separation between old and young, but rather, an inter-penetration, a welding together, a social-personal bonding which makes possible the co-education of both the older and the younger generations.

Experience acquired by tradition and confirmed by modern science teaches us that family life, the rearing and education of children must constitute a truly harmonious community of love and mutual understanding.

The School City Camilo Cienfuegos resembles the military training camp of a modern Sparta; not the free community of scholars in the tradition of ancient Athens.

Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Cuba, by Abelardo Iglesias

This account of the Cuban Revolution was written by the veteran anarchist, Abelardo Iglesias, who lived through the events he describes. While still a young man Iglesias dedicated his whole life to the struggle for freedom and social justice. He was particularly active in the labor move-

ment of his native Cuba, and much later, for many years in Spain, where he fought against Franco fascism and for the Social Revolution from the beginning to the final catastrophic defeat.

Returning to Cuba after the debacle, overcoming the pessimism which for many militants signified the end of their hopes for the realization of our ideals, Iglesias again took up the struggle against capitalist exploitation, political oppression and the monumental corruption of national life–particularly within the labor movement.

This attitude, shared by all the militants of the Libertarian Association of Cuba (ALC) led naturally to the struggle against the corrupt, dictatorial regime of Fulgencio Batista and his friends and collaborators; the very same leaders of the Communist Party, who now occupy the same high posts in the Castro-communist dictatorship.

In the crucial period preceding the downfall of Batista, the Cuban anarchists strove to defend the conquests of the workers and the independence of their organizations against the corrupt leadership of the Batista-Communist dominated Confederation of Cuban Workers (CTC).

The following articles by Iglesias were published in pamphlet form by the Argentine anarchist bi-monthly Reconstruir (Buenos Aires, 1963).

[S.D.]

Introduction

Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Cuba is a series of articles written in late 1960 and early 1961, a few months before I left Cuba. Unfortunately, subsequent events have only confirmed their contentions.

Erroneous ideas about the Cuban Revolution are to a great extent due to the lack of reliable information. Instead of the objective evaluation indispensible to an understanding of events, the views of the critics are distorted by their political prejudices and economic interests.

The reactionaries proclaim the sanctity of private property and religion as essential for the preservation of the "full dignity of man." Almost all North Americans extol the virtues of "representative democracy" and "free enterprise." In Latin-America, opinion is divided based not on the facts, but on how the critics interpret "American imperialism."

Many Cubans detest Castro, not for his totalitarian methods of government, but for the communist character of his dictatorship. Many of those who now oppose Castroism, supported his personal dictatorship from the time of the Sierra Maestra until they began to suspect that he was inclined toward Marxist remedies. For them, the totalitarian method of government was less important than its COLOR. The big landlords, the big capitalists, the heads of the church and the professional politicians fully backed Castro as long as they believed that he would be a "blue" dictator like Franco; they immediately turned against him when he became a "red" dictator like Stalin. But liberal democrats and revolutionaries from all social classes, especially in the universities, enthusiastically accepted Castro in good faith, fought in the Sierras and in the underground for the immediate restoration of the democratic regime, which had been overthrown by the Batista coup of March 10, 1952. And it is they who now constitute the most vocal opposition to Castro in Cuba and in exile. [Since this was written, most of the opposition has come from workers and peasants.]

That militant anarchists everywhere hailed the Revolution when it first began is understandable. It looked like a true social revolution, and they took the libertarian pretensions of the leaders seriously because they lacked regular and complete information about the real situation

in Cuba. Another factor was psychological. With the defeat of the Spanish Revolution (1936-39) the era of popular revolutions seemed closed. Inevitably, disillusionment set in. To some extent, the Cuban Revolution rekindled the old revolutionary flame. The spectacle of a heroic handful of people struggling against seemingly insurmountable odds, disorganized, poorly armed, carrying on a guerrilla war and defeating a formidable, powerfully armed force of professional soldiers, was bound to arouse the sympathy and enthusiasm of all sincere revolutionaries.

But if these facts explain the attitudes of libertarians in 1959, the first year of the Revolution, they cannot now [1963] justify the attitude of certain individuals and groups, in several countries, who still deny the facts and obstinately maintain a position diametrically opposed to libertarian ideas and traditions.

That which compels us to fight for freedom, should also alert us to the presence of a barbaric regime, even when it hides its true nature behind revolutionary libertarian slogans.

At first sight, the expropriation of the holdings of the big landlords seems logical and correct to a movement that does not believe in private property, or recognize the validity of rights unjustly accorded to privileged minorities. But we must realize that the conversion of the expropriated land into state property creates a slavery infinitely worse than private capitalism. Libertarians should know that class privileges are subjected to the state as the supreme regulator of social relations. And we should know also that the conversion of private into state property automatically concentrates enormous political power into a reduced number of men, thereby creating a revolutionary oligarchy wielding unlimited power.

Fidel Castro has established a typical totalitarian oligarchy. In the name of liberty, he has shamelessly betrayed a politically naive people who have allowed themselves to be taken-in by the legendary "hero of the Sierra Maestra. " This is no mere supposition. It is a crude, brutal, monstrous fact which libertarians will have to face in all its magnitude, if they really want to comprehend the immense tragedy now being enacted in Cuba.

Apart from byzantine discussions, there are these objective facts which no one can deny. We list briefly the main points:

> The so-called revolutionary regime is essentially an oligarchy dominated by a handful of men accountable to no one for their actions.
>
> In line with their sectarianism they have abolished all individual rights.
>
> Centralized political and economic power to an extent never known before.
>
> Constructed an apparatus of terror immensely more efficient than Batista's repressive agencies.
>
> The land has not been distributed to the peasants, for individual, family, collective or cooperative cultivation, but has become the 'de facto' property of the state agency, the Institute for Agrarian Reform (]NRA).
>
> The nationalization of private enterprises has not benefited the workers. The industries are administered not by the workers' unions, but have been taken over to reinforce the power of the state, converting the former wage slaves into slaves of the state machine.
>
> Public education has become a state monopoly. The state arrogates to itself the right to impose its kind of education upon the young, regardless of the opinion of the parents.

The legitimate necessity to prepare against counter-revolutionary aggression has been the pretext for the unnecessary militarization of children and adolescents as in Russia and other totalitarian states.

The right to strike has been abolished and the workers must, without complaint, obey the decrees imposed upon them in their work places. The unions have lost their independence and are actually state agencies, whose sole function it is to cajole or force the workers to obey the commands of the state functionaries without protest.

There are no genuine judicial tribunals. Oppositionists are punished not for alleged offences, but for their convictions and revolutionary ideas.

Fidel Castro's government is conducted in accordance with Mussolini's notorious dictum:
Nothing outside of the State!!
Nothing against the State!!
Everything for the State!!

History of a Fraud: The *"March On Havana"*

The romantic aura surrounding Castro's legendary exploits must be dispelled. The myth of his alleged "March on Havana" captured the imagination of his deluded sympathizers, must once and for all be debunked. We who lived in Cuba, who witnessed, and to a certain extent participated in the events, have too much respect for the truth to remain silent in the face of such serious misconceptions.

The facts of the "March on Havana" are the following: Weeks before Batista fled Cuba, when the rebel forces advanced in Las Villas Province without meeting serious resistance from government troops, Fidel Castro, almost immobilized in Oriente province, contacted Colonel Rizo Rubido, military commander of the fortress at Santiago de Cuba, and began negotiations with this officer of the Batista army for the surrender of the city, the capital of Oriente Province.

When the negotiations reached an advanced stage, Colonel Rubido arranged a personal interview between Castro and his superior officer.

The interview took place in an abandoned sugar mill in Oriente Province. With the help of a Catholic Priest, Father Guzman, Fidel Castro and General Cantillo reached full agreement and General Cantillo surrendered Santiago de Cuba and the whole Province of Oriente to Castro. These events were related by Castro himself on television and reported in the first weeks of 1959 in the magazine Bohemia, which reproduced actual photographs of the notes exchanged between Fidel Castro and General Cantillo.

Fulgencio Batista then summoned General Cantillo to Havana and told him of his decision to abdicate and appoint him (General Cantillo) as Commander-in-Chief of the army to maintain order and return the country to normalcy. General Cantillo accepted Batista's offer and immediately contacted Fidel Castro, informing him that he was ready not only to surrender Oriente Province, but the whole country. A few hours later, Batista, together with his entourage, left Havana for Santo Domingo in three military planes. This happened at dawn, January 1st, 1959.

With the flight of Batista, all the armed forces surrendered immediately without firing a single shot. General Cantillo transferred command of his army to Colonel Ramon Barquin who

had just been released, after being sentenced to imprisonment for conspiring against the Batista government.

Upon assuming command of the armed forces, Colonel Barquin told Fidel Castro that the army and he personally was at his disposal and under his orders and that he [Barquin] would remain only as long as Castro wants him to or until he was replaced.

Fidel Castro immediately ordered his rebel troops to occupy all installations, barracks and fortresses. In line with these orders, Camilo Cienfuegos with a force of only 300 men, occupied Camp Military City after 12,000 Batista troops, including aviation, artillery and tank units, surrendered without firing a shot. Commander Ernesto Guevara took over the La Cabana Fortress. Castro's brother, Raul, became Provisional Commander of the Marina de Guerra naval station. Faure Chamont was appointed Commander of San Antonio de los Banos Baños air base and of the Presidential Palace. Other appointees filled the other posts.

Fidel Castro finally entered Santiago de Cuba only after the city had been peacefully occupied by his troops, commanded by Huber Matos, the real hero of the armed struggle against Batista. [Major Huber Matos, military commander of Castro troops who blockaded Santiago de Cuba, was the Commander of Oriente and Camaguey rebel forces. Because Matos urged Castro to halt communist penetration of his government he was brought to trial with 38 other officers and sentenced to 20 years in prison. Despite international appeals for his release and the pleas of his family he has not yet been freed. His family lives in New Jersey.]

Castro's activity at this time was intense: He designated Santiago de Cuba as temporary Capital of Cuba; appointed Manuel Urrutia Lleo to be Provisional President of Cuba; ordered a general strike (which collapsed for lack of support;) appointed the list of ministers and appointed Dr. Jose Miro Cardona as Prime Minister; and delivered the first of his interminable harangues to a carefully staged mass rally.

Only then, when all the power was in his hands; when he was hysterically acclaimed all over Cuba; only THEN did Castro stage his massive publicity stunt, the fake "March On Havana; " a 350 kilometer parade down the Central Highway, escorted by rebel army troops, tanks and planes etc. Castro could have flown directly to Havana in a few hours at most. But he deliberately arranged this ostentatious, garish display of military power, to fool the world into the belief that he had taken by armed force, a city that voluntarily accorded him a tumultuous welcome.

On January 8, 1959, Fidel Castro entered Havana, without firing a shot, acclaimed by delirious mobs, a military spectacle which had nothing to do with a victorious assault on Havana; a vulgar imitation of Mussolini's "March on Rome."

Castro: The Anti-American Imperialist

One of the most controversial issues debated in revolutionary circles is the spurious nature of Castro's "anti-imperialism." According to his sympathizers, Castro was provoked into defying the American imperialist government which strove to perpetuate the economic interests of the capitalist monopolists in Cuba and to force the Castro regime to submit to its dictates and policies. . .

We need not produce too many arguments to demonstrate that the question is not quite so simple. There is evidence that while the United States did not seriously block the illegal shipment of arms to Castro's rebel army and anti-Batista resistance groups in Cuba, it slapped an embargo on arms already paid for on the Batista regime… Batista bitterly protested this policy. The most

widely circulated and influential American capitalist magazines: Time, Life, Coronet, Newsweek, etc. as well as leading capitalist newspapers like The New York Times, glorified Castro and his famous "barbudos" (bearded ones) depicting them as romantic Robin Hoods, gallantly fighting for the freedom of the Cuban people.

Another widely circulated myth cleverly concocted by the Castro propaganda mill is that the peasants enthusiastically support his 26th of July Movement and 95% of Castro's rebel "army" were peasants. The fact is, that although Castro's stronghold in the Sierra Maestra was practically encircled by cane fields and sugar factories and there are at least three million peasants in Cuba, Castro's "army" numbered only 1500 men when the fighting ended with the flight of Batista. Where were the peasant masses? The truth is that the most powerful force upon which Castro depended from the outset was the middle class. Most of the young insurgents came not from the peasantry, but from the middle class. (1)

The Catholic Church also backed Castro, mobilizing thousands of clandestine militants. The Accion Catolica and its affiliated workers and student organizations spearheaded violent anti-Batista action all over Cuba. The press, the radio, and television networks provided free unlimited propaganda, stirring the masses against Batista.

In spite of its anti-Batista sentiments, the Cuban bourgeoisie was nevertheless resolved (with certain modifications) to continue the de facto subordination of Cuba to the overall interests of the United States, the "Colossus of the North."

The financiers and the upper clergy, hoped to seize political power by turning the pro-Castro sentiment of the masses to their account. As the first step in this direction, they gave ample aid to the Castro movement.

For all these elements, Castro became the "Lider Maximo," the "Caudillo" of a popular bourgeois revolution. Castro had at that time given them no reason to think otherwise. In 1959, only a few months after his victory, Castro vehemently denied that he was a communist, denying that he was plotting to replace military dictatorship with "revolutionary dictatorship." "...capitalism may kill a man with hunger; communism kills man by wiping out his freedom. . . " (2)

Scarcely a month after the revolution, Castro cautiously began to reveal his true intentions. Unleashing a violent campaign against the United States he manifested his sympathy for Soviet imperialism. Any one criticizing life in the "socialist" countries was reviled as a "counter-revolutionist." Castro's own comrades-in-arms, Manuel Urrutia Lleo, Jose Miro Cardona, Manuel Ray Rivero and Huber Matos who held key positions in his administration were dismissed from office, imprisoned, or driven into exile when they tried in the latter half of 1959 to oppose Castro's pro-communist policies: The mysterious death of Castro's second-in-command, Camilo Cienfuegos, was one of the tragic consequences of this fierce struggle between the top leaders of the new Cuban government. An apparently ideological dispute became in reality a war to the death for the conquest of power.

In exposing Castro's duplicity, we want to make it crystal clear that we do not in any way intend to justify American policies in Cuba, or anywhere in Latin-America. We do not for a moment overlook the age long exploitation of American imperialism and atrocities against the liberty of the peoples of Latin America. For us, who participated actively in the Revolution and know the facts, the incorporation of the Castro regime into the Russian, Chinese and "third world" imperialist bloc, was due neither to circumstances, nor the U.S. pressure. It was deliberately put into effect in accordance with treacherous Bolshevik tactics.

Fidel Castro is not an anti-imperialist. He is anti-American and pro-Soviet. He carried through a series of maneuvers to justify his total surrender to the Russian-Chinese imperialist camp. (3) To galvanize public opinion into accepting his duplicity, he not only provoked the crisis confrontation with the Washington government, but also renounced that which we libertarians consider most essential: the possibility of forging unbreakable links of solidarity between the oppressed people of Cuba and the other oppressed peoples of Latin America, the only ones who can render unselfish and effective aid to the Cuban Revolution.

The Cuban people now suffer the horrors of a totalitarian "communist" regime, massively subsidized by the Soviet bloc with arms, technicians, military and police experts etc. But the Cuban people have in a thousand ways demonstrated their unquenchable will to emancipate themselves from the dictatorial regime that exploits and oppresses them.

The old spirit of independence is not yet crushed. They are determined to fight for their complete freedom against both their native exploiters and the dominatiom of their northern neighbor the United States.

Our comrades in Cuba and in exile adhere to and fight for this revolutionary policy, against both the reactionary emigre forces and the politicians in exile who would not hesitate to sell their souls to the devil himself, in order to reconquer the political and economic power they lost in the January 1st Revolution.

Note 1

In respect to the middle-class content of the frst Castro Covernment, Theodore Draper's investigation shows:

> ...never a single one of Castro's ministers was a peasant or worker in industry. Every one of them attended a university, came from an upper or middle-class home and aspired to become a professional or intellectual. . .I prevailed on one of the ministers to write out in his own handwriting, on his own stationery, the professions, occupations and ages of each of the ministers. . . (Castro's Revolution. . . p. 43)

The list included seven lawyers, 2 university professors, 3 university students, 1 doctor, 1 engineer, 1 architect, 1 mayor and 1 captain.

Note 2

The main points of the bourgeois-democratic reform constitution which Castro promised to put into effect included: full freedom of press, radio, etc.; respect for all civil, political and personal rights as guaranteed by the Constitution of 1940; democratization of the unions and promoting free elections at all levels.

In an interview early in 1958 from the Sierra Maestra, Castro pledged that his:

> . . . provisional government must be as brief as possible, just time enough to convoke elections for state, provincial and municipal posts . . . the provisional government not to remain in power for more than two years. . . I want to reiterate my total lack of personal interest and I have renounced, beforehand, any post after the victory of the Revolution . . . these are the things we will tell the people. Will we suppress the

> right to strike? NO. Will we suppress the freedom of assembly? NO. We must carry this Revolution forward with all freedoms…When one newspaper is closed down, no newspaper will feel safe; when one man is persecuted for his political ideas, no one can feel safe. .. (quoted Cuban Labor; Miami, Jan. 1967)

Note 3

When Iglesias wrote this the Cuban and Chinese governments were still on good terms. To please the Russian rulers, upon whose aid the existence of the Castro regime depended, relations with China deteriorated rapidly.

[Notes by Sam Dolgoft]

Chapter 10: Why the anarchists broke with Castro's regime

Strangling the Opposition Press

To explain why the anarchists were forced to break with Castro it is first necessary to depict the cruel, unbearable harassments which made it impossible for any of the opposition groupings to function. The situation is graphically sketched out by a consciencious eyewitness report in the following extract: (Yves Guilbert; *Castro l'Infidele*, Paris, 1961, pp. 174-180) [S.D.]

[Fidel Castro said on television, April 2, 1959] "When one newspaper is closed down, no newspaper will feel safe; when one man is persecuted because of his political ideas, no one can feel safe." Officially there is still freedom of the press in Cuba. There is no law limiting the right of expression. However, Castro's dictatorship could not tolerate the existence of a press not entirely devoted to him...

Shortly after the beginning of the [January 1, 1959] Revolution, Castro requisitioned the newspapers *Alerta*, *Pueblo*, *Atajo*, *El Comercio de Cienfuegos*, *El Diario de Cuba* of Santiago, and also closed down the journal *El Camagueyano*, founded in 1902... Although Castro pretends that the press is not being shackled, there is a great deal of unofficial, but no less harmful, harassment and sabotage . . .

To create a subservient press, Castro subsidized Revolucion [former organ of the July 26 Movement], *Combate*, *Diario Libre*, *La Calle of Havana*, *Sierra Maestra*, etc. Journals that he could not, for the 119 moment, entirely suppress were neutralized by an ingenious system of camouflaged censorship. The newspaper workers' union tried to nullify the impact of articles that did not strictly echo Castro's party line by printing a *coletilla*... a sort of disclaimer warning the reader that the article is "counter-revolutionary." It usually reads, "By virtue of the freedom of expression which exists in this country, this article has been printed according to the will of the owners of this publication. But, by virtue of this same freedom of expression, we, the employees of this journal, alert the public that this article is contrary to the truth." Another tactic has been to shut down an obstreperous publication by cutting off its supply of paper or other necessary materials.

Castro was not at all pleased with *coletillas*, which had the opposite of the intended effect, leaving the government open to the accusation of censorship. Early in 1960, he therefore launched an all-out offensive to liquidate, once and for all, the independent press.

[for example] . . . the editors of *Prensa Libre*, savagely attacked by the Castroites, realized that it too would soon be compelled to cease publication, and sounded the alarm in a hard-hitting article titled "The Hour of Unanimity." [Guilbert here quotes from the article] "'Unanimity reigns supreme in Cuba–totalitarian unanimity... there must be no discordant voices, no possibility of criticism. The control of every avenue of expression will facilitate the brain-washing of the public. Dissident voices will be bull-dozed into silence: the silence of those who CANNOT speak out or the silence of those who DARE NOT speak out..."

The great illustrated weekly magazine, *Bohemia*, of Havana, one of the most widely read Cuban magazines in Latin-America, was edited by Miguel Angel Quevado. Under Batista, *Bohemia* constantly fought for freedom and democracy, and denounced the dictator's outrageous violations of human rights. Castro considered Quevado one of his close friends. In the columns of his magazine, Quevado [initially] backed Castro and the Revolution to the limit. But he could not tolerate the increasing totalitarianism of Castro's government. [*Bohemia*, the only non-censored magazine after 1960, was preparing its "Liberty Edition," with a painting of Castro on its cover over the inscription "Honor and Glory to the National Hero!" when] . . . He closed down *Bohemia* and, on July 18, 1960, left Cuba. Quevado explained why he had to do so in a farewell message to the readers:

[Guilbert quotes] " . . . a diabolical, skillfully prepared plot to impose a Communist dictatorship on the American continent has been organized under the close supervision of Moscow. After listening to the declaration of Nikita Khrushchev, there can no longer be any doubt that Cuba is being used as a tool to promote the foreign policies of the U.S.S.R... Cuba is being pictured as a weak little nation whose very existence is being safeguarded by the guns of revolutionary Russia, the 120 greatest military power in the world. After Castro's enthusiastic pledge of solidarity with the U.S.S.R. and the "socialist countries," Castro's part in this attentat against freedom has become obvious...

. . . "In making our own revolution, it is not necessary to subject our people to the oppression and vassalage of Russia. To make a profound social revolution, it is not necessary to implant a system which degrades people to the lowly level of state serfdom, to wipe out the last vestige of freedom and dignity. This is not a genuine revolution...

"These lines should have appeared in the pages of *Bohemia*, but this is no longer possible. Barred from publishing this message in our own magazine, acutely conscious of its moral obligation to the people, to whom *Bohemia* has always been honest and faithful, the editor of *Bohemia* has made the only decision which these circumstances permit: to proclaim in these lines the sad truth of what is happening to Cuba, and to go into exile. . ."

Many other collaborators of *Bohemia* also left with Quevado. The magazine was immediately taken over by a gang of Castro Communists–while Castro hypocritically deplored "the exile of Quevado as one of the hardest blows to our Revolution."

The Anarchist Press Fights Back

Guilbert is perhaps the only witness who not only mentions the Cuban anarchists, but appreciates their unflinching dedication to the principles of freedom and justice.

> . . . in the Cuban night some light still flickers. As far as circumstances over which they have no control permit, the little anarchist journals still valiantly defend freedom to the utmost. Their papers, *El Libertario* and *Solidaridad Gastronomica* (Organ of the Anarcho-Syndicalist food and restaurant workers union) still courageously project their gleam of hope that Castro fears. They, too, will soon be suppressed...(ibid. p. 178)

In the face of the growing oppression, the libertarian movement while constrained to modulate its criticism so as not to be confused with the counter-revolutionary reactionaries or the more liberal bourgeoisie, nevertheless succeeded in making its position unmistakably clear. For example, both papers prominently displayed provocative headline slogans:

WE ARE AGAINST ALL IMPERIALISMS! PRIVATE PROPERTY IS THE SYMBOL OF SLAVERY! SOCIALISM WILL BE FREE OR THERE WILL BE NO SOCIALISM!

THE LAND AND THE INDUSTRIES TO THE SYNDICATES! FOR FREE COLLECTIVES AND COOPERATIVES!

The anarchist papers were compelled to cease publication about two years after the revolution. Since *Solidaridad Gastronomica* appeared monthly and *El Libertario* (organ of the Libertarian Federation of Cuba – ALC) irregularly, the following excerpts from the more important articles, though few, should nevertheless give a fair idea of how the anarchists viewed events during this short period.

The Anarchists and the Revolution

From the Libertarian Association of Cuba to the International Anarchist Movement Havana, June 1959

Dear Comrades:

What follows are our first tentative impressions of the situation in Cuba on the morrow of the Revolution.

With the triumph of the Revolution, many of our comrades released from prison have been joined by ALL our exiled comrades, who have returned to participate in the revolutionary reconstruction of the new Cuba.

It is still too early to predict what orientation the Revolution may take in our country. But there can be no doubt–in view of the adequate measures taken–that the murderous Batista dictatorship will never again be restored to inflict itself upon our people.

The Revolution is preeminently a true people's revolution. The thousands of armed men fighting in the mountains, through their audacity and courage, demolished the dictatorial fortress. Our armed militants enjoyed the full moral and material backing of the masses. The widespread clandestine propaganda and militant actions and uprisings of popular movements all over Cuba, and the fighting solidarity of all groups, undermined the morale and will to fight of Batista's army and his civilian allies.

We feel that a new epoch in the life of Cuba has been opened. But we have no illusions about the character of the institutional changes now taking place. For the time being–how long nobody knows–we still possess civil rights, as well as the possibility of reorganizing our forces and making our ideas and ideals known to the people.

In a widespread revolutionary movement such as this, all sectors are represented; different groupings, often with conflicting aims, strive to exert maximum influence. And it is not always those helping libertarian conceptions that exert the greatest influence.

The doctrine of state centralization has, in Cuba as in so many other countries, had the most harmful effects. Many who sincerely desire a 122 regeneration of society are unfortunately obsessed with the notion that a successful revolution is possible only under a rigid and authoritarian regime. Among these are the extreme nationalists and fanatical patriots – a very dangerous tendency which could facilitate degeneration of the revolution into a sort of Nazism and Fascism, particularly here in Latin-America.

The formidable Catholic influence is equally dangerous for the Revolution. The duplicity of the top of the Church hierarchy has been amply demonstrated in recent years. In return for supporting Batista, the Church was subsidized with donations of hundreds of thousands, even millions of *pesetas*... Nevertheless, many Catholics fought heroically against Batista, and the lower "rank and file" priests and other clergy fought bravely on all fronts to topple the Batista regime. When

normal life has been restored, the Church will surely take advantage of this fact to curry favor with the new regime.

The Communist Party of Cuba is just as dangerous for the Revolution as are the extreme nationalists and the upper echelons of the Church. Fortunately, their influence is limited because they are discredited by their association with Batista and their servility to the Russian totalitarian dictatorship. Hiding behind the banner of liberalism, patriotism, mutual tolerance and the coexistence of all anti-Batista forces, they have been able to infiltrate a number of organizations and some sectors of the labor movement. Though small in number, the Communists are skillful connivers, well-organized and totally unscrupulous; their counterrevolutionary potential must not be underestimated.

The role the labor movement is to play in revolutionary reconstruction is a particularly crucial problem. From the fall of the Machado dictatorship in 1933 to the present, the unions have been the tools of, and one of the main pillars supporting, the government. The fact that the new Revolutionary government is moving to consolidate the labor movement into a single rigidly dominated centralized organization has fortunately–at least for the time being–not weakened the determination of the workers to fight for the autonomy and integrity of their own organizations against dictatorship. The Communists, naturally, are striving to reconquer their controlling position in the labor movement, which they enjoyed for so many years under Batista and the others. But the circumstances are not the same; they are not favorable, and we hope that, in spite of their efforts, the Communists will not succeed in dominating the labor movement.

Despite these and other obstacles, we will continue to struggle for the maximum realization of our libertarian alternatives–in accordance with the realities of the situation and with unflagging dedication–and against Statism and the deformation of the Cuban Revolution. 123

Manifesto to the Workers and the People in General

As early as January 18, 1959, only a few weeks after the Revolution, the Libertarian Association of Cuba already detected the first signs of the authoritarian character of the new regime and sounded the alarm in its Manifesto to the Workers and the People in General. The Manifesto reads in part: …

> In this historic moment of the nation and the working class, the ALC is obliged to call attention to certain fundamental problems…
>
> The Revolution that recently freed the people of Cuba from the bloody tyranny of Batista is a people's revolution for liberty and justice, made by the people. The labor movement of our country was captured by the tyrants, who used it to promote their own sinister purposes. The voices of the rebels and the non-conformists were stilled by the prison officer, the persecutor and the assassin. Unions which dared question the authorities were immediately taken over by the Secretary-General of the [collaborationist] Confederation of Cuban Workers (C.T.C.) and/or the Ministry of Labor. Their freely elected representatives were ousted [or even arrested] and replaced by hand-picked faithful servants of the dictatorship, who were imposed upon the membership without the least semblance of democratic procedure. The workers themselves must see to it that such atrocities are never again revived in Cuba …
>
> We are alarmed that the allegedly "temporary" administrations of the unions and their officials are being installed without consultation or agreement of the membership or of the various organizations that made the Revolution …

> In the midst of the revolutionary turmoil, we do not expect everything, including the labor organizations, to function normally in so short a time. But it is our duty, and the duty of all the workers, by militant action, to see to it that the democratic procedures, the freedoms, and the rights gained by us with the triumph of the Revolution are respected …
>
> We must immediately hold free elections in the unions, where the workers will freely choose their representatives … It is absolutely necessary that general membership meetings be called immediately to freely discuss and deal with the great and urgent problems …
>
> It is absolutely necessary that the workers themselves elect, dismiss or reinstate their officials. To permit any other procedure would be to allow the very same dictatorial practices which we fought against under Batista …
>
> We, the people who fought a bitter war against the old dictatorship, must now make sure that the Revolution will built a new social order that will guarantee liberty and justice for all, without exception…
>
> We workers, who felt on our own bodies the blows inflicted by the old tyranny, must now, again, defend our fundamental rights.
>
> RESOLVE NEVER AGAIN TO INSTITUTE A REGIME OF SUBMISSION AND SLAVERY!
>
> *From Solidaridad Gastronomica*
>
> THE WORKERS MUST BE ALERT NOT TO FALL INTO THE SAME ERRORS TWICE!

The heroic fighters who, with so much effort and sacrifice, defeated the Batista tyranny, merit the eternal gratitude of the Cuban people. Never again must the Cuban people be subjected to horrors such as the Batista tyranny.

We are tremendously disturbed to see swarms of adventurers and other phonies taking advantage of the victorious Revolution, and, by strong-arm methods, taking over control of the unions… Far from signifying a real revolutionary change, these methods only repeat the institutionalized violence of the Batista dictatorship… The Communists wait in the wings, all too anxious to repeat their betrayals of the workers–as when they collaborated with Batista to subjugate them.

Now, with the triumph of the Revolution, is precisely the time for the workers to be doubly alert and watchful not to repeat the same errors, not to allow the democratic assemblies to be destroyed by tolerating decrees from above, edicts converting the unions into agencies of the all-embracing state. The destructive power of the state is the sword of Damocles hanging over the heads of the workers.

We must avoid centralization. We must impede the surge of new hierarchies which are no better than the old ones. We must have free and open assemblies where the will of the majority of the workers can determine the future of our class and its organizations. (Jan. 15, 1959)

The Labor Racketeers and the Gangsters Return–Beware!

Barely two months after the Revolution overthrew the dictator Batista and his faithful lieutenant, Eusebio Mujal [fascist thug and Secretary-General of the Batista "labor front," the C.T.C.], the new dictators are already conniving to seize control of the unions, and, like their predecessors, rule the workers by decrees from above.

These tyrants are packing the union meetings with their stooges–strangers who are not even members–brought in to vote for 125 the labor racketeers. The workers are being intimidated by the presence of armed militiamen. These and other practices constitute flagrant violations of the elementary rights of the workers.

The Revolution must guarantee and defend the right of the workers to freely conduct their affairs without intimidation or interference. The fate of the Revolution is in our hands; the destiny of our class is in our own hands! (March 15, 1959)

Warning! Juan Marinello Is Moscow's Stooge and Batista's Friend!

It is reported in the press that "...yesterday afternoon, in a simple ceremony, Dr. Juan Marinello was appointed to the faculty of the Department of Languages and Literature in the Escuela Normal de la Habana [Havana School of Education], the same position from which this well-known writer and political leader had been ousted by the Batista Ministry of Education..."

This announcement deliberately gives the one hundred per cent FALSE impression that Marinello consistently fought the Batista dictatorship. The phony comrades [of the Communist Party] who now enjoy such great influence in the new revolutionary government were the staunchest and most faithful friends and supporters of the Batista dictatorship and were rewarded for their services by being appointed to very good posts in Batista's corrupt government. To deny this incontestable fact is absurd.

Is there a single Cuban who does not yet know that Juan Marinello head of the Communist Party of Cuba (P.S.P.) was instructed to collaborate with Batista by his masters the Russian Communist Party officials?

From El Libertario

The following article was published in El Libertario, June 20, 1959 shortly after the promulgation of the Agrarian Reform Law. It accurately predicted the disastrous consequences of massive seizures of land by the state, which led to the establishment of state farms (granjas) and the total domination and subjugation of the agricultural workers and peasants. [S.D.]

Plows Tractors and the Guajiro

Under the watchwords "Land and Liberty" and "The Land to Those Who Work It," the anarchists pioneered the organization of agricultural workers. Such men as Niceto Perez, Sabino Pupo, Casanas and Montero were in the struggle for the emancipation of the agricultural workers and peasants.

In contrast to the Marxist bias for the urban industrial workers [based on the fatalistic theory that the realization socialism will depend exclusively on the technical-scientific development of industry]], our conviction that the will of man to create his own social structures is paramount, leads us to attach special importance to the struggles of the rural masses.

The fact that the two greatest upheavals of our century have taken place in predominantly agrarian countries, leads us to place our greatest hope for social change in the vast peasant masses. And it is precisely because it is too often forgotten that the rural masses have always been the most downtrodden victims that we passionately encourage and sustain all measures which promote their rights.

All these considerations lead US to regard them not as passive automatons and lifeless pawns but on the contrary as dynamic human beings who are capable of great revolutionary achievements when inspired by a just and noble cause.

We have been dedicated champions of agrarian reform which we have been demanding for many years. Nevertheless we view with increasing alarm the Agrarian Reform Law which gives priority to the purely mechanical as opposed to the human factors. We view with alarm the government's mistrust of the peasants the enactment of measures which inevitably lead to the creation of a state superstructure ruinous to the creative self-activity spontaneity and initiative of the agricultural workers and a certain tendency to dismiss the small peasant proprietor as a conservative-minded "kulak".

We must realize that for every machine and every technical blueprint to work there must be human beings ready and willing to make the necesssary try sacrifices for the triumph of our cause. If we lose sight of this fact our cause is lost.

We must realize that the worst possible danger to the Revolution is the bureaucratization induced by the deification of technology and the consequent downgrading of the peasants.

Without underestimating the importance of huge cooperative farms to meet the need for agricultural products it must be stressed that the small peasant proprietors can also contribute greatly to agricultural production by organizing *themselves* into collectives for the intensive cultivation of the land in common…

(The reader will note how closelly *El Libertario* anticipated the constructive recornmcndations of the agricultural scientist Rene Dumont–see introduction.)

Concentration Camps

Generally speaking, those who now demand that political prisoners be tortured and locked in concentration camps became "revolutionaries" only AFTER the Revolution. Many ot these "Johnny-come-latelies" were a short time ago humble lackeys of the Batista dictatorship. These vindictive sadists are far more severe than are the humane, magnanimous revolutionary veterans who fought on the Sierra Maestra and Escambray fronts.

The fact that the Revolution must defend itself against the most vicous and intractable counter-revolutionaries does not mean that it should become a blind, vindictive nemesis, totally impervious to human kindness.

The Revolution must not be sullied, corrupted and ultimately undermined by toleration of the concentration camps and the forced labor characteristic of the odious regimes of Hitler and Stalin! (June 20, 1959)

Children in Uniform

In the streets of Havana, in towns and villages, all over Cuba teenagers, and even children, are on parade: goose-stepping like Prussian soldiers, strutting, puffed up with their own conceit that they are training to "defend the country." And their commanders boast about how "revolutionary" they are. How vain their pretensions that they are really defending the Revolution! How far removed they are from the road to freedom!

These juvenile patrols remind us of Mussolini's *Fasci Combatini Combattenti*, and the parades of Franco's Blue Shirts. In no way do these little boys resemble the valiant fighters of the mountains, or the brave underground fighters of the French *Maquis*. For a future of oppression and servitude they are needed: but never to forge a tomorrow of fraternity in a free and happy community. They represent the militarization of the future, the poisonous herb of the barracks–that which the Revolution must abolish forever.

It is one thing to train the masses in the use of arms for self-defense. But it is a grievous error to militarize and corrupt the minds of youth, to inhibit the unfolding of their personalities and to turn them into a herd of mindless animals.

Are professional armies really better equipped to meet the hazards of war and invasion? History demonstrates that a people determined to defend its rights has been able to defeat regular armies. We who boast of "military glory," remember the Germany of the Kaiser and Hitler–their pompous, corseted, goose-stepping generals committing their most odious crimes! Remember the France of Laval and Petain betrayed by the militarists! REMEMBER! (Nov. 25, 1959)

Is There Real Freedom Of The Press in Cuba?

More than two weeks ago the C.N.T. exile organization in Cuba received an urgent appeal from the C.N.T. underground in Spain, asking for internationa solidarity on behalf of 99 imprisoned anarcho-syndicalist militants now facing very heavy sentences for opposing Franco-fascism. [The C.N.T.–Confederación Nacional del Frabajo Trabajo, National Confederation of Labor–was the anarcho-syndicalist confederation which fought in the Spanish Revolution and Civil War, 1936-39.] C.N.T. comrades here in Cuba personally delivered topics of the appeal to the daily newspapers of Havana, as well as the radio stations, requesting publication and announcement. But not a single word has thus far been published or broadcast. Is this freedom of the press? Isn't the nonsectarian revolutionary press maintained by the public obliged to print something of general interest, to serve all the people without discrimination? Or arc the libertarians not liked by those who control the press?

Those who rightly condemn capitalist monopoliers of the press for their partisan, reactionary policies, must not sink to their level. They must not impose their own brand of "revolutionary" monopoly and go so far as to renounce all moral obligation and refuse to help those who are fighting fascist barbarism, only because they do not like their revolutionary ideas…

It would indeed be criminal to deny freedom of the press to a movement like ours, whose struggles for the emancipation of the oppressed have been unequaled in the history of the Cuban Revolutionary movement. But if this sabotage and boycott continues, we will have to ask, IS THERE REAL FREEDOM OF THE PRESS IN CUBA? (July 197 1960)

Declaration published in the *Bulletin of the MECE*; Miami, July-Aug. 1962.

. . .All militant Cuban libertarians fought for the downfall of Batista and enthusiastically hailed and assisted the Revolution. We hoped that the Revolution would bring more liberty and social justice to the men, women and children of Cuba. We tried to help the people's voluntary organizations (cooperatives, cultural groups, peasant and student groups, etc.) assume a decisive part in the construction of the new l.ibertarian Cuba. Little by little, we saw our hopes dissipated as the new rulers became more and more arrogant, ruthless and dictatorial.

While we saw the outrages and bestialities committed daily by the members of the revolutionary oligarchy, we remained silent because we did not want the people to confuse our revolutionary criticism with the criticism of reactionary elements? who attacked the regime only to safeguard their economic and political priveleges. We criticized the Castro-Communist dictatorship, not because it was TOO REVOLUTIONARY, but because it was NOT REVOLUTIONARY ENOUGH.

Between the spring and the summer of 1960, we exposed ourselves to the persecution of the regime by attempting to initiate a widespread discussion which would have given us the opportunity to expose before the Cuban people the ideological bankruptcy of rhe new dictatorsllip and present our constructive solutions to the problems of the Cuban Revolution.

The rulers made a free and open discussion of issues and principles impossible. We were accused by Blas Roca [leader of the Communist Party, ex-friend of Batista] of hiding behind the mask of extreme revolutionism, the better to serve the interests of the American State Department. 7 (In August, 1960), he said, "Today in Cuba we have anarcho-syndicalists who publish Declarations of Principles, that are of wonderful assistance to counter-revolution…they help counterrevolution from extremist positions with phraseology and arguments that look leftist."] When we wrote a fifty-page pamphlet replying to these slanders and outlining our viewpoint, the State Publishing House refused to publish it, and private publishers were strictly warned not to do so. We, and other non-conformist groups, were not allowed to print anything. Our paper *Solidaridad Gastronomic* was so hounded by the authorities that it ceased publication March 20, 1961. The best equipped print shops confiscated from the bourgeois press were opened to the Communists. A veritable flood of Marxist books and pamphlets were used to brain-wash the workers and peasants of Cuba.

This, together with appointing Communists to key posts in the government, the unions, the schools, peasant and cultural organizations, etc., convinced us that the Revolution was lost. ~ his was the bitter end of our hopes, and from that time on our opposition to the increasingly brutal totalitarian regime began.

[The Bulletin also published the following notice dispatched from Cuba:]

Havana, August 16, 1962

Through this little note, we are letting you know that, for reasons too long and too complicated to explain at this time, the Executive Committee of the Libertarian Association of Cuba has decided to suspend publication [of its journal and other activity].

Fraternally yours,

THE SECRETARIAT

Behind these few lines of lie shattered hopes, the despair and the tragedy of the aborted Cuban Revolution.

Anarchists in Castro's Prisons

This is a partial list of anarchists imprisoned because they refused to serve the Castro totalitarian regime, just as they fought its predecessor the Batista tyrannt, remaining always faithful to their ideals.. (Froom Boletin Informacion Libertaria–Movimiento Libertaria Libertario de Cuba En Exillioo: Miami, July-August 1962) [S.D.]

Pláacido Mendez: Bus driver, delegate for routes 16, 17, and 18. For many years, fought against the Batista tyranny and at various times imprisoned and brutally tortured. In 193X he was forced to go into exile, returning secretly to Cuba to fight in the Cuban underground movement against Batista in the Sierra Escambray. With the downfall of Batista, he resumed his union activities refusing to accept the totalitarian decrees of the so-called revolutionary government. Comrade Mendez is serving his sentence in the National Prison on the Island of Pines, built by the bloody dictator Machado. Mendez has been condemned by (Castro's Revolutionary Tribunal to twelve years at hard labor. His family is in desperate economic difficulties.

Antonio Degas: Militant member of the glorious National Confederation of Labor of Spain (CNT): living in Cuba since the termination of the Spanish Civil War, working in the motion picture industry. This comrade conspired against the Batista tyranny and with the triumph of the Revolution, unconditionally placed himself at the service of the new Castro regime. Because of his activities against the communist usurpers of the Revolution, he was imprisoned by the lackeys of Castro without trial. Antonio Degas is imprisoned in the dungeons of Cabana Fortress and

subjected to inhuman treatment. His wife and children, under conditions of at-owing poverty, must also find ways of helping him in prison where he is under medical treatment.

Alberto Miguel Linsuain: Comrade Linsuain is the son of a well-known Spanish Revolutionist, who died in Alicante towards the end of the Spanish Civil War. Linsuain was extremely active against the Batista dictatorship and joined the rebel forces in the Sierra Cristal, under the command of Castro s brother, Raúl Castro. For his bravery in battle he was promoted to Lieutenant in the Rebel Army. With the end of the armed struggle, he left the army and dedicated himself to the union movement of his industry. He was elected by his fellow workers as General Secretary of the Federation of Food, Hotel and Restaurant Workers of the Province of Oriente. When the communists subtly began to infiltrate and take over the organized labor movement, Comrade Linsuain fought the communist connivers. This aroused the hatred of the communist leaders in general and Rau'l Castro, in particular he had violent quarrels with Raúl Castro even when he had first met him in the Sierra Cristal while fighting against Batista. Comrade Linsuain has been in jail for over a year without trial. His family has not heard from him for months and fears for his life. (A later Bulletin reported that Linsuain was either murdered or died in jail.)

SondalioTorres: Young sympathizer of libertarian ideas, who, inspired by our comrades, fought bravely in his native Cuba, against Batista. With the triumph of the Revolution, Torres threw himself, body and soul, into the consolidation and constructive work of the Revolution, moving to Havana on government construction projects. On the job, he openly voiced his fears that the Castro government was gradually, but surely, becoming a ferocious dictatorship. For this, the stool-pigeon members of the local Committee for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR) accused him of counter-revolutionary activities. Sondalio was sentenced to ten years imprisonment. To force him to falsely accuse other fellow-workers of counter-revolutionary acts, Sondalio was subjected to barbarous torture. Four times he was dragged out to face the firing squad and four times he was retrieved just as he was about to be shot. Torres is serving his sentence in the Provincial prison of Pinar del Kito.

José Acena: Veteran libertarian militant; employed in the La Polar brewery; Professor (at one time) at the Instituto de la Vibora. For thirty years Acena carried on an uninterrupted struggle against all dictatorships, including the first as well as the second periods of Batista s tyrannical regimes. For his bravery in the underground revolutionary struggles of the 26th of July Movement, he was made treasurer of the Province of Havana. With the triumph of the Revolution, Acena collaborated fully with the new Castro regime, particularly in the labor and political movements. Acena soon realized that a totalitarian Marxist-Leninist system was being established in Cuba and quarreled violently with the new rulers, denouncing Castro personally and telling him plainly why he hated his regime. From that time on, he was hounded and persecuted by Castro s henchmen and imprisoned various times. Finally, after a year without trial, he was accused of counter-revolutionary acts and sentenced to twenty years imprisonment. This, in spite of the fact that he still bears on his body the scars of wounds inflicted on him by Batista s jailers. He is desperately ill and in need of surgery.

Alberto Garcia: Comrade Alberto Garcia, like so many other militants of our movement, fought against Batista in the ranks of Castro's 26th of July Movement. Because of his well-earned prestige earned in the course of hard underground struggles, Garcia, after the fall of Batista, was elected by the workers of his industry to be Secretary of the Federation of Medical Workers. For his uncompromising opposition to the super-authoritarian conduct of the communists, he was arrested and sentenced to thirty years at hard labor, flasely accused of 'counter-revolutionary'

activitiees. Comrade Garcia is one of the most valiant young militants in the Cuban Liberation Movement.

Chapter 11: The Position of the Cuban Anarchists: Selected Documents (1960-1974)

These documents spanning the course of the Cuban Revolution demonstrate the consistent approach of the Cuban anarchists toward the problems of the Cuban Revolution as summarized in the Statement of Principles (first document) and in the concluding statement, Cuba: Revolution and Counter-Revolution.All the selected documents emphasize constructive proposals and practical libertarian alternatives to dictatorship (strikingly similar to the recommendations of the noted agronomist and economist Rene Dumont and other qualified critics. (see introduction). For the anarchists (and with them a growing number of concerned people) socialist production socialism itself- cannot as the Statement of Principles insistsbe viewed as a simple technical processthe decisive factor is the human factorthe sentiments, interests, and the aspirations of men, women, and children, considered not as mere ciphers, but as INDIVIDUAL HUMAN BEINGS. [S.D.]

Declaration of Principles of the Libertarian Syndicalist Group of Cuba (Havana, 1960)

(1) Against the State in All its Forms.

WE the Libertarian Syndicalist Group, consider that in this period of revolutionary reconstruction by the people of Cuba, it is our inescapable duty to affirm our position in relation to the pressing problems of the Cuban Revolution. We oppose not only specific acts or policies of the State, but the very existence of the State and its right to supreme and uncontested supremacy over every aspect of social life. We must therefore resist any policy that tends to increase the growing power of the State, the extension of its functions and its totalitarian tendencies.

WE, Cuban Libertarian militants, as well as our comrades in other Countries, believe that it is impossible to make a Social Revolution without eliminating the State. The social functions usurped by the State must be returned to and exercised by the grass-roots organizations of the people themselves such as labor unions, free municipalities, agricultural and industrial cooperatives, and collectives and voluntary federations of all kinds; all of them must be free to function without authoritarian interference.

Politically naïve worshippers of the State believe that human society was created by the State. In reality, the State owes its origin to the rise of privileged classes and the consequent degeneration of society. In spite of all its admirers both right and left may say, the State is not only the parasitic excrescence of class society, but is also itself a generator of political and economic privilege and the creator of new privileged classes. The revolutionary transformation of bourgeois into socialist society also demands the abolition of the State.

(2) The Unions as the Economic Organ of the Revolution.

WE, Revolutionary Syndicalists maintain that the labor movement is the truest expression of the interests and the aspirations of the working class. It is therefore the historic task of the unions to effect the economic revolution by substituting the government over men by the administration of things.The labor unions and the federations of industry, properly and rationally restructured, contain within themselves the human and technical elements needed for the most complete collective development and self-management of industry.

As against the revolutionary and reactionary politicians who strive only to capture power, the decisive role of the unions in this period of revolutionary organization is to become the living organisms for the direction and coordination of the economy. The subordination of the unions to the political power of the State, especially in this revolutionary period, constitutes a betrayal of the working class; a vile maneuver to assure labors defeat, in this historic moment when it should be fulfilling its most vital socialist task; the administration of production and distribution in the interests of the whole of society…

(3) The Land to Those Who Work It.

WE, the men and women or the Libertarian Syn,dicalist Group, now, mare than ever before, stand by our revolutionary watchword: The Land to Those Who Work It. We believe that the classic cry of the peasants of all countries, LAND AND LIBERTY, is the truest expression of the immediate aspirations of the Cuban guajiros (peasants); their own land to till and the freedom to organize themselves and to administer agricultural production.

This may be done through family cultivation in some cases, or by organizing producers cooperatives in other cases; bur ABOVE ALL [wherever possible] through the organization of COLLECTIVE FARMS. The form of cultivation must always be decided by the peasants themselves, never imposed by the State. While the representatives of the State may, in some cases be technically capable men, they are in most cases, ignorant of and insensitive to the true sentiments, interests and aspirations of those who till the soil.

Through long experience and participation in the revolutionary struggles of the peasantry, we are convinced that the planning of agricultural production, cannot be viewed solely al a mere technical process. Although it is true that the condition of the land ald machinery of cultivation are very important, the decisive factor is for us, the human factor: the peasants themselves. We therefore declare that we favor the organization of collective and cooperative work on a voluntary basis extending to the peasant every necessary technical and cultural tools- no doubt the best means- of convincing him of collective cultivation as distinct from and superior to individual or family cultivation.

To act otherwise, to use coercion and force, would be to lay the basis for the complete failure of the agrarian revolution and consequently, THE REVOLUION ITSELF.

(4) The School Should Instruct; the Family Should Rear the Young.

WE, militants of Revolutionary Syndicalism, maintain that culture must not be the exclusive property of anyone in particular, but of the whole of humanity. Culture is a right - not a privilege.

All persons regardless of class, race, religion or sex, must have compete access to the fountains of knowledge without limitations or restrictions of any kind. Education should not be monopolized by the State or any privileged group.

Education at all levels must be free to all (primary and secondary schools, technical and scientific schools and the universities). The moral and political education of their children should be considered the inalienable right of the parents, with no ecclesiastical, political or Statist interference. In the final analysis, the family is the basic unit of society and its supreme responsibility is the moral and physical protection of its youngest members. This responsibility implies rights that must not be taken away; that of the formation of character, and ideological orientation of new generations within the family, the home itself.

(5) The Struggle Against Nationalism, Militarism and Imperialism.

WE are opposed to all wars. The instruments of death produced in such frightening quantities by the great powers must now be converted into instruments for the abolition of hunger and the needs of impoverished peoples; to bring happiness and well-being to all mankind.

As revolutionary workers we are fervent partisans of fraternal understanding between all peoples irrespective of all national boundaries, or linguistic racial, political and religious barriers…

WE are unalterably opposed to the military training of the young, the creation of professional armies. For us, nationalism and militarism are synonymous with fascism. Less arms and more plows! Less soldiers and more teachers! Less cannons and more bread for all!

We, Libertarian Syndicalists are against all forms of imperialism and colonialism; against the economic domination of peoples, so prevalent in the Americas; against military pressure to impose upon peoples political and economic systems foreign to their national cultures, customs and social systems as is the case in parts of Europe, Asia and Africa.

We believe that among the nations of the world, the small are as worthy as the big. Just as we remain enemies of national states because each of them holds its own people in subjection; so also are we opposed to the super-states that utilize their political, economic and military power to impose their rapacious systems of exploitation on weaker countries. As against all forms of imperialism, we declare for revolutionary internationalism; for the creation of great confederation of free peoples for their mutual interests; for solidarity and mutual aid. We believe in an active militant pacifism that demands an end to the arms race and rejection of nuclear and all other armaments.

(6) To Bureaucratic Centralism We Counterpose Federalism.

WE are inherently opposed to all centralist tendencies; political, social, and economic. We believe that the organization of society should proceed from the simple to the complex; from the bottom upwards. It should begin in the basic organisms: the municipalities, the labor unions, the peasants organizations, etc. coordinated into great national and international organizations based on mutual pacts between equals. These should be set up freely for common purposes without injury to any of the contracting parties, each of whom must always retain the right to withdraw from the agreement should it at any time be felt that such action would best serve its interests.

It is our understanding that these social organizations, the great national and international confederations of unions, peasants associations, cultural groups and municipalities, will carry

the representation of all without possessing any greater powers that those granted them by the component federated units at the base.

The liberty of peoples can only find adequate expression through a federalist type of organization, which will set the necessary limits to the freedom of each while guaranteeing the freedom of all. Experience demonstrates that political and economic centralization leads to the creation of monstrous totalitarian states; to aggression and war between nations; to the exploitation and misery of the great masses of the people.

(7) Without Individual Freedom There Can Be No Collective Freedom.

WE, Libertarian Syndicalists are firm supporters of individual rights. There can be no freedom for the community as a whole if any of its members are deprived of their freedom. There can be no freedom for the collectivity where the individual is the victim of oppression. All human rights must be guaranteed. These include freedom of expression, the right to work, to lead a decent life. Without these guarantees there can be no civilized basis for human beings to live together in society. We believe in liberty and justice for all persons, even for those holding reactionary views.

(8) The Revolution Belongs To Us All.

The Libertarian Syndicalist Group reiterates its will to support the struggle for complete liberation of our people. Affirming that the Revolution is not the exclusive property of any individual or grouping, but belongs to all the people.

Just as we have always done, we will continue to support all revolutionary measures that tend to remedy the old social ills. At the same time we shall, as always, continue our struggle against authoritarian tendencies within the Revolution itself.

We have fought against the barbarism and corruption of the past. We now oppose all deviations that attempt to undermine our Revolution by forcing it into authoritarian channelswhich are destructive of human dignity. We oppose all the reactionary groups that battle desperately to conquer their abolished privileges and we also oppose the new pseudo-revolutionary oppressive, exploiting groups that in Cuba can be already discerned on the revolutionary horizon.

We are for justice, socialism and freedom; for the well-being of all men regardless of origin, religion or race. Workers! Peasants! Students! Men and Women of Cuba! To these revolutionary concepts we will remain faithful to the end. For these principles we are willing to stake our personal freedom and if necessary our lives.

Libertarian Syndicalist Groups
La Habana, 1960

Miscellaneous Declarations 1961-1975

Statement of Cuban Libertarian Movement Addressed to its Sister Organizations of All Countries, August, 1961

... The Cuban Libertarian Movement wishes to point out that whenever the Cuban people suffered the consequences of dictatorship, our movement joined hands with those who sincerely

struggled against such dictatorships. In the various times that this has happened, it has cost our movement precious lives.

Long before the present revolutionary organizations did so, the Cuban Libertarian Movement fought by all means at its disposal, against all imperialism, especially against North American imperialism, since this was the one that most directly affected our personal liberties and out economic development. Thus, our movement cannot be accused at any time or for any reason of being indifferent to the sufferings of our people or tolerant towards any imperialism, either democratic or totalitarian. The Cuban Libertarian Movement feels that in each case it has taken the position that it should have taken as a revolutionary organization…

… Cuba is controlled by a super-statist regime based upon the most rigid Marxist school. Its planning, structure and development follow the historic pattern of similar countries, and if there is some difference between them, it is only a difference of degree.

In consequence, the Libertarian Movement of Cuba does not see in the Cuban Revolution any of the principles that can identify it with the fundamental concepts of our ideology. On the contrary, it would appear that just as in the other Marxist-Socialist countries all libertarian thought will be suppressed, man will completely lose his personality, his dignity and his rights in order to be a mere cog in the machinery of the State a process already underway. We know that Capitalist, clerical and imperialist interests are allying themselves against the Cuban Revolution. But it is also true that great numbers of workers, peasants, intellectuals and professional people maintain a virile opposition to the totalitarian regime.

The Cuban Libertarian Movement has at no time made common cause with the representatives of reaction and will not do so in the future. Nor will we accept the selfish intervention of any imperialist country in the Cuban problem. But the peoples of the Latin American continent have every right to intervene. They have a moral obligation to defend the minimum rights that have been won at so great a cost, when these rights are usurped anywhere in Latin America [or anywhere else]. In view of all we have said, the Cuban Libertarian Movement will maintain its ideological postulates under all circumstances and will struggle to the end for the freedom of the Cuban people and for the Social Revolution

The National Executive

(Names have been omitted or changed to prevent official reprisals.)

Message of the Libertarian Movement of Cuba in Exile
To The Fifth Congress of the Libertarian Federation of Argentina
(Buenos Aires, December, 1961)

The many letters we have received from individuals and from groups indicate that the international libertarian movement is not only deeply disturbed about the present situation in Cuba, but equally concerned about our general attitude with respect to Cubas problems and what the new situation would be, should the Castro dictatorship collapse or be overthrown.

We will support the revolutionary movement of the masses to solve the great problems of the country and abolish all special privileges and injustices. We will resolutely oppose all reactionary elements who today fight Castro-Communism, only because they yearn to recapture their political power and bring back the old order with all its greed and corruption. We fight against the Castro dictatorship because it signifies the strangulation of the Revolution, submitting our people to the exploitation and oppression of the new exploiting class, just as evil as its predecessor. We fight the new tyranny that placed our country at the service of Soviet-Chinese imperialism.

We must do our utmost to help the Cuban people recapture their freedom of action, by achieving the revolutionary transformation of their country in accordance with their own special interests, and in solidarity with their natural allies, the people of Latin America, who are fighting against their own feudal and capitalist regimes. We want a new Cuba, that will reorganize its social life with the most ample economic justice and most complete political freedom; because we are, above all, socialists and libertarians.

The concern of the international libertarian movement with our struggle against Castro-communism should in no way benefit nor have any connection with the sinister forces of reaction is also our concern. With all the solemnity that the critical situation warrants, with all the emphasis at our command, we, the Cuban libertarians, assure our comrades of the Libertarian Federation of Argentina that we will never make political dials with anti-Castroites to barter away our independence as a movement in its fight for freedom; nor will we subordinate the freedom of the Cuban people to the interests of Russian or American imperialism or any other foreign power.

We pledge our solidarity with all sincere underground revolutionaries struggling against the Castro tyranny. We are prepared to fight with all lovers of freedom for common aims without sacrificing our libertarian principles nor our identity as a distinct revolutionary organization.

In order to counter-balance the enormous political-economic power of the reaction which fights Castroism only because it aims to replace the Cuban dictatorship with the kind of totalitarian regime which after a quarter of a century is still oppressing the Spanish people, it will be necessary to forge an equally formidable alliance.

We do not believe that we alone, with our weak forces, can possibly overthrow Castros revolutionary government, formidablyreinforced by the technical, economic, political, and military might of the socialist countries. Furthermore, the Castro government has built up so monstrous an apparatus that it cannot be dislodged by the Cuban people alone. We consider that the best (though by no means the only) allies of the Cuban people in their struggle for justice and freedom, are the other Latin American peoples who are also fighting to emancipate themselves under different circumstances- but with the same spirit and the same ideals.To this revolutionary task we dedicate our best efforts and we urge the libertarian movement in other lands to take the initiative in uniting all libertarian forces on the basis of a general program acceptable to all.

BOLETÍN de Información Libertaria - General Delegation Libertarian Movement of Cuba - in Exile (Caracas Venezuela, July 1962)

The necessities of the war against the totalitarian regime in Cuba which has organized a political police apparatus along Soviet lines, impedes the creation of large concentrations operating openly. It makes necessary the creation of small, loosely connected, secret resistance groups carrying on a guerilla war of attrition, to wear down, exhaust and finally force the collapse of the dictatorshipThe people will make the hangmen of the revolution pay for the atrocities they have committed and give them a dose of their own medicine.

We are convinced that the line of total revolutionary action is the only viable way for the Cuban people to re-conquer their lost freedom and liquidate the Castro-communist dictatorship. We don not believe that the Cuban tragedy can be resolved by military adventures, like the invasion of April 1961. We believe that other Cuban people must learn from the methods of struggle of the Irish Republicans, the Jewish secret army of Israel, the Cyprus patriots and the Algerian resistance movements. We must adapt these methods to Cuban conditions.

For us, the principal function of the exile is to help stimulate the revolutionary action of the organizations inside Cuba, which represent the fighting will of the people. Whoever wastes time, trying to create paper organizations whose aim is to capture power, if and when the Castro-communist dictators fall is guilty of deceit and is delaying the liberation of the Cuban people.

As lifelong militant revolutionaries, we fight always for the freedom of the Cuban people to make their own revolution without becoming victims of foreign and domestic tyrants. Our main task is to agree on a plan of united action which will bring about the destruction of the Castro-communist dictatorship. While we are prepared to fight with all sincere lovers of freedom for common objectives, we will remain an independent organization and will not collaborate with the power hungry politicians who are already plotting to take over and are already creating Governments in Exile or Governments in the underground.

Agrarian Labo And The Land

(Abelardo Iglesias: Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Cuba.

Boletín de Información Libertaria - Organ of the Libertrarian Movement of Cuba - in Exile; Miami, June 1966)

The root cause for political and social unrest in Cuba, dating back to centuries of Spanish colonial domination is the horribly unjust distribution of the land. A predominantly rural country, with its economy almost totally dependent on agriculture and animal husbandrymust of necessity wipe out all vestiges of feudal property and place the land directly into the hands of the agricultural workers.

While the landed aristocracy allows vast areas of fertile land to remain uncultivated and great masses of peasants suffer the ravages of disease, hunger and poverty, the urban population enjoys a standard of living vastly superior to anything known in Latin-America.

For this reason the Libertarian Movement was always intensely concerned with the problem of organizing a radical, deeply rooted agricultural revolution. Following the example of the libertarian militants who in Mexico had been inspired by the epic of Emiliano Zapata, a group of valiant Cuban militants dedicated themselves to the emancipation of the peasants.

From the organization of a producers coffee cooperative in Monte Ruz over a half century ago, to the organization of the Peasant Federation of Cuba, in which dozens of our comrades fought, the Cuban Libertarians carried on the struggle against the rich landlords, inciting the peasants to forcibly seize uncultivated property and work the land collectively by organizing themselves into voluntary revolutionary collectives or similar cooperative organizations...

With the triumph of the Revolution of 1959, the Cuban Libertarians urged the peasants to seize the land and organize agricultural cooperatives without waiting for orders from the new Castroite authorities. This policy was undertaken for two reasons: first, to involve actively the peasant masses in the construction and administration of the new agricultural economy through their own voluntary organizations; and second, because direct action of the peasants would place economic power in their own hands, thus preventing the revolutionary state from converting free cooperators into slaves of the totalitarian regime. After a great deal of resistance, the new dictators dislodged the peasants from the land by force and threats.

The Cuban anarchists repeatedly warned against dismissing or underestimating the vital contribution that the small peasant proprietor who works the land himself with the help of his family and does not employ hired labor can make to the Revolution (this policy also applies to artisans, small workshops, cooperatives, and the thousands of specialized services without which the economy would come to a standstill. The feasibility of this policy was amply demonstrated during

the Spanish Revolution in the libertarian type rural collectives and urban socialized industry.) [To remind the reader, this extremely important point, already discussed in the article Plows, Tractors and the Guajiro (peasant) is repeated here:]

> " ...without underestimating the importance of huge cooperative farms to meet the need for agricultural products, it must be stressed that the small peasant proprietors can also contribute greatly to agricultural production by organizing themselves into collectives for the intensive cultivation of the land in common.

Joint Statement Of The Libertarians Of The Americas (published in the U.S.S by the Cuban Libertarian Movement - Miami, 1986)

Whereas: Libertarian principles are unconditionally opposed to all forms of human slavery...

Whereas: Viewed objectively, the social and political course of the so-called Cuban Revolution which has led to the establishment of a Communist regime in Cuba has cynically frustrated the aspirations of the Cuban people.

Whereas: The Castro-Communist regime is able to maintain its control over the Cuban people thanks only to the military and economic support and backing of Russia which has turned the island into one more satellite of Red Imperialism through a policy of terror, imprisonment, and crime and inhibiting the resistance and struggle of the people of Cuba against tyranny.

Whereas: The so-called Cuban Revolution, after offering land to those who work it has instead taken the land away from its former owners -including peasants- given in to the State. In the same way, all industrial and productive centers, transport, distribution, the press and in short all social, political and economic activity of the country has been taken over, subjecting the people to the will and authority of the Totalitarian State.

Whereas: All freedom of thought and expression is forbidden in Cuba, no citizen being permitted the free expression of disagreement with the political system and the norms established by the government in power; that all communications media are totally in the hands of the State; that all publication of books and other literary material is subject to the supervision and authorization of the State, and furthermore, that any oral or written expression of opposition or criticism of the government is a punishable offense.

Whereas: Over 90% of the Cuban people are against the political system that has been imposed on them by force and violence, it being a fact that after nine and a half years of Communist domination there are now 100,000 persons in Cuban prisons with the number increasing. Executions and murders of fighters for freedom are daily occurrences in the prisons and the total of these is already more than ten thousand. Over half a million persons have already fled from Cuba, by every means imaginable. These have been of all social classes, but mostly workers and peasants, and their leaving Cuba is a clear demonstration of the rejection by a people of the regime that enslaves them.

Whereas: The so-called Cuban Revolution does not in the least represent the aspirations of the Cuban people which fights and always will fight for its f'reedom with the fullest respect for human life and safety and for continual improvement in the search for peace and the social good. Therefore We, the organizations signing this Joint Statement of l.ibertarians of the Americas, declare:

That the Castro regime is at the service of Russia in its plans for the future domination of the peoples or the Americas: That the Cuban people have the legitimate right to combat and

overthrow the political regime that now oppress them: That the present struggle of the Cuban people against their oppressors and enslavers is just, and should, therefore, have the support and help of all libertarian organizations and individuals on the American Continent and of the World: That the undersigned organizations support the Cuban people in their struggle to wipe out the Totalitarian Communist State that now oppresses and enslaves them, and take upon themselves the task of denouncing before the World by every means at their command, the criminal savagery and slavery suffered by the Cuban people, as well as giving all the collaboration and support that they can in the struggle against Castro-Communism, until the Cuban people achieve their freedom.

MOVIMIENTO LIBERTARIO CUBANA EN EL EXILIO (MLCE)
LIBERTARIAN LEAGUE (USA)
ORGANIZACIÓNES LIBERTARIAS DEL PERU
FEDERACIÓN ANARQUISTA DEL MEXICO (FAM)
MOVIMIENTO LIBERTARIO DEL BRASIL
FEDERACIÓN LIBERTARIA ARGENTINA (FLA)

Message from the Cuban Libertarian Movement - in Exile
(Miami, October 1974)

TO OUR EXILED COUNTRYMEN
TO THOSE WHO SUFFER IN ENSLAVED CUBA
TO THE PEOPLES OF LATIN AMERICA
TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES

We will always remain faithful to the noble ideals which we have proclaimed and defended for so many years against all tyrants and misleaders of the people, including the Marxist-Leninists and the Castro-Communists. In defense of our principles we have always fought with equal determination against the equally bloody right-wing conservative totalitarians. For this, we have paid a very heavy price in persecution and lives.

While professing to hate tyranny, the Pope, in the name of Jesus who preached against violence and slavery, bestows his benediction on dictato Castro… Fascist Spain relates wellto totalitarian-communist Cuba… Russia donates arms and supplies to its Cuban satellite… At the same time, the great American corporations surreptitiously provide Castro with ample credit to purchase autos, buses, and other equipment. In view of the co-existence policy between the great Soviet totalitarian empire and the American-European democracies contending for the domination of Cuba, our position remains:

AGAINST BOTH POWER BLOCKS!
NEITHER THE ONE NOR THE OTHER!
ALWAYS FOR FREEDOM!
ALWAYS FOR HUMAN DIGNITY!

Without a clear, convincing program of full liberty, full human rights and well-being for all, the Cubans abroad cannot stir the oppressed people in cuba to rebel, and even less, the peoples of Latin America. For, the struggle against Castroism is not only our concern. The Latin American masses, too, are also threatened with the imposition of a Castro-type dictatorship. The plight of the oppressed, downtrodden, impoverished peasants and workers renders them receptive to communist propaganda. Their weel-trained, well-paid agents promise them a better life. The masses are naive, they know nothing about the kind of despotic communism that these agents really want to impose. They feel that they have nothing to lose, and in despoair they join.

We must counteract this threat.We must reach the masses with our constructive, practical program and warn them about the real character of the phony communists. We must tell them:

> ...you have the right to live decently. If you are a peasant, you have a right to the land you cultivate, just as you have the right to sun and air. If you are a worker, you have the right to the full product of your labor. Your children are entitled to a good education and the sick to the finest medical attention. You are a human being. You have the right to learn. To think. To act without humiliating yourself, without bowing to the will of an omnipotent, omniverous government. BEWARE! Do not follow false leaders who will enslave you, just as they enslaved your unfolrtunate fellow workers in Cuba...

[The appeal concludes with a ringing call to]

> . . . All the peoples of our America, of all classes, who do not wish to change one tyranny for another; to the Rebel Youth of this country; to all who realize the seriousness of the hour to join the crusade for the liberation of Cuba...

Declaration of the Cuban Libertarian Movement in Exile
(published in March, 1975)

It outlines, not the maximum, full anarchist blueprint for the future society, but a minimum program as the basis for a united front of all tendencies of the Cuban revolutionary movement for the immediate task of achieving the overthrow of the totalitarian regime; It sketches the first steps toward the regeneration of Cuban society. [S.D.]

Preamble: The Cuban workers are not counter-revolutionaries yearning to restore the old order. The real counter-revoluionaries are the tyrants now wielding absolute power over our country, subjecting our people to the most brutal oppression and economic exploitation. Cuba is not a socialist society. It is a totalitarian state with a militarized economy and a militarized social system. The alleged socialist property actually elongs to the State, and the State is, in fact, the property of the oligarchy commanded by the maximum leader, Fidel Castro. All political and economic power is concentrated in the hands of this minority, which constitutes the new ruling class. Therefore, our first and most important task is to destroy the totalitarian state. Only then can we reconquer the freedom to shape our own destiny and prepare the way for a social system in which the workers and peasants will become the real masters of all the means of production, distribution and public services.

Our comrades now living in Cuba in totalitarian slavery are convinced that the Cuban problem is essentially a political problem, and that our strategy should be directed toward first recuperating the indispensable civil liberties necessary to initiate a process of social change leading to a more just, more cultured, happier and freer life. The following programmatic proposals accurately express the ideas and sentiments of our comrades in Cuba.

Political Struclure: (a) The totalitarian State must be replaced by a political structure which will guarantee unrestricted civil liberties with the most scrupulous respect for human rights [freedom of speech assemblage, movement, organization, worship, etc.]. (b) The political police must be abolished. (c) Entirely autonomous municipalities and their confederation into free provinces must be established. (d) A nationally federated system based on a new, decentralized order, must

be organized. (e) Abolition of the army, maintaining only the absolute minimum of professional officers and minimum military training, is essential.

Economic Structure: We advocate (a) the land to those who work it organized and planned as the peasants themselves decide individual or family cultivation, creation of voluntary cooperatives and collectives similar to the Israeli Kibbutzim, etc.; (b) collectivization and operation of large-scale basic industries by the workers, technicians and administrators through a system of self-management, supervised by their respective unions; where necessary for the general welfare and the economy, allowance for individual or group ownership of small craft workshops and similar small-scale enterprises by artisans, (c) overall economic planning by integrated coordinated workers' organizations, technical and administrative organization… (d) in privately-owned establishments which, because of special circumstances cannot be socialized, the system of co-management, participation by the workers, shall prevail.Social Structure: All social services shall be redered and administered by the unions, municipalities and other federated bodies, which will guarantee to all Cubans the following free services: maternity care, other medical and health services' unemployment benefits, access to cultural and entertainment facilities… (b) Free ectucation shall be provided at all levels and in all areas [primary and high school, university, technical and artistic school, etc.]. (c) Free housing will be provided for all.

Conclusions: With the passage of time, and under the dictatorship, the long-suffering people of Cuba have endured profound changes in their way of life. The mentality of the young people who have come to maturity under the dictatorship differs greatly from that of the preceding generation. To try to turn back the clock to a bygone era is both utopian and absurd. If we are to succeed, we must be realistic, take into account the present situation and act accordingly: this means eliminating existing evils, retaining that which is valuable, and initiating new and progressive changes in the quality of Cuban life.

[After outlining the structure of the proposed united front of the Cuban libertarian movement of resistance in exile which would insure mutual solidarity while retaining the full independence of participating organizations, the Declaration goes on to stress that] In the new Cuba, the labor movement must be organized according to federalist principles in industrial unions totally independent of the state and of political parties. Only thus can we assure freedom of movement, initiative and creative action.

Summation: Revolution and Counter-Revolution

(Translated from Accion Lihertaria, Organ of the Argentine Libertarian Federation, Buenos Aires, July 1961)

The heroic impetus of a people that overthrows a dictatorship and expels the tyrant and his assassinsTHAT IS REVOLUTION.

But to assume absolute power in order to accomplish by dictatorial methods that which the recently liberated people should themselves do THIS IS COUNTER-REVOLUTION.

To cleanse the country of the abuses of the regime that has been overthrown THAT IS REVOLUTION.

But to establish terror for the shameless, pitiless extermination of those who will not conform to the new dictaorship THIS IS COUNTER-REVOLUION.

To assume the direct participation of the peoples in all of the new creations and accomplishments THAT IS REVOLUION.

But to dictate by decree how things should be done and to canalize the accomplishments under the iron control of the state THIS IS COUTER-REVOLUION.

To seize the lands for those who work them, organizing them in free peasant communities THAT IS REVOLUTION.

But to twist the Agrarian Reform, exploiting the guajiro as an employee of the National INstitute of Agrarian Reform THIS IS COUNTER-REVOLUTION.

To expropriate capitalist enterprises, turning them over to the workers and technicians THAT IS REVOLUTION.

But to convert them into State monopolies in which the producer's only right is to obey THIS IS COUNTER-REVOLUTION.

To eliminate the old armed forces such as the army and the police THAT IS REVOLUTION. But to establish obligatory militias and maintain an army subservient to the governing clique THIS IS COUNTER-REVOLUTION.

To oppose foreign intervention in the lives of the people, and repudiate all imperialism THAT IS REVOLUTION.

But to deliver the country to some foreign powers under the pretence of defense against others THIS IS COUNTER-REVOLUTION.

To permit the free expression and activity of all truly revolutionary forces and tendencies THAT IS REVOLUTION.

But to recognize only one single party, persecuting and exterminating as counter-revolutionaries, those who oppose communist infiltration and domination THIS IS COUNTER-REVOLUTION.

To make the University a magnificent center of culture, controlled by the professors, alumni and students THAT IS REVOLUTION.

But to convert the University into an instrument of governmental policy, expelling and persecuting those who will not submit THIS IS COUNTER-REVOLUTION.

To raise the standard of living of the workers through their own productive efforts inspired by the feneral welkfare THAT IS REVOLUION.

But to impose plans prepared by the State agencies and demand obligatory tribute from those who labor THIS IS COUNTER-REVOLUTION.

To establish schools and combat illiteracy THAT IS REVOLUTION.

But to indoctrinate the children in the adoration of the dictator and his close associates, militarizing these children in the service of the State THIS IS COUNTER-REVOLUTION.

To give the labor unions full freedom to organize and administer themselves as the basic organs of the new economy THAT IS REVOLUION.

But to stamp these with the seal of subordination to the dominant regime THIS IS COUNTER-REVOLUTION.

To sow the countryside with new constructive peoples organizations of every sort, stimulating free initiative within them THAT IS REVOLUTION.

But to prohibit them or inhibit their action, chaining them to the doctrine and to the organisms of State power THIS IS COUNTER-REVOLUTION.

To call on the solidarity of all peoples, of the decent men and women of the World, in support of the revolutionary people who are building a new life THAT IS REVOLUTION.

But to identify with Russian totalitariansism as a Socialist State of the type acceptable to the Soviet Empire THIS IS COUNTER-REVOLUTION.

All those forward steps that were taken by the Cuban people under the banner of liberty, which shone forth as a great hope for all the Americas and for the World, WAS THE CUBAN REVOLUTION.

The bloody dictatorship of Fidel Castro and his clique, whatever the masdk it may wear or the objectives it may claim to have, IS THE REAL COUNTER-REVOLUTION.

Chapter 12: Cuba in the 1960s and the 1970s

To what extent is our assessment of the early years of the Cuban Revolution still relevant to the Cuba of the late 0960s ans the 1970s? Have there been significant changes, not in minor respects, but in the general DIRECTION of the Revolution?

Forming the "New Man"

Between 1966 and 1970 the Cuban leaders attemted to steer the Revolution in another direction. In accordance with the ideas of Che Guevara, they decided to begin building the new communist society; gradually do away with money and the money economy; distribute goods and services according to the essential principle of communism, "From each according to his ability and to each according to his needs," and in the process, form the "New Man". The "New Socialist Man" is a self-sacrificing idealist who willingly and gladly works not for his private gain, but for the welfare of society. Strongly animated by moral-ethical incentives, the "New Man" does not have to be compelled to fulfill his obligations by the authoritarian decrees of a dictatorial government.

Castro declared that: "... the great task of the Revolution is basically the task of forming the New Socialist Man ... the man of a truly revolutionary consciousness..." (speech in Las Villas, July 26, 1968) The Cuban rulers even boasted that in respect to the building of comunism (distribution, revoutionary consciousness of the people, equalization of income, etc.) Cuba was far ahead of the Soviet Union.

But all attempts to institute socialism by decree, as Bakunin foresaw over a century ago, leads inevitably to the enslavement of the people by the authoritarian State. Their attempt to build communism failed because the "new socialist man" can be formed only within the context of a new and free society, based not upon compulsion, but upon voluntary cooperation. The attempt failed because it was not implemented by thoroughgoing libertarian changes in the authoritarian structure of Cuban society. Communization and forming the new manactually camouflaged the militarization of Cuba. Castro made this clear:

"...today I can see an immense army, the army of a highly organized, disciplined and enthusiastic nation ready to fulfill whatever task is set..." In his speech of August 23, 1968, Castro announced his decision to militarize the whole island and give absolute priority to the economic battle and to achieve this, the absolute need for a dictatorship of the proletariat exercised by the Communist Party... (see K.S. Karol; Guerillas in Power; New York, 1970, p. 447-448, 528).

The communization turned out to be a cruel hoax. It took on the familiar characteristics of typical totalitarian regimes. This stage of the Cuban Revolution has been correctly identified as the Mini-Stalin Era. Moulding the New Manaccording to totalitarian specifications connotes the process of training people to become obedient serfs ot the state: and moral incentives becomes a device to enlist the participation of the masses in their own enslavement. To their everlasting credit the workers resisted:

"...a wave of sabotage beset the countrys economy. Saboteurs burned a tannery in l.as Villas Province, a leather store in Havana, a chicken-feed factory in Santiago, a chemical fertilizer depot in Manzanillo, a provincial store belonging to the Ministry of Internal Commerce in Camaguey, and so on... Castro also gave a long list of acts of sabotage in schools and on building sites... (Karol; ibid. p 447)

The resistance of the people in addition to the suicidal economic adventures of the dictatorship hastened the collapse of Guevaras scheme.

Relations with Russia

Since 1968, when Castro endorsed the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia, the USSR has increasingly dominated Cuban affairs. The Cuban economy has been even more closely integrated into the Coviet orbit since Cuba in 1972 joined the Comecon (Council for Economic Assistance eight-nation Russian controlled economic trading bloc).

The extent of Cubas absolute dependence on Russian economic support can be gauged by the increase of Cubas trade with Russia which in 1972 reached 72% - about the same percentage of trade a with the United States in the 1950s. Assording to Vladimir Novikov, Vice-President of the UUSR Council of Ministers, trade between Russia and Cuba in 1970 amounted to three billion rubles a year or about three and a half million dollars a day; an increase of 60% in four yeras. (see Carmelo Meas-Lago; Cuba in the 1970s University of New Mexico, 1974, pp.9-11)

Under the terms of the economic agreement between Russia and Cuba, "... the Cubans committed themselves to accepting Russian advice and planning of key industries for three years (1973 to 1975, inclusive) .." Russia agreed to construct two new textile plants, a new nickel and cobalt combine with a capacity of 30,000 tons a year, thermo-nuclear plants, a railroad line between Havana and Santiago de Cuba, a factory to rnake reinforced concrete, reconstruction of Cuban ports, a new television and radio factory, etc. etc... (Herbert Matthews, Revolution in Cuba; New York, 1975, p. 398, 399)

Russian military aid has turned Cuba into one of the most formidable military powers in Latin America. In 1970, Cuba reccivcd ... one and a half billion dollars of direct military aid from Russia - double the amount of United States military aid to the rest of Latin America. . . (Juan de Onis, report to the New York Times; May 10, 1970). Through a joint Soviet-Cuban Commission, the USSR not only supervises its military and economic shipments to Cuba, but also exercises de facto control of the Cuban economy.

It is this dependence which accounts for Castros conversion to Marxism-Leninism. His brazen hypocrisy transcends all respect for truth. Even Herbert Matthews, one of Castro s staunchest admirers, is outraged!

"openly critical of the Kremlins [policy of] 'peaceful coexistence' ... by 1973 he was brazenly asserting that even the attack on the Moncada Barracks in Santiago de Cuba twenty years before (1953) was an example of Marxism-Leninism..." [Matthews quotes Castro] ... without the extraordinary scientific discoveries of Marx and Engels, and without the inspired interpretation of Lenin and his prodigious historic feat [conquest of power in Russian Revolution] a 26th of July could not have been conceived of... [Speech on the 20th anniversary of the Moncada attack]

”…this factually was pure nonsense. There was only one Communist in the 1953 attack and he is a political accident. None of the participants could have given a thought to Marx, Engels or Lenin, least of all Fidel. Castro was rewriting history to suit … political needs…” (ibid. P. 390)

Castro’s unrestrained flattery of his Russian saviors, rivals the praise heaped upon Stalin by his idolatrous sycophants. A front page featured report of Brezhnev’s visit to a new vocational school under the headline: BREZHNEV INAUGURATES V I. LENIN VOCATIONAL SCHOOL, reads:

> ”Dear Comrade Brezhnev: During whole months the teachers, workers, students and students of this school and the construction workers were preparing for your visit.. .”
>
> ”WE WELCOME YOU WITH THE GREAT AFFECTION YOU DESERVE AS GENERAL-SECRETARY OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE GLORIOUS PARTY OF THE SOVIET UNION. . . ” APPLAUSE!
>
> ”It’s a great honor and a reason for deep joy and satisfaction for all of us that this school bearing LENIN’S BRIGHT AND GLORIOUS NAME should be inaugurated by you, who now occupies his distinguished place in the Communist Party of The Soviet Union. (APPLAUSE)
>
> ”ETERNAL GLORY TO VLADIMIR ILYIICH LENIN!” (APPLAUSE!) ”LONG LIVE THE INDESTRUCTIBLE FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN CUBA AND THE SOVIET UNION ”’ (APPLAUSE AND SHOUTS OF ”LONG MAY IT LIVE!)
>
> PATRIA O MUERTE! VENCEREMOS! (SHOUTS OF: ”VENCEREMOS’”)
>
> (OVATION)
> (GRANMA February 10, 1974)

It is axiomatic that relations between states are not guided by ethical moral considerations. To promote their interests states do not hesitate to resort to the most revolting treachery and hypocricy. The conduct of the Cuban government confirms this universally acknowledged fact. Castro established friendly relations with Franco-fascist Spain. Maurice Halperin remarks that:

> ”…in 1963 mutual economic benefits proved stronger than ideology ..and by the end of the year all references to ’fascist Spain’ disappeared from the Cuban media … trade between Cuba and Spail increased from eleven million dollars in 1962 to approximately one hundred and three million dollars in 1966 - making Spain Cuba’s third most important trading partner…” (ibid p. 304) Castro went so far as to agree in 1971 in a trade agreement with Spain to pay Spain for all expropriated Spanish owned property nationalized by Cuba. (see Matthews, p. 405)

Agriculture

The economic expert on Cuba, Carmelo Mesa-Lago, concludes that ”…agriculture, especially sugar, the backbone of the Cuban economy, has had a discouragingly bad performance under the Revolution since 1961 … according to the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United

Nations (FAO) total agricultural output in 1969 was 7% below that of 1958 (before the Revolution). (Cuba in the 1970s; University of New Mexico, 1974, p.56)

Even Dumont, the distinguished agronomist, after recalling that Castro boasted that Oriente Province would be producing 1.3 million litres of milk daily by 1969 reversed this optimistic prediction and admitted in his 26th of July, 1970, speech that "...in the first half of 1970 milk production decreased by 25%. In 1968 beef deliveries were 154,000 tons -for 1970, deliveries decreased to 145,000 tons; and Castro declared that we may end up with a further decline in livestock. . . " (Is Cuba Socialist? New York, 1972 pp. 90 - 142) (The economist Lowery Nelson calculates that yearly per-capita meat consumption fell from seventy pounds in 1958 to only 38 pounds in 1972. See Matthews, ibid p. 367.)

Cubans have been living on a severely restricted diet since rationing of foodstuffs and other necessities was introduced in 1962. Dumont severely castigates the Castro regime for this tragic situation. He deserves to be quoted at length:

> "...given its fertile land, its level of technique, its tractors, its fertilizers -all infinitely superior to China's resourcesthere is no reason for Cuba's failure to end shortages of fruits and vegetables that have been going on since 1961 ... neglect of people's needs for food amounts to contempt... (ibid. p. 142)
>
> "...instead of the green belt for Havana, I had proposed in 1960 (to make the city practically self-sustaining in fruits, vegetables, etc.) ... in 1969, the peasants forced to plant only sugar cane or coffee, who had formerly suppled the city, now became consumers instead of providers of food ... the vegetable and fruit crop for Havana Province decreased from 90,000 tons in 1967 to 70,000 tons in 1970..." (ibid. p. 67)
>
> "...in 1969 Castro promised: 'We'll have so many bananas, that we wont sell them to you. We'll GIVE them to you.' But I saw mile upon mile of banana plantations where the trees were dying because they were platned in poorly drained soil ... the average peasant would have avoided this gross error... there were only enough bananas for ill people and children... no one could buy a single banana; and this in a land where bananas were not a luxury, but a daily staple preferred to bread..." (ibid. p. 90)
>
> ". . . Everywhere, from Bayamo to Havana, vegetables, fruits and clothing disappeared from the stores ... shortages which had been bearable until then became shocking and dramatic..." [Dumont attributes much of the shortages and lack of services to the abolition of small shops and severe curtailment of small peasant holdings] ... when the last small shops and various services went, an important supplementary food source disappeared, because State production [nationalization] was unable to replace it. That meant that food was in short supply..." (ibid. p. 63)

According to Joe Nicholson, Jr., (Inside Cuba: New York, 1974, p. 33) the 1974 monthly ration for each person was 6 pounds of rice, 3 pounds of meat, 3 pounds of beans, 2 pounds of spaghetti, 1½ pounds of noodles, I pound of salt, 12 ounces of flour, 6 ounces of coffee, 15 eggs, 3 containers of canned milk (fresh milk only for children and the aged). Even sugar was rationed to only four pounds per month per person! (According to an announcement monitored on Miami Radio Dec. 1975, sugar is to be removed from the rationing list.)

There is no doubt that Castro together with his amateur economic adventurers are directly responsible for the continuing deterioration of the Cuban economy. Their grandiose and impossible 1970 ten million ton sugar goal turned out to be a major catastrophe. Almost the entire working population (including students and others not engaged directly in production) were mobilized in military fashion to work in the cane fields. "...many essential activities" (writes Maurice Halperin) "were brought to a standstill ... this economic nightmare set back the entire economy to its lowest point since the Revolution (Jan. 1, 1959 ... the economy held up only because of massive Russian subsidies... " (Rise and Decline of Fidel Castro; University of California, 1972, p. 316)

Taking full responsibility for this debacle, Castro in a major speech (July 26, 1970) admitted that;

> "...our incapacity in the overall work of the Revolution -especially rnine ... our apprenticeship as directors of the Revolution was too costly. . . " (quoted Rene'Dumont; ibid. p. 152)
>
> On the extent of waste, inefficiency and mismanagement there is voluminous documentation - a few examples:
>
> "...50.000 tractors imported since 1959 were used for all sorts of non-productive purposes ... driving to baseball games ... visiting relatives, etc. Castro said, ...the former owner of a private business had a tractor. It lasted twenty years. But later, when ownershipo passed to the state, a tractor lasted only two, three, or maybe four years..."
>
> ...imported equipment lay unutilized for years ... rusting on the docks because the building to house the equipment had not been constructed ... in 1971, 120 million cubic yards of water were lost in Havana alone because of a neglect of maintenance... of the waterpipe system... President of Cuba Dorticós reported in early 1972 ... that out of 3000 locomotives only 134 were working ... a time-loss study published in 1970 revealed that from ¼ to ½ of the workday were wasted ... in late 1973, Raul Castro said that it was common in state farms that labor costs alone exceeded value of production ... on one state farm the annual wage bill was $48,000 while the value of output was $8,000...
>
> (Mesa-lago; ibid. Pp.33, 34, 37)

To illustrate the bureaucratic maze choking the Cuban economy, Rene Dumont reveals: ...that in Cuba the exportation of a single case of vegetables involves authorizations for packing, refrigeration, as well as loading ... this requires the coordination of thirteen government bureas none of them in a hurry... (Ibid. P. 90.)

Even the pro-Castro economists, Huberman and Sweezy, deplored the bureaucratic structure of the Cuban economy, citing the major agrarian economic agency INRA (National Institute of Agrarian Retorm) as an example:

...coordination was difficult, often impossible... the situation was no better industry. Having all industry under the centralized control of one agency in Havana could not be but an unwieldy and inefficient arrangement... (Socialism in Cuba; New York, 1969, pp. 82-83)

Non-Agricultural Production

According to incomplete, scanty data gathered by Mesa-Lago, industrial production declined in 1969-1970. It improved in 1972: 48% in steel; 28% in beverages; 11% in fishing; 44% in building materials; 41% in salt; 200% in refrigeration, etc. There were also increases in the production of telephone wire, glass containers, plastics, cosmetics and great increases in nickel and copper production. Overall production increased 14% in 1972 and 15% in the first nine months of 1973.

Information about thc ecorlomic sittlation in Cuba is, as Mesa-Lago puts it, "necessarily fragmentary...there are no accurate statistical data - and in many areas, none at all-..." Claims by Castro and official Cuban sources concerning the extent of Cuba's economic progress cannot be verified and "...must be taken very cautiously..." (All above data, Mesa-Lago; ibid. pp. 52-60) Rene'Dumont also complains that ...the organization of Cuba's economy is such that it has become all but impossible to obtain reliable data..." (Is Cuba Socialist?; p. 71)

Castro is not overly optimistic about the rate of Cubas future economic progress. He cautions the people not to expect spectacular increases in production:

the objectives of our people in the material field cannot be very ambitious ... we should work in the next ten years to advance our economy at an average annual rate of 6%. (quoted, Mesa Lago; ibid. p. 59).

In view of Castro's record of fantastically exaggerated claims and broken promises, the prospects for a significant betterment of the standard of living of the Cuban masses are indeed dim.

Chapter 13: Structure of Power in Cuba

In the first phase of authoritarian revolutions, the revolutionary elite (sometimes commanded by a personal dictator) seizes and consolidates power on the pretext that it is acting in the "name of the people." But in order to govern the country and carry out the decrees of the leadership, every regime must eventually institutionalize its power by creating a permanent, legally established bureaucratic administrative apparatus.

To implement institutionalization, Castro, in 1970, launched the reorganization of his government and the drafting of a new constitution, proclaiming that the Revolution had now come of age and the people could now be trusted to more self-rule. Castro promised the enactment of measures to expedite the decentralization of his administration; expand local autonomy and worker's self-management of industry, democratize the mass organizations and create new state agencies designed to encourage more participation of the people in local and national affairs. (We list the more important changes and our comments under appropriate headings.)

Reorganization of the Governmental Structure

In 1973 the top governmental structure was reorganized in the following manner:

1) The division of the government into legislative, executive, and judicial sections was rejected as "bourgeois." The functions of the three branches are concentrated into the Council of Ministers, "... the supreme ... organ of State power ..." In addition to the Council of Ministers, there are a number of affiliated national agencies such as Agriculture and Husbandry Development, the Fishing and Forestry Institute, the National Poultry Board and a number of cultural bodies (the Institutes of Cinema, Literature, the National Council of Culture and similar groupings).

2) Actually, the real power is exercised by the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers (equivalent to a Cabinet) composed of ten Deputy Prime Ministers who control and coordinate their respective departments and agencies. These departments include: basic industry and energy; consumer goods industries and domestic trade; the sugar industry; non-sugar agriculture; construction; transportation and communications; education and welfare. "... The Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers was created pursuant to the orientation of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Cuba ..."

3) At the intermediate levels, Coordinating Provincial Councils appointed by the Deputy Prime Ministers of the Executive Committee in "... coordination with the Provincial Delegates of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party will carry out ... the directives issued from above ... by the corresponding central authority ..." (i.e., the Deputy Prime Ministers of the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers.)

4) "... the Prime Minister of the Council of Ministers, Fidel Castro Ruz, who also presides over the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers will be directly in charge of the following agencies: Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR), Minsitry of the Interior, National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA) and Ministry of Public Health ..."

Since Castro is also the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba (CPC) and since every major ministry and agency head is a member of the CPC and is appointed by Castro, Herbert Matthews (a Castro sympathizer) reluctantly concludes that: "... all the organs of state power are under Castro's direct command. He is all-powerful and it is his Revolution ... Castro does not want – or dare – to create a self-governing administration, a managerial apparatus, an autonomous political party, a powerful military elite; because any one of them could threaten his power ..."[1].

Following the Stalinist pattern, the Cuban State is a structured pyramid in which absolute power is ultimately exercised by an individual (Castro) or by a collective dictatorship as in post-Stalin Russia.

The Judicial System

There is no independent judiciary. "... the courts [reads the law] receive instructions from the leadership of the Revolution which are compulsory..." The judicial system is only an agency of the Council of Ministers, which regulates and controls all courts and legal agencies. The highest judicial administrative body is the Council of Ministers of the Supreme People's Court, which transmits to the lower courts the "... instructions of the leadership of the Revolution which are compulsory..."[2] The system centralizes all four judicial branches: ordinary, military, political, and the People's Courts for minor offenses. The judges of the People's Courts are laymen. The President of the Republic, the Ministers, and the members of the Political Bureau of the CPC are exempt from the jurisdiction of the courts and can be tried only by special Party courts.[3] Private law practice is prohibited. Defendants in court cases can be represented only by state appointed lawyers even when the State itself is being sued. Judges, juries, and other judicial personnel must be ideologically reliable.[4] "... knowledge and study of Marxism-Leninism, Marxist sociology, and the materialist interpretation of history are indispensible prerequisites for the true integral education of a revolutionary judge..."[5]

The Communist Party of Cuba (CPC)

Under the name "People's Socialist Party" (PSP) the Communist Party was organized in 1925. Under Castro, it was known as Integrated Revolutionary Organizations (ORI); the United Party of the Socialist Revolution (PURS) and, since 1965, as the Communist Party of Cuba (CPC).

The Communist Party was never on good terms with Castro, not only because of its collaboration with Batista, but also because it ridiculed Castro's historic July 26th, 1953, attack on the Moncada Barracks (now commemorated as a national holiday). The communists called the attack a "bourgeois putschist adventure." Moreover, the communists took no part in the fight against Batista and sabotaged Castro's call for a general strike to unseat Batista. The communists came

[1] Herbert Mattews, Cuba in Revolution; New York, 1975, p. 379

[2] Carmelo Mesa-Lago, Cuba in the 1970s; University of New Mexico, 1974, p. 68

[3] ibid. p. 68 (unless otherwise noted, Mesa-Lago's sources are from Granma, the official organ of the Communist Party of Cuba)

[4] Mesa-Lago; ibid. p.68

[5] Granma; Jan. 6, 1974

to Castro only a few months before the overthrow of Batista, when they saw that Castro was going to win.

The revolution was made in spite of the opposition of the Party. Since the Party did not, as in Russia, initiate revolutionary action and seize power, it was in no position to dictate terms to Castro in exchange for its collaboration. The Party was accepted only on condition that it acknowledged Castro's leadership and accepted without question all his ideological, political and economic policies.

Castro dominates the CPC, much like Stalin. The members of the Communist Party's Central Committee belong to Castro's clique. Castro himself (as already noted) is the First Secretary of the Party and his brother Raul ranks next. There is, of course, no democracy within the Party. Thus, when Anibal Escalante was accused of "micro-factionalism" (a crime that is not even listed in the penal code), because he tried to subordinate Castro to the discipline of the Communist party, he was sentenced to 15 years at hard labor. "...Escalante and his lawyers were deprived even of the right to address a single word in self-defense to the court and the public documents contain no defense pleas of any kind..."[6]

The CPC does not make policy. Its function is to carry out government orders, not to govern, or, as Maurice Halperin puts it: "...the function of the CPC is to mobilize the population for goals set by Castro himself..."[7]

In Cuba, the CPC fulfulls the same preponderent role as in Russia and the other "socialist countries." The expanding role of the CPC in the reorganization process is manifested in its growing membership, which increased from 55,000 in 1969 to 200,000 in 1975. The estimated membership of the Union of Communist Youth is about 300,000. 85% of armed forces officers also belong to the CPC. An interesting sidelight: according to Verde Olivio (organ of the Armed Forces) the composition of the Central Committee of the CPC was 67% military (including 57 Majors), 26 professionals and only 7% workers. In addition to the 6 secretariats of the CPC in the provinces, there were in 1973, 60 district secretariats, 401 in the municipalities and 14,360 party cells in mass organizations, factories and rural areas.

The Communist Party governs Cuba and Castro rules the Communist Party. The Stalinist subservience of the CPC to Castro was stressed by Armando Hart (in 1969, Organizing Secretary of the CPC) in a speech at the University of Havana:

> ...can anyone analyze or study theoretical questions, raised, for instance, by philosophy, the roads to Communism; or any field of culture, mainly those of social science and philosophy, without taking into account the ideas and concepts of Fidel [Castro] and Che [Guevara]?...[8]

The first post-Castro Congress of the CPC (Dec., 1975) ratified the new constitution drawn up by the veteran communist leader Blas Roca and the juridical committee of the Party Central Committee. The CPC was proclaimed as the "... supreme leading force of Cuban society and the State." The national program of the Party was approved and the tentative first five year economic plan for 1976-1980 inclusive was also recommended.

[6] K.S. Karol, Guerillas in Power; New York, 1970, p. 472

[7] The Rise and Decline of Fidel Castro; University of California, 1974, p. 133

[8] Granma, Sept. 28, 1969 – quoted, Halperin, ibid. p. 17

Pending implementation of the new directives of the Congress, the CPC is headed by a 100 member Central Committee. Below the Provincial Committees are the Regional and Municipal Committees down to the factory and farm cells. At every level of this complicated, autocratically centralized organization, the orders of the high command (Castro's clique) are faithfully carried out.

Driven by the necessity to remain on good terms with his saviors, the "socialist countries" upon whom his survival depends, Castro falsifies the history of his relations with the Cuban communists, affirming now what he vehemently denied before. His mouthpiece, Granma (August 16, 1975) hypocritically stressed that:

> ... throughout its history our nation's first communist party performed tremendous work disseminating Marxist-Leninist ideas; fought the local oligarchy and against imperialism and selflessly defended all democratic demands of the working class ...[9]

People's Democracy and Decentralization

In the summer of 1974 an experiment in democracy and decentralization was initiated in Matanzas Province. Municipal, district and provincial Organizations of the People's Power (PPO) were established. 5,597 production and service units were handed over to the PPO. The PPO performs the combined functions of city council and local administration, and also takes on certain functions of the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR) etc. 90% of the people voted in the elections, but "60% of the deputies are communists and young communist members ..."[10]

An interview with a high official of the PPO proves that the much publicized "decentralization," "democracy," and "people's self-management of affairs" allegedly being instituted in Cuba is a brazen fraud:

> Q) Is the establishment of self-governing Organs of People's Power (PPO) to promote mass participation in local and provincial administration part of the process of reinforcing the Dictatorship of the Proletariat? A) Actually the establishment of the PPO – being tried out as an experiment in Matanzas – is part of the process. Q) On what principles are the PPO based? A) The Communist Party is the principal, the indispensable organism for the construction of socialism in our country and, as such, directs as it deems best all the organizations and organisms, including of course the Organs of People's Power.[11]

This system, patterned after the fake Russian "soviets," actually reinforces the dictatorship.

The Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR)

"... What [asked K.S. Karol] has become of the many rank-and-file organizations that were once so dynamic? ... these organizations have ceased to exist on anything but paper. They became

[9] International Affairs Monthly; Moscow, Nov. 1975, p. 17
[10] ibid. p. 17
[11] Granma, May 28, 1974

puppets ... for example, the CDR ... spring into action when it comes to tracking down bad citizens and small traders. The CDR has been reduced to mere appendages of the "Seguridad" [National Police Force] ..."[12] And Herbert Matthews writing five years later in 1975 states flatly that the CDR is now completely "... under the control of the Communist Party ... Besides spying the CDR also performs certain functions such as helping to organize vaccinations for polio, diptheria and measles, and sees to it that parents send their children to school, that food and other rations are fairly handled, etc. ..."[13]

The CDR is actually a vast, intricate network reaching into every neighborhood, every home and even into the personal life of every man, woman and child in Cuba. The following verbatim conversation with a native Cuban tells more about the operations of the Cuban Police State and the total obliteration of individual freedom than any number of abstract academic dissertations or statistical tables:

> ... I ran into a hurricane of a woman named Mrs. S. "The famous literacy campaign," she stormed, "was indoctrination. There was no dissent ... It was like a new Dark Age in Cuba. These spies of the CDR know who visits me and whom I visit ... Under Mr. Castro, it is suddenly my neighbor's duty to know how I live. Everybody knows that in a civilized country your home is your fortress ... Here in Cuba, every jackass is knocking on your door to give you advice on who is dangerous ... They want to take the lock off my door ... You think I exaggerate? Well, you don't live here ... Our deepest need is to be our own selves, different, non-conformist ... My motto is 'leave people alone' ... It is intolerable to have only one power in the State ... even a righteous power ... because human beings have a perverse desire to say NO – even to righteousness – to disagree.
>
> [A medical student told the visitor:] We all know who are the self-appointed spies. Go and talk to Mrs. Blanco. [The visitor quotes her:] ... Yes, I know what everybody says about me, but I have to see that people do not do certain things – like being absent from work. No absenteeism on THIS block ... [An absentee who claimed sickness – "Stress" he called it – was actually, unbeknwn to his wife, visiting his girlfriend. When Mrs. Blanco threatened to expose him to his wife;] ... he was all right for two days [she said] – I checked with his work place – Two days, and then more "stress" ... He was hungry for his girlfriend ... I felt like following him one day and catching him out ... because, after all, it IS MY BUSINESS ... He is a parasite letting down my block ... I wondered if I should not talk to his girlfriend ... warn her to keep away from him, break relations ... I am not saying anything ... but I am watching from here what is happening ... but what a pain if his wife finds out! ...[14]

Rene Dumont tells that in the barracks of the "machateros" (cane cutters) working away from home: "... there are sometimes little signs that read: 'Sleep quietly. The Revolution is watching over your wife.' As a matter of fact, if a 'machatero's' wife is visited by a man, the husband gets a telegram from the local CDR ..."[15]

[12] Karol, ibid. p. 457

[13] Mattews, ibid. p. 15

[14] Barry Reckord, Does Fidel Eat More than Your Father?; New York, 1971, pgs. 60-69

[15] Rene Dumont, Is Cuba Socialist? New York, 1974, p. 137

Cuban Youth Rebels

In the spring of 1972, Jaime Crombat, Secretary of the Young Communist League, complained that among the youth there was a "... backward minority who neither study nor work — or do so only under pressure – those who, permeated by the old ideology ... maintain a conduct contrary to socialist morals ..."[16] Mesa-Lago's painstaking research unearths the true situation. He deserves to be quoted at length:

> "... in spite of the remarkable progress in education, i.e., reduction in the illiteracy rate ... serious deficiencies were reported. In April, 1971, out of the number of school-age youngsters 14 to 16 years old, there were 300,000 who neither worked nor studied: 23% among 14 year olds, 44% among 15 year olds, and 60% among 16 year olds. The dropout rate was worse – more in rural areas (88%) than in urban areas (66%). In elementary schools, 69% of those who attended classes in 1965 did not finish in 1971 ... students showed a lack of concern for socialist property ..." According to the Minister of Education, 50% of the books sent to school were lost every year due to carelessness. Castro exploded in indignation: "... there is something wrong when we have to educate our young people in the need to care for socialist property ... loafers, people who don't work, criminals are the ones who destroy ..."
>
> ... in the same speech Castro denounced the youth for wearing "extravagant" foreign fashions [Too tight pants and long hair in the case of boys. Too short mini-skirts in the case of girls.], liking "decadent literature." In some cases, "... the youth were used by counter-revolutionaries against the Revolution ..." Castro found "residual manifestations" of prostitution and homosexuality. In 1967, minors participated in 41% of all crimes committed in the nation. Four years later the percentage rises to 50%...[17]
>
> ... in 1972, Joe Nicholson, Jr., a sympathetic journalist who visited Cuba, asked Cuban officials why boys are not allowed to wear long hair. The official answered that if one boy is allowed to be different in hair, dress or behavior, the rest might request the right to be different, too. This in turn, would create controversy, something that was considered incorrect...[18]

Measures to correct this situation included compulsory military service, military units to aid production, and to work in construction, irrigation and other projects. Nevertheless, it was reported that the number of youngsters in the 13 to 16 year bracket who committed offenses remained unchanged. Castro alleged that the high juvenile delinquency rate was due to the fact that they were exempt from criminal punishments by the courts. In May 1973, legal liability was reduced from 18 to 16 years and tough penalties up to life imprisonment were imposed for crimes against the economy, abnormal sexual behavior and other offenses.

> ... The drop-out problem was partially solved through the SMO (compulsory military service) and the Youth Centennial Columns. The SMO recruits numbered 300,000 in

[16] Mesa-Lago, ibid. pgs. 93-96
[17] Mesa-Lago, ibid. pgs. 93-96
[18] Mesa-Lago, ibid. pg. 97

1972 (about one third of all youngsters between 16 and 17). In 1973 both these youth organizations were merged into the Youth Army of Work (EJT) ...[19]

Plight of the Workers

The promised abolition of house rents and increasing wages of the lowest paid workers was not kept. Likewise, full pay for sick and retired workers was eliminated. There was no lessening of the severe food rations in 1973. One of the main resolutions of the 13th Congress of the Cuban Confederation of Labor (CTC), Nov., 1973, restored the worst features of the capitalist wage system – payment according to output, instead of according to need. In this speech to the closing session of the Congress, Castro tried to justify this policy: "... paying the same wage for the same type of work without taking into account the effort required to do it, is an equalitarian principle we must correct ... payment should be measured in physical terms according to the complexity and skill required to do the job ..." In line with this policy, 132 million pesos were allotted to raise wages for technicians in order to spur them to "increase their productivity."[20] At the First Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba (Dec. 1975), the motto "From each according to his ability; to each according to his WORK." was displayed in huge red letters.

Wages are linked to work quotas. Every worker is given a quota. If the quota is not fullfilled, wages are proportionally reduced. Purchase of scarce appliances (television sets, refrigerators, washing machines, etc.) are allotted not according to the worker's need but according to his correct attitude (obeying orders, patriotism, overfullfillment of work quotas, etc.) The faithful wage slave will be allowed to spend his vacation at the better resorts and be granted first access to housing.[21]

Actually, the 13th Congress of the CTC rejected the right of the Unions to defend the interests of the workers. According to the resolutions, there are no conflicts. The State, the Communist Party, and the unions are partners cooperating always to produce "more and better products and services; to promote punctual attendance at work; to raise political consciousness; to follow the Communist Party directives ..."[22]

To get a job, every worker must carry an identity card and a file with a full work record of his "merits" and "demerits." "Merits" include voluntary unpaid labor, overfullfillment of work quotas, working overtime without pay, postponing retirement to keep on working, defense of State property, and a high level of political consciousness. "Demerits" are "activities that negatively affect production, disturb discipline, lower the level of political consciousness ..."[23]

In the Spring of 1971, the government proclaimed a law against "loafing," compelling all able-bodied men between the age of 17 and 60 to work. Worker absenteeism was 20% in late 1970. Penalties for the "crime of loafing" fluctuate between house arrest and one or two years of forced labor.[24]

[19] Mesa-Lago, ibid. pg. 96
[20] Mesa-Lago, ibid. pg. 43
[21] Mesa-Lago, ibid. pgs. 44-45
[22] Mesa-Lago, ibid. pg. 3
[23] Mesa-Lago, ibid. pg. 87, 88
[24] Granma, Jan. 17, 1971

Union *"Democracy"*

In September, 1970, Castro announced that we "... are going to trust the workers to hold trade union elections in every local ... the elections will be absolutely free ..." Castro the brazenly contradicted himself, making it clear that "... only workers who would unconditionally follow government, management and party orders would be elected ..."[25]

The election procedure prohibited candidates from electioneering or advertising their candidacy. Only the election committee had the exclusive right to advertise the "merits" of the candidates. More than half the workers refused to participate in the rigged electoral farce, because they did not expect any real changes, or because there was only one candidate on the ballot. When the CTC was discussing election proceedings, some union members strongly criticized the methods of conducting the elections and the choosing of the candidates. The Minister of Labor interrupted the discussion, calling the critics "counter-revolutionaries" and "demagogues" and warning them that their "negative attitude" had to be "radically changed."[26]

The 13th Congress of the CTC (Nov., 1973) was the first in seven years (1966). The Congress was attended by 2,230 delegates allegedly representing 1,200,000 workers. The main business was automatically ratifying or modifying details of the "thesis" submitted by the organizaing commission (over 99%) in favor). The number of national syndicates was increased from 14 to 22.[27]

Workers' Control and Self-Management

The Castro government never seriously intended to allow meaningful participation of the workers in management (to say nothing about full self-management of industry). K.S. Karol reveals that in 1968: "... Castro himself confessed to me that he saw no chance of granting the workers the right to self-management in the near future – let alone of introducing a truly socialist mode of production ..."[28]

Jorge Risquet, the Minister of Labor, declared that: "... the fact that Fidel Castro and I suggested that the workers be consulted, does not mean that we are going to negate the role that the Communist Party must play ... decision and responsibility fall to the management ... one thing that is perfectly clear is that management should and does have all the authority to make decisions and act ... management represents the organization of the State and is charged with the planning and fulfillment of production and services ..."[29]

In his famous speech of July 26th, 1970, Castro made it clear that: "... we must begin to establish a collective body in each plant ... but it must be headed by one man and also by representatives of the Advanced Workers Movement (The Cuban equivalent of the Russian Stakhanovites, who excelled all other workers in speed and output – model workers. Later Stakhanovism became the

[25] Resumen Granma Seminal, Oct. 10, 1970

[26] Mesa-Lago, ibid. 77-88

[27] Mesa-Lago, ibid. 77-88

[28] Karol, ibid. p. 546

[29] Speech to closing session of the 13th Congress of the CTC

prototype for the Socialist Emulation Movement.), the Young Communist League, the Communist Party and the Women's Front ..."[30]

A 1965 law established Labor Councils (Consejos de Trabajo). The Labor Council is composed of five workers elected for a three year term. But the Council does not manage, administer, or even partially control production. Its functions are to settle workers' grievances, expedite the orders and directives of management, enforce work discipline and process transfers. The transfer of a worker must be approved by both the Ministry of Labor and the Communist Party nucleus.[31]

The unions are actually transmission belts for the administration and implementation of production. Raul Castro declared that the "... unions are supposed to be autonomous, but must be politically guided by the Party and must follow its policies ..." The 13th Congress of the CTC declared that: "... the functions of the unions are to cooperate in improving management performance; strengthen labor discipline; assure attendance at work, increase production, and eradicate absenteeism, malingering and carelessness ..."[32]

The union could participate in the administration of the enterprise through two institutions, Production Assemblies and Management Councils (Consejos de Direccion). These two institutions are the top administrative bodies at all work centers ..." "... each Management Council is composed of an administrator, his or her top assistants, the worker elected union representative, the Communist Party nucleus and the local branch of the Communist Youth Organizations ..."[33]

"... the Assembly could make recommendations but the manager could accept, reject, or modify the recommendations as he sees fit ... unions are not allowed to intervene in the determination of salaries, hiring or firing, dismissal of managers, or in planning ..."[34]

European, American and many Latin American workers actually exercise more workers' control than do the Cuban workers. There was, in fact, more workers' control before Castro's regime came to power.

K.S. Karol, commenting on the massive militarization of labor, which reached a high point in the 1968 "Revolutionary Offensive," tells how "... the whole country, was, in fact, reorganized on the model of the army ... Command Posts were set up ... in every province ... Labor Brigades were turned into batallions, each divided into three squads, led by a Major and a Chief of Operations ... the Che Guevara Brigade [on the agricultural production front] ... was under the direct control of the army ..."[35]

Militarization of Labor

According to Gerald H. Reed who studied the Cuban educational system during his long visit to Cuba: "... the plan for the Technological Instruction Institutes converted these institutions into military centers. The students live under strict military discipline and complete their draft obligations while they study ..."[36]

[30] quoted by Andrew Zimablist, paper presented to 2nd annual Congress on Workers' Self-Management; Cornell University, June 1975

[31] Zimbalist, ibid.

[32] Mesa-Lago, ibid. p. 82,83

[33] Zimbalist, ibid.

[34] Mesa-Lago, ibid. p. 84

[35] Karol, ibid. p. 444-445

[36] Comparative Education Review; June 1970, pgs. 136, 143

The Youth Army of Work (EJT) is a branch of the regular army, commanded by Commandante (equivalent to Major General) Oscar Fernandez Mell. Mell is also Vice Minister of the Revolutionary Army and a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. The EJT was founded Aug. 3, 1973, in the Province of Camaguey. On its first anniversary, a message of congratulations grandiloquently signed "Fidel Castro, First Secretary of the Communist Party and First Prime Minister of the Revolutionary Government" thanks the EJT for:

> ... your decisive help in the sugar harvests of 1974. Your formidable work in fulfilling agricultural plans, in the construction of schools, factories, housing and ferries surpasses even the extraordinary achievements of preceeding organizations...

And Castro's brother, who signs himself, "Raul Castro Ruz, Commander of Division and Minister of the Armed Forces":

> ... sends our most fraternal greetings to all soldiers, officers, under officers [non-commissioned sergeants, corporals, etc.] and political commissars of the Youth Army of Work, and exhorts them to perfect themselves politically, and ideologically for combat ... as we have already said on other occasions, we are certain that this army will become a true bastion of prodcution and defense of the Revolution...[37]

The Armed Forces

At the Inception of the Revolution Castro was acclaimed by the people when he vowed to curb the power of the military, reduced the highest rank in the rebel army to Major and eventually abolished the army entirely in favor of the People's Militias.

The process of compulsory military service, begun in 1963, culminated in 1973 with the abolition of the vaunted Militias, "The People in Arms." "... the Militia has been replaced by civil defense organization under direct army control. Nor is there anything of a 'People's Army' about the new organization ... after each excercise, the guns are safely locked away in the barracks – a far cry from the days when Fidel declared that he was prepared to distribute arms 'even to cats'..."[38]

Cuba boasts the most powerful army in Latin America. Russia and "the socialist countries" supplied Cuba with massive armaments and military technicians. Hundreds of young officers in the Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR) were trained in Russia.[39] As early as 1963, the military expert Hanson Baldwin considered the Cuban air force to be the "most modern and potentially the most powerful in Latin America."[40]

It has been greatly strengthened since with Russian MIGs and other equipment. Cuba has a "formidable array of anti-aircraft missiles, coast artillery, radar stations,"[41] long range cannons, the latest light and heavy tanks, and other modern weapons.

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[37] Granma, Aug. 18, 1974

[38] Karol, ibid. p. 457; also Granma, April 22, 1973

[39] Mattews, ibid. p. 187

[40] Mattews, ibid. p. 102

[41] Mattews, ibid. p. 102

With the cooperation of Soviet military experts, Raul Castro transformed the Cuban armed forces into a highly disciplined, highly stratified military machine differing in no essential respect from the modern conventional armies of the great military powers.

Raul Castro is a far more capable military organizer and strategist than is his brother Fidel. Raul, and not Fidel, devised the strategy and organized the Guerrilla War in the Sierra Maestra and in the Sierre de Cristal, which precipitated the downfall of Batista. Raul has since then capably commanded the Cuban army.[42] Nearly all the commanders who served under Raul became high officers in the Cuban army and government, and became members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party.

It would be a mistake to assume that Raul Castro is a mere figurehead in the regime. He not only shares power with his brother Fidel, but also wields considerable power on his own account. When Castro travels abroad, Raul rules Cuba in his place until Fidel returns. And Matthews emphasizes that if Fidel Castro should for any reason disappear, Raul would easily succeed him as ruler of Cuba, because he would be in a position to rally all the most formidable power blocs to support him. "... Raul would have with him a powerful military and police force, a strong administration, the governmental bureaucracy and the all-powerful Politburo of the Communist Party ..."[43]

Although Raul Castro cut the size of the Cuban army in half (from 300,000 to 150,000), it is still five times greater than Batista's 30,000-man army, navy and air force. Better organized, better trained, and better equipped with the most advanced weapons, the numerically reduced army had been reorganized into a far more formidable fighting force. So much so, that, at this writing, the Cuban government has, in collusion with Russia, been able to send thousands of troops to fight in Angola without noticeably impairing the combat power of the Cuban army.

The hierarchical ranking system of the armed forces has been reorganized to conform with the prevailing traditional ranking systems of all military powers, "capitalist" or "socialist." "... Law 1257 leaves Fidel as Chief Minister of the Armed Forces. Raul Castro, as Minister of the Armed Forces (directly under Fidel), becomes the only Division Commander whose equivalent in other countries is Lieutenant General. (Raul is in fact now called 'Lieutenant General' in Cuba.) Four Brigade Commanders were named who are the equivalent of Major Generals ... a number of First Commanders, or Colonels, were also appointed. Below the rank of Commander (Lieutenant Colonel), the titles of First Lieutenant and Sub-Lieutenant are used as in other armies... Similar changes are made for the Revolutionary Navy. (Ship Commander, for Admiral, down to Covrette Captain, for the equivalent of Commander as in other navies..."[44]

In justifying counter-revolutionary militarization, Castro said that the armed forces "... had been distinguised in the past for their modesty of rank and uniform [plain, shabby olive-green, but that now the] Revolution had become more mature and so had the armed forces..."[45]

Increasing militarization signifies revolutionary progress! This remark alone signifies the degeneration of the Revolution – even without additional incontrovertible evidence.

[42] Mattews, ibid. p. 102
[43] Mattews, ibid. p. 407
[44] Mattews, ibid. p. 407
[45] Granma, April 22, 1973

Concluding Remarks

While Castro is at present the undisputed ruler of Cuba, institutionalization is eventually bound to undermine his personal dictatorship.

It is axiomatic that no State can possibly rule without an administrative apparatus. The reconstruction of the Cuban government therefore necessitates the creation of an enormous bureaucratic administrative machine. The Communist Party, the armed forces, the educational establishment, the economic agencies, the unions, the local, regional, provincial and national governmental branches, etc., relentlessly compete for more power. As these formidable power blocs expand and become more firmly entrenched, Castro's machine will increasingly be obliged to share power with them. Personal rule will give way to a collective dictatorship and tyranny will be perpetuated.

The institutionalization of the Cuban Revolution is, however, still in its early stages. Thus far, the first attempts in this direction indicate that the institutionalization of the Revolution serves only to re-inforce the personal dictatorship of Fidel Castro and his faithful lieutenants.

Powerfully abetted by the massive support of the Soviet bloc of "socialist countries" and its own massive internal apparatus, the Castro regime is still powerfully entrenched. The Cuban people, unable to revolt by force of arms, are waging a relentless guerilla war of passive resistance against the Police State. They have, in the course of their struggles, developed ingenious ways of harassing and even seriously frustrating the plans of their tyrants (loafing, slowdowns, evading laws, sabotage, sporadic acts of violence, ridicule, etcetera).

The rebellion could provide a solid base for a mass underground movement comparable to the anti-Batista resistance movements. On the other hand, the ability of modern totalitarian regimes – both "right" and "left" – to survive mass discontent indefinitely for generations – must not be underestimated. Many hard battles will have to be fought, many lives lost, before victory will have at last been achieved.

Appendices

On the Constitution of the Republic of Cuba

Since the text of the Constitution of the Republic of Cuba arrived after the completioN of this book, comment is included in the appendix. (English Translation, Center for Cuban Studies, N.Y. 1976)

Although Article 4 of the constitution proclaims that "...all power belongs to the working people who exercise it directly or through the Assemblies of Peoples Power..." the constitution actually institutionalizes and perpetuates the dictatorship in much the same manner as the Constitution of the Soviet Union promulgated by Stalin. A few examples:

> [Article 66:] . . . State organs are based. . . upon the principles of. . . unity of power [and the totalitarian Lenin-Stalin principle of] democratic centralism...
>
> [Article 5:] . . . the socialist State. . . consolidates the ideology and rules of living together and of proper conduct in Cuban society. . . directs the national economy. . . assures the educational, scientific technical and cultural progress of the country...
>
> [Article 38:] . . . education is a function of the state. . . educational institutions belong to the state. . . [which promotes] communist education and training of children, young people and adults. . .
>
> [Article 52:] . . . citizens have the freedom of speech and the press [in keeping with] socialist society [but the exercise of that right is vested in the statel...press, radio, television, movies and other organs of the mass media are exclusively state property. . .
>
> [Article 19:] The wage system of Cuba is based upon the. . . socialist principle of 'From each according to his ability, to each according to his work...'

Following the Russian pattern, the Constitution of Cuba " . . . basing ourselves on the. . . proletarian internationalism. . . of the Soviet Union. . ." (Preamble) is a hierarchically structured pyramid in which the absolute power of the state, through its chain-of-command is imposed from the top down over every level of Cuban society (homes neighborhoods, municipalities, provinces etc.) . . . decisions of superior state organs are compulsory for inferior ones. . . "

> [Article 66:] Starting from the local, municipal and provincial Assemblies of People's Power, the Council of Ministers and the Council of State, supreme power is ultimately personified in a single dictator: The President of the Council of State.
>
> [Article 105:] [Decisions of Local Assemblies of People's Power can be] . . . revoked, suspended or modified . . . by the. . . Municipal and Provincial Assemblies of Pcople's Power.

> [Article 96:] [The Council of Ministers can] ...revoke or annul provisions issued by. . . heads of central agencies and the administrative bodies of the local organs [Municipal and Provincial Assemblies] of People's Power...
>
> [Article 88:] [The Council of State can, in turn,] . . .suspend the provisions of the Council of Ministers and [even the] Local Assemblies of People's Power which in its opinion run counter to the Constitution. . . or the general interest of the country.. ."

The prerogatives of the President of the Council of State match the absolute power exercised by Stalin:

> [Article 91:] . . .The President of the Council of State is Head of the Government and is invested with the power to: . . . organize, conduct the activities of, call for the holding of and preside over the sessions of the Council of State and the Council of Ministers . . . control and supervise. . . the activities of the ministries and central agencies of the administration . . . assume the leadership of any ministry or central agency of the administration ...replace.. the members of the Council of Ministers [Article 88] . . . represent the state and the government and conduct their general policy. . .

The totalitarian character of the constitution is best summarized in this extract from its Preamble:

> WE adopt the following Constitution. . . to carry forward the triumphant Revolution [initiated] . . . under the leadership of Fidel Castro [who] established the revolutionary power...and started the construction of socialism under the direction of the Communist Party...

Chronology 1959-1975

Jan. 1, 1959 Batista flees Cuba: Revolution begins.

Jan. 4 Manuel Urrutia Lleo appointed President of Cuba. Armed Student Directorio seizes and refuses to evacuate the Presidential Palace, the seat of government and the University of Havana campus because Castro unilaterally appointed his "Provisional Government" without consulting allied anti-Batista fighting groups.

Jan. 10 Habeas corpus suspended. Capital punishment decreed.People's Socialist Party (PSP-Communists) pledges allegiance to Castro.

Feb. 16 Miró Cardona resigns and Castro appoints himself Premier.

April 5 Censorship of press, radio, television etc. begins. Strikes prohibited.

May 8 Castro government assumes unlimited power. Council of Ministers can decree laws and change constitution at will.

May 17 Agrarian Reform Law (National Institute of Agrarian Reform - INRA) makes illegal ownership of more than 5 caballerias (1 caballeria = 33 ½ acres) of land. INRA institutes state farms on Russian model. Law 43 giving INRA dictatorial powers reads: ". . . the INRA will appoint administrators and the workers will accept all orders and decrees dictated by INRA. . . "

June 3 Pedro Luis Diaz, Commander of the Air Force and close friend of Castro, protests growing influence of Communists and leaves Cuba.

June 9 Resolution 6, gives Castro unlimited power to spend public funds without being accountable to anyone.

July 7 Article 25 of Fundamental Law further extends death penalty for ”acts hostile to the regime”

July 18 Urrutia resigns. The Communist Dorticos appointed new Presiclent of Cuba

July 26 The day after he resigns, Castro before a delirious mass demonstration of 500,000 people withdraws his resignation as self appointed Premier of Cuba. The carefully staged proceeding was a cheap publicity hoax.

Sept. 30 Cuba sells 3,300,000 tons of sugar to Russia

Oct. 13 Article 149, regulating private schools and education, prohibits teaching of subjects not taught in public schools, state dictates curriculum.

Oct. 20 Castro's close friend and second-in-command, Major Hubor Matos, Military Commander of Province of Camagüey resigns in protest of communist infiltration of Cuban government. Arrested by order of Castro and after fake ”trial”, sentenced.

Dec. 14 to 20 years imprisonment. Sentence stirred dormant resentment in armed forces and also civilians who revered Matos, as hero of the Revolution.

Oct. 27 Nationalization of oil property begins.

Nov. 30 10th Congress of Cuban Confederation of Labor (CTC). Communist candidates endorsed by Castro are defeated. A little later, officials freely elected by rank-and-file are dismissed by order of Castro and replaced by Castro's appointees. The democratically elected Secretary, David Salvador, is sentenced to 30 year prison term.

Nov. 26 Ernesto Che Guevara (who knows nothing about finance) appointed President of the Bank of Cuba.

Dec. 27 Law 680 tightens press, radio, television, etc., censorship.

Jan. 1, 1960 Vice-President of Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union, Anastas Mikoyan, inaugurates Soviet exhibition in Palace of Fine Arts

Feb. 13 Commercial treaty signed by Mikoyan and Castro grants credit of $100,000,000 and exchanges Cuban sugar for Soviet armaments.

March. 16 Establishment of Central Planning Body (JUCEPLAN) to manage economy. Blas Roca, veteran communist leader appointed Director of JUCEPLAN.

April 20 Instituto Superior de Educacion established to indoctrinate tcachers with Marxist-Leninist principles.

April 22. Gala celebration of Lenin's birthday.

May 7 Formal diplomatic relations with Russia established.

May 8 C ommandante Rolando Cubela (later mortal enemy of Castro) President of the Federation of University Students (FEU) orders expulsion of anti-communist students from the University of Havana.

June 3 Death Penalty decreed for misappropriation of funds.

June 6 Law 851 decrees nationalization of property. In successive months the property of the Cuban Telephone Co., Cuban Electric Co., three oil companies (Standard, Shell and Texaco) and 21 sugar refineries are nationalized. (By the end of 1960, the state expropriated 11,287 companies, equal to two-thirds of Cuban industry. By March 1961, nationalization totalled 88% of industrial production and 55% of agricultural production.

July 15 Most of the faculty of Havana University resigns in protest over communist party takeover.

Sept. 28 Organization of the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR) to spy on citizens even in their homes.October " . . . a strike is a counter-revolutionary act in a socialist republic. . ." (Castro). ". . .The destiny of the unions is to disappear..." (Guevara). "...the Minister of Labor can take control of any union or federation of unions, dismiss officials and appoint others. . . " (law 647)

Oct. 13 With nationalization of 376 additional firms and Urban Reform Law (including housing) Castro proclaims the completion of the first phase of the Revolution.

Nov. 7 Gala parade in celebration of anniversary of Russian Revolution with participation of thousands of Russian, Chinese and "socialist" countries' technicians and "advisors. "

Nov. 22 Cuban Government predicts that in 1961, production of potatoes, beans, poultry, eggs, corn, and cotton "will have quintuplet)." Actually, "production between 1958-1963 decreased by 50% (Rene Dumont)

Nov. 30 Cuba and China sign trade agreement. China buys 1,000,000 tons of sugar and extends $50,000,000 credit to Cuba.

Dec. 31 Castro creates Higher Council of Universities headed by Minister of Education to rule universities.

Jan. 1, 1961 2nd anniversary of the Cuban Revolution.

Jan. 3 U.S. severs relations with Cuba.

Jan. 4 " . . . any counter-revolutionary activity (as defined by the dictators) by any worker, either in the public or private sector, will be sufficient cause for immediate dismissal and additional punishment for criminal acts under the law. . . " (law 934)

Jan. 21 6 complete factories arrive from Yugoslavia. 100 due to be delivered by Russia. Cuba sends 1000 children to Russia to learn how to become obedient communists. Educational collaboration with Soviet ambassador to Havana, Yuri Gavrilov, and Czechoslovak Vice Minister of Education, Vaslav Pelishek, to teach Cuban educators methods used in communist lands.

Jan. 29 Cuban Ministry of Education will train teachers in Minar del Frío, a communist school, how to become good Marxist-Leninists.

Feb. 10 Stepped up campaign to mobilize hundreds of thousands of "volunteers" to cut cane and do other important work.

Feb. 23 Guevara appointed Minister of Industry (which he knows nothing about)

April 17 "Bay of Pigs" invasion by unofficial U.S.-sponsored forces.

May 1 Castro proclaims that Cuba has become the first Socialist Republic in Latin Anlerica. Thousands parade carrying huge portraits of Castro, Jose Marti, Khrushchev, Mao, Lenin, Marx and Engels. On being awarded the Lenin peace prize, Castro exults: "GLORY TO THE GREAT JOSE MARTÍ!" "GLORY TO THE GREAT VLADIMIR ILYICH LENIN!"

Dec. 2 Castro delivers his "I am a Marxist-Leninist Communist" speech.

March 8, 1962 A forerunner of the Communist Party of Cuba, the Integrated Revolutionary Organizations (ORI) is organized.

March 12 Law 1015 decrees rationing of most foods and other necessities.

July To combat absenteeism and enforce work discipline the government announces plans to issue in August and September, identification cats which all workers must show as condition for employment... ...thereby guaranteeing full compliance with directives established by the Revolutionary Government as far as labor is concerned...Ministry of Labor institutes forced labor

in Province of Pinar del Rió for…employees who comitted transgressions in fulfilllment of their functions…

Aug. - Sept. Drive against political and social dissenters stepped up. El Libertario, organ of the Liberation Association of Cuba (anarcho-syndicalist) forced to suspend publication. Workers threatened with the loss of jobs if they do not volunteerto work without pay. Students, housewives an others told they will lose benefits if they do not volunteer their services. Agricultural cooperatives transformed into state farms.

Spring, 1963 Compulsory service for 15 to 17 year-old delinquents decreed to provide a labor force for a wide range of agricultural and civic projects. Formation of the United Party of the Socialist Revolution (PURS), another version of the future post-Castro Communist Party of Cuba (CPC)

Oct. 4 Second Agrarian Reforn, restricts ownership of land to five caballerias.

Nov. For the first time in Cuba compulsory military service is decreed in preference to volunteer service in militia.

Feb. 14, 1964 Castro takes personal charge of INRA.

Summer, 1965 The much vaunted militia, "The People in Arms" is practically liquidated as an independent force. Nationwide disarmament of the militia is decreed. Militia officers and civilians are commanded to turn their weapons in by Sept. Ist or face severe penalties. Members of the military reserve and communities for the Defense of the Revolution must also comply.

July 4 Havana Longshoremen refuse to load meat for Italy because of meat shortage in Cuba. 200 arrested and later released with only stern warnings for fear of further complications.

Oct. 3 Militarily orgarlized labor camps established to rehabilitate "delinquents."Havana University is again purged. Writers and artists sent to penal camps, ostensibly to "purify the Revolution."

March, 1966 Rolando Cubela (former favorite of Castro) sentenced to 25 years at hard labor for conspiracy to assassinate Castro because he betrayed the Revolution.

Aug. 22-26 12th Congress of the CTC adopts resolution stating that: " . . . the labor movement directed and guided by the Communist Party, must effectively contribute to the mobilization of the masses in fulfilling of the tasks assigned by the Revolution and strengthening Marxist-Leninist theory . . . "

1967 Organization ot the Vanguard Workers Movement. Like the Stakhanovites in Russia, the Vanguard Workers are expected to set the pace and initiate speedup of their fellow workers. In exchange, Vanguard Workers get special privileges.A program of Youth Reeducation Centers established for youngsters under 16 found guilty of minor offences. They are to perform "a full day's work" and get military training.

Oct. Ché Guevara killed in Bolivia guerrilla campaign.

Jan. 28, 1968 Castro asserts his domination over the Communist Party. Anibal Escalante, a prominent communist, is sentenced to 15 years at hard labor for plotting to subordinate Castro to the discipline of the Party. He was accused of the typical Stalinist crime of "microfactionalism."

March 13 Castro introduces the "Great Revolutionary Offensive" by nationalizing 58,000 trades, shops and services. Young people are mobilized, military fashion, for agriculture and sugar production.

Aug. 2 Castro defends the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.

Aug. 17 The Minister of Labor, Jorge Risquet, announces introduction of llabor card" recording acts of indiscipline, work record, etc.

Oct. 22 A "social-security law" providing incentives for workers who demonstrate "exemplary" behavior is decreed. Those who exhibit "communist work attitudes," renounce overtime pay, are not absent without authorization, exceed work quotas and enthusiastically perform "voluntary" labor become eligible for special benefits.

Jan. 2, 1969 Castro introduces rationing of sugar!

July 9 Castro praises revolutionary achievements of the military totalitarian Junta that seized power in Peru.

Sept. 24 Arrnando Hart (prominent member of Casto's ruling junta) praises Soviet achievements under Stalin and urges Cubans to follow Stalin's example.

1970 The whole labor force is mobilized Imilitary fashion) for harvesting the 10 million ton sugar crop while the rest of the economy is neglected. The campaign fails and Castro himself takes the blame for setting back the rest of the economy to the lowest levels since the Revolution, declaring that: "...I want to speak of our own incapacity in the overall work of the Revolution. . tour responsibility to must be noted . . . especially mine. . . Our apprenticeship as directors of the Revolution has been too costly. . . "

Sept. A series of drastic measures to strengthen weak labor discipline enacted by the Labor Ministry and CTC bureaucracy. Sanctions against absentees include denial of right to purchase goods in short supply (new housing, repairs, loss of vacations and other privileges. In extreme cases offenders can be sent to labor camps etc. There is a dossier for each worker which every worker is obliged to show, detailing his work record. Less than half of the workers participate in rigged union elections. Castro's henchmen screen all candidates. In some locals there was only one candidate on the ballot.

March 1971 Dissident poet Herberto Padilla arrested on trumped up charges of "counter-revolution" for writing critical poetry and articles about Cuban dictatorship. Later, in true Stalinist fashion Padilla "repents his sins" and is "rehabilitated." The case aroused world-wide protests.

Dec. 1972 Creation of the super-centralized Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers.

Between 1972 and 1975 the institutionalization and reorganization of the Revolution was being implemented.

Mid-1971 Reform of the judicial system. Courts and all legal bodies dominated] and completely responsible to the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers. There is no independent judiciary. The Prime Minister, the President of the Republic, other ministers, and the members of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Cuba are exempt from the jurisdiction of the regular courts.

April Militias ("People in Arms") abolished.

May Liability of 18 year olds for "crimes" against the economy, abnormal sexual behavior, etc., etc., applied to 16 year old "offenders."

Aug. 2 Creation of the Youth Army of Work (AYW), a paramilitary organization controlled by the Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR).

November 13th Congress of the CTC endorses and promises to carry out the dictatorial policies of the Regime.

December Law 1257 decrees creation of regular, conventional army complete with ranking system and discipline of great military powers.

May 8, 1974 With the establishment of the People's Organization of Popular Control (PCP) an experiment in "decentralization" and "direct democracy" designed to promote mass participation

in Local, Regional administration is initiated in Matanzas Province (to be extended to rest of Cuba in 1976). The system patterned after the fake Russian "soviets" actually reinforces the dictatorship.

July 2 Castro proclaims 3 days of mourning for the death of the fascist dictator of Argentina Juan Perón. With Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba (Dec. 1975) the institutionalization of the Revolution was substantially completed. The permanent, legally sanctioned, totalitarian apparatus intlicts itself on future generations.

Glossary

ALC Libertarian Federation of Cuba

MLCE Libertarian Movement of Cuba in Exile

CNT National Confederation of Labo (Spanish Anarcho-Syndicalist)

IWMA International Workingmens Association (Abbreviations of Cuban organizations with date of founding)

CDR Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, 1960

CTC Confederation of Cuban Workers, 1939

EJT Youth Army of Work, 1973

FAR Revolutionary Armed Forces, 1961

INRA National Institute of Agrarian Reform, 1959

JUCEPLAN Central Planning Board, 1960

OPP Organs of Popular Power, 1974

ORI Ubtegrated Revolutionary Organizations, 1961-1963

PCC Communist Party of Cuba

PSP Socialist Popular Party, 1925-1961

PURS United Party of the Socialist Revolution, 1963-1965

SMO Compulsoray Military Service, 1963

SS Compulsory Social Service, 1973

UMAP Military Units to Aid Production, 1964-1973

UNEAC National Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba, 1961

UJC Young Communist League

Bibliographical Notes

A full bibliography of writings on the background of the Cuban Revolution and the Revolution itself would easily fill several volumes. It is therefore necessary to list such works in English as seems best for the general reader.Interestingly enough, the sources are the speeches and writings of Castro and members of his inner circle (official government publications, periodicals, newspapers etc.) Another excellent source is the works of the pro-friendly critics. Both the Cuban officials in the process ot justifying their dictatorial measures and the friendly critics in trying to account for the degeneration of the Revolution inadvertently supply valuable information about the nature of the Cuban Revolution.

Official Sources

Castros speeches and writings are easily available - a convenient compilation is The Selected Works of Fidel Castro: Revolutionary Struggle; Rolando Bonachea and Nelson P. Valdes (M.I.T. Press Cambridge, 1971 - First ot three volumes.)

Johrl Gerassi, Venceremos! The Speeches and Writings of Ché Guevara (New York, 1968.)

Ché Guevara, Episodes of the Revolutionary Struggle (Book Institute, Havana, 1967.) An invaluable, intimate first-hand account ot the early struggles of Castro's guerrilla band in the Sierra Maestra.

Granma Weekly Review (English Language Edition) - official organ of the Communist Party of Cuba. Good for current events, official notices, proclamations, etc.

Other Background and Source Materials

Cuban Studies Newsletter; published twice yearly by the Center for Latin American Studies; University of Pittsburgh. Contains many informative articles, theses and other writings.

The University of Miami's Center for Research on Caribbean Studies; also the Cuban Economic Research Project, an excellent research staff manned by Cuban specialists.

Yale University's Antilles Program.

Center for Cuban Studies, New York.

United Nations publications.

Background to Revolution; a collection of essays on Cuban history leading to the Cuban Revolution. A good general survey by competent authorities (Edited by Robert F. Smith, New York, 1966).

Jaime Suchlicki, From Columbus to Castro, New York, 1974, also his excellent collection of essays by ten specialists, (University of Miami, 1972). Suchlicki's works are particularly important because he participated in the Revolutionary Students' Movement in his native Cuba.

Although Hugh Thomas' massive history The Pursuit of Freedom has been widely acclaimed, his atrocious work on the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) should be borne in mind when reading his Cuban volume.

Personal Accounts

Jules Dubois' Fidel Castro; (Indianapolis, 1959). Dubois, late correspondent for the Chicago Tribune, interviewed and was on very cordial terms with Fidel Castro and associates. An excellent account of events from Castro's landing in Cuba, to the fall of Batista, plus interesting biographical data.

Herrbert Matthews, New York Times correspondent who first interviewed Castro in the Sierra Maestre, was welcomed to Cuba several times since then. Matthews has written extensively on the Cuban Revolution. Among his writings are: Fidel Castro; (New York, 1959) and Cuba in Revolution; (New York, 1975). Though strongly biased in favor of Castro, the latter work contains valuable information.

Rufo López Fresquet: My First Fourteen Months With Castro; (New York, 1966) and Andres Suárez, Castroism and Communism: 1959-1966; (MIT Press, Cambridge, 1967). Both Fresquet,

former Minister of the Treasury in Castro's cabinet, and Suárez, the Assistant Minister of the Treasury, broke with Castro because they disagreed with his pro-communist policies. Their revelations contribute greatly to an understanding of the Cuban Revolution.

Under the intriguing title, Does Your Father Eat More Than Castro? (New York, 1971), Barry Reckord, a Jamaica dramatist, describes the daily life of ordinary Cubans, and in so doing, tells more about the effects of the Cuban Revolution than any number of abstract statistical studies. The same is true of the journalist, Joe Nicholson Junior's Inside Cuba (New York, 1974.)

Critical Studies

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Adolfo Gilly's Inside the Cuban Revolution (New York, 1964), although passionately pro-Castro, is nevertheless a penetrating critique.

In his Castro's Revolution: Myths and Realities (New York, 1962), Theodor Draper dispels the euphoria surrounding both the character and achievements of the Cuban Revolution. A realistic analysis. His Castroism: Theory and Practice (New York, 1965) develops his themes more fully. K.S. Karol's Guerrillas in Power (New York, 1970) - Karol, a Marxist-Leninist writer who was welcomed to Cuba by Castro, was later excommunicated for his critical insights and revelations about the unfavorable features of the Cuban Revolution. His work constitutes an able political history of the Cuban Revolution, fal superior to Huberman and Sweezy's Socialism in Cuba (New York, 1969).

Maurice Halperin's The Rise and Decline of Fidel Castro (University of California Press, 1972) deals primarily with the complex relations between Castro and the Soviet Union and foreign affairs. His observations on the situation in Cuba itself enhance the work. Halperin taught at the University of Havana for six years and in Russia for three years. His is one of the better works.

The analytic books of Rene' Dumont: Cuba: Socialism and Developmetn (New York, 1970 and Is Cuba Socialist, (New York, 1974), and the painstakingly researched work of Carmelo Mesa-Lago, Cuba in the 1970s (University of New Mexico, 1974) have already been discussed and need no further comment.

Sam Dolgoff
The Cuban Revolution
A critical perspective
1977

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