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THE CUBAN REVOLUTION AND
THE SOVIET UNION
VOLUME ONE

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of the Ohio State University

By
Donald E. Schulz, B.A.

* * * * * *

The Ohio State University
1977

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To my mother,
who never lost faith
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Chapter One

ON IDEOLOGY, POWER, PROCESS AND THE EXISTENTIAL PERSUASION

Revolutionary man does not live for power alone. Granted that that drive is central, the social scientist must always be ready to temper his analysis with the question: Power for what?

Unfortunately, this dictum has not always been followed by students of the Cuban Revolution. Indeed, during the 1960's it became something of a fashionable pastime to comb through Fidel Castro's political statements for inconsistencies and ambiguities which seemed to support the charge that the Maximum Leader was little more than a "consummate opportunist". Castroism, it was said, was simply a "road to power". Had not Fidel evolved from a "Democrat" to a "Humanist" to a "Socialist" to a "Marxist-Leninist" in an embarrassingly short period of time? Clearly, he had no firm ideological anchor on which to base his actions. Rather, ideas were mere vehicles to be manipulated on behalf of his own egocentric drives for dominance and grandeur. They would be adopted or discarded as circumstances dictated.

Cold War and revolution tend to breed positional scholarship. This was, of course, a profoundly political interpretation, designed to discredit as well as understand Castroism. And it quickly found its antithesis in a growing body of literature.
which sought to defend the Revolution and which interpreted its rise and development largely in terms of the idealistic striving for a "new Cuba", purified and redeemed. We need not here explore the whole panoply of issues encompassed by these two divergent schools of thought. Suffice it to say that for their part the "idealists" have tended to focus on the weaknesses of the old Cuba--the economic stagnation, poverty, socio-economic injustice and corruption; the limitations on national sovereignty posed by the dominant influence of the United States--and on the profoundly revolutionary nature of the transformation that has been effected by the Castro regime. In turn, the proponents of "power and opportunism" have retorted that by most socio-economic criteria Batista's Cuba was not that bad off, at least in comparison with other Third World countries; indeed, that revolutionary conditions did not even exist at the time that Castro came to power: Only through an extensive campaign of demagogic manipulation, deceit and police state coercion was the Maximum Leader able to subvert the original democratic and reformist aims of the Revolution and secure his own absolute dictatorship. In the process, relatively few of the socio-economic problems of the old order have been resolved; some, in fact, have been aggravated. Nor has national sovereignty been achieved. Rather, the traditional paternalistic relationship with the United States has simply been replaced by a new and more insidious dependence on the Soviet Union.
In perspective, it seems clear that both schools are substantially correct. Both focus on essential facets of revolutionary Castroism. In linking scholarship with politics, however, they have both been guilty of the cardinal sin of selective perception. It is almost as though two people were looking at the same coin from different sides, each steadfastly insisting that his interpretation alone was "true". In consequence, the resulting dialectical clash of opposites, while useful in that it has helped focus attention on critical issues and clarify contending arguments, has not yet produced its synthesis. There is still no general and systematic interpretation of Castroism adequate to the task of relating power to ideology; moreover that does so in a way which will enable us to understand the dynamics and hence the development of the Cuban revolutionary process. What we have instead are two fairly distinct clusters of partial and selective perceptions and interpretations, on the surface mutually exclusive but in fact largely complementary, which have not yet been trimmed of their excesses and united into a comprehensive analytical whole.³

It is the author's intention to attempt just such a synthesis. The present study represents the first of several steps towards that ultimate objective.
Ideology and Power in Revolutionary Castroism: An Existential Interpretation

One of the most persistent problems in the scholarly literature on the Cuban Revolution has been the widespread failure to define the ideology of Castroism and specify its component parts. To some extent, of course, this may be attributed to the highly dynamic and ambiguous nature of that belief system. Even the "idealists" seem to be in agreement that it did not have a coherent doctrine prior to the seizure of power. On the other hand, a close examination of its origins and early manifestations reveals the existence of a primitive ideological Weltanschauung, with abstract ideals, symbols and values, a general vision of the Cuban past and present and a vague millenarian dream of the future. It is true that there was much here that was ambiguous and inconsistent; much that would be altered or abandoned over time. This should not, however, obscure the fact that there have been crucial elements of stability as well as change in the belief system; moreover, that there is a strong body of evidence that these nuclear ideas and the values attached to them have given shape to behavior.

What were these ideas and values? Where did they come from? How and why did they develop over time? In order to understand the formation and evolution of Castroism, it is necessary to examine the existential environment out of which it arose and to which it was subsequently applied. Ideologies are not independent
of material and social reality. Rather, they develop through
the process of man's interaction with the world around him and
reflect his adjustment to and/or alienation from that world.\(^5\) They
are nowhere born full-grown. On the contrary, they exhibit many
of the same properties of birth, growth, transformation, stagnation,
degeneration and death that characterize the lives of biological
organisms.\(^6\) In this sense, early (pre-1959) Castroism represented
but the first stages of an on-going process of ideological
development that has not yet run its course.

But what is Castroism? In general terms, it may be said
to be a "cross-fertilization" of the Cuban revolutionary tradition
with Marxism-Leninism.\(^7\) Upon closer examination, however, it
becomes apparent that this process of ideological formation and
development has been of a highly selective nature. The revolutionary
tradition of Marti, Guiteras, Chibas and the other heroes of the
century-long struggle for national redemption was itself a
hodge-podge of amorphous, inconsistent and utopian ideas, generally
lacking in programmatic content and quite unsuited to the
requisites of governmental policymaking. Nacent Castroism,
like other revolutionary ideologies in their initial stages,
tended to be largely symbolic or "mythic" in quality. The more
intellectualized considerations of mature political theory had
not yet been formulated. The primary function of ideology was to
provide a complex of energizing ideals with which to mobilize
those alienated from the existing order into a political and military
movement capable of seizing state power.\textsuperscript{8} For this purpose, the very ambiguity of the belief system proved invaluable, for it enabled classes, groups and parties with diverse and often conflicting interests to unite under the common banner of "Revolution".

No doubt, as Alfred G. Meyer once remarked, ambivalence is an all-pervasive, universal human trait.\textsuperscript{9} Men have multiple values and objectives, frequently ill-defined and incompatible, and these qualities tend to be reflected in their formal and informal belief systems. By the same token, however, some goals are more valued than others. With the wisdom of hindsight, it is possible to distinguish the nuclear elements of Castroism from those ideas and values which have been of secondary or peripheral importance.

From its very inception, Castroism belonged to that genus of political phenomena which Anthony F.C. Wallace has termed "revitalization movements".\textsuperscript{10} It arose as a reaction against a political, economic and social order which was perceived to be fundamentally corrupt and unjust. According to this vision, the ideals for which the Cuban Wars of Independence had been fought had been repeatedly frustrated and betrayed. Instead of a fully-developed and sovereign nation, Cuba was a dependent--and in many ways an appendage--of the United States, a deeply divided society, riven through with socio-economic disparities and insecurities and ruled by a political elite far more dedicated
to its own enrichment and perpetuation than the welfare of the masses. It was the historical mission—indeed, the destiny—of Fidel Castro and his immediate entourage to breathe new life into the Cuban revolutionary process. In so doing they would fundamentally transform the old political, economic and social order, revolutionizing it "from top to bottom", attaining the "total and definitive" social justice, sovereignty, freedom, economic development and sense of national community and dignidad which, they were convinced, constituted the "unrealized dream of Martí".11

In essence, then, nascent Castroism may be described as a form of "revolutionary nationalism". Its origins were uniquely Cuban, though some tangential links can be traced to foreign sources as diverse as Lenin, Rousseau and the founder of the Falange Española, Primo de Rivera. Its primary ideological thrust was towards nation-building or national renovation. This is not, of course, to deny it an element of internationalism. (The revolutionary tradition from which it arose tended to view the Cuban people as part of one great Latin American nation. Even in these early years, Fidel had hemisphere-wide aspirations.) But the predominant focus was clearly domestic. Indeed, this would prove to be a significant distinction between "Castroism" and "Guevarism". Whereas the Argentine Quixote12 was essentially a man without a country, who drifted from revolution to revolution tilting his lance against conservative establishments wherever
they existed, Fidel's roots have been firmly implanted in his native land. Thus, while solidarity with the international revolutionary cause has been an important element in Castroism, it has always been subordinate to—and often compromised for the sake of—strictly Cuban concerns.

Let us be clear also about the fundamentally radical and elitist nature of this weltanschauung. Much has been made of the alleged moderation of early Castroism and especially of the frequent pledges to hold democratic elections. In perspective, however, it is clear that such statements were made for primarily tactical reasons. The appearance of moderation was considered essential, for a premature disclosure of the true dimensions of the change being contemplated would have alienated those middle- and upper-class elements whose temporary support or neutrality was critical to the initial triumph and eventual survival of the Revolution.\(^{13}\)

Even so, there is enough substance in some of these early documentary materials to suggest that this millenarian dream bore only faint resemblance to the "moderate" revolution desired by the conventional politicians. From the very beginning, the democratic propensities in Castroism were of the "totalitarian" rather than the "liberal" variety.\(^{14}\) Integral to this vision was a conception of the Cuban nation that was more-or-less synonymous with the disadvantaged and dispossessed. Clearly, "the people" referred to in *History Will Absolve Me* were not the rich and
comfortable elements in society; rather, they were los humildes, the great mythical downtrodden masses. It was they who would be the beneficiaries of the drive for social justice, "total and definitive", and who would form the bulwark of the revolutionary new order to come. At the same time, this view of the "real" Cuba was linked with a highly egocentric conception of those who would save it. The men who attacked Moncada barracks envisioned themselves as the purest of the pure--"new men with new methods", freed from all the selfish ambitions of previous generations. These were the true "representatives" of the Revolution; and they had made a covenant with the "sacred will of the people to conquer the future" Cuba deserved. In effect, the fidelista nucleus would serve as the vanguard of the masses and would do for "the people" what the latter would voluntarily do for themselves if only they had sufficient political consciousness.

Again, it is necessary to stress that power and ideology go hand in hand. One cannot understand the formation and development of revolutionary Castroism without first understanding the interrelationship between the complementary drives for utopia and dominance. On one level this linkage has been purely personal. Thus, a close examination of the Maximum Leader's political development suggests a figure that has been very much the personification of Harold Lasswell's political man, immortalized in the class formula "p)d)\(r-P\), where 'p' equals private motives; 'd' equals displacement onto a public object; 'r' equals rationalization in terms of public interest; 'P' equals political man; and )
equals transformed into." From an early age, Castro demonstrated a strong propensity for dominance and rebellion in his social relationships. Indeed, the relentless assertion of will, the need to struggle against and dominate the recalcitrant forces of his existential environment, no matter how imposing, and to rebel against those which tended to restrict his actions, became a recurrent behavioral trait which soon found political and ideological expression in lucha, the ethic of revolutionary struggle.

Yet ideas are more than mere channels through which psychological drives are expressed. As part of the process of human socialization, they help shape men's self-concepts and values and provide them with conceptual frameworks for understanding and coping with reality. In short, they help direct behavior.

One recalls the words of Lucien W. Pye: "The story of the great man, ideologically speaking, is the story of an individual striving to find his own identity. By following the peculiar logic of that struggle, he gives, without necessarily intending to, a sense of identity and meaning to a people at a particular juncture of history." This has been very much the case with Fidel Castro. Thus, on the one hand, his alienation from the existing social order and his chronic need to dominate and rebel found ideological sanction in the Cuban revolutionary tradition. On the other hand, his increasingly close identification with that tradition could not but have a major impact on his ego development
and value system and his image of the world around him.\textsuperscript{18} And that, in turn, gave both direction and content to his political behavior and, in particular, to the way in which power, once achieved, would be exercised.\textsuperscript{19} Moreover, in the process of establishing their revolutionary identities Castro and his associates would be able to meet the socio-economic and psychological needs of vast segments of the Cuban populace that had previously been excluded from the national community. The result would be messianic dictatorship, accompanied by the breakdown of Cuba's traditionally close relationship with the United States and her realignment with the Communist camp.

More on this presently. For the moment, it is important to note that this linkage between power and ideology was not merely an attribute of Castro's individual psyche. Rather, it was a functional requisite of the ideology itself. There is a point in the pursuit of all revolutionary utopias where considerations of ideology and power merge. It is here that we find the distinction between the ideology's goal culture and transfer culture.\textsuperscript{20} In the words of Chalmers Johnson,

\begin{quote}
...an ideology's goal culture is its image of the ultimate utopia, its idealized contrast to the present, which elicits purposive revolutionary behavior and sacrifice from a significant part of the revolutionary party and which may be used to justify the party's resort to coercion and violence against the noncompliant. An ideology's transfer culture, on the other hand, provides the norms that guide policy formation: it specifies what steps the revolutionary leadership must take (or is invoked to justify the steps the leadership does take) to move toward the goal culture.\textsuperscript{21}
\end{quote}
In general, transfer culture strategies are designed to perform three functions. The first and most basic of these is the establishment and preservation of revolutionary elite hegemony. The second is the maintenance of the social system over which that elite presides. The third is the formulation of policies designed to promote the utopian objectives of the goal culture. In practice, the actual definition of transfer-culture strategy comes from a "subtle interaction" between what the leadership sees as the requirements of the goal culture and what it sees as the requirements of elite hegemony and social system maintenance.22

Obviously, the Maximum Leader and his fidelistas did not have to worry about the problem of social system maintenance prior to 1959. Nor, for that matter, was the task of formulating a detailed program designed to transform reality into utopia a particularly pressing concern. Rather, power was the critical issue. Only through its exercise could the Batista regime be overthrown. And only through the hegemony of a truly revolutionary elite could the obstacles to a fundamental transformation of Cuban society be overcome and a revolutionary new political culture created.

In short, power was a requisite of the goal culture itself. Once achieved, it would have to be consolidated and used, in the face of counterrevolutionary resistance, to bring about the monumental transformation demanded by the millenarian vision. Again, this linkage would appear to be basic to all
truly revolutionary ideologies, for ideals divorced from the power necessary to effectuate them are ultimately futile. In more mature belief systems—for instance, Marxism-Leninism—elite hegemony is often codified in doctrine. (Hence, the role of the Communist Party as "vanguard of the proletariat"). In primitive ideologies, on the other hand, where transfer cultures are much less developed, such matters are likely to be left implicit. Nevertheless, the presumption of revolutionary virtue on the part of a small elite and of the right to act on behalf of "the people" as their "true" representatives will be no less critical to the future of the revolution once power has been seized.

On the Nature and Process of Castroite Ideological Development

But if Castroism at this stage had no comprehensive or precise set of "theoretical criteria" with which to transform reality into utopia, how was such a transfer culture to be developed? And how was it possible for an ideology which arose as a form of revolutionary nationalism to evolve into Marxism-Leninism within the short span of three years? Again, it is necessary to understand the rise and evolution of ideologies as a process. Moreover, this is a process which takes place within an existential context, as revolutionary man, in pursuit of power and utopia, must act and react to the opportunities, pressures and constraints posed by the political, economic and social environment within which he operates. Through his revolutionary struggle, the ideology gains
coherence and specificity, as thought is turned to the practical problems of effectuating the goal culture, consolidating elite hegemony and maintaining the social system over which he presides.

Let me be more precise. From its very inception Castroism, like many other nascent Socialist ideologies, was largely "Marxist in its mood if not in its postulates." The pursuit of utopia; the vision of a Cuban society divided into two antagonistic classes, the oppressors and the oppressed; the heritage of imperialist domination; the elitist presumption; the ethic of revolutionary struggle... Here was a complex of nuclear perceptions and values by no means incongruent with Marxism-Leninism. Here too was a primitive "anticipatory theory" of developments yet to come: The radical redistributive policies of the Revolution could be expected to arouse strong resistance from the well-to-do and conservative elements in society. The United States too might intervene. Washington's historical track record in Cuba and the Caribbean could not be ignored. As recently as 1954, the CIA had sponsored the overthrow of the Arbenz regime in Guatemala. Would the Yankees be willing to accept the far more radical revolution that Castro had in mind?

This structure of predispositions, perceptions and fears would be repeatedly reinforced in the months and years to come. As anticipated, the pursuit of the utopian and hegemonic objectives of Castroism gave rise to an opposition centered around those forces, both Cuban and North American, whose interests were rooted in the
existing political, economic and social order. In turn, this threat both stimulated and facilitated the radicalization process, inducing the Maximum Leader to consolidate his political power and that of his followers and strike out, both verbally and otherwise, at the perceived foreign and domestic "enemies of the Revolution".

But action led to reaction in a self-perpetuating, self-intensifying dialectic of coercion which simultaneously paved the way for the formation of a garrison state within Cuba and for the rapid breakdown in relations with the United States. In retrospect, it is clear that in the beginning these developments were not the result of any calculated strategy to realign the Revolution with the Communist camp. Rather, Castro was initially quite willing to maintain close ties with the United States, albeit in the form of a radically different abrazo than Cuba's traditional relationship with the "Colossus". It soon became apparent, however, that there existed a fundamental incompatibility of basic values and objectives between the two sides. In effect, both Washington and Havana wanted rapprochement, but only on their own terms. Thus, each repeatedly made overtures and demands to which the other could not positively respond. Moreover each, insecure and suspicious, was chronically on the defensive in response to the perceived threat posed by the other. Neither had the presence of mind or the desire to try to break through this blockage in communications by making a concerted effort to understand and come to grips with the other's needs.25
A detailed examination of the breakdown of US-Cuban relations will be presented later in this study. For the moment, it is enough merely to note that the Eisenhower administration was not even remotely inclined to finance the Revolution in the manner and to the extent that Castro desired. Thus did Fidel, thwarted in his efforts to obtain massive new doses of North American economic aid, trade and weaponry, turn elsewhere. Rapprochement was abandoned. Moreover, as the balance of US-Cuban relations swung increasingly negative, mutual antipathy grew through an intense interactive process "during which each side believed its hostility was a justified reaction to the hostile actions of the other." In effect, stimulus gave rise to response in a descending spiral of negative reinforcement. The abrazo became increasingly coercive and uninhibited in its disintegration by either internal or external constraints. At the same time, the mutual inhibitions to the development of a constructive relationship grew steadily stronger. In the end, what emerged was a self-perpetuating, self-intensifying adversary relationship which would lead the world to the brink of nuclear cataclysm.

This sequence of existential developments was not without its ideological effect. As early as April 1961, Castro formally declared the Revolution Socialist; eight months later, on December 2nd, he announced his allegiance to Marxism-Leninism. In perspective, this startling metamorphosis appears to have been the more-or-less logical consequence of (1) the functional requisites of nascent
Castroism and (2) the shifting opportunities, pressures and constraints posed by the existential environment within which Fidel had to operate. Thus, the pursuit of power and utopia had given rise to a counterrevolutionary threat both at home and abroad. In turn, that threat had confirmed and intensified the commitment to the most radical and deterministic elements of the initial weltanschauung. Moreover, as the revolutionaries began to meditate upon the manner and meaning of their actions and experiences, Marxism-Leninism seemed to "reformulate in systematic fashion" many of these same perceptions, beliefs and values. Was not the Cuban revolutionary process indeed a class struggle between the oppressors and the oppressed? Had not Lenin been correct about the need to destroy the old bureaucratic-military machine and seize its arms? Clearly, the initiation of the Agrarian Reform and other measures designed to bring about a radical redistribution of the island's wealth and insure native control of the Cuban economy had been in direct conflict with some of the most basic interests of "Yankee imperialism". The United States could not allow the Revolution to survive for fear that its example would prove contagious. In sum, the very process of revolutionary struggle—and in particular the struggle with US imperialism—led the Maximum Leader and his followers first to become "sentimental Marxists, emotional Marxists" and then to "discover all the truths which Marxist doctrine contained." As was the case in nascent Castroism, affect would precede cognition. Beyond this, moreover, Marxism—
Leninism would provide—or at least appear to provide—the Castrovite goal and transfer cultures with just the kind of substance and coherence that was needed to formulate a comprehensive social, economic and political strategy capable of transforming reality into utopia. Thus, the year 1961 would witness the wholesale mechanistic application of Soviet politico-economic methods to Cuban circumstances. The results, as we shall see, would be somewhat less than ideal.

Still, all things considered, the most critical factor accounting for nascent Castroism's "crossfertilization" with Marxism-Leninism was undoubtedly the sheer requisite of survival. The spiralling "dialectic of hostility" with the United States had confronted Fidel with certain inescapable realities: Cuba was a small, dependent country, vulnerable in the extreme to US economic and military retaliation. Only by finding a new patron capable of providing an alternative source of economic sustenance and defense could the Revolution hope to survive. By sheer coincidence, the only feasible candidate for this role was the USSR (in conjunction with the other Communist states). Thus it was that Castro vociferously embraced Marxism-Leninism in late 1961 as part of a concerted attempt to court that country's avowedly Marxist-Leninist leadership.

No doubt Theodore Draper was correct when he observed that in a different period and under other circumstances Fidel might have adopted a "different ideology of total power." Still, several points must be made. First, the embrace of Marxism-Leninism
did not represent the abandonment of one ideology for another. Castro's conversion, while "opportunist" in the sense that he was reacting to the opportunities and pressures of the moment, by no means constituted an abandonment of principle. On the contrary, the high degree of compatibility between nascent Castroism and Marxism-Leninism meant that the Maximum Leader would have to compromise few of his ideological objectives. Indeed, the alliance with Moscow would enable him to continue the pursuit of his utopian goal culture, while simultaneously fulfilling the requisites of revolutionary elite hegemony and social system maintenance.

Moreover, the adoption of Marxism-Leninism would be highly selective. From the Cuban perspective, some of its classic formulations were clearly inapplicable to Latin American circumstances. After all, the revolutionary struggle against Batista had been centered in the countryside, not the cities; the peasants, not the proletariat, had formed its popular base; guerrilla warfare, not "mass struggle", had been the strategy of victory. Nor had the Cuban Communist party played a crucial role in the resistance. Rather the Rebel Army, and in particular its fidelista nucleus, had been the true vanguard of the Revolution. Thus would Che Guevara and Regis Debray seek to codify their understanding of the Cuban revolutionary experience in formal doctrine. And the attempt to apply that doctrine to Latin American realities would become a major source of friction between the Soviet Union and Cuba as the decade progressed.
Similarly, the doctrine of "Communist Party hegemony" has been only uneasily grafted onto the Cuban scene. Castro's rule has always been of a highly personalistic nature. "While hardly consistent over the years in some of his policies and public pronouncements, he has been extremely consistent in reasserting his dominance over the shifting revolutionary power structure." This has led to certain ideological and institutional difficulties. The initial effort to establish a ruling political party\textsuperscript{35} gave rise to a severe intra-elite power struggle, as the Moscow-oriented "old Communists" attempted to capture control of that body and use it as a base with which to impose their hegemony over the Revolution. Thus, in the spring of 1962, Castro was forced to personally intervene. The leader of the offending faction, Anibal Escalante, was purged. The "old Communists" were told in no uncertain terms that the kind of "sectarian" activities in which they were engaged would not be tolerated. Subsequently, their influence was substantially reduced, and from time-to-time they were unceremoniously reminded through periodic purges and rituals of public humiliation (the trial of Marcos Rodriguez in 1964, the second Escalante or "microfaction" scandal in 1968) that their survival and influence depended above all on their ability to retain Fidel's good will.

The issue then was how to establish a "ruling" Communist Party, as required by Marxist-Leninist doctrine,\textsuperscript{36} without undermining the hegemony of the real revolutionary elite or subverting the Revolution through bureaucratism. The solution, for Castro, was to
keep the Party weak and dependent, dominated by his **fidelistas**, whose loyalty to their Maximum Leader was both unquestioning and unquestioned. Throughout the course of the 1960s, Cuban society would become increasingly organized and mobilized to perform the revolutionary tasks defined by Castro and his inner circle. By the same token, however, this process had little to do with true political development. Rather, by assuring the hegemony of the **fidelista** elite Fidel was able to insure the continuation of his own personalistic rule, essentially unhindered by the kind of institutional checks and procedures that characterize more mature political cultures. The result, in the words of Edward Gonzalez, was that "dilettantism tended to prevail over professionalism, the guerrilla mentality predominated over sober planning, and ideology had priority over economics." 37

More on this presently, The essential point here is that Castroism has represented neither a wholesale rejection of the Cuban revolutionary tradition nor a wholesale embrace of Marxism-Leninism. Rather, it has been a selective synthesis of the most compatible elements of both. Furthermore, its ideological superstructure has clearly had an existential base. The Cuban revolutionary process, as it has been experienced and understood by the revolutionaries themselves, has been a direct source of transfer culture strategy. (Hence, for instance, the theory of guerrilla warfare.) 38 Castroism, in addition to being a "premeditation in advance of political activity", has also been a retrospective
"meditation" on experience.39

But what of its subsequent development? Though the substantive portions of this study will deal only with the formative stages of Castroism, a few words should be said about the ongoing process of ideological change.

Here let me suggest a general principle of revolutionary elite behavior—namely, that any goal dictated by the utopian vision will give way if it is known to contradict the functional requirements of elite hegemony and social system maintenance.40

The assumption, of course, is that some goals are more basic than others; moreover, that these "higher" requisites must be at least minimally satisfied in order to effectively pursue the millenarian future. Indeed, attempts to prematurely promote utopian goals en masse are likely to end in disaster, since their economic and social costs are often high and the ideological objectives which they are designed to achieve have never been fully legitimized among major sectors of the populace. Their vigorous and extensive pursuit (as, for instance, in the case of Soviet War Communism and forced collectivization or China's Great Leap Forward and Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution) is likely to result in public disaffection and resistance on such a scale as to pose a serious threat to the revolutionary elite's power base and ability to govern. Hence the necessity of compromise, for unbending dogmatism is ultimately both self-destructive and destructive of the utopian objectives for which power
(at least theoretically) has been acquired. Subsequently, a process of ideological innovation will be undertaken in order to "bring the ideology into line with the recalcitrant social reality." 41

One need not press this argument too far. Obviously, it assumes that a certain amount of rationality and flexibility will be present in the policy-making process. The millenarian goals must be compromised to "prevent the gap between ideology and reality from growing to unmanageable proportions." 42 Yet, there are always the ever present dangers of elite misperception, dogmatism, indecision, incompetence and other factors which may block the processes of rational decision-making—with catastrophic results. Such phenomena, for instance, help account for the lag that has often appeared between the clear failure of certain ideologically-prescribed policies and the Cuban government's willingness to alter those policies. Partially as a consequence of this lag, the Castro regime has been disaster-prone. Major policy changes calling for the revision or de-emphasis of core elements of the ideology have been resisted until out-and-out catastrophe has forced a radical alteration in the government's "game plan".

Nevertheless, there is considerable evidence that just such a behavioral principle has been involved in the Cuban revolutionary process. Time and again, Castro has attempted to impose ideological goals on a sometimes receptive, sometimes recalcitrant social reality. Only when those aims have proven sufficiently unrealistic and dysfunctional to the social system and/or endangered
his political power base have they been moderated or abandoned—
albeit grudgingly, sometimes merely on a temporary basis, frequently
after disaster has already struck and an even greater catastrophe
is impending.

Examples are fairly evident. Thus, for instance, the regime
initially attempted to pursue the goals of economic development
and independence through an ambitious program of rapid industrial-
ization and economic diversification. The system of politico-
economic planning and organization then prevalent in the Soviet
Union was mechanically applied to Cuban circumstances. The
result was widespread economic dislocation. Agricultural production
fell dramatically. The 1963 sugar crop came to only 3.8 million
tons, down from 6.7 million tons in 1961. Consumption was curtailed;
social unrest grew.

As a consequence of these developments, Castroite transfer
culture strategy was radically re-evaluated. Industrialization was
postponed. After 1963, new emphasis was placed on the rapid
expansion, modernization and diversification of agriculture and
livestock production. There was much discussion of and experimenta-
tion with alternative systems of Socialist organization. A dramatic
rise in sugar output was planned in order to acquire the capital
necessary for the island's eventual industrialization. At the same
time, personal consumption continued to be restricted as the regime
invested heavily in development programs that entailed a delayed
pay-off. "Moral" incentives became the catchword for stimulating
labor productivity. Cuba was said to be embarked upon the simultaneous construction of Socialism and Communism; indeed, it was already ahead of the USSR in eliminating private ownership and developing Communist consciousness and egalitarian distribution. The goal was the creation of a pure Communist society populated by a "New Man", free from all of the corrupt bourgeois values of the past, selflessly dedicated to the welfare of the entire community.

The price was paid; the effort made. The result: disaster. An all-out attempt to produce a 10-million ton sugar harvest in 1970 once again led to massive economic dislocation. The Cuban dependence on the Soviet Union was reconfirmed with a vengeance. Yet another major re-evaluation of transfer-culture strategy was undertaken. Now moral incentives were quietly subordinated to material rewards; Castroite claims to a shortcut to Communism were shelved. The talk of the day became wage differentials, cost-benefit analysis, capital efficiency and institutionalization. Under Soviet influence, more systematic and rational methods of economic planning and administration were substituted for the grandiose and dramatic campaigns of the 1960's. The Cuban Communist Party and the mass organizations were strengthened. Gradually, the personalistic-messianic rule of Fidel Castro seemed to be giving way to a quieter, more paternalistic and bureaucratized social order, as organization men and technocrats came to play an increasingly important role in the regime.
A detailed description of these and related trends may be found elsewhere. The point here is that the pursuit of utopia, moderated by the functional requisites of social system maintenance and elite hegemony, has generated an ongoing process which is clearly modifying both ideology and reality. Moreover, should this process continue indefinitely "the ideology will be transformed, either by reinterpretation or by a reduction in scope, into a stable postrevolutionary structure of values for real men interacting in an equilibrium system."

What does this mean? In essence, it is a concise description of the process of millenarian decline that has so often been cited as characterizing the evolutionary pattern of revolutionary regimes. This is the logical conclusion of the recurrent attempt to refit ideology with social reality. As ideology and reality converge, the unworkable components of the former are either reinterpreted, abandoned and perhaps replaced by more pragmatic elements, or relegated to the level of abstract myths and symbols having little, if any, impact on the policy-making process. In any case, the end result is that both goal and transfer cultures eventually lose their revolutionary impetus as they become increasingly in harmony with social reality. In the long run, they become conservative forces helping to maintain the stability of the social system, rather than radical forces seeking to fundamentally restructure it.
The Cuban Revolution is far too young for us to make any definitive pronouncements on this matter. Certainly, Fidel Castro is perfectly capable of imposing a new wave of utopianism on his country, just as Mao Tse-tung did in China through the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. At the very least, one may anticipate that there will be a continuing tension between the requisites of revolutionary transformation and those of social system maintenance; moreover, that this tension will be inextricably connected with the intra-elite struggle for power. Nevertheless, the current evidence would seem to suggest that there are already powerful long-range processes at work which are leading the Cuban Revolution into the general evolutionary pattern described above.

But let us turn now to the other side of the picture and see whether the existential frame of reference can offer any understanding of the Soviet experience.

Ideology and Power in the USSR: The Process of Transfer Culture "Rationalization"

We will begin by emphasizing that the Soviet Union is at a very different stage of revolutionary development than Cuba. This basic reality, though obvious, is crucial, for it has had a profound impact on the role that ideology has played in the formation of each nation's political, social and economic strategies. In the USSR, the slow, incremental process through which revolutionary ideology is transformed into a value structure for a stable
post-revolutionary society has been going on for over half a century. And in that time, major elements of doctrine have been either reinterpreted, dropped or abstracted to the level of mere lip service as they have come into irreconcilable conflict with the realities of power and policy.  

In short, the scope, intensity and effect of the Marxist-Leninist goal culture have been substantially reduced. Transfer-culture strategy has increasingly come to be dominated by considerations of the here and now, to the detriment of schemes aimed at the utopian future. Indeed, it may be argued that as the ideology has "come to terms" with the real world, policy has been increasingly "rationalized" as the Soviet elite has become more motivated and equipped to engage in an informed calculation (and re-calculation, in the light of changing circumstances) of the benefits, risks, costs and probability of success of proposed policy alternatives and to consider measures which for ideological reasons had been previously regarded as taboo.

The logical integrity of this thesis rests partially on certain assumptions about the nature of revolutionary ideologies in the period following the seizure of power and about the way in which those ideologies are likely to be modified over time. The argument may be stated as follows:

By definition, dogma circumscribes thought. The dogmatic person embraces his ideology with such intensity that values,
perceptions and calculations which are incompatible with that frame of reference tend to be either rejected outright or screened out of his consciousness. Revolutionary ideologies by their very nature include elements of dogma. The utopian vision of the future, for instance, is not something which is immediately subject to tests of proof and disproof. Rather, it is an energizing myth to be believed in with passion. Similarly, those elements of the transfer culture designed to promote these ideals reflect the true believer's faith in the ultimate goals of the "new society" to be created. When, therefore, these ideological "images" of the world are confronted with phenomena, including ideas and strategies, which are incompatible with this vision those phenomena are either ignored through the process of selective perception or force-fit into the stereotypes provided by the belief system.

Thus, thought is restricted. The stronger the attachment to the dogma, the greater the impediment to a well-reasoned calculation of costs, risks, benefits and alternatives. In the beginning, the revolutionary regime may be willing to overlook these limitations, for the ideology performs certain functions--e.g., social mobilization--held to be highly desirable, if not essential. But, as has been suggested, when ideological stereotypes, techniques and objectives are dogmatically imposed on environmental realities which they do not substantially fit the result is likely to be catastrophe. And the more extensive these aims the
more serious the damage, both to the social system and the elite's political power base. Hence, the process of ideological adjustment discussed earlier. The crucial point, however, is that this very process of re-evaluating traditional assumptions, values, ideas, theories and priorities and exploring alternatives that have previously been taboo is synonymous with the introduction of new elements of rationality into the policy-making arena. If it is allowed to continue and develop—which is by no means certain, other considerations than functionality being involved—the ideology will over time become gradually rationalized to cope with the problems of the real world as little by little the dysfunctional elements of dogma are set aside and replaced by the values and thought-patterns of technocrats and managers (i.e., of those elements whose primary concern is to make the existing system work).\footnote{50}

But the "rationalization thesis", as applied to the Soviet experience, rests on far more than a simple deductive argument concerning the nature of ideological evolution. The changes in ideology and leadership that we are concerned with here are inextricably related to the processes of charismatic decline, bureaucratization, modernization and de-Stalinization that have long been a fact of life in the USSR. In part, they have been a product of the oft-noted "objective need" to adapt the patterns of order and organization to the formulation and administration of national policy.\footnote{51} No doubt charismatic
leadership was once a useful tool to help unify the nation, combat external threats and mobilize popular support for revolutionary programs. By the same token, however, it also entailed enormous human and material costs, as Khrushchev so vividly revealed in his Secret Speech. Moreover, the very qualities of spontaneity, personal dictate and the cult of heroism which make this type of leadership valuable in times of crisis present serious liabilities in periods of normalcy. Heroic voluntarism is rarely enough to solve the multifaceted socio-economic problems of modernization. One needs information, expertise, planning and administrative discipline in order to turn complex ideas into realities. Insofar as the Soviets have been able to institutionalize such capabilities in the policy process, they have been able to free themselves from the whims, prejudices and limitations of a single leader or vozhd. As such, they have achieved a rationalistic advancement over the more personalized and dependent relationships of charisma.52

But beyond this, the passage of time and the processes of modernization have led to fundamental changes in the very nature of the Soviet bureaucratic establishment. In part, this has simply been a matter of successive generations of revolutionary elites mellowing and eventually dying off with age. More important, however, it concerns the kind of leaders who are gradually coming to replace the lords of Stalinism. The creation of a highly complex, modern, industrialized society could not have been
achieved without the specialized knowledge of professional managers, economists, scientists, engineers, educators and other functional experts. Nor could such a society be run with much efficiency without their continuing cooperation, including, ultimately, their participation in its decision-making structures. With the lifting of the Stalinist terror, these elements began to emerge from the totalitarian obscurity in which they had been cloaked to greatly expand their role in the policy-making process. As H. Gordon Skilling has noted,

...In an increasingly vigorous debate on public policy, the specialized elites have been able to express their views and interests and to exert an influence on the ultimate decisions in such spheres as education, military strategy, industrial management, legal reform, science, art, and literature. In some cases initial proposals have been substantially altered as a result of the discussions. The cultural, professional, and scientific intelligentsia have thus emerged as one of the main pressure groups affecting public policy. Although their participation in policy-making is often linked with power-political considerations within the ruling echelons, the intelligentsia have also been drawn into a process of deliberation designed mainly to influence the shape of policy rather than to secure power.53

In short, it would seem reasonable to suppose that the injection of this kind of expertise into the policy process has substantially increased the likelihood that decisions will be made in accordance with "rational-technical" criteria,54 rather than on the basis of utopian dogma.

Finally, one other factor may be mentioned here--namely, the influence of worldly success. If power corrupts, so does
success (the former being one particular manifestation of the latter). To quote Robert G. Tucker, "a movement that grows strong and influential and has prospects for further growth acquires a definite stake in the stability of the order in which this success has been won—a stake that is no less real for the fact that it goes unacknowledged."\textsuperscript{55} Having made it to the top, it is a common human tendency to want to stay there. A movement that has little to lose can afford to be revolutionary. One that has acquired power, wealth, legitimacy (whatever its standard of satisfaction) is unlikely to behave in a very revolutionary manner if—and this is the major point of qualification—in doing so it would seriously endanger the bases of its own good fortune. Instead, it will tend to dwell on more controllable, incremental objectives, like winning votes, expanding profits and improving living conditions.\textsuperscript{56}

It is precisely this basic motivating principle which underlies and gives power to the theory of ideological change and links it with the increasingly technocratic and managerial character of Soviet behavior. It is the interest in protecting worldly success, as manifested in the requisites of social system maintenance and elite hegemony, that accounts for both the recurrent compromising of utopian objectives and the gradual rationalization of the transfer culture. Sadly, at least for those of revolutionary persuasion, the fruits of success contained within them seeds of failure, for they meant that the revolutionary
Ideology would be bent to the service of an elite which, in order to protect its gains, would over time become primarily oriented towards the practical tasks of adjusting to its continually changing environment and satisfying the desires of its increasingly bourgeoisified mass constituency. In the course of this extended socializing experience, the immediate technical values of coping, that is, of effectively coming to terms with the existing national and international systems, would become more and more predominant over the determination to wrench those orders out of their current moorings and launch them on new paths of revolutionary development.

A few caveats and qualifications should perhaps be offered, for these arguments ought not be pressed too far. We are suggesting degrees of change—long-range tendencies and trends, rather than sudden, absolute or inevitable transformations. It would be fatuous, for instance, to proclaim that Marxism-Leninism is dead when the men of the Party apparatus, the most doctrine-oriented sector of the Soviet leadership, still constitute the single most powerful interest group in the political system. Clearly, they will not readily surrender their hegemony to the new technocratic elite. Neither do we infer that "experts" make their recommendations solely on the basis of rational calculations of functionality, risk and cost, devoid of personal or group interest. The point is simply that there is a growing body of evidence which points to the increased technical competence of
the Soviet leadership. Political development has been accompanied by a tendency to substitute performance criteria for political criteria in the making of personnel decisions. In turn, this has served to promote rationalization both by drawing the functional specialists increasingly into the policy process and by forcing the apparatchiki to acquire new technocratic orientations and skills which have partially replaced the time-honored dogmas of Marxism-Leninism.

Nor are we arguing that the process of bureaucratization is uniformly conducive to problem-solving. Certainly, one great advantage which charismatic leadership has over bureaucracy is the element of unified policy-making authority. Collective leadership means decision by committee. And especially when that committee contains individuals representing diverse values, interests and perspectives, the resulting process of policy negotiation may well produce a compromise resolution largely unsuited to dealing "rationally" with the problem at hand. Moreover, as Brzezinski has argued, "in a highly bureaucratized political setting, conformity, caution and currying favor with superiors count for more in advancing a political career than personal courage and individual initiative." Or, one might add, creativity and competence. The trouble with a socio-political system which resembles a "bureaucracy writ large" is that it is likely to be plagued by all of the dysfunctional symptoms that have traditionally been associated with the pathology of
bureaucratism. 62

Finally, it would seem that there are substantial differences in the way in which transfer culture strategy is being adapted to "fit" domestic and foreign circumstances. The present international system is far more dynamic than the Soviet internal order. Revolutionary opportunities abound, and can often be exploited with minimum risk and cost. Thus, the very process of "coming to terms" with these existential realities is likely to involve Moscow in a more revolutionary form of behavior than is the case on the domestic front. The recent Soviet-Cuban effort to spur on the revolutionary tide in Africa (most notably, in Angola) is an obvious case in point.

Notwithstanding these qualifications, however, there is substantial evidence that the rationality thesis is indispensable to an understanding of Soviet behavior in the post-World War II era. In the early 1950's, the country was just beginning to move out of the straitjacket of Stalinist totalitarianism. Old stereotypes and dogmas were being re-evaluated in the search for new and more effective ways of dealing with the multitude of rising problems and opportunities, both foreign and domestic, that were facing the Soviet leadership. In this climate of imminent change, Nikita Khrushchev's erratic, impulsive, experimental style of policy-making had its place, though in the long run it was patently unsuited to dealing with the complexities of the kind of modern industrial society that the USSR was fast becoming. In the end,
it was partially in reaction to his blatantly anti-bureaucratic *modus operandi* that the last remnant of charismatic leadership was removed from the Politburo in October 1964. The First Secretary's colleagues simply got fed up with his insatiable penchant for spontaneous and ill-considered millenarian schemes, institutional reorganizations and personalistic dictates and opted for a calmer, more rational "collective" approach to national policy-making. Not surprisingly, the "regime of clerks" which replaced him has displayed a marked lack of interest in measures primarily designed to pursue the utopian goal culture.

To a considerable extent also, the history of Soviet policy towards Latin America in the post-war era has been a history of these processes of ideological rationalization at work, a witness to the gradual shift from the stereotypical isolationist attitudes of Stalinism to the sometimes cautious, sometimes impulsive experimentalism of Khrushchev to the more conservative, well-informed, carefully planned and systematically incremental style of Brezhnev and Kosygin. In part, of course, this may simply mean that the realities of shared power in a collective leadership inhibit the kind of temerity that was such an integral aspect of the Khrushchev personality. But beyond this, there is abundant evidence in the gradual but unmistakable rise in the quality of Soviet specialized literature on Latin America to suggest that the men in the Kremlin are actively seeking a much more detailed and sophisticated understanding of the area (and the Third World,
in general), the better to formulate effective policy. Moreover, one of the most remarkable characteristics of recent Muscovite strategy towards the subcontinent has been its continuity. The same basic game plan has been in effect ever since 1965, a policy which gives every appearance of having been carefully measured in terms of costs, risks, potential benefits and alternatives and predicated on a coldly realistic assessment of Latin American political, economic and social realities and of the Kremlin's past experiences and anticipated future relationships with Cuba, the United States and the other nations of the hemisphere. The apparent conclusion: Better to follow a low-cost, low-risk strategy having a good chance of achieving modest, yet tangible gains than to pursue the kind of dangerous, expensive and probably futile panaceas with which Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev had been so enamoured.

What then of Marxism-Leninism? If we have thus far spoken only of the declining role of the utopian vision, this should not be taken to mean that the goal culture no longer has any meaningful functions or that policies are now formulated solely on the basis of systemic needs and elite interests. Rather than the "end" of ideology, what we are witnessing is the process whereby a revolutionary weltanschauung is gradually rationalized and adjusted to fit real-world opportunities, constraints and pressures. If, on the one hand, it has increasingly been relegated to a conservative,
justificatory and instrumental role, designed to legitimize the repeated subordination of utopian ideals to pragmatic needs and interests, by the same token there still remain semantic and cognitive realities which cannot be ignored. As one noted observer has pointed out, "those who speak the peculiar tongue of Marxism-Leninism and use its vocabulary as a medium of communication with their subjects and with their associates abroad find that their view of events is inevitably colored by this fact."65

Language and thought, after all, are interrelated. The concepts provided by language and the links between those concepts offered by ideology give people frameworks and theories for understanding the world around them and their places within it. At the very least, Marxism-Leninism, with its vision of the present historical epoch characterized by protracted worldwide conflict between the forces of revolutionary change, the Soviet Union at their forefront, and those of imperialism and counter-revolution, has provided the men in the Kremlin with a set of ideological assumptions and images which has served as a general orientational context within which calculations of rationality (whether in pursuit of system maintenance, elite interests or reasonably attainable "third priority" ends derived from the goal culture) have been fitted and, to a certain extent, measured.66

As W. Raymond Duncan has stated, these assumptions and images have provided some of the most basic elements in the Soviet conception
of international political reality:

...the hostile West will seek to maximize its power, making it the major security threat to all Socialist countries and particularly to the USSR; Western power must be reduced by countervailing power and strategy; the Soviet Union, locked into the struggle for power, must augment at all cost its domestic strength which lies at the basis of its relative strength within the world political setting; international power distributions are relative and changing and Moscow must exploit shifting power relationships--indeed, it must serve as a catalyst for change in a constant search for the most effective strategy to translate its power into policy.67

It was through this screen of predominantly ideological, Cold War perceptions that the post-Stalinist leadership sought to pursue its central foreign policy objective, that of maintaining the Soviet state and social system. And it was precisely these assumptions, increasingly freed from the more rigidified stereotypes of the Stalinist weltanschauung, that inextricably led the Kremlin to take advantage of the opportunities that were opening up in Latin America and the rest of the Third World. When the Cuban door opened, the Soviets simply walked through it--though, as we shall see, somewhat belatedly and with great caution (at least, until it was decided to install nuclear missiles on the island). Subsequently, these perceptions and hence Soviet actions were further moderated by a variety of factors--a greater awareness of the risks and costs of involvement (to which their experience with the Cubans contributed immeasurably); an appreciation of the limited tangibility of probable gains (ditto the impact of the Cuban experience); the tacit establishment of a relationship of
"Peaceful Co-existence" with Moscow's most prosperous enemy, the United States; and an increasingly acute pain which accompanied a reluctant recognition that the Soviet economy was still primitive and vitally dependent on the acquisition of Western (and Japanese) trade and technology. Indeed, by the early 1970's it seemed as if these realities were ushering in a new historical era of detente, with substantive implications for the further decline of Muscovite revolutionary militance.

But that is beyond the scope of this dissertation. Let us therefore turn from theory to substance and plunge into the existential milieu of pre-1959 Cuba in search of the origins and essence of revolutionary Castroism.
Chapter One

FOOTNOTES

1See, in particular, Theodore Draper, Castro's Revolution (New York, 1962) and Castroism, Theory and Practice (New York, 1965); Andres Suarez, Cuba: Castroism and Communism, 1959-1966 (Cambridge, 1967), and "Leadership, Ideology and Political Party", in Revolutionary Change in Cuba, ed. Carmelo Mesa-Lago (Pittsburgh, 1971), pp. 3-21; Philip W. Bonsal, Cuba, Castro and the United States (Pittsburgh, 1971); Rufo Lopez-Fresquet, My Fourteen Months with Castro (Cleveland, 1966); and Loree Wilkerson, Fidel Castro's Political Programs from Reformism to "Marxism-Leninism" (Gainesville, 1965).

2See, especially, Herbert Matthews, The Cuban Story (New York, 1961), Fidel Castro (New York, 1969) and Revolution in Cuba (New York, 1975); K. S. Karol, Guerrillas in Power, the Course of the Cuban Revolution (New York, 1970); Maurice Zeitlin and Robert Scheer, Cuba: Tragedy in Our Hemisphere (New York, 1963); Richard R. Fagen, The Transformation of the Political Culture in Cuba (Stanford, 1969); and Nita R. Manitzas, "Social Class and the Definition of the Cuban Nation", in Cuban: The Logic of the Revolution, eds. David P. Barkin and Nita R. Manitzas (Andover, Mass., 1973), M261-1-17. It should be noted, however, that those who adhere to these schools of thought do not speak with uniform or unambiguous voice. Some--for instance, Matthews and Fagen--are clearly aware of the importance which both revolutionary ideals and the drive for power have played in Castroism. There has been little effort, however, to systematically treat both variables; rather, emphasis has been placed on one or the other. Moreover, conceptual frameworks have rarely been spelled out. Thus, one must often reconstruct those frameworks through inference from materials which are largely implicit.

3One must include in this criticism even such fine studies as Hugh Thomas' Cuba, or the Pursuit of Freedom (London, 1971) and Maurice Halperin's The Rise and Decline of Fidel Castro (Berkeley, 1972), for their focus has been predominantly on fact and incident to the neglect of more general and systematic interpretation or theory. Perhaps the best treatment of power and ideology in Castroism...
has been Edward Gonzalez's *Cuba Under Castro: The Limits of Charisma* (Boston, 1974). He does not, however, specify his conceptual framework or place his analysis within a theoretical context.

4 See, e.g., Manitzas, p. 261-5. Matthews goes even farther, contending that Castro in this period had "no systematic ideas, no ideology, no political connections." *Revolution in Cuba*, p. 47. But here he is clearly referring to a fully-developed or mature ideology, rather than an ideology in nascence.


7 Draper, *Castroism*, p. 55.


11 An extensive and amply documented analysis of the existential origins and formation of nascent Castroism may be found in Chapters Two and Three.

12 Guevara's metaphor, in his farewell letter to his parents (April, 1965), as published in *Bohemia*, October 20, 1967.

13 See, for instance, Castro's comments to Lee Lockwood, in the latter's *Castro's Cuba, Cuba's Fidel* (New York, 1967), p. 142.

15 In Psychopathology and Politics (New York, 1960); and Power and Personality (New York, 1948).

16 Here see especially Eric Erickson's classic studies of Luther and Gandhi. Young Man Luther (New York, 1962) and Gandhi's Truth (New York, 1969).


18 In the words of Robert MacIver, "the myth mediates between man and nature. From the shelter of his myth he perceives and experiences the world. Inside his myth he is at home in his world." The Web of Government (New York, 1948), p. 5. A more elaborate treatment of this subject may be found in Kenneth Boulding's The Image (Ann Arbor, 1956).

19 Or, to put it another way, a leader who sees himself as a Great Revolutionary Liberator will tend to behave accordingly.

20 These concepts were initially developed by Anthony F. C. Wallace in Culture and Personality (New York, 1961), p. 148.


22 Ibid., p. 8. This is a more systematized adaptation of a conceptual framework which Johnson designed with specifically Communist elites in mind.


25 This as opposed to the arguments of both those who believe that the United States "pushed Castro into the arms of the Communists" and those who contend that he never had any intention of staying on the American side. See, especially, Zeitlin and Scheer, Cuba: Tragedy in Our Hemisphere; and Draper, Castro's Revolution.
26 See Chapters Six, Seven and Eight.


28 By the same token, civil liberties and democratic elections were readily jettisoned as being incompatible with the requisites of revolutionary survival. In their stead was substituted the "direct democracy" of mass rallies and televised appeals to the nation. Increasingly, the pursuit of freedom came to mean positive freedom or the freedom to do that which is revolutionary, as defined by the Maximum Leader, rather than negative liberty or the absence of constraints. For a detailed explication of these terms, see Isaiah Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty", in Four Essays on Liberty, ed. Berlin (London, 1969), pp. 118-72.


34 Richard R. Fagen, "Revolution—For Internal Consumption Only", in Cuban Communism, ed. Irving Louis Horowitz (n.c., 1970), p. 44.

35 This was the Integrated Revolutionary Organizations, founded in 1961, which gave way to the United Party of Socialist Revolution in 1963, which in turn was replaced by the Communist Party of Cuba
in 1965.

36. Not to mention the Soviet Union, which demanded the formation of such an organization as a condition for Cuba's entrance into the Socialist camp.

37. Op. cit., p. 221. One must agree, therefore, with Gonzales's criticism of Richard R. Fagen's argument that Cuba experienced a rapid rate of political development during the 1960's. See the latter's The Transformation of the Political Culture in Cuba, pp. 160-61.

38. In Draper's words, "only after taking power did it [Castroism] begin to ask itself what it had done and how it had been done." Castroism, p. 58.


40. Again, this is an adaptation of the theory previously developed by Chalmers Johnson in "Comparing Communist Nations", p. 8.

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid., p. 18.

43. Most notably in Gonzales, and Carmelo Mesa-Lago, Cuba in the 1970's, Pragmatism and Institutionalization (Albuquerque, 1974).

44. Johnson, p. 18.


46. By conservative, I include the notion of reformism which, as Robert C. Tucker has pointed out, "accepts the established system and its institutionalized procedures as the framework for further efforts in the direction of social change." Op. cit., p. 185.
Indeed, there have already been some indications that
Castro has resisted the post-1970 institutionalization insofar
as it has served to constrain his personal power and endanger
his ideological objectives. See, especially, Gonzalez, pp. 225-
231-33. For an excellent theoretical analysis of the recurrent
conflict between the drives for utopia and modernization in
Communist regimes and of its link to the struggle for power, see
Richard Lowenthal, "Development vs Utopia in Communist Policy",
in Johnson, ed., pp. 33-117 and especially pp. 50-54.

For a comprehensive and detailed account of this
process, which stresses the general lack of congruence between
pre-revolutionary Bolshevik doctrine and actual Soviet experience,
see Barrington Moore, Jr., Soviet Politics--The Dilemma of Power
(Cambridge, 1956).

For detailed elaboration of this theme, see Leon
Festinger, A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance (Evanston, Ill., 1957);
Milton Rokeach et al., The Open and Closed Mind (New York, 1960);
and T. W. Adorno et al., The Authoritarian Personality (New York,
1950). A more popularized, but nonetheless very insightful
work is Eric Hoffer's The True Believer (New York, 1951).

For a somewhat different, if not entirely dissenting,
viewpoint, see Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, Ideology and Power in
be stressed that this process of "rationalization" is in no
sense inevitable. On the contrary, human motivation and ex-
perience being as varied as they are, it is entirely possible
that political leaders might, for instance, attempt to substitute
new dogmas for unworkable old ones or return to the values of
tradition (which are themselves dogmas) rather than take a chance
on reason. The latter, after all, is a very different basis of
authority from that on which revolutionary power was initially
founded, and the transition from one form of legitimacy to
another may well create problems for the elite's continued
hegemony which practicing politicians may not care to risk.

The classic statement, of course, being Max Weber's
"The Sociology of Charismatic Authority", in From Max Weber:
Essays in Sociology, eds. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New
York, 1946).

For a discussion of the role of the Soviet bureaucracy
in the modernization process, see Merle Fainsod, "Bureaucracy
and Modernization: The Russian and Soviet Case", in Bureaucracy
and Political Development, ed. Joseph La Palombara (Princeton,


56 See, in particular, Robert Michels' classic study of European Socialism, in his Political Parties (New York, 1959), esp. pp. 370-73.

57 Thus, for instance, Triska and Finley found Soviet crisis behavior since World War II "cautious rather than reckless, conservative rather than radical, temperate rather than impulsive, and relatively rational. . . . Soviet enthusiasm for provocation of crises as means to international advantage appears to have declined markedly." Similarly, in the United Nations the Kremlin had been "socialized into a new role" and had "lost much of its inclination to challenge the status quo, so evident in the early post-World War II era." Moreover, as a "relatively 'satiated' power", the USSR "supports and upholds international law and order, which in turn favors the status quo and thus the maintenance of the Soviet position. Cautious incremental improvement upon, rather than a risky challenge of, the status quo has thus characterized recent Soviet foreign policy." Jan F. Triska and David D. Finley, Soviet Foreign Policy (New York, 1968), p. 437.

58 On the other hand, Frederick J. Fleron calculates that between the Nineteenth Party Congress in 1952 and the Twenty-third Congress in 1966 the percentage of Central Committee members identified with the apparatus dropped from 64% to 43.6%. However, he also notes that the professional politicians still dominated the top staff positions in the apparatus, thus retaining control over the key decisions as to how many additional specialists were to be coopted. "Toward a Reconceptualization of Political Change
in the Soviet Union: The Political Leadership System", in Communist Studies and the Social Sciences, ed. Fleron (Chicago, 1969), pp. 235, 238. See also Fleron's "System Attributes and Career Attributes: The Soviet Political Leadership System, 1952 to 1965", in Comparative Communist Political Leadership, eds. Carl Beck et al. (New York, 1973), pp. 57-59. By the same token, Jerry Hough found little evidence that the economic managers had emancipated themselves from Party control at the provincial level. On the contrary, Party officials continued to "have an impact even on specialized decisions, and their intervention, while usually rational in terms of other considerations, is often an arbitrary one in terms of the professional standards, the regulations, and the interests of the officials directly involved." Op. cit., pp. 283, 287.


60 Thus, Jerry Hough notes that "on all but the most central questions, Party policy is less and less incorporated into clear-cut, unchallengeable 'ideology', with a consequent widening of the areas open to public discussion. In almost every policy sphere, ideology is ambiguous and ill-defined; and in almost every policy sphere, the published debate is now freer and more wide-ranging than it was under Khrushchev." In "The Soviet System: Patrification or Pluralism?", Problems of Communism, no. 2 (March/April, 1972), p. 31. It is not possible to give a full listing of all of the recent studies that have dealt with the growing technical competence of the Soviet elite, the relationship between the Party and the specialists and the changing nature and role of the ideology. See, e.g., Jerry Hough, The Soviet Prefects; Milton Lodge, Soviet Elite Attitudes Since Stalin (Columbus, Ohio, 1969), and "'Groupism' in the Post-Stalin Period", Midwest Journal of Political Science, XII, 3 (August, 1968), pp. 330-51; Philip D. Stewart, "Diversity and Adaptation in Soviet Political Culture: The Attitudes of the Soviet Political Elite", in Change and Adaptation in Soviet and East European Politics, eds. Jane P. Shapiro and Peter J. Potichnyj (New York, 1976), pp. 22-24, 31-32; Frederick J. Fleron, Jr., "Representation of Career Types in Soviet Political Leadership", in Political Leadership in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, ed. R. Barry Farrell (Chicago, 1970), pp. 108-39, and "Cooptation as a Mechanism of Adaptation to Change: The Soviet Political Leadership System", Polity, II, 2 (Winter, 1969), pp. 176-201; Robert E. Blackwell, Jr.,


62 For an influential application of organizational theory to Soviet politics, see Meyer, The Soviet Political System: An Interpretation.


64 Including the need to mobilize the Soviet populace behind the regime's economic goals. See, especially, Stewart, "Diversity and Adaptation. . .", pp. 31-32.


66 It is significant that Triska and Finley found a greater overall density of doctrinal stereotypes in the formulation of foreign affairs elites than domestic elites; also, that the impact of doctrine was greater in long-range planning and expectation than
short-range analysis and decision. They conclude that "Marxist-
Leninist interpretation of events by the Soviet elite is most
significant for the international system as the basis for setting
persistent Soviet programmatic policy which may predestine repeated
collision crises. There is little reason to suppose, on the other
hand, that contemporary Soviet-elite interpretations of particular
events and their probable immediate consequences will be significantly
different from non-Communist interpretations of the same events."

67 In Soviet Policy in Developing Areas, ed. Duncan (Waltham,
Chapter Two

THE RISE OF CASTROISM -- THE EXISTENTIAL PRECONDITIONS

One basic issue that will recur throughout this study is that of ideology formation. Specifically, how and why did the ideology of Castroism come about? In this chapter and the next, we shall examine its origins and early development and make some preliminary statements about its general nature. Only with this kind of background will we be equipped to understand why the Soviet-Cuban alliance was formed and why it has had such a rocky history.

It should be noted at the beginning that this task of coming to grips with the nature and role of Castroite ideology is a formidable one. Some of the most knowledgeable and insightful students of the Cuban Revolution continue to view Fidel Castro as one-dimensional man incarnate, a consummate opportunist and sociopath of no real ideological persuasion, who forcibly imposed his Revolution on an unsuspecting populace in the course of the single-minded pursuit of his own power and grandeur. As Andres Suarez put it, a man who believed that "politics was nothing but a naked struggle for power devoid of any spiritual or ideological principles." Or, at best, that "the ideology is so elusive as to be hardly ascertainable in terms of content." Thus, "it is difficult to claim a significant role for it in the regime."
Now this is a portrait that strikes me as being more caricature than reality. Yet, it is an important interpretation, one that cannot be ignored. Its weaknesses are not obvious; it has a particularly skillful apostle in Suarez; and it has performed a considerable scholarly service in focusing attention on the egoistic drives for power and grandeur that have so clearly played a vital role in determining the course of the Maximum Leader's political evolution. Unfortunately, it contains certain conceptual weaknesses which render it highly vulnerable to partisan abuse, even when framed in more temperate terms than the above capsulization. The fact of the matter is that those who subscribe to this perspective almost always have some personal or ideological axe to grind. And while there is nothing wrong with this per se, the danger is that this kind of limited perceptual framework, rigidly applied, will serve as a cognitive blinder, blocking out critical aspects of Cuban revolutionary reality that do not conform to its structure of predispositions.

It will be necessary to delineate and discuss my differences with Suarez point by point as my argument is developed. And while our disagreements are not so much over the "facts" as over matters of conceptualization, it is the latter realm which seems to me to be most crucial for our understanding of what has happened in Cuba. The field of Cubanology is packed with knowledgeable people who cannot agree with one another on some of the most basic issues--precisely because they are looking at those issues and the available evidence
from radically different perspectives. Their predispositions, definitions and values have largely predetermined their conclusions.

To say this, of course, is in no way to claim any absoluteness of objectivity or definitiveness of interpretation for myself. I also have values and predispositions, inherent in my personality and in my analytical framework. But what I can do is to be consciously multidimensional and eclectic in my approach to the subject in an attempt to understand how seemingly irreconcilable elements of social, psychological and political reality fit together in meaningful fashion. Further, efforts will be made to be precise with regard to definitions and arguments and the train of reason and evidence underlying them. This much is vital if we are to be a community of scholars talking with one another, rather than merely to one another or, worse yet, past one another.

In the following approach, I shall attempt to capture the major elements of what might be called the two faces of Castroism—namely, its bases in the Cuban social system, on the one hand, and in the personal and political development of Fidel Castro, on the other. A primary thesis is that under most circumstances ideologies cannot be properly viewed in isolation from the history and the social, economic, political and psychological textures of the societies in which they arise and take root.³ There are, of course, some instances in which ideologies are artificially imposed on nations by external force, but these are the exceptions, not the rule. For the most part, one must look to the sociological and psychological
milieu in which groups exist to understand why masses of men become receptive to new ideas or cling to old ones. Just as revolutions have preconditions, so do ideologies. It is these existential bases of Castroism that will be examined in the current chapter.

But beyond this, one must look to the individuals who have served as theorists, prophets and footsoldiers of the new order-to-be, for it is they who translate the ideological raw materials inherent in the social conditions of their time and place into actual doctrine and policy. In our case, by far and away the most important influence on the rise of Castroism has been (obviously) Fidel Castro, and it is primarily his ideological evolution which will have to be examined in detail in subsequent chapters. More specifically, in the next chapter I will suggest (at least in primitive fashion) how Fidel’s personal ego drives interacted with environmental opportunities, pressures, constraints and the intellectual milieu in which he lived to produce the nascent ideology of Castroism. Most important, it will be argued, in conjunction with my previous theoretical comments, that ideology itself is not a static phenomenon but rather a developmental process. Ideologies are nowhere born full-grown. Karl Marx, to take just one example, did not suddenly wake up one morning with a fully-developed theory of historical change. Rather, his ideology evolved over time in accordance with the recurring interaction of his revolutionary predispositions, on the one hand, and his environmental reality-perceptions, on the other. This process, moreover, was
never fully separable from the pressures flowing out of his own ego development. The young humanist Marx did not have the same kind of sophisticated weltanschauung as the older, more radical author of the Manifesto and Capital. Nor was the latter apostle of revolutionary optimism and human progress the same man who, towards the end of his life, began to brood over the prospect of the degeneration of modern civilization.

And so it has been with Fidel Castro. The mere fact that his belief system has undergone changes of both substance and labeling cannot in itself be held to be a priori proof of his lack of ideology. In this sense, Suarez and those who subscribe to his interpretation quite simply misunderstand the nature of human ideological development. Were consistency (in reality, more often a sign of intellectual stagnation than anything else) the critical factor in measuring ideological allegiance, then neither Marx, nor Lenin, nor Stalin, nor Mao Tse-tung could be considered ideologically committed. To be sure, the arguments of the anti-ideologists rest on far more than this single proposition. Let this then be considered as merely the opening salvo of a more comprehensive attack on their position, which will be developed throughout the course of this study.

The Paradox

Much has been made of the fact that Cuba under Batista's rule was not, comparatively speaking (critical phrase, that!), a poverty-stricken nation. Indeed, Cubans enjoyed one of the highest
standards of living in the hemisphere, higher even than in some Western European countries. While available statistics differ from source-to-source and year-to-year and are often grossly unreliable, they can nevertheless serve as a general point of reference if used carefully. On an approximate per capita basis, Cubans owned more television sets, motor vehicles and appliances than any other Latin American citizenry and ranked second in radios, third in telephones and fourth in income (which may have been as high as $521 in 1958). They were predominantly urban (57%), literate and non-agricultural (58.6%), had a large (by most standards) middle class, a substantial number of prosperous businessmen, an ever-mushrooming (though notoriously unproductive) state bureaucracy, one of the most organized and powerful labor movements in the world and a peasantry that was relatively small and isolated.

Furthermore, it has been pointed out by numerous observers that the socio-economic programs of successive governments from 1933 onward had been of a generally redistributive nature and that partially because of this inequalities, though still great, were considerably less pronounced than in most Latin American countries. Even Castro had to admit that Cuban distributive policy had, "as a result of wage increases, the introduction of the eight-hour day, paid holidays, social insurance, etc., brought about a more just distribution of the national income. Before it used to flow into the hands of the few, now it reaches the hands of the many." Or,
at least, as one close observer of Cuban political life remarked, "the lower classes shared, though to an insufficient extent, in
the gradual improvement in living standards."  

Both working class and peasantry were beneficiaries, though
in varying degrees. In fact, as an integral part of the neo-
corporate political system that developed after 1933 organized
labor by the 1950's came to exercise a virtual stranglehold over the
government; and it would not be an exaggeration to say that Batista,
during his second period of power, ran Cuba by means of an alliance
with organized labor."  

In return for union support, successive
regimes underwrote a vast number of restrictive practices, including
the right to permanent employment in many industries and limitations
on mechanization and other labor-saving investments. Among other
things, workers had won the right to strike, the right to a minimum
wage, to an eight-hour day, to four paid legal holidays, to a month
of paid vacation per annum and to a guaranteed forty-eight hours of
pay for a forty-four hour workweek. In many sectors of production,
salaries rivaled levels found in Canada and Western Europe.  

In short, organized labor had little reason to want to
fundamentally restructure anything. It was already in very many
respects the personification of Fanon's "pampered proletariat".  

Moreover, in the countryside both peasants and farm laborers
(the latter composing better than two-thirds of those working in
agriculture) had made rather substantial gains in developing their
class consciousness and cohesion during the turmoil of the 1930's
and had had some success in translating this new-found source of power into political dividends. As a consequence, a fair amount of socio-economic legislation had been written on their behalf. In 1937, for instance, sugar farm tenants were given permanent possession of their plots, including the rights of inheritance, sale and mortgage, in return for the delivery of a legally fixed quota of sugarcane and the payment of a five per cent rent on their annual product. Later, these provisions were modified so that a farmer could not be evicted, even for a failure to pay his rent. And in 1952, this "right of permanence" was extended to all tenants with holdings up to 165 acres—including squatters—so that the International Commission of Jurists could, with some justification, later draw the conclusion that at the time that Castro came to power "the Cuban tenant had many of the rights which are normally associated with full ownership of land but without the obligations which are usually involved."  

Finally, with regard to the island's 600,000 rural laborers, about one-sixth worked in the sugar mills, forming a kind of proletarian elite in the countryside. Their union strength was such that they were able to effectively oppose the introduction of labor-saving machinery, win wage increases in times of prosperity and protect them when falling sugar prices brought hard times. And as for the bulk of the farm workers, though considerably less well off than those in the mills, they too had shared in the benefits of political, social and economic change—from the introduction of
minimum wage laws, for example—so much so that by the late 1940's the foremost US student of rural Cuba could estimate that their overall position was "vastly better in mid-century than it was in the beginning, or during the first three decades, of the century." 

So why a revolution in Cuba, of all places?

The fact of the matter is that there is a great deal of truth in Suarez's assertion that "the overthrow of Batista was not due to any demand by the masses for a radical transformation of the socio-economic structure." As I shall discuss in more detail later, the leaders of the coalition of forces that composed the opposition to the dictatorship were primarily bourgeois in origin. Their aims, at least to judge by their public pronouncements, were more political than social or economic, the most trumpeted goals being the ending of the terror and the restoration of legitimate democratic government under the Constitution of 1940. Few hints of radical Socialism were found in their often vague and contradictory statements on economic policy. Nor were strains of anti-Yankee rhetoric readily observable. On the contrary, moderation was the byword. It was only after the dictator had been toppled, in the process of Castro's movement to establish and consolidate his own absolute authority, that the Revolution veered onto the path of political, social and economic radicalization. Indeed, it was this course of action, juxtaposed against Fidel's earlier acquiescence to and even promotion of temperance, that led many of his critics to conclude that once in power he had betrayed the
original aims of the Revolution and that a basically middle class phenomenon had been perverted and used to destroy the middle class.\textsuperscript{16}

**The Roots of Castroism: Socio-Economic Insecurity, Injustice and Frustration**

Yet, all this tells only part of the story. The Cuban politico-socio-economic milieu was never one-dimensional. On the contrary, its development was multi-faceted and uneven—a fact which is recognized by scholars of all political persuasions, though they often differ as to its significance. The socio-psychological preconditions of Castroism existed in mix with a multitude of forces that lent stability to the old order. It will be the purpose of this and subsequent sections to distinguish these mass bases of nascent Castroism, specifically, to spotlight those realities (1) which provided a focal point of ideas and values around which the ideology arose and gained substance and (2) which provided a reservoir of both latent and active political support which enabled Fidel, once in power, to develop the Revolution and its ideology in a far more radical manner than his early political statements had suggested. As will become readily apparent, the sprouts of Castroism arose more from the strains and weaknesses of the social system than from its sources of strength. To a very great extent, the revolutionary process involved the activation and development of the former to the point where the latter were overwhelmed.\textsuperscript{17}

Thus far, only faint hint has been given of the frustration, inequality, insecurity and corruption that was such an integral part
of the Cuban society against which Castro began his rebellion. Statistics on per capita income, television sets, motor vehicles and telephones demonstrate only that wealth existed; they say nothing about its distribution, or about the whole complex of social and historical sources of mass alienation which were to provide much of the active and latent capacity for the development of revolutionary Castroism. And they most assuredly do not give us much basis for understanding one of the central themes of this chapter: That in early 1958 large segments of the Cuban populace were waiting for a messiah. During the latter half of that year and the first half of 1959 they found one.

To begin, one can hardly understare the importance of the fact that the island's economy suffered from chronic stagnation and instability. Incomes fluctuated with the international price of sugar, which accounted for between a quarter and a third of the national income and about 82% of the island's exports. And the market price of sugar was heavily dependent on forces beyond Cuban control--on wars, tariffs, quotas, foreign production and so forth. As a result, the economy was particularly susceptible to boom-bust cycles. Price rises due to increased international demand during time of war would bring prosperity to the isle. But when the wars ended and demand fell so did sugar profits, and hence much of the basis of Cuban well-being. In further consequence, the entire social structure was riven with insecurity. Lowry Nelson put it well when he said that there was "considerable social
mobility up and down the social hierarchy. People who were rich have been made poor; some who were poor became rich; some rich have become richer; and great masses of the poor have been pushed further down the scale. Cuban society, as a stable and organized structure, can properly be regarded as being in a state of emergence."\(^{19}\)

All in all, there is considerable doubt whether real per capita income had increased much in the half century prior to Castro's coming to power.\(^{20}\)

Moreover, while one can hardly dispute the fact that the masses had, in general, benefited substantially from the redistributive policies of the past two and a half decades, it must be emphasized that the pursuit of socio-economic justice was at best uneven. Widespread poverty and inequality remained an integral part of Cuban society. Wealth was disproportionately concentrated in Havana, and in rural areas conditions remained extremely bad, sometimes close to the starvation level. To quote one authority, "about a third of the nation existed in squalor, eating rice, beans, bananas and root vegetables. . . , living in huts, usually without electricity or toilet facilities, suffering from parasitic diseases and lacking access to health services, denied education. . . ."\(^{21}\)

What statistical information we have clearly supports this general picture. From November 1956 to September 1957 Havana University's Catholic Student Association conducted a survey of 1,000 representative families distributed throughout Cuba's 126 municipalities. Their findings revealed that: about 43% of the adult populace was illiterate;
approximately 60% of rural families lived in homes having earthen floors and roofs made of palm leaves, two-thirds of which lacked water closets and latrines; one in fourteen households had electricity; only 4% of these families ate meat regularly; less than 1%, fish; fewer than 2%, eggs; and only 11% milk. In contrast, rice, kidney beans and root crops composed about 69% of their diet.

Moreover, 13% of the populace had a history of typhoid; 14% of tuberculosis; and over one-third had intestinal parasites. And added to all this was the suffocating boredom of rural life, with which even the relatively well off had to constantly contend. 22

Inextricably linked to this generally depressing portrait was the specter of unemployment. According to a National Economic Council study conducted during 1956-1957, about 16.4% of the national labor force was chronically unemployed, 6.8% underemployed and 7% worked for their families without remuneration. 23 Yet, if anything, the underemployment figure would appear to be a substantial underestimate, for the vast bulk of the country's half a million sugar workers, including those in the mills, had to face seasonal layoffs. 24 Some of these, it is true, were able to find jobs elsewhere during the long dead season (tiempo muerto) between sugar harvests. Perhaps a quarter of the cane labor force could look forward to two or three months work in the coffee fields in the autumn. Others might find positions in rice farming or in public works and construction projects. The vast majority, however, had to live with the reality of being unemployed for the better part of the year. 25 Most returned
to their family farm to eke out a subsistence living on plots furnished by the sugar mills or credits provided by local stores.

Unemployment compensation had not been one of the benefits of expanding union power.

Conditions in the cities were, of course, considerably better than those in the countryside. Still, perhaps half of the more than 650,000 permanently and partially unemployed lived in the shanty towns of Havana, Santiago and other major urban centers. And in some respects their lot may have been more difficult than that of their rural counterparts, for they were continually being exposed to the opulence of middle and upper class life-styles.

Needless to say, it is much easier for men to accept the poverty of their existence if they are not being constantly socialized into desiring more than they are likely to achieve. Indeed, it was from the upward-aspiring sectors of alienated urban labor that Castro would draw much of his initial support.

For the moment, I shall be content with making the following observations. First, although much of the urban and rural proletariat had benefited considerably from the plethora of socio-economic legislation that had been passed--from the minimum wage laws, for example--many of these gains had been nullified by the soaring inflation of the immediate post-World War II years. Thus, for instance, Alienes estimated that while per capita income skyrocketed from $257 to $352 between 1946-1947 real income per head increased by only about $19, from $213 to $232. (Moreover, by 1948 real income
had dropped to $201, that is, less than it had been in 1905 when it had reached a level of $228 per head.) Secondly, not everyone had benefited from this redistributive legislation, and those who did profit did not share equally in the gains. Minimum wage laws, for instance, did not help the hard-core unemployed, most of whom had no recourse to union (and, hence, to a large extent legislative) protection. And, as always, those without protection were precisely those who were hardest hit by the inflation.

Furthermore, though statistical information is not available, it seems likely that to some degree this un and underemployed lumpenproletariat may even have been adversely affected by the new laws for, as conservative economists have often pointed out, the higher the wages that an employer must pay, the fewer the number of employees he can afford to take on. Minimum wage laws are fine for those who have jobs. For those who do not, they are something else again. Similarly, now that a significant portion of the labor force had acquired the legal right to protection from arbitrary dismissal (the enforcement of this stricture frequently being carried to absurd lengths) businessmen were wont to complain that it was "harder to get rid of a worker than a wife." To those in search of stable employment, the measure sometimes became more of a hindrance than an advantage, for bosses had grown wary of retaining workers beyond the six month period after which they could no longer be legally dismissed.
In sum, therefore, it should not be surprising that one consequence of this uneven (and, in part, illusory) flow of redistributive benefits was that large segments of the rootless lower classes became frustrated and bitter as their actual achievements failed to keep pace with the hopes and expectations that had been raised by the repeated promise of improvement. Some turned to a life of crime, often joining the numerous gangster groups that proliferated during the post-war era. Others, especially those at the very bottom of the socio-economic hierarchy, became completely demoralized and retained "little semblance of self-respect" and "consequently no ambition to be other than a successful beggar."30 Still others, a very few, joined Fidel Castro in his attack on Moncada and later in his expedition on the Granma. But I shall have more to say about those in subsequent chapters.

A word of caution might be added here, for it is exceedingly difficult to separate illusion from reality when estimating the amount of progress that had been made towards the attainment of socio-economic justice by the time of Batista's fall. Most of the relevant statistical information that we have is either incomplete, of dubious reliability or of such a general nature as to preclude meaningful trend analysis. Thus, for instance, we know from census data that there was a substantial increase in the number of doctors, dentists, nurses and teachers in the ten year span from 1943 to 1953. But one can only guess how many of these ever ventured beyond the relatively luxurious confines of Havana into the
countryside. And the figures on teaching personnel are grossly misleading to boot, the Ministry of Education having been a notorious source of sinecures. Moreover, the statistical material that we have on the post-1953 era is of such a generally restricted nature as to make overall comparisons with the preceding decade hazardous, at the very least.

Having said this, however, it must be added that the information that is available on the latter period, though inconclusive, tends to suggest that at best progress continued to be highly uneven and in some areas gave way to stagnation and even regression. For one thing, the Cubans had to run faster just to stand still, to keep population growth and inflation from nullifying the gains that were implicit in their redistributive policies. As I have just suggested, much of this progress had already been wiped out by the inflation of 1946-1947. Now, during the second Batista era, it appears that while inflation had largely come under control income had stagnated. To judge from National Bank statistics, per capita income increased virtually not at all between 1952-1958 ($350 in 1952 and $356 in 1958). And real income per head may well have declined. And while such gross calculations say nothing about the manner in which wealth was shared by different segments of the populace, they are nevertheless suggestive. The bulk of the effective redistributive legislation occurred prior to 1952, and it seems unlikely that the gap between rich and poor narrowed significantly after that year.
On the contrary, there is evidence that at least in rural areas the chasm widened, for in the 1950's many of the programs and protective laws that had been enacted on behalf of the peasantry went unenforced throughout large sections of rural Cuba. The government's Economic and Social Development Program of 1954, to take one example, called for agrarian reform and the provision of economic and technical aid to small farmers. It hardly got off the ground. Indeed, in some areas "all signs of legality vanished in the countryside." Thus it was in the mountains of Oriente where, even before Fidel's arrival, a state of virtual warfare already existed between landlords, their agents and corrupt local officials, on the one hand, and squatters, on the other. In the face of continuing poverty and the overwhelming power of the landlords, the lot of the small farmer remained precarious. The growth of civil war merely served to heighten and spread this insecurity and set in motion the process through which it would achieve political expression.

The Roots of Castroism: The Heritage of "Yankee Imperialism" and Limited Sovereignty

We need not trace in detail the evolution of Norte Americano hegemony over its southern neighbor. This has been done elsewhere and often, from a variety of perspectives. Suffice it to say that in a great many critical respects Cuba had never really been a sovereign nation at all. Its formal independence from the Spanish yoke, attained only after two devastating wars of liberation, had
brought not freedom but a new form of colonial dependence. The United States, through the Platt Amendment, which at its insistence was incorporated in the Cuban Constitution, acquired the right to intervene in the island's affairs virtually at will and, in fact, repeatedly exercised this prerogative up until the time of the Amendment's abrogation in 1934. Hence, the initial military occupation of Cuba (1898-1902) was almost immediately followed by a second occupation (1906-1909), by short-term troop interventions (1912-1917), by the appointment of General Enoch Crowder and later of Sumner Welles and his successor, Jefferson Caffery, to serve, in effect, as proconsuls over the Cuban government. Indeed, it was the opposition of Washington (and of Welles and Caffery) as much as any other single factor that led to the downfall of the Grau administration in January 1934. And while this overt hegemony clearly declined after the institution of Roosevelt's "Good Neighbor Policy", the last UN Ambassador to the Batista regime could still say, with considerable justification, that "until the advent of Castro, the United States was so overwhelmingly influential in Cuba that...the American Ambassador was the second most important man in Cuba, sometimes even more important than the Cuban President."  

Yet, if anything, the US economic penetration of the "Pearl of the Antilles" was even more suffocating than its political and military dominance. If one makes allowances for hyperbole, Guevara pretty much hit the nail on the head when he complained that Cuba had been "developed as a sugar factory of the United States."
Military and political hegemony had paved the way for a massive influx of North American capital. The United States needed sugar, and it was precisely that product that the island's soil and climate were best suited to grow. Moreover, by employing to the hilt the bargaining leverage provided by Cuban dependence on the US sugar market Yankee negotiators were able to obtain wide-ranging tariff preferences for their own industrial goods (the Reciprocal Trade Agreement of 1934 being perhaps the most one-sided and damaging of these pacts). American business interests thus had little incentive to invest in such a way as to promote economic diversification. The island, in addition to becoming a huge sugar plantation, became a lucrative dumping ground for finished products from the north. In turn, under the strain of this kind of competition "those in Cuba who wanted to invest their money 'safely' invested it in sugar, with the result that a vicious circle developed: when sugar prices were high all money was invested in sugar, and when they were low, no money could be found for other investments." King Sugar was both profitable and obvious, and since virtually all business ventures depended on the sugar industry, either directly or indirectly, it was scarcely more risky than alternative sources of investment. But its relatively dominant position vis-a-vis other industries meant that the economy would develop in a grossly misshapen fashion, that it would be perilously dependent on forces beyond Cuban control and perhaps fundamentally incapable of providing the kind of stable base upon which a healthy
socio-political superstructure must rest. In fact, under the system that arose "all the advantages of specialization turned into disadvantages. A doubtfult blessing became an undoubted curse."\(^1\)

Life became like a lottery, dependent on the boom-bust cycles of the world market, and limited international demand combined with inadequate diversification to severely restrict the economy's capacity for growth. Huge tracts of land were condemned to lie fallow and workers to unemployment because the fixation with sugar economics allowed for neither full production nor the sowing of alternative crops.

Furthermore, the limited international demand for their chief product all too often cast the Cubans into the humiliating role of supplicants before the "Colossus of the North". The single most crucial decision affecting the island's economy was made in Washington, not Havana. As Philip W. Bonsal, former US Ambassador to the Castro regime, noted: "Cuba's share in our market did not rest upon a contractual basis but was dependent on the will of Congress. Cuts were made from time to time in the Cuban quota for the benefit of domestic areas or even of other foreign areas. The need for Cuba to avoid actions or attitudes which might put her in a bad light with Congress at quota time was a fact of life generally understood."\(^2\) In many respects, therefore, this was a classic example of an all too-common type of relationship between strong and independent nations and those which are weak and dependent. Even after the decline of "gunboat diplomacy", Washington's control
of the purse strings continued to seriously compromise Cuban sovereignty.

It is true that a considerable amount of diversification and Cubanization had taken place by the time of Batista's fall. The island was not, technically speaking, a monoculture, since only a quarter to a third of the national income came from the sugar industry. But sugar still accounted for about four-fifths of the country's exports. Hence, as the World Bank's Report on Cuba noted, all other investments, no matter how safe they appeared, ultimately "depended on the fate of sugar in the international markets." Moreover, its psychological impact remained enormous. For years, it had served as the symbol of Cuban backwardness and subjugation to the powerful neighbor to the north, and these were wounds which could not be healed overnight. Finally, although by 1958 some three-fourths of the sugar factories, along with a great many other enterprises, were native-owned, US companies and their representatives continued to play a strong and highly visible role in the nation's economic life. North American business interests controlled such key sectors of the economy as the electrical supplies, the large oil refineries, the telephone system, some of the major banks, parts of the mining industry (primarily nickel and manganese) and one of the island's three cement factories. And US consumer goods flooded Havana, dictating much of the social and cultural life of the Cuban middle and upper classes, simultaneously engendering feelings of admiration, envy, desire and resentment.
And always there was Guantanamo naval base, still occupied by the Americans, leased to them "in perpetuity", an outmoded remnant of a bygone era, but one which was (and continues to be) a cutting reminder to Cuban nationalists of their weakness in the face of Yankee power.

If, therefore, anti-Yankee appeals were muted during the course of the resistance, there nevertheless existed below the surface a vast reservoir of latent anti-American sentiments which, linked with the socio-economic, philosophic and psychological strains discussed elsewhere in these pages, contained the seeds of a fairly coherent ideology of revolutionary nationalism which would later, for want of a better term, be called Castroism.

The Roots of Castroism: The Frustrated Ideal

But the foregoing cannot be separated from the Cuban revolutionary heritage—from the history of dashed hopes, betrayed ideals, alienation, opportunism and corruption that characterized much of the island's political and intellectual history during the course of the past century. It is thus to this heritage that we will now briefly turn our attention.

The greatest apostle of the Ideal was, of course, Jose Marti (1853-1895), about whom it has often been said (as it was later said of Fidel Castro) that he had no well-developed, fixed or internally consistent political philosophy. Yet, while this is true it can also by the same token be misleading, for Marti did have a general vision which contained certain concepts and values that
became central to the development of Cuban revolutionary nationalism. This vision was profoundly romantic and essentially humanist, his faith being that Cubans could abolish the social and moral afflictions of the old order and construct a regenerated society—a Cuban nation, in the fullest sense of the term—characterized by liberty, class harmony and social justice.\(^45\) Racial inequities would be eliminated, large-scale education instituted, land reform and economic diversification undertaken. The poor and humble—the rural masses, the urban laborers, the Blacks, the Indians—would form the very bulwark of the new society. For the first time, Cubans would be able to fully develop and express the innate constructive potentials of their culture. Above all, however, the struggle for national renovation was dependent on the quest for national sovereignty. And while Spain was the immediate obstacle to the fulfillment of this Ideal, Martí had few illusions as to the beneficence of the ever-present "Colossus of the North". Thus, in his famous letter to Manuel Mercado, he proclaimed that "it is my duty...to prevent through the independence of Cuba, the USA from spreading over the West Indies and falling with added weight upon other lands of Our America. All I have done up to now and shall do hereafter is to that end....I know the Monster, because I have lived in its lair—and my weapon is only the slingshot of David."\(^46\) Nor was he oblivious to the danger which Yankee economic power posed to the political sovereignty of his nation and to the rest of Latin America, for he knew that as surely as night follows day
hegemony in the one sphere would bring dominance in the other.

But Marti died before independence was attained. His vision was destined to be frustrated and, in the end, perverted. The fear of North American hegemony soon became fact, as intervention followed intervention. The dream of social justice and national reclamation withered as political instability, opportunism, violence, electoral fraud, financial corruption and dictatorial arbitrariness became the chronic heritage of the Spanish colonial experience. Moreover, as Yankee economic imperialism spread throughout the island, destroying the old creole society in its wake, native elites became increasingly North Americanized. In purely economic terms, those who survived and made it to the top did so by adapting to the new economic situation being structured by the mass invasion of US capital. More specifically, foreign investment "typically took the form of the establishment of subsidiaries by United States companies with participation by local Cuban capital". Cuban capital was thus invested not in competition but in collaboration with United States capital. The result was the structural integration of the Cuban bourgeoisie within the economy of the alien capitalism. Thus, in a very basic sense, the bourgeoisie became fundamentally alienated from the Cuban nation, its social values mimicking those of its northern neighbors, its political power being used to promote Yankee interests, which were so closely identified with its own.

The chasm between the hopes and dreams of the Cuban revolutionary experience, so eloquently articulated by Marti, and social,
economic and political circumstances as they developed in the years after the granting of formal independence did not, of course, go unnoticed. By the 1920's, a new generation of students and intellectuals had arisen, acutely aware of the enormous gap between the Ideal and the Reality, increasingly inclined to view this condition as the product of Yankee imperialism and elite betrayal. Fueled by a deep sense of moral outrage and frustration and inspired by bright, young stars like Julio Antonio Mella, protest groups began to organize, demanding purification of the nation's social and political institutions and a return to the ideals of Marti. Clandestine meetings were held, manifestoes distributed, demonstrations conducted. A substantial genre of revisionist literature, highly critical of the role that the United States had played in the island's history, took root. Anti-Yankee sentiment, spurred on by the continuing, blatantly interventionist nature of US policy in Cuba, spread far beyond the relatively narrow confines of Havana University. Indeed, as early as June 1922 one Havana newspaper ran a double-page headline declaring that "HATRED OF NORTH AMERICANS WILL BE THE RELIGION OF CUBANS". Moreover, it was during these years, under the influence of a wealth of social protest literature dedicated to the Negro, the peasant and the worker, that intellectual and nationalist circles to a very great extent came to identify the Cuban nation (that is, the "real" Cuban nation) with the common people, los humildes, those whom Fidel Castro would later call "the vast unredeemed masses, to
whom all make promises and whom all deceive. . . . "49 And this was more than mere socially isolated, petty bourgeois idealism, for among the workers themselves a new sense of class consciousness was being assiduously cultivated and given practical expression by the anarcho-syndicalists and the Communists, whose organizational and educational efforts in the face of grinding poverty and exploitation found an increasingly receptive mass audience as the decade progressed.

As long as the prosperity engendered by World War I continued, these strains of alienation were kept in reasonable check. But once sugar prices began to drop and, most particularly, once the Great Depression hit Cuba, discontent spread on a large scale to the working and middle classes, even encompassing professional men from socially prominent families.

Eventually, this time bomb exploded. The President of the Republic, Gerardo Machado, had come into office on a platform pledging moral renovation and repeal of the Platt Amendment. He had achieved neither. Caught in the crunch of economic hard times, his administration riddled by graft, he had increasingly come to rely on sheer violence and illegality to remain in power. Yet, try as he might, Machado could not crush the opposition, nor prevent it from spreading to ever-widening segments of the populace. Political action groups were formed in opposition to the dictatorship. Counter-terror followed terror in extended sequence until finally, in early August 1933, a whole panoply of strikes and
insurrections culminated in a near totally effective general strike in Havana. Ruby Hart Phillips observed in awe: "A marvellous thing, a whole nation folds its arms and quits work. I don't know exactly what they can accomplish. . . . They intend either to starve themselves to death or force the USA to take pity on them and intervene. . . . There is no leadership. . . it is entirely spontaneous--a nation without a leader, acting in perfect accord. . . ."50

Under growing pressure, particularly from the US envoy, Sumner Welles, Machado resigned. His place was taken by Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, a safe, docile representative of the old order. But the situation failed to improve, and within a month he too was ousted by a revolt led by non-commissioned army officers (the famed "Sergeants' conspiracy", headed by one Fulgencio Batista) and students from the National University of Havana. A five-man junta, the Pentarchy, was formed under Ramon Grau San Martín, a fashionable medical professor, who a few days later became provisional President.

This was the opportunity that the disciples of Marti had been waiting for, and many of them now flocked to the new administration. But, once again, the dream was not to be fulfilled. The American government considered Grau, and particularly his Secretary of the Interior, Antonio Guitérrez, too radical. It withheld recognition on grounds that the new regime had not shown itself capable of restoring order and guaranteeing private property. Here
was a classic example of a self-fulfilling prophesy in action. Grau was to be denied recognition since he could not restore order, but he could not restore order as long as he was denied recognition. Catch-22. And in the meantime, first Sumner Welles and later his successor, Jefferson Caffery, repeatedly undercut his position through their behind-the-scenes maneuvering with the opposition.

Yet, to a considerable extent, Washington’s fears were justified, even if its actions were not. Labor agitation continued throughout much of the island, strikes, rioting, mill seizures and the formation of rural soviets being commonplace. The representatives of the old order, whom Welles steadfastly held to be the "better elements" of the society, viewed Grau as a traitor to his class. The Communists, under the influence of the Comintern’s "Third Period" strategy, opposed him as a petty bourgeois front man for domestic capitalism and Yankee imperialism, more nefarious even than the Machados, the Menocals and the Mendiettas, since he cloaked his reaction under the guise of reformation. Worse still, the entire anti-Machado coalition was riven with factionalism and instability. The ABC, perhaps the most prominent of the terrorist groups that had helped bring down the dictator, refused to back Grau and, in fact, actively sought to undermine his government. The students remained suspicious of the army, the army hostile to the students. Both were split by serious internal divisions. Finally, faced with the necessity of having to cultivate the support of Batista and the military, Grau began to lose the
allegiance of the students. Guiteras left the government. The student Directorio Revolucionario, heretofore the chief pillar of the regime, was dissolved after losing a referendum at the National University.51

Under attack from virtually all sides, faced with continuing US hostility, including the ever-present specter of possible military intervention, lacking a stable base of political support of his own, Grau was never able to gain control of the situation. It soon became clear that real power lay with the army, more specifically, with Batista. In January 1934, the former sergeant-stenographer and fruit salesman (a jack of many trades was he) forced the hapless President to resign. Thus began the initial era of Batista's rule, first, behind a series of puppet presidents, later, from 1940-1944, as constitutional President himself.

Were this a simple case of virtue betrayed by brute power, domestic or foreign, our narrative would read much like the stereotypical representations of a political soap opera. But the real tragedy was somewhat more subtle—and more human—than this. Grau was overthrown, but the middle class students and intellectuals who followed him and the working masses who took to the streets in pursuit of labor reform were by no means totally deprived of either power or spoils. Rather, over the years they were to a very substantial extent coopted into the system. Batista needed their support, or at least their passivity, if he were to assure the stability of his own rule. Hence, as has been discussed earlier, many of the socio-economic programs that had been contemplated or
begun under Grau were enacted or extended over the next two and a half decades. Organized labor became an integral sector of the ruling class. Moreover, by 1944 Batista was sufficiently confident that Grau's "radicalism" had been tamed that he allowed the old professor to return to the presidency after the caudillo's own hand-picked candidate had been defeated in that rarity of rarities, a relatively free and honest national election.

Poor Cuba. The Ideal had not only been betrayed, it had been prostituted. Hugh Thomas put it well when he said that Grau

...embodied in 1944 the hopes of hundreds of thousands of Cubans who wanted a secure future for themselves and their children, a serious and socially conscious government free from corruption, and one which was essentially, in some clear if undefined or 'Martian' way, Cuban. He betrayed these hopes utterly. The trust which the people of Cuba had in him was wasted in a revel of corrupt government which rivalled the era of Zayas and exceeded that of Batista. ...Grau turned his presidency into an orgy of theft, ill-disguised by emotional nationalistic speeches. He did more than any other single man to kill the hope of democratic practice in Cuba.52

He did not, of course, invent the corruption system. As Thomas has demonstrated in great detail, venality had long been a way of life in Cuban politics. It had been part and parcel of the Spanish colonel heritage wherein members of the judiciary and civil service had been so ill-paid or had had to pay such a high price to obtain their jobs in the first place that the resort to corruption became the only viable means of recompense.53 Its roots were numerous and deep, engrained in the insecurities of the sugar economy from which all classes suffered, in the materialistic and
personalistic propensities of the Cuban psyche, which in mix led to the widespread expectation that followers would be materially rewarded by leaders for their loyalty; in the emergence of a variety of self-perpetuating parasitical institutions, such as the lottery and the enormous and notoriously inefficient state bureaucracy, through which payoffs and patronage were distributed and critics suborned; in the political use of the police to intimidate those who were not to be silenced by other means.

But if the new President did not invent the system, he and those whom he brought to power with him (a great many of whom were bonafide members of the "generation of 1930", whose youthful idealism had long since been eroded by age and experience) certainly had few compunctions about exploiting it and allowing it to develop to its fullest. Once again, we may refer to Thomas:

...by 1944-5 corruption had gone so far at so many levels in Cuba that the complete change of personnel provided by revolution seemed essential to secure any real change. ... It was not just the President and a few ministers who helped themselves to cash which was not theirs—that was a comparatively minor problem—but everyone, in any official position: mayors, sub-mayors, governors and lieutenant-governors of provinces, treasurers, accountants of small towns, school inspectors and school teachers. There was no social stigma to graft. It resembled the nonpayment of taxes... in Italy. Of course, it extended to law as well as to government.54

Not only this, but with the growth of corruption came the return of urban violence on a scale unwitnessed since the early 1930's. The political action groups which had played such an important role in the struggle against Machado had by now degenerated
into little more than nonideological bands of gangsters, at least
ten of which were in operation when Grau assumed office. Over
the years they had become a well-entrenched part of the Cuban
social structure, with ties in the unions, the university system,
the government (especially the police) and the new President's
own political party. Fearful of their power and desirous of using
it for his own purposes, Grau gave these pistoleros loose rein.
Some of their leading figures, such as Mario Salabarria, Emilio
Tro, Fabio Ruiz and Manolo Castro, were brought into the govern-
ment in positions of high authority. (Salabarria, for instance,
was appointed chief of the Buro de Investigaciones, the secret
police. Ruiz became the chief of police in Havana.) Financial
subsidies were even paid to the groups, at first through the Minis-
try of Education, then later, under Grau's successor, Carlos Frio
Socorras, through the Ministry of Finance. The University of
Havana, operating under the privileges of autonomy, became in effect
their private sanctuary, where they stockpiled arms, sold everything
from textbooks to grades, intimidated professors and students alike
and waged intermittent warfare on each other and anyone else unfort-
unate enough to get in their way.55

The moral integrity of the nation had sunk to a new low.
However, while many accepted the corruption of the Ideal
with cynical indifference or opportunism this was by no means univer-
sally the case. Most particularly, Senator Eduardo Chibas, after
two years of frustration and disillusionment, broke with the President
and founded the Party of the Cuban People which, he claimed, represented the "orthodox" ideals of the Cuban revolution that Grau and his Autenticos had betrayed. In the short span of five years, the Ortodoxos were to gain a strong national following, particularly among the young. Indeed, it was under the banner of chibasismo that Fidel Castro would make his entry onto the stage of national politics.

But more on this presently.

The Roots of Castroism: Mass Alienation, Messianic Fatalism and the Dynamics of Preliminary Mass Commitment

There is a question of dynamics that might fruitfully be touched on at this point. I have said that the overthrow of Batista did not occur through any mass uprising of the poor against the rich (or, for that matter, of Cuban nationalists against the "lackeys of imperialism"). On the contrary, the popular base of the resistance was late in forming, and when it did jell it tended to cut across most distinctions of class and ideology. (Indeed, it was largely for these reasons that the Cubans were able to avoid the kind of catastrophic violence and socio-economic disruption that had characterized their wars of independence against Spain.) The predominately bourgeois leadership tended to focus on rather limited objectives, of minimal controversy. The need for unity was paramount. Very little was said that would have frightened away potential collaborators, as would have been the case had the struggle been conducted along the more narrow lines of a conflict
between haves and have-nots.

Moreover, only a comparatively small proportion of the total populace was ever actively engaged in the fighting. Officially, Castro's barbudos amounted to only 803 combatants in December 1958,\(^5\) with perhaps a maximum of 3,000 men scattered throughout the various fighting groups composing the Rebel Army.\(^6\) Hardly a mass uprising, particularly when you consider that there were some 50,000 peasants in the Sierra Maestra alone, not to mention the more than 800,000 agricultural laborers, ranchers and farmers scattered throughout the island. Similarly, in the cities most of organized labor, still under the thumb of batistiano union leaders like Eusebio Mujal, remained with the dictator until almost the very end, some of its foremost bosses accompanying him into exile. Hence, few political strikes of consequence were attempted and still fewer had any real success.\(^7\) In fact, this paucity of large-scale working class support was driven home to the revolutionaries with a vengeance by the complete failure of the general strike of April 9, 1958, which collapsed in a matter of hours in Havana.

Clearly, then, the revolt against Batista was not the same type of phenomenon that had occurred in 1933 when jobless and hungry men had taken to the streets in mass.

This relative passivity requires some explanation, for it is easy to misinterpret. Some observers, for instance, have concluded that there was very little lower class socio-economic discontent of consequence, that the redistributive policies of the
preceding two and a half decades had been sufficient to drain off
the tensions produced by the dangerous mix of poverty and in-
equality. And, of course, this explanation does capture an
essential part of the total reality. A "trade union mentality" was
readily apparent in some sectors, particularly among the most
organized ranks of the urban proletariat, who had already made
substantial gains through the existing structures of influence
and were interested in more of the same, not in revolution.59

Still, this is too simple by far to serve as an adequate
general interpretation. (After all, at least part of this passivity
can be attributed to the lack of leadership and encouragement
on the part of the union bosses.) Rather, the social and psychologi-
cal raw materials of revolutionary ideologies and mass movements
exist in latent form prior to their expression in formal doctrine
or active politics. Alienation and frustration, which among other
things are motor forces of revolution, may be expressed in diverse
ways, rebellion being only the most obvious. The entire Cuban
social structure was riven with insecurity and discontent, but
like a homeostatic mechanism it also contained certain devices,
such as the corruption system, the lottery and the labor unions,
which were capable of absorbing much of this tension and channelling
it into nonrebellious outlets. Yet, these were for the most part
systemic plugs, not cures, and in the process of their functioning,
alienation and opportunism came to a very considerable extent to be
institutionalized. Hence, for instance, the sociopathic, but
nonetheless semi-legitimate, activities of the corruption system and the action groups. Hence also, the singularly bitter and vindictive pattern of management-labor relations, which became formalized at the bargaining table long after the unions had won the right to organize and had made gains which in some cases far exceeded their initial expectations. 60

Moreover, the system was also characterized by a high degree of atomization. In the words of Ramon Ruiz, this was a "splintered society", hardly a nation at all. 61 Or at least the sense of nationalism that had developed had emerged, like the economy, in a grossly misshapen, even crippled, form. Thus, much of the upper class indulged in cultural escapism, opting for North American life-styles and reasoning that, after all, Cubans had always "swum in both ponds". And as for the middle class, Lowry Nelson argued that it was not a class at all but merely a large appendage of the plutocracy, its members having less money, it is true, but lacking the kind of independent perspectives and values that would have made them a genuine social class unto themselves. 62 Just as upper class Cubans mimicked the Americans, so were they in turn mimicked by the middle sectors.

In fact, the "middle class" (if we may still call it that) was little more than an amorphous

...collection of groups, none with a clear concept of its place in society, but each imbued with a set of petit ideals, the sum of which did not add up to an ideal of class. Passive in its political attitudes, each group had involved itself in national
issues only when threatened directly. No unanimity of opinion on national questions bound them together, especially on matters relating to the political and moral health of the country. In 1952 each group accepted passively Batista's coup, as each had bowed before the political chicanery of the past.63

Lacking unity and purpose, the "Establishment" found it difficult to organize an effective, mass opposition to the usurper.

The lower classes were similarly fragmented and only ineffectively organized for purposes of resistance. Few people had the kind of resources that were needed to channel their socio-economic and political tensions into a mass uprising. Yet, this did not mean that such tensions were nonexistent. Rather, as James V. Downton has convincingly argued, the mere presence of discontent is not in itself sufficient to turn a potential rebel's passivity into active commitment. Before an individual can offer his services for purposes of concerted, sustained resistance, he must first (1) be available, in the sense that he must have the resources to make the commitment and must be sufficiently free from the kind of social pressures, prior commitments and ethical values that would tend to preclude such a course of behavior; (2) have the opportunity to act, in that he has access to organizational means through which he can express his rebellion; and (3) perceive the potential gains of commitment, whether they be material or psychological, as outweighing the costs and risks involved in such action.64

In large part, all social classes failed to meet these criteria. Theoretically, the lower sectors should have been at an
enormous advantage, since their tendency towards rootlessness—manifested in their high degree of unemployment and underemployment—should have freed large numbers of their rank to join the resistance. But, once again, the situation was not quite as simple as this. First of all, there were certain realities of day-to-day survival and of providing for one's family which those who were poverty-striken were least equipped to meet. A bourgeois family has alternatives that are not open to the destitute. A husband who has to continually forage for the daily meal usually does not have the luxury of being able to make commitments that will demand large increments of his time and energy. Secondly, many of those who were "available" did not have ready access. While the middle class lived almost entirely in the major urban centers where demographic realities favored the primary organization of the resistance, much of the lower classes was scattered throughout the countryside. Needless to say, this dispersion and isolation made large-scale organization of the rural populace extremely difficult. It took time for the small guerrilla bands that had been formed, themselves largely dependent on their inaccessibility for survival, to develop to the point where they could launch major operations outside their base areas and take full advantage of the recruitment potentials offered by the huge agricultural labor force. Third, for all classes there were considerations of profit and self-interest which dissuaded many from joining. Those who were already well-off had few pressing socio-economic incentives to spur them on to commitment.
Moreover, until the summer of 1958 there were only scattered signs that Batista was in serious trouble, certainly no reason to think that the rebels were the wave of the future. (On the contrary, the general strike called for April had been an unmitigated disaster.) In turn, this lack of a clear bandwagon motivation was combined with the strong fear, fully justified, that overt disobedience would draw retaliation, especially in the form of police terror. As long as the costs and risks of resistance seemed great and the prospects of success slim, the vast bulk of the citizenry preferred neutrality to commitment. Life was hard for many, but it was not intolerable. This was not, after all, a time of exceptional economic hardship, judged by normal Cuban standards.

Furthermore, it is also apparent that within the "lower depths" of the social structure a great many people had become demoralized to the extent of having lost all hope. Most of these had long ago withdrawn into their own subcultures, cutting themselves off from the larger society around them, rejecting both its cultural goals and socially prescribed means of attaining them. The beggar culture of Havana, to use a most salient example, appears to have been in substantial part composed of people who were in a very real sense domestic aliens, being devoid of both faith in and allegiance to the existing social, economic and political structures of Cuban society. Thus, they were for the most part beyond the reach of ordinary political appeals and tended to be more-or-less impervious to the struggle for power being waged around them. This also seems
to have been the case with a large percentage of the island's Black population, traditionally alienated from conventional white bourgeois politics and largely unreceptive to the still moderate programs of the resistance movement. (Though in this case there was the additional factor that Batista was himself a mulatto of lower-class origin and hence considered by many Blacks to be one of their own.)

Finally, as has been noted time and again by such acute observers of Cuban social life as Hugh Thomas and Lowry Nelson, much of the populace—and not only the lower classes—had acquired a kind of lottery mentality a brand of fatalism which was, in turn, closely linked with a strong propensity towards messianic behavior. Chronic socio-economic dependence and insecurity, plus the long history of North American hegemony and intervention, had bred the fatalistic belief (which, of course, had more than a few roots in harsh reality) that the future was governed by forces beyond their control. As Thomas observed,

...the impression was widespread that no individual effort could be as profitable or as damaging as the rise or the fall of a percentage of a cent in the world price of sugar. Indeed it was hardly surprising that the entire population was geared to the lottery itself, poor families waiting pathetically each week as the results came out, in the hope that at last their number would spring up first and provide a new world for them—rather in the same mood with which they also optimistically waited for a new leader, for Grau or for Mendieta, for Machado or for Batista, in the expectation that a lucky number would come up to incarnate, like a panacea, the spirit of Jose Marti.
The world of illusions forms a vital sector of the human experience. It is there that men compensate for the fears and inadequacies of their personal lives through the vicarious identification with heroes, symbols, pipedreams, abstract principles and a variety of other mechanisms which provide psychological gratification through the performance of ego supportive, inspirational and security functions. In Cuba perennial insecurity, alienation and frustration, fueled by a wide range of forces, not all of which can be discussed in these pages, were culturally channelled into a mode of political expression characterized by a chronic search for messianic leadership. Like Vladimir and Estragon waiting for Godot, substantial segments of the populace were perpetually awaiting the appearance of a savior, of a Maximum Leader who would provide balm for their wounds, relieve their fears and frustrations and lead them into the Promised Land. Indeed, the political history of the Cuban republic was to a very great extent the history of the rise and fall of such heroes.

Paradoxically, this psychological mind-set contained the seeds of both mass revolutionary activism and passivity. Once the Leader had appeared and had achieved recognition (through words, deeds and self-dramatization, plus an effective means of communicating these messages to the receptive publics that did exist), hundreds of thousands of Cubans would willingly follow in his footsteps. Yet, until he had clearly made his entrance onto centerstage and established that recognition it would be difficult for those of a messianic-fatalist
mentality to take sustained, concerted action of their own. The trauma of such allegiance is that ultimately it represents a flight from individual responsibility, a grasping for a simple, all-embracing solution to a panoply of complex problems, a surrendering of the individual will to a higher authority. And when that higher authority is absent, the will loses an important part of its direction. A kind of fatalistic passivity predominates, and quite often the follower ends up withdrawing from active political life altogether. Beckett's famed duo, it may be remembered, could take no decisive action of their own. They could only await the arrival of the savior.

The fact of the matter is that after 1951 Cuban society had just about run out of living messiahs. Eddy Chibas was dead, a victim of his own bullet, and Fidel Castro was not yet, shall we say, a household word. For half a century, the political life of the nation had been dominated by opportunists, crooks, mediocrities and false prophets, but now, after almost eight years of governmental venality on a magnitude that may have been unprecedented, even for the Cubans, the would-be prophets had almost all been discredited. There was simply no one around whom large masses of people could rally in defiance of the usurper, no one who could provide the kind of incentives that were worth the risk of dying for. Just a passel of shopworn, perennially squabbling, bourgeois politicos out to protect their own interests--cockroaches, Castro would call them. Nor was there that much allegiance--at least among
the lower classes—to those democratic institutions which the
cockroaches had tinged with the mire of their disrepute and which
Batista had overthrown. In the face of a chasmic leadership vacuum,
bequeathed of the kind of organization that might have made resistance
effective, the populace as a whole remained generally passive.

But by mid-1958 all this had begun to change. The mass
base of the resistance began to grow rapidly, like a snowball rolling
downhill picking up momentum as it goes along. Once the incomp-
petence of the old regime had been clearly demonstrated on the
field of battle (most dramatically, in the defeat of Batista's
"Big Push" against the Sierra Maestra in May-July, the only major
government offensive of the entire war) and a viable alternative
source of leadership had appeared, psychological processes were
set in motion which resulted in a massive withdrawal of public
support for the dictator and a gradual shift in the balance of
effective power in favor of the resistance. I might add that
this was a process which had been aided to no small degree by the
announcement of a US arms embargo in March and by the gradual dis-
covery by substantial segments of the populace that passivity was
no sure defense against the often indiscriminate terror of Batista's
police and armed forces.

It is true that relatively few people actually engaged in
the fighting. For one thing, the shift in the balance of popular
allegiance and the collapse of the old regime occurred so rapidly
that the limited organizational infra-structure of the resistance
was incapable of absorbing and directing a massive influx of raw military recruits. But hundreds of thousands more were on the sidelines, lending moral and material support to the rebels. Their motives, of course, were varied and mixed. Some were merely climbing opportunistically aboard the bandwagon of success, hoping to be rewarded for their allegiance. Others feared the wrath that the victorious revolution might inflict on nonsupporters. Still others genuinely looked forward to the creation of an honest, democratic government or to the institution of long overdue socio-economic reforms. For all of their vagueness and confusion, the leaders of the resistance had not, after all, been totally mum with regard to the latter.

No doubt Suarez was right when he stated that the overthrow of the dictator had not occurred because of any mass demand for fundamental socio-economic transformation. What he does not seem to fully appreciate, however, was the extent to which a very large portion of the populace—particularly among the lower classes—would be receptive to such changes once they had been initiated by the messiah. The seeds of revolutionary nationalism lay within the Cuban people themselves, in their relationships with each other, with the land on which they lived and worked and with the larger complex of human linkages which composed the international system of which they were a part.

On January 8, 1959, Godot at last arrived in Havana.
Chapter Two

FOOTNOTES


3In this respect I am hardly being original since, as Robert E. Lane has pointed out, the best of previous works have taken care to point to the "contextual nature" of political ideologies. For a review of various approaches to the problem of ideology development, see his Political Ideology (New York, 1962), pp. 413 ff.

4With regard to the latter, see Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Selected Correspondence (Moscow, 1953), pp. 409, 435. Also, Boris Nicolaievsky and Otto Maenchen-Helfen, Karl Marx: Man and Fighter, trans. G. David and E. Mosbacher (New York, 1956), p. 370.

5Indeed, these were realities that were even recognized by some of the revolutionaries themselves. See, in particular, Anibal Escalante's remarks in Verde Olivo, July 30, 1961. To be more specific, Suarez contrasts the 1953 Cuban per capita income of $325 with that of Italy ($307), Austria ($290), Spain ($242), Turkey ($221), Mexico and Yugoslavia ($200), and Japan ($197), citing statistics given in Charles P. Kindleberger, Economic Development (New York, 1958), p. 6.


7Various estimates may be found in Boris Goldenberg, The Cuban Revolution and Latin America (New York, 1965), pp. 120-21.


9 Goldenberg, pp. 122-23.


11 For a carefully documented discussion of labor conditions both before and after the Revolution, see Carmelo Mesa-Lago and Roberto E. Hernandez, Labor Conditions in Communist Cuba (Coral Gables, 1963). Also, see James O'Connor, The Origins of Cuban Socialism (Ithaca, 1970), pp. 177-89; 328 ff.; and Thomas, pp. 1173-79.

12 Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth (New York, 1963).

13 Goldenberg, pp. 124-25.

14 Lowry Nelson, Rural Cuba (Minneapolis, 1950), p. 150.

15 Cuba: Castroism and Communism, p. 34.

16 This is a position which is, in my opinion, best stated in the works of Theodore Draper, e.g., in Castro's Revolution, pp. 3-58. For his subsequent development and modification of the initial argument, see Castroism, Theory and Practice (New York, 1965), pp. 57-134.

17 Incidentally, this is a formulation which has recently received some attention in the theoretical literature on revolution. See, in particular, Harry Eckstein, "On the Etiology of Internal Wars", in History and Social Theory, no. 4 (1965), pp. 159 ff. and Lawrence Stone, "Recent Academic Views of Revolution", in Revolutions.


19 Rural Cuba, p. 140.

20 Thus, Zeitlin, taking his first three calculations from Julian Alleen y Urosa's Caracteristicas Fundamentales de la Economia Cubana (Havana, 1950), p. 52 and deflating his income series through use of the old US wholesale price index, estimates that real income per head averaged $203 in 1903-1906; $212 in 1923-1926; $211 in 1943-1946 and about $200 in 1956-1959. In Revolutionary Politics and the Cuban Working Class (Princeton, 1967), p. 48. O'Connor (p. 17) offers similar figures and notes that between 1950-1958 total production increases (1.8% per annum) lagged behind population growth (2.1% per annum), resulting in an average yearly decline in income of .3%. Hugh Thomas (p. 1104) seems to agree with the general thrust of the "stagnation thesis", though he offers no such revised data of his own. This is probably just as well since such efforts are of dubious reliability.


22 Agrupacion Catolica Universitaria, Por Que Reforma Agraria? (Havana, 1958), mimeograph. Some of these rounded figures are cited by O'Connor, p. 58 and Jacques Chonchol, "La reforma agraria cubana", Part I, Panorama Economico (University of Chile, Santiago), no. 227 (1962), pp. 16-31. They find rough confirmation in the findings of the 1953 census. See, e.g., Seers, p. 96. Lowry Nelson felt that this need for social contact was the "heaviest burden that weighs upon many rural Cuban people." Rural Cuba, pp. 13, 17.

23 The gross figures out of a total labor force of 2.2 million were 361,000 unemployed, 150,000 underemployed (i.e., less than 30
hours a week) and 154,000 working without remuneration. A larger figure for "underemployed" can, of course, be obtained by using a 40-hour week standard. See Consejo Nacional de Economia, El Empleo, el Subempleo y el Desempleo en Cuba (Havana, 1958), mimeograph. See, in particular, Tables 6 and 2).


25 The length of sugar harvests varied from year-to-year and province-to-province, an average safra lasting perhaps three to four months.

26 This is Hugh Thomas' estimate. Op. cit., p. 1109.


28 The argument must not, of course, be pressed too far, for the relationship between wages and employment is not necessarily a close one. See N. Arnold Tolles, "Wages: Wage and Hour Legislation", in International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences, ed. David L. Sills (1968), p. 422.

29 The exceptions to this rule included agricultural laborers, domestic servants, workers employed for six months or less and managers and other representatives of the employer who had been entrusted with substantial responsibility. See Investment in Cuba, pp. 165-67.

30 Nelson, Rural Cuba, 147.

31 According to the 1943 census, the overwhelming majority of doctors, dentists and nurses were in Havana province. The 1953 census, however, gave no province by province breakdown.

32 Ramon Ruiz (p. 11) calculates that between 1945 and 1951 real income per head dropped from $228 to $134.7. But his method of computation is unclear. National Bank statistics are taken from Memoria del Banco Nacional de Cuba (Havana, 1957-1959). According to the price indices that are available for this same period, inflation increased by a little more than 1% per annum. Hence, real income may have slightly declined. On the other hand, Mesa-Lago, also using National Bank data but with 1950 as the base year, suggests
that a modest rate of real growth (i.e., about 1%) occurred. "Availability and Reliability of Statistics in Socialist Cuba", pp. 48-49, 51. Both computations show little more than how easy it is to manipulate statistics if you want to prove or disprove something. Needless to say, all such seemingly precise calculations rest on statistical quicksand. The data are simply too unreliable to trust.

33Thus, National Bank statistics suggest that the share of the national income that went to workers and employees steadily declined after 1953. See Illan, p. 26. But then, even this is far from certain, as ILO accounts show a regular increase in the years from 1948 to 1958. See International Labor Organization, Yearbook of Labor Statistics, 1948-1958 (Geneva, 1948-1958).

34See Wyatt MacGaffey and Clifford R. Barnett, Twentieth-Century Cuba, the Background of the Castro Revolution (Garden City, N.Y., 1965), pp. 78-79.

35Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, La Revolucion Cubana y el Periodo de Transicion, Havana, mimeograph, folletto II.

36Specifically, Article III stated that "the government of Cuba consents that the United States may exercise the right to intervene for the preservation of Cuban independence, the maintenance of a government adequate for the protection of life, property, and individual liberty, and for discharging the obligations with respect to Cuba imposed by the Treaty of Paris on the United States, now to be assumed and undertaken by the government of Cuba." The full Amendment may be found in Robert F. Smith, The United States and Cuba, Business and Diplomacy, 1917-1960 (New York, 1960), pp. 187-88.


39In the words of James O'Connor, "Cuba left the bargaining table with modest cuts in United States duties on sugar, tobacco, and a handful of other agricultural products, and thus slightly increased its foreign exchange earnings. In return, Cuba raised United States preferentials by wide margins, agreed to refrain from
increasing duties on large numbers of mainland products during the life of the treaty and to reduce or abolish internal taxes on many American products, and accepted a ban on any quarantine restriction on any item receiving the benefit of tariff reductions, together with any transfer and means of payment for commodities," James O'Connor, "Cuba: Its Political Economy", in Cuba in Revolution, eds. Rolando E. Bonachea and Nelson P. Valdes (Garden City, N.Y., 1972), p. 63. Also, see Smith, The United States and Cuba, pp. 158-59.

40 Goldenberg, p. 127.

41 Ibid.

42 Philip W. Bonsal, "Cuba, Castro and the United States", Foreign Affairs, XVL, 2 (January, 1967), p. 264. Thus, for instance, the Sugar Act of 1951 reduced the island's quota for 1952-1956 and brought about a decline in both international sugar prices and the Cuban national income.


44 According to official figures 121 out of the island's 161 sugar factories, producing 62.1 per cent of the sugar, were in Cuban hands. For further details, see Goldenberg, p. 126.

45 However, it should not be assumed that Marti was a proponent of liberal democracy. On the contrary, as Richard Gray has recognized, Marti's understanding of and allegiance to democratic theory was quite limited. While he laid great stress on the ideal of liberty, this seems to have been at least in part for purposes of rallying the Cuban people around the cause of independence. Gray believes, and I tend to concur, that had Marti come to power he almost surely would have had to subordinate the libertarian and democratic facets of his beliefs to the more authoritarian predispositions, notably the reverence for duty, patriotism and obedience. I shall have more to say on this presently. See Robert Butler Gray, Jose Marti, Cuban Patriot (Gainesville, Fla., 1962).

46 In Obras Completas, I (Havana, 1931), pp. 271-73. Marti's major political ideas may be found in Resolucionaa, Bases del Partido Revolucionario Cubano and Manifesto de Montecristi. For those interested, the standard biography is Jorge Manach's Martí, Apostle of Freedom (New York, 1950).
Thus, Robin Blackburn goes so far as to argue that Cuba lacked any independent national bourgeoisie of consequence. This seems to me to be an overstatement. See his "Prologue to the Cuban Revolution", New Left Review, no. 21 (October, 1963).


My apologies for skimming over a great deal of very interesting and important material, but my purpose here is merely to provide a general context against which the rise of Castroism can be placed. Those desiring a more detailed treatment of Cuban history can do no better than to consult Hugh Thomas' monumental Cuba, or the Pursuit of Freedom, And for an account of the chaotic events of 1933, see Luis E. Aguilar, Cuba 1933: Prologue to Revolution (Ithaca, 1972).


Ibid., p. 738. This theme is developed virtually throughout the entire course of the book.

Ibid., p. 740.

Several useful accounts of the action groups are available. See, especially, Suarez, Cuba: Castroism and Communism, pp. 11-18; Thomas, pp. 741-43; Jaime Suchlicki, University Students and Revolution in Cuba, 1920-1968 (Coral Gables, Fla., 1969), pp. 48-54; and Rolands E. Bonachea and Nelson P. Valdes, eds., Revolutionary Struggle (Cambridge, 1972), pp. 16-27.

Goldenberg, p. 162.

Thomas, p. 1042. But there were many camp followers. Perhaps a more generally accepted estimate would be that of 1,500, given by Robert Taber in M-26: Biography of a Revolution (New York, 1961), p. 297.
A major exception was the political strike in Santiago in early August 1957, which was set off by the funeral of two young leaders of M-26, Frank Pais and Raul Pujol. Though eventually crushed, the action lasted five days, closed the Nicaro nickel plant and even spread to some cities beyond Oriente, including Havana.

As was later admitted by Castro himself, in Obra Revolucionaria, no. 32, December 15, 1960.

Thus, the World Bank's Report on Cuba (Washington, 1951) lamented the lack of trust, goodwill and cooperation existing between organized labor and management. For its part, surmised the Bank, labor seemed intent on gaining revenge for the past abuses of its powerful adversary. Each side, resentful and haunted by the perpetual insecurities of its place in the island's stagnant sugar economy, used the other as a convenient scapegoat on which to blame its troubles. Some of the anecdotes in the Report are quite amusing (e.g., p. 149).


His conception of the Cuban social structure as being divided into two main classes upper and lower, is rightfully considered to be classic. See Rural Cuba, pp. 159-61.


Thus, Eric Hoffer says that "when people toil from sunrise to sunset for a bare living, they nurse no grievances and dream no dreams." This is obviously an overstatement. But it sounds nice, and it does capture an important part of the truth. The True Believer (New York, 1951), p. 27.

This is, of course, the phenomenon of retreatism, so well described by Robert K. Merton in his Social Theory and Social Structure (New York, 1968), pp. 207-09.

As might be expected of those who had "no ambition to be other than a successful beggar." Nelson, Rural Cuba, p. 147.

Thomas, pp. 1122-23.
69Ibid., pp. 739-40. See also, Nelson's comments in Rural
Cuba, p. 218.
Chapter Three

THE RISE OF CASTROISM--THE TRANSFORMATION OF EXISTENTIAL PRECONDITIONS INTO NASCENT IDEOLOGY

To be a rebel is not necessarily to be a revolutionary. Yet, revolutionaries, in the sense that they are in revolt against the old order of things, must be rebels. The key to the transition from rebellion to revolution lies precisely in the ability to go beyond the mere negation of the past to the affirmation of the radically transformed "new society" still to be created.

This is easier said than done, for coherent revolutionary ideologies are not born, as if by magic, out of mere existential preconditions. The latter represent only the raw materials from which full-fledged doctrines may, if circumstances permit, be formed. At the risk of being redundant, let me reiterate that human belief systems are not static phenomena. Revolutionary ideologies, in particular, must be viewed as part of a developmental process--change is inherent in their very nature. They evolve in accordance with man's interaction with his environment--with that part of it from which the ideology is drawn and with the more comprehensive social reality to which it is applied. They are nowhere born full-grown. Rather, somewhere in the developmental process will appear prophets, theorists, politicos and interpreters.
whose function it is (among other things) to transform existential preconditions into more-or-less coherent doctrine and to revise the latter to fit the requisites of diverse and changing circumstances. Thus, to take a highly oversimplified example, was Hegel turned on his head by Marx, and thus did Lenin take the Marxism of Marx and force it into the Procrustean mold of Russian revolutionary politics. Subsequently, as Barrington Moore and others have demonstrated,\(^1\) Bolshevik doctrine underwent still further and sometimes drastic modification as social realities continued to clash with the values and preconceptions of the ideological weltanschauung.

The highly variable quality of ideological coherence needs also to be stressed. Not only do human belief systems change over time, they are rarely, if ever, so well-defined as to be wholly free of ambiguity and contradiction. For one thing, a certain lack of coherence is often essential to the spread and perpetuation of doctrines, for it provides them with a degree of flexibility that can greatly facilitate the crucial tasks of adjusting and readjusting to environmental realities (i.e., of winning and maintaining power and of dealing with the functional requisites of the social system). Indeed, as has often been noted, Marxism-Leninism has proven particularly adaptable in this respect. Several generations of Communist politicians have found ready solace in its ambiguities and contradictions, repeatedly resorting to selective quotations from the Holy Scriptures to justify whatever policies and
ideological "revisions" they have happened to favor. Yet, none of this may in itself be properly taken to mean that their behavior has been unaffected by the Marxist-Leninist goal culture, only that there have been other transfer-culture values at stake that have sometimes (quite often) had to be given higher priority.

Beyond such functional considerations, however, it is clear that some ideologies are more developed than others in the sense that their vision of the world is more comprehensive, detailed, precise and consistent. In large part, this may simply be a matter of the formative processes having been carried farther in some instances than in others. Few theorists, after all, have the intellectual power of a Karl Marx. In fact, it is probably safe to say that most ideologies never develop past the stage of nascence. Moreover, both developed and underdeveloped belief systems are likely sooner or later to be subject to the processes of conceptual erosion. As Sir Lewis Namier once remarked, "ideas outlive the conditions which gave them birth and words outlive ideas." Still, as our examination of the early manifestations of Castroism tends to suggest, even such primitive ideational and value systems may have a very substantive impact on the behavior of their holders.

It is within this theoretical context that the subject matter of this chapter will be approached, for we must deal with the processes of ideological formation before the Johnsonian model can be properly applied in its entirety. This was not an instance
of an initially coherent and intellectually codified doctrine being altered in the course of its application to social reality, as occurred for example with the rise of Bolshevism in Tsarist Russia. Rather, part of the dilemma confronting Castro and his comrades was that they had no single coherent or precise body of "theoretical criteria" to guide their actions. Those ideological elements that did exist came from a variety of sources, usually quite nebulous.

In a way, this should not be surprising, for the Cuba of Fidel Castro's youth was plagued by ideological as well as political degeneracy. Almost everyone paid lip service to Marti; yet few made any serious effort to put his ideals into practice. Politicians of all shades, from Grau to Batista, sought to identify themselves with their nation's revolutionary tradition. Behind the facade of rhetoric, however, lay ambiguity, confusion and deceit. Indeed, over the decades the very concept of revolution had been largely (though, as we shall see, not entirely) stripped of essence and relegated to the position of an ideological and linguistic remnant of the past, a vicarious link to the heroic era of Jose Marti, the Cuban Wars of Independence, the events of 1933.

In sum then, it may be said that if Fidel, during the period of his life that is explored in the following pages, was more the rebel than the revolutionary there was good reason, for he and his compatriots had been socialized into an ideological tradition which was riven through with ambiguity and contradiction.
An important part of the challenge that would face his leadership, therefore, would be to once again provide substance to the myth.

But there is yet another facet to this subject that needs to be discussed—namely, the Maximum Leader's undeniably compulsive drive for personal power. As I have noted in the preceding chapter, a number of very distinguished students of the Cuban political scene have argued that Castro has no meaningful ideology, that he is little more than a consummate opportunist, single-mindedly dedicated to the pursuit of his own power and grandeur. Thus, for instance, has Andres Suarez posed the dichotomy of Che, the idealist, and Fidel, the opportunist. In contrast to "Guevarism" which has a "strong ideological component", Castroism is said to place "its emphasis on power". The interpretation is in essence socio-pathological: From his early political experiences with the "action groups" Fidel acquired "the belief that politics was nothing but a naked struggle for power devoid of any spiritual or ideological principal.... [Subsequently] he has changed his main ideas in accordance with circumstances.... He has founded and dismantled organizations. But what he has never abandoned is his personal leadership and the stratagems required to impose it...." Or, to put it another way, for Castro political ideas are nothing more than tools to be manipulated in the pursuit of power. They are the servants, not the masters, of motivation.

A basic weakness in this conceptualization, it seems to me, lies in its excessively polarized--one might even say
stereotypical--view of reality. We are forced to interpret Castro's behavior in terms of either idealism or power. There is no in-between. But life is usually not that simple. The realm of the ideal and the theoretical cannot be divorced from the realms of power and material reality. To a very considerable extent, opportunism is what the game of politics is all about, at least in the sense that political men must be acutely aware of and capable of adjusting to the opportunities, pressures and constraints posed by their changing environments. For those who would survive and deal effectively with the everyday problems of governing, the realities and requirements of power cannot be ignored. Thus must idealists be flexible enough to adjust their ideologies to fit their circumstances, for excessive rigidity is likely to be self-defeating in those very sectors of political life which are ultimately most vital--namely, those which I have identified under the general rubrics of elite hegemony and social system maintenance. Indeed, for Guevara, dogmatism quite literally proved to be a fatal disease.

No doubt Fidel is--as his critics charge--a consummate power-monger on an enormous ego-trip. Men who try to build heaven on earth usually are. But it is a very great leap from this basic recognition to the conclusion that "the ideology is so elusive as to be hardly ascertainable in terms of content" and that therefore "it is difficult to claim a significant role for it in the regime." If the Maximum Leader's weltanschauung has undergone great change since his university days, there nevertheless remain
important elements of continuity which his detractors tend to overlook. Moreover, words have too often been translated into actions for us to conclude, with Señor Suarez, that an ideological interpretation is irrelevant to our understanding of Castro's behavior. Rather, power and ideology go hand-in-hand. One cannot fully understand the rise of Castroism without understanding, at least in primitive fashion, how the Maximum Leader's ego drives have interacted with the environmental opportunities, pressures and constraints with which he has had to deal, including the intellectual milieu to which he has been exposed. I stress the word interacted because ideas are more than mere channels through which psychological drives are expressed. As part of the process of human socialization, they help shape men's self-concepts and values and provide them with theoretical frameworks for understanding and coping with reality. They help, in other words, to direct human behavior.

The Struggle Ethic (Lucha) and the Processes of Ideological Formation: Childhood and Youth

The drive for personal power is intimately affected by the processes of environmental socialization. At a rather early age, children acquire a general sense of relative power or relative helplessness vis-a-vis the existential world with which they must cope:

Launched on the right trajectory, the person is likely to accumulate successes that strengthen the effectiveness of his orientation toward the world while at the same time he acquires the knowledge and skills that
make his further success more probable. His environmental involvements generally lead to gratification and to increased competence and favorable development. Off to a bad start, on the other hand, he soon encounters failures that make him hesitant to try. What to others are challenges appear to him as threats; he becomes preoccupied with defense of his claims on life at the expense of energies to invest in constructive coping. And he falls increasingly behind his fellows in acquiring the knowledge and skills that are needed for success on those occasions when he does try.

There is little reason to doubt that the pattern of

Fidel Castro's youthful orientations towards power conformed to the first of these types. Possessed of exceptional physical and mental capabilities, he learned early in life that power abhors a vacuum. People are, in general, manipulable creatures. With sufficient effort, they can be led or intimidated into accepting the dictates of one's will. Indeed, the relentless assertion of will, the need to struggle against and dominate the recalcitrant forces of the environment, no matter how imposing, and to rebel against that which tends to restrict one's actions, has been a recurrent behavioral tendency which has been tempered over the years only by the gradual realization, slowly and painfully acquired, that there are some elements that will and temerity alone cannot overcome.

Our narrative, then, will be intimately concerned with the manner in which the struggle ethic has been manifested, for in Castro we are dealing with the personification of homo activus, with existential man incarnate. It has been through the processes of the struggle ethic, in general, and revolutionary struggle, in particular,
that his life has received both meaning and direction.

Legend has it that at the age of six or seven Fidel Castro, infant rebel, threatened to burn down the family house if his father refused him admittance to school. His parents, fearing that he might do just that, complied with his demand. The anecdote, if true, would appear to be symptomatic, for although the available evidence is scant it seems almost certain that the seeds of Castro’s dominance-rebellion syndrome lay in his childhood experiences and particularly in his relationship with his parents.

He was, to begin with, the fifth in a brood of nine children, the illegitimate byproduct of the bigamous union between Angel Castro and a servant girl, Lina Ruz Gonzalez, whom his father later married. His early environment was marked both by an extreme primitiveness and a certain cultural rootlessness. Oriente was the most remote, underdeveloped, rebellious and insecure province in Cuba, an area "where gun-law often reigned; . . . where the US influence was strongest and most brutally exercised; where the doctors, teachers, dentists and indeed all social professions were least numerous in proportion to the population." In some respects, notes Hugh Thomas, his parents did not really have a tradition or a world of their own to bequeath him:

. . . they were both nouveau, both in different ways ambitious and greedy, both restless and insecure, he an immigrant from Spain and a self-made richman, she an internal immigrant from the country of tobacco, both now living in the profitable but savage sugar territory of Oriente, where the few villages were formless shanty gatherings without traditions or churches, where bandits of various types persisted
into the 1950's and where the dominant institution was the United Fruit Company's mills with their private railways, their wharves and their seemingly insatiable demands on the soil.\footnote{11}

As for the general atmosphere that existed within the Castro household, it was "evidently savage: Angel, reticent, violent, hardworking, and rich, resembling \textit{le pere} Grandet, though more generous with money, or the father of Cirilo Villaverde, the novelist, who is described as having 'neither time nor inclination to talk with his sons': no emphasis on comfort: poverty and squalor nearby, unredeemed by even the minor advantages that long traditions may bring."\footnote{12} Apparently also, the surrounding squalor crept inside, for the family developed somewhat of a reputation for uncleanliness. According to the testimony of neighbors, the Castros seldom bathed. The house in which Fidel lived as a youth had neither toilets nor running water. It has even been alleged that chickens were given the run of its interior.\footnote{13}

Regardless, it is clear that family life was severely restricted within the household. The husband mistreated the wife and ignored the children. He was far too busy acquiring wealth to be a real father to his offspring. (By the 1950's, in fact, he had managed to accumulate some half a million dollars and anywhere from 10,000 to 23,000 acres of land.) In turn, Fidel's relations with the old man were far from good. Years later, he described him as a "\textit{latifundista}, a wealthy landowner who exploited the peasants" and "paid no taxes on his land or income."\footnote{14} Indeed,
the stories of his disagreements with Angel are legion and, at times, border on the fantastic. Thus, for instance, at the age of nine or ten he is purported to have threatened to set fire to one of the family cane fields, and a few years later he allegedly tried to organize a strike of the hacienda's sugar workers. Perhaps it is safest merely to say that there was no love lost between them. The old man was indeed more than a bit of a scoundrel, certainly not above exploiting the disadvantaged or engaging in shady business practices. No doubt his aloofness and hostility induced his son to seek attention through and build an ego identity around repeated acts of self-dramatization, dominance, and rebellion. In a sense, the civil war within the family became the prototype for the larger political wars to be fought in the future, for as young Fidel gradually became exposed to new environmental influences, his central operational perspective—the struggle ethic—broadened and became directed not only at the senior Castro but at the society which had produced him and which he in significant part reflected.

Our portrait of the relationship between mother and son is more ambiguous. On the one hand, we are assured by Herbert Matthews that they had genuine affection for one another. Moreover, it appears that the decision to opt for an education for the children was in the main determined by Lina. On the other hand, we know that, at the very least, serious strains developed later in the relationship: Señora Castro was far from happy with Fidel's guerrilla activities against the Batista regime, even journeying
to Mexico on one occasion to protest the burning of her cane fields by the M-26 underground. In fact, the eyewitness account that we have of that incident strongly suggests that Lina was much more concerned with her material possessions than she was with the welfare of her son. Furthermore, we know that later, during the crucial period of 1962-63, she and her daughter, Juanita, lent active support to the counterrevolutionary forces on the island. In spite of this, Matthews tells us, Fidel "closed his eyes". Out of love, one presumes. Whatever be the truth of the matter, it seems that her behavior more-or-less complemented that of Angel, for the lad soon became skilled in manipulating his parents' indifference and/or indulgence to his own advantage. He was rarely disciplined and became the proverbial "spoiled child", using threats and tantrums to get what he wanted.

This initial pattern of behavior was further developed and refined during Fidel's school years, particularly after he left Mayari and home to attend the Colegio La Salle and the Colegio Dolores in Santiago and, still later, the Jesuit boarding school, Belen, in Havana. It was during this period of his life that we have the first clear indications of the charismatic potentials that were soon to prove so vital to his political career. It was here also that he came face-to-face with new kinds of environmental hazards, for his propensities for self-dramatization and dominance were abrasive to many and his somewhat disreputable origins and lack of personal hygiene provided ready-made targets for
the jeers of his youthful compatriots. Nevertheless, his determination was extraordinary, and he ultimately prevailed. According to his brother, Raul, "he succeeded in everything. In sport, in study. And every day he fought. He had a very explosive nature. He defied the most powerful and the strongest and when he was beaten he began again the next day. He never gave up." The struggle was conducted on two fronts, the intellectual and the physical. His powers of recall and debate were exceptional. If in the beginning he could not always outfight his opponents, he soon learned to outtalk them. Thus, language too became a weapon. Having begun an argument, he would persist until he had either overpowered his antagonist or driven him into exhaustion. And meanwhile, he was growing larger, stronger, more agile. Eventually, his physical prowess was such that he was named the "best schoolboy athlete" in Cuba for the year 1943-44. The aura of machismo—of manliness—surrounded him. His Yearbook at Belen fairly glowed with praise: "Fidel distinguished himself always in all the subjects related to letters. His record was one of excellence, he was a true athlete. . . . He has known how to win the admiration and affection of all. He will make law his career, and we do not doubt that he will fill with brilliant pages the book of his life. He has good timber, and the actor in him will not be lacking." Quite so. Not surprising then that even at La Salle (i.e., prior to 1942) he had acquired a coterie of young followers. The seeds of messianism were already developing in microcosm.
Once again, none of this should be taken to mean that Fidel’s personality was being formed and manifested in an ideological vacuum. On the contrary, he had now begun the prolonged and difficult task of transcending adolescence and establishing an adult identity of his own. Like so many other youths "ever ready to install lasting idols and ideals as guardians of a final identity", he too was actively engaged in the search for heroes to emulate and social values to help structure his self-concepts and behavior. And such models were not lacking in the Cuba of that era. His schoolboy environment provided him with a superficial introduction to a wide variety of political personalities and doctrines from extreme left to extreme right. He learned of Lenin, Hitler, Mussolini, Peron. . . . The works of Jose Antonio Primo de Rivera, founder of the Falange Española, with their emphasis on the need for national revitalization, social justice and the elevation of the living standards of all Spaniards, became especially dear to him. But most important, he was introduced to the heroes and history of the Cuban revolutionary experience, and especially to Jose Marti, whose works he read voraciously and who "became his model and primary moral influence." Here he learned of Cuba’s hopes, frustrations and insecurities and that its "true identity and place in the world were something to fight for, something yet to be accomplished." Moreover, it was here also that he found primitive ideological justification for his revolt against his father in the form of los humildes, the great mythical downtrodden masses, whose
banner he embraced and vigorously defended in his increasingly bitter arguments with Angel. 

If in the final analysis neither the Martian Ideal nor the Cuban revolutionary tradition, in general, provided much coherence to Castro's burgeoning weltanschauung, they at least had the virtue of saturating his psyche with certain basic concepts and values—revolution, national renovation, social justice, national sovereignty—which would have a profound impact on his behavior. A goal culture writ primitive, if you will. The task of firming up the substance of that vision and of formulating specific transfer culture strategies with which to pursue it would, of course, come later. Needless to say, the ongoing process of ideological formation would be highly selective and closely tied both to Fidel's personal ambitions and to the environmental circumstances with which he would have to contend. The Ideal was at best an ambiguous vision, riven through with internal contradictions which would have to be resolved during the course of the struggle process. Most important, there would eventually have to be made a fundamental choice between the value of liberty (as conceived in the Western liberal democratic tradition) and that of national renovation, for Marti's own attempted synthesis had been far from satisfactory. Freedom and duty had only uneasily coexisted within his vision. As Richard B. Gray has observed, while the Apostle had written "ecstatically of liberty", he had also "wanted the submission of the individual to the nation. . . ." The two could not be fully
reconciled. In the main, he had focused on citizen duty, glorifying public service, even though he "recognized that it called for numerous sacrifices that were not appreciated by the masses of the people. He was less emphatic about the rights of the citizen." In sum, although he had "exalted liberty as long as it seemed useful to encourage the Cubans to gain their freedom from Spain, ... his writings elsewhere indicate that he would have considerably restricted that liberty once the Republic was in operation." Like most politicians, he was not above hiding his real intentions when necessity demanded it.

Shadows of events yet to come. No doubt young Fidel was quite oblivious to such philosophical contradictions. But he could not remain so forever. The opportunities, pressures and constraints posed by his environmental circumstances would force him to set priorities and make choices. New ideas and values would be absorbed, and in the process his adopted Ideal would undergo considerable modification. Yet, even so, the ultimate abstract vision of a renovated, sovereign and socially just Cuban nation would remain essentially intact.

Finally, it should be emphasized that this process of psychological and ideological development occurred within a crucial generational context. It was not by chance that Fidel had chosen the Apostle as his idol, for following the cataclysmic events of 1933 the cult of Martí had rapidly grown to epic proportions. The Cuban nation, repeatedly frustrated in its search for
living heroes, had begun to resort to the wholesale deification of
the dead. No matter that the masses of the people never fully
understood the man or his Ideal. They could still engage in and
draw emotional sustenance from his apotheosis. But in so doing,
they were destined to implant in their children the seeds of
revolutionary discontent, for in school and elsewhere the members
of Castro's generation were being partially socialized into an
ethic which was radically at odds with the national reality with
which they were familiar. In a very real sense, the gerontocracy
systematically de-authoritized itself. When the millenium finally
came, it would take the form not merely of class conflict but of
a revolt of a substantial portion of the younger generation against
its parents, a monumental attempt to cast off the shackles of
parasitismo and develop a fully renovated and healthy national
organism.

This argument, of course, ought not be overstated, for if
ever there was a schizophrenic generation, torn between conflicting
value systems, it was the so-called "generation of '53". Indeed,
Castro himself was the personification of that moral split: His
idealism came ready-mixed with an obsession for power and a propensity
for violence--traits as characteristic of the old order as of the
new. But in any case, let us turn our attention to Fidel's
university years, for this too was to be a vital formative period
in his life. For the first time, he would encounter an existential
milieu not susceptible to his powers of conquest.
The Transformation of the Struggle Ethic into Revolutionary Rebellion: The Pistolero and the Young Ortodoxo

By the time that Castro arrived on campus in October 1945, the University of Havana had degenerated into a microcosm of virtually all of the ills that plagued the larger society of which it was a part. Violence and corruption, personified by the bonches or grupos de accion, reigned supreme in its hallways. Pistol-packing youths with revolutionary slogans on their lips engaged in internecine warfare, imposing their will on administration, faculty and students alike, beating or killing those whom they could not intimidate, trafficking in grades, registrations and textbooks and looting the University's Finance Office when they needed additional funds. One of these groups, in particular, the Revolutionary Socialist Movement (MSR), exercised a kind of general hegemony over the campus. Those who would advance politically had either to ally themselves with it or with one of the rival bonches, for to stand alone in defiance of the existing system was to invite destruction. And so Fidel played the game, as did many others. After a brief flirtation with the MSR's Manolo Castro, he joined the opposition Revolutionary Insurrectional Union (UIR) and became an active participant in the war (for that is what it was) to remove MSR influence from the University.

Such behavior is understandably subject to different interpretations. Andres Suarez, for one, has argued that these were the critical experiences in the formation of the Maximum
Leader's propensity for opportunism. It was there, in the world of the action groups, that he came to know firsthand...

...the real weakness of Cuban political institutions, their almost exclusive dependence on force, and the corruption and incompetence of their leaders. It was there that he acquired both the facile conviction that, because the state had survived Batista's devastation as well as the Autentico disaster, no moral or intellectual qualification whatever was needed to govern it, and also the belief that politics was nothing but a naked struggle for power devoid of any spiritual or ideological principle. It was there, finally, and not in the writings of Lenin, ...that Castro came to realize the decisive role that violence could play in civic life and in this connection the importance of two other elements: firearms and the availability of a group of desperadoes ready to give blind obedience to their leader.32

Now this is fine up to a point. As Bonachea and Valdes have quite rightly remarked, "political violence and extremism are as Cuban as palm trees, and Fidel Castro was a product, rather than a cause, of the profound and unresolved tensions in Cuban society."33 But, once again, we must keep in mind that we are talking about an extended process of psychological and intellectual development. The fact of the matter is that Fidel had been socialized very early in life into a culture of struggle and violence: in the microcosm of his family; in the surrounding primitive frontier society of Oriente; in his experiences at school, where victory in the quest for dominance required bravery and physical prowess as well as intellectual agility and an iron will; in his initial exposure to a Cuban revolutionary tradition that was permeated by the mystique of violence. In fact, it would not be too far amiss to say that much of his youth had been a kind of intensified course in the ethic
of machismo, wherein his ego had been developed and rewarded by his peers in accordance with his ability to fulfill and overfulfill certain culturally prescribed ideals of manliness. And if temerity, courage, strength and the ability of conquest ranked high among the norms of manhood, the techniques of violence provided a ready vehicle for their display. Thus did Fidel "enter rapidly into conflict with the milieu" which he encountered at the University. To have done otherwise and avoided the challenge posed by physical danger would have been a direct affront to one of the most central of all his self-concepts.

Beyond this, however, it is important to note that this would be a period in which Castro's personal frustrations and propensities for rebellion would reach new heights as his ambitions were time and again thwarted by the socio-political order in which he was operating. Fidel was indeed a product of the old Cuba. But he was at least as much an antibody, rebelling against that system, as a simple mirror image of its immorality, cynicism, corruption and irresponsibility. No doubt this was in large part a matter of chance. Had the old social system exhibited a greater capacity for absorbing its members and their discontents, Castro might well have been permanently drawn into it, his youthful ideals corroded, as had happened to so many others. Instead, he became one of the rootless alienated, only a partial success as a student leader and a pending failure as a politician, lawyer, husband and even, one might add, as a revolutionary. And just as his revolt against
his father had found intellectual justification and behavioral
direction through his primitive understanding of the Cuban revolu-
tionary tradition, so would his growing frustration and his
violent rebellion against the socio-political order of Batista,
Grau and the action groups find their legitimacy and sense of
direction in an increasingly radicalized and expanded version of
the initial ideological base.

Thus, even as Fidel, driven by temperament and ambition,
plunged into the world of the action groups, so too after 1945
did he become part of the "millenarian minority... phrasing
heroic slogans, recalling past heroes..." He also found
a new hero to emulate in Eduardo Chibas, one of the leaders of the
Student Directorate during the struggle against Machado, whose
rebellion against the corruption and cynicism of the Autentico
government mirrored the disillusionment of a substantial portion of
the rising young political generation of which Castro was a member.
In May 1947, the youth section of the ruling Cuban Revolutionary
Party met under the leadership of Chibas and formed the Party of
the Cuban People (Ortodoxo). Their symbol became the broom, with
which they pledged to sweep away the corruption and gangsterism
associated with the Grau (and later the Prio) regime and return to
the original ideals of the Cuban revolutionary heritage. Among
their ranks was a young law student from Havana University, one
Fidel Castro Ruz.

To describe Chibas' influence on Fidel as profound would be
no overstatement. At the very moment when Castro and many of his
generational contemporaries were searching for an ideologically attractive, viable alternative to the venality of the existing system, Chibas stepped forward in the mantle of the Redeemer, promising national renovation, social justice, liberty, governmental probity and political and economic independence. The Cuban revolution was portrayed as a continuing process, part of the recurrent historical struggle of a people in pursuit of national fulfillment. Political sovereignty and national renovation could be divorced from neither the quest for economic independence nor the need for basic structural change. Among other things, the Ortodoxo platform called for the abolition of monoculture and latifundismo, the enforced use of idle lands, the creation of a professional civil service, the elimination of illiteracy, the formation of agricultural cooperatives. . . . We need not recount the entire program. It was, in any case, never very well defined. Let us merely say, with Hugh Thomas, that Chibas' "oratory was always demagogic, inspiring emotions and creating desires which he could not fully satisfy." As, for instance, when he promised to "destroy the great foreign monopolies, to eliminate their indigenous servitors, and to reunite with the people the properties robbed from them by political hacks."  

It was here that Castro found a model of charismatic showmanship and personalismo after which to pattern his own career. The aspiring young politico soon became an ardent follower of the Ortodoxo leader, closely studying his style, picking up the finer
points of demagogy from a genuine master of the art. He learned how to monopolize the rhetoric of revolution and virtue to keep his foes on the defensive and how to use drama, symbolism, violent denunciation and the many other techniques of oratorical propaganda to manipulate the emotions of his audiences. Perhaps equally important, he witnessed Chibas' extraordinary success in using his Sunday night radio broadcasts to build a strong personal following, particularly among the university students and the urban middle class. Week after week, the Ortodoxo chief took to the air to ridicule and denounce those who had betrayed the revolution. In the process, he "helped to undermine not only the authority of the Autenticos... but the stability of Cuba's political institutions as well." Yet, within four years of his break with Grau, Chibas would acquire such national renown that he would become the apparent successor to the Presidency of Carlos Prio Socarras. As we shall see, this impressive demonstration of the power of mass communications was not lost on his young disciple.

It is necessary also to note that chibasismo contained within it many of the same kinds of ambiguities and contradictions that had characterized the Martian Ideal. Chibas insisted, for instance, on defending Cuban independence; yet his foreign policy stance with regard to the rest of the hemisphere suggested something less than an absolute respect for the sovereignty of his neighbors. Thus, even as he adamantly denounced the imperialist meddling of the Colossus he also pledged to "resolutely combat
all tyrants, from...Trujillo...to Peron." The precise meaning of such promises is, of course, subject to speculation. Talk is cheap. Yet, as has been noted elsewhere, his words were not so different in their implications from Marti's vision of the Cuban independence movement as an integral part of the fight to maintain freedom throughout the hemisphere. The Latin American revolutionary tradition, from Bolivar to Marti to the Caribbean Legion to Castro, has always had a strong internationalist aura about it. Even the decrepit Autenticos were not above sponsoring the abortive Cayo Confites expedition against Trujillo, about which I shall have more to say shortly. For the moment, let us simply note that it was part of Chibas' gift for demagogy that he was able to combine inherently inconsistent ideas and political positions, wrap them together under a veil of emotion and ambiguity, and thus appeal to individuals and groups holding vastly different, even mutually exclusive, values and interests.

Indeed, this same observation may be made with regard to the attempt to embrace the highly incongruous (though perhaps not totally irreconcilable) concepts of revolution and democracy. The question, of course, is how to institute basic structural change in the face of heavy resistance from powerful interests that are staunchly opposed to such alterations of the status quo. Can such goals be reached through democratic means, or do the means have to be compromised or abandoned in order to achieve truly revolutionary ends? Conversely, if democratic means are in themselves the primary
value at stake, to what extent ought "revolutionary" objectives be scrapped in order to maintain the allegiance to democracy? As things turned out, these key issues were never definitively resolved, for neither Chibas nor the Ortodoxos were ever to capture the ship of state. Divorced from the day-to-day realities of actually having to run a government, they could afford to rest content in the trappings of revolutionary rhetoric. After all, in the game of democratic electoral politics ambiguity is as often as not a virtue in attracting mass popular support. Party platforms and campaign speeches are rarely characterized by deep philosophical introspection. Their function is more limited—to mobilize the faithful and attract votes. In this respect, the Ortodoxo appeals were an enormous success.

Finally, it should not be surprising—in light of Cuban history, the environmental conditions existing on the island in the late 1940's and the fact that the Ortodoxos were an out-of-power party aspiring to office—that when internal debates did arise over the meaning of revolution they would come to focus largely on the tactical issue of whether to seek power through the electoral process or through insurrection. On the one hand, the older and more conservative leaders of the party, including Chibas, opted strongly for peaceful democratic methods. Theirs was a generation, now middle-aged, which had long ago lost its enthusiasm for violence. As members of the liberal Cuban bourgeoisie, they had too much to lose to advocate open warfare against the system of which they were
such an integral part. Notwithstanding some of their more extreme rhetoric, they were basically evolutionists, not revolutionists. On the other hand, there soon appeared within the rank-and-file a splinter organization, centered largely within the movement's youth section and having strong ties with those recruits drawn from the action groups at the University, especially the Revolutionary Insurrectional Union. This was the so-called Accion Radical Ortodoxa, and from 1948 on its members engaged in a running debate with the party leadership in a vain attempt to pressure the latter into adopting a policy of armed struggle. The founder of this faction was none other than Fidel Castro.

At this point, it is necessary to shift our focus of attention back to Havana University, for one cannot understand Castro's course of ideological and political development apart from his interaction with that environmental milieu. I said earlier that not long after Fidel entered the University he became one of the rootless alienated. This requires some explanation. It ought, first of all, be noted that the campus was itself a kind of national repository of the rootless, what with its naturally transient student population, its large body of older "professional students" and the bonchistas or "men of action", the last being for the most part non-students "with a very low standard of education and from the fringes of society, who were either habitually unemployed or had never given any serious thought to working." It was into these ranks that Fidel Castro, the personification of homo activus,
now descended in a concerted effort to rise to the apex of the University power structure. His major target: The presidency of the Federation of University Students (FEU), which had in recent times become a prominent stepping-stone to political advancement. His approach to the milieu took the characteristic form of a plunging-in headfirst, "possessed with desire to triumph at all costs and always over the most heavily weighted odds." The term was not yet one week old when he challenged the President of the FEU to a fight.46

As a student, his performance was efficient enough, though hardly inspired. His heart was elsewhere. Indeed, it seems that his enrollment in the Law School was more the product of the simple procedural necessity to declare a course of study, combined with his own indifference and a certain amount of social pressure, than of any interest or intent to pursue a career. Years later, he admitted that he did not know why he had chosen to enter the legal profession, attributing it "in part to those who said, 'He talks a lot; he has the makings of a lawyer.'"47 He was, in fact, a powerful debater, and law seemed a logical choice. It was, moreover, a traditional field for aspiring young politicos to enter. And so he played the game, or at least went through the motions, becoming one of those students who "never went to lectures, never opened a book except on the eve of examinations."48 The results were more than adequate for his purposes, for his exceptional memory, and perhaps also his reputation as a pistolero, enabled him
to accumulate a solid record--on paper--in a field in which the standards of academic excellence were notoriously low. Theodore Draper has quite rightly commented that Fidel's was "a classic case of the self-made rich man's son in a relatively poor country for whom the university was less an institution of learning or a professional-training school than a nursery of hothouse revolutionaries."49

He was less successful, however, in the thing that mattered most--the quest for student leadership. Though he started off well enough, being elected class delegate in the Law School, he soon became bogged down in the mire of gang warfare that dominated University life. He also gained his initial exposure to the real (as opposed to the mythological and the intellectual) world of revolutionary politics. The action groups, for all their ideological and moral degeneracy, had their roots in the frustrated revolution of '33, and even now they were not totally devoid of a certain aura of romantic idealism.50 No doubt this may for the most part be attributed to the enormous capacity that human beings have for self-deception and rationalization and the tendency, by no means unique to the Cubans, to define revolutionary behavior in terms of violent action. Nevertheless, they still held some attraction for those youths whose idealism came mixed with a need to establish their manhood through heroic adventure. And, indeed, some of their activities did smack, at least superficially, of genuine revolutionary impulse.
One such occurrence took place during the summer and early fall of 1947 and is mainly noteworthy because of the participation of our hero. This was the so-called Cayo Confites affair, in which more than 1,200 Dominican exiles, adventurers and bonchistas were gathered and trained under the general auspices of the Revolutionary Socialist Movement (MSR), the intent being to overthrow the dictatorship of Rafael Leonidas Trujillo. In spite of the considerable risk involved in becoming part of an expedition dominated by his archenemies, Rolando Masferrer and Manolo Castro, Fidel arranged for a truce to be negotiated so that he might join the venture. As fate would have it, however, the affair came to naught. Although it began with the backing of the Grau government and some prominent members of the Caribbean democratic left (most notably, Juan Bosch, the Dominican writer and politician, who would at a much later date become President of his country), the Truman administration in Washington was acutely sensitive to the dangers posed by hemispheric instability. This was 1947 and the Cold War was in full bloom, and while Trujillo was undeniably a tyrant he was at least a reliable one. Hence, pressure was applied to abort the invasion. Moreover, it seems also that the Cuban government received information that MSR ambitions were not restricted to the Dominican Republic. The expeditionary force was alleged to be part of a still larger plot, in league with the Minister of Education, to overthrow the Grau regime. Such was the subterranean nature of the Cuban political process.
In any case, the armed forces were quickly mobilized and the would-be invaders arrested and put on a navy frigate headed for Havana. Fidel, fearing for his life now that the cease-fire had been lifted, managed to escape the clutches of Maferrer and his goons by jumping overboard, with sub-machine gun and all, and swimming to safety through the shark-infested Bay of Nipe. Thus did his first real exposure to the enterprise of making revolutions end in an uneasy mix of farce and heroism. Yet, the incident also contained another element that would recur even more dramatically on future occasions: There was a strong element of *fortuna*, of chance or blind luck, guiding his destiny. Had he not led a charmed life, his career might well have ended then and there, in the Bay of Nipe.

Similarly, he might well have been destroyed in the crescendo of violence which was then reverberating throughout the halls of the University. Fidel would later comment that these years had been more hazardous than his entire guerrilla experience in the Sierra. He was, in fact, a marked man. He had joined Emilio Tro's Revolutionary Insurrectional Union (UIR) with the intent of breaking the MSR's hegemony over the campus. In 1947, Manolo Castro's reign as President of the Federation of University Students came to an end. In the aftermath of a close but unsuccessful UIR electoral bid for power (an election in which Fidel was himself defeated at the polls), factional bloodshed reached new heights. Grau's policy of coopting the action groups by bringing them into the government--specifically, into the national police
establishment—had had the effect of conferring an aura of semi-
legality on the terror.

This was an era of machine-gun murders and speeding cars,
of gangsterismo, reminiscent in microcosm of the days of Al Capone.
We need not go into the details, except to note a few highlights:
In September, Tro fell victim in a prolonged and bloody shootout.
The following February, Manolo Castro was assassinated in retaliation.
Fidel was accused of having been a participant, and he and three
of his companions were arrested. They were soon released, however,
for lack of evidence.

The truth of the matter has never been fully established.
He may well have been guilty, as an accessory before the fact if
not as a participant in the actual event. But what is clear is
that the MSR believed him to be involved. Indeed, following the
death of Tro and his own return from Cayo Confites Fidel had dared
to publicly denounce the gangsterism of the rival grupo, even calling
some of the culprits by name. Thereafter, his life was not worth
the proverbial plugged nickel. He survived several assassination
attempts largely by sheer luck. After the murder of Manolo
Castro; however, the danger became intolerable, and he was forced
to flee the country to escape retaliation.

He soon resurfaced in Bogota, Colombia, just in time to
participate in yet another bizarre episode. In April, 1948, that
city was scheduled to be host to the Ninth Inter-American Conference,
which had been called for the purpose of transforming the old
Pan-American Union into a more cohesive structure, the Organization of American States. A second, concurrent gathering was also planned. The Argentine dictator, Juan Peron, had managed to persuade Havana University's student leaders to take the initiative in organizing this latter meeting, the purpose of which was to pave the way for the creation of an anti-imperialist, anti-colonialist Latin American Student Congress and to "precipitate a wave of protests" against the Inter-American Conference. Heading the Cuban delegation were Enrique Ovares, Alfredo Guevara, Rafael del Pino and Fidel Castro, the latter representing the law faculty of the University. Interestingly enough, we are told that there was some dispute between Castro and Ovares as to who should preside over the meeting, the former pleading that it would help his political career, the latter denying him that privilege by virtue of his position as the new President of the Federation of University Students.

Such matters, however, were soon dwarfed by more momentous events: the assassination, through the act of an apparent madman, of Jorge Eliecer Gaitan, the charismatic hero of the Colombian Liberals. This was the spark that ignited the famed "Bogotazo", the great brushfire of violence that shaped the course of that nation's political life for years to come. Decades of pent-up hostility and frustration suddenly burst forth in a wave of mass rioting. By nightfall the capital was out of control, and Fidel in his youthful impetuosity joined the mob, distributing anti-American propaganda and inciting the masses on to revolt. His role thereafter
is somewhat obscure. According to William D. Pawley, the US Ambassador to Brazil and a delegate to the Inter-American Conference, a voice was soon heard over the radio: "This is Fidel Castro from Cuba. This is a Communist revolution. The President has been killed. All the military establishments are now in our hands. The Navy has capitulated to us, and this revolution has been a success." 58

The testimony is of dubious validity, to say the least. Apart from the fact that it was delivered more than a decade after the event and by a highly prejudiced source at that, there is no reliable evidence that Castro considered himself a Communist at this stage of his career. It is true that a few of his friends at the University were Communists, most notably Alfredo Guevara and Leonel Soto, but his known political dealings with the young Communists were clearly more those of an adversary than an ally. 59 Rather, he considered himself a "man of revolutionary action", 60 a part of the same tradition as Marti and Chibas. If his understanding of the concept of revolution was still quite primitive it was for the reasons elucidated in detail earlier in this chapter. The nebulosity of his ideological vision did not, however, prevent him from acting. Quite the contrary. The revolutionary myth, embedded as it was in an aura of romanticized violence, demanded action. It was the duty of revolutionaries to make revolutions, to fight against tyranny and imperialism at home and abroad, to side with the masses against those who oppressed them. Thus, when Bogota exploded in the wake of Gaitan's death Castro reacted instinctively,
in accordance with his self-concepts. He grabbed a gun and joined the crowd, anxious to become a part of the revolutionary milieu.

In any event, his efforts went for naught. The Colombian authorities were well aware of his activities. Fidel, Rafael del Pino and other members of the delegation were soon forced to seek refuge in the Cuban Embassy, from whence they were shipped back to Havana in a government-chartered plane. Thus did his second exposure to the real world of revolutionary action end much like the first (i.e., the Cayo Confites affair). Still, one must conclude that these experiences could not but have left their mark on Castro's psyche. He had been entranced by the excitement, the violence, the mobs, the demagogic oratory of Gaitan, whom he had met prior to the assassination. This was his first exposure to the enormous raw power of the masses. No doubt he gained some feel for the revolutionary potentials that lay within these blind forces, if only they had the proper leadership.61

Once again, Fidel returned to the University, "an act of unheard-of temerity"62 considering the fact that he was a marked man. Not to have done so would have been to have abandoned his aspirations for student leadership and given in before the well-publicized threats that had been made against his life. Whatever else Castro may be, he is not a coward. He went back "arms in hand"63 ... and was soon up to his neck in trouble. The war between rival gangs raged on, increasingly mixed with labor and student unrest and mass political demonstrations. Fidel barely had chance to catch
his breath before he was again accused of murder. This time, however, it was clearly a frame-up, and nothing much came of the charges. Soon thereafter, a highly unpopular increase in Havana bus fares provided Castro and his companions with the opportunity to incite insurrection, Bogotazo-style, and for a few hours it appeared as though the city might indeed be on the verge of a mass uprising. But the government soon capitulated to the demands of the demonstrators, and the turmoil subsided. Nevertheless, within the University itself there was little reprieve, for the UIR continued to chip away bit by bit at the MSR structure of power. And violence, in turn, only begat more violence: The new year witnessed an abortive attempt on the life of Fidel's archenemy, Rolando Maseferrer. Once again, Castro was accused of involvement. It also saw the death of the UIR leader Justo Fuentes, as he was leaving the radio station COCO where he and the future leader Maximo conducted a daily broadcast. Thus another crucial encounter with dame fortune, for in failing to make the program that day Fidel escaped the fate of his associate.

We need not dwell on these and related matters. It is enough to note that Castro never attained the FEU presidency. And as it gradually dawned on him that his career was stagnating, that time was running out, that the revolutionary activities in which he had been engaged were as much illusory as real, he became increasingly alienated from the world of the action groups, eventually dropping out of the UIR altogether. Yet, even as he was moving away from
his old life as a pistolero he was also heading in specific new directions. In the fall of 1948, he married Maria Diaz Balart, over the strong objections of her family. Within a year, the couple had a son, Fidelito. Simultaneously, he plunged ever deeper into the world of Ortodoxo politics, bringing to it the increasingly violent and radical dispositions of his socialization. He even began to dabble in Marxism-Leninism, at least to the extent that he took the trouble to attend some of the courses in Marxist studies that were taught at the University. Still, he was hardly a Communist. The fact of the matter was that in spite of all his "petty bourgeois prejudices" he was already in many respects a far more radical commodity than the Stalinists in charge of the Popular Socialist Party.

The Transformation of the Struggle Ethic into Revolutionary Rebellion: The Road to Moncada

It is part of the conventional wisdom of social psychology that frustration is one of the basic causes of aggression.

This was to be an important transition period in Fidel’s life. Having just abandoned one (albeit very primitive and misguided) mode of revolutionary struggle, he was now in the process of searching for a new, more effective and mature, strategic approach with which to pursue his ideological and career objectives. But although he was a fervent and highly active proponent of chibasismo, his radicalism made it difficult to gain acceptance from the Ortodoxo elders. Nevertheless, he persisted—as always—gradually building
a reputation as a party spokesman and a highly effective critic of the Prio regime through his daily radio broadcasts and his articles in *Alerta*. His immediate aim was to win enough support from the Ortodoxo masses and the party's radical wing to secure nomination as a candidate to the House of Representatives. But what lay beyond the goal of election we do not know. Castro's opinion of the more conservative elements in charge of the party machine was exceedingly low (a feeling which was reciprocated), but he trusted Chibas, confident that "the moment would come when he would have nothing to do with those people."  

But fate was soon to intervene in the form of two events, wholly beyond his control, which were to have a fundamental impact both on his personal destiny and on the future of the Cuban nation. On August 5, 1951, Eddy Chibas committed suicide, apparently an act of honor, symbolic sacrifice or severely aggravated neurosis, following his failure to substantiate certain publicly-made charges of corruption against Prio's Minister of Education.  

His death not only eliminated the frontrunner and probable winner of the presidential elections scheduled for the following year, it threw his highly personalistic political organization into disarray. The Ortodoxos were now deprived of their central unifying force, and factional squabbling rapidly ensued. The party's leadership, however, remained in the hands of the electoralists, who were convinced that they would be swept into power on the wave of public emotion that followed their jefe's demise.
Fidel also assumed that an Ortodoxo triumph was imminent. But he was disturbed by the prospect of the machine politicians, "reactionary and rightist elements...incapable of producing any fundamental changes", coming to power. Thus, he pushed his own candidacy even harder, organizing an intensive mailing campaign aimed at winning the allegiance of the grass roots Ortodoxos not controlled by "the Establishment". In this, he was fairly successful, being elected a delegate to the party assembly and eventually acquiring the sought-after nomination. But his intentions are still the subject of some conjecture. His own version, given many years later, was that he had now, for the first time, "conceived a strategy for the revolutionary seizure of power":

... once in Parliament, I would break party discipline and present a program embracing practically all the measures that later on were contained in our Moncada program and which, since the victory of the Revolution, have been transformed into laws. I knew that such a program would never be approved in a Parliament the great majority of whose members were mouthpieces of the landowners and the big Cuban and foreign businesses. But I hoped, by proposing a program that recognized the most deeply felt aspirations of the majority of the population, to establish a revolutionary platform around which to mobilize the great masses of farmers, workers, unemployed, teachers, intellectual workers and other progressive sectors of the country.

I also understood the necessity of uniting a part of the armed forces to this movement of the revolutionary masses, and among the laws that I had in mind were some directed to capturing the support of the troops and of some of the newly appointed officers who had manifested certain political anxieties.

I already definitely believed in the need for seizing power by revolution, but at that time and in those circumstances, I thought this was only possible by relying upon the people and a part of the army. I
was very far away from believing then that such a Revolution could be made a few years later with the people alone and against the entire army.\textsuperscript{72}

While this explanation undoubtedly smacks of a considerable amount of \textit{ex post facto} rationalization designed to lend continuity and legitimacy to Castro's revolutionary belief system, it is by no means incompatible with either his previous or his subsequent patterns of behavior. He had, of course, participated in elections before--at the University. But there can hardly be any debate that insurrectionary methods were his preference. Moreover, his writings and broadcasts as an Orthodoxo politician clearly reflect his continuing concern for those "most deeply felt aspirations" of the masses, namely, the pursuit of national renovation, sovereignty and social justice.\textsuperscript{73} And in early March 1952, he consummated his break with the \textit{grupos de accion} with a detailed denunciation of the government's financing of their activities.\textsuperscript{74} Hence, my inclination to accept the statement pretty much at face value, keeping in mind however that Fidel's revolutionary ideas were still highly nebulous, that he has never been the most astute or farsighted of planners\textsuperscript{75} and that this was, as indicated earlier, a transition period in his life. One suspects, on the basis of his past and subsequent performances, that the plan to use Parliament as a launching pad for revolutionary action was never very well defined in his own mind. And, of course, had his electoral ambitions actually met with success it is by no means impossible that that very success might have had a moderating influence on his behavior.
Lord Acton's dictum that power corrupts is applicable to both revolutionary and non-revolutionary politicians alike.

But this is sheer speculation. All that we know for sure is what actually occurred. The elections were never held. They were pre-empted by Batista's *golpe d'estado* of March 10, 1952.

This changed everything. In one fell swoop Fidel's plans had been swept from beneath his feet. His immediate reaction was to take to the streets, to return to the University and help pass out arms to the students. But such moves were futile, for it was clear that the forces of insurrection lacked the organization, leadership and weaponry to wage an effective resistance against the army. Three days later, however, Castro issued a manifesto entitled "Revolution or Zarpazo!", denouncing Batista and calling on the Cuban people to fight back. He also sent a letter to the caudillo warning him of the dire consequences of his action. Finally, he took the legal steps of filing a brief before the Court of Constitutional Guarantees in Havana, requesting that the dictatorship be declared unconstitutional, and a similar document before the city's Urgency Court, demanding more than one hundred years imprisonment of the usurper.

Needless to say, none of this had much effect. The courts were already subservient to the new regime. The first brief was rejected; the second ignored. Fidel's next move, in his own words, was

...to try to unite all the different forces against Batista. I intended to participate in that struggle
simply as one more soldier. I began to organize the first action cells, hoping to work alongside those leaders of the party who might be ready to fulfill the elemental duty of fighting against Batista. In those circumstances I thought that the men with the most authority and prestige would put themselves at the front. As for myself, all I wanted was a rifle and orders to carry out any mission whatsoever.78

An amazingly modest statement from a notoriously immodest man! Hence, suspect. In any case, it soon became apparent that most of the "respectable" opposition leaders were either too old, too conservative or too disorganized to provide effective resistance. Prio had given up the ship of state virtually without a fight and scurried off into exile. And with Chibas dead, the Ortodoxo electoralists posed no real threat to the new dictator.

Legal maneuvers were no match against the force of arms. When Batista ordered the dissolution of political parties and the suspension of constitutional guarantees they acquiesced without any serious resistance, thus once again revealing the bankruptcy of their revolutionary pretensions.79

Fidel was now in a kind of psychological limbo, well on his way towards becoming a misfit. He was about to enter his late 20's; not many of his aspirations had been realized. He now found himself "a politician without a platform as well as a lawyer without clients".80 His chosen profession was that of a revolutionary, but that had been repeatedly frustrated and had not, in any case, provided him with much of a livelihood. He needed a means of supporting himself, for he could not continue to live off his father's dole forever. Ironically, in some respects he had become
overcommitted to that which he was not. Like so many other young men and women, he had given his allegiance to the Ortodoxos largely out of a sense of identification with Marti, Chibas and the Cuban revolutionary tradition and a desire to fulfill the Ideal which had so often been frustrated in the past. But now, the party seemed to be going the way of the Autenticos, its organization increasingly falling under the control of elements whom he deemed opportunistic and conservative.

Similarly, he had been trained as a lawyer. But the Cuba of 1952 was a nation which had an overabundance of lawyers. For a young man just getting started in the business, times were hard. Clients were poor, few and far between. And the fact of the matter was that Fidel was more of a dilettante than a professional, most of his energies being devoted to his true love, politics. Finally, these frustrations and insecurities had begun to have a destructive effect on his marriage. But then, what more could one expect of a union between a fervent revolutionary, largely contemptuous of materialistic concerns, and the daughter of a wealthy and conservative family with close ties to the Batista regime. Of course, he could have abandoned his revolutionary ideals and joined the usurper—his brother-in-law, Diaz Balart, apparently urged this course of action on him—81—but that would have required a degree of crass opportunism of which he was incapable.

In the end, these tensions had to be manifested in one form or another, and so they were: in a wild, desperate attack on the
Moncada barracks.

This was the revolutionary arm of chibasismo, in rebellion not only against Batista but against the conventional politicians of the Ortodoxia, whose "sterile conflicts" and "stupid quarrels" were motivated not by ideology but by purely selfish and personal desires. In late June, the party's youth group, Juventud Ortodoxa, issued a manifesto rejecting the electoral politics of the elders and openly calling for revolutionary action. Once again, these demands were rejected by the national leadership. Factional bickering continued, to the benefit of the dictator and the progressive disillusionment of the party's youth. Yet, even before this, Castro had already begun to move on his own, without consulting the Ortodoxo leadership. He began meeting with Abel Santamaria, a young accountant who was in the process of forming his own resistance group within the University; moreover he soon became political editor of the militant underground paper El Acusador. By August, the decision was reached to infiltrate the Juventud Ortodoxa and recruit the discontented into action cells in preparation for the coming struggle. As Fidel took care to emphasize: "The moment is revolutionary and not political. Politics is the consecration of the opportunism of those who have the means and the resources. The Revolution opens the way to true merit, to those who have sincere courage and ideals, to those who risk their lives and take the battle standard in their hands. A revolutionary party requires a revolutionary leadership, a young leadership originating
from the people, that will save Cuba."

A young leadership. Originating from the people. That will save Cuba. Key phrases these, as we shall see.

By the summer of 1953, Fidel had managed, with help from Santamaria and his comrades, from "Pepe" Suarez in Artemisa and from his old insurrectional comrades in the Accion Radical Ortodoxa, to gather around him a highly personalistic federation composed of several groups, "each following a minor leader who in turn accepted Castro as the over-all chief." From within this pool of several hundred people, a vanguard of some 165 men and two women were selected for one of the most daring and hazardous revolutionary exploits in the history of the Cuban nation. The intent was to launch an attack on the barracks of Moncada and Bayamo in Oriente province, the minimal goal being to capture an arsenal from which sympathizers could be armed with weapons for further operations. There was a second, maximal, objective also: It was thought that a successful assault on the barracks might spark a popular uprising throughout the province and that such an event might in turn snowball into a nationwide revolt against the dictatorship.

But such hopes belonged to the realm of revolutionary fantasy. The plan, while quite elaborate, was of dubious conception. In an enterprise in which the attackers were outnumbered by a factor of about eight to one there was almost no room for error. The need for surprise was absolute. Hence, the assault was scheduled to coincide with the annual carnival in Santiago, the hope being
that a good many of the garrison's soldiers would attend the festivities and would be in no shape to resist an early morning attack the following day.

Yet, as fate would have it, the element of surprise would be quickly lost. Fidel's contingent encountered a patrol almost immediately upon reaching the barracks. The alarm was sounded. Confusion ensued. The ill-trained, ill-equipped and ill-organized moncadistas, only a handful of whom had had any clear idea of what they were getting into until the hour of combat, were no match for the garrison's vastly superior fighting force. Badly outnumbered and outgunned, their discipline rapidly broke down. And to make matters even worse, their reinforcements—about fifty of their best-armed men—were not on hand at the decisive moment. Incredible as it may seem, they had become lost in the unfamiliar streets of Santiago, the route of attack not having been planned with sufficient care.

Meanwhile, at Bayamo, a similar catastrophe was unfolding, though on a much smaller scale.

Thus did the slaughter begin. While only a few of the attackers were killed in the actual fighting, about 68 were murdered after capture. Castro himself managed to avoid that fate only by chance. Having sounded the retreat and made good his own escape, he had attempted to regroup the remnants of his force at their training camp, "El Sibony". From there, he had set out for the Sierra Maestra to continue the struggle, accompanied by perhaps one
or two dozen of his most stalwart supporters. They never made it.

Within a week, Fidel was captured in his sleep by a rural patrol under the command of Lieutenant Pedro Manuel Sarria, who is important mainly because he refused to have anything to do with the officially sanctioned practice of torturing and killing the prisoners. It was primarily to Lieutenant Sarria, who had the integrity to risk the displeasure of his superiors, that Fidel owed his life.

Once again, Castro had failed, this time with terrible consequences. A pattern was becoming evident, a portrait of revolutionary optimism gone rampant. Herculean aims had been sought with means wholly insufficient for their achievement, as though courage and will were adequate compensation for a lack of planning, organization and firepower. The gamble that a relative handful of amateurs, only partially armed and mostly with sporting rifles at that, could conquer a much larger and better-equipped body of professional soldiers was at best a long shot, even with the advantage of surprise. But without that advantage and lacking allies within the barracks themselves, it was a hopeless cause. Moreover, the prospect that the attack might evolve into a provincial or even a national uprising was even more remote. It is true that Oriente had a long and revered tradition of revolutionary activity. However, in the face of a near total absence of advance work—of organization and propaganda within selected sectors of the populace—there was little chance of any large-scale mass participation in the rebellion. Fidel and his comrades were simply out of touch with
reality.

Yet, out of these ashes the phoenix of revolution would arise. For Castro would not give up. And he led a charmed life. It was there, at Moncada, on July 26, 1953, that the initial nucleus of the revolutionary movement was forged out of blood, suffering and struggle.

Nascent Castroism and the Requisites of Revolutionary Struggle: The Roots of Totalitarian Democracy

If there is any single lesson that students of the Cuban Revolution should have learned by this time it is that for the Maximum Leader and his colleagues deception, including self-deception, has long been a way of life. Language is not only a means of communication. It is also a method of obstructing it and of manipulating one's environment to best advantage. Or, to put it another way, words are political weapons, to be used, mendaciously if necessary, in pursuit of political objectives. Hence, Fidel, 1961:

...People have asked me if my thinking at the time of Moncada was what it is today. I have replied 'I thought very much then as I think today'. ... Whoever reads what we said on that occasion will see very many fundamental things of the Revolution. ... That is a document. ... written with a care adequate to express a series of fundamental points, avoiding at the same time making commitments which would limit the field of action within the Revolution. ... That is, one had to try and make the movement the most broad-based as possible. If we had not written this document with care, if it had been a more radical program, ...the revolutionary movement of struggle against Batista could not afterwards have acquired the breadth that it did and which made victory possible. ... Some pledges of that time were made simply with concern of not harming the breadth of the revolutionary movement.
And later to Lee Lockwood:

...I think that all radical revolutionaries, in certain moments, or circumstances, do not announce programs that might unite all of their enemies on a single front. Throughout history, realistic revolutionaries have always proposed only those things that are attainable.

...In our case, to have stated a radical program at that moment would have resulted in aligning against the Revolution all the most reactionary forces, which were then divided. It would have caused the formation of a solid front among the North American imperialists, Batista, and the ruling classes. They would have called finally upon the troops of the United States to occupy the country. For Cuba, a small country, an island very close to the United States, with no possibility of receiving any outside help, this would have constituted a complex of forces difficult to overcome with the forces and means which we then had. 89

As might be expected, the often glaring contrast between Castro's words and deeds has provided a field day for his critics, who have frequently seized upon them as evidence of his opportunism and lack of ideology. Their arguments are not entirely convincing. The fact of the matter is that were behavioral consistency and verbal integrity the litmus tests of revolutionary virtue very few of history's great revolutionaries would be able to make passing marks. Certainly not Lenin or Stalin or Mao Tse-tung, whose writings have helped make theoretically legitimate the norm of tactical flexibility. (It may be remembered that it was Lenin who came to power on the platform of the Social Revolutionaries, or so his enemies charged.) Nor, as I have suggested, could Marti have passed such standards.

There is, granted, a considerable element of opportunism in Castro's behavior, but it has been an opportunism which has been
primarily borne of the necessity of dealing with the requisites of elite hegemony and social system maintenance, as suggested earlier. For Fidel and his comrades, the first priority aims during the period of the anti-Batista resistance had to be survival and the acquisition of power (i.e., the hegemony function). If those basic needs could not be satisfied, then all the revolutionary intentions in the world would be quite meaningless; if indeed, those objectives required the employment of obfuscation and deceit, then so be it. Once power had been won and consolidated, attention could be paid to the difficult tasks of precisely defining and implementing the "real" program of the Revolution.

One may sympathize with Mr. Draper's lament that the revolution was betrayed. His revolution and the revolution promised by Castro in his public statements most certainly were. The point, however, is that some revolution had to be betrayed. Either Fidel had to abandon his nascent ideological values or those of the bourgeois audience to whose sympathies he played during the struggle for power.

Lenin said it best. In order to make an omlette one must crack some eggs. Revolution is not a game for innocents.

What then did Castro believe at the time that he launched his ill-fated attacks on Moncada and Bayamo? One thing that seems clear enough is that he did not at that time consider himself to be either a Marxist or a Communist, though he had acquired a certain "theoretical knowledge" of Marxism and been impressed by some of its
insights, particularly with regard to the class struggle. But he only vaguely understood the theory of imperialism and was not in any meaningful sense an economic determinist. Rather, he was still a man of "revolutionary action". And as such, the element of Marxism-Leninism that appealed to him most was the voluntarist thrust of Leninism--namely, the single-minded pursuit of revolutionary power and the conviction that given the right circumstances a small, well-disciplined elite can, through force of will and action, help create revolution out of the strains and fissures of the social fabric in which it operates. Precisely the element, in short, which reflected and helped conceptualize his own long standing obsession with the struggle ethic, in general, and revolutionary struggle, in particular. But if he was in some modest way influenced by Marxism-Leninism, if indeed most of the young men who led the assault on Moncada--Abel Santamaría, Jesus Montane, Nico Lopez--were people of the left, with at least a smattering of exposure to the classics of Marxism, this is a far cry from saying that they were Communists. On the contrary, the revolutionary tradition to which they belonged was predominantly homegrown.

I shall resist the urge to give a detailed presentation of the myriad of political statements and programs set forth by Castro and his followers during the period of the anti-Batista struggle. This task has already been undertaken by numerous writers, and I have no new substantive material to add to their efforts. In any case, we know that these documents only partially reflected Fidel's
real views and purposes. It is, however, instructive to focus selectively on certain crucial programs and themes which, in the light of developmental analysis, tell us much about the nature of nascent Castroism and of its subsequent evolution.

It had been the intention of the Moncada insurrectionists to broadcast three statements to the Cuban people over Radio Santiago in the event that their attempt to seize the barracks met with success. One was a manifesto written by Raúl Gómez García on Fidel's instructions, which explained the aims of the group. A second contained five "revolutionary laws" to be put into effect as soon as the government was in their hands. The third was a recording of Chibás' final radio broadcast.

For our purposes the first of these declarations, entitled the "Manifesto of the Revolutionaries of Moncada to the Nation", is the most interesting, for it provides a concise portrait of the coexistence and interrelationship of ideological and power motivations within the Castroite transfer culture. Here we find a strong sense of vicarious identification with the Cuban revolutionary heritage of Maceo, Martí, Mella, Guiteras, Chibás et al., an assertion that the ideals for which those heroic martyrs had fought had been largely frustrated and betrayed, that the "true revolution" was a long-term historical process which had "not yet ended". Moreover, mixed with this developmental perspective was the generational resentment of youths who no longer believed that their parents had the integrity to do what was necessary to cast off the
parasitical bonds in which the nation was locked and fulfill the "unrealized dream of Marti". Hence, the strong sense of missionary zeal and elitism in the rebellion. The young people of Cuba would do what their parents would not. They would constitute the vanguard of the Revolution, "freed...from all the faults, the mean ambitions, and the sins of the past...new men with new methods, ...[dedicating] their lives to an ideal." But there was also to be an elite within the elite, for it was declared that "the men who have organized the Revolution and who represent it have made a pact with the sacred will of the people to conquer the future they deserve. The Revolution is the decisive struggle of a people against all those who have deceived them." It is precisely this egocistic assumption of revolutionary virtue that binds together the ideological and power components within revolutionary Castroism in a manner typical of that breed of politicos whom J. L. Talmon has designated as "totalitarian democrats". Here we find the Hispanic-American equivalent of Rousseau's "general will" and a revolutionary vanguard which, through its commitment and action, proves itself the authoritative interpreter of that will. Similarly, there is an identification of "the people" with a group that is considerably less than the whole of society. Castro's later reconstruction of the speech which he delivered in his own defense while on trial for the Moncada attack (History Will Absolve Me) is fairly specific:
...When we speak of the people we do not mean the comfortable ones, the conservative elements of the nation, who welcome any regime of oppression, any dictatorship, any despotism, prostrating themselves before the master of the moment until they grind their foreheads into the ground. When we speak of struggle, the people means the vast unredeemed masses, to whom all make promises and whom all deceive; we mean the people who yearn for a better, more dignified and more just nation; who are moved by ancestral aspirations of justice, for they have suffered injustice and mockery generation after generation; who long for great and wise changes in all aspects of their life; people who, to attain the changes, are ready to give even the very last breath of their lives, when they believe in something or in someone, especially when they believe in themselves.95

Once again, the distinction is similar to that of Rousseau (with whom Castro was at least passingly familiar)96 in differentiating between the "general will" and the sum of particular wills which he called the "will of all". "The people" are the uncorrupted, the virtuous, those who know what is right (at least instinctively, even if they cannot precisely articulate it) and are ready to make the necessary sacrifices in order to attain it. And for Castro "right" means Revolution, defined predominantly in terms of achieving national renovation, sovereignty ("The Revolution declares itself free from the shackles of foreign nations...") and social justice ("total and definitive").97 In short, "the people" are those who support him in those objectives. On the other hand, those who would oppose that general goal culture and, especially, the more specific aspects of the transfer culture from which policies would be derived would come to be defined as either hard-core counterrevolutionaires dedicated to the restoration of the
unjust, exploitative system of the past or the misguided victims of a false bourgeois consciousness, who had not yet learned to subordinate their own personal or group interests to the welfare of the nation as a whole. The parallel with Robespierre is unmistakable: "Having started with passionate opposition to the exclusion of the lower strata from the body of the sovereign and politically active nation, an opposition based on the idea of the sacred and equal rights of man, he finished by declaring the popular masses alone the nation, and by virtually outlawing the rich, if not the bourgeoisie as a whole."98

These logical consequences of the initial egocentric premise of revolutionary virtue would not become fully apparent until much later, after the old regime had been overthrown and political power had been attained, though from time-to-time specific manifestations of the underlying syndrome could be detected in Castro's words and behavior. Yet, in light of the "totalitarian democratic" proclivities so visible in the Moncada Manifesto and in the later History Will Absolve Me, it should not have been surprising that Fidel would ultimately allocate to himself the right to interpret and enforce the "general will", even to the point of "forcing men to be free". In Cuba, the pursuit of freedom would come to mean not "negative liberty" or the freedom from constraints but rather the "positive" version of the term--freedom to do that which is right,99 i.e., in this case that which is in the interest of the Revolution. And, naturally, it would be up to those who were most qualified, who had "organized and who represent
the Revolution", who had "made a compact with the sacred will of the people to conquer the future",\textsuperscript{100} to authoritatively define the revolutionary interest. In the end, democratic elections and civil liberties would be easily rationalized into oblivion, for these were at best peripheral values within the nascent ideological system of Castroism. Much more important was the creation of a new Cuba, a sovereign nation of men and women who could stand with pride and dignity and fulfill their potentials as "truly free" human beings. But first power had to be exercised: To overthrow the tyrant; to mobilize the masses and build the new society; and gradually, as popular resistance began to arise, to do for all Cubans what they would voluntarily do for themselves if only they had the proper revolutionary consciousness.

We need not belabor the obviously self-serving assumptions that lay behind these perspectives. Nor need we conclude that Castro himself was fully aware of the logical implications of those assumptions or that he had even worked out a detailed and coherent revolutionary program in his own mind. The Moncada manifesto was remarkably nonspecific in its proposals. What, after all, can one say about a document that promises "to give Cuba the well-being and economic prosperity that its rich land, geographic situation, diversified agriculture, and industrialization assure it"? Or that calls for "total and definitive social justice based on economic and industrial progress following a synchronized and perfect plan which will be the result of thorough, thoughtful study"? Or that "bases itself on the ideals of Jose Marti, the program of the Partido Revolucionario Cubano, the Montecristi Manifesto as well as the revolutionary
programs of Joven Cuba, ABC Radical, and the Partido del Pueblo Cubano (Ortodoxo)? The only concrete pledge in the entire proclamation is a promise to restore the Constitution of 1940. (Yet, there was no mention whatsoever of elections.)

Moreover, while the five "revolutionary laws" which were to accompany the manifesto are more specific, they are probably less satisfactory as a general indicator of Castro's ideological state of mind. For one thing, about all that we know of their content is what Fidel revealed in History Will Absolve Me, the reconstruction of the speech delivered at his trial in October 1953. But by the time of that writing he was already preparing for yet another grand attempt at revolutionary struggle. Though imprisoned on the Isle of Pines, he was able to remain in fairly close contact with his followers in the outside world and to engage them in an extensive effort to propagandize his cause. He was well aware of the need to cultivate the support of the "respectable" opposition, and particularly his old Ortodoxo contacts, for he would require their help both in his campaign to get out of prison and in the long-range struggle to bring down the dictatorship. Hence, the necessity of combining propaganda, the "soul of every struggle", with calculated deception. And so he instructed Melba Hernandez: "Much guile and smiles for everyone. Follow the same tactic used in the trial: Defend our points of view without creating problems. There will be plenty of time later to squash all the cockroaches together."

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102
It was with these considerations in mind that Fidel wrote *History Will Absolve Me*, with its reconstructed version of the original "revolutionary laws", for he needed a dramatic literary vehicle with which to launch "tremendous accusations" against Batista and create a revolutionary myth around his own person and around the symbol of the Twenty-Sixth of July. Not surprisingly, therefore, his proposals were eminently reasonable, almost moderate:

The First Revolutionary Law would have returned power to the people and proclaimed the Constitution of 1940 the supreme Law of the State, until such time as the people should decide to modify or change it. And, in order to effect its implementation and punish those who had violated it, there being no organization for holding elections to accomplish this, the revolutionary movement, as the momentous incarnation of this sovereignty, the only source of legitimate power, would have assumed all the faculties inherent in it, except that of modifying the Constitution itself; in other words, it would have assumed the legislative, executive and judicial powers.

The Second Revolutionary Law would have granted property, non-mortgageable and non-transferable, to all planters, non-quota planters, lessees, share-croppers, and squatters who hold parcels of five caballerias [approximately 165 acres] or less, and the State would indemnify the former owners on the basis of the rental which they would have received for these parcels over a period of ten years.

The Third Revolutionary Law would have granted workers and employees the right to share thirty per cent of the profits of all the large industrial, mercantile and mining enterprises, including the sugar mills. The strictly agricultural enterprises would be exempt in consideration of other agrarian laws which would be implemented.

The Fourth Revolutionary Law would have granted all planters the right to share fifty-five per cent of the sugar production and a minimum quota of forty thousand arrobas [half a million tons] for all small planters who have been established for three or more years.
The Fifth Revolutionary Law would have ordered the confiscation of all holdings and ill-gotten gains of those who had committed frauds during previous regimes, as well as the holdings and ill-gotten gains of all their legatees and heirs. To implement this, special courts with full powers would gain access to all records of all corporations registered or operating in this country, in order to investigate concealed funds of illegal origin, and to request that foreign governments extradite persons and attach holdings rightfully belonging to the Cuban people. Half of the property recovered would be used to subsidize retirement funds for workers and the other half would be used for hospitals, asylums and charitable organizations.\textsuperscript{104}

Not much here to frighten away potential allies. Not even a proposal to nationalize the sugar industry, which certainly could have used it considering its unbalanced structure and the critical role that it played in the nation's life. Of course, one could have read between the lines. The proclamation that the "revolutionary movement" was the "only source of legitimate power" was, in retrospect, a fairly clear assertion of the presumptions underlying the "totalitarian democratic" mentality, and the "request that foreign governments extradite persons and attach holdings rightfully belonging to the Cuban people" hinted of future difficulties with the United States. But such declarations could as easily have been made by Chibas or Martí as Castro. Indeed, it would seem that in general the laws owed more to chibasismo than to any other precursor, though the sugar reform decree was not so different from some of the legislation passed by Batista in the late 1930's.

Perhaps the most accurate conclusion would be that not only was Fidel playing mental games with the Cuban public and particularly with the cockroach politicians whose help he momentarily needed, but
he was far from clear in his own mind as to the specific content of many of the programs that would be put into effect should he eventually take power. Indeed, this is implicitly admitted in HVM, for the five "revolutionary laws" were said to be preliminary to a panoply of subsequent legislation, for the most part left undefined, covering such widely divergent areas as agrarian and educational reform, tax reform, the nationalization of foreign-owned utilities and telephone companies (including a "refund to the people of the illegal excessive rates this company has charged"), housing reform (including a 50% reduction in rents), industrialization, unemployment, public health. . . . A program, it was argued, that was no more than the exact fulfillment of Articles 90 and 60 of the Constitution of 1940, which set maximum limits on land ownership, called for measures tending to revert foreign land holdings back to Cuban ownership and authorized the state to use all means at its disposal to eliminate unemployment and insure a decent livelihood for all Cubans. 105

In sum, this was a rhetorical tour de force, a document and a program consciously designed to appeal to a nation having more than its share of frustrated idealists longing for change. (Ironically, however, it received very little circulation until mid-1958, when it was resurrected for propaganda purposes.) Yet, though it called for far-reaching social changes it was sufficiently restrained and amorphous that most people could read it without becoming unduly alarmed by its radicalism. It could not even be
properly called Socialist. Private ownership of the means of production was not to be eliminated. On the contrary, it would be extended so that the majority of the nation would own property. Still, as we have seen, lurking within the rhetoric was the hint of things, far more extreme, that were yet to come, "matters which must be hidden if they are to be obtained, for if they were proclaimed for what they are they could create difficulties too great to be overcome."106

Nascent Castroism and the Requisites of Revolutionary Struggle: The Regeneration and Collapse of the Revolutionary Nucleus

In the first place, I must organize the men of the Twenty-Sixth of July and unite with unbreakable bonds all of the combatants, those in exile, those in jail, and those in the streets, who make up more than eighty men sharing common history and sacrifices.

Thus did Castro, still imprisoned on the Isle of Pines, write his chief Ortodoxo contact, Luis Conte Aguero, in August 1954. The objective was to create a "perfectly disciplined human nucleus" around which "fighting cadres" and subsequently a "large civic and political movement" could be built that would "command the necessary force to conquer power by peaceful or revolutionary means. . . ." The indispensable conditions for the formation of such a movement would be "ideology, discipline, and leadership. The three are essential, but leadership is basic. . . ."107

He was still playing games with the politicians of the Ortodoxia, assuring them of his loyalty to the "purest ideals" of Chibas, trying to convince them that the attack on Moncada had
been designed to place power in their hands. Inside prison, however, his situation was becoming increasingly desperate. His most basic self-concepts, his "passionate desire for sacrifice and struggle", were being put to their most severe test yet. Try as he might to treat his imprisonment as a "rich experience", providing new opportunities for combat and revolutionary growth that "would help in the continuation of the struggle once we are freed," the loneliness, frustration and insecurity of his existence (he had been sentenced to a term of fifteen years) grated exceedingly hard on his nerves. Thus, he wrote Conito Agüero: "My situation cannot be any harder. I do not know whether it is the mental torture of being alone, or seeing the incredible things that are happening. How could these things be done in Cuba with absolute impunity, amidst the great indifference of almost everyone?"

He began to bury himself in books, omnivorously devouring everything he could get his hands on—from studies on ancient China and Rome to the works of Saint Thomas, Luther, Milton, Locke, Rousseau, Paine, Martí and many others. Even some Marx and Lenin, it seems, but not much. It was a way of keeping himself together when he was not busy writing or organizing his fellow-prisoners into educational circles or otherwise preoccupied with the continuing machinations of getting out of jail and preparing for the revolutionary struggle still to come. And as his inner tensions grew, so did his bitterness and his scorn for those who
remained safely uncommitted, aloof from the struggle, their "existence attached to the wretched bagatelles of comfort and self-interest."

At times, his ideological fantasies seemed to verge on euphoria, as if he were seeking psychological compensation for his sacrifices through the intensification of his commitment to an increasingly radicalized vision of the future. Thus, he wrote:

I never stop thinking of things, for sincerely, what joy I would have in revolutionizing this country from top to bottom! I am convinced that every inhabitant can be made happy. I would be prepared to bring down upon myself the hatred and ill-will of one or two thousand men, among them some relations, half of my friends, two-thirds of my colleagues, and four-fifths of my old college classmates... Have you noticed the number of invisible links that a man must break who is determined to live in accordance with his ideas?

But the natural tensions of his situation were soon compounded by news of his wife's betrayal: She had accepted a sinecure from her brother, the undersecretary of the Interior, a paltry bit of opportunism that provided Fidel's enemies with a chance to discredit him. Initial rage and disbelief quickly gave way to pained silence as he learned from his sister, Lidia, not only of the truth of the charge but of Mirta's decision to divorce him. Moreover, in the world outside the Isle of Pines, the prospects of revolution seemed to be rapidly dwindling as Batista moved to placate the opposition by lifting the martial law, declaring a partial amnesty for political prisoners (not including the moncadistas) and exiles and pledging to hold free and democratic elections in November. In the depths of his despair, sensing that all of his labor, sacrifice and suffering had been for naught, Fidel
contemplated suicide. 116

He was now not far from rock bottom. But, once more, fortune smiled. Batista proved incompetent of harnessing the explosive forces which his usurpation had unleashed. In the words of Bonachea and Valdes, he found himself in "the irreconcilable paradox of an illegitimate ruler dreaming of legitimacy."

His policy suffered from acute schizophrenia, a syndrome of inconsistency marked by the periodic alternation of repression with concessions: "Thus, on some occasions he used repression against militant adversaries and then suddenly relaxed it, hoping to create a liberal environment in which his flexibility would win him support. Batista was caught in a vicious cycle. Repression was followed by a liberal policy that allowed opponents to challenge his rule, making repression a necessity once again." 117

The elections were a farce. The dictator won unopposed, Grau San Martin withdrawing at the last minute in protest of the rigged balloting. But he wavered in the face of the widespread public disillusionment and bitterness that followed in their wake, allowing Fidel's supporters to launch a massive campaign for political amnesty. And eventually, he acquiesced. On May 15, 1955, after almost two years in prison, Castro and the remaining jailed survivors of Moncada were set free.

It was the biggest mistake Batista ever made.

Fidel did not long remain in the country. No sooner was he released than he went on the offensive, gathering together the
remaining, loyal moncadistas, along with more recent recruits, into revolutionary cells and excoriating the dictatorship in speeches and print. Thus, the Twenty-Sixth of July Movement (M-26) was officially born. He soon found, however, that amnesty did not mean free access to the media of mass communications to carry on subversive propaganda. He was barred from making public speeches. Moreover, as governmental pressure was stepped up, it became increasingly difficult to organize clandestine activities. Within two months, he left for Mexico City to continue the revolutionary struggle from abroad.

Thus began the period of Mexican exile, an era marked by a growing gap between the Ortodoxo leadership and the youthful insurrectionists in the party's rank and file. As Bonachea and Valdes have acutely observed,

... Politicians could justify an understanding with the government; after all, it was youth who suffered most under Batista. To be young was sufficient cause to incur the capricious wrath of the police. Hence, youth would opt for revolution, old professional politicians for compromise. The year 1955 marked the parting of ways, because the older generation was merely aware of the prevailing climate of terror and brutality, whereas the youth of Cuba experienced it firsthand.118

Not surprisingly, the Twenty-Sixth of July Movement made every effort to intensify and exploit this gap through the recruitment of the alienated and the denunciation of the electoral politics of the elders. As early as August, the fidelistas were able to capture the Ortodoxo national congress with a call for violent revolution. But the victory was largely restricted to a certain
symbolic importance, for most of the "respectable" leaders of the party continued to seek a peaceful solution to the national crisis, lulled on by the seeming reasonableness of the dictator's conciliatory gestures. The hostility between Fidel and "the Establishment" grew ever more intense. When word reached Havana that he was preparing an invasion of the island, the moderate oppositionists began to turn and castigate him in the press. Castro's reaction was in full character. On Christmas Day 1955, he launched a defiant, rebellious, vitriolic counterattack, entitled "Against Everybody!", denouncing the "wolf pack" that had descended upon him, even as it cooperated with Batista, "the money-grabbing political opposition, scared by the increasing strength of the revolutionary movement that threatens to oust them all from public life."

Strong words, these. Moreover, included in the diatribe was a rather clear hint that liberal democracy was not the ultimate value in his lexicon of revolutionary virtues:

The Cuban people want something more than a mere change of command. Cuba earnestly desires a radical change in every field of its public and social life. The people must be given something more than liberty and democracy in abstract terms. Decent living must be made available to every Cuban. . . . There is no greater tragedy than that of the man capable and willing to work, suffering hunger together with his family for lack of work. The state is unavoidably bound to provide him with it or to support him until he finds it. None of the armchair formulas being discussed today include a consideration of this situation, as though the grave problem of Cuba comprised only how to satisfy the ambition of a few politicians who have been ousted from power or who long to get there. . . . We will join our
co-nationals bound together behind an ideal of complete
dignity for the people of Cuba, of justice for the hungry
and forgotten men, and of punishment for those many
responsible. . . .

A not uneffective appeal in a nation suffering from rampant
unemployment!

Fidel was now on the verge of breaking away from the Ortodoxos,
just as Chibas before him had rebelled against the revolutionary
degeneration of the Autenticos. When the schism formally came the
following March, he took care to explain that his actions were
not directed against the professed ideals of the party or against
its rank and file masses. Rather, the Twenty-Sixth of July
Movement was composed of the real disciples of Chibas. It constituted
the "revolutionary apparatus of chibasismo", "the revolutionary
organization of the humble, for the humble, and by the humble", the
Ortodoxo movement without the leadership of landlords, sugar-
plantation owners, stock-market speculators, incompetent politi-
cians, commercial and industrial magnates and other such undesirables.

In short, the incarnation of revolutionary virtue.

But who were these men and women who made up this "per-
fectly disciplined human nucleus" that Castro was gathering around
him in Mexico? We know that the vast bulk of the original moncadistas
were from the lower middle or working classes--for the most part
factory or agricultural laborers or shop assistants, under thirty
years of age, of limited education. Contrary to the opinion of
Herbert Matthews, few were university students. Most, it appears,
were members of the Partido del Pueblo Cubano (Ortodoxo); almost
none came from the ranks of the Communist Youth. (A notable exception to the last statement being Fidel's younger brother, Raul. But he had broken party discipline to join the attack and had not, in any case, been one of its leaders.)

Unfortunately, hard data on the Mexican group is almost nonexistent. However, the information that we do have suggests a roughly similar composition. Thus, for instance, Teresa Casuso has described her first meeting with Castro and about fifty of his young followers, an encounter which took place in a Mexican jail:

I realized with some disappointment that with the exception of Che and Fidel these were humble, ordinary people—store clerks, laborers, students at business schools or at secondary school; one was a bank clerk. They were not like the revolutionaries I had known, but much humbler and cruder. It was doubtlessly a heterogeneous mass gathered by Fidel from the various elements of the Cuban people he came in contact with. Their language was coarse, and from the things they said I thought some of them irresponsible.

Somewhat taken aback, she seized the first opportunity to warn Castro that these youths were surely "well-intentioned but incapable of being the directors of a movement of national reorganization."
Fidel reassured her: These were the soldiers of liberation, not reconstruction. For the latter task, the Twenty-Sixth of July would rely on the services of "brave and capable intellectuals." More pap for the bourgeoisie.

We know that these "soldiers of liberation" were engaging in long discussions on the nature of the coming national reconstruction,
though there is little contemporary evidence as to the content of these talks or the ideological views of their participants. But at the very least study groups were set up, and the works of Marti were made available, along with the manifestoes of the Twenty-Sixth of July. Presumably also, these discussions were not devoid of the basic themes of Marxism-Leninism for, in addition to Raul and the vague leftism of Fidel and the original montadistas, the group had been joined during this period by the Argentine physician and avowed Marxist, Ernesto Guevara, who brought with him a first-hand account of the recent CIA-sponsored overthrow of the Arbenz regime in Guatemala. Indeed, Guatemala provided a stock topic of conversation for the conspirators. As we shall see, it was a spector that would haunt Castro for some time to come. All in all, however, it must be concluded that, with the exception of some of the inner circle of leaders around Fidel, these were for the most part men (in many instances, little more than boys) who loved to play with guns and mouth revolutionary slogans but who were largely ignorant of the world of serious ideas. A few were little more than mere adventurers and opportunists, devoid of principles, to whom everything was reduced to "taking power". In general, the group's ties to its jefe were more personalistic and messianic than ideological. In Casuso's words: "Fidel, calm, noble of bearing, stood out among them like a tower among hovels. Later I came to understand that this was the basis of his absolute authority over them."
On November 25, 1956, eighty-two men set sail for Cuba aboard a decrepit yacht, appropriately named Granma, determined to "make the Revolution that had not been made." Both the boat, which was designed to hold only ten passengers, and the arms they carried had been paid for primarily by funds provided by former President Carlos Prio, ever-anxious to keep a finger in every revolutionary pie that had the slightest prospect of success. Once again, there is a paucity of specific information on the class composition and ideological propensities of the men making up the invasion force. The evidence that is available, however, suggests a group roughly congruent with the original moncadistas and with the young men described by Casuso: White Cuban townsmen, under thirty, perhaps slightly better educated than those who had been at Moncada and Bayamo, about nineteen or twenty of whom were veterans of that previous suicidal episode.

Again, this was an affair borne more of emotion than reason. The plan was to instigate a regional insurrection, accompanied by a general strike, culminating in a national uprising. The invasion would be coordinated with a rebellion in Santiago. The expeditionary force was scheduled to disembark at Niquero, where some one hundred men were waiting under the command of Crescencio Perez. The intention was to capture the town, assault Manzanillo and help launch a "project of agitation and sabotage that would culminate in a general strike." If things went wrong, the expeditionary force could always fall back to the Sierra Maestra.
and wage guerrilla struggle. Unfortunately, the scheme required far better planning and far more organizational and mass support than anything that the Twenty-Sixth of July could hope to command. This much was understood only too well by Frank Pais, the gifted M-26 organizational chief in Oriente, who strongly resisted the proposed undertaking. But Pais was overruled. Fidel had publicly vowed to land in Cuba before the year was out, and he was determined to keep that promise, come what may. Swayed by Castro's eloquence and charismatic authority, Pais, against his better judgment, returned to Santiago to prepare for the coming uprising.

For his part, Pais did his job and more. With the aid of such veteran moncadistas as Lester Rodriguez and Haydee Santamaria, he recruited, armed and organized the insurrection in Santiago. It was easily the most telling blow that had yet been struck against the dictatorship. For a short time, on November 30th and December 1st, M-26 commandos managed to paralyze the city, sowing terror and confusion and forcing Batista to fly in several hundred well-trained reinforcements to help restore order. At that point, the odds became insurmountable and the rebellion died.

Elsewhere, the uprising was a monumental flop. Lacking leadership, organization and weaponry, the M-26 cadres on other parts of the island failed to join in the insurrection. In Havana, it appears, the local leadership was not even informed as to the date of the uprising. And to make matters even worse, the Granma encountered rough seas, contrary winds and generally stormy weather.
throughout most of its voyage and was plagued by engine trouble to boot. The craft shipped water; its eighty-two passengers, lying silent and still in piles on its deck, suffered the torments of seasickness, hunger and thirst. They finally did reach the island, but only on December 2nd, too late to be of any help to the rebels in Santiago. Moreover, when they did land it was not at Niquero, as planned, but to the south, at Playa de los Colorados, near Blic. Not only did they miss their connection with the Perez group, they did not even have a firm beach upon which to disembark. Rather, this was swampland. It would be hours before the wet, frightened, hungry, bone-weary men would be able to flounder their way through the marshes to solid ground, and when they did they would not be able to stop for rest. The Santiago uprising had alerted the military to their presence. They were now hunted men. Within a matter of days they were discovered and cut to ribbons by government troops at Alegria de Pio.

In fact, as early as December 2nd the United Press correspondent in Havana, Francis McCarthy, had reported that the expedition had been wiped out and both of the Castro brothers killed.136

The situation was not quite as bad as all that. But it was not far from it. Only about nineteen of the eighty-two invaders made it to the Sierra Maestra with Fidel to continue the struggle in guerrilla fashion. Of the rest, approximately twenty-four were killed in the initial battle with the government forces or shortly thereafter. Most of the remainder were captured and later
Nascent Castroism and the Requisites of Revolutionary Struggle: The Resurrection and Growth of the Revolution Within the Revolution and the Development of Preparatory Counterdependence

On February 24, 1957, Herbert Matthews reported on the front page of the New York Times that "Fidel Castro, the rebel leader of Cuba's youth, is alive and fighting hard and successfully in the rugged, almost impenetrable fastness of the Sierra Maestra at the southern tip of the island." Thus did Castro re-emerge from the near total isolation into which he had been cast by the Granma disaster and the Cuban government's press censorship. The famed interview with Fidel, which Matthews acquired after being smuggled into the Sierra in disguise, represented a reportorial coup for both the veteran correspondent and for his employer, the Times. And for the future lider maximo, it was a new lease on life. He was down and almost out. In spite of his own indefatigable optimism, the morale of his men was approaching the zero point. They were tired, lost, hungry, without adequate clothing or shelter to protect them from the torrential downpours that plagued them. Worst of all, they had acquired the omnipresent fear of hunted animals. Several deserted. Others were on the verge. Few of his followers outside the Sierra knew for sure whether Fidel was dead or alive. The interview with Matthews, therefore, offered a grand opportunity to re-establish contacts with the outside world and to score a major propaganda victory by discrediting the government, which had been

tried. A few managed to escape to the plains.137
loudly proclaiming his demise, and by bolstering the morale of his supporters in both the mountains and the plains.

Moreover, in Matthews, Fidel would find the perfect foil: an old man looking for the Big Story of his career, trying to prove that he could still compete in a young man's game; a liberal, respected in his profession, yet sufficiently naive and ambitious to serve as a ready vehicle in the public relations campaign that now had to be waged. Castro, as the saying goes, got "good reviews":

Fidel Castro and his 26th of July Movement are the flaming symbol of the opposition to the regime. The organization, which is apart from the university students' opposition, is formed of youths of all kinds. It is a revolutionary movement that calls itself socialist. It is also nationalistic, which generally in Latin America means anti-Yankee.

The program is vague and couched in generalities, but it amounts to a new deal for Cuba, radical, democratic, and therefore anti-Communist. The real core of its strength is that it is fighting against the military dictatorship of President Batista.

Matthews was correct in his designation of nascent Castroism as being Socialist, nationalistic and anti-Yankee. He was dead wrong in his belief that it was democratic (in the sense of Western liberal democracy) and anti-Communist. To be fair, all this was to become much clearer in retrospect than it was in February 1957, when the interview took place. Nevertheless, by portraying Fidel in highly romantic terms, as a kind of modern Robin Hood ("over-powering", "his men adored him", "an educated, dedicated fanatic, a man of ideals, of courage and of remarkable qualities of leadership", who had "strong ideas of liberty, democracy, social justice, the need to restore the Constitution, to hold elections" and
"dealt fairly with the peasants, paying for everything they ate") leading the young people of Cuba against the forces of oppression, Matthews became somewhat more than a mere journalist, "objectively reporting the facts". He became a conduit of fidelista propaganda and an invaluable tool in the psychological warfare campaign that was being waged against the dictatorship.

Furthermore, not only did he help to create an aura of heroism around Fidel and his guerrillas, making them powerful symbols of the resistance, there was also a certain presumption of victory involved. Matthews had "a feeling" that Castro was "now invincible. Perhaps he isn't, but that is the faith he inspires in his followers." After all, Fidel had plainly told him that they had "been fighting for seventy-nine days now and are stronger than ever. The soldiers are fighting badly; their morale is low and ours could not be higher." The initial revolutionary nucleus had apparently expanded rapidly since the landing. Though Castro refused to give precise figures beyond the disclosure that his guerrillas operated in "groups of ten to forty", Matthews estimated their number at ninety, though "tens of thousands" of others were said to be "heart and soul with Fidel Castro and the new deal for which they think he stands."

The truth of the matter was that Fidel had perhaps eighteen men with him; ten from the original Granma contingent, (Raul, "Che", Camilo Cienfuegos, Juan Almeida, Julio Diaz, Universo Sanchez, "El Gallego" Moran, Efigenio Ameijeiras, Ciro Redondo, Lucio Crespo);
four reinforcements from Manzanillo (Pesant, Motola, Yayo, Echevarria); three peasant recruits (Guillermo Garcia, Manuel Fajardo, Ciro Frias); and one guide (Eutimio Guerra, soon to be shot for treason). Raul, it seems, kept passing back and forth through the camp with the same men, creating the impression that there were many more guerrillas present than was actually the case and that there were other camps and columns elsewhere in the mountains. Of course, the nucleus, though it was now virtually isolated from the M-26 organization outside the Sierra, was in the process of re-establishing those contacts. And it had already begun to broaden its ties with the region's precaristas (squatters) through Crescensio Perez, a local strongman and several other connections. But this was a far cry from "tens of thousands. . .heart and soul with Fidel. . . ."

In any case, the interview made Castro an international figure overnight. Inside Cuba, where press censorship was by sheer chance lifted the following day, the effect was electric. Matthews' gross overstatement of the strength of the guerrilla forces did wonders for the morale of the urban resistance, as well as for its recruitment and financial operations. Conversely, the morale of the government and the armed forces plummeted. Moreover, their humiliation was compounded when Batista's Secretary of Defense vigorously denied that the interview had ever taken place and continued to insist that Castro was dead. Whereupon the Times replied by publishing an obviously authentic photograph of Matthews and Fidel in the Sierra.
In sum, it may be said that Matthews' misconception of nascent Castroism both reflected and gave great impetus to a much broader syndrome of misunderstanding, the roots of which may be traced back to the pre-Granma era. In Matthews' case, this was largely a matter of ideological predispositions and professional interests prejudicing his interpretation of the amorphous and contradictory idea system which he had been called on to analyze. He evidently understood Fidel to be some sort of social democrat. In reality, as we have seen, the democratic strains which existed within the Maximum Leader's ideological weltanschauung were founded on egoistic and totalitarian assumptions.

Still, if Matthews tended to project his own ideational and value system on Fidel, so did many others. And Castro, like Marti before him, assiduously cultivated such self-deception through calculated mendacity of his own. He needed a broad political base in order to capture power and put the real Revolution into effect. Hence, the necessity of cultivating the forces of "reason and respectability". As Theodore Draper has correctly noted, the most striking feature in Castro's statements in the years 1956-1958 was their growing trend toward moderation and constitutionalism. Fidel increasingly sought to stress themes, such as free and democratic elections and administrative honesty, which were dear to the generation of 1930, and to play down and obscure the radical revolutionary elements that constituted the core of his own belief system. In general, one is inclined to agree with the assessment
of Luigi Einaudi: "If something seemed to provoke excessive resistance, Castro fell silent, while maintaining a high level of propaganda about those points on which there could be general agreement and always maintaining the more radical programs in reserve under the umbrella of the general slogan of revolution and subsidiary slogans like agrarian reform and economic independence, which had wide currency among Cubans of all shades."\(^{145}\)

One need not unduly belabor points already made. Hints of the "real" Revolution may be discerned as late as the summer of 1957 in some of the programs of the Movement: In the sense of identification with the thought of Marti and the "unfulfilled ideals of the Cuban nation"; in the self-designation of the Twenty-Sixth of July as a "continuation of the revolutionary generations of the past";\(^{146}\) in the conceptualization of the Revolution as "not exactly a war or an isolated episode" but a "continuous historic process. . . . The conspiracies of the previous century, the War of '68, of '95, the uprising of the 1930's and, today, the struggle against the Batista terror, are parts of the same and unique Revolution"; in the call for a "total transformation of Cuban life, for profound modifications in the system of property and for a change in institutions. . . . the Revolution is democratic, nationalist and Socialist."\(^{147}\)

In short, this was to be a "true Revolution", designed not merely to oust Batista and his cohorts, but to "move resolutely to the roots of Cuba's problems." Its objective was the "complete
integration" of the Cuban nation, which in turn was said to consist of the "harmonious development of three elements: political sovereignty, economic independence, and a differentiated culture." Social unity would rest on "the supreme goal of the Revolution: the moral and material welfare of man." Order would presuppose the "organic unity of the nation...no group, class, race, or religion should sacrifice the common good to benefit its particular interest, nor can it remain aloof from the problems of the entire social order or one of its parts." Strains here of Martí, Rousseau and the Communist "new society" yet to come. Clearly, the Revolution was not intended to return Cuba to the "vicious stage" that had given rise to the coup of 10 March, where disunity and corruption flourished under a "clique of exploiters for democracy". Rather, this was to be a "true political democracy", resting on both "the competition of ideas between political parties and a representative government based on the genuine expression of the general will." This being, of course, a synthesis of liberal and totalitarian democratic conceptions. Though one might have suspected it from the de-emphasis on constitutional arrangements and elections, only time would tell for sure that the general will would ultimately prevail over the competition of ideas between parties.

Once again, while such statements were sufficiently non-specific to be susceptible to a variety of interpretations, particularly in a nation which had grown generally cynical of slogan-mongering politicians, their spiritual thrust was radical. As with
the original Moncada manifesto, the proclamation of "total" objectives—social justice, societal transformation, national integration—foreshadowed a Revolution more far-reaching by far than anything that had yet been seen in Latin America, more extreme even than any program that the Cuban Communists believed either possible or desirable (which, as we shall see, is not really saying all that much). Similarly, while Castro had taken care to assure Matthews that the Revolution had "no animosity towards the United States and the American people" the Movement's "Mexican Program" demonstrated a clear awareness of the essential link between Norte Americano hegemony over the island and the syndrome of parasitism—"the colonial mentality, the foreign economic domination, political corruption, and unlimited military control"—that characterized the Cuban domestic scene. If internal parasitism were to be overcome and a healthy national organism created, truly radical changes would have to be made in the island's traditional relationship with the "Colossus of the North".

This is not the place to give detailed consideration to the development of the phenomenon of counterdependence. Suffice it merely to say that the requisites of successful revolutionary struggle demanded the attainment of several critical objectives: the ouster of the Batista regime; the destruction of the police and the armed forces, the primary foundationstones of the old state; the manipulation, out-maneuvering and eventual elimination of the cockroach politicians, whose assistance Castro momentarily
needed; and the prevention of Yankee military occupation or mediation designed to bring about a political solution to the armed struggle, while thwarting the radical aims which Castro had in mind. These issues soon came to a head. On July 12, 1957, Fidel, in league with Felipe Pazos, the widely known and respected former president of the National Bank, and Raúl Chibas, the brother of Eddy and a prominent Ordoñeco leader in his own right, issued the "Declaration of the Sierra Maestra", which called for the formation of a "Civic-Revolutionary Front", to unite all groups opposing the government under a common eight-point platform. Among other things, the manifesto set out a general program to be implemented by a provisional government after the overthrow of the dictator, which included such staple items as the release of all political, civil and military prisoners, the elimination of corruption, the creation of new jobs and the institution of agrarian reform, accelerated industrialization and an intensive campaign against illiteracy. At the end of one year, general elections would be held for all state, provincial and municipal offices under the norms of the Constitution of 1940 and the Electoral Code of 1943. Most significant, however, was a call for the immediate designation of a provisional president and declarations that the Civic-Revolutionary Front would neither invoke nor accept foreign intervention or mediation of any kind in the internal affairs of Cuba nor permit any type of provisional military junta to rule the Republic.¹⁵¹
We know now that this was a compromise statement. In
Guevara’s words, "we were not satisfied. . . but it was necessary;
it was progressive at that moment. It could scarcely last beyond
the moment when it marked a break in the development of the Revolution. . . ."152 But even in its moderation, the plea for unity
proved unacceptable to the other leaders of the resistance.153
The opposition was still far too fragmented to unite under a single
program. Some still favored the electoral route over armed force.
Others feared that acceptance of Castro’s proposal would dilute
their own influence and cast them into subordinate roles in the
struggle against Batista. In October, representatives of seven
opposition groups met in Miami, Florida, ostensibly for the purpose
of responding to Fidel’s call for unity. In reality, many of the
participants desired to counteract and control the growing influence
of M-26. On November 1st, a nascent Junta de Liberacion signed
a "Unity Document of the Cuban Opposition to the Batista Dictator-
ship", similar though somewhat more conservative and vague than
Castro’s declaration of the previous July. On one point, however,
it was quite specific: the program of the provisional government
was to be subordinate to the primary task of "re-establishing the
democratic regime and institutional normalcy."154

Castro was furious. In an angry letter to the signatories
of the pact, he rejected the agreement as an attempt to bind the
future conduct of his organization without even having had the
consideration, not to say the obligation, of consulting with its
leadership. Felipe Pazos, who without any clear authorization had
signed the statement in the name of the Twenty-Sixth of July, was repudiated as having exceeded his authority.

It is instructive to note the primary foci of Castro's discontent. His criticisms were not directed at the issue of elections or even at the proposed program of the provisional government, though the latter had been watered down considerably, even to the point of excluding all reference to agrarian reform. Rather, his concern was largely centered on the following omissions and provisions: Point Four of the "Declaration of the Sierra Maestra" had stated that the Civic-Revolutionary Front "neither invokes nor accepts the mediation or intervention of any kind from another nation in the internal affairs of Cuba", a proclamation which was accompanied by the specific request that the United States "suspend all arms shipments to Cuba." The "Unity Fact" merely repeated the request for a weapons embargo. No position was taken on the issue of foreign intervention. Moreover, the Declaration's Fifth Point, which had firmly repudiated the idea that a provisional military junta might govern the nation, was similarly ignored. Furthermore, appended to the agreement was a secret codicil which, among other things, gave the Junta de Liberacion the right to appoint the provisional president and to exercise veto power over his selection of cabinet members and called for the post-victory incorporation of the revolutionary armed forces, along with their weapons, into the regular military apparatus of the Republic.
Not surprisingly, these elements were completely unacceptable to Fidel, for they posed a grave threat to the existence of the Twenty-Sixth of July Movement, to his own ambitions for political power—indeed, to the very future of the Revolution itself. To have subordinated his person and his organization to the authority of the traditional politicians, in league with the armed forces, would almost certainly have doomed Cuba to a repetition of the frustrated revolutions of the past. (Or so he must have reasoned, and not without cause.) In addition, the prospect that Yankee intervention would occur at some point in the revolutionary process was very substantial: An outright military occupation? A more subtle aggression along the lines of the CIA-sponsored invasion of Guatemala that had occurred only three years previous? Or, at any rate, some kind of forced mediation *a la* Sumner Welles, which would bring about a political resolution of the conflict while leaving the old state and social system intact, along with the attendant *Norte Americano* hegemony over the island.

Castro's reaction to the "Unity Pact" was symptomatic of his personality: He went on the offensive. The refusal to take a stand against foreign intervention was evidence of "lukewarm patriotism and a self-evident act of cowardice." To replace Batista with a junta was unthinkable. It would create the "deceptive illusion that Cuba's problems had been solved" by the mere removal of the tyrant. Rather,
... some civilians of the worst breed, including accomplices of the March 10 coup who are today estranged from power, perhaps because of their great ambitions, are thinking of those solutions which could only be looked on favorably by the enemies of progress in our country. We do not hesitate to declare that if a military junta substitutes for Batista, the Twenty-Sixth of July Movement resolutely will continue its campaign of liberation. . . . the soldiers must stay in their barracks. . . .

As to the leadership of the resistance, it was sheer fantasy to suppose that the revolutionary struggle could be directed from Miami. Would those living safely in exile, who refused to aid the men and women who were doing the actual fighting, demand the lion's share when victory had been won? Rather, leadership "is and will continue to be in the hands of the revolutionary fighters in Cuba." And with regard to the post-war period, neither the assertion that the Junta de Liberacion would have the power to appoint the provisional president and to veto his cabinet nominations nor the provision for the incorporation of the revolutionary armed forces within the regular army would be acceptable. Instead, the Twenty-Sixth of July Movement "claims for itself the function of maintaining public order and reorganizing the military forces of the Republic. . . ." Only it had the power, the discipline, the spirit of justice and chivalry to "guarantee that honorable military men have nothing to fear from the Revolution."

Finally, with regard to the appointment of the provisional president, since
...it is not possible to wait one more day without answering this national question, the Twenty-Sixth of July Movement now answers it. We present to the people the only formula possible that will guarantee the legality and the development of the aforementioned bases of unity and of the provisional government itself. That person should be the distinguished magistrate of the Court of Appeals of Oriente Province, Dr. Manuel Urrutia Lleo.155

Who?

This was a truly extraordinary piece of political one-upsmanship. Doctor Urrutia was a former member of the Court of Appeals in Oriente, one of the judges, in fact, who earlier that year in Santiago had heard the government's case against some one hundred members of M-26, including survivors of the Granma expedition. On that occasion, he had behaved with exemplary courage and integrity in finding the accused innocent of the charges filed against them. They were, it seems, constitutionally justified in trying to overthrow a regime which had itself come to power in violation of the constitution. Urrutia was a moderate, a political liberal but social conservative, a well-meaning but inexperienced man of "unheard-of naivete",156 with few pretensions of power or grandeur and no constituency of his own to bolster his political authority. The perfect choice to block the candidacy of a more dangerous aspirant to power. (The Junta had wanted Pazos, the darling of the moderates.)

A clever devil, that Fidel. In one dramatic blow, he had managed to seize the initiative, wrapping himself in a cloak of patriotism and revolutionary virtue, forcing his antagonists on the
defensive. Who could really oppose Urrutia? And how could one reject the injunction against foreign intervention? Or against military rule, for that matter, given the unsavory record of the Cuban armed forces? Even the shotgun attack on the conference of Miami, while unfair to some of the participants, struck too close to home to be convincingly denied. The truth was that the politicians of the Establishment had been more adept at talk than action. Moreover, the very fact that a good many of them were living in the safety of exile and were closely identified with the corruption and opportunism of the "old politics" made it difficult to defend themselves against the man who had become the "flaming symbol" of the Revolution, who was even then risking his life in armed struggle within Cuba. Finally, the designation of Urrutia as provisional president tended to counteract fears of Castro's personal ambitions—even as he was demanding hegemony over the Revolution for his own political organization. Thirteen months later, the second act of the scenario would unfold, with Urrutia assuming office and designating Fidel as Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces. Less than seven months after the downfall of the dictator, the game would be completed, with the president being forced to resign by the very man to whom he owed his appointment.

But this is getting ahead of our story. Suffice it to say that if unity were to be attained it would have to be on Castro's terms. Without his support, any attempt to form a united front
was presumed to be superfluous. Hence, the disbandment of the nascent Junta de Liberacion. Fidel, with only 120 armed guerrillas under his command and the most rudimentary of political organizations, had effectively thwarted the maneuvers of his bourgeois competitors.

It should also be noted that this same period witnessed Castro's consolidation of hegemony over the Twenty-Sixth of July, a dominance which had been somewhat shaken in the wake of the Granma disaster. The challenge had come from the revolutionaries of the llano (plains) and particularly from Frank Pais, the one man who had the prestige to endanger Fidel's position of leadership. During the first half of 1957, Pais had worked furiously to repair his organization in Santiago, which had been shattered in the wake of the uprising of November 30th. He created the Resistencia Civica to attract support from the professional and middle sectors and began preparing to open a new battle front under his personal command. This at a time when the guerrillas of the sierra (mountains) were in a position of extreme weakness, at the height of their dependence on their urban counterparts for new recruits, weaponry, food, intelligence, money and other such vital necessities.

There were, in fact, a variety of pressures making for strains between the two sectors. In addition to the perhaps inevitable conflicts arising out of organizational interest, especially the natural inclination of each sector to view itself as
the vital center of the resistance and the tendency of each to emphasize those problems and strategies most crucial to its own success, there were also personality, class and ideological differences at work. Pais had a mind of his own. He was the docile follower of no man and, in fact, had met Castro on only two or three occasions. As we have seen, he had opposed Fidel’s plans with regard to the Granma/Santiago affair, and in the aftermath of the ensuing catastrophe, his own authority had grown even as Castro remained isolated and dependent in the remote mountains of Oriente. Furthermore, his own urban apparatus was largely staffed by men and women of the middle class, more moderate, better educated, of higher socio-economic background than the heterogeneous mass that was the Rebel Army. Actually, the composition of the latter grew more humble as the war progressed, as ever-increasing numbers of peasant recruits flocked to the ranks of the barbudos. By the end of 1958, perhaps half the Rebel Army were squatters or field hands from the coffee and sugar estates of the Sierra Maestra, with the remainder being largely composed of town and agricultural workers from other parts of the island. Precisely those groups, in other words, who had the least stake in the existing socio-economic order and would prove most receptive to the appeals of messianism and radical change. As for the revolutionaries of the urban resistance, though they were far from being a monolithic lot, their charismatic attraction towards Castro was considerably less than that of the hard-core fidelistas who
were fighting with their Maximum Leader "arm-in-arm" in the mountains of Oriente.\footnote{162} Having a greater stake in the existing socio-economic order, they were sometimes wont to view the barbudos as militarists and radicals. In the words of Guevara, they were given "to certain 'civilian' attitudes, to certain opposition to the caudillo that they feared in Fidel."\footnote{163} Not surprising, then, that divergent views would arise with regard to matters of strategy, leadership and doctrine.

On July 7th, Pais wrote Castro that the time had come to develop a "new tactic, a new line", combining armed insurrection in the cities with guerrilla struggle in the mountains and culminating in a general strike that would topple the dictatorship. Pursuant to this objective, he said, M-26 would undergo an organizational restructuring, the better to plan and coordinate its activities. Heretofore, it had been "necessary in this brief period of time to act a little in a dictatorial fashion, dictating orders and being quite strict; but now we can channel our actions according to a thoroughly studied plan." More specifically, organizational power would be weighted in favor of the llano. Decisions with regard to matters of program and policy would be made, not by Castro, but by a national directorate, only one of whose thirteen members would come from the sierra. (Pais even went so far as to specify the identity of that representative--Celia Sanchez.) Furthermore, he revealed, a new program was in the process of being formulated, the Movement's previous statements having
been much too vague: "If you have some suggestions, send them to us."\textsuperscript{164}

Though we have no record of Fidel's response to this communication, one can imagine his gut reaction. He had not come all this way to be upstaged within his own movement. Indeed, he had already rejected Pais' advice, proffered earlier in the year, that he leave the mountains entirely and return into exile to reorganize the resistance from abroad.\textsuperscript{165} He was, in fact, beginning to move towards the belief that "the city is a cemetary of revolutionaries and resources",\textsuperscript{166} that it would be in the sierra, not the llano, that the war would ultimately be won. No doubt this was largely a matter of circumstance. He was determined not to be excluded. Wherever he was, that would be the vital core of the movement, and neither Pais nor anyone else could dissuade him from that conviction. From this basic premise, it would be an easy step to the conclusion that the function and duty of the urban resistance must be to serve the guerrillas, not vice versa. After all, the former was too close to the center of governmental power, and hence too vulnerable to retaliation, to be a secure locus of revolutionary leadership, political and military. Rather, it would be the guerrilla foco, far removed from the apparatus of repression, which would constitute the critical nucleus, the revolution in the revolution.

These and related matters were later to be developed in great theoretical detail by Guevara and Regis Debray. For the
moment, however, the *fidelistas* were too preoccupied with the day-to-day problems of survival and the acquisition of power to clarify such ideas through theoretical musings. Moreover, Fidel's own strategic views were still in flux. He might be increasingly predisposed towards the *sierra* and wary of the men and women of the *llano*, but he was concerned above all with the prospects and opportunities of seizing power. He was not inflexibly wed to any one strategy but would take his breaks wherever he could find them. In short, Theodore Draper was essentially correct when he said that the doctrine of guerrilla warfare was "an ex post facto rationalization of an improvised response to events beyond Castro's control."167 The extended process of revolutionary struggle would itself be the ultimate determiner of theory, not vice versa—at least at this stage of the game.

Be that as it may, the internal challenge to Fidel's authority was soon dealt a crippling blow by the death of Pais, who was shot down in the streets of Santiago on July 30, 1957. At the same time, the negotiation of the "Declaration of the Sierra Maestra" had helped bolster and legitimize Castro's own position through his association with the "respectables", Fazos and Chibas. (It is probably no accident that the signature of Frank Pais did not appear on that document.) Still, the *llano* was by no means out of the game. In the months that followed, its leaders attempted to regain the initiative by vigorously promoting the strategy of the general strike. The latter half of 1957 and the early weeks
of 1958 witnessed a whole series of events which suggested that the
dictatorship was crumbling; in Santiago, the death of Pais had
been followed by mass mourning and protests, bringing on a demon-
stration of police brutality that aroused the ire of the new US
Ambassador, Earl E. T. Smith; subsequently, a spontaneous general
strike had temporarily crippled Oriente, Camaguey and portions of
Las Villas; in September, a naval uprising at Cienfuegos had
resulted in the temporary seizure of the city; terror and counter-
terror had proliferated; in the mountains of Oriente, the guerrilla
movement had consolidated its position and begun to expand—a camp
was set up at Hombrito with facilities for basic training, small-
scale manufacturing and hospitalization, and in March new fronts
were opened by Raul Castro in the Sierra Cristal and by Juan Almeida
at El Cobre, west of Santiago.168 Most significant, however, on
March 14th the US State Department announced the suspension of arms
shipments to the Batista regime, an act of great symbolic import
for a nation which had

. . . traditionally tended to seek North American
sanction for its policies. United States disapproval
simply meant in influential circles on the island that
Fulgencio Batista had to go. The following day the pro-
fessional associations issued a manifesto demanding the
resignation of the caudillo. Batista, the long-time
strong man, was almost totally isolated, relying mainly
on very close associates and the dreaded police and
paramilitary groups that still depended on him.169

All this convinced a good many revolutionaries that the
moment was right to administer the coup de grace, and towards that
end the new head of the llano, Faustino Perez of the M-26 organization
in Havana, journeyed to Oriente in early March to discuss with Fidel plans for the upcoming general strike. His reception was mixed. Some of the barbudos, most notably Raul and Che, feared that a llano-organized victory in the cities might result in the loss of their own control over the Revolution and in its subsequent abortion or degeneration. But Fidel was more flexible. With Pais gone, he had less reason to fear the urban resistance. No doubt he calculated that he could control Perez, who was one of the original "eighty-two" and whom he had earlier dispatched to Havana as his personal emissary with instructions to divert "all available arms" to the Sierra.\textsuperscript{170} No doubt also he felt the need to strike while the iron was hot, while domestic conditions were such that the dictator might actually be toppled. He knew all too well that timing was a critical factor, that opportunities must be seized while they are still available, that "he who hesitates is lost".

Better, then, to be at the head of the strike plan than a latecomer, for should the enterprise be organized without him and should it succeed—and according to the information provided by Perez and his other urban contacts there was an excellent chance that victory might indeed be attained\textsuperscript{171}—Fidel might well find himself out in the cold, or at least see his influence greatly reduced within the triumphant revolutionary coalition. Moreover, to have resisted a plan which commanded such strong support from the urban wing of M-26 would have surely raised charges of obstructionism and powermongering from those elements who were already
highly mistrustful of the fidelista propensity for militarism, radicalism and caudillismo. It could easily have created such bitterness as to have irreparably split the Movement, perhaps dooming the entire revolutionary struggle to the impotent squabbling of contending factions. The lessons of Cuban revolutionary history were firmly implanted in his consciousness. The need to maintain the unity of his own organization was paramount. Thus, he had encouraged Perez in his preparations, and thus he now actively joined him in issuing a call for "total war against the tyranny", calculating that he had little to lose: "If he [Batista] succeeds in crushing the strike, nothing would be resolved. We would continue to struggle, and within six months his situation would be worse. . . ."173

As things turned out, the strike was a major political disaster, though it did carry the side benefit of effectively spelling the end of the llano's challenge to the primacy of fidelista leadership. The whole affair was planned and organized with incredible incompetence. No attempt was made to publicize the timing of the event or to obtain a broad range of support by soliciting the aid of other organizations (as Castro had advised). The action groups which were to have carried out commando raids on police stations, production centers and communications facilities never arose because of a lack of weaponry.174 Not surprisingly, the workers stayed on their jobs en masse, most of them either blissfully unaware that a strike had been called or under the influence of
the batistiano unions. In the aftermath, Faustino Perez, who as director and coordinator had to assume primary responsibility for the fiasco, was recalled to the sierra. More important, in May the national leadership of M-26 met in the mountains of Oriente, amidst great acrimony. Fidel was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the revolutionary armed forces and Secretary-General of the national directorate, with the power to appoint five other members. A purge of llano leaders was immediately conducted. The urban militias were placed under the authority of the Rebel Army. From this moment on, the national directorate would be a wholly docile appendage of the sierra. To the best of my knowledge, it never met again, nor in any way hindered Castro's unilateral power to make or veto policy decisions.175

There was one last major challenge to overcome: Batista and the state apparatus of repression upon which his power rested. The failure of the April strike had encouraged the dictator to take decisive action to once and for all eliminate the cancer that was the Rebel Army. Heretofore, the regime's faintheartedness and indecision, combined with the brutality of the armed forces and police, had resulted in the progressive estrangement of ever larger segments of the Cuban populace. In the mountains of Oriente, following the guerrilla assault on Uvero in May 1957 the government had instituted a reconcentrado program which involved the uprooting and resettlement of some 2,000 area families in strategic hamlets, the classic pattern of a regime trying to separate "the fish from
the sea". Meanwhile, the army's best infantry units had been sent to root out Castro and his followers. Fortunately for the latter, this campaign was short-lived. The ruthless conduct of the military gave rise to a chorus of popular protest, and Batista, lacking the courage of his convictions, recinded the offensive, settling instead for a strategy of containment. Hereafter, the Sierra was effectively written off, as government forces became increasingly reluctant to enter the territory. In effect, the guerrillas gained a sanctuary from which to consolidate their positions and gradually expand their control throughout the mountains. By the end of the year, in fact, the struggle in the Sierra resembled more of a war of battle lines or columns than a guerrilla war.

But in May 1958 Batista, heady with the illusion of power and temporarily freed from the pressure on the cities, decided to redeploy some 10,000 of his troops--fourteen battalions and seven companies--to deal with the barbudos. We need not go into the details of this campaign. It is enough merely to note that the offensive came fairly close to succeeding in its objectives. At the time, it may be remembered, Fidel had only about 300 men under his command. But the regular armed forces, poorly led, low in morale and corrupt to the core, were simply incapable of waging a sustained counterinsurgency campaign. They soon became overextended, their supplies of food and ammunition run short, their air cover lost. Towards the end of June, Fidel launched a counterattack which shattered the force of the hated batistiano commander,
Sanchez Mosquera, inflicting some 1,000 casualties and taking 400 prisoners. The effect was electric: "Batista's High Command, now a demoralized gaggle of corrupt, cruel and lazy officers without combat experience, began to fear total extinction from an enemy of whose numbers and whereabouts they knew nothing accurate. . . . The extent of Sanchez Mosquera's defeat was exaggerated. The advance was halted." Throughout the month of July, the Rebel Army continued to counterattack, inflicting heavy casualties, sowing panic among the increasingly demoralized forces of the government, gradually tearing them to shreds. By mid-summer, amazingly, it was all but over. Castro had effectively won.

On the 20th of July, at long last, a broad unity agreement was reached calling for a common strategy of armed insurrection, to culminate in a "great general strike on the civilian front". Castro was no longer weak and isolated. More and more young men were beginning to flock to the mountains. With every passing week, the resistance gained momentum on all fronts, in llano and sierra, as the forces of messianism and bandwagon opportunism rapidly overcame those of fatalistic passivity. The Savior was at last in view. In August, with the final withdrawal of government troops, three new operations were planned, following the strategy pursued by Calixto Garcia, Antonio Maceo and Maximo Gomez during the War of Independence against Spain. Guevara would head westward towards the central province of Las Villas, a la Gomez in an effort to cut communication between the two ends of the island and to
establish M-26 authority over the guerrillas (largely led by remnants of the Directorio Revolucionario, which had been decimated during its attack on the Presidential Palace in March 1957) that were then operating in the Sierra de Escambray. Camilo Cienfuegos, pursuing the role of Maceo, would strike far west towards Pinar del Rio at the other end of the island. Fidel would play Calixto Garcia in Oriente. No matter that all was not carried out according to plan. Batista's army was now rapidly disintegrating from within, a phenomenon reflective of the general abandonment that was occurring throughout all social classes and all major segments of the population, save only those elements so tightly bound to the dictatorship as to be inextricable.

Perhaps a rebel victory could have been prevented, even this late in the game. But there was simply neither the will nor the competence to block it. The regular army would be completely destroyed. It had to be since, along with the apparatus of the police, it constituted the main obstacle to the triumph of the "real" Revolution that Fidel had in mind. Towards the end of the war, several half-hearted efforts would be made to stem the tide of the future, which was then all but inevitable. There would be a phoney presidential election on November 3rd, in which Batista's candidate, Rivero Aguero, would win easy victory, and a last-minute attempt at intervention by the United States via the Pawley mission, which will be discussed presently. Then, there was one final effort by Batista's Chief of Staff, General Eulogio Cantillo, to set up a
...unta after the dictator's flight. And in the wings was Colonel Ramon Barquin, waiting to take command of the army in order to preserve its institutional structure. But in the end, these maneuvers were futile. Fidel was ready, and his enemies were not. Within minutes of Batista's fall he was on Rebel Radio proclaiming "Revolution, Yes! Military coup, No!" The general strike was on. And this time, virtually no one remained indifferent.

In sum, the moment had come when it was propitious for the Rebellion to be transformed into the Revolution and for the nebulous shell of ideological concepts that formed the essence of nascent Castroism to begin being filled with substance. The forces of messianism had gained such momentum that the personal ethic of revolutionary struggle could now be projected onto an entire nation, with a consequent rise of counterdependence and a monumental attempt to create a new, "truly free" and dignified Cuban nation. But these are subjects to be explored in future chapters.
Chapter Three

FOOTNOTES


4Thus, for instance, Batista would justify his coup of March 10, 1952 in terms of the "continuation of the revolutionary aspirations that began in 1927 and culminated in the 1940 Constitution." See the "Constitutional Law" issued by his Council of Ministers, in El Mundo, April 5, 1952.


6Ibid., p. 18.


9Specifically, Angel had two children by his first wife—Lidia and Pedro Emilio—and seven by his second—Fidel, Raul, Ramon, Juana, Angela, Emma and Augustina.


11Ibid., p. 806.
12 Ibid., p. 807.


14 To Lee Lockwood, as reported in the latter's Castro's Cuba, Cuba's Fidel (New York, 1967), p. 25.

15 Thus, for instance, the allegation that he acquired part of his land by moving his fences ever outward; encompassing the property of his neighbors.


19 Rolando E. Bonachea and Nelson P. Valdes, "Introduction", in Revolutionary Struggle, 1947-1958, ed. Bonachea and Valdes (Cambridge, 1972), p. 5. [Hereafter, this volume will be referred to as Bonachea and Valdes.]

20 Lazo (op. cit., pp. 114-15) carries these points to the extreme of parody in his debunking account of the rise of Castroism. Nevertheless, Fidel's lack of personal hygiene is well known, and the stigma of his illegitimacy has been commented on by numerous observers. See, e.g., the remarks of Juan Bosch in Bohemia Libre (New York), October 13, 1967.


According to Jose Antonio Rasco, in Daniel James, Cubai The First Soviet Satellite in the Americas (New York, 1961). This is confirmed in Bonachea, pp. 807 and 822.

Bonachea and Valdes, p. 5.

Thus did Fidel, at age eighteen, denounce his father as "one of those who abuse the powers they wrench from the people with deceitful promises." Thomas, p. 808. And Conte Aguero writes that when his teachers "wanted to talk to him, they knew that the best thing to do was to go to the kitchen where he would probably be found talking to the cook or some other humble employee about their problems and agonies." Op. cit., p. 23.


"I have had to act silently and rather indirectly, because there are matters which must be hidden if they are to succeed, while to proclaim them for what they are would raise difficulties too great to be overcome." This from the famed letter to Manuel Mercado, cited by Emilio Roig de Leuchsenring in his Marti, Antimperialista (Habana, 1961), p. 107.

The growth of the cult has been chronicled in detail by Gray, op. cit.


Fidel's comment to Gloria Gaitan de Valencia, in America Libre (Bogota), May 22-28, 1961.

Thomas, p. 810.

Which may be found in Partido del Pueblo Cubano (Ortodoxo), Doctrina del Partido Ortodoxo (La Habana, n.d.).
See, e.g., the complaint of Mario Llerena (Bohemia, July 9, 1950) and Chibas' response (Ibid., July 16, 1950).


Partido del Pueblo Cubano, Doctrina. .

Gray, pp. 182-83.

"Only the vigorous personality of Chibas, his image of honesty and rebelliousness, and his clean history of struggle against the Machado dictatorship managed to give coherence to what was a heterogenous amalgam of incompatible elements." "Program-Manifesto of the Twenty-Sixth of July Movement" in Cuba in Revolution, eds. Rolando E. Bonachea and Nelson P. Valdes (Garden City, New York, 1972), pp. 122-23.

Bonachea and Valdes, p. 29.


Thomas, p. 809. He also tells of Castro driving "a bicycle hard into a brick wall to prove to onlookers he had the willpower to do something they would never do."

Revolucion, April 10, 1961.

Ibid., March 7, 1964.


As was reflected, for instance, in their titles: Revolutionary Insurrectional Union, Revolutionary Socialist Movement, Revolutionary National Alliance, Guiteras Revolutionary Action, etc.

Bonachea and Valdes, p. 23.
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52 *Diario de la Marina*, January 14, 1959.

53 By the young Communist Alfredo Guevara, soon to become a close friend and important influence on Fidel.

54 This is the opinion of Hugh Thomas, *op. cit.*, p. 813.

55 Bonachea and Valdes, p. 23.


57 Suchlicki, p. 53.


59 Thus, for instance, had the Communists been allied with the MSR against Castro and the UIR in the student elections of the previous year. Moreover, once elected Vice-President of the Law School student body Fidel turned on the Communists, who had supported his candidacy, and led a militant campaign against them. Dubois, p. 17.


61 This point is well made by Hugh Thomas, *op. cit.*, p. 816.


63 *Ibid*.

64 He was, however, elected Vice-President of the Law School student body, later moving up to the presidency when his superior resigned. But this was not the same thing.

65 Some years later, he noted almost nostalgically that the blame lay "not with those young men who, distracted by their natural anxieties and by the legend of a heroic epoch, desired to make a revolution which had not been achieved, at a moment when it could not be done. Many of those who, victims of illusion, died as gangsters, would today be heroes." *Bohemia*, December 25, 1955.
According to the testimony of Baudilio Castellanos, in Revolution, July 18, 1962.

Castro himself has said that as of his second or third year of Law School he had read "hardly anything by Karl Marx", (Lockwood, p. 138) and that at the time he passed the baccalaureat he was a "political illiterate". Still, he admitted to having been "already greatly influenced" by Marxism, though he had "two million petty bourgeois prejudices": "At best I can say that if I had not had all those prejudices I would not have been in a condition to make a contribution to the Revolution in the way I have now been able to. . . ." Speech of December 1, 1961.

This last statement will assume much greater significance later, when we discuss the relatively conservative role played by the Cuban Communists in the anti-Batista struggle and in the early years of Castro's rule. As to Fidel's assertion that he was already strongly influenced by Marxism, one must allow for a certain amount of hyperbole. As we shall see, this particular speech was designed to establish his credentials as a Marxist-Leninist.


Lockwood, p. 140.

More specifically, Chibas was able to provide evidence that Aurellano Sanchez Arango had indeed been guilty of some financial misappropriations. But for the most part his charges, and especially the accusation that the Minister had used funds from the education budget to purchase real estate in Guatemala, went unsubstantiated. Subsequently, there was much speculation as to the motive for his suicide. It seems probable that the act was spurred on by a combination of factors. Chibas' emotional instability was a matter of public record, as was his highly developed sense of personal honor. Indeed, his reputation as a man of integrity was perhaps his greatest source of popular appeal. Thus, the intensity of the despair which accompanied his inability to make good on his pledge to unmask Sanchez Arango. He had been humiliated before the entire nation and could now expect to find his word and honor subjected to bitter ridicule. Indeed, the mudslinging had already begun. He chose instead to become a martyr, shooting himself immediately after making a final dramatic radio appeal to the Cuban people. (Though, as some have suggested, he may only have been shooting to wound and simply miscalculated.) His last words to the public: "Comrades of Ortodoxia, forward! For economic liberty, political liberty and
social justice! Sweep away the thieves in the government! People of Cuba, arise and wake! People of Cuba, keep awake! This is my last knock at your door!" Thomas, pp. 769-70.

Ibid., pp. 139-40.

Ibid., p. 140.

Thus, for instance, his attack on the latifundistas and his demand for social justice for workers and peasants, in Alerta, June 6, 1951; thus also his sensational radio exposure of Prio's unfair labor practices towards his farm workers. Bonachea and Valdes, p. 30.

Alerta, March 4, 1952.

This quite possibly being one of the understatements of the century.

The text of this statement, see Bonachea and Valdes, pp. 147-49.

Ibid., pp. 149-52.

Lockwood, p. 140.

Which is not to say that there was no resistance. On the contrary, the island was rife with conspiracies. From exile, Carlos Prio financed several invasions and golpes. But none of them came to anything. The most serious threat, the coup planned by Rafael Garcia Barcena's National Revolutionary Movement, was discovered prematurely by Batista's military intelligence, and the conspirators were quickly rounded up and imprisoned.

Thomas, p. 821.

Ibid. Diaz Balart himself joined Batista's government as undersecretary of the Interior.

This statement, from the mimeographed underground paper El Acusador, may be found in Bonachea and Valdes, pp. 152-53.

Ibid., p. 153.
The idea was to produce a provincial uprising, capture the arms from the enemy, and then use the radio stations to win the support of the masses in the whole country. Saul Landau, "Interview with Fidel Castro", Eyewitness (San Francisco), II, 1 (1970), p. 2. The best general account of the attacks on Moncada and Bayamo is still Robert Merle’s Moncada (see footnote 21). A good bibliographical review of the materials put out by the Castro regime may be found in Andres Suarez, "The Cuban Revolution: The Road to Power", Latin American Research Review, VII, 3 (Fall, 1972), pp. 6-8, 24.

Thomas gives a figure of ten to one, based on the estimate that the barracks held about 1,000 men. This would appear to be a maximum calculation, however, since even with the diversion of 27 or 28 men to Bayamo the planned attack force on Moncada must have numbered about 130-140 men and two women. But then, there were some who pulled out of the affair at the last minute. For various estimates, see Thomas, pp. 835-36; Comision de Orientacion Revolucionaria de la Dirección Nacional del PUN, Relatos del Asalto al Moncada (Habana, 1964), p. 23; and Marta Rojas, La Generacion del Centenario en el Moncada (Habana, 1964), p. 245.


Speech of December 1, 1961.

Lockwood, p. 142.


Lockwood, p. 138-39.

Which is not, of course, to say that all facets of Leninism were equally absorbed. Castroism has never, for instance, displayed the kind of organizational force of What is to be Done? Still, Fidel was sufficiently attached to the doctrine to offer the opinion that anyone who had not read Lenin was an ignoramus. This during his trial for the Moncada assault. See Ibid., p. 144.

Bonachea and Valdes, pp. 155-58.
More specifically, he referred to the 700,000 Cubans without work; the 500,000 farm laborers, living in poverty and working only four months of the year; the 400,000 industrial laborers and stevedores whose retirement funds and benefits had been taken away and "whose future is a pay reduction and dismissal"; 100,000 small farmers, working and living on land that was not their own; 30,000 poorly paid teachers and professors; 10,000 young professionals: doctors, engineers, lawyers, school teachers and others, "who come forth from school with their degrees, anxious to work and full of hope, only to find themselves at a deadend with all doors closed." Fidel Castro, History Will Absolve Me (London, 1967), pp. 40-42.

As demonstrated in Ibid., p. 99.

Quoted materials are from the "Manifesto of Moncada", in Bonachea and Valdes, pp. 157-58.

Talmon, p. 249.


Bonachea and Valdes, p. 157.

"It seems to me", he wrote Luis Conte Aguero, that a particular radio chain could be induced to "announce daily how long I have been incommunicado: so many months and ten days, so many months and eleven days, and so forth." Conte Aguero, ed., Cartas del Presidio (Habana, 1959), p. 35.


Ibid., p. 37.

History will Absolve Me, pp. 43-45.

Ibid., pp. 45 ff.

The quote is, of course, from the "Testament" of Marti, in the letter to Manuel Mercado. See Hispanoamérica en Lucha por su


108 "If our revolutionary effort had succeeded," he wrote Conte Aguero, "it was our objective to place power in the hands of the most devoted Ortodoxos... Speak with Dr. Agramonte [Ortodoxo candidate for president in the aborted elections of 1952], and show him this letter. Tell him that we feel completely loyal to the purest ideals of Eduardo Chibas..." Letter of December 12, 1953, in Bonachea and Valdes, pp. 221-30.


112 As is evidenced by the copious references in History will Absolve Me. 

113 On Das Kapital: "We read about three chapters of it, and then threw it aside, and I am certain that Fidel never looked at it again." Raúl Castro to Herbert Matthews, as quoted in the latter's biography of Fidel. Op. cit., p. 187.


116 "I consider the movement above me," he wrote Conte Aguero, "and the very moment I realize that I am not useful to the cause for which I have suffered so much, I will kill myself." Letter of July 31, 1954, in Conte Aguero, Fidel Castro, Vida y Obra (Habana, 1959), p. 190. This period of Castro's life, incidentally, is analyzed with exceptional acuity by Bonachea and Valdes, pp. 59-60.


118 Ibid., p. 70.

119 In Dubois, pp. 100-03.
The precise nature of Guevara’s Marxism during this period is not entirely clear. According to Mario Dalmau, whom Che met in Guatemala, he “had read widely in Marx and Lenin, a whole Marxist library, and his thought was clearly Marxist. But logically, like all the Argentines, he was given to debating.” Granma, October 29, 1967. Moreover, his Marxism is also confirmed by the Peruvian Communist, Hilda Gadea Acosta, whom he lived with in Guatemala and soon married. Cuba (Havana), November 1967. On the other hand, Suarez could not “find a single document showing that Guevara was familiar with the classics of Marxism or could be identified completely with any Communist position before the summer of 1960.” Cuba: Castroism and Communism, p. 39. Perhaps it is best merely to say that he was a “revolutionary”, somewhat more versed in and influenced by Marxism-Leninism than Fidel, but still not an economic determinist, much less a member of any Communist party. Yet, according to Hugh Thomas, he even then despised the profit motive and believed in the perfectability of man. And his hatred of the Norte Americanos and his faith in the “cleansing effect” of the revolutionary process are well-known. See Thomas’ Cuba, pp. 880-81; and Daniel James, Che Guevara (New York, 1969), pp. 77-78.

Thus, Guevara described a conversation with one of the original moncadistas, who later left the movement: “The thing is very simple. What we have to do is pull a coup. Batista pulled
a coup and took power in a day, we have to pull another one to get him out. ... Batista has given the North Americans one hundred concessions, we will give them one hundred and one.' The thing was to take power. I argued with him that we had to pull the coup on the basis of principles, that it was also important to know what we were going to do once we were in power." Humanismo, nos. 53-54 (January-April, 1959), p. 347. Or, as Che's comrade, Ricardo Rojo, wryly observed, in Argentina those kind of people were put in the insane asylum. My Friend Che (New York, 1966), p. 27.

128 *op. cit.*, p. 95.

129 A reference to the frustrated revolution of '33, in Bohemia, December 25, 1955.

130 These are the estimates of Hugh Thomas, in "Middle-Class Politics and the Cuban Revolution", p. 260; and Cuba, p. 894.


132 According to Faustino Perez, in Bohemia, January 11, 1959.

133 Actually, there is some debate among scholars and participants alike as to whether guerrilla warfare represented a fallback strategy or whether revolutionary *focos* were to be established from the very outset. See Suarez, "The Cuban Revolution: The Road to Power", p. 11.

134 Thomas, pp. 895-96.

135 Bonachea and Valdes, p. 88.

136 And, to make matters worse, subsequently confirmed the initial erroneous report. See the Havana Post, December 4, 1956.

137 Figures vary here. The official mythology has tended to promote the number twelve as the original nucleus of the guerrilla movement, apparently as a propaganda ploy bringing to mind the twelve disciples. But Bonachea and Valdes (p. 90) estimate that thirty men, with seven weapons among them, actually remained to form the future core of the Rebel Army. They calculate that
twenty-one had been killed and thirty captured. The figure of nineteen is given by Thomas, "Middle-Class Politics...", p. 260. On the other hand, Che mentions twenty-one, in Obra revolucionaria (Mexico, 1967), p. 121, and Faustino Perez sixteen, in Rene Ray, Liberated y Revolucion (Habana, 1959), p. 28.

138 The original article is reproduced in Matthew's The Cuban Story, pp. 27-39.

139 Fidel: "Are we already in the Sierra Maestra?" Guillermo Garcia: "Yes." Fidel: "Then the Revolution has triumphed!" This at a moment when they were "four men, with two rifles and one hundred and twenty-seven bullets." Garcia to Lee Lockwood, op. cit., p. 52.

140 Matthew's, op. cit., pp. 27-39.

141 Thomas, Cuba, p. 920.


143 Thomas, Cuba, p. 920.

144 Castroism, p. 15.


146 From Nuestra Razon: Manifesto-Programa del Movimiento 26 del Julio, in Enrique Gonzalez Pedrero, La Revolucion Cubana (Mexico, 1959), pp. 89-130, an English translation of which may be found in Bonachea and Valdez, ed., Cuba in Revolution, pp. 113-40. This was the so-called "Mexican Program", dated November 1956 and published in Mexico City the following summer. It was written by Mario Llerena, admittedly without direct contact with Castro, though it ostensibly represented his views.

147 From the program appearing in Revolucion in February 1957, cited in Matthews, The Cuban Story, p. 79.

148 Neustra Razon: Manifesto-Programa... .

148 Neustria Cuban Story, p. 38.

151 In Bonachea and Valdes, pp. 343-47.

152 In Pasajes de la Guerra Revolucionaria (Habana, 1963), p. 103.

153 With few exceptions, most notably, Roberto Agramonte of the Ortodoxos and Manuel Bibe of the Ortodoxo Historico splinter.


155 The letter to the Junta may be found in Bonachea and Valdes, pp. 351-63.

156 According to Mario Ilerena, in Thomas, Cuba, p. 971.

157 Particularly Faure Chomon of the Directorio Revolucionario, who bitterly reminded Castro that his (Chomon's) own organization had paid more than its share of revolutionary dues—for instance, in its Kamikaze assault on the Presidential Palace the preceding March, an attempt to attack "the despot in his own den". Bonachea and Valdes, p. 105.


160 Suarez, "The Cuban Revolution...", p. 15.

161 Thomas, p. 1043. Elsewhere, Robin Blackburn has estimated that about 75% were peasants. "Prologue to the Cuban Revolution", New Left Review, October 1963. Our only sources here are impressionistic and may be subject to challenge. Karol, for instance, has reported that between 60-80% of the guerrillas were townsmen. Op. cit., p. 164.

162 Obviously, I am speaking in very general terms. Some of the most outstanding rebel leaders in Havana and Santiago were ardent fidelistas, e.g., Haydee Santamaria, Melba Hernandez and Armando Hart.
According to Faustino, the guerrillas "did not have firsthand information on the existing conditions. It was we who provided them with that information, according to what we believed the situation to be." Granma, April 13, 1969. Which says something about the dilemma of policymakers who find themselves restricted to a single source of information, especially one which is unreliable.

On March 28th, Castro had proposed that all groups, including the Popular Socialist (Communist) Party, should participate in the strike. But the strike committee in Havana had rejected the advice as coming too late in the game, Thomas, Cuba, p. 988.

There are those who argue that Fidel had absolute power over policymaking and appointments all along. Taber, for instance, stresses that the national directorate had only "nominal responsibility for making command decisions" and that while Castro paid lip service to the concept of collective leadership, "he continued to issue the orders,
both political and military, and to exercise his personal veto on plans of which he disapproved."

Op. cit., p. 186. See also Karol, pp. 173-74. Perhaps. But clearly he did not wield absolute power over the llaneros, and the fact that the directorate was dominated by the members of the urban resistance suggests that at a minimum that body constituted a potential source of countervailing power which had to be neutralized at the earliest possible opportunity.

As Guevara noted, the shift of the national leadership to "liberated territory" in the sierra "objectively eliminated some practical problems related to decisionmaking which in the past had impeded Fidel from exerting real authority." In Obra Revolucionaria, p. 240. Che's own account of the "Decisive Meeting" in the mountains appeared in Verde Olivo, November 22, 1964.

176 Bonachea and Valdes, p. 97.
177 Ibid.
178 Ibid., p. 108.
179 Suarez, Cuba, p. 33.
180 Bonachea and Valdes, p. 110.
181 Thomas, Cuba, pp. 997-98.
182 This was the so-called "Caracas Pact" or "Unity Manifesto of the Sierra Maestra", the text of which may be found in Bonachea and Valdes, pp. 386-89.
183 In Rafael Otero Echeverria, Reportaje a una Revolucion, de Batista a Fidel Castro (Santiago de Chile, 1959), p. 256.
Chapter Four

SOVIET RELATIONS WITH LATIN AMERICA: THE COURSE OF TRANSFER CULTURE RATIONALIZATION

What then of the Soviet side of the picture? If Castroism was still an ideology in nascency, the same could not be said of the variant of Marxism practiced by the leaders of the Kremlin. Rather, in the Soviet Union the incremental process through which revolutionary belief systems are "rationalized" and transformed into value systems for stable post-revolutionary societies had been going on for over four decades. During the course of this evolution, major components of both the goal culture (the utopian vision of the future) and the transfer culture (the norms that guide actual policy formation) had been either reinterpreted, modified, dropped or abstracted to the level of mere lip service as they had come into irreconcilable conflict with political, economic and social reality.

It is the contention of this study that the Soviet involvement in Cuba may be usefully understood against this background of ideological rationalization; moreover, that the Cuban abrazo has provided Kremlin policymakers with a major learning experience which has had a substantive impact on the evolution of Moscow's transfer culture strategies toward Latin America, the Third World

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and, indeed, the Capitalist West in general. We have argued that the essence of rationalization consists of the recurrent fitting of revolutionary belief system to environmental reality, with both being changed and converging in the process, with the former gradually becoming better equipped to cope with the latter as decision-making is institutionalized, expertise developed, old dogmas and stereotypes abandoned, new channels of information opened up, new alternatives explored, etc. It is the purpose of this chapter and the next to show: (1) how Stalinism frustrated the natural development of this process, impeding the formulation of an effective Soviet strategy towards Latin America and turning the Cuban Communist movement into a docile clique of bureaucratic opportunists quite unsuited to the tasks of revolutionary leadership; and (2) how the Muscovite transfer culture, freed from the straitjacket of Stalinism, embarked upon the course of rationalization and how this process affected the Kremlin's initial response to nascent Castroism.

Stalinism: The Frustration of Transfer Culture Rationalization

From the very beginning of Soviet rule, Moscow's relations with the outside world were shaped by a basic duality of purpose. To cite Lenin: "We live not only in a state but in a system of states, and the existence of the Soviet republic together with imperialist states is in the long run unthinkable." On the one hand, there was a genuine ideological desire, even an obligation, to promote the spread of international revolution. On the other, there were the overriding requisites of security and self-preservation.
In the face of a hostile "Capitalist encirclement", the new and still relatively weak and isolated Bolshevik political elite and the social system over which it presided had to be protected from their enemies, both foreign and domestic. All too often, these transfer culture objectives would prove mutually incompatible. Given the choice between a revolutionary crusade whose outcome seemed both dubious and dangerous and the preservation of Bolshevik rule in Russia, Lenin had little hesitation in opting for the latter. This was an issue which would have to be faced many times in the years to come. And always it would be resolved in the same way.

Let us be clear. We do not imply that Soviet foreign policy (or domestic policy, for that matter) has been entirely lacking in revolutionary virtue. Only that revolutionaries, like everyone else, must learn to cope with the opportunities, pressures and constraints posed by the environmental circumstances in which they operate. Those who try to force-fit reality into the unbending mold of their ideals are likely to end up like Che--six feet under in Bolivia.

Thus, time and again Lenin and his successors would radically shift their strategy and tactics and "creatively develop" doctrine in order to effectively pursue the "higher needs" of the Soviet transfer culture. The pattern is fairly clear: When utopian ideological goals have come into conflict with the requisites of social system maintenance and elite hegemony, the former have generally been subordinated to or displaced by the latter. Thus
did the initial millenarian impulse give way to the New Economic Policy and the accommodationist tactics of the "temporary Capitalist stabilization". Not being able to produce instant Communism at home or abroad, the Soviet leaders opted to deal with reality, rather than cling dogmatically to the ideal, even though this meant a certain temporary coexistence with the forces of Capitalism. Subsequently, when environmental circumstances changed, making it feasible for Stalin to reinstitute ultrarevolutionary strategies domestically and in foreign affairs, those policies too would come into conflict with the constraints posed by reality and be modified accordingly.

Yet, this process of transfer culture adjustment was by no means wholly rational, at least judged by most criteria. For one thing, under Stalin the egocentric premises of Leninism were pushed to their farthestmost extremes. Whereas in 1918 the Bolshevik position was still tinged by the idealistic assumption that Soviet Russia existed in order to promote the world revolution, a decade later the situation had changed radically. The relationship had become reversed, the international movement reduced to the status of an instrument in the service of the Muscovite state and its new vozhd. The critical factors here were organizational and psychopathological. The original purpose of the "Twenty-One Conditions" had been to create a highly centralized, tightly disciplined international movement of professional revolutionaries (the Comintern) modelled after the Bolshevik Party in Russia. But
whereas in Leninism the principle of control had been viewed
primarily as a means to the end of revolution, in Stalinism it
became an end in itself.

One recalls the words of Alexander Solzhenitsyn: "Mistrust
was Iosif Djugashvili's determining trait. Mistrust was his world
view." Mistrust and the insecurity which bred it. This was,
after all, a man who saw himself surrounded by wolves. Here
a classic case of the self-intensifying spiral of paranoia:
Monumental suspicion added to monumental fear led to an obsession
to control all things subject to his influence. But since much of
the environment proved resistant to that control and reacted with
hostility to his attempts to impose it, the resultant negative
feedback reinforced the already-existing fear and distrust, often
leading to even more intensive efforts to force-fit recalcitrant
reality to his will. In many respects, Stalinism was the personifi-
cation of the hegemony function run wild. In his obsessive pursuit
of security and self-esteem through total power, this self-
designated "man of steel" decimated the Bolshevik Party of Lenin
and turned it into a docile tool of his own personal will. So
too was the international Communist movement systematically de-
Leninized and transformed into a centralized network of servile
Stalinist bureaucracies.

Not surprisingly, these psychopathological tendencies led
to widespread transfer culture dysfunction. Hence, the forced
collectivization of the peasantry gave rise to massive resistance,
bloodshed and artificially-induced famine. Soviet agriculture would be crippled for decades to come. Hence also, the dogmatic attack on "Social-Fascism", which helped to undermine the forces of German democracy and pave the way for Hitler's rise to power. Subsequently, the subjugation of the Bolshevik Party, the Red Army and the Soviet Government through the mechanism of the Great Terror deprived the USSR of much of the cream of its political, managerial and military leadership, leaving it woefully ill prepared for the Nazi invasion that was soon to come. One could go on in some detail, but the basic point is clear enough: The gross perceptual distortions, fears and suspicions, the obsession with control, the rigidity of ideas and behavior that were characteristic of mature Stalinism seriously undermined the regime's capacity to deal with the functional requirements of the Marxist-Leninist transfer culture. Inevitably, the weakening and endangerment of the Soviet state and social system and of the political hegemony of the Bolshevik Party meant that the pursuit of the utopian future would also be jeopardized. 4

We would not, of course, deny Stalin his triumphs. The phenomenal strides made in industrializing backward Russia were largely his doing. He had wanted to accomplish in a decade what the Western Capitalist nations had taken a century to achieve, and to a very considerable extent he succeeded. Nor would we deny the essential rationality of much of his behavior. As Hume once remarked, reason is the servant of the passions. Judged solely
on the basis of his efforts to maximize his own personal power, Stalin was a genius. His talents for systematic planning, organization, bargaining and manipulation were immense. Still, many of his "accommodations with reality" came only after monumental damage had been done and he had no choice left but to alter course or face destruction. And even when he did shift strategy, all too often this would be done in a rigid, mechanistic, pendulum-like fashion, with one extreme policy being followed by another, until environmental circumstances changed once again, enabling him to revert to a position more congruent with his basic totalitarian disposition.

Thus, although doctrine and strategy were repeatedly adjusted to fit the changing environmental circumstances to which they were applied it is difficult to say that the Stalinist transfer culture underwent much enduring rationalization, in the sense that the term is used in this study. Rather, the lesson of the final period of Stalin's rule (1945-1953) is that the aging despot had changed hardly at all, except perhaps to grow more paranoid in his senility. Hence, totalitarian controls, eased during World War II in order to mobilize popular support for the struggle against Germany, were reimposed with a vengeance. There was to be no post-war relaxation, no lessening of sacrifice or vigilance, no de-emphasis of heavy industry or collectivization for the sake of higher living standards. Instead, a return to Stalinist "normalcy"--the regimentation of the Five Year Plan, the terror of the Purge.
Throughout all classes of society, the optimism of the war years—the wide-spread expectation that once the fighting was over life would be better—gave way to alienation, resignation and ultimately apathy.

In effect, Stalinism was a form of internal warfare of a state against its own people. Its natural external concomitant was Cold War, for the continuation of totalitarian rule, sacrifice and vigilance at home required the legitimacy of a posited threat from abroad. Moreover, the obsession with security and control now found outward expression through the mechanism of the Red Army, as Soviet-style regimes were forcibly imposed on Eastern Europe, isolating the region from the West. Once again, the export of revolution became an operational objective of the Muscovite transfer culture.

Conflict and Accommodation: The Pattern of Soviet Latin American Policy, 1917-1935

And what of Soviet policy towards Latin America? Perhaps the most obvious yet in many respects the most fundamental observation that can be made is that for most of the period from 1917 to 1959 Moscow's attitude towards this huge sector of the globe was characterized by profound ignorance and placid indifference. Latin America was clearly a low-priority area in the Leninist and Stalinist scheme of history. Indeed, it is not difficult to understand why this was so. For the first decade and a half of Soviet rule, the Politburo's attention was overwhelmingly focused
inward on domestic considerations. The men in the Kremlin had neither the time nor the resources to overindulge in the realm of foreign affairs. They were far too absorbed with the monumental task of running their own country: of restoring the viability of its war-shattered economy and social system; of consolidating the political hegemony of the Bolshevik Party; of resolving the struggle for leadership that arose with Lenin's debilitation and death; of launching a massive program of forced collectivization and rapid industrialization through the Five Year Plans. In the face of a threatening "Capitalist encirclement", a strong, industrialized Socialist society, purged of all counterrevolutionary elements, had to be built. The overriding goal of foreign policy became security: the protection of the new and still relatively weak and isolated Soviet state from external predators.

Given this sense of priorities, few regions of the world were further from Moscow's sphere of interests than Latin America. Geographically and culturally distant from Russia, the territory represented an unknown phenomenon of peripheral concern to the Soviet leadership. The predominant threat of the day came from the major Capitalist nations of Europe, plus Japan, and it was with a view towards neutralizing this challenge that first Lenin, then Stalin sought to expand the regime's political, military and economic contacts abroad. Insofar as the Kremlin became engaged in extra-European activities, its interest was largely restricted to nations strategically important to Soviet defense (e.g., Turkey
and China) and to some of the Asian and Middle Eastern colonies of Great Britain and France. By weakening the hold of the imperialist states over their foreign empires, it was thought, Capitalism itself could be attacked. Once deprived of its markets, raw materials, slave labor and, most important of all, its opportunities for foreign investment, European Capitalism would collapse under the weight of its own internal contradictions. In the meantime, colonial disturbances could serve as useful diversions to prevent the enemies of the new Soviet state from uniting to crush the Revolution.

Nowhere in this picture did Latin America fit. Politically, economically and militarily, the region was considered to be under the vassalage of the United States, a sleeping giant isolated from the international community and of little immediate threat to the Bolshevik regime in Moscow (aside from an early half-hearted intervention in the 1918-1921 Civil War). Any serious attempt to promote Soviet influence in the area would almost surely have been construed as a challenge to the vital interests of the "Colossus of the North". Both geography and the Monroe Doctrine told the Communists that a victorious revolution in Latin America would stand much less chance of survival than would one in Asia or even central Europe, where the USSR might be able to intervene effectively on behalf of the local rebels. Chronic "Yankee interventionism" and gunboat diplomacy in the region reinforced Moscow's suspicion that the best that could be gained from this inherently unfavorable
situation was a modicum of influence. Total power was not considered to be a realistically attainable goal. 8

Had the men in the Kremlin been in a position to conduct a more active foreign policy the history of Latin American Communism might have been vastly different. Certainly, there was no lack of revolutionary ferment in the region. Rather, as Luis Aguilar has noted, the relative order and stability which had characterized the most important areas of Latin America at the turn of the century was in a process of rapid deterioration under pressure from a variety of forces, most notably:

...the continuous immigration from Europe, importing social ideas and social unrest; the organization of the first workers' groups with their expression in strikes and demands; the increasing influx of rural population into the cities; the emergence of a strong middle-class nucleus, full of political claims; and the economic crises that were occasioned by World War I. Thus, in rapid crescendo, the following took place: there appeared on the continent the first genuinely popular parties and political figures to transcend the minority dichotomy of liberals and conservatives (the Radical Party in Argentina, Jose Batlle y Ordenez in Uruguay, Francisco I. Madero in Mexico, and Arturo Alessandri in Chile); the Mexican Revolution broke out, causing the banner of agrarian reform to be raised; the student centers were shaken by the echoes of the 1918 University Reform of Cordoba (Argentina), which thrust the students into the national political struggles; and the echo of the distant but impressive drumrolls of the Russian proletariat, summoning the workers to revolution, resounded.

The new atmosphere was, in addition, fraught with seething nationalism and Latin solidarity. North American Manifest Destiny ceased to be merely a program and became a reality that washed over the Caribbean and flooded southward. ... In the twenties, anti-imperialism was, for at least the minority of alert Latin Americans, not only a popular cause but almost a duty of conscience and salvation. 9
But the Soviet Union was not yet a great power. Its leaders lacked the will, knowledge and resources to take advantage of the revolutionary opportunities that existed in the New World. Nor could they effectuate a major presence so far from their own borders. Moreover, as the primary agency through which foreign Communist parties were given ideological and practical guidance the Comintern initially paid little heed to the area. Understandably enough, since it was dominated by Russians and Europeans whose attention was absorbed by problems of more direct relevance to the survival of the nascent Soviet state. Latin America was a backwater of international politics, a peripheral region of the same colonial genus as China, India and the other dependent countries of Asia and Africa. In truth, the makers of Soviet and Comintern policy were woefully ignorant of the social and political realities of the area. All too often their behavior would be dictated by rigid stereotypical formulas largely inappropriate to dealing with the particular conditions that existed.

Be that as it may, in the aftermath of the Russian Revolution channels of communication were opened between Moscow and various Latin American radical groups, largely on the latter's initiative. The first and most important of the area's Communist parties were founded: in Argentina (1918), Mexico (1919), Uruguay (1920), Chile (1922), Brazil (1922) and Cuba (1925). And gradually, as they began to develop beyond the initial rudimentary stages of organization and as they were joined by lesser parties and by numerous
front organizations, the Comintern's interest began to pick up somewhat. In 1926, the Communist Party of the United States was directed, in league with various agents and agencies of the International, to work with, instruct and otherwise watch over the fledgling parties in order to prepare them for the assumption of greater responsibilities in the future. Two years later, at the Sixth Congress of the Comintern, Bukharin announced that Latin America was "for the first time widely entering the orbit of influence of the Communist International"; indeed, that "the whole gamut of South American problems is assuming increasing significance from day to day." Whereas only one country, Mexico (with three votes), had been represented at the Second Congress, now just eight years later delegates from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico and Uruguay (wielding a total of twenty-five votes) were in attendance. As the comrade from Brazil noted, the Comintern had heretofore sadly neglected Latin America: "We hope that it is not going to lose interest, and that it will help us in developing our Communist parties, which are small, into real mass parties."

The International did not lose interest. Towards the end of the decade, several attempts were made to consolidate its control over the Latin American movement. A special Latin American Secretariat, including a Caribbean Bureau and a South American Bureau, was created to supervise the activities of the region's nascent parties. In 1929, a major effort was made at the systematic
coordination of the various Communist groups in the area with the
convocation of the First Congress of Latin American Communist
Parties in Buenos Aires and the Constituent Congress of the Con-
federation of Latin American Labor Unions in Montevideo.

Nevertheless, the Comintern's help was to be rendered in
a way which had little to do with the creation of strong mass
parties. The Sixth Congress (1928) marked the beginning of the
famous "Third Period" in the development of post-World War I
Capitalism. In the view of the International, the first period
had come to an end in the latter months of 1923, signalled by
revolutionary failures in Germany and Bulgaria. The ensuing era,
from 1924 to 1928, had been characterized by a temporary, partial
stabilization of the Capitalist world, during which the proletariat
stood mainly on the defensive. Now, it was proclaimed, stabilization
was to give way to a new round of political instability and war
during which the forces of international revolution would once
more go on the attack.

In short, the dualism that was so firmly engrained in the
Soviet transfer culture--the ideological drive for revolutionary
expansion, on the one hand; the requisites of system maintenance
and elite hegemony, on the other--now began to be manifested in
the form of a periodic behavioral flux, as the men in the Kremlin
repeatedly sought to tailor their foreign policy to fit the changing
environmental opportunities, pressures and constraints with which
they had to contend. Thus would accommodation be the hallmark of
revolutionary ebb; conflict of revolutionary flow. Moreover, this pattern of adaptation was by no means solely a product of changing international circumstances. The internal counterpart to the era of temporary Capitalist stabilization had been the New Economic Policy. Russia in the early 20's was badly in need of a respite from conflict, both foreign and domestic: "The messianic urge and the millenarian vision had to become weaker simply because the Soviet rulers were becoming absorbed in the task of running their own society and in the process were discovering that many economic and political problems had to be tackled in time-honored ways, regardless of the precepts of Communism." Thus had both foreign and domestic ideological goals been compromised for the sake of social system maintenance.

By 1928, however, the situation had changed drastically. The collapse of the Kuomintang-Communist alliance in China and the attendant massacre of the latter had dealt a severe setback to the strategy of accommodation and left Soviet policy towards that country in a veritable shambles. Yet, even as Communism was contained in the major frontiers of Europe and Asia the absence of a concrete threat of war left the Kremlin free to radically alter its transfer culture strategies, both at home and abroad. Moreover, it was hardly an accident that this turn in policy coincided with a shift in the politics of the Soviet leadership struggle. By the time of the Sixth Congress of the Comintern, Stalin had defeated Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev and was locked in battle
with his former allies, Bukharin, Rykov and Tomsky. He now embraced
the radical programs of the Left Opposition in order to attack the
Right. Domestically, this led to the abandonment of the free market
mechanisms of the NEP and the adoption of a policy of forced collectiv-
ization and rapid industrialization through the Five Year Plans.
In international affairs, it meant a shift to a strategy of extreme
militance on the part of the foreign Communist parties, characterized
by violent attacks on both right-wing and left-of-center elements
and a renewed emphasis on the tactics of revolutionary violence.

For the purposes of this study, it is instructive to single
out the following points in the strategy outlined at the Sixth
Congress:

1. The conviction that the masses of the colonial
and semi-colonial countries had taken to the field in
the international struggle. The heightening of the
struggle against Yankee imperialism in Latin America was
cited as an example. No attempt was made to define
clearly the terms 'colonial' and 'semi-colonial'. In
the final program the term 'semi-colonial' was extended
to include the so-called 'dependent countries', of which
Argentina and Brazil were cited as typical.

2. The condemnation of the upper bourgeoisie of
the colonial and semi-colonial countries as allies of
imperialism and of the small progressive bourgeoisie,
usually called 'national-reformist', as 'opportunist' and
always ready to capitulate to imperialism. The Socialists
('Social-Fascists') were considered to be the best allies
of Fascism.

3. The repeated warnings against Trotskyist or
Trotskyite influence, which demanded repeated purges of
the leadership cadres of the parties. Was this a return to genuine revolutionary militance or
merely an exercise in left-wing infantilism? The record is painfully
clear. Instead of exploiting to the full the revolutionary opportunities presented by the depression era, the Latin American Communists repeatedly misconstrued the political conditions under which they were operating, in effect sabotaging the forces of change and strengthening those of repression and the status quo. Thus, in Argentina at the turn of the decade the Communist Party simultaneously attacked both the Socialists and the bourgeois democratic government of the aging Hipolito Irigoyen, helping to undermine the latter and pave the way for the Fascist coup of September 1930. In Chile, the Party’s uncompromising militancy produced a dual crisis. On the one hand, it resulted in an increasing Communist isolation from the collective struggle against the dictatorship of Carlos Ibáñez. On the other, it produced an internal schism that reduced even further the Party’s effectiveness as an instrument of revolutionary struggle. When, in June 1932, a group of military men and civilians under the leadership of Colonel Marmaduque Grove seized power and proclaimed a “Socialist Republic”, the Communists (or at least that faction that remained loyal to the Comintern line) were found in the camp of the opposition, denouncing Grove and his associates as allies of imperialism and representatives of the class interests of the bourgeoisie. Shortly thereafter, the nascent Socialist Republic was overthrown.

In Cuba too, Communist attacks on the bourgeois nationalist government of Grau San Martin contributed to the latter’s downfall and to the rise of Fulgencio Batista. But we will examine
that instance of revolutionary self-destruction in detail in the next chapter.

Suffice it to say that between 1929 and 1935 Latin American Communism was plagued by political isolation, factionalism and, ultimately, impotence. Armed uprisings were attempted in Mexico (1929), Chile (1931), El Salvador (1932), Cuba (1933) and Brazil (1935). None were successful. In most cases, severe repression followed. In Mexico, where the Communist movement had enjoyed slow but steady growth and made substantial organizational inroads among the peasantry, the Party was outlawed, its newspaper banned. Within a matter of months, its influence in the countryside vanished almost completely. In El Salvador, most of the leaders of the Party were captured and shot, the labor movement decimated and the dictatorship of General Maximiliano Hernandez Martinez consolidated for the next dozen years. In Chile, Communist influence within the working class dropped sharply, a casualty of excessive militance and isolationism and of competition from rival Socialist groups. In Brazil, where a broad Popular Front had been formed against the dictator, Getulio Vargas, mass arrests were made, and the Party was driven underground. . . .

Moreover, not only did the strategy of revolutionary ultramilitance severely inhibit the growth of a strong Communist movement in Latin America, it effectively destroyed the Kremlin’s first tentative efforts to penetrate the region through the mechanisms of conventional diplomacy. During the decade of the 20’s, Moscow
had on several occasions announced its willingness to enter into political and economic contacts with the area. Diplomatic relations were established with Mexico (1924) and Uruguay (1926). A branch of Yuzhamtorg, a Soviet trade agency, was set up in Argentina for the purpose of developing commercial relations with the various countries of South America. Some trade did follow. But the conduct of conventional diplomacy proved incompatible with the vigorous promotion of international revolution. After 1928, the inherent conflict within Soviet strategy became intolerable. Governments under attack from local Communists were not assuaged by the Kremlin's protestations that, after all, the foreign parties were merely "private international organizations" in no way connected with Soviet officialdom. Hence, in 1930, following the Communist rebellion of the previous year, Mexico broke off diplomatic relations with Moscow. In 1931, the Argentine police raided Yuzhamtorg and suspended its operations. At the end of 1935, in the wake of the uprising in Brazil, Uruguay severed its political contacts with the Kremlin. In retaliation, the Soviets cancelled all commercial transactions with Uruguay and closed down Yuzhamtorg altogether. Thus did the USSR lose its last diplomatic toehold in the region. 18

In sum, then, it may be said that the attempt to impose an inflexible "Third Period" strategy on Latin America was singularly unsuccessful. No doubt it is a measure of both the ignorance and the indifference of the Soviet and Comintern leaders that such a
self-defeating and futile policy was permitted to continue for so long unchanged.

Conflict and Accommodation: The Pattern of Soviet Latin American Policy, 1935-1953

Yet, as destructive as the strategic blunders of the "Third Period" were to the cause of hemispheric revolution, an even more damaging effect was produced by the very process of stalinization itself. Under Comintern discipline and dependent on Soviet funding, the region's nascent Communist parties had become little more than docile tools of Muscovite foreign policy. As the Comintern leader Manuilsky told a meeting of Latin American comrades in 1938:

Above all, our force must be used in defense of the Soviet Union. This is the first duty of the parties, of the individual Communists, of our sympathizers, friends, and followers. The mark of a good Communist shall be precisely this: the fervor with which he defends the Soviet Union and its international policy, his eagerness to praise its works, the emphasis with which he teaches the people that the only just policy is that of the USSR and that all other nations are unjust, provoking wars, and leading to world-wide conflagration. . . . The very soul of the Communist party's strategy is the vigorous defense of the Soviet Union; there can be but one policy, that of Russia, of Stalin. No Communist may have the right to defend any other. . . .

And moreover:

. . . It is no longer a mere danger that we shall be attacked. Indeed quite possibly the Soviet Union will be forced to take preventive action to defend its borders and to prevent a war. In such a case, the duty of Communists would be to work for the defeat of Capitalism in their own countries and annihilation of their own bourgeoisie. Now if the Socialist homeland should be attacked and the attackers were, for an example, an
American nation; all the Communists of America would be obligated to create the worst possible conditions for the action of the aggressor, and make every effort to facilitate the victory of the Socialist homeland.\textsuperscript{19}

The levelling process is a sociological reality, and stalinization was the levelling process in its crudest form. Solzhenitsyn said it best: "Just as King Midas turned everything to gold, Stalin turned everything to mediocrity."\textsuperscript{20} Externally, he imposed his own psychopathological obsessions onto the international Communist movement, just as domestically he imposed them onto the Soviet political system. In his profound insecurity, suspicion and cynicism, he sought to totally control all things subject to his influence.\textsuperscript{21} In the process, he more often than not succeeded in destroying whatever truly revolutionary leadership had existed within the foreign parties.

Gradually, under the pressures of imposed subservience, the more imaginative, daring and independent of the Latin American Communist leaders either left the ranks or were purged. In their place came the "Gletkins", the Stalinists, colorless apparatchiks of unquestioning loyalty, willing to follow every twist and turn of the Soviet line. Theoreticians they were not, though most were capable of giving a report to a Party Congress in the conventional Marxist jargon, and this to some extent masked their lack of intellectual credentials. Certainly, there were among them men and women of ability, particularly with regard to the handling of administrative details. Above all, however, the leaders who emerged within this framework were cautious masters of
the art of survival. They were "never possessed of the charisma needed to make them the Uncle Ho's or Chairman Mao's of their countries. Orthodoxy rather than audacity and shrewdness rather than breadth of vision were the characteristics rewarded by their system. Thus, while political influence was always to be won for the price of the steady subsidy given by Moscow, political power was never to be won." 22

In point of fact, the Latin American comrades would more often than not be encouraged to be perpetual bridesmaids. Instead of creating a vigorous revolutionary tradition, they would become a rather conservative force, more interested in their own immediate survival than in seizing power. 23 Indeed, many would be able to establish fairly secure positions in the political lives of their countries. Whether legal or illegal, they would usually be tolerated and were often able to come to terms with whatever government happened to be in office. Moreover, their opportunism would be completely unbound by considerations of ideology, except of course for the imperative of "proletarian internationalism"—absolute obedience to the Muscovite line of the moment. Thus, indiscriminate cooperation with dictators and democrats alike, reactionary despots of the right as well as radicals of the left, would be the hallmark of Communist behavior. Occasionally, parties would split into two (and sometimes more) separate organizations with opposing policies, one openly collaborating with the government and the other with the opposition, until such time as the political situation had changed.
and they could reunite. Hence, opportunism not only assured their survival but frequently left the Communists considerable freedom to engage in labor activities and conduct political demonstrations and other propaganda functions. As a side benefit of their cooperation with the government of the moment, they were sometimes able to persuade the latter to adopt positions favorable to their own and Moscow's interests. This sort of influence would be tenuous and often short-term, but it would amply satisfy Stalin's limited ambitions for the region.

And what were Stalin's ambitions? Once again, one must refer to the opportunities, pressures and constraints of the time. By 1934, the vozhd had far more important matters than the utopian drive for world revolution to contend with. The critical motivations of his transfer culture remained elite (namely his own personal) hegemony and social system maintenance. While he had defeated Trotsky and the Left and Right Oppositions, there were still pockets of resistance to his rule within the Bolshevik Party. Should the Soviet Union become embroiled in a major war, with disastrous consequences, those pockets would surely grow. Hence, the need both to avoid such a conflict and to eliminate his enemies altogether. The latter would be accomplished with comparative ease. The murder of Sergei Kirov would provide the pretext to initiate a series of purges that would decimate the Party, in effect raising the secret police above it and Stalin above the police. The problem of war, however, would not prove so susceptible
to resolution.

By 1934, the strategic failures of the "Third Period" could no longer be ignored. In Germany, the unrelenting Communist campaign against "Social-Fascism"—against any and every Socialist and progressive movement—had contributed significantly to the paralysis of the Weimar Republic and the rise of Adolph Hitler. At first, these events had been viewed with complacence. Fascism, it was assumed, was the highest, most decadent stage of Capitalism. Nazi rule would be violent but brief. It would solidify the working class around the Communist Party and pave the way for the collapse of the whole rotten system and the final triumph of Communism. Gradually, however, it began to dawn on the men in the Kremlin that Fascism was a highly dynamic force, by no means inevitably self-destructive, and that its decimating attack on parliamentary and democratic institutions was not preparing the ground for Communism at all but rather endangering its very existence:

... The example of Germany was proving infectious. Movements combining Socialist, nationalist, and racist demagogy were springing up all over Europe. The discrediting of parliamentary institutions and the helplessness of the democracies in the face of the economic crisis were benefiting not the Communists but the extreme right. ... The threat of international Fascism thus changed from a ritual phrase of Soviet propaganda to a frightening reality.2

Moreover, the danger to the West was paralleled by the rise of Japanese militarism to the East. The Manchurian adventure in 1931 and the subsequent creation of the puppet state of Manchukuo
had dramatized the impotence of the Western democracies and the League of Nations and raised the specter of still further aggression to come. Having devoured Manchuria, the Japanese might now be encouraged to seek additional conquests as part of a larger drive for hegemony over the Far East. Might not their next target be the Russian protectorate of Outer Mongolia or even the easternmost territories of the USSR itself?

Thus, the last months of 1933 and the beginning of '34 witnessed an agonizing reappraisal of Stalinist foreign policy. Heretofore, it had been assumed that war, when it came, would likely be restricted to the "rival imperialist powers and would not expose the Soviet Union to immediate danger but, on the contrary, would present Communism with further chances of expansion. Now, the threat of war, any war, was seen as inimical to Soviet interests." Consequently, the men in the Kremlin began to shift course. During the next six years, they would repeatedly seek to probe and exploit many of the same international arrangements and institutions that they had been denouncing and attempting to subvert for the past decade and a half--most notably, collective security, the League of Nations and the Western alliance system. The immediate aim was not the destruction of Fascism, but rather its containment and deterrence. The overwhelming need of the moment was that the USSR be spared a major military conflict it could ill afford.

We need not give a detailed recounting of Soviet/Comintern activities during this era. That has been done elsewhere and often.
Suffice it to say that the diplomatic maneuvers of the Soviet state—the innumerable non-aggression pacts and mutual assistance treaties, the establishment of diplomatic relations with the United States, the entrance into the League of Nations, the support of the Spanish Republic, etc.—were paralleled by a dramatic shift in the strategy of the Communist International. The year 1935 marked the official proclamation of the Popular Front. From political isolation and unremitting struggle against the forces of "Social-Fascism", the foreign comrades were now ordered to embrace nationalist slogans and form broad alliances with Socialists and other bourgeois democratic elements in an effort to mount a common front against Fascism. If during this period the primary aims of Soviet foreign policy were to contain Fascism and avoid war, it was the function of the Comintern to make sure that the Western Capitalist nations did not fall prey to the Nazi virus, or, just as bad, join Hitler in a united front against the Red Menace to the East.

And what of Latin America? In the mid-30's, the region remained a backwater of international politics, of marginal relevance to the overriding Soviet concerns of the moment. Yet, it was by no means to be left untouched by the sweeping revision of Comintern policy that was occurring in Moscow, primarily in reaction to the unfavorable tide of events in Europe and Asia. If the critical issue for Soviet foreign policy was the protection of the USSR and if the Latin American Communist parties (and indeed all foreign
Communist parties) were conceived by the men in the Kremlin to be nothing more than instruments to be manipulated on behalf of the interests of the Soviet state and its vozhd, then it was only natural that the Latin American comrades be enlisted in the worldwide struggle to contain Fascism. Now, the Latin Communists were to be subjected to a gauntlet of criticism and self-criticism. Their failure to "correctly distinguish and differentiate the role of the various bourgeois and petty bourgeois parties in the growing anti-imperialist and agrarian" struggle had distorted their revolutionary perspective and led to an overestimation of the forces of the counterrevolution.26 Or, as Wang Ming stated at the Seventh Congress of the Comintern, there had been a general tendency to exaggerate the influence of Fascism: "Many of our comrades in Latin America have characterized nearly all the bourgeois and petty bourgeois parties as Fascists, thus hindering the establishment of an anti-Fascist Popular Front."27

The upshot of this criticism was that one last attempt would be made at the revolutionary seizure of power—in Brazil—this time using Popular Front organizational tactics.28 When that effort failed, the strategy of insurrection was abandoned altogether. The Communists now held out their hands to other political groups, in the process moderating their radicalism, adopting nationalist slogans and seeking legalization for their activities. This was the beginning of a silver era in the history of Latin American Communism. For the first time, they were to
assume real importance in the political life of the hemisphere. Responsible politicians in more than one country would prove willing to enter into agreements and coalitions with them, with the Communists receiving at least a certain limited freedom to conduct their propaganda and organizational work among the masses. Now, they began to acquire a serious popular following within the working class and the intelligentsia. In country after country, their own partisan trade unions merged into the more moderate confederations, paving the way for Communist hegemony over large sectors of organized labor. Thus, they were to play a leading role in the formation of the Confederations of Workers of Chile, Mexico, Colombia, Ecuador, and Cuba, and the General Union of Workers of Uruguay. In Argentina, the Communists liquidated their independent trade unions in the Socialist-controlled General Confederation of Labor. In the international arena, they played an important part in the establishment of the Confederation of Workers of Latin America. 29

Beyond this, it should be noted that the strategy of the Popular Front sanctioned rapprochement with dictators and democrats alike, in accordance with Comintern directives to form the broadest possible alliance against Fascism. Not all of these efforts were successful. In Argentina and Uruguay, for instance, the Socialists were unreceptive to Communist overtures. And in Brazil, the uprising of 1935 was followed by political persecution and the proclamation of the neo-Fascist Novo Estado. Under these
circumstances, the formation of an effective coalition with other opposition groups proved extremely difficult. In spite of its efforts, the Party continued to lead an extremely hazardous existence.

Yet, elsewhere there were notable successes: In Mexico, the years 1934-1940 witnessed a period of recuperation and substantial growth. Under the benevolent rule of President Lazaro Cardenas and in alliance with Vicente Lombardo Toledano, head of the powerful Confederation of Mexican Workers, the Communists were able to rapidly expand their ranks until by the end of the decade the Party numbered nearly 30,000 members. In Cuba, the Party gradually moved into an alliance with Fulgencio Batista, acquiring legal recognition in 1938, and joining the coalition of forces that supported the dictator in his successful presidential campaign two years later. In Chile, as part of the "first functioning People's Front in the Western Hemisphere", the Communists were able to score substantial victories at the ballot box. In 1937, they sent seven of their members to the Chamber of Deputies and one to the Senate. The following year, in league with the Socialists and Radicals, they succeeded in electing the Radical Pedro Aguirre Cerda to the presidency.

In retrospect, however, little of this activity can be properly termed revolutionary. True enough, the Latin American parties made considerable gains during this period. But notably lacking was the kind of single-minded drive for revolutionary power that constituted much of the basic essence of Leninism. As extensions
of the Soviet state, their influence would be used not to further
the pursuit of hemispheric revolution but rather to promote the
interests of the USSR, as defined ultimately by Joseph Stalin.
Indeed, this had already become a general principle of behavior:
Whenever the former came into conflict with the latter, the latter
would prevail. The prostitution of revolutionary ideals could
always be rationalized psychologically through the convenient
argument that any act that strengthened the "fortress" of the
worldwide Socialist Revolution contributed automatically to the
eventual triumph of that Revolution.

The moment of truth came with the signing of the Nazi-
Soviet Non-Aggression Pact in August 1939. Once again, Moscow's
foreign policy was to undergo a dramatic shift in reaction to the
radical alternations that were occurring in the international
environment. Heretofore, the assumption had been that a major
war in Europe must be averted, lest it embroil the USSR in its
devastation. But the years following Hitler's rise to power had
witnessed a rapid destabilization of the balance of power on the
continent. Step by step, Nazi militarism began to engulf its
neighbors. Aggression fed upon aggression: the Rhineland,
Spain, Austria, Czechoslovakia. . . . The Western democracies
seemed helpless, paralyzed by a lack of will as much as anything
else. In this atmosphere, Moscow's attempts to exploit the
mechanisms of conventional diplomacy and collective security had
brought only limited success at best. True, the old fear of a united
anti-Soviet front of Capitalist powers in league with Germany had
turned out to be an illusion. But Nazi militarism had not been
contained. With every domino that fell, a general European
conflagration seemed nearer. Thus did Stalin, bending to the
environmental pressures of the moment and exploiting to the full
the opportunities that were available, seek to strike an arrange­
ment which would assure his country's non-involvement in the event
such a war did occur, as now seemed likely.

Here a vivid reminder of one major feature of Soviet foreign
policy--namely, its readiness to come to terms with almost anyone,
regardless of their ideological disposition, if such an agreement
promises substantive advantages. In this instance, the benefits
included not only the temporary avoidance of war but the acquisition
of half of Poland plus a free hand in Estonia, Latvia and Finland.

Nevertheless, the Nazi-Soviet Pact, by freeing Germany
from the fear of a two-front war, proved to be the immediate pre­
cipitator of World War II. The men in the Kremlin now prepared
to sit back and enjoy the spectacle of the major Capitalist
powers of Europe ripping each other to shreds. Once again, the
foreign Communist parties were ordered to ignore their own revolu­tion­
ary interests and line up behind the Communist policy of the
moment. After the initial shock wore off, the Latin American leaders,
with few exceptions, declared their support for the Nazi-Soviet
accord and for Moscow's position of benevolent neutrality towards
Germany. The new international slogan became "Socialist Neutrality".
The struggle in Europe was denounced as an "imperialist war". Now, the Chilean Popular Front broke up under the pressure of internal friction caused by renewed Communist militancy and by differences over the war issue. In country after country, groups which had been allied to the Communists turned against them. The extreme collaborationism of the Popular Front was now replaced by another period of isolation as the regional parties suffered heavy losses in membership and prestige and their influence in the labor movement went into decline.

Fortunately for the Latin American comrades, though not for their Muscovite sponsors, this era did not last long. On June 22, 1941, the Wehrmacht crossed into Soviet territory, ushering in yet another dramatic reversal in the Kremlin's foreign policy. From this moment on, the struggle against the Nazi invaders would assume top priority within the Stalinist transfer culture. At stake was everything that was critical—the very maintenance of the Soviet social system and the continued political hegemony of the vozhd. Needless to say, considerations of ideology would again take a backseat to the requisites of survival.

Now, once more, the Comintern was mobilized in the service of the "Socialist Fatherland". In Europe and the Americas, the Communist parties shifted from a policy of defeatism to a violently pro-war stance. Thus began a new era of Popular Frontism, pursued this time on an even more exaggerated scale than had been the case in the late 30's. And, once again, the strategy reaped significant
gains. This period was to mark the high point of Stalinist influence in Latin America. Widespread sympathy for the Allied cause could not but rub off on the Communists, who everywhere associated themselves vociferously and without reservation with the struggle against the Axis. Moreover, their appeal was immeasurably enhanced by the abandonment of all pretense of revolutionary activity. Marxist slogans were dropped; the cloak of nationalism and democracy embraced. In many instances, the names of the Communist parties themselves were changed so as to remove the designation "Communist". The object now was to maintain the stability of the hemisphere and to mobilize all potential sources of support for the war effort. Consequently, those who continued to argue that the struggle against Hitler should not take absolute precedence over economic or political reforms were denounced as Fascists or Trotskyites. In the field of labor activities, the general Communist position was to uphold the status quo: no provocation of strikes, no agitation for wage increases.

Certainly, the wartime collaboration made for some curious bedfellows. In Venezuela, for instance, the Communists supported the dictator Isaias Medina Angarita and fought to the end to prevent his overthrow by a popular uprising supported by the army. In Cuba, first Juan Marinello, then Carlos Raphael Rodriguez, joined the Batista Cabinet as Ministers Without Portfolio. In Brazil, the Communists succeeded early in 1945 in coming to terms with Getulio Vargas, who was eager to have their support for his effort
to be named "constitutional President" through the electoral process. But perhaps strangest of all was the alliance between the Dominican comrades and the most oppressive of all the hemisphere's tyrants, Generalissimo Rafael Leonidas Trujillo. Trujillo, like Vargas, was anxious to prove himself a "democrat" by going through the motions of holding elections. Though the Communists had no chance of winning, they could nevertheless serve as a useful token opposition to help legitimize the whole affair. Thus, they were given a certain freedom of action to run their own candidate. Once used, however, they were no longer needed. The dictator sent them scurrying off into exile.

Notwithstanding such occasional setbacks, this was an era of unprecedented gains. The apparent harmony between the United States and the forces of international Communism could not but make a deep impression on Latin American governments of widely disparate philosophies. Living a largely dependent existence in the shadow of the "Colossus", their ruling elites were all too accustomed to looking to the North for political guidance. Thus would the Communists, taking full advantage of the benevolence of the times, make enormous inroads among the trade unions of a dozen nations, most notably Cuba, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Mexico, Colombia, Peru and Venezuela. In 1944, they would capture control of the only area-wide labor organization, the Confederation of Workers of Latin America. At the height of their influence, during the early post-war years, their parties would be legal or at least tolerated in almost every
country in the hemisphere. They would have members of Congress in Cuba, Chile, Bolivia, Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, Brazil, Uruguay and Costa Rica. Indeed, during the latter months of 1946, the Chilean Communists would place three of their rank in the cabinet of the Radical President Gonzalez Videla. Even at a moment when their national and international environments were somewhat less than entirely propitious, they would still control about 50% of Chile's organized labor. Finally, in 1947 total Communist party membership in Latin America would reach a peak of between 330-375,000, and their candidates would poll almost a million votes in various national elections.

Moreover, added to these inroads were the gains made by Soviet conventional diplomacy. Prior to World War II, political relations had been established with only three countries in the region, and in two of these instances—Mexico and Uruguay—formal contacts had been broken off during the turmoil of the 1930's. In the case of the third—Colombia—the initial recognition, granted in 1935, had never been followed up by the exchange of diplomatic missions. Only with the rise of East-West cooperation, borne of the common Fascist threat, did a breakthrough of sorts occur in the Kremlin's insolation from the hemisphere. In the brief period of four years (1942-1946), diplomatic relations were established with no less than fourteen Latin American governments. At the peak of its success, before the wartime spirit of good feeling between East and West had begun to wane, the USSR would be formally
Table 1
Diplomatic Relations of the Independent Latin American States
with the USSR Prior to the Cuban Revolution*

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*As presented in International Affairs, these figures remain strangely incomplete. El Salvador is not mentioned as having granted the USSR recognition in 1945. This oddity may be due to the fact that no provisions were ever made between the two countries for resident diplomatic missions. Subsequently, when the Osorio regime came to power in 1952 it issued a formal denial (not an abrogation) of relations with the Soviet government and was thereupon dropped from Moscow's diplomatic list. This is not an entirely satisfactory explanation, however, inasmuch as a number of other countries made similar declarations in the postwar years, yet continued to be recognized by the USSR. Of the governments listed in this chart, only Mexico, Uruguay and Argentina retained active (as opposed to merely formal) diplomatic relations with the Soviets by 1955.

Source: International Affairs (Moscow), no. 3 (March 1967), pp. 110, 112.
Table 2

Trade of Twenty Latin American Republics with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe
(millions of US dollars)

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1938</th>
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<td>6,493.0</td>
<td>7,017.0</td>
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<td>24.2</td>
<td>92.0</td>
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<td>1.1</td>
<td>12.4</td>
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<td><strong>IMPORTS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Imports from Soviet Union and Eastern Europe*</td>
<td>30.7</td>
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<td>34.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Soviet Union</td>
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*Eastern Europe here includes Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland and Rumania.

recognized by fifteen Latin American republics, eight of which would host resident Soviet missions. In addition, the Kremlin's economic contacts with the region also improved somewhat. During the prewar era, trade had been practically non-existent. Now, while direct commercial links remained insignificant, the absorption of Eastern Europe into the Soviet sphere of influence gave Moscow indirect ties with the hemisphere that it had not had before.

In retrospect, however, these gains were not as impressive as they might seem at first glance. In a number of cases, political relations remained a mere formality, and diplomatic missions were never exchanged. Moreover, the overall level of economic contact remained relatively low. Exports to and imports from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe accounted for only 1% of Latin America's total trade, hardly enough to provide Moscow with significant bargaining leverage. Political not economic considerations had been responsible for the commercial growth that had occurred. And once the political situation changed, economic relations would also undergo alteration.

In point of fact, with the opening of the Cold War the fruits of accommodation would rapidly shrivel and die. During the eight years between 1947-1954—an era which witnessed the final phase of Stalin's domination of the international Communist movement and the resurgence of dictatorship throughout much of Latin America—all but three of the fifteen republics that had recognized the Soviet government would break off diplomatic
relations or deny that such contacts existed. In each case, a specific grievance would be cited to justify the action. More than anything else, however, the move to cut formal ties with Moscow reflected the wave of anti-Communist policies being adopted by the Latin American regimes, most of which were anxious to curry favor with Washington. By 1952, direct trade with the Soviets would drop to almost the zero point.

Moreover, setbacks in conventional diplomacy were to be accompanied by a similar decline in the strength and influence of the regional Communist parties. During World War II, the relations between the Soviet and Latin American comrades had been subjected to considerable disruption, as the latter had been left pretty much to their own devices to work out the details of local strategy and tactics. The men in the Kremlin had more important things to worry about. In fact, in his desire to further the cause of Allied collaboration, Stalin in May 1943 dissolved the Comintern altogether. With the cessation of hostilities, however, Soviet strategy again underwent radical change. Now, with the rise of the Cold War, the desire to once more bend the international movement to the shifting course of Muscovite foreign policy dictated an attempt to reassert Stalinist controls. In Latin America, Luis Carlos Prestes and other prominent comrades were made to give a pledge of allegiance, to wit: that in case of war between their own nations and the Soviet Union, they would side with the latter.
Now, the Latin American Communists would be forced to repudiate the "Browder deviation", with its conciliatorist approach towards Capitalism, and follow the Soviet lead into strident opposition against US imperialism and its allies throughout the hemisphere. The outcome was predictable. Almost everywhere the parties suffered sharp declines in membership and influence, as the forces of anti-Communism began to organize and unite against them. In many instances, they were either proscribed outright or their activities curtailed. Thus did the Brazilian Party, having made enormous gains at the ballot box, find itself outlawed, its elected officials expelled from Congress. Similarly, in Cuba the Autentico government moved to oust the Communists from their hegemony over the Confederation of Workers. In Argentina, the peronistas forced the Party underground and seized control of the unions. In Chile, the showplace of the Popular Front, the Party was declared illegal. In early 1951, a new hemisphere-wide labor structure was created, the Inter-American Regional Organization of Workers, which would soon dwarf the rapidly declining, Communist-dominated Confederation of Latin American Workers in membership, influence and prestige. By the following year, total party membership in the region had fallen to about 198,000.39

From Stalin to Khrushchev: The Beginnings of Transfer Culture Rationalization

In sum, it may be said that Stalinist policy towards Latin America was essentially an appendage of a more general or macrolevel
transfer culture strategy designed primarily to maintain and strengthen the Soviet state and social system and preserve the political hegemony of its ruling elite (more specifically, Joseph Stalin). This larger strategy, in turn, was subject to numerous shifts over time, as changes in their national and international environments subjected the men in the Kremlin to new opportunities, pressures and constraints, repeatedly inducing them to alter existing policies in order to effectively pursue the "higher needs" of the transfer culture. As this macrostrategy underwent evolution, so was Moscow's Latin American policy adjusted in accordance with those alterations.

In essence, therefore, Soviet policy towards the region was little more than a pale reflection of Soviet behavior towards other, more critical areas of the globe--most notably, Europe. Latin America was of only peripheral relevance at best to the requisites of system maintenance and elite hegemony. Moreover, Moscow's attitudes towards the continent were strongly affected by geographic fatalism, indifference and a profound ignorance of local conditions. Thus, policy was formulated not so much on the basis of the realities of Latin American society or even of Soviet experience with that society (i.e., on the perceived success or failure of existing and past strategies) as in reaction to the opportunities, pressures and constraints generated by other environments more directly affecting the critical functions of system maintenance and elite hegemony. Not surprisingly, since Moscow's policies were
so often detached from the Latin American realities to which they were applied, they tended to be ineffectual—largely irrelevant for purposes of promoting either Communist revolution or substantive Soviet influence or for weakening the hegemony of the "Colossus of the North".

Only with the dictator's demise would this futile pattern begin to undergo significant alteration. Only then would the processes of transfer culture rationalization gradually spread to the making of Latin American policy.

True, in certain other areas Moscow's foreign relations did exhibit some tentative signs of rationalization during the final years of Stalin's rule. As it became increasingly apparent that a strategy of inflexible Cold War militance and isolationism was becoming increasingly dysfunctional—that its risks and costs were growing and its effectiveness rapidly declining as Communist belligerence and expansionism gave rise to organized Western resistance (NATO, the Marshall Plan, the Berlin airlift, etc.)—voices of moderation and change began to be heard from within the Kremlin walls. In essence, these voices argued that the establishment of the "People's Democracies" and the triumph of Chinese Communism had at long last broken the bonds of "Capitalist encirclement". It was no longer necessary to approach the bourgeois world with indiscriminate, uncompromising hostility. Rather, a greater flexibility of tactics would enable the USSR to more effectively exploit the internal weaknesses of foreign Capitalism. Thus, public
opinion could be manipulated through such strategems as the "Peace Movement". The institutions of bourgeois democracy--parliaments, municipal governments, trade unions--could be used to rebuild local Communist followings. "Peaceful Coexistence" could be actively employed as a weapon to undermine Western solidarity. In the words of Georgi Malenkov: "If now, under conditions of a tense international situation, the North Atlantic bloc is rent with inner struggle and contradictions, a relaxation of this tension may lead to its disintegration."

Such views did not go unchallenged. From 1949 until Stalin's death in March 1953, Soviet foreign policy would be an uneasy mix of militance and flexibility. Certainly, Stalin himself could not have been unaware of the dangers inherent in moderation. After all, the legitimacy of his own totalitarian rule depended to no small extent on the maintenance of a high degree of international tension. Any major enduring reduction of Cold War hostilities would have had the effect of undermining the rationale for continuing control, sacrifice and vigilance. And that, in turn, would invite an unleashing of the forces of change that might have endangered the very existence of Stalinism, both in the Soviet Union and in its highly vulnerable Eastern European protective zone.

Thus, while Stalin was not averse to siding with the moderates when such tact promised strategic advantages abroad or political benefits at home his support was always carefully circumscribed by considerations of his own personal power and security. In point
of fact, his behavior suggests a willingness to play off moderates like Malenkov against militants like Vyacheslav Molotov, a tactic of divide and conquer that enabled him to maintain his own autocratic position while his subordinates maneuvered among themselves for primacy in the struggle for succession. Hence, the leftists continued to be given wide latitude to voice their warnings of impending imperialist aggression and to denounce those who claimed that "Capitalist encirclement" was a thing of the past: Such attitudes would only give rise to "complacency and lightheartedness and blunt the feeling of revolutionary vigilance." The imperialists could not be appeased by concessions. "Right-wing opportunism" would merely encourage them to increase the pressure on the Socialist camp. Rather, the "laws of the class struggle demand an intensification of the offensive against the positions of reaction. . . ." 45

Indeed, to judge by the propaganda campaign surrounding the infamous "Doctor's Plot", Stalin had every intention of using the spector of the "imperialist threat" as a pretext with which to launch yet another purge, one which might well have assumed the proportions of the Great Terror of the 1930's and which would most certainly have engulfed many of his associates in the Communist Party Presidium. 46 Le plus change, le plus meme.

Only with the autocrat's death would the floodgates of change be opened. With the substitution of collective leadership for one-man dictate, the men in the Kremlin gradually moved to
deal with a whole host of unsolved problems bequeathed them by the heritage of Stalinism. We cannot, of course, examine these trends in detail. That would require a separate volume in itself. Let us merely note that the rationalization process would be on-going, uneven and frequently painful. The re-evaluation and jettisoning of old beliefs, values and behavior patterns in the search for new and more effective transfer culture doctrines and strategies would take place in an atmosphere of uncertainty and experimentation. The Soviet leaders had no blueprint for the future. They were entering uncharted waters, faced with problems both critical and pressing, rarely given to easy solutions. Not surprisingly, their policies tended to be piecemeal and pragmatic: To the widespread longing for an end to Stalinist repression, the regime responded with a pledge to respect the principles of "Socialist legality" and the rights of minority nationalities; to shortfalls in agricultural production with a scheme to plough up millions of acres of "Virgin Lands" in Central Asia; to the desire for greater freedom of expression with the "Thaw"; to the dangers and deadlocks of Cold War with new overtures to the West, including concrete measures designed to ease international tensions (the ending of the Korean War, the conclusion of the Austrian peace treaty, the Geneva summit, etc.); to the challenge of Titoism with an attempt at rapprochement . . . . The culmination of these and other trends towards de-Stalinization was Khrushchev's Secret Speech to the Twentieth Party Congress in February 1956. Their consequence: The challenge to
Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe via Poland and Hungary and to Khrushchev's political position at home by the "anti-Party group".

The rationalization process had gotten out of control. Yet, notwithstanding these growing pains--indeed, in spite of a whole panopoly of constraints posed by ideological values and dogmas, fear, ignorance and opposition from vested interests opposed to change--it continued to develop.

In the area of our primary concern--Soviet policy toward Latin America, in general, and Cuba, in particular--transfer culture rationalization was largely a byproduct of Moscow's evolving attitudes towards the newly emerging nations of the "Third World". The post-war breakdown of Western colonialism had presented the men in the Kremlin with a golden opportunity to expand their influence abroad at the expense of the Capitalist enemy. Unfortunately (for them), the processes of adjustment and rationalization had been severely hampered by the rigidity of their own perceptions. The official view was that the world was irrevocably divided into two great opposing camps, the "imperialist", headed by the United States, and the "peace-loving", headed by the USSR.\textsuperscript{47} The struggle between these antagonistic blocs would dominate the next stage of history and serve as "the chief moving force of the development of our age toward Communism." Between these camps there could be no "third force", no neutralism or nonalignment. Such pretensions were nothing more than an insidious cover with which the imperialists and their local agents sought to
disguise the continuing reality of colonial hegemony, to attack
Communism and defend Capitalism. 48

Thus entrapped in the bonds of insecurity, dogma and
ignorance, the Stalinists in the Kremlin remained largely oblivious
to the revolutionary nature of the changes that were occurring
in the colonial world. Soviet writings on the subject "tended to
be stereotyped, dull, vitriolic, and virtually useless either for
research or as guidance for any rational policy." 49 More often
than not, strategy was misguided and self-defeating. Instead of
cooperating with and exploiting the forces of bourgeois nationalism
in the struggle for political independence, Moscow excoriated
leaders like Nehru, Sukarno and U Nu and encouraged local Communist
uprisings against them. The consequence: Communist isolation
from the increasingly dominant tide of Asian nationalism. Only in
China and Vietnam were Marxist-Leninist parties able to harness
the forces of nationalism to their own purpose and win power.
Elsewhere—in the Philippines, Malaya, Indonesia, even in Hyderabad,
India—Communist uprisings sooner or later came to naught. In
general, Soviet efforts to penetrate the area were characterized
by a fairly consistent pattern of failure.

But with the freeing (only partial, it is true) of the
Muscovite transfer culture from the insecurities and perceptual
blinders of Stalinism, a major re-evaluation of Communist policies
in Asia, Africa and Latin America was set in motion. It was fairly
obvious that some kind of modus vivendi had to be reached with the
newly emerging nations of the "Third World". Fundamental changes in the international power structure were occurring that could no longer be ignored if the struggle with the West--still uppermost in the minds of Soviet policymakers--was to be pursued with optimum success. In the words of Thomas Thornton:

...The great shift in Soviet attitude of the mid-1950's can well be described as a coming-to-terms with the national bourgeoisie, on both the theoretical and the practical political level. Nehru, Sukarno, Nasser, Nkrumah, Houphouet-Boigny—even Peron—were enemies of international Communism mainly because the Soviets chose to regard them as such. In most cases, all that was required to alter its role was recognition that the national bourgeoisie was fundamentally opposed to imperialism and an acceptable ally of Communism. The Soviet policy shift made this recognition and the Third World was brought into being almost overnight. Realization of the options that were opening up as a result of the emergence of genuinely independent new states and "national liberation movements" made possible the most fruitful Soviet foreign policy move since the period of the Popular Front and World War II.50

But the strategic shift from isolation to courtship required a corresponding change in doctrine and tactics and the development of more reliable sources of information on which to formulate policy. In the fall of 1955, Khrushchev and Bulganin descended on India, Burma and Afghanistan, dramatizing the new Soviet interest in Asia in a determined campaign of cajolery and foreign aid. This was something new. The concept of economic aid had been about as alien to Stalin as the two-party system. Shortly thereafter, at the Twentieth Party Congress, Khrushchev signalled that the time had come for a major theoretical and academic re-evaluation of the role of the national bourgeoisie and the underdeveloped nations
(especially the peoples of the Orient) in the present historical epoch. 51

The upshot of this fundamentally political stimulus was the beginning of a new era of scholarly research on the "Third World" and the end of the dogmatic refusal of Soviet doctrine to recognize the breakdown of the old colonial order. In fact, it now began to be argued that this disintegration was but a symptom of the deepening "General Crisis of Capitalism", which had now reached its third and most advanced stage yet. An enormous "peace zone" or "anti-imperialist bloc" was said to be forming, including both "Socialist" and "non-Socialist" states and embracing territories containing over half of the world's population. Dozens of countries that were formerly part of the "reserve force of imperialism" were breaking away from the West and moving in the direction of the Socialist camp. True, this was a heterogeneous grouping. Not all of its leaders were sympathetic to or even tolerant of Communism. Still, such national liberation movements were basically progressive in that it was their historical function to weaken imperialism by destroying its foreign empire. At this decisive moment in history, therefore, it would be the task of Soviet foreign policy to use those means at its disposal--diplomacy, trade, "disinterested" aid, propaganda, cultural exchange--to encourage this process and attract these newly emerging nations into the Socialist camp. 52
Thus, "Peaceful Co-existence" in no sense implied a live-and-let-live relationship with the Capitalist world—only a determination to restrict conflict and competition to methods short of all-out war. The development of nuclear weapons had made the latter far too hazardous to seriously contemplate.

We shall have more to say about this experience in theory-building as we go along, for this issue of how to secure the transition to Socialism in newly emergent countries governed by representatives of the national bourgeoisie would pose a major dilemma for Communist doctrine and strategy for years to come. In an attempt to exert ideological influence over these regimes, the Soviets would develop the concepts of "national democracy" and "revolutionary democracy", the model for which would be... the Cuban Revolution. But these developments were still several years off. For the moment, let us turn our attention to the evolution of Moscow's Latin American strategy, for there the process of transfer culture rationalization was to have a critical impact on Soviet involvement with the forces of nascent Castroism.

Soviet Policy Towards Latin America, 1953-1958: The Beginnings of Rationalization

Just as the death of Joseph Stalin opened the door to a major re-evaluation of Soviet doctrine and strategy towards the newly emerging nations of Asia and Africa, so too did it initiate the processes of rationalization in Moscow's Latin American policy.
In effect, during the last years of his life Stalin had written off the region as a viable area of interest, a casualty of Cold War politics and geographical location. Concentrating on those areas of most direct relevance to the USSR, the Kremlin studiously "avoided any appearance of a many-sided frontal attack on the Old World's positions that would increase American suspicions and counter-measures." Moreover, isolation was accompanied by a categorical refusal to believe that these states were anything more than hopelessly reactionary members of the counterrevolutionary camp—a "solid and obedient army of the United States", anxious to promote foreign wars for their own economic profit. To the Soviet leader, the entire Latin American bourgeoisie was a "primary enemy of the liberation movement, incapable of joining in the struggle for national sovereignty and independence."  

No doubt the outbreak of Cold War could not but have had a negative impact on Communist fortunes in the region, given the dominance and hostility of the "Colossus of the North". Still, it seems equally clear that that impact would have been far less damaging had it not been for the rigidity of Stalinist perceptions and behavior patterns. After all, Latin America was hardly invulnerable to Communist penetration. Indeed, the period following World War II marked "a new era of social and revolutionary insurgency" on the continent. All the old agrarian, industrial and social conflicts now reappeared with a vengeance, bringing with them a new cycle of political instability. This was more than a return to the
ancient practice of settling narrow power disputes by *golpe*. The political revolutions that were occurring in Argentina, Guatemala, Venezuela and Bolivia were "reflections of radical economic change and deep social tensions. They signalled the crumbling of the traditional order."\(^{57}\)

Yet, for all the revolutionary undercurrents that were shaking the continent, the local Communist parties, bound in the straitjacket of Stalinism, remained politically impotent, isolated from the most important events of the time:

... Not in Guatemala in 1944, in Bolivia in 1952, or in Cuba in 1959, nor in any of the other political convulsions in Venezuela, Argentina, Colombia, or Peru did the Communists play an outstanding role. The initiative, which fell instead into other hands, opened up political horizons to nationalist and democratic parties which, like Acción Democrática in Venezuela, the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (MNR) in Bolivia, the Christian Democrats in Chile, Acción Popular in Peru, or Liberación Nacional in Costa Rica went on to become decisive forces in their respective countries.\(^{58}\)

Moreover, not only did the Communists remain isolated from the increasingly powerful forces of bourgeois democracy, nationalism and social reform, whose leaders--Cold War politics notwithstanding--had never really forgiven them for the "betrayals" of the "Third Period", they were also fundamentally estranged from the more radical elements among the new political generation that was just then emerging from the universities. The fact of the matter was that youthful idealists seeking to bring about revolutionary changes in the societies in which they lived had to do so outside the framework of the orthodox Communist parties. The
leaders of those thoroughly bureaucratized structures, relatively comfortable and increasingly cautious in their middle age, regarded the "petty bourgeois putschism" of the young with suspicion and unease. Indeed, they viewed it as a threat to their own security, for they knew all too well that revolutionary violence would be followed by counterrevolutionary retribution and that the latter tended not to distinguish between various shades of the leftist bacilli. In return, youthful radicals more often than not perceived Communist opportunism and passivity as proof of revolutionary bankruptcy: These dull, plodding old men were surely nothing more than bureaucratic extensions of a foreign power, bound to serve its interests. Hardly a force capable of performing the critical tasks of a revolutionary vanguard.

Thus, while neo-Marxist and anti-imperialist views spread rapidly throughout the continent during this era, this diffusion was by no means a product of orthodox Communism, in fact was often directed against it. In the words of Luis Aguilar:

"This apparent absence of revolutionary dynamism intensified the Marxist criticism of the Communist parties and extended it to the new groups that now began to germinate on the continent. Up to 1945, it may be said that the basic and virtually exclusive nucleus of Marxism in Latin America was formed by the Communist parties. . . . After the war, the situation began to change. The Communists had to cope with the increasing attack of a more varied and extensive left, which censured them not for being Marxists but for not acting upon their own Marxist postulates."

These were the forces of the Jacobin Left, frustrated, fragmented, increasingly alienated from the existing political order and from
the Communists, whom they perceived as being a part of it. From their ranks came Fidel Castro.

Be that as it may, in the wake of Stalin's death the Soviets cautiously moved to expand their influence in the region. In 1953, two significant developments occurred: A trade pact, including credits totalling up to $30 million, was concluded with the Peron regime in Argentina, and more than a thousand Latin Americans visited Communist bloc countries or attended meetings of Communist front organizations outside the hemisphere. The following year two important articles in Kommunist and Pravda confirmed that the theory of "geographic fatalism" was undergoing revision. The first of these, a book review co-authored by A. M. Sivolobov, an important Party official charged with monitoring the Latin American Communist parties, argued that the Tenth Inter-American Conference, held in Caracas in March, had demonstrated the weakness of US hegemony in the region. Successful Latin American opposition to the United States could be expected in the period to come.

Indeed, it is clear that the men in the Kremlin had decided that the time was ripe to actively intervene in the increasingly favorable situation that was developing in Guatemala. There, in the midst of a major social revolution led by the forces of bourgeois-democratic radicalism, the local Communists had made substantial headway in infiltrating the critical institutions of power. True, the Arbenz regime was hardly "Communist-dominated", 
as many of its critics charged. Only four of the fifty-six deputies in the national legislature were Party members; none sat in the cabinet. But the Communists controlled the General Confederation of Workers, which contained most of the principal labor unions of the country, and their influence in the government was far from insignificant. Both the legislative and executive branches were honeycombed with non-Party radicals willing to join hands with the Communists in promoting the common goals of social revolution and national independence. Communists and their "fellow-travellers" held key positions in the National Agrarian Department, the Ministry of Labor and the Social Security Institute. And the two top leaders of the Party, Jose Manuel Fortuny and Victor Manuel Gutierrez, had ready access to the President.62

In short, there was considerable reason for optimism. Moreover, in retrospect it is clear that the Guatemalan experience was an important test case for Moscow. If the men in the Kremlin were just beginning to break out of the psychological bonds of "geographic fatalism", they still had no clear understanding of the opportunities and constraints awaiting them on the continent. How vulnerable was the United States, really? Granted that Latin disillusionment with the "Colossus" was on the rise—that even within "Establishment" circles there was a growing feeling that Washington was too busy crusading against Communism to pay much attention to the needs of its poor neighbors to the south—could such sentiments be exploited to promote substantive Soviet
influence in the hemisphere? More specifically, would the United States allow a genuine revolution—one that challenged both the traditional social order and the North American political and economic interests that supported it—to survive? Was gunboat diplomacy truly a thing of the past?

The Soviets decided to find out. As domestic opposition arose to the Arbenz government and particularly to its attempts to transform Guatemalan feudalism through agrarian reform, charges of "Communist subversion" grew increasingly strident. Now, the United States moved to mobilize hemispheric opinion against this perceived threat. At the Inter-American Conference in Caracas a resolution was passed affirming the resolve of the member states not to allow any branch of "international Communism" to be established in the western hemisphere. Exile camps, organized under the auspices of the Central Intelligence Agency, were set up in Nicaragua and Honduras to prepare for a coming invasion.

In response, Moscow approved the shipment of some 2,000 tons of Eastern European arms to the Arbenz regime. In May, these arrived at Puerto Barrios aboard the Swedish steamship Alfhem. Before they could be put to use, however, an expeditionary force under the command of Colonel Carlos Castillo Armas crossed the Guatemalan border. Armed resistance was feeble. After a few minor clashes, the military withdrew its support for the Arbenz government, and the regime collapsed. Meanwhile, Soviet attempts to get the United Nations Security Council to consider this blatant act
of "imperialist aggression" were effectively stymied.

The lesson was clear, or at least seemed to be: The United States was still the dominant power in the hemisphere and would use any means at its disposal to prevent the establishment of revolutionary governments that would threaten its political hegemony, challenge its economic interests and open the door to major Communist advances.

Thus was the traditional Muscovite predisposition towards "geographic fatalism" reinforced. When towards the end of the decade a nascent revolutionary regime was established in Cuba, the men in the Kremlin, operating on the assumption that the United States would once again intervene militarily, would initially offer that government even less help than Arbenz had received.

But if the Guatemalan episode effectively dashed Moscow's hopes of scoring a major short-term expansion of Communist influence in the hemisphere, it did not produce a full-scale retreat into Stalinist isolationism. Instead, the Soviets settled down to a long-range strategy of gradual penetration in line with the doctrine of "Peaceful Co-existence". Thus, in January 1956 Premier Bulganin, in an interview with the Spanish-language magazine, Vision, called for an expansion of diplomatic, economic and cultural contacts between the Communist world and the nations of Latin America. Subsequently, this call was reiterated by other top Soviet officials, including Nikita Khrushchev. Recognizing the breadth, if not the intensity, of the discontent that was spreading through the continent,
Moscow chose to work with the "Establishment", the existing elites, rather than place its faith in the revolutionary opposition. In the words of one commentator:

The great world-wide movement for emancipation from colonial and semi-colonial oppression...is spreading in diverse forms to the countries of Latin America... Not only their working masses, but to a considerable extent even their ruling circles, are becoming imbued with a sense of national dignity, or, as the imperialists call it "hypersensitive nationalism". The Latin American peoples are increasingly united in their opposition to the sway of foreign capital, in their demand for an independent national policy, peaceful development, and rapid economic progress for their countries. It is natural that in these legitimate aspirations they can count on the sympathy, understanding and willingness to render unselfish assistance only from countries which themselves have suffered the oppression of foreign capital, won their liberation and have advanced sufficiently far economically to be able to help those who are seeking to cast off the colonial yoke and to build up their national industry. (Emphasis added)65

Influence rather than power was to remain the byword of Soviet Latin American policy.

Hence, the pattern of Moscow's conventional diplomacy. Beginning in 1953 with the previously-mentioned trade and credit agreement with Argentina, the Soviet bloc sharply accelerated its commercial contacts with the region. In the short space of two years, trade expanded almost fivefold over 1953 levels. (See Table III) In order to attain maximum impact, these efforts were concentrated in four primary targets: Argentina, Brazil, Cuba and Uruguay. Moreover, other means of communication were simultaneously developed to complement this activity: Radio broadcasts to the hemisphere were greatly increased; magazine and newspaper circulation
### Table 3

Trade of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe with Latin America (millions of dollars)

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stepped up; cultural exchange programs initiated. Thousands of Latin Americans visited Soviet bloc countries or attended Communist front meetings outside the hemisphere. In 1956, Communist diplomatic missions embarked on a repatriation campaign designed to convince Eastern European immigrants to return to their homelands.

But while such activities were fairly successful as propaganda devices, they had their limitations. As long as the Cold War flourished, local governments would prove averse to establishing diplomatic relations with the Communist world. After all, Guatemala had been an object lesson for them, as well as for Moscow. Thus, by 1958-59 only seventeen bloc missions would be operating in five Latin American countries. Similarly, Soviet commercial penetration was to prove difficult for both political and economic reasons. These were, after all, dependent nations. If they carried a flirtation with the Soviet bloc too far, they would risk frightening off foreign investors and damaging their vital economic links with the United States. Furthermore, Communist industries could not always supply the kind of sophisticated capital equipment that Latin America needed, and in those markets where they could compete (e.g., agricultural machinery) US and European manufacturers were more often than not already firmly entrenched. And then, of course, there was the fear that spare parts might not always be available in the future. Hence, after the initial surge of the 1953-55 period trade declined, then began to level off at an average of slightly more than $200 million a
year. (Table III) Early promises of long-term, low-interest credit and other forms of aid went largely unfulfilled. Not until late 1958 did Moscow offer large-scale credit to a Latin American government (Argentina), and in that case the loan went largely unutilized.\(^{69}\) Ironically, for the most part Latin America issued short-term, current account loans to the Soviet bloc, rather than vice versa.\(^{70}\)

As for the region's Communist parties, their position remained essentially unchanged. The strategy of "dual Communism" was in vogue. In a number of countries the local parties split in two, with a legally recognized "official" organization supporting the government in power and an "unofficial" body usually working underground against it. But such opportunism rarely had much effect. Alienated from both government and opposition (including the revolutionary left), plagued by impotence and stagnation, the Communists (post-1954) continued to be a major force only in Argentina, Chile and Brazil.\(^{71}\) Theirs was the politics of middle-aged security and bureaucratic self-perpetuation, not that of the revolutionary seizure of power.

In sum, it may be said that these initial efforts to rationalize Soviet Latin American policy, while quite modest, were not insignificant in that they resurrected Moscow's interest in the region and stimulated the development of a strategy that was specifically designed to fit the realities of the local conditions to which it was to be applied. This was something new. For decades, Latin American policy had been little more than an appendage
of a more general macro-level strategy designed to meet the
Kremlin's objectives in other, more critical areas of the globe.
Now, a genuine learning process had been initiated. Whereas under
Stalin research on Latin America had been reduced to a veritable
shambles, now historians and social scientists were being called
on to sharpen their expertise and re-evaluate the sterile, stereo-
typical interpretations of the past.\textsuperscript{72} Granted, this had not yet
produced much in the way of tangible gains. Latin America was still
a low-priority area in the Muscovite scheme of things, and under-
standably so. Moreover, policy continued to be seriously con-
strained by an enormous ignorance and by the psychological remnants
of geographic fatalism. Nevertheless, the rigidity of the Kremlin's
perceptions and behavior patterns had undergone a remarkable ameliora-
tion. And this was symptomatic of an increasing general receptivity
to the exploitation of opportunities that would probably have been
ignored or badly mishandled in Stalin's day.

Enter the Cuban Revolution. We shall presently examine
how the Soviets would react to the opportunities that were beginning
to open up on that isle. For the moment, it is enough to note that
even on the eve of Castro's takeover Moscow had little expectation
of making dramatic short-term gains in the region. Barring the
unexpected, only a long-range loosening of Yankee hegemony seemed
likely. But the unexpected was just around the corner and would
soon present the Soviets with their greatest opportunity yet to
extend their influence in Latin America. And, as the men in the
Kremlin would learn soon enough, with this opportunity would come attendant risks, costs and frustrations.
Chapter Four

FOOTNOTES

1V. I. Lenin, Works (Moscow, 1946), XXIX, 487.


3Specifically, a reference to his state of mind on the eve of the "Doctors' Plot". The last foreigner to visit him, in February 1953, noted that he was doodling wolves.

4A point which has been made by Marxist critics, both official and unofficial. See, e.g., Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" and Roy Medvedyev's Let History Judge, The Origins and Consequences of Stalinism (New York, 1971).

5It is worthwhile noting that these qualities are by no means incompatible with paranoia. In the words of Robert C. Tucker: "Not only are 'careful preparation, planning and system' not foreign to individuals of this category; they are among the characteristic attributes of them. With mental powers fully intact, the paranoid organizes his life around methodical planning and scheming to strike at those who, he unshakably believes, are doing just this to him. Stalin's preparation of the events of 1936-1938 in Russia gives every sign of having been an historic case in point." In The Soviet Political Mind (New York, 1971), p. 116.

6A number of works not footnoted in the coming sections have proven valuable to this research. The most notable of these are: Victor Alba's Historia del Comunismo en America Latina (Mexico, D.F., 1954); Boris Goldenberg, Kommunismus in Lateinamerika (Stuttgart, 1971); Donald L. Herman, ed., The Communist Tide in Latin America: Bibliography, The Post-War Years, 1945-1960 (Los Angeles, 1962); Leo Okinshevich, comp., and Robert G. Carlton, ed., Latin America in Soviet Writings: A Bibliography, 2 vols. (Baltimore, 1966); Karl M. Schmitt, Communism in Mexico (Austin, 1965); Donald L. Herman, The Comintern in Mexico (Washington, D.C., 1974); Herman Ramirez Necochea, Origen y Formacion del Partido Comunista de Chile (Santiago, 1965); and Jorge Abelardo Ramos, Historia del Stalinismo en la Argentina (n.c., 1969).
The classic statement, of course, being Lenin's Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism.

Thus, for instance, Lenin told M. N. Roy at the Second Congress of the Comintern (1920) that "there were more urgent tasks which must have priority. It would be long before revolution could succeed in the New World. Conditions might mature in the near future. But American imperialism was on the alert to intervene, as it had done in the past." In Roy's Memoirs (Bombay, 1964), p. 346.


G. N. Kolomiets, ed., The Political Parties of Latin America (Moscow, 1965).

International Press Correspondence, July 25 and August 13, 1928.


International Press Correspondence, August 8, 1928.


Aguilar, pp. 17-18. Both the Program of the International and the Theses on the revolutionary movement in colonial and semi-colonial countries that were adopted at the Sixth Congress may be found in Jane Degas, ed., The Communist International, 1919-1943, Documents (London, 1956), II, 471 ff.

20"But he knew his Boss. One must never work full force for Stalin, never go all out. He did not tolerate the flat failure to carry out his orders, but he hated thoroughly successful performance because he saw in it a diminution of his own uniqueness. No one but himself must be able to do anything flawlessly.

So even when he seemed to be straining in harness, Abakumov was pulling at half-strength--and so was everyone else." Op. cit., p. 106.

The view here is not dissimilar to Trotsky's portrait of Stalin as the "personification of the bureaucracy" and "the outstanding mediocrity in the Party." See, especially, My Life (New York, 1960), pp. 481, 506, 512-513; and The Revolution Betrayed (New York, 1965).

21This is not the place to discuss the psychopathology of Stalinism. For those interested in detailed treatments of that subject, see Robert C. Tucker, Stalin as Revolutionary, 1879-1929; A Study in History and Personality (New York, 1973); and Gustav Bychowski, "Joseph V. Stalin: Paranoia and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat", in The Psychoanalytic Interpretation of History, ed. Benjamin B. Wolman (New York, 1971), pp. 115-49.

22D. Bruce Jackson, Castro, the Kremlin, and Communism in Latin America (Baltimore, 1969), pp. 8-9.

23One recalls the comment of Ernst Halperin that there is "probably no conservative or liberal party in all of Latin America that has not staged more insurrections and incited more civil wars than the Communists." In Nationalism and Communism in Chile (Cambridge, 1965), p. 13.

24Ulam, p. 196.

25Ibid., p. 195


We know now that this plan, which was actually launched several months prior to the Seventh Congress and in collaboration with the Latin American delegates who were already in Moscow (the Congress had been postponed from the end of 1934 to the summer of 1935), represented a compromise between the views of Dimitri Manuilsky, the chief proponent of armed violence, and those of Georgi Dimitrov, the apostle of the Popular Front. For details, see Eudosio Ravines, La Gran Estafa (Santiago, 1957), pp. 255-57.


Aguilar, p. 31.

International Press Correspondence, May 1, 1937.

Alexander, p. 27.


Though about half of these would be captured by the Brazilian Communists, who during a brief period of legality between 1945-47 were able to build their popular support to an unprecedented level. See Dorothy Dillon, International Communism and Latin America, Perspectives and Prospects (Gainesville, 1962), p. 12. Also, Poppino, pp. 194-95.

Poppino, p. 231.


This was, however, an idea that had been in the wind for some time. Thus, in 1938, Manuilsky had informed the Conference of Latin American Communist parties, meeting in Moscow: "If the Communist International needs to be thrown overboard to save the ship, it will disappear as the First International, founded by Marx, disappeared once it had ceased to serve the purpose for which it was created." Ravines, The Yenan Way, p. 260.


Poppino, p. 231.
Thus, for instance, Stephen Glisson writes that although the Chilean Popular Front "represented a considerable tactical success for the Chilean Communists and the new Comintern line, it is not easy to see what practical advantage Moscow reaped from it. The Chilean Popular Front, unlike its European counterparts, was not anti-Fascist—its activities were mainly electoral alliances, the former dictator Carlos Ibáñez and the small local Nazi Party—nor did the Popular Front Government, which only declared war on the Axis on the eve of the allied victory, offer the Soviet Union any help in the Second World War." Op. cit., p. 20.

See, for instance, Boris Ponomarev's major article commemorating the thirtieth anniversary of Lenin's "Left-Wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder", in Pravda, April 27, 1950.

Speech to the fifth session of the Supreme Soviet, August 8, 1953, in Kommunist, no. 12 (August, 1953), p. 27.


Pravda, February 6, 1953.


Robert C. Tucker has stated the above argument in somewhat stronger terms: "It is true, as some Western scholars have suggested, that, especially from 1949 on, there were certain indications from Soviet quarters and elsewhere of a possible impending shift in or softening of the foreign policy line. But it does not follow that the policy changes that began on the morrow of Stalin's death were the fruition of a new trend of policy that began under his own auspices toward the close of his life. Evidence adduced in the above-mentioned essay shows that in his final years, months, and even weeks, he fought against such a trend. He was engaged in a determined and desperate struggle against change, against forces within his own regime that were pressing for an international detente and realignment of policy. His last published work was in part a polemic against these forces. And his concluding policy act—the abortive case of the Kremlin doctors—was, as I have attempted to show, a calculated effort to demonstrate and dramatize the impossibility of detente, the necessity of steadfastly
persevering in his cold war against the West." In The Soviet Political Mind, pp. xi-xii. The essay referred to is contained in pp. 87-102.


50 Ibid., pp. 17-18.


52 The first thorough examination of the general theoretical remarks made by Khrushchev at the Twentieth Party Congress was that of V. Samyov, "The Disintegration of the Imperialist Colonial System and Questions of International Relations", Kommunist, no. 18 (December, 1956), 97-114. See also, M. S. Dragilev, Materialy Vsesoiuznogo Soveshchaniia Zavedulushchikh Kafedram Obshchestvennykh Nauk (Moscow, 1958).

53 Ulam, p. 457.


56 Aguilar, p. 37.

58 Aguilar, p. 38.


60 Dillon, p. 15.

61 V. Ermolaev, S. Semenov and A. Sivolobov, "Serious Mistakes in a Book about the Workers' Movement in Latin America", Kommunist, no. 7 (May, 1954), pp. 120-27. The basic themes of which were reiterated in a prominent article in Pravda (May 10, 1954), authored by Otto Kuusinen, a veteran Comintern official for some twenty years.

62 Dillon, p. 13. For more detailed information, see Penetration of the Political Institutions of Guatemala by the International Communist Movement. (Washington, D.C., 1954); Intervention of International Communism in Latin America, Department of State Publication 5556, Inter-American Series 48 (Washington, D.C. 1954); A Case History of Communist Penetration: Guatemala, Department of State Publication 6465, Inter-American Series 52 (Washington, D.C., 1957); Daniel James, Red Design for the Americas: Guatemalan Prelude (New York, 1954); J. D. Martz, Communist Infiltration in Guatemala (New York, 1956); and Ronald Schneider, Communism in Guatemala, 1944-1954 (New York, 1958). These are not, shall we say, the most objective and balanced accounts in the world. Thus, for instance, the allegedly liberal Mr. James blandly asserts that "the backward countries... have never experienced 'Yankee imperialism' for the simple reason that it does not exist..." (Op. cit., p. 158)


64 Pravda, January 17, 1956.

65 V. Volsky, "Latin America and the Socialist Countries", International Affairs (Moscow), no. 12 (December, 1956), p. 56.

66 A dramatic reflection of the new Soviet interest in the hemisphere may be seen in such statistics as the average number of radio hours broadcast to the region per week. In 1948, this level amounted to only 17.15 hours per week; by 1961, it had risen to 219 hours. For a detailed account of Communist bloc communications and cultural efforts, see Dillon, pp. 16-27; also, Frederick C. Barghoorn, The Soviet Cultural Offensive (Princeton, 1960), pp. 192-93, 216, 219-25; and Cissold, pp. 21-25.
Minimal progress, if any, over 1955 levels, when fifteen bloc missions were located in six Latin American countries. Dillon, pp. 28-29.

Clissold, p. 23.


Allen, p. 102.

The Argentine Communist Party enjoyed a period of sensational growth during these years. In 1952, it had perhaps 30,000 members; in 1957, 90,000. The figures for the Brazilian and Chilean parties are 60,000 and 50,000 for the former and 35,000 and 25,000 for the latter. This pattern of decline is typical. Thus, while total party membership in Latin America rose from about 197,500 in 1952 to 214,000 in 1957 this increase was due primarily to the unusual situation in Argentina. These are Poppino's estimates. Op. cit., p. 231.

Chapter Five

COMMUNISM AND THE CUBAN REVOLUTIONARY
PROCESS, 1925-1958

What role then would the Cuban Communists and their Soviet
sponsors play in the processes and events that gave rise to the
Cuban Revolution? The issue thus posed requires a discussion of
the history and nature of Cuban Communism, for ironically enough
the "old Communists" of the Popular Socialist Party were part and
parcel of the very political system against which Fidel Castro and
his followers were rebelling.

Stalinism in the "Pearl of the Antilles", 1925-1952

In the estimation of one noted observer, "Cuban Communism
was Stalinist from the very outset."1 Certainly, this is an
exaggeration. In point of fact, during much of the first decade
of its existence the Cuban section of the Third International was
viewed with considerable suspicion by the comrades in Moscow.
And not without reason. Founded in mid-August 1925 at a time when
the administration of Gerardo Machado was beginning to harden into
tyrranny, the Communist Party of Cuba was initially influenced as
much by the Cuban revolutionary tradition as by the writings of
Marx and Lenin. One of its founders, Carlos Balíno, had been a
follower of Marti during the War of Independence. Another, Julio Antonio Mella, had arisen to prominence as a student leader and advocate of university reform. A physically-powerful and oratorically-gifted young caudillo, well-known in intellectual circles as an ardent revolutionary and anti-imperialist, Mella "began as a leading critic of university life and ended as a critic of society at large. For him Communism was the normal result of his libertarian and fiercely anti-imperialist sentiments, of his utter devotion to the cause of social justice. And he applied his theories with the gusto of an intellectual deeply rooted in the moral climate of his country and tradition."

Of similar mettle was Ruben Martinez Villena, poet, intellectual, lawyer and friend of Mella, who joined the Party in 1927 and soon became its de facto, though not its titular, head. Between them, the two men were able to bring into the ranks of the Party a wealth of youthful talent. Cuban Communism had not yet been stalinized. It was still capable of appealing to the romanticism, innocence, idealism and rebelliousness of the disaffected young. And Cuba in the 1920's had more than its share of disaffected young. A new political generation was arising, increasingly alienated from the realities of the society of which it was a part, desirous of heroes and causes to believe in and die for, of actions that might yet make Marti's vision come true. It was only natural that some of these youths, inspired by the triumph of the Russian proletariat, drawn by the charismatic presence of Mella and Martinez Villena,
would seek fulfillment by joining the Communist Party of Cuba.

Yet, these were not Leninists, but "Communists of the heart"—revolutionary idealists with millenarian dreams of liberty and social justice, not easily given to the rigors of collective discipline and having only the foggiest notions of Marxist doctrine. In the words of Boris Goldenberg,

.. .Mella, Martinez Villena, and their closest Cuban-born comrades-in-arms were certainly revolutionaries, but just as certainly they were not Bolshevists. Rather they were Communists of the heart, idealists, individualists, radical democrats, nationalists and anti-imperialists, regarding themselves as the most radical participants in the movement against Machado. While most of their proletarian fellow-combatants remained profoundly influenced by anarcho-syndicalism, these intellectuals were impatient voluntarists rooted in the Hispanic tradition and more inclined towards individual heroism than towards discipline. They had neither the time nor the desire to devote themselves to any serious study of Marxism-Leninism. Nothing was more alien to their make-up than calm analysis of the situation, cold calculation, or bureaucratism.

Relations between these elements and the increasingly stalinized Communist International were bound to be stormy. Moreover, even within the Party itself there was always a certain amount of ingrained hostility between these middle-class intellectuals and the predominantly proletarian rank and file. Thus, the founding Congress of the Party—spurred on by a Mexican Communist overseer, Enrique Flores Magon—rejected Mella's "ultra-leftist" views in favor of a more orthodox platform. In the years to come, Mella would be in and out of trouble with the movement: Expelled from its ranks after having broken
discipline by engaging in a prison hunger strike, he was subsequently reinstated on Comintern orders. Deported to Mexico by Machado, he joined the Mexican Communist Party, serving as a member of its Central Committee and, according to some reports, as its Secretary-General until being ousted from the Party altogether by a more conservative faction in late 1928. A few weeks later he was readmitted, only to fall victim almost immediately to a Machado assassin. Only through his martyrdom did Mella become the idol of the Orthodox.

But if Mella’s maverick inclinations seriously limited the effectiveness of his Party work, the same could not be said of Martinez Villena. No doubt this was in part a factor of personality. Martinez Villena was more flexible, more willing to submit to collective discipline, more receptive to the views of doctrinally-knowledgeable and orthodox comrades like Fabio Grobart. More important, however, he had the good fortune to join the movement at a time when it was experiencing a severe leadership crisis brought about by intense governmental repression. In the wake of its founding Congress, the Party had quickly run through a whole series of Secretaries-General. Many of its most prominent members were forced into exile or withdrew into the relatively safe confines of private life. And added to these woes was the death of the elderly Balfínó in early 1926. In effect, the Party was left "without leadership and organization. It had to start all over again. . . ."

By the time that
Martinez Villena joined the ranks in 1927, "the whole Party, including officials and ordinary members, could fit in one room."\textsuperscript{11}

The affiliation of Martinez Villena, "the most attractive personality in the new generation of intellectuals",\textsuperscript{12} gave the movement a much-needed shot in the arm. Though already suffering from the incurable tuberculosis that would claim his life seven years later, the new convert threw himself into his work with abandon. Under his leadership, the Party organization began to expand. Significant inroads were made within the trade union movement as the Communists organized strikes, issued programs and manifestos and provided legal council for unionists on trial. About the turn of the decade, they managed to capture control of the National Confederation of Cuban Workers (CNOC), a small but increasingly significant central labor body founded in the mid-20's under anarcho-syndicalist auspices. One of their own, Cesar Vilar, held the key post of Secretary-General.

Simultaneously, the Party stepped up its participation in the growing popular revolt against the Machado regime. In 1928 the dictator, after illegally extending his term of office to six years, arranged for his own uncontested re-election. Now, student resistance began to mount, and to make matters worse unrest soon spread to the working class. This was the beginning of the Great Depression, during which the living standards of the masses would plunge towards levels of deprivation never before experienced in the republican era. Discontent would bring protest and
violence, which in turn would breed counterviolence, intensifying and expanding the initial discontent in a vicious cycle of social systemic deterioration. The revolutionary conditions thus created would provide the Cuban Communists with their first real opportunity to prove their revolutionary mettle under fire.

But inevitably, the situation was also fraught with enormous risks and dangers. And ultimately the Party's inability to cope with the circumstances in which it found itself would provide the Comintern with exactly the pretext that it needed to justify the stalinization of the Cuban movement. The truth of the matter was that as the revolutionary process developed from an economic into a political crisis Martinez Villena and the inexperienced, idealistic young intellectuals around him began to get out of hand. Departing from their Comintern-approved "Third Period" strategy, they shifted to a policy of united front and class collaboration, concentrating on the achievement of political demands—the overthrow of Machado, the restoration of democratic liberties and the legalization of trade unions—to the neglect of the economic needs of the masses.

This critical turn, initiated in the spring of 1930, had disastrous consequences. In March, the Communist-led National Confederation of Cuban Workers called a one-day general strike which, after considerable initial success (some sources estimated that as many as 200,000 workers had participated), soon collapsed under government pressure. Subsequent attempts to develop
a "permanent general strike" the following month never got off the ground. In the face of official repression, Martinez Villena was forced to flee the country. Condemned to death in absentia, he made his way to the Caucasus and a sanatorium.

Thus it was that the Comintern moved to tighten controls over the Cuban comrades. In November, the Communist Party of the United States sent an open letter to the Communist Party of Cuba, suggesting that the latter had been unable to keep pace with the rapid march of recent events:

...It is impossible for the Party to successfully lead the masses into broader, more highly political struggles (general strike, armed rising) unless it takes as its starting point and basis the development of local and partial struggles for immediate and adequate relief to the starving unemployed, for food and shelter to the poor and homeless... demands for more wages and shorter hours... demands of the poor peasantry against evictions, against taxes and against the imperialist land grabbers.

The working masses who had joined the March 20th strike had done so for very basic economic reasons. They wanted bread for the unemployed. The question of trade union legality did not represent a "burning, immediate issue of daily life"; it was "too removed and abstract to move them to immediately engage in mass struggle... Thus, the attempt to develop a general strike in April solely upon the demand for legality of the trade unions, leaving out the elementary needs of the starving masses, was foredoomed to failure."

In the estimation of the North Americans, the attempt at "permanent general strike" had been nothing more than a confused
effort to leap over all the immediate tasks of mass preparation and mobilization—the necessary pre-conditions of a successful political struggle—and solve the problem of acquiring revolutionary power through a badly prepared coup. In fact, any attempt to engage in an armed uprising that was not preceded by serious organizational groundwork, that relied solely on the spontaneous action of the masses, would amount to no more than a suicidal "putsch". The primary task of the Party, therefore, must be to intensify its organizational and propaganda efforts: to set up nuclei in the factories, rebuild the revolutionary trade unions, establish strike committees and armed workers' corps, to broaden the Party's mass base through recruitment, especially among the rank-and-file proletariat.

Moreover, this struggle must be waged not in league with the "Social-Fascists" but against them. In forming a "united front" with the bourgeois nationalist trade union leaders in April, the Cuban comrades had surrendered leadership to the very forces whose interests lay in the sabotage of all genuine revolutionary action. In effect, the "united front against Machado" had been turned into a "united front with Machado against the Communists." Thus, it was incumbent upon the latter to distinguish the contradiction between the aims and interests of the nationalist leaders and those of the masses which followed them, "differences which these leaders will seek to conceal behind abstract phrases of 'liberty' and 'democracy'." It would be the task of the CPC to
expose those contradictions "to the fullest extent, and attract the nationalist masses to its own banner as the leader of struggle for the real interests of the masses." Should the nationalists stage a revolt and attempt to arm the masses, those arms "must, of course, be accepted—but never surrendered, and used solely for the ends of the toiling masses against both Machado and the Nationalists."

Though the letter took care to stress that it was neither a "directive" nor a "substitute for the directives" of the Communist International, but "merely observations and practical suggestions for your consideration", it was also quite explicit in its opinion that the difficulties being experienced by the Cuban Party were essentially the result of leadership weaknesses—of the instability caused by government repression, of the lack of trained personnel to replace those leaders eliminated by the terror and, more ominously, of the "insufficient bolshevization of the entire Party. . . ."13

In response to this letter and to a series of practical directives from the Comintern's Caribbean Bureau, the Cubans, in or around November 1930, instituted a basic shift in strategy, accompanied by a limited purge. The following months witnessed a rise in Party membership and a general improvement in work methods. Nevertheless, progress was slow. A half year later, the Communists were still without a fully-developed program of action. Nuclei had not yet been established in the factories. Major segments of
the labor force—most notably the sugar plantation and mill workers and the transport workers—remained essentially untouched by the Party's organizational efforts. Similarly, there were few contacts between the Communists and the island's huge Negro population. Moreover, only a small percentage of Party members were native-born Cubans. 14

It was partially with a view towards remedying these weaknesses that a national sugar workers' conference was held under Communist auspices at the end of 1932. Subsequently, a mass walkout led to the formation of the country's first national sugar workers' union. During these months, Communist influence in the countryside began to expand sharply, as "regional peasant leagues" were formed, sugar mills seized and the Party became semi-legal in many areas. 15 Now, as economic conditions plunged to new depths (the harvest of 1932 was the lowest since 1915; the annual sugar price less than a penny) the revolutionary struggle began to take on an increasingly insurrectional flavor.

The critical moment came in the summer of '33. In early August, a strike of bus company workers spread like wildfire through the transport system of Havana. Soon, the whole city was in the throes of a crippling general strike. Other cities and rural areas rapidly became infected, as the movement assumed an increasingly political character. By August 6th, virtually the entire nation was united in opposition to the Machado government. On August 7th, the rumor went out that the President had
resigned. In Havana, the populace poured into the streets. An army of demonstrators descended on the capitol, only to be met by police gunfire. Dozens were killed or wounded.

In desperation, Machado sought to negotiate with the Communists on the Central Strike Committee. We still do not know the full story of the bargain that was struck, but it appears that in return for a cessation of the general strike the dictator agreed not only to meet the demands of the transport workers but to legalize the Communist Party and even to give CNOC funds with which to carry out its operations.16

Now, from the viewpoint of Martinez Villena (returned from his sojourn in the Soviet Union), Cesar Vilar and a majority of the Central Committee, these were substantial concessions. After all, the Caribbean Bureau had directed them to concentrate on the economic needs of the masses and to combat the "Social-Fascists" for the leadership of those masses. This arrangement would enable them to do both. Not only could they claim credit for having negotiated an end to the strike and obtained a settlement favorable to the initial demands of the transport workers, but the agreement with Machado would strengthen both their own Party organization and the Communist-controlled CNOC, leaving them in good position to further penetrate the masses and to pursue the latter's economic interests.17 On the other hand, a continuation of the strike and the chaos which attended it would enable the forces of bourgeois nationalism to go on exploiting the situation and posing as leaders of the working class. Worse yet, the
imperialists would be given just the excuse they were looking
to invoke the Platt Amendment and send in the marines to
restore law and order.\footnote{18}

Thus did the Central Committee, overriding the objections
of both Comintern representatives and their Cuban Communist
supporters, vote to accept Machado's overture.\footnote{19} A return-to-
work order was issued.

This was a mistake. The appeal went unheeded. The strike
continued. To the masses, no less than to their bourgeois
nationalist leaders, Communist behavior smacked of crass oppor-
tunism and treason, coming as it did only one day after the
massacre of August 7th. The stage was now set for Machado's
flight and the rise of the revolutionary government of Ramon
Grau San Martin.

And what would the Party's attitude be towards the new
regime? On August 26th, the Central Committee met in plenary
session and went through the required self-criticism. K. S. Karol
has described the thrust of these deliberations:

\begin{quote}
. . . It concluded that the Strike Committee had
gravely underestimated the militancy of the masses, and
had been quite wrong to conclude that all the workers
wanted was a wage increase. And since no Communist
Party must ever lag behind the revolutionary masses,
the Party decided to atone for its sins by calling on
the Cuban proletariat to form soviets, 'organs of pop-
ular power in every locality preparatory to the seizure
of power at the top.' The Party did not evidently
bother to consult any other political groups, nor did
it try to enlist outside support for its new tactics.
It was convinced that the present popular upsurge would
force all the rest to fall into line, would persuade
them to accept Communist decisions and Communist leadership. The unexpected emergence of a government that was well to the left of de Cespedes, and which the United States refused to recognize, seemed to corroborate their view of the situation. To the Communists, Grau was just another Kerensky, and it was more urgent than ever to press for the formation of soviets, which alone could express the true will of the people. There could therefore be no question of Communist support for the new government, which, in its turn, was quick to denounce the 'Red diversionists.'

And so began a short-lived era of dual government. In the four months that it held office, the Grau regime promulgated a veritable torrent of legislation, much of which was highly revolutionary by Cuban standards: The eight-hour day, a minimum daily wage for cane cutters, the legalization of political parties and trade unions, the right to strike, freedom of the press. . . . In addition, a number of highly popular nationalistic measures were instituted, aimed at curtailing North American influence on the island. Thus, for instance, gas and electric rates were ordered reduced by 45%, and when the US-owned electric company resisted it was nationalized. Thus also, the unilateral decision to default payment on outstanding government debts to United States' citizens. And the famous decree "nationalizing" labor (i.e., specifying that at least 50% of the employees in every enterprise in the country had to be Cuban).

No matter. The Communists steadfastly refused to make distinctions between those groups that supported the regime, those that opposed it, and the new youth-oriented political organizations that were emerging from the turmoil. Both left-wing radicals
and conservatives, dictators and democrats, were condemned as Fascists, "Social-Fascists" and lackeys of Yankee imperialism. On the anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, the Party newspaper, Bandera Roja, called for "a day of struggle against the bourgeois-landlord government of Grau San Martin, for the establishment of the workers and peasants government on the basis of soviets." For the duration of the regime, the Communists continued to foment labor unrest and public disturbance, leading peasants in the seizure of the lands upon which they worked, establishing rural "soviets" and bombarding the government with a seemingly endless stream of invective. In the end, their opposition, expressed largely in insurrectional activities, contributed in significant measure to the undermining of Grau's authority and to his ultimate downfall. The continuing chaos (for which, of course, the Communists were only partly responsible) gave the United States a convenient excuse to withhold diplomatic recognition on the grounds that the regime in Havana did not exercise effective control of the situation. Lacking US recognition and support, the President was unable to build the kind of domestic political base that was needed to restore order. In January 1934, the revolutionary government of Grau San Martin, "harassed on the Left, sabotaged on the Right, threatened by the United States which had brought up its fleet", passed into history.

It was almost as though stupidity were a virtue. For more than a year after the fall of the Grau regime and its
replacement by the conservative dictatorship of Colonels Batista and Mendieta, even in the face of growing military repression and increased restrictions on political and labor union activities, the Communists continued to parrot the Comintern line. In April, the Party held its Second Congress. It was resolved that

Of all the groups and parties in Cuba, the most dangerous for the revolution are the parties of the 'left,' chiefly the Cuban Revolutionary Party of Grau. The principal danger for the revolutionary movement in the present situation are these groups of the 'left,' which not being systematically and energetically unmasked so that their influence may be broken, can analyze the mass discontent and use it for their own purpose, which is to divert the masses from the road of revolution in order to safeguard the bourgeois-landlord-imperialist domination.23

Thus did the Communists manage to alienate the very groups that might otherwise have served as their natural allies in a serious bid for revolutionary power. Though some short-term benefits, including a rise in Party membership,24 were reaped from the turmoil, a golden opportunity to secure more lasting and fundamental gains was irretrievably lost. Isolated from the mainstream of Cuban political life, they found themselves increasingly helpless to shape the course of domestic affairs.

Here then was a classic example of the self-defeating effects of revolutionary dogmatism. As was so often the case in the Stalinist International, centrally-determined strategies, formed primarily in response to the functional requisites of the Soviet transfer culture, were applied in a rigid, mechanistic fashion to local situations which they did not fit. Thus, the
Communist Party of Cuba became subject to a congenital defect: "it tried to transfer into the neo-colonial situation of Cuba, an underdeveloped country, the precise revolutionary scheme its comrades had developed for the Capitalist countries of Europe." But in the process of surrendering its autonomy, it also lost much of its capacity to adjust strategy in a rational and effective manner to the opportunities, pressures and constraints posed by the political environment in which it had to operate. Locked into the Comintern line of the moment, the Cuban comrades had to wait until events in other lands persuaded their Muscovite overlords that the time had come to change direction.

Meanwhile, the Executive Committee of the International, taking advantage of the difficulties being experienced by the Cuban section, moved to complete the task of "stalinization". In early 1934, as Martinez Villena lay dying of tuberculosis, Comintern agents were sent to the island to purge the Party of the petty bourgeois influences that had plagued it since its inception. Francisco Calderio, a self-educated cobbler better known later under the pseudonym of Blas Roca ("Blas the Rock") became its new Secretary-General. The group of idealistic young intellectuals "drawn into the Party by the noble enterprise of redeeming the humble, captivated by the apparent logic of Marxist ideology, and seduced by the fascinating personality of Villena, was eliminated from the Central Committee, and in the end left the Party altogether." In their place was elevated a more docile,
proletarian breed: the Stalinist apparatchik.

But by 1935, the ultrarevolutionary disasters of the "Third Period" could no longer be ignored. The need to combat the rising Fascist tide persuaded the Soviet leaders that a fundamental reassessment of Comintern strategy was required. Hence began the era of the "Popular Front". At the Seventh Congress of the Comintern, held in Moscow in mid-summer, the Latin American comrades were subjected to a sound dose of criticism:

It must be noted that in most of the colonial and semi-colonial countries (with the possible exception of Brazil) the Communists underestimated the importance of united front and trade union tactics; they were unable to take the lead and organize the growing desire of the mass of workers...and have thereby surrendered the initiative to the reformist and even the national reformist government (namely Mexico).

Thus unfettered, the Communists began to mute their radicalism and seek alliances with many of the selfsame groups that they had previously been castigating as "Social-Fascist".

As elsewhere, this shift in strategy had been in the making for months. In Cuba, it had been introduced on a limited basis as early as February, when the fourth plenum of the Central Committee had authorized an attempt at rapprochement with Antonio Guiteras' Joven Cuba (but not, it may be noted, with Grau's Autenticos). Subsequently, the Communist press began to exhibit definite signs of moderation as the Party, spurred on by heavy criticism both from the Comintern and from within its own ranks, moved to free itself from the dogmatic illusion that the entire opposition front, from the Guiteras group on the left to the ABC
on the right, was uniformly reactionary and had to be dealt with in the spirit of implacable hostility. Now, it began to differentiate between these various factions and to "seek allies—albeit even inconsistent and temporary allies—in the organization of a genuine national revolution." 31

Unfortunately, by this time it was too late for these strategic changes to have any effect on the revolutionary struggle within Cuba. The Batista-Mendieta dictatorship had become entrenched. For the next two and a half years, the nation "groaned under a regime which almost matched that of Machado in its terror and its suppression of civil liberties." 32 Moreover, the Party still had to bear the burden of its "Third Period" militance. The forces of the revolutionary left would not so readily forgive "these little leaders of tropical Communism" their treasonous "tactic of attacking revolutionaries more violently than they do reactionaries." 33 It would not be so easy to form a Popular Front. Indeed, when one finally was created towards the end of the decade it would assume a shape that could not have been anticipated in the political atmosphere of 1935. Meanwhile, the Party would remain isolated and ineffectual, "quite incapable of grasping the real nature of Cuba's crisis or of affecting its development." 34

In the face of repeated rejection from the left, the Communists turned to the right. In 1935 their official position, as enunciated by Blas Roca, was that Fulgencia Batista was the
personification of Cuban Fascism, a "national traitor in the pay of the imperialists" who had "drowned" the March 1935 general strike "in blood", "turned the university into a barracks", "smashed the workers' trade unions", "filled the prisons", "unleashed a barbarous terror campaign", "banned all anti-imperialist parties, and would now like to profit from his temporary victory by liquidating the revolution altogether." Yet, within three years this same Blas Roca would tell the Party's Central Committee that Cuba was now experiencing "semi-democratic conditions" and that Batista had "ceased to be the leading figure in the reactionary camp." In fact, he now felt quite sure that "the force of the revolutionary tide which, in September 1933, drove this man to fight the then government, continues to exercise a pull on him..." Two years later the Party, by then openly a member of the dictator's own political coalition, would actively campaign for his election to the presidency. In 1943, two of its rank would enter the cabinet, the first Communists anywhere in the hemisphere to rise to such heights.

Now, this was quite a shift—from isolation and purblind hostility to an opportunistic symbiosis based on a chance complementarity of interests. For his part, Batista lacked a mass based on which to rest his considerable power. The Communists, through their political organization and their influence in the labor movement, would help him obtain one. In return, the Party would be legalized and given a free hand in the trade unions. A
mutually beneficial arrangement!

No doubt Goldenberg was right. Batista was "basically neither a 'Fascist' nor a 'reactionary'--nor even a military dictator in the classical mold. A mulatto from the lower class who never tried to conceal his origins, he was ambitious, keenly interested in enriching himself and his friends, and yet at the same time anxious to appear as a 'democrat' and proponent of social reform." He was acutely aware of the dangers involved in continuing to rule through terror alone. After all, he had witnessed first-hand what had happened to Machado when power had become divorced from legitimacy. From 1936 on, therefore, he sought to build a popular base for his rule, enacting some of the most advanced social legislation in the history of the republic. His goal: To be elected constitutional President. However, in order to achieve this aim he needed help, "for he was looked upon with mistrust by the big landowners and upper bourgeoisie, while the 'national revolutionaries' regarded him as their archenemy. He consequently turned to the Communists, fully confident that he could use them for his own purposes." Once that decision had been made, the rapprochement was concluded with amazing speed. In late 1937 a front organization, the Revolutionary Union Party, was accorded legal recognition. The following May a Communist daily newspaper, Noticias de Hoy (under the editorship of Anibal Escalante), began appearing in the streets of Havana. Subsequently, in July, the Central Committee was allowed
to hold its tenth plenum, openly and without interference, on which occasion it was resolved that Colonel Batista was "no longer the focal point of reaction, but the defender of democracy" and that the Communists must therefore "adopt a more positive attitude" towards him, "compelling him as a result to take even more democratic positions."39

One week later, Blas Roca and Joaquin Ordoqui were invited to confer with Batista at the latter's headquarters at Camp Columbia. We can only surmise the agreement that was struck, but the months that followed witnessed a degree of harmony and cooperation heretofore unimaginable. Thus, shortly after his meeting with the two Communist leaders Batista called in the newsmen of Havana and announced that "the Communist Party... is a democratic party which pursues its ends within the framework of a Capitalist regime and renounces violence as a political means, and consequently it is entitled to the same status as that of any other party in Cuba." Whereupon, on the 25th of September, the Party was granted full legal recognition.40 Two months later witnessed it mobilizing its members to give the dictator a rousing welcome home from the Armistice Day celebrations in Washington, D.C.

Meanwhile, the Communists took full advantage of their increasingly favorable circumstances to step up their recruitment activities and their penetration of the trade union movement. By the time of the Party's Third National Congress, in January 1939,
membership had multiplied more than fourfold over 1937 levels. There were now reported to be some 23,000 comrades in Cuba. Moreover, this same month witnessed the founding of the all-embracing Confederation of Cuban Workers, under Communist hegemony, with Lazaro Peña at its head. From this moment until the end of Batista's reign in 1944, the Communist-led unions would tend to shy away from collective bargaining, instead taking their grievances directly to the Ministry of Labor where they could be assured of favored treatment from a department of government that itself became increasingly infiltrated by Party members and sympathizers as the years went by.

Thus did Blas Roca and his comrades become "respectable" members of the Cuban political establishment. The Party now joined the dictator's own "Social Democratic Coalition", winning six seats in the elections for a Constituent Assembly that were held in late 1939.

Nevertheless, the majority of seats--forty-one out of the seventy-six that were in contention--went to a heterogeneous opposition front composed of Autenticos, Conservatives and a number of smaller groups. And not surprisingly, the ensuing deliberations produced a document--the famous Constitution of 1940--that was a veritable hodge-podge of political, social and economic provisions, frequently utopian and unworkable, representing diverse and contending philosophies. For their part, the Communists vied with the Autenticos in an effort to make the charter as
progressive as possible. With considerable success, as it turned out, for in addition to the conventional democratic freedoms the Constitution included such items as the "right to work", to social security, a minimum wage, an eight-hour day and a forty-four hour workweek (with four weeks of paid vacation annually). Unions were guaranteed the right to organize and strike; employers restricted in their right to dismiss employees. Arbitration boards and labor courts were established in which the unions were to play a decisive role. Maximum property holdings were set; the right of expropriation justified. The subsoil of Cuba was declared to belong to the state.

We need not go into further detail, since the document was only selectively applied it after it was written. Suffice it to say, with Goldenberg, that to the extent that its provisions became reality they "had an adverse impact on productivity." In effect, parasitism became constitutionalized. Moreover, the charter

... also brought about a far-reaching fusion of the government and the union movement, with the result that the status of wage earners now depended less on their own efforts than on the paternalistic intervention of the Ministry of Labor, the new labor courts, and the President of the Republic. The labor movement and, with it, the Communist Party became, so to speak, "integral elements of the state". Once again, the leaders of "Creole Communism" were critically dependent on their ability to maintain good and close relations with whatever government was in power.43

This was the golden era of pre-Castroite Communism. Even the brief period from 1939-1941, during which the Cuban comrades
were required to follow the Comintern lead in denouncing the "imperialist war" in Europe, failed to halt the Party's advance. True, membership declined to a reported 14,800 in 1941. But there were compensations. As members of the coalition of forces supporting Batista's bid for the presidency in the 1940 elections, the Communists were able to send ten of their rank to the Chamber of Deputies and more than a hundred to city councils throughout the republic. A Communist, Justo Salas, was elected mayor of Santiago, the second largest city on the island. In Havana, the Party added 10,000 votes to the number it had received in the Constituent Assembly elections of the previous year. Meanwhile, it continued to dominate the labor movement, using its influence to line up the unions in opposition to the Allied war effort.

No doubt they were lucky. Had the Wehrmacht not attacked the Soviet Union, initiating a full-scale rapprochement between the forces of Western democracy and those of international Communism, it seems unlikely that their good fortune could have continued indefinitely. For the moment, Batista still needed their political support, their parades and demonstrations, to help counteract the dynamism and popularity of the Autenticos. But how long could such an alliance last in the face of the traditional Cuban dependence on and deference to the "Colossus"? Certainly, one can say that at minimum the Party would never have reached the heights of popularity and influence that it attained during the period from 1942-46. Then, the goodwill fostered by the cooperative struggle against the common enemy would allow
Batista to bring first Juan Marinello, then Carlos Rafael Rodriguez into the cabinet as Ministers Without Portfolio. At the peak of its popularity, the Party would attract over 150,000 affiliates, though admittedly only a small percentage of these were dues-paying members. In the 1944 elections, the number of Communist votes would reach 130,000 or about eight percent of all ballots cast. Three of their leaders would be elected to the Cuban Senate, nine to the Chamber of Deputies. Two years later, their electoral strength would rise to 176,000, ten percent of the voting public.

But success had its price. The Party now faced a classic dilemma—namely, how to maintain revolutionary dynamism, discipline and esprit de corps while operating within the framework of a bourgeois parliamentary system. This was more than just a matter of having agreed to renounce violence in return for legalization. The Party organization was becoming increasingly bureaucratized and conservative with success. For the first time really, the Communists had something to lose politically, something to be protected. This had never, of course, been a genuinely Leninist institution in the tradition of What Is To Be Done?—never, that is, a well-organized, highly-disciplined band of professional revolutionaries single-mindedly devoted to the seizure of power. But now, in addition to all of its other inadequacies, the Party was fast becoming corrupted by the virus of Menshevism. The attempt to give it a mass base by drawing even larger numbers of afiliados into full membership was having a debilitating effect
on the quality of its personnel. Popular support, if increasingly broad, was also shallow. Relatively few militants and even fewer affiliates would be willing to maintain their commitment once good times faded into bad and repression returned as a way of life.

This process of "bourgeoisification" was also reflected in policy and doctrine. If the war effort was the overriding concern of the moment, the economic demands of the masses would have to be subordinated to the requisites of "national unity". Class cooperation was necessary if breaks in production were to be avoided. Communist economic strategy thus tended to focus on the maintenance of current wage scales and living standards, rather than on the acquisition of major short-term gains for the proletariat. Calls for land reform were dropped; nor was nationalization promoted, except on a small scale. Moreover, the goal of revolutionary power was now shelved indefinitely. The Party subordinated itself to Batista, praising him as a "great democrat" and the embodiment of Cuba's sacred ideals and defending him against the attacks of his political enemies. Similarly, the Roosevelt administration was lauded as a staunch defender of freedom and democracy. Much concern was expressed about the internal stability and prosperity of the United States and the strength of its armed forces.

Indeed, during this period the Cubans, under the influence of the so-called "Browder deviation", came very close to repudiating Marxism-Leninism itself—or at least the theories of imperialism and
class conflict.

In late November-early December 1943 Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin met at Teheran. Shortly thereafter, the leader of the US Communist Party, Earl Browder, set forth an extreme revisionist analysis of the national and international situations, in effect declaring an end to the imperialist era and the revolutionary class struggle and the beginning of an extended new period of peaceful coexistence between the Soviet Union and the Capitalist West, circumstances which would enable the latter to make the transition to Socialism gradually, through non-violent means. Now, it was proclaimed, humanity had ... risen to a new level of intelligence. Capitalism and Communism have already begun to march hand-in-hand toward the peaceful collaboration of tomorrow. This broad policy, pursued in the interests of all, also imposes an obligation on all of us to reduce to a minimum, and if possible to eliminate altogether, every form of violence in the life of every country. ... I have long reflected on this matter and have come to the conclusion that the people of the United States are subjectively unprepared for a Socialist transformation of society. In proclaiming such an objective, far from uniting the nation, we merely foster divisions that can only profit the most reactionary forces. So as to sow confusion in the democratic camp, the reactionaries are fighting their election campaign [presidential, 1944] under the banner of free enterprise; we Marxists must not fall into their trap by proclaiming the opposite message. ... We declare quite openly that we are ready to contribute to the effective running of free-enterprise Capitalism, lest the marvelous development of our economy be slowed down after the war.51

Here, it seemed, was the ideal doctrinal rationalization for the wartime policies to which the Cubans had committed themselves. Blas Roca and his comrades (with the notable exception of a group
of dissidents led by the former head of CNOC, Cesar Vilar) now became fervent disciples of "Browderism". True, they did not go quite as far as their North American mentor, who at the height of his euphoria proposed the dissolution of the Communist Party and its replacement by a Communist Political Association which, instead of nominating its own candidates for election, would encourage its members to work within the Democratic and Republican parties to promote those measures that were deemed progressive.52

The Cubans were content merely to change the title of their organization— from the Communist Revolutionary Union to the Popular Socialist Party (PSP)—in line with international Stalinism's current strategy of conciliation towards the government in Washington.53

Nevertheless, as the Communist poet Marinello was careful to point out, this change in names was "far reaching... not a matter of labels."54 Indeed, the strategy of class collaboration was envisioned not as a "momentary and ephemeral policy, but [as] a long-range and enduring one on the progressive road toward the conquest of all rights of the working class."55 The age of imperialism was now declared to be over: "Teheran offered a lasting peace for many generations."56 In their optimism, the Communists fantasized of the glorious days to come, when joint US-Cuban cooperation would resolve "harmoniously our most acute and urgent economic problems..."57

Unfortunately, the adoption of "Browderism" left the Cubans in a highly vulnerable position once wartime collaboration turned
to Cold War. Thus, when in April 1945 the French Communist Jacques Duclos, after a personal meeting with Stalin, launched his famous attack on Browder in *Cahiers du Communisme*, he extended his indictment to the Popular Socialist Party as well, accusing its leaders of the sin of "revisionism" for advocating continued class collaboration and Communist-Capitalist coexistence after the war. Teheran itself was now scornfully dismissed as a mere "diplomatic document". 58

The initial Cuban response was confused and defensive. This was a matter of no small import to Blas Roca and company, whose recent political prosperity was critically dependent on the continuation of the wartime spirit of cooperation. As disciples of moderation and goodwill, they had been able to attract a breadth of popular support undreamed of in the bad old days of "Third Period" isolationism. Not surprisingly, they were most reluctant to give this up. Moreover, the foremost spokesman of the Party--Roca, Marinello, Escalante, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez--were all closely identified with the "spirit of Teheran". A major change in the international line could undermine their leadership positions, subjecting them to the dangers of a purge. And then, the authoritative nature of the Duclos article was not entirely clear. Could this be merely an expression of personal opinion or, more likely, the beginning of a dialectic designed to explore the respective merits of alternative post-war strategies? After all, the war was still on. No one could confidently predict the events that were yet to come.
Thus, June witnessed Blas Roca rejecting Duclos' charges and defending the Teheran and Yalta agreements as "solemn and formal undertakings which constitute a genuine platform for mankind's struggle to achieve peace that will endure for several generations. . . . We consider the agreements, which fully conform with our views, to provide the basis for our activity." But by the following month, under pressure from abroad and from within his own Party organization, Roca's tune had changed. Hence: "We must revise all our views of recent times." The Party, it seems, had over-estimated the significance of Teheran and Yalta. It had been an illusion to expect the United States and Britain to carry out those agreements. Imperialism and colonialism would not suddenly vanish overnight. Nor could Capitalism overcome its own internal contradictions. Still, Duclos had gone too far in downgrading Teheran. Moreover, his attack had merely succeeded in providing grist for the mills of anti-Communism. If the Cubans had been insufficiently critical of their North American comrades, so had many others. After all, they had not dissolved their party and had only spoken of the tendency of the class struggle to disappear.

In the months to come, the tone of the official press took on an increasingly Cold War flavor. By January the rout was complete, as Browder's chief nemesis and successor, the militant William Z. Foster, launched a public attack on Roca at the PSP's Third National Conference. Delegates virtually fell over one another in performing the required self-criticism. Subsequently,
Comrade Blas was reduced to blaming the Party's errors on the "corrupt anti-Marxist theories of Earl Browder." 62

But the perils of Cuban Communism did not stop here, for the Popular Socialist Party was dependent not only on the Stalinist international system of which it was a part but on the government in Havana as well. In 1944 Fulgencio Batista, having grown tired of the rigors and responsibilities of high office, decided to step down, sponsoring his friend and premier Dr. Carlos Saladrigas in his stead. Saladrigas' presidential opponent was none other than the Autentico hero, Grau San Martin. For reasons not yet fully understood, Batista permitted an honest election. This, as it turned out, was a mistake, for his hand-picked candidate proceeded to be soundly drubbed (a 65% majority) by the man known as the "divine gibberer". Thus chastened, the former sergeant-stenographer and President of the Republic retired temporarily to Miami Beach to enjoy his now immense fortune.

This change did not have an immediate effect on Communist fortunes. Though they had backed the candidacy of Saladrigas, they were, to put it charitably, realists. They needed government support, or at least tolerance, in order to survive and prosper. Thus, in spite of their own misgivings about the new President's intentions, they held out their hands in friendship, offering him their "full, enthusiastic and staunch support". 63 And, at first, Grau proved responsive.
Certainly, there was no love lost between these allies. Only months before, the Communists had been attacking the Autenticos as "neither revolutionary nor genuinely Cuban" but "in the Nazi pattern", an antipathy which was fully reciprocated by the other side. No one had forgotten the betrayals of '33. In fact, Grau now found himself under considerable pressure from his own supporters to break the Communist stranglehold over organized labor. Indeed, prior to assuming office he had indicated his intention of doing just that. But the new President too was a realist, and despite his personal triumph at the polls he remained politically vulnerable. The Autenticos and their Republican allies held only twenty-four seats in the Cuban Senate. The opposition had twenty-seven. The Communists, with three seats, constituted the critical balance. Furthermore, should the latter choose to launch a general strike against the government it was by no means certain that Grau could have survived. The new regime had not yet had time to consolidate its power. The army remained largely under the control of batistianos. Anything could happen.

Hence, rapprochement seemed the order of the day. The Communists were allowed to maintain a general hegemony over the Confederation of Cuban Workers (CTC), though now it was agreed that they would share leadership positions equally with the Autenticos. Nevertheless, Lazaro Peña remained its Secretary-General, and the Party's influence within the Ministry of Labor continued essentially intact. In political matters also, the two sides gradually moved
into open alliance. When, in late 1945, the Autenticos needed Communist support in order to elect their candidate President of the Senate, the latter readily gave it... in return for which their own man, Juan Marinello, received Autentico backing for the Vice-Presidency. In the parliamentary elections of June 1946, the Communists joined the government coalition, helping Grau win a majority of seats in both houses of Congress.

Here a certain irony. The history of Cuban Stalinism is to a considerable extent a case study of chronic self-destruction. As long as Grau needed the Communists, they were fairly safe. But now, in no small part due to their own actions, he was no longer so dependent on their support. Having gained a parliamentary majority of his own and improved his control over the armed forces, he would soon be in a position to turn on them and render them helpless. Indeed, even before the congressional elections, in early 1946, a group of Autentico labor leaders had met in Miami in preparation for the anticipated offensive. Either there or shortly thereafter, the decision was made to work towards the exclusion of the Communists from the Confederation of Cuban Workers.67

The critical moment, however, did not come until the following year. By the spring of 1947, "the Cold War was casting shadows over Cuban politics and therefore over the Communist-Autentico alliance." The latter had already managed to establish their predominance among the sugar workers. Communist ranks began to be plagued by defections, as several prominent union leaders
joined the opposition. Tension and violence mounted. In spite of the Party's attempts to maintain the rapprochement with Grau, by April the President had made up his mind: The Autenticos would oppose the election of Lazaro Peña as Secretary-General of the CTC at that organization's Fifth Congress, scheduled to meet the following month. 68

In May, the delegates gathered in Havana in an atmosphere of high tension. On the eve of the Congress, an Autentico leader was killed while leaving the Credentials Committee. His associates immediately cast the blame on the Communists. Now, the new Minister of Labor, Carlos Prio Socarras, moved quickly to suspend the meeting, calling for the creation of a Credentials Committee to be composed in equal parts of the government, the Autenticos and the Communists. Not surprisingly—the proposal obviously being a stacked deck—the latter declined, choosing instead to hold their own rump Congress which re-elected Peña and returned a new Executive Committee with a strong Communist majority. Subsequently, the Autenticos followed suit, convoking their own Congress in mid-summer, with the Independent Angel Cofiño at its head and no Communist representatives on any committee. 69

So now Cuba had two national labor confederations. It soon became apparent, however, that the PSP's version was destined to dry on the vine. The government swung its support to the Autentico unionists, ousting Peña and his comrades from CTC headquarters, the uncompleted Palacio de los Trabajadores, denying them recognition and funding. Gradually, the most important of the nation's labor
federations fell into line. As for the Communist-affiliated unions, they now lost the right to strike, to engage in collective bargaining, even to appear before the arbitration boards. Deprived of the critical tools of power, harassed by Autentico gangsters who killed several of their leaders, their influence within the working classes rapidly declined. Though Lazaro Peña and company tried to reorganize their forces, by the early 1950's only a skeleton organization remained under their control. And as for their representation in the "official" Confederation of Workers, we need merely cite the available figures from the final CTC Congress prior to Batista's golpe of March 10, 1952: Out of 4,500 delegates in attendance, only eleven were Communists. Even more significant: It was reported that only twenty of the country's three thousand unions were clearly in Communist hands. 70

Moreover, isolation in the labor movement was accompanied by isolation in politics. Under the pressure of Cold War tensions, popular support for the PSP dwindled; political allies vanished. In the presidential election of 1948, the Communists, after making unsuccessful overtures to the newly-formed Ortodoxo Party of Eduardo Chibas, were forced to run their own candidate. And although that candidate--Juan Marinello--received some 142,000 votes (about 7.5 percent of all valid ballots cast), this was small compensation, for they now lost their three seats in the Senate (retaining nine, however, in the Chamber of Deputies). Moreover, Party membership had already gone into sharp decline. 71 For the remainder
of Autentico rule, they were to be a harassed, alienated fringe
group, shorn of virtually all influence on the national political
scene, with few prospects for the future. By the time of the 1952
election campaign, their isolation was so complete and their pop-
ular support so weak that they urged their followers to vote for
the Ortodoxo candidate for president, even though the Ortodoxos
steadfastly refused to respond to their calls for a "united front".72

Cuban Communism and the Rise of Nascent Castroism, 1952-1958

What role then would the Popular Socialist Party play in
the processes and events that gave rise to Castro's Revolution?
In truth, their contribution would be embarrassingly modest. By
the time of the second coming of Fulgencio Batista, Cuban Communism
had degenerated into an ineffectual sect, the Party a bureau-
cratic structure both organizationally and temperamentally
incapable of providing the kind of dynamic and resourceful
leadership needed to capture state power. These were not
Leninists. Nor were they revolutionaries in any meaningful sense
of the term, though they were genuine-enough products of the Stalinist
international system. Rather, theirs was an elite of insecure,
middle-aged apparatchiki, with a long history of tactical oppor-
tunism and subordination to Moscow. Notably lacking here was the
sense of romance and adventure, the ability to take risks and
fire imaginations, that was to prove so important to Fidel Castro's
victory. Instead of boldly striving for power, they cautiously
sought out the dominant currents of the time and flowed with the
tide. Not surprising, then, that they would become followers rather than leaders of the anti-Batista rebellion. Belated followers at that: "Outflanked "from the left"" by a bearded messiah who "came down from the mountains,. . . the first Communist revolution. . . to succeed on Latin American soil was achieved without, and in part against, them."?3

It is difficult not to be caustic about the performance of the "old Communists" during these years. Indeed, for most of this period their revolutionary record would be mainly characterized by its non-existence. Thus, the political isolation into which the Party had been cast by the great Autentico "betrayal" continued uninterrupted. The Communists, along with almost everyone else outside student and intellectual circles (excepting, of course, the middle-class politicos who had been displaced), shrugged off the change of governments in Havana as being of no great consequence: The Batista regime "does not differ in character from the Prio government", declared Hoy, implying at least that it was no worse.74 In point of fact, the passivity, ineffectuality and opportunism that marked the Party's response to this and subsequent events was symptomatic of the more general decay that pervaded the entire political system. In a very real sense, the revolutionary struggle that was soon to be initiated at Moncada would be directed not only against Batista and the "cockroach" politicians of the bourgeoisie but at the Cuban Communists as well, for they too were part and parcel of the old order that the forces of nascent Castroism
were determined to destroy.

But what of the immediate relationship between Blas Roca and his comrades and the young revolutionaries that were beginning to gather around the messianic personage of Fidel Castro? All available evidence indicates that Communist involvement in the attack on Moncada was practically nil. True, Fidel's brother, Raul, had recently entered the Juventud Socialista—the Communist Youth—but he was not at this time one of the leaders of the rebellion, having joined only in July, more out of loyalty to Fidel than anything else. And even then, he had taken care not to inform the Party of his actions.75 Furthermore, although our information is far from complete, the most authoritative studies to date suggest that only a small handfull of the participants were or had ever been members of the PSP or its affiliated youth organization. And none of these were leaders.76

More to the point, the Party's attitude towards these wild-eyed young rebels and their insurrectionary adventures was far from sympathetic. Only a few days prior to Moncada, Blas Roca had issued a sharp condemnation of violence as a means of combatting the dictatorship. Terror, he had proclaimed, was a false and pernicious tactic favored by some bourgeois and petty bourgeois groups because it is action- and person-oriented and excludes the masses from participation in the struggle. It is anti-revolutionary in that it encourages passivity among the masses and makes their organization more difficult, alienates large segments of the populace and provokes government repression. Moreover, in a possible reference
to the forthcoming events at Santiago and Bayamo, he ridiculed "putschism" as an attempt "to take Camp Columbia by infiltrating with a few knives, pistols and hunting rifles. Putschism consists in these crazy adventures sometimes hatched out on the university campus." Such undisciplined and desperate acts were both sterile and harmful to the cause of revolution. Disaffected youths should direct their energies instead into the organization and mobilization of the masses.

In reality, nothing was further from the minds of the Party leaders than a strategy of revolutionary struggle—no any form. They were in far too vulnerable a position to risk antagonizing Batista. Stripped of the bulk of their popular support and union power, isolated from the forces of the democratic opposition, they no longer posed much of a threat to the government in Havana. Moreover, they knew all too well that the price of revolutionary militance would be repression. These were no longer young men. Having grown comfortable in their middle-age, they were now far more interested in avoiding trouble than in causing it. No doubt they, like the rank-and-file members who followed them, had been corrupted by the virus of "electoralism". Nobody wanted to go underground again, not after all these years. Better to seek a *modus vivendi* with Batista in order to ensure their own survival and maintain what limited influence they still had, while waiting for new opportunities to open up in the future.

Thus did Blas Roca and company seek to disassociate themselves from the strategy of armed resistance, reasoning (quite
correctly) that they would have to bear at least part of the costs of any anti-government violence perpetrated by other opposition groups. In the aftermath of Moncada, the Party's statement was strong and unequivocal:

...We repudiate the putschist methods, peculiar to bourgeois political factions, of the action in Santiago de Cuba and Bayamo, which was an adventurist attempt to take both military headquarters. The heroism displayed by the participants in this action is false and sterile, as it is guided by mistaken bourgeois conceptions. ... The entire country knows who organized, inspired and directed the action against the barracks and that the Communists had nothing to do with it. The line of the Communist Party and of the masses had been to combat the Batista tyranny seriously and to unmask the putschistas and adventurers as being against the interests of the people.79

These repudiations were not entirely successful. The Party was now caught up in the wave of repression that followed Moncada. On the day of the attack, both ex-President Prio and the Communists were accused of complicity. Arrests followed. Hoy was outlawed, its offices occupied and searched. A number of leading Communists, including Lazaro Peña and Joaquin Ordoqui, had to undergo trial and acquittal before the government finally gave up its campaign of implication.

The relationship between the Communists and Batista during these years is especially curious, characterized as it was by a certain continuing ambivalence. Clearly, the PSP suffered far less at government hands than did some of the other opposition groups, most notably the bourgeois intellectuals and the students. The Party itself was, of course, outlawed, along with its auxilliary
organizations, such as Juventud Socialista; its newspapers, Hoy and Ultima Hora, were banned. Yet, critics were quick to note how many Communists seemed to turn up in the new regime, particularly in the Ministry of Labor. Moreover, throughout this period the PSP would continue to publish several "illegal" journals, some of which were openly delivered through the mail. Its weekly magazine, Carta Semanal, would allegedly maintain a circulation of some 16,000 copies—a figure roughly corresponding to the size of the Party's membership. Furthermore, while scores of Communists were ordered arrested most seemed able to evade the grasp of the police with relative ease. Stalwarts such as Marinello and Carlos Rafael Rodriguez continued to live in Havana with minimum inconvenience. Considerable freedom of movement was allowed them both within Cuba and abroad, with the result that some comrades took advantage of this laxity of constraints to refresh their perspectives of the Soviet bloc firsthand.

All in all, the dictator's treatment of his old friends was fairly relaxed. There was no possibility, of course, of resurrecting their former alliance. The Cold War was in bloom, and Batista, like so many other Latin American leaders, was well aware of the advantages to be had by playing to Washington's paranoia. Yet, he also knew that the Communists, being quite "toothless", were no real threat to his power. Hence, his anti-Communism tended to be as much motion as substance. In deference to the Norte Americanos, he would outlaw "Communism" and create a
special Bureau for the Repression of Communist Activities (BRAC).
A CIA observer soon noted, however, that most of the funds allocated
for this organization never reached their destination; moreover,
with the growth of popular resistance its efforts became increasingly
focused, in terroristic fashion, on other, more serious opponents
of the regime, most notably the Twenty-Sixth of July Movement. 82

The Party was, in fact, entrapped in a political limbo
from which it could not escape. Unable to come to terms with
Batista and unwilling to cast their lot with the unreliable and
self-destructive putschistas, Blas Roca and his comrades continued
to promote their basic line of "united front" and "mass action"
for a "democratic way out of the Cuban situation." 83 But no one
was listening. Indeed, the democratic parties were even more
anti-Communist than they were anti-batistiano.

This was an era of dormancy and bureaucratic stagnation.
Blas Roca was out of the country much of the time. Day-to-day
leadership fell into the hands of a pentarchy consisting of
Aníbal Escalante, Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, Lazaro Peña, Manuel
Luzardo and Severo Aguirre. 84 While some success had been made
earlier in the decade attracting dissident young Ortodoxos into
the ranks, many of these now left, alienated once again by the
passivity of their elders. By the time of Batista's fall, mem-
bership may have dropped to as few as 7,000 militantes. 85

Nevertheless, the Party could not but be affected by the
outbreak and development of the Civil War. Thus it was that from
about mid-decade onward Communist policies and fortunes slowly began to change. As early as the period of Castro's Mexican sojourn, contacts were made between the fidelistas and some of the Cuban Communist exiles in that country—most notably, Lazaro Peña and Joaquin Ordoqui—with the result that by the time of the Granma expedition a certain limited "collaboration" had been established. But this was far from being a full-fledged alliance, and there is little evidence to support the charge made later by Fidel's estranged sister, Juanita, that "the scheme to Communize Cuba was incubated in Mexico in 1955." Rather, at the time both sides were engaged in efforts to broaden their political contacts, the PSP in order to break out of the isolation in which it was so firmly embedded, Castro in order to gain allies, information and capital for the armed struggle that was shortly to be launched. In point of fact, their "collaboration" seems to have been largely restricted to some discussions of the revolutionary prospects within Cuba, with the Communists adopting a much more cautious stance than the perpetually optimistic fidelistas. Moreover, almost all of these communications were strictly unofficial. The erosion of Party discipline had left individual Communists relatively free to make personal contacts with Castro and his followers. Some now did so.

But the obstacles to rapprochement were formidable. During this same period, Fidel was also negotiating with a variety of anti-Communist elements, including the Directorio Revolucionario,
the Montecristi Group and the former Autentico President Prio Socarras (from whom funds were obtained to purchase the Granma). Not surprising, then, that he was under heavy pressure to repudiate all connections with the PSP. Indeed, a campaign had already begun, instigated by the Cuban government with the collaboration of the Mexican police, to link his movement with the forces of international Communism. This threat had to be de-fanged, and quickly. Hence, from exile came an indignant denial:

...What moral right...does Señor Batista have to speak of Communism when he was the presidential candidate of the Communist party in the elections of 1940, when his electoral slogans hid behind the hammer and sickle, when his photographs hung next to those of Blas Roca and Lazaro Peña, and when half a dozen of his present ministers and confidential collaborators were outstanding members of the Communist Party.

Political circumstances were not yet ripe for an abrazo with the PSP. Too many potential allies would be antagonized or frightened off by such a maneuver.

Moreover, for their part, the Communists were far from anxious to embrace Castro. Their situation had not changed; they were as vulnerable as ever to government retaliation. In addition, they had little faith in the reliability of these brash young men and women and even less in their prospects for success. Thus, on February 28, 1957, in the aftermath of the Granma disaster, the Party's National Committee sent a letter to the Twenty-Sixth of July Movement, proclaiming its "radical disagreement" with the latter's "tactics and plans". While commending the "valor and sincerity" of the rebels, the Communists deplored their terrorism,
sabotage and scorched-earth policies, advocating instead that
the government be resisted "with every peaceful expression of the
popular will." Nevertheless, the letter did admit that the Party's
differences with M-26 were primarily over "methods and tactics"
and that Castro's group came closer to the PSP's "strategic
conception" than any other political faction, even though it
had not yet taken a strong enough stand against "imperialist
domination".90

The following month, this position was reaffirmed in a
letter from Juan Marinello to the New York Times correspondent,
Herbert Matthews: "At the present time, and with reference to
the assaults on barracks and expeditions from abroad—carried
out without depending on the people—our position is very clear:
We are against those methods." Rather, the correct path was
"to mobilize the masses" through "strikes, demonstrations, civic
protests of every kind" in order to bring about democratic elec-
tions and the establishment of a Democratic Front of National Libera-
tion. In turn, this would lead to the formation of a government
representing the workers, peasants, urban petty bourgeoisie and
national bourgeoisie, all "under the leadership of the proletariat."91

Still, these tactical differences did not prevent the
Communists from attempting to mobilize the masses and the other
opposition parties in a campaign to hold back the hand of govern-
mental repression and ensure Castro's survival. True, they had
little success.92 But in May the Party, through its branch in the
city of Havana, made its first real approach to M-26. And although this move was not immediately reciprocated, two members of the Juventud Socialista were subsequently dispatched to the Sierra, where they joined Guevara in a separate unit fighting under Castro's overall command.

These were the tentative beginnings of a glacier-like rapprochement that would not be fully consummated until well after victory had been won. No doubt they owed much to the increasingly repressive nature of Batista's rule. The government's response to popular resistance was terror. Having created an institutionalized system of repression and advertised the rebellion as being Communist in origin, the dictator had to a considerable extent become a prisoner of that system and the mythology that supported it. No matter that the Communists were toothless. It was almost inevitable that they would have to bear part of the burden of the officially-inspired violence that grew more intense as public resistance mounted. As with many of the other opposition groups, they too would gradually be pushed, in large part against their own will, towards the path of armed insurrection.

Thus it was that within the Party there began to emerge a growing split between the supporters of peaceful, "electoral" opposition, led by Aníbal Escalante, and younger, more daring advocates of revolutionary violence. The conflict of generations was not confined to the bourgeois opposition. Here too youth, being the most obvious target of police repression, became the initiator
of rebellion. Indeed, some had already begun to look to the "Chinese model" as a possible road to revolutionary power in Latin America. Moreover, these rumblings now began to find support at the very top of the Party hierarchy, most notably in the person of Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, who in August established contact with the Twenty-Sixth of July Movement's representatives in Havana.94

It was not until February 1958, however, that these elements were able to muster enough authority to bring about a significant change in official Party strategy. Heretofore, Communist cells in eastern Cuba and the Sierra Maestra had been under orders to collaborate with and give limited assistance to the rebels. Now, the decision was made to step up this aid. According to Carlos Rafael, instructions were issued to cadres for "militant Communist incorporation" into the rebel forces. Henceforth, a dual strategy would be employed, one in which the armed struggle in the countryside would be placed "on the same level as the struggle of the masses in the cities. . . ." In short, the Party now appreciated "that there existed in the Sierra a genuine guerrilla movement of a working class and peasant character, with a proper political conception and a program which justified and merited our support. What before was collaboration could be and should be transformed into direct participation."95

One must be careful not to take this testimony too literally. We know that some guerrilla units were formed—for instance, in Las Villas, where police repression "drove the local Communists into a
state of semi-rebellion", and in the Sierra Cristal, where they soon became incorporated into the forces of Raúl Castro;96 moreover, that Osvaldo Sanchez Cabrera was sent to Fidel's headquarters to serve as an initial channel of communication.97 But the Rodriguez statement was issued at a time when the Communists were under heavy fire from the M-26 organ Revolucion and other sources for their alleged lack of substantive contribution to the anti-Batista struggle.98 Thus, it is hardly surprising that Carlos Rafael would be eager to defend the Party's record, even to the point of overemphasizing and seriously distorting its role in the resistance.

More to the point, there is irrefutable evidence that this "direct participation" fell far short of a full alliance. Hence, the same month in which Rodriguez claims that the decision was made to elevate the importance of insurrectionary methods also witnessed the PSP sending an open letter to the foreign Communist parties, specifically repudiating guerrilla terrorism and emphasizing that "we Communists had no relation whatsoever—neither directly, nor indirectly—to the terrorist acts." The letter made no mention of Communist participation in the armed struggle, merely calling on the fraternal parties to exercise their influence "in the cause of a democratic and free Cuba." As for the PSP itself, it would continue the political battle against the dictator, "the struggle for a democratic solution of the present crisis, for a coalition democratic government, for democracy, for national liberation and peace."99 Indeed, as late as May the Communists would continue to
condemn M-26 terrorism, even while designating that group as the "most militant and progressive sector of the non-Communist opposition."\textsuperscript{100} And on June 28th, Blas Roca and Juan Marinello issued a call on behalf of the Party's National Committee for an end to the violence and the establishment of a peaceful settlement through "democratic and clean elections, respected by all. . . ."\textsuperscript{101}

In sum, the PSP leadership was attempting to hedge its commitments. Communist participation in the resistance continued to be minimal and largely covert, counterbalanced by public proclamations of innocence and democratic intents. No doubt this was one way of keeping their feet in diverse camps--of opening up promising new political contacts, while minimizing the dangers of governmental retaliation. No doubt too the February decision was made grudgingly, in the face of strong opposition from the proponents of a "democratic solution". Indeed, it seems quite possible that it had been taken only under the specter of substantial disaffection (and even defection) among the Party's more youthful members, many of whom were by now champing at the bit for a taste of real revolutionary action.\textsuperscript{102} In any case, the compromise decision that resulted from this in-fighting can hardly be termed a decisive commitment.

To be fair, the obstacles to rapprochement came from both sides. There was a considerable reservoir of anti-Communist sentiment within the Twenty-Sixth of July Movement, especially among the revolutionaries of the llano and the exile representatives in Miami. And in this period, this influence was still very strong.
Hence, the fiasco of the general strike of April 9th. Of all the opposition groups, the PSP alone had a significant following among the ranks of organized labor. Clearly, then, the situation called for an alliance. Yet, in spite of this the M-26 organizers in Havana were unwilling to allow the Communists any significant leadership role. Even Castro's own efforts to intercede proved fruitless. On March 28th, he sent a letter from the Sierra proposing that all opposition groups, including the PSP, be allowed to participate. Nevertheless, the appeal was rejected, the strike committee reasoning that such unity was too difficult to achieve that late in the game.

And so the strike was launched without the Party's support. It failed miserably, as we have seen, and recriminations were quick to follow. The Communists blamed the fiasco on M-26's "unilateral strike call", which had been issued "without counting on the rest of the opposition or on the workers themselves." Blas Roca later attributed the PSP's lack of cooperation largely to the refusal of "certain revolutionary sectors" to give it control over a sufficient number of workers' committees. Still, their reaction was not entirely negative. Had it been developed in the correct manner and received armed support from the Sierra, the strike might have led to the fall of the dictator. And in any case, it was a welcome "step towards organization of the masses and away from excessive reliance on heroic but indecisive guerrilla warfare, futile bombing and sabotage." Carlos Rafael is even
reported to have remarked that this setback might teach Castro that he could not succeed by acting alone, that victory could only be attained by a united front of all opposition forces.

Indeed, the failure of the general strike proved crucial in bringing about the subsequent PSP-fidelistas rapprochement. Within the Twenty-Sixth of July Movement itself, the anti-Communist civilians of the llano had now been largely discredited; leadership increasingly fell into the hands of the more radical elements gathered around Fidel Castro in the sierra. Thus were trade union negotiations with the Party opened in early June, for the disaster of April had clearly demonstrated the need for vast organizational improvements on the labor front. Moreover, as it became increasingly evident that Batista's first major military offensive was running into serious trouble in the mountains of Oriente, the PSP began to step up its contribution to the war effort, with new partisan units being formed in Camaguey, Escambray and Pinar del Rio.

Circumstances now seemed ripe for the fashioning of a political alliance between the two sides. Even Escalante had been converted. Towards this end, therefore, Carlos Rafael made his way to the sierra in early July. His reception, however, was mixed. As he later recalled: "In the Sierra Cristal, where Raúl Castro was in command, there was nothing but understanding for the Communists. But when I got to Fidel in the Sierra Maestra, the understanding had changed to suspicion." This is perhaps not too surprising, since Fidel was then engaged in the delicate
negotiations that would produce the Caracas "unity pact" of July 20th. Although he apparently wanted the Communists included in this agreement, he was well aware that the democratic opposition would have nothing to do with them. Consequently, there arose the need for a separate, covert understanding.

The precise nature of this accord remains unknown. It seems unlikely, however, that it went much beyond a limited tactical alliance of convenience. Blas Roca later maintained that "unity was forged, without signed pacts, between organizations, around the Rebel Army and the Revolutionary Government. . . ."114 Moreover, Castro too has implicitly affirmed the largely informal nature of the collaboration.115 Yet, it seems that at the very least he did promise Carlos Rafael that the PSP would be allowed to participate in the united front once it was formally established in "liberated territory".116 Hence, we have the spectacle of Rodriguez leaving the Sierra in early August and returning to Havana, where he informed the astonished local representatives of the signatory parties of Caracas that Fidel wanted the Communists included in their unity coalition, at least in the labor section. This idea was not, to put it mildly, favorably received. Strong resistance ensued, and the proposal was rejected.

Nevertheless, Carlos Rafael was still able to give his PSP comrades a positive report on his contacts with Castro. Thus, he was soon dispatched once again to the Sierra, where he transmitted their complaints about the Caracas junta to Fidel. And there he
remained as an "official representative of the Party" for the duration of the war. Meanwhile, the decision had been made to step up military and labor support for the resistance. Communist infiltration of the Rebel Army (especially those columns led by Raul Castro and Che Guevara) now began to increase rapidly.

Still, even during these final months the Party's involvement in and commitment to the anti-Batista struggle remained limited. While a few Communist leaders (Carlos Rafael, Luis Mas Martin, Ursinio Rojas) continued to live in the rebel encampments in the Sierra, none of these emissaries played a significant leadership role. Indeed, they behaved more like "political refugees . . . than political organizers." Moreover, never did the PSP commit itself publicly (i.e., in an official policy statement) to the elevation of the strategy of armed insurrection over that of "mass struggle". Thus, even its revised political program, published in the authoritative Soviet journal Partiinie Zhem in October continued to repudiate terrorism and stress the need for "free democratic elections." And as to the number of Communist cadres that fought with the rebel forces, even that is in doubt. Escalante later referred to the "hundreds" of comrades who had joined the ranks. But Carlos Rafael, in a spirited defense of the Party's contribution to the resistance, could name only a handful that had been killed in military combat, though "other dozens" had fallen through assassination. Nor, for that matter, did the Communists play a significant role on the labor front, where
unity was achieved only in October and then through an organization that would be barely in existence by the time of Batista’s fall.\(^{123}\)

In sum then it may be said that, irrespective of the contributions of specific individuals, the Party’s overall revolutionary record was far from impressive. Its major commitment was made only very late in the game, when the handwriting on the wall was more-or-less evident, and even then that commitment was hardly unequivocal. Indeed, the rapid collapse of the ancien régime would take the Communists by complete surprise.\(^{124}\) Victory would be won without their ever having clearly defined their position towards Fidel Castro, head of the Rebel Army.\(^{125}\) In turn, their vacillation and opportunism would create a source of bitterness that would continue to haunt them for years to come. As Guevara later taunted: "In Cuba, the Communist Party did not lead the revolution. It was unable to discern the correct methods of struggle and erred in its estimation of the chances of success. This extremely serious mistake was not fatal here, because we had Fidel and a group of real revolutionaries."\(^{126}\)

The Initial Soviet Response

And what of Moscow’s reaction to these developments? Here there is relatively little to be said. If de-Stalinization had begun to free Soviet foreign policy from its traditional pathological rigidity, setting in motion the processes of transfer culture rationalization, the Kremlin’s Latin American strategy was still largely
shaped in accordance with old priorities, inhibitions and stereotypes and a continuing profound ignorance of the political, economic and social conditions existing within the individual countries in the area. In point of fact, Muscovite policy was plagued by a general inability to differentiate the unique situation that was developing in Cuba from the broader, long-range processes of erosion that were slowly undermining the traditional North American hegemony over the region. Moreover, the lessons of Guatemala were hard to ignore. Right up until Batista's fall, Khrushchev and his colleagues seem to have been anticipating another imperialist intervention designed to protect Yankee interests and preserve the status quo.

In consequence, Moscow's response to the rise of nascent Castroism was, if anything, even more laggard and unseemly than that of the PSP. No doubt this was largely a factor of involvement. The Cuban Communists were caught in an inescapable situation which demanded a basic re-evaluation of strategy. The men in the Kremlin, on the other hand, felt no such sense of urgency. If one may judge on the basis of Soviet press accounts, they had only a very limited knowledge of or interest in the events that were unfolding in the "Pearl of the Antilles". Reportage tended to be relatively meagre, propagandistic, inaccurate and dependent on foreign press dispatches and PSP analyses. True enough, coverage was stepped up sharply during the course of 1958 as the Civil War grew by leaps and bounds. Still, Soviet commentators consistently underplayed
the magnitude and intensity of the struggle. The resistance was not officially recognized as a "national liberation movement" until August—that is, until after the Cuban Communists had made their basic decisions to join the insurrection. And even then, Moscow continued to be quite cautious in its evaluation of Fidel Castro and his followers, skeptical not only of their revolutionary integrity and reliability but of the effectiveness of their guerrilla tactics. Indeed, the sudden collapse of the Batista regime would catch the Kremlin completely by surprise.

In fact, there is every reason to believe that Moscow served as an important restraining force on the Cuban Communists, inhibiting them from making a more definitive commitment to the insurrection. The tactics of "united front" and "mass struggle" were not, after all, unique to Cuba. Rather, they were part and parcel of the official Soviet strategy towards Latin America, doctrinally sanctioned under the concept of "Peaceful Co-existence" and binding on the regional Communist parties. It was thus hardly an accident that the PSP's February 1958 decision to adopt a dual strategy of armed insurrection and mass struggle had been accompanied by an open letter to the foreign Communist parties denouncing terrorism and calling for a "democratic solution" to the Cuban problem. Or that shortly thereafter Pravda had seen fit to reproduce a long letter from the PSP's M. Ruiz, which condemned the spread of terrorism as "fruitless and ineffective", "the product of despair and of certain bourgeois and petty bourgeois groups."
Such communications were necessary in order to reassure the Soviets of the Cuban Party's orthodoxy and gain their support for the policy modifications that were even then in the process of being made. Similar messages would continue to be dispatched to Moscow throughout the course of the year.

Moreover, beyond this there was the necessity of drawing the Kremlin's attention to the potentially revolutionary situation that was beginning to develop on the island. In truth, prior to February 1958 the Soviets had had little interest in Cuba other than as a convenient source of Cold War propaganda. Now, under the prodding of the PSP, this attitude began to change. In March, Khrushchev reiterated Moscow's desire to establish "normal diplomatic, trade, cultural and other relations" with the countries of Latin America. Subsequently, mass youth demonstrations were organized throughout the country in support of the Cuban patriots. Now, Soviet press coverage of the Civil War was increased dramatically. Indeed, there were as many articles published during the first six months of 1958 as had appeared during the entire previous year. Furthermore, whereas the Popular Socialist Party had heretofore been almost totally ignored, now its program and activities began to be publicized and given official sanction.

Clearly, a decision had been made to step up support for the Cuban Communists in their campaign to form a "united front" against the dictatorship. No doubt the intention—in line with the doctrine of "Peaceful Co-existence"—was to pave the way for a
possible establishment of diplomatic and other relations with a post-war government of National Liberation.\textsuperscript{137}

But this was hardly a firm commitment to anything. In point of fact, though Moscow's interest in Cuba grew as the year progressed the men in the Kremlin continued to have major reservations about this "national liberation movement". Never, for instance, did the Soviet press refer to the anti-Batista struggle as a "revolution"; nor were the guerrillas ever termed "revolutionaries".\textsuperscript{138}

As late as October, the Twenty-Sixth of July Movement was taken to task for having "no clear-cut political program. Castro is fighting for the overthrow of the Batista tyranny, but he does not promise the social reforms that could radically change the conditions of the working people."\textsuperscript{139} Indeed, only when the batistiano collapse was imminent did the Soviets bother to summarize Castro's political program which, they complained, still lacked "conciseness".\textsuperscript{140}

No doubt the new messiah was as much an unknown quality to the Communists, both Soviet and Cuban, as he was to virtually everyone else. No one could know what Fidel would do tomorrow. For the moment, all that could be done was to continue working for a broad unity coalition and hope that Castro and his followers would not opt for a policy of anti-Communism when they had the opportunity.

But Muscovite suspicions were by no means restricted to the revolutionary integrity and reliability of the fidelistas. There was also the little matter of tactics. True, the Soviets had given their approval to the "dual strategy" of the Cuban comrades, but
they had done so only grudgingly, with a clear preference for more conventional methods of struggle. Thus, for instance, we find the October issue of *New Times* proclaiming that while the Popular Socialist Party continued to back the Castro forces it was fully convinced that they could not win "without the support of the masses. It believes that this support could take the form of mass strikes. . . . Incidently, a general strike played an important role in the overthrow of Machado in 1933." Even on the eve of victory, Moscow would continue to condemn, in the name of the PSP, "the wrong tactics of some rebel detachments who engaged in terrorist acts and adventurism. . . ." Such behavior, it was asserted, had led to a series of crushing defeats for the partisans. Needless to say, even at this late date the Soviets remained completely oblivious to the possibility that the Castroite movement might have something to offer Latin American Communists with regard to the strategy and tactics of acquiring power.

Then, of course, there was always the danger of "imperialist intervention" to consider. US marines had already been dispatched to Guantanamo in late July to protect the water supply of the adjacent naval base. This move, along with the landing of American troops in Lebanon, was generally perceived as being part of a worldwide campaign by the United States designed to crush national liberation movements wherever they arose. To the men in the Kremlin, there seemed every reason to believe that this scenario would be repeated on a much larger scale should the Civil War intensify and
more covert tactics fail to produce a Cuban government acceptable to the "Colossus". This was a fear which was voiced again and again in the Soviet press, right up until the moment of Batista's flight. No doubt it too served as a powerful damper on Muscovite enthusiasm.

But if the Kremlin's view of nascent Castroism was, at best, cautiously optimistic, its policy towards the government in Havana smacked of a calculated opportunism that in part bordered on the reactionary. True, diplomatic relations had been broken off shortly after the golpe of 10 March and were not resumed for the duration of Batista's rule. True also, the Soviet press grew more vitriolic in its denunciations as the Civil War progressed. But this perhaps signified little more than that the Kremlin was seizing a golden opportunity to further its image as a patron of national liberation movements and to score propaganda points vis-a-vis the United States. Just as important, and much more ironic, was the Soviet economic relationship with the Batista regime.

It will be recalled that in the wake of Stalin's death the processes of transfer culture rationalization had led to a renewed effort to expand Moscow's diplomatic, economic and cultural contacts with Latin America—in effect, to work with the existing "establishments" in order to secure short-term benefits and a modicum of influence, rather than attempt their immediate overthrow through the vigorous support of the revolutionary opposition. And so it was with Cuba, where Soviet and Eastern European sugar purchases
would actually help to strengthen the Batista regime to a limited extent. But then, after all, Russia was merely an observer of, not a participant in, the Civil War. A distant observer at that. No reason, certainly, why the government in Havana could not be dealt with in a business-like fashion in pursuit of Soviet economic self-interest. Thus would Cuba remain one of the primary targets in the Kremlin's limited commercial offensive in the hemisphere, even at a time when the local Communists were joining the ranks of the growing insurrection. Though the volume of trade fluctuated from year to year and was never so large as to give Moscow any political influence with the Batista regime, the overall level for the years 1955-58 placed Cuba third among the Soviet Union's commercial partners in Latin America.

But January 1st ushered in a new era. The dictator had fallen, seemingly overnight. Washington had not intervened. Moscow would now have to come to terms with the unknown, with the revolutionary government of Fidel Castro.
Table 4
Trade of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe with Cuba (millions of US dollars)

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Chapter Five

FOOTNOTES


2Among other things, Julio Antonio Mella was founder of the Federation of University Students and the Jose Marti Popular University. He was also leader of the student strike movement which led Machado to temporarily close down Havana University in 1925. For more on the link between the emerging student movement and the nascent Communist Party, see Jorge Garcia Montes and Antonio A. Avila, Historia del Partido Comunista de Cuba (Miami, 1970), pp. 57-59.

3Karol, p. 65.


5Thus, for instance, the Cuban Communist Party was not admitted to even a provisional membership of the Comintern until 1927 and not to full membership until 1928. See International Press Correspondence, November 21 and 28, 1928.

6Hence, even Mella had to overcome the anti-intellectual propensities of the Party’s rank and file. Soon, however, many of those who had initially felt hostile towards his leadership became "dazzled" by his charismatic eloquence. See, e.g., the testimony of Justo Gonzalez, in Hoy, August 20, 1963. Also, Raquel Tibol, Julio Antonio Mella en "El Machete" (Mexico City, 1968), pp. 246-47.

7The doctrinal ignorance of the delegates may be seen in that Flores Magon had to explain such basic concepts as "democratic centralism" and party "cell" and instruct them as to how to organize "nuclei" in social organizations. See Pedro Serviat, 40 Aniversario de la Fundacion del Partido Comunista (Habana, 1963), pp. 110 ff.

8The circumstances surrounding Mella’s death remain shrouded in mystery. There has been some suggestion that he was killed by
the Communists themselves, but these reports are highly suspect. The bulk of the evidence points towards Machado. Readers desiring to pursue the subject further may consult the following sources:


9 The Polish-born Grobart, nee Abraham Simkowitz, arrived in Cuba only in 1922, after which he apparently became the Comintern's resident agent in the Party. See Boris Kozolvhyk, The Political Biographies of Three Castro Officials, Rand Corporation, Santa Monica, RM-4994 Re, May 1966. According to Joaquin Ordoqui, all the Communist leaders, including Martinez Villena, "were helped by Fabio in our development, because he was the most politically advanced of the comrades." Hoy. August 14, 1960.


13 This letter, dated November 6, 1930, was published the following January in the official organ of the CPUSA. See The Communist, X, 1 (January 1931), pp. 66-73.


The extent to which economic considerations dominated Communist thinking is suggested by the Party's manifesto of August 3rd, which called for the overthrow of Machado only after first setting forth a list of specific economic demands—the eight-hour day, unemployment relief, payment of back wages, etc. See William Simon, "Background to Recent Events", The Communist, XII, 9 (September, 1933), pp. 902-21.

Fear of a North American invasion was the reason usually given by the Communists themselves to explain their behavior. See, e.g., International Press Correspondence, May 4, 1934.

For a first-hand account of the in-fighting that accompanied this decision, see the "Interview with Blas Castillo", in Pensamiento Critico, no. 38 (April, 1970), pp. 197-99. Summarized in Luis E. Aguilar, Cuba 1933, Prologue to Revolution (New York, 1972), pp. 145-46.


The proletarian nature of the new leadership should not be overstated, however, as some of the most prominent Stalinists were of bourgeois origin—e.g., Juan Marinello and Anibal Escalante.
See Chapter Four, footnote 28. The Cuban representative at this meeting was Blas Roca.

Thus, according to the Cuban delegate to the Seventh Congress of the Comintern the Party's primary mistake had been to "mechanistically place the class interests of the proletariat in opposition to the interests of the national liberation struggle and the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution." Cited in Goldenberg, p. 70. And from The Communist International: "At the very moment when a very wide revolutionary upsurge of the people was taking place, accompanied by a tremendous strike struggle waged by the proletariat and directed against American imperialism and its local reactionary agents, the Communist Party of Cuba absolutely incorrectly raised the question of differentiating between the camp of counterrevolution and the camp of the national liberation struggle, characterizing the national reformist party, the Autenticos, the national revolutionary Guiteras group, as parties moving in the direction of Fascism." "Struggles of the Communist Parties of South and Caribbean America", op. cit., XII 10 (May 20, 1935).

Cortes (Blas Roca), "For the United Front in Cuba", Ibid., XII, 11 (June 5, 1935).

Alexander, p. 277.

In the words of Eddy Chibas. Quoted in Baeza Flores, p. 111.

Karol, p. 81.

Quoted in Ibid., pp. 81-82.

Ibid., p. 83.


Ibid.

Daily Worker (New York), October 1, 1939.

Alexander, pp. 278-79.
Up from approximately 5,000 members in 1937. See Goldenberg, p. 72.

Alexander, p. 280.

Goldenberg, p. 73.


Alexander, pp. 282-83.

The distinction here is between afiliados (backers and sympathizers) and militantes (dues-paying members). According to Fabio Grobart, only about 10% (specifically, 14,692) of the Party's 152,000 affiliates in 1944 were dues-paying members. See Fundamentos, December 1946, p. 348. Wyatt MacGaffey and Clifford R. Barnett, citing an unidentified Party "spokesman", give a figure of 37,000 militantes for the year 1946. In Twentieth-Century Cuba (New York, 1965), p. 157.

Goldenberg, pp. 75-76.

See the lament of Blas Roca, in Hell, pp. 289-90. Similarly, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez later admitted that the rank and file had been penetrated by "electoralism" and had "lost part of its bite." In Jacques Arnault, Cuba et le Marxisme (Paris, 1962), p. 92.

See, for instance, the statement of the Confederation of Cuban Workers, in El Mundo, June 28, 1944.

See, e.g., Hoy, January 16 and February 5, 1944.

Fundamentos, February 1944. This speech is quoted and analyzed at length in Karol, pp. 102-03.

Ibid.

The Cuban example soon proved contagious. Thus, for instance, the Communist Party of Colombia became the Social Democratic Party; of Costa Rica the Popular Vanguard Party; of Haiti the Popular Socialist Party; of Mexico the People's Party,
etc. The ultimate sacrifice had, of course, already been made with the dissolution of the Comintern in 1943.

54 Quoted in Thomas, p. 733.

55 Blas Roca and Lázaro Peña, La Colaboración Entre Obreros y Patronos (Habana, 1945), p. 18.

56 Blas Roca, Los Socialistas y la Realidad Cubana (Habana, 1944).

57 Quoted in Thomas, p. 734. See also, A la Luz de Teheran (Habana, 1944).


59 Statement to the National Executive Committee of the Popular Socialist Party, in En Defensa del Pueblo (Habana, 1945).

60 Fundamentos, July 1945. See also the statement of Juan Marinello, in Ibid., August 1945.

61 And yet, Roca survived. Boris Goldenberg reports that Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, who served as the interpreter on this occasion, repeatedly softened and sometimes omitted Foster's criticisms. Hence, the US delegate "was probably more than a little astonished when, at the conclusion of the Conference, Roca was reconfirmed as Secretary-General of the PSP." Op. cit., p. 76.

62 Al Combate! (Habana, 1946).

63 Roca, Los Socialistas y la Realidad Cubana.

64 New Masses (New York), September 28, 1943.


66 World Report, August 29, 1946.

67 Thomas, p. 748.

68 Ibid., pp. 752-53.
To barely 10,000 members in 1948, according to official figures. Similarly, in the space of two years--1948 to 1950--its number of registered voters dropped from 150,000 to 55,000. New York Times, April 6, 1952.


Goldenberg, p. 62.

See the comments of Blas Roca, ibid., May 23, 1952.


Though Carlos Rafael Rodriguez has claimed that the Communist leaders knew nothing of these plans. To Thomas, ibid., p. 842.

In addition, Roca also dismissed those bourgeois elements (i.e., the supporters of the ousted Autentico President, Prio Socarras) seeking to launch "so-called" insurrections from abroad. While not completely ruling out insurrection as a tactic, he stressed that it could only be successful under favorable "objective" conditions in which truly "popular" support could be mobilized. Hoy, July 19, 1953.

Daily Worker (New York), August 5 and 10, 1953. This statement could not appear in Hoy, however, since by this time that paper had been closed down. Subsequently, the "official line" was conveyed to PSP militants through the circulation of a special letter to all Party organs. See Carta de la Comision Ejecutiva Nacional de PSP a todos los Organismos del Partido, August 30, 1953 (mimeograph).
Alexander (op. cit., pp. 293-94) conceives this to have been a unique variant of "dual Communism", that instead of formally splitting the Party into two separate organizations the Communists simply entered Batista's own party. But there is little evidence to support this interpretation, and at least some of the comrades who went over to the dictator were defectors, not infiltrators.

Boris Goldenberg, The Cuban Revolution and Latin America (New York, 1965), p. 165. Once again, available statistics are, at best, rough approximates. Carlos Rafael Rodriguez has placed Party membership at about 20,000 at the time that it was declared illegal in 1953, but this claim is probably inflated. Central Intelligence Agency estimates for 1957 were 10,000. On the other hand, the New York Daily Worker reported a membership of 16,000 for this same year. By January 1959, according to Jacques Arnault, this level had declined to only 7,000. The figures given by Rodriguez and Arnult may be found in the latter's Cuba et le Marxisme, pp. 92 and 154. The CIA estimate is in Earl E. T. Smith's The Fourth Floor (New York, 1962), p. 33. The figure from the Worker is cited in M. Kremnyov, "Cuba in Flames", New Times, no. 40 (1958), p. 18.


Thus: "The PSP poses the necessity of a united front of the masses against the government, for a democratic way out of the Cuban situation, restoration of the 1940 Constitution, civil liberties, general elections and the establishment of a National Democratic Front government, with a program of national independence, peace, democracy, agrarian reform which will give land free to the peasants, and of the demands of the workers. . . ." Daily Worker, August 5, 1953. A statement of the Party's "minimum" and "maximum" programs may be found in Hoy, July 19, 1953.

Thomas, p. 846.

According to Jacques Arnault. See note 81.


88 Karol, p. 141.

89 Bohemia, July 15, 1956.

90 This letter has been reproduced by Fausto Maso in Bohemia Libre, July 7, 1963.

91 The original letter may be found in the Columbia University Library.

92 Though they were, of course, perfectly willing to claim credit. Thus, for instance, Escalante would later assert that "we were able to hold Batista's forces in check, thus giving the rebels time to withdraw into the Sierra Maestra." In Fundamentos, August 1959.

93 Thomas, p. 944.

94 Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, La Revolucion Cubana y el Periodo de Transicion (Habana, 1966). Another influential opponent of the Escalante line was Osvaldo Sanchez Cabrera.

95 Hoy, 15, 1959. This testimony has been affirmed by Anibal Escalante in even stronger terms. Hence: "The decisions of the Party leadership in February 1958—which were preceded by active support for the armed movement—were not the beginning, but only the seal on, our participation in the civil war against tyranny." Fundamentos, August 1959.

96 See Thomas, pp. 981 and 992. Thus, in March the PSP clandestine publication Carta Semanal declared: "We not only sympathize with the actions of the insurgent forces, but also stand for active help in every guerrilla area and the building up of ties between the guerrilla action and the mass movement."


98 See, for instance, Revolucion's sharp attack on the PSP's collaboration with Batista in its February 14, 1959 issue. Such criticisms were frequent during this first year.

100 Daily Worker, May 4, 1958.

101 Sra. Miembros de los Organismos Dirigentes del 'Movimiento 26 Julio,' del PRC (a), de la Organización Auténtica, del Directorio Revolucionario, del Grupo 'Montecristi,' del PPG (0) y del PNR (mimeograph).

102 In the words of K. S. Karol (op. cit., p. 150): "In 1957, the urban branch of the July 26th Movement made tremendous headway, as we can tell from a whole series of spectacular actions in Havana and Santiago. These were greeted with enthusiasm by the Communist rank and file, but the leaders still refused to take the plunge."

103 Thus, one noted observer has suggested that even after their purge from the Confederation of Cuban Workers the Communists were able to retain the allegiance of some 25% of the workers. Maurice Zeitlin, Revolutionary Politics and the Cuban Working Class (New York, 1970), pp. 3-4. The bases of this estimate are unclear to me.

104 Thomas, p. 988.


106 Hoy, June 7, 1959.


109 See the testimony of Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, in La France Nouvelle, July 17-23, 1958; and Ursario Rojas, in Fundamentos, March 1959.

110 Arnault, p. 78.

111 In fact, according to Karol's informants (op. cit., pp. 153-54) Escalante was largely responsible for the Party's "conversion" to fidelismo, having himself taken "grave personal risks when he threw his entire weight behind the Castroists."
This was at the invitation of Castro, who had extended similar offers to the other opposition groups. Only the Communists and the Directorio Revolucionario responded. Testimony of Carlos Rafael Rodriguez at the trial of Marco Rodriguez, in El Mundo, March 25, 1964.


"...We met with each other, we understood one another, and started to work together." Armainio Savioli, "L'Unita Reporter Interviews Fidel Castro", L'Unita (Rome), February 1, 1961. We know now that prior to his departure for the Sierra Rodriguez had been briefed by Anibal Escalante as to what line to take with Castro. In fact, he was given a "long memorandum, crammed with instructions for the July 26th Movement. It contained 'advice' on the best means of conducting the war, on running the country, on the correct attitude toward the other political forces, and on international politics. The whole thing was written in the classical, authoritarian style." Wisely, Rodriguez accepted the memorandum, then ignored it, journeying instead to the Sierra to "listen" to Fidel, "to hear what he expects of us, and not to ram our policy down his throat." Karol, p. 153.

Speech of December 1, 1961, in Hoy, December 2, 1961. In addition, Edward Gonzalez has speculated that the Party may have received the following possible minimum concessions from Castro: 1. the recruitment of PSP cadres into the Rebel Army; 2. the legalization of the Party and the reopening of its newspaper, Hoy; 3. the muting and possibly the outright rejection of anti-Communism as a policy on the domestic scene; 4. the maintenance and encouragement of informal ties between the Castroites and individual Communists; 5. Government neutrality in trade union elections; and 6. the promotion of an anti-imperialist, neutralist foreign policy. In return, he suggests, the PSP apparently ended its opposition to the strategy and tactics of violence and promised Castro the support of its cadres and trade unions in the coming Revolution. The Communists may also have referred to the probability of Soviet economic aid if a fidelista-PSP alliance were formed. In "The Cuban Revolution and the Soviet Union, 1959-1960" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California at Los Angeles, 1966), pp. 190-93. This is, to repeat, largely speculation.

Hoy, January 11, 1959; also, Ibid., March 26, 1964.
Thus, in August 1960, Blas Roca acknowledged that "Fidel Castro opened the ranks of the Rebel Army to all those who wanted to fight with arms against the tyranny and for the revolution." VIII Asamblea Nacional, p. 63. See also, Daniel James, Cuba: The First Soviet Satellite in the Americas (New York, 1961), pp. 75-79.

Thomas, p. 1011.


Fundamentos, August 1959.

Hoy, April 15, 1959. Castro himself later recalled that the insurgents had found only "a few" PSP militants in the mountains. Obra Revolucionaria, December 2, 1961.

This was the Frente Obrero Nacional de Unidad (FONU).

Thus, in November, we hear that "the tyranny has shown itself incapable of breaking the resistance and struggle of the masses. Yet it would be a mistake to conclude that this in itself signifies the possibility of an immediate defeat. . . ." Communist Party of Chile, Documentos..., p. 29.

Suarez, p. 29. Indeed, while the PSP's revised political platform conceded that Castro's military activities were a serious threat to the Batista regime it also complained that his failure to transform the insurrection into a "mass movement" was seriously impairing its chances for victory. Moreover, Fidel was also criticized for the failure of the general strike of 9 April which, in the Party's view, had been a blatant attempt to upstage the other opposition groups, including the PSP. Had it been properly conducted, in consultation with those organizations, it would have overthrown the dictatorship. See Partiunia Zhign, no. 20 (October, 1958), pp. 50, 53-55.

Hoy, August 24, 1963. Similarly, at the PSP's Eighth National Assembly, held in August 1960, Blas Roca publicly confessed that the Party had misinterpreted the "objective" revolutionary situation that had existed and praised Castro's "great historical merit" in using armed struggle to bring about the victorious Revolution. VIII Asamblea Nacional, pp. 44, 72.
Thus, for instance, the initial Soviet analysis of Castro's victory would emphasize the situation's lack of uniqueness. These changes were placed only "on a par with other recent events of similar magnitude in various Latin American countries." A. Pavlenko, "Cuba--A Defeat to US Imperialism", International Affairs (Moscow), no. 2 (February, 1959), p. 91.

Gonzalez, p. 245.


Thus, on the eve of the downfall International Affairs would still be referring to the resistance as "a mighty national liberation movement against which the US colonials and their henchmen are in the long run powerless." [Emphasis added] O. Burlak, "Cuba: Civil War", op. cit., no. 1 (January, 1959), p. 112.

Pravda, February 14, 1958.

A more proper form of struggle being along the lines of the PSP-supported general strike of August 1957. The Party also called for a "united front" of all opposition groups which would work for "free and democratic elections" to produce a "broad democratic coalition" government. Ibid., February 22, 1958.

See the "Joint Statement by the Argentine Communist Party and the PSP of Cuba", in Ibid., March 1, 1958.

In an interview with the Mexican newsman Manuel Mejido. Excelsior (Mexico City), March 13, 1958.


Ibid., p. 12.

Gonzalez, p. 246.

Though it was also noted that more recently the Rebel Army had "inflicted upon the government troops a number of telling blows." Burlak, p. 112.

A typical statement of the Soviet position may be found in P. Yerokhin, "Big Stick Again", International Affairs, no. 9 (September, 1958), p. 98. Similarly, on the eve of victory Izvestia warned of a US intervention designed to prevent the "seizure of power by the insurgents." Op. cit., December 31, 1958. Also, Burlak, p. 112.
THE CUBAN REVOLUTION AND
THE SOVIET UNION
VOLUME TWO

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of the Ohio State University

By
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* * * * *

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Chapter Six

THE TRANSFORMATION OF REBELLION INTO REVOLUTION--THE DEVELOPMENT AND RADICALIZATION OF THE CASTROITE TRANSFER CULTURE

AND THE RISE OF COUNTERDEPENDENCE (PART ONE)

Some years ago, Theodore Draper described Castroism as "a leader in search of a movement, a movement in search of power, and power in search of an ideology." In short, "a 'road to power' which has attached itself to different ideologies. He [Castro] won power with one ideology and has held it with another." As for its professed allegiance to Marxism-Leninism, well, Castroism merely "gave Communism total power in Cuba, and Communism gave Castroism an ideology of total power" in return: "In a different period, Castroism might well have adopted a different ideology of total power."¹

There is much truth in this. Yet, as I have suggested earlier, such formulations also contain serious flaws. For one thing, they tend to treat Castroism as little more than ex post facto rationale--"retrospective" theory, if you will, divorced from the kind of anticipatory weltanschauung that helps guide behavior. It may be true, for instance, that the theory of guerrilla warfare did not become a part of the doctrine until after victory had been won. Only then did the revolutionaries have the
time to ask themselves what had been done and how they had done it. But once the theory had been formulated, they then proceeded to apply it. It helped direct their actions. More important, as Einaudi has protested, a "lack of 'anticipatory' theory was not a characteristic of the men who made up the fidelista core, who attacked Moncada and returned from Mexico to try again."² Though Castro and his closest associates were hardly ideological sophisticates, they did, as we have seen, have a primitive ideological vision of their own, complete with an abstract, utopian goal culture. Power for what? To destroy the old order of things, to create the new. To transform, renovate, revolutionize the Cuban nation "from top to bottom"; to restore the pride, dignity and cultural integrity of a people; to pursue social justice, "total and definitive"; to acquire the sovereignty that had never really been attained.

Once again, this was a vision whose roots were predominately indigenous, quite apart from any tangential debts that were owed to Marx and Lenin. If its symbols, concepts and programs were often amorphous and contradictory, it was for reasons which have been discussed at length in previous chapters.

The key theoretical point to be reiterated, however, is that the formation and development of Castroism, like other revolutionary ideologies, is best viewed as a process whereby certain existential preconditions or ideational raw materials are translated into a more-or-less coherent world view by a succession of prophets,
theorists, politicos and interpreters. Central to this perspective is a vision of men interacting with their changing environments, being subjected to a variety of opportunities, pressures and constraints which shift over time, forcing them to adjust and readjust their operational perspectives and ideologies and hence their behavior. In the case of Fidel Castro, we have seen how the basic psychological urges for self-esteem and power were translated into a perpetual struggle to dominate his environment, with an attendant propensity to rebel against those forces, human and otherwise, that threatened or acted to constrain that ambition. Moreover, it was also noted how these strivings for power and rebellion found expression and sanction through the development of a nascent ideology of revolutionary nationalism which helped lend general direction to his behavior. From very early on, the concept of revolutionary struggle became the catchword of his being.

This much having been said, the next step in our analysis will be to show how the Castroite goal and transfer cultures gradually became instilled with elements of Marxist-Leninist content in the period which followed the overthrow of Batista. By January 1959, environmental circumstances had changed radically. After years of seemingly futile struggle, victory had finally been won. The collapse of the ancien regime had been rapid and complete—seemingly miraculous—leaving a power vacuum which the forces of the opposition quickly moved to fill. But now, the very fact that power had been at least partially attained would force Castro
to provide greater substance to the myth of Revolution, to make commitments to specific governmental policies and programs designed to lead to the construction of the "new society." This was something that neither Marti nor Chibas had ever had to do. Others, of course, had been given that opportunity—and responsibility—and had abused it grossly. Memories of the past hung like a specter over the new líder maximo. This Revolution too might be aborted or, once having been set in motion, destroyed by foreign intervention or domestic counterrevolution, including the natural forces of revolutionary degeneration. Such fears would haunt Castro from the moment he took power and would never be far from the center of his consciousness in the years which followed.  

Thus it was that the initial "Year of Liberation" would witness a preeminent stress on that transfer culture objective which has been termed elite hegemony. Power had not yet been wholly acquired or consolidated. Environmental circumstances remained highly fluid, subject to changes both rapid and profound. Action had to be taken. If the revolutionary process was to be developed to the full, all elements serving to brake its momentum would have to be neutralized or displaced. The revolutionary nucleus, expanding in the wake of victory, would have to gain a monopoly of power. In large part, therefore, the next two chapters will be concerned with the mechanisms whereby that hegemony was attained. Emphasis will be placed on both the political maneuverings of Castro and his followers vis-a-vis their political competitors
and potential allies and on those socio-psychological factors which provided them with a mass base of popular support with which to develop a charismatic dictatorship and set in motion the processes of ideological and policy radicalization.

Again, we are speaking of a dynamic pattern of interaction between man and his environment, with both being affected and changed in the process. Within Cuba, Castro's gradual move to explore and take full advantage of the opportunities afforded by his new circumstances, to develop his personal hegemony and that of his followers, to formulate and implement increasingly radical policies in pursuit of the revolutionary goal culture, had the effect of narrowing the popular base of the Revolution, progressively alienating those segments whose interests and ideologies were opposed to such fundamental and wide-ranging transformations. At the same time, this train of events increasingly aroused the suspicion and hostility of influential elements in the United States, whose traditional economic and political interests in Cuba were perceived to be threatened by forces which were thought to be vaguely "Communistic". Eventually, there would come a moment of truth when Castro would have to choose either to curtail the development of his Revolution or to risk its destruction by North American imperialism in league with the forces of domestic counterrevolution.

Some years later, Fidel was asked by one of his intimates what he would have done had the Soviet Union not been available to
provide the kind of economic and military assistance that had proven so crucial to the continued radicalization and ultimate survival of the Revolution. His reply, after a moment of reflection, was that he "would have played with the national bourgeoisie for ten years but in the end it would have been the same thing."

Perhaps. But then, of course, we can never know for sure.

There can be no question, however, that the availability of the USSR to serve as a political and ideological mentor and a vital source of economic sustenance and military protection had a most profound impact on the subsequent development of Castroism. Maybe Draper was right when he said that under other circumstances Fidel might have adopted a different ideology of total power.

On the other hand, this is surely less an indication that "he did not believe in anything very profoundly" than that the ideational system which he did possess was highly dependent on the shifting complex of opportunities, pressures and constraints with which he had to deal. In this respect, Castroism is no different from other ideologies, which are similarly dependent on the environmental circumstances of their holders. In point of fact, Marxism-Leninism would be embraced selectively, through a process of gradual synthesis, a "cross-fertilization" of the Cuban revolutionary tradition with the European Communist tradition. The two were by no means wholly incompatible with one another, though important elements of both would have to be either revised or shed. In any case, the latter would help provide the goal and transfer
cultures of nascent Castroism with much-needed substance. More shall be said about the specifics of this formative process in subsequent chapters. For the moment, we need only concentrate on those forces which led up to its initiation.

The Roots of Radicalization: The Messianic-Fatalist Syndrome

Much has been made of the charismatic powers of Fidel Castro. Unfortunately, attention has tended to focus overwhelmingly on the personality of the individual. Very little heed has been paid to the social and psychological bases of his authority and the processes whereby those latent raw materials were transformed into a mass movement that came to embrace the greater part of the Cuban nation. Chapters Two and Three have been partially designed to correct this imbalance, for a leader is nothing without his followers, and charisma is not merely the product of an individual personality but of its interaction with the needs and desires of the masses from whom its authority is derived.?

Earlier we spoke of the messianic-fatalist syndrome that has plagued Cuban political life during the course of much of this century. That this phenomenon represented an extreme manifestation of a very common behavioral tendency seems clear from the literature of modern social psychology. In the words of Henry L. Minton, "if one believes that he is controlled by forces beyond his control, he tends to act on this belief by assuming a passive orientation to his environment. On the other hand, if one
believes that he is master of his fate, he tends to assume an active orientation to his environment." In short, "one's evaluation of how powerful or powerless he feels seems to be an important determinant of the action he will take."\(^8\)

As with individuals, so with entire nations. Cuban fatalism was never the product of complaisance or satisfaction. Rather, indifference and passivity were the natural consequences of a pervading sense of powerlessness and an accompanying loss of identity and purpose. The ideals for which the Wars of Independence had been fought had been repeatedly frustrated. North American military intervention had not freed the nation at all but had merely substituted one colonial hegemony for another. Moreover, the accompanying economic and cultural penetration of the island had deprived the Cubans of control over a large portion of their own destiny and had turned their country into a kind of appendage of the United States. Real power lay in the hands of foreigners. The island had been developed as a sugar factory and as a convenient dumping ground for finished products from the North. As a consequence, the nation had witnessed the erosion of many of its own unique characteristics.\(^9\) Furthermore, American economic power, in league with political and military power, had been invested in such a way as to shape an indigenous elite whose economic, political and cultural interests were closely tied to sources outside the Cuban nation, particularly to US business and political circles. In turn, this had meant a certain psychological
division of loyalties. As Marshal Singer has noted, when men's "economic identity and their national identity come into conflict they may well support the former over the latter." It became difficult for those who tried to "swim in both ponds" to be fully Cuban. Their own interests all too often dictated that their power would be employed in ways which helped sustain the continued North American hegemony over the isle and which inhibited the processes of nation-building.

In short, the Cuban republic had been born crippled and so, under the hegemony of the United States, had it developed. To say this is by no means to cast all blame on "Yankee imperialism" or to imply that there were no men of genuine nationalist integrity within the Cuban elite. But the nation itself had never been allowed to develop as a viable entity. Spanish colonialism had taken a heavy toll even prior to the attainment of formal independence, and its heritage of mass destruction and of parasitical values passed on to the Cubans bode ill for the growth of strong and constructive social and political institutions. In the years following the attainment of formal independence, political life had rapidly degenerated into a huge spoils system, with public office being regarded as more of a means to self-aggrandizement than an opportunity to serve the people. Perhaps even more critical, however, the economic structure fostered by the power of North American Capitalism could not sustain an entire nation. No doubt many Cubans benefited from the island's link with the "Colossus".
But large segments of the populace were also condemned to unemployment and underemployment. While the middle and upper classes lived in comfort, the lower classes resided in squalor. In addition, the entire social structure was riven through by insecurity, largely the product of the island's overdependence on foreign sugar markets. And that very dependence, added to the continuing specter of Yankee hegemony and to the parasitismo and corruption that was so firmly embedded within their own social system, tended to breed the fatalistic conviction that the destiny of the Cuban people lay in the hands of forces beyond their control. In truth, the crippling process was a psychological as well as a social phenomenon.

Not that this fatalism was constant or omnipresent. Rather, this was a nation characterized by perhaps nothing so much as a propensity for extremism. As Hugh Thomas has documented, the history of the Cuban people has in significant part been the history of a pursuit of freedom. The Cubans have always been rebels, they "have always fought for their liberties... but in between convulsive upheavals there was always a pall of defeatism and cynicism, the more or less patient shrug of the shoulders, the acceptance of violence, graft and mismanagement as if they were the normal order of events."

Harry Stack Sullivan once remarked that apathy is a curious state: "It is a way used to survive defeat without material damage, although if it endures too long one is damaged by the passage of
time. Apathy... is a miracle of protection by which a personality in utter fiasco rests until it can do something else." In Cuba, emotional withdrawal, reflected in a widespread sense of political apathy, cynicism and fatalism, became a major defense mechanism (though it was by no means the only one) whereby a temperamentally rebellious people sought to relieve the anxieties produced by its profound sense of powerlessness in the face of insecurities and frustrations which, as we have seen, were deeply engrained in its national experience. Unfortunately, the phenomenon tended to be self-perpetuating and ultimately self-defeating, for hand-in-hand with this sense of emptiness and self-alienation came despair and destructiveness, violence and assassination. It is easy (and, of course, in no small part justifiable) to blame Grau, Prio and the Autenticos for not containing the action groups and curbing the corruption that plagued their administrations. But the fact remains that these troubles were not the offspring of any one man or political party but were integral byproducts of the entire Cuban national experience. The disaster that was Autentico rule was only one in a long series of disappointments perpetrated by politicians who had come to power cloaked in the mantle of the Cuban revolutionary tradition. Time and again, hopes had been raised, only to be dashed on the shoals of Cuban reality. The attendant de-moralization and withdrawal was accumulative and overwhelming. When Carlos Prio fell victim to Batista's coup of 10 March, the public more-or-less responded with a collective shrug
of the shoulders, as if to say: "Ah well, that is the way things are done here."

Yet, below these surface behavioral trends the impulse to rebel remained very much alive, for, as I have suggested, passivity and fatalism represented more of a submergence and obscuring of discontents than their elimination. In a very real sense, the Cuban nation was a time bomb of repressed anxieties and frustrations waiting to explode. All that was needed was a leadership capable of harnessing these tensions and channelling them into national policy.

Years ago, Sidney Hook observed that "the tendency to compensate for one's deficiencies by sinking them in the glorious achievements of more fortunate mortals may be an ever-present feature of social life." More specifically,

... an important source of appeal made by the leader to his following lies in the vicarious gratification of their yearnings through his presumed traits and achievements. The splendor, the power, the flame of the leader are shared imaginatively. New elements of meaning enter the lives of those who are emotionally impoverished. The everyday disparities and injustices of social life, and sometimes the lacks and incapacities of personal life, fade out of the center of concern. The ego is enlarged without effort and without cost.15

In Cuba, the pressures giving rise to such tendencies were particularly intense, for this was a country in which "politics, magic and religion... were neighboring provinces, sometimes without boundary lines..." Cubans had had little to believe in. Customs and institutions which, in more stable countries, act as a brake on the ambitions of single men and on the emotional
expectations of masses, in Cuba had scarcely existed either during modern industrial society or in the slave society which had preceded it." Here the hispanic propensities for personalismo, caudillismo and machismo provided a ready-made channel for political, social and economic discontent and the frustrations of emergent nationalism. Heroism—including its most extreme form, messianism—became a natural outlet, one of many, for people sorely in need of emotional compensation for chronic and widespread feelings of powerlessness and national self-alienation.

That the phenomenon of heroism frequently performs functions of enormous import in the nation-building process is hardly debatable. National heroes help to establish a sense of national identity, pride and unity among publics having disparate and often conflicting values and interests. They provide a symbolic focus of leadership around which the masses may be mobilized in pursuit of national objectives. In fact, a primary impetus behind the rise of the Marti cult in the post-1933 era was precisely this desire on the part of Cuban patriots to find such a unifying symbol. Unfortunately, the effect of the enterprise was more vicarious than real, for the nation-building process had already turned sour, and the accompanying pall of fatalism, cynicism and withdrawal could not so easily be removed. There had been too many foreign interventions; too many aspiring messiahs fallen by the wayside, killed or corrupted. In truth, entirely too many Cubans paid homage to their Apostle through lip service rather
than emulation. "False leaders invoke[d] him as a recognized password to triumph, in order to hide their true intentions of personal gain."\(^{17}\) The masses, embracing his apotheosis with uncritical abandon, had only a primitive understanding of the man and his ideas.\(^{18}\) It was as though great cross sections of the populace, having lost faith in their leaders, in themselves, and in their ability to alter the national destiny, had chosen to bury their sensibilities in cult hero-worship, among other diversions,\(^{19}\) while awaiting the arrival of the one true savior, who would bind their wounds, soothe their spirits, and lead them into the Promised Land. No doubt this sort of escapism was emotionally more appealing, not to say infinitely easier, than a determination to accept personal responsibility for one's own fate. In a sense, hero-worship was a substitute for life itself, for it helped provide the devotee with the semblance of a meaningful existence.\(^{20}\)

The Roots of Radicalization: The Revolutionary Nucleus

How then were these raw messianic potentials, largely latent by the time of Batista's return to power, transformed into a mass movement that would be used to revolutionize Cuban society "from top to bottom"? Granted that the impulse to rebel had not been extinguished--only submerged and diverted--rebellion is still not revolution. The latter requires more than isolated and ephemeral acts of heroism. Certainly more than the bringing down of a two-bit dictator of dubious competence. Rather, revolution is an on-going process, creative as well as destructive, involving not only the
demolition of the old social order but the construction of the new. Hence, a primary challenge for Fidel Castro in his role as revolutionary leader would be to mobilize those popular forces which were alienated from the traditional Cuban social, economic and political systems and to channel their energies, first, into the destruction of those systems and, second, into the building of the new society of the future.

In truth, once Batista and his cohorts had been eliminated the first of these tasks was accomplished with amazing ease. The real trick had been to build a revolutionary movement from scratch in the inhospitable atmosphere of the mid-1950's. Fortunately for Fidel, the mass alienation that plagued Cuba was not solely manifested in withdrawal and fatalism. A new political generation was arising, whose members had during the course of their educational experiences been widely exposed to the heroes, myths and ideals of the Cuban revolutionary tradition, who were well aware of the chasm that existed between those ideals and the national reality, and who had not yet seen their idealism fatally eroded by the enervating sense of helplessness and resignation that had accompanied the chronic failures and frustrations of older generations. Moreover, youthful idealism, impatience and temerity existed side-by-side with socio-economic frustration for, like their predecessors in 1930, the children of '53 found virtually all avenues of upward social mobility blocked. Fidel Castro, the lawyer without clients, was in good company, for thousands of other
young students and former students were in similar straits, victims of a system of higher education which was no longer attuned to the needs of the society which it served. Hence, the flood of unemployed graduates in the arts and social sciences, the ten thousand young professionals referred to by Castro in History Will Absolve Me, who had left "the classrooms with their degrees, desirous of working and full of hope, only to find themselves in a dead end street, all the doors closed, deaf to clamor and supplication."21

The Castros, of course, were children of the bourgeoisie, as was most of the core leadership of the revolutionary nucleus. The bulk of the Moncada and Granma participants, however, were of more humble background, rather poorly educated, recruits drawn from the urban lower-middle and working classes--factory hands, ship assistants, lorry drivers, agricultural laborers. . . . They too had experienced considerable socio-economic frustration. Some had known real deprivation, especially in childhood, having spent many a schoolday in city streets, "running errands, carrying baskets, collecting salvage and stealing."22 A large portion were immigrants from the countryside, seeking escape from the poverty and tedium of rural life.23 Now they were young adults, desirous of advancement, continually being exposed to and tempted by the opulence of middle-class life styles, yet lacking the education, manners and skills needed to satisfy their ambitions. True, they tended to be somewhat better off than the social strata from which they had arisen. Most of them, at least, had jobs.24 (Cuba, it may be
remembered, contained some 650,000 permanently or partially un­
employed--about one-third of the labor force for some months of
the year--perhaps half of whom lived in the shantytowns of Havana
and other urban areas.) But this only seems to have added to
their alienation, for having escaped from the lower depths they
now found themselves saddled to work which they disliked and which
held little promise of further upward mobility. Some drifted
from occupation to occupation or held more than one job at a time
in order to make ends meet. And always, there were the twin
spectors of underemployment and unemployment from which few could
be entirely safe.

In a word, they were rootless. Like so many of their
petty bourgeois compatriots, they had become alienated from their
origins and had not yet found a place in the socio-economic struc­
ture wherein they could fit and be secure.

Students of the sociology of revolution have often argued
that it is precisely the declasse--those whose class affiliations
are weakest and who are characterized by a relative absence of
bonds that tie them to the established order--who are most likely
to support and be in the forefront of revolutionary change.25
The Cuban experience would seem to be a case in point, for the
quality of rootlessness was clearly a major factor accounting for
the ease with which the anti-Batista rebellion was transformed
into a revolutionary mass movement. Indeed, to a very considerable
extent rootlessness was an integral part of the Cuban national
existence. Large segments of the populace, both urban and rural,
had no real stake in the social, economic and political systems
in which they lived. As Goldenberg has observed,

Because of their rootlessness they have
frequently been inclined toward social radicalism; since
they could expect little from reforms of the existing
system, they have been favorably disposed towards its
substitution by another in which they might be able
to take root. Because of its utter heterogeneity, this
mass of people has never been able to develop a common
consciousness or to form a common political organiza-
tion. As a conglomerate of rootless individuals, un-
accustomed to work, they have resisted strict discipline
and have been prone to corruption of all kinds—their
hopes being pinned on some "caudillo," or benefactor.
Since they have not worked, they more than others have
been able to participate in terrorist and guerrilla
activities. These are the people who may be said to
have given something like a social basis to the Cuban
revolution as a whole. A closer look at the social
composition of the anti-Batista rebels reveals that,
rather than the middle-class extraction of their leaders,
it is this rootlessness which has been the common
denominator tying them together. They were recruited
from the young unemployed and underemployed of the cities
and the countryside, as well as from university and high
school students and from frustrated intellectuals of
all descriptions who, with a lot of time on their hands,
had only their rootlessness to lose and a world to con-
quered.25

In a sense, then, it would not be much amiss to describe
the Cuban Revolution as the "revolution of the rootless". It may
be true, as has frequently been claimed, that the leaders of the
resistance were primarily bourgeois in origin, that their aims,
at least to judge from their public pronouncements, were moderate
and more political than socio-economic. But appearances are often
deceiving. Within the broad coalition of organizations arrayed
against the Batista regime was the Twenty-Sixth of July Movement.
And within M-26 was a revolutionary nucleus of rootless young men and women grouped around the charismatic personage of Fidel Castro. Their objectives were far from moderate. Equally important, beyond this nucleus there existed a vast, heterogeneous mass of rootless, alienated humanity which was increasingly drawn into the struggle as the civil war intensified and spread to ever-widening segments of the population. Ultimately, it would be these masses who would provide the key to the future of the Cuban nation, for without their support Castro and his comrades could never have transformed the Rebellion into the Revolution.

Human motives are complex and diverse, and it would be fatuous to attribute the political attraction of Fidel Castro to any single causal factor. Rather, different people received different gratifications from his leadership in fulfillment of a variety of needs and desires, both material and psychological. This was as true for the early members of the revolutionary nucleus as it would later be for the great masses of the Cuban people. Certainly, there were those within his entourage who were seeking adventure and spoils in a manner typical of Cuban caudillismo, who had attached themselves to this impressive "man of action" because they saw in him a means to their own advancement. But clearly, there was more to fidelismo than this. The urge for self-aggrandizement tended to be intertwined with personal loyalties and nascent ideology. Above all, rootlessness is a psychological phenomenon, a
condition of profound insecurity and normlessness, the natural
d byproduct of lives which had become largely divorced from social
moorings. The men and women who formed the core of the nucleus
were searching for something beyond political power and material
well-being, though for most these were strong incentives in them-
selves. They were seeking a transcendental meaning in their lives.
And in Fidel Castro and the Revolution they found it.

No one has stated this more vividly than Haydee Santamaria.

Speaking of the horror of Moncada, she recalled that

...At that moment, I was not really thinking of
death; there were two things which preoccupied me. The
first was that, when it was all over, if Fidel re-
mained, he would go on with the Revolution; our lives
and our actions would have a meaning. ...

...from that moment onward, I could think of no
one except Fidel. We were all thinking of Fidel. Of
Fidel who must not die. Of Fidel who had to live to
fight the Revolution. Of Fidel's life which was our
life too. Because as long as Fidel lived, Abel, Boris,
Renato and the others were not dead. They would live
through Fidel, and he would continue the Cuban Revolution
and give our country back its destiny.27

No doubt for most the bases of this attraction were more
personalistic than ideological. For those of messianic persuasion,
Leader and Cause tended to be indistinguishable: Fidel seemed
the very personification of the Revolution. Still, this was not
always the case. Upon closer examination, there appears to have
been at least a rough correlation between the socio-economic back-
ground and level of education of his nuclear associates and their
propensity for charismatic, as opposed to ideological, allegiance.
Most of the commanders of the Rebel Army, for instance--men like
Camilo Cienfuegos, Juan Almeida, Universo Sanchez, Galixto Garcia, Ramiro Valdes, William Galvez, Guillermo Garcia, Crescencio Perez and Efigenio Ameijeiras (the last of whom later fell prey to la dolce vita disease and was purged)—were of humble origin and low education. Having few political ideas of their own beyond an acute resentment of the socio-economic order in which they had suffered since birth, they were almost wholly dependent on their jefe for ideological inspiration. In turn, Castro recognized early on that their alienation would be more effectively channelled into emotional than intellectual allegiances. Hence, his insistence that while ideology, discipline and leadership were all indispensable conditions for the formation of the revolutionary movement, leadership was basic. Given the personalistic and messianic inclinations of his countrymen, it would be necessary to "inspire faith...towards one person".

For these and many other humildes, Castro became both a vicarious and an active channel through which long-standing socio-economic anxieties and frustrations could be expressed. In his charismatic leadership, they found a home—a place to belong and to take root, a source of meaning, inspiration and security. Though he "stood out among them like a tower among hovels", he was a hero with whom they could identify in a highly personal way, for he seemed the epitomy of strength, courage, temerity and all the other qualities of machismo to which they themselves aspired. There were elements of paternalism and comradeship here
also. Their Leader lived with them, dressed like them, and shared their risks and hardships, and although he was their intellectual superior by far, he was given to neither aloofness nor intellectualization. Rather, he was muy simpatico; he could talk to them without condescension, in terms which they could understand and appreciate. And most important, his words were backed up with action.

In short, these were fidelistas in the strict sense of the word. They were his followers, pure and simple. Hence the durability of their relationship with the Maximum Leader, for their need to believe in a messiah was complemented precisely by Castro's own long-standing obsession with the struggle ethic and the quest for personal domination: They gave him the uncritical adulation which he so desired. In return, so overpowering was his presence and his desire to win, so totally did he believe in himself, in his Cause, and in the ultimate victory to come, that he was able to project his own incorrigible optimism and self-confidence onto them, sometimes even in the midst of seemingly hopeless situations.

Here we have the testimony of Guillermo Garcia, reputedly the first peasant to join Castro's forces in the Sierra, as recorded by Lee Lockwood:

"I met Fidel for the first time on the twelfth of December, ten days after he landed in the Granma. I remember the moment very well. We were walking through a field of platanos [bananas]. Fidel said, 'Are we already in the Sierra Maestra?' I said, 'Yes.' 'Then the Revolution has triumphed!' he said.

"At that moment we were four men, with two rifles and one hundred and twenty-seven bullets." Guillermo's barely visible smile indicates that he is tremendously amused.
"And did you believe him?" I asked.

"Did I believe him? . . . If I didn't believe him I wouldn't be here now, chico," he says softly. . . .

"You know, Fidel spoke with so much emotion—you had to believe him. Even in that platano field, though it seemed crazy, I believed him. And now, look where we are."32

Ultimately, of course, this loyalty was well-rewarded and the personalistic nature of the initial commitment reconfirmed. When Batista's army collapsed during the latter half of 1958, it left a power vacuum which the barbudos of the Sierra quickly moved to fill: "Through the victory of January these men, who had had enough faith in Castro to accompany him in his desperate revolutionary adventures, became the high command of the armed forces of the republic. And the unanimous admiration of the Cuban people for Castro convinced them once and for all of the exceptional qualities of the man they had acknowledged as their chief." No doubt many of them were indeed convinced that he had "quasi-magical powers" and were ready to follow him anywhere, as long as victory and its rewards eventually confirmed that faith, "whether their leader was a partisan of 'unity,' a Communist, a Papist or a vegetarian."33

There were others in the nucleus, however, whose support for Castro was of a more conditional nature. For the most part, these were educated children of the bourgeoisie, more politically experienced than their lower-class compatriots, less dependent on their Leader as a source of ideas and inspiration. (Which is not to say that they were immune from his charismatic charms.) A few--
most notably his brother, Raul, and the Argentine physician, Guevara—were already strongly influenced by Marxism-Leninism, though they were by no means orthodox Communists. Neither Raul nor Che, in fact, had as yet reached political maturity. Yet, each in his own way was already more ideologically advanced and radical than Fidel. Moreover, there is no question about the integrity of their commitments. What was vital to them was not merely power in and of itself, but what was done with it. They would almost certainly have bolted had Castro betrayed what they conceived to be the primary goals of the Revolution.

Still others—a diverse group including such stalwarts as Faustino Perez, Haydee Santamaria, Jesus Montane, Armando Hart, Carlos Franqui and Marcelo Fernandez—were less susceptible to labelling, though their nascent ideological roots were very real nonetheless. In general, they were radical revolutionaries of vaguely Socialist persuasion, strongly influenced by the ideals and heroes of the Cuban revolutionary tradition. Their objective: the wholesale renovation of Cuban society, including the attainment of social justice and national sovereignty. It is true that some—mostly individuals associated with the llano, such as Perez, Fernandez and Hart—were anti-Communist. Yet, as often as not, they were also anti-Yankee, for they remembered the past and were determined that this time Marti's dream would not be aborted. Their antipathy for Marxism was based not so much on specific ideological principles as on their familiarity and disgust with the
whole sordid history of Cuban Communism. Their complaint was
not that the Communists were too radical but that they were not
radical enough, that they were opportunists and bureaucrats who
had never hesitated to betray the cause of revolution when it
suited their aims or those of their foreign sponsors.

In sum, from his first weeks in power Castro had to
contend not merely with the forces of conservatism and bourgeois
moderation but with far more radical elements within his own
political camp. This was the core of the "Jacobin Left"—alienated
young men and women who had long ago grown weary of the endless
"discussion of intellectual problems, and...the ideological
dilettantism" that characterized the old politics and who had
"decided to face the situation squarely". 35 As Hugh Thomas has
observed, they were in love with the idea of Revolution and were
attempting, quite self-consciously, to live an epic. 36 No doubt
their Cause gave meaning and direction to their own rootless lives.

Hence, much of the basis of their attraction to Fidel
Castro, for here at last they had found a Leader who combined a strong
sense of historical mission with an overwhelming penchant for action.
Certainly, their loyalties to him were intense; for some even
messianic. After all, they had been with him for a long time—a
few all the way back to Moncada—and had shared innumerables
risks and hardships over the years. These shared experiences—
the sacrifices, the dangers, the cooperative struggle—together
with the shared ideal of Revolution (no less inspirational and
unifying in its effects for being amorphous) had created bonds of 
comradeship that would prove surprisingly durable in the years to 
come.37 True, serious differences of ideology, interest and per-
sonality would arise soon enough—indeed, were already visible 
in the smoldering resentments that continued to exist between 
sierra and llano. But such tensions tended to be obscured in the 
initial euphoria of Victory. And although their voices were neither 
unified nor unambiguous, these nascent ideologues of the nucleus 
could agree upon one thing: this was not to be the "moderate 
revolution" desired by the professional politicians.

The Roots of Radicalization: Dual Government and the Requisites of the Revolutionary Transfer Culture

Everybody loves a winner, and Cubans are no exception.
During the final six months of the civil war, Castro's charismatic 
appeal experienced phenomenal growth. Yet, there was more to this 
than a simple desire on the part of great masses of people to get 
on the winning side. As Thomas has astutely observed: "Occasionally 
after years of struggle and disappointment, and for many reasons, 
peoples decide to place their collective will-power in the hands of 
a single man. Ever since the death of Marti, the Cubans had been 
searching for such an individual. Now they believed they had 
found one."38 Had he died in the Sierra, Castro probably would 
have been remembered, if at all, as just one more link in the long 
chain of ill-fated prophets stretching from Marti to Guiteras to 
Chibas. Instead, he endured and ultimately triumphed, the first
military hero in his nation's history to attain victory largely independent of foreign support. Moreover, this was a conquest which smacked of the miraculous. That twelve men (or so the official mythology had it) could survive the catastrophe of the Granma and overcome apparently insuperable obstacles to engineer the defeat of a modern army trained and equipped by the most powerful military establishment in the world fairly defied the imagination. No matter that the realities of the civil war did not always conform to its myths, the apostolic analogy did not go unheeded. To hundreds of thousands of Cubans, it must have seemed as though Christ, or at least Jose Marti, had returned to free them from all the evils from which they had suffered for so many decades.

David Hume once remarked that reason is the servant of the passions. He might have added that it is often their victim as well. The emotional pendulum of the Cuban nation was once again in full swing. By the time of Batista's fall, mass psychological withdrawal, cynicism and fatalism had been replaced, seemingly overnight, by a sweeping sense of optimism that might more properly be termed euphoria. Years of pent-up anxiety and frustration burst forth in a veritable flood of emotion. Long-standing feelings of impotence and insecurity found ready overcompensation in the mechanisms of messianic allegiance. At last, the Savior had come. Now all would be made right.

Thus was the illusion of powerlessness supplanted by the illusion of omnipotence, with monumental consequences for the future
development of the Revolution.

And yet, when Fidel Castro entered Havana a conquering hero on January 8, 1959, "no one knew what he was going to do. It is doubtful that he himself knew, except in the most general terms." He had come to power without any clearly defined and internally consistent ideology or political program, an ambiguity which in part reflected the confusion and uncertainty in his own mind. Yet, as we have seen, this was also the product of cold calculation, for he was acutely aware that his immediate political base rested on a broad coalition of forces having diverse and often conflicting interests. And always in the background there was the specter of the "Colossus" and the memory of Guatemala.

In short, Fidel's position was still highly vulnerable. Even at the moment of Victory, his own political apparatus, the Twenty-Sixth of July, remained weak and disorganized, with perhaps a maximum of 400 members in Havana. For its part, the Rebel Army was not much better off, its ranks (1,500-3,000, at most) being swollen by a large influx of unassimilated campfollowers who had flocked to its side once the handwriting on the wall became clearly visible. Moreover, the adoption of an increasingly moderate political tone during the latter years of the war had inevitably served to constrain Castro's freedom of action. Few of his promises had been so explicit as the pledge to restore constitutional government, civil liberties and democratic elections.
But were such promises compatible with the desire for radical socio-economic revolution? Equally important, what would be the popular reaction to a decision to subordinate the former to the latter? True enough, the theme of Revolution had struck a central chord in the public psyche, but Cubans had heard such slogans bandied about for decades. How many of them really wanted the kinds of radical change that the idea implied? In particular, what would happen once the upper and middle classes began to feel the crunch of redistributive policies designed to attain "total and definitive social justice"? And what would be the reaction of the United States, whose economic and political interests were so closely tied to the old order and its ruling elite?

In point of fact, it seems that in the beginning Fidel did not fully understand the true magnitude of the political vacuum into which he was stepping. The vantage point from the Sierra had been quite different. It took time to adjust to the realities of his new situation. As Celia Sanchez later remarked, "we could not know that when victory came we and the Twenty-Sixth of July Movement would be so strong and popular. We thought we would have to form a government with Autenticos, Ortodoxos and so forth. Instead, we found that we could be the masters of Cuba."43

Hence, a certain initial caution which allowed the first cabinet of the Revolutionary Government to be dominated largely by the forces of bourgeois moderation: "Mature men..."
technical preparation and a clean record of public service" who had been willing to let Castro do "the muscle work" during the resistance so that they could later "constitute the government".\textsuperscript{44}

The provisional President, of course, was Castro's own hand-picked candidate, Manuel Urrutia, a brave and honest judge but a man of limited imagination, energy, ambition and political acumen. He, in turn, appointed as Prime Minister the equally circumspect Jose Miro Cardona, a prominent Havana lawyer. Others of note included Roberto Agramonte, Ortodoxo presidential candidate in the aborted elections of '52, as Foreign Minister; Rufo Lopez-Fresquet, a professional economist and tax expert who had served in the Grau and Prio regimes and had connections with the conservative Havana newspaper, Diario de la Marina, as Finance Minister; Angel Fernandez, another lawyer and a personal friend of Urrutia, as Minister of Justice; and Raul Cepero Bonilla, an economist and journalist, at Commerce.

In sharp contrast to such bland, middle-aged "respectables" was a coalition of much more youthful and rebellious personalities: the impetuous young Armando Hart, the first national coordinator of M-26, who became the new Minister of Education; Manuel Ray, a brilliant engineer and a radical revolutionary of democratic persuasion, who as Minister of Public Works now energetically set about to repair the bridges, railroads and other public facilities which, as commander of the Civic Resistance in Havana, he had so recently been in charge of destroying; Humberto Sori Marin, head of the Rebel
Army's Justice Department and legal advisor to Fidel in the Sierra Maestra, another of those who mixed revolutionary romanticism with an allegiance to democratic methods, the new Minister of Agriculture; Augusto Martinez Sanchez, lawyer, councilor to Raul in the Sierra Cristal, now Secretary of Defense; the mysterious Faustino Perez, the once powerful head of the llano, now a full-fledged barbudo, with a beard to prove it, Minister for the Recuperation of Ill-Gotten Goods. . . .

Of the seventeen members of the initial cabinet, only three (not counting Perez) were closely identified with the sierra. Six others had been with the urban Civic Resistance. The remainder had been largely inactive in the struggle against Batista.

Fidel himself did not immediately join the cabinet. Later, he blamed this on his own inexperience and naivete. He had had no political ambitions, he said, and had desired neither the office of Prime Minister nor that of President. Rather, he had wanted to remain "completely separate from power"; while those responsible took "the elementary measures that the people were expecting." Unfortunately, such hopes proved to be illusory. The new government had contained too many men with "an anachronistic conservative mentality", with the result that weeks passed and "not a single measure had been taken, not a single thing had been done! This was beginning to create a certain very detrimental discontent. It was exactly then that it was proposed--not on my initiative--that I assume the office of Prime Minister." Thus had "factors conspired
to place me in a position where all problems came to rest upon me, inevitably, no matter how much I tried to evade responsibility."

There is some truth in this, but not much. The evidence suggests rather that during these early weeks Castro was carefully probing the political environment, testing his strength and the weakness of his opponents, attempting to weigh the opportunities, risks and constraints that lay before him. It was almost as if he were stage-managing a scenario. He was less concerned with the formalities of power than with its substance. Thus, while roundly disclaiming all personal ambitions and remaining aloof from the presidential cabinet he simultaneously sought to undercut Urrutia's authority and assure his own control over the real bases of power.

In short, his behavior was very much in accordance with the principle of elite hegemony: Before the goal culture objectives of the Revolution could be attained, power had first to be won and consolidated by the revolutionary nucleus under the direction of its Maximum Leader. This Revolution would not be allowed to fall prey to the cockroach politicians of the bourgeoisie.

Most important, there was the immediate need to assure fidelista domination over the critical institutions of violence--the armed forces and the police. As Castro later declared,

When a moment of crisis arrives, as it arrived in Cuba on the 1st of January--the key to this whole situation is whether the people take control of the weapons or whether the military machine remains intact with weapons in hand and the people defenseless. When a crisis of this kind arises in any country the prime objective of the people's movement is to destroy the military machine
and seize its arms. This is an indispensable condition: without it, the revolution can be checked, can be betrayed, and can be crushed.

On the other hand, given this control Urrutia and his civilian colleagues would be virtually powerless to block the future course of radicalization. Thus, Fidel confessed that while the Revolution had "found it necessary to launch and proclaim a candidate... this had no importance... It doesn't matter where so-and-so is placed in any revolution in which the military apparatus ceases to exist, in any revolution where the people conquer power, destroy the military apparatus and have a revolutionary army." 49

This was soon to become a cardinal principle of Castroite doctrine, partly attributable perhaps to the influence of Lenin's *State and Revolution*. Or at least so Fidel suggested in his speech of December 2, 1961. 50 But then, that was at a time when he was trying to impress the Soviets with his affinity to Marxism-Leninism, the better to win their support vis-a-vis the "Colossus". More than likely Einaudi was correct when he said that such influences were "important not in the sense that they provided new insights, but rather in that they seemed to reformulate in systematic fashion a conclusion Castro and other members of the Generation of 1950 had already arrived at on the basis of their own interpretation of Latin American experience..." 51

Specifically, there was the memory of the aborted revolutions of 1933 (Cuba) and 1954 (Guatemala), where "those who fought had to leave, betrayed by the military caste, because there as
everywhere the military abandoned the constitutional government . . . ."52 The conclusion: "A revolutionary stage could not have begun in our country without uprooting that institution upon which rested the entire political and economic system of our fatherland."53

We shall have more to say about the "lessons of Guatemala" presently. For the moment, let the reader simply recall that Castro's dispute with the signers of the Miami Unity Pact had revolved in large part around the key issue of military control. Even in December 1957, he was already anticipating the danger to the Revolution should Batista be replaced by a military junta. Thus, he had flatly rejected the provision which had called for the incorporation of the revolutionary forces and their weapons into the regular armed forces of the republic and had claimed for the Twenty-Sixth of July Movement the function of maintaining public order and reorganizing the nation's military establishment. Furthermore, it will be remembered that it was at this time that Castro unilaterally declared Urrutia—a political obscurity with no independent base of power of his own—provisional President in a bold attempt to pre-empt the emergence of a more formidable contender, such as the highly respected former President of the National Bank, Felipe Pazos. For all his courage and integrity, the good judge was unlikely to exert the kind of strong leadership that might stand in the way of Castro's own designs.
In short, the unity that Fidel was interested in was a unity over which he could develop effective hegemony. That ambition was no less moving in January 1959, in the wake of victory, than it had been in 1957, in the isolation of the Sierra. And as anticipated, there was a certain initial resistance.

In the aftermath of Batista's flight, his Chief of Staff, General Eulogio Cantillo, had turned over command of the armed forces to Colonel Ramon Barquin, leader of the puros, a group of liberal officers who had attempted an unsuccessful coup against the dictatorship in April 1956. In turn, Barquin had declared himself in charge of the military forces in Havana and begun installing his old associates in similar posts of command. Now this was a potentially serious threat. The acceptance of Barquin would have meant the continuation of a professional army, under the leadership of officers unlikely to be receptive to the kind of radical revolution that Fidel was contemplating. On the other hand, had Barquin refused to turn over his command to the rebel detachments that were even then moving on the capital it is not impossible that he would have been able to muster enough firepower to shred their meagre forces. After all, they were only a few hundred in number and poorly armed, and he had at his disposal a vast supply of cannons, machine guns and other heavy armaments with which to resist their advance.

He had not the will, however, to make the attempt. Indeed, had he chosen to do so it is by no means clear how many troops
he could have gotten to follow him. There were more than 10,000 soldiers and officers in Camp Columbia alone, but they were no longer an army, just a "passive mass of unguarded prisoners." As with the imperial army of the Tsar, these troops too had chosen in their own way to "vote with their feet". Moreover, at this point it was obvious that a decision to continue the fighting would have flown in the face of overwhelming public sentiment. There was no questioning the moral authority of the "bearded ones" and their Leader. They had captured the imagination and support of virtually the entire nation. And now that the tyrant had fallen, it was the collective judgement of that nation that the moment for peace and national reconciliation had arrived.

Thus, on the second day of January, Barquin acquiesced. Guevara entered Havana and occupied La Cabana fortress through the simple expedient of walking in. At the same time, Camilo Cienfuegos took over Barquin's command at Camp Columbia.

The stage was now set for a massive reorganization of the armed forces designed to secure their control by men "loyal to the Revolution, and not accomplices of tyranny." Trusted leaders of the Rebel Army were assigned to the provincial military commands: Raul Castro in Oriente, Hubert Matos in Camaguey, Calixto Morales in Las Villas, William Galvez in Matanzas, Dermito Escalona in Pinar del Rio. Cienfuegos became army Chief-of-Staff. The unstable Pedro Diaz Lanz, who had flown munitions into the Sierra during the war, became head of the tiny Cuban air force. True, many old
officers also found stations. A total purge was simply infeasible. The need for peace, reconciliation and national unity was too great. Moreover, the Rebel Army itself still lacked the organization, discipline and manpower needed to assure the Revolution’s continuing defense in the weeks and months to come. Thus, "honest military men" were promised free access to the new army, with retention of their ranks "regardless of the date of their promotion.” However, the most dangerous of the potential "Bonapartists"—Barquin, Borbonnet, Rubido, a few others—were given less sensitive posts, some amounting to virtual exile from the arena of effective power. And with every passing week, it became increasingly clear that fidelista hegemony—particularly in the person of Raul and those who had served with him in the Sierra Cristal—was growing stronger. On February 2nd, Fidel designated his younger brother as his substitute in command of the armed forces in the event of his own absence, either temporary or permanent.

The police also underwent reorganization. Once again, many of those against whom no charges of misconduct could be filed were allowed to remain in their posts, at least for the moment. Within a week of the dictator’s flight, however, the skeleton of a new command structure had been created. At its apex was placed none other than Efigenio Ameijeiras, former chauffeur and Granma expeditionary, a man of dubious moral caliber but unquestioned loyalty, who took his orders not from the Minister of the Interior
but directly from Castro himself. Hundreds of rebel soldiers were now brought into the police apparatus. By the end of January, only four of the nineteen police stations in Havana remained in the same hands as at the beginning of the month. Significantly, the new commanders were primarily Sierra Maestra combatants.

Yet, the acquisition of institutional power over the military and the police constituted only one facet of the movement towards hegemony. Equally critical was Fidel's early recognition that his most basic and exploitable source of political authority stemmed from the Cuban people themselves—from their wide-spread, euphoric and often uncritical acceptance of him as their national Savior. Thus, in the wake of the dictator's fall he marched triumphantly into Santiago and set in motion the initial stage of a concerted public relations campaign designed to maximize his charismatic authority in preparation for the political wars to come. This was the birth of "direct democracy"—the technique of using mass rallies, personal appearances and "government by television" to project his personality and appeal issues "over the heads" of conventional politicians and political institutions directly to the public at large. Long ago, he had learned from Eddy Chibas the crucial role which mass communications could play in developing a large-scale charismatic following. Now those lessons were to be applied with a vengeance.

From Santiago, where he held his first post-victory "conversation with the masses", Fidel set off on a slow caravan
westward, besieged by cheering crowds, finally arriving at Havana on the eighth of January. In effect, the Cuban people were being given the opportunity of meeting their Messiah firsthand or, failing that, of vicariously sharing his glory through that most effective of substitutes for personal contact, television. Their response was electric. Hundreds of thousands of viewers saw him speak at the presidential palace and later at Camp Columbia. He raised his arms and a sea of people parted to let him through. He called on his countrymen to lay down their weapons. A white dove perched symbolically on his shoulder. He spoke for hours, extemporaneous, informal, dramatic, as if engaged in a dialogue with his audience. The masses were transfixed. Never before had so many Cubans been able to personally identify with a public figure and share in the euphoria of his triumph. His Victory was Theirs. No longer did they feel powerless.

In the months to come such scenes would become commonplace. Time and again—sometimes three or four times a week—Castro would address his countrymen with regard to some vital issue. A call for unity. A defense of national sovereignty. It hardly seemed to matter. For hours on end and often far into the night, half a million television sets would transport the Hero of the Revolution into the homes of ordinary Cuban citizens. There was a certain irony here. For years, the island had been used as a kind of testing ground by the major Yankee telecommunications companies to perfect techniques that had not yet been introduced
into their own country. In consequence, Cubans enjoyed one of the most advanced communications systems in the world. On a per capita basis, they owned more television sets than any other Latin American populace. In radios, they ranked second. Now the technology of Capitalism was to be systematically employed to foster a charismatic mass movement which in the end would destroy Cuban Capitalism, along with its attendant Norte Americano hegemony. All too soon, the techniques of "direct democracy" would be turned on Fidel's enemies, with devastating effect.

For the moment, however, Castro's objective was more modest: to monopolize public attention and develop to the utmost both the breadth and the intensity of his own popular support, thus drawing political authority away from Urrutia and his cabinet and paving the way for his own legitimate assumption of governmental power. In this, he was enormously successful. As the New Statesman observed in early February,

> Every pressure group feels represented by Castro: the peasant believes fervently that agrarian reform is now imminent, but he doesn't know that the sugar planter has never before felt so secure. The urban trade unionist, who may have helped sabotage Batista's war effort, is as enthusiastic as the industrialist who gave Castro large sums of money to buy expensive foreign arms and finance his underground.

To adapt a remark of Santayana, via Sidney Hook: In the beginning, for those who believe, the substance of things hoped for becomes the evidence of things not seen. The human capacity for self-deception and wishful thinking is immense, and Castro was a master at manipulating such weaknesses to his own advantage. During
these early weeks, he was all things to all men, a seeming paragon of disinterested and responsible leadership, standing above the fray of partisan and class conflict, a towering symbol of national unity. To those concerned about democracy and civil liberties, he promised free elections, a free press and an "absolute respect for the individual."\(^65\) To the poor, he offered "just wages, just housing and the just life."\(^66\) This Revolution, he proclaimed, "was not made to maintain privileges" or "enrich those who are already rich, but to give to those who have nothing. . . .."\(^67\) Yet, the bourgeoisie also had a place. Thus: "We do not want to have conflicts with private capital, whether Cuban or not. . . . In order to industrialize the country, in order for development, we need the help of the Cuban capitalists. . . ."\(^68\) "We want to invest our money in new industries, not nationalize those already existing."\(^69\) In short, he was telling diverse groups what they wanted to hear, while disclaiming all personal ambitions\(^70\) and playing upon the widespread optimism of the moment: "If we can realize our plans, if we are allowed to carry out our projects you may rest assured that within a few years the Cuban standard of living will be higher than that of the United States or Russia--because those countries spend a large proportion of their national income on the production of armaments."\(^71\)

In the midst of such euphoria, occasional elements of disharmony--a threat to suppress the satirical journal Zig-Zag, mass violations of legality which accompanied the trials of batistiano
war criminals, a decision to postpone elections for eighteen months—were either ignored or rationalized away.

Later, Urrutia would lament that perhaps no man had "ever reached the presidency under circumstances more difficult than mine. I had only nominal power; all real power, political and military, was in the hands of Fidel Castro. He was supported not only by his personal prestige but by his revolutionary organization, by the Rebel Army, and by popular fervor."72 This was not much of an exaggeration. The Revolution had, in fact, embarked upon a transitional period of dual government, comparable in some respects to that which arose in Russia following the fall of the Romanovs. If Castro was not an actual member of the cabinet, his presence was acutely felt nevertheless. He was Commander-in-Chief of the Rebel Army, the undisputed Hero of the Nation. And from the very beginning, he played the role of eminence grise, holding informal meetings with various government officials, using them as conduits for introducing policies of his own. This was particularly true with regard to Martinez Sanchez and Hart, who served as his " unofficial representatives" in the cabinet. As for Urrutia and the moderates, they were consistently overshadowed and upstaged. At no time were they able to outline a general government program or otherwise provide the kind of coordinated and decisive leadership that was needed to take the initiative away from Castro and his followers. Rather, each minister was left free to act on the basis of his own discretion. Early cabinet meetings were primarily
spent preparing a new constitution, which was finally promulgated on the seventh of February. 73

There was one occasion on which Urrutia did attempt to exercise leadership. This was with regard to the issue of gambling, a public vice which, spurred on by a large influx of North American capital, had grown to outrageous dimensions during the second Batista era. The President, with the support of his cabinet, proposed to stamp out this plague, beginning with the closing of the casinos. The casino workers, however, had other ideas. They appealed to Castro. He in turn took their case public via television, deriding those who "from an air-conditioned office" wished to "take bread from the mouths of casino employees". 74 His authority thus undercut, Urrutia backed down.

It was now apparent that those who had responsibility had no real power; moreover, that Fidel would not allow them to acquire it. He, on the other hand, had power but not responsibility. Sensing the futility of their position, Urrutia and his Prime Minister, Miro Cardona, moved to resign.

But the time was not yet ripe for a mass departure of the moderates. Their presence was still needed to lend legitimacy to the regime. There was, among other things, the nettlesome problem of elections. Early on, Castro had obtained cabinet support for a general "suspension of politics". The old political parties were abolished by decree. There were to be no elections for a period of eighteen months. As long as Urrutia and people...
like him remained in the government, Fidel could continue to pose as the disinterested champion of "unity", even while simultaneously undermining the processes of bourgeois democracy. Thus, shortly after assuming the prime ministership, he declared that "it would not be correct to organize elections now. We should get a crushing majority. It is in the public interest that elections be delayed until political parties are fully developed and their programs clearly defined."75 And he was believed!

But what if such men should leave the government disenchanted? The class base of the Revolution would be narrowed prematurely. They would be free to criticize, to demand elections, to form a coherent and effective opposition. Clearly, it was vital to the future development of the Revolution to keep these potentially counterrevolutionary "braking forces" immobilized until such time as they could be eliminated.76 Thus did Fidel prevail upon Urrutia to stay on for the sake of "unity". Henceforth, however, there would be a difference. In accepting the post of Prime Minister, Castro demanded—and received—broad legislative and executive powers to carry forward the program of the Revolution. Previously, such authority had been vested in the presidency. Now, it was to be transferred to the Council of Ministers so that "the agreements passed by a majority of the Council should have the character of law."77

From this moment on, the "government of Urrutia" was dead. True, this was not immediately apparent to the outside world, for
care was taken to avoid any hint of crisis. The official propaganda emphasized the entrance of Fidel and the departure of Miro, leaving the impression that Urrutia's position remained unchanged. The President went right on attending cabinet sessions as though nothing had happened. But now it was Castro who was dominant. Urrutia, realizing that his position had been usurped, gradually faded into the background.  

It was now time to begin the work of the Revolution. As Fidel told Elena Mederos, his Minister of Health: "This train will now start moving fast—probably too fast for you. At some point you will certainly want to get off, but you can choose your own moment."

The Roots of Radicalization: The Dilemma of Counterdependence

Almost three years later, in the speech in which he announced his conversion to Marxism-Leninism, Fidel would declare that

When the Revolution came to power it had the choice of two courses: either it could remain within the framework of the existing social system or it could go beyond it. . . . To take money from the imperialists by threatening them with friendship with the Soviet Union is blackmail. . . . This would have meant maintaining the status quo which existed in this country and respecting all the interests of imperialism. . . . Any country which resolves to liberate itself from the monopoly of North American trade, which determines to make an Agrarian Reform, which decides to have its own industries, to have its own independent policy, has to oppose imperialism. . . . There was no alternative: either revolution or betrayal.
Yet, during these early months the alternatives were not nearly so clear as they would appear in retrospect. The basic problem was one of overwhelming Cuban weakness and dependence in the face of North American power. Both sides suffered from "Guatemala complexes". True enough, the Eisenhower administration had mellowed considerably since the days in which it had equipped the legions of Castillo Armas to overthrow the Arbenz regime. But it had not fundamentally changed its spots. Indeed, as long as the Cold War continued to rage, US foreign policy would be unable to free itself from a certain pathological fear of Communism which would lead it time and again to resort to military intervention in order to retrieve its political and economic failures and protect what it conceived, rightly or not, to be vital security interests. Guatemala, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Vietnam. They were all links in the same chain.

As for Fidel Castro, from the very beginning he was acutely sensitive to the danger of such an aggression. Moreover, his fears were firmly grounded in historical precedent: In the long record of United States interference in Cuban internal affairs--in the military occupations of 1898-1902 and 1906-1909, in the interventions of 1912 and 1917, in the proconsulship of Crowder and the manipulations of Welles and Caffery, in the continuing occupation of Guantanamo. Had the Good Neighbor Policy really changed anything? The lesson of Guatemala suggested that it had not—that while the "Colossus" might prefer to exercise its
hegemony through more subtle and indirect means than outright occupation (e.g., through a native compradore bourgeoisie) it would act firmly to crush any attempt to institute truly revolutionary change in its own backyard. And the Guatemalan experiment had not even been all that radical. There, after all, the agrarian reform had merely been intended to break up the feudal relationships that still existed in the countryside, the purpose being to create a "modern Capitalist economy", not to institute Socialism. Even so, the reactionary opposition was still able to rally around the banner of "anti-Communism" and enlist the aid of the Central Intelligence Agency and the US Ambassador to overthrow the government of Jacobo Arbenz.

What then would be the likely Yankee reaction to an attempt to revolutionize Cuban society "from top to bottom", to break the bonds of colonial dependence and socio-economic injustice and vigorously assert the nation's cultural integrity and political sovereignty?

In point of fact, thus far Washington's behavior had been relatively restrained, more inconsistent and passive than anything else. During the course of the struggle against Batista, the Eisenhower government had come under heavy pressure from Congress and public opinion, in no small part influenced by an aggressive lobbying and public relations campaign on the part of Castro's allies and representatives in the United States, to curtail its support for the dictatorship. This was not a strong
administration. Moreover, it was considerably less monolithic than it had been in 1954. Arch conservatives were less influential. Some officials—most notably Roy Rubottom, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, and William Wieland, head of the Caribbean desk at State—were not unreceptive to the idea of a reform government in Cuba. (Later, they would serve as useful scapegoats for the fulminations of the right.) Furthermore, throughout much of this period US public opinion, strongly influenced by highly romanticized press accounts of the Cuban "Robin Hood", remained quite favorably disposed towards Castro himself.

In response to such influences, the Eisenhower regime had made a not unmeaningful attempt to remain neutral with respect to the contending forces in the civil war. As we have noted earlier, the decision to cease arms shipments had contributed much to the Cuban government's demoralization and eventual collapse. Moreover, US pressure on the dictator to maintain constitutional guarantees was no small boon to the propaganda operations of the resistance, for it provided the latter with invaluable access to the press. Probably too, North American protests of the brutal measures used by Batista's military and police had inhibited the regime's ability to employ its instruments of repression to full effect.

In any case, when Batista was finally ousted Washington accepted his political demise with fairly good grace and made a
number of potentially substantive efforts to befriend the new regime. Not the least of these was the appointment of Philip W. Bonsal, a well-intentioned and highly competent career diplomat, as the new US Ambassador to Havana. In the months to come, Bonsal would make a genuine effort to express his government's good will and its appreciation of the Cuban desire for change in their traditional relationship with the United States.

And yet, Washington's attempts at evenhandedness had always given the impression of being weighted against the Revolution. And not without reason. In the main, this imbalance was a natural concomitant of the Eisenhower administration's conservative ideological make-up and its similar conception of the national interest. Foreign policy was still largely under the direction of the Dulles brothers—John Foster at State, Allen at Central Intelligence—the architects of Guatemala, to whom anti-Communism was a religion and neutralism immoral. In part too, it was a byproduct of the general lethargy that characterized US Latin American policy (and, indeed, virtually all policy areas during this period.) Batista, after all, had been a reliable friend and ally. Moreover, he had power; his opponents did not. It was thus both more convenient and more logical for an administration concerned above all with the maintenance of North American hegemony over the region to deal with the Batistas, the Trujillos and the Somosas than to lend encouragement to their enemies, especially—as in the case of Fidel Castro—when those enemies were of uncertain or vaguely leftist persuasion.
Shakespeare said it best. Men would rather bear the ills they have than fly to others that they know not of. The Cuban President was unquestionably a "self-enriching and corrupt dictator." But he had in the past demonstrated a marked ability to salvage order out of chaos. He was a thoroughly known commodity and moreover receptive to the continuation of North American economic, cultural, political and military penetration of his country. He was, quite simply, the safest bet.

Indeed, both of the American Ambassadors to Havana during the period of the civil war had been strong and highly visible supporters of the dictator. The first of these singularly undistinguished emissaries, Arthur Gardner, had been so fulsome in his praise that he had even embarrassed Batista. His successor, Earl E. T. Smith, was somewhat more restrained. Nevertheless, he left no doubt where his sentiments lay. As early as January 1958, he indicated at a press conference his belief that the United States would never "be able to do business with Fidel Castro." (These remarks, though off the record, soon became general knowledge and were reported to Fidel in the Sierra.) The Ambassador, it seems, regarded Castro as an "outlaw" and a "would-be leftist dictator", whose movement was steadily coming under the control of the Communists. Throughout his stay in Cuba, he studiously avoided contacts with the "terrorists" and sought to strengthen the pro-US, anti-Communist regime in Havana. When these efforts failed, he tried repeatedly to promote a successor government that
would block Castro's rise to power.

Then, there was the matter of military aid. Under the terms of the Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement of 1952, the United States had issued military grants to the Batista regime in steadily increasing amounts, averaging some one and a half million dollars a year from 1954-56 and rising to well over double that amount by 1957-58. The equipment supplied, which included tanks, rockets, bombs, machine guns, grenades and rifles, was ostensibly intended for purposes of hemispheric defense, to be diverted for other purposes only with the prior agreement of the United States. Not surprisingly, this technicality was readily ignored once the fighting began. US arms were used against rebel troops and peasant huts. Castro was outraged. In June 1958, he wrote to Celia Sanchez: "When I saw rockets firing at Mario's house; I swore to myself that the Americans were going to pay dearly for what they were doing. When this war is over, a much wider and bigger war will begin for me: the war that I am going to launch against them. I am saying to myself that this is my true destiny."!

Strong words these, written in anger, but reflecting sentiments the origins of which may be traced all the way back to Fidel's childhood experiences in Oriente, where he more than once witnessed the overseers of United Fruit abuse Cuban farmworkers. We shall have more to say about this "destiny" presently. For the moment, it is sufficient to note that even as Batista continued to rely on American armaments, Castro's own efforts to raise funds within the
United States encountered strong resistance from the Eisenhower administration. In response to repeated complaints from the government in Havana, US authorities convicted some 170 Cubans for violating American neutrality legislation and confiscated over half a million dollars worth of arms, ammunition and other materials. In February 1958, the most spectacular of these incidents occurred when former President Prio Socarras, who had supplied much of the funds for the Granma expedition was indicted on charges of conspiring to violate the neutrality laws.\(^93\) Shortly thereafter, in response to pressure from Congress and public opinion, the State Department instituted the arms embargo. But even so, Batista would be able to continue drawing upon already available stockpiles of American weaponry for the duration of the war. Moreover, the US military mission remained in Havana, lending the impression (not entirely unwarranted) that the Eisenhower administration’s support of the dictatorship remained essentially uninterrupted.\(^94\)

Finally, when it had become clear even to the United States government that Batista could not survive there occurred several half-hearted attempts to replace his regime with one capable of restoring order. At first, Ambassador Smith put his faith in the mechanism of democratic elections. But when it became apparent that the presidential balloting of November 3rd would be fraudulent and entirely inadequate for the purpose desired the State Department took more clandestine action. On the eve of the elections, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles contacted William D. Pawley, a prominent
businessman and sometime diplomat, and enlisted his services as an unofficial emissary to go to Cuba and convince Batista to capitulate. Thus, on December 9th, Pawley spent three hours with the dictator, offering him "an opportunity to live at Daytona Beach with his family... to make an effort to stop Fidel Castro from coming to power." In his place would be installed a military junta, headed by Colonel Barquin, Colonel Borbonnet, General Díaz Tamayo, Bosch of the 'Bacardi' firm and one other. All were enemies of Batista.

Even this could not be done in a competent fashion. The effort failed when Batista insisted that he be allowed to announce that what he was doing was at the behest of the United States government. For his part, Pawley had not even been given the authority to say that the State Department would carry out its side of the bargain.95

Subsequently, the Department sent Ambassador Smith to ask Batista pointblank to resign, indicating that "there were Cuban elements which could salvage the rapidly deteriorating situation."96 But Smith was not authorized to say who they were, and in any case the dictator remained firmly determined that if his ship was going to sink all on board would go down with the captain. No military junta, he insisted, could survive without him; the army would collapse. Would the United States intervene militarily to stop the fighting? Smith disabused him of the idea. In retrospect, their conversation was tantamount to an official
instruction to leave the country. Thus relieved of all remaining illusions of survival, the Cuban President began to prepare for an extended vacation abroad. Finally, after some last-minute ineffectual behind-the-scenes maneuvering, including a CIA operation to spring Colonel Barquin from his imprisonment on the Isle of Pines, the United States acquiesced to the flow of events within Cuba.

In sum, then, it is fair to say that the policy of the United States government had been a hodgepodge of inconsistent and indecisive actions totally unsuited for dealing with the situation faced in a rational and effective manner. Not only had it succeeded in undermining the government of its ally but it had done so in a way calculated to insure the hostility and suspicion of the forces of victorious Castroism. It was, in short, a classic example of the perfect failure.

The main point to be made, however, is that given this performance and given Washington's historical track record in Cuba, Guatemala and, indeed, Latin America in general, Castro's obsession with the prospect of US intervention was understandable enough. His enemies were later to label this fear, no doubt accurately, as a kind of paranoia. But it was a paranoia which was firmly rooted in the realities of actual experience. Thus, even before taking power, on October 26th, Fidel warned that: "If the... Department of State continues to allow itself to be led by the intrigues of Smith and Batista and makes the unjustifiable mistake
of bringing its country to an act of aggression against our sovereignty, it should be certain that we will know how to defend it."98

Beyond this, however, one must agree with the observation of Edward Gonzalez that "the initial postures adopted by both countries mutually fed upon and reinforced each other's antagonistic perceptions."99 For his part, Fidel saw sinister implications behind every Yankee criticism—even those emanating from non-governmental sources. And in these early weeks such commentaries were frequent. Of special concern was the furor which arose over the trial of batistiano war criminals. In the wake of the dictator's flight, there had been widespread fear that the Cuban masses would take justice into their own hands in an orgy of vengeance against their tormentors, just as in 1933 infuriated mobs had murdered Machado's porristas. Thus, early on revolutionary tribunals had been set up to deal with the worst offenders. By January 19th, over two hundred men had been tried, found guilty and shot on charges of having murdered or tortured prisoners.100 No doubt most if not nearly all of the accused richly deserved their fate. No doubt too the trials accomplished their primary objective, that of pricking the boil of public resentment and allowing long pent-up frustrations to be drained with minimum harm to all but the guilty. Nor, for that matter, was there ever any question that these tribunals had the support of the overwhelming majority of the Cuban people, including political leaders of virtually all shades.
Still, their conduct was hardly in accordance with the legal standards of Anglo-Saxon justice. As in most neo-vigilante proceedings, punishment was harsh, sometimes overly so. No doubt some of those killed were innocent. Moreover, in the United States the public reaction was quite different than in Cuba. No sooner had the trials begun than they were subjected to scathing attack from various segments of the American press, which likened their proceedings to the proverbial Roman circus where mobs howled with glee as their victims were sent to the wall to be shot. Even in these earliest weeks, there was talk from Senator Morse and other officials of cutting the sugar quota and resorting to other pressures "to ensure a government of law and order and justice" in Cuba.101

Such North American actions bred an entirely predictable Cuban reaction. In response to the perceived external threat, the nation turned defensive. Castro demanded that the United States return those "assassins" who had taken refuge within its borders, maintaining that they were common murderers and thieves, not political exiles.102 The "anti-Cuban campaign" of the US press was repeatedly denounced in the media, which attributed it to the "international oligarchy" and its Cuban "fifth column" who were trying to prevent the Cuban people from obtaining their economic freedom now that their political freedom had been won.103 In late January, before a huge public rally, Fidel defended the revolutionary tribunals and warned of the danger to come: "Of course, the government of the United States has taken no position against us,
but we already know how things work in the United States. A determined campaign is beginning. The interests that fear the Revolution are organizing a campaign against it. They shape public opinion and then demand that the government of the United States take action. . . ."104

Jean-Paul Sartre later observed that "if the United States didn't exist, the Cuban Revolution would perhaps invent it."105 There is much truth in this. The danger from the North was real enough as it was. But during these early weeks Castro was actively moving to maximize his charismatic authority in preparation for the political struggles to come. And as with countless demagogues throughout the course of history, he found that he could most readily repress dissent and mobilize popular support behind his person and his policies if there were an external enemy which could be portrayed as threatening the entire nation. The issues began to be defined accordingly: At one pole were the enemies of the Revolution--the "Colossus", the "international oligarchy", their Cuban "fifth column"; at the other was that great undifferentiated mass, the Cuban people, at long last on the verge of attaining economic and political freedom. By defying the former in the name of the latter Castro was able to effect a transference of popular emotions from two widely revered symbols--the nation (or, as it was more frequently expressed, the people) and the Revolution--to himself. Already he was the personification of the Revolution. Now, increasingly, with the unwitting aid of the
United States, he would become the personification of the Cuban nation itself. And once having thoroughly wrapped himself in this cloak of revolutionary nationalism, his charismatic appeal would be enhanced to the extent that no one could publicly oppose him without seeming to oppose those beloved abstractions also. Indeed, in the months to come Fidel's heroic myth would become so overpowering that it would enable him to institute the most radical changes, both domestically and in his country's foreign relations, without being seriously endangered by the more conservative middle-class politicians with whom he had been allied during the struggle against Batista.

As for the Eisenhower administration, notwithstanding its official efforts at moderation, including the great pains which it took to dissociate itself from Congressional calls for economic sanctions and other forms of intervention, its suspicion of and distaste for Fidel Castro was never more than thinly disguised. Within a matter of weeks of January 1st, it began informally to examine measures by which the Cuban leader could be restrained if he developed into a menace. By April, these fears had been translated into a specific recommendation (which did not yet, however, become official policy) that exile forces be trained for the purpose of overthrowing the Castro regime. The source: Vice-President Richard M. Nixon who, after conversing with the Cuban Premier during the latter's good-will visit to the United States, decided that he was "either incredibly naive about Communism or under Communist
discipline" and should therefore be dealt with accordingly.\textsuperscript{107} This at a time when Communist influence within the Castro regime was almost negligible and when Fidel himself was widely describing his ideology as a form of "Humanism".

In large part, of course, Washington's negative reaction was understandable. To those who had assumed that the primary objective of the Revolution was the restoration of constitutional guarantees and democratic government, the revolutionary tribunals came as a rude shock, as did Castro's gradual move to assume dictatorial power. Moreover, the latter's anti-Yankee rhetoric was disconcerting, to say the least. North Americans had become used to a kind of paternalistic docility from Cubans, and Fidel hardly fit that mold. He seemed too intemperate, too radical, too ready to fight at the drop of a hat. What was one to make of a man who had the audacity to tell the United States government that if it did not like what was being done in Cuba it could send in the marines, and there would be "200,000 dead gringos."\textsuperscript{108} Clearly, this was an unstable individual. What would be his attitude towards US economic investment in his country, largest per capita in Latin America? Nationalizations were to be expected, but to what extent and on what terms? And where did he stand on the issue of Communism? Even during these early weeks there were innumerable reports (for the most part ill-founded) of Communist penetration of his regime. As in Guatemala, the rallying cry of those who were being economically dispossessed by the Revolution was anti-Communism. And Washington,
in its paranoia, was all ears.

Moreover, such fears grew as it became increasingly clear that Castro's romantic conception of his personal destiny and that of his nation would lead him to challenge US hegemony not only in Cuba but throughout the hemisphere. Here was a supreme egoist, a man whose psychological drives for power and grandeur had found expression in a form of revolutionary maximalism subject only to the limitations imposed by environmental reality. Perhaps it took such a man to be an heir to Marti. Be that as it may, it is clear that even in these early weeks Fidel's mind was on the testament of the Apostle—that it was his ambition to use the liberation of Cuba as a spearhead to free the rest of Latin America from the yoke imposed by imperialism and the traditional oligarchies. David was at last ready to stand up to Goliath. He began now to openly refer to the Cuban Revolution as a model for other countries to emulate, even going so far as to resurrect the ancient idea of an eventual union of Latin American people. His methodology was violence; his appeal generational. Hence:

"We have to direct attention to the new idea [i.e., armed struggle] which is taking root in Latin America today. The most advanced movement is Cuba's...the remaining movements are struggling to reach power, but it is necessary that the youths ascend to power, the power that the Capitalists and the military castes have in their hands... We have to strengthen that movement."
Meanwhile, these words were already being systematized by Guevara who, towards the end of January, delivered an address to the Nuestro Tiempo Association in Havana which contained many of the ideas which were soon to become core elements of Castroite doctrine. Here we find reference to the Rebel Army as "the vanguard of the Cuban people", its "primary instrument of struggle". Here also, months before the formation of a militia, was the belief that the entire nation "must be turned into a guerrilla army". Few punches were pulled. The experience of the Sierra was explicitly set forth as an example for the rest of Latin America to follow. Indeed, the Cuban case was said to have "destroyed all drawing room theories" and proven that

...a small group of determined men, supported by the people and without fear of death, can if necessary overcome a disciplined regular army and decisively defeat it. That is the fundamental lesson. [Moreover,] there is another that should be realized by our brothers of America, economically situated in the same agrarian category as ourselves, and that is that they must make agrarian revolutions; there must be struggle in the fields, in the mountains, and from there the revolution must be taken to the cities--but it should not be attempted in the cities without an integral social content. Soon, the revolutionaries of the hemisphere would be presented with a full-fledged theory of guerrilla warfare to help guide their behavior.

Furthermore, words were soon accompanied by deeds, as the Castro regime began to actively foment armed rebellions in the Caribbean. Several invasion attempts were launched from Cuban territory. Initially, it appears, these expeditions were undertaken
without Fidel's knowledge or official government complicity. During these early months the island had become a haven for revolutionaries of various shades, not all of whom were readily subject to the control of Cuban authorities, let alone of the líder máximo. In April, for instance, eighty-four men, all but two of whom were Cuban, landed in a small Panamanian locality named "Nombre de Dios" where they were quickly overcome by defending governmental forces.\textsuperscript{111} Castro was furious. He was even then engaged in the delicate politics of rapprochement with the United States, and such incidents threatened to undermine his efforts.\textsuperscript{112}

Yet, by June this attitude would change drastically. A similar invasion, this time of the Dominican Republic, would occur, with equally catastrophic results. No longer would there be any question of Castro's personal complicity, for on this occasion he would make an open appeal for public support.\textsuperscript{113}

In light of such behavior and the basic conflicts of ideology and interest that separated the two sides, was not the break between Cuba and the United States inevitable? In retrospect, it seems difficult to conceive of any compromise formula that would have preserved amicable relations. The revolutionary nature of the changes that Castro desired were in large part unacceptable to a North American government acutely sensitive to the issues of regional hegemony and Communist expansionism and anxious to protect its citizens' economic interests in Cuba.
Yet, the situation was more complex than it would appear at first glance. The potential for a continuing abrazo, though it would most certainly have been an uneasy one, was by no means negligible. For one thing, although Fidel had a general idea of the direction in which he wanted to take the Revolution the more specific aspects of his program remained largely undefined and highly subject to the influence of the environmental circumstances in which he was operating. During these early months, he was probing that environment, testing the opportunities, pressures and constraints which confronted him, trying to decide on a transfer culture strategy that would secure the utopian ideological goals which he desired without unduly jeopardizing the critical objectives of elite hegemony and social system maintenance. On the one hand, his personal inclinations were extremist—to push the processes of revolution just as hard and as fast as possible, to "continue advancing the Revolution for as long a time as our forces and the circumstances permit us to do it." The lessons of the past spurred him on: Either the Revolution would advance continuously or it would stagnate and regress as it had after '33, when the worst enemies of the Revolution had turned out to be the revolutionaries themselves. On the other hand, there were certain harsh realities of Cuban vulnerability and dependence which could not be ignored.

How does one institute a thoroughgoing revolution in a society subject to the political, economic and military hegemony of
a "Colossus" which is fundamentally, even violently, opposed to such change? How does an entity which is critically dependent on another set in motion the processes of counterdependence? Throughout the period of the resistance, Fidel had followed Marti's dictum "to act silently and somewhat indirectly, because there are things which must be hidden if they are to be obtained, for if they were proclaimed for what they are they could create difficulties too great to be overcome." Hence, the increasingly moderate tone of his public statements from 1956 on. Obviously, this was not a strategy based on any supposition of Yankee benevolence. Quite the contrary, it was assumed that Washington's relative moderation was primarily a product of Castro's own tactics of moderation and deception and of the enormous success which his public relations campaign had enjoyed in North America.

But Fidel was well aware that this honeymoon could not last forever, and he was acutely sensitive to the dangers that lay ahead. He was now venturing into the realm of the unknown, groping uncertainly towards the future. On the one hand, he was determined to vigorously assert his nation's sovereignty and uphold its dignity in the face of all slights. On the other, he knew that if he pushed too hard he would be inviting retaliation. Cuba was still, after all, little more than an economic appendage of the United States. In the ten-year span prior to Batista's downfall, the "Colossus" had accounted for some 62.5% of the island's exports and 75.4% of her imports. The US alone had absorbed
50% or more of her total sugar production and better than 70% of her sugar exports.\textsuperscript{117} And sugar and its byproducts accounted for over 80% of the value of all Cuban exports.\textsuperscript{118} In short, this was a dependence that could not be eliminated by magic or wishful thinking. As long as it remained the predominant fact of the island's economic life, the Cuban government would always be susceptible to blackmail, subtle or overt, for the penalty for obstinacy could well be a socio-economic disaster that could threaten the hegemony of the new revolutionary elite itself. And then, of course, there was always the specter of military intervention, either directly through the US marines or indirectly through surrogates. Even in these early weeks, exiled batistianos were already beginning to prepare for the "liberation" of their homeland. And they were not without powerful friends, both in the United States and in those capitals of the Caribbean where the forces of tyranny still held sway.

Moreover, beyond such purely defensive considerations, the processes of revolutionary transformation and counterdependence could not be successfully developed without major foreign political and economic support. The industrialization and economic diversification of Cuba could not be accomplished without a massive investment of capital, technology and expertise. And such resources could only come from abroad. Thus, towards the end of January Castro had met with Romulo Betancourt and attempted to engage his participation in "a master play against the gringos". Would the
President-elect of Venezuela loan Cuba $300 million to help free the Revolutionary Government from its dependence on North American loans and the sugar quota? Betancourt disabused him of the idea. The stark reality was that the nation was chained economically to the United States and apparently had nowhere else to turn. With the possible exception of Blas Roca and some of his comrades in the PSP, no one yet dreamed that the Soviet bloc might be willing to provide the kind of massive commitment that would enable Cuba to break its fetters with the "Colossus". Indeed, at this point the men in the Kremlin seemed hardly aware of the Revolution at all, let alone of the substantive benefits that might be derived from an abrazo.

In short, Castro was caught in a bind between that which was desirable and that which was necessary. No doubt he preferred to play the demagogue, to give full vent to his emotional needs, his ideological dispositions and his lust for power. Yet, such inclinations were strongly moderated by the constraints and pressures of the environmental realities with which he had to deal. His Revolution was both highly vulnerable to and dependent on Yankee political, economic and military power. And that was a fact of life which had to be lived with, at least for the moment.

Not surprisingly, conflicts in input gave rise to subsequent conflicts in output. Cuban foreign policy rapidly became marked by a quality of inconsistency and ineptitude that rivalled and indeed surpassed that of its neighbor to the north. Nowhere
was this more vividly illustrated than in Castro's trip to the United States in April. To begin with, this was a journey which he had been hesitant to undertake in the first place, for fear of damaging his image as an uncompromising nationalist. It was not an uncommon assumption among political observers in Washington, Havana and the other capitals of the hemisphere that all Latin American rulers had a price. Understandably, then, Fidel was anxious to avoid the impression that his visit constituted a "sell-out" of any kind. To make matters even more uncomfortable, he was under heavy pressure from the left wing of his own Twenty-Sixth of July Movement to take a hard line towards the Norte Americanos. For ultraradicals such as Raul and Che, there was little to negotiate. Either the Revolution would move forward, or it would die. To compromise with the imperialists and their Cuban serviteurs, to allow them to stand in the way of its progressive radicalization, would be to condemn it to stagnation and, ultimately, regression.

Now these were views which, as we have seen, mirrored Castro's own to a very considerable extent. Fidel, however, was laboring under the burden of additional considerations. As lder maximo, he had the ultimate responsibility for assuring the survival and continued development of the Revolution. Thus he, more than any other man, had to deal with the realities of its vulnerability and dependence. As the weeks had worn on, the Cuban middle classes had begun to feel the pinch of the government's redistributive
policies. Voices of dissent had begun to grow louder, rallying around the banner of "anti-Communism". In turn, these voices were echoed by an increasingly shrill chorus from the north. Ever since January, relations with the United States had been deteriorating apace, as mutual suspicion and fear gave rise to an action-reaction dynamic that neither side appeared to have the will to brake.

Now, as the domestic enemies of the Revolution seemed to be linking forces with its external foes, Fidel became increasingly uneasy. Thus, on the second of April, during one of his frequent televised press conferences, we find his first public reference to the Guatemalan precedent. Denouncing "Communism" as a "theme which the counterrevolutionaries must agitate for lack of any other major pretext with which to damage Cuba", he proclaimed:

...[S]ome will say, since we do not shoot the Communists, that we are traitors; and because we do not close the newspaper Hoy, we are Communists;...that it is right for foreign mercenaries to come here to destroy the country. ... They have already begun to say that the events in Cuba are similar to those of Guatemala.... It would be a lamentable error, for the situations are different. ... I know the men who make up the Rebel Army today. Our opponents do not know the people of Cuba. And I tell them now that here in Cuba it would be a mistake to make errors of this type. There is not the slightest resemblance between one thing and the other.

If in that country [Guatemala] those who fought had to leave, betrayed by the military caste, because there as everywhere the military abandoned the constitutional government and ran away, here we have the soldiers of the Rebel Army, men who know how to die fighting in defense of their land.

It would be well for those who think that with that campaign they are going to recover their privileges and their power with the aid of the foreigners not to think that it is going to be a "pushover" and that the people
Clearly, this issue of Communism had to be defused before the situation got out of hand. But how? Here the invitation extended by the American Society of Newspaper Editors to address its annual meeting proved a singular blessing, for it provided Fidel with a golden opportunity to use his charismatic charm to appeal over the heads of the "vested interests" directly to the public at large. What began as a single speech would soon be parlayed into an extended good-will tour (much to the chagrin of official Washington). During the course of his visit, Castro would take full advantage of the publicity generated by his presence to wage a systematic campaign designed to counteract all charges of Communism, thus calming North American fears and thwarting the "anti-Cuban" conspiracy being conducted by the forces of counter-revolution.

Similarly, a triumphant journey to the United States might do much to maintain unity at home. Not only would it provide Castro with a superb dramatic vehicle with which to monopolize the news, but the image of the Cuban leader being enthusiastically received by the public and hosted by influential figures from the government, business, press and other sectors of the "establishment" could be expected to strike a responsive chord in a nation that was used to looking to North America for political as well as economic and cultural leadership. Surely, Fidel could not be a Communist if
he were received with such cordiality in the very capital of anti-Communism? Moreover, there were elements of messianism and nationalist pride involved here also, for Castro, unlike so many other Latin rulers, would not be going to Washington as a supplicant, but rather as a celebrity. His triumphant reception would offer one more bit of proof, both to himself and to his countrymen, that here was a hero of extraordinary merit, a man whose international stature far surpassed that of any previous Cuban leader.

In addition, there was the need to pacify the moderates within Fidel's own coalition government. Men like Urrutia, Felipe Pazos at the National Bank, Roberto Agramonte at the Foreign Ministry, Rufo Lopez-Fresquet at the Treasury and Regino Boti at the Economy were still a force to be reckoned with, and they were solidly pro-American in orientation. Thus, when Castro revealed that he had been invited to the United States they urged him to accept.123 Lopez-Fresquet even went so far as to suggest that he take his principal economic advisors with him so that they might enter into formal negotiations with the Eisenhower government and with the representatives of private enterprise.124 This was their golden opportunity. Not only was US economic assistance and trade vital to the regime's socio-economic programs, but such links, along with their attendant political ties, could serve as moorings for the Revolution, lending it much-needed stability and inhibiting the political ascension of the radicals.
Finally, we come to a point of major controversy. The role which economic considerations played in Castro's decision to visit the United States and in the subsequent deterioration of relations between the two sides has long been a topic of heated debate. At one extreme, there arose a myth, perpetrated by certain defenders of the Revolution, that the Cuban leader had wanted American aid but had been "given the cold shoulder" while in Washington, that "even his request for quite minor financial consideration was turned down flat." At the other extreme, largely in reaction to this thesis, there appeared the counter-argument that Fidel had never really had any serious intention of negotiating with the Yankees. Thus, Draper has commented with irony: "I am intrigued by one aspect of this myth about Castro's allegedly intense desire for American government aid and his reluctant turn to the Soviet Union as a result of frustration: he never complained about this, neither did other leaders. . . . Yet this charge has become one of the staples of pro-Castro propaganda outside Cuba." As is often the case in polemical matters, the truth would appear to lie between the two extremes. If Fidel was concerned over his country's economic dependence when he approached Betancourt in January, he was certainly no less aware of this central problem in April, as his relations with the "Colossus" were deteriorating at an alarming rate and there appeared no realistic alternative source of sustenance upon which his Revolution could draw for its
survival. In point of fact, by early April Castro had begun to prepare for his forthcoming journey by meeting with his principal economic advisors every morning to discuss the major economic items of interest in Cuba's relationship with the United States. The sugar quota, tariff revision, tax treaty, possibilities of financing, US taxation of its citizens' investments in Cuba, all these issues and more were discussed. According to Lopez-Fresquet, the Prime Minister "showed unusual perserverence in his desire to know all aspects of these economic matters. Each day Ernesto Betancourt, of the National Bank, remained with Castro after the rest of us had left and helped him improve his English." 127

Thus, even as Fidel raised the spector of Guatemala he also informed a television audience that his top three economic advisors would accompany him to the United States and Canada to "undertake negotiations" with regard to loans and improved trade relations. 128 Subsequently, he authorized the dispatch of a memorandum to Washington which listed economic themes to be negotiated. Meanwhile, BANFAIC announced a plan for some forty new industries in Cuba, all of which would receive the cooperation of US private enterprise. 129 Finally, at an improvised press conference held just prior to his departure, he declared that "we will recover the lost sugar quotas and work toward the betterment of the balance or payments between the US and Cuba. . . ." 130

Yet, no sooner did he step aboard the Britannia aircraft that would transport him to the United States than this attitude seemed
to change. In the words of López-Fresquet,

...the Prime Minister warned me as we left Havana not to take up Cuban economic matters with the authorities, bankers, or investors of the North. At various times during the trip, he repeated this warning. That is why, when I visited the then Secretary of the Treasury, Robert B. Anderson, I did not respond to the American official's indications that the United States was favorably disposed towards aiding our country. Also for this reason, during our stay in Washington, when I exchanged views with Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs Roy Rubottom, I feigned polite aloofness to his concrete statement that the US Government wished to know how and in what form it could cooperate with the Cuban Government in the solution of the most pressing economic needs.131

Similar accounts have been given by the national bankers, Pazos and Betancourt. Moreover, while in the United States Castro himself repeatedly declared that he had not come to seek aid but rather to influence American public opinion. Thus, in his speech to the newspaper editors on the seventeenth of April, he explained that "we did not come here for money. It is possible that many other governments have come here for money, and many people believe that every time some government comes here, it is coming for money. I was more interested in public opinion than in money. And I was not agreed that the aim of the travel be confused."132

Did this mean, as Castro's critics were to charge, that he had no intention of negotiating with the Eisenhower regime? Probably not. Rather, such inconsistent behavior appears to have been largely the product of the conflicting mix of environmental pressures, constraints and opportunities under which he was operating. On the one hand, the revolutionary transfer culture,
with its functional needs for social system maintenance, elite hegemony and the pursuit of the utopian future, required that the realities of Cuban vulnerability and dependence be recognized and dealt with—that the counterrevolutionary threat be defused, that economic sustenance be obtained. On the other, for both political and ideological (not to mention psychological) reasons Fidel wished to avoid any appearance of servitude. Thus had "defiant rhetoric and studied aloofness" become "the style necessary for the preservation of his nationalist image in his own eyes as well as those of his followers." 133

We need not elaborate on these constraints and pressures at length, since most of them should be fairly obvious to the reader by this time. Certainly, it will come as no surprise that this man, who had for so long been obsessed with the struggle for personal domination and the pursuit of national sovereignty, whose ambitions moreover were hemispheric in scope, would be acutely protective of his reputation as a revolutionary nationalist. At stake here were considerations of ego, ideology and political interest. Furthermore, Castro was beginning to come under heavy pressure at home. The most radically nationalist of his followers within the Twenty-Sixth of July were clearly embarrassed and worried by this venture into the headquarters of "imperialism". Thus, Revolucion was hard pressed to edit the Leader's remarks abroad as it repeatedly scrambled, slanted and otherwise distorted its reportage of his speeches. 134 Indeed, at one point Raúl became
so alarmed at what he considered Fidel's overly conciliatory stance towards the "Colossus" that he journeyed to San Antonio, Texas, to confront him. There the two leaders engaged in a heated argument, with the younger man reportedly asking his brother pointblank whether he "had sold out to the Yanquis." We shall have more to say about the anti-American, pro-Communist activities of Raul and Che presently. For the moment, it is enough to note that the pressure on Castro was such that he felt obliged to vigorously defend his behavior in public upon his return home.

But if such pressures and constraints served to limit Fidel's overtures to the Eisenhower administration, inducing him to keep his visit "unofficial" and to refrain from partaking in formal economic negotiations, there were also tactical considerations involved. Hence, Castro explained to Lopez-Fresquet that "the Americans will be surprised. And when we go back to Cuba, they will offer us aid without our asking for it. Consequently, we will be in a better bargaining position." In point of fact, Castro already had in mind the beginnings of a plan whereby he could accept major increments of US aid without selling out his revolutionary nationalist objectives. Thus, following his departure from North America he journeyed to Buenos Aires to address a meeting of the Organization of American States' "Committee of Twenty-One". There, before an assembly of stunned delegates, he called for a United States commitment of $30 billion to a ten-year program of economic development for all of Latin America. What
Fidel Castro, nationalist, could not accept, Fidel Castro, "savior of Latin America", could.

Was this proposal in earnest? There is every reason to believe that it was. Hence, for instance, Javier Pazos, who was a member of Fidel's staff both in Washington and Buenos Aires has testified that Castro "was very enthusiastic about his private Alliance for Progress scheme. . . . My impression then was that he was contemplating the possibility of staying on the American side of the fence as a sponsor of this $30 billion scheme and as the leader of a Nasser-type revolution in Cuba and Latin America. In any case, I repeat, Fidel considered himself to be in a strong position vis-a-vis the United States." 138

The human capacity for self-deception is enormous, and Castro's is greater than most. This plan was vintage fidelismo, grandiose to the point of being divorced from the realm of reality. Indeed, had this not been the case with most of his revolutionary undertakings from Cayo Confites on? Of Moncada? Of the Gramma? The fact of the matter is that maximalism had long been an integral part of the struggle ethic. Time and again, the drives for domination and grandeur, sublimated ideologically into a perpetual struggle for revolutionary transformation, would impel Castro to impetuously pursue the most monumental objectives, often with resources wholly inadequate to their achievement. On this as on so many other occasions, he opted for a panacea which would have solved all his problems at one fell swoop.
To be fair, there were some reasonable and even far-sighted considerations involved here. By making his proposal in Buenos Aires before an inter-American audience rather than in Washington before the State Department and by framing the issue in multi-lateral rather than bi-lateral terms Fidel hoped to mobilize enough hemispheric support to pressure and/or persuade the Eisenhower administration into making the economic commitment that was called for. (Precise amounts, of course, were always subject to negotiation, as were other details.) If successful, he might well have been able to accept massive amounts of US aid without compromising his revolutionary ideals or giving the appearance of a sell-out. Certainly, he would have had a degree of prestige and bargaining power as a representative of all Latin America that he could never have hoped to possess as a leader of Cuba alone.

Moreover, at first glance this was not an entirely implausible scheme. For years, there had been a widespread feeling among politically aware Latin Americans that they had been neglected and taken for granted by their neighbor to the north. After all, the socio-economic problems of their countries were no less serious than those of Western Europe, yet they had received no equivalent of the Marshall Plan. In fact, only about 2% of all direct US aid since 1945 had gone to Latin America.\(^{139}\) Thus had the "Committee of Twenty-One" been formed to consider how "Operation Panamérica", Brazilian President Kubitschek's plan
to raise the area's economic growth rate, could be effectuated. Furthermore, Castro's proposals (a second had called for the creation of a regional common market) had been drawn directly from the studies and recommendations of the United Nations Commission for Latin America, headed by the respected Argentine economist, Raul Prebisch. 

Thus, it was not unreasonable to assume that they would be favorably received, at least in those countries which stood to directly benefit from them. Finally, Castro was not unaware that reformist ideas were beginning to receive currency within the United States itself. The stoning of Vice-President Nixon in Caracas the previous year had brought home the fact that there existed in Latin America a growing tide of discontent which, if not dealt with effectively, might seriously undermine the stability of the entire hemisphere. Increasingly, the voices of change were being heard alongside those of repression and the status quo.

Unfortunately, such considerations were almost totally irrelevant to the actual situation. In truth, Fidel's behavior had seriously poisoned the atmosphere for rapprochement long before his arrival in Washington. Even Eisenhower had become "highly suspicious that Castro was a Communist and deeply disgusted at his murderous persecution of his former opponents. . . ."

Thus, upon learning of the Prime Minister's invitation to address the newspaper editors he had inquired whether the Cuban leader could be denied a visa. Advised that such a move would be unwise,
the President had nevertheless taken the trouble to be in Carolina, playing golf, while Castro was in Washington.\footnote{141}

This was not an inconsequential snub. True, Fidel had not requested a meeting, but had one been offered it would certainly have been accepted. And while no one can say what would have occurred had the two men met, both Eisenhower and Castro possessed considerable personal charm. It is not impossible that such an encounter might have done much to alleviate the fear and suspicion on both sides. As it was, the Cuban leader was consigned to the tender mercies of Vice-President Nixon, a more neanderthal mentality, whose obsession with the issue of Communist infiltration was hardly designed to bring out Fidel's better qualities.

There were, of course, other, more congenial, contacts made. But with both Havana and Washington wed to policies of restraint, little of substance could be accomplished. Attempts by the Americans to broach the subject of aid were politely shunted aside by Castro's economic advisors. The matter was not pressed further. Meanwhile, exploratory talks with the International Monetary Fund broke down over the issue of stabilizing the Cuban economy.\footnote{142}

No doubt Fidel really believed that he was in a good bargaining position. From his perspective, the visit had been an overwhelming success. Not only had he succeeded in upholding Cuban dignity and sovereignty by refusing to fall prey to the temptations of easily acquired aid, but the generally conciliatory
manner in which he had conducted himself during his stay had left open the door for more ambitious negotiations to come. After all, had he not repeatedly denied any affinity with Communism, checked his anti-Yankee impulses and maintained his dignity, even in the face of the most provocative questioning? Had he not even gone so far as to proclaim that in case of conflict between the forces of Communism and those of Democracy he would side with the latter.\textsuperscript{143} And what was the ideology of the Revolution if not "Humanist"? His was a "government of the people, without dictatorship and without oligarchy; liberty with bread and without terror."\textsuperscript{144}

This had been an exercise in "stroking", pure and simple. The public response was enthusiastic. North Americans too needed heroes.

To official Washington, however, Fidel had seemed vague, elusive, distant and unapproachable. In large part, as we have seen, this was a perception well-founded in the realities of his behavior. Still, his behavior had been to no small degree a reaction to the Eisenhower regime's own conduct, and indeed to that of its predecessors. With the wisdom of hindsight, it is easy to render judgments: The United States should have taken a much stronger stand to impress upon the Cubans its willingness to aid their country. At the very least, such a position should have been made a matter of public record. But it was not. This was not an administration noted for either the firmness or the frequency of its initiatives. Rather, the exercise of power seemed to be more
of an ordeal than anything else. 145

Furthermore, Washington's policy towards Cuba was still
in a state of indecision. Some officials counseled aloofness,
arguing that the Castro government would have to "go through the
wringer" before it would agree to accept aid and to adopt the
stabilization measures that were necessary to obtain it. Others
wanted to take the initiative and impress upon the Cuban leader
both his need for foreign capital and the US readiness to supply
it (provided, of course, that the Cuban development program made
"economic sense" and did not "embrace the creation of high-cost
industries"). 146 Yet others, reactionary, obsessed with the
menace of Communism, were implacably hostile towards Castro and
his Revolution. Though their position was a minority one, they
were still well enough placed to severely inhibit the development
of rapprochement. And as we have seen, they had highly vocal allies
in the Congress and the press. As for the President himself, he
had neither the understanding, the desire nor the strength of leader-
ship to deal effectively with this enormously trying and complex
phenomenon that was the Cuban Revolution.

Not surprisingly, then, when Castro made his Buenos Aires
proposal a "figurative roar of laughter went up in all communica-
tions media from the Canadian border southward. The American
delegation dismissed the idea with amused contempt." 147 In
truth, the two sides were living in almost entirely different
worlds. One thought in terms of epic transformations, the other in
accordance with the business ethic and the rules of bureaucratic
diplomacy. Communication would have been difficult even had they
not been laboring under the burden of profound fears and suspicions.

The reaction from official Latin America was not much more
encouraging. Fidel had miscalculated badly. He had seen him-
self as a pioneer, blazing the trail of the future. And so he
was. But he was premature. Though the forces of radical change
had been set in motion, most of the hemisphere remained if not
under the direct rule of conservative dictatorships or traditional
oligarchies then at least under the hegemony of compradore bourgeoisies
whose interests were closely tied to those of the "Colossus". Even
men like Betancourt of Venezuela and "Pepe" Figueres of Costa
Rica, who had supported Fidel during his struggle against Batista,
were not really revolutionaries at all but democratic reformers,
more accustomed to dealing with the existing world of reality than
with that of the absolute and the ideal. Over the years, they
had come to accept US hegemony as a fact of life. For his part,
Figueres had even gone so far as to publicly warn Fidel to recognize
the geopolitical and economic realities of his situation, to curb
his bellicose foreign policy and join Washington in the struggle
against international Communism. Already, these respectable
were coming to regard Castro as a stranger and a potential threat
both to their own leadership ambitions and to the stability of the
hemisphere.

Ironically, less than two years later President John F.
Kennedy would initiate the Alliance for Progress, a plan not too
dissimilar to Castro's Buenos Aires proposal, with an endowment of $10 billion to cover a period of ten years. Subsequently, Lyndon Johnson would pledge an additional $10 billion to continue the program. But then, by the early 1960's the motivation of fear was much more acute than it was in 1959. Americans were no longer laughing at the "bearded maniac" in Havana.149

**Cuban Communism and Nascent Castroism: The Uneasy Symbiosis**150

What then of Castro's relationship with the Popular Socialist Party? We have suggested that the rapprochement of the previous summer had been largely tacit, short-term, tactical and open-ended, dependent on the course of future events for its further development. Thus, for instance, the PSP's "Theses on the Present Situation", set forth on January 11th, merely referred to the victors as a "coalition which is not a formal entity and does not correspond to precise accords between political organisms, but rather has arisen in the defense of common objectives."151 Similarly, in that same issue of Hoy, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez specifically denied that any agreement had been reached guaranteeing the Party's legality under the new regime.152

In point of fact, the political position of the Cuban Communists during these months was characterized by isolation and weakness. The PSP's revolutionary credentials were modest at best; its liabilities many: a reputation for totalitarianism and subservience to Moscow; its counterrevolutionary activities of the 1930's; its alliance with Batista in the 1940's; its
seemingly preferential treatment by the dictator in the 1950's; and its relative passivity in the midst of the civil war. Not surprisingly, the overwhelming bulk of the victorious coalition looked upon the Communists with suspicion and distaste and felt no inclination whatsoever to include them in the spoils of victory. Party membership and labor union strength remained low; anti-Communist elements showed little hesitation in attacking the PSP in the press or in excluding it from positions of power in the unions. Nor, for that matter, was the Party directly represented in the highest circles of government. On the contrary, as we have seen, the composition of the Council of Ministers was generally moderate and anti-Communist in orientation—even the barbudos constituted only a small minority within its ranks.

Thus, with no real institutional base of power outside of its own organization and with the fate of the Revolution almost entirely in the hands of uncertain or hostile forces, the PSP was placed in a position of monumental insecurity. Within the governing coalition, only the fidelistas seemed to offer the possibility of a viable alliance. But although Che and Raul were clearly sympathetic, Fidel remained a highly ambivalent figure—sometimes friendly, on other occasions threatening—and it soon became apparent that it would be he, rather than his brother or Guevara, who would have the decisive voice in determining the future course of the Revolution. As Castro moved to maximize his charismatic authority and consolidate his control over the critical institutions of violence, the
distinction between nominal and real power in the Cuban regime became unmistakable. Clearly, the Communists could not be destroyed by their enemies without Fidel's consent. Hence, the Maximum Leader would have to be wooed assiduously if they were to survive and expand their influence. A failure on that score could be fatal.

Be that as it may, the immediate task facing the PSP in January 1959 was to clarify the current situation for its cadres and define official policy. And towards these ends, a series of statements was issued, the most important of which were the "Theses" of January 11th and Blas Roca's report to the full plenum of the National Committee, delivered on January 27th.153 If we may summarize: In the Party's view, recent events had constituted "not simply a superficial political change, but rather a genuine displacement of social forces in power. It can be said that a revolution has occurred in Cuba or, more accurately, that a revolution is underway. . . ." Power had "passed into the hands of the rebel armed forces, with the Commander-In-Chief, Fidel Castro, in supreme authority. . . . Nevertheless, these groups then passed formal power over to President Urrutia and the Cabinet. . . . but through a spontaneous and inevitable political phenomenon, these rebel forces, headed by Fidel Castro, have retained part of the power. . . ."154

This distinction between Castro and the Rebel Army, on the one hand, and the Provisional Government, on the other, was crucial. The former were held to be clearly "more revolutionary, . . .
more to the left" of the latter. The ranks of the Rebel Army were composed not of militarists but of civilians who had joined the resistance in order to promote "the redemption and transformation of Cuba... democracy and betterment of the people."

As such, they would continue to have a vital role to play in the defense and advancement of the Revolution. In fact, any curtailment of that role would not only "be false from the revolutionary viewpoint... it would be a step toward the right, toward the liquidation of the Revolution." In contrast, the Provisional Government was said to be under the "control and hegemony" of the national and small bourgeoisie, elements which "are not determined in the revolutionary struggle against imperialism; they vacillate before the economic and social measures which must be adopted in order to carry forward national liberation, economic development and social progress. These forces are limited in their anti-imperialist and revolutionary orientation by their anxiety to conserve the Capitalistic regime at all costs." Moreover, within the Cabinet there were plattistas and anti-revolutionary "braking elements" who opposed Castro's "moral authority" and sought "to paralyze the Revolution... to stop with formalistic and purely political solutions... to accommodate themselves to the status of Cuba's subordination to the North American imperialists." These elements were to be exposed and attacked at every opportunity.

Thus were Fidel Castro and the Rebel Army accepted as legitimate representatives of the revolutionary left. This was, in
fact, little more than a recognition of and an accommodation to existing realities. Not only did the forces of nascent Castroism wield considerable power, but they had demonstrated a certain willingness to protect "democratic liberties" (i.e., to tolerate and provide legal guarantees for Communist political activities) and to promote radical socio-economic reforms at home and an independent, anti-imperialist policy abroad. Hence, these elements were to be cooperated with and strengthened wherever possible. Still, at the end of the month the Revolution had not yet "touched the socio-economic bases of foreign domination, reaction and tyranny." In the estimation of the Secretary-General, there remained a serious discrepancy between the promises of Fidel Castro and the actions of the Provisional Government. True, recent events had dealt telling blows to the "plattist mentality" and "geographic fatalism". But as long as fundamental reforms had not been instituted and the economic power base of its enemies liquidated, the Revolution would remain highly vulnerable to the forces of imperialism and domestic reaction. The primary task of the PSP, therefore, would be to promote the further development of the Revolution, for if it were allowed to stagnate, or even pause in the process of advancement, it would surely be destroyed.

In sum, the Communists were to take the offensive in a "united front" strategy designed to enhance their own legal and political position and pave the way for their eventual assumption of power. Thus, cadres were instructed to vigorously and publicly
support Castro and strive for "unity" with his followers at all levels—in particular, to infiltrate and indoctrinate the Rebel Army and the labor unions. The Communists would serve as the conscience of the Revolution, providing advice and guidance to the Maximum Leader with respect to its future course of development. More specifically, the Party would continue to press its demands for direct participation in the Provisional Government, for trade union "democracy", for the elimination of the "braking elements" from the government, and for the radicalization of the regime's domestic and foreign policies.159

But the courtship of Fidel Castro was not to be so easy. As we have seen, the lider maximo was under considerable pressure to repudiate the Communists, even during these early weeks. For practical political reasons alone, he could not have openly embraced them, even had he wanted to. And he was not at all sure that he wanted to. Certainly, he had no particular reason to trust them. Quite the contrary, he held few illusions as to their ultimate loyalties and intentions. He had not broken his neck "fighting one dictatorship to fall into the hands of another."160 In point of fact, Castro's attitude towards the Communists was not unlike his attitude towards the "cockroach" politicians of the bourgeoisie: He would be willing to strike alliances with them, formally or informally, in order to attain his own ends. But when they were no longer necessary or useful they could be dispensed with. Moreover, should they try to capture leadership of the Revolution he would not
hesitate to stop them "in their tracks". 161

No doubt too during these first weeks Castro had more important things to worry about than the Communists. After all, they were not yet a major force in the power struggle that had already begun to unfold. Hence, the existing PSP/fidelista rapprochement, ambivalent though it was, would be allowed to continue essentially unchanged. This meant, however, that to the extent that a united front could be achieved at all it would have to be largely through personal contacts and joint actions based on a "coincidence" of interests and goals, rather than on "formal and precise agreements". 162 The task would not be easy, for the Party was on the defensive. Within M-26 itself, certain elements were already seeking a monopoly of revolutionary virtue and the offices that went with it. In spite of the unity appeals of the Castro brothers and Guevara, anti-Communism continued to be a popular refrain. Moreover, PSP demands for increased influence within the government and trade unions were either rejected or ignored by the Maximum Leader, with the result that towards the end of January the Communists were expelled from the directorate of the United National Labor Front. Subsequently, following an incident in which the Twenty-Sixth of July police did nothing to prevent a break-in at the offices of Hoy, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez angrily remarked that Castro was very mistaken if he thought that now that the insurrection had been won the Communists would "go into a monastery": "The Revolution has not yet begun, and if he chooses the right
road one day we shall all meet. But if not, it will be neither the first nor the last time that we shall go underground."163

Yet, these weeks also witnessed some Communist penetration of the Rebel Army, particularly those units commanded by Guevara. Thus, in the immediate aftermath of victory, Armando Acosta, a Party stalwart who had been a chief aide to Che during the Battle of Santa Clara, found himself in control of the fortress of La Punta, overlooking Havana Harbor on the western side. Subsequently, he took over "cultural activities" (i.e., military education and leisure) at La Cabaña, on the opposite bank, where several of his comrades were soon given jobs under his direction. In the words of Hugh Thomas, this was the "beginning of a process, not its end. . . ." As was the case with other sectarian groups—for instance, the Catholics--the Communists, "however few they were, took every opportunity, from the first day after the victory, to improve and extend their influence."164

Moreover, although the regime in Havana continued to retain its essentially moderate composition, Castro's mid-February appointment as Prime Minister was hailed by the PSP as "a step toward the elimination of the distance between the revolutionary power and the Provisional Government, as a reinforcement of the revolutionary elements of action and impulse against the braking elements of plattist mentality, who yield before the imperialists and who orient themselves to anti-revolutionary concession. . . ."165 Subsequently, as Fidel moved to vigorously institute socio-economic
reforms and assert Cuban neutrality in the Cold War it appeared as though much of the Party's domestic and foreign policy program would be adopted. In fact, the Agrarian Reform Law that would be promulgated in May would be somewhat more radical than that advocated by the Communists. 166

But in spite of these moderately favorable signs and even in the face of the Party's concerted effort to woo Castro through personal flattery and pledges of unwavering loyalty, the full extent of the PSP's isolation and vulnerability soon became terrifyingly clear. The radicalization that was occurring was not due to the effectiveness of Communist pressure group tactics but was a product of Fidel's nascent revolutionary ideology and ego drives. The Party could survive only for as long as the Maximum Leader did not withdraw his favor. Were he to turn on the PSP or even adopt a posture of indifference to its fate, Blas Roca and his comrades would be swamped under a tide of anti-Communist reaction.

To make matters even worse, the months of March and April witnessed a serious resurgence of the factional debates that had plagued the Party prior to its rapprochement with Castroism the previous year. The reader will remember that at that time the more conservative (i.e., Stalinist) wing of the PSP, under the leadership of Anibal Escalante, had argued for the continuation of a relatively peaceful, urban-oriented strategy for opposing the dictatorship ("mass struggle", "democratic elections") and against the proposals of those, most notably Carlos Rafael Rodriguez,
who wanted the Party to actively join in the guerrilla struggle in the sierra. In large part, this dispute had been the product of radically divergent assessments of the reliability of the M-26 rebels, with the Escalante faction remaining extremely wary of these "petty bourgeois putschistas", whose attitude towards the Communists seemed to be at best ambivalent and at worst downright hostile. Now, with these same bourgeois elements in power and with Rodriguez and his followers both strengthened by the proven "correctness" of their strategic assessments and increasingly infatuated with the charismatic personality of Fidel Castro, Escalante attempted to reassert his authority by undertaking the crucial task of defining in theoretical terms the nature of the Revolution that was underway and the proper strategy to be adopted towards it. The critical issue, of course, was the attainment of "proletarian hegemony".

The formal debate began in late January, with Escalante's report to the plenum of the PSP National Committee. Although we still do not know the full details of his position, at the very least he seems to have argued that the Cuban experience was an exception to the traditional Marxist model of revolution, that instead of "following the classic revolutionary road, the Cuban... movement began and developed in the far-off countryside and finally enveloped the cities, particularly the capital. In this experience, which broke with pre-established dogmas and rules, the vision of Fidel Castro and his general staff soared highest; it is similarly
necessary to recognize the role unquestionably played by the Popular Socialist Party to open the way for the "Chinese road." 167

This reference to the Chinese model should not be surprising. For many years, the PSP had been one of the most thoroughly stalinized parties in the world. It should thus come as no shock that some of its leaders would look to the wisdom of that arch-Stalinist Mao Tse-tung to help explain their current situation. After all, the Sin-Soviet dispute was still largely confined to subterranean rumblings of discontent. It was not yet considered heretical to praise the Chinese leader as a great "teacher of Marxists". Indeed, as has been suggested earlier, Maoist influences were by no means confined to Escalante and his followers. To the Rodriguez faction also, the Chinese road seemed closer to the Cuban experience than did, say, that of the Russians. Even Blas Roca, having spent much of 1957 in the People's Republic, was not unaffected by Maoist theory.

But such influences tended to be embraced on a selective basis in accordance with the predispositions and interests of the borrower. Thus, for instance, the Chinese experience with the national bourgeoisie (the Kuomintang, 1927) tended to confirm the suspicions of those who feared that not only would that class not complete the democratic, anti-feudal and anti-imperialist tasks of the Revolution, but it would likely turn on the Communists and seek to destroy them when the opportunity permitted. The critical issue then was how to catapult the PSP into a position
of dominance so as to assure the Revolution's successful transition from its bourgeois-democratic to its Socialist stage. To the Escalante faction, this could not be done by abdicating leadership to the bourgeoisie. Castroism itself was little more than "ideological confusion". To become overly dependent on the goodwill of these unpredictable young rebels would be to court disaster. Nor should the Communists risk losing "their identity in the common tasks" of "unity". Rather, they must push hard for the establishment of proletarian hegemony over the national front at the earliest possible moment. In the process, the Party would strive to coopt "sincere" revolutionaries into its ranks and "even open the path toward positions of leadership."

Although Escalante's ideas became quite influential in the weeks to come, they were never able to gain official sanction. Rather, the thrust of Party policy was of a much more gradualist nature, designed in the short run merely to achieve the "minimum" objectives of survival and moderate influence within the united front coalition. The more ambitious goal of proletarian hegemony was to be postponed indefinitely, for it was understood only too well that any premature attempt to usurp such predominance would be fraught with the gravest of dangers.

The chief spokesman for this position was none other than the Secretary-General, Blas Roca, a "curious combination of apparatchik and Cuban politico", whose function over the years had more often been that of middle-man and unifier of factions than
vorođed. Now, Comrade Blas stepped forward as an "elder brother" and authoritative Party spokesman, borrowing eclectically from both Soviet and Chinese theory, even as he sought to root Communist strategy in the unique political circumstances of the Cuban Revolution. During these early months, when the factional debates raged hot and heavy, he wove a compromise course between Escalante and Rodriguez. Being a pragmatist, however, he recognized and accepted the realities of power and inclined towards the latter. Hence, for instance, his willingness to court the national bourgeoisie and to concede (temporary) hegemony over the Revolution to the radical small bourgeoisie. Hence also, his decision to support Carlos Rafael's position with regard to the seemingly critical issue of elections.

On March 15th, Hoy carried a lengthy article by Rodriguez, which among other things endorsed the electoral path as a vehicle for attaining power. His manner of presentation, however, suggested that the matter was still under debate. Thus, he first revealed that the Party's municipal leader in Yaguajay had proposed that Castro's mandate be extended to four years on grounds that an earlier balloting could result in a setback for the Revolution. Next, he disclosed the existence of an unpublished letter from Blas Roca in which the Secretary-General had rejected this suggestion and argued that 18 to 24 months of revolutionary rule would eliminate any possibility of a counterrevolutionary victory at the polls. Finally, Carlos Rafael charged that the counterrevolutionaries feared
elections because they did not think it possible to "conquer the people democratically. . . ." Revolutionaries, he proclaimed, should prepare themselves for such an eventuality.175

If we may be permitted to read between the lines, it seems almost certain that it was Escalante and his supporters who were opposed to the electoral route. No doubt their fears were well based. Not only was the Party unlikely to make a strong showing at the polls (much less win), but there was a very real danger that free elections would produce a victory for the forces of anti-Communism. No doubt Roca and Rodrigues were pinning their hopes on the formation of an overt political alliance with Castro that would have enabled the PSP to share power in much the same manner as it had in the 1940's with Batista. But there was no guarantee that such a pact could be formed. Moreover, for Escalante even this would have been something less than a satisfactory denouement, for instead of dominating such a front the Party would almost certainly have been dangerously dependent on it, perhaps even to the point of eroding its own separate identity. And then there was always the prospect that the Maximum Leader would turn on the Communists--as Batista and Grau had done before him--when it served his political interests.

Regardless, the intra-Party dispute seems to have been temporarily resolved by early April, at which time Rodriguez was confirmed as the new editor of Hoy, in place of Escalante. In turn, the later was compensated with the powerful post of Executive-Secretary. On April 10th, Roca's letter was finally
made public; a front-page editorial was run in the Party newspaper endorsing the electoral path. The following day the Secretary-General published a major article, entitled "What Class of Revolution Is This?", in which he stressed the "patriotic and democratic, national-liberationist and agrarian" nature of the Revolution. This was "not a proletarian revolution which tomorrow will impose Socialism"; rather, at this stage it was merely "popular" and "advanced", based on a four-class alliance of workers, peasants, petty bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie. Its basic tasks—the achievement of complete national sovereignty; the elimination of feudalism through agrarian reform; the consolidation of political independence through economic development; and the broadening and deepening of democracy—could be pursued within a Capitalist framework under bourgeois leadership.

Once again, the key issue was that of proletarian hegemony. Here was an authoritative reply to those who "claimed that the Revolution would turn against the Communists and raise the infamous banner of anti-Communism..." In essence, Roca's response was that any attempt to seize power at this stage would be premature. This was not a Socialist Revolution and hence did not yet require Communist leadership. At the same time, it was not anti-Communist, but "advanced". From the moment that Castro had assumed the premiership, hegemony had passed into the hands of the radical small bourgeoisie, thus assuring the Revolution's continued democratic and anti-imperialist development. The political apparatus
of the old regime had been destroyed. Measures had been taken against
the "bureaucratic bourgeoisie" and to restore full national sover-
eignty and independence. The Revolution was "as Cuban as palm
trees." By maintaining its current tempo, it could move on to its
"new stage" at the "appropriate moment". 179

Yet, no sooner was this position set forth than the Party
was confronted with a crisis of major proportions. The immediate
catalyst was Castro's visit to the United States. Not surprisingly,
the Communists viewed this event with great apprehension. The
fear that haunted them, of course, was that the Maximum Leader
might agree to sell out the Revolution— that is, to adopt a position
of moderation and anti-Communism—in return for economic concessions
from the North. Thus, Hoy sought to remind Fidel of his revolu-
tionary obligations and his duty as a Cuban nationalist. Its
columns in early April were filled with warnings that the Yankees
would seek to use this trip to undermine the Revolution. Though
Party spokesmen continued to express their confidence that Castro
would "not surrender himself" to these intrigues, their tone was
more hopeful than confident. As if to bolster the Maximum Leader
on his perilous journey, they triumphantly proclaimed that Cuba
would not become another Guatemala— that the Revolution was
strong and popular and the international balance of power had
shifted to such an extent as to serve as a substantial check on
Yankee aggression. Blas Roca even went so far as to announce that
in case of US economic aggression "all the sugar which the United
States refuses to purchase could be acquired by the Soviet Union, China and the Peoples' Democracies under mutually advantageous conditions." Consequently, Cubans need not fear an imperialist boycott, since their sugar had "purchasers in the Socialist countries in the quantity we wish to sell."\(^{180}\)

Subsequent events suggest that such statements were directed at both Castro and the Soviets. On the one hand, the Communists sought to encourage the Maximum Leader in his revolutionary dispositions, to reassure him of their loyalty and offer him a viable policy alternative that could be exploited once the Yankees began to put the economic squeeze on Havana. By reorienting the Revolution away from Washington and towards Moscow, they obviously hoped to assure their own survival and at least a modicum of influence within the new Cuban elite and pave the way for the eventual attainment of "proletarian hegemony". But such a strategy required the Kremlin's cooperation if it were to succeed. Hence, the Party simultaneously sought to convince Nikita Khrushchev and his colleagues of Castro's reliability, of his regime's capacity to survive in the face of geographic disadvantage and North American enmity, and of the situation's potential benefits for Moscow's foreign policy. After all, as Roca was quick to note, Soviet friendship for the Revolution was merely the logical extension of the Kremlin's general strategy of "Peaceful Co-existence", which sought the establishment of "normal relations with all countries of Latin America, to purchase their products and to sell them
whatever is necessary for industrialization and economic development."

We shall have more to say about this "courtship of Moscow" presently. For the moment, our focus of attention is Fidel Castro. Caught between mounting pressures from his own revolutionary left on one side and Cuban moderates and conservatives on the other, faced with the need to acquire economic sustenance and pacify the growing hostility of the United States, the Maximum Leader opted for a policy of moderation during his North American sojourn. But this exercise in public relations could not but have serious repercussions at home, where all factions were anxiously awaiting his pronouncements for hints as to the future course of the Revolution.

Fidel's behavior was particularly disturbing to the Communists. Thus, for instance, Hoy's accounts of his remarks tended to be highly selective, generally failing to report his derogatory references to Communism and his efforts to reassure his hosts of Cuba's basically pro-Western orientation. Similarly, some of his more controversial statements were claimed to be either mistranslations or the product of inaccurate reporting. All in all, the Party's editorials were rather cautious and subdued in tone, praising Castro for defending the Revolution but noting that "it is still too early to make an accounting and even more so to evaluate each of his assertions and arguments. . . ." Unity remained essential. As Carlos Rafael was quick to point out,
the immediate tasks of the Party involved the implementation of needed reforms, not debate over ideological finepoints. Castro's criticisms were "a matter of opinion" and, as such, were subject to "discussion between revolutionaries." 

But if the PSP and its sympathizers viewed Fidel's remarks with apprehension, the forces of anti-Communism within Cuba could not but be considerably encouraged. The stage was now set for a major clash between Communist and anti-Communist partisans. Soon after Castro's departure, Hoy became embroiled in an increasingly bitter polemic with the Twenty-Sixth of July organ, Revolucion, with each side seeking to legitimize its position by selectively embracing the words of the Maximum Leader. When towards the end of the month M-26 won ninety percent of the secretarial positions in the National Federation of Sugar Workers, Hoy criticized it for "sectarianism" in representing the elections as its own "exclusive victory". 

Subsequently, Revolucion responded with a series of editorials embracing Castro's ideology of "Humanism", ruling out any possibility of an alliance with the PSP and portraying the Twenty-Sixth of July Movement as the only force in Cuba capable of carrying out the Revolution. The proletariat, it was asserted, would defend the gains of the Revolution without succumbing to "totalitarian ideologies". Meanwhile, Raul, Che and Camilo Cienfuegos came to the Party's defense, organizing the May Day celebrations around the theme of unity and denouncing anti-Communism as a divisive tactic and a "pretext that the enemies of
our Revolution utilize to make us oppose one another...to reinforce those of us who have not yet evolved in a revolutionary manner...."

By the time of Fidel's return, the situation was threatening to get out of hand. On May 7th, Blas Roca accused some members of M-26 of creating an "artificial opposition" and using Castro's statements to "combat the Communists and oppose unity with them." His clear implication was that those who engaged in such activities were either dupes of the imperialists or counterrevolutionaries. In reply, the Havana Provincial Administration of M-26 attacked the Secretary-General for attempting to divide the Twenty-Sixth of July Movement into hostile "sierra" and "llano" factions "in the name of unity". Noting the PSP's subservience to Moscow and its failure to foresee the "correct path of struggle" against Batista, it charged that the Party's adherence to the doctrine of inevitable Communist revolution was incompatible with "Fidel and our Humanist Revolution".

Not surprisingly, then, all factions awaited Castro's arrival with great anticipation. Would the Maximum Leader seek to retain the unity policy of past months and in the process risk the enmity of the North Americans and the anti-Communist forces within Cuba? Or would he seek to pacify these elements and reorient the Revolution by turning on the Communists? No one could know for sure.

But Fidel had not yet decided what to do. His actions were still dependent on evolving environmental circumstances. He
had just made his Buenos Aires proposal and to all appearances was dead serious about "staying on the American side", providing of course that the price was right. At the same time, we have the word of Javier Pasos that "he was very mad at the Communists because they had brought out their militia in the May Day celebrations. He expressed himself in very strong words about them. . . . At one point he said that if they kept on pushing him, he would . . . finish them off before public opinion, his most effective weapon at that time."189

Nevertheless, Castro initially chose to maintain his posture as the great reconciler of differences. His speech of May 8th was extremely moderate and conciliatory, offering something to please all sides. He explicitly termed the Revolution non-Communist, identified its ideology solely with the Twenty-Sixth of July Movement, called upon "all social sectors" and "all classes" for support and defended his trip to the United States against criticism from the radicals. Yet, while disparaging Communism for suppressing liberty Fidel refused to yield to demands for the persecution of the PSP and, in a clear reference to both the anti-Communist elements within M-26 as well as to the Party itself, called for an end to all intrigues which "divide the men in our government, . . . in our Army, to make such and such imputations, defending me while they attack other comrades; eulogizing me while they attack my own brother. . . ." To both sides, he offered the following formula, truly a monument to his talent for calculated
ambiguity: "We shall place ourselves a little further forward than the right and the left; neither to the right nor to the left, one step ahead of the right and one step ahead of the left."^190

This situation was to change quickly. Although Castro's speech was moderate enough in tone, it clearly favored the Twenty-Sixth of July Movement over the Communists. Thus, for instance, his designation of the former as the sole repository of the "ideology of the Revolution", the group responsible for the successful struggle against Batista and for the governing of the nation. Moreover, his affirmation of the Revolution's "Humanist" nature gave the PSP's critics a useful club with which to beat it. Blas Roca and his comrades could not respond by rejecting Humanism, for that would entail a repudiation of Castro himself—a potentially fatal error. In effect, they could do little but continue to pledge their unwavering allegiance to the Maximum Leader and his Revolution, even as they admitted to less than wholehearted agreement with his political comments and ideology. If anything, the laudatory nature of their praise and their unequivocal promises of support may be taken as evidence that they viewed the trend of recent events with considerable alarm and were determined to give Fidel no pretense for turning on them.^191

This anxiety was soon shown to be fully justified as Revolucion, obviously encouraged by Castro's statements, stepped up its attack. For the rest of the month the Party was on the defensive, its position steadily weakening under a withering barrage
of invective which clearly had the support of the Maximum Leader. (It is known that Fidel visited the offices of Revolucion almost daily to check on the content of the newspaper.) Thus, for instance, when Hoy published an unauthorized unity statement by two cells of M-26 and the PSP, Revolucion responded with an unsigned lead editorial denouncing the Communists for "trying to force an underhanded political pact, ignoring the leadership of the Twenty-Sixth of July Movement and its Maximum Leader." 193

On May 21st, the Party came under attack from Castro himself. Appearing on the Cuban equivalent of Meet the Press, Fidel denounced Communist labor agitation as "demagogic", "criminal" and "counterrevolutionary" and rejected their call for concessions (including a "redistribution of posts") in the trade unions. Condemning both "Capitalism, which starves people, and Communism, which resolves economic problems, but suppresses liberties", he reiterated his commitment to the uniquely Cuban solution of Humanism. Moreover, he also announced that the Party's powerful ally, Che Guevara, would soon leave the country on an economic mission to Europe and the Middle East. 194 Subsequently, the troops that were under Guevara's authority were dispersed. Never again would he command armed forces within Cuba.

Two days later, the Tenth Congress of the National Federation of Sugar Workers, the largest union in the CTC, refused to recognize the credentials of most of its Communist delegates. Consequently, the Party's participation in the gathering was
minimal. Not even Ursinio Rojas, the PSP's leader among the sugar workers, was in attendance. Furthermore when, on May 24th, Hoy published an unfavorable account of these proceedings, the reaction of the M-26 delegates was swift and crushing. The "unity" candidate put forth by the Communists was rejected; a new directorate, headed by Twenty-Sixth of July representatives, was elected unanimously. By an overwhelming vote, the Congress condemned the PSP organ for its "perverse, groundless, slanderous and counter-revolutionary" report. Subsequently, police had to be sent to the newspaper's headquarters to protect it from overzealous anti-Communists.

In the face of this onslaught, Blas Roca and his comrades vigorously denied the charges that were being levelled against them and hurriedly convened a plenum of the National Committee. In his opening speech, the Secretary-General solemnly informed the delegates that:

We are now in a critical moment for the Revolution. The declarations of Fidel Castro on television have been followed by an example of brutal anti-democratic methods in the Sugar Congress and by the creation of an atmosphere of provocation and attack on the part of rightist elements. . . .

The situation threatens to degenerate into a rupturing of the general revolutionary solidarity, the result of which would be fatal for the advance of the Revolution. . . .

The Party now found itself trapped, without an avenue of escape:

"We must not create or aggravate any conflicts", warned Roca, "but it is also impossible for us to retreat." Under present
circumstances, "unity" would be especially difficult to achieve. In effect, the Communists responded with a mass "crossing of fingers"—a policy of "more of the same" combined with the not particularly optimistic hope that the siege would soon end.
Chapter Six

FOOTNOTES


3 Thus, for instance, in his first post-victory pronouncement, in Santiago, he promised that "this time it will not be as in '98 when the Americans arrived, took control of the situation, intervened at the last moment, and then would not even permit Calixto Garcia, who had been fighting for Cuban independence] for thirty years, to enter Santiago." Nor would it be another 1933, when the "Revolution" was betrayed, first by Carlos Manuel de Cespedes, then by Batista. Or 1944, when "those who arrived in power turned out to be thieves." Speech of January 2, 1959, in Revolucion, January 3, 1959. And a few days later, in Havana: "Who can be 'the enemies of the Revolution. . .' We ourselves, the revolutionaries. . . who might turn out to be like the many revolutionaries of the past. . . ." Speech of January 8, 1959. Text in Fidel Castro, Discursos para la Historia (Habana, 1959), tomo I.


5 Draper, p. 51.

6 Ibid., p. 55.


9. A frequent lament of Cuban nationalists. See, for instance, Fernando Ortiz, La Decadencia Cubana (Habana, 1924).


11. Hence, the title of his magnum opus, Cuba, or The Pursuit of Freedom.


17. This from Grau San Martin, of all people. See Marti y el Partido Revolucionario Cubano (La Habana, 1939), p. 13.

18. An opinion shared by some Cuban critics, as well. See, e.g., Agustin Guerra de la Piedra, "Do We Have the Republic that Marti Dreamed Of?", in Orto, XXXVIII (February, 1950), p. 1. In the words of Mariblanca Sabas Aloma, "because of wanting to make Marti sublime...we are dangerously bordering on ridicule, or, what is worse, on vulgarity." El Avance Criollo (Habana), August 23, 1941.

19. See, especially, my comments on social systemic plugs, in Chapter Two, pp. 31 ff. This is not, of course, intended to be a thorough treatment of social and psychological escape mechanisms.

20. Hence, the tendency of many Cubans to be hypersensitive to almost any criticism of Marti, germane or otherwise, for any
attack on the Apostle also represented a threat to the self-esteem of those who derived ego-support from his worship. For a note on the "inviolability" of Marti, see Richard Butler Gray, Jose Marti, Cuban Patriot (Gainesville, Fla., 1962), pp. 146-47.

21 In Jules Dubois, Fidel Castro: Rebel--Liberator or Dictator? (Indianapolis, 1959), pp. 68-69.

22 Thomas, p. 1132.

23 As always, hard evidence is sparse. Suarez estimates that forty-eight of the seventy-one slain moncadistas for whom such data are available had been born in rural areas. See his "The Cuban Revolution: The Road to Power", Latin American Research Review, VII, 3 (Fall, 1972), p. 23.

24 Thomas lists only one out of one hundred and fifty-four identified moncadistas as having been unemployed. But this is difficult to believe, considering the widespread unemployment and underemployment that characterized the social strata to which they belonged. More than likely many of those for whom professions are formally listed did not work very regularly. See op. cit., pp. 1546-47.


31 Ibid., p. 95.

Suarez, p. 76.

Thus, Fidel: "I believe that at the time I met Che Guevara he had a greater revolutionary development, ideologically speaking, than I had. From the theoretical point of view he was more formed, he was a more advanced revolutionary than I was." In Lockwood, p. 143. Hence also, his comment on January 22, 1959 that "behind me come others more radical than I. . .assassinating me would only fortify the revolution." Whereupon he appointed Raul second-in-command, to succeed him in case of his death. Castro, Discursos para la Historia.

Comments of Armando Hart, in Revolucion, April 4, 1960.

Cuba, pp. 1038, 1055.

One recalls the wistful reminiscence of Celia Sanchez, recalling her days in the Sierra: "Ah, but those were the best times, weren't they? We were all so very happy then. Really. We will never be so happy again, will we? Never . . ." In Lockwood, p. 80.

Thomas, p. 1037.

Batista's army was hardly "modern". Rather, it was rotten to the core--ill-trained, ill-equipped and ill-commanded, riven through with incompetence, factionalism and corruption. Moreover, Castro and his guerrillas did not win the war by themselves, though they frequently liked to give that impression. In point of fact, it had been the men and women of the urban resistance who had had to bear the brunt of the government's program of terror and who had suffered most of the casualties. (Nineteen to one was a much-quoted estimate of the ratio of deaths, llano to sierra. But this is based on a highly inflated calculation of 20,000 dead and can hardly be more than a guess. See Jean-Paul Sartre, On Cuba (New York, 1961), p. 56. Castro's barbudos had really only fought two major engagements during the entire war--the summer offensive of 1958 and the final coup de grace at Santa Clara in late December. Yet, even here, rebel deaths probably numbered no more than fifty all told. As to the US role in the struggle, it was at best indecisive, even on occasion--most notably, the arms embargo of March 1958--favoring the rebels.
In many Cuban homes a picture of Fidel has an honored place; in some of them it is a photograph of a bearded youth who seems to be wearing a kind of halo; the resemblance to portraits of Christ is notable." Irving P. Pflaum, "By Voice and Violence", Part I, American Universities Field Staff Reports, Series V, 3 (August, 1960), p. 16. See also, Wyatt MacGaffey and Clifford R. Barnett, Cuba, Its People, Its Society, Its Culture (New Haven, 1962), pp. 284-85; Rafael Cepeda, "Fidel Castro and the Reign of God", Bohemia, July 17, 1960; and Lloyd A. Free, Attitudes of the Cuban People Toward the Castro Regime (Princeton, 1960).


Lockwood, p. 173.

Quoted in Leslie Dewart, Cuba, Church and Crisis: Christianity and Politics in the Cuban Revolution (London, 1964), p. 82.


Lockwood, p. 173.


The genealogy of the idea may be traced back at least as far as the Eighteenth Brumaire, where Marx concluded "that the next attempt of the French revolution will be no longer, as before, to transfer the bureaucratic-military machine from one hand to another, but to smash it, and this is essential for every real people's revolution on the Continent." The quoted material is from his letter of April 12, 1871 to Dr. Kugelmann. See Karl Marx, Selected Works, ed. V. Adoratsky (New York, 1933), II.
In quoting this passage in The State and Revolution, Lenin comments: "On the continent of Europe in 1871, the proletariat did not in a single country constitute the majority of the people. A 'people's' revolution, actually sweeping the majority into its current, could be such only if embracing both the proletariat and the peasantry. Both classes then constitute the 'people.' Both classes are united by the circumstance that the 'military and bureaucratic machinery of the State' oppresses, crushes, exploits them. To shatter this machinery, to break it up--this is the true interest of the 'people,' of its majority--the workers and most of the peasants--this is the 'preliminary condition' of a union of the poorest peasantry with the proletarians." V. I. Lenin, Selected Works (Moscow, 1951), II, Part I, p. 239. This is the statement referred to by Castro in his speech of December 2nd. See Jacques Arnauld, Cuba et le Marxisme; Essai sur la Revolution Cubaine. (Paris, 1963), pp. 52 ff.


53 Cited in Einaudi, p. 231.

54 Lopez-Fresquet, p. 66.

55 Cienfuegos' comment, in Revolucion, January 8, 1959.

56 Thomas, p. 1072.

57 Speech of January 8, 1959, in Castro, Discursos... .

58 Thomas, p. 1198.

59 Ibid., p. 1071. According to J. P. Morray, some 1,100 rebel soldiers were brought into the police. See The Second Revolution in Cuba (New York, 1962), p. 35.

60 Guevara referred to this process as a "dialogue of two tuning forks whose vibrations summon forth new vibrations each in the other. Fidel and the mass begin to vibrate in a dialogue of growing intensity which reaches its culminating point in the abrupt ending crowned by our victorious battle cry [Fatherland or Death! We shall Triumph!] Socialism and Man (Havana, 1967), p. 17.


65"Should the men who form today's government prove unequal to their task the people will be able to replace them by others in free elections. . . . Public opinion will decide everything--it is an enormous force where there is real freedom. . . ." Speech of January 8, 1959. "Our methods are based on absolute respect for the individual, on absolute recognition of freedom and human rights. . . . The only sacrifice which I am not prepared to make, the only action which would be repugnant to my feelings would be to use force to further the Revolution." Speech of February 6, 1959. "If one begins to close down one newspaper no other newspaper will feel safe—and if one begins to persecute one person because of his political views nobody else can feel safe." Speech of April 29, 1959. And so on. Fidel Castro, *Discursos* . . .


69 *Guia del Pensamiento Politico Economico de Fidel* (Habana, 1959), p. 73. Similar qualified assurances were given on numerous occasions. See, e.g., *Revolucion*, March 7 and April 3, 1959.

70"Everybody knows how much I respect the civilian institutions of the Republic. Everybody knows that I have not interfered nor shall interfere in the activities of the President of the Republic. . . . Should the President forbid me to speak in public or tell me not to give even one interview I would unconditionally obey this order." Speech of January 21, 1959. Even as he replaced the floundering Miro Cardona as Prime Minister,
he stressed his "respect for the system...lack of personal ambitions, loyalty to principles, unshakable and profound democratic convictions." Speech of February 6, 1959. Source:

71Speech of February 16, 1959, in Ibid.


73Lopez-Fresquet, pp. 41-42, 80-81.

74Revolucion, February 1, 1959.

75Ibid., February 24, 1959.

76As Castro revealed in his speech of December 2, 1961, the revolutionaries had been forced to hide their time, because some of these elements had an independent public standing, or at least been given stature by the reactionary press. Obra Revolucionaria, December 2, 1961.

77Lockwood, p. 176.

78Lopez-Fresquet, pp. 46-47.

79As Castro himself stressed to the cabinet.


82*El Mundo* (Habana), December 2, 1961.

83*See*, especially, the arguments of Theodore Draper, in Abuse of Power (New York, 1966).

84Speech of President Jacobo Arbenz Guzman to the National Congress in 1953. Similarly, the opening article of the agrarian reform law read that "the Agrarian Reform... has as its purpose the liquidation of rural feudal property and the relations of production which originate in it so as to develop Capitalist methods of exploitation and production in agriculture and pave the way for the industrialization of Guatemala." Both sources cited in Einaudi, pp. 115-16.


86*See*, for instance, Earl E. T. Smith, The Fourth Floor (New York, 1962); Nathaniel Weyl, Red Star Over Cuba (New York, 1961); Mario Lazo, Dagger in the Heart, American Policy Failures in Cuba (n.c., 1968). But former Ambassador Bonsal states that "when I was in Washington in early February 1959 to be briefed for my Cuban mission, I was impressed by the reserve with which Castro was viewed by the departmental officers with whom I dealt. They accepted the Cuban reality as it then appeared and were determined to develop productive relations with the new government. They had no direct relationship with Castro though they had had contacts with representatives of the numerous democratically minded forces that fought Batista under Castro's leadership. Their thinking had been influenced by the sordid and bloody morass into which the regime of Batista had sunk. But they had no enthusiasm for Castro, only a determination to be in the best possible position to deal effectively on behalf of American interests with the new ruler whose people appeared united in idolizing

See, for instance, the testimony of Fulgencio Batista, in Respuesta (Mexico, 1960), pp. 72-73 and 99-102; and that of Earl Smith, op. cit., pp. 82 ff.


Though this remark was meant to be "off the record", it soon became popular knowledge and found its way back to Castro in the Sierra Maestra. Smith, p. 60.

According to the Agency for International Development, the totals (in millions of dollars) were as follows: 1954: 1.1; 1955: 1.5; 1956: 1.7; 1957: 3.2; 1958: 3.6. See Cole Blasier, "The Elimination of United States Influence", in Revolutionary Change in Cuba, ed. Carmelo Mesa-Lago (Pittsburgh 1971), pp. 46, 78.


On the other hand, former Ambassador Bonsal complains that "the arms furnished were an infinitesimal fraction of the arms acquired by the Batista regime with its own funds for purposes of national defense and internal security. Only a small part of the arms available to the Cuban military were ever used against Castro and his men." Cuba, Castro, and the United States, p. 32. The military assistance given the Cuban government was in fact quite modest, only a small part of the mutual defense program being extended to Latin America as a whole. For its part, Uruguay received more aid than did Cuba. Paul D. Bethel, The Losers (New York, 1969), p. 61. Certainly these grants were not intended to serve counterinsurgency purposes. Rather, their target was external, against a posited threat from outside the hemisphere.

It is doubtful, however, that such considerations made much impression on Castro. As we have seen, this aid had a political and
psychological impact that went far beyond its actual military value. Moreover, Batista lost few opportunities to publicly suggest that such ties did indeed constitute US support for his regime. No doubt much of Fidel’s protestations were for propaganda effect. Yet, it seems likely that his anger was genuine enough. Not only was he predisposed by temperament and ideology to view the “Colossus” with suspicion and fear, he was already anticipating a Yankee intervention on behalf of the status quo. Moreover, this was in the heat of war. It was not that easy to distinguish bombs obtained through US grants from those purchased independently by the Cuban government. In any case, most of the weapons used against the rebels were of North American origin. It was more convenient psychologically to think in terms of black and white, friend and foe, than delve into the more subtle shades of reality.

92 Blasier, pp. 46-47.

94 Thus, only two weeks after the suspension of arms shipments the mission held a highly publicized luncheon to honor Francisco Tabernilla, who had just been promoted to general-in-chief of the army by Batista. See Dubois, p. 242.


96 Smith, p. 182.

97 So it was regarded by Smith. Thomas, p. 1019.


100 *Revolución*, January 19, 1959.


103 *Ibid.* , p. 44.

104 Speech of January 21, 1959, in *Discursos* . . . .


106 Eisenhower, p. 524.


110 See "Social Projections of the Rebel Army", in "Che" Guevara on Revolution, A Documentary Overview, ed. Jay Mallin (Coral Gables, 1969), pp. 69-79. It may be noted that even in this early stage of development the doctrine of guerrilla warfare was marked by strong elements of self-delusion. Thus, for instance, the underestimation of the importance of the llano; the perception of Batista's army as "disciplined" and in some sense typical of the other military establishments in the region; and the conviction that the Cuban revolutionary experience could be generalized for Latin America as a whole. Such misconceptions were to lead to disaster when the Castroites attempted to apply theory to reality.

111 See Ernesto F. Betancourt, "Exporting the Revolution to Latin America", in Mesa Lago, ed., p. 114.

112 See the evidence of Lopez-Fresquet, p. 112.

113 See Hoy, June 16, 1959. According to Herbert Matthews, "of the so-called invasions from Cuba only one—the two small groups that entered the Dominican Republic in June, 1959—had Castro's official backing. The others were either the work of adventurers and mercenaries, like the landings in Panama in April and in Haiti in August, 1959, or groups that evaded Cuban vigilance." *The Cuban Story*, p. 192. For its part, the Cuban government repeatedly denied any direct involvement in the earlier invasions of Panama and Nicaragua. See Boughton, pp. 77-78 and 112.

Letter to January 8, 1959, in Discursos.


In The Reporter, August 13, 1964.

Thus, Felipe Pazos heard Castro express "fears of being invited to the White House and of being photographed with the President of the United States as one more Latin American leader 'sold out' to imperialism." Cited in Gonzalez, Cuba Under Castro, p. 69. And in point of fact, the Cuban press reflected this concern. He was thus "neither expected nor able to assume a petitionary posture toward the United States." Boughton, pp. 73-74.

In the words of Ruby Hart Phillips, "The present middle class finds itself seriously hurt by dramatic rent reductions, reductions of land values and forced sales of vacant lots in towns, as well as the depressed economic situation. . . . Many people with modest savings, as well as the wealthy class have invested in land and property in the Spanish tradition and now they see themselves stripped of their possessions and eliminated as a class. Nothing convinces them that this is not due to Communist influence." New York Times, April 24, 1959.

In Selser, ed., pp. 283-87.

See Thomas, pp. 1199-1200.


This also seems to be basically the position taken by Lopez-Fresquet, Bonsal and Suarez.

Yet, compare this with Thomas, p. 1205.

Revolucion, April 3, 1959.

Thomas, p. 1205.

Lopez-Fresquet, p. 104.

The Times of Havana (Miami), September 15-17, 1961.

Problems of Journalism, Proceedings of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, 1959, p. 82.

Gonzalez, p. 68.


Goldenberg, The Cuban Revolution and Latin America, p. 182. See also the observations of Lopez-Fresquet, op. cit., pp. 111-12.

See Revolucion, May 9, 1959.

Lopez-Fresquet, p. 106. See also the testimony of Felipe Pazos, cited in Thomas, p. 1209.


Matthews, p. 237.

Halperin, p. 53.

Eisenhower, p. 523.

In addition to their acute sensitivity to any semblance of foreign interference in their internal affairs, the Cubans
appear to have been concerned over the detrimental effects the proposed stabilization program might have on unemployment and inflation. Zeitlin and Scheer, p. 84.

143 Interview on "Meet the Press", April 24, 1959, in Discourse...  

144 Revolución, April 25, 1959.  

Hence, the title of Emmet John Hughes' memorable account of the Eisenhower years. See The Ordeal of Power (New York, 1963).  


147 Herbert Matthews, Fidel Castro, p. 167.  

148 Castro's reaction to this presumptuous and paternalistic attempt to influence Cuban foreign policy had been to denounce Figueres and the United States and assert Cuba's neutrality in the event of global war. See Hoy, March 24, 1959.  

149 In 1967, the Latin American republics officially approved a project to create a common market, excluding Cuba.  

150 The following interpretation is especially indebted to the work of Edward Gonzalez, whose Ph.D. dissertation, "The Cuban Revolution and the Soviet Union", remains the most detailed collection of documentary materials yet assembled on Castro's first year in power and the PSP-Soviet response.  

151 Hoy, January 11, 1959.  


153 The specialist may also wish to consult the more moderate preliminary manifesto, entitled "The Overthrow of the Tyranny and the Immediate Tasks Ahead", which called for: 1. the conversion of the Rebel Army into the nucleus of the new army; 2. the promulgation of the Agrarian Reform decree issued in the Sierra on October 10, 1958, which granted ownership rights to tenant farmers with 165 acres or less, with prior compensation to be paid to previous owners; 3. the quest for new markets for Cuban goods in the Socialist bloc; and 4. the restoration of the Constitution of 1940. Ibid., January 6, 1959.


157 That is, alleged supporters of the infamous Platt Amendment.


159 *Ibid.* See also the "Theses".


161 Lopez-Fresquet, p. 162. This in response to Communist encouragement of peasant land seizures during the early weeks of the Revolution.


163 Evidence of Guillermo Cabrera Infante, quoted in Thomas, p. 1199.


166 The PSP program, though similar to Castro's, differed in its explicit support for privately-owned farms, including productive sugar plantations, and in its opposition to the immediate establishment of agricultural cooperatives. *Ibid.*, March 4, 1959.


Years later, Carlos Rafael Rodríguez would note that because Marxist-Leninist doctrine held that the transition to Socialism could only be achieved under the "leadership and hegemony of a party of the working class" it had been easy to "lapse into sectarian dogmatic mechanisms". Specifically, some comrades had failed to realize that the road to Socialism had been opened in Cuba through "unique ways" and that "any dispute about a theoretical hegemony would be not only anti-historical but also absurd." *Granma Weekly Review*, October 13, 1974.

Rodríguez's words. See his tribute to Roca in *Granma Weekly Review*, October 13, 1974.

Contrary to the opinion of Andres Suarez (op. cit., pp. 55-63), who argues that the Party "maintained its 'monolithism' at least until January 1959", after which time a "deviation" headed by Carlos Rafael Rodríguez arose to challenge Roca's authority. This interpretation has some validity: Carlos Rafael's star was indeed in the ascendant. Being a barbudo of sorts, he had personal ties with Castro and the *fidelistas* which the Secretary-General could not hope to match. No doubt too Suarez is right in surmising that Rodríguez was one of those "comrades" who wanted the Party to undertake a self-critical re-evaluation of its performance during the struggle against Batista. Nevertheless, his analysis errs in overestimating the "monolithic" nature of the PSP and in ignoring the Escalante challenge, the debate over "proletarian hegemony" and the substantive points in agreement between Rodríguez and Roca. For a more detailed examination of the evidence, to which the present interpretation is indebted, see Gonzalez, "The Cuban Revolution and the Soviet Union", pp. 343-61.

Thus, on April 17th, the assistant-editor of *Hoy*, Raul Valdes Vivo, denounced the pedantry of unidentified Party members who insisted on proletarian hegemony, even as he indicated that the Chinese model (which he claimed was not characterized by that
phenomenon) was appropriate for the Cuban experience. Ibid., April 17, 1959. Escalante's position was that Marxist-Leninist doctrine required that Communist hegemony be exercised in the transition from the bourgeois-democratic to the Socialist stage. Lecture delivered on March 11, 1960, published in Fundamentos, May 1960.

179 Hoy, April 11, 1959.

180 Ibid., April 2, 1959.

181 Ibid., April 4, 1959.

182 Ibid., April 18, 1959.

183 Ibid., April 21, 1959.

184 Ibid., April 29, 1959.

185 See Revolucion, April 30 and May 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 1959.

186 The quote is from Raúl's speech of April 25th, as reported in Hoy, April 28, 1959. See also the May Day speeches in Revolution, May 2, 1959.

187 Ibid., May 7, 1959.


190 Revolution, May 9, 1959.

191 On May 10th, for instance, Blas Roca pledged his personal support to "Fidel Castro with all his strength, with all his capacity, with everything he has, in the revolutionary labor he creates and directs, and the Cuban Revolution which he has called Humanist." In this same issue of Hoy, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, though noting that the Party differed with the Maximum Leader on
some of his statements and "many problems of doctrine", maintained that the Communists "coincide with Fidel Castro without any reservation."

192 Thomas, p. 1219.


Chapter Seven

THE TRANSFORMATION OF REBELLION INTO REVOLUTION--
THE DEVELOPMENT AND RADICALIZATION OF THE
CASTROITE TRANSFER CULTURE AND THE
RISE OF COUNTERDEPENDENCE
(PART TWO)

What had happened? Why had Fidel turned on the Communists?
What would subsequently lead him to change his mind, join in an
open alliance with them and reorient the Revolution towards Moscow?
The historical reality defies the oversimplified explanations of
both those who claim that the United States "pushed Castro into
the arms of the Soviets"\(^1\) and those who insist that he never had
any serious intention of negotiating with the Americans in the first
place.\(^2\)

In point of fact, the evidence suggests that in April
and May of 1959 the Maximum Leader was not at all averse to the
idea of sacrificing the PSP to Yankee sensibilities--providing,
of course, that the price was right. The crucial considerations
here were undoubtedly the most obvious--namely, the continuing
Cuban weakness and dependence in the face of the overwhelming power
of the "Colossus".\(^3\) These realities had not suddenly disappeared
with the overthrow of Batista. The Revolution, if it were to
survive and develop to its full capacities, would require massive
doses of foreign trade and aid. And the most visible and realistic
source of such economic sustenance was the United States. Moreover, there could be few illusions about the Castro regime’s capacity to survive should the Norte Americanos firmly resolve to eliminate it. Defending the Revolution against internal sabotage and exile expeditions of the Castillo Armas stripe was one thing; defending it against the US marines was entirely something else.

The central issue then was how to come to terms with these environmental opportunities, pressures and constraints without abandoning the basic ideological objectives of Castroism. Fidel’s strategy, designed to defend Cuban sovereignty and dignidad while pursuing the ideals of social justice and national renovation, was to maintain the abrazo with the United States, but in a considerably altered form. Economic independence could not be achieved overnight; it would only come gradually, through industrialization and economic diversification at home and the acquisition of new markets and sources of aid abroad. In the meantime, political sovereignty would be maintained through a general policy of non-alignment. Castro would not join either Cold War bloc, but would make up his own mind on international issues in accordance with his own ideological values and ambitions and the perceived interests of the Cuban nation. North American aid would be accepted in the form proposed at Buenos Aires—that is, as part of a multi-lateral endeavour designed to promote revolutionary change in Latin America and establish Fidel’s credentials as the region’s foremost political leader and spokesman.
Unfortunately, he was not entirely operating in the realm of reality. Official Washington was not yet willing to institute such a program for its Latin friends, let alone for Fidel Castro, whom it did not trust. Nor did there appear to be much willingness to provide Havana with a significantly higher sugar quota. On the contrary, in early June a spokesman for the US Department of Agriculture indicated that such plans were impractical, since the Agrarian Reform would likely lower Cuban agricultural production.

In turn, Castro's response was defensive and typically grandiose: He offered to sell the United States 8 million tons of sugar in 1961 at the bargain price of four cents a pound. An answer was demanded by the fifteenth of June.5

Not surprisingly, this proposal was politely rejected. The US market could not have absorbed an influx of those dimensions.6 Nor, for that matter, could the Cubans have produced it. Only once before, in 1952, had the island's sugar crop reached 7 million tons. Given their own domestic needs and other commitments, the Cubans would have had to have produced some 9 million tons in order to have fulfilled such an agreement. Yet, Castro in his euphoria was already envisioning crops on the magnitude of 8-12 million tons "without the slightest notion of how it could be done or where such quantities would be sold."7

In retrospect, such episodes were symptomatic not only of Fidel's monumental powers of schizophrenic delusion but of the essentially pathological nature of his regime's relationship
with the "Colossus". No doubt Halperin was right when he observed that both sides derived a certain satisfaction from these exchanges: "Each...believed it had scored some good points in the debate, and...confirmed its darkest suspicions of the other. Washington was more convinced than ever that it was dealing with a dangerous eccentric. Havana was more than ever convinced of Washington's implacable hostility towards the...Revolution." In the final analysis, however, such behavior was both sterile and self-destructive, for the defensive posture of each side only served to reinforce the antagonistic perceptions of the other, inhibiting communication and compromise and setting in motion a self-intensifying spiral of suspicion and fear that rapidly undermined Cuba's traditionally close abrazo with the North.

In sum, here was a classic case of "dyadic incompatibility"--an increasingly "uninhibited, mutually inhibitory" relationship compelled by its own coercive nature to disintegrate through an extended process of "mutual destruction". This was something more than the conventional "self-fulfilling prophesy", that false definition of the situation that gives rise to behavior which makes the original false conception come true. Here the sources of conflict lay not merely in each side's misperceptions of the other but in a very real incompatibility of basic values, interests and goals. And yet, in a very fundamental respect, the relationship was self-fulfilling, for the pursuit of the utopian and hegemonic objectives of Castroism set in motion a revolutionary process
which rapidly acquired a momentum of its own, thwarting the development of the kind of constructive political and economic ties with the "Colossus" that were so sorely needed to replace the corrupting bonds of the past and substituting in their stead a veritable "dialectic of hostility" that could not but eventually issue in breakdown.

Once again, it must be stressed that revolution is a process. It will be the primary function of this chapter to trace and analyze the dynamics of this phenomenon as it developed in Cuba during the last eight months of 1959, paying special attention to the inter-relationship between the radicalization of Castroite transfer culture strategy and the rise of a counterrevolutionary threat, both at home and abroad. Fidel's critics are undoubtedly correct when they charge that he needed an enemy (and particularly an external enemy) in order to maintain national unity, mobilize the masses behind his revolutionary program and legitimize his increasingly authoritarian rule. It should not be thought, however, that this threat was merely an artificial creation of his own Machiavellian designs. On the contrary, counterrevolution was inherent in the very notion of revolution. The pursuit of the utopian and hegemonic objectives of Castroism inevitably gave rise to an opposition centered around those forces, both Cuban and North American, whose interests were rooted in the existing political, economic and social order. In turn, this threat both stimulated and facilitated the radicalization process, compelling
the Maximum Leader to consolidate his political power and that of his followers and strike out, both verbally and otherwise, at the perceived foreign and domestic "enemies of the Revolution".

But action led to reaction in a self-perpetuating, self-intensifying dialectic which simultaneously paved the way for the formation of a garrison state within Cuba and for the rapid acceleration of counterdependence vis-à-vis the United States. In retrospect, it is clear that both Washington and Havana wanted rapprochement, but only on their own terms. Thus, each side repeatedly made demands which the other, for a variety of reasons (political, ideological, economic and psychological), could not fulfill. Moreover each, insecure and suspicious, was chronically on the defensive in response to the perceived threat posed by the other. Neither had the presence of mind to try to break through this blockage in communications by making a concerted effort to understand and come to grips with the other's needs. For his part, the Maximum Leader, ever anxious to protect his self-image and reputation as a revolutionary nationalist, studiously neglected certain potentially constructive avenues of negotiation, while framing his own initiatives in a manner most unlikely to draw a favorable response from Washington. In turn, the Eisenhower administration, having had its economic overtures once rebuffed during Fidel's visit to the United States, retreated to a posture of "watchful waiting". In truth, it had little inclination to make major new commitments to a regime which was endangering the
stability of the Caribbean and the property rights of US citizens. On the contrary, within administration circles the hope continued to be expressed that a policy of denial would eventually force Castro to moderate his radicalism for the sake of survival.

But if in the short run such inhibitions were a formula for stalemate, in the long run they were the precursor of breakdown. Thwarted in his efforts to obtain North American trade and aid, Castro would turn elsewhere. Rapprochement would be abandoned. Moreover, as the balance of Cuban-US relations swung increasingly negative, mutual antipathy grew through an intense interactive process “during which each side believed its hostility was a justified reaction to the hostile actions of the other.”

Thus did stimulus give rise to response in a descending spiral of negative reinforcement. The abrazo became increasingly coercive and uninhibited in its disintegration by either internal or external constraints. At the same time, the mutual inhibitions to the development of a constructive relationship grew steadily stronger. In the end, what emerged was a self-perpetuating, self-intensifying adversary relationship which would lead the world to the brink of nuclear cataclysm.

The Dynamics of Radicalization: The Pursuit of Revolutionary Virtue, The Rise of the Counterrevolutionary Opposition, the Growth of Counterdependence, and the Consolidation of Elite Hegemony

The slave begins by demanding justice and ends by wanting to wear a crown. He must dominate in his turn. His insurrection against his condition becomes an unlimited campaign against the heavens for the purpose of
bringing back a captive king who will first be dethroned and finally condemned to death. Human rebellion ends in metaphysical revolution. It progresses from appearances to acts, from the dandy to the revolutionary. When the throne of God is overturned, the rebel realizes that it is now his own responsibility to create the justice, order, and unity that he sought in vain within his own condition, and in this way to justify the fall of God. Then begins the desperate effort to create, at the price of crime and murder if necessary, the dominion of man. This will not come about without terrible consequences, of which we are so far only aware of a few. But these consequences are in no way due to rebellion itself, or at least they only occur to the extent that the rebel forgets his original purpose, tires of the tremendous tension created by refusing to give a positive or negative answer, and finally abandons himself to complete negation or total submission. Metaphysical insurrection, in its first stages, offers us the same positive content as the slave's rebellion. Our task will be to examine what becomes of this positive content of rebellion in the actions that claim to originate from it and to explain where the fidelity or infidelity of the rebel to the origins of his revolt finally leads him.14

On May 17th, the Agrarian Reform Law was promulgated.15 In retrospect this decree, which had been drawn up primarily by the geographer Núñez Jimenez without the consultation of the cabinet (including even the Minister of Agriculture, Humberto Sori Marin),16 marked a crucial turning point for the Revolution, for it set in motion the processes of radicalization and the action-reaction syndrome which eventually led to the total disintegration of the abrazo with the United States.

Yet, the Law itself was not all that radical as agrarian reforms go. In general terms, it set a ceiling on land ownership of 30 caballerias (about 400 hectares or 1,000 acres). However, exceptions of up to 100 caballerias were to be permitted in the case of unusually productive sugar, cattle and rice farms, the
efficiency of which might be seriously damaged were they to be broken up. Foreign companies might even be permitted to hold property above that limit should the Cuban government deem it in the national interest. Moreover, owners were to be compensated for their expropriated lands through the issuance of twenty-year bonds carrying an annual interest of four-and-a-half percent. In turn, the confiscated properties were to be distributed among the peasants in plots of no more than two caballerias each for a family of five or handed over to cooperatives for their use. Tenants, subtenants, lessees and sublessees were to be granted free ownership. A National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA) was set up under Castro’s general direction with immensely broad power to expropriate and distribute land, organize cooperatives, build roads, housing and so forth. In the words of Andres Suarez, "the implementation of the Law would harm only an insignificant number of landowners but would immediately benefit about 100,000 tenants, subtenants, and the like, and, if the land was actually distributed, perhaps some 200,000 new farmers. Implementation, accordingly, meant the initiation of a social revolution."  

It is difficult to overstate the political significance of this measure. The Revolution now began to polarize sharply along class lines. Simultaneously, the popular base of Castro’s authority both narrowed and intensified. No doubt this was inevitable, given Fidel’s revolutionary propensities. As Robert Tucker has observed, the leader who "can make national identity
meaningful... and who... can help [his countrymen] find their way to a new life-style... will certainly acquire great charisma in the eyes of very many. By the same token, however, he is likely to arouse fanatical hatred on the part of those who remain devotees of the old order... ."18

The immediate interests at stake were of course economic. Within three weeks of the Reform's enactment, 2.3 million acres of Cuban land were taken over in Camaguey. Conservative reaction was swift and harsh. Landowners went on the radio to denounce the government's program; protest rallies were held. Both the Association of Tobacco Planters and the Association of Cattlemen passed resolutions against the Law, the latter complaining that the 100 caballeria ceiling on property holdings was too small to make business profitable. The President of the Cattlemen pointed out, accurately enough, that this land reform was more radical than that proposed by the Communists.19 Meanwhile, the conservative press, led by the venerable Diario de la Marina, attacked the measure with vehemence. The Church too began to waver. Monseigneur Perez Serantes, after initially expressing his support, felt obliged to call upon Castro to respect the interests of all concerned. "Certain groups", he noted forebodingly, had begun to suspect that the authors of the Law had been "drinking at the same spring" as the Communists.20 By the end of June, public approval of the government's performance had fallen some thirteen-and-a-half percentage points below its February mark, evoking concern among Fidel's associates in the cabinet. Castro's response: "We
are still doing fine; at the end, we will have only the children with us."^21

But the rise of the domestic counterrevolution was accompanied by growing hostility and opposition from the United States. Given the North American economic penetration of the island, it could hardly have been otherwise. Most of this, it is true, was strictly "unofficial" in origin. For its part, the US business community in Cuba responded in predictable fashion to the perceived threat to its interests: "The Revolution may be like a watermelon", quipped one observer. "The more they slice it, the redder it gets."^22 In the wake of the Agrarian Reform Law, such charges became increasingly commonplace. Now *Time* and *Newsweek* began to join their more conservative competitor, *US News*, in raising the specter of Communist subversion.^23 This, it may be noted, at precisely the moment that Castro was beginning to turn on the PSP and lend encouragement to the anti-Communist elements within his own Twenty-Sixth of July Movement.

To give credit where it is due, the Eisenhower administration's response to all this was fairly moderate. On June 11th an official note was dispatched to the government in Havana, expressing concern over the future of US investments on the island and over the detrimental effects which the Agrarian Reform was expected to have on agricultural production. While expressing sympathy for Cuban objectives and recognizing the right of expropriation, it was stressed that
...this right is coupled with the corresponding obligation on the part of a state that such taking will be accompanied by prompt, adequate, and effective compensation. . . .

The wording of the Cuban Agrarian Law gives serious concern to the Government of the United States with regard to the adequacy of the provision for compensation of its citizens whose property may be expropriated. 24

Now this was a perfectly legitimate request. Clearly, the government of the United States had a responsibility to its citizens to help protect their investments in foreign lands. As such, it was merely performing its duty in response to the representations of North American business interests. And certainly those interests had plenty of reason to worry. Not only was the Law disturbingly vague as to the future of US property in Cuba, but the issue of compensation had hardly been settled in a satisfactory manner. The idea of payment through twenty-year bonds was bound to raise eyebrows. Would such certificates ever be issued? If so, what would be their true worth? Moreover, it seemed that the expropriated properties were to be assessed in accordance with the tax valuations that had been filed under the Batista regime. But in those days it had been common practice to assess holdings at only a fraction of their real worth. Were owners then to be faced with a choice of either accepting an enormous loss on their confiscated lands or confessing to previous tax evasion? For its part, the State Department took the position that compensation should be "prompt, adequate and effective". Unfortunately, the meaning of this phrase was never explained. The government in Havana, operating
under the assumption that the Yankees were demanding immediate cash payment, rejected the American note as being "a little offensive to national sovereignty". In truth, given Cuba's unfavorable balance of payments and the fact that Batista and his cronies had raided the Treasury prior to their departure, the Castro regime could not have met such a claim, even had its validity been recognized.25

Such issues were difficult but perhaps not insoluble, given sufficient time, flexibility and goodwill. Unfortunately, these elements were not in great abundance. The processes of conventional diplomacy were rapidly being overtaken by events, as the Revolution began to acquire a radical momentum of its own. Thus, the actual expropriations were to be conducted in a most arbitrary and destructive manner. A veritable horde of "zealous incompetents"26--mostly inexperienced young officers from the Rebel Army--descended upon the large estates, often confiscating anything that looked worth taking and doing incalculable damage to the productivity of the properties they tried to manage.27 Rarely were inventories made or receipts given. To make matters even worse, the response of the Cuban masses was "one of emotional support of anything that had Castro's backing and of a determination that not a comma of the Agrarian Reform Law should be abated from a text few had read. Every word in the document seemed somehow to have become a fragment of the national sovereignty not to be altered without loss of national honor."28 Such overreactions, of course, are not uncommon
among frustrated and insecure peoples. Still, they could not but have had a highly deleterious rigidifying effect upon the future course of Cuba's relationship with the United States.

Moreover, on the evening of June 11 Fidel moved to tighten his hegemony over the government. A major cabinet shake-up was initiated. The moderate, pro-US Foreign Minister, Roberto Agramonte, was replaced by Raul Roa, a vitriolic polemicist, who soon proved willing to jettison his recent anti-Communism and return to the anti-Yankee orientation of earlier days. The Minister of Agriculture, Sori Marin, was supplanted by Pedro Miret, one of the original moncadistas. Raquel Perez, a political unknown but a relative of Miret, succeeded Elena Mederos as Minister of Social Welfare. Serafin Ruiz de Zarate, a doctor with Guevara's forces in Las Villas, took over from Martinez Paez at Health. Jose Naranjo, who had been with Raul Castro in Oriente, became the new Minister of the Interior, succeeding the ineffective Luis Orlando Rodriguez. Finally, Alfredo Yabur, "an old enemy" of Castro's at the University but "now an unconditional friend", replaced Angel Fernandez as head of Justice. All of the departing ministers had one thing in common: They had opposed the Agrarian Reform in one particular or another.29

Thus began the flight of the moderates. On June 12th, the former Autentico Prime Minister Tony Varona appeared on national television, denouncing the Reform and calling for democratic elections. The following day Castro responded, also on television,
lashing out at all critics of the Revolution in general and the Agrarian Reform in particular. Those who opposed the actions of his government were branded "counterrevolutionaries and traitors". Cubans were divided into two groups—"those who wholly supported the Revolution and those who are joining the reactionaries backed by Trujillo." The issue of elections was posed rhetorically. The response of the studio audience was in the negative.\(^{30}\) Even as he spoke, bombs exploded in the streets of Havana, sparking a wave of arrests and illegal detentions.\(^{31}\)

On June 14th, a force of some two hundred Dominicans, together with a handful of Cubans, landed on the northern coast of the Dominican Republic. This episode, so reminiscent of the abortive Cayo Confites expedition of 1947, was largely the product of the long-standing personal and ideological antagonism between Castro and Trujillo, each of whom regarded the other as a mortal enemy. During the Cuban civil war, the government in Santo Domingo had provided the Batista regime with arms and money in a concerted effort to subvert the North American weapons embargo. Subsequently, throughout the first half of 1959 it had carried on a vitriolic propaganda campaign against the Revolution and had provided refuge both for the ousted dictator and for various exile groups which, with Dominican assistance, had begun to organize and conduct counterrevolutionary activities against their homeland.\(^{32}\) In turn, the Castro regime had responded by giving sanctuary to Trujillo's enemies and making the Generalissimo the primary target of its
anti-despotic harrangues. In early June, relations between the two governments sunk to a new low when Cuban diplomatic personnel were attacked by Dominican mobs. The upshot of this deteriorating pattern was the decision to "liberate" Santo Domingo.

No doubt too the affair had important domestic implications. As Suarez has observed, "Castro could implement a radical transformation of the Cuban social structure, while maintaining his personal power intact, only if he kept up his close and constant relations with the masses. The lowering of rents, the granting of land to the tenants, and similar acts of course reinforced these ties; but, like every internal reform, they also ran into opposition . . . ." Moreover that opposition, though still relatively small, was rapidly growing as the revolutionary process developed, threatening an increasingly wide range of vested interests. Hence, the utility of a "great national cause" to silence his critics and mobilize the Cuban people behind the increasingly radical program of the Revolution. On the surface, the Dominican invasion must have seemed opportune:

. . . Castro would reaffirm his posture as liberator in the eyes of the Latin American peoples. Victory seemed certain, for the Dominican tyranny was hated at least as much as that of Batista. Castro would direct the operations from the eastern tip of Cuba, and his military triumph would decisively convince both the Twenty-Sixth of July Movement and the Rebel Army that they must allow him to carry out his designs, because destiny itself had singled him out to accomplish a great historical task.33

But, as Bobby Burns once remarked, "the best laid schemes o' mice an' men gang aft agley. . . ." The Maximum Leader had
miscalculated again. Trujillo proved surprisingly durable. Within a few days of the landing, the invasion collapsed. Most of the insurgents were either killed or captured.

This was a significant defeat. Not only did it reinforce the counterrevolutionary dictatorships in the Caribbean, but it tended to confirm the worst suspicions of the Eisenhower administration: Castro was indeed a danger to the stability of the region, and hence to the interests of the United States. Why then should material support be lent to his regime? At the very least, such measures as the Dominican invasion and the Agrarian Reform made it more difficult than ever for moderates on both sides to pursue the path of constructive negotiations. On the one hand, a rapidly growing number of North Americans—and not only members of the rabid right—were coming to view Castro's attempts at accommodation with skepticism, if not outright hostility. On the other, the Maximum Leader himself was now being put increasingly on the defensive. In the aftermath of the Dominican fiasco, the Trujillo government turned to the Organization of American States, setting in motion its peace keeping machinery and assuring US involvement in the imbroglio.

The island now began to take on the appearance of a besieged fortress. Under these circumstances the prospects for rapprochement, always tenuous at best, grew more and more remote. The Eisenhower administration would not—probably could not—meet Cuban economic demands. Nor apparently could it initiate significant counterproposals.
of its own. In turn, the Castro regime continued to cling to the
Buenos Aires plan, using it in rapier-like fashion to parry the
perceived United States-Dominican threat in the OAS. Little, however,
was done to accommodate Yankee sensibilities with regard to the
North American properties threatened by the Agrarian Reform.

Indeed, as nationalist sentiment rigidified under the
growing danger from abroad, negotiation and compromise became
increasingly difficult. Thus, Ambassador Bonsal's efforts to play
a more active role in the diplomatic process were shunned by Castro
in deference to his own revolutionary left, which regarded the
envoy's attitude as vaguely "proconsular".34 No matter that such
charges were unfair. Bonsal was being made to pay for the sins of
his predecessors. Still, the emotions involved were real enough.
The Ambassador to Havana had always been a highly controversial and
powerful figure, symbolic to many of Cuban subservience in the face
of North American power. For the sake of his own nationalistic
reputation, therefore, Fidel was inclined to keep him at a distance.
Unfortunately, such inhibitions contributed nothing to the cause
of rapprochement. Had he been properly cultivated, Bonsal might
have proven a valuable intermediary in Castro's campaign to re-
structure the island's traditional economic and political relation-
ship with the North. Instead, the Ambassador's sojourn in Havana
would be just one more opportunity lost.

Yet, if in the realm of international affairs Castro
seemed increasingly on the defensive, a "persecuted outlaw in
tavail...surrounded by enemies, struggling among nameless
conspiracies",35 at home he was still very much the savior of Cuba. Accordingly, the rise of the counterrevolutionary opposition gave him a golden opportunity to consolidate his own political hegemony and that of his followers. More than this, it made it absolutely imperative that he do so. In truth, Fidel's options were rapidly narrowing to the point where he faced a critical choice. Either the Revolution would continue to move forward, or it would stagnate and probably regress. To capitulate to the pressures of the rising opposition would be to submit to a de facto sharing of political power that would not only weaken his own authority but in all probability abort the thoroughgoing transformation of Cuban life that constituted the essence of his goal culture. On the other hand, the path of radicalization was by no means certain. At the very least, the social composition of the revolutionary coalition would have to undergo drastic alteration. Indeed, this was the larger meaning of the chain of developments that had been set in motion by the Agrarian Reform and that would soon culminate in the so-called Urrutia affair. The predominantly middle-class orientation of the Revolution would now be supplanted by a "government of the peasants, of the humble". Electoral democracy would be formally discarded in favor of the "direct democracy" of mass demonstrations and televised appeals to the nation.

Near the end of June, events began to move towards a climax. The reader will recall that during the previous month Blas Roca and his comrades in the Popular Socialist Party had been under heavy
attack from anti-Communist elements within the Twenty-Sixth of July Movement and, indeed, from the Maximum Leader himself. In June, however, the situation had changed markedly. Though the PSP continued to lose ground in trade union elections, the danger of excommunication, apparently very real during the latter part of May, faded with every passing week. On explicit orders from Castro, Revolucion ceased its polemic against Hoy.36

But the matter did not end there. As we have seen, the implementation of the Agrarian Reform struck at the very heart of counterrevolutionary Cuba, which in turn responded by attempting to rally its forces around the banner of anti-Communism. Moreover, it soon became apparent that this issue would be embraced not only by the large landowners and other ultra-conservative elements (from whom such charges were to be expected) but by some of the most prominent moderates within the revolutionary coalition. Here then was the primary motive behind Castro's volte-face. Men like Urrutia and Hubert Matos, the highly respected military governor of Camaguey, knew all too well that a direct attack on the Maximum Leader would be suicidal. Hence, they began to express their opposition through more subtle and indirect means, raising the issue of Communism in an attempt to restrain Fidel and organize a coherent resistance to the leftward drift of the Revolution. This was the beginning of a process which, if not checked, might prove fatal to Castro's ambitions, both personal and ideological.

To summarize: On June 8th, just five days after the Agrarian Reform Law became official, Matos and Urrutia had raised
the banner of anti-Communism in a joint appearance in the heart of conservative cattle country. When, towards the end of the month, the President reiterated these views in a nationally-televised interview, the stage was set for a full-scale resumption of polemics. Thus, on June 30th, Aníbal Escalante issued a reply in Hoy, denouncing Urrutia for abandoning the path of moderation and undermining the "solidarity of the revolutionary camp in a difficult moment."38

Meanwhile, a congruent drama of equal significance was occurring. On June 29th the head of the tiny Cuban air force, Pedro Díaz Lanz, was replaced by Juan Almeida, one of the surviving moncadistas. Once again, the critical issue was the "Red menace". Increasingly concerned over what he perceived to be growing Communist influence within the Castro regime, Díaz Lanz had refused to participate in the Dominican invasion and had subsequently released an unauthorized and harshly anti-Communist statement to the press.39 Upbraided by Fidel and removed from office, he returned home and drafted his letter of resignation, charging that Communists occupied prominent positions in the Rebel Army and government. From there, he fled Cuba with his family in a small boat bound for Miami.

Castro was both furious and alarmed. For weeks Urrutia had been trying to sabotage the Revolution, to slow down its tempo by delaying the signing of legislation sent to his office.40 Now he was beginning to make his case public. Worse yet, the increasing alienation of Matos and the defection of Díaz Lanz revealed the existence of significant counterrevolutionary factions
within the very bastion of Castroism—the Rebel Army. Clearly, action had to be taken, and fast, to defuse this opposition before it could organize and expand into an effective resistance. Hence, on the 2nd of July, Fidel appeared in yet another televised interview, denouncing Diaz Lanz as a "Judas" allied with Trujillo and the other enemies of the Revolution in a general conspiracy to provoke foreign intervention. As to the problem of Communism, "our position is very clear": 'I consider it not very honorable that in order to avoid being called Communists, we must launch campaigns against them and attack them... This is not done by self-respecting men."

From this moment on (with a few exceptions to be noted presently), anti-Communism became virtually synonymous with counterrevolution. A purge of the air force followed; officers thought to be in sympathy with Diaz Lanz were relieved from duty.

Urrutia too was on the way out. On July 13th, he committed what was in effect his own political suicide. Appearing in an exclusive radio interview with Fidel's old Ortodoxo ally, Conte Aguero, the President assured his fellow countrymen that he had "absolutely no disagreement" with Castro, who "sides with humanist democracy as do I." Whereupon he proceeded to lash out against the Communists, accusing them of "inflicting terrible harm" on the Cuban nation by trying to make it "an instrument" in the Cold War: "I can make the forthright declaration that the Communists in Cuba wish to promote dissention among those supporting the revolutionary cause."
They wish to open up another revolutionary front—one in which they work for the interests of Russia against the United States." As for himself, he would "never aid and would always be opposed to such a treachery against the Cuban people."\(^{42}\)

This attempt to wrap himself in the protective cloak of "Humanism" proved fruitless. Urrutia's fate was sealed the following day by an occurrence quite beyond his control: The Internal Security Subcommittee of the US Senate Judiciary Committee played host to a celebrated witness—the defector, Diaz Lanz—who used the occasion to reiterate and expound upon his belief that the Castro government was "Communist inspired". Much of this testimony was hysterical and untrue, a melange of fact, rumour, fantasy and personal speculation. Diaz Lanz was himself certainly a sick man, one whose violently anti-Communist sentiments would all too soon take on the familiar overtone of racism and anti-Semitism.\(^ {43}\) Nevertheless, his appearance was timely and sensational. Those legislators inclined to view Fidel Castro as a "willing tool of international Communism" found their fears and predispositions reinforced wonderfully.\(^ {44}\)

In retrospect, this episode was notable not only as a study of the self-perpetuating and self-intensifying tendencies of collective paranoia but as a dramatic demonstration of the inability of the Eisenhower administration to shape and enforce a coherent national policy towards the Revolution. In large part, of course, this was a dilemma that was inherent in the very nature of pluralist democracy. The executive branch could no more control the activities
of the legislature than it could those of the press, the business community or the public at large. Yet, as often as not, it seemed indisposed to exercise even that power which it did have. To a very considerable extent, torpor was the natural state of its existence. Unfortunately, this passivity all too often left the initiative to other, more unofficial, agents which, in the course of pursuing their own interests, behaved in a manner highly detrimental to the objectives of the "official" US foreign policy. The hearings of the Judiciary subcommittee were one such instance. As we shall see, the counterrevolutionary activities of the growing Cuban exile community in Miami would be another.

Most important of all, however, the Diaz Lanz episode was significant for the impact that it had on the Cuban revolutionary process. In the words of Hugh Thomas, its main consequence was to "drive public and official opinion in the US further into distrust of Cuba, and to weaken the liberal opposition in Cuba.... The 'Diaz Lanz affair' had precisely the opposite effect to what Diaz Lanz probably wanted: the prevention of further radicalization of the regime. It gave Castro another opportunity to head leftward with impunity."45

This was hardly surprising. To Fidel Castro and a great many other Cubans, the embrace of this arch traitor by the United States Senate reinforced all of the deep-seated resentments of the past and fears of the future. At minimum, it seemed an insulting and gratuitous violation of national sovereignty. More ominously,
there was the hint of aggression yet to come. The internal and external enemies of the Revolution were obviously beginning to unite against it. Granted, the Senate subcommittee was not the entire legislature. Nor was the legislature the executive. But this was a process. What Congressmen said today the President might well say tomorrow. Certainly, it was a foreboding sign that although Eisenhower took care to disassociate his administration from the testimony of Diaz Lanz, he did so in a curiously tentative fashion, noting that such charges "are not always easy to prove" and that the United States would continue to watch the situation closely: "The Caribbean area is in a state of unrest. The OAS has moved in to the extent of asking for a meeting for the Foreign Ministers to go all through this situation and see what should be done. The United States expects to cooperate with the OAS. That is our stand today."46

Threat—radicalization. Once again, it is necessary to stress the crucial role of the former in both stimulating and facilitating the latter. Fidel now made his move. On the evening of July 17th, he stunned the nation with a televised announcement of his resignation, confirming a report published in Revolucion the previous day. In truth, this was "less a speech than an execution."47 According to Castro, his continuation in office was impossible in light of the differences that had arisen with the President of the Republic. There followed a list of accusations: Urrutia had delayed legislation that was necessary for the advancement of the Revolution. He lived in luxury, while demanding sacrifice
from the rest of the population. His appointments had been most unsettling. Of crucial importance, however, was his embrace of "a plan that was exactly the plan of Pedro Luis Diaz' Lanz"—namely, the attempt to raise the specter of Communism in order to provoke foreign aggression against Cuba. The Conte Aguero interview in particular had placed himself, Fidel Castro, in an untenable position, since he would surely be accused of having Communist sympathies if he tried to counter Urrutia's statements. Indeed, he had been rendered "impotent" and "defenseless," hardly able to work at all due to exhaustion brought on by the consequences of the "fevered anti-Communist declaration" of the President. Let Urrutia then form a cabinet. Doubtless he would be able to find some Norte Americano "agents" to serve him.  

This performance, carefully orchestrated by occasional interruptions as messages of support poured into the station, proved totally devastating. Threatening crowds began to gather around the Presidential Palace, demanding Urrutia's resignation. Cabinet members assembled for the crisis were detained by the Defense Minister, Martinez Sanchez. 49 Isolated and intimidated, the President capitulated. There were no protests. No one wanted to defend a man who could be associated with Diaz Lanz. In his place was appointed Oswaldo Dorticos, a little-known lawyer from Cienfuegos, a former Communist but now an aspiring Castroite, whose flexibility and compliance with the will of the Maximum Leader would enable him to remain a major figure in Cuban politics for years to come. 50
Nine days later, on the 26th of July, Fidel submitted his political fate to the Cuban people in a gigantic rally at the Civic Plaza. This was the sixth anniversary of Moncada. It was also, in a sense, the ratification of both the Agrarian Reform and the triumph over Urrutia. Hundreds of thousands of peasants swarmed into Havana under the government-organized concentracion campesina.

... There was a public holiday. The army paraded. Residents of Havana fought with each other to lodge the countrymen. The huge audience, on the day, of countrymen and townsmen treated the occasion as one of entertainment. President Díaz-Canel began the proceedings by announcing that in response to innumerable requests, Castro would resume as Prime Minister. The great crowd cheered for several minutes, sang, danced and called revolutionary slogans. Castro then spoke for four hours. He began with the sun high, and continued until after it had sunk behind his head. It was the first of many such occasions. The crowd was mesmerized. Castro, as usual, spoke clearly, without notes, often repeating his points to drive them home without ever quite repeating his phraseology. There were interruptions for dancing and singing as well as shouting 'Viva Fidel!' There were men selling soft drinks, hats, sandwiches. This was 'direct democracy', the immediate communion between the 'Maximum Leader' and the people.51

At last, apparently, los humildes had reached the Promised Land.

Castroism and Communism, Cuban and Soviet: Two Emerging But Very Limited Abrazos

Where was the critical turning point in the Revolution, that magic moment when all was lost for the cause of liberal democracy and the political tide turned inexorably toward Communism? To state the matter thus is of course to grossly oversimplify reality. There was no one moment, but rather a whole series of inter-related occurrences which gradually undermined the forces
of moderation within Cuba, strengthened those of emergent Castroism, eroded the traditional embrace with the United States and paved the way for a reorientation of the Revolution toward the Socialist bloc. Once again, revolution is a process and cannot be understood otherwise. The events of May-July, beginning with the promulgation of the Agrarian Reform and culminating in the ouster of Urrutia, were crucial in that they marked the initiation of an ongoing radicalization movement. The train had now begun to acquire a momentum of its own. The seeds of nascent Castroism—in particular, the drive for social justice, national renovation and sovereignty, on the one hand, and elite hegemony, on the other—had blossomed into a full-fledged social revolution under the direction of a messianic dictatorship of the first order. This much was a product of the belief system's basic transfer culture requisites and of the Maximum Leader's skillful exploitation of the opportunities posed by the politico-socio-economic environment in which he operated.

Yet, even so, a break with the United States was by no means inevitable. True, there existed fundamental conflicts of value and interest that could not but create severe strains in the relationship. Such differences, however, tended to be mitigated by one overriding constraint—namely, Cuban weakness in the face of North American power. The Revolution remained acutely vulnerable to economic and military retaliation from the "Colossus". Hence, the requisites of social system maintenance and elite hegemony—indeed, ultimately those of the ideological goal culture itself—seemed to
necessitate the continuation of the abrazo, for there was no reason to believe that the kind of economic and military aid that would enable the Revolution to survive a break with the United States could be obtained elsewhere. Certainly not from the Communist bloc. In spite of Hoy's repeated calls for the normalization of relations with the Soviet Union, China and the other Socialist countries, such ties remained inconsequential in mid-1959.⁵³

Now it is true that the responsibility for this lack of contact lay largely with the Cubans themselves. In Castro's view, there were more pressing problems to be solved.⁵⁴ A too rapid establishment of relations with the Communist world might even undermine his attempts at rapprochement with the United States. Such matters could be dealt with later, under more favorable circumstances. Thus, Soviet recognition of the Provisional Government in Havana went unreciprocated. Diplomatic relations, broken off in the aftermath of Batista's return to power, would not be restored at the ambassadorial level until the following year.

Still, if the Castro regime displayed a singular lack of initiative, so did Moscow. The processes of transfer culture rationalization had led the Kremlin to abandon the isolationist posture of Stalinism and seek a "normalization" of relations with Latin America. But the region remained a strictly peripheral area in the Soviet foreign policy perspective. Khrushchev's attention was preoccupied by matters of far more import. Indeed, he was even then engaged in a major campaign to weaken the political and military
position of the United States and its NATO allies on the European continent, most immediately in Berlin. We shall discuss the nature and evolution of this emerging "Grand Design" in some detail later in our narrative. The issues involved were varied and complex. For the moment, it is enough simply to note that the Soviet Premier's personal prestige was deeply involved in this effort as he sought to demonstrate his abilities as a statesman by furthering his country's security and status as a Great Power dealing with other Great Powers at the summit level and winning substantive concessions in the process. Consequently, any actions (such as a blatant attempt to penetrate a traditional sphere of US influence) that might endanger the desired summit meeting with the West were to be avoided if at all possible. Ironically, the very moment that negotiations were taking place for Khrushchev's crucial preparatory visit to the United States also witnessed Urrutia's ouster and a major turn of events in Cuba.55

In view of these considerations, it should not be surprising that Moscow's interest in Castro's Revolution would develop only slowly during the course of 1959. Indeed, it would scarcely be an exaggeration to say that the Kremlin's response constituted a classic study in the politics of caution. Moreover, it soon became apparent that this conservative approach reflected a view of the Cuban situation that differed markedly from that held by the Popular Socialist Party. Again, this was to be more-or-less expected. The Cuban Communists were faced with a vastly different situation than their Soviet comrades. The PSP was fighting for its life, trying,
at times desperately, to form an alliance with the only force in the country that might be willing and able to provide it with protection and an opportunity to broaden its organizational bases of power. Hence, as we have seen, Blas Roca and company took extreme pains to laud Fidel Castro and draw a highly optimistic picture as to the future course of the Revolution.

We know now that the target of this campaign was not only the Maximum Leader but the Soviets as well. It was generally assumed that in order to win Castro's full acceptance as an ally the Party would have to demonstrate its ability to attract a significant portion of the external aid necessary for the Revolution's survival and continued development. As Severo Aguirre, PSP delegate to the Twenty-First Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, informed his audience, "the struggle of the Cuban people is not over, ... after this first struggle, it has embarked on a new stage, which is still harder and more dangerous. And we must tell you, with all clarity, that we need still more support from the Socialist world."56 Thus, Hoy's general optimism may be seen as part of a concerted attempt to convince Moscow of the Castro regime's trustworthiness and durability.57 Such arguments, if convincing, could not but raise in the minds of the Kremlin leaders the possibility that a considerably greater involvement might be in the Soviet interest—-that Cuba might serve as a bridgehead to all of Latin America.
In spite of these efforts, including repeated economic feelers from Hoy, Moscow's entry onto the scene was to be highly cautious and gradual. The uncertain course of Cuban politics lent only occasional support to PSP assurances of Castro's reliability. Was this not just one more bourgeois nationalist leader who would turn on the Communists when the opportunity permitted? And what of his relationship with the United States? Could he possibly institute a genuine social revolution which flew in the face of Yankee interests? Or maintain an independent, anti-imperialist foreign policy? Did he even want to try? The realities of the island's geographical location could not be ignored. Nor the memory of Guatemala. Though it was certainly "notable" that the Eisenhower administration had not yet resorted to armed aggression, Soviet press commentators revealed a continuing concern over the future. Thus, for instance, did Izvestia observe that the "current provocational commotion" about Communism was "quite significant . . . . With its aid the American monopolists intend to create political and psychological motives to justify any act of intervention in Cuba's internal affairs." 59

In a sense then it is not too much to state that all three of the national actors in our drama suffered from "Guatemala complexes". 60 For the Soviets, however, this was not so much neurotic fantasy as a realistic assessment of the situation. (We do not, of course, suggest that North American fears of Communism and Cuban fears of "Yankee aggression" were not also rooted in reality—only that those insecurities were so compelling
as to produce serious perceptual distortions and a whole host of self-defeating and destructive behavior patterns, many of which are detailed in these pages. For Khrushchev and his colleagues, on the other hand, the tasks of calculation were largely unencumbered by emotional involvement. The cost/risk/benefit scale seemed clear enough: A major commitment would be expensive, dangerous and, in all likelihood, of little ultimate value, given the precedent of Guatemala and the island's indefensible location.) Quite apart from considerations of summit diplomacy, the men in the Kremlin had no desire to become embroiled in a possible confrontation with the United States in an area of the latter's greatest strength and their own greatest weakness.

Thus, it is hardly surprising that the initial Soviet assessment of Castro's victory stressed the situation's lack of uniqueness. These changes were placed only "on a par with other recent events of similar magnitude in various Latin American countries", which were gradually eroding US hegemony in the region. A matter for applause, but hardly jubilation. Consequently, the term "revolution" was never used to describe the upheaval. Nor was guerrilla warfare ever perceived as an acceptable method of struggle for revolutionaries in other lands. All in all, the situation seemed to offer little more than some excellent propaganda opportunities and the prospect that a few marginal political and economic gains might be made within the context of the general hemispheric objectives of "Peaceful Co-existence". However, given the
inherent instability of the situation and the Castro regime's own lack of response to Moscow's initial attempt to broach the subject of diplomatic relations, the Kremlin opted for a strategy of "watchful waiting". If ties were to be established, the Cubans themselves would have to make the first move.

This policy would remain essentially unchanged throughout the course of the year. Nevertheless, as the government in Havana moved to institute major socio-economic reforms and strengthen its defenses the Soviets gradually began to realize that something quite out of the ordinary was taking place. The overthrow of Batista had led not merely to a "routine reshuffle" of ruling groups, as was so often the case in other Latin American countries, but to a truly "revolutionary" change in the "social forces standing at the helm of the government." In place of the old military establishment, a new army was being created, "composed chiefly of peasants, farm labourers, workers and petty bourgeoisie, all of them interested in a thorough economic and political reform."62 Such an army could "be relied upon to defend the Revolution." While the imperialists would undoubtedly continue to plan aggression against Cuba, "this is not 1954, and it is not so simple to do this."63

Significantly, however, these perceptual alterations did not result in corresponding changes in behavior. The men in the Kremlin continued to bide their time, taking few initiatives, making no commitments.64

This was the situation in June when Guevara, on his tour of Europe and the Third World, made the first semi-official trade
contacts with Moscow through the Soviet diplomatic mission in Cairo. 65 Subsequently, during the first week of August, a diplomatic courier was dispatched to Havana with details of an offer: The Soviet Union would purchase 170,000 tons of Cuban sugar on a cash basis and an additional 330,000 tons at 10-20% cash and the rest in barter. In response, Castro instructed Felipe Pazos, President of the National Bank, to accept the cash but to postpone negotiations for the cash-barter arrangement until the future. On August 12th, an agreement was concluded for the assigned amount at 2.58 cents per pound. Late the following month, the additional 330,000 tons were bought at 2.9 cents a pound, with 100,000 tons to be delivered in 1959 and the rest between January and March 1960. All told, Moscow had contracted to purchase 500,000 tons of sugar in 1959-1960 for a total sum of $31,300,000. 66

These were exceedingly token arrangements, unlikely to disturb Washington or interrupt Khrushchev's summit aspirations. In point of fact, the quantity of trade exchanged remained at about the same level that Moscow had maintained with the Batista regime from 1955-58. (See Table IV) A Chinese purchase of 50,000 tons of sugar at the end of the year did little more to further Communist economic penetration of the island. In commercial terms, these agreements enabled Havana to unload some of its surplus produce and temporarily raise world prices, which had been near an all time low. For the Soviets, they represented an opportunity to acquire half a million tons of sugar at bargain prices. Combined with a preliminary
effort by the Socialist bloc to encourage citizen and press exchange and promote trade contact, they also represented a very cautious attempt to show Fidel Castro and the Cuban Communists that Moscow was interested in their Revolution.

Table 5

Soviet Imports of Cuban Sugar in (1) Metric Tons and (2) Millions of Dollars for 1955-1959


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<td>442,000</td>
<td>214,000</td>
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<td>35.7</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>15.5</td>
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*Due to delays in shipping and payment, actual imports were considerably less than the Soviets had committed themselves to purchase.

But if this embrace had only marginal relevance for the future of the Revolution, a more substantive rapprochement was beginning to take shape within Cuba itself. We have traced the growth of the anti-Communist sentiment sparked by the Agrarian Reform and have noted Fidel's reaction to it. What has not been adequately discussed is how these events affected the regime's relationship with the Popular Socialist Party. As we have seen, the period between mid-April and the PSP's plenum of May 25-28 had been a time of great insecurity for the Party. Castro's anti-Communist
statements both during and after his visit to the United States had set in motion a polemical campaign which threatened to culminate in an outright act of excommunication. But although these events lent considerable weight to the arguments of those who advocated the rapid establishment of "proletarian hegemony", the Party's strategy remained essentially unaltered. By late May, however, some compromise formula was clearly needed to hold the PSP's squabbling factions together. Hence, the plenum's "Conclusions"--a synthesis of diverse views and strategies, generally reaffirming Blas Roca's statement of April 11th.

We need examine this document only insofar as it serves to throw light on the Party's relations with the Soviet Union and emerging Castroism. Certainly, in theoretical terms the text went considerably beyond anything that had yet found acceptance in Soviet writings. Thus, for instance, it was readily admitted that the Cuban Revolution had its "peculiarities"--most notably, the elevation of armed conflict in the countryside over urban mass struggle, with the attendant replacement of the proletariat by the radical petty bourgeoisie as the primary moving force of the resistance; the defeat of a professional army by a guerrilla movement; and the inability of US imperialism to intervene in order to preserve the Batista regime or cow the revolutionary government that had been established in its place. Such idiosyncracies, however, did not consign this Revolution to a "unique category". Rather, the Cuban experience was said to constitute a "fundamental lesson" for Latin America--namely, that "even in small countries like Cuba, under specific conditions, it is possible
to initiate the guerrilla struggle, to develop it...until the overthrow of the reactionary pro-imperialist regime and the establishment of a national independent and democratic government."

So much then for the "theory of geographic fatalism". Cuba had convincingly demonstrated that "the Yankee imperialists...no longer have the same ease as in the 1930's to intervene militarily and diplomatically in the countries of Latin America; that when they encounter a revolutionary government which is supported by the people, which does not want to submit and which is ready to resist, they find it difficult to make it yield and capitulate." Of course, the viability of the Revolution and the inability of the United States to intervene did not stem solely from Cuban internal conditions. There were also other constraints--in particular, an increasingly favorable balance of international forces (the growing strength of the Socialist camp and of anti-imperialist sentiment throughout the world, especially in Latin America) which served as a serious impediment to Yankee aggression.

Yet, the document also reflected the uncertainty of the times. Its analyses and conclusions were often phrased in a deliberately tentative manner. There was no attempt to hide the fact that the Revolution had reached a critical turning point. From here on out, it would either advance or stagnate, depending on whether the revolutionaries or the plattistas prevailed. Moreover, the danger came not merely from the United States and the ultra-conservative interests within Cuba but from within the national front
itself. The forces of "sectarianism" were assiduously at work, undermining the unity that was so vital to the Revolution's survival. On the one hand, there were the "rightists", "charmed by the 'smile' of the imperialists and blissfully forgetful of the 'sword'", who demonstrated a marked tendency towards "anti-Communism and disruption". On the other, there were the forces of the left, whose ultraradicalism played into the hands of the Revolution's enemies and alienated elements of the bourgeoisie that were still capable of giving it their sympathy and support. Furthermore, the Cuban economy was still highly dependent on the United States. Hence, any "exaggerated measures" or "attempt to disregard the realities and concrete difficulties confronting the... Revolution must be rejected." Clearly, there were few illusions here that the Soviet bloc would be willing to bail Havana out of the consequences of an imperialist embargo.

But in spite of these doubts and insecurities, the "unity" policy of the past was retained essentially intact. The Party reaffirmed its support for Castro's leadership and revolutionary objectives (though in a considerably less laudatory fashion than had previously been the case). Fidel was assured that the Communists were not seeking a "reapportionment of offices or positions" in their favor. At the same time, however, they would continue to struggle for the modification of the present government through "democratic means" and to insist that "spokesmen" for the working class be included in it. Significantly, Party members were reassured that
the PSP would suffer no loss of organizational identity through "unity", no "confusion of ideologies or policies". Rather, the "struggle of opinions" would continue within the national front.

In short, the proletariat remained the "most consistent and profoundly revolutionary class" in Cuba. Only it could be in a position to make the Revolution "advance without interruption, to place itself at the head of all the revolutionary elements of society in alliance with the peasants, to destroy Capitalist exploitation, and to construct Socialism." On the other hand, the actual attainment of working class hegemony was still some time away. After all, Marxist-Leninist theory did not require the proletariat to be the "decisive factor" in all stages of the revolutionary process, and this particular Revolution was still in its "patriotic and democratic, national-liberationist and agrarian" phase.

In retrospect, the "May Conclusions" may be seen as a transitional reflection of the Cuban Communist transfer culture. As a supremely political document designed to mollify Castro, hold together divergent Party factions, provide a policy guide for cadres and alleviate various Soviet inhibitions to involvement, the document represents a skillfully constructed anthology of appeals to a varied assortment of targets. It was almost immediately overtaken by events, however, as Fidel, for reasons discussed earlier, embarked on the path of radicalization. Gradually, the fear of excommunication faded into the background as the Maximum Leader moved to block
the growing anti-Communist tide. In turn, Blas Roca and company, acutely alert to the shifting opportunities, pressures and constraints of the Cuban political environment, quickly jumped on the bandwagon. In the aftermath of Castro's conciliatory statement of July 2nd, the Party ratified and strengthened its support for the Prime Minister. 68 By the end of the month, Comrade Blas was even going so far as to note that although the transition to Socialism required the predominance of the proletariat, "the very same revolutionary government, under the leadership and direction of Fidel Castro, by giving entry to the working class, can evolve in this direction." 69 If this did not constitute acceptance of bourgeois leadership during the stage of the "transition to Socialism", it came very close. The Communists would not monopolize power, but instead would burrow from within the national front to become a kind of senior partner, providing the Revolution with vital ideological guidance. 70 But the government would still be led by Fidel Castro! Even Anibal Escalante, who only the previous month had criticized "Humanism" as "ideological confusion", 71 admitted that he was now "satisfied and certain" that the Revolution was "on the right path". 72

Still, the evidence suggests that this rapprochement fell considerably short of a full-scale alliance. If the PSP was eager to embrace Castro, Fidel was not yet sure how closely he wanted to reciprocate that abrazo. As we shall presently see, he was still engaged in a concerted effort to obtain massive economic and military support from the United States. In light of the North American
obsession with the "Red Menace", he could have few illusions as to the impact that an open political union with the Communists would have on that campaign. Only in late summer and early autumn, with the abandonment of rapprochement and the adoption of a major program of rapid industrialization and capital accumulation within Cuba itself, would he move to complete the alliance with the PSP, at least to the extent of granting it hegemony over organized labor. In the meantime, the Party took advantage of the official moratorium on "anti-Communism" to step up its strategy of infiltration and its demands for increased influence within the trade union movement.

The Dynamics of Radicalization: "Dyadic Incompatibility" and the Process of Symbiotic Disintegration

In mid-August, the Fifth Conference of OAS Foreign Ministers opened in Santiago, Chile. This meeting, initially called to investigate Dominican charges of aggression against Cuba, was widely viewed in Havana as a direct threat to the Revolution. In the words of Raul: "The plans of Trujillo and his cronies were to coordinate a counterrevolutionary uprising at home and an invasion of mercenary forces from abroad with the meeting of the Foreign Ministers. In this way, if the counterrevolutionary plan succeeded, the Conference would give its approval to the new anti-patriotic government."?3

No doubt such statements contained a heavy element of propaganda. Certainly, the whole affair gave Fidel a golden opportunity to republicize his revolutionary credentials and his "David image" vis-a-vis the "Colossus" and to strike out against the
forces of counterrevolution within Cuba itself. And yet, these charges were not entirely without substance. The intentions of Trujillo were clear enough. Moreover, the Dominican invasion had left the Castro regime vulnerable to retaliation at the very moment that its foreign and domestic enemies were beginning to unite against it. If Trujillo, backed by the United States, could mobilize hemispheric opinion against Havana there was no telling what would come next.

Indeed, the Foreign Ministers' Conference had scarcely convened when the Castro government announced that it had uncovered and smashed a counterrevolutionary plot sponsored by the Dominican dictator in league with Cuban dissidents. Though the full details of this episode are still not known, it appears that some months previous two former guerrilla leaders of the Second Escambray Front, Majors William Morgan and Eloy Gutierrez Menoyo, had been approached by agents of Fulgencio Batista with a plan to "liberate" the island, had pretended to join the conspirators but had instead contacted Castro. In turn the Maximum Leader, gleeful at the prospect of playing cat and mouse with his archenemy, had instructed them to go along with the scheme. Subsequently, Morgan was appointed military chief of the uprising and journeyed to Miami and the Dominican Republic in search of funds. Trujillo, completely taken in by his representations, contributed some $500,000, which the Major then proceeded to turn over to Cuban authorities. 74

The denouement of the scenario came with Morgan's return to the island with a boatload of fifty men and seventy machine guns,
which were seized upon arrival by alerted Castroite security forces. Radio contact was then established with Trujillo: The invaders were in control of Trinidad airport, Morgan announced, and were even then fighting off a government counterattack. Arms were needed. In response, Dominican military specialists were flown to Trinidad to take the situation into account. In order to maintain the illusion, the airfield was lined with Cuban soldiers, shouting "Down with Castro" and "Death to the Agrarian Reform". Thus deceived, the Dominican "experts" arranged to send on a planeload of arms. What they did not know was that Castro was even then personally monitoring the whole affair from under a nearby mango tree. At the appropriate moment, government troops moved in and rounded up the entire lot.

A number of tantalizing questions have been raised with respect to this incident. There has been some suggestion, for instance, of CIA involvement, though evidence is lacking. Moreover, the precise role of Morgan and Gutierrez Menoyo remains unclear. Both men later went over to the side of the counter-revolution. Indeed, it is not impossible that their anti-regime activities had already begun, that they had been discovered by Cuban security police and had decided to turn state's evidence in order to save their own skins, all the while pretending that everything had been a "double game" from the beginning.

Be that as it may, it is apparent that from the very first moment of discovery Fidel played the game to the hilt, baiting his
trap with agents provocateurs so as to draw in as wide and embarrass a range of conspirators as possible. This was vintage fidelismo, a grand performance staged by a truly great actor and manipulator of men. And one which, on the surface, seemed to have a definite prophylactic value. Through his activities, Morgan had learned the names of many anti-Castro elements within Cuba itself. Here then was a grand opportunity to drive the gusanos (worms) out of the woodwork. These weeks found the government's security forces earning their pay. Thousands of suspects were arrested and detained. In many instances, those seized were victims of police entrapment, lured by undercover agents into revealing their counterrevolutionary propensities. No doubt the sentiments of many were summed up by one of the participants in the aborted "invasion", who declared at his trial that he "should not be judged as a conspirator but as an imbecile for participating in this counterrevolution."78

Needless to say, these developments were grist for yet another television spectacular, and, sure enough, on August 15th Fidel once again took to the airwaves: This was not only the work of Trujillo, be proclaimed, but of "large groups of vested interests" which had "taken an oath to oppose our Revolution to the death, to try to isolate us from all other countries..." The Dominican invasion had been supported by a North American airplane. Could that craft have left Florida without the "complicity" of US officials? Clearly, the timing of the Foreign Ministers Conference was not coincidental. These events were all part of a
"great plot", a "giant conspiracy" against "our country and our Revolution". 79

Meanwhile, in Santiago, the Cuban delegation to that Conference was engaged in a concerted attempt to turn the tables on its antagonists by using the meeting as a forum to mobilize Latin American opinion against the Trujillo regime and the other dictatorships of the hemisphere and in favor of Fidel's own Buenos Aires proposal. These efforts were not entirely without success. The Cubans were able to avoid diplomatic isolation and thwart OAS intervention in their internal affairs. On the other hand, such dangers had always been exaggerated. For all its distaste for the Castro government, Washington was not yet in the mood to take decisive action. Moreover, although the gathering passed a declaration of principle against dictatorships, it did not support Cuban demands for collective action against Trujillo. And as for the attempt to turn the Conference into a forum on Latin American economic development, any victory won was purely moral: The issue of underdevelopment was included on the agenda, but only in order to avoid a Cuban boycott. Obviously, this did not mean that any substantive economic commitments would be made, and, in fact, none were. The resolutions of the Conference were at once a compromise and a stalemate.

We present these details in support of the theory of dyadic incompatibility. If a total breakdown was not yet inevitable, it was becoming ever more difficult to avoid. Both Washington and
Havana were becoming increasingly defensive in response to the perceived threat posed by the other (or rather, in the Cuban case, by the forces of the counterrevolution, with which the Norte Americanos were variously identified). Neither side had the presence of mind to try to break the cycle by making a concerted effort to understand and deal with the needs of the other. Thus, action led to reaction in a descending spiral of negative reinforcement. The abrazo became increasingly coercive and uninhibited in its breakdown. At the same time, the mutual inhibitions to the development of a constructive relationship grew steadily stronger.

In retrospect, it is clear that Castro was simultaneously pursuing incompatible goals, a common enough occurrence in life but one that is hardly conducive to constructive behavior patterns. Thus, even as he sought North American economic support he felt obliged to do so in a manner that would not compromise his nationalist reputation and self-image. Hence, his repeated failure to exploit certain opportunities for rapprochement (e.g., the April sojourn to the United States; the offices of Ambassador Bonsal), while framing his own initiatives in a manner most unlikely to draw a favorable response from Washington (the Buenos Aires proposal; the eight-million ton sugar offer of June; the attempt to turn the Foreign Ministers' Conference into a forum on Latin American underdevelopment). Fidel was, in fact, behaving more like an adversary than an ally, a tendency to which he had long been predisposed both psychologically and ideologically through the
ethic of revolutionary struggle but which was now becoming increasingly overt in response to the growing counterrevolutionary threat at home and abroad. In turn, the Eisenhower administration had little inclination to make major new commitments to a regime that was endangering the stability of the Caribbean and the property rights of US citizens. Then too, much of official Washington still believed that it had the bargaining leverage to eventually tame Castro. After all, Cuban economic dependence was a reality that could not be forever ignored. When the crunch hit, the young man would come around fast enough. He had no alternative.

But if in the short run such behavior was a formula for stalemate, in the long run it was a prescription for breakdown. Heretofore, Fidel had been operating under the illusion that he was in a strong bargaining position, that the Yankees would eventually have to negotiate on the basis of his terms and he would be able to acquire the necessary concessions without having to compromise his basic revolutionary objectives. The reasoning here was fairly simple, the assumption being that economic dependence was a two-way street: If Cuba was dependent on the United States was not the North American economy also dependent on Cuba? After all, the island was its "largest, most efficient and cheapest" supplier of sugar; moreover, "sixty percent of the interests that profit directly from the production and commerce" of that commodity were American. Where else were the Yankees to obtain the quantity and quality of sugar they needed to meet the growing demands of their
consumer-oriented society? Certainly not from their own domestic growers, for whom the costs of production were prohibitively high. 82

But now the events of weeks gone by had eroded this initial optimism. Not only had Castro failed to mobilize hemispheric opinion behind his "Marshall Plan" for Latin America, but the efforts of his government to win an increase in the sugar quota had not yet brought any substantive gains. Indeed, on August 7th his Minister of Commerce, Cepero Bonilla, had issued an open appeal to the United States: The recent failure of Hawaii, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands to meet their foreign trade obligations had demonstrated that Cuba was North America's most reliable supplier of sugar. Since Cuban sugar was essential to the US if it were to avoid a deficit, was it not in the interest of both countries to raise the island's allocation? 83 Subsequently, the Eisenhower administration did indeed grant Havana an additional 77 thousand tons, bringing the 1960 quota up to 3.1 million tons (approved by Congress at the end of the year). But these gains were marginal at best. Fidel had far more grandiose aspirations and needs in mind.

Moreover, to make matters worse it was soon discovered that Washington was moving to block the Revolution's attempts at self-defense. 84 As early as the previous spring, Havana had opened negotiations with Europe for the purchase of war materials. 85 By June, Castro was prepared to spend some 9 million dollars in the United States alone for similar purposes. 86 But the Dominican
invasion and the general unrest in the Caribbean had changed matters considerably. Fidel had been forced to abandon the US connection and seek arms elsewhere. In September, it was learned that the Department of State had approached Great Britain and several other European governments in an effort to persuade them not to deal with the Cubans. Coming as it did in the midst of a rapidly intensifying dialectic of coercion between the forces of revolution and those of counterrevolution, this development could not but strongly reinforce Castroite fears and suspicions.

In light of these trends, it hardly mattered that on the evening of September 3rd Fidel spend an amicable six hours with Ambassador Bonsal, discussing the problems and prospects of US-Cuban relations. No sooner did the meeting break up than Bonsal returned to Washington, recalled apparently to underscore American "displeasure" with the Agrarian Reform and other measures. Castro's conclusion: The Ambassador, for all his good intentions, was a mere functionary, whose influence was marginal and whose work was being effectively thwarted by the political interests back home.

Thus was the stage set for the abandonment of rapprochement and the acceleration of counterdependence.

The Dynamics of Radicalization: The Requisites of the Revolutionary Goal Culture, the Formation of the Castroite-Communist Alliance and the Growth of Counterdependence

Once again, the Revolution faced a major turning point.

The first eight months of the year had witnessed Castroite transfer
culture strategy oriented more towards the assertion of political independence and the promotion of social revolution than the correction of the Cuban economy's structural imbalance. Yet, as Martí had recognized over half a century earlier, political and economic sovereignty are indissolubly linked. One is not secure without the other. Now the time had come to complement the Agrarian Reform with a massive program of rapid industrialization designed to raise the industrial, technical and cultural level of the nation, diversify its economy and break once and for all the crippling bonds of dependence.

But this was easier said than done. For one thing, there was the critical problem of finances. The regime's previous reforms had already seriously depleted Cuban foreign currency reserves. And to make matters worse, the world market price of sugar had just plunged to an eighteen-year low of 2.65 cents a pound. Sales were down. Forecasts of impending economic crisis were being heard with increasing frequency. At the very least, it seemed that Castro would either have to find a new source of external capital or curtail his reform program. Yet, the government's efforts to attract such support had met with little success. Not only were its relations with the United States in stalemate, but its attempt, through the Guevara mission, to find new markets and sources of aid in Europe and the Third World had brought only marginal results. Hence, on September 8th, the Argentine Quixote returned to Cuba, full of praise for Yugoslavia, Egypt and the
countries of the Socialist bloc, but with little more than the Soviet sugar deal and two rather inconsequential treaties with Egypt and Ceylon to show for his efforts.

Nevertheless, Fidel remained optimistic. Even before Che's arrival, he had made up his mind to push ahead with his contemplated program of industrialization. Subsequently, in a series of public statements culminating in a "report" to the nation on September 17th, he announced that henceforth industry would supplant agriculture as the government's top priority economic target. Instead of being dependent on foreign capital, however, the "future of Cuba" would be obtained through the nation's own resources—that is, through savings. Above all, "the people must not hope that others will come to fulfill their tasks."

But if industrialization were to be achieved primarily through the use of domestic capital, a much wider segment of the population would be required to make "revolutionary sacrifices" than had previously been the case. Part of the program, of course, might be financed through the idle savings of the rich. But beyond this, the workers too would have to demonstrate their support by toiling longer hours and investing up to 20% of their wages in savings certificates. Furthermore, although the public was reassured that private capital would continue to be welcomed Castro also indicated that such resources had proven insufficient to meet the needs of the country. Foreign investments moreover were rejected as imposing "unacceptable" conditions on Cuban sovereignty. In short, direct
government intervention in the economy would be the "only way" that the nation could hope to industrialize rapidly.91

Perhaps, as leftist scholars have occasionally suggested, some form of Socialism was inevitable if Cubans were ever to break out of the bonds imposed by their traditional socio-economic and political systems and achieve sustained economic development.92 It must be stressed, however, that this movement towards state intervention was not so much the product of any "economic philosophy" as of the requisites of the Castroite goal culture. The utopian vision demanded a renovated and sovereign Cuban nation. If the resources to pursue these ideals could not be otherwise obtained, government control was the obvious path to follow.93 Still, few observers could have anticipated the magnitude of the interventions that lay ahead.

We shall have more to say about the economic development of the Revolution in subsequent chapters. For the moment, however, our primary concern is political--specifically, with the impact that the industrialization program had on Castro's relations with the Popular Socialist Party. In retrospect, it is abundantly clear that the Cuban Communists had had no say whatsoever in the decision to reorient the nation's economic priorities. That choice had been Fidel's, aided only by the closest and most radical of his advisors. In truth, to Blas Roca and company this new campaign must have seemed unduly precipitate. According to official doctrine, the Revolution was still in its pre-Socialist stage and,
though of a "popular advanced" nature, its primary task remained agrarian reform, not industrialization. A too sudden embrace of statist and collectivist policies would likely frighten away potential allies and create a whole host of serious problems that would best be avoided. Hence, it was the Party's position that direct state intervention in the industrial sector (not to mention agriculture) should be strictly limited to those projects "which are necessary and which have not been undertaken by private initiative." 94

But the Communists needed Castro. And what was equally important, he now needed them. The new emphasis on "revolutionary sacrifices" could not but increase popular discontent, especially among the working class. Fidel was thus obliged to find some means of containing this alienation and mobilizing the proletariat behind the forthcoming industrialization campaign. Yet, he could not trust the dominant forces in the Confederation of Cuban Workers (CTC). Even his own Twenty-Sixth of July labor leaders had proven themselves all too susceptible to the divisive appeals of anti-Communism. What was needed was a more unified and ideologically-oriented movement, tailored to subordinate the immediate economic interests of the proletariat to the revolutionary "general will". Consequently, when Hoy launched a new polemical offensive against Revolucion in late August, demanding, among other things, that the CTC disaffiliate itself from the Inter-American Regional Organization of Workers, purge its ranks of mujalismo95 and create a "united,
revolutionary classist labor movement", Fidel stayed on the sidelines and let the debate run its course.96

Still, it was apparently not until the middle to latter part of September that a formal deal was struck. Thus, the PSP waited an entire week following Castro's September 17th "Economic Report" to the nation before issuing an official "Resolution" embracing the new policy. And even then, the more radical aspects of the program were notably softened.97 Nevertheless, as early as September 20th Blas Roca had made up his mind. On that date, he published a major article in Hoy, praising Fidel's address and calling upon his comrades to re-read the "Report", extract its essential points and "transmit" them to the public.98 Now the polemic with Revolucion was brought to a halt. Party cadres were instructed that henceforth their role would be to elevate the "revolutionary consciousness" of the proletariat and mobilize it behind the tasks of economic development.99

In early October, a plenum of the Central Committee was convened to discuss and ratify the programmatic changes made necessary by this rapprochement. We still do not know the full story of what transpired at this highly secretive gathering. At the very least, however, the assembled delegates were alerted to the possibility that certain unspecified occurrences would "influence" the forthcoming Tenth Congress of the Confederation of Cuban Workers in a manner that would "appreciably modify the actual state of forces" and "produce new alignments, which would open up new paths that
could be positive."\textsuperscript{100} This was something less than an outright prediction of victory for the forces of "unity". Nevertheless, the speaker—Party labor boss Lazaro Peña—left the distinct impression that important developments were about to take place. Moreover, for the first time it was tentatively proclaimed that "proletarian hegemony" might not be necessary for the conquest of Socialism. In the words of Blas Roca, there existed "the possibility that the most advanced elements of the radical sector of the petty bourgeoisie, which today exercises hegemony over the Revolution, will evolve toward the proletariat, will adopt Socialist points of view and will remain at the head in the process of the transition to Socialism."\textsuperscript{101}

This was more than some delegates could stomach. In response to repeated interjections, the Secretary-General was obliged to acknowledge that, yes, the hegemony of the working class was indispensable for the actual attainment of Socialism. That stage, however, was not proximate. Moreover, the real issue was how that domination would be established. It could not be achieved through proclamation or even through the distribution of offices, but only by means of an ideology and program capable of "'winning over to the ideology of the proletariat that part of the radical petty bourgeoisie that moves toward the proletariat.'" This was not an entirely satisfactory answer, however, for the issue remained the subject of "constant discussion" throughout these proceedings.\textsuperscript{102} Nor did it evaporate with their termination. Two
years later, it would be dramatized in practice as Anibal Escalante and his followers moved to seize control of Castro's own nascent political party.

But for the moment, the rapprochement was secure. The plenum reaffirmed Communist support for the government's economic program, qualified of course by the usual strictures against ultraradicalism. The delegates disbanded in a general atmosphere of optimism in anticipation of the Revolution's continuing "uninterrupted development". Few, however, were fully prepared for the tumultuous events to come.

Finally, it is necessary to underscore the fact that these developments were integrally related to a significant shift in Cuban foreign policy. The relationship between Castro and the Communists had previously been constrained by the assumption that an overt embrace would be counterproductive to the regime's effort to acquire massive increases in North American trade and aid. Now, however, the very failure of that policy had untied Fidel's hands. If revolutionary momentum were to be maintained, Cubans would clearly have to learn to be self-reliant. Hence, the push towards industrialization and economic diversification. Hence also, the alliance with the PSP. But if Cubans were to be self-reliant, what need was there of a rapprochement with the United States? Indeed, what was the likelihood that such an arrangement could still be negotiated, given the decision to embrace Blas Roca and company?

Thus did the government in Havana move to adopt a more explicitly "Third World" position in international affairs. Towards
the end of the month, Foreign Minister Roa delivered a major policy address before the UN General Assembly. Though taking care to reaffirm the common ideals of the two Americas, he made it very clear that the Castro government was going its own way. For the first time in history, he proclaimed, the Cuban nation was truly sovereign, its foreign policy freed from "all bondage, oppression and servitude." Henceforth, its vote would not be "controlled by outsiders", as it had been during the Batista era, but would be issued "on its own behalf". Moreover:

...It is, alas, an undeniable fact that the world of today is split up into two large groups, one led by the United States of America and the other by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, both armed to the teeth, and a third group, possessing far more moral than physical strength, which tries to serve as a bridge between them. Cuba belongs by history and tradition, geographical position and international obligations to what is known as the Western group. The Revolutionary Government of Cuba, however, will neither accept nor admit false dilemmas or prefabricated divisions. In specific terms, this means that we do not accept the view that the only choice is between the Capitalist and the Communist solution. There are other roads and other solutions that are wholly democratic, and Cuba has now found its own road and solution to its problems—the solution chosen by the Latin American peoples which, with natural differences of emphasis, provides us with common ground with the underdeveloped peoples of Africa and Asia. ... We will never be a docile pawn on the chessboard of power politics. It is high time that the Great Powers ceased arbitrarily to decide the fate of small nations. The coercive action in Guatemala, Guiana, Hungary, Algeria and Tibet must not be repeated.

Obviously, this was a far cry from a wholesale realignment towards the Communist bloc. Rather, the ideology of the Revolution remained "Humanism"—a "unique position...equidistant from totalitarianism and pseudo-democratic systems of government, which
finds its expression in government by public opinion at home and open-door diplomacy abroad. In practical terms, this meant that domestically the regime would continue to develop as a messianic dictatorship, relying heavily on the techniques of "direct democracy" to mobilize the nation around its increasingly radicalized revolutionary program. Moreover, in foreign affairs it suggested a concerted effort to expand Cuban relations—and especially commercial contacts—with other lands, including those of the Communist bloc. Thus would the bonds of economic dependence be broken forever, as industrialization and agricultural diversification at home were complemented by the diversification of the island's foreign markets.

Or at least that was the way things were supposed to work out.

The Acceleration of Counterdependence and the Rise of the Garrison State: The Threat-Radicalization Syndrome Revisited

Threat is the motor force of revolution. That much seems clear. Just as the revolutionary threatens the powers that be, so that threat engenders a counterrevolutionary response, threatening the revolutionary in turn and compelling him to take still more radical measures in order to fortify his power base, undermine that of the opposition and assure the continued development of the revolution.

In short, the pursuit of the utopian and hegemonic objectives of nascent Castroism had set in motion a dialectic of
coercive action and reaction which rapidly acquired a momentum of its own. But if Fidel was riding the wave of a revolutionary process, harnessing its elemental forces to his own ends, he was by no means in full command of the situation. On the contrary, in trying to dominate and manipulate this process he was increasingly in danger of becoming its victim.

Indeed, it could hardly have been otherwise. Lacking a monopoly of coercive power and the means of controlling the general public, the regime through its increasingly radical behavior (and especially through the activities of its security police) only stimulated further the growth of counterrevolutionary activity. Now violence returned as an integral part of Cuban political life. Incidents of terrorism and sabotage were reported throughout the island. Assassination was in the air. On August 9th, Castro's home in Cojimar was attacked for the second time (a similar incident had occurred in June). The following day, an attempt was made on the life of Raul. Now young men once again began to return to the Sierra Maestra in preparation for a guerrilla struggle against the central government. Meanwhile, in the Orangos mountains of Pinar del Rio, armed resistance was already underway. In September, thirty former batistiano soldiers, part of a more substantial contingent with which government forces had previously skirmished, were captured with a large supply of weapons. From the island of Madeira, the ex-dictator offered to
aid any serious and responsible resistance movement against the
Castro dictatorship.

The radicalization process now began to move rapidly
towards a climax. In October, relations between Havana and
Washington plunged to a new low as counterrevolutionary operations
intensified, with North American complicity. It is impossible
to gauge the full extent of US involvement in this nascent holy
war. The preceding nine months had witnessed the arrest of
several score American citizens, most of whom were undoubtedly
guilty of anti-government activities of one kind or another.
Then too, it was common knowledge that supplies were being flown
into the island at night from Southern Florida to be airdropped
to the forces of counterrevolution in the field. But such opera­
tions were less the product of official connivance than of the
sheer inability of US authorities to police their own citizens
and territories. Indeed, as one frustrated border patrolman was
wont to complain, Fidel himself had once had occasion to gloat
over how easily his arms runners were able to escape capture.107
That, of course, had been during the anti-Batista resistance.
Now the shoe was on the other foot.

Still, it must be said that although the Eisenhower
administration had not yet officially decided to give up on Castro
and embrace the forces of counterrevolution it was gravely
negligent in its responsibility to prevent the territory and
resources of the United States from being used to conduct a
concerted campaign of aggression against its neighbor. Certainly, much more could have been done to thwart these adventures. Moreover, it seems highly probable that even at this preliminary stage personnel associated with the Central Intelligence Agency were into the act. We know, for instance, that as early as the previous spring the Double Checker Corporation, soon to become a major cover for CIA-financed operations against the Castro regime, was registered in the state of Florida.\textsuperscript{108} It is beyond belief that the exiles were not infiltrated; moreover, that some were not recruited into the Agency's service. From there, it would have been only a short step to a certain "unofficial" but very real involvement in the "undeclared war". No matter that that involvement had not, insofar as we know, been authorized at the highest echelons of the government. Covert operations tend to have a life of their own. All too often, there has been a standing assumption that such activities must be "plausibly deniable"--that the President and his advisors (not to mention Congress) have an overriding "need not to know" about the secret and dirty details of espionage and intelligence. Hence, the problem of control for, as Hugh Thomas has observed, CIA agents are "sometimes prone to self-assertion."\textsuperscript{109} Especially when they are personally sympathetic to the people and the cause with which they are working.

In any event, it should not be surprising that as the dialectic of revolutionary-counterrevolutionary violence began to
spiral and US nationals were discovered actively engaged in anti-
government operations all of the old fears and suspicions were
reinforced. And when, on October 11th, a Florida-based plane
bombed a sugar mill in Pinar del Rio, Castro's disposition grew
even darker. To make matters worse, Washington chose this particu-
lar moment to respond to the Cuban note (of June 15th) on the
agrarian reform. There were few signs here of any willingness to
compromise on the central issues at stake. Indeed, a few
days later, in the aftermath of yet another airplane bombing, it was
learned that the Yankees had succeeded in their effort to prevent
Havana from purchasing jet fighters from Great Britain. Now
a series of previously "cordial and understanding" meetings
between the US envoy, Bonsal, the Cuban Minister of Economics,
Boti, and the President of the National Bank, Pazos, broke down. Castro's Ambassador to the United States, the elderly and respected
Ernesto Dihigo, issued an official statement reiterating his
government's defensive intentions and warning that should its
efforts to procure foreign military materials continue to meet
with obstruction it would be forced to obtain those arms "from
such sources as might remain open to it."

Simultaneously, Fidel moved to strengthen the Revolution's
internal defenses, consolidate his political hegemony and con-
summate the rapprochement with the Communists. On October 17th,
it was announced that Raul would be brought into the cabinet as
head of the newly formed Ministry of the Armed Forces, charged with
the task of combatting the rising incidence of counterrevolutionary activity. This maneuver, which resulted in a streamlining of the command structure, with the younger Castro assuming direct control over military and police units, would greatly enhance the effectiveness of the armed forces and place them firmly in fidelista hands. Moreover, it was also disclosed that one of the Maximum Leader's confidants, Augusto Martinez Sanchez, would become the new Minister of Labor. Significantly, Hoy lauded the appointment "as a step of great importance for the strengthening of the revolutionary government and the advance of the Revolution."115 Finally, this same day Castro issued a statement that the Twenty-Sixth of July Movement would "not endorse any tendency" in the forthcoming election for the presidency of the Federation of University Students.116 Thus was the "unity" candidate assured of victory.

Then came the Matos affair.

On October 19th, the military governor of Camaguey, Hubert Matos, privately informed Fidel of his intention to resign because of the latter's tolerant attitude towards the Communists. In the Major's own words, he did not want to become "an obstacle to the Revolution". Faced with the choice between adapting to its changing course and resigning, he had concluded that the "honest" and "revolutionary" thing to do would be to leave. At the same time, however, he felt obliged to speak frankly to Castro about the "Communist problem" and to remind him that "great men begin to
... If after all, I am held to be ambitious or conspiratorial, it would be a reason not merely for leaving... but for regretting that I was not one of the many comrades who died in the struggle. I hope you will understand that my decision (which I have considered a long time) is irrevocable. Also I request you, speaking not as Major Matos, but simply as one of your comrades of the Sierra—you remember!—as one of those who set out determined to die in carrying out your orders, that you will agree to my request as soon as possible, allowing me to return home as a civilian, without having my sons afterwards learn in the street that their father is a traitor or a deserter. 117

This was serious. If there was anyone in Cuba capable of providing the kind of leadership needed to unify the opposition and mount an effective challenge to the leftward drift of the Revolution, it was Matos. This was not another Urrutia. Matos had a military and political power base of his own in Camaguey. He was personally popular and respected; his revolutionary reputation had been earned on the field of battle, not in the safety and comfort of exile. Moreover, just as Urrutia had become a symbol of the traditional "Establishment", so Matos was beginning to become a symbol of a younger, more liberal grouping of politicos. This was the so-called "center-left", a diverse conglomerate of moderates and radicals, more-or-less anti-Communist and democratic in orientation, who were growing increasingly restive over the direction that the Revolution was taking. Included in their ranks were such figures as Manolo Ray (Minister of Public Works), Enrique Oltuski (Minister of Communications), Faustino Perez
(former National Coordinator of the Twenty-Sixth of July Movement; now Minister for the Recuperation of Ill-Gotten Goods), Felipe Pazos (President of the National Bank), Carlos Franqui (editor of Revolucion), David Salvador (Secretary-General of the Confederation of Cuban Workers) and Marcelo Fernandez (former National Coordinator of M-26, recently transferred to the Foreign Ministry).

Such men were more dangerous than the conservatives. Their role in the anti-Batista struggle was beyond reproach; they were deeply committed to the achievement of substantive socio-economic reforms and to an alteration of the island's traditional relationship with the United States. Accordingly, they were more difficult to discredit. Some would eventually find their way into exile; others into prison. Still others would manage to overcome their democratic and anti-Communist scruples and make the necessary adjustments to Castroism as it continued on its evolutionary journey to Marxism-Leninism. In October 1959, however, they remained an indecisive and unorganized array of malcontents, without leadership or clear direction. Most of them still believed in Fidel to one extent or another. Few had yet had the presence of mind to begin the difficult and dangerous task of organizing against him.

That was where Matos came in. We have already noted his earlier collaboration with Urrutia. Needless to say, the President's ouster and the PSP's drift towards legitimacy had done nothing to calm the fears that had given rise to that alliance. Indeed, these weeks witnessed his increasing alarm at the growing Marxist influence
within the Rebel Army and the National Institute of Agrarian Reform and at the arbitrary expropriation practices of the latter. By September, in fact, he had become obsessed with the idea that a Communist plot was brewing. But he did not suspect Fidel; rather, the object of his distrust was Raul. He had become convinced that the younger Castro was at the head of a cabal and was prepared to kill his brother if need be in order to impose Marxist rule on Cuba. Consequently, Matos intensified his efforts to build his own local political following and began to discretely contact various members of the government to inform them of the situation. When towards the end of the month a Communist, Jorge Enrique Mendoza, was assigned to administer the Agrarian Reform in Camaguey and, incidently, to keep an eye on Matos, the Major tried to warn Fidel of his fears. He was not, however, successful. The appointment of Raul Castro to the post of Minister of the Armed Forces was the last straw.

How dangerous was Matos? It is impossible to say for sure. We do not know his precise intentions; nor how his appeals would have been received by the publics and individuals to whom they were addressed. It seems likely that his resignation was part of a plan to force the Maximum Leader's political hand, to make him commit himself on the issue of Communism, and perhaps define more clearly the specific goals of the Revolution. Certainly, a direct power play would have been futile (barring, of course, the possibility of assassination, an alternative for which the Major had little stomach).
We do know, however, that these developments were enough to send Castro into a visible state of "preoccupation". To Fidel, it appeared as though the Twenty-Sixth of July Movement, and indeed the entire country, was polarizing into revolutionary and counterrevolutionary extremes. Moreover, his alarm increased upon receiving a telephone call from Mendoza, warning him of the "gravity" of the situation in Camaguey. Matos, it seems, was inciting rebellion. He had promoted the "collective resignation" of his officers, prepared a statement for the media explaining his position and was planning a rally on his own behalf for the 21st of October. Was this a cuartelazo (barracks revolt) in the making? Castro could not afford to take chances. This was a challenge which had to be nipped in the bud. Hence, he personally descended on the province with a coterie of followers. Matos, recognizing the ultimate futility of his situation and unwilling to turn his guns against the father of the Revolution, against the man whom he had so recently regarded as a comrade, acquiesced fatally to his own arrest. It was a weak ending to what might have been a much stronger play.

Threat-radicalization. Once again, we have suggested that the former is a major stimulus of the latter. Yet, it must again be stressed that it is not merely a cause but a facilitator as well. If Fidel was understandably alarmed at the growing danger to his Revolution, he was also most prompt and adept at harnessing this demon to his own purposes. Indeed, the very day on which he received
word of Matos' impending resignation he took advantage of the crisis to lash out at all those "who in one way or another" were weakening the cause. In effect, fence-sitters were told to choose sides: "Those who are against the Revolution do not matter to us", he proclaimed. "Those who do matter are those who are with it. And those who wish to remain in the middle...would be better enemies than companions; that is, they would do more damage as companions than as enemies." Militia units were already being armed and trained. "Every sector" of the population would become "like the column of an army"; every person "like a soldier in that army". Henceforth, however, the Revolution would depend "above all" on the peasants and workers. It would thus become invincible, for the people had begun to understand "many things" that had previously been known to only a "few". 124

On October 21st, Matos was arrested and denounced by Castro as a vain and ambitious traitor, engaged in a "counterrevolutionary intrigue" and "criminal conspiracy" against the Cuban people. 125 That evening the defector, Diaz Lanz, flew over Havana in a twin-engined B-25 bomber obtained, apparently indirectly, from US authorities in Florida. 126 Thousands of leaflets were dropped on the city, urging Cubans to revolt against their "Communist dictatorship". Planes were sent up in pursuit. Anti-aircraft shots were fired. In the course of the skirmish, fragments from these projectiles fell back into the crowded streets of the capital. Two people were killed; some forty-five wounded. Initial police
reports admitting the defenders' responsibility for these casualties were quickly suppressed. In the meantime, terrorists took advantage of the confusion to machine-gun pedestrians from passing cars.

The following day, in the aftermath of yet another attempt on his life, Fidel appeared on the Cuban version of "Meet the Press". Now leaflets became bombs, as the Diaz-Lanz overflight was officially branded an air raid--Cuba's "Pearl Harbor", as it were. Matos, Diaz-Lanz, Urrutia, Trujillo—all were lumped together as allies in one great counterrevolutionary conspiracy. The United States was denounced for its complicity in the affair. Once more, the Maximum Leader reiterated his determination to strengthen the island's internal defenses and break the bonds of economic dependence. That issue of Revolucion carried banner headlines: "THE AIRPLANES CAME FROM THE US".

The culmination of these developments was a mammoth rally before the Presidential Palace on October 26th. In front of more than half a million people, Fidel dramatized his case against the Norte Americanos. Even as he spoke, word arrived that incendiary bombs had just been dropped on a sugar central in Pinar del Rio. A UPI dispatch was produced, reporting that unauthorized flights had departed from Miami that very day. This was the last straw:

... We do not know whether it is due to cynicism or helplessness; we do not know if it is due to shamelessness or absolute carelessness toward the people of
the United States that the authorities issue reports on the fifth air incursion of our territory. How is it possible that the authorities of such a powerful country with such immense economic and military resources, with radar systems which are said to be able to intercept guided missiles, should confess to the world their inability to prevent small planes from leaving their country to bomb a defenseless country like Cuba?

I would ask myself a question. Would US authorities be so careless as to permit Russian emigres to carry out bombing excursions over Russian cities and villages from Alaska? ... And then I wonder how it is possible that the authorities of the United States should be so negligent as to permit these excursions against a country of the same American continent... and I wonder whether the cause for the carelessness is not due to the fact we are a weak country and the authorities of the powerful nations are cautious not to permit these acts of aggression on other powerful nations, but permit them against countries like ours. I do not believe that there is any other explanation.

The speech was a masterpiece of demagogy, all the more effective because of its skillful synthesis of powerful truths and attractive misrepresentations. In retrospect, it is clear that—given the pressures, opportunities and constraints of his circumstances—Castro needed the specter of a counterrevolutionary threat, first, in order to intimidate and silence his domestic critics and contain the growth of the counterrevolutionary opposition within Cuba itself and, second, in order to mobilize the masses behind his revolutionary programs and leadership. Diaz-Lanz, Matos and the "Colossus" were more than enemies or antagonists, they were convenient symbols to be manipulated to the banner of besieged nationalism. With their unwitting aid, the uninterrupted development of the Revolution would be assured.
Thus, once again, the "bombing and machine-gunning" of Havana were equated with Pearl Harbor. Castro "shook his fist, roared defiance at the northern sky", went into a general diatribe on the sins, real and imagined, which the Yankees had committed against Cuba over the years. Internal dissent and anti-Communism were labelled "treason" against the Fatherland. The opposition newspapers, Diario de la Marina and Avance, were branded just as guilty as the actual perpetrators of aggression, since they "inspire, whitewash and solidarize" such activities. What was required was nothing less than total revolutionary commitment:

The more they attack us, the more we shall defend ourselves. To the last drop of blood. Cuba will never surrender. Every house will become a fortress. We shall start training our peasants and workers immediately. Let the revolutionary tribunals be set up again and let the pilots who may be forced down here know that a firing squad awaits them!

Now the bourgeois-democratic goals of the resistance were definitively superceded by the central ideological objectives of Castroism—the drives for socio-economic justice, national renovation and sovereignty. Others might speak of liberal democracy and freedom, declared Fidel. They forget "that in the midst of hunger, desperation and a lack of culture there can be no talk of democracy, only of oppression. . . ." Henceforth, he would simply "consult with the masses". At the same time, the shifting social base of the Revolution was ratified. In effect, the middle class was to be jettisoned in favor of the peasants and workers, the primary beneficiaries of the reforms that had been enacted and the
"best allies" of the Rebel Army.

In sum, this was a moment of profound "spiritual" and "political transmogrification" for the Revolution, the climax of a process that had been months in developing. This was the birth of the garrison state.

Was it also the point of no return for US-Cuban relations? Ambassador Bonsal apparently thought so. The following day, he called upon President Dorticos to protest these "deliberate and concerted efforts...to replace the traditional friendship between the Cuban and American people with distrust and hostility." Seven points of contention were enumerated and discussed. While it was conceded that the flights from Florida had taken place, he indignantly denied that the United States was not doing everything within its power to halt them. After all, his was a government of laws. There would have to be evidence before arrests could be made. And besides, the Cubans had failed to comply with US requests for information about these activities.

All in all, the reaction of the Eisenhower administration was a mixture of indignation, befuddlement and conciliation. The President himself confessed that he had "no idea" of Castro's motivations. Nevertheless, the State Department quickly moved to alleviate the exile problem by dispatching another hundred immigration agents to Florida. In addition, a variety of legal measures were taken to make US-based activities against Cuba more costly and difficult.
But it was too late. Fidel had already made up his mind to exploit the spector of foreign aggression for everything it was worth. Now a nationwide campaign was launched to gather funds for the purchase of arms with which to defend the Revolution. "Airplanes for Defense" became a familiar rallying cry. Moreover, on November 1st the Foreign Ministry released a crude propaganda pamphlet, complete with photographs of air raid victims and bombers flying over Havana, reiterating the accusation of a "Pearl Harbor" attack on Cuba. This in turn led to an official State Department condemnation of the "offensive" brochure and a denial that the B-25 piloted by Diaz-Lanz had been capable of the bombing and strafing activities charged. Subsequently, the government in Havana rejected the American statement and issued a strong protest note of its own, repudiating Bonsal's accusations of October 27th and calling for a drastic revision of traditional Cuban-US trade arrangements.

And so it went. Meanwhile, on November 3rd, Revolucion published a front-page editorial reiterating Castro's theses on the detrimental effects of economic dependence and the need to diversify the nation's foreign commerce. Now the time had come to consider normalizing the regime's relations with the Soviet Union. Indeed, a 'good occasion' to re-establish those contacts would be Anastas Mikoyan's forthcoming visit to Mexico: "The Revolutionary Government should invite him to Cuba. It would be a magnificent opportunity...to construct the necessary friendly
relations that must exist between all peoples of the world and to open new markets to our basic products."\textsuperscript{139}

This was the beginning of a courtship that would last some three and a half years. We will deal with its initial stages in the following chapter. For the moment, it is enough simply to take passing note of its inception.

More immediately critical was the situation within Cuba itself. To moderates like Felipe Pazos, the fall of Matos had been "terrible news". It had seemingly "swept away" the "equilibrium" between the Communists and anti-Communists in the armed forces.\textsuperscript{140} Increasingly isolated, intimidated by the Maximum Leader's powerful evocations of "direct democracy", the men and women of the "center-left" found themselves important to block the further radicalization of the Revolution. True, some attempts were made. Thus, Pazos had the poor judgment to denounce Castro to President Dorticos, who immediately brought his behavior to the attention of the cabinet. The \textit{fidelistas} called for punitive action: Raul demanded execution; Armando Hart arrest; Martinez Sanchez merely that he be fired. Pazos himself feigned illness in order to avoid attendance.\textsuperscript{141} Subsequently, Manolo Ray and Faustino Perez clashed sharply with Fidel over the Matos affair. A showdown was averted only at the last minute, when word arrived that Camilo Cienfuegos, Matos' replacement in Camaguey and perhaps the most popular man in Cuba after Castro himself, had mysteriously disappeared.\textsuperscript{142} A search was organized, but nothing was found. To
this day, the fate of Cienfuegos remains the subject of speculation.  

But this was only a postponement of what was by now a virtual inevitability—the wholesale eclipse of the "center-left". Hence, November witnessed yet another shake-up in the Havana government. On the 16th of the month, a purge of the Foreign Ministry was initiated. Subsequently, Perez and Ray were fired from their cabinet positions, following angry exchanges with the Maximum Leader. Moreover, Pazos was now replaced as head of the National Bank by Che Guevara, a move of ominous portent to those of moderate persuasion. Indeed, in its aftermath Bonsal informed the State Department that "henceforth, as long as Castro ruled Cuba, productive diplomacy was out of the question." Nevertheless, there was general agreement on the American side

... that the channels and the forms of diplomacy should be maintained. The situation in Cuba was chaotic and fluid; Cuban toleration for the prevailing disorganization and for the mismanagement of the country's interests at home and abroad might be short-lived. Effective opposition from within the Cuban community still seemed a reasonable expectation in view of the Castro excesses and of the supposed character of that community. Castro's own chances of escaping death from assassination or accident appeared poor.

In the midst of all this, Fidel moved to complete the alliance with the PSP and impose government control over organized labor. On November 18th, the Tenth Congress of the Confederation of Cuban Workers (CTC) opened in Havana. Before more than 3,000 delegates, only 150-265 of whom were Communists, the Maximum Leader evoked the spirit of "unity": This assembly must be a model
of factional harmony, he proclaimed; there would be no room for division. Consequently, an official unity slate of thirteen candidates, including three Communists, was set forth in the election for a new CTC Executive Committee.

But neither the endorsement of Castro nor that of the Confederation's Secretary-General, David Salvador, was enough to sway the delegates, most of whom were committed to the Twenty-Sixth of July Movement. Pandemonium ensued. Fist-fights broke out in the hall. Cries of "Unidad!" were met by shouts of "Melones!", the implication being that the proponents of the former were akin to the watermelon--green on the outside and red on the inside. On November 21st, Fidel was obliged to take the floor once again, this time to restore order. The delegates were subjected to a severe tongue-lashing: The meeting was more like a "lunatic asylum" than a labor congress. Such petty squabbling presented a "shameful spectacle"; indeed, it struck at the prestige of both "the founder of this movement and the Prime Minister." By defying his warnings against discord, the dissidents had placed their own factional interests above those of the Revolution and set themselves in direct opposition to the government. It was necessary to elect "genuine revolutionaries" to the Executive Committee, men who would purge the Confederation of reactionary and corrupt unionists and organize the workers "into an army". There could be no "half-way measures". The only correct policy was one which served to create, purify and strengthen a "genuine
revolutionary apparatus upon which the Revolution could count" in the years ahead. 148

Nevertheless, the Congress continued to balk. The unity slate was voted down. Only with the formation of a new ticket, excluding the Communists, was an Executive Committee finally elected. Needless to say, this unexpected development was hardly calculated to please the small PSP delegation headed by Lazaro Peña. Consequently, it declined to participate in the voting on grounds that the new slate was "not in accordance with the position taken by Fidel Castro; it included notorious protectors of the mujalistas, while excluding firm elements of the left." 149

But Peña and his colleagues need not have worried. Their defeat would soon prove more illusory than real. If they had seemingly been frozen out of the Executive Committee, so had some of their most formidable enemies. Moreover, the Committee now contained a number of "easily subornable bureaucrats" of no firm ideological persuasion, who would serve as ready allies in the campaign to turn the Confederation into a government appendage. 150 Furthermore, the basic Castroite-Communist demands for "purification" had been accepted. The Congress had resolved to set up purge machinery (ostensibly to stamp out mujalismo) and disaffiliate the CTC from the Inter-American Regional Organization of Workers. In place of the latter, which was branded an agent of the US State Department, a new "revolutionary confederation" was proposed.
Hence, on November 24th, the PSP's Executive Bureau expressed its general satisfaction with the results of the gathering. The conspiracy of reactionaries and mujalistas was said to have suffered a major defeat due to the "proper orientation of the unitarian elements of the left and the timely, justified and correct intervention of Fidel Castro..." The new Executive Committee was acknowledged to contain "some" unity elements; the ultimate test of its performance, of course, would be whether it followed the Maximum Leader's call to cleanse and strengthen the ranks of organized labor.  

In point of fact, the Congress had scarcely disbanded when the "purification" drive began. Purges were conducted in the tobacco and artist federations; the Communists were granted concessions in the powerful National Federation of Sugar Workers. By the end of the year an open split had occurred between the CTC Organization Secretary, Jesus Soto, and the Secretary-General, David Salvador, over the issue of growing PSP influence in the unions. Within a matter of weeks Salvador, an ardent revolutionary nationalist but staunch anti-Communist, would be virtually isolated. By March, 22 out of the 28 M-26 labor federation chiefs would find themselves removed from office. Thus would the way be opened for the Popular Socialist Party to vastly expand its influence and for Fidel to obtain the kind of reliable "revolutionary" working class organization that he needed to bring his ambitious industrialization program to fruition.
In short, by the turn of the year the handwriting was on the wall, through, granted, it was easily misread. This was not yet a Communist revolution (at least in the generally accepted sense of the term). Nor were the Cuban Stalinists even close to attaining their cherished goal of "proletarian hegemony". That push would come later. Rather, the month of December witnessed Castro, having consolidated his political power, travelling from one end of the island to the other, delivering fiery speeches and promoting class warfare. Time and again, he raised the specter of Fortress Cuba. Here was a Revolution of the "poor and humble", under siege from the formerly privileged interests which were conspiring against it. Extreme vigilance would have to be exercised, for a "life and death" struggle was underway. Drastic measures would have to be taken, for "those who wished to destroy the Revolution deserve to be destroyed themselves." Already, in fact, he was anticipating the large-scale defection of the middle class and planning a massive educational campaign designed to give the lower sectors the managerial and technical skills needed to free his regime from its dependence on the bourgeoisie. Through such programs and such institutional facilities as the Rebel Army, the National Institute of Agrarian Reform, the CTC, the militia and the mass rallies, los humildes were to be mobilized into the ethic of revolutionary struggle. Thus was the Cuban nation to be forged in the midst of the counterrevolutionary whirlwind.

2 This was the official U.S. government position in the early 1960's. It is perhaps best reflected in the works of Theodore Draper. See Castro’s Revolution: Myths and Realities (New York, 1962); and Castroism: Theory and Practice (New York, 1965).

3 There were, of course, other considerations involved—for instance, pressure from anti-Communist forces within Cuba itself and especially from within his own Twenty-Sixth of July Movement. Moreover, we know that Fidel was highly displeased with the FSP’s May Day “unity” activities, interfering as they did with his own efforts at rapprochement with the United States. (See the testimony of Javier Páezos, in New Republic, January 12, 1963.) Urrutia has even reported that Castro was under the impression that the FSP had intended to stage a golpe against him during his absence from the country. [Manuel Urrutia, Fidel Castro y Compañía, S.A. (Barcelona, 1963), p. 54.] Finally, it appears that he had been quite simply misinformed about the alleged activities of the Communists in San Luis, Oriente, which had led to the labor disorders that were denounced in his speech of May 21st. (Hoy, December 2, 1961.)

4 The “savior” of Latin America, trumpeted Revolución repeatedly.

5 Revolución, June 5, 1959.

6 U.S. needs in 1961 were estimated at 9.2 million tons, of which 4.8 million had been allocated to domestic producers and nearly a million to the Philippines. El Mundo, June 11, 1959.

8Ibid., p. 61.


15This decree should not be confused with the so-called Law No. 3 of the Sierra Maestra, promulgated in the autumn of 1958. That "symbolic" statute had been carefully designed to please both peasants and proprietors. Thus, peasants squatting on government land or on 155 acres or less of private property were to be granted deeds, while former owners were to receive a prior cash indemnity from the state. Moreover, the latter were to be exempt for a period of ten years from any taxes due on investments made with their indemnification funds. See Rufo Lopez-Fresquet, My Fourteen Months With Castro (Cleveland, 1966), pp. 113-14.

16Ibid., p. 114.

17Cuba: Castroism and Communism, 1959-1966, pp. 53-54. According to Hugh Thomas, the measure "directly affected only about 10% of the farms in the country at the normal maximum of 1,000 acres (or 12,000 properties), and much less than that at the special maximum. On the other hand, the law affected about 40% of the total land in farms." Cuba, or the Pursuit of


20. Ibid.

21. Public approval, however, remained at 78.3 percent. Lopez-Fresquet, p. 56.


23. Zeitlin and Scheer note that only one article had appeared on the theme of Communism in Time and Newsweek prior to the promulgation of the Agrarian Reform. This in contrast to US News, which introduced the subject in its second issue on Cuba and carried five such articles prior to May 17th. Op. cit., p. 288.


25. Bonsal, which, of course, it was not.


27. Thus, for instance, Mario Lazo reports that on the Pingree Ranch a $20,000 breeding bull was slaughtered for a barbecue. Dagger in the Heart (New York, 1968), p. 188.

28. Bonsal, p. 75.

29. Thomas, p. 1225.


31. Thomas, p. 1227.
32 According to Trujillo's personal secretary, Jose Suarez Nuñez, El Benefactor had immediately promised 5,000 Dominican troops to Batista in order to oust Castro and return the former dictator to power. See El Gran Culpable (Caracas, 1963).


34 See Bonsal, p. 74.

35 Thomas, p. 1227.

36 Ibid., p. 1222.

37 Urrutia, p. 46.

38 Hoy, June 30, 1959.


41 Revolucion, July 2, 1959.


43 From personal observation of Diaz Lanz's behavior at several anti-Castro rallies.


45 Thomas, p. 1232.


47 Thomas, p. 1232.

48 Revolucion, July 18, 1959.
As of the time of this writing (1977), Dorticos is still President and, with the exception of the brothers Castro and perhaps Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, the most powerful man in Cuba. Biographical details may be found in Edward Gonzales, "The Cuban Revolution and the Soviet Union, 1959-1960" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1966), pp. 328-29.

A summary of such contacts may be found in Suarez, pp. 82-83.

In Fidel's own words, "we have not bothered with these problems because we have been occupied elsewhere." However, "we support the principal that there must exist diplomatic and economic relations with all the peoples of the world." Revolucion, July 28, 1959.

Specifically, Nikita Sergeyevich indicated a willingness to meet the US President during conversations with visiting American governors on July 8th. Subsequently, Eisenhower extended a formal invitation through visiting Presidium member Frol Kozlov on July 13th and nine days later received the Soviet Premier's acceptance. Castro's attack on Urrutia, it will be remembered, came on July 17th.

This was in late January. See Twenty-First Congress of the CPSU, Stenografichesky Otchet (Moscow, 1959), I, 492.

This interpretation has been confirmed, incidentally, by Carlos Rafael Rodriguez in an August 14, 1967 interview with Edward Gonzales. See the latter's "Castro's Revolution, Cuban Communist Appeals, and the Soviet Response", World Politics, XXI, 1 (October, 1968), pp. 44-45.


Anli In fact, references in the Soviet press to the Guatemalan precedent were fairly common during this period.

Pavlenko, p. 91.


Pravda, May 12, 1959.


It has also been alleged that contacts with the Soviet embassy in Mexico were made by Major Ramiro Valdes, chief of army intelligence (G-2), in early July. But this is unconfirmed. See Daniel James, Cuba, The First Soviet Satellite in the Americas (New York, 1961), pp. 234-37.

Revolución, August 13, 1959; Hoy, October 2, 1959.

The following is based on the text as reproduced in Ibid., June 7, 1959. A more extensive summary and analysis may be found in Gonzalez, "The Cuban Revolution and the Soviet Union", pp. 404-16.

Hoy, July 4, 1959.

Ibid., July 26, 1959.

See, especially, the statements by Anibal Escalante and Carlos Rafael Rodriguez with regard to the FSP's ideological credentials, in Ibid., July 29, 1959.

Ibid., June 30, 1959.

Ibid., July 29, 1959.

Ibid., September 16, 1959. See also the comments of Blas Roca, in Ibid., September 1, 1959.
This is the estimate given by Robert D. Crassweller, in Trujillo: The Life and Times of a Caribbean Dictator (New York, 1966), pp. 349-51. Other sources give other figures. See, for instance, Hispanic American Report, XII, 8 (October, 1959), p. 430.

Thomas, p. 1238; and Lopez-Fresquet, pp. 136-37, 168-69.

This has been suggested by Thomas, p. 1238; and Suarez, p. 71. See also Paul Bethel, Cuba y los Estados Unidos (Barcelona, 1962), pp. 77-87.

Bonsal, p. 84.

Lopez-Fresquet, p. 136.

Radio Havana, August 15, 1959

Javier Pazos puts this somewhat more strongly: "A cut in petroleum exports, or a flip of the sugar quota, and that young man would have to crawl!" Op. cit., p. 11.

Personal testimony of Javier Pazos. Ibid., pp. 10-11.


Revolución, August 7, 1959.

The State Department, of course, took a somewhat different view of the matter, the fear being that the shipment of arms to Cuba would merely further Caribbean instability.


Specifically, the intervention of the Cuban Telephone Company and the reduction in rates of the Cuban Electric Company. *Ibid.*, September 5, 1959. Moreover, on September 4th the US citizenship of Major William Morgan was revoked. On the Castro-Bonsal meeting, see Bonsal, pp. 89-91.


Boughton, p. 164; and *Hispanic American Report*, XII, 8 (October, 1959), p. 433.


In the words of Guevara: "If they [the industrialists] stick to the old methods, if they do not comprehend the profound transformation that the Revolution is carrying out in our country, the Government will feel itself obliged to intervene. What we intend is a planning of industry, and in this the Government must intervene. But private capital has all the liberty and all the possibilities of operating without intervention." *Revolucion*, September 15, 1959.

The words are Blas Roca’s. *Hoy*, September 20, 1959.

Then too, as Gonzalez has suggested, the PSP may have anticipated a negative Soviet response and been reluctant to offend Moscow by supporting the program. "The Cuban Revolution and the Soviet Union", pp. 492-93, 498-501.

A pejorative term generally referring to the corrupt practices of the followers of Eusebio Mujal, former boss of the Confederation of Cuban Workers.

Summaries and analyses of this debate may be found in Gonzalez, "The Cuban Revolution and the Soviet Union", pp. 476-81; and Boughton, pp. 146-52.
In addition to the two preceding sources, see the article by Cesar Escalante, in *Ibid.*, September 29, 1959.

Moreover, in this same issue Roca's statement was paraphrased in even bolder terms, to wit: "...the possibility that the radical small bourgeoisie and its most advanced elements adopt positions of the proletariat and continue in the forefront of the revolutionary process in the conquest of Socialism." Emphasis added.

Hence, on September 30th the second Soviet trade pact was completed, with Moscow agreeing to purchase 330,000 tons of Cuban sugar in addition to the 170,000 tons contracted the previous month.

In Castro's own words: "We must diversify our agriculture and our markets, because the more diverse the economy of a nation the more diverse are its markets and the more solid and free is the economy of that nation." Interview of September 17th, in Castro, *La Revolucion Cubana*, p. 345. See also Guevara's television interview, in *Revolucion*, September 15, 1959.

Nor, for that matter, was the Castro government able to effectively patrol Cuban territory to prevent it from being used as a base of operations against neighboring countries.
110 See, for instance, Time, October 26, 1959.

111 Thomas, pp. 1242-43.

112 The British government, of course, denied that its decision was due to US pressure.

It is a measure of North American complacency and in-comprehension that former Ambassador Bonsai could later write that "the United States considered that these planes would add to Castro's offensive capabilities while Castro alleged they were essential to the defense of that island (against whom?)." Op. cit., pp. 98-99. Against whom, indeed? True, the anti-government activities underway were as yet mere pinpricks. What was alarming, however, was their rate of growth and their potential for future expansion. After all, the forces of the counterrevolution had only just begun to organize and fight. At their disposal was a reservoir of money, weapons and manpower that already far exceeded that which had been available to Fidel in, say, February 1957. Moreover, there was every reason to believe that these resources and activities would rapidly expand in the months ahead, as the Revolution continued to develop, threatening the interests of ever-widening segments of the upper and middle classes. And then, of course, there was always the specter of the "Colossus" and the memory of Guatemala. North American economic and political interests were so closely intertwined with the established Cuban social order that it seemed naive to think that the Revolution would not have to defend itself against US-sponsored attacks from abroad (large or small, official or unofficial, direct, or through surrogates). Indeed, had not this process already begun? One recalls the words of Guevara: "Another aspect of the Guatemalan variant is to choke off Cuba's arms supply, forcing her to buy them from Communist countries, and then to unleash a violent tirade against her for doing so. But a member of our government has summed this up as follows: 'They may attack us for being 'Communists', but they are not going to wipe us out merely because we were stupid.' La Guerre de Guerrillas (Habana, 1960), p. 202.

Thus, although we may agree with Bonsai's characterization of the counterrevolutionary terrorism of late September and early October as "trivial" in terms of actual damage done, the critical dimension was not objective and physical but rather subjective and psychological. Indeed, the Ambassador's own account of Cuba's deteriorating relationship with the United States is most informative on this score. Throughout this work, he employs such adjectives as "constructive", "rational" and "productive" in order to contrast US policies (and especially his own positions) with the "unreasonable" and "destructive" behavior of the Castro regime. One wonders. What would have been the North American reaction had Cuban-based planes
bombed Florida or Louisiana? Surely, Hume was right when he said that reason is the servant of the passions. What to one person seems reasonable, just and good may to another be fallacious, exploitative and hypocritical. It all depends on whose ox is being gored.

113 Gonzalez, p. 519.

114 Hoy, October 18, 1959.

115 Ibid.

116 Revolucion, October 17, 1959.

117 English excerpts may be found in Thomas, p. 1244; and Boris Goldenberg, The Cuban Revolution and Latin America (New York, 1965), pp. 188-89. The full text is in Leovigildo Ruiz, Diario de una Traicion (Miami, 1965); and Yves Guilbert, La Poudriere Cubaine; Castro l'Infidele (Paris, 1961).

118 Both the term "center-left" and the list are from Gonzalez, "The Cuban Revolution and the Soviet Union", p. 314.

119 For instance, Lopez-Fresquet and Andres Valdespino. See Lopez-Fresquet, pp. 130-32.

120 Testimony presented at the trial of Matos. Hoy, December 17, 1959; also, Bohemia Libre, December 11, 1960.

121 Hoy, December 17, 1959.

122 Castro's testimony, in Herbert L. Matthews, "Return to Cuba", Hispanic American Report Special Issue (Stanford University, Institute of Hispanic American and Luso-Brazilian Studies, n.d.), p. 11.

123 Hoy, December 17, 1959.

124 Ibid., October 21, 1959.

125 Ibid., October 22, 1959.

Carlos Luis, "Notes of a Cuban Revolutionary Exile", New Politics (Fall, 1963), pp. 143-44. Also, Bonsal, p. 105.

R. Revolucion, October 23, 1959.

The following analysis is based on the text as it appeared in Ibid., October 27, 1959.

Bonsal, p. 106.

Draper, Castroism, p. 123.

See Bonsal, p. 108.

US Department of State, American Foreign Policy, Current Documents, 1952, pp. 377-82.

Ibid., pp. 383-84.

For instance, the Justice Department declared it a criminal act to depart without authorization from US territory for the purpose of "furthering civil strife" in another country. Perpetrators were liable to a maximum fine of $5,000 and five years in prison; airplanes used in such actions were to be confiscated. See Zeitlin and Scheer, p. 105-06.

In point of fact, the aircraft were American C-54's flying over New Jersey. This was a photomontage of an incident which had occurred in 1947. Life (Spanish edition), February 22, 1960.


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139 See Thomas, pp. 1246-47; Gonzalez, p. 529; and Lopez-Fresquet, pp. 50-61.

140 Testimony of Pazos. Cited in Gonzalez, pp. 528-29. In point of fact, reports of Communist infiltration had been greatly exaggerated. Few FSP stalwarts held important positions in the armed forces. Nor was Castro foolish enough to give them the opportunity to establish control over those critical institutions of violence. They were to remain firmly in fidelista hands. See Suarez, p. 75.

141 See Thomas, pp. 1246-47; Gonzalez, p. 529; and Lopez-Fresquet, pp. 60-61.

142 Pazos, in Gonzalez, p. 529.

143 The presumption being that he was lost at sea. Other claims have been made—most notably, that the Castro brothers arranged his murder—but these were never proven. Indeed, if violence of this sort was involved it seems at least equally plausible that it came from the forces of the counterrevolution.

144 See Lopez-Fresquet, pp. 150-51.

145 Bonsal, p. 110.

146 Gonzalez, p. 548.

147 Revolucion, November 20, 1959.


149 Hoy, November 24 and 25, 1959.

150 Thomas, pp. 1250-51.

151 Hoy, November 25, 1959.

152 Thus, early the following year Salvador was sent abroad, ostensibly on an official mission to France. By the time of his return in March, his position had become untenable. Subsequently, he was expelled from the CTC and arrested for attempting to flee the country. In August 1962, he was sentenced to thirty years imprisonment for engaging in counterrevolutionary activities.

154 See, for instance, Hoy, November 28, 1959; and Revolucion, November 29 and December 1, 2, 18 and 21, 1959.

... lose ties and great involvement make for much more intense conflict, when conflict occurs at all. ... The ambivalence generally present in close relationships... from the suppression of hostile feelings (which in turn may be traced to the frequent occasions for conflict inherent in such relationships), the acting out of which is being avoided by the participants for fear of the disruptive effects of such conflicts. If the "love object" is at the same time a "hate object", it is understandable that conflict would mobilize the entire affect of the personality and that the relationship might be disrupted through the resultant intense conflict... So the fear of intense conflict may lead to suppression of hostile feelings; and in turn, the accumulation of such feelings is likely to further intensify the conflict once it breaks out.

Few human relationships are as close as that between a father and his son; few conflicts so bitter as that of a son's rebellion nearing the point of breakdown. The abrazo between Cuba and the United States had always been of a highly paternalistic nature. Not only had the "Colossus" presided over the birth of the Republic, but the ensuing North American economic, military and political penetration of the island had woven an umbilical cord of dependence that simultaneously gave rise to intense feelings of attraction and antipathy. On the one hand, there can be no denying that many Cubans had benefited from Yankee hegemony. But
the price of material abundance for some had been the compromise of national integrity. Cuba was a dependent; hardly a sovereign entity at all. Nor, for that matter, was it a nation in any meaningful sense of the term. Rather, Cuban society, as it had developed under the influence of Spain and North America, was fundamentally "splintered"—a "collection of pieces held together by circumstance and historical accident", encompassing "economic conflicts, ethnic rivalries, and rural-urban differences that mocked the myth of nationhood."⁴

We have said that the essential core of Castroite ideology has been the notion of revolutionary nationalism. It has been the primary historical task of Fidel Castro to mold a Cuban nation out of the societal raw materials of the past. The operational assumption was that this could not be done piecemeal, through liberal democratic reforms, but only through a massive assault on the social, economic and political structure of the traditional order. Only by genuine revolutionary action could the barriers to national renovation, sovereignty and social justice be overcome and the idealized new society of the future be attained.

In the preceding chapter, it was noted how the pursuit of the utopian and hegemonic objectives of Castroism set in motion an ongoing dialectic of coercion between the forces of revolution and counterrevolution; how the rise of the counterrevolutionary threat both stimulated and facilitated the increasing radicalization of the regime's transfer culture strategy; and how these developments
gradually undermined Cuba's traditionally close relationship with the United States, inhibiting communication, compromise and the willingness of each side to come to terms with the needs of the other and substituting in the place of constructive dialogue a veritable "dialectic of hostility" that grew steadily more intense as the year progressed.

It was precisely this deepening spiral of antipathy that North Americans found most difficult to understand. What was eating Castro? President Eisenhower undoubtedly spoke for many when he observed that here was a country which "on the basis of history" ought to be "one of our real friends".3 After all, had not US capital made an enormous contribution to the development of the Cuban economy? And was not the United States the island's principle market? Indeed, did not the existing quota system guarantee the latter's sugar producers a price (5 cents a pound) that substantially exceeded international levels? In the words of Philip Bonsal, the accepted wisdom, as 1959 gave way to 1960, was that Cuban dependence on the American market for the disposition at premium prices of half its sugar and the dependence of the American people on Cuba for some 30 percent of the sugar consumption in the United States represented a relationship the disruption of which was in the interest of neither partner.4

In truth, the North American frame of reference left even knowledgeable observers like the US Ambassador woefully ill-equipped to understand and deal with the cataclysmic developments
that were unfolding. To Eisenhower, Bonsal and a rapidly growing number of their compatriots, Castro seemed an ungrateful upstart who had betrayed the Cuban people and the original democratic ideals of the Revolution for the sake of his own megalomaniac aspirations. It hardly mattered that such perceptions contained important elements of truth, for there was here an entirely inadequate appreciation that the United States, through both its actions and inactions, had significantly contributed and was continuing to contribute to the breakdown in relations that was now well underway. Nor was there much understanding of the breadth and depth of Cuban support for the Maximum Leader and his Revolution. It was almost as if the father, having been rejected (in his own mind, unjustly) by the son, was obliged for psychological reasons of his own to deny the prodigal all virtue. Indeed, in the months ahead US policy would become increasingly self-delusory and dysfunctional, as coercion replaced diplomacy and the dialectic of hostility continued on its increasingly uninhibited course towards breakdown.

But the disintegration of the embrace with the "Colossus" could not but have a critical impact on the future development of both Castroism and the Cuban Revolution. The rise of counter-dependence would lead not to independence but rather to the substitution of a new dependence for the old. The harsh reality was that Cuba could not sustain itself. It had been born an economic cripple and so had it developed, a condition which would prove
quite impervious to the miraculous powers of the new messiah. When the umbilical cord to the North was cut, it became necessary to find an alternative life line. Such were the requisites of social system maintenance. Moreover, beyond the need for economic sustenance there were the dictates of national defense. If the Castro regime were to survive, it had to have arms. Equally to the point, it needed a patron to protect it against the growing military threat from the "Colossus". The obvious--indeed, the only realistic--candidate for the task: The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

But this was an alliance easier conceived of than formed. For reasons to be presently discussed, Nikita Khrushchev and his colleagues were most reluctant to undertake the kind of costly and dangerous commitment that Castro was contemplating. Only through a prolonged period of courtship and with the benevolent intervention of events quite beyond his control would the Maximum Leader obtain an abrazo sufficient to guarantee the survival and continuing development of his Revolution. But in the process, Castroism itself would be dramatically transformed, as its goal and transfer cultures were increasingly imbued with Marxist-Leninist substance.

Soviet Transfer Culture Strategy under Khrushchev: The Emergence of the Grand Design

We have argued that in order to understand the development of Cuban policy towards the Soviet Union it is necessary to understand
the interrelationship between Castro's transfer culture strategy and the shifting mix of opportunities, pressures and constraints posed by the existential milieu in which he has had to operate. The same may be said of Nikita Khrushchev's Cuban policy. Prior to 1960, Muscovite contacts with the government in Havana were modest in the extreme, constrained by considerations of both power and ideology. On the one hand, the opportunities for substantive gains initially appeared quite limited. The situation in the Caribbean was highly unstable. There was no guarantee that the Castro regime would be able to survive. In fact, the precedent of Guatemala suggested that it would not—or, at least, that if it did the price would likely be the curtailment of the Revolution under North American pressure. Then too, as we have seen, in the beginning the Havana government was most careful to avoid any impression that it would be receptive to a major restructuring of the island's traditional relationship with the USSR.

These and related perceptions were, of course, gradually revised as the year progressed, as both the revolutionary process within Cuba and the dialectic of hostility with the United States intensified and the Maximum Leader began to turn to the Socialist camp to meet his growing economic and military needs. Still, the Soviets remained cautious. The truth of the matter was that Khrushchev had other, more important problems on his mind. He, like Castro, was a man of grandiose ambitions. Even then, a master plan was unfolding designed to bring about a major restructuring of
East-West relations and pave the way for a massive reformation of the Soviet domestic order.\textsuperscript{5} Compared to those stakes, any gains to be won in Cuba were minor. Indeed, to have shown an excess of ambition with regard to a country which the United States had traditionally considered its own private preserve would have jeopardized the delicate process of diplomacy already underway and scheduled to reach a climax at the Paris summit conference the following spring.

For the moment, then, the situation in the Caribbean was to be approached with care and moderation, in line with the general hemispheric strategy of "Peaceful Co-existence". Only with the U-2 incident and the collapse of the Grand Design would Nikita Sergeyevich plunge head first into the Cuban quagmire and exploit to the hilt the opportunities that were there presented.

But what was the nature of this Grand Design? Much of its detail, of course, must elude us, since the plan was never allowed to develop into its advanced stages. No doubt too Khrushchev would have been flexible with regard to matters of strategy and even ends. He had to be, for his existential environment was in large part beyond his control. Already he was encountering stiff resistance from the Chinese. And there were others, in both the Capitalist and Socialist camps (indeed, within the Soviet Communist Party Presidium itself), who preferred the familiar dangers of the Cold War to the uncertain hazards of "Peaceful Co-existence".
And yet, if much of the Design remains shrouded in mystery its general objectives are fairly clear. Ever since the death of Stalin, Nikita Sergeyevich had been engaged in an intense and complex behind-the-scenes struggle to sustain and extend his power within the Soviet political elite. Moreover, as with most conflicts of this kind, the struggle for power was closely interwoven with a simultaneous battle over policy. In retrospect, it is evident that the issues under debate were fundamental. What Khrushchev was proposing was nothing less than a massive assault on the economic, social and political legacy of Stalinism, an intensification of the process of transfer culture rationalization that had been set in motion by the death of the dictator and given ideological legitimacy at the Twentieth Party Congress.

At the center of the controversy were the crucial issues of resource allocation and mode of governance. The traditional formula of economic progress through terror, reglementation and austerity was becoming increasingly obsolete. Few were willing to return to a full-fledged Stalinist system, with all its excesses. The danger to the Communist Party's political hegemony, not to mention the personal well-being of its leaders, was far too great. Had not the vozhd decimated the Party through the purges, in effect subordinating it to the Secret Police? Clearly, no individual could be allowed to accumulate that much power again. By the same token, however, there was little consensus as to what should replace the priorities and methods of the past. The
relaxation of totalitarian controls contained very real risks. Who knew what forces might be unleashed by a move towards liberalization? This was a conservative, insecure elite, unsure of the legitimacy of its rule and, indeed, of that of the political system over which it presided (not to mention that of its Eastern European empire). Moreover, as a bonafide product of Stalinism it would never entirely be able to free itself from the ideological perspectives and values of the past. Nor, for that matter, from the bureaucratic interests of the political order which it had inherited. Inevitably, the movement towards reform gave rise to strong opposition. Lacking the prestige and power of a Joseph Stalin, Nikita Sergeyevich would be forced to rely on maneuver and negotiation to institute the changes that he desired. Unfortunately, history would prove these far less potent tools than terror for purposes of effectuating major socio-economic and political transformation.

In particular, there was the intractable problem of Soviet agriculture. Even prior to Stalin's death, Khrushchev had become convinced that a radical revision of transfer culture strategy was necessary in order to cope with the grave economic dislocations produced by the chronic neglect of the agricultural and consumer sectors in favor of heavy industry. As early as 1950-51, he had sponsored a plan for the amalgamation of medium and small-scale collective farms into agrogorods or agricultural cities, complete with the elementary amenities of urban life, in a sweeping attempt
to modernize the backward villages, eliminating the gaping differences between town and countryside and facilitating the transition to Communism. The program was defeated—it would have required a major diversion of resources into the rural areas, giving agriculture a priority that Stalin and his lieutenants found quite unacceptable. Nevertheless, the idea did not die. Plans for a massive restructuring of economic priorities would be resurrected and further developed once political circumstances permitted.

Thus, it was that in the wake of the dictator's demise the Soviet leadership rapidly fragmented into three camps with regard to the central issues of economic strategy. In one of these were found the neo-Stalinists—men like Lazar Kaganovich, V. M. Molotov and the Minister of Defense, Nikolai Bulganin, whose ideological or institutional loyalties led them to unwaveringly champion the cause of heavy engineering and armaments. Arraigned against this conservative coalition were two groups of reformers. On the one hand, there were the followers of the Prime Minister, Georgi Malenkov, largely concentrated within the government administration, who very early in the succession struggle lined up behind a program aimed at stabilizing heavy industrial expenditures for the sake of raising the living standards of the urban upper classes. On the other, there was Nikita Khrushchev and his supporters within the Communist Party apparatus, whose advocacy of dramatic agricultural reform flew in the face of both Stalinist dogma and Malenkov's repeated insistence that the grain problem had
been resolved.

In point of fact, Soviet agriculture remained as backward and stagnant as ever. Indeed, the situation was critical: Gross farm production was only 7% over 1928 levels; the output of livestock products had actually declined. Meanwhile, the number of urban consumers had risen by more than 50 million. To Nikita Sergeyevich, the moment seemed opportune to wrench the mantle of reform from the hated Malenkov. Clearly, the latter's program was far too modest to cope with the basic structural problems at hand. Without a massive infusion of manpower and material resources into the agricultural sector all talk of eliminating the chronic grain shortage and raising the standard of living was so much empty propaganda. And then, of course, there was the need for increased farm prices and tax relief for the peasants in order to give them the incentive to produce that was so obviously lacking under the current system. Only then would crop yields be raised and the perennial problem of agriculture definitively resolved.

But Khrushchev was a politician as well as a reformer. The struggle over resource allocation inevitably involved fundamental issues of power. Power which neither he nor Malenkov yet possessed in sufficient abundance to challenge the conservative establishment head on. It would take time—and much political maneuvering—before the First Secretary would be in a position to put such an ambitious program into effect. Meanwhile, policies and alliances would be embraced and abandoned in accordance with the evolving requisites of the struggle for hegemony. In order to overcome the
challenge from Malenkov, Nikita Sergeyevich would be obliged to form a temporary tactical alliance with the conservatives. Only with the Prime Minister's ouster in 1955 would he seize the banners of "De-Stalinization" and "Peaceful Co-existence" in a wholesale assault on the defenders of orthodoxy.8

Still, if considerations of policy, not to mention ideology, were often subordinated to the requirements of power, this was no mere opportunist. Rather, a fascinating admixture of pragmatic politician and revolutionary idealist. In the words of Carl A. Linden:

...Political necessity occasionally led Khrushchev to assume the colors of an orthodox militant; expediency frequently put him in a centrist position, but personal conviction moved him more and more toward radical reform within the context of the party regime. He took up the latter cause whenever possible and undertook grave risks for its sake.9

Some of these gambles paid off, at least in the short run. Thus, for instance, his proposal for a Virgin Lands Program to convert vast acres of semi-arid territory in Central Asia and Siberia to the cultivation of wheat. Here was the First Secretary's answer to Malenkov's consumer proposals. Its intent was both economic and political: If successful, it would relieve the acute shortage of higher-grade bread and flour in the cities and increase the feed supply for livestock, all within the immediate future and at relatively low cost.10 Moreover, hand-in-hand with this controversial project came an ambitious program of Party reform. It was the First Secretary's aim to remold the Communist Party into
an effective agency of economic leadership, capable of wresting control of Soviet agriculture from the overcentralized and notoriously inefficient state bureaucracy headed by Malenkov. The recurrent theme during this period was "on-the-spot" guidance of the economy by local Party executives. Indeed, Khrushchev himself seemed the personification of the pragmatic Party activist, always on the move, investigating local conditions first-hand and offering advice and criticism on a wide range of subjects about which he had, presumably, considerable practical knowledge.\(^\text{11}\)

Needless to say, these activities drew heavy fire from the established interests. Even so, Khrushchev was able to overcome the resistance of Malenkov, Molotov and Kaganovich and win approval for the Virgin Lands Program. And the initial success of that endeavour\(^\text{12}\) gave him no small boost in the ongoing struggle for political hegemony. On the other hand, the attempt to reform the Party and liberate the countryside from the suffocating embrace of the state agricultural bureaucracy ran into more formidable obstacles. What was involved here was a direct challenge to the institutional structure of Stalinism. Within the Party itself, the First Secretary was seeking to enhance the role and power of the managerial elements in the regional machines at the expense of the political-ideological watchdogs in the central apparatus. The ensuing conflict would give rise to a formidable alliance of endangered bureaucratic interests within both Party and state that would frustrate the cause of economic reform for years to come.
In the short run, however, the "Grand Tactician" would be able to effectively exploit the factional differences within the opposition to establish a shaky political hegemony of his own. The name of the game was divide and conquer, and Khrushchev was a master. Was not Malenkov's emphasis on light industry and consumer needs in direct violation of Party doctrine on the primacy of heavy engineering and armaments? Did not this weaken the Soviet defense posture? Indeed, was not the Prime Minister's conciliatory stance towards the West as much a product of his own weakness of character as anything else? Surely such spinelessness would only serve to encourage imperialist aggression! The neo-Stalinists agreed. With their assistance, Khrushchev succeeded in ousting his archenemy from the Prime Ministership in February 1955.

Yet, no sooner had Malenkov been unseated than the First Secretary reversed direction. In the face of Molotov's bitter opposition, a daring campaign of reconciliation with Yugoslavia and detente with the West was launched. Now, suddenly, the Soviets became veritable paragons of amicability, evacuating their Finnish naval base and coming to terms on an Austrian peace treaty. Simultaneously, a series of extensive proposals for reducing international tensions was set forth, including a disarmament offer which on the surface seemed to meet Western demands for a control system to prevent atomic stockpiling and surprise nuclear attack. Moreover, words were soon translated into action in the form of an ambitious troop reduction program. Over the course of
the next two years, the Soviet armed forces would be cut by some 1.84 million men. The culmination of this diplomatic offensive came in July, with the Geneva summit conference. Though little of substance came out of that gathering, it did produce an atmosphere—a "spirit of Geneva"—that would help sustain the hope for peace during the four difficult years to come. Subsequently, in fact, the new Prime Minister, Bulganin, went so far as to offer the American President a twenty-year treaty of friendship and economic, cultural and scientific cooperation. That proposal, however, was politely rejected.

In retrospect, it is clear that this move towards detente was the necessary external concomitant of the internal reforms then under contemplation. Only with a significant reduction of international tensions would Khrushchev be in a position to justify a massive assault on the domestic heritage of Stalinism and to shift national priorities away from the traditional overconcentration on heavy industry towards a major new commitment of manpower and material resources to the agricultural and consumer sectors.

But such movements were easier envisioned than achieved. Cold War tensions were not to be so readily dissipated. The Americans remained suspicious, and with reason. After all, the Soviet disarmament proposals, if implemented, would have eliminated the threat of both US strategic nuclear power and the impending tactical nuclear capacity in Europe. Muscovite conventional superiority on the Continent, though reduced, would have been assured;
German rearmament blocked. In effect, such measures would have meant the end of NATO. Beyond this, however, disarmament in general was not conceived to be a realistic policy alternative in official Washington. The truth of the matter was that the United States had become a status quo power, more interested in maintaining its military, political and economic hegemony in international affairs than in engaging in the kind of comprehensive and complex negotiations that might result in the erosion of that position in the name of "Peaceful Co-existence". Better to dismiss such advances as propaganda or political gamesmanship designed to weaken the vigilance and unity of the West.

Thus would detente remain limited to its initial stage. This was roughly the situation when the crises in Suez and Hungary erupted in the autumn of 1956, all but destroying the "spirit of Geneva" and with it the immediate prospects for the further development of this complex and tortuous embrace.

Still, it must be said that if the international obstacles to the emerging Grand Design were formidable, the domestic constraints were no less so. Once again, it is necessary to stress that Khrushchev was far from being the kind of absolute dictator portrayed in the ideal model of totalitarianism. The logic of Soviet politics may incline the leader to try to maximize his power. By the same token, however, it also compels the elite to constrain him in that ambition. Having alienated both Stalinists and Malenkovites, those highly divergent factions began to band
together to resist his further advance.

The climax of this drama came in June 1957, when Malenkov, Molotov, Kaganovich and Bulganin succeeded in mobilizing a majority of the Communist Party Presidium against the First Secretary. Only by appealing to the larger Central Committee was Khrushchev able to turn back their challenge and re-establish his authority over the supreme political organs of Party and state. Nevertheless, victory had a price. The issues that had so alarmed the "Anti-Party Group" disturbed others as well: "Like the anti-Khrushchev faction itself, the forces Khrushchev marshaled to overcome his challengers were diverse. Among those casting their lot with him were figures who were less than ardent supporters of his more far-reaching power ambitions or of his penchant for reform, and they sought to place limits on his victory."17

In particular, they sought to defuse the explosive issue of "De-Stalinization". The First Secretary's assault on the former dictator (most notably, in his "Secret Speech" to the Twentieth Party Congress) threatened to undermine the legitimacy of the entire Soviet system. Dangerous questions had begun to be asked: How had a Socialist society produced such a monster? Where were its present leaders when all these "crimes" were being committed? Was there not some fundamental weakness within the system itself that enabled such monumental abuses of power to go unchecked? Clearly, a process had been set in motion which, if allowed to get out of hand, could eventually threaten the hegemony of the Communist
Party itself, not to mention the political fortunes of its current leaders. Just as clearly, this was something that the oligarchs in the Kremlin could not permit.

Moreover, the danger was not merely internal. The virus or revisionism had been unloosed, and only time would tell how deeply it would erode Soviet leadership of the international Communist movement. In the short run, however, the explosions in Poland and Hungary remained vivid reminders of the threat which "De-Stalinization" posed to the Muscovite empire in Eastern Europe. Nor, for that matter, was Eastern Europe the only area of concern. Even then, rumblings of discontent were being heard from within the Italian Communist Party. Would not the continued embrace of Tito and the acceptance of the "different roads to Socialism" thesis merely accelerate the development of the nascent centrifugal tendencies already present in the international movement? These were hazards both serious and immediate. Hence, it should not be surprising that when Mao Tse-tung launched a concerted diplomatic offensive against the evils of revisionism that initiative was welcomed by some members of the Soviet elite as a means of curbing the First Secretary's disturbing propensities for reform.

Then, of course, there was the whole sticky problem of economic policy. The months preceding the confrontation with the "Anti-Party Group" had witnessed Nikita Sergeyevich engaged in a massive effort to rationalize the production process and cure once
and for all the chronic infirmity of Soviet agriculture. In early 1957, a program of industrial decentralization was introduced, aimed at enhancing the influence of the territorial Party and government organizations at the expense of the central state bureaucracy. Simultaneously, a series of inter-provincial conferences were held at which the prospects for agricultural development were discussed. On March 12th, at one such gathering in Rostov, the First Secretary called for a "rapid solution" to the livestock problem. Two months later he went even further, pledging that the Soviet Union would overtake the United States in the per capita production of meat, butter and milk within the "near future".

"The imperialists", he noted, "sputter that our capital investment in industry prohibits the development of consumers' goods production and agriculture and thereby does not make it possible to provide more fully for our people's food needs. . . . It will be interesting to see what their tune will be now. . . ." The ensuing uproar was not unanticipated. After all, the views of Malenkov, Molotov and their followers were well known. What was underestimated, however, was the breadth of the opposition. In retrospect, it is clear that these measures represented a direct challenge to a vast bureaucratic complex which transcended narrow political alliances. To conservatives like the veteran ideologist Mikhail Suslov and the Leningrad apparatchik Frol Kozlov, the First Secretary's insistence that "our Party has never regarded the development of one sphere of the national economy as
being opposed to the development of another"\textsuperscript{20} sounded suspiciously like a prelude to a major doctrinal heresy—an assault on the primacy of heavy industry. Similarly, his calls for an increased emphasis on material incentives (including cessation of the deliveries that the state received from the collective farmers' private plots) were suspect on grounds that such measures would strengthen and expand the Capitalist sector of the economy, long a source of acute embarrassment to those of orthodox persuasion. Moreover, while the military may have supported Nikita Sergeyevich in his struggle against Malenkov, the First Secretary now seemed increasingly to be adopting the latter's pro-consumer, anti-defense industry program. Needless to say, the thought of reducing the size and budget of the armed forces held scant attraction for the marshals.\textsuperscript{21}

Finally, these debates over policy were, as always, inextricably entwined with the critical dilemma of power. It had long been evident that the First Secretary was using the issues of "De-Stalinization", "Peaceful Co-existence" and economic reform as vehicles to promote his own drive for political supremacy. Herein lay a paradox: In condemning the absolute power of the former dictator, Khrushchev was himself attempting to accumulate absolute power. Indeed, only thus could he have hoped to overcome the formidable domestic obstacles to his emerging Grand Design.

But neither this paradox nor its implications was lost on his associates in the Central Committee. In the months to come,
the struggle over power and policy would continue apace, marked by a fluctuating pattern of advance and retreat. The latter half of 1957 witnessed Khrushchev working hard to consolidate his political hegemony in preparation for yet another major assault on the established order. In the beginning he moved slowly, masking his revisionism under the cloak of orthodoxy, constrained by the very compromises and alliances that had enabled him to survive the challenge of the previous June. Towards the end of the year, however, he succeeded in strengthening his position by securing the removal of Marshal Zhukov and the elevation of several of his own supporters into the ranks of the Presidium and Secretariat. Subsequently, in the early months of 1958, he replaced Bulganin as Prime Minister and introduced "the most radical change in the Soviet countryside since collectivization"—the abolition of the Machine Tractor Stations. Furthermore, these developments were soon followed by the announcement of an ambitious new program to reorient industrial strategy away from its traditional focus on steel and metal towards the production of chemicals. In the First Secretary's own words: "The latest discoveries in the field of chemistry make possible a fuller utilization of the vast natural resources of our country's national economy, as well as the manufacture of high-quality goods from synthetic materials on a much larger scale than heretofore; together with a sharp advance in agriculture, this will enable us within the next few years to satisfy to the full the increasing public requirements in clothing,
footwear, household equipment and general consumer goods."23

Thus was the way prepared for the drafting of a new "Seven Year Plan" geared towards the goal of surpassing US living standards within the next dozen years and for the convocation of an "extraordinary" Party Congress designed to secure Khrushchev's position as supreme leader and architect of the transition to the utopian society of the future.

Moreover, once again, the external concomitant of internal reform was detente. If the material and technological bases for Communism were to be developed according to schedule, substantial new sources of investment capital would have to be found. Industrial equipment would have to be obtained; the most up-to-date scientific, technological and managerial know-how acquired. It was Khrushchev's hope that these needs could be fulfilled in significant part by the restoration of large-scale economic ties with the West. And it was with this in mind that he proposed to the American President on June 2nd that broad trade relations between their two countries be resumed. Furthermore, "in this connection, in particular, the question arises of possible time payments and the granting of long-term credits on customary terms."24

Then too, the First Secretary was already contemplating a radical reform of the Soviet military establishment. In part, this involved a shift away from conventional warfare and a large standing army towards a strategy and force structure oriented around
nuclear weaponry. Defense would be maintained by substituting "firepower" for "manpower". The army itself would eventually be converted into an internal security force or militia system similar to the one which had existed during the early years of the regime. Through such measures, it was hoped, substantial human and material resources would be freed for reinvestment in more productive sectors of the economy.

But Khrushchev had far more ambitious plans in mind than a mere shift in strategy and force structure. The point was to release resources for the civilian economy, not simply transfer them from one sector of the defense establishment to another. Even in 1957, it was evident that "hidden" military expenditures in the form of the space program would wipe out any savings attained through cuts in conventional force levels. Were nuclearization not accompanied by a lessening of international tensions, including the institution of effective arms control and disarmament measures, the prospects for a long-term stabilization or reduction of defense expenditures would be nil.

Yet, the initial American response to "Sputnik" already suggested the beginning of a new and intensified round in the Cold War. Clearly, an action-reaction process had been set in motion which, if not quickly checked, would accelerate the arms race beyond control. Thus did an early 1958 Pravda editorial give vent to Muscovite concern with the increasingly unfavorable trend of NATO military expenditures: The Soviet Union, it was complained,
was "systematically reducing" its own defense spending. Why were the Western powers not doing the same? Was not the United States, in fact, planning to raise its expenditures from $40 to $43 billion a year? Was it not even then contemplating a budget of some $50 billion by 1960? 27

And then there was the problem of German rearmament. With the launching of "Sputnik", the American atomic umbrella over Western Europe had to all appearances been blown away. It had been a natural response for the United States to station nuclear warheads and intermediate-range ballistic missiles on the continent. And so it had been arranged at the December 1957 meeting of the North Atlantic Council. To Khrushchev and his colleagues, however, this seemed a move of singularly ominous portent. True, foreign control had been specifically excluded, but who could say what might happen in time of crisis? Safeguards are never absolute. Might not some German commander trigger a nuclear exchange in the midst of a border skirmish? Already there was talk in both Germany and France of an "independent nuclear deterrent". To a Soviet leadership still laboring under traumatic memories of past aggressions, the placement of such weapons on European soil seemed but a single step in an on-going process. Clearly, it was imperative to prevent the "revanchists" in Bonn from gaining access, direct or indirect, to these tools of mass destruction. 28

And so the Kremlin's foreign policy machine shifted into high gear. In the months that followed, a veritable flood of
diplomatic initiatives was unloosed, ranging from repeated proposals for a summit conference to calls for a cessation of nuclear weapons tests, the establishment of a nuclear-free zone in Central Europe, the reduction of troop strengths, the initiation of measures to prevent surprise attack and the conclusion of a German peace treaty. At the same time, concrete steps were taken to spur on the diplomatic process: In January 1958, a new cut in manpower was announced, this one considerably more modest (300,000 persons) than the huge reductions of 1955-57. Military units totalling more than 41,000 men were withdrawn from East Germany; another 17,000 from Hungary. Moreover, on March 31st, at the end of a highly concentrated series of nuclear weapons tests, the Soviet government proclaimed a unilateral suspension of all such experiments.

Still, the United States and its NATO allies, ever insecure and suspicious, remained aloof, on the defensive. No doubt Khrushchev was himself largely responsible for these reactions. His penchant for "poker diplomacy", with its overriding emphasis on secrecy, bluff and deception, was hardly conducive to engendering a sense of trust in his adversaries. If, in retrospect, such tactics seem to have been more the product of weakness and insecurity than anything else, this was by no means evident at the time. After all, "Sputnik" had just been launched, and the Soviets were making all sorts of exaggerated claims with regard to their strategic capabilities. It was only reasonable to suppose that if the First Secretary could so readily abandon his "rocket rattling"
techniques for the more soothing rhetoric of "Co-existence" he could just as easily revert to his former behavior when it served his purposes. And, indeed, to most Western observers his new diplomatic offensive appeared to be little more than a tactical maneuver designed to erode NATO solidarity and defense and pave the way for the expansion of Communist influence in Europe.

This apprehension was not, of course, unwarranted. Khrushchev had always been quite clear that "Peaceful Co-existence" referred mainly to military co-existence; it by no means excluded (and, in fact, demanded) the continuation of the historically inevitable struggle between Communism and Capitalism on the political, economic and ideological fronts. Moreover, the Soviet conception of the basic sources of international tension was markedly different from and largely incompatible with those which dominated Western thought. From Moscow's perspective, the global policy of the United States seemed blatantly expansionistic; "containment" little more than a thinly-disguised rationale for the military and political encirclement of the Communist camp in an attempt to isolate it from the international community at large. Inevitably, a major component of the Grand Design would involve the erosion and eventual elimination of the instrumentalities (most notably NATO) through which that policy was conducted.

What was missing from Western analyses, however, was a proper understanding of just how important detente was to Khrushchev; moreover, of the consequences that would attend his failure to achieve
it. In retrospect, it may be said that this was a golden opportunity lost. Had the NATO powers been less insecure, they might have been able to take advantage of the First Secretary's own highly dependent situation in order to extract substantive concessions through the negotiating process. Granted, the West was vulnerable; the Germans particularly so. Had detente assumed the appearance of a US sell-out, the psychological and political consequences would have been highly de-stabilizing, not to say disastrous. Still, there was no inherent reason why such bargaining had to be one-sided. Khrushchev sorely needed Western trade, technology and aid in order to secure the success of his Seven-Year Plan; similarly, he needed a reduction of international tensions and the institution of effective arms control measures in order to forestall an enormously expensive escalation of the arms race and free additional resources for the civilian economy. The benefits of detente might have been mutual and the cause of peace immeasurably enhanced had the United States and its allies only had the presence of mind to recognize that these initiatives contained important opportunities as well as pitfalls.

But they did not. Rather, procrastination and evasion became the hallmark of NATO strategy. With every passing week, Khrushchev's frustration and impatience grew more intense. Time was wasting. For all their lip service to the cause of "peace", the Capitalists continued to display the "mobility of a snail". To Nikita Sergeyevich, an early summit conference seemed imperative
if this diplomatic logjam were to be broken. Only by bypassing the bureaucracy through a direct meeting of heads-of-state could the fundamental decisions be taken that would bring about "a radical change in the methods of and approach to the settlement of international problems."\(^{32}\)

But did the Western powers want a summit? To Khrushchev, it appeared increasingly evident that they did not.\(^{33}\) Already preparatory talks had begun to bog down in seemingly interminable and fruitless deliberations. At the same time, little progress was being made on the arms control and disarmament front. Neither the United States nor Britain proved willing to follow the Soviet lead in halting nuclear weapons tests. Indeed, in the months that followed the moratorium announcement of March 31st such experiments continued to be conducted on a highly intensified scale. Meanwhile, the nuclearization of NATO's European forces proceeded apace.

This is not the place to give a detailed history and analysis of the enormously complex and difficult problem of arms control. Suffice it to say that as the negotiating process dragged on into autumn Nikita Sergeyevich began to consider more drastic methods of breaking the deadlock.\(^{34}\) The Communist Party's Twenty-First Congress was fast approaching. He sorely needed some dramatic evidence of progress in the foreign policy arena to bolster his political authority and build momentum for his programs and for the "Big Push" against Stalinism and the Soviet bureaucratic
establishment. Clearly, the carrot had failed to achieve the desired results; now the stick would be applied with alacrity.

On November 10th, during a Soviet-Polish friendship meeting in Moscow's Lenin Stadium, Khrushchev suddenly announced that his government would no longer recognize the obligations that it had assumed under the Potsdam Agreement, specifically the provisions on Berlin. The time had come, he declared, for the Great Powers to give up the remnants of the occupational regime in Berlin and thereby allow a normal situation to be established in the capital of the GDR. The Soviet Union, for its part, will turn over to the sovereign German Democratic Republic those functions which are still retained by Soviet agencies.

Let the USA, Britain and France build their own relations with the German Democratic Republic and come to agreement with it if they are interested in any questions concerning Berlin. As for the Soviet Union, we will sacredly observe our obligations as an ally of the GDR, that is, those obligations which derive from the Warsaw Pact and which we have frequently reaffirmed to the German Democratic Republic. Should any aggressive forces attack the German Democratic Republic, we would consider this an attack on the Soviet Union and on all the member-states of the Warsaw Pact.

Moreover, while the question of reunification could be settled only by the two existing German states,

... the conclusion of a peace treaty... is another matter. This is really a task which should be settled primarily by the four powers which belonged to the anti-Hitler coalition in collaboration with the representatives of Germany. The signing of a German peace treaty would help normalize the whole situation in Germany and in Europe in general. The Soviet Union has proposed and proposes now that this matter be taken up without delay.35
Subsequently, this position was clarified and elaborated in a series of communications: The NATO powers, by violating the key provisions of the Potsdam Agreement and rearming the Federal German Republic, had forfeited their right to remain in Berlin. They would have to withdraw their forces. West Berlin would become a "demilitarized free city", with its own government and social system, until such time as the two German states could agree on reunification. It would then become the capital of a united Germany. Regarding the issue of reunification, the FGR and the GDR should enter into negotiations with a view to setting up a confederation. A six-month deadline was fixed for the settlement of the Berlin problem. Should the West refuse to come to terms, Moscow would sign a peace treaty with the German Democratic Republic and turn over to it control of the access routes to the city.36

Much has been written about this episode.37 To most Western observers, Khrushchev's motives seemed clear enough: To get the Allies out of Berlin and demonstrate the unreliability of US commitments, thus dividing and weakening NATO and paving the way for an extension of Soviet hegemony on the continent. Occasionally too, there was recognition of the maneuver's defensive function: West Berlin, as Nikita Sergeyevich put it, had become a "malignant tumor", an advance post of subversion aimed at the Socialist bloc in Eastern Europe and particularly at the German Democratic Republic, whose younger workers were fast disappearing
into its confines. As long as this "abnormal situation" continued to exist, Central Europe would remain a tinderbox that could explode at any moment. Needless to say, from the Soviet perspective it was highly desirable, if not imperative, that this danger be alleviated.38

What was never fully understood, however, was the function which the Berlin offensive was intended to serve in the larger complex of maneuvers which constituted Khrushchev's Grand Design. This was, above all, a tactical ploy, a spur in the posterior of a recalcitrant West. Its purpose: To force the Allies to the conference table for the kind of serious, on-going and comprehensive negotiations that would fundamentally transform the current state of international relations, substituting "Peaceful Co-existence" for Cold War and "Peaceful Economic Competition" for the wasteful and dangerous excesses of the arms race. In Khrushchev's words, "implementation of the Soviet proposals would create good conditions for the more rational use of material and currency resources, stop the drain placed on state budgets by military appropriations and afford an opportunity for turning these resources toward improving the living standards of the people."39

In point of fact, the Soviet challenge in Berlin was only one prong in a multi-prong offensive. No sooner had the gauntlet been cast down than a renewed arms control campaign was launched. A series of declarations and proposals was set forth calling for an immediate, universal and permanent cessation of nuclear weapons
tests and the institution of procedures to reduce the danger of surprise attack. Ground control posts and aerial photography zones were embraced as acceptable means of dealing with the latter problem. At the same time, however, it was declared that such steps would be ineffective unless "linked with measures which would reduce troop concentration of the opposing political and military alignments in what are potentially the most dangerous regions of Europe and with measures to prohibit the deployment of modern weapons of mass destruction at least in sections of Central Europe as a start, namely, on the territory of both parts of Germany." Accordingly, it was urged that agreement be reached on a one-third reduction of foreign troops in Europe and a ban on the deployment of nuclear weapons on German territory. Subsequently, proposals for a NATO-Warsaw Pact non-aggression treaty and a "zone of separation" of armed forces were also set forth.

Moreover, on January 10th the Soviet government delivered a draft German peace treaty to the US embassy in Moscow. Included in its articles were certain crucial provisions: Germany would be prohibited from producing or equipping its armed forces with nuclear weapons. Similarly, it would be denied involvement in any military alliance "directed against any state which is a participant in the present treaty, and also...in military alliances the participants of which are not all four principal Allied Powers in the anti-Hitler coalition--the USSR, the United States of America, the United Kingdom and France." In effect, this would
have meant an end to German membership in NATO, the Warsaw Pact and the Western European Union. Furthermore, all foreign troops were to be removed from German territory, and all foreign military bases liquidated. Borders would be fixed at present boundaries; all claims to former possessions in other countries renounced. Pending unification, the term "Germany" would be understood to include both the FGR and the GDR, each of which would undertake to prevent the revival of "revanchist" parties and organizations within its territory and would pledge never to resort to the use of force against the other. As for West Berlin, it would retain the status of a demilitarized free city until such time as the two Germanies became one.

Furthermore, in an accompanying diplomatic note it was proposed that a peace conference be convened two months hence to examine the Soviet draft, work out and sign a formal treaty and discuss the problem of Berlin. Participants would include,

... on the one side, the governments of the states whose armed forces participated in the war against Germany and, on the other side, the governments of the German Democratic Republic and the Federal German Republic, which would sign the peace treaty on behalf of Germany. If a German confederation is formed by the time the peace treaty is signed, then the treaty could be signed by representatives of the German confederation, as well as by the two German states.

So there you had it. The Grand Design, had it been successful, would have effectively counteracted the threat posed by the NATO nuclear build-up in Europe. In combination with some variant of the arms control and disarmament measures mentioned
above, a German peace treaty would have done much to "normalize" the situation on the Soviet western front. Germany would be prevented from acquiring nuclear weapons or from participating in any military alliance directed against the USSR. The Berlin powder keg would be defused; GDR stability enhanced. By obtaining international recognition of East German sovereignty and legitimacy, Moscow would virtually guarantee the survival of Herr Ulbricht's proletarian paradise. In a confederation of equal states, unification would not mean the dissolution of the Socialist partner. Indeed, some advantage might even be expected in the long-term struggle to undermine the government in Bonn. In any case, NATO would be pushed back and US influence on the continent visibly eroded.

But there was one last missing piece to the puzzle which has not yet been mentioned; indeed, which was hardly noticed at all at the time (at least in the West) and is still not fully understood. That piece involved the People's Republic of China. In his speech to the Twenty-First Party Congress Khrushchev, in addition to calling for such staple items as a German peace treaty, disarmament, East-West trade and a summit conference, made another plea, briefly, but with stress. That was for the creation of a "zone of peace, above all an atom-free zone" in the Far East and the entire Pacific Basin.

In retrospect, and with infinitely more information than we had in 1959, it is possible to see here the precursor of a bold
attempt to integrate the China problem with the other components of the Design, resolving it in the process of resolving the whole. At the time, of course, the United States was only vaguely aware that Moscow had a China problem. The monolithic facade so valued by Khrushchev and Mao alike had only just begun to crumble. Yet, below the surface manifestations of unity Sino-Soviet relations were deteriorating at an alarming rate. To Nikita Sergeyevich, Mao seemed almost as much an adversary as a comrade. A dangerous adversary at that. One who had already demonstrated his capacity to sabotage the delicate course of Khrushchev's summit diplomacy (for instance, in the Quemoy-Matsu crisis of the previous year) and who might yet drag the Soviet Union into a world war. What, after all, was one to make of a man who could glibly speak of losing three hundred million people in a nuclear exchange? Clearly, it was very much in Moscow's interest to prevent this "ally" from gaining access to such weapons of mass destruction.

But how to achieve that objective? The Soviets had already committed themselves (in October 1957) to help Peking develop an atomic capacity. Could they now abrogate that agreement without doing irreparable damage to the relationship and to international Communist unity? Khrushchev's plan, in a nutshell, was as follows: He would sharply increase the Soviet economic and military commitment to China, thus reassuring its leaders of Russian friendship and reliability in time of crisis. In essence, Moscow would provide a nuclear shield for the People's Republic, deterring "imperialist
aggression" and relieving Peking of the necessity (not to mention
the enormous material burden) of developing its own atomic arsenal.
At the same time, Soviet aid would secure Chinese compliance with
Khrushchev's arms control and summit strategy. Mao and his associates
would be persuaded to renounce the acquisition of nuclear weapons.
Nikita Sergeyevich would gain a major--and perhaps decisive--
bargaining chip in his campaign for a German peace treaty.
In effect, an atom-free zone in the Far East would be traded for
a similar agreement in Central Europe.

Here then was the "carrot" that would complement the
Berlin "stick". The Americans were deeply worried about China.
That much was obvious. Very well, the First Secretary would relieve
their fears--for a price. In the process, he would bring Peking
back into the Soviet fold.

Had Khrushchev actually been able to pull off this maneuver,
some of the other inter-related components of the Grand Design
might well have fallen into place. Certainly, such personal
diplomatic triumphs would have given an enormous boost to his
political position at home, perhaps enabling him to consolidate
his dictatorial hegemony and effectuate his domestic reform
program. The First Secretary was an inveterate optimist: With
the substitution of limited detente for Cold War, the way would
be cleared for the large-scale acquisition of Western trade,
credits and technology. Resources would be released from heavy
industry; the agricultural and consumer sectors would flourish.
Nikita Sergeyevich would go down in history as the man who had led the Soviet Union out of the quagmire of Stalinism and laid the socio-economic foundations for the transition to Communism.

No doubt this must have seemed a world-historical era, a time in which fundamental shifts were occurring in the structure of both the international and the Soviet domestic systems. If the East wind was not yet prevailing over the West wind, a process had nevertheless been set in motion. The trick would be to control that process, averting nuclear holocaust and confining the historically inevitable conflict between Communism and Capitalism primarily to the political, economic and ideological realms.

In the long run, the latter would be "buried" not through military force but rather through "peaceful competition", as the Soviet Union outstripped the United States in industrial production and living standards, demonstrating the superiority of its economic system and inspiring other nations to follow in its wake.

All this did not, of course, come to pass. Like a certain Cuban rebel even then engaged in a seemingly miraculous struggle for national liberation, Nikita Sergeyevich was not entirely operating in the realm of reality. One need not overemphasize the significance of psychological factors to recognize here a certain megalomaniacal thread. For Castro and Khrushchev both, the obsession with grandiose, all-embracing and final solutions was to be a source of great weakness as well as great strength. Though men of enormous vision, their dreams would all too often
exceed their capacities. In the case of the latter, the gap between illusion and reality would ultimately result in political self-destruction.

In the short run, however, Khrushchev's position was fairly secure. He was on the offensive, struggling to build momentum for the "Big Push" that lay ahead. But as the year progressed, he became increasingly frustrated by the growing domestic and international opposition to the Design. Thus, for instance, his failure to secure the final disgrace of the "Anti-Party Group" and to establish his own dictatorial hegemony at the CPSU's Twenty-First Congress in January. Thus also the resistance to his efforts at domestic reform. Though the First Secretary's chemical program was incorporated in the new "Seven-Year Plan", it gradually became evident that the mere fact of formal adoption would not lead to substantive change. Chemicals would continue to play second fiddle to steel and armaments. Similarly, his campaign to revamp Soviet agriculture began to run into serious trouble: In mid-1958, the administrative powers of the Union Republic Ministries of Agriculture had been strengthened in the face of his long-standing opposition. Now, a series of proposals regarding the formation of agrogorods, inter-kolkhoz repair shops and a national kolkhoz federation started to bog down in political trench warfare, along with his efforts to open up additional expanses of virgin land and acquire better terms of trade for farmers.
For Nikita Sergeyevich then the crucial issue domestically was how to acquire enough political leverage to break through this logjam. Increasingly, the answer seemed to lie in the realm of foreign affairs.

Yet, here too the obstacles remained formidable. The Chinese were particularly infuriating. On the one hand, they made entirely unreasonable demands on Soviet economic resources; on the other, they refused to cooperate in the slightest with the First Secretary's international game plan. After all, Moscow was doing everything it could to accommodate its ally. Only the previous summer, it had agreed to provide technical assistance for the construction or expansion of 47 industrial plants in China; in February, it had supplemented this with an additional accord covering 78 enterprises at a total cost of some 5 billion rubles. At the same time, a new commercial protocol was signed providing for a considerable increase in trade (7.2 billion rubles in 1959).

Now this was a most impressive economic and technological commitment. And it was made at no small cost to the USSR. In the words of David Floyd:

By this time, aid to China represented a very heavy burden even for an economy of the size of Russia's, which was in any case not without its own shortcomings and troubles. How burdensome it must have been, and how demanding the Chinese must have been, is suggested by a claim later made by Khrushchev that the Russians were building more up-to-date factories in China than they were at home. What proportion of the Soviet economic effort was absorbed in China we cannot tell; nor do we know how much more was consumed in military aid or what
part of their aid was repaid in useful commodities by the Chinese. What is certain, however, is that without Soviet aid the Chinese would not have embarked on their ambitious economic plans.52

Why then was Mao so ungrateful? Had not the Soviets done more than enough to prove their friendship? Had they not even demonstrated their willingness (during the Quemoy-Matsu crisis) to risk nuclear holocaust in order to deter an imperialist attack on the mainland? Yet instead of receiving thanks, they were subjected to insults—snide accusations of revisionism and pretensions of ideological grandeur (most notably, in the Chinese claim to have discovered a short cut to Communism through the "people's commune"). And what was one to make of the Chairman's strange reaction to the Soviet effort at military cooperation? The Kremlin had, upon request, supplied Peking with considerable aid in the form of aircraft, long-range artillery, air force advisors, etc. But when Khrushchev offered to station Soviet interceptor squadrons and nuclear weapons in the People's Republic, Mao had become indignant. Nor would he allow the Russians to use Chinese radio facilities to maintain contact with their Pacific submarine fleet; nor permit that fleet to refuel and rest its crews at mainland ports, even on a reciprocal basis.53

Moreover, as the new year progressed the Chinese began to back off from their previous support for Khrushchev's arms control strategy. True, they continued to pay lip service to his proposal for an atom-free zone in the Pacific. Now, however, they "rather whimsically implied that... it should comprise all
the countries bordering on the ocean, i.e., the United States and the Soviet Union as well as China." 54

Simultaneously, as the prospects for a nuclear test ban treaty began to brighten they made it abundantly clear that the price of Chinese participation would be "a sample atomic bomb and technical data concerning its manufacture." 55

Obviously, the vantage point in Peking was radically different than in Moscow. To Mao and his followers, Khrushchev's courtship of the West seemed less the product of a love for peace than of "great power chauvinism"—a desire to divide the world into Soviet and US spheres of influence and reduce the People's Republic to the status of a satellite. Were not the Kremlin's "unreasonable demands" for air and port facilities "designed to bring China under Soviet military control"? 56 As for Khrushchev's support during the Taiwan straits crisis, Peking had been quick to note that these pledges had been extended only after the initial period of danger had passed and it had become apparent that the United States was not contemplating an attack. And the not inconsiderable economic assistance that had been granted? Well, after all, that had been little more than a bribe. Did the Soviets really think that the Chairman would sell out China's sovereignty? In any case, the aid extended was much less than was desired or needed in order to complete the "Great Leap" into Communism.

Khrushchev was not a patient man. Increasingly, he began to think in terms not of convincing Mao but of removing him, or
at least of persuading more moderate elements in the leadership to challenge his ultraradical policies. Now he found a champion to promote that cause: the Chinese Minister of Defense, Marshal P'eng Teh-huai, on a tour of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union during the spring of 1959.

More on this presently. For the moment, let us merely note that if Peking was nothing but a source of headaches for Khrushchev, Washington was initially that much more cooperative. Thus, after waiting more than half a year for the State Department to reply to his trade initiative of the previous June, the First Secretary dispatched Anastas Mikoyan to America to "warm up" relations between the two countries and spur on the commercial process. There the wily Armenian received a somewhat less than enthusiastic reception: On the one hand, from the US business community, a restrained interest in rapprochement and the normalization of economic contacts; on the other, from the Department of State, a studied aloofness bordering on hostility. To staunch anti-Communists like John Foster Dulles and C. Douglas Dillon, the Soviets had not changed their spots. They were still engaged in a protracted struggle against the Capitalist world. If now they were seeking Western trade and technology, it was only to strengthen their hand in the Cold War. After all, was not the Kremlin's Seven-Year Plan dependent on a large-scale expansion of commerce with the Capitalist nations? Why should the US pull Khrushchev's economic chestnuts out of the fire? Clearly, a major increase in
trade was not in the best interests of the United States, might even lead to the strengthening of Soviet war-making potential. Neither credits (which, in any case, might never be repaid) nor most-favored-nation status ought to be granted so formidable an enemy. 58

As the weeks passed, however, things slowly began to turn Khrushchev's way. In large part, this may be attributed to his volte-face on the Berlin issue. Having shocked the West into attention, the First Secretary now proceeded to ease the pressure by tacitly withdrawing the six-month deadline which he had set the previous November. 59 The tactic worked. No longer under the threat of ultimatum, yet actually aware that such demands could be renewed at any time, the NATO powers decided to meet the Soviets half-way. On February 16th, they proposed a Big Four Foreign Ministers' conference to which German "advisors" would be invited. Subsequently, Moscow accepted this initiative, and on the 11th of May formal deliberations were opened in Geneva.

But this was merely a prelude to more important negotiations. In point of fact, Khrushchev had little faith in such low-level gatherings. The West, if permitted, would drag out these talks for years. Nothing would be accomplished. 60 What was needed instead was a series of summit meetings between heads-of-state to cut through the diplomatic red tape and get down to the basic issues of European security and arms control. 61 Towards this end, the First Secretary relentlessly continued to push.
His persistence was soon rewarded. Early that summer, the United States and the USSR exchanged national exhibitions. In New York, the Soviet display was opened by none other than Frol Kozlov, First Vice-Chairman of the Council of Ministers and the second most powerful man in Russia. Shortly thereafter, Vice-President Nixon performed similar honors in Moscow in a move that was widely believed to be a prelude to an exchange of visits between Khrushchev and Eisenhower. And, indeed, on August 3rd that suspicion was confirmed. Nikita Sergeyevich would go to America.

Moscow Between Washington and Havana: The "Spirit of Camp David" and the Soviet-Cuban Courtship

And so Khrushchev finally got his summit conference, though in truth its value would be more symbolic than substantive. This would not be an occasion for great decisions. For one thing, the Americans were not yet ready to participate in negotiations of the magnitude which he was contemplating. For another, the First Secretary was sorely in need of a breather. The bottom was dropping out of his China policy, and he needed time to determine the damage and alter his strategy accordingly.

In retrospect, it seems fair to state that this summer marked the point of no return for Sino-Soviet relations. In June Khrushchev, in an attempt to club his recalcitrant ally into line, had "unilaterally" torn up the October 1957 agreement on military technology and "refused to provide China with a sample of an atomic
bomb and technical data concerning its manufacture." Shortly thereafter, at a Central Committee plenum in Lushan, P'eng Teh-huai had launched a direct attack on Mao's political and economic policies and, ultimately, on his leadership. Only by dint of his enormous personal prestige was the Chairman able to turn back this challenge. The insurgents were dismissed from their positions; a campaign of denunciation was launched against them. Subsequently, it was revealed that P'eng had been in contact with the Soviets and had taken them into his confidence. Now Mao was forewarned. The threats had become personal.

Moreover in August and September, virtually on the eve of the First Secretary's journey to the United States, a serious flare-up occurred along the Sino-Indian border. To Nikita Sergeyevich, this seemed nothing less than a bald attempt to sabotage the course of detente. Thus, on September 9th the TASS news agency issued a statement of neutrality, deploring the incidents, stressing Soviet friendship with both countries and expressing the hope that the dispute would soon be resolved. The Chinese were furious. In their eyes, this date would assume a very special significance: For the first time in history, a Socialist country had sided with the forces of reaction against a fraternal Socialist ally. "In this way, the leadership of the CPSU brought the differences between China and the Soviet Union right into the open before the whole world." Needless to say, by this time Khrushchev's negotiating hand had been seriously weakened. Accordingly, China would be hardly
mentioned at all in his discussions with Eisenhower. Nor, for that matter, would there be any progress made on the other substantive issues of disarmament. The First Secretary was aware that such an agreement was premature. There were still major differences separating the two sides. Before the Americans would be willing to participate in world-historical deliberations, they would have to be prepared psychologically. Hence the primary purpose of the visit. This would be Khrushchev’s great opportunity to use his not inconsiderable charm and powers of persuasion to appeal directly to the US public and its leaders, dissipating the Cold War fears and stereotypes that had kept their two countries apart and setting the tone for the more complex and constructive relationship to be developed in the months to come.

In short, this was to be a grand exercise in public relations (or, in more charitable terms, a good will trip). For their part, the Americans welcomed their famous guest in much the same way as they might have received an envoy from Mars, with an admixture of curiosity, fear, amusement, hostility and polite benevolence. The visit was not entirely successful. Khrushchev’s informal talks with Eisenhower and his aides proved disappointing. Indeed, some members of the President’s entourage—most notably, the Under-secretary of State, Douglas Dillon—were downright antagonistic. Similarly, the First Secretary’s efforts to court the US business community were largely without result. Nor was his tour of the country (seven cities in thirteen days) free from embarrassment.
In Los Angeles, a threatened demonstration forced the cancellation of a trip to Disneyland. Moreover, during a dinner in his honor the Soviet leader was baited by Mayor Norris Poulson, who chided him for his unfortunate "we will bury you" remark. (He had already gone to some pains to make clear that he had not been referring to military conquest, but rather to an extended process of economic competition.) At this point, an angry Khrushchev seriously contemplated cutting short his visit and returning home.

Elsewhere, however, things went amicably enough, and by the end of his journey the First Secretary could at least console himself with the thought that, even if no concrete agreements had been signed, he had still scored a certain moral victory. He had been received as an equal by the President of the United States. Both his own personal stature and the legitimacy and prestige of the government which he represented had been significantly enhanced in this dramatic demonstration of the viability of "Peaceful Co-existence". Clearly, relations between the USSR and the USA were better than they had been in years. The ice had been broken. Now it would be up to the diplomats to clear the way for the more substantive negotiations to come.65

But such modest achievements were not enough for Nikita Khrushchev; they needed to be embellished. This was a hand to be played for everything it was worth. Indeed, at this stage of the game the appearance of detente was almost as important as its substance. The Grand Design had not yet gained the kind of momentum
needed to break through the formidable barriers impeding it. There were still powerful individuals and interests to be won over, not only in the United States and Western Europe but in China and the Soviet Union as well. Hence the birth of the "spirit of Camp David", a largely mythical aura calculated to maximize Khrushchev's political power and foster the cause of detente both at home and abroad.

And, in fact, no sooner had he returned to the USSR than he was off once again, this time to Peking. There he endeavoured to convince his hosts of Eisenhower's benevolent intentions: The First Secretary had met with the American President and had determined that he was a responsible leader, one who enjoyed the "absolute confidence of his people" and was genuinely concerned with the preservation of international peace. Together, they had discussed the pressing issues of the day. The resulting "spirit of Camp David" could be expected to mark a "new era in international relations"; indeed, a "turning point in history". 66

The Chinese were not convinced. Had not Eisenhower himself denied the existence of this "spirit"? Nor were they pleased with Khrushchev's admonitions against testing "by force the stability of the Capitalist system." After all, how else was Taiwan to be liberated? Was this not some devious Soviet-American plot to get Peking to accept the bankrupt "two Chinas" policy? 67 Significantly, no communique was issued at the close of these deliberations.
Be that as it may, the First Secretary had by now thoroughly committed himself. There was no turning back. As the months progressed, the Grand Design would become increasingly dependent on a breakthrough in the summit negotiations scheduled for the following year.

But what then of Cuba? Obviously, the vantage point in Havana was radically different than in Moscow. If the "spirit of Camp David" had lessened tensions between the two superpowers, by the same token it seemed to bode ill for the cause of Soviet-Cuban rapprochement. Might not Khrushchev "sell-out" the Revolution for the sake of detente with the United States? This was a matter of no small concern to both Castro and the Cuban Communists. If large-scale trade and aid were not forthcoming from the Socialist camp, the Revolution might have to be curtailed, since its continuing radicalization would leave it vulnerable in extremis to the wrath of the "Colossus". Blas Roca and his comrades could have few illusions. They would surely be among the first casualties of any such modification. Their participation in the national front was especially galling to Washington. If they could not come through on their promises of substantial foreign Communist support, they were likely to be jettisoned by Castro as a liability.

Thus did the month of September witness the launching of a concerted campaign of courtship, designed to obtain just such a commitment. In the PSP organ Hoy, Mao Tse-tung was acclaimed as a "sincere and loyal friend,...the personification of the revolutionary
struggle for the liberation of a large nation. . . .”68 Had not Chou En-lai announced that China "wants and can import Cuban sugar in unlimited amounts."69 Now Aníbal Escalante turned up in the People's Republic, where he enlightened his hosts as to the "advanced" nature of the Revolution while making a major appeal for Sino-Soviet support.70 Meanwhile, back in Havana, the PSP issued declarations highly laudatory of the Chinese, praising their solidarity with Cuba, suggesting support for their "Great Leap Forward" and noting the relevance of their revolutionary experience for other countries "besieged by North American imperialism. . . ."71

In early November the Castro government actively joined this campaign, as Revolución announced that the time had come to re-establish economic relations with Moscow. It was noted that Anastas Mikoyan was soon to open a scientific, cultural and technical exhibition in Mexico. Would this not be a good occasion to invite him to Havana?72 The Minister of Commerce, Cepero Bonilla, was more explicit: The USSR was capable of absorbing "several times more" Cuban sugar than had been bought during the current year; it was to be hoped that additional purchases would soon be made.73 Now too Foreign Minister Roa declared cryptically that in view of the US effort to block Cuban arms purchases from Great Britain the Castro government would obtain such weapons "from whomever may be willing to supply them."74 Perhaps the boldest of all appeals, however, was left to the PSP's Carlos Rafael Rodríguez,
who in a nationally-televised interview assured his countrymen that the "Soviet economy, the economy of Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland...are in condition to assist us if there are some countries...like England...which lack sufficient sovereign dignity to negotiate in company with Cuba.... If this occurs, those economies--Czech, Hungarian, Soviet--have sufficient machinery to industrialize our country on advantageous terms...."  

We do not know the precise moment when these appeals began to find their mark, inducing the Soviet government to reassess its policy towards the Revolution. On the basis of the available evidence, however, it seems clear that the process of re-evaluation was an extended one, sharply circumscribed by Khrushchev's priority aim of detente with the United States. Major involvement in Cuba must still have seemed a bad risk, directly antithetical to the First Secretary's summit diplomacy, involving the possibility of a costly confrontation with Washington and always containing the danger that the Revolution might be aborted through foreign invasion, civil war or betrayal by the unreliable Castro and his petty bourgeois supporters. Moreover, Fidel's ambitious industrialization and modernization programs would obviously require foreign assistance on a massive scale, thus involving the Soviet leaders in a commitment of resources that could more profitably be used at home to deal with their own nation's economic problems.

Hence Moscow's entry onto the scene continued to be slow and cautious, in line with its general transfer culture strategy
of incrementally normalizing relations with all of Latin America. Now Alexander Alexeyev, former First Secretary to the Soviet embassy in Argentina, was dispatched to the island as an accredited TASS correspondent to survey the situation. In the months and years to come, Alexeyev would play a major role in shaping the Kremlin's policy toward the Revolution, eventually assuming the post of Ambassador in 1962. Now also a delegation from the Central Council of Trade Unions was sent to attend the Cuban Confederation of Labor's Tenth Congress. Towards the end of the month, in Mexico, Anastas Mikoyan received a Castro envoy, who invited him to Havana along with the Soviet national exhibition. Though the offer was not immediately accepted (Mikoyan was not empowered to make any specific commitments), a serious re-evaluation of policy was clearly underway. On December 9th, Radio Moscow announced that the exhibition would be sent to Havana. Shortly thereafter, following the trial and conviction of Hubert Matos, Alexeyev delivered a personal message from Khrushchev to Castro, reassuring the Cuban leader that he need not use the PSP as an intermediary; he could deal with Moscow directly.

Still, the Soviets had not yet made a tangible commitment. In early December, Aníbal Escalante had returned from the USSR empty-handed, his efforts to court his Muscovite hosts having clearly failed. Consequently, PSP frustration and irritability began to mount rapidly. Towards the end of the month, an aggressive
new press campaign was launched, designed in part to goad the Soviets into making the desired commitment. Now the Party began to exploit the emerging Sino-Soviet split, exalting China's support for the Revolution, even as similar pledges by Moscow were noticeably underplayed. At the same time, renewed efforts were made to convince the men in the Kremlin of the Revolution's "advanced" nature and reassure them that Cuba would not be another Guatemala. During these weeks, PSP militance reached new heights as Blas Roca and his comrades found themselves being pushed into an increasingly radical position by the dizzying spiral of the Cuban revolutionary process. The pressure to support Fidel in his efforts to make the Revolution "continuously advance" was overwhelming. But in embracing Castroite policies, the PSP found itself ever more at odds with Moscow.

No matter. There is little evidence that Cuban Communist appeals were a crucial factor in the Kremlin's final decision to step up its economic commitment to the Revolution. Rather this move, like the Mikoyan mission to Mexico (the first such visit to the region by any major Soviet politician) and the agreement in December to buy $200 million worth of Brazilian coffee, was a logical concomitant of the rationalization of Muscovite Latin American policy. Taking advantage of the growing desire of local elites to expand relations with the USSR, the men in the Kremlin sought to incrementally penetrate the hemisphere through the re-establishment of conventional state-to-state contacts. In the
highly sensitive case of Cuba, however, this process had to be handled with special caution so as not to interfere with Khrushchev's summit diplomacy. Thus the extreme secrecy which surrounded the initial negotiations between the two sides. Only on January 30th did Tass announce that Mikoyan would open the Soviet exhibition in Havana. And not until the commencement of that display on February 5th was it revealed that a new trade pact would be forthcoming.

All in all, Mikoyan spent nine days in Cuba. Upon completing his initial duties in the capital, he set off on a whirlwind tour of the island, everywhere extolling the virtues of the Soviet system and conveying the willingness of his government to expand relations with the Castro regime. Actual negotiations were left to the Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade, B. A. Borisov. By the end of their mission, a major economic agreement had been signed: Moscow had contracted to buy an additional 425,000 tons of Cuban sugar in 1960 and a million tons annually in each of the succeeding four years, all at 2.78 cents a pound—that is, slightly below the current world market price. Of this total 20 per cent would be paid in dollars, the rest in goods. Moreover, a $100 million loan was granted at a 2.5 per cent annual rate of interest to be used "exclusively" for the purchase of Soviet machinery, equipment, materials and technical assistance. The subject of fighter planes, it was stressed, had not come under discussion. At the same time, trade would be expanded in other areas, with Cuba supplying
the USSR with such items as fruit, juices, henequen, pepper and hides and receiving, among other things, petroleum, fuel oil, wheat, wood products, aluminum and sulfur. On the other hand, diplomatic relations were not re-established. That would await a more "opportune moment".86

In perspective, it is clear that the Mikoyan mission did not signify the wholesale realignment of Castroism with the Socialist camp, though many North Americans took it for just that. (As we shall presently see, Fidel had not yet totally given up on the Yankees.) Rather it was an integral part of the lider maximo's long-range drive towards political nonalignment and economic independence, announced the previous September. Cuba would join neither Cold War bloc; it would protect its sovereignty by maintaining relations with both sides, while presenting itself as a leader of the underdeveloped countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Thus would Castro obtain the trade and credits needed to industrialize and diversify the Cuban economy and resolve once and for all the overriding problem of underdevelopment.

In essence then the accord with Moscow signalled the first serious Cuban penetration of the Communist national economic systems (and vice versa). Even before Mikoyan had left the island a delegation arrived from the German Democratic Republic. On February 20th, a financial and trade agreement was signed. Similar pacts were soon concluded with Yugoslavia, China and Poland. (In April, Japan too got into the action with a purchase of 500,000
tons of sugar over a three-year period; at the same time, Cuba bought a substantial quantity of Japanese textiles and other items.) Moreover, in May the National Petroleum Institute revealed that the Castro regime expected to obtain about 20 per cent of Cuba's annual crude oil consumption from the Soviet Union, to be paid for with sugar as provided by the terms of the February accord. 87

Still, it must be emphasized that the rapprochement with Moscow remained strictly limited. The Mikoyan mission had provided the Soviets with the opportunity to obtain a first-hand assessment of the Cuban situation and lend tangible encouragement to this vanguard of the Latin American national liberation movement—without, however, having to make the kind of more substantive commitment that might have endangered Khrushchev's summit aspirations. Moreover, at the same time they had consummated a highly desirable economic agreement. The First Secretary's consumer program anticipated a substantial increase in domestic sugar consumption. But the Russian beet sugar crop had been damaged by drought. Thus, the Mikoyan mission had provided a golden opportunity to meet Soviet needs at minimum cost. Similarly, the accord enabled the Castro regime to dispose of part of Cuba's large sugar surplus 88 and put a halt to the dangerous deterioration of its dollar reserves. That diplomatic relations were not re-established was clearly Havana's decision. 89 Fidel did not want to risk undermining anticipated forthcoming negotiations with
Finally, it should be noted that in spite of official assertions to the contrary there was apparently some decision made at this time with regard to the supply of weapons to Cuba. Having been denied arms by the United States and Great Britain, Castro was now making good on his Foreign Minister's pledge to obtain them "from whomever may be willing to supply them".

Deadlock and Deterioration: The Last Rapprochement

But what of Cuba's relationship with the "Colossus of the North"? In the previous chapter, we defined the concept of "dyadic incompatibility" as an "uninhibited, mutually inhibitory" relationship compelled by its own coercive nature to disintegrate through an extended process of "mutual destruction". More specifically, it was suggested that in the case of Washington and Havana the sources of conflict lay not merely in each side's misperceptions of the other but in a fundamental incompatibility of basic values, interests and goals. Thus, the pursuit of the utopian and hegemonic objectives of Castroism gave rise to a counterrevolutionary opposition centered around those forces, both Cuban and North American, whose interests were rooted in the existing political, economic and social order. In turn, this threat both stimulated and facilitated the revolutionary process, inducing the Maximum Leader to speed up the consolidation of fidelista power and the institution of still more radical reforms.
and to strike back, both verbally and otherwise, at the perceived foreign and domestic "enemies" of the Revolution.

But action led to reaction in a self-perpetuating, self-intensifying dialectic of coercion which simultaneously paved the way for the formation of a garrison state within Cuba and the rapid acceleration of counterdependence vis-a-vis the United States. In retrospect, it seems clear that both the Eisenhower and Castro regimes wanted rapprochement, but only on their own terms. Thus, each side repeatedly made overtures and demands which the other, for a variety of reasons, could not accept or fulfill. Furthermore each, insecure and suspicious, was chronically on the defensive in response to the perceived threat posed by the other. Neither had the presence of mind or the desire to try to break through this blockage in communications by making a concerted effort to understand and come to grips with the needs and capacities of the other.

But if in the short run such mutual inhibitions were a formula for stalemate, in the long run they were the precursor of breakdown. Thwarted in his efforts to obtain massive new doses of North American trade and aid, Castro turned elsewhere. Rapprochement was abandoned. Moreover, as the revolutionary process developed and the balance of US-Cuban relations grew increasingly negative, mutual antipathy grew through an intense interactive process "during which each side believed its hostility was a
justified reaction to the hostile actions of the other." In effect, stimulus gave rise to response in a descending spiral of negative reinforcements. The abrazo became increasingly coercive and uninhibited in its breakdown by either internal or external constraints. At the same time, the mutual inhibitions to the development of a constructive relationship grew steadily stronger.

In December, as we have noted, this disintegration was translated into official US policy, as Ambassador Bonsal reported to the Department of State that "as long as Castro ruled Cuba, productive diplomacy was out of the question." Henceforth, progress on major issues was virtually precluded. United States policy would continue to be characterized by "nonintervention, moderation and restraint". Now, however, accommodation would be replaced by "watchful waiting". The forms of a normal relationship would be maintained. Havana would be given no pretext for breaking relations. Deprived of the specter of an external enemy, it was hoped, Castro would be unable to sustain that sense of emergency which he had so skillfully cultivated for his own purposes. "In an atmosphere of concentration on purely Cuban issues, opposition to his personal dictatorship could be expected to grow." Meanwhile, at the highest echelons of the CIA, consideration began to be given to the líder máximo's eventual "elimination".

In retrospect, one may doubt the wisdom of this shift.

In spite of his anti-Yankee posturings and his revolutionary offensive
against North American business interests, there is little evidence that Castro was already committed to "an eventual rupture" with the United States.\textsuperscript{94} Indeed, to have deliberately pursued such a policy would have been suicidal. The Cuban economy was still critically dependent on the US lifeline for the disposal at premium prices of about half its annual sugar crop (some 3.1 million tons in 1960). And there was as yet no reason to suppose that the USSR and the other Socialist countries would be willing or able to replace the United States as the island's primary purchaser and source of imports. (Indeed, there was some question as to whether the Soviet economy would be able to absorb all of the sugar contracted in the Mikoyan mission.)\textsuperscript{95} Nor, given the priorities of Khrushchev's summit diplomacy, did it seem likely that Moscow would be willing to make the kind of substantive military commitment needed to deter or repel a major Yankee attack.

In point of fact, Castro's foreign policy at the turn of the year was still quite fluid; and for the moment at least it was based on the assumption of continuing close economic relations with the United States. At the same time, however, he was determined to pursue his revolutionary goal culture as far and as fast as possible. And that meant radically restructuring the existing abrazo with the "Colossus".

On November 13th, this had been made explicit in a note to the US Ambassador: The Revolutionary Government considered it
imperative to achieve some sort of trade equilibrium with the United States. The existing sugar quota system left Cuba entirely too vulnerable to unilateral action from the North. Senators, press services and other interests opposed to the Revolution were using the threat of a quota reduction as an "intolerable instrument of undue pressure. . . ." Moreover, the United States had always been the "most favored party" in its commercial dealings with the island. Over the past ten years, the balance of payments had been unfavorable to the latter by more than a billion dollars. Thus, it was only logical that Cuba should endeavour to halt this drain by diversifying production and expanding trade with "all countries of the world, without neglecting her efforts to intensify as much as possible economic relations with the United States. . . ."

On the other hand, it was quite clear that the only acceptable "intensification" of US-Cuban economic ties would be a selective one, designed to increase Cuban benefits and limit American influence on the island, thus protecting the national sovereignty. Hence, for instance, the quota system was criticized for restricting sugar sales to the North. In contrast, US capital investment was denounced for having given the island a "semi-colonial" economy, "as evidenced by its absolute subordination to sugar production, the inefficiency of agricultural production to fill our own consumption requirements and by the advantageous position of many foreign industrial products when they compete with their Cuban counterparts."
And, in fact, as the revolutionary process intensified within Cuba itself, the interests of North American Capitalism came increasingly under fire. Towards the end of the year several of the island's largest US-owned cattle ranches were seized, including 33,500 acres of the famous King Ranch which were made into a government-run cooperative. In spite of this loss of land, the cattle were usually not confiscated; however, since it was impossible to feed them they had to be sold. Moreover, now the National Institute of Agrarian Reform stepped in with orders that no one except the government could buy the cattle; nor could they be exported. In effect, the large ranches not only lost their land but were forced to sell nearly all of their herds to the state on the latter's terms. And elsewhere, similar scenarios were occurring: In Oriente, 75,000 acres of land on which US companies held mineral concessions were seized, including 10,000 acres belonging to Bethlehem Steel and 30,000 acres belonging to the Cuban Development Company. Nearly 40 US, Canadian and British firms had their files seized and sealed, preliminary to the drafting of a new petroleum law. Subsequently, legislation was passed requiring foreign oil concessionaries to drill on their properties instead of holding them for exploration. In addition, they were made to turn over 60% of their earnings to the government. Still another law empowered the state to take over companies which found themselves in financial straits or which tried to cut their losses by reducing production; this led to many additional
nationalizations, in particular of hotels.

No doubt, as Zeitlin and Scheer point out, such expropriations were meager when compared to the seizures of Cuban property that were occurring. Nevertheless, for every action there is a reaction. And as the economic and political climate on the island grew increasingly threatening to foreigners, investments dried up. Credits were denied. Tourist earnings, which had come to about $50 million the previous year, fell to an anticipated $10 million. Such losses, in combination with the decline in sugar export earnings (world market prices having earlier plunged to an eighteen-year low), had a disastrous effect on the island's foreign exchange reserves. By the end of December, these totalled only $49.4 million. Moreover, this amount did not "include the large backlog of applications for exchange transfers in payment of imports, services and other remittances; and the danger of exhausting exchange reserves reportedly was averted only by delaying remittance approvals."

In early January, the Castro government seized 70,000 acres of US sugar land. Ambassador Bonsal was immediately recalled to Washington. He returned on the 10th of the month bearing a stringent note of protest. The two sides were now firmly deadlocked. Each was on the defensive, inflexible in the conviction that it was the innocent victim of the other's unreasonable demands and provocations. Both had an abundance of evidence with which to selectively feed their increasingly
For its part, the Eisenhower administration was intent on "placing on the record the numerous acts of arbitrary despoilment of which Americans in Cuba had been the victims at the hands of the INRA", 100

...the seizure and occupation of land and buildings of United States citizens without court orders and frequently without any written authorization whatever, the confiscation and removal of equipment, the seizure of cattle, the cutting and removal of timber, the plowing under of pastures, all without the consent of the American owners. In many cases no inventories were taken; nor any indication afforded that payment was intended to be made. These acts have been carried out in the name of the National Agrarian Reform Institute.101

The American Ambassador, Bonnal, thought this was but an "expeditious procedure". After all, the INRA’s actions "did not represent the application of the Land Reform Law or of any other Cuban law; they were purely arbitrary exercises of personal power." Moreover, the Castro regime was already well along the road towards destroying the kind of independent "administrative and judicial machinery...that might have furnished remedies to those who believed themselves the victims of abuses of executive power and of denials of due process."102

On the other hand, in light of the policy change of the previous month it is apparent that Washington was no longer much interested in negotiating its differences with Havana. The American protest note was largely a public relations maneuver designed to legitimize the growing hostility to the Castro regime.
This was not lost on the Cubans. On January 11th the acting Foreign Minister, Marcelo Fernández, issued a reply criticizing the Eisenhower administration for releasing its protest to the press before the Cuban government had a chance to react to it. The note in question did not go into the "fundamentals" of the situation but merely listed a number of alleged "violations" of the Agrarian Reform Law. It was the "firm position" of the Revolutionary Government to accelerate the agrarian reform, "applying equal methods of expropriation and indemnification to nationals and foreigners and referring any case in doubt to the competent Cuban courts."\(^{103}\) Revolución was less diplomatic. The American note was uncategorically rejected. Castro's bond proposal was defended as the only possible means of paying for the confiscated property (an accurate enough assessment in light of the regime's deteriorating financial situation).\(^{104}\)

On January 13th, an airplane bearing North American registration dropped incendiary bombs on cane fields fifty miles northeast of Havana. A second attack followed two days later. No doubt these acts were unrelated to the US protest; to the Cubans, however, they seemed indissolubly linked. And to make matters worse, Vice-President Nixon chose this moment to journey to Miami--increasingly the heart of counterrevolutionary exile activity--where he raised the specter of a cut in the sugar quota should the Castro regime fail to mend its ways.\(^{105}\)
This was too much. On the evening of January 20th, Fidel once again took to the airways in a nationally-televised inter-
view. His message had a familiar ring:

"...the obvious international plot against Cuba, the insolent threats, the plans of the monopolies, of the criminals of war and the international oligarchies, which are aimed at destroying us. ... At present, defense of the Revolution and defense of national sov-
ereignty are one and the same. ... The only hope for the Revolution's enemies is to obtain foreign support. ... The fact that Cuba is an island and hard to reach does not mean that they will not try to come. ... They did not give us bases, ... and in spite of this we arrived here in a small boat. Now consider the advantageous circumstances of the counterrevolutionaries, who have airports, planes, abundant funds, provided by the monopolies. ... and are further encouraged by the constant notes of the embassy, of North American officials. ... Every day a policy of hostility to Cuba is more evident. It would be irresponsible not to take care of the national defense. Reality shows that each day it is more necessary to prepare more militia."

To Secretary of State Herter, this was the "most insulting" diatribe to date. Once more, he ordered Bonsal home for con-
sultations. Simultaneously, the New York Times reported that the administration had decided to ask Congress for the authority to raise or lower sugar quotas in an emergency. The proposal, it was noted, was aimed at fashioning an economic weapon to be used against the Castro regime should the need arise.

The abrazo was now approaching the point of total break-
down. In the opinion of Ambassador Bonsal, Fidel's outrage was a sham. The American protest note had been a reasonable expression of legitimate concerns; it had in no way contradicted the ex-
pressed US desire to improve relations. Castro was bent on
artificially manufacturing a threat which did not exist. By the same token, however, it was important not to provide the Cuban despot with an easy target for his harrangues. Thus, moderation continued to be the essence of his council. 108

On January 26th, President Eisenhower issued a major policy statement, based largely on Bonsal's recommendations. While rejecting Castro's charges as "totally unfounded", he reaffirmed his government's commitment to nonintervention and promised that it would continue its efforts to prevent US territory from being used for illegal operations against other countries. At the same time, he welcomed any information that the Cubans could supply that would assist US law enforcement agencies in such matters. On the other hand, there was little here that was new. The statement once again placed the blame for the deterioration of relations squarely on the Castro regime. The United States regretted that its "earnest efforts" to establish a basis for understanding and confidence had not been reciprocated. The Cubans, of course, had the right to undertake social, economic and political reforms—but only with due regard for their obligations under international law. Similarly, the US government and the American people had the right to assert and defend their legitimate interests. The Eisenhower administration would continue to bring to the attention of the Castro regime any instances in which the rights of its citizens had been violated. Such disputes,
it was hoped, could be resolved through negotiations. Finally, the President expressed confidence that the Cuban people would be able to recognize and defeat the "intrigues of International Communism" which were seeking to destroy both their "democratic institutions" and their "mutually beneficial" friendship with their North American neighbors. 109

That same day, the Argentine Ambassador to Havana, Julio Amoedo, received a visit from Daniel M. Braddock, the US charge d'affaires ad interim. Amoedo had personal relations with both Bonsal and Castro. Would he initiate a mediation? If the Cuban leader were receptive, a basis for understanding could be found in the following proposals: 1. the campaign of insults against the United States would be halted; 2. Dr. Castro would receive Ambassador Bonsal upon his return to the island with a view to concretizing the resolution of existing differences; 3. the United States was disposed to assist the Havana government in the financing of the agrarian reform and other socio-economic measures.

Early the following morning, Amoedo located the Cuban leader at the home of Celia Sanchez. Fidel's initial reaction was negative. Even then, he was preparing an editorial for the next edition of Revolucion in which Eisenhower's speech would be categorically rejected. Upon second thought, however, he reconsidered. After all, there was no harm in listening to what the Yankees had to say. Revolucion was notified that the editorial would not be published; all attacks against the United States were ordered to
Castro agreed that the differences with the Americans should be discussed. Amoedo was informed that President Dorticos would shortly issue a statement to that effect. 110

And, indeed, that very evening Dorticos appeared on national television. His speech was the complement of Eisenhower's: The Cuban government regretted the progressive worsening of relations with the United States. At the same time, it had been the victim of an intensive US press campaign which had distorted the "true significance" of the Revolution and insulted its leaders. The Eisenhower administration, through its note of protest, had associated itself with this campaign. Moreover, there had been innumerable threatening statements by American officials—by Vice-President Nixon, for instance. And Washington was trying to block the Castro regime from obtaining arms with which to defend itself against the "imminent threats of invasion of our territory". Cuba was glad that the United States recognized its right to carry out reforms. By the same token, however, this right was not dependent, in paternalistic fashion, on US favor; rather, it emanated from Cuba's condition as a sovereign nation. The Revolutionary Government was "fully disposed to hear and consider all complaints and claims regarding individual cases that may be made by US citizens, in keeping with Cuban and international law." Similarly, it was ready to "discuss without reservation and with the utmost thoroughness" all differences between the two governments; it saw "no obstacles of any kind" that would
"prevent the realization of these negotiations." 111

Was all this for real? Years later, Amoedo would offer the opinion that Fidel had accepted his mediation only "as a dilatory tactic to diminish tension... while awaiting Mikoyan's arrival." Thus, his efforts had proceeded satisfactorily up until the latter's visit, after which the Castro regime had "virtually paralyzed the negotiations with various excuses and evasions which were designed to gain time until the Cuban-Soviet pact was signed... ." 112

In perspective, this appears too simple. The Mikoyan mission did not solve Fidel's economic problems. Cuba was still critically dependent on the United States. Where else could the capital be obtained to finance the Revolution's ambitious socio-economic reforms? Were the US offer of aid genuine, it seems unlikely that it would have been refused.

But was it genuine? The Department of State later denied that economic aid had been proposed. And, indeed, it appears that the third point in the Braddock-Amoedo feeler had been unauthorized. In the prevailing atmosphere of hostility, such an offer would have been widely regarded in the United States as "craven appeasement". And this was, after all, an election year. Moreover, Ambassador Bonsal's return was now delayed as the administration continued to emphasize its displeasure with the now conciliatory government in Havana. 113
It was almost as if incompetence were a virtue. On February 1st, the New York Times noted the "remarkable" absence of attacks on the United States in the Cuban press. Three days later, it reiterated its previous report that the administration had decided to seek Congressional authority to cut the sugar quota. Cuban concern mounted. What was one to make of these seeming contradictions in US policy? The interpretation, in Havana, was not charitable. Nor did subsequent statements by President Eisenhower and Secretary of State Herter do much to alleviate the growing apprehension.\textsuperscript{114}

Thus it was that Fidel, in the wake of Mikoyan's departure, decided to test the quality of Yankee intentions. On February 22nd the US charge, Braddock, was given a note from the Cuban Foreign Minister: The Castro government had decided to create a special commission to begin negotiations with Washington at a mutually acceptable time. There was, however, a catch:

The Revolutionary Government...wishes to make clear...that the renewal and subsequent development of the said negotiations must necessarily be subject to no measure being adopted, by the Government or the Congress of your country, of a unilateral character which might preclude the results of the aforementioned negotiations or cause harm to the Cuban economy and people.

It seems obvious to add that the adherence of your Government to this point of view would not only contribute to the improvement in relations between our respective countries but also reaffirm the spirit of fraternal friendship which has bound and does bind our peoples. It would moreover permit both Governments to examine, in a serene atmosphere and with the broadest scope, the questions which have affected the traditional relations between Cuba and the United States...\textsuperscript{115}
Was this an unreasonable demand? A neutral observer might doubt it. To the Americans, however, it seemed "unrealistic" and "impertinent". Congress had not yet made a grant of executive discretion with regard to the sugar quota. Besides, the administration could not be expected to tie the hands of the legislature while the Cuban dictatorship was "daily taking wholly arbitrary and hate-inspired actions against American interests..." Clearly, this was a mere ploy "advanced for propaganda purposes and to underline the unilateral nature of the American sugar legislation on which Cuban welfare was then dependent." One week later, the US responded with a note of its own reaffirming its willingness to negotiate but rejecting the Cuban condition.

Again deadlock. But not for long. On March 4th, the French munitions ship, La Coubre, bearing 76 tons of war materials, exploded in Havana harbor. Seventy-five Cuban dock workers were killed, some two hundred injured. The initial report from the Belgian munitions expert, Dessard, ruled out the possibility of accident. The ship had apparently been sabotaged, though it could not be determined whether the act had taken place in port, during the trip or while loading. The next day, at the funeral of those killed in the explosion, Castro gave vent to his suspicions: Had not functionaries of the US government repeatedly tried to prevent Cuba from obtaining arms? Granted, he had no proof, but the Americans clearly had an interest in blocking the delivery. And it was "among the interested parties that we must look for the
guilty. ... We are justified in believing that when, through diplomatic channels, they failed in their efforts to prevent the sale of these supplies, they might have tried other methods. . . ."

At the same time, Eisenhower's decision to seek discretionary authority to lower the sugar quota was denounced as a blatant attempt to restrict Cuban independence through the threat of economic reprisals.\textsuperscript{119}

This was the last straw. Secretary of State Herter quickly denounced Castro's charges as "baseless, erroneous and misleading", designed to "transform the understandable sorrow of the Cuban people into resentment against the United States."\textsuperscript{120}

Ten days later, on March 17th, the decision was made to begin recruiting and training Cuban exiles for eventual military action against the regime.\textsuperscript{121}

The actual cause of the Le Coubre explosion has never been established. At the time, there was some feeling among Cuban longshoremen that the blast had been accidental. Some stevedores indicated that safety precautions for handling munitions ships had not been rigorously observed. Inexperienced soldiers had helped unload the cargo; workers had been seen smoking on the job. In addition, no hard evidence was ever produced to support the initial charge of sabotage. Regardless, as with so many of the incidents contributing to the breakdown of the US-Cuban abrazo the objective reality of the event was less important than its subjective impact. March 4th marked the end of any realistic hope for rapprochement.
Henceforth, there was hardly enough trust or good will left on either side to produce more than the facade of an effort. All this became quite clear when towards the middle of the month the Secretary of the Treasury, Lopez-Fresquet, advised Castro that he had been approached by yet another emissary from the North. This individual, it was said, had the authority to offer the Havana government US aid in fighting violations of Cuban territory by planes based in Florida. The United States would publicly apologize for not being able to stop these flights due to the large number of isolated airports in the state and the inability of its radar system to detect low-flying aircraft. Moreover, it would offer Castro the "newest military planes and the technical assistance to operate them" as a gesture of good will in order to end the quarrelling and advance the cause of negotiations.

Fidel was curious: "What an interesting thing this international chess game is!" However, he needed time to think the matter over. On the morning of March 17th, Lopez-Fresquet was summoned to the Presidential Palace. Castro, it seems, had conferred with Dorticos. After due deliberation, it had been decided not to accept the offer: "We don't trust the US; we think... they want us... to contradict ourselves. Once we admit publicly that they are on the level and that they are friendly to us, they will not give Cuba anything." And, indeed, we now know that the proposal had--once again--been unauthorized. The emissary
in question had been Dr. Mario Lazo, senior partner of one of the largest law firms in Cuba and an unofficial adviser to the US embassy. It had been on his initiative alone that the offer had been made.  

Relations between the two sides were now rapidly assuming the appearance of a comedy of errors. And they were shortly to become even worse. Inside the Castro regime, a debate was raging over the sugar quota. Guevara, in his zeal to defend the Soviet trade pact and push Fidel ever leftward, had begun to publicly attack Cuban sugar sales to the "Colossus". The preferential prices that the Cubans received were dismissed as a mere subsidy for high-cost North American producers. In truth, the United States was dependent on the island. Cuba was its "largest, most efficient and cheapest provider"; moreover, "sixty per cent" of the interests that profited "directly from the production and commerce in sugar" were US interests. In return for the "supposed" benefits of the quota system, the island had been developed as a sugar factory of the United States. All sorts of "burdensome treaties" had been imposed in order to gain favored treatment for Yankee exports and investments. In effect, preferential sugar prices were part and parcel of the whole elaborate structure of economic slavery which it was the duty of the revolutionaries to destroy.

Castro himself did not go quite this far. Indeed, he could not. He had the responsibilities of power to consider. He
was now peering over the edge of the abyss, reluctant to take the final plunge. A break with the United States could prove fatal. True, the US sugar dependence on Cuba afforded him some room for maneuver. A cut in the quota would be damaging to North American economic interests, not to mention the consuming public. Similarly, such a move might be deterred by the specter of retaliatory nationalizations. And even the Eisenhower administration could not be totally oblivious to the damage that such a blatant act of aggression might do to its relations with the rest of Latin America.

Still, how far could the Yankees be pushed? Somewhere there was a line beyond which provocation would bring powerful retaliatory response. The end of the sugar harvest would bring a major new round of nationalizations. One had to anticipate the possible North American reaction.

Thus it was that in the weeks following the Le Coubre affair the courtship of Moscow was resumed. The time had now come to re-establish diplomatic relations and to explore the prospects of even closer economic ties in the event that Washington should actually carry out the threatened sanctions. Moreover, on March 16th the PSP Central Committee published a resolution calling for still greater solidarity from the Socialist countries. In particular: "Cuba needs fighter planes and radar equipment, as well as other arms..."
It was with a view towards promoting these objectives that Blas Roca set off for Peking and Moscow in April. He would presently be followed by other emissaries.

The Consolidation of Elite Hegemony

Finally, it is necessary to note that these external developments were complemented by the steady intensification of the revolutionary process within Cuba itself. Once again, the familiar pattern: Revolutionary threat had led to counterrevolutionary counterthreat, inducing Castro to strike ever more forcefully against the perceived enemy. As early as December, Fidel had predicted that in 1960 the Revolution would have to be defended with arms in hand. And already that prophesy seemed to be coming true. Estimates of counterrevolutionary strength ran as high as 18,000, drawn mainly from friends and relatives of those imprisoned or executed by the regime. Some 13% of Cuba's cane fields had been subjected to incendiary bombing. In the Sierra Maestra, nearly 200 guerrillas were reported active under the command of the former Castro guide "Nico" Beaton. Elsewhere in Oriente, several other groups were operating. At least one of these, it seems, was already receiving aid from the Central Intelligence Agency. Initial government efforts to snuff out this incipient brushfire had suffered embarrassing setbacks. Meanwhile, a promising new underground organization, the Movement of Revolutionary Recovery, had been set up, consisting of disillusioned
former Castro supporters. And in Guatemala CIA representatives were busy negotiating a Cuban exile training center.

In retrospect, it is clear that the internal danger to the regime was greatly overrated.\textsuperscript{133} Still, this was by no means apparent at the time. And, in any case, Castro was not one to take such matters lightly. The survival of the Revolution was at stake. Nor was the threat restricted to impersonal acts of counterrevolutionary warfare. Fidel was, in fact, a hunted man. The gangster, Meyer Lansky, had placed a $1 million bounty on his head.\textsuperscript{134} Indeed, assassination plots were now being spawned with a regularity that suggested that sooner or later one of them would find its mark. Under these circumstances Castro, always disorganized and peripatetic, became even moreso, "rarely sleeping in the same house but sometimes in Cojimar, or in Celia Sanchez's apartment in Vedado or in the Havana Hilton. But even so, still he showed himself incessantly."\textsuperscript{135}

These months witnessed the increasing consolidation of the garrison state. In December, the Revolutionary Military Tribunals had been reactivated in earnest with the trial and sentencing (to 20 years imprisonment) of Hubert Matos. This was yet another demoralizing blow to the "center-left". More arrests and trials soon followed. At the same time, the largest militia in the history of the country was being formed under the command of Rogelio Acevedo, a young guerrilla captain who had been with Guevara at the battle of Santa Clara.
Meanwhile, within the unions the purge of mujalistas had been broadened to include all those who had voted against the Communists at the CTC's Tenth Congress. Resistance was ineffectual. In the words of Hugh Thomas, organized labor was not

...likely to make a vigorous challenge on behalf of the free system. The credit of many of the leaders was low because of past collaboration with Mujal or Batista. Some had narrowly escaped being tried as Batistianos. Others were anxious through some new display of zeal to work their way back to what now passed for respectability. The whole history of Cuban labor made such men likely to react defensively, selfishly and un-creatively to demands made on them by any progressive government. If they had handed themselves over en bloc to Batista in 1952, it was not surprising that, despite their apparently strong position, they should, in 1959, be a rather easy prey for the Communists.

By spring, the unions were already well along the road to becoming appendages of the government. The Ministry of Labor had acquired the power to settle labor disputes; the right to strike had been abolished; the registration of all employers and employees had become a matter of law. Henceforth, workers would have to seek employment through the Ministry's offices and lists.136

Similar controls were extended over the media of mass communications. In the six month period between November and June, over a dozen Havana dailies either went out of business or were taken over by the government. In May, the Diario de la Marina and Prensa Libre, the most influential and vocal opponents of the regime, were seized by workers representing the newspaper unions. The adverse public response was minimal. The press too had been identified with the ancien regime, some papers having been totally
dependent on state subsidies for their survival. To all intents and purposes, this marked the death knell of the free press, though for the moment the weekly journal Bohemia and a handful of minor independent publications continued to appear. However, there was little in the way of criticism heard. By now also station CMQ, the most important television center in Havana, had fallen under government sway. And at the University, clashes between pro-and anti-Communist groups signalled the decline of the traditional academic freedoms.

These weeks too saw the departure of some old allies:

On March 17th, following his conversation with Dorticos at the Presidential Palace, Lopez-Fresquet resigned as Finance Minister. Towards the end of the month Castro's old Ortodoxo colleague, Conte Aguero, sought asylum in the Argentine embassy after denouncing the government over national television and being denounced in turn by the Prime Minister and his brother, the Minister of Defense. By this time too the CTC Secretary-General, David Salvador, had become thoroughly disillusioned with the increasing Communist penetration of the unions and was on the verge of making contact with Manuel Ray, the former Minister of Public Works, who was already in the resistance. Moreover, in May the Archbishop of Santiago, Monseigneur Perez Serantes, who had been popularly credited with having saved Castro's life after Moncada, finally made firm his longstanding suspicions: "It can no longer be claimed that Communism is at the gates", he declared in a pastoral letter
that was widely read in Oriente and Havana, "because in truth it is within."137

Yet, none of this seemed to have much effect on Fidel's popularity. In April and May, Princeton's Institute for International Social Research surveyed a cross-section of the island's urban and semi-urban population: 43 percent of the respondents were found to be strong supporters of Castro's Cuba, 43 percent supporters and only about 14 percent opposed. The Cubans exhibited a "perfectly enormous" sense of both personal and national progress (especially the latter) and were "highly optimistic about the future." They praised the Revolution—especially the agrarian reform, educational and industrialization programs—and the honesty and dedication of its leaders. The percentage of supporters and fervent supporters was greater among the poor and less-educated than among the better-educated middle- and upper-income respondents and greater among those living outside Havana than Havanans. The survey director, Lloyd Free, declared that he felt "reasonably confident" that had a national election been held at that time "Fidel Castro could have won by overwhelming odds."138

In June a second poll, this by the magazine Bohemia, generally confirmed these findings.139

One recalls the words of Max Weber: "The charismatic leader gains and maintains authority solely by proving his strength in life. If he wants to be a prophet, he must perform miracles; if he wants to be a war lord, he must perform heroic deeds. Above all, however, his divine mission must 'prove' itself
in that those who faithfully surrender to him must fare well. If they do not fare well, he is obviously not the master sent by the gods."\(^{140}\) In Cuba, at an increasingly frenetic pace and in a remarkably short period of time, the redistributive policies of the Castro government had brought about a dramatic rise in the living standards of the rural and urban lower classes.\(^{141}\) Not surprisingly, los humildes had responded accordingly. Gone were the cynicism and fatalism of the past. The initial millenarian optimism had been confirmed by concrete socio-economic rewards. For the first time really there was a sense of common pride and purpose among vast segments of the population heretofore excluded from the national community. The result, among other things, was the reinforcement of the messianic allegiance.\(^{142}\)

Unfortunately, little of this was understood in official Washington. To the American President and his advisors, Castro had quite simply "betrayed" the Revolution and those who had made it with him. Indeed, it was almost as though the father, having been rejected (in his own mind unjustly) by the rebellious son, was determined for psychological reasons of his own to deny the prodigal all virtue. Even the US embassy in Havana, normally a source of moderation, shrugged off the findings of the Princeton survey. As Bonsal himself later admitted, "we underestimated the degree to which pre-Castro Cuba in most of its manifestations had been rejected by the great majority of the people."\(^{143}\)
This was putting it mildly. In truth, the traditional
democratic freedoms sank "amidst only the gentlest of ripples." In retrospect, it is clear that the policy of "reasonableness
and restraint" that had been dominant prior to March 17th
had been based on a whole complex of mistaken assumptions. Not
only had it underestimated the breadth and intensity of Castro's
popular support and overestimated the Cuban allegiance to
liberal democratic values, it had seriously misjudged the political
potency of the middle sectors. From the moment of his arrival
in Havana, Bonsal had been counting on the "Establishment"--
including anti-Batista politicians, Capitalists, union leaders and
the "emerging middle class"--to confine Castro "within democratic
patterns of behavior." Yet, these heterogeneous elements had
never been able to hold any leader to account. All too often,
those who were politically aware and active preferred the safety
and comfort of exile to the hazards of confronting the regime's
increasingly repressive security apparatus, not to mention the
now violently politicized lumpenproletariat. Anyone challenging
Fidel "risked being torn apart by the mob, and sophisticated
Cubans knew this." Lacking leadership, organization and common
purpose, the middle sectors waited, as in the past, for a more
formidable power to assert itself. In the words of one exile: "We
had no confidence in any possible Cuban leadership of the anti-
Castro forces, and we did not believe that you, the United States,
would let Castro get away with it."^{147}

But now a new policy had been set in motion. Unbeknown to the American public—including even the US Ambassador^{148}—the Eisenhower administration was already moving to prepare Castro's overthrow. The stage was now set for the final breakdown of the abrazo. Meanwhile, over the USSR a U-2 spy plane was about to open up new prospects for the development of the Cuban Revolution.
Chapter Eight

FOOTNOTES


2 Ramon Eduardo Ruiz, Cuba, the Making of a Revolution (n.c., 1968), p. 142.


5 The following interpretation will not meet with universal approval. It is often said, for instance, that Khrushchev made policy ad hoc, without benefit of any coherent design. Hence, Crankshaw: "He moved backwards into the future, trying to stand at bay, but always giving ground to the forces he himself, to his own greater glory, had unloosed. Or, because he was all those things, a peasant, a ward politician, a power-seeker on a grand and ruthless scale, as well as a dreamer and, towards the end, a statesman, he was incapable of an all-embracing and coherent design. He wanted to bring prosperity and glory to Russia, but his temperament was too opportunistic and his received ideas were too limiting to allow him to see the prerequisites for this. Instead, . . . he constantly sought dramatic and personal solutions which were going to change the face of the Soviet Union overnight without wonder of wonders, disturbing the existing, the Stalinist, framework. . . ." Edward Crankshaw, Khrushchev, a Career (New York, 1966), p. 270. One trusts that the arguments and evidence presented in these pages are sufficient to modify, if not dispel, such notions.


7 It had been Malenkov and Lavrenti Beria who had been primarily responsible for Khrushchev's humiliating defeat on the agrogorod issue. See Ibid., pp. 46-50.

Ibid., p. 23.

Ploss, p. 60.

Linden, p. 29.

Though progress was uneven—the 1955 and 1957 harvests being poor due to unfavorable climatic conditions—on the whole the Program was a definite plus. Hence, for instance, the 1954 Virgin Lands crop represented a 65% increase over the 1949-53 average; moreover, two years later a record harvest of 63 million tons—180% over the 1949-53 levels—was recorded. And although this total steadily declined during the next two seasons, these were by no means bad years. Indeed, the 1959 crop was still almost two-and-a-half times the 1949-53 average, and almost 20% better than the corresponding figure for 1954-58. See Frank A. Durgin, Jr., "The Virgin Lands Programme, 1954-60", Soviet Studies, XIII, 3 (January, 1962), pp. 260-62.


This from a 1955 peak of 5.7 million men. It must be noted, however, that the United States had earlier announced a gradual reduction of its post-Korean force levels from 3.2 million to 2.8 million men by mid-1956. Thus, the Soviet move was not entirely the unilateral initiative that it was proclaimed to be. Thomas W. Wolfe, Soviet Power and Europe: The Evolution of a Political-Military Posture, 1945-1964 (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation Memorandum, RM-5838-PR, November 1969), p. 221.


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17Linden, p. 40.

18Nikita Khrushchev, Stroitel'stvo Kommunizma v SSSR i Rasvitiye Sel'skogo Khosyaystva (Moscow, 1963), II, 342.

19The target dates for overtaking the US production of milk and meat were 1958 and 1961 respectively. Pravda, May 24, 1957.

20Ibid.

21A notable exception here being Zhukov, who was largely responsible for the military's active stand against the "Anti-Party Group". In Khrushchev's own words: "Unlike so many thick-headed types you find wearing uniforms, Zhukov understood the necessity of reducing our military expenditures. We limited the number of commanders and cut the salaries of certain categories in the officers corps. After I retired, some voices of dissatisfaction were heard blaming me for this policy. In fact, the cuts were made on Zhukov's initiative, though I unconditionally supported him because I knew we had many abuses and excesses in the military sphere. It was also under Zhukov that we reached an agreement in the leadership to reduce our standing army by half. . . . Furthermore, unlike some others, Zhukov demonstrated a realistic approach to the questions of establishing some sort of reciprocal arms control with the United States. In short, Zhukov was exceptionally perceptive and flexible for a military man." In Khrushchev Remembers: the Last Testament, translated and edited by Strobe Talbott (Boston, 1974), pp. 13-14. But Zhukov soon fell into disfavor for his "Bonapartist" tendencies and was removed from office. For more on the military and the problem of resource reallocation, see Ibid., pp. 220-21 and 534-41. An excellent treatment of the whole range of issues involved in the growing schism between Khrushchev and the marshals may be found in Roman Kolkowicz, The Soviet Military and the Communist Party (Princeton, 1967).

22For further discussion of these and subsequent developments, see Linden, pp. 58-59. Quoted material at p. 58.


24Ibid., June 6, 1958. See also his report on expanding the chemical industry, in Ibid., May 10, 1958.

26 Bloomfield, Clemens and Griffiths, pp. 52-53.


29 On the politics of Soviet missile deception, see especially Arnold L. Horelick and Myron Rush, Strategic Power and Soviet Foreign Policy (Chicago, 1966).

30 Here it is perhaps significant that the Soviets would decide not to engage in a highly costly large-scale deployment of their first-generation ICBM's, in spite of their capacity to do so.

31 In the words of Adam Ulam: "It can be unhesitatingly stated that the rejection of the Rapacki Plan for a nuclear-free zone in Central Europe was one of the fundamental errors of Western policy in the postwar period. Rejection would have made sense only if the West planned to use the threat of nuclear armament for Bonn as a bargaining card with the Russians. Since at the time it did not...the United States and its allies had nothing to lose by accepting the Plan.... In fact, if the West had been able to shake off its by now pathological feeling of diplomatic inferiority vis-a-vis Moscow, its feeling that in every agreement it was likely to be taken in, it would have seen what considerable advantages and opportunities the Rapacki Plan opened: it would have meant the installation of some form of international control in the territories of East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Poland." Op. cit., pp. 290-91.

32 Khrushchev, in his May 24th address to the Warsaw Treaty participants. Pravda, May 27, 1958.

33 Message of June 11th to President Eisenhower, in Ibid., June 17, 1958.
In all fairness to the West, it should be noted that both Washington and London suspended nuclear weapons testing on 31 October. Also, that on September 30th Moscow began a new series of tests which lasted until November 3rd, when its moratorium was resumed. For an excellent discussion of Soviet test ban and regional arms control policies, see Bloomfield, Clemens and Griffiths, pp. 146-61.

Pravda, November 11, 1958.

See, for instance, Khrushchev's press conference of November 27th, in Ibid., November 28, 1958.


Ibid., December 13, 1958.

This in contrast to the West's offer of a one-year suspension. The Soviet position was that such an agreement would be meaningless, twelve months being the amount of time required to analyze the results of previous explosions and prepare for the next round: "By proposing a one-year suspension...after conducting an accelerated series of nuclear tests unprecedented in intensity, the US and British governments seek, on the one hand, to gain a one-sided military advantage over the Soviet Union and, on the other, to keep their hands free to resume nuclear tests whenever it suits them. It is fully understandable that the Soviet government considers the Western powers' proposal...unacceptable." Ibid., December 4, 1958. Similarly, Western insistence that "mobile ground observer teams" be set up on a permanent basis to provide on-site inspection throughout the USSR was also rejected. In Khrushchev's words: "Zhukov...and I agreed in principle to on-site inspection of the border regions and to airborne reconnaissance of our territory up to a certain distance inside our borders, but we couldn't allow the US and its allies to send their inspectors criss-crossing around the Soviet Union. They would have discovered
that we were in a relatively weak position, and that realization might have encouraged them to attack us." Khrushchev Remembers: the Last Testament, p. 536. Suffice it to say that each side endeavoured to set forth proposals that, at minimum, would not be to its military disadvantage and that, at maximum, would be in its favor.

41 Pravda, December 8, 1958. This had been anticipated by the Polish Foreign Minister's announcement on November 4th of a revised version of the Rapacki Plan for a nuclear-free zone in Central Europe. A two-stage process was now suggested: First, there would be a freeze on existing nuclear weapons in the zone; second, a reduction of conventional forces, accompanied by complete denuclearization. Both steps would be subject to strict controls. See Bloomfield, Clemens and Griffiths, pp. 148-49.


44 Pravda, January 11, 1959.


47 See, e.g., Khrushchev Remembers: the Last Testament, p. 255.


49 Pless, pp. 113-83.

50 Izvestia, August 12, 1958 and February 8, 1959.

51 In addition, a rise in fourth quarter deliveries had resulted in the planned annual volume of trade for 1958 being
surpassed by more than 600 million rubles. Pravda, February 27, 1959.

52 Floyd, p. 62.


Ulam and others have suggested that Khrushchev proposed to link the Soviet and Chinese armed forces through a system of joint command similar to the Warsaw Pact—that is, under Russian leadership. Op. cit., p. 293. See also Halperin, pp. 124-31; and Malcolm Mackintosh, "The Soviet Attitude", in Ibid., pp. 203-10.

54 Ulam, p. 303.


56 "The Origin and Development...", in Griffith, p. 399.

57 Khrushchev himself always indignantly denied this. Perhaps too indignantly to be entirely convincing. The charge had clearly struck a nerve. See, e.g., Pravda, March 20, 1959.

58 For Mikoyan's account of his visit to the United States, see Ibid., January 25 and February 1, 1959.

59 The Soviet initiative of January 10th had made no reference to the matter, leading to widespread speculation that the ultimatum had been withdrawn. And, indeed, two weeks later Mikoyan suggested that "the deadline could easily be postponed by two or three weeks or even two or three months." Ibid., January 25, 1959. Subsequently, on March 19th, Khrushchev announced that it was not an ultimatum at all, but merely a "tentative date". Ibid., March 20, 1959. Suffice it to say that that "tentative date" kept being extended until finally the subject was dropped altogether following the First Secretary's visit to the United States in September.

60 And, in fact, nothing was, Western opposition to the Soviet peace treaty being "fundamental". The Allies were particularly unhappy with the lack of any provision for free elections. They noted, quite rightly, that the insistence on an equal status for the two Germanies would have meant that the 17 million Germans in the East would have had parity of representation with their
52 million countrymen in the West. Yet, it is difficult to imagine any other terms that could have been offered, since any truly democratic balloting would have quickly led to the dissolution of the Ulbricht regime. For this and related issues, see Mackintosh, pp. 216-17.

61See, for instance, Khrushchev's election speech, in Pravda, February 25, 1959; his press conference on the German problem, in Ibid., March 20, 1959; and his interview with the editors of West Germany's Social Democratic newspapers, in Ibid., May 9, 1959.


63Ibid., pp. 399-400.

64John Foster Dulles was by this time dead of cancer. The new Secretary of State was Christian Herter.

65For the First Secretary's recollections of his American tour, see Khrushchev Remembers: the Last Testament, pp. 368-416.

66"The Origin and Development...", in Griffith, p. 399.

67Ibid., pp. 399-400.


69According to Roca, in Ibid., October 3, 1959.

70Ibid., October 21, 1959.

71Ibid., October 1, 1959.


73Hoy, November 5, 1959.

74In Defense of National Sovereignty (Havana, November 13, 1959).

75Hoy, November 22, 1959.


79. This at least is the argument of Edward Gonzalez. See *Ibid.*, pp. 594-613 and "Castro's Revolution. . .", pp. 61-64. It should be noted, however, that when Gonzalez asked Carlos Rafael Rodriguez about these developments the latter rejected this interpretation. But then, that was to be expected. Gonzalez to the author. Herbert Dinerstein, incidently, makes much the same argument in *The Making of a Missile Crisis: October 1962* (Baltimore, 1976), pp. 64 ff.

80. Thus, in contrast to official Soviet policy which stressed the broadening of state-to-state contacts between the Communist nations and Latin America, Blas Roca openly called for the overthrow of the oligarchical regimes and their replacement by "revolutionary, progressive and democratic governments of the popular classes" based on the model of Cuba. *Hoy*, January 17, 1960. Similarly, the PSP now embraced the idea of cooperatives and state farms, even as Moscow continued to talk about the "leading role" of the free farmer and the dominant economic position of the national bourgeoisie. Contrast, for instance, the "Nuestra Opinion" column in *Ibid.*, January 10, 1960 with B. Alexandrovsky, "The Cuban Example", *New Times*, no. 2 (1960), pp. 11-13. As for the Soviet policy of detente with the United States, one need merely quote Hoy: "What the leaders of the major military power of the world can do without prejudicing its position in negotiations, the representatives of a small country cannot permit themselves to do. . . . Not to understand this is to commit the gravest sin of ignorance. What for the USSR and Khrushchev is a disposition for peace and benevolence, for us would be a dangerous venture." *Op. cit.*, January 7, 1960.

81. See, e.g., Khrushchev's interview with Argentine editor R. Nobel, in *Pravda*, January 4, 1960. Also the article by V. Chichkov in *Ibid.*, November 18, 1959. Significantly, an abridged version of the latter was published in *Revolucion* the following day.
One source claims that on January 19th or 20th Foreign Minister Roa had journeyed to Moscow on a secret mission to "attend negotiations of a strictly economic nature." But this is third-hand information. See the testimony of Justo Carrillo, in Daniel James, Cuba, the First Soviet Satellite in the Americas (New York, 1961), p. 251.


At this time, Mikoyan announced that the Soviet Union would purchase 345 million tons of Cuban sugar. Hoy, February 6, 1960.


At the end of 1959, Cuba had a sugar surplus of some 1.27 million tons. UN Economic and Social Council, Economic Survey of Latin America for 1959, Preliminary (1960), p. 19.

That this was so is demonstrated by Mikoyan's statement on the subject: "When the opportune and convenient moment for the Cuban government comes, she will establish diplomatic relations with us...we are not in a hurry, and it must be said that the issue is not mutual recognition: We officially recognize the Revolutionary Government of Cuba." Hoy, February 14, 1960.


Bonsal, pp. 110-11, 133.

According to CIA Director Allen Dulles, the Agency did not yet "have in mind a quick elimination of Castro, but rather actions designed to enable responsible opposition leaders to get a
foothold.\textsuperscript{94} US Senate, 94th Congress, Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders (Washington, D.C., 1975), pp. 92-93.

\textsuperscript{94} Bonsal, p. 111.

\textsuperscript{95} Only reluctantly had the Soviet negotiators agreed to a clause not to re-export Cuban sugar. See, e.g., Mikoyan's press conference, in Pravda, February 16, 1960; and Castro's television interview, in Hoy, February 20, 1960.

\textsuperscript{96} New York Times, November 14, 1959.


\textsuperscript{98} Hispanic American Report, XII, 10 (December, 1959), p. 601.


\textsuperscript{100} Bonsal, p. 118.

\textsuperscript{101} New York Times, January 12, 1960.

\textsuperscript{102} Bonsal, p. 118.

\textsuperscript{103} Revolucion, January 12, 1960.

\textsuperscript{104} Ibid. On the other hand, no one had yet seen any of these "tantalizing documents" and there was considerable skepticism as to whether they even existed, though admittedly some cash payments had been made. See Hugh Thomas, Cuba, or the Pursuit of Freedom (London, 1971), pp. 1258-59.

\textsuperscript{105} New York Times, January 17, 1960.

\textsuperscript{106} Revolucion, January 21, 1960.

108 Bonsal, pp. 118 ff.


112 Amoedo, pp. 11-12.

113 Bonsal, pp. 126-27.


115 Ibid., p. 199.

116 Bonsal, p. 128.

117 US Department of State, pp. 200-01.


123 Theodore Draper, "More on US-Cuban Negotiations", New Leader, XLVII, 10 (May 11, 1964), p. 3; also, see Mario Lazo, Dagger


125 Cuban sugar accounted for about a third of the US annual consumption.

126 See, e.g., Castro's speech to the national meeting of sugar workers. Revolucion, December 16, 1959.


133 Thus, for instance, when Beaton was finally tracked down in June it turned out that his band numbered only about 20 followers, nearly all of them members of his family. See Hispanic American Report, XIII, 6 (August, 1960), p. 381.


135 Thomas, p. 1260.

136 Ibid., pp. 1249-51; 1259-60; 1274. Quoted material at pp. 1249-50.

On the other hand, it was also considered highly significant, in light of the prevailing intolerance of political opposition in Cuba that as many as 30 percent of the respondents dared to express at least some criticism of the government to an unknown interviewer. Obviously, some of those listed as supporters were covert oppositionists. It should be noted, however, that the inability of the Princeton team to conduct interviews in rural areas may have also skewed the survey somewhat the other way, since Castro's most ardent followers were probably among those who had benefited, or were expecting to benefit, from the agrarian reform. Lloyd A. Free, Attitudes of the Cuban People Toward the Castro Regime (Princeton, 1960); also "Gauging Thresholds of Frustration", in When Men Rebel and Why, ed. James Chowning Davies (London, 1971), p. 255.


Felipe Pazos, former President of the National Bank, estimated that in its first months the Revolution had increased the real income of rural and urban workers by 25-30 percent. See "Commentaries on Two Articles on the Cuban Revolution", El Trimestre Economico, XXIX, 113 (January/March, 1962), p. 7.

See, especially, the evidence of Free, Attitudes of the Cuban People..., pp. 6-8.


Bonsal's metaphor. Ibid., p. 140.

Ibid., pp. 4-5.


Bonsal, p. 6.

Ibid., p. 135.
Chapter Nine
CONCLUSIONS AND PROSPECTS

The months from May to October 1960 mark a watershed in the development of the Cuban Revolution. In that short period of time, the dialectic of hostility between Washington and Havana would dramatically accelerate in a spiralling breakdown of relations that would propel Cuba into the Soviet orbit and pave the way for Castro's embrace of Marxism-Leninism. We will not attempt here to document and analyze this process. Current plans call for the addition of several post-dissertation chapters carrying the present account through the October 1962 Missile Crisis. It would seem appropriate, however, to pause briefly and reflect on our findings, for it is evident that the cataclysmic developments to come were in large part predetermined by what had preceded them.

By the spring of 1960, relations between Washington and Havana had reached the point of no return. That much seems clear. The decision of the Eisenhower government to seek Castro's overthrow by all means short of an invasion by the US military would force the Maximum Leader to seek an open alliance with Moscow. The only question was whether the Soviets would be willing to reciprocate his embrace. But in May that issue also was resolved, as the U-2 incident led to the breakdown of the Paris summit conference and
the temporary collapse of Khrushchev's "Grand Design". Now US-Soviet relations would take a sharp turn for the worse. And Cuba would join Berlin as a central focus of Cold War rivalry.

In retrospect, it is difficult not to be sarcastic about the quality of American foreign policy during this era. No doubt the Eisenhower and Castro regimes were from the very beginning fundamentally incompatible. The ideological goals of the latter constituted a direct threat to US economic, political and military interests not only in Cuba, but in all of Latin America. Given the temper of the times, it is difficult to imagine how any administration in Washington could have maintained close and constructive relations with Havana, especially in light of the highly provocative manner in which Castro was pursuing his revolutionary objectives. And certainly there was no question of the United States subsidizing the Revolution through the Buenos Aires proposal or a massive increase in sugar purchases. In this respect, as in many others, Fidel was simply not operating in the realm of reality.

Still, all this being said, it is difficult to conceive of a more unimaginative response to the challenge posed by the Cuban Revolution than that of the Eisenhower administration. In effect, its passivity represented a gross abdication of responsibility. Thus, the initiative was left almost entirely to Castro; and Castro in turn was largely incapable of making initiatives that Washington could accept. A more serious American effort to
court Havana may or may not have been successful. But it would surely have made it much more difficult for Fidel to cast the United States in the role of oppressor. Similarly, a more concerted attempt to deal with the problem of US-based counterrevolutionary exile activity might have done much to remove a major source of friction between the two sides. Instead, the Eisenhower government retreated into a defensive shell. Ineffectuality became the hallmark of its Cuban policy. Moreover when, in the aftermath of the Le Coubre incident, it finally came out of that shell it would be in the form of a blind overreaction. Castro would be pushed into the arms of the Soviets, even as Nikita Khrushchev, in the wake of the U-2 incident, would be pushed towards an abrazo with Cuba.

In short, the irony of US policy was that it would have precisely the opposite effect from what was intended. Instead of preventing Cuba from going Communist, it would ultimately drive Havana and Moscow into alliance, while confirming all of Castro's longstanding fears and suspicions of "Yankee imperialism". More than that, it would provide him with just the specter of foreign aggression that he needed to maintain national unity, while mobilizing the masses behind his revolutionary objectives.

But what of the process of ideological development? We have traced the roots of Castroism to their origins in the Cuban revolutionary tradition and have seen how, once in power, the drive for utopia and elite hegemony set in motion an ongoing
dialectic of coercion between the forces of revolution and counterrevolution. Indeed, we have suggested that threat was the motor force of the Revolution, at least in its initial stages. On the one hand, it facilitated the radicalization inherent in nascent Castroism by helping to rally the Cuban people—and especially the lower classes—behind the Maximum Leader and his policies; on the other hand, it served as a potent stimulus, compelling him to take ever more radical measures to consolidate and defend revolutionary power and destroy (or at least neutralize) the growing counterrevolutionary opposition.

But the very process of revolutionary struggle had substantive ideological implications. The rise of the counterrevolutionary threat at home and abroad confirmed and intensified the commitment to the most radical and deterministic elements of the initial weltanschauung. By the same token, the more moderate components of that vision were either reinterpreted or jettisoned as being incompatible with the requisites of survival. Moreover, as the revolutionary process intensified and Castro and his associates began to meditate upon the manner and meaning of their actions and experiences, they would find that Marxism-Leninism helped lend system and substance to many of their own perceptions, beliefs and values. After all, class struggle had been an integral part of Castroism from its very inception, being inherent in the redistributive thrust for social justice, "total and definitive".
Similarly, the vision of an economically, socially and politically underdeveloped and dependent Cuban nation, dominated by North American imperialism and its domestic servitors, was essentially congruent with the Marxist-Leninist world view. Clearly, what was unfolding was nothing less than a life and death struggle between the forces of imperialism and reaction in one camp and those of national liberation and revolution in the other. Had not the Norte Americanos proven by their actions that they would not allow a genuine social revolution to occur in Cuba? By the same token, the strong voluntaristic thrust in Leninism could not but have a certain emotional appeal for those who believed that it was the duty of revolutionaries to make revolutions. Cuba would be freed and utopia attained, but only through an extended process of revolutionary struggle, led by a dedicated and selfless vanguard who would do for the masses what the latter would spontaneously do for themselves if only they had the proper consciousness.

Thus, to a very considerable extent, Marxism-Leninism would sum up the Cuban revolutionary experience, as understood by the revolutionaries themselves. More than that, it would provide—or at least appear to provide—the Castroite goal and transfer cultures with just the kind of coherence and substance that was needed to formulate a comprehensive social, economic and political strategy capable of transforming reality into utopia.
If one adds to these considerations the crucial fact that a major long-term Soviet commitment was essential if the Revolution were to survive and that the formal embrace of Marxism-Leninism was thought to be part of the price for obtaining that support, then it becomes clear why Castroism evolved in the direction that it did.

In more abstract terms, the ideology developed in accordance with its existential base, as revolutionary man, in pursuit of power and utopia, acted and reacted to the shifting opportunities, pressures and constraints posed by the political, economic and social environment within which he had to operate. Through this process of revolutionary struggle, the ideology gained coherence and specificity as thought was turned to the functional requisites of effectuating the utopian goal culture, consolidating elite hegemony and maintaining the social system.

But this was an ongoing process. It would not end with the formal adoption of Marxism-Leninism. Nor, for that matter, would that doctrine be embraced in toto. Rather, it would be selectively adapted to Latin American circumstances. In effect, Castroism would develop as a crossfertilization or synthesis of the Cuban revolutionary tradition and Marxism-Leninism. And that synthesis, in turn, would continue to evolve in accordance with existential experience. Thus, time and again utopian goals and methods would be imposed on environmental reality. Sometimes those goals and methods would dramatically change that reality. On
other occasions, however, when they proved sufficiently dysfunc-
tional as to threaten the maintenance of the social system or the
hegemony of the revolutionary elite, the ideology itself would be
modified. By the early 1970's one could clearly discern the
beginnings of Thermidor, as the millenarian impulse was gradually
being supplanted by the values and thought-patterns of technocrats
and managers.

In short, there is every indication that Castroism is
undertaking much the same evolutionary path as Soviet Marxism-
Leninism. It is slowly being "rationalized" and transformed into
a "stable postrevolutionary structure of values for real men
interacting in an equilibrium system."

Finally, what may be said about the Muscovite side of the
picture? Although this dissertation ends at precisely the point
that major Soviet involvement in Cuba began, we are, as always,
concerned with a process. It has been argued that the alliance
with Havana must be placed within two basic existential contexts.
The first of these is the development of transfer culture rationali-
zation, which gained rapid headway following the death of Stalin.
The second is Khrushchev's "Grand Design". Thus, the former
led to the initial, cautious renewal of Soviet interest in Latin
America and to the first, limited stages of commitment to Castro's
Revolution. And the dramatic collapse of the latter in May 1960
freed Khrushchev from the constraints which his summit ambitions
had placed on a further, large-scale involvement in Cuba. Indeed,
the island would now become a primary instrument through which the First Secretary would attempt to reaffirm his revolutionary credentials and bolster his political prestige against the attacks of his critics, both domestic and foreign. Two years later, moreover, it would serve as both a figurative and literal launching pad for the resurrection of the Grand Design.

Yet, in perspective, it is clear that there existed a fundamental incompatibility between such millenarian ambitions and the more conservative, incremental processes of rationalization. Khrushchev, like Castro, was thinking in terms of immediate and monumental transformations. And the recurrent attempt to impose such policies on international and domestic realities all too often led to catastrophe. It was in large part a collective disgust with such "hare-brained schemes"--most dramatically exemplified by the Cuban Missile Crisis--that led to the First Secretary's ouster in October 1964. Henceforth a calmer, more systematically rational approach to policy-making would be adopted. The "regime of clerks" was not that interested in the pursuit of utopia.

There is much more to be said about these themes. Indeed, the task has just begun. For the processes of ideological change are ongoing. And their consequences for the behavior of revolutionary elites are fundamental. In the Soviet and Cuban cases, they are still to be fully realized. But that is the task of future volumes. For the moment, this project is done.
Chapter Nine

FOOTNOTES

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Note

This study has also cited extensively from Cuban and Soviet newspapers and periodicals. Because of their vast number, it is not possible to list each reference separately. From the Cuban side,
the most important sources by far have been the Twenty-Sixth of July Movement's organ, Revolucion, and the Cuban Communist paper, Hoy. Occasional use has also been made of Bohemia, Fundamentos, Verde Olivo, El Mundo, Obra Revolucionaria, Bohemia Libre, Granma Weekly Review, Granma, Alerta, Diario de la Marina, El Acusador, El Avance Criollo, Humanismo, Cuba, Pensamiento Critico, Carta Semanal, Orto and the Havana Post. On the Soviet side, the list is much shorter. By far the most important single source has been the Communist Party newspaper, Pravda, though occasional use has been made of Izvestia, New Times, Kommunist, International Affairs, Partiinia Zhizn, Voprosy Filosofiya and Sovetskoye Vostokovedenije. In addition, other newspapers and periodicals used include the New York Times, International Press Correspondence, The Communist, The Communist International, Daily Worker, Militant, New Masses, World Report, New York Herald Tribune, La France Nouvelle, L'Espresso, L'Unita, Excelsior, New Statesman, The Times of Havana (Miami), Wall Street Journal, Miami Herald, Hispanic American Report and Time magazine.