



## THE DECADE OF INSTITUTIONALIZATION

IN its second decade, the Cuban revolution faced critical problems. Internally, mounting economic difficulties inspired a new frenzy of planning activity and greater regimentation in the hope of stimulating productivity. One result was the expanded influence of the military in society, and its increasingly important role in both economic and political life. The party, which had remained weak and ineffective throughout the 1960s, was enlarged and strengthened in its efforts to spread its influence throughout society. Meanwhile, the regime continued to pursue its aim of transforming Cuba in accordance with a new set of values and with the ultimate end of creating a new socialist man. Externally, the Cuban leadership attempted to break out of its isolation in Latin America, became selective in its support of revolutionary movements in the area, moved even closer to the Soviet Union, increased its influence on the non-aligned movement, and embarked on a series of successful military interventions, primarily on the African continent.

Although past Cuban-Soviet relations had been punctuated by frequent instances of Castro's insubordination and attempts to assert his independence, in mid-1968 relations entered a period of close collaboration and friendliness. A turning point occurred in August 1968, when Castro supported the Soviet invasion of Czecho-

slovakia, a response dictated primarily by political and economic considerations. First, he came to believe that Cuba would enjoy greater protection by ensuring its continued membership in the Soviet bloc than by espousing the principle of sovereignty for small countries. Second, poor sugar harvests in 1967 and 1968 increased the need for more Soviet economic aid and highlighted the extent to which Cuba's future development was dependent on outside assistance. Third, the failure of Castro's guerrilla activities, particularly the Bolivian fiasco, removed an important irritant in the Soviet-Cuban relationship. A guerrilla movement brewing in Latin America would have hindered Havana's rapprochement with Moscow. After Che Guevara failed, Castro could more easily accept Soviet ideas on the peaceful road to power in Latin America. Fourth, Castro's distrust of President Richard Nixon and his policies also influenced his decision to move closer to the Soviet Union. He perceived Nixon as the same man who had helped hatch plans, in 1960, for the U.S. support of armed intervention in Cuba and feared that, as the war in Vietnam came to an end, Nixon might turn against Cuba. Finally, Castro's ideas contrasted markedly with those of the Dubcek group in Czechoslovakia. The Cuban leader considered himself to the left of both the Soviets and the Czechs, and therefore could not sympathize with the liberalization taking place in Prague. For internal reasons also, he could not logically support liberalization abroad while maintaining orthodoxy at home.

In the months following his Czech stand, Castro's accommodation with the USSR became increasingly manifest. In November 1968 he welcomed a delegation from the East German Communist party with great ceremony and signed a joint communiqué on the "Necessity of Fighting against All Forms of Revisionism and Opportunism." In his yearly Anniversary of the Revolution speech on January 2, 1969, he drew up a balance sheet of ten years of revolution and concluded by expressing deep gratitude to the socialist camp and particularly to the Soviet Union for their aid and solidarity.

In other ways the Cubans went out of their way to demonstrate their new spirit of collaboration with the Soviets. In June 1969 Castro reversed one of the rare collective decisions by the Central Committee of Cuba's Communist party—namely, that Cuba would not participate in the World Conference of Communist Parties convened by the Soviet Union. According to the new line, he sent as an "observer" to the Moscow conference Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, the

most steadfast theoretician of the former Partido Socialista Popular and a member of the secretariat of the ruling Communist party of Cuba. Rodríguez delivered a speech unstinting in its praise of the Soviet Union, which closed with this pledge: "We declare from this tribune that in any decisive confrontation, whether it be an act by the Soviet Union to avert threat of dislocation or provocation to the socialist system, or an act of aggression by anyone against the Soviet people, Cuba will stand unflinchingly by the USSR."

This show of solidarity had wide implications. Several other ruling Communist parties, including those of China, Vietnam, and Korea, had refused to attend the conference, precisely because its main objective was to enlist support for a crusade against Peking. Cuba's attendance and Rodríguez's statement showed support for the Soviet position—Castro was casting his lot with the USSR. This was followed by calls of the Soviet navy at Cuban ports and by the visits of Soviet Defense Minister Marshal Grechko and Prime Minister Alexei Kosygin. In turn, Fidel and Raúl visited Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union for extended periods of time.

In the early 1970s Soviet military and economic aid increased substantially and Cuba moved closer to the Soviet Union, becoming in 1972 a member of the Eastern European Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA). The result was greater direct Soviet influence in the island. Soviet technicians became extensively involved in managerial and planning activities at the national level. The total number of Soviet military and technical advisers increased considerably, and numerous economic advisers arrived. These were particularly influential in the Ministry of the Sugar Industry and the Ministry of the Armed Forces, where a joint Soviet-Cuban Advisory Commission was organized. Of special significance were long-term agreements between Cuba and the USSR that geared the Cuban economy into the Soviet Economic Plans. A new Inter-Governmental Coordinating Committee was also established, giving the Kremlin considerable leverage over Cuban developments. The Soviet Union's influence and its presence became more extensive than at any other time, with the possible exception of the period immediately preceding the 1962 missile crisis. Castro exchanged the pervasive influence of the United States for a new, more complete dependence on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, dependence that lasted until the collapse of the Soviet Union.

As a result of his own economic problems as well as mounting

Soviet influence, Castro began to turn inward. The Soviets had long been pressuring the Cubans to curb their activities in Latin America and to concentrate on revitalizing their sagging economy. Quite significant in this connection, an article in *Pravda* on October 2, 1970, bluntly asserted that "the Cuban people and the Cuban Communists realize that Cuba's main contribution to the world socialist system and the general revolutionary process now lies in economic building and creating a developed socialist society on this base."

In the early 1970s Castro's speeches downplayed the notion of Latin American revolutions or his continuous support for terrorists and anti-American groups. They concentrated instead on domestic, political, and economic issues. Official Cuban media routinely called for revolutionary action, but without declaring, as was customary, that armed struggle is the only road to power. An August 1972 publication of the Cuban-engineered Continental Organization of Latin American Students (OCLAE) urged Latin American students to devote themselves to the struggle "to its final consequences." It proposed "new forms of organization to confront imperialist violence," but it strikingly omitted any reference to the once standard demands for guerrilla warfare.

Prior to 1968 Castro had been the foremost proponent of violent revolution. Latin American revolutionaries and terrorists received training in Cuba and were sent back to their native countries to lead insurgencies, and Cuba had been channeling funds, arms, and propaganda to rebel groups in various Latin American nations. Even areas where conditions did not seem propitious for violence were considered targets. Castro advocated reliance on groups of vanguard guerrilla fighters rather than on mass movements and believed that guerrilla campaigns could create the conditions necessary for revolution.

The implementation of these ideas brought Castro into conflict with Moscow and the Communist parties of Latin America. For several years the Soviets called for the formation of popular fronts and mass movements. They criticized Castro's emphasis on armed struggle as "left wing opportunism which leads the masses to adventurist actions." In the Soviets' view it could jeopardize their economic offensive in Latin America as well as their attempts to increase political influence in the area. They perhaps were also afraid of being drawn into involvements and confrontations with the United States not of their own choosing.

Most of the traditional Communist parties in Latin America fol-

lowed the Soviet lead. They particularly resented Castro's claim to supremacy over the revolutionary movement and disliked his branding of Communists who opposed armed struggle as "traitorous, rightist, and deviationist." Having achieved a secure and comfortable position in most Latin American countries, the Communist parties and their middle-aged leaders feared that a call to violence would lead to failure, persecution, and exile. They were working toward creating "the necessary conditions for revolution" through propaganda, infiltration, popular fronts, and even elections, but in most countries they showed little inclination to plunge into armed struggle.

Castro came to recognize that there were "different roads to power." While not completely renouncing his original goal of exporting his own brand of communism, he became more selective in furnishing Cuban support.

The electoral failure of the Popular Front in Uruguay and more importantly the overthrow of the Allende regime in Chile in 1973, however, marked a turning point for the Cuban-inspired revolutionary struggle in Latin America. The Cuban leadership examined its strategy and tactics in the area and concluded that the way to power in Latin America was not through ballots but through bullets. Beginning in the mid-1970s, Castro increased his support to select groups, particularly in Central America, providing them with propaganda material, training, advisers, financial help, and ultimately weapons. An acceleration of the revolutionary armed struggle in the area followed.

Castro also became involved with African-Americans in the U.S. and with the Macheteros, a Puerto Rican terrorist group. Cuba focused particular attention on the black struggle in the United States, providing aid and training to the Black Panthers and the Black Liberation Army, as well as a safe haven on the island for black leaders. Castro continuously promoted the independence of Puerto Rico and supported the Macheteros who committed terrorist acts and bank robberies in the United States. Several still live in Cuba.

Cuban military and intelligence personnel aided Middle Eastern groups and regimes in the struggle against Israel, and Cuban troops fought on the side of Arab states, particularly Syria, during the Yom Kippur War. Castro sent military instructors and advisers into Palestinian bases; cooperated with Libya in the founding of World Mathaba, a terrorist movement; and established close military coop-

eration and exchanges with Iraq, Libya, southern Yemen, the Polisario Front for the Liberation of Western Sahara, the PLO, and others in the Middle East.

This coincided with the U.S. debacle in Vietnam and the Watergate scandal. The inability of American administrations to respond swiftly and decisively to conditions in Central America, as well as in other parts of the world, and to the Soviet-Cuban challenge in Africa, emboldened the Cuban leader. More than 40,000 Cuban troops supported by Soviet equipment were transferred to Africa in order to bring to power communist regimes in Angola and Ethiopia.

Cuba's commitment to revolution in Africa dated from the mid-1960s, when Che Guevara visited the area to promote violent anti-colonialist resistance. In particular, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and its Marxist leader, Aghostino Neto, were supported by Castro, the Portuguese Communists, and the Soviets. The possible defeat of Neto's group, one of the three and perhaps the weakest of those fighting for power, produced a convergence of Soviet and Cuban policies in Angola in the mid-1970s. Cuban involvement enhanced Castro's international prestige and influence, encouraged the creation of Marxist regimes friendly to Cuba, and showed Cuban solidarity with Moscow's interests in the area as well as tested the combat readiness of Cuban troops.

Emboldened by Cuban-Soviet victories in Angola and Ethiopia, the Castro regime focused its attention on the rapidly deteriorating conditions in Nicaragua. There, archaic and unjust social, political, and economic structures dominated by an oppressive, corrupt, and inefficient dynasty began to crumble when faced with increasing popular discontent. Cuba jointly with Panama and Venezuela increased support to the *Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional* the principal guerrilla group opposing the Somoza regime and led by Castro's longtime friend Marxist leader Tomás Borge, among others. In July 1979, Somoza fled to the United States and the *Frente* rode victorious into Managua.

The Sandinista victory in Nicaragua stands as an imposing monument to Cuban strategy and ambitions in the hemisphere. The overthrow of Somoza gave the Castro line its most important boost in two decades. It vindicated, although belatedly, Castro's ideological insistence on the value of violence and guerrilla warfare as the correct strategy to attain power in Latin America. Castro's long-held belief that the political, social, and economic conditions that had

produced his revolution in Cuba existed or could be created in other parts of Latin America and that revolution would occur throughout the continent seemed at last justified. Jesús Montané Oropesa, member of the Cuban Communist Party Central Committee, emphasized that the revolutionary victories in Nicaragua and Grenada were the most important events in Latin America since 1959. "The triumph in Nicaragua," explained Montané, "verified the effectiveness of armed struggle as a decisive means of taking power."\*

From that time on, the tempo of Cuban-supported violence accelerated in Central America. Aided by an extensive network of intelligence, military forces, and a sophisticated propaganda machinery; the Cuban government increased its support to various groups in the area. In cooperation with Sandinista leaders, Cuba aided insurgent groups in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Colombia. Castro's commitment to revolutionary violence was reinforced once again, showing convincingly that the Cuban leadership is willing to seize opportunities and take risks to expand its influence and power.

The beginning of the 1970s saw the economic scene riddled with many problems. Castro highlighted these in a speech on July 26, 1970. After acknowledging that Cuba had failed to reach its goal of a 10 million-ton sugar crop and that total production for the year would be only 8.5 million tons, he used the failure as a point of departure for deep soul-searching with regard to the whole range of past economic policies and practices. Noting that the effort invested in the sugar crop had been detrimental to most of the other sectors of the economy, he cited low productivity of such vital items as milk, bread, vegetables, and clothing, and explained that industrial production was badly lagging behind established goals. The lack of spare parts, failures in the transportation system, and decreasing productivity throughout the consumer sector were plaguing the economy. "Insufficient production in the face of increasing expenditures," he said, "has resulted in growing difficulties." While worker absenteeism had aggravated the situation, a small workforce was also a factor.

Castro in his speech laid the blame for the economic failures on "the bureaucracy" as well as on himself. In a calculated gesture, he told the Cubans that "we have a certain underdevelopment in leadership" and that the people could change leaders "right now, at any

---

\*Radio Havana, October 21, 1980.

moment they wish." He acknowledged Cuba's deepening dependence on the USSR, admitting "that we have had large imbalances in our foreign trade, particularly with the Soviet Union." In conclusion, he warned Cubans that "the next years will be hard ones," with little hope of immediate prosperity.

Castro's exhortations and admonitions were echoed by other government officials. Labor Minister Jorge Risquet attributed the country's mounting economic problems principally to "widespread passive resistance" by workers. Discussing the reasons for labor inefficiency, Risquet complained that there was no rapport between Cuban workers and their superiors, among them, the state administrators and Communist party and labor union officials. He reported that productivity among sugar workers was so low that the cost of the 1970 sugar harvest was three times higher than the crop's value on the world market.

Because of these difficulties Cuba's leadership reexamined economic policies in an effort to devise more workable economic plans. Production goals were reduced and tailored to the realities of the situation. The regime encouraged decentralized implementation of centrally determined policies and programs and showed an increasing preoccupation with economic—as opposed to social—objectives. Castro himself admitted that in the period of socialist construction certain economic incentives still had to be employed, thus signaling a partial departure from the emphasis on moral incentives. In a speech on July 26, 1973, Castro explained that "along with the moral stimulus, we also have to use the material stimulus, without abusing one another. The first would lead us to idealism, the second would lead us to develop individual selfishness." While some reliance on moral incentives continues, primarily because of Castro's commitment to this policy and because of the Soviet Union's inability or unwillingness to deliver large quantities of consumer goods, a reorientation began toward the production of more consumer goods in an attempt to motivate the labor force.

To stimulate productivity and forestall any further slackening of revolutionary momentum, Castro's July 26 speech was followed by an increased regimentation and militarization of society. The standard holidays (traditionally of great significance in Cuban life) were deemphasized. Military officers were appointed to important civilian posts, and the armed forces became a super-agency supplying administrators for both central and local organizations dealing with politi-

cal, economic, and educational matters. Development organizations, at both the national and the local level, came under the aegis of the military. In line with this trend, the army established special centers to train low-level cadres for jobs in various national and local organizations. Under the control of Raúl Castro, the Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces became one of the most powerful and influential Cuban institutions.

On the ideological front, greater emphasis was placed on the need for sacrifice: the building of socialism demands high investment rates coupled with maximum technical and scientific knowledge and minimum consumption. The regime argued that worker's goodwill was not enough and that in certain circumstances coercion was unavoidable in the interest of "building a socialist society." A variety of austerity measures were instituted, including further reductions in sugar and coffee rations and cutbacks in consumer goods and imports from Western countries.

Unhappy with Castro's management of the economy and with Cuba's repeated failures to meet its production goals and international obligations, the Kremlin pressured the Cubans to adopt more orthodox Soviet policies. Castro acknowledged Soviet displeasure when, in an interview published in the Soviet magazine *Ogonek* in 1970, he confessed that "previously we did not fulfill many pledges and accordingly—very naturally and justifiably—a certain skepticism developed concerning our economic plans." President Dorticós also recognized the arduous path in building a "genuine Communist society," pointing out that Cuba still needed to develop the foundations of socialism through the use of Soviet economic methods, including the use of material incentives.

These confessions highlighted a limited return to economic rationality. Instead of continuing with their plans to phase out the use of money, the leadership acknowledged the need for monetary transactions and for applying economic criteria—efficiency, productivity, cost accounting, and growth. In an attempt to increase labor productivity, they further deemphasized moral incentives and egalitarian wage-distribution policies and introduced greater decentralization and managerial discretion as well as a larger role for market forces.

These policies resulted in a modest improvement during the first half of the decade. Industrial production expanded, and more consumer goods became available. The economy was aided significantly by the world rise in sugar prices as well as massive infusions of Soviet

equipment and aid. In addition to providing several billion dollars' worth of free military equipment, the Kremlin postponed repayment of the principal and interest due on Cuba's debt to the Soviet Union, granted some interest-free credits, and linked the prices of petroleum and sugar to prevent a deterioration in the Cuban terms of trade. By selling petroleum to Cuba below OPEC prices, the Soviets, furthermore, sheltered the Cuban economy from the shock of higher oil prices affecting the Western economies.

In spite of this recovery, the economy remained plagued by major problems. Low productivity, mismanagement, inefficiency, underemployment, and overambitious goals were the more persistent ones. Sugar prices collapsed from \$.65 per pound in 1974 to as low as \$.08 in 1977. Foreign exchange dwindled, and imports decreased. The impact would have been far more significant if it were not for the fact that the Soviets, who purchased half of Cuba's annual sugar production, subsidized the economy by paying a price for sugar well above the world market.

Unexpected problems also hurt the economy. A blue mold fungus destroyed most of the tobacco crop in 1979–1980 while other diseases affected the sugar and cattle-raising industries. The slump in the Soviet economy in the late 1970s slowed down the tempo of Soviet assistance. Cuba's involvement in Africa, while important politically for the Cuban leadership, had been costly, forcing mobilization at home and significant expenditures abroad to maintain 40,000 Cuban troops in Africa. The institutionalization of a Soviet-style centrally planned economy had burdened Cuba with a vast administrative bureaucracy that stifled the innovation, productivity, and efficiency necessary for sustained economic growth.\*

In an attempt to increase economic efficiency and in line with Soviet objectives, the Cuban Communist party, which now numbered some 482,000 members, was expanded and strengthened. The aim was for greater party conformity to the needs of a socialist society, with principal emphasis on a higher level of ideological training and the acquisition of specialized knowledge by party members.

Throughout the 1960s the party had remained weak and unable to play a key role in the political process. Established in 1961 through the merger of Castro's 26th of July Movement with the Partido

---

\*See Lawrence H. Theriot, *Cuba Faces the Economic Realities of the 1980's* (Washington: U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1982).

Socialista Popular (PSP) and the Directorio Revolucionario, the new structure was called Organizaciones Revolucionarias Integradas (Integrated Revolutionary Organizations, or ORI), a preparatory step toward the creation of the United Party of the Socialist Revolution (PURS), transformed in 1965 into the Communist Party of Cuba (PCC), the island's ruling and only party.

During the early period the party remained small, disorganized, relegated to a secondary position vis-à-vis the military. It lacked a clear and defined role. Internal leadership and coordination remained poor, and meetings were scarce and of questionable value. Evidently Castro saw little need for a well-developed party structure that would have reduced or at least rivaled his *personalista* style of leadership. Conflict between old-guard Communists and Fidelistas also created tension and prevented the development of a strong organization. Competition from the military and the bureaucracy took the best talents away from the party. These cadres saw better opportunities for advancement in those other sectors than in a party riddled with factionalism and not warmly supported by the *líder máximo*.

The decade of the 1970s was one of expansion and consolidation for the party. During the first half, membership expanded from some 55,000 in 1969 to 202,807 at the time of the First Party Congress in 1975. During the second half, the rapid rate of expansion slowed somewhat. By the time of the Second Party Congress in 1980 there were fewer than 400,000 members and candidates. As the Third Party Congress was approaching in 1995, Fidel Castro disclosed that full members and candidates numbered 482,000. Recently, greater emphasis has been placed on candidates active in production, teaching, and services. Since many of the earlier party members had been promoted rapidly within the ranks and had become party bureaucrats, the need was for cadres working in industry and agriculture and, therefore, hopefully being more aware of production problems and in closer contact with the realities of the economy.

Also an attempt was made to bring more women into the party. From the time of the party's organization, women had been underrepresented in its ranks and leadership organs. Even when more women were entering the labor force, few were attaining leadership status. Since 1975, attempts have been made to correct this situation.

The First Party Congress in 1975 was a watershed in legitimizing the position of the party as the guiding and controlling force in society. It reassured the Soviet Union of Cuba's loyalty and friendship,

extolling the Soviets' continuous military and economic aid to the Cuban revolution, and rehabilitated old-guard communists, some of whom had been mistrusted and persecuted by the Castroites. Three old-guard Communists, Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, Blas Roca, and Arnaldo Milián were elected to the Political Bureau.\* The Congress also expanded the party's Central Committee from 91 to 112, increased the Political Bureau from eight to thirteen, and maintained the Secretariat at eleven members with Fidel and Raúl as first and second secretaries.

In his report to the Congress, Castro attempted to reconcile the adoption of Soviet-style institutions in the island with a renewed emphasis on nationalism and on the historical roots of the Cuban revolution. He emphasized that Cuban socialism was the culmination of a struggle against Spanish colonialism and U.S. neo-colonial involvement in Cuban affairs. With total disregard for Martí's ideas, Castro linked the Cuban independence leader with Lenin in order to justify Cuba's move into the Communist camp. The Congress adopted a Five Year Plan calling for closer economic integration with the Soviet Union and an economic system modeled on other socialist states. The approval of the party's platform stressing "Marxist-Leninist principles and the leading role of the party" was further evidence of the impact of Soviet-style orthodoxy in the island.

Of paramount importance was the adoption of Cuba's first Socialist Constitution, which was approved by a 97.7 percent majority in a popular referendum in early 1976. Modeled upon other Communist constitutions, the Cuban document recognized the party as "the highest leading force in state and society" and defined the function of mass organizations such as the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution and the Federation of Cuban Women. It divided the island into fourteen new provinces instead of the six old ones.\*\* It recognized freedom of speech, religion, the press, and association so

\*These included in addition to Fidel and Raúl Castro, Juan Almeida, Guillermo García, Ramiro Valdés, Armando Hart, Osvaldo Dorticós, Sergio del Valle, Pedro Miret, and José Ramón Machado. During the Second Party Congress in 1980 the Political Bureau was expanded to sixteen members. The new members were Osmani Cienfuegos, Julio Camacho, and Jorge Risquet. Milián died in 1983 as did Dorticós, who committed suicide.

\*\*The new provinces are Camagüey, Ciego de Avila, Cienfuegos, Ciudad de La Habana, Granma, Guantánamo, Habana, Holguín, Las Tunas, Matanzas, Pinar del Río, Sancti Spiritus, Santiago de Cuba, and Villa Clara.

long as these did not conflict with the objectives of socialism; enumerated the rights and duties of Cuban citizens; and created a host of new governing institutions, particularly the Organos del Poder Popular, or People's Power Apparatus.

These institutions consist of three sets of "elected" assemblies at the municipal, provincial, and national levels. At the base of the structure were 10,725 members elected in 1976 to some 169 municipal assemblies. These in turn selected 1,084 delegates to the provincial assemblies and 481 delegates to the National Assembly. The National Assembly selected a thirty-one-member Council of State consisting of Fidel Castro as president of the Council, Raúl Castro as first vice-president, five other vice-presidents, a secretary, and twenty-three other members. The Cuban state is formally represented by a president, Fidel Castro, who is designated Head of State. In addition, the president appoints and presides over a Council of Ministers that is approved by the National Assembly and has primary responsibility for administering the country. The National Assembly is also empowered to legislate, regulate production, and appoint Supreme Court judges.

Real power, however, resides with the smaller Council and ultimately with the Political Bureau of the party. The National Assembly has been largely a rubber-stamp body that meets for only a few days a year to discuss mostly social legislation and to approve laws and proposals submitted and previously agreed to by the Council. In turn, the fact that the Council is dominated by members of the party's Political Bureau, and also that most of the National Assembly is composed of party members, assures that at all levels the party's position will be dominant. Every important issue or legislation is reviewed by the Political Bureau, which in some instances either acts independently of any other governmental agency and makes important decisions on its own or vetoes proposed legislation. The party, therefore, enjoys a veto power in decision making somewhere between the drafting of laws and their adoption by the National Assembly.\*

Perhaps the most important effect of the People's Power Apparatus has been the increase in communication and responsiveness at the local level. Whereas prior to this time Cubans had little input

---

\*See William M. Leogrande, "The Communist Party of Cuba Since the First Congress," *Journal of Latin American Studies* (November 1980), pp. 399-419.

into the decision-making process, these organizations provide an avenue for channeling a limited amount of criticism. The vast network of municipal assemblies at the local level, furthermore, offers easier access to state officials and a mechanism for resolving local problems.\*

The party has devoted great efforts to ensuring its control over the managerial and state bureaucracies. Not only are party officials involved in the management and supervision of industries and agriculture enterprises, as well as at all levels of government, but the party has also developed an internal machinery to oversee and control all aspects of society. Within the party, eighteen departments are important links with other organizations. Eight departments deal with economic issues; five with internal party matters; two with foreign affairs; and three act as liaisons with other organizations. A department of religious affairs was created to monitor and supervise religious activities in the island. The fact that five departments are devoted to internal party affairs indicates the importance attached by the leadership to the building of a strong party machinery. The party has also created a National Control and Revision Committee to supervise the work of party members within the party and in other organizations, thus signaling a further tightening of party control and influence.

The second PCC Congress convened in December 1980 and solidified the main tenets of the 1975 Congress report while presenting new dictums for the 1980s. At the international level, the Congress reaffirmed Cuba's strong ties with the Soviet Union, defended such internationalist principles as support for revolutionary movements abroad (with special reference to Nicaragua and Grenada). Within this context, the FAR's external as well as internal roles of assistance to national liberation struggles and national defense buildups were exalted. Regarding U.S.-Cuban relations, the party anticipated an escalation of tensions between the two countries as a result of Ronald Reagan's election. In the economic sphere, the Congress emphasized the need for more state planning and warned of a possible decline in production and exports due to the world economic situation. The 1980 Congress strengthened the PCC structure and func-

---

\*See William M. Leogrande, "The Theory and Practice of Socialist Democracy in Cuba: Mechanisms of Elite Accountability," *Studies in Comparative Communism* (Spring 1979), pp. 39-62.

tion in the political sphere. Following traditional Marxist-Leninist principles, the PCC was envisioned as the vanguard of the people.

The degree of penetration of society by the political system has been exceptionally high and effective. Most citizens are involved in "voluntary" organizations and are mobilized constantly for active participation in the political process. They are swept up in successive campaigns to fulfill any conceivable aspects of human endeavor in the form of "tasks." These "tasks" or "goals" are emphasized primarily in the fields of industrial production, ideology, and education. Of maximum importance is the understanding of Marxism-Leninism, which requires not only taking formal courses in educational institutions but also attendance at party meetings.

The Communist euphemism that the state will "wither away" is nowhere to be found in Cuba. On the contrary, the state is monolithic and its managerial capabilities depend on the party and a new class of technocrats. A tightly knit leadership led by the Castro brothers envisages far into the future its role in initiating, coordinating, and controlling policies and functions in Cuban society. They claim not only to exercise legitimate power but also to interpret the wishes and will of the people.

A highly intolerant and hierarchical party structure has developed. It has been molded through the successful attempts of the leadership to monopolize political functions such as recruitment, socialization, and articulation, as well as to inculcate uniformity of beliefs and conformity of behavior within the party and throughout society.

Castro has never shown any concern over the use of coercion and deceit. He justifies these techniques as necessary and correct under Marxist-Leninist doctrine to protect the revolution against foreign and domestic enemies and to expand its influence abroad. He is a master in the manipulation of public opinion and in the propagation of partial truths, repeated incessantly in his speeches and in the controlled media until accepted as reality. He believes that the preservation of his revolution requires massive doses of coercion and the use, for a long time, of techniques of centralized administration and repression to crush any resistance.

Of the several institutions in the Cuban panorama, the military continues to be the most powerful, most influential, and best organized. The stability of the regime and the continuity of the revolutionary process seem guaranteed primarily by the power and loyalty of Cuba's armed forces. Headed by Raúl Castro, the Cuban military

has been transformed into a highly professional institution completely loyal to the Castro brothers.

When on December 31, 1958, General Batista fled Cuba, most organizations that had supported his regime crumbled. Among these, the military was particularly affected because of its slow and weary campaign against the guerrillas and because of an internal process of demoralization and decomposition that had been taking place for several years. As soon as Castro was entrenched in power, he proceeded to eliminate the national armed forces and to replace them with the so-called Rebel Army, made up of guerrillas who had fought in the Sierra Maestra mountains.

During the first few years of the Revolution this Rebel Army constituted, together with a hastily organized militia, the only armed forces in the island. As the regime grew stronger and as ties with the Soviet Union began to develop, a reorganization of its cadres was initiated, which led to the development of a professional military establishment. Also, the Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces was created, and Raúl Castro was named to head it. Castro's aim was a totally loyal military organization. As he saw it, it would have been impossible to consolidate the revolution unless the military was actively included in the great political process that was under way. The example of Guatemala in 1954, where the armed forces became the vehicle through which Colonel Castillo Armas overthrew the leftist Jacobo Arbenz regime, loomed large in the minds of the Cuban leadership.

The very nature of the Rebel Army, composed of different ideological tendencies, complicated the problem of creating a disciplined armed force. The inherent problems were further complicated by the ideological shifts implemented by Castro himself in the early days. The way out was the establishment of complete loyalty to Fidel as the paramount ideological requirement for the military. The more moderate factions within the armed forces who opposed Communist participation in the government or who rejected the rapid pace of reform had to be purged or eliminated. In the first three years of the revolution a widespread purifying operation took place that affected not only old adversaries but any "comrade" of the revolution suspected of being lukewarm, opposing the government, or harboring anti-Communist sentiments.

The purges were followed by intense indoctrination of the army cadres. The presence of representatives of party political organs was

evidence of an ideological conditioning that very much resembled circumstances in other Communist countries. According to government statements, the majority of the officers today belong to the Communist party or to the Union of Young Communists. Dozens of high military officers are members of the Central Committee.

All this occurred not without resistance in the armed forces. Over the course of years, the shifts, dismissals, and changes created a lack of confidence and misgivings among many members of the military. But these misgivings have over time been compensated by a new role. Not only did the military receive new and sophisticated weaponry but it also assumed a predominant role in the management of the economy and an external role in promoting Castro's policy primarily in Africa. Its responsibilities as well as its prestige and importance have thus been augmented.

Relations between the Cuban Communist party and the armed forces appear quite good. The numerous safeguards that have been established against party infringement upon the authority of military officers prevent any possible independent activity by the party in the armed forces. The presence of numerous military men in the party's Central Committee and the political and economic functions which Castro assigns many officers also reflect obvious confidence of Castro himself in the military, and have led to a degree of participation without parallel for other institutions of the country.

The Cuban armed forces faced another problem in its early stages of development. This was the lack of technically skilled personnel to man and handle the increasing quantity of sophisticated equipment being shipped by the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries to Cuba. In many instances it was necessary not only to train technically capable officers but even to instruct in the most basic techniques the vast number of recruits who, attracted by the revolutionary enthusiasm of the early days, responded to the call of the armed forces.

Faced with these problems, the Cuban government had to set up officers' schools in all branches and send a number of students to Eastern European countries. As the years have gone by, a new military technical elite has come into being within the armed forces. Castro's old companions still enjoy his confidence, and most of them continue to occupy high positions in the military establishment. Yet as subordinate cadres become technically qualified, pressure will be

exerted on Castro's old comrades to move out and give way to this new military group.

With the growth and strengthening of the party's role in society, the use of military techniques to boost productivity and the employment of troops as a labor force were partially curtailed. The organizational advantages that the military enjoyed in the early years were rivaled by the party, which increased its role in managing the economy. Soviet pressures for a clearer differentiation of civilian and military roles in Cuba, the need to build a strong military apparatus for defense, and the external mission assigned to the military in places like Angola, Ethiopia, and Nicaragua gravitated against an extensive and continuous involvement of the armed forces in administration and production, a trend that was again reversed in the 1990s.

Cuba's activist foreign policy, geopolitical situation, and ties with the Soviet Union placed the country in a position of constant mobilization and tension. What existed in the way of a foreign threat, whatever its degree of danger, meant greater responsibility for the military and was used to justify demands of the armed forces, apart from propagandistic rhetoric, for fresh and continuous commitments. Cuba's armed forces developed a dual defense function: one, to watch the foreign front, and two, to watch the internal front. This dual-defense dimension, although it is in the nature of a universal principle for all armed forces, acquired a certain singularity in Cuba. The Cuban military, therefore, combined training for guerrilla warfare to face possible internal subversion with training on how to handle modern weapons systems to deal primarily with a major defensive action. In addition it received extensive combat training through its involvement in Africa.

The Cuban armed forces were organized into the three classical branches: land, sea, and air. It is estimated that a total of 225,000 men were on active duty. In addition there were 190,000 trained reservists who were subject to annual refresher training. The land army had the largest number of men, totaling an estimated 200,000. It was well supplied with modern and sophisticated Eastern European armored equipment and artillery. The air force had an estimated two hundred combat aircraft including Soviet MIG23 interceptors, and later MIG 29s, fighter bombers, and helicopters. The much smaller navy had some submarines, several patrol boats, and missile launchers.

The army units were deployed in three geographical sectors. Each

sector has elements of all weapons needed to make up an independent force. In general, the entire concept of deployment was oriented to defense against landings, to mobility, and to mutual support among the forces. Many coastal sectors were protected by heavy artillery and numerous fortifications. In addition, large-scale anti-aircraft defenses covered the entire territory. Army reserves, exceeding 100,000 men, could be mobilized quickly. The regime in 1964 instituted compulsory military service for the armed forces. The decree issued by the government stated that all Cubans, age sixteen and over, have a three-year commitment to serve in regular military units, or will receive military instruction in the training centers for short periods of time.

A National Militia was created parallel with the development of the armed forces. The Militia was developed for the purpose of mobilizing the population, creating an organization in support of the armed forces, and using this manpower for the military's developmental needs. The organized Militia was given thorough military training. Yet in the 1970s its role and importance were downplayed as a professional military developed. In 1980, Fidel reestablished a territorial militia estimated at a strength of 500,000 men and women to "defend the revolution from the aggressive machinations of U.S. imperialism."

In the 1970s the Cuban armed forces became without a doubt the strongest military establishment in the western hemisphere next to the U.S. armed forces. Cuba, with a GNP of \$13.3 billion, spent over \$1 billion on defense. A great deal of the training and preparation was under the direction of Soviet experts. The USSR sent numerous technicians and advisers to the island and maintained a strong military presence including a ground-force brigade of 2,600 men, a military advisory group of more than 2,000, and an intelligence-gathering facility. It is also estimated that there were about 8,000 Soviet and Eastern European civilian advisers in the island. The cost of Soviet arms delivered to Castro since 1960, all sent free of charge to the Cuban government, exceeded \$3.2 billion. In the early 1980s the Soviets escalated weapons deliveries to Cuba and reequipped the Cuban military in an unprecedented fashion.\*

---

\*Only prior to the 1962 missile crisis did the Soviets deliver a larger quantity of equipment to Cuba, some 250,000 metric tons. During 1981 alone, Soviet merchant ships delivered some 66,000 tons of military equipment, as compared with the previous ten-year annual average of 15,000 tons.

This military buildup was motivated by various factors. First, U.S.-Cuban tensions increased after the Reagan Administration took office, and Castro was apprehensive about U.S. policies toward Cuba. Second, more equipment was needed to arm the territorial militia being organized to support the military. Third, there was a need for larger weapon stockpiles in the island because of Cuba's military aid to Nicaragua, Grenada, and other insurgent groups in the area. Some of the older weapons found their way to Cuban-supported guerrillas in Central America, particularly in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala. Finally, by providing Cuba with this vast new arsenal the Soviets were reaffirming their commitment to protect the Cuban Revolution and reward their Caribbean ally for past and future services to the cause of international communism.

The Cuban armed forces, according to their technical profile, constituted the most solid institution in the national political spectrum. The army's attitude, its deployment, and its weapons were primarily oriented to the defense of the island and to the implementation of revolutionary policies. It was not only well equipped but it also was superbly organized and trained, and a great number of recruits and reservists saw combat in Africa. The vast and modern air force provided Cuba with a capability for intervention in the Caribbean and Central America. The future of the revolution and the continuity of the leadership were based on the loyalty and power of the military establishment.

Threats to Cuba from abroad did not seem to represent a serious risk for the Castro regime so long as such threats did not find sufficient dynamic support inside the island. Internal opposition to Castro was disorganized and disillusioned. The military strength of the regime and its coercive organs were able to infiltrate and thwart any attempt at rebellion. The massive refugee exodus from Mariel to the United States in 1980 and others earlier worked as an escape valve for discontented elements, eliminating possible opposition to the regime. Repeated failures of various incursions into the Cuban territory from surrounding areas confirmed the strength and power of the Cuban military and the weakness of its opposition.

Both the party and the military were enlisted in a fight against *burocratismo* (bureaucratism). To be a bureaucrat, it was felt, was to be an enemy of the revolution. Castro and his followers took every opportunity to blame the bureaucracy for the various failures suffered by the Cuban economy. As the economic crisis deepened in the

late 1970s, Castro's impatience with the party and the bureaucracy grew. In December 1979, he asked the National Assembly to transfer to the Council of Ministers its authority to consider and write tougher crime laws. This was followed by a massive political shake-up that included the firing of various ministers and state-agency administrators. Instead of replacing those dismissed, the top leadership acquired new powers and responsibilities. The end result was a greater concentration of power in the hands of the Castro brothers and their trusted allies.

Guidelines adopted at the Second Party Congress in 1980 called for greater efficiency and productivity of labor and outlined cutbacks in imports, signaling a further shortage of consumer goods and tougher times ahead. Fidel also vowed to wage a battle against corruption and abuse of position by employees of state agencies. He explained that the government was struggling to come to terms with the *mercado libre campesino*, a free market established to stimulate agricultural productivity by allowing farmers to sell surplus products; the free market, however, was manipulated by middlemen whom Castro referred to as "bandits."\*

The effect of such attacks was to reduce rather than increase the efficiency of those responsible for implementing the goals of the revolution. For one thing, the attacks almost completely destroyed the initiative of lower-echelon functionaries. Also, the demands made by the party for more sacrifices and more dedication greatly taxed the resources of higher government functionaries, resulting, among other things, in increased absenteeism.

Within the bureaucracy itself, marked class distinctions developed. The intermediate and high-level cadres, furnished either by the army, the party, or the state administration, exercised a sort of paternalistic-authoritarian leadership at all levels. It seems that a new class was emerging in Cuba, a new elite that enjoyed living conditions that contrasted with those of the average population. Better housing, clothing, and transportation, and even more food were some of the privileges reserved for this group. They had, therefore, a vested interest in the preservation of the regime as well as in the consolidation of their own power and position.

Aiding the military and the party were the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR). This massive apparatus, with

---

\**Havana Domestic Radio*, May 1, 1982.

more than three million members out of a total population of some ten million, was assigned the task of mobilizing and controlling the population.

Initiated in 1960, the CDR continue to be an organ of neighborhood vigilance. During the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961 they were a key factor in keeping the population under control and rounding up real and suspected counterrevolutionaries within hours after the outbreak of fighting. Over the years, however, they have become much more than committees of revolutionary vigilance. They have become a mass organization to aid other state organs. Just as the CDR help the Ministry of Interior in its fight against counterrevolutionaries, so it helps the Ministry of Education in school enrollment and attendance, the Ministry of Public Health in its special campaigns, and the National Bank in savings campaigns. The CDR also has a vital role in local government, serving as links between the municipal administrations and the neighborhoods. Well-functioning committees keep an eye on the quality of services at local stores and bring shortcoming to the attention of the manager or his superiors.

In early 1968 the CDR played a major part in the execution of the "revolutionary offensive" leading to the expropriation of close to 55,000 Cuban bars, nightclubs, and other small private businesses. The very day the government decreed the confiscation of almost all remaining private businesses in the island, the neighborhood CDR throughout the country assigned volunteers to guard the local stores and officially took them over in the name of the revolutionary government. They appointed "People's Administrators" and opened the stores for business, thus completing the confiscation process in a single day.

In order to raise the ideological level of members, the CDR placed much emphasis on study seminars at the neighborhood level. The Cuban government estimates that more than 1.3 million people a month take part in these seminars. Recent themes of study include Cuban history, the struggle against American imperialism, and the need for more sacrifices to increase productivity. Still, the effectiveness of the seminars is questionable. Participants have pointed out that the quality of the instructors is rather low and that people are usually bored with the repetitious and monotonous lectures.

The new man and the new society envisioned by Castro and his regime were to be significantly different from the past and required a change in the values and attitudes of many Cubans. The belief that

events are determined by nature had to be transformed, and the orientation toward the present modified. Devotion to the cause of communism and love of the fatherland must prevail. The church's faltering influence had to be eliminated completely; so must be the aversion of Cubans to manual labor and the notion that a woman's place is in the home. The new man would consciously labor for the welfare of society, each working for all and all for one. "That is what is meant by revolution," explained Fidel, "that everyone shall benefit from the work of everyone else." Racial prejudices will be eliminated. Honesty and truthfulness would guide everyone's life. The young would be taught to respect and admire party leaders, especially Fidel, and to obey party discipline. Consciousness of social duty and intolerance of any violation of social interest would predominate.

The new socialist morality would preserve those virtues demonstrated by Castro's rebel army while fighting in the mountains against Batista; a spirit of sacrifice, abnegation, courage, discipline. After emphasizing that communism is a question of developing human awareness, as well as material wealth, Fidel described the type of man his regime proposed to create: "We will bring up human beings devoid of selfishness, devoid of defects of the past, human beings with a collective sense of effort, a collective sense of strength." Castro explained his great dream—that "of advancing toward a Communist society in which every human being with a superior awareness and a full spirit of solidarity is capable of contributing according to his ability and receiving according to his needs."

The new society would be abundant in material wealth, but man would be less concerned with obtaining material goods for himself, preferring to work to produce for the whole society. "From an early age," explained Fidel, "children must be discouraged from every egotistical feeling in the enjoyment of material things, such as the sense of individual property, and be encouraged toward the greatest common effort and the spirit of cooperation." Although society would enjoy material wealth, money would be abolished. "There will arrive the day," said Castro, "when money will have no value. Money is a vile intermediary between man and the products man creates."

Other material incentives would similarly be eliminated. Recalling Che Guevara's preaching of the superiority of moral over material incentives, an editorial in *Granma*, the official newspaper of Cuba's Communist party, lashed out at "economism," which it described as "the tendency to consider that men produced more and better as

they received more and better," and stressed that the new Communist ideology will be developed only through a gigantic effort to organize the productive, social, educational, and cultural activity of the Cuban people. "Men produce more and better," concluded *Granma*, "as they improve the organization of work, as technical training is improved, technological and scientific resources are more extensively employed, and Communist awareness becomes greater."

In foreign affairs the Cuban masses had to be irreconcilably opposed to the enemies of the fatherland, especially the United States. Cubans should demonstrate solidarity with the peoples of developing countries, of the socialist camp, and particularly of Latin America, as well as friendship and brotherhood toward the people of the Soviet Union. As James Reston pointed out after a trip to Cuba as early as 1967, "A remarkable new generation of Cubans, more literate and disciplined than any other, is being indoctrinated systematically with the idea that the United States is the embodiment of everything that is narrow, selfish, and evil in the world today." A new anti-United States vision based on intense internal struggle and commitment, it is not to be mistaken for more moderate Latin American versions, as in Peru or Mexico.

All efforts were directed toward committing the younger generation to these principles, for if the drive to create the new socialist man failed, the revolution would fail, too. Without the proper attitudes, the millennium could not be reached. Faithful to Lenin's ideas that the school should "educate and prepare members of a Communist society," the Castro regime seemed convinced that, under the direction of the party, education could be used as an indispensable tool in developing the new society and the socialist man. Politburo member Armando Hart described the objective of socialist education as "the ideological, scientific, and technical formation of whole generations capable of actively constructing socialism and communism." "The task of teaching and the ideological struggle are intimately related," he explained. "It is necessary to educate man against the individualistic ideology and to instill in him the work methods derived from the Marxist-Leninist concept." "Education," Castro emphasized, "is society's basic instrument to develop worthy individuals able to live within communism." Particularly from intellectuals and writers, the revolutionary leadership demanded commitment to the revolutionary goals; *homo poeta* (the intellectual) must support the dominant role of *homo faber* (man the maker).

The "new man," however, is nowhere to be found. Despite significant efforts, the regime has been unable to root out old habits and values. Even forty-two years of revolution have not destroyed all that was "bad" in Cuba's cultural legacy. Youthful apathy, pessimism, and cynicism characterize contemporary Cuban society.

The pervasiveness of tradition cannot be easily overcome. The memory of past ideas and values weighs heavily on the minds of the Cubans, and historical experiences are not easily eradicated. Despite the government's attempts to rewrite and reinterpret Cuban history, the past is still too close for total forgetfulness. Yet the regime uses its own historical interpretations as weapons in the political struggle. These new interpretations have become the established dogmas to be inculcated in old and young alike. Fidel and the party link their present policies with broad aspirations and sentiments of the people while using whatever national or cultural symbols they consider appropriate to obtain their desired goal.

This attack on the past has not meant a total rejection of Cuba's cultural tradition. On the contrary, the regime emphasizes certain aspects of the past, such as African cultural contributions, as well as Cuban sacrifices at the time of the wars of independence. The cult of Martí flourishes, though Martí's writings have been carefully screened to select those that reflect his anti-Americanism and his admiration for some socialist ideas.

Nationalism and anti-Americanism guide the revolution's efforts at cultural changes. It seems as if the regime is attempting to find a new identity by taking what it considers "good" from Cuba's past and by preserving some aspects of Cuba's political tradition, such as nationalism, while emphasizing "bad" aspects more strongly, such as the role of the United States. Castro and the Cuban leadership present the revolution as the embodiment of the ideas of the independence movement and the frustrated 1933 revolutionary process. A history of Cuba written as a text especially for the members of the Cuban armed forces concluded by pointing out that the failure of the 1933 revolution proved that true progress for Cuba could be achieved only in opposition to the United States. This search for a nationalistic identity is definitely influencing present cultural directions and certainly will shape the thinking of the new socialist man.

There is no doubt that the emerging Cuban intelligentsia will differ significantly from that of pre-Castro times. The latter was cosmopolitan and had been exposed to both Western and Eastern ideas.

Its origins were chiefly middle- or upper-class. Today a part of the new intelligentsia has worker and, in some instances, rural backgrounds. Its view of other cultures, particularly that of the United States, has been deliberately distorted to conform to the objectives of the Cuban Communist party by reason of the unavailability of diverse reading materials and the educational policies of the regime.

Far beyond the sphere of formal education, the whole of society had to be geared toward producing the proper conditions for the development of the new man. A massive social apparatus was thus devised to mold the minds of the growing generation. It included the press and the mass-communication media, as well as social, cultural, and workers' organizations. The party, the Union of Young Communists (UJC), and the army all provide political instruction. As early as June 1964 an article in the theoretical journal *Cuba Socialista* indicated the regime's awareness of the important role movies, radio, television, and the press play in the "cultural and ideological formation of the masses" and reiterated that the efforts of all the revolutionary leaders, beginning with Fidel Castro, were directed at making radio and television "informational and educational vehicles through which the masses could be both *informed* and *formed*."

Recognizing early that one of the most stubborn obstacles to the ideological conversion of the Cuban people was the cultural and political legacy documented in the works of Cuban writers, the Castro government launched a purge of all literature incompatible with the Communist view. Not only were old textbooks eliminated but many were rewritten to justify the Castro revolution and its movement into the Communist camp. The government also embarked on a massive effort to disseminate the writings of foreign and particularly communist and socialist authors.

Schools at all levels formed the core of the social apparatus. But before schools could be effective, the old "bourgeois" intelligentsia had to be either eliminated or won over, the schools had to be transformed, and a whole new generation of teachers had to be indoctrinated.

To eliminate the old intelligentsia was relatively easy. Some members of this group left the country voluntarily during the first years of the revolution. Others were expelled, purged, or pensioned off from their bureaucratic and academic positions. Still others, who accepted the regime, were at first incorporated only to be later replaced by more trustworthy younger cadres.

Why Castro allowed the old intelligentsia to leave Cuba requires some explanation. Underlying the regime's thinking was the assumption that a generation reared under the capitalist system could not be trusted or converted to Marxism-Leninism. Every disloyal intellectual who left therefore could be substituted by a loyal follower. In addition, a policy of allowing Cubans to leave the island diminished opposition and released internal pressures. Undoubtedly a group of disloyal writers, professors, intellectuals, and *pensadores* could influence public opinion and become a source of potential trouble.

Before his death in Bolivia in 1967, Che Guevara described how the educational system worked in Cuba. The process of educating the young, he explained, was twofold: on the one hand, society acted upon the individual by means of direct and indirect education while, on the other hand, the individual underwent a conscious phase of self-education. Direct education was the job performed by educational institutions, the party information organs, and the mass media. Indirect education consisted mainly of the pressure exerted by the educated masses and the social apparatus on the uneducated individual. "The individual receiving the impact of the social power," wrote Guevara, "realizes his inadequacy and tries to adjust to a situation. He is educating himself."

Fidel Castro after  
the Moncada  
Attack, July 1953.



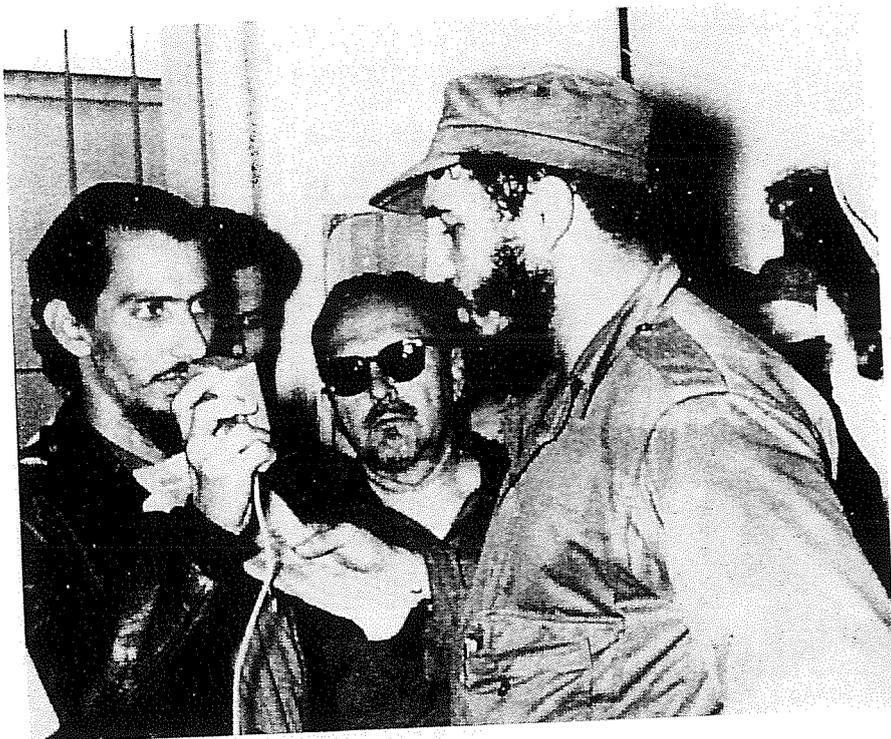
Ernesto "Che"  
Guevara (1959).



Raúl Castro (1959).



Castro's rebel army in the Sierra Maestra, 1958.



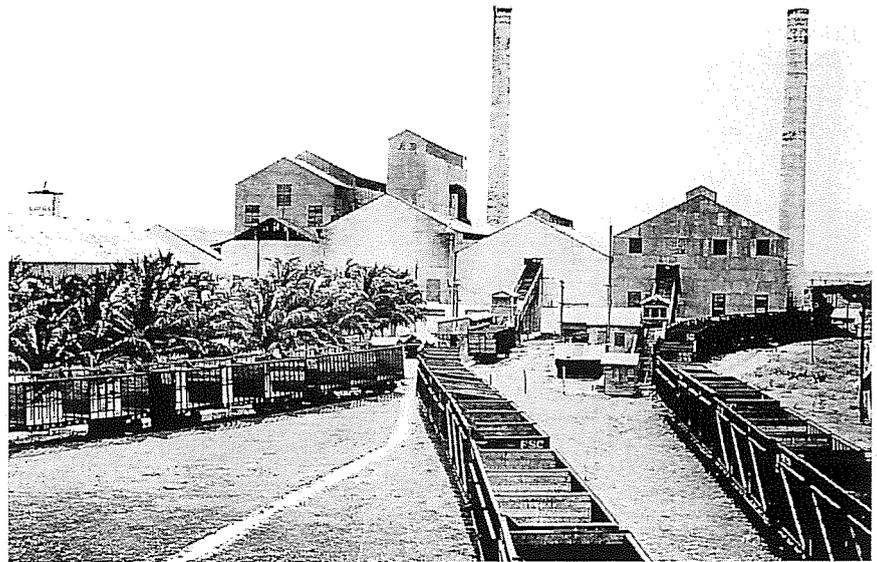
Fidel Castro (right) and Manuel Urrutia (center), the first revolutionary president, in the days following Batista's overthrow.



Manuel Urrutia, Armando Hart (former minister of education and organization secretary of Cuba's Communist party), and José Miró-Quijano (minister who resigned in February)



Anastas Mikoyan (right), Soviet deputy prime minister, visiting a Cuban factory in February 1960.



In pre-Castro Cuba, sugar was the main source of foreign currency earnings. After more than forty years, sugar is still "king," and today Cuba is still dependent on sugar exports. Since the revolution, Russian equipment and spare parts have been brought in to run the sugar mills. *Courtesy of the Organization of American States.*



Tourism has always been a major source of Cuban foreign currency earnings. The pre-revolutionary Hotel Nacional was refurbished to accommodate a new wave of tourists, primarily from Canada, Europe, and Latin America. *Courtesy of the Organization of American States.*



Havana was a thriving metropolis in the 1950s. Construction of high-rises, a booming economy, and a vibrant night life characterized the city. *Courtesy of the Organization of American States.*



Fidel and younger brother Raúl reviewing a military parade. In the past few years, the military has become the dominant institution in Cuban society. Military officers direct the economy and manage agricultural and industrial enterprises. Despite recent reductions, the Cuban military remains a powerful fighting force. *Courtesy of the Miami Herald.*



A residential street in Havana, 1999. The capital has deteriorated significantly during the Castro era. *Author's collection*



Beautiful Varadero Beach in Matanzas Province, 1999. Cuba's tourist industry is one of the few areas of the economy that is booming. Europeans and Canadians flock to the special tourist hotels, which are off-limits to Cuban citizens. *Author's collection.*



The lush vegetation and rolling hills of Viñales Valley in Pinar del Río Province, 1999. *Author's collection.*



Pre-Revolution American cars are still a common sight in Cuba. Cubans have become very skilled at doing makeshift repairs to keep these vintage autos on the road. *Author's collection.*



Cubans queuing up for food, 1999. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the standard of living and the availability of goods in Cuba dramatically declined. *Author's collection.*

# 14



## THE REVOLUTION CONTINUES: THE EIGHTIES AND NINETIES

IN the early 1980s, the Cuban revolution reached a critical stage in its development. Persistent structural and managerial problems in the economy, low prices for Cuba's export products, and inability to break away from economic dependence on the Soviet bloc forced a reexamination of basic goals. Since production in most key sectors had fallen short of expected targets, emphasis was placed on increased planning with more modest goals. The regime adopted Soviet economic methods, decreased emphasis on moral incentives, and attempted to create more efficient economic organizations. The Cubans suffered more austerity, with greater rationing of food and consumer goods, and, therefore, harder times. Life became increasingly difficult, with long lines to obtain the most basic goods, with a collapsing public transportation system, and with rapidly deteriorating education and health systems. In desperation, Cubans preferred to risk dying in the straits of Florida fleeing the island in flimsy rafts rather than continue to live in Castro's Cuba.

The establishment of a Soviet-type centrally planned economy burdened Cuba with a vast and cumbersome bureaucracy that stifled innovation, productivity, and efficiency. The island continued its

heavy reliance on sugar for development of the domestic economy and for foreign trade, with little attempt made to achieve agricultural diversification or industrialization. Dependence on sugar ensured that erratic swings in hard currency continued. At the same time, Cuba relied on the Soviets for massive infusions of aid to meet minimal investment and consumption needs and depended almost entirely on Soviet oil exports for energy requirements.

Meanwhile, Cuba's per capita debt grew into the largest in Latin America, four times that of Brazil and three times that of Mexico. The approximately \$10 billion debt was more than two hundred times that of 1959. Cuba's loans were short-term, floating-rate types and had to be refinanced constantly at interest rates that rose sharply after the debt was incurred. Cuba's interest payments increased at a staggering rate, while Western commercial banks were reluctant to provide new hard-currency loans.

Popular expectations of rapid economic improvement were replaced by pessimism. There was decreasing enthusiasm among Cuba's labor force and increasing signs of weariness with constant revolutionary exhortations. Underemployment was rampant, and labor productivity was at a low point. Absenteeism from the job place became common. Cubans stole from state enterprises and fed an already growing black market for food and goods. Graft and corruption became widespread as Cubans rejected socialist morality and laws and struggled to survive on a daily basis.

Yet this is only one side of the picture. It is in the nature of totalitarian regimes that the key question related not to economics per se but rather to the effects of economic factors upon the levers of political and social control. In an effort to increase productivity and forestall any further decline in revolutionary momentum, the regime increased the militarization and regimentation of society and institutionalized its rule by expanding the role and influence of the party throughout society. This progressive institutionalization contributed to the further stabilization of the system, while reducing its vulnerability to threats of external subversion and internal revolt. From an institutional standpoint, the regime appeared equipped to withstand the difficult years ahead. Fidel Castro was still dominant. He remained "the revolution," "the maximum leader." The evidence seemed to indicate that significant segments of the Cuban people continued to be attracted by his personalized style of government. Some regarded him as a protection against the state structures, an

uncontrollable and unpredictable leader ready to change or challenge policies of which he was the author. His lengthy speeches before huge throngs served both as a pedagogical device and as an instantaneous plebiscite. Despite some friction within the military after the U.S. invasion of Grenada embarrassed the Cubans, to all appearances, he maintained absolute control of his government, with no other public figure in a position to challenge his undisputed authority. Speeches by ranking government and party officials were replete with laudatory remarks about the commander in chief. Mass organizations, such as the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution and the Federation of Cuban Women, continued to display slogans extolling Castro's personality, calling for unswerving loyalty to the maximum leader and insisting on supporting Fidel "until victory."

Even with the significant institutionalization of the power structure, Castro's hold on the reins was unchallenged. Yet the very fact that he surrounded himself progressively with the more hard-line elements in the party and the military was certainly indicative of Castro's predilections. Starting in December 1979, the ranks of the "technocrats" in the regime, led by Vice-President Carlos Rafael Rodriguez and Minister of Trade Marcelo Fernandez, were decimated by purges that victimized Fernandez and twenty-two other ministers, presidents of state committees, and other high officials, removing them from the Council of Ministers and, in nine cases, from the new Central Committee that was installed in December 1980.

The political elite's values, policy goals, and organizational interests were driven to reinforce Castro's political inclinations and policy preferences. The hard foreign policy objectives of this group were (1) maintaining Cuba's independence from, and opposition to, the United States; (2) actively supporting violence and terrorism in Latin America; (3) promoting national liberation and socialism in the Third World; (4) acquiring influence and supportive allies among the Third World states; and (5) securing maximum military, economic and political commitments from the Soviet Union. The Castro brothers and their respective followers were also in full control of the pivotal Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers, which was assigned enlarged powers under the governmental reorganization in the early 1980s. The old guard of civilian guerrilla veterans, the *fidelistas* and *raúlistas*, along with the Cuban armed forces, occupied the top posts of the party and the government to an extent unparalleled

since the 1960s. The profile of the regime indicated that it would be no more amenable to moderation or conciliatory policies toward the United States than it was two decades ago.

In foreign affairs, the Cuban revolution achieved significant successes. In the late 1970s, Castro emerged as the leader of the non-aligned movement. There he espoused four important themes for the future that became the cornerstone of Cuba's policy toward the developing world: support for violent revolution, anticolonialism and anti-Americanism, an end to white supremacy in Africa, and a reduction of dependency on the Western economies. These policies coincided with Soviet objectives and produced a convergence of Soviet and Cuban actions in the developing world. Castro's willingness to commit his Soviet-equipped, well-trained armed forces in the African continent gained for Cuba much respect and admiration but also created some fear among African leaders.

The Cuban leadership saw its support for revolution as an integral and critical part of Cuba's foreign policy. Helping leftist insurgents throughout the world is a revolutionary commitment that ensures these allies will come to Cuba's aid in times of need. But more important, worldwide revolution directed against the United States and its supporters weakens the United States, the principal enemy of the Cuban Revolution, diverts its attention and resources, and may ultimately restrain its policies and actions against the island. This, in turn, will ensure the survival of the Cuban Revolution and its present leadership, the most important objective of Cuba's foreign policy.

Armed struggle has remained fundamental to Castro's mystique as well as to the image that he has projected onto the larger world stage where he is determined to play. Other revolutionary leaders may shed, in time, doctrinaire excesses in favor of the pragmatic pursuit of comfortable rule. Yet there is truly nothing in Castro's personal makeup to suggest that he could forsake the global floodlights and renounce his internationalist commitments.

Perhaps the Sandinista victory in Nicaragua and the establishment, albeit temporarily, of a Marxist regime in Grenada were Cuba's most important revolutionary achievements in the western hemisphere. Although the overthrow of the Somoza regime in Nicaragua was as much the result of internal opposition as of external aid, Cuba claimed a joint effort with Venezuela and Panama in bringing down the Somoza dynasty. Cuba pointed out, furthermore, the

vindication of the Cuban line, which had been emphasizing for years the need for violence and particularly guerrilla warfare to attain power in Latin America.

The Sandinista victory gave new life to revolutionary violence and terrorism in Central America, much of it supported by Cuba. Yet Cuba's support for insurgent groups in the area, particularly in El Salvador and Guatemala, was channeled increasingly through Nicaragua. Using Nicaragua or other third countries facilitated the flow of weapons, propaganda, and aid, while making the task of detection and resistance that much harder. Cuba also denied supporting revolutionary groups, thus weakening U.S. credibility and influence, while at the same time facilitating relations with more conservative governments in Latin America. Castro's willingness to come to the aid of the Argentine military regime during the Falklands War was a further indication of Cuba's pragmatic and opportunistic foreign policy. In Argentina, Castro sided with a military dictatorship that had important commercial relations with the Soviet Union and that was fighting Great Britain, a close U.S. ally.

Throughout these maneuvers in Cuba's foreign policy, Castro remained closely tied to the Soviet Union. While there were frictions between Castro and the Kremlin, the latter's influence and presence in the island were far more extensive than ever before. At the same time, solidarity with the Soviet Union remained a vital element of Cuba's foreign policy. Cuba's policies and actions in the international arena operated in the larger framework of Soviet objectives. Castro continued to pursue his own policies only as long as they did not clash with those of the Soviets. To an American journalist who visited Cuba in 1984 and questioned Fidel's loyalty to the Soviets, Castro replied, "I am not Sadat," meaning he would not leave the Soviet camp as Egyptian leader Anwar Sadat had.

Uncomfortable as he felt in the embrace of the Russian bear, Fidel's options were limited. Although relations with China improved from the nadir in 1967, the Chinese seemed unable or unwilling to take Cuba on as an expensive client. Castro's support of Moscow's policies were decried by Beijing as "revisionist," and his denunciations of Mao in the late 1960s were still remembered with bitterness and anger by the Chinese.

Increased commercial ties with Canada, Western Europe, and Japan beckoned as a healthy development from Cuba's standpoint. Yet the ability of these countries to absorb the island's sugar exports

was limited, and Havana had scant cash reserves with which to purchase European and Japanese goods. Cuba's heavy economic commitment to the Soviet Union and eastern European countries was an additional deterrent to a broadening of its scope of trading partners, while U.S. pressures on Western allies tended to limit their willingness to trade with Cuba.

To be sure, all of this could have enhanced the desire of the Castro regime to reduce its reliance on the Soviet Union and to reach some accommodation with the United States. Rapprochement with the United States could have led to a loosening of the embargo and the travel ban and even access to an important and proximate market, if the United States were willing to buy Cuban sugar. It could have bolstered Cuba's immediate security position and provide Castro with leverage in his dealings with the Soviet Union. U.S. recognition would have meant an important psychological victory for Castro. In Latin America, it would have been interpreted as a defeat for "Yankee imperialism" and as an acceptance of the Castro regime as a permanent, albeit irritating, phenomenon in the Caribbean.

It is a measure of the strange and pervasive economic determinism in the American outlook that we tend to assign priority to economic analysis in trying to understand the motivations of revolutionary Marxist regimes like the one in Havana. The history of the past decades offers clear proof that economic considerations have never dominated Castro's policies. On the contrary, many of the initiatives and actions that the Cuban leadership has undertaken abroad, such as intervention in Angola, Ethiopia, Grenada, and Nicaragua, as well as constant mass mobilizations at home, have been costly, disruptive, and detrimental to orderly economic development. If the economic welfare of the Cuban people had been the leitmotif of Castro's policies, we would be confronting a totally different Cuba today.

Cuban moves toward accommodation with the United States would have posed some major problems for the Kremlin. The Soviets were not averse to some amelioration in Cuban-U.S. tensions, especially if this resulted in reducing Cuba's heavy demands for Soviet aid. The Kremlin was fearful, however, that ties with the West could foster desires for increasing independence by other Soviet bloc members and lead to progressive internal liberalization, as the results of the West German efforts to establish diplomatic and trade relations with Eastern Europe showed. Although Cuba was not so critical to the Soviet Union as Eastern Europe, a resumption of Cuba's relations

with the United States and significant weakening in Soviet-Cuban ties was seen as leading to the eventual subverting of the revolution and the renunciation of membership in the "socialist camp." Moscow viewed Cuba's possible defection as a blow to its prestige and as damaging to the Soviet power posture vis-à-vis the United States.

Rapprochement with the United States would have also been fraught with danger and uncertainties for the Cuban leadership. It would have required a loosening of Cuba's military ties with the Soviet Union, the abandonment of visible support for violent revolutions in Latin America, and the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Africa and other parts of the world. These were conditions Castro was not willing to accept. He perceived them as attempts by the United States to isolate Cuba and strengthen anti-Castro forces within the island, thus posing a threat to the stability of his regime. Moreover, the economic embargo engendered in Cuba a sort of siege mentality, which facilitated the mobilization of the population and justified the constant demands of the government for more work and sacrifices, while at the same time providing a ready-made excuse for economic failures. The close ties of the Cuban economy to the Soviet Union prevented a rapid reorientation toward the United States, even if this were politically feasible. Castro, therefore, was not able or willing to offer meaningful concessions that would be indispensable for U.S.-Cuban rapprochement. Statements of intention or meaningless tactical concessions are no substitutes for substantive policy changes. In the past, Castro has periodically extended ostensible olive branches to the United States, only to retract them. Even in those years, the complex diplomatic avenues between Washington and Havana have never been completely barricaded. Negotiations have proceeded and ad hoc agreements have been struck; for example, with respect to the treatment of skyjackers or the Mariel refugees. The question, therefore, is not whether Castro is willing to negotiate. The question, rather is whether he stands ready to render the kinds of meaningful concessions that he has barred in the past—concessions concerning Castro's support for revolutionary and terrorist groups and Cuba's respect for human rights and development of a pluralistic society.

It is unlikely that a profoundly anti-American, megalomaniac, and cunning leader such as Fidel will be happy as simply another friendly authoritarian/paternalistic caudillo relegated to an insignificant tropical island. Castro's political style and ideology and his apprehen-

sions about U.S. motivations make him more prone to maintain a hard line. His awareness of Cuba's vulnerability is reinforced by the hostile activities of Cuban refugees in the United States. Commitment to violent revolution and solidarity with anti-American regimes such as Iraq, North Korea, Iran, and Libya are cornerstones of his foreign policy. The preservation of a radical position is felt to be necessary for the defense of the revolution and to encourage the anti-U.S. struggle. He cannot modify, let alone abandon, these cornerstones without risking his power and obscuring his personal place in history—a consideration that may be becoming more important in Castro's mind.

Meaningful Cuban overtures to the United States seem unlikely, all the more so because of the prospect of a continuing erosion of the U.S. embargo and the travel ban. Castro prefers to make the U.S. boycott an important issue in his anti-U.S. campaign in Latin America. Although of little economic significance for the revolution, Latin American moves toward reestablishing economic and diplomatic relations with Cuba are viewed by Havana as a major political defeat for the United States in Latin America, which could result both in some isolation of the United States in the region and in pressures for it to recognize the Castro government.

This is not to say that Cuban-Soviet relations were without serious irritants. Moscow's claim to leadership of the "socialist bloc" and its interference in Cuba's internal affairs clashed with the forces of Cuban nationalism. Given Castro's personality and past policies, his suspicion, if not dislike, of the Soviets, and his desire to play a leading role in world affairs, he remained an unstable and unpredictable Soviet ally. Yet, in the 1980s, Castro had no choice but to follow the Soviet lead, while attempting to emerge from his isolation in Latin America and improve Cuba's faltering economy.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Castro faced some of the old problems that plagued the Cuban Revolution in the past, as well as new and critical challenges. Internally, there was growing evidence of disillusionment with the party's and Castro's exhortations. Absenteeism and youth apathy were increasing. Castro seemed to be losing the battle to create a new generation devoted to the party and to the revolution. Despite thirty years of revolution, the "new man" was yet to be created. The loss of this generation represents, perhaps, the greatest challenge for the future stability of the regime.

Economically, the revolution was extremely weak. Persistent

structural problems in the economy, low prices for Cuba's export products, and the inability to obtain greater quantities of aid from the Soviet Union forced yet another reexamination of basic goals. The deepening economic crisis, aggravated by events in Eastern Europe, produced a new frenzy of planning activity and greater regimentation, in the hope of stimulating productivity. While rejecting *perestroika* (restructuring) and *glasnost* (political opening), Castro returned to the failed paths of the past, insisting that the Cubans should work harder, sacrifice more, and expect less in the years ahead. Among the populace, pessimism and cynicism replaced revolutionary fervor.

Externally, Castro remained a willing ally of the Soviet Union. While frictions developed after Gorbachev's assumption of power, the Soviet Union's influence on the conduct of Cuba's foreign policy remained strong, and Cuba's solidarity with the Soviets was one of the main cornerstones of Cuba's foreign policy. Without abandoning his commitment to anti-Americanism and internationalism, Castro became more selective in supporting revolutionary groups in Latin America and elsewhere. He expanded ties with the new Latin American democracies and tried to project a statesmanlike image in the area. He also negotiated, on his own terms, a solution to the Angolan conflict and the withdrawal of Cuban troops from the continent of Africa.

Mild overtures from Castro toward the United States encouraged those in this country who believed it was time for a rapprochement with Cuba. In 1989, Castro tried and executed three high-ranking officers of the Interior Ministry and General Arnaldo Ochoa, former commander of Cuban troops in Africa, accusing them of drug trafficking. The execution seemed more connected with the elimination of a potential rival than with drugs. Denying his or his brother's involvement with drugs, a denial few believed, Castro called on the United States for cooperation in fighting the drug trade. As he had in the past, Castro was willing to negotiate and to cooperate with the United States on specific issues.

Castro was not ready then, or since, to make major concessions. It is interesting to note that Fidel's overtures to the United States are usually followed with the now standard qualifier: "Since certain things are sacred—independence, the country's sovereignty, its revolutionary principle—its political and social systems cannot be renounced. Whoever destroys them will have to fight us." In a bitter

and vitriolic anti-American speech on July 26, 1989, the thirty-sixth anniversary of the Moncada attack, Castro reemphasized his commitment to socialism and rejected any possibilities of change.

Yet successive U.S. administrations have hoped for an accommodation with the Cuban Revolution. Castro has periodically (especially before U.S. elections) extended ostensible olive branches to the United States, only to retract them. The expectation remained, however, that somehow a negotiated settlement could be found in the 1980s to contain Castro's internationalism and the accelerating currents of instability and conflict in Central America, and to relieve the difficult choices that the United States confronted in responding to these developments. Optimistic appraisals of the possibility of a deal with Castro were also encouraged by the spectacle of Cuba's deepening economic problems.

Before the revolution, most of Cuba's foreign trade was with Western nations, almost 70 percent with the United States. Since Castro's takeover, Cuba's trade was reoriented primarily toward Socialist countries. Almost 80 percent of Cuba's trade was with non-Western nations. To many American businesses, the possibility of reopening this market to American products seems natural, given the pre-revolutionary tradition, the geographical proximity of the island, and the needs of the Cuban economy for American know-how and technology. The notion of trade with Cuba is also surrounded by a certain mysticism that misestimates the true potential of the Cuban market, enhanced by the vision of selling to a state-controlled economy with its massive purchasing power.

There is little question about Cuba's chronic need for U.S. technology, products, and services. Yet need alone does not determine the size or viability of a market. Cuba's large foreign debt, owed to both Western and Socialist countries; the abysmal performance of its economy; and the low prices for its major exports make the "bountiful market" perception a perilous mirage.

Given Cuba's dismal economic picture, Castro's ability to use its scant foreign exchange to buy U.S. and Western products will remain very limited for the foreseeable future. The island's economy has fallen from a position of regional economic leadership to a level below the median Caribbean per capita income. In the process, Cuba has amassed a massive foreign debt, and the servicing of this debt has created an added burden to the economy. Yet this debt does not take into consideration the more than \$19 billion the USSR had

granted Cuba between 1961 and 1988, including commodity subsidies and absorption of balance-of-trade deficits. Cuba's indebtedness to the Soviet Union and the high level of assistance it received from Moscow until 1992 vouched for its dependency, for its subordination to decision-making mechanisms other than its own, and for its inability to divert significant resources to purchase Western goods.

Obviously, Cuba's dependence on foreign powers has greatly increased, relative to the pre-revolutionary era. That exacerbation of dependency must be judged in terms of Cuba's loss of economic flexibility and alternatives as a result of the political ideological commitment to the revolution. This commitment exacted a high economic price not only through heightened international dependency, but also through a massive concentration on sugar that weakened Cuba's possibilities to diversify its exports, as well as its choice of trading partners.

If a resumption of U.S.-Cuban economic relations were to take place, the United States must be prepared to barter its products for Cuban sugar. Cuba's chronic shortage of hard currency means bartering or loans are the only mechanisms available to the Castro regime to acquire U.S. goods. But Cuba's gain of any share of the U.S. sugar market must come at the expense of other sugar producers in the Caribbean, as well as sugar producers in the United States itself. This arrangement would deal a considerable blow to the American sugar industry, but it would be particularly devastating to the economies of a score of friendly nations structurally dependent on sugar exports to the United States. Such nations as the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Guatemala, and El Salvador would face additional hardships, stifled growth, and enlarged debt burdens that could threaten their political stability, and thus, U.S. regional security interests.

It is also important to point out that domestic protectionism in the United States has already resulted in reduced sugar quotas for most regional producers. A specific danger is that Cuba could subsidize sugar exports and sell below marginal cost. To some Caribbean sugar states, this would represent an economic dislocation of the first magnitude. The same argument holds, in varying degrees, for other potential Cuban exports such as biotechnology, nickel, tobacco, citrus, and rum.

Cuba's products are neither economically nor strategically important to the United States. From the U.S. point of view, therefore,

the reestablishment of commercial ties with Cuba would be at best problematic. It would create severe market distortions for the already precarious regional economy of the Caribbean and Central America, since the United States would have to shift some of these countries' sugar quota to Cuba. It would provide the U.S. market with products that are of little value and in abundant supply. And while some U.S. firms could benefit from a resumed trade relationship, it would not help in any significant way the overall U.S. economy. Cuba does not have the potential to become an important client like China, Russia, or even Vietnam.

Under the protective umbrella of the Soviet Union, Castro continued to play a great power role in Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East into the 1990s, supporting violent revolution in three continents and leading the non-aligned movement—a role totally out of proportion to Cuba's size and resources—and at the expense of the Cuban people. The Cuban leadership saw its support for revolution as an integral and critical part of Cuba's foreign policy. The Soviets provided Cuba the protection that allowed Castro's adventurism in the world. While not providing the principal motivation for Castro's policies, the protection and aid of the Soviet Union enhanced Cuba's policies and actions. Yet it is important to emphasize that the Soviets were neither able nor willing to prevent Cuba's involvement with revolutionary groups. In the 1960s, Castro engaged in revolutionary exploits throughout the world, many times to the chagrin and dismay of the Soviets. To understand Cuba's world role requires a unique analytical lens.

American analysts generally neglect the personal factor as a key to the behavior of a revolutionary society dominated by the charisma and philosophy of a single personality. Notwithstanding the prominent attention that has been given to Castro the leader, there is still inadequate appreciation of Castro the man, and of the integral role that violent revolution and "internationalism" exert upon his personal makeup.

By the 1990s, Cuba's international relations had developed into seven main themes: (1) the survival of the Castro revolution; (2) the internationalization of Castro's personal prestige and charisma and the resulting power and influence this conveys; (3) the maintenance until the collapse of communism, of a close alliance with the Soviet Union and its interests throughout the world; (4) the preservation of an anti-American posture in an attempt to weaken American

power and influence worldwide; (5) the acquisition of influence and supportive allies among Third World states; (6) the development of a "new international economic order"; and (7) the continuous support of "movements of national liberation" in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America.

The Cuban government helped a broad range of "progressive forces," terrorist groups, and religious fanatics opposing the United States. Since the 1970s, however, the regime has been increasingly willing, in spite of its Marxist rhetoric, to establish ties with conservative Latin American states. Clearly, ideology is not the sole factor shaping Cuba's external behavior. Cuban interest in developing such relations has been motivated by a desire to foster Cuban and, in the past, Soviet objectives, and to undermine U.S. interests in the area.

Another interesting characteristic of Cuba's foreign policy is the attempt to achieve goals with low risks. Failures abroad would hurt Castro's prestige and weaken his leverage. Successes, however, feed the leader's ego and bring with them tangible rewards; worldwide influence, leverage vis-à-vis other countries, and internal support, which compensates for the continuous economic failures and hardships endured by the Cuban people. Successes abroad justify sacrifices at home.

Despite the expansive role of Cuba and the successes of certain daring Cuban initiatives (especially in Africa), Cuban foreign policy has had its share of failures and has shown signs of possible decay. The U.S. invasion of Grenada is a case of forced Cuban reversal. The eventual electoral defeat of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, as well as the peace accord in El Salvador, shows the limits of Cuba's internationalism and influence.

The image of a non-aligned Cuba was repeatedly tarnished by Castro's close partnership with the Soviets. His failure to condemn the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan cost him dearly. It was difficult for Castro, the "champion" of non-intervention and a constant critic of past U.S. interventions, to justify the brutal Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. It was also difficult for honest and responsible leaders of the Third World to accept this dual standard. Castro's failed attempt to rally Latin American leaders to repudiate their foreign debt contrasted sharply with Cuba's commitment to pay its own debt to the Soviets. It is difficult to reconcile preaching morality at home and practicing cynicism abroad.

In 1988 Angola, South Africa, and Cuba signed an agreement

mediated by the United States calling for the removal of Cuban troops from Angola and establishing the independence of Namibia. With this agreement, Castro achieved his original goal of consolidating a Marxist regime in power in Angola, as well as securing the independence of Namibia. On July 26, 1988, he proclaimed that Cuba was "willing to participate in a just and dignified solution that includes the security of Angola and the independence of Namibia." He also achieved world status—he shared the negotiating table with bigger powers. The U.S. had negotiated with a leader of a small, insignificant Caribbean island and considered his wishes and demands. Castro's prestige and leverage increased. Furthermore, Castro left Angola only gradually over several years, thus minimizing the impact of returning his troops to Cuba and helping to guarantee the survivability of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, the Angolan Marxist regime.

Cuba emerged as the real victor. Castro achieved at the bargaining table what he was unable to achieve on the battlefield. The agreement allowed him to extricate his troops from a difficult, indeed a no-win, situation. In over ten years of fighting, he had been unable to emerge victorious in the Angolan conflict, and Cubans suffered thousands of losses. Opposition had been growing to a winless war, and there was less enthusiasm within the military to remain indefinitely in Angola. In addition, returning troops increased the AIDS epidemic on the island.

Cuban policies and actions in the world were usually conducted with Soviet support or acquiescence and, in the case of Angola, with direct Soviet military involvement. Yet it should be emphasized that commitment to revolutionary violence has been a Cuban policy since the beginning of the revolution. Fidel sees this commitment as his most significant contribution to modern revolutionary theory and as the policy that will provide for him a place in history.

Despite *perestroika* and *glasnost* in the Soviet Union and differences with Gorbachev, Castro remained a close Soviet ally until the end of communism. Since the late 1960s, the relations between Havana and Moscow had taken the form of a progressively closer alliance. The incorporation of Cuba into the Soviet camp was evident not only in economic terms (Cuba was a member of the COMECON and was heavily dependent on Soviet economic and military aid and trade) but was clearly manifested in its model of government and its international behavior. The nature of this alliance was more complex

than the theories that describe Cuba as a simple satellite or the Soviets as the center of an empire with a series of allies in its periphery. Undoubtedly, Cuba was subservient in most cases to Soviet interests, but Havana had considerable leverage with Moscow as well as some freedom to act and react in external affairs (especially in the Caribbean and Central and Latin America). What best defined the relationship is a commonality of interests and a mutuality of gains.

In spite of this intimacy, the Soviet-Cuban connection had encountered differences, temporarily souring the partnership. The early years of the 1980s were marked by minor but revealing tensions. The Soviets quarreled with Castro over his somewhat independent ideological maneuvering and his failure to put order into Cuba's faltering economy. Castro attempted to underscore his limited independence in international policies vis-à-vis the Kremlin but mitigated possible negative repercussions by praising the Soviets' vital economic lifeline to his regime.

Tensions between Cuba and the Soviet Union also can be traced to the Grenada invasion. The successful U.S. invasion represented a setback for Cuban influence in the region. Wishfully expecting a stronger Soviet reaction, the Cubans were disappointed by the Kremlin's lack of support. Consequently, several regional leftist organizations, such as the Worker's Party of Jamaica, criticized Cuba for not providing military assistance to that radical violent communist faction that took control of Grenada after the assassination of Prime Minister Maurice Bishop, the Coard group. Castro, in turn, blamed his military commanders in Grenada for having failed to resist the U.S. intervention, demoting several officers whose performance was deemed unacceptable.

Castro also showed impatience with the Soviet level of support for Nicaragua and with the Kremlin's unwillingness to challenge the United States in defense of the Sandinista revolution. Castro's failure to attend the COMECON meeting in 1984, and the absence of a high-level Soviet delegation at the anniversary celebration of the Cuban Revolution that same year were additional signs of strains in the relations.

By early 1985, Havana and Moscow were beginning to reconcile differences. Raúl Castro and a top-level Cuban delegation attended Chernenko's funeral in Moscow. In 1986 and 1987, Fidel attended the anniversary celebrations of the Bolshevik Revolution in Moscow, and insisted that there was no friction with the Soviets, and claimed

that relations were better than ever. He proclaimed the 1987 celebration his best visit to the USSR.

Gorbachev's visit to Cuba in early 1989 produced mixed results. While Castro balked at Gorbachev's insistence on the need for *perestroika* and *glasnost* on the island, they agreed on other more fundamental issues dealing with international relations. Cuba and the Soviet Union supported the renunciation of the utility of force in international relations, the reduction of regional conflicts, and the continuous global emphasis on the problems of humanity. Cuba would seek greater economic aid from Western countries, including, if possible, the United States, so as to alleviate the Soviet burden of supporting the Cuban economy. As long as the Soviets were not directly involved nor their image tarnished, Cuba would continue to support movements of national liberation. Armed struggle in certain countries remained, from Cuba's standpoint, the only possible road to further power.

As on previous occasions, the areas of agreement in Soviet-Cuban relations seemed greater than those of disagreement. Despite Castro's rejection of economic reforms and his clinging to old Marxist-Leninist ideas, he recognized and supported the value of Gorbachev's "new thinking" in international affairs as a strategy to weaken the Western alliance and undermine U.S. interests, particularly in Latin America.

As the decade of the 1990s began, despite advancing age and mounting internal problems, Castro remained a troublesome adversary of the United States. Little did he expect that communism would collapse in the Soviet Union and that his critical ally would fragment into smaller republics following market economic policies and a more democratic path.