

THE DEATH OF THE CUBAN REVOLUTION

**CASTRO'S BETRAYAL OF THE
CUBAN PEOPLE IN THE NAME
OF REVOLUTION**



Texts compiled by Sam Dolgoff



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It is not easy to convey the haunting feeling of despair, frustration and fear that pervades every aspect of Cuban life... the daily provocations, the incessant brutalities of the "revolutionary" tyrants poisons the atmosphere. One can hardly breathe. I have fought for freedom and socialism all my life. One still hopes: perhaps some miracle will yet rescue the Revolution from its usurpers? Perhaps Revolutionaries will smash the state? Perhaps Fidel Castro will change? Perhaps...? All in vain. The walls are closing in...

...I still hope for the eventual freedom of Cuba. But there are times when I am beset by doubts and fears. I realize how difficult, if not impossible, it is, for a people all alone to extricate themselves from the totalitarian clutches without powerful help from the outside...

(Reconstruir; anarchist bi-monthly, Buenos Aires. January-February, 1964.)

Leaving Cuba **by Salvador Garcia**

Salvador Garcia, a veteran Spanish anarcho-syndicalist militant fought the Franco-fascists on the Aragon front from the beginning of the Civil War in 1936, until the fall of the Republic in 1939, when his column was interned in a French Concentration camp. During World War II, Garcia fought in the underground resistance against the Nazi occupation army in France. Later he and his family emigrated to Cuba where he was active in the libertarian movement and was for years Secretary of the C.N.T. Spanish refugee organisation.

When the sadistic persecution of revolutionaries, by Castro's totalitarian regime, made life unbearable, Garcia found refuge in Mexico. The following excerpts from an interview given a few days after Garcia's arrival in Mexico (Summer, 1963) depicts the emotional upheavals endured by revolutionaries forced into exile.

[S.D.]

Hundreds of thousands of Cubans are risking their lives, trying desperately to leave Cuba. Embassies are swamped with individuals and families seeking refuge in foreign lands. Streets are cordoned off, heavily armed troops guard the docks, ready to open fire on the hordes of desperate Cubans frantically trying to board the first American ships, returning to the U.S. after unloading medical and other supplies to ransom prisoners taken during the aborted American invasion.

Havana International Airport is crowded with high-level bureaucrats (provided with ample funds) travelling to the "socialist" and many other countries. The most expensive restaurants and luxurious accommodations are reserved for the thousands of military "advisors", technicians, specialists and visitors from Russia, China, and other "third world socialist countries." They shop in special stores, with unrestricted access to the rarest liquors, the finest clothes and luxury products. All this, while the ordinary Cuban is forced to subsist on meagre rations of coffee, rice, plantains, poultry, meat, fruits and vegetables abundantly available before Castro. Even the communists cannot deny that the Cuban standard of living was among the highest in Latin America.

The Cuban Revolution: A Direct Report **by Augustin Souchy**

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

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

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

This pamphlet falls into two parts. The first is Souchy's over-all evaluation of the Cuban Revolution. It was written when Castro's gradual moves toward full-fledged totalitarian rule first became apparent. While acknowledging what turned out to be the Revolution's temporary positive aspects, Souchy's observations reflected his growing concern about the authoritarian deformation of the Cuban Revolution.

The second part, a direct report of his visits to various peasant "co-operatives," government "collectives," etc. is a concise critique of the disastrous consequences of Castro's Agrarian Reform Program. Since "Agrarian Reform" is considered the Revolution's major achievement, Souchy's analysis takes on added significance.

[Sam Dolgoff]

Part One: Overall Evaluation of the Revolution

The Cuban Revolution is much more than a mere political change in the form of government. The Revolution initiated a vast economic-social transformation, which to a certain extent resembles what took place in Spain after the 19th of July, 1936 [beginning of the Civil War]. There are, nevertheless, certain important differences. While the Spanish Revolution, in the period of struggle against the existing order as well as the period of social-political reconstruction, was the work of the great masses of workers and peasants, the Cuban Revolution was propelled by a minority of self-sacrificing dedicated revolutionaries... The character of both revolutions springs from these differences.

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

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

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

The new regime came to power on a wave of popular enthusiasm and admira-

overthrow the totalitarian usurpers of the Revolution...

LIBERTY OR DEATH!
"Antonio". Cuba May 13, 1961.

(source: Bulletin of the Cuban Libertarian Movement in Exile (MCLE), Miami, May-June, 1964.)

...on the accusation of any stoolpigeon anyone can be imprisoned, even shot, without being given the least opportunity to defend himself or engage counsel. We know of many cases where persons detained were later murdered on the pretext that they were killed while fighting against government forces...

On July 31, 1962, inmates of Principe prison hung up a poster, "We Are Hungry!" in a corridor. The guards retaliated by opening fire on the protesters, killing some and wounding many. Some of the inmates were placed in solitary confinement, without sun, in damp cells, which seriously affected their health...

In the Cabana Fortress - an ancient Spanish colonial prison - protesting prisoners were stripped naked and exposed to the tropical heat... others were locked up for months in gloomy dungeons...

"Antonio". Cuba, August 5, 1962

(source, ibid. August-September, 1962)

In addition to scarcity of food and other necessities the people are subjected to arrests and house searches at any hour of the day or night, the CDR are now invested with police powers. Shootings grow more numerous each day. In the night people are herded into concentration camps... recently more than a thousand from the little town of Paguay Grands were herded into the public square, converted into a concentration camp, seventy were shot...

"Antonio". Cuba, March 18, 1963.

(source ibid., March-April, 1963)

Other Reports

The following reports were sent from Cuba by an anarchist militant active in the anti-Castro underground resistance movement who also fought against Batista.

[S.D.]

...Those who organised the April 1961 invasion of Cuba misunderstood the reality of the Cuban situation. The failure of the invasion points up the need for a thorough re-evaluation of the means for the liberation of Cuba. For the moment we shall try to describe the situation.

The invasion caught us by surprise. There was a total lack of information and the underground were not consulted or notified. The government immediately proceeded to detain anyone suspected of being opponents of the regime. Only those able to go into hiding escaped arrest. There is no way of knowing how many were seized but we believe that in Havana alone there were over 40,000. There must have been at least half a million nationally... In one of the phoney "co-operatives" 800 workers were hauled in. Detention centres in Havana and in the provinces were surrounded by machine-gun troops. And the prisoners were warned that at the first sign of trouble they would immediately be shot down. Nevertheless in many places the prisoners attempted jailbreaks. In one case - the Palace of Sports - prisoners were machine-gunned and a number were killed and wounded. Prisoners in the Castillo del Principe Fortress were so sadistically tortured that many became seriously ill and some had to be placed in insane asylums...

...it was the Committees for the Defence of the Revolution (CDR) who conducted most of the house by house raids. No one can escape their vigilance. These block and neighbourhood stoolpigeons are a permanent danger...

...a people that has sent such a huge proportion of its sons, daughters, and friends into exile because they cannot tolerate the regime; a people in armed opposition to the dictatorship with over half a million imprisoned for opposing the dictatorship are decisively rejecting the tyrannical social regime which they are being forced to endure. A detested regime maintains itself in power through terror supported by the armaments and military technicians of foreign imperialist powers. Rather than submit to such domination the people will, if necessary, die fighting to

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

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

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

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

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

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

Part Two: "We Visit the New Rural Co-operatives"

Moncada

The road to the Sierra is very rough. In certain places our jeep almost overturned

and so detracted somewhat from the pleasure of viewing the beautiful panorama of hills and beautiful valley with its luxurious tropical flora. After some hours of difficult travel, we reached the shore of a stream. A group of peasants were harvesting malangas and we soon learned that they belonged to a co-operative.

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

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

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

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

But we must never forget that there are two different freedoms! National freedom which refers to the autonomy of a nation, and personal freedom which is much more important. In brutally oppressed countries, with violent upheavals, and little or no experience of national sovereignty, the first national autonomy, is more valued than the second, freedom of the individual. Cuba belongs to the first. Bread there is, but we must point out on the basis of the most meticulous observation, that the rationing of human freedom has already begun. [Souchy, of course, wrote before the full impact of the disastrous economic policies of the revolutionary government brought about acute shortages and rationing of food products that before were always in plentiful supply.

Between Bayamo and Manzanillo

The sheltered city of Bayamo was one of the provision points for the rebels of the Sierra Maestra while they were fighting the Batista dictatorship. Situated in the fertile valley, Bayamo, the commercial centre of a rich agricultural area, is today the dis-

tioned in the press. No one ever sees a photograph of him...

Q. *Who are some of the democratic oppositionists (anti-Batista, anti-communists) in Castro Cuba who have been shot?*

A. Plineo Orieto, one of Fidel Castro's commanders, was shot. They said he was organising an insurrectionary plot, but there was no proof. Porfirio Ramirez, President of the Student Federation of Santa Clara was shot because they (secret police) said he was organising an opposition. Again there was no real proof. Gerardo Fundora, a labour leader in Mantanzas, was shot.

Communists

Q. *You mentioned the communists in the labour unions and the secret police. Just how important are the communists over-all in Cuba today?*

A. They control education, the army, the secret police, the trade unions... the press and mass media, the agrarian reform and the tourist industry...

Q. *What about Castro himself?*

A. Fidel came to a coincidence of interests with the communists from about 1956. When I was in Mexico with Fidel in the training camp of the 26th of July Movement there was always more communist literature than any other kind. Now Castro is working completely with the Communists... [Further questions about the communist orientation of the Cuban regime, as well as education, censorship, political prisoners, the army and militarisation etc., are here omitted as they are discussed in much greater detail throughout the text.]

Roy Finch sums up the lessons that could not be learned from the experience of the Cuban Revolution:

"Though the connivance of the American blindness and Cuban Communism, the Cuban Revolution has all but been stolen from the Cuban people... [and quotes Albert Camus] "...None of the evils which totalitarianism claims to remedy is worse than totalitarianism itself ..."

Q. How many libertarians left Cuba?

A. Between 20 and 30.

Q. Would it have been dangerous for you to stay in Cuba?

A. We would probably be in jail by now.

Labour Unions

Q. What is the situation in the Cuban labour movement now?

A. All the national and provincial unions have been taken over by the communists.

Q. What happened to the libertarians in the unions?

A. The libertarians were particularly strong in the Food Workers union. When the communists came to power, they expelled the libertarians not only from the leadership, but from the union itself... the union is 100% communist controlled now.

Q. What has been the public reaction to the communists taking over the unions?

A. There has been considerable reaction of workers against the Stalinists and against the government. Many union meetings have ended in riots. Workers have demonstrated in the streets. Three men, all of whom fought against Batista, have received thirty-year jail terms for signing a declaration against the communist domination of the unions. They are Lauro Blanco, a leader of the Transport Workers Union; Salvador Estavalora, a Castro military man; and Mario Paierno, who had been very active in the anti-Batista underground. Padierno had been picked up and then turned loose. Then the secret police returned and took him away. They told him that he had been sentenced "in absentia." (Mr. Dieguez said that he had been picked up at the same time, but was released, apparently upon personal intervention of Castro himself, probably for "old times sake.")

Secret Police

Q. On the question of civil liberties - is there a secret police now in Cuba?

A. No one knows. We believe that they have a thousand people working for them in Havana. They have informants in factories, unions and schools.

Q. How does the secret police function?

A. The head is a man named Ramiro Valdes, a Communist Party member. There are two divisions under him: D.I.E.R. (Army Intelligence) and D.I.R. (Civil Intelligence.) The D.I.E.R. is run by Raul Diaz Argelles, a man named Lavandiera, a French communist who was the right hand man of the communist Arbenz in Guatemala. The head of the D.I.R. is Angel Valdes - also a Communist Party man - no relation to Ramiro Valdes. But the man who really runs the whole thing is a Russian agent called Fabio Crobot. He is the Communist Party's over-all control man in Cuba. He has been in an out of Cuba for thirty years now. He is never men-

trict headquarters of the INRA. Most of the land is owned by relatively more affluent proprietors, but the creation of co-operatives by the INRA is making rapid progress. The 8 co-operatives in the district consist of 11,858 hectares (one hectare is about 2 1/2 acres) worked by 2,700 agricultural labourers.

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

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

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

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

Statisation of Manzanillo Shoe Factories

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

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

A quarter century before, during the Spanish Revolution, similar collectives were established in Spain. In Catalonia, the Levante and Castille, the isolated workshop collectives later organised themselves into socialised industries. These develop-

ments were based upon the old libertarian tradition that gave the Spanish Revolution its distinctive character.

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

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

The Primavera (springtime) Rice Co-operative

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

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

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

The Hermanos Saenz Co-operative

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

Interview With Cuban Libertarians **by Roy Finch**

Roy Finch resigned from the editorial board of the libertarian-pacifist magazine Liberation because he disagreed fundamentally with its pro-Castro policy. While the editors insisted that the Cuban Revolution was taking a libertarian direction, Finch maintained, on the contrary, that Cuba was fast becoming a totalitarian state. In the ensuing debate, Finch supported his position by arranging an interview with Cuban anarchist exiles, lately arriving in New York. We extract the following excerpts from Liberation, March, 1961.

[S.D.]

...the interview took place in the present New York home of Jesus Dieguez, in Batista's day, head of the Revolutionary Insurreccional Union, an old revolutionary group which worked with Castro and with which Castro was once affiliated. Mr. Dieguez is obviously a man of great courage. He threw himself whole-heartedly into the revolutionary struggle against Batista as far back as 1940. He showed me newspaper stories about the Revolutionary Insurreccional Union and newspaper clippings with photographs of himself standing beside Castro in the pre-revolutionary training days in Mexico. All members of the group I met were life-long foes of dictators, and all of them were in the underground fight against Batista...

...Most of the following interview was conducted with Jesus Dieguez and his son Floreal Dieguez. Other members of the group broke in occasionally, and it was clear that they were in substantial agreement with what was said...

Q. *What is the point of view of the Cuban Libertarians about the Revolution?*

A. From the outset the Libertarians supported many of the things that were done: the expropriation of private property, land and factories and taking over industries. They opposed the government's becoming the new landlord, the new capitalist. In June 1960, A Statement of Principles of the Libertarian Syndicalist Group was issued [see below].

three universities, the Minister of Education and the INRA (National Institute for Agrarian Reform) should jointly rule and dictate the policy of the university. This plot to capture the university was decisively rejected by the students and faculties of the three universities.

The pretext for the takeover of the university came when a few Castroite students, without consulting anyone, expelled two engineering professors on the false, now familiar charge that they were “counter-revolutionists.” Again, without consultation, the expelled professors were replaced by two non-teachers; Che Guevera’s brother-in-law and an active communist. The professors protested this outrage by going on strike. The communist dominated F.E.U. (Federation of University Students) then occupied several university buildings, and the government legalised the seizure. Recalcitrant faculty and students were purged and the freely elected administration was usurped by appointed “Revolutionary Juntas” faithful servants of the state.

The junta assumed dictatorial powers and commanded all the teachers to obey their decrees. More than 80% of the professors who refused were expelled and replaced by docile sycophants, strict followers of the “party line”... This spelled the end of the university as an independent entity. It turned out to be the preliminary step toward the invasion of the University by hordes of Castro-communists.

The co-operative was organised and built by the INRA. INRA advanced construction and operating finances. The complex consists of 120 elegantly landscaped houses for the tobacco workers and their families. A typical dwelling consists of three bedrooms, a dining room, tile bathroom and a fully equipped kitchen. The buildings are “functional,” but the roofs are too low and the old peasant “bohios” (cottages) are better ventilated. Apart from this, we must praise the revolutionary government for its efforts to wipe out slum housing.

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

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

San Vincente

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

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

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

...our Revolution is based upon the concepts formulated by Fidel

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

The School City: “Camilo Cienfuegos”

In the field of education the Castro regime is inordinately proud of what it considers its greatest achievement: the construction of *Ciudad Escolar* - School City - an immense complex named after the great hero of the Revolution Camilo Cienfuegos. The complex is being built at the foot of the Sierra Maestra Mountains, Castro's famed stronghold. This grandiose project, meant to astonish the world, was conceived while Castro's guerrilla band was still being hunted by the Batista army.

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

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

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

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

The opinion of the veteran teacher makes sense. To separate 22,000 children from their homes and parents is to deprive the children of the love, affection, and

nity dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the preservation of culture. The military boot returned to profane the terrain of culture. But this time, more than before, not only did the barrack invade the University the University itself was converted into a barrack!

Neither the fraudulent election of Cubela as President of the F.E.U., nor the militarisation of the University [via the organisation of the militia], sufficed to stem student rebellion. In February 1960, the Russian leader Anastas Mikoyan, on his visit to Havana, placed a ceremonial wreath on the statue of the revered “apostle” of Cuban independence, Jose Marti, in Havana's Central Park [as is the custom for foreign dignitaries]. Outraged that the representative of a tyrannical, totalitarian government should be invited to insult the memory of Marti, a group of students dramatized their indignation by placing their own wreath on Marti's statue. [They carried signs reading “Viva Fidel! Down with Communism!”]

The students were immediately arrested and branded “counter-revolutionary agents of yankee imperialism.” [Among those arrested were Juan Muller, a leader of the fighting in Las Villas Province during the Revolution, and his brother, Alberto Muller, Secretary of the Havana University Student Federation. See the first-hand account of Ruby Hart Philips in her book, *The Cuban Dilemma*; New York, 1962, p. 153].

The incident became the pretext for a ferocious offensive by the Communist minority in the University against those who manifested their opposition to the Castro regime. The slogan coined by the former leader of the Communist Party, Juan Marinello, Rector of the University of Havana, “To be against Communists is to be a counter-revolutionary,” became the battle cry of a tiny group who publicly burned student publications critical of the Communists.

And it was the Communist, Marinello, a Minister under Batista, who declared that there is no need for autonomy under a “revolutionary regime,” where the “people are the government.”

When I was Under-Secretary of Finance, I wrote an article refuting Marinello's argument, which was published in the magazine *Bohemia*. Marinello replied in the [then] official organ of the Party, *Hoy*, with insults, libelling me as a “counter-revolutionary in the pay of imperialism,” and “an agent of the reaction infiltrating the ranks of the revolutionary government.”

Marinello's blast set off an intensified government sponsored campaign to discredit the opposition and capture the university. The University Student and Faculty Council fought back. But this only intensified the attacks not only against the autonomy of the university but also against the faculty, accusing it of sabotaging plans for university reform.

The accusation was false and unjust. After months of painstaking effort the joint Faculty and Student Commission worked out a comprehensive Reform Project, which was overwhelmingly and democratically approved by the students and faculty of the whole University.

In April 1960, a joint meeting of the communist dominated chapters of the universities of Havana, Oriente and Las Villas proposed that the delegates from the

Control of Student Administration

To carry out the first stage, it was necessary to find a suitable puppet as candidate for President of the Federation of University Students (F.E.U.).... The candidate selected, Rolando Cubela, was a Commandante of the Rebel Army who enjoyed the absolute confidence of the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Raul Castro. [Cubela had been an early leader of the Student Revolutionary Directorate and fought with the Directorate on the Escambray Front. He was famous for having killed Batista's chief of military police in the busiest intersection of Havana.]

Cubela's opponent, Pedro Boitel, was very popular with - and favoured by - the students, who feared an installation of an army officer as President of the F.E.U. would lead to the militarisation of their organisation.

The authorities could not risk the defeat of their candidate. On the day before the F.E.U. elections, Castro himself came to the University and addressed the students. So as not to antagonize them, he feigned impartiality and did not directly urge them to vote for Cubela, but subtly prepared the ground for the victory of his candidate by urging revision of the old electoral system: "Do away with party factional rivalries and agree on the unanimous proclamation of a single candidate." But this time the "Maximum Leader" encountered open opposition. The students, true to their traditions of democratic procedures and academic independence, rejected Castro's proposal. The decision of the students was "THERE WILL BE ELECTIONS."

But a few hours before the voting was to take place, Boitel suddenly withdrew his candidacy. The reason was not hard to find. He was forced to step aside. The confusion created by his withdrawal and above all, the fact that Cubela was the only candidate, automatically guaranteed his election. With Cubela as President, the capture of the F.E.U. seemed certain. [Some months later, Boitel, falsely sentenced to 42 years imprisonment as a "counter-revolutionist" in the dreaded Castillo de Principio Penitentiary, died after a prolonged hunger strike. Castro also got rid of Rolando Cubela some time later. On March 10, 1966, he was sentenced to 25 years in prison for plotting the assassination of Castro]

Militarising the Universities

The "election" of Cubela was followed by the creation of the University Student Militias. The government mobilized its propaganda apparatus to convince the students that it was their "heroic mission" to wear the "uniform of a militia member." But the students were not easily fooled. Out of more than 20,000 students, only 300 voluntarily joined the newly organised *University Student Militia*.

But, what was lacking in numbers was made up for by military fanfare. Day and night, little bands of students in uniform strutted through the University grounds, carrying pistols, rifles and machine guns. The stentorian shouts of the officers echoed with provocative insolence all over the campus, desecrating the academic commu-

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

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

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

Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Cuba

by Abelardo Iglesias

This account of the Cuban Revolution was written by the veteran anarchist, Abelardo Iglesias, who lived through the events he describes. While still a young man Iglesias dedicated his whole life to the struggle for freedom and social justice. He was particularly active in the labour movement of his native Cuba, and much later, for many years in Spain, where he fought against Franco fascism and for the Social Revolution from the beginning to the final catastrophic defeat.

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

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

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

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

[S.D.]

How the Communists Took Over the University of Havana

by Andres Valdespino

This is the title of a revealing first hand report by Andres Valdespino, which appeared in the April 1, 1962 issue of Cuba Nueva, part of which we translate below. Valdespino was an active fighter in the anti-Batista movement. In the first months of the Castro government he served as the Under-Secretary of Finance, and later, Professor of Criminal Law in the University of Havana. He resigned from the faculty in protest of the destruction of the University as an independent centre of learning, and against the regime's disrespect for human rights.

[S.D.]

Autonomy and Totalitarianism

An autonomous university not subjected to the political interests of the state, is necessarily incompatible with the conception of a totalitarian society - a society in which nothing is allowed to exist outside the control and domination of the state... autonomy of education is a genuine revolutionary conquest, and no revolution worthy of the name has the right to limit or abrogate this constitutional right granted in the *Magna Carta* of the Republic.

In its plans for the conquest of the University, and in order not to arouse strong mass resistance and student revolt, the Castro-communist regime decided to proceed gradually, in three stages: first, by taking administrative control of the student organisation; second, by militarising the University; and third, by replacing the legitimate governing bodies of the University with state controlled bodies.

At present, Communist Party people hold key posts in the government propaganda machine, which they run with the technical help of native and foreign-born Communist experts. Through the “cultural” departments created in every government ministry, in the armed forces, etc., they organise courses in so-called “revolutionary doctrine,” which are actually Marxist indoctrination courses. For example, the “cultural” chief of the military camp of La Cabana [one of the most important in Cuba] is Ramon Nicalau, who for years was financial secretary of the Communist Party. Among the lecturers with him on this project are Juan Marinello, President of the Communist Party, and Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, Editor of the Communist newspaper *Hoy* [Today], organ of the Party [its well-equipped printing plant was donated to the Party by the Castro government after confiscation from the Batista newspaper *Alerta*].

The Cinematic Institute is the statist agency directing and controlling the movie industry. It is managed by Dr. Alfredo Guevara, another Communist Party member. Through the Film Review Board, he decides what films are acceptable for exhibition in the country. The *People's Consultation Library* of the National Capital is another agency that spreads only Castro Communist propaganda. All these projects are financed by the government.

The organisation of Youth Patrols has been undertaken by the national police. It recruits children from the age of 7 years. They receive military training under the guise of “revolutionary indoctrination.”

Official Declaration of Educational Policies

...we must orientate education according to Marxism-Leninism. Marx's CAPITAL must be studied in all primary grades... the teachings of Marxism-Leninism in the universities is obligatory... (Armando Hart; Minister of Education, July 11, 1963)

...The Union of Young Communists and the Federation of University Students must see to it that the curriculum follows the orientation of Fidel Castro... (Ex-President of the Federation of University Students, Jaime Crombat, speech in the University of Havana, May 26, 1965)

...the creation of the Communist Party cells will facilitate the campaign of the University to eliminate counter-revolutionists and homosexuals... (Blas Roca, member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba, speech in the University of Havana, June 14, 1965 - Source for all above quotes - *Este y Oeste*; June 15, 1966, Caracas)

Introduction

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

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

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

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

That militant anarchists everywhere hailed the Revolution when it first began is understandable. It looked like a true social revolution, and they took the libertarian pretensions of the leaders seriously because they lacked regular and complete information about the real situation in Cuba. Another factor was psychological. With the defeat of the Spanish Revolution (1936-39) the era of popular revolutions seemed closed. Inevitably, disillusionment set in. To some extent, the Cuban Revolution rekindled the old revolutionary flame. The spectacle of a heroic handful of people struggling against seemingly insurmountable odds, disorganised, poorly armed, carrying on a guerrilla war and defeating a formidable, powerfully armed force of professional soldiers, was bound to arouse the sympathy and enthusiasm of all sincere revolutionaries.

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

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

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

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

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

1. The so-called revolutionary regime is essentially an oligarchy dominated by a handful of men accountable to no one for their actions.
2. In line with their sectarianism they have abolished all individual rights.
3. Centralised political and economic power to an extent never known before.
4. Constructed an apparatus of terror immensely more efficient than Batista's repressive agencies.
5. The land has not been distributed to the peasants, for individual, family, collective or co-operative cultivation, but has become the 'de facto' property of the state agency, the *Institute for Agrarian Reform (INRA)*.
6. The nationalisation of private enterprises has not benefited the workers. The industries are administered not by the workers' unions, but have been taken over to reinforce the power of the state, converting the former wage slaves into slaves of the state machine.
7. Public education has become a state monopoly. The state arrogates to itself the right to impose its kind of education upon the young, regardless of the opinion of the parents.
8. The legitimate necessity to prepare against counter-revolutionary aggression has been the pretext for the unnecessary militarisation of children and adolescents as in Russia and other totalitarian states.
9. The right to strike has been abolished and the workers must, without complaint, obey the decrees imposed upon them in their work places. The unions have lost their independence and are actually state agencies, whose sole function it is to cajole or force the workers to obey the commands of the state functionaries without

on maps to indicate the Sierra Maestra.

History was, and is, taught from the Marxist point of view. Before the establishment of the "Revolutionary government," Cuban parents had something to say about the kind of education their children got. Now they must accept the curriculum imposed by the state without protest. Anyone venturing even the slightest disagreement is immediately denounced as a "counter-revolutionary agent of imperialism" and treated accordingly.

Teachers are obliged to faithfully follow the official curriculum, methods, and policies meticulously worked out by the "orientators," whose indoctrination sessions they must attend. To further ensure enforcement of the rules, every educational centre is under the constant surveillance of the *Committee for the Defence of the Revolution*, which in this case serves as a sort of academic police, made up of teacher and student stool-pigeons, who faithfully obey the orders of the government.

The technical schools, the secondary schools, trade and professional schools, and the universities are subjected to the same procedures. Autonomy of the university - won after years of struggle and immense sacrifice, and of which Cuban students were justly proud - has been totally destroyed. The University of Havana is ruled by the arbitrarily imposed *Junta de Gobierno* [Administrative Council], whose membership can be revoked each year in order to guarantee the "revolutionary fidelity of the faculty."

The fake "university reform" was put into effect by intimidation and violence. The old Stalinist and Batistiano sycophants, Juan Marinello and Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, fill the most important posts in the University with their handpicked appointees. The *Federacion Estudiantil Universitaria* [F.E.U. - *Federation of University Students*] that fought so valiantly for freedom and autonomy against all oppressive governments has lost its liberty. The students no longer have the right to elect their own officers. From his office in the *Ministry of the Armed Forces*, Raul Castro dictates who shall be the president of the student organisation - in flagrant violation of all the rules and regulations of the F.E.U. [For details see "How the Communists Took Over the University of Havana," below.]

An emphasis on the monstrous intervention of the state in all academic activities may appear exaggerated to readers not acquainted with the bitter reality of the Cuban tragedy; but it is a truly serious situation. It is most distressing for a man like myself, nearly 50 years of age, to be led around by a boy of 12, uniformed and shouldering a small size rifle of Czechoslovakian make. It is shocking to see boys barely 15 years of age standing guard, guns in hand, in front of public buildings. It is disgraceful to contemplate teenagers parading through streets and along highways all over Cuba, marching in step and singing martial hymns full of hate and venom...

The Propaganda Machine

The following was included in the Report of the *Libertarian Association of Cuba* (A.L.C.) for September 12, 1960:

When Blas Roca hears the expression “army,” he automatically envisions the gigantic parades in Moscow’s Red Square, in brilliant uniforms adorned with gold epaulets, gilded helmets, varnished chin straps and shiny spurs....

Naturally, as in all totalitarian regimes, our reply was not published. The censored press and governmental control of all commercial printers prevented the libertarian voice from being heard. The regime continues its breakneck militarisation of Cuba.

In the first months of the Revolution, the military forces numbered half a million. This does not mean that the Cuban people voluntarily agreed to serve the Castro dictatorship. At least 80% of those in the army were forced to join by threats ranging from outright violence to loss of jobs if they did not “volunteer.” [Although Iglesias wrote before enactment of compulsory military service for all men between the ages of 17 and 45, he accurately detected the drift toward conscription.]

Regimenting Education

In contrast to the obscurantism imposed by Spain during centuries of despotism, Cuba’s public education system [during the first 25 years of the Republic] provided for every child - with exemplary vigour and dedication - an ample, well-rounded, progressive education, free from all political and religious domination. To provide 300,000 children with free quality education - including food and clothing for poor children - in a country which, at that time, numbered only 1,500,000 people, was indeed a stupendous achievement.

During the Machado dictatorship [1925-33] both the quality and availability of public education declined. This was due to the dependence of jobs on political connections, the poorly trained teachers, crowded, unhealthy school buildings, the scarcity of educational equipment, and the location of school buildings far from poor neighbourhoods most in need of good schools. Eventually, widespread and monumental administrative corruption, and other failures of the state, as well as rapid population growth, brought about the collapse of public education. This led to a proliferation of all kinds of parochial schools - Masonic, Catholic, Jewish, Protestant, etc.

Castro’s much vaunted anti-illiteracy campaign was used to glorify his regime and to indoctrinate children, teenagers and adults with adoration of the state and the “cult of personality” *a la Stalin*.

The system was designated to militarise the mentality of children. For example, in teaching the alphabet, the letter “F” was introduced with “el Fusil (the gun) de Fidel Fue (was) a la Sierra.” The letter “R” was treated thus: “Raul el faRo” (Raul Castro, beacon, bearer of light). “CH” was the pretext for constructing the following phrase: “Los MuCHaCHos y muCHaCHas quieren muCHo al CHé” [The boys and girls like Ché Guevara very much]. Similar techniques have been used in teaching other subjects. Thus, in geography, photographs of Castro and his companions were placed

protest.

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

11. Fidel Castro’s government is conducted in accordance with Mussolini’s notorious dictum:

Nothing outside of the State!!

Nothing against the State!!

Everything for the State!!

History of a Fraud: The “March On Havana”

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

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

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

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

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

With the flight of Batista, all the armed forces surrendered immediately without firing a single shot. General Cantillo transferred command of his army to Colonel Ramon Barquin who had just been released, after being sentenced to imprisonment for conspiring against the Batista government.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Castro: The Anti-American Imperialist

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

of the Sierras," was accelerated by the threat of counter-revolutionary invasion from the U.S. This threat, though real enough, was nevertheless exaggerated beyond all possible limits. It served no useful military purposes but it did expedite domestic totalitarian regimentation.

The "revolutionary" government militarised the lives of men, women, adolescents, and even children. The regime created the *National Revolutionary Militias*, the *Association of Pioneer Rebels*, the *Mariana Grajales Women's Battalions*, the *Conrado Benitez Brigades*, etc., etc. - all of them decked out in colourful uniforms, similar in design to those worn in the "socialist" nations. The uniform craze was so great that the then-chief officials of the C.T.C. ordered all union officials to wear uniforms. Day and night, the streets of Cuba's cities, towns and villages resounded to the tramp of marching military trainees, to the incessant yells of drill-masters: ONE, TWO! ONE, TWO! ONE, TWO!

The anarchists watched the military policies of the government with growing apprehension. We understood perfectly the dangers threatening the Revolution, but we could not permit ourselves to be fooled by the bombastic phraseology of the new rulers. We are also convinced that to train revolutionary forces it is not necessary to resort to harsh disciplinary measures. In our *Declaration of Principles* (Havana, June 1960) we stated that, "We are unalterably opposed to the militarisation of the young, the creation of professional armies and military groups for adolescents and children. Fewer soldiers and more teachers; fewer arms and more plows; fewer cannons and more bread for all."

Our anti-militarist declaration was denounced as "counter-revolutionary, reactionary, and an insult to the "glory of the Red Army." The Secretary-General of the P.S.P. (Communist Party), Blas Roca, accused us of sabotaging the "defence of the Revolution." In a letter to Blas Roca, we refuted his base accusations and slander:

...libertarians maintain that the Rebel Army must not be converted into a professional army, that the militias should not become instruments for brainwashing, creating a militaristic mentality in the workers and peasants, and that it is neither necessary nor desirable that youth patrols and work brigades should transform children and adolescents into soldiers.

The Secretary-General of the *P.S.P. Communist Party* confounds mere technical information on the use of arms and mere training in strategy with the professional militarisation of the young: he confuses youth patrols and revolutionary "voluntary" work brigades with the military indoctrination of women and children... Blas Roca's authoritarian mentality violently rejects the ideas that a revolutionary army can possibly function without commanders and barrack discipline; that the Revolution can be successfully defended by soldiers who are not professional militarists; by soldiers who fight gallantly because they are motivated by their revolutionary convictions; an army without bemedaled generals and marshals.

ary government; this is genuine, real democracy, a direct and permanent, concrete democracy...”!

The Militarisation of Cuba

The Cuban people have always been allergic to uniforms. At every opportunity, they have persistently violated rules of dress prescribed by employers of certain enterprises. For years bus drivers fought obligatory wearing of uniforms during working hours. In other industries, employees refused to wear work clothes if the garments advertised the company or its products. The average Cuban considered the wearing of uniforms degrading.

One of the strongest reasons for the popular opposition to Batista's regime was the instinctive aversion of Cubans to its overweening militarism and its vulgar display of martial finery and pomp. With the triumph of the Revolution, the masses expected a return to civilian rule, and the dismantling of the military apparatus. It seemed at first that this was being done. The rebel troops, in plain unobtrusive olive-green uniforms, numbered less than 2,000, while Batista's troops had exceeded 40,000. In his famous speech delivered on the triumphal arrival in Havana, Castro pledged an end to militarism: “Arms? What for?... The military barracks will be converted into schools.”

Castro's acts belied his words. A few weeks later, the Cuban capital was swamped with thousands of young soldiers hastily mobilised into the new military and police forces by the “revolutionary” government. Almost all important posts in the new government were filled by officers of the Rebel Army. Many provincial executive committees of labour unions and industry-wide federations were militarised, and committee people ostentatiously displayed their uniforms and insignia of rank. All government delegates of expropriated landed estates and factories were members of the Rebel Army. When Fidel Castro appointed himself Chief of the Revolutionary Government, (“maximum leader”) he gradually eliminated nearly all civilian ministers, replacing them with high-ranking officers of his army, mainly the Commandantes de la Sierra. All key government posts were filled by military people loyal to Castro. Castro himself intertwined his political and military functions so that it was almost impossible to differentiate one from the other.

Popular reaction against the new militarism made itself felt very quickly through practical jokes, sarcastic cartoons, etc., exposing the contradiction between what Castro had said while fighting Batista, and the military arrogance of the new government. Castro's second-in-command Commandante Camillo Cienfuegos, in defence of his chief, appealed to the famous slogan “the people in arms.” The slogan was widely circulated in a vain attempt to justify the hated militarism of the new regime. Castro, who had promised to convert barracks into schools, was actually converting Cuba itself into one vast military camp.

The pace of militarisation, which at first was justified on the pretext that the government must be ruled by “tested revolutionaries,” such as the veteran “combattants

Castro regime to submit to its dictates and policies...

We need not produce too many arguments to demonstrate that the question is not quite so simple. There is evidence that while the United States did not seriously block the illegal shipment of arms to Castro's rebel army and anti-Batista resistance groups in Cuba, it slapped an embargo on arms already paid for on the Batista regime... Batista bitterly protested this policy. The most widely circulated and influential American capitalist magazines: *Time*, *Life*, *Coronet*, *Newsweek*, etc. as well as leading capitalist newspapers like *The New York Times*, glorified Castro and his famous “barbudos” (bearded ones) depicting them as romantic Robin Hoods, gallantly fighting for the freedom of the Cuban people.

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

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

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

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

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

Scarcely a month after the revolution, Castro cautiously began to reveal his true intentions. Unleashing a violent campaign against the United States he manifested his sympathy for Soviet imperialism. Any one criticizing life in the “socialist” countries was reviled as a “counter-revolutionist.” Castro's own comrades-in-arms, Manuel Urrutia Lleo, Jose Miro Cardona, Manuel Ray Rivero and Huber Matos who held key positions in his administration were dismissed from office, imprisoned, or driven into exile when they tried in the latter half of 1959 to oppose Castro's pro-communist policies: The mysterious death of Castro's second-in-command, Camilo

Cienfuegos, was one of the tragic consequences of this fierce struggle between the top leaders of the new Cuban government. An apparently ideological dispute became in reality a war to the death for the conquest of power.

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

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

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

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

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

Baptizing Dictatorship: "Direct Democracy"

A revolutionary minority seeking to govern without the explicit endorsement of the people or the confidence of the revolutionary organisations whose militants fought to overthrow the old regime and make the Revolution, cannot consolidate its dictatorship if it does not "legitimate" its right to govern. Castro tried to justify his abuse of power by camouflaging his dictatorship as a genuine people's democracy. For these reasons he organised frequent brainwashing sessions. The sole purpose of these gigantic demonstrations was the projection of his personal power as the symbol, the perfect deification and incarnation of the popular will.

To stay in power Castro desperately sought the support of both the liberal democratic and revolutionary masses. He adopted the classical techniques used by all totalitarians from Caesar to Franco, including the manufacture of mass support by staging delirious massive demonstrations spurred on by his fanatical followers.

The man destined to baptize Castro's dictatorship was the existentialist philosopher, Jean Paul Sartre. On one of his "impartial" fact finding visits at the invitation of the "Revolutionary Government," Sartre, inspired by his reception, struck just the right note. Castro's dictatorship was defined as a "direct and concrete democracy." Sartre explained: "...the revolutionary rulers converse directly with the people, thus establishing a direct and permanent bond between the will of the great majority of the people and the government minority..."

It is a fact, well known in Cuba, that by the middle of 1959 - only six months after the revolution began - more and more people were beginning to realize they had gotten rid of one bloody dictatorship only to fall into another brutal dictatorship. The honeymoon between the Cuban people and the "revolution" proclaimed by Castro was over. And the rulers, to hide this fact, began to imitate the same procedures prevailing in the other totalitarian regimes. To insure an audience of half a million people, that he could not otherwise get, Castro resorts to the following draconian methods:

1. suspend economic activities throughout Cuba.
2. close all public entertainment; movies, theatres, cafes, etcetera.
3. command all radio and television stations to suspend all regular programs, and broadcast only publicity for the meeting.
4. suspend all public transportation leaving the city for places outside of Havana.
5. all available transport mobilized to bring people to the rally.
6. order all employees, workers, peasants, university professors and students to report to a designated official who will assign each one to the rallying point from which they will proceed to the meeting.
7. 30 days before the meeting all propaganda organs must, 24 hours a day, urge the people to attend the meeting.

And Castro boasts: "The people, the real revolutionary people, are here with us, helping by their spontaneous presence and determination to fight for the revolution-

In respect to “voluntary” labour, *The Bulletin of the Cuban Libertarian Movement* in exile (Miami, July 1967) quotes the official organ of the *Communist Party of Cuba*, *Granma*:

“Jose Lopez-age 88 ‘voluntarily’ returned to work in the sugar harvest.” (*Granma*, April 25, 1967)

“42 women in the Henequin factory Matanzas province ‘voluntarily’ worked 72 consecutive hours” (*Granma*, April 26, 1967)

“Workers in the Central Workshop of the Ministry of the Armed Forces putting in a 14 to 16 hour day, ‘voluntarily’ worked a total of 28,000 hours” (*Granma*, April 27, 1967)

“In the province of Oriente, 109,247 workers in three months ‘voluntarily’ worked a total of 1,000,000 hours.” (*Radio Progreso*, April 29, 1967)

According to *Granma*, March 22, 1967, “the volunteer cane cutters of the *Silvia Taboada Brigade*, composed of members of the *Revolutionary Armed Forces* of Havana, worked 28 consecutive hours cutting cane in Havana Province.”

In the same issue, *Granma* published an article about another brigade by Berta Cabrera, which said in part, “Today is Sunday, but it is different from other Sundays. There is no time for paseos [going out and having some fun. The clock says it’s almost four-thirty a.m. Everything here is work for the *Ricardo Santa Brigade*. ‘How many hours do you work?’ we asked. ‘There’s no limit’ replies one of the cane-cutters, ‘as long as one can hold out... there are a few who are ill.’ Julio Robaina, another cane-cutter, says, ‘how many hours do we work? No one knows. We start before six a.m. and we never know when we will finish... Sometimes, at eight, nine p.m. or after midnight ...’”

According to a broadcast over *Radio Progreso* (Havana, March 16, 1967), “The workers of the Sakenof Factory in Santa Clara, Las Villas Province, 590 men and 350 women exceeded the goal set for production of bags and containers for fertilizer. Many workers remained on the job for 20 consecutive hours... without getting extra pay.”

[Notes by Sam Dolgoff]

Note 1

In respect to the middle-class content of the first Castro Government, Theodore Draper’s investigation shows:

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

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

Note 2

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

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

...provisional government must be as brief as possible, just time enough to convoke elections for state, provincial and municipal posts... the provisional government not to remain in power for more than two years... I want to reiterate my total lack of personal interest and I have renounced, beforehand, any post after the victory of the Revolution... these are the things we will tell the people. Will we suppress the right to strike? NO. Will we suppress the freedom of assembly? NO. We must carry this Revolution forward with all freedoms... When one newspaper is closed down, no newspaper will feel safe; when one man is persecuted for his political ideas, no one can feel safe... (quoted in *Cuban Labour*, Miami, Jan. 1967)

Note 3

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

[Notes by Sam Dolgoff]

How Castro's Clique Rules Cuba

Without taking into account some of the psychological characteristics of the "Lider Maximo" (as Castro likes to be known) it is impossible to explain how a regime built around the "cult of the personality" functions.

The messianic obsession which dominates Castro's personality also characterises his official behaviour. Even a brief survey of his political history leads immediately to the conclusion that we are dealing with a super-authoritarian, pathologically conceited individual, taken up with an insatiable lust for personal power.

The way he treats his friends and collaborators convincingly reveals this condition. He goes to extremes in persecuting those who dare question his orders or dissociate themselves from him; he insults collaborators in public; is enraptured to the point of hysteria by public ovations; basks in the adulation and servility of his subordinates. His ideology is, in effect, "the cult of personality." He is an unscrupulous political dilettante. If it suits his purposes, he professes any ideology. He affirms in public what he repudiates in private; deliberately falsifies known facts and constantly contradicts himself, affirming today what he denied yesterday and vice versa.

To curry favour with the peasants, Castro catered to their religious prejudices. His own religious education alerted him to the tremendous propaganda value that religious mysticism and ritual exercise over the masses. During the whole of his two-and-a-half year stay in the Sierra Maestra, Castro never once failed to display the conspicuous, colourful crucifix he wore around his neck. During his "March On Havana" escorted by the "heroes of the Revolution," the famous "Barbudos" (bearded ones) Castro ordered them to display brightly coloured medallions and other religious ornaments on their uniforms.

In this and in many other ways, Castro projected a godlike image of himself, as a sort of earthly Messiah. He encouraged the illusion that only HE and his select group of "disciples" and the "heroes of the Revolution" have earned the right to wield unlimited power over the people of Cuba.

Once the undisputed right of an elite group to dominate the economic, political, social and individual life of a nation has been established, the personnel of the ruling groups is of secondary importance. At the beginning, Castro's legendary "Twelve Apostles" who disembarked with him from the Granma to begin the guerrilla war against Batista constituted his government. Later, the "Commandantes of the Sierra" were allowed to join the club. Still later, Castro allowed the leaders of *United Party of the Socialist Revolution* - a coalition of the *26th of July Movement*, the *Revolutionary Directorate* (mostly students) and the *Popular Socialist Party* (communist) to join the elite.

Castro purged, jailed, banished and tortured hundreds of his adherents, who had distinguished themselves for bravery in the Revolution, only because they were too independent; he replaced them with former enemies, who, for a few grains of power, recanted and became his fanatical disciples.

The technique employed by this little gang of dictators to dominate the people of Cuba is simple: Castro's junta appoints and discharges the President of the

(October 3, 1964) reports the enactment of a law compelling state farm workers "to put in an eight hour day and satisfy production quotas to receive full pay..." To drastically reduce absenteeism, carelessness "...and machinery breakage... *stiff penalties will be provided...* the lightest penalties are a 15% reduction in pay... for three unjustified absences from work in a month..." (our emphasis).

To supplement legal measures the government tightened its domination of the labour movement introducing greater centralisation. In an article in the June 26, 1966, issue of *Granma*, the government made clear its plan for the restructuring of the labour movement. Under the headline *Interview with Basilio Rodriguez - Minister of Labour* subtitled: *Twelfth Congress of the CTC Proposes to Strengthen Unions*, the article, in part, reads:

"...the call to the CTC Congress proposed the strengthening of the authority of the Central Organisation... With the new structure, the activities of the CTC and the directors of the national unions were strictly controlled by the Central Organisation."

Note 3

On Voluntary Labour

...the first regulations of the *Socialist Emulation Program*, which went into effect in 1963, set up strict controls for voluntary work. Under the program, workers were required to sign contracts with the State, agreeing to work a determined number of hours without pay. In early 1963, the CTC decided that the *Battalions of Voluntary Workers* had to turn in weekly reports giving the names of workers in each battalion and the work record of each volunteer. This was one of the measures instituted to alleviate the shortage of labour and the problem of increasing absenteeism. The CTC branch in Matanzas Province had to be "hurriedly reorganised" because it failed to fulfil its "obligation to provide its quota of voluntary labour." (*CMQ Radio*, Havana, February 5, 1963)

...in 1964 the *Voluntary Labour Program* was further systematised with the introduction of the *Carte Laboural* (Labour Identity Card). The amount of voluntary labour performed by each worker was recorded on the card. According to Arnaldo Milian, Secretary-General of the *People's Socialist Party* (Communist) of Las Villas, the system "guarantees discipline in each brigade, besides improving political awareness and permitting constant promotion of production and emulation... this is what enabled the *Cruces* (town) section to achieve such a high degree of cane cutting..." (broadcast over *Radio Progreso*, Santa Clara City, April 11, 1964. See also, *Organisation of Labour Brigades in Agriculture* by Israel Talavera; *Cuba Socialista*, Havana, April 1964)

Note 1

Out of 2,963 delegates, only 247 votes were cast for the Castro backed state. Delegates denounced the communists for their record of collaboration with Batista. Fistfights broke out on the floor and in the street. The Russian envoy, who got up to address the congress was hooted down with cries of ASSASSIN! MURDERER OF THE PEOPLE! and similar invectives.

The outrageous violation of the elemental rights of the union membership aroused the protest of the international labour movement. For example, the *News Bulletin of the International Union of Food and Allied Workers* (Geneva, June-July, 1962):

SAVE OUR MOVEMENT

David Salvador, leader of the labour section of the 26th of July Movement throughout the Cuban revolutionary struggle against Batista, was recently sentenced to 30 years in prison by Castro. Salvador was the first elected leader of the post-revolutionary CTC. He resigned his post as Secretary-General... in May 1960 in protest of the Communist take-over being directed by Castro.

In November, he was imprisoned without trial and remained in La Cabana Fortress, along with 700 other political prisoners. Seven others were sentenced with Salvador, including a revolutionary army commander, Jaime Vega, and two other revolutionary labour leaders.

For over a year after Salvador was arrested, the CTC had elected no leader. Finally, in November 1960, Lazaro Pena was put into the post. Pena, an old time Communist union bureaucrat, helped form the Batista controlled CTC in 1939, during the Communist-Batista coalition. [within which he was also the CTC's first Secretary-General - S.D.]

Note 2

Labour Discipline Laws to Legalise State Domination of Labour Movement and Punish Workers Resistance.

In August 1962, a decree was issued prohibiting workers from changing their occupation or employer and making absenteeism a major crime. In September, work norms were set up and tables were worked out to compute productivity. From then on the work force was to be strictly disciplined and regulated by law. Law 647 allowed "...The Minister of Labour, through his representative, if he thinks it necessary, to take full custody of any union or federation, and is authorised to dismiss officials and appoint others to replace him..."

Correspondent Juan de Onis in a Havana dispatch to *The New York Times*

Republic; likewise all the ministers. It enacts or repeals all the laws. It also appoints Provincial Governors and Mayors; determines who shall administer the labour unions; the industrial federation of unions and the armed forces. The junta dictates national and foreign policy without consulting the formal, established government; appoints and discharges "revolutionary" tribunals and civilian judges; and administers the economy without being accountable to anyone. Further, it convokes "spontaneous" mass meetings to "consult" the people about government measures that have already been put into effect. It exercises exclusive and absolute control over all channels of information and communication and intervenes in all matters (including what it knows nothing about).

The top rulers aside from Fidel Castro and his brother Raul, a member of the communist youth organisation in 1952, are the late Ché Guevara, fanatical Argentine communist who was with Castro in Mexico; Osvaldo Dorticós Torrado [President of Cuba], a lawyer, in his youth a *Communist Party* member, later a trusted friend of Batista who rewarded his services with a high post in the municipality of Cienfuegos; Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, former Minister without Portfolio in Batista's first "constitutional" government, a former editor of the *Communist Party* daily *Hoy*; Blas Roca, another corrupt Stalinist bureaucrat and personal friend of Batista in whose cabinet he was also Minister without Portfolio; the late Lazaro Pena, boss of the CTC (government controlled labour organisation) under Batista and at his death occupied the same post under Castro; Raul Roa, who to win favour with Castro, became a *Communist Party* hack after 30 years as a virulent anti-communist; Juan Marinello, head of the *Communist Party* under Batista with whom he shared the electoral slate when he ran for mayor of Havana in 1940; and Armando Hart Dávalos, a lawyer and faithful Castro sycophant. [At this writing almost all of them are high officials in Castro's government.]

The absolute monopoly of power exercised by this little group can logically be called a "revolutionary oligarchy." All the functions of government, traditionally divided into legislative, judicial, and executive branches are now concentrated in this little group. They intervene in everything. In a workers' assembly they connive to dismiss officials elected by the membership, as they also do in meetings of students, where they dictate the curriculum.

Nothing escapes their control. Everything and everybody is subject to their orders. The political parties who make up the coalition United Party of the Socialist Revolution are orientated and directed by them. The simple rank-and-file members are not given the least opportunity to question their arbitrary decisions. [All reliable reports substantiate these facts - if anything, the situation is even worse, since the dissolution of the coalition, Cuba is now OFFICIALLY a one-party dictatorship, and the party is in turn subjected to the personal dictatorship of Fidel Castro.]

Cuban Labour In A Straitjacket

The Cuban labour movement was absolutely independent of governments and

political parties from its foundation by the anarcho-syndicalists in the 1880s, the last days of Spanish domination, until 1938, when the communists in alliance with the Batista Government, subordinated action of the working class to the interests of the Party and the State. With the creation of the only government-sponsored union, *The Cuban Confederation of Labour* (CTC), the unions lost their autonomy and became totally dominated by the communist labour bureaucracy and the Batista Ministry of Labour. [Before the Revolution, the CTC consisted of 1,200,000 members organised into 33 industrial federations and 2,490 local unions.]

In spite of repression, in spite of the fact that strikes were forbidden by law, the workers, to a certain extent, still influenced by the anarcho-syndicalist traditions of the Cuban labour movement, refused to renounce their independence as a class, and fought back with strikes and other direct action tactics, many times against the will of the leaders of their union, the CTC. In the course of years of bitter struggles, the workers defended their organisations and wrested from their employers greatly improved conditions and many other substantial gains.

With the fall of Batista, the working class expected that the injustices would be corrected and the obstacles to a free and beneficial development of the labour movement would be swept away by the triumphant revolution. But this was only "the dream of a summer night." The reality was that the new regime also prohibited strikes, and urged the workers to wait patiently until the government would study their demands and decide whether to grant them or not. Raul Castro tried to convince the workers that "the best union is the State - the workers don't need unions when they have a friendly government, THEIR government, to protect them."

This attitude was endorsed by the new labour leaders who, after the Castro Revolution, had been placed in control of the labour movement. The workers were told that in order to "defend the revolution," they must cease demanding better conditions and wages will be frozen. While the new government subordinated the needs of the workers to the plans of the government, the unions were denied the right to play their rightful part in the revolutionary transformation. Instead of allowing the labour organisations to administer the expropriated industries, which would have been correct and constructive, the Castro government, without consulting the workers, appointed state administrators. In most cases these administrators knew little or nothing about the industry and were absolutely incapable of managing them efficiently.

The 10th Congress of CTC, which took place in November, 1959, was marked by a bitter battle between the workers who had openly and freely elected their representatives who were anti-communists. But the dictators, especially Fidel and Raul Castro, insisted on placing the unions under the control of the old-line *Communist Party* fakers. The workers were forced to accept handpicked communists or communist sympathizers who control the CTC.¹ This signifies that the interests of the labour movement are subordinated to the interests of the new totalitarian state and the elimination by foul means of the militant unionists who refused to accept dictatorship. Cuban labour is imprisoned in a straitjacket.²

The communist officials are determined to liquidate all the conquests gained by

the workers in 80 years of struggle. Among the list of benefits and rights eliminated by the eleventh Congress of the CTCR (the word "Revolutionary" was added to the original name) were the right to strike, job security, sick leave, 30 days paid vacations, four paid holidays, the 44 hour work week with 48 hours pay, overtime at time-and-a-half, double or triple rate, the summer work-schedules under which employees in commercial establishments and office personnel are entitled to two paid afternoons off during the hot months of June, July and August - and many other improvements.

The workers are being constantly pressured into making "voluntary" sacrifices to finance the experiments of the government:³ The offices of the unions have been converted into recruiting centres for Militiamen and workers are threatened with the loss of their jobs if they don't join the militias. The labour officials also help to form *Committees of Vigilance for Defence of the Revolution*, who spy on the workers on the job, reporting what they say and do to the police. The reaction of almost all the workers to these provocations, is passive resistance: non-co-operation, absence from work, absence from all meetings called by the Castro-communist bosses, etc., etc. It can be affirmed without fear of contradiction that 80% of all the Cuban workers are against Castro.

In June 1960, the anarchists reiterated their conviction that the workers themselves, through their own union organisations, should undertake the revolutionary control and administration of all expropriated industries and enterprises, for the simple reason that no one can possibly be better or equally fitted, by reason of know-how and experience, to operate and administer the industries than those who work in them. This proposal, favorably received by the organised workers, was, of course, rejected by the "new class" who today exploit the people.