

As the Cuban passengers boarded our Air Canada flight from Toronto to Havana, we were amazed at the huge volume of packages they carried with them. Laden like Andean *cargadores* (porters) with blue jeans, skirts, toys, and perfume, they could have been walking department store advertisements. The woman seated on our left was a United Nations official returning to Cuba after four years of diplomatic service in New York. Other Cubans with whom we spoke were either returning technical and diplomatic representatives or, in several cases, expatriates who had left the island *before* the Revolution and were returning for the first time to visit relatives.¹ The various appliances and clothing being brought to Havana for the passengers own use or for relatives (in the case of the expatriates) testified to the continuing scarcity of consumer goods in the revolutionary republic.

Several hours later, as our plane neared the island's shores and we could make out its lush, green colors from the air, the Cubans excitedly rushed to the windows. All of them, diplomats and returning expatriates alike, seemed deeply moved by their imminent return to their homeland, whatever their attitudes toward the Revolution (we suspected that some of the expatriates were not supportive). Cuba's culture and climate—like those of Puerto Rico, Trinidad and other Caribbean islands—inspire the love and affection of its native sons and daughters.

For the Americans on the flight, the first aerial view of Cuba generated a different type of excitement and an air of mystery. All the people in our study-tour group had long been anxious to observe firsthand the dramatic process of political and socioeconomic change unfolding in that nation. Until recently, we had entertained little hope that a journey such as this—several intensive weeks visiting and studying various Cuban political and economic institutions—would ever be possible. To be sure, group travel from Mexico or Canada to Cuba has been open to Americans for several years, and in 1977 direct charter flights between the United States and Havana were reintroduced. But most existing group tours are designed for Canadian and Mexican tourists who wish to soak up the Caribbean sand and sun and have little interest in the Cuban political process. The Cuban government, anxious to promote its developing tourist industry, has encouraged such visits and, indeed, has even instructed Cubatour (the government tourist bureau) guides to steer away from political discussion.

For those American scholars, students, or journalists wishing to engage in more intensive study of Cuba's revolutionary process, it is still extremely difficult to obtain individual entry visas. The Cuban regime remains sensitive to criticism, particularly when it emanates from leftist intellectuals who sympathize with the Revolution

but find fault with aspects of its implementation. Thus, critical works by scholars such as René Dumont and K.S. Karol—both leftists who spent extended periods in the country as guests and advisers—have been very poorly received by the Cuban government.² The Cubans also retain a not unreasonable wariness of CIA espionage. Consequently, those who want to conduct scholarly research projects must be sponsored by an interested Cuban institution (a university or government agency) and must generally be recommended by persons sympathetic to the Revolution.³

Our study-tour, sponsored by the Venceremos Brigade, would allow us to travel the length of Cuba overland, from Havana to Santiago and back, visiting factories, housing projects, state farms, hospitals, schools, and political organizations such as the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs) and Poder Popular.⁴ Because of the impossibility of independently booking spaces in Cuba's heavily overcrowded hotels and intercity buses, individual members of the Venceremos tour could not leave the group overnight for separate travel. However, throughout the trip the two of us (and other group members) excused ourselves from various scheduled visits and also took advantage of unscheduled "free time" (including almost every night after dinner) to strike off on our own to talk individually with

Cuban citizens in the streets, bars, parks, and in their homes. We found the Cuban people almost universally friendly, extremely hospitable, anxious to exchange viewpoints with foreign visitors, and fascinated by the opportunity to meet "*yanquis*"—whatever their views of their own Revolution and of American policies. We are convinced that most of them expressed their political views to us freely and honestly. Indeed, those Cubans we met who opposed the government (we spoke to a number who did, almost all in Havana) were not in the least bit hesitant to express their criticisms and complaints to us.

The Revolution Approaches Middle Age

Our visit to Cuba (June-July 1978) came on the eve of a series of critical dates in the nation's revolutionary history. Throughout our trip we saw volunteers, mostly organized through the Committees for Defense of the Revolution (Cuba's principal mass mobilization organization), repairing and painting monuments, major thoroughfares and buildings in preparation for the upcoming XI International Youth Festival. In late July thousands of delegates from the Third World, the Soviet Bloc, Western Europe, and the United States would flood the island, straining its tourist facilities and dormitories to the utmost. Signs mobilizing the population for the festival—a major source of national pride—were everywhere in evidence. The festival itself would coincide with another major, national celebration, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the abortive attack by a group of university students, led by Fidel Castro, on the Moncada military barracks in Santiago. The attack failed to ignite a popular uprising against the long-standing Batista dictatorship, but served as the opening battle in a five-year struggle that culminated in victory for the "*barbudos*" (bearded rebels) on New Year's Day, 1959. On July 26, the anniversary of the Moncada attack and now Cuba's primary

national holiday, Fidel (as the Revolution's "Commander in Chief" is universally known) regularly addresses crowds of up to one million in Havana's Plaza of the Revolution to explain, at great length, the current state of the Revolution and its future policies.

At the close of the year, one more revolutionary milestone would be reached—the twentieth anniversary of General Fulgencio Batista's flight from the island and the incredible victory of the small guerrilla army led by Fidel, his brother Raúl, Ché Guevara, and Camilo Cienfuegos.⁵ The International Youth Festival and the two anniversaries (July 26 and January 1) are together significant benchmarks in the unfolding of Cuba's revolutionary process. Like its "*maximo lider*," Fidel, whose beard increasingly reveals specks of gray, the Revolution has entered middle age. After years of isolation and serious economic problems, this is a time of particular satisfaction and contentment for the nation's leadership and much of its population.

In contrast, the 1960s—the first decade of the Revolution—was a period of great trials and difficulties. Staunch opposition of most of the nation's upper and middle classes, early attempts at counterrevolutionary sabotage and guerrilla warfare by opponents of the regime, CIA plots to overthrow the government (capped by the Bay of Pigs invasion), and expulsion from the Organization of American States (OAS), had all conspired to isolate Cuba internationally (except from the Soviet Bloc) and to instill a siege mentality among her leaders. The U.S.-directed economic blockade, the flight of most of the country's professionals and technicians, the great difficulties of socializing a highly dependent capitalist economy, and the many planning and managerial errors committed by the government at all levels, contributed to a series of economic setbacks and a stagnant Gross National Product (GNP).⁶ During the period of greatest

economic difficulty, 1964-1969, the nation's GNP fell by a total of 2 percent while per capita GNP declined by some 10 percent.

The severity of these problems should not be overstated. A new sense of national pride and independence, an unprecedented level of socioeconomic egalitarianism, new opportunities for social and educational mobility, and a revolutionary élan—particularly among the young—buoyed the spirits of the 75 percent or more of the population that probably endorsed the Revolution and Fidel's leadership. Moreover, despite declines in per capita GNP and food production (documented by the Cuban government's own statistics), two-thirds of the population—particularly the rural sector and the unskilled, urban population—were undoubtedly living better than ever before. Distribution of available wealth and income, especially after the flight of much of the middle and upper classes, was far more equitable. In addition, guaranteed employment (in a nation which had traditionally suffered from chronic unemployment), free medical care, the virtual abolition of rent on housing, and fully-paid vacations raised mass living standards, though such gains were not reflected in GNP figures. Still, by 1969, with the opportunities for further economic redistribution virtually ended and a declining per capita GNP, the need for economic growth became pressing. The nation continued to face an acute housing deficiency and to suffer serious shortages of basic food and consumer items (due, in large part, to an extremely high rate of capital investment). Revolutionary spirit could not be maintained indefinitely in a stagnant economy.

The 1970s have featured a steady economic recovery and growth. With the emergence of new technicians to replace those who had fled, the rectification of many earlier planning errors, and more balanced economic development,

the fruits of earlier capital investment began to blossom. The GNP rose by an estimated 5 percent in 1971, 9 percent in 1972, 13 percent in 1973, and 8-10 percent in 1974 and 1975.⁷ While economic data for 1976-77 have not yet been published, it is estimated that growth continued at a rate of some 4-6 percent. During our trip, the government announced that the sugar harvest (still by far the most critical sector of the economy) had approached the 1970 record of 8.5 million tons, which suggests that 1978 was also a good year for the Cuban economy. Moreover, unlike the previous record harvest, this *zafra* (sugar harvest) had been accomplished without causing dislocations in other sectors of the economy.

In our conversations with various Cuban citizens, we were repeatedly told that many food and consumer items that needed to be rationed in the past are now freely available ("*por la libre*"). People are eating more eggs, fish, and dairy products (especially yogurt) than ever before. Apartment construction has also expanded greatly during the past decade and we could see new housing being built throughout the island. Indeed, the construction industry has been expanding in the 1970s at incredible rates of 15 to 40 percent annually.

Economic growth has been accompanied by political development and the refinement of revolutionary institutions. The most important recent change in this area involved the creation of Poder Popular ("Popular Power"). In October 1976, Cubans throughout the island voted for thousands of representatives to municipal government councils under the terms of the nation's new constitution. The officials elected to these Poder Popular councils (a part-time, unpaid, position) direct the administration of many local services. In addition, their offices (which are apparent everywhere and may even be found in gas stations in more remote areas) serve as boards

through which citizens can and do address complaints and requests to the government. Finally, the popularly elected local officials, in turn, elected delegates to both provincial and national assemblies. While the municipal Poder Popular elections were undoubtedly not totally open in the British Westminster tradition — there was no formal campaigning and outspoken criticism of the revolutionary process would not be allowed — seats on the councils were contested vigorously in what Frank Mankiewicz and Kirby Jones have called "the most honest and democratic elections in Cuban history."⁸ Candidates for the municipal councils were frequently not members of the Cuban Communist Party and in many cases they defeated party-member opponents.⁹

The Cuba we visited last June was a stable and confident nation. The Organization of American States had voted to lift its diplomatic blockade, and the country already enjoyed economic and political interchange with a number of hemispheric neighbors (including Peru, Mexico, Argentina, Venezuela, Panama, and Jamaica). The Western economic blockade had been greatly weakened, if not ended. At the United Nations, Cuba has emerged as a leading spokesman for the Third World and its delegation is known for its thorough preparation on major issues. In Africa, it is extending technical as well as military assistance to a number of nations. In Miami and elsewhere, increasing numbers of Cuban exiles are accepting the fact that the Revolution is here to stay. The hosting of the International Youth Festival, the government's willingness (indeed, eagerness) to accept thousands of "bourgeois" Canadian, Mexican, and American tourists, the new policy (introduced after our trip) of allowing visits by expatriates who had fled *after* the Revolution, and — perhaps most important — the decision (also subsequent to our trip) to release

virtually all the country's 3,500 political prisoners, all reflect the regime's current confidence and its belief that the Revolution has reached a new stage of maturity.

A Revolution Latin Style

As our tourist bus traveled down the highway from José Martí airport toward Havana, we passed a small number of billboards offering a variety of political messages: some expressed support for "the people of Uruguay in their struggle" against a rightist military dictatorship; others exhorted the population to further their education or to get out the sugar harvest. Some of the posters were more mundane, calling on citizens to conserve energy or to save money at the government's national bank (where deposits are safe but draw no interest).

Inside our bus, a Beatles tape, played again and again by our Cubatour and ICAP (Cuban Institute for Friendship Between Peoples) guides, reverberated over the amplifier. Indeed, our guides' enthusiasm for rock (as well as for Salsa and other Latin beats) was seemingly exceeded only by their fervor for the Revolution. The music was our first indication of the cultural openness and *latino* vibrance of the Cuban Revolution. In art, music, and lifestyle there is neither the somberness of the Soviet Union nor the rigidity of the People's Republic of China.

To be sure, we were struck in our subsequent travels by the Cuban people's extremely high level of politicization, particularly outside Havana. For example, a week after our arrival we happened upon a public exhibition of posters, almost exclusively political in nature, in the city of Santiago — the "cradle of the Revolution." By then we had become accustomed to the crowds of outgoing, inquisitive youngsters (in this case aged 7 to 12) we often attracted.

"What country are you from?" they asked.

"Try to guess," we replied, well aware of what an oddity American

tourists were, particularly away from the beaches near Havana.

"East German?" "No!"

"Polish?" "No!"

"Russian?" "No!"

Finally, after they had run through most of the Soviet Bloc nations, one young boy guessed, "Japan."

"Don't be silly," countered a more mature 12-year-old, "they couldn't be from Japan.... That's a capitalist country."

Later, we asked the children to identify the home countries of Agostinho Neto (Angola), Mengistu Haile Mariam (Ethiopia), and other leftist, Third World leaders who appeared in several posters with their names printed but not their countries. We were amazed at how many they were able to place.

Yet, Cuba's culture is clearly not totally politicized, nor is that the government's intention. On our first morning in Havana, we turned on the radio and were greeted by the strains of "The Sound of Music." That album was followed by a fairly political childrens' show, a revolutionary "Sesame Street," if you will, featuring stories stressing the value of hard work at school and concluding with a bouncy tune entitled "Firme con Fidel, Firme con el Ché" (Unswerving with Fidel... [and] Ché"). After the children's program, the station turned to a selection of traditional, Caribbean-style music. Similarly, while political films are shown widely, they are not the dominant movie fare. Local movie theaters featured "Hello Dolly" and "Chinatown," as well as a variety of Mexican adventure films. On the beach near Cienfuegos we were approached by a large group of teen-agers who wanted to get the latest news regarding the Bee Gees.

During our first night in Havana (Saturday), we were struck by the city's lively, *latino* atmosphere, far



Political posters on a street in Santiago: upper left, "Communist Ethics: the Highest Form of Human Living Together"; lower left, "Parents: An Educational Example."

more similar—at least on the surface—to Veracruz (Mexico) or Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic) than to the austere image of the Cuban capital painted by some of the U.S. news media. There were revolutionary posters here and there and a CDR office on every block, but on the beaches along the tree-lined Prado and on the sea wall of the Malecón, Havana's waterfront, young men watched the passing scene as miniskirted young women (long skirts are *out* in Cuba) walked along the avenues with their families or boyfriends. In the darkened doorways along the Malecón many couples could be seen passionately embracing.

While the Cuban Revolution thus has little of the puritanical values and style commonly associated with other Marxist societies, it has prompted the elimination of pornographic films and magazines, rampant prostitution, and the infamous sex shows for which prerevolutionary Havana was so well known. In the Revolution's early days, Havana's many prostitutes—deprived of their North American customers—were encouraged by the Federation of

Cuban Women to attend schools where they could learn alternative occupational skills. The government now guarantees full employment for all women who wish to work,¹⁰ so economic necessity has lost its motive force, although in the bars of Havana's old city we did see several women soliciting customers. We were told the authorities tolerate this small amount of remaining prostitution, although it is technically illegal. The continued tolerance of Cuban society is also reflected in its special hotels designed to allow young couples—with no apartments of their own—to check in by the hour. Such hotels were introduced well before the Revolution but continue to flourish under new, state management. In short, while the government and the CDRs have sought to eliminate traditional Latin *machismo* and sexism in the family, the sensuality and sexuality of Cuban humor and of male-female relationships remains untouched.

Early in our tour, we attended a national music contest at Havana's large Karl Marx Theater. Leading Cuban singers were performing songs in the final round of competition to select an official



Havana's ocean front: the Malecón.

song for the International Youth Festival. The performance was televised nationally, but since tickets are inexpensive (\$1.15-\$2.30) and well within the budget of most Cubans, the theater was nearly full (including a large number of families that had brought their children). For those members of our study group who had expected an evening of militant, revolutionary music, the concert proved to be a disappointment. Most of the songs were softly lyrical, extolling nature, love, youth, and "the future" with only tangential political content. Even the most politically oriented songs were a far cry from the Chinese People's Republic's best-sellers calling on the nation to surpass Britain in steel production. The sequinned costumes of the performers and the master-of-ceremonies' style suggested, more than anything else, a Latin version of the old Ed Sullivan variety show. The unquestioned hit of the night, bringing the audience to its feet, was not even an entry in the contest; instead, it was a fiery rendition of "Babalú" performed by Rosita Fernés, a vicacious, 55-year-old Cuban musical star whose dress—slit to the thigh—showed her still youthful figure to full advantage. While some of our

American group complained about the song's "sexist style," the audience clearly loved it.

Thus, the Cubans have rejected a revolutionary culture that politicizes almost all art and cultural life. Cuba is a highly mobilized and politicized society. The Revolution has instilled strong ideological commitment and seriousness of purpose within its population, particularly among the young. But Castro and the top revolutionary leadership—to their credit—have not sought totally to transform the traditional culture, or to remove the elements of style and individuality which give the island so much color and vibrance. At the Tropicana Night Club in Havana, couples of all social backgrounds dance to Latin rhythms in their patent leather dress shoes while bikini-clad performers sing on stage. The cost of the Tropicana (\$13 or more per couple) is high. But with full employment, free social services, and a scarcity of consumer goods, most Cubans have more cash available than they can readily spend. For many of them, a trip to the Tropicana—formerly the exclusive preserve of rich Cubans and "yanqui tourists"—is the fulfillment of a long-time dream. It may not be overtly political, but it's

what they want and, in its own way, it *is* revolutionary.

Impressions of Havana

Walking down the streets of Havana, one is struck by two major contrasts with other Latin American capitals such as Mexico City or Lima. First, there are a limited number of restaurants, bars, and shops, and the range of products within those establishments is quite narrow. At the ice cream parlors (ice cream is a Cuban passion), long lines form to buy the one or two flavors usually available. At one café, we tried wheat ice cream—it tastes a bit like frozen cream of wheat. Long rows of North-American-style stores, filled with toys and clothing for the middle and upper classes (or tourists), so typical of Mexico City, are not to be found here. Grocery stores offer a very limited selection: cucumbers (or other vegetables in season), cooking bananas (plantains), rice, sugar, yogurt, powdered and condensed milk, cooking oil and lard, eggs, soap, and a small variety of canned goods were in stock at the shops we visited. There are no competing brands or even brand names. Butcher shops offer a small quantity of rationed meat, but fish is now plentiful and unrationed. Clothing is usually practical and work-oriented, though we did see a tuxedo and wedding gown for sale in one store window.

Beyond the small quantity of consumer goods, there is also a second distinctive feature of Havana's streets. One encounters none of the beggars and maimed cripples with outstretched hands common to other Latin American capitals. (Badly crippled persons and some mentally retarded individuals seem to be given jobs selling newspapers, magazines, and candies in street stands.) Nor are there the hustling shoe shine boys or the pathetic, barefoot kids that sell flowers and chiclets in the cold mountain nights outside the movie theaters of Bogotá (Colombia) or La Paz (Bolivia).¹¹ Finally, we saw no old people or children sleeping on

the sidewalks at night—a sight so depressingly common in Rio de Janeiro, Bogotá, or Mexico City. In short, the Revolution has eliminated both the extremes of dire poverty and of middle- and upper-class luxury.

It is quickly apparent why so many of the urban middle and upper class chose to leave. Gone are most of the fancy nightclubs and restaurants, the exclusive beach resorts and private schools, the expensive appliances and cheap maids, and the many privileges they enjoyed before the Revolution. The range of salaries for skilled and unskilled occupations has narrowed considerably. Whenever we visited factories, hospitals, universities and schools, state farms, and hotels, or when we met people on the street, we inquired about current salaries. The figures we gathered (Table 1) coincide closely with earlier data available elsewhere.¹²

Because so many services are free in Cuba (medical care, schooling, sports events and, until 1977, public telephones) or have been reduced to nominal costs (rent which never exceeds 7 percent of income) and because so many consumer goods

Table 1

Monthly Salaries of Selected Cuban Occupations

Occupation	Monthly Salary in Pesos*
Hotel Cleaning Lady	75-80
Agricultural Workers (State Farm)	80-100
Electricians	120-220
Cement Plant Workers	100-250
Hospital Laboratory Technicians	150
Hospital Staff Doctors	200-400
Middle-Level Government Administrators	200-300
University Professors (Santa Clara)	300-500

*The official exchange rate (given tourists) is: 1 peso = \$1.15.



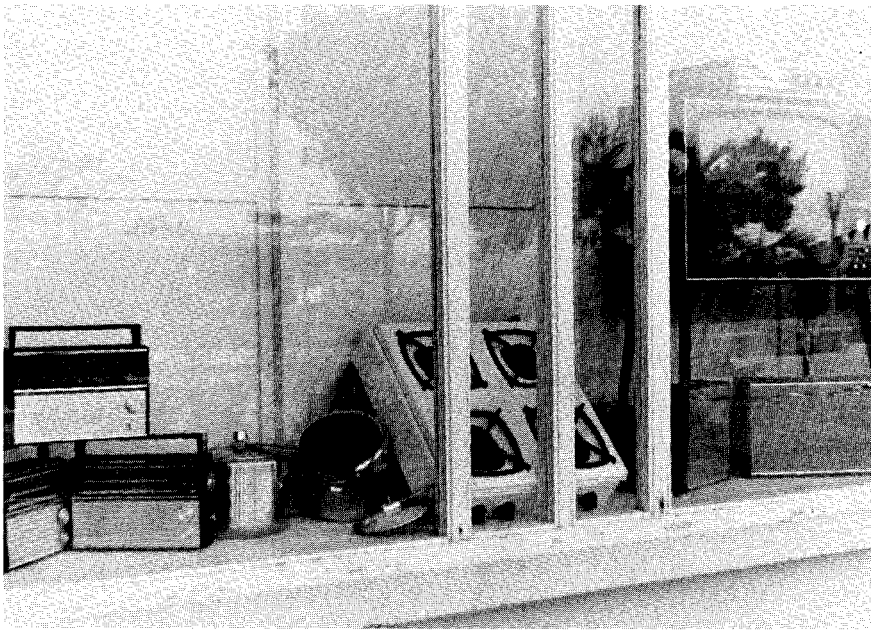
Street in Old Havana (Sunday morning).



Downtown Havana.

are rationed or very expensive (electrical appliances, for example), it is difficult to evaluate purchasing power or to make direct comparisons with developed or Third World nations. What is significant is the salary range. The vast majority of rural and urban workers seem to earn between 100 and 150 pesos (\$115-\$173) per month. Professionals and

technicians (including government functionaries) obviously earn more, but most have monthly salaries of 200-300 pesos and very few earn more than 350. With rare exception, there is a salary ratio of approximately 3.5:1 between top and bottom incomes; this ratio is extremely small compared to that of other Latin American nations or even in industrialized societies.



Some consumer goods in Havana appliance shop.



Lining up to buy flowers for Fathers' Day (to be put on grave sites) near Havana's main cemetery.

Professionals and technicians who chose to remain in Cuba after the Revolution for either ideological or personal reasons continue to enjoy a somewhat higher than average standard of living and a great deal of prestige. For example, only university graduates are allowed to buy the few automobiles sold for private use—if they can secure and afford them and prove that the car is

occupationally necessary. More affluent persons who remained on the island were allowed to keep the homes they lived in before the Revolution. We met one woman who told us that she and her immediate family (husband and three children) retained their five bedroom house while her aged mother lived alone in a nearby four bedroom home. However, each

individual is limited to one home (the most affluent lost their summer houses) and children who move out of their family's home lose the right to inherit it.¹³

The loss of skilled professional and technical persons—both Cuban and foreign—in the 1960s was extensive and created a major economic crisis. Of 6,000 doctors in the country at the time of the Revolution, some 50 percent left the island. The flight of the engineers and industrial technicians was even more widespread. A number of doctors and other professionals, particularly younger ones, stayed out of ideological conviction and accepted their more modest standard of living. In the major provincial hospital of Camaguey we spoke to one of the few senior staff members at the time of the Revolution who chose to stay. He told us that while his income is much lower than it had been previously, he is much happier with his work now that he can serve those who most need him and can practice preventative medicine.¹⁴

The Disgustados

Of course, not all the remnants of the old middle and upper class share his political commitment. Many who stayed did so because of family ties or an unwillingness to move to a new culture. In the province of Sancti Spiritus we met a middle-aged Havana couple on vacation. The husband had worked as an engineer for a well-known, American-based, multinational corporation before the Revolution and now was employed as a high-level technician in the communications ministry. His wife was also a college-educated technician working in a government agency. After the Revolution they had remained in Cuba because of his inability to gain custody of the children from his first marriage. When we met them, they had been standing in front of their hotel for over an hour awaiting a taxicab (that never did come) to take them to a Catholic religious shrine near the city of Trinidad. "Since the Revolution," they angrily told us,

"taxi service has gone to hell." Undoubtedly it has — taxis are not currently a high government priority.

The couple reflected a common viewpoint among dissatisfied members of the urban middle class. As religious Catholics who before the Revolution enjoyed a luxurious lifestyle — vacations in Miami, the best medical care, private schools for their children — the new regime has little to offer them. The Gómezes (not their real name) had refused to join a CDR (to which about 70 percent of adult Cubans belong). Moreover, they told us that most of their friends and co-workers knew of their antirevolutionary sentiments.

"And yet, in spite of your known political convictions, you are not bothered and can keep important posts in government agencies [they had a combined salary of over 500 pesos per month]?" we asked.

"Sure! As long as we don't proselytize or engage in antigovernment activities."

Like many *disgustados* (persons opposed to the Revolution), the Gómezes continued to attend church services on Sunday along with a significant minority of mostly older Cuban citizens. Official policy discourages religious practice, however, and parents who attend church regularly or who enroll their children in religious instruction cannot usually enter these children in the Pioneers, the national youth mobilization organization. Yet, in Santiago a group of workmen who were rebuilding the roof and a wall of a large church told us they were employed by the state whose policy it is to keep the nation's churches in good repair. A leader of the Jewish community in Havana informed us that, despite the government's anti-Israeli foreign policy, state-owned bakeries still provide the Jewish center with matzo (unleavened bread) for Passover. Several privately owned kosher butcher shops in Havana are among the only

remaining private businesses still allowed to function in the capital.¹⁵

During the early 1960s, then-Premier Fidel Castro estimated that 30 percent of Cuba's urban population did not support the Revolution. If that estimate was correct (some argue it understated the degree of opposition), the level of discontent in Havana undoubtedly was (and still may be) higher. During our first days in the capital, when we struck off individually away from our study group and guides, we were approached a number of times by *disgustados*. Almost all were young men in their late teens or early twenties (Cuba is still sufficiently *latino* that young women don't strike up conversations with strangers.) These "dissidents" tended to hang around the foreign tourist hotels, particularly the Havana Libre (formerly the Havana Hilton). Their attraction to that particular hotel, Havana's largest, soon became apparent. In the rear of the lobby is a large shop stocked with Cuban tourist products (rum, cigars, "Cuba Sí" T-shirts, scarves, etc.) as well as imported wines and beers, more expensive clothing, Japanese tape recorders and televisions, and other items that are either tightly rationed for Cubans or totally unavailable. The shop has two purposes: first, it provides goods for foreign tourists or items that the foreign diplomatic community "demands" (tape recorders, Heinekin beer) but which are unavailable in local shops because the government feels they are luxuries an underdeveloped country cannot afford; second, it furnishes the Cuban economy with badly needed foreign exchange. Indeed, only dollars or other hard foreign currencies are accepted at the store and only foreigners are allowed to pass beyond its totally draped glass doors and windows.

On several occasions when we visited the Havana Libre we were approached by young men offering to exchange pesos for dollars at favorable (illegal) rates if we would

buy a tape recorder or stereo on their behalf. Other members of our group had similar experiences. Indeed, many of the young dissidents whom we spoke to in Havana, both near the hotel and elsewhere, seemed most interested in buying clothing from us (in order to circumvent the rationing system or to get a pair of highly valued American blue jeans) or wished to engage in some other form of black market activity. When they expressed their distaste for the Revolution (which they did without caution or hesitation), their complaints seemed to center on economic rather than political factors, although some did criticize the absence of political freedom or their inability to freely travel abroad. For the most part, however, they were more interested in stereos than in press freedom.¹⁶ Usually they came from middle-class backgrounds or, in some cases, merely aspired to such a lifestyle. In discussing the absence of modish clothing and electrical appliances in their country, they often made invidious comparisons with the United States where many of them had exiled relatives.

Many Western observers visiting Cuba have also faulted the Revolution for its spartanly austere living conditions. Yet, both the Cuban *disgustados* and foreign critics overlook the fact that while more luxurious consumer goods are indeed readily available in other Latin American nations, most of those items are beyond the economic means of 40-60 percent of the population. In Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Peru, and Uruguay (and in Mexico during the 1940s and 1950s), the lower 50-70 percent of the population have taken sharp cuts in their living standards — working class real income has typically declined 30 percent in those nations — in order to finance industrialization or to repay loans from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other lending agencies. Cuba is the only Latin American nation where the upper income strata rather than the lower

were forced to sustain declines in their standard of living in order to finance capital investment. At the same time, the Cuban regime has guaranteed its rural and urban lower classes jobs, educational opportunity, medical care, and an adequate if somewhat spartan diet, something that virtually no other Latin American nation has achieved.¹⁷

On the basis of only several weeks in Cuba, it was obviously impossible for us to gauge with great confidence the proportion of the population that supports or opposes the government. Those young Havanans who approached us in the capital undoubtedly were not a representative sample of public opinion. At the same time, the urban and rural workers to whom we were introduced in our guided tours were surely atypically unreserved in their revolutionary enthusiasm. Generally they came either from model state farms and factories with particularly good working and living conditions or from sectors of the working class (such as the cigar workers) with long histories of radicalism even preceding the Revolution.

Our conversations with citizens whom we approached independently suggested that it is quite erroneous to imagine a bi-polar division between impassioned opponents of the regime on the one hand, and fully committed, revolutionary ideologues on the other. Like citizens everywhere, Cubans tend to evaluate their government and its policies in terms of a mixed bag of political and economic criteria. In Holguín province we traveled on our own and into the countryside to talk both to peasants working on a state farm and to a number who still owned their own plots. One of the latter complained that he disliked having to sell his products at state-controlled prices and would prefer having greater control over the use and marketing of his pigs and vegetable crop. Like most

smallholders throughout the world, he had a rather cautious and conservative world view, and he showed no great enthusiasm for the government. Yet, when asked to cite the single greatest change in village life since the Revolution, his response was a positive one. Pointing up the road to a new secondary school perched on a hill, he declared, "Now our children can study to be whatever they want."

In Santiago, we met a young black engineering student on the bus. After talking to us briefly about Malcolm X and Martin Luther King—whose writings he had read in translation—he confided that one of his great desires in life was to get a pair of genuine Wrangler blue jeans. Like the young *disgustados* whom we had met in Havana, he too would have liked more Western-style consumer goods. But, unlike the others, he was unequivocal in his support for the regime. "My father was an unskilled railroad worker," he told us. "Yet I and two of my sisters have gone to university. Before the Revolution that would never have been possible."

On the whole, our own impression—buttressed by the observations of colleagues who

have spent a year or more on the island—was that the number of persons who endorse the Revolution, with varying degrees of enthusiasm, far outnumber those who oppose it. To the extent that discontent exists, it seems to be overwhelmingly concentrated in Havana. Indeed, not once were we approached outside the capital by persons wishing to engage in black market dealings and only rarely when outside the capital did we hear critical comments about the government.

The Revolution in the Provinces

While our visits to the Havana Libre Hotel exposed the continued existence of consumer-oriented values and antigovernment dissent in Havana, our second trip to the hotel also showed a very different side of the Revolution. On that occasion we met two young, rural couples who were enjoying their honeymoons as fully paid guests of the state. We learned that a paid honeymoon is the privilege of all Cuban citizens. One couple, both aged 18, told us this was their very first visit to Havana. Mixed among the "Libre's" foreign tourists and official delegations, they gazed in amazement at the luxury hotel so totally beyond the dreams of their parents in prerevolutionary days.



Santiago street scene.

The fact that they couldn't enter the hotel's tourist shop to buy Heinekin beer or short-wave radios did not seem to bother them. They never had developed such tastes. For them, the honeymoon, like the new school and polyclinic in their village, was among the many wonders Fidel and the Revolution had brought.

When we left the capital for the provinces of Cienfuegos, Camaguey, Sancti Spiritus, Holguín, Santa Clara, and Santiago, we were struck by the marked change in atmosphere. The people with whom we spoke in the provincial capitals and towns tended to be more animated, outgoing, and outspoken in their support for the revolutionary process.

In a café in the city of Camaguey, we met two union activists: Gregorio, a railroad mechanic, and Helena, the director of an adult education program at a nearby canning factory. Both were open and voluble, stating at the start of our conversation that they were committed revolutionaries and Marxist-Leninists. Indeed, they made it clear they trusted us—as Americans—only because we were traveling with the Venceremos Brigade. Helena, a large-framed intense woman, symbolized the doggedness and persistence of the rural revolutionary. The daughter of a Camaguey small landowner, she had left the farm early to live with her sister in the provincial capital in order to complete her primary education. At the start of the revolutionary struggle she had studied bookkeeping for two years and was employed by a local firm. Both she and Francisco, the man with whom she was living, were militant unionists and when he joined the rural guerrillas in the closing months of the fighting, she stayed behind in Camaguey to engage in "clandestine underground activity." Married after the guerrilla victory, Helena worked

for five years in the Cuban army while her husband, by then a member of the Communist Party, studied for a period in Moscow. Later, she left the military and briefly headed the province's Federation of Cuban Women. Recently widowed (Francisco had died of a heart attack), Helena is simultaneously directing an adult education program and pursuing her studies at the University of Camaguey in order to complete requirements for her teacher's credentials. She proudly told us that her eight-year-old daughter headed her second grade group of Pioneers.

Fidel Castro has stated that 90 percent of Cuba's rural and small town population support the Revolution. Our experiences outside Havana suggested that this estimate may not be exaggerated. Like its counterparts in Vietnam and China, Cuba's Revolution was not really a classical Marxist class struggle between the industrial proletariat and capitalists. Instead, the hallmark of government policy has been the transfer of resources and benefits from Havana to the provinces, from city to countryside. Like all capitalist, Third World nations, prerevolutionary Cuba was marked by sharp urban-rural discrepancies in income, health care, educational

opportunities, and government services. If Cuba's wealth—sugar, tobacco, cattle—originated in the countryside, it was spent almost exclusively in Havana. While there was poverty in the nation's capital, it was also the stronghold of the middle and upper classes as well as the bastion of "foreign, bourgeois, consumer-oriented values." "Havana," said Fidel, "is the overdeveloped capital of an underdeveloped nation."

Nothing is more apparent in Cuba today than the extent to which earlier priorities have been reversed. In the provincial towns and cities we visited throughout the island, we repeatedly passed new housing being constructed by worker "microbrigades." These brightly painted new apartments that dot the island are practically nonexistent in Havana (where most apartment buildings have been allowed to decay considerably). In fact, the only major housing project being built for the capital—the vast model city of Alamar—is located well outside the city.¹⁸ Similarly, many consumer goods (clothing, books, appliances) were more widely available outside Havana than in the capital, a complete reversal of the pattern in other Latin American



New rural housing: El Tablón dairy farm (Cienfuegos Province).

nations. Moreover, modern medical care, once almost exclusively limited to Havana and other major cities, is today available throughout the country in government polyclinics providing free service. The large number of doctors graduated since the Revolution (over 60 percent of the current medical population) are required to spend three years, after completing their schooling, practicing in provincial cities and towns where their services are most needed. Many of them remain after their obligatory service has ended, either out of ideological commitment or simply because the cultural, economic, and recreational opportunities available in the provinces are no longer very different from those in the capital.

Microbrigades and Worker Heroes

Walking through the streets of Camaguey one evening, we entered a complex of new, high-rise worker apartments not far from our hotel. Housing over 700 families, the complex included a day-care center, primary and secondary school, athletic facilities, and, atop one of the buildings, a combination restaurant and nightclub. We were told by several residents that the units were two to three years old and, like most new Cuban apartment houses, were built by volunteer worker brigades.

Microbrigade housing represents an innovative approach to solving Cuba's extensive housing shortage without diverting labor resources from other sectors of the economy. In factories throughout the country, teams of volunteer workers (usually about 35 in number) are released from their regular labor obligations for a period of several months, while their factory co-workers obligate themselves to make up the volunteers' regular production quota. After a brief training period, the microbrigade volunteers, receiving their regular salaries, construct apartment units (generally prefabricated) for the workers in their factory so as to partially or fully meet their housing needs. During the 1970s microbrigade housing



Old rural housing: typical Bohia still widely seen.



Huge Alamar housing project (microbrigade) outside Havana.

has been built at an annual rate of 25,000 units (accounting for 80 percent of all newly constructed apartments).¹⁹ With the exception of Alamar and several other large projects, most apartments are no more than three to four stories high. The ones we saw in various locations throughout the island were simple but generally tasteful in architectural style with open green

areas and attractive pastel coloring.²⁰

The project we happened upon in Camaguey had one apartment building put up by local construction workers, another by railroad workers, and two by microbrigades from nearby factories. Each apartment came equipped with a small television and stove (both

free), but no refrigerator. Rent on all microbrigade apartments is set at 7 percent of the salary of the family's highest wage earner. Thus, if both husband and wife are working—a common practice—rent comes to a nominal 4 percent or so of family income. Once the apartments are completed, they are allocated to workers in the factory according to a vote of all the plant's employees. The criteria for the allocation of apartments (since supply rarely meets demand) include both family need and the applicant's "merit." This second factor is, in turn, determined by a worker's productivity, revolutionary commitment, and general attitude. Workers who maintain low absentee records, exceed their production norms (quotas), attend adult education classes, participate in CDR volunteer labor projects, and are ideologically committed to the Revolution, are given first priority.

We were invited for a beer in the apartment of Félix, a construction worker living in one of the Camaguey apartments. He, his wife Carmen, who worked in a nearby pharmaceutical warehouse, and three children share a modest, two-bedroom apartment. Carmen proudly showed us their refrigerator, a highly valued possession in Cuba. While the price of refrigerators is quite high, demand still far exceeds supply because of the surplus of disposable income already noted. Like apartments, refrigerators are allocated by a vote of the workers in each plant according to the same criteria. Washing machines are assigned in the same way, but only working mothers are eligible to receive them.

We learned from Félix that during four of the five previous years he had been cited by his co-workers and supervisors as a "hero worker" for his exceptionally high level of production and revolutionary commitment. As his reward he had earned expense-paid study-vacations in Bulgaria, East Germany, Poland, and the Soviet Union during his annual,

month-long vacations (while his family continued to receive his regular pay).

The family's new apartment and refrigerator as well as Félix's European vacations were evidence of the material rewards now available to exemplary workers. During the mid-1960s, Cuba's revolutionary leadership (as well as European advisers and scholarly observers) intensely debated the use of "material" (economic) versus "moral" (purely idealistic) incentives as a means of stimulating worker productivity in the factories and countryside. During the early years of the Revolution, the prevailing ideological strain—emanating primarily from Ché Guevara—was that the "new socialist person" would work harder, not for personal material gain, but out of an idealistic commitment to the development of the country and the good of future generations ("moral incentives"). The use of personal material incentives (the norm in capitalist societies), Guevara and his supporters argued, would not only violate the Marxist axiom of rewarding "each according to his need" but would also reintroduce class differences. Spurred on by revolutionary idealism and government propaganda, many Cubans extended their work week by 10-20 percent (working overtime and on weekends) at no extra pay through voluntary labor in their plants or with the CDRs.²¹ But overall the system failed. With almost all citizens guaranteed their basic diet and medical needs, rent nearly free, "luxuries" virtually unavailable, and little additional income (and even fewer goods) to be gained by working harder, worker productivity per hour fell by perhaps as much as 30 percent. By the mid-sixties, absenteeism had also reached alarming proportions. Thus, by 1970, with the economy in a prolonged slump, the role of material incentives—never totally eliminated from the economy—was increased.²²

In our various visits to factories and state farms we were struck by the

great emphasis on increasing productivity. Repeated stress was placed on reaching and exceeding "*las normas*" (worker production norms or quotas), and salaries for individual workers or production teams often varied by 25 percent or so according to how much they produced ("*según las normas*"). On the Ciego de Avila citrus farm in Santa Clara, for example, fruit pickers' salaries varied from 90-105 pesos (\$103-\$121) monthly.

At the same time, however, our hosts stressed that economic rewards depend on collective rather than individual efforts. Productivity-related wage boosts are generally tied to the output of a whole production unit while critical incentives (microbrigade apartments, televisions, and washing machines, etc.) are allocated on the basis of the workers' collective decisions. Similarly, rather than compete with each other for material rewards, workers are encouraged to "emulate" the revolutionary commitment and spirit of self-sacrifice of local worker heroes (whose pictures appear on factory bulletin boards) or of legendary figures such as Ché Guevara. At times, however, the difference between emulation ("*emulación*" was a word we heard repeatedly) and competition escaped us. At Havana's La Corona cigar factory (Roberto Fernández Tobacco Plant) we asked if the various parallel production units competed to produce the most. "No," responded our guide, "we don't believe in competition." Then, after a pause, "There is socialist emulation between units to see who can produce the most."

Fidel

Twice during our Cuban visit we had the opportunity of seeing Fidel Castro on national television. In Cienfuegos we watched him give an extensive interview to reporters from the three major U.S. television networks. (Both Castro and his Cuban audience lavished special attention on Barbara Walters who,

by virtue of her earlier interviews of Fidel, has become something of a national favorite. "Did you see Fidel's interview with Barr-bará last night?" we were asked by several Cubans the next day, as if the other network reporters were not there. The following week in Havana we watched the President address the opening session of the 1978 National Assembly of Poder Popular. The appearances gave us an opportunity to observe his skill as a speaker and performer as well as to watch the reaction of his Cuban audience in our hotels.

In his address to the National Assembly, for over one hour Castro was at his oratorical best explaining government economic policy. What might have been a dry, statistical presentation became instead an engrossing combination of lecture, anecdote, and humor. Throughout, Castro alternated between high school economics instructor ("What is a social expenditure?" he asked. "A school is a social expenditure; a hospital is a social expenditure."), political leader and rural storyteller (clearly relishing all three roles). Addressing himself more to the national television audience than to the Assembly itself, Fidel stressed that even should the United States end its economic blockade of Cuba, the people mustn't expect to get all the material goods they want. Illustrating the point further, he dramatically recalled his yearly Christmas-season letters to the Three Kings telling them the many things he wanted them to bring for Epiphany. "Each year," he recounted, "my list got longer and each year my letters became even more sincere and insistent. This time they would *surely* bring me everything I wanted. But they never did."

On both occasions when we saw Castro appear on television, the hotel's Cuban guests and employees quickly gathered in the lobby near the set. Nodding their heads in approval of his major points, exchanging knowing glances at his best stories, and laughing at



Mural of Ché Guevara on Havana's Plaza of the Revolution.

his jokes, they seemed to hang on every word. Those who crowded expectantly before the television were probably a self-selected audience of regime supporters, but Fidel's obvious rapport, even across the air waves, was impressive. Indeed, a full understanding of the Cuban Revolution is impossible without a feeling for the unique relationship between its "*máximo líder*" and the Cuban people. As American journalist Lee Lockwood once noted, the Cuban working class and peasantry originally accepted the need for a Marxist revolution, not because of prior ideological orientation or because of immediate economic gain, but out of a deep, abiding trust in "Fidel."²³ Throughout the difficult years of the '60s, the rationing and the volunteer labor, that faith did not seem to waver.

Given the relatively small size and population of the island and Castro's constant jeep trips through the country, most Cubans have either spoken to their President directly or have at least been present at one of his speeches to a mass rally. A man of tremendous physical and intellectual energy, with a magnetic, charismatic personality, the Revolution's "commander in

chief" has established a direct, personal bond with his people that is probably matched by no other world leader. To almost all Cubans he is known as "Fidel" (just as other revolutionary heroes are always referred to as "Ché" [Guevara], "Camilo" [Cienfuegos], or "Frank" [País]). In fact, it is considered somewhat rude to speak of "Castro" (or "Guevara").

There appears to be a conscious effort to prevent the development of a "cult of personality" comparable to that in Stalinist Russia or Mao's China. We saw no statues of Castro and surprisingly few photographs or posters. Government offices, schools, and factories were far more likely to carry pictures of Ché or José Martí (the nineteenth-century leader of the independence struggle), Camilo or even Lenin. The slogan of the Pioneers, "*Seremos como el Ché*" ("Let us be like Ché"), holds up the slain guerrilla leader as the primary hero for youthful emulation. While Santiago features a Frank País Museum (this capable leader of the urban resistance movement against Batista was killed before the revolutionary victory), there is, to our knowledge, no street, building or museum named after Fidel.

President Castro has also begun in recent years to delegate more decision-making responsibility. The creation of Poder Popular represents an attempt to move from a charismatically directed regime to a more institutionalized Revolution. Despite his constant denials to foreign reporters, however, Fidel remains the ultimate decision-maker. Others may have critical influence on central government policy, but the final decision is his, and only his closest associates argue strenuously with him. For most Cubans, Fidel *is* the Revolution and his word is gospel. Only time will tell whether he can successfully transfer his personal legitimacy to revolutionary institutions that will smoothly handle his passing from the scene.

Cuba's Place in the Sun

As we entered the country at José Martí Airport and when we stayed at various tourist hotels, we were greeted by billboards declaring, "Welcome to Cuba: First Free Territory in the Americas." While that proclamation may outrage opponents of the Revolution, it reflects the belief by many Cubans we met that theirs is the first Latin American nation to achieve economic and political independence from United States' domination. Signs of national pride were everywhere evident. We were constantly asked during our trip (more than in any other Latin American country we have visited), "What do you think of our country?" or "What do you think of our Revolution?" From the schoolteacher with whom we exchanged political buttons in a Santiago bookstore to the recently returned Angolan veteran we met in Cienfuegos, they greeted positive responses with grins of appreciation.

Shortly before our trip, a Cuban athletic team returned from the Caribbean games in Colombia where they had totally dominated the competition, winning almost twice as many gold medals as all other entering countries combined. Cubans are well aware that their

amateur baseball, track, and boxing teams are not only the best in Latin America but are among the most powerful in the world. When we spoke to a group of high school students in Santa Clara, they wanted to know if we thought "Cassius Clay" (as he is still known in Cuba and the rest of Latin America) would be willing to fight Teófilo Stevenson, Cuba's two-time Olympic, heavyweight gold-medalist. "Who would win?" we asked. "Stevenson," they shouted in unison.

Pride in their country's athletic achievements is but one manifestation of Cuba's nationalism and of popular recognition that their small country (under 10 million) now exercises a role in the world disproportionate to its size. In his speeches to the Cuban people, President Castro often boasts that the country will soon have more doctors, engineers, and technicians than it needs. But, says Fidel, this needn't worry us, for we can then send our professionals abroad to aid other developing nations. Cuba is already sending technical advisers to Vietnam, Laos, Jamaica, Peru, Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, and other allied nations.

We spoke to several Cubans (at both formal, group meetings and in informal street encounters) who had returned from "international service" in Africa. In our conversations we were mindful of Western press describing heavy Cuban military losses in Angola and Ethiopia as well as strong disenchantment over the country's "African mission."

Our own discussions suggested a far different picture. While one mother whom we met in Santiago expressed understandable anxiety about a son who had recently departed for military duty in Ethiopia, most people told us that Cuban military losses had been fairly light. In fact, most of the Cubans we met who had either served in Africa themselves or who had relatives there said they were engaged in civilian roles. The husband of one of

our guides, for example, was about to return from Angola where he had spent several months as a construction adviser. Since returning civilian or military "internationalists" (the term Cubans use) receive tremendous prestige as well as first crack at new apartments and other material benefits (some microbrigade apartment houses are specifically designated for them), there is no shortage of volunteers for African service and no need for forced military duty. Not a single *disgustado* whom we met cited Cuba's African involvement as the basis of his criticism. This was particularly noteworthy since most of the dissidents with whom we spoke were of draft age. Other prorevolutionary Cubans sometimes mentioned their country's "international mission" with pride.²⁴

Education and the "New Socialist Person"

"If there is a privileged class in Cuba today," one foreign journalist has recently observed, "it is the children." Our own experiences during our weeks of travel on the island seemed to bear this out. Whether we encountered young Pioneers singing and chanting on the back of a packed truck (on a field trip), curious secondary level students at the beach, or elementary school students taking a break from classes at their farming community, Cuban youth appeared alert and confident, with exceedingly high aspirations. "In Cuba you can become anything you wish, if you want it badly enough," we were told by the 13-year-old daughter of a sanitation worker as we shared a beer with her parents during Camaguey's Carnival celebration. Her mother, who had worked as a maid before the Revolution, smiled proudly at her daughter's plans to be a pediatrician. When polling a cluster of curious children in Santiago as to their social backgrounds and future plans, we found most of them interested in technical occupations. Though they were children of factory workers, a bus dispatcher, and a waiter, they

aspired to careers in engineering, medicine and nursing. Among the children was the sister of a member of Alycia Alonso's famed Cuban dance company. While we expected her to favor a career as a ballerina, she emphatically stated that she wanted to be a teacher in the countryside where education is still most deficient.

It would appear then that Cuba is reducing the link between students' socioeconomic origins and their educational aspirations and achievement, while at the same time developing a youthful social consciousness. But such things have been brought forth painfully, placing considerable pressure on Cuban young people. When we toured the primary school at El Tablón, a model dairy farm in Cienfuegos Province, slower students were being intensively tutored for approaching final exams. The yearly national tests issued by the Ministry of Education were quite difficult, a sixth grade teacher explained to us. If a student failed to pass the exams for several consecutive years, he or she would pass to a more technical track. Those children with learning disabilities would be sent to special schools.

Universal primary education (six years) was set as a goal shortly after the Revolution, but school dropouts, especially in the countryside, were a continuing problem. Between 1960 and 1970, national enrollment in primary schools increased 50 percent while secondary enrollment more than tripled. Yet, as of 1968 only one of seven students who had begun elementary school in the previous ten years managed to enter high school. Despite the law, large numbers of students were not even completing their primary education and the truancy and dropout rates remained high.²⁵ Data from selected provinces indicates that during the 1970s elementary school enrollment has continued to grow gradually (about 3% annually) while the number of students in secondary schools increased

dramatically by over 400 percent from 1970-1977. Still, only about one-third of all students appear to continue beyond elementary school and primary level dropouts remain a problem.²⁶

For students who wish to continue beyond elementary school, there are three principal options: three years of technical schooling, five years of training for primary level teaching (both of these options are terminal), or a four-year, secondary academic curriculum. Those who complete the secondary school track (roughly the equivalent of junior high school) may either continue on to preuniversity school (senior high school) or may enter more advanced vocational schools for agriculture, language, or other technical fields. Thus, while our conversations with Cuban children revealed a very high level of aspirations (perhaps unrealistically high), only a select minority will successfully pass through the series of rigorous academic examinations and manage to enter the university system. As a Dean at the University of Santa Clara explained to our group, neither the universities nor society as a whole can absorb large numbers of professional students. At the same time, the country desperately needs middle level technicians.

Not only do the number of people who dream of a university education far exceed the available openings, but the size of particular curriculums does not correspond to student preferences. Since the Revolution, the universities have sharply reduced the size of their law, social science, and humanities programs while greatly expanding their engineering and agricultural departments.²⁷ Admission to the various programs is based on a combination of student preference, aptitude examinations, grades, and teacher evaluations. Since there is still an excess of applications to the humanities departments, even those who are granted university admission may not secure entrance into the program they most desire. The Dean at Santa Clara indicated

that failure to get their preferred career choice is a major cause of dropping out among university students. A second important cause is marriage, particularly since his university has no housing for student couples. Thus, at the University of Santa Clara, there is an average annual attrition rate of 18 percent. Students who fail to maintain the necessary academic average lose their full-time scholarship and must work during the day but maintain the option of continuing their university studies at night.

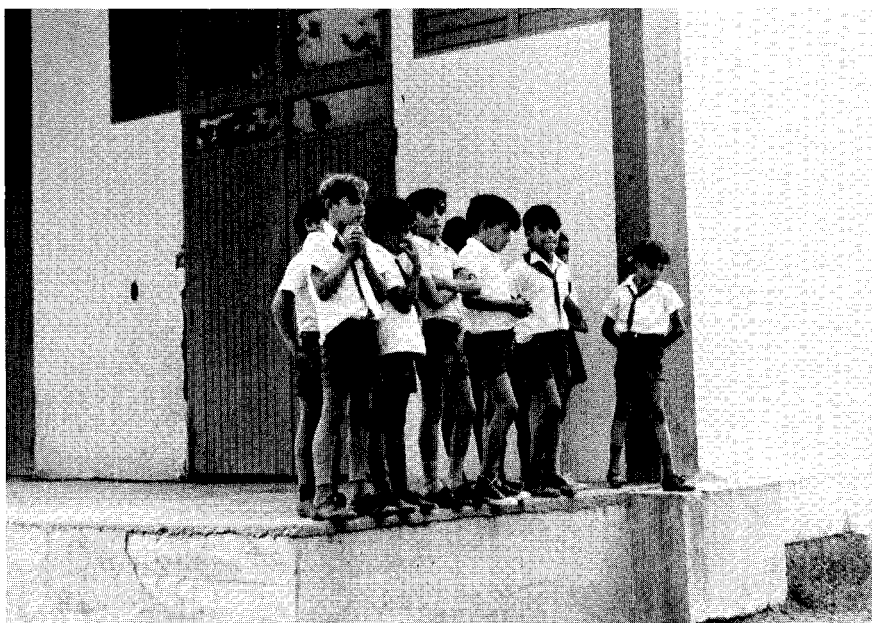
University or advanced technical training is not, however, a prerequisite for attaining a successful career. Primary schoolteachers, for example, begin their work after a total of only 11 years of schooling, when they are only 5 years older than their sixth grade students. Adult education teachers may have only one year of post-secondary education (12 years total). Indeed, in our travels, we had the feeling that Cuban society is being run for and by its youth. The average age of workers at the huge Nuevitas Cement Factory was 29; at the Camaguey Surgical Hospital, doctors averaged 31 years of age. In the early 1960s, during the flight of middle-class professionals from the island, more advanced university students sometimes taught their first- and second-year schoolmates. In fact, the exodus of professionals opened up channels for upward mobility in many sectors. Our guide at Cienfuegos' Bulk Sugar Mill had been a manual laborer at the mill in 1960. Pressed into administrative service by the shortage of technicians, he had combined night courses in engineering with on-the-job training and now holds a high-level supervisory position.

Beyond its obvious purpose of career training, education in Cuba is designed to promote revolutionary values. From the first elementary school reading primers on, many (though certainly not all) textbooks promote Marxist ideological norms. Moreover, academic activity is but

part of the educational curriculum. At the El Tablón dairy farm students spend about three hours of their school day working in orchards and vegetable gardens "to make them aware of a role as producers and not merely consumers." The fruits and vegetables grown by the students later appear on the school dining table.

Educational practices are also designed to bridge the traditional, Third World gap between city and countryside. In the early years of the Revolution children of peasants were sent from their villages—where schools, if they existed, rarely went beyond the third grade—to boarding schools in urban centers. One notable experiment in this area was the Ana Betancourt School established by the Federation of Cuban Women. Up to 10,000 girls (aged 14-20) were brought each year from rural regions of Oriente Province to Havana where it was felt that could benefit from the cultural opportunities of an urban environment. After being offered a curriculum in basic academic skills, health care, and home economics, they were returned home where they were expected to pass on their knowledge to ten or more girls in their villages. Initially many parents were highly suspicious of the program and some feared their daughters were being kidnapped. It was only after a number of parents were brought to Havana that they fully accepted the program.

In recent years, the Cubans have reversed the direction of geographical mobility. Urban secondary and preuniversity students are required to spend much of their summer vacation doing agricultural work in the countryside. Beginning in 1968, the rural work program was taken one step further with the opening of the first "Secondary Schools in the Countryside" (Secundarias Básicas en el Campo). Boarding students from the cities reside full time (returning home for vacations) in these schools, studying and working



"Pioneers" outside their classroom in El Tablón model dairy farm.



Pioneer youngsters on a field trip in Santa Clara.

in agricultural production with their local, rural classmates. Three hundred and five of these schools now exist and it is hoped that by 1980 most secondary education in the nation will take place in the countryside.²⁸ Secondary and preuniversity students near the Ciego de Avila state citrus farm in Santa Clara province work four hours per day throughout the school year in the canning factory and

spend the whole day picking fruit during the harvest season (with their academic schedule adjusted to the season).

The schools in the countryside are providing a labor supplement that formerly only seasonal workers could fulfill.²⁹ Obviously they are also designed to create positive attitudes toward agricultural labor among urban students and to break

down long-standing cultural barriers between the nation's urban and rural population. Of course, in the case of the children of the old urban middle class, the boarding schools facilitate the teaching of revolutionary values free from "corrupting influences" at home. School officials maintain that, although students are removed during adolescence from full-time family support, they are also placed in a more serious academic environment. Thus, the dropout rates at the Secondary Schools in the Countryside are lower than those of urban secondary schools.

On all levels of Cuban society today, education has become the new religion to which all pay homage. Whether they are engaged as teachers or as students, a large percentage of the population is involved, at least part time, in the educational process. Following a largely successful campaign in the early 1960s to achieve universal adult literacy, the government's present goal is to bring every Cuban child and adult to a sixth grade level. The country is dotted with billboards encouraging adults to "reach the sixth grade." When we walked into a public library in Havana one weekday evening, the reading room was full of adults studying math, English, and other subjects they were taking in evening courses.

Almost every factory and state farm has its adult education program. Some, like the cement plant in Nuevitas, provide primary through preuniversity courses and send the most capable students on to the university in Camaguey. Others, such as the El Tablón dairy farm's adult school, offer only primary level training and have to struggle to get workers to attend classes and pass their yearly exams. Workers at the larger industrial plants are offered two hours of classes per day which they can attend either before or after their shifts. While many workers are self-motivated, there are also social pressures and



Large billboard stressing education "Worker: Let us Win the Battle [to reach the level of] the Sixth Grade with Your Attendance at Classes."

material incentives for attendance. Workers who hope to secure microbrigade apartments, televisions, or refrigerators are aware that attendance at adult education courses is one criterion for such rewards.

There are some, like the 82-year-old former *hacienda* peon whom we spoke to on the streets of Trinidad, who are beyond the pale of educational ferment. Juan Carlos admitted to not knowing how to read ("not a word"). Though he had spent two months studying during the literacy campaign, he had forgotten it all (apparently that is not uncommon). When we asked if he

would like to try again, he responded "*Por que?*" ("Why?").

Others have reacted far more positively. Our tour bus driver, Ramón, was formerly a part-time boxer and race car driver who was ready to leave for the United States in the '50s because he couldn't find a steady job and saw no future for himself in the country. Now in his early forties, he had finished his primary education at night and intended to continue through secondary school. He was particularly proud of his daughters who were both enrolled in teacher training programs and credited the Revolution with having made all of this possible.

The Women's Revolution in the Revolution

School was starting two weeks later than scheduled and Lidia, our guide at the Nuevitas Cement Factory, wondered how the workers' children would be cared for in the interim. Most of the plant's female employees had taken their vacations during the regular school break and were now due back at work. Lidia felt that the mothers should extend their vacations briefly so they could rotate watching their children until school started again. When asked if the fathers would be willing to share this unanticipated day care, she responded that while some husbands were involved, it was still largely a woman's concern. Our conversation was broken off suddenly when Lidia rushed home after receiving word that her daughter had just suffered a serious fall and had sprained her wrist. The situation was depressingly familiar. While Cuban women have entered new sectors of the work force since 1959 and have made important legal gains, many traditional sex roles persist.

Under the terms of the Cuban Family Code, the nation's women are among the most liberated in the world — on paper. As the result of political pressure by the huge Federation of Cuban Women (FMC), the 1975 government code not only guarantees women legal equality in such areas as marriage, child custody, divorce, and "the economic basis of matrimony," but also assigns husbands responsibility for 50 percent of all housework and childcare (Cuba is the only nation in the world with such a legal obligation). When we talked about the Code to women of various socioeducational levels, however, we were told that husbands rarely live up to such expectations. Even the well-intentioned president of a CDR we visited in Santiago admitted that, while he often picked up his children from their day-care center and put dinner on the stove when his wife was late from work, he was doing nowhere near his 50 percent share. Whatever the current rhetoric and legal requirements may

be, for most Cuban women, as for their sisters in the rest of the world, entering the labor force means working a "double day" at home and in the workplace.

The government aids working mothers by providing day-care programs and by giving them priority in the allocation of washing machines and other labor-saving devices. But the availability of childcare is well below demand and many women wish to work but cannot, due to the shortage of facilities.

At the various "model" factories and state farms the group visited, our hosts stressed the growing role of female labor. In Havana's Roberto Fernández Tobacco Plant, the percentage of women workers had increased from 10 to 60 percent since 1959 (although they seemed to occupy the slightly lower paid positions). At the Nuevitas Cement Plant and at the Bulk Sugar Mill, where few women worked before the Revolution, they now constituted about one-fourth of the employees, yet many were working in the laboratories or offices of these plants.

Nationwide statistics indicate that the growth in the number of working women has been gradual (less dramatic than is often claimed) and that women still constitute a distinct minority of the total labor force. Cuban women constituted some 9-17 percent of the nation's active work force between 1930-1958; by 1970 their proportion had only risen to 18.5 percent (only 1.4 percent above their 1953 level).³⁰ According to unofficial figures cited to us by spokespersons from the Federation of Cuban Women, by 1978, 28 percent of the work force was female.

Perhaps more important than the growth in the number of women working has been the change in occupational patterns. At the Camaguey Surgical Hospital we learned that 40 percent of the doctors on the staff are women, apparently about the percentage of

female doctors nationally. During the 1950s, some 65 percent of all working women were employed in the service sector, the vast majority as domestic servants (with teaching a distant second). By 1970, however, the service sector employed only 41 percent of the female labor force and most of those women were employed in such greatly expanding sectors as teaching and health care (nurses, midwives, paraprofessionals) rather than domestic service.³¹ At the same time, the percentage of working women who are employed in industry and agriculture remained fairly static from 1953-1970 (though their absolute number has grown) and most of the new women workers were absorbed by the commerce sector.

The formal entry of women into the labor market represents only a part of their changing role in Cuban society. Some 2.2 million women over the age of 14 (about three-fourths of that age group) belong to the Federation of Cuban Women, organized from local block groups through the national level. FMC volunteer activities in the 1960s literacy campaign, mass vaccination (particularly polio, DPT, tetanus, and other immunization for women and children), cancer screening and pre- and post-natal assistance, have helped improve Cuban educational and health standards. Women also contribute disproportionately to CDR volunteer work campaigns.

In a variety of ways, then, the traditional, sheltered role of the Cuban woman (a role typical of *latino* culture) is slowly changing. Women are getting out of the home either in the work force or as volunteers. In Santiago we were addressed by a member of the National Directorate of the CDR, a 35-year-old woman who had recently returned from service as a paramedic in Angola. Indeed, large numbers of women have volunteered for nonmilitary service in Africa, reflecting a degree of independence open to only a small, educated elite before the

Revolution. Relations between working married couples, at least among the young ones, tend to be more career and less family centered than before. Thus, one of our group's guides often travels for weeks outside Havana, separated from her husband. In general, the growing scope of women's activity outside the home has probably contributed to a steady decline in the nation's birthrate since 1964.³² Female emancipation may also have contributed to the 400 percent increase in the divorce rate between 1960 and 1971.

In the political sphere, gains for Cuban women have been slow in coming. When the first experimental elections for Poder Popular were held in Matanzas Province in 1974, women were elected to a mere 3 percent of the seats on the province's municipal councils. This extremely poor showing evoked strong criticism both from the FMC and from President Castro. Consequently, when Poder Popular elections were held nationally in 1976, a strong effort was made to recruit more female candidates and to stress the importance of greater female representation. When the results were in, over 20 percent of the elected Municipal delegates were women — still an underrepresentation but a distinct improvement over both the Matanzas election and the international norm. At the top echelons of political power, Cuban leadership is still largely male and white. Only 6 of the 117 members of the Political Bureau and Central Committee of the Communist Party are women.

The women's revolution in Cuba is part of a broader movement toward erasing past inequalities of sex, race, region, and class. Anywhere in the world, even within a revolution, such changes are slow in coming both because of a heritage of long-standing educational and cultural inequalities and because of the difficulties of altering deeply ingrained social attitudes.

Cuba in Perspective

Since its inception, the Cuban Revolution has usually provoked intense reactions, positive and negative. Particularly during its first decade, critics (Cuban exiles, much of the Western press...) wrote of a totalitarian state featuring political repression and a stagnant, mismanaged economy. Revolutionary sympathizers (foreign intellectuals and university leftists) returned from the island raving about mass political participation, total equality, and the elimination of poverty. In short, for one side "before 1959 Cuba was a paradise and now it is hell" and for the other "before the Revolution everything was wrong but now everything is right."³³

An alternative to these extreme positions was offered by Western leftists who sympathized with the general goals of the Revolution but found it overcentralized and incompetent in its planning (Dumont), too militaristic (Karol), too authoritarian (Halperin, Silverman) or too Stalinist (Horowitz, Radosh).³⁴ Unlike Cuba's more conventional critics, they faulted the Revolution for not being socialist enough.

During the past decade, more dispassionate works by scholarly supporters of the revolutionary process (Karl, MacEwan, Zeitlin) and by academic critics (Mesa-Lago, Suárez) have offered carefully documented analyses of both the accomplishments and failures of the Cuban regime.³⁵ Western journalists (Lockwood, Mankiewicz, Ward, FitzGerald) have been more prone to credit the Revolution with major socioeconomic improvements, while still generally faulting it for its lack of liberal, democratic norms.³⁶ The "*revolución en marcha*" has itself been in a state of constant flux thereby invalidating much earlier writing. The Revolution's second decade has been marked by greater stress on consumer goods (and a concomitant cutback in capital

investment), greater attention to housing needs, and more efficient, technologically oriented management. Critics charge that it has also been characterized by a loss of idealism and spontaneity.

Totally objective analysis of so complex a process of socioeconomic and political change is probably impossible. Most foreigners visiting Cuba bring with them certain preconceived judgments and values. We suspect that their ultimate evaluations of the Revolution usually coincide closely with what they had originally expected to find. Leftist sympathizers (including a number of our Venceremos Brigade tour companions) often come to the island expecting to find Utopia (or, at least, a nation moving toward it) and don't leave disappointed. Western journalists usually anticipate a socially progressive but controlled, regimented society, and they generally leave with their expectations confirmed. Even the most scientific observers cannot escape being influenced by their underlying ideological preferences. Visitors who are strongly committed to the norms of liberal-democratic civil liberties or to the rights of private property will obviously assess the Revolution differently from those who are more concerned with mass political involvement or socioeconomic egalitarianism.

Our own observations were undoubtedly similarly influenced by our ideological preferences and normative values (which differ somewhat between the two of us). As the preceding pages reveal, we were greatly impressed by Cuba's great gains in education and health care, the opportunities for upward mobility, the spirit of common effort, and the movement (slow, to be sure) toward sexual equality. Having lived in a number of other Latin American countries, we were struck by the lack of abject poverty in Cuba, the high degree of socioeconomic egalitarianism, and the uniquely equal sharing of the many sacrifices of development.

We feel much of the Western news media has erroneously evaluated Cuban living standards and political conditions by the criteria of industrialized, developed nations. Cuba remains an underdeveloped nation with widespread use of antiquated technology, inadequate transportation, and an essentially single-crop export economy. While nobody seems to starve, only children, pregnant mothers, and the elderly receive a milk ration, and meat consumption is very low. An impressive number of new apartments are being constructed, but many peasants (other than those living on model state farms) continue to live in primitive huts, and most housing in Havana appears shabby and deteriorating. Yet, it is ridiculous to expect the Cubans to emerge fully developed in two to three decades when no Third World nation (save, possibly, Japan) has managed to do so.

Similarly, given the virtual absence of Western parliamentary practices in the Third World (practices which many political scientists see as inapplicable), there seems little reason to single out Cuba for special censure. Undoubtedly, many Western-style civil liberties are not granted in Cuba, but this is true of most of the Third World. Moreover, informed observers indicate that there is no torture of political prisoners (common to Uruguay, Chile, and Iran) and certainly there are no civilian massacres and death squads as in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Argentina.³⁷ Political corruption and nepotism have apparently been eradicated far more effectively than in any other Latin American nation. Public criticism of the Revolution's ideological thrust and basic policies are not tolerated. But, our impression was that the CDRs, Poder Popular, and factory- or farm-level organizations afford the average Cuban worker and peasant a higher degree of decision-making influence at the local (micropolicy) level than is true for their counterparts in Bolivia, Ecuador, or even such formal democracies as Mexico and Colombia.

Our generally positive impression of the Revolution—based on obviously limited exposure—was tempered by some important concerns. On the whole, we were struck by how few channels of information are available to most Cubans. The press and other mass media offer a very narrow and controlled view of the world. The selection of material we encountered at the major bookstores of Havana and Santiago was small and ideologically homogeneous, in contrast with those of Mexico and even Brazil, which are full of opposition viewpoints. When we spoke to several university students about Cuban electrical power plants (and the possible construction of a nuclear plant), they were totally unaware of ecological hazards. Moreover, many educated young Cubans seem to feel that such knowledge is not necessary. When we asked a young Communist Party member, with a university degree in economics, where we could acquire recent statistics on Cuban agriculture, education, and other basic socioeconomic indicators, he had no idea. In fact, he found it strange that anyone other than a government planner working in those fields would be interested.

The companion of controlled information is a limited capacity to criticize. It is true that Cubans are encouraged to speak out against administrative errors and to air their problems (lack of materials for production, poor bus service) through Poder Popular, their unions, the CDRs, etc. We found that even the most fervent revolutionary was quick to note the continued shortages in child care, housing, and basic consumer goods. Indeed, Fidel is often the government's severest critic—during the early 1960s he charged that the CDRs were sometimes used by Cuban citizens

as vigilantee committees to harass neighbors against whom they held grievances; in 1970 he acknowledged, and took full blame for, the economic chaos caused by the unsuccessful attempt to harvest ten million tons of sugar. But while there is much room for criticism of government performance, we saw no evidence of public criticism, or even debate, over basic policy. None of the educated, pro-Revolutionary Cubans to whom we spoke seemed to feel there was reason to question or criticize Cuba's military involvement in Africa, her dependence on the Soviet Union (and strident criticism of China), the increased use of material incentives, or a number of policies about which committed Marxist revolutionaries might easily disagree. Thus, while intellectuals throughout the world tend to be their governments' severest critics, in Cuba they are usually its most unquestioning supporters. And while Fidel has often admitted publicly to having made policy errors, not once did we hear a pro-revolutionary Cuban suggest that their "*Comandante en Jefe*" (Commander in Chief) might be wrong.

Through its first 20 years, the Cuban Revolution has shown a great degree of flexibility and a willingness to correct past errors. To a large extent this has resulted from the vitality and honesty of its *máximo líder*, Fidel. However, without the development of a more open, critical society, the Revolution's creativity and flexibility may not survive him.

(January 1979)

NOTES

1. Until recently, only persons who left Cuba before the Revolution — that is, who were not leaving because of counterrevolutionary beliefs — were allowed to return for visits. That restriction was lifted after our visit.
2. See René Dumont, *Socialism and Development* (New York: Grove, 1970) and his *Cuba: Es Socialista?* (Caracas, 1971), as well as K.S. Karol, *Guerrillas in Power* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1970). Despite their strong reaction to these books (Dumont was absurdly accused of being a CIA agent) the Cuban authorities seem ultimately to have adopted many of the authors' proposals.
3. The Cuban government seems far less upset by the criticisms of nonleftist, Western journalists. Such newsmen (or women) are admitted into Cuba far more easily than are academic scholars. *National Geographic* reporter Fred Ward, for example, spent seven months freely traveling throughout Cuba, interviewing both ordinary citizens and government officials (including Fidel Castro). His *Inside Cuba Today* (New York: Crown, 1978) is generally balanced, but strongly anticommunist in tone.
4. The Venceremos Brigade is a United States organization formed in the 1960s to express solidarity with the Cuban Revolution. It is most noted for the groups of young volunteers which it has sent to Cuba to cut sugar cane or to work on construction as a show of support. Our study tour was open to non-Brigade members of any political persuasion and this article does not reflect the viewpoint of the Venceremos Brigade in any way.
5. These four men each commanded one of the combat columns of the July 26 Movement's rural guerrilla "army." They are probably the nation's most widely admired heroes (along with the nineteenth-century independence leader, José Martí). Cienfuegos was killed in a plane crash shortly after the Revolution while Guevara died in his unsuccessful attempt to spark a revolution in Bolivia in 1967.
6. For analyses or criticism of early Cuban economic policies, see: Dumont, *op. cit.*; Edward Boorstein, *The Economic Transformation of Cuba* (New York: Monthly Review, 1968); Rolando Bonachea and Nelson Valdés (eds.), *Cuba in Revolution* (New York: Doubleday, 1972); Carmelo Mesa-Lago (ed.), *Revolutionary Change in Cuba* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 1971).
7. "Cuba: A Sustained Economic Recovery," Bank of London and South America, *Review* (May 1975); and, unpublished data from Arthur MacEwan, Department of Economics, University of Massachusetts.
8. Frank Mankiewicz and Kirby Jones, *With Fidel* (New York: Ballantine, 1975).
9. Of the thousands of Cubans elected to the municipal councils, no official data are available on the percentage who are not Party members, but the number is apparently significant. On the other hand, the representatives the local delegates elected to the National Assembly of Poder Popular were overwhelmingly members of the Party.
10. Under Cuban law all able-bodied men are technically *required* to work from the time they complete their education and military service till retirement age (though there appear to be a number of men "between jobs" or "in training"). Women are not required to work, but are guaranteed jobs if they want them.
11. One does encounter a small number of elderly shoeshine men in Havana. Almost all of them are pensioners who are supplementing their old-age pension (60 pesos per month). They must pay a nominal fee for a license and can then keep whatever money they take in, thereby engaging in one of Havana's few private enterprises.
12. Similar data for wages in the 1968-1970 period are available in Bonachea and Valdes, *op. cit.*, p. 363 and for 1972 in Arthur MacEwan, "Incentives, Equity and Power in Revolutionary Cuba," in Ronald Radosh (ed.), *The New Cuba* (New York: William and Morrow, 1976), pp. 86-87. The fact that wages have remained virtually unchanged over the past ten years reflects the lack of inflation in Cuba's controlled economy.
13. When the elderly mother of the woman mentioned above dies, her family will lose the home. It will then be allocated by the state, probably for institutional use.
14. Since the Revolution, Cuban medical schools have gradually managed to replace, and then exceed, the number of doctors who fled. There are now more doctors per capita than before 1959 (even with population growth).
15. In the countryside, an extensive — though tightly regulated — private sector remains in the thousands of small landowners who farm their land privately and sell to the state at a controlled price. Most of the country's famous tobacco, for example, is still grown by private farmers.
16. This is not to suggest there aren't many Cubans who object to the censorship of the press, speech, the media, and books. We obviously didn't have the opportunity to speak to political prisoners or dissident intellectuals. Nor are we dismissing the importance of such freedoms. We merely are pointing out that among the *disgustados* we met, politically based discontent was secondary. One must keep in mind that Cuba has no tradition of political freedoms and certainly did not enjoy them under Batista.
17. In *Socialism and Underdevelopment*, René Dumont criticizes the Cuban regime for being far too generous in the benefits it lavished on the peasantry in the years after the Revolution, benefits he felt the economy couldn't afford. Our own feeling was not that the government has erred in denying its citizens appliances and other "luxuries" which a developing nation badly in need of capital investment cannot afford. Rather, its error is in building luxury hotels and tourist shops which may earn foreign exchange but also invite unwarranted, invidious comparisons between lifestyles in industrialized and developing nations.
18. Currently housing over 25,000 persons, Alamar has a projected population of 150,000. We found its grounds less well kept and the complex generally less attractive than smaller microbrigade projects in other parts of the country.
19. In a December speech to the Cuban Labor Confederation (the CTC), President Castro announced that the volunteer microbrigades would soon be replaced by full-time, professional construction crews using more sophisticated techniques. The objective is to raise the current rate of construction of 20,000-25,000 units annually to 50,000 by 1980 and 100,000 by the late 1980s. Rents for apartments built in the future will be somewhat

higher, but existing rents will remain as they are.

20. Fred Ward, *op. cit.*, writes disparagingly of the frequent breakdowns in water and electrical services in Cuban workers' apartments. He seems to use U.S. housing as his basis of comparison, although water and electrical outages are a common feature of life throughout Latin America, particularly in low income neighborhoods. Barrio dwellers in Caracas and Bogotá told me they rarely get water more than two days per week and sometimes go 10-15 days without water. Whereas basic services are very inexpensive in Cuba, they constitute a serious economic burden for low-income families in most Latin American nations.

21. Carmelo Mesa-Lago, "Economic Significance of Unpaid Labor in Socialist Cuba," *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 22 (April 1969).

22. For a discussion of the debate in Cuba over incentives, see Bertram Silverman (ed.), *Man and Socialism in Cuba* (New York: Atheneum, 1973). For more recent developments, see: articles by Radosh and by MacEwan in Radosh (ed.), *op. cit.*; and, especially, Terry Karl, "Work Incentives in Cuba," *Latin American Perspectives*, II (1975) #4. MacEwan and Karl argue that the distinction between moral and material incentives has been overstated and that the use of collective rather than individual incentives is more critical. See Carmelo Mesa-Lago, *Cuba in the 1970s* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1974) for a differing viewpoint. *Latin American Economic Report* (January 8, 1979) reports increases of 40-250 percent in worker productivity following increased use of material incentives.

23. The best studies of Castro's charisma are: Lee Lockwood, *Castro's Cuba: Cuba's Fidel* (New York: Random House, 1969) and Mankiewicz and Jones, *op. cit.*

24. James Nelson Goodsell's, "Cubans Take Pride in their Africa Role," *Christian Science Monitor* (July 10, 1978), quoting recent visitors to Cuba, also challenges the prevailing Western media image of disenchantment. By mid-1978, articles in *Time* and *Newsweek* were contradicting their own earlier reports of high Cuban casualties and antiwar discontent.

25. Nelson Valdés, "The Radical Transformation of Cuban Education" in Bonachea and Valdés, *op. cit.*

26. The data for 1970-1977 is drawn from the Cuban government statistics published by Editorial Oriente (Santiago: 1977) in three volumes on the Provinces of Granma, Guantánamo, and Santiago de Cuba. For other recent data and analysis of improvements and remaining problems in Cuban education, see "Socialist Ideology and the Transformation of Cuban Education" in Karabel, Jerome, and Halsby (eds.), *Power and Ideology in Education* (London: Oxford University Press, 1977). The extent of improvement in school attendance can be fully understood when one realizes that in 1958, 49 percent of Cuban children of primary school age (6-14 years) had absolutely no education. Cuba then ranked seventeenth in Latin America in primary school enrollment and the proportion of school-aged children attending school had been higher in 1923. See Valdés, *op. cit.*, p. 424.

27. Rolland Paulston, "Education," in Mesa-Lago (ed.), *Revolutionary Change*.

28. These schools, then, will conform to Maria Montessori's recommendation that adolescent education should take place in rural settings and should involve significant amounts of physical labor to absorb adolescent energy.

29. Sugar harvesting previously involved the labor of huge numbers of seasonal workers who would generally be unemployed the rest of the year. By using student and volunteer labor the government has been able to shift sugar workers to other, full-year employment. Because of the inefficiency of many of these unskilled cutters, however, the government is now shifting its emphasis to mechanization.

30. *La Población de Cuba* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1976), p. 176.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 183. Between 1958-1969 the number of people employed in education (a largely "women's profession") increased by over 500 percent. By 1978 that figure may have doubled again. There are still maids in Cuba, but fewer as better employment is made available.

32. The birthrate (and infant mortality rate) rose slightly in the early years of the Revolution. *Ibid.*, pp. 30 and 60.

33. Mesa-Lago, *Revolutionary Change*, p. xiii.

34. Maurice Halperin, *The Rise and Decline of Fidel Castro* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971); Irving Horowitz, *Cuban Communism* (New Brunswick: Transaction Press, 1970). The remaining authors are cited in previous footnotes.

35. Maurice Zeitlin, *Revolutionary Politics and the Cuban Working Class* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970); Andrés Suárez, *Cuba: Castroism and Communism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967).

36. Frances FitzGerald, "A Reporter at Large: Slightly Exaggerated Enthusiasms," *The New Yorker Magazine* (February 18, 1974). The other authors are cited earlier.

37. We did not observe the conditions of Cuba's political prisoners and rely here on earlier reports by Lockwood, *op. cit.* and a very recent evaluation in *Latin America: Political Report* (November 3, 1978), p. 339. The later article quotes recently released prisoners as saying there was mistreatment (but not torture) of prisoners by guards in the 1960s but that since 1968 "treatment has been much more humane." For a more negative assessment of conditions for political prisoners, see Theodore Jacqueney, "The Yellow Uniforms of Cuba," *Worldview* (January 1977).