

American Universities Field Staff



**REPORTS
SERVICE**

CASTRO CUBA IN MID-1960

Some Over-all Impressions of the Revolution

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For many spectators the tragi-mystery of Castro's Cuba was solved when Nikita Khrushchev confessed his love for Fidel and was accepted. After this, there remained for the last act only a few critical questions: What was Uncle Sam, the Papá bearded in his den, going to do? And what were the precise intentions of Nikita, already overlord of a crowded, restless harem? What would be the impact on the leading men of Latin America who had reacted so adversely to the Nikita-Fidel embrace?

But for me, after six months in Cuba, this was an oversimple reading of a complex revolutionary jigsaw puzzle. The enigmas and dilemmas of the Castro epoch cannot be disposed of so easily. This is the point I will elaborate on in forthcoming reports. Those that follow this introductory comment will convey my soundings made on the island before it was cast adrift on the Cold War seas. Here, my intent is to relate some personal impressions and conclusions--ideas borne in on me during my provincial meandering, after scores of interviews and a host of informal contacts in the cities and towns of Cuba, and from the commentary record compiled both before and after Castro came to power.

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An inextricable admixture of violence and rumor is the fabric of revolution. In Cuba of late there have been abortive assassinations, the clash of rival groups in the streets, demonstrations in the churches, comings and goings of inscrutable Orientals and uncommunicative Russians, debates in the United Nations and earnest palavers in the Organization of American States, diplomatic notes galore, and many another event to delight the imagination. And what wild and wonderful rumors have been spawned. Had you heard, for instance, that when Fidel became ill and Nikita heard about it, he offered with his inimitable spontaneity to blow up America to cheer up Fidel? Or that Nikita had made the offer first thus causing Fidel's illness? Or that Fidel sent Raul to Nikita with fifty million dollars (advanced inadvertently to Fidel by ESSO, Shell, and Texaco) to (a) pay Nikita to remain silent or (b) pay for a flying expedition to put down an uprising to be started by Uncle Sam? But then, didn't Nikita's timely nuclear-missile aviso deter the imperialists and forestall their aggression?

One was assured that Fidel's "halo had slipped and soon would become a noose around his neck." And also that until the Americans "did something drastic" the Cubans would have to put up with Fidel and Nikita.

Anyway, there was a Cuban consensus that their island, accurately called by Columbus "the fairest land ever seen by human eyes," was disaster-bound. The islanders I talked to were fearful, overflowing with hatred and suspicion or if not yet quite hopeless, very near despair.

It would have been impolite and unrealistic to add to the burdens of these Cubans by saddling them with the full responsibility for their plight. They had been a bit too hasty, I suppose, in submitting to the embrace of their bearded liberators. They had, to exhume a phrase, jumped from Batista's frying pan into Fidel's fire. But who are we to pass judgment on a people who had been fried in a pan made in the U.S.A. over a fire we helped to ignite?

The responsibility, I think, needs to be shared with those Americans who joined in putting a halo around Fidel and with those who for some 60 years were the Grand Moguls, the maharajas, and the comptrollers of the Republic of Cuba. For, after all, the year 1959 simply divides an era of predominant American influence in Cuba from a year of constantly rising Soviet Russian influence.

The current year has recorded an about-face in Cuban foreign policy as abrupt as Hitler's friendship pact with Stalin. It has seen the frontal assault by Nikita Khrushchev upon the ramparts of this hemisphere. It has witnessed a massive shift in the trade which bound the island of Cuba to the American mainland, a shift binding it every day more closely to the Soviet-Red Chinese bloc. And an enormous reservoir of American good will in Cuba has been steadily drained. To the tune of a vituperative propaganda campaign, a pleasant neighborhood in the Florida straits has been converted into a Cold War battlefield.

There is an intimate relationship between these events of the last few months and the many years of American hegemony in the Caribbean. The Batista dictatorship that preceded Castro was indeed Cuban, but Batista as a ruler of Cuba was a creature of American administrations, Democratic and Republican. To be sure, he may not have been too welcome when he first appeared on the scene in 1933; as few now recall, he began as a revolutionary who had behind him a rebellious corps of army noncoms and a Students' Directorate. But even in the beginning, his role was to substitute his revolutionaries for others including Communists who were naturally anti-Yankee and unacceptable to the United States. In comparison, Batista was acceptable. And soon Sergeant, then Colonel, then General, then President Batista made himself presentable and useful. In the process he grew more and more accustomed to the power and the glory and the comfort of ruling the Cubans in a manner satisfactory to the Government of the United States.

I do not say and I do not believe that what was done in Cuba while Batista ruled as the power behind the Presidency from 1933 to 1940 when he became President by election, or what was done in his lawful administration, was all evil. On the contrary, much of it was good. In many ways he was, from 1933 to 1944 a better man for Cuba than were his elected successors, the Presidents Grau and Prio, from 1944 to 1952.

Grau and Prio doubtlessly were corrupt, as was Batista, but Grau also played the fellow-traveler role, which Batista did not though he accepted support from the Communists. Prio, who never associated himself with the Communists, conducted an inefficient administration. So when Batista tore apart the constitution he had given the Cubans, destroying representative government and civil rights as he seized control through the army in 1952, he was welcomed back to power. He was welcomed back by American businessmen in Cuba and by the government in Washington which sent him friendly ambassadors, military advisers, munitions, arms, and moral support.

In a real sense, then, the terrible tyranny of Fulgencio Batista, which antagonized almost all Cubans and made Fidel Castro appear to be their liberating savior, was made possible by American support. Moreover, much of Cuba's economy was controlled by American firms and individuals, and Cubans blamed these Americans for their unemployment and for the under-utilization of resources that left them frustrated and, they felt, doomed to a subordinate place in the 20th-century world. Americans did, of course, risk (and have lost) capital on the island, helped educate the islanders, and trained some of them for modern industry.

We also gave to the Cubans their taste in sports, motion pictures, television, and radio, and a lively skill in the art of the propagandist. But we left them to solve the economic and social problems our presence created, problems that the Cubans could not solve by themselves. When Fidel Castro and the Cuban people demolished Batista, the Department of State gave

evidence of having nothing in the way of assistance to contribute to political and economic stability in Cuba. It therefore adopted the inspiring policy of wait-and-see or let-the-dust-settle.

I presume the policymakers in Washington believed that we could afford to wait and see, that when the dust had settled our position vis-à-vis Cuba would be reasonably satisfactory to us, and that, after all, we were not responsible for the plight of Cuba and therefore were not obliged to react sooner. In any case, Washington operated only on the fringe of Cuban developments from the flight of Batista until the entry of Khrushchev. It was a policy that must have anticipated the ultimate arrival in Washington of Fidel Castro, hat in hand and ready to do business on reasonable terms. But the dust didn't settle that way. Instead, Mr. K. found an opening into the Western Hemisphere.

Could another policy have led to a different denouement? I believe it could. If the United States Government had gone to Havana, hat in hand, ready to do business on reasonable terms, ready as a neighbor to assist in the rectifying of old mistakes, to acknowledge the Cubans as equals, I believe its overtures would have met with a hearty welcome from all the Fidelistas except the Communists. And I believe the rejection of such an offer would have been extremely difficult, whatever Fidel Castro's inclinations may have been at that stage.

As for Fidel's inclinations, certainly he now seems to be dedicated to the proposition that Cuba's best friend lives in the Kremlin; a year ago he might have been prepared to find Cuba's best friend on Pennsylvania Avenue.

During the first year of the Revolutionary Government, the Fidelistas --Fidel himself--were not positive about where they wanted to go, nor did they understand very clearly where they were being taken by their Cuban Communist compañeros. They, the Communists, knew and their mentors knew. The others, it would seem, only thought they comprehended the goals they were seeking, and the need for their speedy attainment. It is difficult to believe they were aware that the route they chose would make them Nikita's darlings.

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The Many Faces of Castro Cuba--Mid-1960

Varied are the reasons offered for what is taking place in Cuba. "An atheistic Communist conspiracy," say many so-called Voices of Freedom, "has by stealth stolen a beachhead in the Western Hemisphere which it seeks to dominate by force and violence." This explanation strikes me as weak.

The so-called Voices of Communism respond in more inane fashion. "An evil and dying imperialism," they say, "has been challenged by a brave

colonial people who seek only to be independent, to exploit their own resources, to begin a long-retarded advance toward prosperity and freedom." Actually, the Cubans today are more dependent on Russia than they were on the United States a year ago, and every day they are losing more of their independence.

Confused are the results of what is taking place in Cuba. On one hand Khrushchev warns that nuclear missiles based in Russia will be hurled at the United States, should that country try to intervene in the islands off its shore; on the other, Eisenhower avers that the Monroe Doctrine remains valid in the Atomic Age.

The United States, which needs vast amounts of sugar and pays a high price for its imports, must purchase less from Cuba, where huge sugar surpluses are produced; while Russia (and the same is true for Red China and the Soviet satellites) which doesn't want more sugar and pays a low price for it must purchase more from Cuba.

Sugar is shipped from Cuba to markets halfway around the world rather than to an adjacent continent; and rice, wheat, machinery, and many other things needed by the Cubans and formerly purchased in the United States are now being bought in distant lands, sometimes at higher prices for inferior merchandise.

Petroleum formerly coming from the neighboring Caribbean wells of Venezuela now must come to Cuban refineries from sources in Romania and Russia, and probably at a net loss for the Cubans. The foreign oil companies who supplied Cuba with petroleum under credit arrangements that benefited the Cuban Government financially have had their properties intervened by the Government which now in one way or another must make available funds to purchase the necessary petroleum.

The Congress and Executive of the United States are described as tools of Wall Street monopolies seeking to strangle the Cubans while the managers and owners of hotels in Cuba are fired for incompetency because American tourists no longer flock to Cuba.

Efficient, profitable, tax-paying enterprises founded with American capital are being nationalized or "intervened" by the Cuban Government while other enterprises are established with funds borrowed from Russia and Cia.

The way that Cuba is taking to increase its wealth and income is to seize productive ranches and slaughter their cattle, or productive farms and harvest and market their produce, or productive sugar cane mills, or productive factories and successful enterprises of all kinds, Cuban and foreign alike.

Any Cuban who wishes to insult the President of the United States and the American Congress may do so with impunity and even be rewarded, but

it is a crime approaching treason to criticize Premier Khrushchev or communism.

While nearly all the Cuban people are said to support their Government there can be no elections at any level and only one political party, the Communist party.

The Cuban Government is dedicated to constitutional freedom and lawful action, but Cuba cannot have a constitution and must be governed by edicts. 18 months after the overthrow of Batista's dictatorship, drumhead military trials are held and immediate executions still occur.

While censorship is forbidden, mails are violated and telephones tapped, Cubans and foreigners detained for expressing opinions, and no opposition press, radio, or television is tolerated.

Cuba's way to industrial progress is to supplant trained Cubans, Americans, and other Westerners with trained Easterners; its way to economic diversification is to harass a variety of capitalists, print currency, put the Government into every kind of business, and have the President of the National Bank of Cuba sign new currency notes with his nickname, "Che."

All of these accomplishments are held to constitute a splendid and original revolution so inspiring and successful that only increasing pressures from a badly frightened United States and its stooges prevent Latin Americans from immediately embracing it.

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There are two main approaches to the study of Castro's Cuba. It can be considered an invalid, the sick man of the Caribbean and a schizophrenic country under the sway of a paranoid.

The second approach demands that one must take seriously and seek to explain what could be the systematized delusions and the projection of personal conflicts ascribed to the imagined enemies of a paranoid. One also must accept as valid for the Cubans their feelings and notions which could be the product of a split national personality, of the dissociations and emotional deterioration characteristic of schizophrenia.

The first approach is the most attractive and it could be the most fruitful. I would use it without hesitation were I working on the Dominican Republic of Generalissimo Rafael Trujillo. Once an observer is beyond the reach of a Maximum Leader and his goons, this approach places much less nervous and mental strain upon him.

In this introduction and in the reports which follow I have consciously

chosen the second approach and pursued it while fully aware of the possible validity of the first one.

I have sought rational explanations for l'affaire cubane and, of necessity it being the other side of the same coin, for l'affaire americaine. The assumption has had to be made that in Moscow as well as in Washington the policies adopted in relation to Havana were developed by sane and unemotional gentlemen who considered they were dealing with normal individuals in Cuba.

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The first and unavoidable duty of any observer in a sanely managed country is to observe. This is not as self-evident as it appears. For what must be observed is not what is said to exist but what in fact does exist.

For example: the Government of Cuba says it has converted and is converting the military barracks of the old Cuba into the schools of the new Cuba. Someone interested in discovering whether or not this is true may be taken to visit some barracks which now are schools and some barracks which now are being turned into schools. Thus he may be satisfied with what the Cuban Government has said on this subject.

He would be wrong: what the Cuban Government says in this instance is only half true. Havana's Camp Columbia, now called Libertad, was the first place selected by Fidel Castro for conversion into a great educational center for Cubans denied higher education because of poverty. The dedication of Camp Columbia to this worthy purpose took place only days after Castro overthrew Batista in January 1959.

Eighteen months later, in July 1960, about half of Camp Columbia (or Libertad) was a military reservation surrounded by a wire fence separating it from the other half which was far from being a great educational center. The building that had been selected to become an engineering college had been changed into future offices for the bureaucrats of the Ministry of Education. A single dormitory was near completion (it was nicely done) but no one was quite certain who was to live in it; if the older students were chosen they would have to attend the national university many miles away in the heart of Havana.

Other buildings were in varying stages of reconstruction into classrooms and offices and one was about ready for use. So it still was possible that a small school could be opened in the camp and the students and teachers housed there and it still was possible that in another year or two the camp would be demilitarized (Armed Forces Minister Raul Castro and many of his officers then would have to find homes elsewhere) and be totally devoted to education.

In July 1960, however, the camp was about as much military as educational and this was true of other barracks visited in other places¹ while nearly all of Cuba's smaller military barracks for the rural and national "revolutionary" forces still were barracks and not schools.

I have cited the barracks-into-schools theme and Camp Columbia as an example to illustrate the gulf in Castro Cuba between what the Government says exists and what in fact does exist. It is something noted everywhere and it is very important.

Castro Cuba exists on two levels. It is, as I have suggested, a kind of madhouse wherein fantasies and realities tend to merge if one does not remain on guard constantly. There are two governments in Castro Cuba. One you can see, the other you can sense but not see. There are two Fidel Castros. One you can hear and interview and meet at official receptions or see on television. The other is mostly hidden from view.

There are two public opinions. One you can sample at the great gatherings called by Fidel and his mentors to impress him and to impress the world. Or you can read, hear, and see it in the Government press, radio, and television, about all there is to read, hear, and see in Cuba. The other public opinion is not so visible or audible but it can be found too. In March and April it was easy to find it, difficult in fact to evade it. During May, June, and July it gradually moved underground and in many places whispers took the place of shouts.

There are two economies in Castro Cuba. One is exhibited in the public reports of the National Institute for Agrarian Reform (INRA), in the showcase co-operatives, in the speeches of Fidel and his close associate, Major Ernesto ("Che") Guevara, the President of Cuba's national bank and the master of Cuba's economy. The other economy must be extracted painfully from unpublished data and from the evaluations by experts of published official statistics. The other economy can be seen also in the co-operatives that are not showcases on display to very important visitors, and in the towns and cities of the Provinces.

There are two foreign policies and two worlds outside Cuba. Listen to Fidel and his official spokesmen and to the Government press and you will find the foreign policy the Cuban Government says it is pursuing. Look at what that Government does and you can put together the policies it in fact pursues. The outside world as an American knows it, is but dimly reflected in the world you hear, see, and read about in Cuba.

¹ A notable exception was the Moncada Barracks in Santiago de Cuba, a place of special significance for Castro. It was against this installation that he led an armed rebel band on July 26, 1953, a date memorialized in the name given his revolution: the "26 de Julio" Movement.

There are two armed forces in Castro Cuba. One you may see every day: the rebel, revolutionary uniformed forces of the Government and the militia, composed of farmers, workers, and intellectuals who are being trained so that they will be prepared to carry out their duties should it be necessary to chose "death or country." You even may catch sight of the nonuniformed D.I.E.R. and G-2 police-intelligence forces (D.I.E.R. stands for the Intelligence Department of the Rebel Army). But you will have to work diligently to uncover the anti-Castro forces of Cuba. Thousands are disarmed and jailed; many are in exile or seeking it; some are planning an uprising.

And so there are two lives, two communities, two societies in Cuba, existing side by side, merging rapidly, overlapping, adjusting, and readjusting to each other, with individual Cubans slipping from one to the other, often via political refuge in an embassy in Havana or by somehow evading the authorities who would hold them inside Cuba. Many thousands are seeking a legal way to "el norte" but the limited visa facilities of the American Embassy-Consulate in Havana, and of the Consulate in Santiago de Cuba have caused many of these Cubans to despair of getting out, should their own Government grant them permission.

It is said that without irregular assistance, a Cuban cannot expect a visa to enter the United States from our consular officials in less than a year after he applies for it. Fidel Castro and the United States Government appear to be co-operating to force Cubans to remain in Cuba. To stay in one of the two Cubas of Castro, that is. To find their place in the complex maze of these two warring societies which must be penetrated and mapped by an observer of the Cuba of Fidel Castro, mid-1960.

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The Two Cubas of Mid-1960

Revolutionary alteration in social structures, in contrast with evolutionary process, includes, I take it, any change brought about quickly and by violence, and which is of substantial significance. By this definition, if a whole class of people in a society is removed from its accustomed place within a few months or years, by killing, exiling, jailing, and intimidating its most effective members, one can assume that a revolution is underway.

After World War I, the Bolsheviks, to consolidate and entrench their newly won power, erased substantially an entire class from Russian society, perhaps even two or three classes: the aristocracy, the bourgeoisie, and finally the kulaks (who in Cuba might be called colonos). The Bolsheviks then started to consume one another. Both of these developments, class warfare and cannibalism, were the manifestations of a revolution.

Signs that a ruling group is preparing to undertake the elimination of

a former ruling group as a social-political factor; evidence of class discrimination in hiring and training members of the armed forces, of the government bureaucracy, of the diplomatic corps; evidence of a deliberate campaign to instill class hatred among those in the society who will be required to participate in or condone the contemplated action against other members of the same society: all are recognizable as tentacles of a revolution.

Still another certain basis for concluding that a revolution exists is the complete change in attitude toward property. I refer to lawless acts such as the occupation of real estate and the seizure and removal of personal property of all kinds from pigs to diamonds.

One also can assume the existence of a revolutionary change within a country when it suddenly switches its allegiance from A to B, A's opponent, or from one alliance to an opposing alliance, and when it prepares to fight former friends and to seek assistance from former enemies.

If these are some of the signs of a social revolution then Cuba is having a social revolution and Fidel Castro is entitled to call himself a revolutionary. But by some of these tokens it seems to be a slow moving, mild revolution led by a hesitant and seemingly faint-hearted revolutionary who, as I have said, might have changed his course a year ago.

For in Cuba in the summer of 1960 there remained most of the people belonging to the class called counterrevolutionary, who theoretically should be dead, in exile, in prison, or so intimidated they wouldn't dare exhibit their class membership. In fact, they made no effort to hide themselves or their class affiliation though some of them didn't express their views too freely.

There were very few cases of attempted disguise. On the contrary, in dress, manner, occupation, and attitude the Cuban wealthy and middle classes proclaimed their position openly, one might say even challengingly, in the 18th month of the great Castro revolution which was supposed to be shattering the Western world.

The country and beach clubs of the best families and of the wealthy--those clubs not in Government hands and most of them were not in the summer of 1960--were jammed over the week-ends. Varadero Beach was well filled with vacationing middle-class Cubans. The roads were packed with cars in the Havana area on Sundays and Saturdays. Expensive restaurants in the city were steadily patronized, sometimes by cabinet ministers and their parties.

The churches were full of the well-dressed faithful. Lawns were well cared for, the gardens attended to, the air conditioners humming away in Havana's huge residential quarters of the well-to-do, an area as extensive and as handsomely and expensively developed, with spacious homes, many pools, and two- and three-car garages (filled) as the suburban areas of Chicago or Detroit.

There were birthday parties, coming-out parties, engagement parties, weddings, Saint's Day receptions, Chamber of Commerce meetings, Lions Club and Rotary Club luncheons, Old Grad reunions, all well attended by well-fed and well-clothed Cubans.

The American Club did a brisk if not record business until the exodus began in mid-July. The July 4th reception at the Ambassador's residence was a brilliant success.

The Banco Continental Cubano (Fidel's own bank), whose Cuban President I met dining in one of Havana's exclusive skyscraper clubs, ran a two-page advertisement in the July issue of Bohemia Magazine showing how much the bank had progressed in Castro Cuba. This privately owned aggressive bank had between June 1959 and March 1960 increased its deposits from 140 million pesos to 190 million, its deposits of Government funds rising from 21 million to 61 million. And while it could show only a rise of about 10 million pesos in deposits other than those of the Government and of public organizations or Fidel's large checking account, most other banks claimed heavy losses in private deposits suggesting that many Cubans were hoarding currency.

In the provinces during the summer and spring of 1960, the gentry attended their clubs, went fishing, held parties, walked in the right paseos in the evening and sometimes for a week-end took motor trips to the beaches. And a new kind of tourist was seen in rural Cuba. In buses, in INRA station wagons, and the motor trucks of intervened factories and INRA co-operatives, the farm and city workers and their families started to visit the new INIT (National Institute for the Tourist Industry) beach houses and motels, to view the great swamps opened up to exploration by newly built roads, and to patronize INIT restaurants in the countryside.

There were political arguments in public places even if voices were a little hushed. A Havana workingman was overheard in a bus proclaiming his undying resistance to Fidel Castro and the "slave" labor unions of the Government. And at a gigantic rally of gastronomical workers in Havana addressed by Fidel about a dozen workers had to be escorted from the theater. They had been shouting unpleasant remarks at their leaders, most of whom were Government officials.

But, on the other hand and in the other Cuba, persons disappeared from their homes and offices to turn up in the scattered private prisons of the D.I.E.R. and G-2, or to be sent to one of the larger prisons or fortresses, charged, if with anything, with "a crime against the state" or with being "an enemy of the people." The courts were still functioning and a number of the judges showed considerable courage in trying to safeguard the constitutional rights of citizens which theoretically they still retained.

I read in mid-July of a habeas corpus proceeding brought by the mother of a certain Capt. Yanez whom I had met when he was the Prime Minister's elegantly attired military aide. I had heard of his disappearance in mid-June. The published report of the hearing accorded his mother, who claimed she didn't know what had happened to her son, stated that a representative of the D.I.E.R. had appeared in the courtroom, presumably after his organization had been asked about Capt. Yanez, and that the D.I.E.R. man had told the judge that Capt. Yanez had been detained for a month "on suspicion and for questioning" but had been released the day of the hearing. The petition was dismissed. The newspaper didn't say whether or not the mother and son were reunited. I wouldn't be too surprised to learn that Capt. Yanez still isn't free.

One of the secretaries in the Prime Minister's office also disappeared suddenly, no doubt also detained as a suspected enemy of the people. A moderately high-ranking INRA administrator (of a zone in Camagüey Province) disappeared between sunup and sundown. I later learned he was in the Mexican Embassy seeking political refuge in Mexico or the United States. His alleged offense never was made known. Neither was his disappearance: an INRA official told me he had "gone to Havana on business."

The case of José Miro Cardona, who crossed from one of the Cubas to the other in July, overshadowed all the other Fidelistas jailed or seeking exile. Miro Cardona had been the first Prime Minister of Castro Cuba, a position he won as a leader of the underground fighting Batista. An illustrious barrister, he had been the head of the bar association. After Fidel became Prime Minister he sent Miro Cardona to Madrid as Cuban Ambassador. He had to be withdrawn from Spain when the Spanish Ambassador in Havana was ousted by Fidel.

Then Miro Cardona was named Ambassador to Washington. But shortly after the United States notified the Cuban Government that the new Ambassador was acceptable he took sanctuary in the Argentine Embassy in Havana.

"Ideological differences" between the Cuban Government and his conscience, he said it was. But a former Prime Minister doesn't seek political refuge and exile only because of ideological differences. Apparently he had felt the hot breath of D.I.E.R. as did the Cuban Ambassador in London who on returning home for consultations found himself charged with the theft of Government funds and facing certain imprisonment because, as he undoubtedly knew, he had expressed some doubts about Fidel's foreign policies. He also went into a foreign embassy for refuge.

A Fidelista group of lawyers, probably dominated by Nikita's Fifth Columnists, denounced and "expelled" the directorate of the bar association because it had refrained from disbarring Miro Cardona and a law professor who had gone into exile to join the anti-Fidel Frente Revolucionario Democrático.

But in Castro Cuba these denunciations--and there were scores reported in the press--didn't stop with the specified charges of partiality to some individual in disgrace. They spilled over into the darker area of class warfare, accusing the victims of being "divisionists" and "counterrevolutionaries" because of what they were rather than what they had done. Because of what they were--bourgeoisie professionals, businessmen, farmers, salaried technicians, etc.--they were unreliable, and denounced as potential traitors partial to Americans and their interests.

I know a Cuban hotel manager who was told by a Ministry of Labor official charged with administering intervened hotels in Havana that professional skill and experience weren't wanted and that revolutionary zeal was. "We have nothing against you personally," the manager was informed, "except that you don't have the right background. You're not revolutionary enough."

And that, of course, was the trouble with the many men and women who, having struggled bravely to unseat Batista and to bring in Fidel, were dropped one by one from his Government. They had the misfortune of belonging to the "other Cuba."

In key posts in the first government of Fidel Castro there were able and dedicated Cubans with immaculate records during the insurrection who became powerless, virtual prisoners in Cuba. Rúfo López Fresquet, who was Treasury Minister, Manuel Ray Rivero, who was Minister of Public Works, Enrique Oltuski Osaqui, the former Minister of Communications, Faustino Pérez Hernández, once head of the Department for the Recovery of Misappropriated Assets, and Elena Mederos de González, of Social Welfare, are among them.

And who remains in the front ranks in the key ministries of the nominal Government of Cuba? Heading the Treasury is Rolando Diaz Aztatrain, an enthusiastic class warrior who is married to Nilsa Espin. Nilsa's sister Vilma is Raul Castro's wife. From an Oriente family of French origin, Vilma heads the Communists' front groups for women and Nilsa is a leader of the Army's Marxian indoctrination courses. Brilliant and attractive young women, they appear to be the power behind their respective husbands.

Augusto Martínez Sanchez, the Labor Minister, is a protégé of Raul and of Vilma. In the Public Works Ministry there is Osmani Cienfuegos Górríaran, a militant Communist who helped Vilma and Raul purge the armed forces and begin their Marxist indoctrination courses. Osmani's brother Camilo is the martyr saint of the Fidelistas; he had been head of the armed forces before Raul.

Camilo's disappearance is a mystery. But his closest companion in the Rebel Army, his Chief of Staff, was shot and killed by a Captain Beaton who later was tried secretly and executed immediately. A member of the

firing squad rebelled and was arrested. And the word went around the Rebel Army and on the outside that Camilo had been killed by the Castros, that his staff officer suspected it and was himself killed and his assassin executed.

The chief aides of Foreign Minister Raul Roa García were fired in his absence and replaced by men acceptable to the ruling clique. In a few weeks many Cuban ambassadors resigned and joined the "other Cuba." Roa remained, apparently content with his task of implementing any policy handed him. With only a few exceptions this also is the task of the other ministers: Raul Cepero Bonilla in Commerce; José A. Naranjo Morales in Interior; Pedro Miret Prieto in Agriculture, and Regino Boti León and Luis M. Buch, who operate on the fringe of the cabinet.

The decisions affecting Cuban policy are not made by the cabinet, they are made by a group composed of Fidel and Raul Castro, "Che" Guevara, Osvaldo Dorticós Torrado, the President of the Republic and, apparently, a Communist for many years, and Antonio Núñez Jiménez of INRA, also a long-time Communist. Ernesto ("Che") Guevara, apparently has been a Communist since his university days in Buenos Aires.

Also possibly sharing in the policy-making process are Vilma Espin de Castro, Raul's wife, and Celia Sanchez Agramonte, Fidel's personal secretary. It is possible but not likely that sometimes the Minister of Education, Armando Hart Dávalos and his dynamic wife, are admitted into the inner circle. Also possibly admitted on some occasions are Jesus Soto, who has taken over the Cuban Labor Confederation, and Ramiro Valdes, of Army G-2, both tough Communist operators.

Need it be added that Communists and those willing to serve them were moving rapidly during the summer into crucial jobs at that time not filled by one of their number? Or that those Cubans displaced and many others aware of what had been going on, moved over to the "other Cuba"? Or that soon the Communist battle cry of "Cuba Si! Yankis No!" was being rivaled by the cry of "Cuba Si! Rusia No!"?

Or that Fidel would have to leave his sickbed for a television speech denouncing Roman Catholic priests in Cuba as "fascist falangistas" from Franco-Spain and calling upon Cuba's "good Christians" to resist the growing power of "a small group of Pharisees" who "want to convert the churches into counterrevolutionary trenches"?

Or that the President of the United Nations Security Council, Ambassador José A. Correa of Ecuador, should reply to a Soviet attack on the United States, by pointedly warning that "the Latin American countries will fight for nonintervention...if any power whether near or far--especially if it is a distant power--should attempt to tell us what to do"?

Or that during Fidel's illness his close friend "Che" Guevara found it advisable to announce that the Cubans would resist "to the last drop of blood" any attempt to make their island "a Communist satellite"?

But I must ask the reader to remember that the two Cubas of mid-1960 pictured here, the two which as this is read well might be one again, are not too much like the Cuba of 1959 when Castro triumphed. This explanation and analysis therefore would not be complete without comment on when, how, and why the Castro movement became Nikita's.

* * * * *

Nikita's Conquest of Castro Cuba

The first President of Castro Cuba, Manuel Urrutia Lleo, was hounded from office in July 1959. José Miro Cardona already had been supplanted as Prime Minister by Fidel Castro, who in reality was the Government of Cuba, the only man the Cuban masses would follow. A few months after Fidel ousted Urrutia he fired Roberto Agramonte Pichardo, the Foreign Minister, Manuel Ray Rivero, of Public Works, Elena Mederos de González of Social Welfare and Faustino Pérez Hernández of the Department for the Recovery of Misappropriated Assets. Later, Rúfo López Fresquet bowed out of the Treasury.

Meanwhile, Major Hubert Matos and his staff in Camagüey were arrested and tried and sentenced for treason; the Rebel Army commander Camilo Cienfuegos disappeared and later his Chief of Staff was shot and killed. And running through all these events was the issue of Cuba's role in the Cold War.

President Urrutia, an incompetent executive who dearly loved easy living and the money it required, became aware in the late spring of 1959 that Communists were receiving more and more of the top posts in the Army and Government, that they were winning preferred political positions and in their conflicts with non-Communists getting Fidel's unwavering support. Urrutia was a middle-class lawyer, a provincial judge who had ruled against the Batista regime and then fled into exile. In 1959 he showed his courage again; in a public address he made a backhanded reference to "the Communist menace" by assuring his audience that in Castro Cuba there would be none.

His ouster quickly followed, on charges that he had been drawing the constitutional salary of the President and spending it in a most unrevolutionary way. It was implied that the President of the Republic like Prime Minister Castro and all his associates should take modest salaries (about \$500 monthly) and lead abstemious private lives as an example of honesty and sobriety. The Fidelistas had inherited one of the most corrupt bureaucracies in history and a populace long accustomed to official corruption. A freewheeling, luxury-

loving President couldn't be tolerated. So Urrutia's ouster was explained away as part of the reform of Cuban mores.

But there was another explanation, and this one was used again and again as Fidel dropped ministers, punished army officers, and drove scores of his onetime followers into prison and exile. It is best stated in Fidel's remarks during a television appearance on April 2, 1959, remarks which because of their significance are given in full as an appendix to this report. Essentially, Fidel's position until the autumn of 1959 and perhaps even later, was this:

" . . . communism is the theme which is going to be used by the counterrevolution . . . to bring about [our] failure fear . . . that communism is growing in Cuba, does not respond to reality communism coexists with other political parties in many countries, as for example, France, Italy, etc.

"Why do they wish to raise the ghost of communism simply because the Communists are not persecuted, if here no one is persecuted? . . . The democratic thing to do is do what we are doing: to respect all ideas."

In short, Fidel claimed he looked upon the Communists of Cuba as just another political party; that he could see no danger from communism; that it wasn't growing in Cuba a country to be compared to France or Italy; that only those wishing to overthrow his regime raised "the ghost of communism"; that anyone wishing to oppose ("persecute") communism was a counterrevolutionary and not a good democrat.

Did Fidel believe what he said? Or was this part of what his onetime followers call the Great Betrayal, a piece of the tragic hoax he played upon Cubans and non-Cubans? For communism was growing in Cuba, as Urrutia, Ray, Pérez, Elena Mederos, Rúfo López, Matos, and many other insiders well knew and now admit. And Cuba is no France or Italy and in 1959 (or subsequently) had no valid non-Communist political parties. And were not Matos, Urrutia, Ray, Pérez, and the others being persecuted for opposing the growing power of the Communists in Cuba?

The answer is affirmative. And yet I am not convinced that Fidel had set out in April 1959 to betray his non-Communist friends. I am not so convinced though every Cuban who then served with Fidel and who later crossed into the "other Cuba" with whom I could talk is convinced he was betrayed by Fidel; that Fidel knew from the start where he was leading Cuba.

Analyzing the developments in Cuba since Fidel's statement on communism in April 1959, I believe it is still uncertain whether Fidel Castro is the Great Betrayer so many Cubans believe him to be or is a stubborn, dedicated, egocentric young man in a hurry who wasn't quite bright enough for the

job and who was "taken" by more clever, unscrupulous associates, by Nikita's Fifth Column.

The process by which Fidel found himself in Nikita's waiting arms is fascinating and in a subsequent report I shall try to describe it. There may be more Fidels and there may be more Cubas. But I cannot imagine there will ever again be anything quite like the Castro Cuba that is the subject of these reports.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Dwight D. Eisenhower". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

APPENDIX

During the televised interview in Havana held on April 2, 1959, one of the Cuban newspapermen who formed the panel questioning Dr. Fidel Castro asked:

"Do you not believe, Dr. Castro, that there exist in Cuba and abroad large sections of opinion which fear that there may be a growth of communism in our country?"

In reply, Dr. Fidel Castro said:

I am happy that you have asked me that question because this is a very fitting time to clarify that problem, which is fundamental. For that fear of the sections of opinion to which you allude is also fundamental even though the sectors are in the minority. Especially since communism is the theme which is going to be used by the counterrevolution, since there is no other pretext of greater importance, to cause harm to Cuba, to agitate or to bring about the failure of our revolution.

That fear that the minority seems to have, that communism is growing in Cuba, does not respond to reality. Frankly, I do not understand that fear because the United States and Russia exist and neither one power nor the other has died of fear. Besides, it is an evident fact that communism coexists with other political parties in many countries, as for example, France, Italy, etc.

Fear of the growth of communism? Why? For what reason if what has survived in this country has nothing to do with those fears? What has survived in this country is the recovery of the citizens' rights: of the press, of assembly, of writing, of thinking, and of speaking. That is what has been re-established in this country.

Do these rights, the rights which everyone enjoys in Cuba today, mean that a growth of communism must come with them? Does it mean that it would be preferable to live as we lived under the regime of Batista? With everything censored, everyone oppressed, everyone persecuted, rather than to live as the people of Cuba are living today?

The Communists simply have a newspaper. What do these people want? That we permit everyone except the Communists to speak? Why? We protested that they did not permit us to speak when we were told to be quiet. Yet some wish to silence others and accuse the revolution of being communistic because it

permits the Communists to publish their paper as do the Marina, El Mundo, and all the other newspapers and magazines which are published without censorship or stumbling blocks of any kind.¹

Why do they wish to raise the ghost of communism simply because the Communists are not persecuted, if here no one is persecuted? To protest when we are persecuted and not when other parties are persecuted, to want us to persecute them because they are Communists? To persecute the Catholic because he is a Catholic, to persecute the Protestant because he is a Protestant, to persecute the Mason because he is a Mason, and the Rotarian because he is a Rotarian; to persecute the Marina because it is a newspaper of the Rightist tendency, another because it is of a Leftist tendency, to persecute one because it is radical and of the extreme Right, and another, because it is of the extreme Left is something I cannot conceive, nor shall I do it nor will the revolution do it. The democratic thing to do is do what we are doing: to respect all ideas.²

¹ Terrorism rather than direct, official censorship silenced the Marina (El Diario de la Marina, Cuba's oldest and most reactionary newspaper) within a year but the Communist press and the government-run press--and between these two there was only a small difference in emphasis--flourished. Terror "controlled" those publications which the Government and its affiliates did not operate or indirectly manage. I have heard a report that the director of Bohemia Magazine is in an embassy in Havana and seeking exile, after accusing Fidel of betraying the revolution. Bohemia Magazine and its director, whose personal life leaves much to be desired but whose courage in Batista's time was boundless, showed more political independence during the first six months of 1960 than any other publication in Castro Cuba. But it never opposed the Government or its actions and policies. Prensa Libre, like Marina independent and critical, but not Rightist, also went down and became by force a government organ.

² Enough evidence has been presented to show that in Castro Cuba in April 1959, when Fidel was speaking, and since that date, "all ideas" were not respected at all. It is interesting to observe how Fidel shifts the topic from a fear of the Communists gaining too much power in Cuba to the defense of Communists from "persecution" which of course was not proposed in the question he is answering. Fidel was asked in effect is there a danger of the Communists taking over in Cuba and after saying there was no such danger he raises the nightmare of persecution and the "ghost of communism." I think it may be said that Fidel, who was a star student in a Jesuit institution, realized what he was doing in equating a Communist with a Catholic, a Protestant, a Mason, and a Rotarian. Cuba has had little or no religious, sectarian persecution or prejudice. There is in Cuba hardly any group of laymen who can be identified as "Catholic" in a political sense. Fidel knows all that, yet he is arguing that communism and catholicism are comparable.

Those who speak of democracy should begin by learning in what respect for all ideas, for all creeds, consists; in what liberty and the rights of others consists. And frankly, we respect everyone; we persecute no one. That is our democratic principle. Those who do not practice this principle are not democrats and the wish to impose those rules on the people is even less democratic. In the United States itself, there is a Communist newspaper, there are communistic organizations. What do they want us to do? Close newspapers, persecute ideas? No sir. I say absolutely not If to think as I do is to be a Communist, they can call me a Communist because I have acted as I believed and I have acted in the spirit of liberty, of justice, and of respect for others. I think that I have thought and acted as the majority of the Cuban people would; that I have thought and acted in a spirit of justice and with respect for others. I make no distinctions and as a member of the Government I must have an equal respect for all ideas, for all creeds, even though they are not mine; a respect for everyone's rights because here giving rights to some and persecuting others has been called democracy. The other day there was a debate on the radio between Catholics and Communists. They were discussing ideas. To discuss ideas reasonably, in the public eye, is the way things should be discussed. It is another thing to impose ideas by force, to want to impose ideas using force instead of reason. I wish everyone to preach his own doctrine, that some preach one thing and others something else. Here some want us to persecute the Communist newspaper and close it. Ah! But when the government begins by closing one newspaper, no newspaper can feel safe.³

When the government begins to restrict, democracy is a right only for some and not as well as others. Let all discuss their theories, their preachings. Let all write, let all argue; for man is reason, not force. Man is intelligence; not imposition. He is not caprice. Let him speak, let him argue. What we are seeking is a liberty wherein all ideas are discussed, where everyone has a right to think; freedom to write; freedom to assemble for all licit and legal acts. Isn't that the ideal world?⁴

³ Fidel is here completely right and no newspaper or radio and television reporter or commentator felt safe in his Cuba for the very reason he stated. As for the free discussion of ideas, the Castro press was afraid to publish or discuss even a pastoral letter of a Catholic Archbishop in Cuba. And it should go without saying that Fidel's opponents, such as Luis Conte Agüero who once was his biographer, were given no chance to present their ideas to the Cubans; as soon as they showed they had changed they were forced out of the country or silenced in some other way.

Let us add to that a world where everyone eats, a world where men do not die of hunger because those who like to demand to speak of liberty and democracy do not like to speak of the right of men to eat, to live. With that theoretical democracy the wretched people who are dying of hunger do not eat; with that theoretical democracy the sick are not cured.

We must procure more things for man. We must give him liberty, but fundamentally, we must give him an ample opportunity to satisfy his needs. When, for example, a man of a conservative mentality speaks of equal opportunity, we must say to him: Very well, what do you mean by equal opportunity? Can the son of a barefoot farmer who does not go to school, who does not receive an education, and the son of a man who lives in a comfortable house, who receives an education, and who has means of all kinds, have the same opportunity? That is not equal opportunity in any sense of the word. What we must do is give equal opportunity to the poor boy and the rich boy.

We must concede the poor boy equal possibilities. We must make available to the son of that farmer who lives lost away in the mountains the same advantages that the son of the man who lives in the city enjoys. We must give to the poor man opportunity to work in order to feed his child; to receive the fruit of his labor in order that he may educate him. We do nothing when we talk about liberties that are theoretical. The right to write, very nice. The right to speak freely, very fine. But the illiterate who has never opened a book in his life cannot have the right to speak. Rights unfortunately, are more relative than the human ideal would wish. I wish that men were still more free. The truth is that today we know how to write a great deal, and to speak; and man does not have a place to speak nor a place to write.

It would be wise of us to dwell on the fact that we must give man not only liberty in order that he may properly and freely develop his individuality, but we must give him also an opportunity to live because he has to live in a house; he has to dress, he has to eat. Not only that, he has to relax and enjoy himself.

⁴ I had an occasion to remind Fidel of these words and to ask what happened to "the ideal world" in Cuba. The usual reply, and I have had it in Russia too, was that in "war" one may not do what he would like to do in peacetime. Cuba it seems was at war with the imperialists and hence could not afford--temporarily of course--"the ideal world" quite yet. The Russian people have been waiting 40 years for the freedoms Fidel praises. They are only a tiny bit closer to having them today than they were in Stalin's day. And the Cubans, I feel sure, would be taking the same long perhaps endless road with Fidel if Cuba were geographically as remote as the Soviet Union.

The ideal politico-philosophical theory is that which gives to man all the freedoms and, besides, makes it possible for him to satisfy his material needs. That is our revolutionary doctrine. Do you want me to tell you what the rest is? Pretexts. Aren't we here speaking of communism? Afterwards, some will say, since we do not shoot the Communists, that we are traitors; and because we do not close the newspaper Hoy, we are Communists; that we are traitors to our country; that it is right for foreign mercenaries to come here to destroy the country. There we begin and there we end. That is the route of counterrevolution.

The strategy of the counterrevolution is to create problems for us among the very masses whom we have been trying to help find a better future; to block our measures; to try to create unemployment while we do all we can to decrease it. In that campaign, the counterrevolutionists have already begun to say that the happenings in Cuba are similar to those of Guatemala in order to make it appear that what happened there is happening here. It would be a lamentable error, for the situations are different. There is no possible point of comparison.

In this Republic, in this country of ours, we know what sad days are and we do not want to forget them. We know of sacrifices, of sleepless nights, of endless physical effort. We know what adversity is, and we know of defeats and also, at the end, of victory. I know the men who make up the Rebel Army today. Our opponents do not know the people of Cuba. And I tell you now that here in Cuba it would be a mistake to make errors of this type. There is not the slightest resemblance between one thing and the other. If in that country [Guatemala] those who fought had to leave, betrayed by the military caste, because there as everywhere they abandoned the constitutional government and ran away; here, we have the soldiers of the Rebel Army men who know how to die fighting in defense of their land. It would be well for those who think that with that campaign they are going to recover their privileges and their power with the aid of foreigners, not to think that it is going to be a "pushover" and that the people of Cuba can be imposed upon easily because possibly all their plans will turn out bad. Let there be no mistake about it. For in defense of our country and of the Cuban Revolution we are willing to make whatever sacrifices may be necessary and to die to the last man.