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A NOTE ON CUBA

by Irving P. Pflaum

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Cuba came under Soviet protection, announced its intention to recognize Communist China, denounced the United States-Cuba trade and friendship treaty, and in general seemed determined to become a focus of international tensions as this note on the island was in preparation.

Cuban intransigence under the leadership of Dr. Fidel Castro Ruz had been debated by the alarmed delegates to a meeting of the Organization of American States; and the United States had been forced to review its Latin American policy and reaffirm its Monroe Doctrine in the realization that an island republic less than a hundred miles from Florida was enthusiastically forging one link after another to chain itself to the Communist bloc.

The island had become the prize of a political, psychological, and potentially military war, with the islanders being manipulated and exploited by outside powers. The impotence of the Cubans, however, was merely relative, as Washington now fully understood. Moscow also could one day learn the same lesson.

This is an age in which modern technology has given Moscow an opportunity to bolster its aspirations in the Western Hemisphere by offering Cuba a nuclear-missile umbrella. However, it is also a time in which a Nasser has with impunity snubbed, harassed, and insulted Communists after

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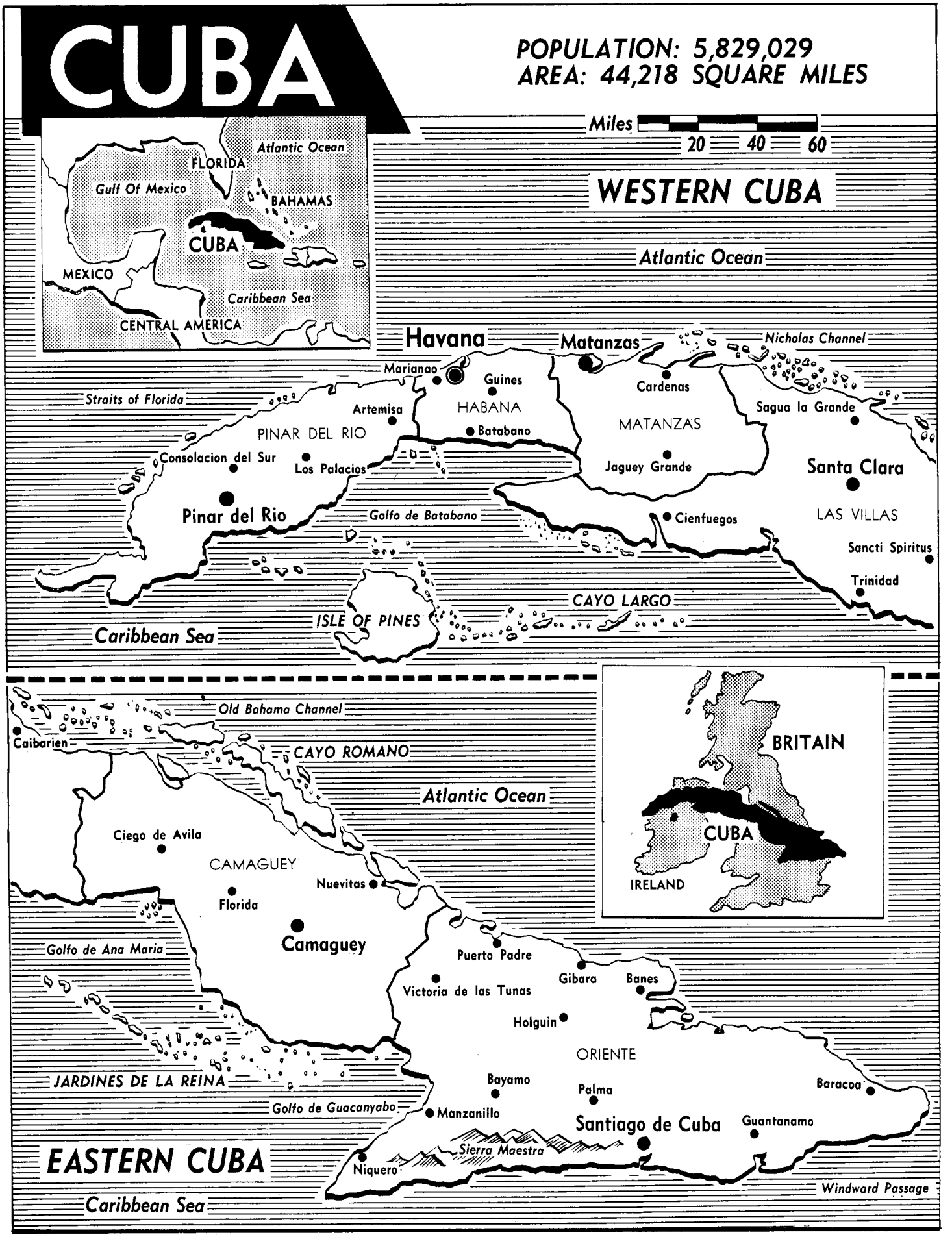

AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES FIELD STAFF

having welcomed Moscow's support in the Suez crisis and after getting massive Soviet economic aid.

It is therefore too early to write off the Cuban story as a closed chapter in a dreary tome of Soviet-Communist expansion by stealth. Even while basking under Khrushchev's benevolence the Cubans are capable still of a certain amount of self-determination.

It also is too early to consider the Cuban story as a mere footnote to a developing Western Hemisphere society. In Havana the popular notion of Old Cuban Hands is that when the echoes of the Castro regime have ceased there will remain only another tale of a misguided, frustrated Latin American caudillo, captured briefly by Khrushchev's Fifth Column because Washington was for a time inept and indecisive. This attitude seems to ignore the sweeping changes in Cuban society since January 1, 1959. It is true, however, that much of what has been done could be undone. In part this is so because the kind of changes originally desired by the Cubans--such as the widespread redistribution of land to the landless--actually have not taken place.

Cuba's reforma agraria is deteriorating into an archaic transfer of ownership and control from individual capitalists to state capitalists. Thus a return to individualism would not be too difficult. But Cuba's reforma moral and reforma social may not be so easily stopped; indeed, they must be kept alive if today's inequities are not to be exceeded by tomorrow's, as were yesterday's by today's.

To a marked degree the Cuban crisis reveals a moral failure of the West, which cannot with justice be blamed on any particular person or group, on any one nation, race, class, or political party in Cuba or the United States.

During the Batista regime Cubans lived with a tyranny that terrorized those it could not or need not corrupt, while the people of the United States, unaware or unconcerned, offered arms to the tyrant through their Government, and made capital available to him through the usual channels.

Cubans lived under an economy in which chronic unemployment and underemployment of human and natural resources made for conditions that served to enhance the profits of American investors. It was a moral failure that the desperate uncertainties of such an economy (tied as it was to unpredictable world prices for sugar and to a share in the United States market at the unilateral disposal of the United States Congress) should be regarded as inevitable and unchangeable--beyond the power of the United States to alter.

The Cubans responded to the conditions they found intolerable with a reformist, revivalist, nationalist movement. It has been captured by a Communist-oriented minority which had little to do with its creation and development. It has been perverted and misled, but it still exists, and it should not be assumed that many Cubans have forgotten why they arose in near-unanimous

revolt, nor should it be assumed that they will with meekness return to the hopelessness and frustrations of the past when honesty, integrity, and self-respect were positive deterrents to personal survival and success in Cuba.

It is a tragedy that a reformation reaching deep into Cuban society was so sorely needed, so widely welcomed by the Cubans, and so easily perverted. It would be still more tragic if the only reply of the West could be a destruction of the original reformation movement in Cuba.

While the Cuban crisis moves toward resolution--or stalemate--there are six million Cubans whose personal destinies are involved. Having rebelled against the intolerable, having accepted the leadership of an ailing demagogue, they are thoroughly stirred and alerted--not only by anti-Yankee slogans, but also by dreams and hopes of a more fruitful future.

The Land and the People

Fly high over the islands of the Caribbean, and Cuba looks like a larger Jamaica, Hispaniola, or Puerto Rico. Between its mountains there is in Cuba enough rolling land to place Jamaica, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, and Trinidad, with room to spare for all the Leeward and Windward Islands and for Nassau and the Bahamas.

Of the three generally mountainous areas, the rugged Sierra Maestra in the east has become almost synonymous with the Castro rebellion, for it was in these mountains that Castro was headquartered. There are also the low range in the central area and the Sierra de los Organos in the extreme west.

Now land on the island that dominates the Caribbean Sea and you will notice several marked differences between Cuba and most of the other islands. You may observe that Havana is a major port commercially and a metropolitan center of world stature. It far outstrips any area competitor, surpasses many a major North American port city, and has a skyline that rivals San Francisco's.

Cuba was born in and cast up from the sea, probably in the form of many small islands corresponding to the chains of mountain ranges of Guaniguanico, Las Villas, Camagüey, and los Colorados. Repeated volcanic accidents, repeated immersions and erosions, constant deposits of debris from the sea and land over some millions of years fused these chains of islands into the fabulously fruitful, strategically placed Caribbean archipelago that is called Cuba. Antonio Núñez Jimenez, politician-geographer and onetime professor at the Universidad Central de las Villas, calls it a collection of island peninsulas. It has more than 2,000 miles of coastline and some 1,600 keys, islands, and islets, many with deep bays. For economic reasons as well as for its production of alcohol, Cuba has been called "La Isla de Corcho," or

the popping Cork Isle. Núñez Jimenez observes that it merits the title for geological reasons as well, because no matter how frequent or serious the inundations, the volcanic eruptions, Cuba, corklike, rose from the sea to reign as the "Pearl of the Antilles."

Cuba is fortunate geologically in having only limited seismic or volcanic areas or faults. The largest seismic area, around Santiago in Oriente Province, just about forms the head of the caiman (crocodile) the Cubans say the island's shape resembles. There are several lesser seismic areas and some half dozen transverse fractures or faults in the island proper. Of the four larger longitudinal faults, only one is within the island, running from Havana through Oriente. The other three are almost entirely just outside or well outside both the north and south coastal areas. Even though some of these maritime fractures or crevasses are well outside the 12-mile limit, Cuba today claims that they are within the island's insular platform, probably against the possibility of future discovery of petroleum reserves.

"The fairest land ever seen by human eyes," Columbus said of Cuba. These words are from his October 1492 diary: "Nunca tan hermosa cosa vide; lleno de arboles todo circado el rio, hermosas y verdes, con flores y con fruto, cada uno de su manera; aves muches y pajaritos que cantaban muy dulcemente. . . ."

The section of Oriente Province surrounding Cuba's first settlement of Baracoa still is beautiful and fruitful, with its graceful royal palms, sturdy pines on the hills, orange groves, and cocoa plantations. Plantings of young coffee shrubs are shaded by fast-growing papaya trees, banana trees, and coconut palms. This once was a wealth-producing area and while a lack of adequate roads has hampered its development, by the same token the region has kept its lush fruitful land and its stands of bamboo, pine, mango, and ceiba.

As for the rest of Cuba, whose magnificent size (44,218 square miles), situation, climate, fertility, harbors, and bays, Columbus never fully realized even through his fourth voyage, all its provinces--Oriente, Camagüey, Las Villas, Havana, Matanzas, and Pinar del Rio--have lost thousands of acres of precious virgin timber that covered their hills, much of it in primeval forests of hardwood. This rich Cuban heritage that would take a century to replace was destroyed to make way for the growing of sugar cane.

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Different from its Caribbean neighbors in size, Cuba also differs in the racial origins of its inhabitants. The people are predominantly of European stock; those of African or of mixed descent are in the minority, while the reverse is true elsewhere in the area. The indigenous Indian population was eliminated so soon after the first Spaniards landed that, unlike other nearby former Spanish colonies, Cuba has no Indian minority and not enough mestizos

to cause social or political problems, as in Mexico, or a caste system, as in most of Central America. The fact that Cuba was the last of the Latin American colonies to revolt against European overlordship affected the racial proportions of the population. Under Spanish rule Cuba was a haven for white European planters fleeing from their rebellious African slaves on the neighboring islands.

One reason for the lateness of the Cuban revolt against Spain may be found in the racial, cultural pattern of the Cubans which set them apart not only from many Caribbean island neighbors but also from most other colonials in Latin America. The Cuban uprising was an armed rebellion by gentlemen planters, most of them of Spanish descent, many of them wealthy and well educated. (College level education has been available in Cuba for centuries.)

It is to be expected that the British-educated mulatto barristers and other intellectuals presently ruling the British West Indies, and the Britons who preceded them, should find Cubans mystifying. (When I spoke recently with Jamaican Prime Minister Norman Washington Manley about revolutionary Cuba, he showed a sense of remoteness that would be more understandable in an American Midwesterner, although Jamaica is as close to Cuba as is Florida.) It is surprising, however, to find sharp differences in attitude between Central Americans and Cubans of the same class unless one takes into account the Indian-Ladino masses, until recently inert and apolitical, that formed the economic base on which most Latin American countries flourished. In Cuba virtually everyone, including the Negroes (14 per cent of the population in 1899, 12 per cent today) and mestizos (17 per cent then and 14 per cent now) took sides in the struggle against Spain.

The Hispanic Background

Columbus made his first landing on the uninhabited beach of Bariay. He had to go miles to find a settlement. Similarly in the Cuba of today there are great stretches of fruitful and productive countryside with only here and there, on the peripheries, urban settlements of people who go great distances daily to plant and tend and gather the crops. Census figures for 1953 classified 56.3 per cent of the population as urban.[1]

In exploring some 300 miles of Cuba's northeast coast of what is now Oriente Province, from Cape Maisi to Puerto Padre, Columbus on his first voyage "encountered no one" except in the settlements of Baracoa (El Yunque), Nipe Bay, and Gibara.

The urban pattern of the indigenous indios or naturales was continued by the conquistadores. Upon order of King Ferdinand, Fray Nicolas de Ovando, Governor of Hispaniola, appointed Sebastian de Ocampo to explore and settle Cuba, to find out whether it was truly terra firma--(an archipelago or a not

too small island) and if there were spices, gold, and other things of value there. His travels, first north and then east, brought him to the site of the present port of Havana in 1509 where, by grace of the asphalt he found there to repair his ships, he planted a small settlement and called it "de Carenas." Ocampo completed his exploration and tour of Cuba in eight months bringing back to the Governor in Hispaniola the report that Cuba was an enormous island of incomparable climate, health, fertility, with scattered settlements of gentle natives. And in spite of the fact that there was little gold the decision was made to colonize and settle Cuba immediately.

Don Diego Velásquez, a fierce and famous soldier of Spain, had come to the Indies with Columbus on his second voyage. He left Hispaniola in 1510 to assume the governorship of Cuba. Starting with Baracoa in Oriente, he founded seven more communities: three in Oriente Province--Santiago, Bayamo, and Manzanilla; Camagüey in the province of that name; Sancti Spiritus and Trinidad in Las Villas Province; and San Cristóbal in Havana Province. Baracoa is the only city of those established by Velásquez that still exists on its original site.

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[1] The trend toward urbanization noted in previous census periods continued from 1943 to 1953. Exactly 56.3 per cent of the population was classified as urban in 1953 as compared with 54.6 per cent in 1943 and 51.4 per cent in 1931, the first census which reported a greater urban than rural population. This trend is generally noticeable throughout the island, but it is particularly strong in those areas dominated by the cities of Havana, Santiago de Cuba, and Santa Clara.

The 56.3 per cent figure for the urban population is roughly comparable with the 1943 and 1931 census figures. The 1953 census presents a new concept for urban population, which is shown in that year as being 57 per cent of the total population. The difference arises from varying definitions of urban.

The Cuban census does not have any classifications for cities, towns, and villages because the political subdivision in Cuba is the municipality, which roughly corresponds to the county in the United States. The 1953 census does however provide population statistics covering urban nuclei, i.e., the total of those urban areas which, in an economic sense, form cities and towns. Of the 732 such areas on which information was obtained in 1953, those with 100,000 population or over accounted for 34.9 per cent of the total urban population; those of from 25,000 to 100,000 represented 23.4 per cent; and those of less than 25,000 represented 41.7 per cent.

The 1953 census provided, for the first time, statistics on the population of greater Havana. This metropolitan area, which comprises the urban zones of a number of neighboring municipalities, had a total of 1,217,674 inhabitants, or 20.9 per cent of the population of the entire country.

The principal urban nuclei after Havana (785,455) and Marianao (219,278), are: Santiago de Cuba (168,237), Camagüey (110,388), Santa Clara (77,398), Guantánamo (64,671), Matanzas (63,916), Cienfuegos (57,991), Holguín (57,573), Cardenas (43,750), Manzanillo (42,252), and Pinar del Rio (38,885).

According to historian Hermino Portell-Villa, the conquerors found Cuba's Siboneys and Tainos still free and living unmolested except for occasional raids visited on them by the savage Caribs, who came by canoe from neighboring islands. They lived happily and peacefully for the most part, subsisting mainly on fruits and fish. They were gracious and hospitable, offering the Spaniards food, strong drink made from herbs, and another herb which they set afire in order that they might inhale its aromatic smoke. But friendly as they were, they were firm and resourceful in their refusal to work for the Spaniards. Rather than submit, they starved, drowned, or hanged themselves; they strangled their children at birth, and finally they rose in revolt. The result was that the gentle Indians described by Columbus had been wiped out within 25 years of his landing.

Cacique Hatuey, honored by Cubans as their first fighter for independence, is often called a Siboney. In fact he was not a native-born Cuban, but a Guanahatabeyan from Hispaniola. But since the Guanahatabeyans, who were either of Floridian or South American origin, had once inhabited the extreme western tip of Pinar del Rio, the Cubans have claimed him.

Having known the Spaniards' way of subjugating the Indians, Hatuey came to Cuba and gathering a group of indios around him with his convincing story that the Spaniards had in reality only one god--Gold--he headed Cuba's first uprising for liberty. The gentle Cuban Indians put up a good fight that lasted two or three months. But Hatuey was caught and condemned to burn at the stake. When urged to abjure his heathen belief, he firmly declined, as he did not wish to go to a heaven where he would meet more Christians. Thus Hatuey died and the town of Bayamo takes fierce pride in claiming to be the site of the first revolt against Spain.

The town of Bayamo is even prouder of the part it played, along with the town of Manzanilla, in the Ten Years' War that began on October 10, 1868. Copying Father Hidalgo who had cried aloud in his church in Dolores, Mexico, in 1811, Carlos Manuel de Céspedes uttered El Grito de Yara from his plantation in Bayamo. In Manzanilla it was published as a Declaration of Independence to the world. The people take pride too in the burning of their town by their own loyal citizens when it was clear that Céspedes could no longer hold out against the Spanish Count Valmaseda's troops. They are proudest of all of their Himno Bayamesa--the Cuban "Marseillaise," dedicated to the spirit of sacrifice and human freedom.

Cuba's importation of slaves began in the 16th century. Negroes could work under conditions Cuba's Indians rejected. The two chief industries in which Negroes were used were in the rounding up of wild cattle, which thanks to Columbus' foresightedness in stocking the island, were plentiful, and in the growing and processing of sugar cane.[2]

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[2] Sugar cane was brought to Hispaniola by Columbus upon request of Velásquez, while he was Governor there. Velásquez took it to Cuba.

Marriage between the races was lawful and the Roman Catholic Church insisted that each Negro was a human being with a soul to be saved. In 1788 a Royal Cedula was issued by Charles III to improve the slaves' condition and permit them to buy their own and their families' freedom. Most of the provisions were not enforced, but some Negroes shook off slavery.

The Cuban census of 1817 listed 290,021 whites; 115,691 free colored; 225,259 slaves. Close by in Haiti, meanwhile, Toussaint L'Ouverture had had his successful uprising, and there arrived in Cuba, along with the exiled French planters, several colored men with revolutionary ideas. According to W. F. Johnson's History of Cuba, much panic and terror ensued.

In 1820 the slave trade in Cuba was abolished by Spain, but the increasing sugar acreage demanded more and more workers, and slaves continued to be smuggled into Cuba as "sacks of coal" by Yankee traders as well as by Europeans and Cubans until the 1870's.

As more Negroes bought their freedom and became educated there were isolated uprisings all over the island. Furthermore, many white Cubans were tired of being treated as second-class citizens by Spanish governors, officers, and civil appointees, who came to Cuba only long enough to enrich themselves. Following a slaughter in 1840 by Captain-General O'Donnell of some 1,346 colored people, a high percentage of the criollos (whites born in Cuba or the Caribbean area) came over to the support and defense of the Negro. Cuba, La Isla Siempre Fiel, had begun to think in terms of Cuba Libre.

Cuba was affected by dreams of freedom as early as any other Caribbean country. During the year (1762 to 1763) the British captured and held Havana, Cuba had its first taste of free trade. There were ships of all nations coming and going freely, and for that short period, no monopolies, royal or private. Everybody made money.

The short English tenure, awakened and nourished two things, Cubanidad and a desire for freedom. When the English attacked, the criollos had rallied round the Royal Governor and fought gamely for Cuba. And when the French Haitians attempted an invasion in 1807, Cuba repelled them. Later, Spain's censorship could not keep news of Latin American revolutionary leaders and their successes from seeping through. Bolívar's advance from Venezuela's plains to the Chilean Andes inspired Cubans to ask the Liberator to free Cuba too. But Bolívar had all he could manage on the continent, and it was to be some 80 years before Cuba could attain independence.

There was a constant ferment for freedom. Free Masons formed the Soles de Bolívar with headquarters in Matanzas in 1810 but their well-planned uprising of August 1823 was betrayed to Spanish General Francisco Vives who arrested, among many others, Cuba's first great lyric poet, José Marie Heredia. Heredia was exiled to Spain and died in Mexico in 1839 before he had turned thirty-six. Many generations of Cubans have known and loved the poetry of

Heredia, since it gives the clearest and most penetrating vision of the tenets of his native land and its rebel past. Special editions of Poesias Heredianas were published in the fateful revolutionary years of 1851, 1868, and 1895.

Although many Cubans were dedicated Royalists and others, among them some wealthy slaveowners, wanted annexation to the United States, the burning desire for freedom continued to touch off the flames of rebellion in many quarters. While the Free Masons continued their activities, a new society was formed--El Aguila Negra (The Society of the Black Eagle) with branches in the United States, Colombia, and Mexico. (The slaveowning American South, of course, frowned on this organization.)

The declaration of the Monroe Doctrine in 1823 was a considerable blow to the Cubans who were hoping and working for freedom from Spain. The Inter-American Congress, convened in Panama by Bolívar, was another setback. The principal South American countries showed little enthusiasm for Cuban aspirations. Nevertheless, there was one abortive uprising after another. Of the numerous leaders of rebellions of the period, the most persistent perhaps was Narciso López, who from 1848 to 1851 tried three times to dislodge the Spaniards with the help of American money and volunteers.

For his first expedition, López acquired $100,000 and 800 American volunteers, officered by veterans of the Mexican War. They left New Orleans on the ship "Creole" and landed on Cuba's northern shore. No Cubans rose to join them as much out of fear of reprisals as apathy. The volunteers fought a few brisk battles, seized a railroad station to cut communications with Havana, and captured a local garrison. Knowing his small force could not hold out, López sensibly returned to the United States, landing at Key West. There the volunteers were greeted with cheers from the local populace, and arrest by Federal agents. The subsequent trial was a failure as no witnesses could be found. López returned to New York and gained new friends and funds. Another ship, the "Cleopatra," was bought and outfitted, but upon pressure from Spain, Federal agents arrested her officers before she could sail. A third López expedition on the boat "Pampero" landed at Morillo. The two divisions were captured through betrayal, suffered indignities and torture and 52 of the volunteers were shot. According to W. F. Johnson's account, only two of those executed had Spanish names. Narciso López was garrotted. The Spaniards' cruelty in dealing with López and his chiefly American volunteers rallied thousands of fearful or lukewarm Cubans to the cause of their own freedom.

By 1868 the wealthiest landowners among the criollos were ready to try to throw off the burdens of taxation and extortion laid on them by Spain. When Céspedes, from his Yara plantation, issued the statement that was to become a declaration of independence, many plantation owners followed his example and freed their slaves. Several provinces declared for abolition. Negroes responded by enlisting with the rebels. There were recruits of every

shade of skin among the mambises (untrained guerrillas) who flocked around Céspedes and his fellow leaders. The group at the top included Salvador Cisneros, Francisco Aguilera, Tomas Estrada Palma, Maximo Gomez y Báez, and Modesto Diaz, of whom the last two were experienced fighters from Santo Domingo.

The officers and men who started the Ten Years' War totaled about 150. They had not guns enough to go around. With little but their courage and their machetes they took to Cuba's subtropical jungle, many of them with their families, and made their stand. Like Céspedes, many had much to lose. They not only freed their slaves and abandoned their homes, but they endangered their families and sacrificed all their wealth. For the first time Cubans--white and black--were united against a common foe. By the end of 1868 2,600 men had joined the mambises--but still they had too few weapons.

Spain at first maintained there was no war--then in 1869 and 1870 offered terms to Céspedes. In 1869 Augustin Arango sent by Céspedes to meet the Spanish, was murdered by the Voluntarios (wealthy young Spaniards banded together to keep slavery and fight the insurrection).

In 1870 the Voluntarios had some 80,000 well-armed members dedicated to harass the patriots. Their paper was La Voz de Cuba.

A series of atrocities by the Voluntarios brought more and more Cuban recruits to the mambises. The insurrection now involved all of Cuba except Pinar del Rio Province and threatened Havana. Although the United States took no official notice, American newspapers and private individuals were following the struggle with interest.

The New York Herald's James O'Kelley arrived in Havana in 1872, presented himself to the Spanish Captain-General Francisco Ceballos and received safe conduct through the Spanish lines. Though warned he would be shot if he went near the insurgents, he finally succeeded in his prime objective to interview Céspedes.

O'Kelley was hard put to keep up with the mambises, though he considered himself an old campaigner after experience in Africa, Ireland, France, and Mexico. Cuban soldiers and officers got no rations and no pay. Each man was his own commissary and a lucky day's foraging would supply coconuts, bananas, edible palm, and an occasional jutia or opposum which are still plentiful in the hilly and wooded sections of Cuba. Any plantation might yield oranges, yucca, malanga, corn, sugar cane, coffee, and tobacco. If streams were polluted, one had only to tap a certain vine for cool water. Cuba's fruitful soil was fostering the fight for freedom.

There was equality between white and colored and an appreciable number of colored officers. Before he caught up with Céspedes, O'Kelley visited

other rebels and reported favorable impressions of Major General Calixto García Iñiguez (of the famous Message to García), and General Maximo Gómez.

Among the men at the luncheon table at Céspedes' camp, which O'Kelley finally reached, were Céspedes' son and Tomas Estrada Palma, a young officer who later became the first President of Cuba when it was free of Spain. From discussion with Céspedes and his officers, O'Kelley concluded that Cuba would win its war, no matter how long it took.

These courageous fighters were agreed that their only chance for decent government was complete freedom from Spain; but they were divided on whether to become an independent republic or seek annexation to the United States.

Spain's ugly heritage of distrust divided the recently united ardent patriots, and Céspedes was deposed as leader in 1873. The war ended with the Pact of Zanjon, signed on February 10, 1878. Cuba gained only what Spain had offered earlier: a general amnesty, a mild form of autonomy, emancipation of the slaves who had served in the war.

The end of the Ten Years' War did not bring an end to the rebellion. By 1881 José Julián Martí was in the United States actively propagandizing for the cause of Cuban independence. In Florida he organized the Cuban Revolutionary Party in 1892. General Gómez was one of the veterans who refused to accept the Pact of Zanjon. Another was Cuba's military genius, the mulatto Antonio Maceo, el Titan de Bronce. Few men have received such consistent praise, admiration, respect, and affection from their countrymen as this magnificent patriot. He is equally honored by American, Cuban, and Spanish historians. Like his first commanding officer, Gómez, he was a daring and courageous leader and a superb guerrilla strategist. Maceo met social prejudice with grace and urbanity, but permitted no racial discrimination when it affected the rights of a man as a soldier or a citizen. He was the symbol of sublime fusion that Martí so often invoked in his eloquent speeches on behalf of Cuban independence.

Maceo was killed in December 1895 when he was ambushed by a Spanish patrol at San Pedro as he was on his way to a meeting with Gómez in Pinar del Rio. He was fifty-one years old, had campaigned the length of the island in 117 battles and numerous lesser engagements. After 30 years of fighting for Cuban independence, his last words were: "All goes well."

The fight for a Cuba Libre was going well and moving toward a climax. For when Martí, Maceo, and Gómez landed in Cuba in April 1895 to launch their assault they had found the popular support they needed.

With the possible exception of Lincoln, no man of this Western Hemisphere has had as much written about him as has José Julián Martí y Pérez,

who was born in Havana on January 28, 1853. And if his collected works which now stand at 50 are ever finally gathered and completed, the Martí "hagiography" will be monumental.

Though not a military genius like Bolívar, San Martín, or Washington, or an emancipator like Lincoln, he had in common with Lincoln a greatness of personality, a pureness of spirit and above all a love of humanity that enveloped and held his listeners and readers. Critics, both Spanish and American, praise his poetry and prose writings but always emphasize his greatness of personality. He has been called by Ruben Dario, "A superman, great and virile in communion with God and Nature . . . ." Martí's poetry and prose are rooted in the best of the Spanish popular and classical spirit as well as his own simplicity and originality. His wide modern culture included much that was both English and American. He was an innovator in poetry as well as prose, cultivating in both his Spanish and English writings close-knit, precise phrases without pedantry or involved syntax, easily understood even by the hombre de machete. Because of his unquestioned integrity, zeal, indominitable spirit, and faith in human ideals, Martí soon became the recognized leader of Cuba's independence movement dominating older and more experienced politicos, fighters, and patriots. From his first conviction at seventeen in 1870 for exchanging incendiary letters against Spain with his friend, Fermin Valdes Dominguez (for which they were exiled to Spain for two years), Martí's life work was Cuban independence. Though he earned his living as journalist, teacher, writer, and poet, he continued the exacting and exhausting work of a political speaker, organizer, and money raiser in the cause of Cuban independence. He wrote, lectured, and conferred with Cubans and friends of Cuba from New York to Key West and west to New Orleans, and from Mexico down through Venezuela.

Martí insisted he must go to Cuba as a soldier when, in February 1895, the second grito rang out. He was recognized as chief of the revolution even though he was not a military man. He helped to plan the campaign, and landed with Gómez at Las Playitas in Oriente on April 11. Spanish troops attacked a small band of Cubans on May 19 near the town of Dos Rios. Gómez, launching a counterattack, urged Martí to stay behind. Unwilling to risk less than other men, Martí joined the fighting and was killed.

"El Apostol" died at the age of forty-two, but he continues to live in the hearts of all Cubans, as Cuba's political genius and patron saint. And though Martí hated the Yankee imperialism of the 1890's (anti-American Cubans often quote his: "I know the monster, I have lived in its entrails"), he feared political despotism of any kind for Cuba even more. He also fought not only for independence but for free speech and freedom of the press, and liberty and freedom from oppression for all citizens.

The death of Martí in May 1895 so shocked all Cuba that many Cubans formerly "fearful of reprisal" joined the revolutionary forces and fought hard under Gómez, García, and Maceo. By December 1895, the Spanish losses

through fever, disease, and the fierce, unexpectedly swift forays of the guerrillas made Spain's war a losing one.

The Yankee Background

The history of the United States involvement in the affairs of Cuba is a long and complex drama with numerous subplots, in which the characters have typified a range of vices and virtues from avarice to humanitarianism. Several of the high points in the drama have had to do with what happened to or was thought to have happened to certain ships.

During the many years of the Cuban struggle for independence from Spain, the leaders of the rebellion enlisted much sympathy and support from the people of the United States. There is no doubt that in large part they tapped the wells of sentiment for an oppressed land that fought to shake off a European yoke. But not all of the North American support was selfless. Some wanted so strategically placed a Caribbean island to come under United States control; there were Southerners who in the 1850's hoped to bring Cuba into the Union as a slave state, and there were some with capital burning holes in their corporate pockets who wanted Cuba for its investment opportunities.

As early as 1854 the United States and Spain were in conflict over a ship. The "Black Warrior," plying its usual course between New York and Mobile, paused as usual in Havana harbor, only to be seized by the Spanish authorities on the charge that the Master had violated port regulations. If the South had had its way, the United States would have declared war on Spain. The North remained calmer, and release of the ship ended the crisis.

The next maritime incident was more serious. In 1869, shortly after the start of the Ten Years' War, the Spaniards seized the ship "Virginius" and, at Santiago, shot its American Master and 51 others. The Virginius Affair helped to solidify pro-Cuban American opinion. Spain's concession in paying $80,000 to the families of the executed men was only a reminder of the outrage.

As the 19th century drew toward its close, American opinion, fed by an unremitting press campaign, was increasingly pro-Cuban and anti-Spanish. President McKinley, responding to the public pressures, dispatched an encouraging message to General Calixto García in 1897, promising that the United States would aid the revolutionists with money, food, and ammunition.

Elbert Hubbard's account of A Message to García added to his own fame as the most popular essayist of his time, put the name of García on every schoolboy's tongue, and, by omitting a few pertinent details made the message bearer, the intrepid Lieutenant Andrew Summers Rowan, even more of a hero than he was.

The Cubans under García welcomed the offered aid and if they had known what the future had in store for them they probably would have insisted that it be limited to the exact terms of the offer. A third maritime incident was in the making and "Remember the 'Maine'" was to be the slogan of the United States expeditionary force in the Spanish-American War.

The "U.S.S. Maine," a battleship, blew up on February 15, 1898, in Havana harbor, where it had dropped anchor on a peaceful mission to protect Americans who might be endangered as the Cuban Revolution drew to a climax. Toward the end of the following April the United States and Spain were at war.

The "Maine" incident catalyzed American prowar sentiment although it was not established that the Spaniards were responsible for the explosion.

Castro remembered the "Maine" when a ship carrying munitions for his forces blew up while it was being unloaded in Cuba. He charged that, just as the Americans had touched off the "Maine" explosion themselves to precipitate war with Spain, they had planted a bomb on the ship that carried munitions to him.

There are other aspects of the Spanish-American War that Castro reminds his listeners of as he does his best to promote anti-Yankee hysteria among the Cubans.

The Cuban Army was in sight of victory over the Spaniards when the United States was gathering its forces for war. Many towns in Oriente were in Cuban hands before any Americans landed. The site chosen for the American landing, the methods of combat and the engagement of other Spanish armies to prevent their rushing to the defense of Santiago were all conceived by Cubans under Calixto García as chief and executed with the constant support of the Cuban army of liberation.

The Cubans continued to fight unceasingly, in front of, and side by side with the Americans as both armies made their way to Santiago and the final surrender of July 16, but a terse order from the Yankees prevented the Cubans from unfurling their flag and participating in the surrender ceremonies. No Cuban has ever quite forgotten this arrogant discourtesy, nor the further conceit of naming that culmination of 30 years fighting for Cuban independence--"The Spanish-American War," without any mention of Cuba. The final and official end--the Treaty of Paris--merely fixed what Spain had lost and the United States had gained.

In line with the Joint Resolution of Congress which declared war on Spain, the United States set up a military government to occupy Cuba until the Cubans should be able to govern themselves. Brigadier General Leonard Wood, Cuba's first American Governor, was interested primarily in health

and sanitation for the island and at first his direct New England manner antagonized most Cubans. But before the end of his regime most of Cuba honored and admired him for his efficiency and unbribable honesty. He brought to Cuba better sanitation facilities, hospitals, and schools. He supported projects for research on and control of yellow fever and malaria.

Although Cubans did not like General Wood because they thought he was an annexationist, and because he seemed high-handed, he did evoke the respect of most Cubans. And in accordance with the terms of the Congressional resolution he called for an election to choose members of a constitutional assembly at the end of his term as governor of Cuba.

The United States lived up to its promise to withdraw from Cuba as soon as the new Cuban Republic was formed. But there was a qualification in this promise and intention--the Cuban Constitution must abide by "the Platt Amendment."

This controversial document was drafted by Elihu Root, then Secretary of War, and introduced as a rider to the Army Appropriations Bill of 1901 by Senator Orville Platt of Connecticut. It granted the United States the right to approve foreign loans to Cuba, to intervene in Cuba to preserve peace and independence, and to pass on Cuban treaties. Naval bases were to be ceded to the United States; the sanitation program was to be continued, and the Isle of Pines was specifically omitted from the boundaries of Cuba. In 1902 the terms of the amendment were written into a treaty between Cuba and the United States.

To all Cubans the Platt Amendment was an arrant denial of the self-government for which they had fought so long and bitterly. Most Americans felt it gave, as Elihu Root said: "no powers that the Monroe Doctrine did not imply." Even when the Amendment terms were eliminated in a new treaty signed during the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt, the Cubans remained bitter.

In 1902 General Wood returned to the United States. He left Cuba in the hands of the newly elected President, Estrada Palma, and with a treasury surplus of 58,000,000 pesos. Palma, following Wood's policies, finished his first term with a balance of some 10 to 25 million in the Treasury. But Palma's political associates fixed the new election. The opposition of the new Liberal party precipitated a civil war, and in 1906 the United States intervened. Charles Magoon, formerly governor of the Canal Zone, was named provisional governor of Cuba.

During the Magoon era the way was opened to American and European capitalists to finance docks, railroads, public utilities as well as additional sugar interests; all of which seemed natural and right to most Americans--the proper way to pep up a new country. And although no personal dishonesty or evidence of bribery attaches itself to Magoon, his permissive attitude toward American capital and contractors, in public works, roads and public

utilities, and expanding sugar interests, put the final touch to the exploitation, that made what Leland H. Jenks has called "Our Cuban Colony," politically independent but financially bound.

Under the succeeding Presidents--José Manuel Gómez, Mario Menocal, and Alfredo Zayas--Cuba became more and more bound by American financing. In 1912 Bethlehem Steel acquired nearly a billion tons of iron ore reserves in Oriente and the Cobra and Jaragua copper mines were financed and owned by Americans. The Platt Amendment gave the United States the power to pass on Cuban Government applications for foreign loans. Various Cuban governments found it easy and expedient to borrow United States money; public utilities, veterans' needs, and sanitation measures, were all good causes and many a Cuban politician did well for himself out of such loans.

Gerardo Machado was elected President in 1924 on a strong anti-Platt platform and the promise of economy and honesty in office. His first term was noteworthy for a road building program that brought Cuba more miles of highways in four years than the Spanish had layed down in 400 years. After engineering a second term for himself he so ruthlessly put down opposition that Cuba became embroiled in what amounted to a civil war. The United States again intervened, this time in the person of Ambassador Sumner Wells, and a revolt of military officers put added pressure on Machado. He fled the country in 1933. His successor was picked by a Revolutionary Junta, headed by one Sergeant Fulgencio Batista, who was thereby embarked on a political career that was to continue, with a few interruptions, until January 1, 1959.

By the time Machado left office, American bankers had lent Cuba something over $200 million. American capital controlled more than three-fourths of Cuba's sugar output, dominated the tobacco business and the utilities complex, and had huge interests in most of the lesser businesses.

The Cuban sugar industry has a history that dates back to the time of Columbus. Thanks to Velásquez--who had Columbus bring him sugar cane seedlings to Hispaniola when he returned on his third voyage, and who brought some seedlings to Cuba when he came there in 1509 as Governor--sugar has been the chief cash crop of Cuba since the 1600's. When it was found that Indians would not work the crops, slaves were brought in to do the heavy work of the three-month zafra (harvest)--and with the passing of the slaves, the illiterate guajiros were hired as needed. Unlike tobacco or coffee which need almost constant care, sugar cane grows largely untended for some nine months of the year, and only during the three-month zafra is labor needed to cut, gather, and squeeze or grind the cane. The first machinery for sugar mills in Cuba was imported by a Yankee in 1830, and sugar then became the dominant crop, forcing out coffee.

In 1888 Henry Havemyer united some 17 growers and formed the first sugar trust, and inventions to extract more sugar, and faster, followed. By 1900 Cuba was the world's sugar bowl, and all of Cuba was involved in its economics. Big business all over the world was interested in it, and many

Cubans put money in sugar mills or sugar stocks. If they were members of the sugar combines they were making so much money they did not know what to do with it.

Americans pumped about a billion dollars into Cuba during the first quarter of this century. If they did not set out to create a monocrop economy, they made one likely by building the highly specialized sugar-production structure. The peak of all types of American investment in Cuba was reached in 1929-30, when estimates of the total ranged from $919 million to $1,500 million. The depression dealt a hard blow to the sugar industry, volatile in the best of times. By 1936 the investment total was reported by the United States Department of Commerce to be $666 million and ten years later it was down to $553 million. After that revaluations, reinvestments, and new investments brought the total up to between $700 million and $800 million.

Although the sugar industry has dominated the Cuban economic scene (its capacity is about 17 per cent of the world's total sugar production and it produced about 50 per cent of the sugar sold in the "free" international markets until Castro started to deal with the Communist bloc), nevertheless, the Castro regime inherited and is busily nationalizing a range of productive enterprises. The tobacco industry still is important, there are three large oil refineries, once controlled by Standard Oil, Texaco, and Shell, a British rayon-chemical plant, a large American automobile tire plant, a sizeable utilities complex, various installations for the exploitation of minerals, and numerous smaller industrial operations.

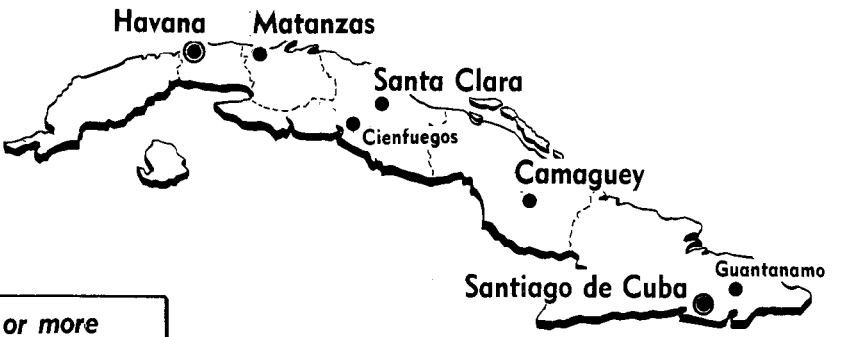
Batista skillfully wielded the power that came to him with the departure of Machado. After controlling a succession of Presidents, he took the office himself in 1940 and for a four-year term played well at being the staunch ally of the United States during World War II. Then he stepped aside. Ramón Grau San Martín was President for four years, and was followed by Dr. Carlos Prio Socarras. Contemporary Cubans characterize the administrations of these two as noteworthy for political liberalism, social progress, economic prosperity, and widespread corruption.

Batista chose to run again in 1952 and chose to win by force when it became obvious that one of his opponents, Dr. Roberto Agramonte, was sure to be elected. During the early hours of March 10, 1952, he used the Army to make himself Cuba's dictator. It was an easy, near-bloodless golpe de estado. By March 27 his regime had been recognized by the United States as the Government of Cuba.

From March 10, 1952, to January 1, 1959, the Batista dictatorship in Cuba followed a well-known pattern in Latin America that has been well-described as follows:[3] "On one side were the fixers, the courtesans and the

[3] Ravines, Eudocio, América Latina, Buenos Aires: Editorial Claridad, 1956, pp. 59, 60.

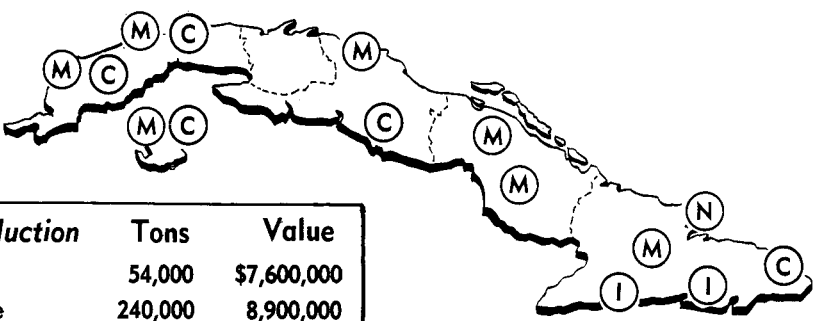
POPULATION CENTERS



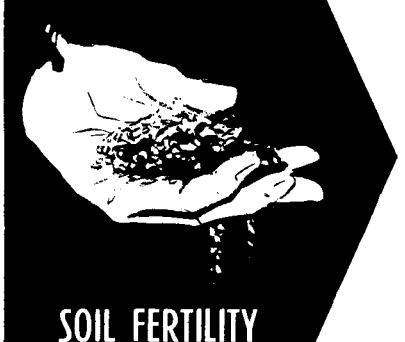
100,000 or more
200,000 or more

DISTRIBUTION: RURAL, 70 PER CENT; URBAN, 30 PER CENT.

MINERAL WEALTH

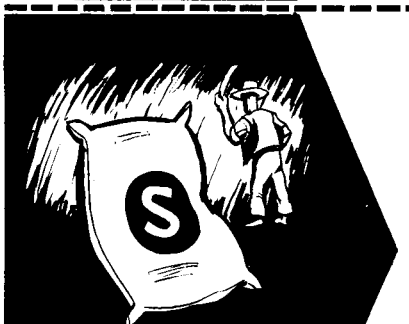


1958 Production	Tons	Value
Copper	54,000	$7,600,000
Manganese	240,000	8,900,000
Iron Ore	96,000	900,000
Nickel	8,000	7,100,000

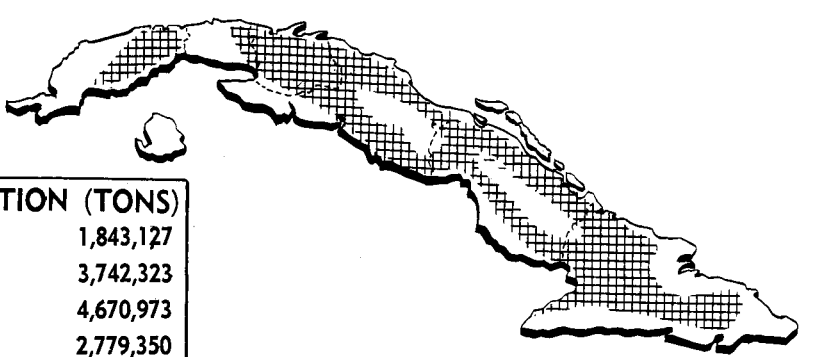


SOIL FERTILITY

GOOD
MEDIUM
POOR TO MEDIUM



SUGAR PRODUCTION



PRODUCTION (TONS)	
1910	1,843,127
1920	3,742,323
1930	4,670,973
1940	2,779,350
1950	5,394,585
1958	5,631,332

Principal producing areas:

informers using the national interest as a flag to cover their personal grafting and to defend the subsistence of the dictatorship; on the other side, the conspirational maneuvers in which ideals and desires, patriotism and greed, programs and personal hatreds are intermixed . . . . The Latin American dictatorship thus constantly fosters perversion, the falsification of values . . . men are promoted for their servility and the administrative function degenerates into a gang of servants. The men who triumph do not do so because of their talents or moral qualities but because of their baseness . . . . And enveloping the entire regime is the weight of the calendar, not one functionary thinking of serving the community or of the future of the country, but only of the day when inevitably he will lose his post and cease to make money easily."

The Castro Revolution

Dr. Fidel Castro Ruz brought into the Cuban dictatorship a new element: a rebellion dedicated and devoted not only to overthrowing the incumbent dictator, but also to the elimination of the professional military forces, especially those of the Army, upon which the dictator had relied. Castro banned from the start any possibility of compromise with any segment of the armed forces, contending that no constitutional civil government could be secure so long as a professional officer corps and a drafted armed force existed in Cuba.

Before beginning his armed rebellion, Castro made a typically quixotic gesture. He asked the high court of Cuba to declare the dictatorship unconstitutional, something the court could not and did not dare to do. Then in another gesture that was more suicidal than quixotic Castro led a small band of devoted youthful followers in a dawn raid on the Moncada Barracks in Santiago de Cuba. Castro's "26 de Julio" Movement takes its name from the date (July 26, 1953) of that raid.

At his subsequent trial for insurrection, Castro defended himself in an astounding, prolonged oration to the judges. He confidently predicted victory for his rebellion and outlined the reforms he would undertake. Then he went to prison, was pardoned (by Batista) after serving part of his sentence, returned to Havana in triumph, went to Mexico, led an invasion party back to Cuba, set up his headquarters in the Sierra Maestra mountains of eastern Cuba, and in about two years of guerrilla fighting brought down the dictatorship of Batista.

Countless factors contributed to this victory but foremost was the conduct of the rebellion. Castro routed Batista by combining the best features of Cuban guerrilla warfare with clever psychological warfare and with an advanced type of political warfare in an organized campaign embodying the strictest kind of disclipine. While relatively powerless in the military sense, Castro played with Batista (and with his American military advisers) as a self-confident cat plays with a hysterical mouse. He made Batista do exactly

what he wanted him to do: convert his rather mild dictatorship into a ruthless tyranny.

The personable, engaging Batista, who had fancied himself a popular hero, was converted by Castro into a bloody beast, an insupportable assassin, who soon became convinced that he could defeat Castro only with more torturing, assassinations, and mass reprisals. When this failed, Batista and his coterie concentrated on their escape with the largest possible booty. This is what Fidel sought. The moral degradation of Batista brought about the moral disintegration of his army; more and more officers and men deserted to Castro and he breezed into victory.

The flight of Batista before dawn on the first day of 1959 was the signal for the beginning of a kaleidoscopic epoch in Cuba. The loss of the city of Santa Clara in Las Villas Province to the rebel forces of Major Ernesto "Che" Guevara, ably assisted by the local populace, seems to have been decisive for Batista. His final gesture before flight was typical. He issued a communiqué announcing the rout of Guevara's forces.

Portentous in light of later developments, Radio Moscow was the channel for the first news of Guevara's victory. It broadcast the story on the day of the event--December 31, 1958--while other news media were quoting Batista's communiqué.

Unconditional surrender followed and Castro made a leisurely, triumphant journey from Oriente to Havana, where he was given a victor's welcome. He had, meanwhile, proclaimed Manuel Urrutia, a judge, as Provisional President and José Miro Cardona, a Havana lawyer and anti-Batista leader, as Prime Minister. Castro was to be the cabinet's "delegate" to the armed forces, the Rebel Army.

Miro Cardona soon discovered that Castro and not the Cabinet was governing; the Prime Minister resigned and Castro took his place, with Major Cienfuegos moving into the command of the Rebel Army. With this organization the first period of the new regime began in January 1959 and ended in July, when Urrutia was removed and Osvaldo Dorticós was named President.

This initial period of about six months saw three principal alterations in Cuban society: (1) the trial and punishment of captured members of the defeated government and the recuperation of wealth acquired under it; (2) the purge of the existing state apparatus and the substitution of a new one dedicated to honest administration and a "people's democracy"; (3) the passage by the Cabinet--there being no legislature--of basic laws aimed at radical changes in the economic system.

The most important of these laws dealt with agrarian reform. It became effective on June 3, 1959, and outlawed big estates (larger than 994 acres

for most owners; 3,316 acres for some); provided for expropriation of property and payment for it in bonds (4 1/2 per cent interest, principal payable in 20 years); for the distribution of land to landless Cubans in small farms (the "vital minimum" being fixed at 66.32 acres); and for the formation of "cooperatives" under the supervision of the National Institute For Agrarian Reform (INRA), a government organization set up by the law and given wide discretionary powers.

Other important laws were Tax Reform (No. 447) including a graduated income tax; Rental Reduction (No. 135) providing for reductions of 50 per cent (rents under $100 per month), 40 per cent (under $200 a month) and 30 per cent (over $200); Compulsory Sales of Unimproved Realty (No. 218); and Securities and Exchange Regulation Law.

The National Institute of Savings and Housing (INAV) was started in March and took over the assets of the National Lottery. And the work of the National Institute for the Tourist Industry (INIT) was started with the construction of scores of recreational facilities.

Partly in an effort to revive United States tourism in Cuba, Castro visited the United States during the spring of 1959; he also went to Venezuela. In both places and occasionally in his lengthy and frequent appearances on television in Cuba, Castro referred to his earlier promise to hold elections within 18 months of his victory. He spoke in a friendly way of the American people. Except for placing a government interventer in the United States-owned Cuban telephone company (while forcing a drastic reduction in rates) and another in the United States-financed electric power utility, Castro did not directly interfere with Cuba's foreign trade or internal business.

Strict control over imports and money, however, were imposed; they seemed justified by the sorry state of Cuban finances inherited from Batista and the inflationary forces inherent in the economy.

July 26, 1959 was a turning point in Castro's Revolution. The day was celebrated as the sixth anniversary of the abortive attack he led on an army barracks in Santiago de Cuba, thus formally initiating his career as an active revolutionist. In 1959 it also marked the end of what might be called the "Urrutia Period" and the start of what can be named the "Dorticós Period." For with the ouster of his first President and the installation of his second, a revolutionary lawyer and theorist, Castro moved from installing and consolidating his power to implementing the Revolution by using it. In the initial stage of the Revolution, wealth had been shifted from private owners to the state but most of it had been, or was alleged to have been, misappropriated wealth acquired dishonestly by its owner in Batista's time. Most of the Cubans who were executed, imprisoned, or purged from the armed forces and bureaucracy during the first period of the Revolution were paying a penalty for their connections with the Batista regime. The laws were "passed"

in the first period; in the second they were enforced, often by action that went beyond the wording of the law. This was especially true in regard to the Agrarian Reform Law.

In the autumn of 1959 the seizures began--of farms and ranches with all their chattels and improvements--without compensation. The Rebel Army, officered by veterans of the insurrection, the ranks filled with country lads (as was the case in the old army), furnished the armed force and INRA the administrators who took over one private property after another. At this time also there were denunciations of Cubans not connected with the Batista regime but charged with being counterrevolutionaries. Many were sentenced to prison and lost their property. The interventions in urban property were stepped up on various pretexts ranging from charges of sabotage to insolvency. Before the end of the year, INRA had become by far the largest enterprise in the history of Cuba: it was beginning to operate a chain of retail stores and it was producing, marketing, and exporting the output of scores upon scores of sugar and agricultural "co-operatives."

The summer of 1959 saw Castro change his approach to the United States. The first major desertion from the revolutionary forces was by the air force chief who shortly after he reached Florida flew back over Havana in a rented plane to drop anti-Castro leaflets. He was met with antiaircraft fire and there were casualties. Castro blamed them on bombings but the evidence pointed to misdirected and dropping antiaircraft shells. The incident became the fuse of violent and continuing verbal attacks upon the United States by Castro and his followers.

Meanwhile Castro's close friend, Major Guevara, had gone to Europe where he visited Communist Governments. On his return he was given a key position in INRA and then the presidency of the National Bank of Cuba, with sufficient power to control the economy. Soon Soviet Vice Premier Mikoyan, who was in Mexico City with a Soviet trade exposition, was invited to bring it to Havana. He did, and the preliminary discussions for a Russo-Cuban trade pact took place.

By the end of the year, it was made clear that Cuba would receive substantial economic assistance from the Soviet Union and its satellites. There was a $100 million long-term credit from Moscow accompanied by large sugar purchases to be spread over a five-year period, with Cuba bound to take correspondingly large imports from Russia. Among the products to come from Russia was petroleum at an announced price below that being paid for Venezuelan petroleum imported by the three foreign refineries operating in Cuba.

The continuing campaign against the United States and the Russo-Cuban trade pact, accompanied by an exchange of ambassadors, heralded the start of a third revolutionary period, beginning in 1960.

If the first period can be named for the ousted first president, Urrutia, and the second for his successor, Dorticós, the third may be named for Castro's sponsor and protector, Nikita Khrushchev. The last is the period when Cuba was brought into the Cold War on the Sino-Soviet side, and with the avowed military protection of the Soviet intercontinental nuclear missile arsenal. This also is the period when Cubans took sides, for and against Castro. Among those seeking haven in exile to oppose him was former Prime Minister Miro Cardona. And among his declared opponents in Cuba were prelates of the Roman Catholic Church.

In the third period, President Dorticós toured Latin America to drum up opposition to the United States, a Cuban-Red Chinese trade pact was made, Castro's brother, Raul, the heir apparent, called on Khrushchev, and the director of INRA made a triumphant tour of Communist Europe.

The nationalization of American-owned property in Cuba was nearly completed; it had started in the spring of 1960 with the expropriation of United Fruit Company lands. Earlier various ranches, farms, and other properties of Americans had been seized. In July, when the oil refineries were seized, the United States cut the quota of shipments of Cuban sugar to the American market and the Soviet Union immediately purchased, (on a 20 per cent cash and 80 per cent barter basis) the tonnage kept out of the United States.

In August the Organization of American States began to discuss Cuban-United States tensions after the United Nations Security Council had postponed action on a Cuban complaint of economic aggression. Castro had become ill the month before but had made some public appearances while his brother Raul proclaimed triumphantly that he had been promised by Khrushchev all the military and economic support Cuba needed.

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