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CASTRO'S CUBA

A REVOLUTION BETRAYED?

Theodore Draper



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

THEODORE DRAPER has spent the last 25 years as a journalist, historian and editor who has specialized in international affairs and American foreign policy, with extended excursions into the history of the American labor movement in general and the American Communist movement in particular. He has worked in and written about France, Germany, Morocco, Haiti, Guatemala, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Cuba and other countries.

The author of four books, his first, *The Six Weeks' War*—a study of the French defeat of 1940—appeared in 1944. His second, *The Battle of Germany*, published in 1946, was the official history of the 84th Infantry Division, the unit with which he served in World War II. When the project on Communism in American Life was formed by the Fund for the Republic, Draper was asked to write the history of the Communist party of the United States from its beginnings to 1945. His first volume in this series, *The Roots of American Communism*, came out in 1957; the second, *American Communism and Soviet Russia*, was issued in May of last year. He plans to start working on the third and final volume, dealing with the period 1930-45, next fall.



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CASTRO'S CUBA

A REVOLUTION BETRAYED?

By Theodore Draper

WHO is Fidel Castro? What is he? After two years in power, he still evades both his defenders and detractors. In the first months of his regime, Castro used to speak of "humanism," which he defined as "liberty with bread without terror"—hardly a political or social program. But after trying it out a few times, he dropped it in favor of even more ambiguous formulas. When he or his associates were asked what kind of society they were building or what it should be called, they usually answered that they were building "a reality, not a theory," or that they were interested "in deeds, not words," or that their revolution was "indigenously Cuban." Castro still refuses to be pinned down to anything more definite and, until he commits himself, the question officially remains open.

At a youth congress in Havana last August, however, Ernesto Guevara, Minister of Industry and former president of the National Bank of Cuba—whose bank notes are signed with his nickname, "Ché," nothing more—took a long step toward giving the regime an ideology and a name. Since Guevara is the ideological *éminence grise* of Castro's regime, he has a habit of saying today what Castro will say tomorrow. He said: "What is our ideology? If I were asked whether our revolution is Communist, I would define it as Marxist. Our revolution has discovered by its methods the paths that Marx pointed out." In "Notes for the Study of the Ideology of the Cuban Revolution," published last October in the magazine *Verde Olivo*, Guevara wrote: "The principal actors of this revolution had no coherent theoretical criteria; but it cannot be said that they were ignorant of the various concepts of history, society, economics and revolution which are being discussed in the world today." Then he declared: "We, practical revolutionaries, initiating our own struggle, simply fulfill laws foreseen by Marx the scientist."

These statements raise more intriguing questions than they pretend to answer. Did Guevara mean to imply that the ideology was "Marxist" but not "Communist?" Was it the "Marxism" of the Communists or some other "Marxism?" Did Fidel, Guevara and the others really come upon Marxism as if they were bright but naive children rediscovering the roundness of the earth? Could the "laws" of "Marx the scientist," which have not been fulfilled anywhere else, be fulfilled in the little island of Cuba by those who did not know what they were doing until after they had done it?

Guevara's explanation obviously explains too little or too much. But

Castro, Guevara and other Cuban leaders have spoken much more freely and at far greater length to a chosen few who have become their foreign interpreters and apologists. This growing band, however, has not had an easy time of it, and has been forced to do much of the theorizing that the Cubans have refused to do for themselves. In time, every revolution has created its own mythology but, in this case, these foreign sympathizers, in lieu of embracing one ready-made, have had to produce their own. Each of these sympathizers has made his own characteristic contribution to this mythology which, if nothing else, tells us what those who feel closest to Castro make of him. The situation is undoubtedly an oddity but, then, the Cuban revolution is an odd one.

1. THE MYTH MAKERS

ONE OF THE FIRST and favorite myths has been that of Castro's "peasant revolution."

It turned up in the articles written and interviews given by the French writers, Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, who spent March 1960 in Cuba. After the usual hectic round of short trips and long talks, Sartre wrote a series of 16 articles in *France-soir*. In one of them he related how he had informed the Cubans that, like the Chinese, they had made a "peasant revolution." The Cuban reaction, he reported, was divided: the "bearded ones" (those who had fought in the mountains) agreed with him; the "unbearded ones" (those who had fought in the resistance movements in the cities) maintained that the peasants had fought little or badly and that the revolution had sprung from the cities.

Mme. de Beauvoir gave a somewhat different version in an interview in *France Observateur*. She said that the petty-bourgeoisie had begun by stirring up the urban revolution while the peasants had held back; then, bit by bit, the peasants had joined in, the "immediate interests" of the victorious revolution had become those of the peasant class, and thus "despite its origins, the urban revolution can be considered a peasant revolution."

As a full-fledged theory, however, the Cuban peasant revolution made its appearance in the book, *Cuba, Anatomy of a Revolution*, by Leo Huberman and Paul M. Sweezy, editors of the magazine, *Monthly Review*. After three weeks in Cuba, they were persuaded that the revolution had succeeded because the peasants as a class had actively joined the rebels and had become "one with the revolutionary army." Fidel Castro appeared to them to be "the embodiment of the revolutionary will and energy of the peasantry." As for the kind of system that this peasant revolution had brought forth, Huberman and Sweezy "have no hesitation in answering: *the new Cuba is a socialist Cuba.*"

Six months later, they paid another three-week visit to Cuba. By this time, the Castro regime had nationalized a large part of the Cuban economy. This development caused them to revise their previous estimate—the Cuban revolution was no longer "essentially a peasant revolution" because the working class had finally been "swept" into it. Castro himself had not yet

reached the point of calling himself a "Marxist," but the two visitors conferred on him the distinction of having arrived, by virtue of his own "rich experience" and "sharp and fertile mind," at an "unmistakably Marxist" interpretation in a way that would have made Marx himself "prone to acknowledge him as a disciple." Despite Castro's "modesty," however, they heard so much about a socialist Cuba that it had become a "commonplace," in contrast to their first trip, during which no one had spoken to them of Cuba as a socialist country, and socialism was not even included among the revolution's ultimate goals.

And so, in the spring of 1960, a new path to socialism was discovered—a peasant revolution led by the middle-class son of a wealthy landowner. And in the fall of 1960, there was more certainty than ever of the socialist revolution in Cuba because the working class had at last caught up with it.¹

Other Castro sympathizers have gone farther. Paul Johnson of the British weekly, *New Statesman*, took a quick look at Cuba and reported that Castro had come to power through a "peasant revolution" but governs through "a genuine dictatorship of the proletariat," expressed through the "arbitrary" rule of one man. In the *New Republic*, Professor Samuel Schapiro, an American academic advocate for Castro, merely limited himself to commenting that "the heart of the revolution, the land reform program, is essentially Marxist." And C. Wright Mills of Columbia University has made an anthology of all the things that Castro and his closest associates say of themselves, at least as of last August.

Professor Mills' recently published book, *Listen, Yankee!* is a peculiarly useful and exasperating work. It purports to be "the voice of the Cuban revolutionary," not that of its author. From the conversations I had in Cuba last April, I can testify that the Castro leaders talk much in the way Mills has recorded them. Sometimes the words in the book were so close to those I had heard that I felt I knew the name of the source. To this extent, Mills has made himself the vehicle of the purest and most direct propaganda, unlike the others who talked to more or less the same people but passed on in their own name what they had been told. No one ever said "Listen, Yankee!" or "Yankee this" and "Yankee that" to me, but except for this touch of artistic license, I consider these long monologues more or less authentic. Anyone who wants to get the Castro party line most nakedly can get it here.

Nevertheless, Mills has put his name to the book and in the last few pages gives the Castro case his personal endorsement. He says that he leaves it to the reader to agree or disagree with the points in it, as if there might be one non-Cuban reader in a hundred or a thousand with the necessary background. A reader has a right to expect that the author should do some work of his own beyond listening only to one side, and that a sociologist would at least be able to give a reasonably accurate report of

¹ In their book, Huberman and Sweezy devote less than a page to the working class, compared to pages about the peasantry, and they vaguely suggest far more working-class support for the revolution before 1959 than was actually the case. In part of one sentence elsewhere in the book, however, they admit that "growing support among urban workers" came to Castro after he took power. In the subsequent article in the "Monthly Review" of December 1960, they imply the peculiar "backwardness" of the Cuban workers by writing that "the nationalizations of the summer and fall have swept the working class into the revolutionary process."

the social structure of the country. The book as a whole is just as honest and dishonest as any unrelieved propaganda is likely to be, and if Mills merely sought to be a front man for the Castro propaganda machine, he has succeeded brilliantly. But is that all that should be expected of C. Wright Mills?

Mills' Cubans—one never knows where they end and he begins—are not altogether in agreement with Sweezy and Huberman. First, Mills tells what the revolution was *not*—"not a fight between peasants and landowners, or between wage workers and capitalists—either Cuban or Yankee; nor was it a direct nationalist battle between Cubans and foreigners." It was "not an 'economically determined' revolution—either in its origins or in its sources." Nor was it "a revolution by labor unions or wage workers in the city, or by labor parties, or by anything like that." What was it then? The leaders were "young intellectuals and students from the University of Havana"—they are also called "a few middle-class students and intellectuals"—who made "a lot of first moves for a long time before some of their moves began to pay off." The revolution "really began" when, in one of these moves, "a handful of these young intellectuals really got together with the peasants."

Thus Mills' version contains no nonsense about a "peasant revolution"; it merely claims that the decisive forces in the insurrectionary period were the intellectuals and the peasants, with the former in total command. There is also no nonsense about the workers making the revolution; they are said to have joined in after the victory, and their "revolutionary consciousness" has allegedly been aroused only in recent months. At this point, however, mythology takes over and Mills also has the workers superseding the peasants as a revolutionary force. But the greatest nonsense is written about the middle class. The original "handful" of leaders admittedly came exclusively from that class. Nevertheless, the mythology requires that "the middle classes generally supported the revolution, at least in a passive way, during the insurrectionary period, although as a class they had little to do with making it." I take it this means that most members of the middle class supported the revolution passively or not at all.

Mills has also compiled a number of programmatic statements by Castro's group. There is still the old reluctance to be pinned down to anything definite, because a "political system" would hamper the leaders, because very few people care about it anyway, or because the very lack of a system proves that it is democratic. But this motif slides gently into another one: "We ourselves don't quite know what to call what we are building, and we don't care. It is, of course, socialism of a sort." Or, whatever the system is, the Cubans discovered it all by themselves: "In so far as we are Marxist or Leftist (or Communist, if you will) in our revolutionary development and thought, it is not due to any prior commitment in our ideology. It is because of our own development." Still later in the book, Castro's Cuba becomes "a dictatorship of, by and for the peasants and the workers of Cuba" or "a dictatorship of the people." Mills himself considers Castro's regime to be "a revolutionary dictatorship of the peasants and workers of Cuba" in which one man possesses "virtually absolute power."

All these theories by Sartre and de Beauvoir, Huberman and Sweezy,

Johnson and Schapiro, Mills' Cubans and Mills, cannot be true but they have one thing in common—they serve the purpose of concealing the fact that the Cuban revolution was essentially a middle-class revolution which has been used to destroy the middle class. And without understanding this apparent contradiction, very little can be understood of Castro's Cuba as a social system.

2. TERROR AND COUNTERTERROR

TO BEGIN WITH, what truth is there in Castro's "peasant revolution?" The 32 men under Castro who invaded Cuba from Mexico in December 1956 and the 12 who survived to fight in the mountainous Sierra Maestra at the eastern end of the island all came from the middle class. Castro himself was their ideal representative—son of a rich landowner, university graduate, lawyer. The *guajiros*, or peasants, in the mountains were utterly alien to most of them. But they had to win the confidence of the peasants to obtain food, to protect themselves from dictator Fulgencio Batista's spies and soldiers, to gain new recruits. As the months passed, the relations between them and the peasants took on a new dimension. The crying poverty, illiteracy, disease and primitivism of the outcast peasants appalled the young city-bred ex-students. Out of this experience, partly practical and partly emotional, came a determination to revolutionize Cuban society by raising the lowest and most neglected sector to a civilized level of well-being and human dignity.

But, for over a year, Castro's fighting force was so small that he did not expect to overthrow Batista from the mountains.² Victory was foreseen through the vastly larger resistance movement in the cities, overwhelmingly middle class in composition. This calculation was behind the ill-fated general strike of April 9, 1958.³ It failed because the middle class could not carry off a general strike. Only the workers and trade unions could do so, and they refused mainly for two reasons: they were doing too well under Batista to take the risk, and the official Cuban Communists deliberately sabotaged the strike because they had not been consulted and no attempt was made to reach an agreement with them in advance. Without the key transport workers under Communist leadership, the strike was doomed. The National Committee of the Communist party, known since the last war as the *Partido Socialista Popular*, issued a statement (on April 12, 1958), a copy of which I have seen, blaming the fiasco on the "unilateral call" for the strike by the leadership of Castro's 26th of July Movement in Havana under Faustino Pérez.⁴

² Castro himself described his isolated and near-desperate situation in his letter of December 31st, 1957, to the so-called Council of Liberation: "For those who are fighting against an army incomparable in number and in arms, without any support during a whole year other than the dignity with which we are fighting for a cause which we love sincerely and the conviction that it is worth while to die for it, bitterly forgotten by fellow-countrymen who, in spite of having all the ways and means, have systematically (not to say criminality) denied us their help. . . ." The entire document is contained in Jules Dubois' "Fidel Castro" (1959), to this date the best documentary source, though its pro-Castro bias has been regretted and repudiated by its author.

³ Castro's manifesto of March 12th, 1958, reads in part: ". . . 2. That the strategy of the final stroke should be based on the general revolutionary strike, to be seconded by military action. . . ."

⁴ Declaraciones del P.S.P., 12 de abril de 1958.

In the mountains at this time, Mills was told, the armed men under Castro numbered only about 300. Four months later, in August 1958, the two columns commanded by Majors Guevara and Camilo Cienfuegos, entrusted with the mission of cutting the island in two, the biggest single rebel operation of the entire struggle, amounted, according to Guevara, to 220 men.⁶ Sartre was informed that the total number of *barbudos* in all Cuba from beginning to end was only 3,000. Castro's fighting force was until the end so minute that it hardly deserves to be called an army, let alone a "peasant army," and even the influx of the last four or five months failed to give it anything like a mass character. In any case, the character of an army is established by its leadership and cadres, which remained exclusively middle class throughout, and not by its common soldiers—or every army in the world would similarly be an army of the peasantry and proletariat.

How could such a small band "defeat" Batista's Army of over 40,000?

The answer is that it did not defeat Batista's Army in any military sense. It succeeded in making Batista destroy himself. Until the spring of 1958, life in most of Cuba went on much as usual. But the fiasco of the April strike forced Castro to change his tactics. Disappointed in his hopes of a mass uprising, he shifted over to full-scale guerrilla warfare—bombings, sabotage, hit-and-run raids. Batista's answer to the terror was counterterror. The Army and Secret Police struck back blindly, indiscriminately, senselessly. The students, blamed as the main trouble makers, were their chief victims. It became safer for young men to take to the hills than to walk in the streets. The orgy of murders, tortures and brutalities sent tremors of fear and horror through the entire Cuban people and especially the middle-class parents of the middle-class students.

This universal revulsion in the last six months of Batista's rule penetrated and permeated his own Army and made it incapable of carrying out the offensive which it launched in May against Castro's hideout. As Mills' book says, Batista's Army "just evaporated." The engagements between the two sides were so few and inconclusive that Batista's abdication caught Castro by surprise. The real victor in this struggle was not Castro's "peasant army" but the entire Cuban people. The heaviest losses were suffered by the largely middle-class urban resistance movement, which secreted the political and psychological acids that ate into Batista's fighting force; Sartre was told that Batista's Army and police killed 1,000 *barbudos* in the last clashes in the mountains and 19,000 in the urban resistance movement.

Castro's guerrilla tactics, then, aimed not so much at "defeating" the enemy as at inducing him to lose his head, fight terror with counterterror on the largest possible scale, and make life intolerable for the ordinary citizen. These tactics can be employed by even a few hundred rebels, and they are now being applied against the democratic government of Romulo Betancourt in Venezuela. The same terror that Castro used against Batista is now being used against Castro. And Castro has responded with counterterror, just as Batista did.

3. THE PROMISED LAND

THE STRUGGLE for power also helps to answer the question: Was the Cuban revolution "betrayed?" The answer obviously depends on what revolution one has in mind—the revolution that Castro promised before taking power, or the one he has made since taking power.

Huberman and Sweezy have written: "Fidel had made his promises and was determined to carry them out, faithfully and to the letter." But neither they, nor Mills, nor Sartre, ever say what these promises were. The oversight has been a necessary part of the mythology.

I have made a brief inventory of the promises, political and economic, made by Castro from his "History Will Absolve Me" speech (at his trial in 1953) to the end of 1958. These promises have already become so embarrassing that some of his literary champions have begun to rewrite history (after less than two years!) by avoiding all mention of them.⁶

Political:

- Castro's 1953 speech predicted that the first revolutionary law would be restoration of the 1940 Constitution and made an allusion to a "government of popular election."

- Castro's manifesto of July 1957, his first political declaration from the Sierra Maestra, contained a "formal promise" of general elections at the end of one year and an "absolute guarantee" of freedom of information, press, and all individual and political rights guaranteed by the 1940 Constitution.

- Castro's letter of December 14, 1957, to the Cuban exiles upheld the "prime duty" of the post-Batista provisional government to hold general elections and the right of political parties, even during the provisional government, to put forward programs, organize, and participate in the elections.

- In an article in *Coronet* magazine of February 1958, Castro wrote of fighting for a "genuine representative government," "truly honest" general elections within 12 months, "full and untrammelled" freedom of public information and all communication media, and re-establishment of all personal and political rights set forth in the 1940 Constitution. The greatest irony is that he defended himself against the accusation "of plotting to replace military dictatorship with revolutionary dictatorship."

- In his answers to Jules Dubois of May 1958, Castro pledged "full enforcement" of the 1940 Constitution and "a provisional government of entirely civilian character that will return the country to normality and hold general elections within a period of no more than one year."

- In the unity manifesto of July 1958, Castro agreed "to guide our

⁶ Castro's pre-1959 promises are dealt with by Huberman and Sweezy in a peculiar way. Twelve-and-a-half pages of the 1953 speech are cited, but omitted is the five-point program on which he said the revolution was based. This program began: "The first revolutionary law would have restored sovereignty to the people and proclaimed the Constitution of 1940 as the true supreme law of the state, until such time as the people should decide to modify it or to change it." The others provided for grants of land to small planters and peasants, with indemnification to the former owners; the right of workers to share in profits; a greater share of the cane crop to all planters; and confiscation of all illegally obtained property.

While the speech makes other important points, this is the only itemized program in it, and it is hard to see how its omission can be justified. The unity pact of July 1958 is handled in the same way. It contained three points: a common strategy, postwar "normality," and "a minimum governmental program." I have quoted the second point in full in the text. Huberman and Sweezy cite a paragraph in this unity pact which asked the U.S. to cease all military and other types of aid to Batista, but ignore the three-point program, which might have put Castro's promises in a somewhat different light. Mills simply ignores the whole collection of Castro's pre-power pledges.

⁶ Verde Olivo, October 8, 1960.

nation, after the fall of the tyrant, to normality by instituting a brief provisional government that will lead the country to full constitutional and democratic procedures."

Economic:

- In the 1953 speech, Castro supported grants of land to small planters and peasants, with indemnification to the former owners; the rights of workers to share in profits; a greater share of the cane crop to all planters; and confiscation of all illegally obtained property. His land reform advocated maximum holdings for agricultural enterprises and the distribution of remaining land to farming families; it also provided for encouragement of "agricultural cooperatives for the common use of costly equipment, cold storage plants, and a single professional technical direction in cultivation and breeding." In addition, the speech expressed the intention of nationalizing the electric and telephone companies.

- The manifesto of July 1957 defined the agrarian reform as distribution of barren lands, with prior indemnification, and conversion of share-croppers and squatters into proprietors of the lands worked on.

- The *Coronet* article favored a land reform to give peasants clear title to the land, with "just compensation of expropriated owners." It declared that Castro had no plans for expropriating or nationalizing foreign investments and that he had suspended an earlier program to extend government ownership to public utilities. On nationalization, he wrote:

I personally have come to feel that nationalization is, at best, a cumbersome instrument. It does not seem to make the state any stronger, yet it enfeebles private enterprise. Even more importantly, any attempt at wholesale nationalization would obviously hamper the principal point of our economic platform—industrialization at the fastest possible rate. For this purpose, foreign investments will always be welcome and secure here.

- In May 1958, he assured his biographer, Jules Duhois:

Never has the 26th of July Movement talked about socializing or nationalizing the industries. This is simply stupid fear of our revolution. We have proclaimed from the first day that we fight for the full enforcement of the Constitution of 1940, whose norms establish guarantees, rights and obligations for all the elements that have a part in production. Comprised therein is free enterprise and invested capital as well as many other economic, civic, and political rights.

- The unity manifesto of July 1958, which was written by Castro, merely called for:

A minimum governmental program that will guarantee the punishment of the guilty ones, the rights of the workers, the fulfilment of

international commitments, public order, peace, freedom, as well as the economic, social, and political progress of the Cuban people.

Such were the promises that Fidel had made. The near-unanimity with which Castro's victory was accepted in January 1959 was the result not merely of his heroic struggle and glamorous beard but of the political consensus which he appeared to embody. This consensus had resulted from the democratic disappointments of 1944-52 and the Batista despotism of 1952-58. There was broad agreement that Cuba could never go back to the corrupt brand of democracy of the past, and the Cuban middle class was ready for deep-going social and political reforms to make impossible another Prio Socarras and another Batista. Castro promised to restore Cuban democracy and make it work, not a "direct" or "people's" democracy but the one associated with the 1940 Constitution which was so radical that much of it, especially the provision for agrarian reform, was never implemented.

It is, moreover, unthinkable that Castro could have won power if he had given the Cuban people the slightest forewarning of what he has presented them with—a wholly government-controlled press and all other means of communication, ridicule of elections, wholesale confiscation and socialization, "cooperatives" that are (as Huberman and Sweezy admit) virtually "state farms," or a dictatorship of any kind, including that of the proletariat. It was precisely the kind of promises Castro made that enabled him to win the support of the overwhelming majority of the Cuban middle and other classes; a "peasant revolution" would hardly have been expressed in quite the same way.

The least that can be said, therefore, is that Castro promised one kind of revolution and made another. The revolution Castro promised was unquestionably betrayed.

4. THE SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION

THE CASTRO mythology tends to distort not only the original nature of the Cuban revolution but also the character of Cuban society.

Pages are written by Huberman and Sweezy about the peasantry, a single paragraph about the working class, and almost nothing about the middle class. Mills never seems to have made up his mind which Cubans were speaking through him. Judging by his own list of the Cubans who spoke to him, there was not a worker, and certainly not a peasant, in the lot. Without exception, his informants were middle-class intellectuals and professionals of the type in power. Sometimes he makes them speak in their own name; more often they masquerade as the most impoverished and miserable of Cuban peasants. They say, "we squatted on the edge of the road in our filthy huts," as if they were the "we" and as if this was typical of all Cubans. The average reader might imagine that Cuba was nothing but "a place of misery and filth, illiteracy and exploitation and sloth." This may be a triumph of propaganda but it is a travesty of sociology.

Cuba before Castro was, indeed, a country with serious social problems, but it was far from being a peasant country or even a typically "underdeveloped" one. Its population was more urban than rural: 57 per cent in the urban areas and 43 per cent in the rural, with the trend strongly in favor of the former (according to the *Geografía de Cuba* written by Antonio Núñez Jiménez, the present director of the Agrarian Reform Institute). The people dependent on agriculture for a living made up about 40 per cent, and of these over one-quarter were classified as farmers and ranchers. In 1954, the national income was divided as follows: the sugar industry, agricultural and industrial, 25 per cent; other agriculture, 13 per cent; other industry and commerce, 40 per cent; everything else, 21 per cent.

The standard of living, low by U.S. and West European standards, was comparatively high by Latin American; only three countries, Venezuela, Argentina and Chile, rated above Cuba in per capita income; Cuba's was almost as high as Italy's and much higher than Japan's. Cuba ranked fifth in Latin America in manufacturing, behind Brazil, Argentina, Mexico and Chile. Cuba had one automobile for every 39 inhabitants (in Argentina, 60; Mexico, 91; Brazil, 158), and one radio for every five inhabitants (second to Argentina, with one out of three). Cuban tourists were able to spend more in the United States than American tourists spent in Cuba. After World War II, Cuban interests were strong enough to buy a substantial share of U.S.-owned sugar production which fell from 70-80 per cent of the total at its high point in the 1930s to about 35 per cent in 1958. Government encouragement of "Cubanization" would easily have cut the figure in half again in a short time under a post-Batista democratic regime.

I am not trying to suggest that Cuba's economy was a healthy one. It was precariously dependent on the fluctuations of a single crop, sugar, which accounted for more than 80 per cent of Cuban exports and employed about a half million workers for only three to four months a year. As the rates of illiteracy show—41.7 per cent in the rural areas and only 11.6 per cent in the urban areas—the social development of Cuba was shockingly unbalanced in favor of the cities and towns, and Castro's crusade for the peasantry has repaid the Cuban upper and middle classes for decades of indifference to the welfare of the land workers.

But this is not the same thing as implying (as Mills often does) that Cuba was nothing but a land of backward, illiterate, diseased, starving peasants. When he writes, "We speak Spanish, we are mainly rural, and we are poor," the first statement is undoubtedly correct, the second is demonstrably false, and the third is partly true. Cuba was one of the most middle-class countries in Latin America.

In effect, this mythology of the Cuban social structure makes Castro's victory inexplicable. If a "handful" of middle-class "students and intellectuals" had the active support of only a few hundred or even a few thousand peasants, without either the working or middle classes (as Mills maintains), the Batista regime would never have toppled. It was the desertion of the middle class—on which Batista's power was based—that caused his regime to disintegrate from within and his Army to evaporate.

5. ECLIPSE OF A MOVEMENT

CASTRO'S "BETRAYAL" of the Cuban revolution has also taken another form.

When Batista fell, two movements entered into competition—Castro's 26th of July Movement (named after the date of his first unsuccessful attempt in 1953) and the official Communist party, the *Partido Socialista Popular*. The odds seemed to favor the former overwhelmingly. In his first victory address at Camp Liberty, Castro spoke of the popular sympathy and almost unanimous support of the Cuban youth which the 26th of July Movement enjoyed, and he appeared to argue that there was no need for any other movement.

But a different fate soon awaited the 26th of July Movement. The reason, as it was explained to Mme. de Beauvoir, is most revealing:

The 26th of July Movement, from which the revolution issued, had an apparatus, but a petty-bourgeois one, which could not follow the revolution in the radicalization that has been proceeding since the taking of power; it was not capable of going along with the advance of the agrarian reform. So it was permitted to fall away.

Mme. de Beauvoir passes on this information without the slightest indication that there might have been something unwholesome in this procedure. But apart from the justification for Castro's decision to eviscerate his own movement, she confirms the middle-class character of that movement and Castro's political reason for condemning it to a nominal existence—the difference between its revolution and his.

Not so long ago also, there was no higher honor in Castro's Cuba than to belong to the rebel army. It was the chief basis of Castro's rule; army men actually ran the country through ostensibly civilian organizations, such as the Agrarian Reform Institute. When Huberman and Sweezy first visited Cuba last March, they reported that "from January 1, 1959, to this day the real power has always been in the revolutionary army, manned and nourished by as radical a social class as any in the world today"—the Cuban peasantry. But on their second visit six months later, they noted the "(relative) eclipse" of the rebel army and the officially inspired rise of the large, amorphous militia. Indeed, in their December 1960 article, they no longer refer to it as the rebel army; it had become the "regular army." Instead of the "truly most remarkable relations of solidarity, trust, and understanding" between Castro and the army at the time of their book, they intimated that it had become a potential counterrevolutionary force, typical of Latin American "standing armies." Once the rebel army's peasant character had been its greatest glory; now it had apparently become a serious drawback. *Bohemia Libre*, the edition in exile of Cuba's most famous magazine, has gone so far as to say editorially that the rebel army "already does not exist." In any case, it has gone the way of the 26th of July Movement.

The fate of David Salvador, the outstanding labor leader of the 26th of July Movement, tells the same story. Before Batista fell, Salvador represented the underground group, "Labor Unity," and coordinated the resistance within the working class. At a time when the official Cuban Communists opposed Castro as a "putschist," Salvador believed in him and in the last period of Batista's rule went to jail for his underground activity. After the victory, he took over the leadership of the Cuban labor movement for the 26th of July Movement and served as secretary general of the Cuban trade union federation. At its national congress in November 1959, however, Salvador's fortunes suddenly changed. The 26th of July Movement would have scored an overwhelming victory over the Communists, if Fidel Castro himself had not unexpectedly appeared at the congress, berated the delegates for "having given proof neither of prudence, nor of unity, nor of anything," and demanded, in effect, the installation of a triumvirate in the federation's leadership, including the pro-Communist candidate, Jesús Soto. The real leader soon became Soto, not Salvador, whom the Communist organ, *Hoy*, began to attack openly for his "strange attitude."

With his family, David Salvador was caught in November 1960 trying to escape from Cuba in a small boat, and he has again been cast into prison, this time by Batista's successor, Fidel Castro. The trade unions have lost even the bargaining power they had under Batista; they have become propaganda appendages of the Ministry of Labor which makes all decisions on wages and conditions, Soviet-style.

What does all this mean? In his own 26th of July Movement, in the rebel army and in the labor movement, Castro has shunted aside the very ones who helped him in the struggle for power. He has done so, as Mme. de Beauvoir has hinted, because they were led to expect a different revolution from the one he is making. The 26th of July Movement was sacrificed first because it was the embryo of a political party. It could grow into a full-fledged party or become an empty shell. The rebel army has never recovered from the shock of Castro's persecution of one of his closest former comrades-in-arms, Major Hubert Matos, who was sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment for having protested against the favoritism shown to Communists in the army. As Mills remarks in *Listen, Yankee!*, "that was the biggest blow."

The "mass assemblies" and amorphous militias now suit Castro's purposes better because they are so impersonal and anonymous. The individuals in the outdoor spectacles have a direct relationship only to Castro personally, not to each other. The demonstrations are as "democratic" as Hitler's Nuremberg rallies and Mussolini's balcony speeches once were.

The 26th of July Movement and the rebel army were more than Castro's personal emanations; their members were bound by a cause for which they had fought and sacrificed together. That cause went back to a period before Castro's personal rule and to a revolution waged against personal rule. That Castro could not live with the 26th of July Movement and the rebel army is more than faintly reminiscent of Stalin's need to abolish the Society of Old Bolsheviks.

6. THE TWO REVOLUTIONS

LUKEWARM lemonade helped Jean-Paul Sartre to understand the nature of Castro's "democracy."

One day, as he tells the story, Castro invited Mme. de Beauvoir and himself on an "inspection tour" of the Veradero beach. Soon the party stopped at a little refreshment stand. Castro offered them some lemonade. He started to drink some himself, put down his glass, and said loudly: "It's lukewarm." Then the following dialogue ensued:

"Don't you have refrigerators?" Castro asked.

"Sure we do," the waitress said. "But they don't work."

"Have you reported it to your superior?"

"Of course, last week. And it isn't a big job," she added familiarly. "An electrician could do it in two hours of work."

"And no one has been ordered to make the repairs?"

She shrugged her shoulders. "You know how it is," she added.

And this is Sartre's comment on the scene:

"It was the first time that I understood—still somewhat vaguely—what I called the other day 'direct democracy.' Between the waitress and Castro, an immediate secret understanding (*connivence*) was established. . . ."

Castro was not yet satisfied. Sartre relates how Castro insisted on going over to the delinquent refrigerator and vainly tried to fix it himself. At length, Castro turned to the young waitress and muttered: "Tell your superiors that if they don't get busy on their problems, they will have problems with me."

One reads and wonders. Could it really be that this banal and somewhat embarrassing little scene convinced the famous and worldly French philosopher that Castro's Cuba was—not an ordinary kind of democracy but—a "direct democracy?" Involuntarily, my mind went back to some experiences in the Dominican Republic a few years ago. There, too, the *Líder Máximo*, who prefers being called *El Jefe*, liked to visit his domain, see his subjects personally and settle problems on the spot.⁷ To my dismay, I discovered that there was much to be said for his regime in purely physical terms, that the peasants worshipped him, that he could have won honest elections quite as overwhelmingly as his fixed elections, and that the only ones who seemed disturbed were a few intellectuals and other dubious middle-class characters. It was easy to imagine the same scene played by *El Jefe*, the young waitress, lukewarm lemonade, and the refrigerator that wouldn't work, except perhaps that *El Jefe*, having had much more time, no longer permitted lukewarm lemonade under any circumstances. But the greatest blow of all came one day when I entered into a philosophical discussion with a leading official and asked whether *El Jefe's* unique system had a name. Gravely and courteously, he answered: "neo-democracy." I must have flushed in anger. If only they would leave "democracy" alone! If Generalissimo

⁷ One of Castro's titles is also "El Jefe de la Revolución," as on the front page of the leading semi-official newspaper, "Revolución," December 16, 1960. The same issue contains two "líder máximo."

Rafael Leonidas Trujillo was the leader of a democracy, even a "neo-democracy," who was not?

At bottom, all these "neo" and "direct" democracies rest on a simple proposition; that the Leader and his people are one and indivisible. Hence they need no representative institutions, no elections, no loyal or disloyal oppositions, no free or partially critical press, none of the rights and safeguards traditionally associated with a democracy.

The horror of this thinking is that it wipes out the lessons to be learned from the most desperate and tragic experiences of our time. If there is anything that should have burned itself into our consciousness, it is the excruciating evil of the popular despot, the beloved dictator, the mass Leader. The *connivence* which Sartre imagined between Castro and the waitress existed between Hitler and a too large portion of the German people and between Trujillo and an even larger portion of the Dominican people. More horrible still is the fact that, with the whole modern machinery of propaganda at their disposal, the Leaders can manufacture a reasonable facsimile of popular consent even if they may not have it to start out with. Is it necessary at this late date to recall these terrible lessons to Jean-Paul Sartre? Could he have survived the "direct democracy" that he recommends to the Cubans?

Castro's "democracy" poses awkward problems for all his apologists. Their argument runs: (a) Castro could win any election overwhelmingly and, therefore, (b) elections are unnecessary or harmful and, anyway, (c) all previous Cuban elections were crooked. Here, again, it seems necessary to recall the ABC of democracy to people who pride themselves on being the only real democrats. The democratic mandate is not one that once given cannot be revoked; it is of the essence of democratic consent that it must be periodically renewed. Most observers estimated Castro's popular support at 90 per cent or more in January 1959, and at 75 per cent or more a year later, but it may well be, as some claim, that the figure has been cut to 50 per cent or less at the present time. It is no longer certain that he could win any election overwhelmingly or at all.

There have been three stages in Castro's attitude towards elections. First, he promised them. Then he said they were not immediately feasible. Now he ridicules them. In effect, he once said: "Cuba has never had an honest election and a truly free press. I will show Cuba how to have them." Now he says: "Cuba has never had an honest election and a truly free press. Therefore, Cuba has no right to have them under me." Here, in essence, are the two revolutions of Fidel Castro.

The problem of elections is evaded by the counteroffer of something even better. Huberman and Sweezy write: "What we do maintain is that the revolution itself gives the Government a far more democratic mandate than the freest of free elections ever could, and that it is the sacred duty of the Government to *carry out* the oft-announced platform of the revolution before it comes back to the people asking for either approval or further instructions." What revolution? What platform? The revolution to restore the Constitution of 1940 and hold elections in 12-18 months? Or the revolution against the Constitution and against elections for an indefinite period? How can the

Government come *back* to the people for "approval" and "further instructions" when it has never once gone to them for approval or instructions?

The reference to the "oft-announced platform of the revolution" is simply incredible. Huberman and Sweezy might have been less tempted to make it if they had not successfully avoided stating that platform. They themselves tell a story which belies it. According to them, the first draft of the agrarian reform law contained no provision for cooperatives. All the revolutionaries around Castro believed that the peasants were not ready for them. The decision to have them was made by Castro alone against the better judgment of his closest advisers and adherents. By Huberman and Sweezy's own admission, then, Castro did not carry out "the oft-announced platform of the revolution" as anyone else had understood it in this key area; he carried out a basic revision of that platform to the surprise of everyone but Fidel Castro.⁸

But there is something even more deeply objectionable to this reasoning. It implies that anyone who claims to possess the true idea of the revolution confers on himself a more democratic mandate than any of the people, even in the freest of free elections, can give him. The next step—and revolutionists have taken it—is to say that it is "democratic" to make the revolution without the people or despite the people—in, of course, the people's interest. Out of such revolutions have invariably come the worst tyrannies.

7. SCAPEGOAT HISTORY

WHILE SOME writers see everything but Communism in Castro, others see nothing but Communism. The most extreme version of this second school of thought may be found in the book, *Red Star Over Cuba*, by Nathaniel Weyl. Weyl knew the international Communist movement from the inside during the 1930s—he has testified that he once belonged to the same American party unit as Alger Hiss—and he has also written a book on Mexico's agrarian reform under ex-President Lázaro Cárdenas. There is no indication,

⁸ The present-day Cuban "cooperatives" are usually traced back to Castro's "History Will Absolve Me" speech in 1953. A careful reading of the key passage in that speech hardly bears this out.

"A revolutionary government, after transferring the ownership of parcels of land to the one hundred thousand small farmers who today pay rent, would proceed to a definite solution of the land problem by, first: establishing, as the Constitution orders, a maximum acreage for each type of agricultural enterprise and acquiring the excess acreage by means of expropriation, recovering lands usurped from the State, filling in swamp and marsh lands, planting vast tracts and reserving zones for reforestation; second, distributing the remaining land among farming families with preference given to the largest ones, encouraging agricultural cooperatives for the common use of costly equipment, cold storage, and a uniform professional direction in cultivation and breeding; and, finally, to facilitate assistance, equipment, protection, and useful knowledge to the farming population." ("Pensamiento Político, Económico y Social de Fidel Castro," Editorial Lex, Havana, 1959, pp. 44-45).

I have purposely translated this passage in its literal form in order to give the reader a sense of where cooperatives belonged in the total scheme of Castro's 1953 agricultural policy. They obviously occupied a minor place in the general scheme; they were intended, in the traditional meaning of cooperatives, to service independent landowners. These 1953 cooperatives were clearly not the "state farms" of 1959. In addition, Castro seems to have dropped or rarely mentioned "cooperatives" after 1953. The version of this passage in the Huberman-Sweezy book (p. 41) is taken from the official English translation of this speech, published by the Liberal Press, New York. For some reason, the phrase "for the common use of costly equipment, cold storage" was omitted from this translation, as a result of which the whole section on cooperatives is somewhat distorted. In 1958, Castro's "agrarian reform" meant what it has usually meant: land for landless peasants. But, then, Huberman and Sweezy discovered, via a translator, that Cuban peasants do not want their own land; they did not even understand the question of owning their own land "until it had been repeatedly rephrased and explained" (p. 118, note). Huberman and Sweezy add that this incident set them off on their entire interpretation of the Cuban Revolution. If so, the Cuban peasants are truly unique, and no one apparently ever understood them before—certainly not Fidel Castro who put so much emphasis on giving them their own land in 1953 and after.

however, that he has had a personal knowledge of Cuba in the last two years or at any other time.

Much of Weyl's book is based on police and intelligence sources, such as the Batista regime's Bureau for the Repression of Communist Activities (BRAC.) A lurid series of articles in a sensation-mongering New York tabloid is treated as if it were a serious historical source. The recklessness with which Weyl uses his materials, good, bad and dubious, is matched by that of his views. These range from the conviction that Fidel Castro has been "a trusted Soviet agent" since 1948, when he was little more than 21 years old, to the imputation that Cuba was lost to Communism by "appeasement-oriented" officials of the State Department. The implicit thesis of the book was stated by Senators James Eastland (D.-Miss.) and Thomas Dodd (D.-Conn.) of the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee, whom Weyl quotes: "Cuba was handed to Castro and the Communists by a combination of Americans in the same way that China was handed to the Communists." In effect, this is the extreme "right-wing" case against Castro and those who allegedly put him into power.

Weyl's methods hardly inspire confidence in his results. He makes some members of the State Department the butt of his indignation for having failed to accept the evidence that Castro has been a Communist and Soviet agent for a dozen years. But, for some reason, he fails to mention that General C. P. Cabell, Deputy Director of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, testified in November 1959 before the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee (one of his favorite sources) that "we believe that Castro is not a member of the Communist party, and does not consider himself to be a Communist." Presumably the CIA had gone to some trouble to find out all about Castro's past political allegiances and was less riddled than the State Department with "appeasement-minded subordinates" (Weyl's phrase for then Under Secretary Christian Herter, Assistant Secretary for Latin American Affairs, Roy R. Ruhottom, and Director of the Caribbean Division William A. Wieland). The CIA may have been wrong, but its evaluation of the evidence certainly has a bearing on Weyl's case against members of the State Department with a similar view.

Weyl, however, cites the testimony before the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee of Raphael Diaz Balart (Castro's former brother-in-law), who worked for Batista to the end. He writes that Diaz Balart gave "basically the same account" as that of Dr. Emilio Núñez Portuondo, Batista's former Prime Minister, who declared that "Fidel Castro subordinated himself to Communist party discipline during his first year at the University (1945-46) and used his Party name of Fidelio." Weyl then quotes those portions of Diaz Balart's testimony which indicate that Castro and the Communist students had had "a very nice understanding" about helping each other. But he does not quote Diaz Balart's direct assertion: "No, he was not in that moment a member. He was just in that moment an opportunist leader who wanted to promote himself." Basically Diaz Balart gave anything but the same account as Núñez Portuondo.

Weyl also plays fast and loose in his references to Communist money

allegedly put at Castro's disposal in the Sierra Maestra. He quotes from the articles by two newspapermen in the New York *Daily News*: "'Once,' said a man who was close to Fidel, 'Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, an active member of the Communist party in Cuba, arrived with a dozen men loaded with money. It came to \$800,000 and Fidel hugged him and shouted, 'Now we're ready to win the war.'" Thus Weyl quotes two newspapermen who quote "a man who was close to Fidel." But some 30 pages later, Weyl writes: "We have seen that Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, who was not only a member of the Political Bureau of the Cuban Communist party, but its brains, went to the Sierra Maestra to bring Fidel Castro almost a million dollars." There is no doubt about Rafael Rodriguez' journey to the Sierra Maestra in June 1958—he readily admitted it to me when I talked to him last spring—but only a reader with a short memory would "have seen" that Rafael Rodriguez had brought Fidel Castro almost a million dollars. Perhaps he did, but the evidence is third-hand at best. Nevertheless, Weyl goes on to assert that "Fidel Castro's forces won primarily because they had almost unlimited supplies of money."

How much more complex Cuban politics can be than Weyl appears to make it may be gathered from his reference to Raúl Roa. Weyl writes that one of the Cuban Communist party's "charter members and early leaders was Raúl Roa, whom Fidel Castro would later appoint Foreign Minister of Cuba." That is all. From this a reader might suppose that Roa was just another Communist functionary in Castro's entourage. But Roa has had a rather more varied political career. He wrote an article in Mexico in 1956 denouncing "the crimes, disasters and outrages perpetrated" by the Soviet "invaders" in Hungary. This article, together with other uncomplimentary references to Communism, were reprinted in his book, *En Pie*, issued by an official publishing house in Cuba in October 1959. The Communist leader, Blas Roca, in the official Communist organ, *Hoy*, of March 11, 1959, denounced Roa as a *plattista*—the historical equivalent of an "agent of American imperialism."⁸ Yet Roa has become a servile spokesman of the Communism and Soviet Union which he had many times condemned. He has never, however, completely won the trust of the Communists, one of whom has been put in as his Under Secretary.

Weyl also identifies Faustino Pérez as a Communist on the basis of Batista's sources. The official Cuban Communists have always blamed Pérez (the leader of the former Havana underground) for the failure of the April 1958 strike on the ground that he refused to make a deal with them. They took their revenge in November 1959 when he was ousted from Castro's Government for protesting against the treatment of Major Hubert Matos. Weyl even cites a "Cuban underground" report that Matos worked for the Communists "as early as 1957," without saying a word about the price Matos has paid for his anti-Communism. Such blunders are inevitable in

⁸ Senator Orrille H. Platt gave his name to the famous amendment which empowered the U.S. to intervene in Cuba; it was revoked in 1934. The Platt Amendment was written into the Cuban Constitution as an appendix in 1901 and embodied in the U.S.-Cuban treaty of 1903. Weyl manages in a single sentence (p. 55, note) to get Senator Platt's first name and the date of his amendment wrong—a curious feat for a student of Cuba.

a book which accepts Batista's and Trujillo's sources uncritically. Communists, ex-Communists, non-Communists and opportunists are indiscriminately lumped together. Every bit of evidence that does not fit the book's thesis is ruthlessly suppressed or glossed over. All the hard problems of Castro's political developments are over-simplified and vulgarized.

Sometimes a reader of both the Mills and Weyl books might be hopelessly puzzled. Mills' Yankee is taunted with the question, "What did you do—about the weapons, for example, the Yankee Government kept sending—and sending—and sending—to Batista?" But in Weyl's book, former Ambassador Earl E. T. Smith says of the United States' decision to stop sending arms to Batista in March 1958, that "the psychological impact on the morale of the government was crippling." In his recent book, *Respuesta* (Reply), published in Mexico, Fulgencio Batista also complains bitterly against the harmful effect of the U.S. embargo on arms. A reader of Mills' book would never know that the arms had ever been cut off. A reader of Weyl's book would never know that the effect of the arms embargo was partially undone by the failure to withdraw the military mission.

Weyl's chief American scapegoat is Herbert L. Matthews of the *New York Times*. In February 1957, Matthews published three articles and photographs which proved that Castro was alive, and he vouched for his idealism, courage, and innocence of Communism. The chief count against William Wieland seems to be that he advised the newly-appointed Ambassador Smith to be briefed by Matthews before assuming his post. Rubottom's main misdeed appears to have been that he told a Senate subcommittee on December 31, 1958, the day before Batista's flight, that "there was no evidence of any organized Communist element within the Castro movement or that Señor Castro himself was under Communist influence." As if this were not trouble enough for Rubottom, he also stands accused of having been the protégé of Dr. Milton Eisenhower, whom Weyl brushes off as "a well-intentioned, vaguely Leftist, former New Deal bureaucrat."

Ambassador Smith's briefing by Matthews, which promises to become a minor *cause célèbre* in some circles of American politics, runs true to form in Weyl's book. On checking, I found that Ambassador Smith had testified: "I spent six weeks in Washington, approximately four days of each week, visiting various agencies and being briefed by the State Department and those whom the State Department designated." He also said that "in the course of six weeks I was briefed by numbers of people in the usual course as every Ambassador is briefed." One of these people, suggested by Wieland, was Matthews. Weyl converts this testimony to: "Ambassador Smith made the remarkable disclosure that Wieland sent him to none other than Herbert Matthews to get his briefing on Cuban affairs before departing for his post in Havana." Thus "a" briefing is transformed into "his" briefing, as if Matthews were the only one to brief Smith. And it is hard to understand what is remarkable about the recommendation of Matthews in May 1957, among many others, since at the time he was one of the very few Americans who had talked to Fidel Castro.

Some other testimony before the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee, which Weyl does not quote, might not have been irrelevant. According to

Batista's commander in the Sierra Maestra area, Colonel Ugalde Carrillo, his forces there numbered 6,000 to 7,000. He estimated Castro's men at 700 to 800. In addition, Batista's Army contained more than 33,000 men elsewhere. This force of over 40,000 had for years obtained as much arms as it had wanted from the United States and elsewhere. The American Ambassador from 1953 to the middle of 1957, Arthur Gardner, was so "pro-Batista" that, as Mrs. Ruby Hart Phillips (the long-time *New York Times* correspondent in Havana) has written in her recent book, the dictator was embarrassed because he thought that the Ambassador was overdoing it. Despite Matthews' remarkable briefing, Gardner's successor, Earl Smith, was so "anti-Castro" that his subordinates pleaded with him in vain to be less partisan. And despite Matthews' pro-Castro articles of February 1957, Castro's entire force 14 months later numbered only 300 (according to Mills) and at most 800 (according to Ugalde).

The forces at Batista's disposal were to the very end so superior in numbers and weapons that only a vast popular revulsion can account for Batista's debacle. Batista's Chief-of-Staff, General Francisco Tabernilla, came much closer to the truth when he was asked whether the Army could have successfully resisted Castro's march on Havana. "It could," he replied, "but not for a long time, because by that time, the people of Cuba were already against the regime of Batista, and there is no army, once the people get up in arms, that can suppress it."

Herbert Matthews has expressed his latest views in the *Hispanic American Report* (August 29, 1960, Stanford University). He has evidently been saddened by the development of Castro's regime into "a dictatorship, without freedom, under the control of one man." He maintains: "Despite strong resemblances, it is not Marxism, Communism or Fascism, but it is getting close to a totalitarian structure of some sort." Yet, even as Matthews wrote these words, Guevara was characterizing the Cuban revolution as implicitly "Marxist." Matthews also continues to resist the evidence of Castro's deliberate policy of aid-and-comfort to the official Communists. For example, he declares that "Fidel played into their hands unwittingly from the beginning by allowing his 26th of July Movement, which had made and won the revolution, to wither away. This left a vacuum into which the Reds naturally moved." *Unwittingly?* It was, as has been admitted, a cold-blooded decision, no more unwitting than the more recent one to "allow" the rebel army to wither away. Unlike some pro-Castro apologists, however, Matthews does not pooch-pooch the possibility of Communist domination. On the contrary, he regards it as so far advanced that "the point of no return does not seem far away." But in his anxiety to absolve Castro himself of the prime responsibility, he sometimes argues that Castro's pro-Communist policy was logical, sometimes that he blundered into it, and sometimes that he was pushed into it. In effect, Matthews' faith in Castro has dimmed but not died, and he is still capable of writing: "Paradoxical though it may seem, Americans should be praying that nothing happens to Fidel Castro. Any hope of changing the situation for the better lies with him."

8. WHOSE REVOLUTION?

ON ONE THING Mills, Johnson and Weyl almost agree. For Mills, Castro's regime is "a revolutionary dictatorship of the peasants and workers." For Johnson, it is a "genuine dictatorship of the proletariat." For Weyl, it is "a dictatorship of the proletariat." What can these long-suffering, ill-defined words mean in relation to Cuba today?

When I visited Cuba last spring, the Cabinet—a fair sampling of the top leadership—was made up of eight lawyers, three former students, two professors, one architect, one engineer and the like. Most of them still hold the same offices or have been replaced by people of the same type. Everyone attended a university (some in the United States), came from upper- or middle-class homes, and became or aspired to become a professional or intellectual. Not a single one represents in any conceivable sense the peasantry or proletariat, or owes his position to its organized strength or pressure. What they are they owe solely to Fidel Castro, and they are responsible to him alone. This much is recognized by Mills who flatly states that Castro possesses "virtually absolute power" in Cuba today. But where does that leave the "dictatorship of the peasants and workers?"

Reflecting on the situation as they saw it in the spring of 1960, Huberman and Sweezy gave the peasantry the decisive role in the victorious revolution. made Castro the "embodiment of the revolutionary will and energy of the peasantry," and extolled the Cuban peasantry as "perhaps one of the world's most deeply revolutionary classes" and "as radical a social class as any in the world today." Six months later they returned to Cuba and discovered that the peasantry had been superseded as the "most revolutionary class" by the working class and that the peasant-manned and -nourished rebel army had suffered a relative eclipse. They were delighted in the spring and they were enchanted in the fall; the peasant revolution was wonderful and the swift dispossession of the peasant revolution was even more so. But why the peasantry should have been superseded if it really was "as radical a social class as any in the world today," they do not try to explain. It is conceivable that the class which had really made the revolution, which the *Líder Máximo* embodied, and which was perhaps the most deeply revolutionary class in the world today, would permit itself to be pushed into the background without a word of protest or token of resistance? Is this the behavior of a class towards *its* revolution?

The process thus conjured up is clearly mythological. Those who "gave" the revolution to the peasantry could also take it away. The peasantry never had in its hands any of the levers of command of the revolution, before or after the victory. The revolution was made and always controlled by declassed sons and daughters of the middle class, first in the name of the entire people, then of the peasants, and now of the workers and peasants. At most the revolution is doing things *for* and *to* the peasants and workers. The good and evil in these things may be open to debate, but *who* decides these things and to what class they belong are not. For Marx, the notion that the peasants would have been the driving force of a socialistic revolution would have

been simply unthinkable; the idea that the working class would have to be "swept" into a socialist revolution after it had been made by another class and as a mechanical result of nationalization from above, equally so.

The alleged role of the working class in this revolution is just as fanciful as that attributed to the peasantry. In December a few hundred authentic proletarians employed by the Cuban Electric Company staged a protest march from union headquarters to the Presidential Palace. The rank-and-file was discontented because the new management of the nationalized electric company had cracked down on privileges long tolerated under the dictatorship and thereby had reduced its standard of living. The leadership, headed by an old 26th of July militant, was enraged because the central Trade Union Federation (now completely controlled by the Communists) had moved to oust it. The rebellion was quelled by the flight of the union leaders to foreign embassies and a long, angry speech by Prime Minister Castro. He admitted that a large part not only of the electric workers but of the mass of workers in general was "confused." He scorned those who would exchange "the right of the working class to govern and direct the country for a plate of lentils." At one point, he declared: "Do you know what is the first goal for which the working class should fight, the only goal for which a working class in a modern country should fight fundamentally? For the conquest of political power!"

This speech was noteworthy for the political vocabulary employed for the first time by Castro, but it told much more about him than about the Cuban proletariat. Would it be necessary to exhort the proletariat to take power in a "dictatorship of the proletariat?" And if it followed his advice, would all the lawyers in Castro's Government remain in power? Of all the dictatorships of the proletariat which have been bestowed on us in this century, Castro's is surely the least convincing.

Events have also dealt unkindly with Jean-Paul Sartre's clairvoyance. In the introduction (dated September 12, 1960) to the Brazilian edition of his series of articles on Cuba, he wrote: "No, if Cuba desires to separate from the Western bloc, it is not through the crazy ambition of linking itself to the Eastern bloc." He also communicated his certainty that "its objective is not to strengthen one bloc to the detriment of the other." On December 10, Major Guevara was "crazy" enough to announce publicly in Moscow: "We wholeheartedly support the statement adopted by this conference [of 81 Communist parties]." It would be hard to imagine any way of linking Cuba more closely to the Eastern bloc or of strengthening that bloc to the detriment of the West than the wholehearted support of this statement.

The attitude of Paul Johnson in the *New Statesman* toward Latin America in general and Cuba in particular smacks of a peculiar kind of anti-colonial colonialism. For him, their basic economic problems cannot be solved "through mere electoral victories, since effective legislation requires the assent of the armed forces." Therefore, only *Fidelismo* or Communism—which he regards as "natural enemies"—remain as practical alternatives. In the case of Cuba, he seems to have cut the ground under his own argument since the armed forces disappeared and the need for their assent vanished

with them. The main theme of Castro's "History Will Absolve Me" speech of 1953 and of all his statements until he assumed power was that Cuba's social and economic problems could be solved within the framework of the Constitution of 1940. But there was one thing the Constitution excluded—the dictatorship of a *Lider Máximo* and his junta. The colonialists used to say that some peoples were not fit for anything but some form of imperialism: The anti-colonial colonialists say that some peoples are not fit for anything but some form of totalitarianism.

In the end, one wonders how far such words as "socialism," "democracy," "Marxism," and "dictatorship of the proletariat" can be stretched. For some of Castro's admirers, they can be stretched to the point of meaninglessness.

Five years ago, for example, Huberman and Sweezy were shocked by Nikita Khrushchev's expose at the Soviet Communist party's 20th Congress of his predecessor's vices. After a suitable period of reflection and repentance, they came up with a theory of Stalinism as "good ends with bad means." They explained that Stalinism "became the instrument of the advance to socialism" but, unhappily, "incorporated the methods of oriental despotism—murder, mendacity, duplicity, brutality, and above all arbitrariness."¹⁰ This view of Stalinism has its roots in a certain conception of socialism. In this conception all that essentially matters is that the economy should be nationalized. The nationalizing state may be murderous, mendacious, guilty of duplicity, brutal and arbitrary, but it is still "socialist." And by separating the ends from the means, the political from the economic, what the state controls from who controls the state, socialism can be arrived at through oriental despotisms or pseudo-peasant revolutions.

9. THE CUBAN VARIANT

MARXIAN SOCIALISM was predicated not merely on a nationalized economy but on the harmonious development of several factors. The achievement of economic democracy by the socialist revolution presupposed the achievement of political democracy by the bourgeois-democratic revolution. For this reason, the classical Marxists took political democracy for granted, as we no longer can, and they assumed that economic democracy would be built on it. They conceived of socialism as the culmination of capitalist development, without which the prerequisites of socialism—an advanced industrial economy and a preponderant, impoverished, class-conscious proletariat—could not be fulfilled.

History has not worked out that way. Where capitalism has been successful, the prerequisite of a preponderant, impoverished, class-conscious proletariat has not been fulfilled; and where capitalism has not been successful, the prerequisite of an advanced industrial economy has also not been fulfilled. Either the middle class has not been strong enough to achieve a viable capitalist economy or it has been strong enough to bar the way to a socialist economy.

¹⁰ "Monthly Review," July-August 1956, pp. 71-2.

This familiar dilemma of modern socialism has spawned all sorts of bastard and spurious "socialisms." Instead of the proletariat, they issue out of the middle class, but of that portion in revolt against the failure of the middle class. These sons and daughters of the bourgeoisie gravitate irresistibly toward the ideology of socialism, but they can make use only of those aspects of socialism which conditions permit them to utilize. They cannot be faithful to the fundamental ideas of the socialist tradition—that the proletariat should liberate itself, that there are prerequisites of socialism, especially an advanced industrial economy, and that socialism must fulfill and complement political democracy.

But there is one aspect of socialism on which they can seize without delay or restraint. They can find in Marxism an ideological sanction for the unrestricted and unlimited use of the state to change the social order, and they can find in Leninism a sanction for *their* unrestricted and unlimited power over the state. In classical Marxism, the role of the socialist state was conditioned by the stage of development at which it was put into effect and by the class relationships which governed its realization. In this caricature of socialism, however, the only prerequisite that really matters is the seizure of power, no matter by whom, how, when, or where. Thus we live in a time not only of "Cuban socialism" but of "Indonesian socialism" and even of "African socialism."

This phenomenon indicates that we are badly in need of new words to assume some of the burden that has been thrust on socialism. The order of development cannot be inverted—first the revolution, then the prerequisites of socialism—without resulting in a totally different kind of social order, alien to the letter and, infinitely more, to the spirit of socialism. These inverted revolutions from above belong to what, for want of a better word, we must call the Communist family of revolutions, which, in practice, serve to industrialize the peasantry rather than to liberate the proletariat. But even this family has grown so large and now covers so much ground that its name does not necessarily guarantee full understanding.

For about 30 years, the only Communism was Russian Communism and, in effect, Communism was whatever the Russians said it was. Then, in 1948, came the Titoist variant—a small Communist state in rebellion against Russian domination—and, at the end of 1949, the Chinese variant—a Communist state so vast that it could rival Soviet Russia in power. But both the Yugoslav and Chinese Communist leaderships derived from a common source, the Comintern, which from 1919 to 1943 was tightly controlled by and wholly dependent on the Russian Communists. Thus far the line of descent was clear and direct.

Now a new branch of the family has begun to emerge. It is related to the national-revolutionary movements which the world Communist movement long before Khrushchev had recognized as a distinct force and with which it had sometimes collaborated and sometimes competed. As late as 1954, the Soviet press attacked Ghana's President Kwame Nkrumah and his party as a "screen" for British imperialism. Under Khrushchev, however, the pendulum has swung over to the outermost limits of collaboration. This policy,

apparently one of the points at issue between the Russian and Chinese Communist parties, reflects the undeniable fact of the last few years that no Communist has been a match for Nkrumah in Ghana, Sékou Touré in Guinea, or Fidel Castro in Cuba. The local Communists were, therefore, advised to bide their time and achieve their goal in two stages instead of one. First the national-revolutionary movement could win power, then the Communists could win power in the national-revolutionary movements.

This strategy owes its success to a shrewd assessment of the national-revolutionary movements. They are far more capable than the Communists of achieving national unity against the common enemy. But the common enemy, not a social and political program, gives them their *raison d'être*. As a result, they are much more inspiring and effective, before taking power than they are afterward. Filling the political and social vacuum the day after the revolution gives the Communists greater opportunities than they had during the revolution. Above all, the nationalist leaders are usually men whose magnetic mass appeal is combined with intellectual fuzziness, adventurist temperaments, and insatiable egos. Their strong point makes them indispensable and their weak points vulnerable to the Communists. They serve the Communists only on condition that the Communists should appear to be serving them. Their political school was nothing like the Comintern, and they represent a variant still farther away from the Russian prototype than Marshal Tito or Mao Tse-tung.

This variant has gone farther in Cuba than anywhere else, though the story is far from finished there, too. For this reason, Fidel Castro has cast such a large shadow from such a small island.

The phenomenon of Fidel Castro has, as yet, received little serious study. His revolution may not be the one that he promised to make, but it is for all that a genuine revolution. It is related to other upheavals in countries with similar national and social resentments and inequalities. It cannot be dismissed as nothing more than a diabolical aberration because it is not what it claims to be. It belongs to a new type of system, neither capitalist nor socialist, that emerges where capitalism has not succeeded and socialism cannot succeed. In most pro- and anti-Castro propaganda, the revolution that brought him into power is so ruthlessly distorted that his entire political development begins and ends in fantasy. The serious student will seek answers to questions that the mythologists of "Left" and "Right" do not even ask. How could a revolution basically middle-class in nature be turned against that class? How could a revolution made without the official Communists and for the most part despite them become so intimately linked with them? How, in short, could Fidel Castro promise one revolution and make another, and what consequences flowed from this revolutionary schizophrenia?

The answers, as I have suggested, take us into territory that has been as yet hardly explored. For the Communists and the *Fidelistas* to meet, *both* had to travel some distance from their starting-points. The Communists had to make up their minds that they could win power, not against Fidel but only through Fidel. In all probability, this decision was made after an internal struggle in the first half of 1958 between the Old Guard "Stalinist"

leadership headed by the general secretary, Blas Roca, and a more flexible "Khrushchevite" group represented by the editor of the party organ, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez. Some competent observers believe that the deal was made in the Sierra Maestra before Castro took power and that all his moves have been determined by this pact. Others think that he went through a period of wavering and vacillation in the first months of his regime. In any case, his major decisions were made so secretly and within such a small group that even former members of his Government profess to be uncertain of his commitments and motives.

The inner history of Castro's regime remains to be told. Its main lines, however, have become increasingly clear. Fidel Castro—as much demagogue as idealist, as much adventurer as revolutionary, as much anarchist as Communist or anything else—was suddenly and unexpectedly catapulted into power without a real party, a real army, or a real program. In the struggle for power, he had put forward no original economic or political ideas and had stayed well within the limits of traditional democratic reform and idiom in Cuba. He differed from Batista's other enemies chiefly in the tactics he was willing to employ, in his faith in armed struggle and his willingness to organize it. But once power came into his hands, he refused to permit anything that might lessen or restrict it. He would not tolerate the functioning of a government which was not the facade of his personal rule or of a party which might develop a life of its own. His power and his promises were from the first incompatible, and this contradiction forced him to seek a basis for his regime wholly at variance with that of the anti-Batista revolution. He did not have the disciplined and experienced cadres, the ideology, and the international support to switch revolutions in full view of the audience. Only the Cuban and Russian Communists could make them available to him. Having formerly collaborated with Batista (whose Government once contained both Juan Marinello and Carlos Rafael Rodriguez), the Cuban Communists were easily capable of collaborating with Castro. The "united front" of Communists and *Fidelistas* is heading, as Guevara recently intimated in Moscow, towards a "united party," and if it materializes, Fidel Castro will certainly go down in history not as the *Líder Máximo* of a new movement but as the Pied Piper of an old one. Still, as long as the Communists need him at least as much as he needs them, further surprises cannot be ruled out; Fidel's ego may give the Communists as much trouble as it has given many others.

When I returned from Cuba last spring, I wrote: "Castro once spoke of his revolution as 'liberty with bread and without terror.' If he continues to push too hard, too fast, and too far, Cuba may yet have more terror without either bread or liberty."¹¹ Unfortunately, my worst apprehensions have come true, and Fidel Castro has given Cuba not a national revolution but an international civil war.

¹¹ Theodore Draper, "The Runaway Revolution," "The Reporter," May 12, 1960.

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