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## CUBA SINCE 1959

Fulgencio Batista had been the dominant figure in Cuban national affairs for a quarter of a century. He had ruled Cuba, directly or indirectly, since the military coup of 4 September 1933, except for an interlude of Auténtico rule from 1944 to 1952. He had seemed confident and powerful until the last weeks of his last presidency. But suddenly Batista was gone. On New Year's Eve 1958 he quit, taking with him much of the top echelon of his government. A new leader, young and bearded, who for two years had led a guerrilla war in eastern Cuba, gradually spreading the influence of his forces to the western provinces, slowly assuming the leadership of the urban and the rural resistance to the Batista regime, marched into Havana. Audacious and effective in his military campaign and political skills, persuasive and commanding in his public speech, Fidel Castro had become the leader of the future. Power had passed, somewhat unexpectedly, to a new generation of Cubans.

In January 1959 the old regime collapsed in Cuba and a revolution came to power. The old rules of the game no longer applied and the armed forces that had shaped the life of independent Cuba for so long had crumbled. The rebel army became the defender of the new revolutionary state, sweeping aside the parties that had structured political life in previous decades. Only the Communist party (Partido Socialista Popular, PSP), which had been banned by Batista in the 1950s but reappeared in 1959, was left intact. The fall of the old regime required that new norms, rules and institutions be devised to replace those that had collapsed or been overthrown. The history of Cuba during the next thirty years addressed the needs of revolutionary creativity, the persistent commitment to create order out of revolution, the need to uphold a revolutionary faith in the implementation of that new order.

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THE CONSOLIDATION OF REVOLUTIONARY POWER  
(1959-62)

Cuba has always been buffeted by the winds of international affairs. Geographically in the heart of the American Mediterranean, it has been coveted by the major powers over the centuries. With the end of four hundred years of Spanish colonial rule and the establishment of United States primacy in 1898, Cuba's link with the United States became the virtually exclusive focus of Cuban international relations during the first half of the twentieth century.

In 1959 the U.S. government viewed with concern the affairs of a country that seemed uncharacteristically out of its control. Cuba mattered to the United States because of both its strategic location and its economic importance. The United States operated a naval base at Guantánamo under the terms of a 1903 treaty that recognized nominal Cuban sovereignty but guaranteed the United States the right to operate the base for as long as Washington wished. Despite subsequent Cuban protests, the United States retained the base. While U.S. military forces had not been stationed in Cuba outside Guantánamo for several decades and U.S. government officials had played a reduced role in internal Cuban politics, in the 1950s the U.S. ambassador remained the country's second most important political figure after the President of the Republic. In 1959 the value of U.S. investments in Cuba – in sugar, mining, utilities, banking and manufacturing – exceeded that in every other Latin American country except Venezuela. The United States also took about two-thirds of Cuban exports and supplied about three-quarters of its imports. (And foreign trade accounted for about two-thirds of Cuba's estimated national income.)

Fidel Castro, the 26 of July Movement, which he led, and other revolutionary forces that had participated in the revolutionary war, sought to affirm Cuban nationalism. In the symbols used and histories evoked, in the problems diagnosed and solutions proposed, there was a strong emphasis on enabling Cubans to take charge of their history. There was, however, during the revolutionary war only a limited criticism of U.S. government policies and the activities of U.S. enterprises in Cuba. Castro had bitterly criticized the modest U.S. military assistance initially extended to the Batista government under the formal military agreements between the two countries, but this aid was eventually cut. Castro had also spoken of the expropriation of the U.S.-owned public utilities. However, in the later

phases of the guerrilla war, for tactical reasons, Castro seemed to back off from any expropriation proposals.

In the early months of the Revolution there were three principal themes in Cuban-U.S. relations. First, there was mistrust and anger over U.S. criticism of events in Cuba. The Cuban government brought to trial many who had served the Batista government and its armed forces; most of these prisoners were convicted and many were executed. The trials were strongly criticized, in both Cuba and the United States, for observing few procedural safeguards to guarantee the rights of the accused as well as for the severity of many sentences. Fidel Castro and other Cuban government leaders were offended by this, and they denounced their critics in the U.S. mass media (especially the wire services) and the U.S. Congress. The onset of poor relations between Cuba and the United States from January 1959 stemmed from this clash between the values of justice and retribution of revolutionaries and the values of fairness and moderation of a liberal society even toward its enemies.

The second major factor was the Revolution's initial impact on U.S. firms operating in Cuba. The frequency of strikes increased sharply in 1959 as workers sought gains from management under the more favourable political situation. Foreign-owned firms were affected by such strikes and in some cases the question of their expropriation arose. A strike at the Royal Dutch Shell petroleum refinery, for instance, raised the question of the expropriation of British property, authorized by a law issued by the rebels in retaliation for British military sales to the Batista government. Fidel Castro obtained generous concessions from Shell in exchange for forgoing expropriation 'at this time'.<sup>1</sup> Comparable pressures from below affected the revolution in the countryside. The Agrarian Reform Act (issued May 1959), moderate in many respects, was also strongly nationalist. The Instituto Nacional de Reforma Agraria (INRA) was more willing to intervene in labour-management conflicts when farms were foreign-owned, and to suspend the strict application of the law in these cases to expropriate foreign-owned land. Such local agrarian conflicts soured U.S.-Cuban relations.

The third feature of this period was changing Cuban attitudes to new private foreign investment and official foreign aid. On 18 February 1959 Prime Minister Fidel Castro publicly welcomed foreign capital and on 20 March 1959 acknowledged the ample availability of aid. On 2 April 1959

<sup>1</sup> Fidel Castro, *Discursos para la historia* (Havana, 1959), I: 50-2, 75-81.

the Prime Minister announced that on a forthcoming trip to the United States he would be accompanied by the president of the National Bank and the Ministers of the Treasury and of the Economy to seek funds for Cuba. This trip to the United States in April 1959 became a deadline for making decisions that the overworked revolutionaries had hitherto postponed. Did Cuba's new government want a close relationship with the United States? Was this revolution committed to a Cuba open and profitable for multinational firms? Could its leaders make a genuine and radical revolution with the support of the United Fruit Company, Coca-Cola, the Chase Manhattan Bank or Standard Oil? Would Fidel Castro accept the economic austerity preached by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), embrace U.S. vice-president Richard Nixon, and proclaim U.S.-Cuban friendship at the gates of the Guantánamo naval base? En route to the United States Castro told his economic cabinet that they were not to seek foreign aid from officials of the U.S. government, the World Bank or the IMF, with whom they might speak during their visit. The purpose of the trip, therefore, changed from acquiring aid for capitalist development to gaining time for far-reaching transformations the specific form of which was still uncertain. There is no evidence that the United States, or these international financial institutions, denied aid to Cuba that its government had requested. In fact, Cuba did not ask them for aid. Had such aid been requested and granted, it would have tied Cuba's future closely to the world capitalist economy and to the United States because of the conditions ordinarily attached to such aid in the 1950s. A small number of revolutionary leaders, therefore, concluded well ahead of the rest of the citizenry that it was impossible to conduct a revolution in Cuba without a major confrontation with the United States. A revolution would require the promised extensive agrarian reforms and probably a new, far-reaching state intervention in the public utilities, mining, the sugar industry and possibly other manufacturing sectors. Given the major U.S. investments in these sectors, and United States hostility to statism, revolution at home would inevitably entail confrontation abroad.

The approval of the Agrarian Reform Act was followed in June 1959 by the first major cabinet crisis, which resulted in the departure of the moderates. U.S. ambassador Philip Bonsal presented a formal U.S. government protest on 11 June complaining of irregularities and abuses in the early implementation of the Agrarian Reform Law against U.S. firms. The head of the Air Force, Pedro Luis Díaz Lanz, quit at the end of June and fled to the United States, charging Communist infiltration of the govern-

ment. President Manuel Urrutia was forced out in July, leaving no doubt that Prime Minister Castro was Cuba's uncontested leader. The question of communism was also an issue for Urrutia, who had stoutly defended the government against charges of communism while accusing the Communists of attempting to subvert the Revolution. Urrutia was replaced by Osvaldo Dorticós (who would serve as president until 1976). The question of communism also mattered for the slowly evolving links with the Soviet Union. The first official contacts with the Soviet Union were made in Cairo by Ernesto 'Che' Guevara in June 1959, although at this stage Soviet-Cuban trade was as insignificant as it had been before the Revolution. Relations with Moscow changed qualitatively from October 1959. And Soviet deputy prime minister Anastas Mikoyan visited Cuba in February 1960 to sign the first important bilateral economic agreement between the two countries and to promote other relations.

U.S.-Cuban relations continued to deteriorate during the second half of 1959. Disputes over Communist influence in the government became frequent and intense. Washington's view of the Cuban government soured as Castro sharpened the vituperative tone of his remarks about the United States. In early March 1960 a Belgian ship *La Coubre*, loaded with arms and ammunition for the Cuban government, exploded in Havana harbor. Prime Minister Castro accused the U.S. government of sabotage. Publicly, the U.S. government protested. Privately, on 17 March 1960, President Dwight Eisenhower authorized the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to organize the training of Cuban exiles for a future invasion of Cuba.

The pace of deterioration in U.S.-Cuban relations quickened in the spring and summer of 1960. In late June the Cuban government requested the foreign-owned petroleum refineries to process crude oil it had purchased from the Soviet Union. When the companies refused they were expropriated. At the same time, a newly amended sugar act was making its way through the U.S. Congress. A clause in the bill authorized the President to cut off the Cuban sugar quota; the bill was approved by 3 July. On 5 July, the Cuban Council of Ministers authorized the expropriation of all U.S. property in Cuba. On 6 July, President Eisenhower cancelled Cuba's sugar quota. On 15 July the newly established Bank for Foreign Trade became Cuba's sole foreign-trade agency. On 7 August the expropriation of all large U.S.-owned industrial and agrarian enterprises was carried out, and on 17 September all U.S. banks were confiscated. On 19 October the U.S. government prohibited exports to Cuba except for non-subsidized foodstuffs and medicines. On 24 October, Cuba expropri-

ated all U.S.-owned wholesale and retail trade enterprises and the remaining smaller U.S.-owned industrial and agrarian enterprises. The United States withdrew Ambassador Philip Bonsal on 29 October. U.S.-Cuban diplomatic relations were finally and formally broken in the waning days of the Eisenhower administration in January 1961.

In contrast, Cuban-Soviet relations improved markedly during this period. On 9 July 1960, Prime Minister Nikita Khrushchev declared that Soviet missiles were prepared to defend Cuba 'in a figurative sense'. The first formal military agreement between the two countries was signed within weeks as the Soviet Union pledged to 'use all means at its disposal to prevent an armed United States intervention against Cuba'.<sup>2</sup> This increasing military collaboration between Cuba and the Soviet Union predictably heightened U.S. government hostility towards Havana.

The swift and dramatic changes in U.S.-Cuban relations were paralleled by the reorganization of Cuba's internal political and economic affairs, one consequence of which was a massive emigration to the United States. Washington favoured this emigration through special programs with the aim of discrediting the Cuban government. From 1960 to 1962 net out-migration from Cuba amounted to about 200,000 people, or an unprecedented average of well over 60,000 per year. Most emigrants came from the economic and social elite, the adult males typically being professionals, managers and executives, although they also included many white-collar workers. On the other hand, skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers were under-represented relative to their share of the work force, and rural Cuba was virtually absent from this emigration. This upper-middle- and middle-class urban emigration was also disproportionately white. Henceforth, a part of the history of the Cuban people would unfold in the United States. The first wave of emigrants, in part because they could transfer their skills to new workplaces, would experience relative economic and social success over the next thirty years. Politically, they would constitute a strong anti-communist force often sharply at odds with prevailing political opinion among other Spanish-speaking communities in the United States.

In late 1960 and early 1961 the would-be Cuban-Americans were still just Cubans, exiled from their homeland and planning to return. As the United States and Cuban governments came to blows during the second half of 1960, Washington became more interested in assisting the exiles to

<sup>2</sup> *Revolución*, 21 July 1960, 1.

overthrow the Castro government. The exiles, however, were deeply divided. Those who were once close to the Batista government were repelled by those who had worked with Fidel Castro during the rebellion or in the early months of his government, although they had broken with Castro over the question of communism and other issues; this antipathy was fully reciprocated. Did Cuba need a restoration or a non-communist transformation? There were many shades of opinion within each side of this fundamental cleavage, personality conflicts further complicating relationships. The U.S. government required a unified Cuban exile leadership if the efforts to overthrow the Castro government with a minimum of U.S. intervention were to succeed.

On 22 March 1961 several key exile leaders agreed to form the Cuban Revolutionary Council presided over by José Miró Cardona, who had been the first prime minister of the Cuban revolutionary government in January and February 1959. Prominent members of the Council included Antonio ('Tony') Varona, former prime minister (and opponent of Batista), as well as Fidel Castro's former Minister of Public Works, Manuel Ray. Manuel Artime, a former lieutenant of the rebel army, was to be the political chief of the invasion force and José Pérez San Román the military commander. Upon the overthrow of the revolutionary regime the Council would become the provisional government of Cuba under the presidency of Miró Cardona. The exiles' Brigade 2506 completed its training in Nicaragua and Guatemala.

The administration of John F. Kennedy inherited the plan for this invasion when it came to office on 20 January 1961. Those who pressed for an invasion used the analogy of covert U.S. support for the overthrow of Guatemalan president Jacobo Arbenz in 1954: effective, at low cost to the United States and with no direct involvement of U.S. troops. Supporters of the invasion argued that it had to proceed soon before Castro's government received enough weapons from the Soviet Union to defeat the challenge. On 3 April the U.S. government published a 'white paper' accusing Castro and his close supporters of betraying what had been an authentic revolution. In the U.S. government's view, Cuba needed a non-communist transformation. President Kennedy agreed to let the CIA-trained invasion force go forward, provided that U.S. forces were not used.

On the morning of 15 April planes piloted by Cuban exiles bombed several airfields in Cuba, creating much panic but little damage. The police responded by imprisoning tens of thousands of suspected dissidents. On Monday morning, 17 April 1961, Brigade 2506 landed at Girón

beach on the Bay of Pigs in south-central Cuba. The Cuban government mobilized both its regular armed forces and the militia. Led personally by Fidel Castro, they defeated the invasion force within forty-eight hours and captured 1,180 prisoners. The prisoners were held for trial and interrogation by Castro and others on Cuban national television; they were eventually ransomed for shipments of medical and other supplies from the United States late in 1962. As recriminations began within the Kennedy administration and exile groups in the aftermath of the invasion's failure, Castro triumphantly announced that Cuba's was a consolidated socialist revolution able to defeat its enemies within Cuba as well as the superpower to its north.

If the making of a radical revolution in Cuba required a break with the United States, the defence of a radical revolution in the face of U.S. attack demanded support from the Soviet Union. On 2 December 1961, Fidel Castro proclaimed that he was a Marxist-Leninist and that he would be so until death. In July 1962 Raúl Castro, the armed forces minister, travelled to Moscow to secure additional Soviet military backing. On the Soviet side, the possibility of stationing strategic missiles in Cuba seemed to be a political and military coup. A Soviet strategic base in Cuba would parallel U.S. bases ringing the USSR, and the reaction time and accuracy of a Soviet nuclear attack on the United States would be improved. The 'figurative' missiles of July 1960 became the real missiles of October 1962. The USSR eventually installed forty-two medium-range ballistic missiles in Cuba, and as U.S. intelligence sources gathered information on this President Kennedy was persuaded that the Soviet Union and Cuba sought a major change in the politico-military balance with the United States. On 22 October, Kennedy demanded the withdrawal of Soviet 'offensive missiles' from Cuba and imposed a naval 'quarantine' on the island to prevent the additional shipment of Soviet weaponry. Kennedy also demanded the withdrawal of Soviet L-28 bombers and a commitment not to station Soviet strategic weapons in Cuba in the future.

The world held its breath. Not since the dropping of nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki had nuclear warfare seemed so imminent. Poised on the edge of war, the two superpowers jockeyed over their military relationship. The crisis ended when, without prior consultation with Cuba, the Soviet Union backed down, pulling out all its strategic forces in exchange for the pledge that the United States would not invade Cuba. The United States made that pledge conditional on UN verification of the Soviet withdrawal of strategic weapons, but a furious Fidel Castro refused

to allow on-site inspection. In fact, although a formal U.S. pledge to desist from invading Cuba would not be made, an 'understanding' came to govern U.S.-Soviet relations over Cuba. The Soviet Union was not to deploy strategic weapons in Cuba nor to use it as a base of operations for nuclear weapons. The United States, in turn, would not seek to overthrow Castro's government. Thus the Cuban missile crisis was a major victory for the U.S. government, since it publicly humiliated the Soviet government over the central question of the day, and yet it also sealed the end of U.S. influence in Cuba. Both Fidel Castro and his exile opponents lost the total support of their superpower allies, but the former would eventually recognize the he had gained much more because his rule was saved by the wisdom of Soviet actions.

As peace returned to the Cuban countryside at the beginning of 1959, the economy began to recover. The revolutionary government sought to stimulate economic growth and, at the same time, to pursue its redistributive goals by altering the structure of demand. The real wages of non-agricultural workers rose sharply, and urban rents for lower-rent dwellings were slashed by as much as 50 per cent. Early in 1959, the government seized all property that had belonged to former president Batista and to his close associates. For the first time in Cuban history the state acquired a major role owning and directly operating productive activities. Unlike most other major Latin American countries, Cuba had not developed an entrepreneurial state sector of the economy before 1959; consequently, there was very little experience about how it might be operated. These problems were to be compounded after 1960 when many managers were dismissed, emigrated or were arrested.

The experiment with a mixed economy was brief because, as we have seen, the Cuban government socialized most of the means of production during its confrontation with the United States. That confrontation need not have affected Cuban-owned business, but on 13 October 1960, 382 locally owned firms, including all the sugar mills, banks, large industries, and the largest wholesale and retail enterprises, were socialized. Three days later the Urban Reform Act socialized all commercially owned real estate. The 1959 Agrarian Reform Act had destroyed Cuban-owned as well as foreign-owned latifundia although it still permitted small- and medium-sized private farms. Because many Cuban entrepreneurs had close connections with the United States and were presumed to oppose the revolutionary government, the survival of revolutionary rule seemed to

require that management and ownership pass to loyal revolutionaries, however technically incompetent they might be. These actions also reflected a self-conscious decision to socialize the economy even though the Revolution's socialist character would not be proclaimed officially until April 1961. Such decisions were justified on the grounds of national security and also because direct ownership and control over the means of production were deemed necessary for economic planning. Economic centralization was viewed as a rational step to generate economic growth. The revolutionary leaders were not compelled to socialize the economy: they acted autonomously and, in their view, prudently to implement an ideological vision of the society they wished to build. Power had to be concentrated in the hands of the few to achieve the aspirations of the many: that was at the heart of the evolving ideology.

The turning-point in internal Cuban politics occurred in October and November 1959, months before the break with the United States, or the first treaties with the Soviet Union. On 15 October, Raúl Castro, Fidel's younger brother, became defence minister (a title changed later to Minister of the Armed Forces), a post he held thereafter. Raúl Castro had had a distinguished military career. He was primarily responsible for the organization and development of the Cuban armed forces and their eventual victories at the Bay of Pigs and in overseas wars, the military being the one undoubtedly effective organization created in the first thirty years of revolutionary rule. He also assumed the post of second-in-command to his older brother in all affairs of state, civilian as well as military, playing an important role in the revitalization of both party and government in the 1970s. Raúl was Fidel's formally designated successor in case of death, with the power to enforce the succession.

On 18 October 1959, Rolando Cubelas – the 'unity' candidate with Communist support – defeated Pedro Boitel, the candidate of the 26 of July Movement at the university, in the elections for the presidency of the Federación Estudiantil Universitaria (FEU) after intervention by Fidel Castro, and aligned the FEU with the shift toward Marxism–Leninism. (In 1966, Cubelas would be arrested for plotting to assassinate Fidel Castro, for which it seems he had the support of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency.)

On 19 October, Huber Matos, military commander of Camagüey province and one of the leading figures of the revolutionary war, resigned along with fourteen officers over the rising influence of communism in the

regime. When Matos was arrested the entire 26 of July Movement executive committee in Camagüey province resigned and its leader was detained. Matos spent two decades in prison; his courageous resistance in jail and his unwillingness to collaborate or to bend to the will of his captors became a symbol of strength to the opposition.

In November the Confederación de Trabajadores Cubanos (CTC) held its tenth congress to select a new leadership. The 26 of July Movement's slate had a clear majority. The government pressed for 'unity' with the Communists, but the congress delegates refused and when Fidel Castro addressed the congress his words were interrupted by the chanting of 'twenty-six, twenty-six'. He attacked those who would use that label 'to stab the revolution in the heart'.<sup>3</sup> He argued that the revolution's defence required avoiding partisan quarrels; he asked for and received authority from the congress to form a labour leadership. He picked the 'unity' slate, including the communists.

At the end of November most of the remaining moderates or liberals in the Council of Ministers, including Minister of Public Works Manuel Ray and National Bank president Felipe Pazos were forced out of office. Of the twenty-one ministers appointed in January 1959, twelve had resigned or had been ousted by the end of the year. Four more would go out in 1960 as the revolution moved toward a Marxist-Leninist political system. The elimination of many non-communists and anti-communists from the original coalition, along with the regime's clash with business, were the internal ingredients of the transformation of the revolution's politics. A new leadership consolidated centralized and authoritarian rule. But among those in the new government coalition, only the old communists had the political and administrative experience to make the new system work.

As internal and international conflicts deepened during 1960 and 1961 the government developed its organizational apparatus. Having obtained control over the FEU and the CTC, the leadership established a militia with tens of thousands of members to build support and to intimidate internal enemies. The Federación de Mujeres Cubanas (FMC) was also founded in August 1960 and the Comités de Defensa de la Revolución (CDR), which eventually encompassed millions of members, were established in September 1960. Committees were set up on every city block, in each large building, factory or work centre (eventually, CDRs would be dismantled in

<sup>3</sup> *Revolución*, 23 November 1959, 4.



work centres so as not to duplicate the work of the labour unions) in order to identify enemies of the Revolution for the state's internal security apparatus. Gossip became an arm of state power. The Asociación de Juventud Revolucionaria (AJR) was launched in October 1960, merging the youth wings of the old Communist Party, the Revolutionary Directorate, and the 26 of July Movement. A few years later the AJR became the Unión de Jóvenes Comunistas (UJC), the youth affiliate of the Communist Party. The Asociación Nacional de Agricultores Pequeños (ANAP) was founded in May 1961; it excluded the medium-sized farm owners (whose property would be expropriated in 1963) and sought to cut across the divisions that existed between producers of various commodities.

A new Communist party was founded in the summer 1961. Called the Organizaciones Revolucionarias Integradas (ORI), it was created through the merger of three pre-existing organizations: the 26 of July Movement, the Revolutionary Directorate, and the old Communist Party, the PSP. The first two of these had by this stage become phantom organizations: the Revolutionary Directorate had been deprived of much independent power after January 1959, while the battles for control over the university students' federation and the labour unions had crippled the 26 of July Movement's capacity for independent political activity. PSP members brought several advantages to the ORI. They were bridge-builders between the rest of the leadership and the Soviet Union. They had some theoretical knowledge of Marxism-Leninism, in contrast to the rest of ORI, and they had long experience of party politics as well as the organization of mass movements. The PSP had run the CTC during its first decade and party militants were the only ORI members with prior government experience, having served in Congress in pre-revolutionary years and contributed ministers (including Carlos Rafael Rodríguez) to Batista's war cabinet in the early 1940s. As a result, they initially dominated the ORI.

The organization of party cells, selection of party members, and all promotions and dismissals had to be cleared through the office of the powerful Organization Secretary, veteran PSP leader Anibal Escalante. Party cells asserted their authority over administrators, and a preliminary system of political commissars was introduced in the armed forces. Membership in the party, moreover, emphasized recruiting those who had belonged to the older political organizations; recruitment of genuine newcomers was not encouraged. Escalante gave preference to his old PSP comrades, who knew best how to organize a party and were personally loyal to him. This proved unacceptable for old 26 of July members and

especially to the military commanders of the guerrilla war. In March 1962, Fidel Castro denounced Escalante for 'sectarianism', removed him from the job as organization secretary, and exiled him to Czechoslovakia. A massive restructuring of the ORI followed; about half the ORI members were expelled, many of them from the PSP faction. New efforts were made to recruit members not only from the pre-existing organizations but also from among those who had been too young for political activity before 1959. The scope of party authority in the armed forces was drastically limited; henceforth, military commanders would have supreme military and political authority within the armed forces. In 1963 the ORI's name was changed to the Partido Unido de la Revolución Socialista (PURS).

In 1962, revolutionary power had become consolidated, although the leaders would not realize this for some years. The threat from the United States began to recede as a consequence of the settlement of the missile crisis. Fidel Castro had established his mastery of Cuban politics and his pre-eminence over all rivals. The organization of revolutionary rule beyond his charisma was under way, even though it would become effective only in the 1970s. Opponents of the regime took up in arms in every province in the first half of the 1960s, being especially strong in the Escambray mountain region of Las Villas province. Thousands of Cubans died in this renewed civil war (1960-6), the rebels including the peasantry of southern Matanzas province as well as those whose social and economic interests were more obviously at stake. They were, however, thoroughly defeated by 1966. (With many like-minded Cubans emigrating, the regime, in effect, exported the opposition.) The main task had become the management of the economy, the rapid decline of which imperilled the accomplishment of other government goals.

#### ECONOMIC POLICIES AND PERFORMANCE

Following the establishment of a command economy under conditions of political crisis, early economic policy in revolutionary Cuba sought development through rapid industrialization. Cuba's overwhelming dependence on the sugar industry was seen as a sign of under-development. As Che Guevara, Minister of Industries and architect of the strategy, put it, 'there can be no vanguard country that has not developed its industry. Industry is the future'.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> *Obra revolucionaria* 10 (1964): 14.

Central state ministries were established and a development plan was formulated with help from many sources but especially from the Soviet Union and East European countries. Cuba was utterly unprepared, however, for a centrally planned economy. It lacked technical personnel (now in the United States or prison) as much as statistics. The plan for 1962 and the plan for 1962-5 were both fantasies. Data did not exist to formulate them and knowledge of economic management was primitive. The plans called for the achievement of spectacular growth targets. Instead, the Cuban economy collapsed in 1962. The government froze prices and imposed rationing for most consumer products. The ration card, a fixture in Cuban life ever since, combines two important aspects of the government's economic performance: relative failure to generate economic growth coupled with relative success in protecting the needs of the poorest Cubans and reducing inequalities in access to basic goods and services. Redistribution policies sought not only to enhance the purchasing power of the poor but also to curtail that of the rich. Wage scales set maximum as well as minimum salaries. In a surprising move the government changed the currency overnight; those who did not have their funds in state banks could not exchange old for new pesos. Their savings were worthless.

The Cuban economy fell further in 1963. Sugar production was down by over a third of its 1961 level as a result of the government's drastic policies to diversify away from the crop. Production elsewhere in agriculture and industry also suffered. Imports of machinery and equipment for accelerated industrialization, coupled with the decline of revenues from sugar exports, created a balance-of-payments crisis. In June 1963, Prime Minister Castro announced a new strategy which once again emphasized sugar production and slowed down the efforts toward industrialization. The strategy of sugar-led development was reaffirmed in 1964 when the Soviet Union and Cuba signed their first long-term agreement that guaranteed better, stable bilateral sugar prices and, eventually, Soviet subsidies above world market prices for Cuban sugar.

The government's strategy called for increasing sugar production until 10 million tons of raw sugar would be produced in 1970. This policy was opposed by a number of technicians and administrators in the sugar industry, but they were overruled. The 1970 sugar production target became a point of pride, a demonstration that Cubans could take charge of their history against all odds. Just as the impossible dream had been achieved in the late 1950s when Batista was overthrown, so would another be achieved at the end of the 1960s as committed revolutionaries demonstrated that

they could raise the level of sugar production from 3.8 million tons in 1963 to 10 million tons in 1970. The doubters would be proven wrong again.

The new strategy was complicated, however, by a top-level debate on the nature of socialist economic organization. One side, led by Minister of Industries Che Guevara, argued that the part of the economy owned by the state was a single unit. Money, prices and credit should operate only in dealing with Cuban consumers or foreign countries. The market law of supply and demand could and ought to be eliminated to move rapidly toward communism. Central planning was the key. All enterprises would be branches of central ministries. All financing would occur through the central budget by means of non-repayable interest-free grants. All enterprise deficits would be covered by the state. Buying and selling among state enterprises would be simple accounting transactions. Money would be a unit of accounting but would not be used to assess profitability. Material incentives (wage differentials, bonuses, overtime payments) to labour would be phased out. The central government would allocate resources by planning physical output and would set all prices needed for accounting.

The other side argued that the part of the Cuban economy owned by the state was not a single economic unit but a variety of enterprises independently owned and operated by the state. Transfers from one enterprise to another did involve buying and selling, with profound implications for the allocation of resources. Money and credits were needed to maintain effective controls over production and to evaluate economic performance. Enterprises had to meet their own production costs and not simply be bailed out for their deficits by the central bank; they had to generate their own funds for further investment, maintenance and innovation. Material incentives to labour were essential to maintain productivity and quality and to reduce costs. If the first model required extraordinary centralization, the second required more economic autonomy for each firm.

The debate was eventually resolved when Che Guevara left the Ministry of Industries in 1965 (to be engaged in revolutionary campaigns in Africa and in South America until his death in late 1967) and the ministry was divided into its former sub-components. Some of Guevara's political allies in other ministries lost their jobs. However, Guevara's policies were generally adopted, and their implementation was carried out to extremes. Much of the calamity in economic performance in the late 1960s is due to Guevara's flawed vision as well as to the administrative chaos unleashed by

Fidel Castro and his associates, as Castro himself would recognize in a dramatic speech on 26 July 1970 when the Cuban economy lay in ruins.

The radical model required the fuller centralization of the economy. As early as 1963 a second Agrarian Reform law was issued to expropriate the middle-sized farms of the rural bourgeoisie that had remained after the implementation of the 1959 law. By the end of 1963, the state owned 70 per cent of all land, and only small farms remained in the private sector. The climax of collectivization came with the 'revolutionary offensive' of the spring 1968 when consumer service shops, restaurants and bars, repair outfits, handicraft shops, street food outlets and even street vendors passed to state ownership and management. Except in a limited way in a small part of the agricultural sector, no economically productive activity could take place in the late 1960s without going through a government agency. It was the time of the state as hot-dog vendor, ice-cream parlour, barber and radio repairman. Although an illegal black market developed, for vegetables as well as for plumbing services, the government had put the economy in a strait jacket.

Paradoxically, as the economy became thoroughly centralized, the means for central planning and control were abandoned. In the late 1960s there were neither real year-to-year national plans nor any medium-term planning. From late 1966 onwards only sectoral planning occurred, but on a limited basis and with little effort to reconcile the often conflicting claims on the same resources from unconnected enterprises and projects. A central budget was also abandoned, not to reappear until a decade later. Fidel Castro launched an attack on 'bureaucratism' which crippled the capacity of several central agencies. Financial accounting and auditing were discontinued; statistics were kept only in physical quantities (e.g., pairs of shoes). It became impossible to determine the costs of production for most items.

The changes in labour policy were equally dramatic. The phasing out of material incentives was to be coupled with a renewed emphasis on moral incentives: the revolutionary consciousness of the people would guarantee increased productivity and quality and reductions in cost. Workers would be paid the same regardless of variations in effort or quality. Those who worked overtime would be expected to do so voluntarily and would not receive extra pay. Money was seen as a source of capitalist corruption. This change in policy occurred in the wake of a major structural change in the labour market. Whereas Cuba had suffered a persistently high rate of overt unemployment before the Revolution, this had been reduced quickly in

the early 1960s and been transformed into a labour shortage. Many of the formerly unemployed had been put to work in state enterprises. Productivity per worker plummeted as employment rose and production declined. Inefficiency and under-employment were institutionalized in the new economic structures. And yet this was also an extraordinary human achievement; it allowed most able-bodied Cubans the dignity of some work and the commitment to use their talents in a constructive way.

Economic performance was complicated by another change in the structure of the labour market. Because of the highly seasonal nature of the all-important sugar industry, pre-revolutionary employment patterns had suffered sharp seasonal oscillations. Workers worked very hard when they were employed to save for the expected unemployment during the 'dead season'. When the revolutionary government guaranteed employment (or sufficient unemployment compensation) throughout the year to all able to work the pre-revolutionary structural incentive to work hard weakened. Thus the revolutionary government succeeded in eliminating a perpetual source of misery – the fear of destitution as a worker stimulus – but this was not replaced by new effective incentives for high-quality work. As material incentives were removed on top of these structural changes, the problem of low and declining worker productivity worsened, as did labour shortages. No moral exhortations were incentive enough.

Since moral incentives proved insufficient to stimulate production and productivity the government engaged in mass mobilization for work in the sugar fields and other sectors of the economy. These so-called volunteers – who often lacked the right to refuse – were deployed throughout the country rather ineffectively. They were supplemented by a substantial portion of the personnel of the Cuban armed forces. Having defeated the internal counter-revolution by 1966, the armed forces committed themselves to directly productive economic activities including the harvesting of sugar cane. Military officers became harvest supervisors as the desperate effort to produce 10 million tons of sugar in 1970 combined with the shift towards radical economic policies and reliance on revolutionary consciousness. A new revolutionary citizen was to have emerged to lead Cuba to economic emancipation.

The economy was recorded as having produced 8.5 million tons in 1970 (by juggling the artificially low 1969 figures): the highest in Cuban history but still 15 per cent below target. Between 1968 and 1970 the Cuban economy was badly dislocated as resources were shifted among sectors without regard to the cost of achieving the impossible dream, the

central government's actions promoting chaos while labour was coerced to work under military discipline without adequate rewards. Production in cattle-raising and forestry declined from 1968 to 1970, as did over 68 per cent of all agricultural product lines and over 71 per cent of all industrial product lines; even the fishing sector, the best performer under revolutionary rule, showed more declines than increases.

By 1970 Cuba's economic growth performance was dismal. Two sharp recessions had marked the beginning and end of the decade, the intervening years showing only a modest recovery. The standard of living was extremely spartan, and discontent surfaced at all levels. To his credit, Prime Minister Castro took personal responsibility for the disaster and changed economic policies in the first half of the 1970s.

Relief for the Cuban economy came from an unexpected quarter: the world sugar market. Prices for sugar in the free world market soared from an annual average of 3.68 cents of a dollar in 1970 to 29.60 cents in 1974. Given that sugar exports had continued to account for about four-fifths of all exports, this price bonanza alone accounts for much of Cuba's economic recovery in the first half of the 1970s. The government also moved to reform internal economic organization by adopting and adapting the Soviet economic model. Central macro-economic planning reappeared in the early 1970s, enabling Cuba to adopt its first five-year plan in 1975. The first plan (1976-80) proved too optimistic and many of its targets were not reached (the growth rate was one-third below plan) since it had been based on the assumption that world sugar prices would remain higher than proved to be the case in the late 1970s. Nonetheless, it was more realistic than anything the government had adopted before. A central budget was again designed and implemented from 1977. Financial accounting and auditing were reinstated, and material incentives received renewed emphasis as various reforms in monetary, price and wage policies sought to align supply and demand more accurately. The Soviet Union also channelled considerable resources to bring the Cuban economy afloat again.

One indication of how badly organized the Cuban economy had been in the 1960s is that many of the new measures formulated early in the 1970s could not be implemented until the late 1970s or early 1980s. Delays were also caused, however, by some opposition to the liberalization of the Cuban economy. And yet, as the 1980s opened, farmers were allowed to sell the surplus to their state quotas in markets where prices were unregulated and transactions were between private persons; this also occurred in

handicraft markets and in the after-hours and weekend contracting of services. At long last one could hire a plumber or buy tomatoes without dealing with a bureaucracy. State enterprises received greater autonomy to contract labour directly rather than depending wholly on the central labour agency. A new management system was gradually adopted and implemented in the late 1970s and early 1980s to provide managers with more autonomy and authority. It allowed each enterprise to retain some profits to distribute to managers and workers at the end of the year and to improve the enterprise and working conditions. Wage differentials, overtime pay and bonuses came to play a major role in labour incentives. Higher wages were paid for better-quality work, productivity improvements, cost reduction and longer hours.

The economy prospered almost spectacularly during the first half of the 1970s, Cuba's growth rate in those years comparing well with that of the world's leading growth performers. However, the economy stagnated during the second half of the decade except for 1978. The third major severe recession under revolutionary rule was under way by mid-1979, encouraging the outburst of emigration in 1980 just as the prolonged recession of the late 1960s increased the emigration of those years.

Weak economic performance at the beginning of the 1980s put pressure on the country's foreign-debt service payments. Although Cuba has not been a major borrower in the international capital markets, its hard-currency foreign debt in 1982 was about \$3 billion. When foreign trade became more concentrated with the Soviet Union exports generated less revenue for servicing the hard-currency debt. The ensuing negotiations with European, Arab and Japanese bankers led to policies that decreased consumption levels in the early 1980s in order to meet Cuban debt obligations.

One major difference between these two periods of economic performance was the price of sugar. Although it rose steadily from 1970 to 1974, it fell to an average of about 8 cents per pound during the second half of the 1970s. After a short-lived rise in late 1980 and early 1981 the world price of sugar fell to the 6- to 8-cent level. Moreover, troubled by its own weak economic performance, the Soviet Union in 1981 cut by one-sixth the price it paid for Cuban sugar while continuing to raise the prices it charged for its exports to Cuba. Cuba's terms of trade with the Soviet Union in 1982 – when Cuba had to reschedule its debts with market-economy lenders – were one-third lower than in 1975. The recovery of the price the Soviets paid for Cuban sugar in subsequent years

prevented a more severe economic crisis, even if the Cuban–Soviet terms of trade remained well below what they were in the mid- to late 1970s. Sugar prices remained closely related to the swings in Cuban economic performance, underscoring the commodity's persistently central role in the economy.

The adoption of some economic reforms in the early 1970s had quick and positive results, but by the late 1970s productivity improvements were more difficult to attain. Fidel Castro told the third party Congress in 1986 that Cuba still suffered from 'the absence of comprehensive national planning for economic development'. He added that the new management system, after a good beginning, had 'no consistent follow-through to improve it. The initiative was lost and the creativity needed to adapt this system to our own conditions – a system largely taken from other countries – never materialized'. Even 'the budget continued to be ineffective. Rather than regulating spending, it, in effect, promoted it'.<sup>5</sup>

To address these problems, in April 1986 Castro launched a process that he called 'rectification'. Cuba was the only communist regime in the late 1980s to back off from market mechanisms in order to improve production and efficiency. Castro denounced heads of state enterprises for having become apprentice capitalists. He lashed out at the lure of 'vile money'. To stamp out the curse of the market, in May 1986 the government banned the farmers' markets that had been legalized in 1980. Other anti-market measures were adopted and Castro lashed out against the reliance on bonuses to motivate the workers, calling once again for moral incentives to build a better society. The fact that the economy fell into a recession in 1986–7 partly reflected the inefficacy of these measures to rid Cuba from the vestiges of capitalism. There was, however, another enduring problem. The second half of the 1970s was also the period of the two major African wars and of the deployment of large numbers of Cubans overseas, which relied on the mobilization of reservists. A majority of Cuban troops in Ethiopia, about four-fifths of the Cuban troops in Angola and almost all Cuban personnel in Grenada were reservists at the peak of the wars and the U.S. invasion. Given the desire to win the wars and to perform well overseas in military roles, some of the best managers, technicians and workers were taken from the home economy for the overseas army, contributing to a decline in productivity and efficiency in various sectors since the

<sup>5</sup> *Granma Weekly Review*, 16 February 1986, special supplement, 6, 7.

late 1970s. Although the number of Cuban troops in Ethiopia was reduced sharply by the mid-1980s, more than 50,000 Cuban troops remained in Angola until the war ended in 1988.

The Cuban revolutionary government sought to generate economic growth from the moment it arrived in power but except for the recovery of the early 1970s these policies did not succeed. There was no growth at all during the 1960s. The economy's performance after 1975 failed to reach many planned targets. It generated only modest real economic growth and suffered a major recession as well as serious international debt problems. The structure of production diversified only a little. Sugar remained king, generating about four-fifths of export revenue. However, the government had also implemented a strategy of import substituting industrialization, evolving gradually in the 1970s and continuing in the 1980s – decades after such strategies appeared in most major Latin American countries. Cuba's factories now provided a wider array of light- and medium-industry products. However, their inefficiency and the poor quality of their products remained a problem while non-sugar agricultural production continued to perform poorly with few exceptions (eggs, citrus fruits). Cuba was unable to diversify its international economic relations to any great extent: there was overwhelming dependence on one product (sugar cane) and one country (the Soviet Union). The tendency in the late 1970s and 1980s was to retain dependence on both.

On the other hand, government economic performance was impressive with respect to redistribution. There was a strong and generally successful commitment to provide full employment for all able-bodied citizens (despite the reappearance of overt unemployment in the 1970s, reaching 5.4 per cent in 1979), even at the cost of under-employment and inefficiency. Equally, access to basic goods at low prices was provided through the rationing system, even at the cost of subsidizing consumption. The government's policies in the 1960s dramatically reduced inequalities between social classes and between town and country. The improvement in the rural poor's standard of living was outstanding. The trend in the 1970s and early 1980s toward greater use of material incentives led to a new inequality that stimulated good managerial and worker performance. Nevertheless, the leadership retained its commitment to meet the basic needs of its people, and Cuba remained a very egalitarian society by Latin American standards.

## SOCIAL TRENDS

Cuba underwent a demographic transformation after the Revolution came to power. There was a 'baby boom' in the early 1960s, the crude birth-rate increasing by about a third compared to the late 1950s; then the crude birth-rate stayed above 30 births per 1,000 population from 1960 to 1968. The principal explanation for the baby boom is probably the improved economic conditions for lower-income Cubans resulting from redistributive policies and improved health facilities in the rural areas. Increased wages, an end to overt unemployment, reduced rents and guaranteed access to basic necessities, including education and health care, provided a 'floor' for all Cubans. At the same time, the government launched a campaign to promote marriages, including the legalization of the many pre-existing consensual unions. Contraceptive supplies, previously available from the United States, were cut off by the U.S. trade embargo. The emigration broke up families and opened up new opportunities for relationships for those remaining in Cuba. The emigration of doctors and other health-care personnel reduced opportunities for abortion, as did the more effective enforcement of a pre-revolutionary law restricting abortion.

The initial impact of the baby boom was masked by emigration. Population growth rates declined in the early 1960s, but when the first wave of emigration was shut off at the time of the missile crisis the growth rate reached the highest level since the 1920s: over 2.6 per cent per year. The baby boom also began to have a dramatic impact on the primary school system, which had to expand overnight, and on the delivery of other social services to the young. The government's ability to deliver such services is a striking demonstration of its commitment to support the young even in years of economic decline.

The baby boom was followed by a baby bust. The crude birth rate was reduced by half between the end of the 1960s and the end of the 1970s, when the population growth rate was one-third of what it had been in the mid-1960s. As a result of the emigration outburst, there was a net decline in population in 1980, when Cuba's age pyramid showed that the population aged fifteen to nineteen (the peak of the baby boom) was 50 per cent larger than the population aged twenty to twenty-four (born just before the Revolution). One consequence of the baby boom was to allow the government regularly to station 35,000 young men in its overseas armed forces. The population under age five (the 'baby bust') was somewhat smaller than the population aged twenty to twenty-four, and it was one-

third smaller than the population aged fifteen to nineteen. The baby bust had as many implications for social services as did the baby boom; one initial effect was Cuba's ability to export primary school teachers to work overseas in foreign-aid missions. In the long run, the baby bust might have made it more difficult for Cuba to station its armies overseas in the 1990s.

Cuban fertility had been declining gradually before the Revolution. The high level of social modernization probably contributed to the renewed fertility decline, but its magnitude and suddenness in the 1970s could not be explained with reference to long-term processes alone. The new fertility decline began in the late 1960s with the economy's sharp deterioration. However, it continued unabated during both the economic recovery of the first half of the 1970s and the economic slow-down at the end of the decade. The economy's poor performance is a necessary but insufficient condition for explaining the fertility decline. In 1964, restrictions on abortion were eased. Abortion became legal and easy, Cuba's abortion ratio (the number of abortions per 1,000 pregnancies) rising steadily from the 1960s so that by the end of the 1970s two out of five pregnancies were ended by abortion. Only Bulgaria, Japan and the Soviet Union had a higher abortion ratio. Indeed, abortion probably became the main birth-control method. While the number of abortions doubled from 1968 to 1978, the number of live births fell by two-fifths. Other means of contraception, however, also became more available within the national health system and these contributed to a fertility decline too. After the sharp increases of the previous decade the marriage rate stabilized in the mid- and late-1970s, but the divorce rate quadrupled from its pre-revolutionary level, about one in three marriages ending in divorce throughout the 1970s. It is likely that the greater incidence of divorce helped to reduce the birth rate. The continuing severe housing shortage also discouraged marriages because couples did not wish to live with their in-laws, or if they did, there was rarely space to house children. The permanent stationing of some 50,000 Cubans overseas in the late 1970s must also have contributed to reduce fertility.

According to the 1981 national census, there were 9,706,369 Cubans living in Cuba, one-fifth of whom lived in the city of Havana – a slightly smaller proportion than in the 1970 census. Cuba had become an urban country. While the level of urbanization increased slowly between 1953 and 1970 (from 57 per cent to 60 per cent), it jumped to 69 per cent in 1981. Urban growth also occurred outside the capital. While Havana

grew 7.7 per cent from 1970 to 1981, Victoria de las Tunas grew by 58 per cent and Holguín and Bayamo by more than 40 per cent. Seven other cities grew by more than 24 per cent in that period, and the number of towns with a population of 95,000 or more doubled in the 1970s. In short, urbanization occurred mostly outside the primate city (Havana), a rare outcome by Latin American standards.

The experience of women changed considerably under revolutionary rule. As we have seen, women were more likely to get married, get divorced and have an abortion. They were much more likely to have children during the 1960s than during the 1970s. The proportion of women in the labour force also doubled from the late 1950s to the late 1970s, when they accounted for 30 per cent of the labour force. This resulted, however, from a gradual increase rather than from an abrupt change brought about by the Revolution. The increased entry of women into the labour force reflected an evolving social modernization although some government policies may have helped it. By contrast, the participation of Cuban women who emigrated to the United States increased much more and much more quickly: proportionately, twice as many Cuban-origin women in the United States than in Cuba were employed in the labour force in 1970, when a majority of Cuban-American women but only a quarter of Cuban women were in the labour force.

Some Cuban government policies discouraged female incorporation into the labour force. The government reserved certain categories of jobs for men on the grounds that women's health would be impaired were women to be engaged in those occupations, although no evidence was released to justify that policy. As the young 'baby boom' workers entered the labour force rapidly, government policies sought to maintain a constant sex ratio in the labour force instead of helping the proportionate incorporation of women.

There was an impressive increase in the numbers of women throughout the educational system. Women were represented at levels comparable to their share of the population in formerly predominantly male professional schools at the university, such as medicine, the natural sciences and economics. Although they remained under-represented in engineering and agronomy and over-represented in primary and secondary school teaching and in the humanities, a fundamental shift had occurred. The government, however, imposed quotas to limit the increase in women's enrolment in certain professional schools such as medicine on the grounds that

women were more likely to interrupt their careers and that women doctors would be less suitable for service in the armed forces.

Women's participation in politics lagged considerably. Women accounted for only 13 per cent of the Central Committees of the Communist Party of Cuba chosen in 1980 and 1986; there were no women in the party Secretariat and no women in the top government organ, the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers. The first woman entered the party's Political Bureau in 1986: Vilma Espín, Raúl Castro's wife and president of the Women's Federation. Women were also under-represented at the middle ranks of leadership. Surveys suggested the persistence of sexual stereotypes in the home (despite government efforts through a Family Code approved in the mid-1970s to equalize status between spouses in the family), the workplace and in politics. Women and men clung to traditional female roles.

There was little research on race relations after the Revolution. Because Cuba's black and mulatto population was disproportionately poor, and because the poor benefited disproportionately from government policies, blacks were likely to have benefited from such policies. Available surveys suggested stronger black than white support for the government; until 1980 blacks were greatly under-represented among Cuban exiles. The 1980 emigration outburst included urban blacks in numbers comparable to their share of the urban population. The government eliminated the few racially discriminatory legal bars that existed before the revolution but this had modest impact. The government sought to include the symbolism of Cuba's African heritage at the forefront of the justifications for Cuba's actions in African countries. However, the gaps between whites and blacks may not have changed as much during the past decades. For example, although health standards for the entire population improved, the relatively higher vulnerability of blacks to diseases (especially parasitic diseases that afflict poor populations) continued. The gap in access to health care between whites and blacks did not change much either, despite the undoubted gains in this regard for most Cubans.

Perhaps because the leaders of the revolutionary movement in the 1950s were disproportionately white and because they continued to command the heights of power, blacks were greatly under-represented in the top organs of government and party. The level of black representation changed little from before the revolution – when Batista was Cuba's first mulatto president – to the 1986 party congress when President Castro declared it a

matter of party policy to increase the black share of top party organs; whereas one-third of the total population was black (1981 census), the black share of the 1986 Central Committee was just one-fifth. Only in elections to local municipal assemblies were blacks apparently represented in numbers comparable to their share of the population.

Since the government claimed to have solved racial problems, it became subversive to argue that they persisted even if in modified form. The government banned associations of black intellectuals and politicians that had existed before the Revolution. A number of those who insisted there were still serious racial problems in Cuban society, or distinctive intellectual issues among Afro-Cubans, became exiles.

Cuba's educational transformation was the revolutionary government's most impressive achievement. The government advanced Cuba's social modernization by the sharp reduction of illiteracy (down to 12.9 per cent in the 1970 census and to 5.6 per cent in 1979), starting with a major campaign in 1961 which was continued through the extensive adult education system. The government expropriated all private (including Church-affiliated) schools. After difficulties during the 1960s, the government accomplished virtual universal attendance at primary schools. Average educational levels in the labour force jumped from bare literacy in the 1964 labour census to sixth grade in the 1974 labour census and to eighth grade in the large 1979 demographic survey. In 1979, two-fifths of the adult population had completed the ninth grade and two-thirds the sixth grade.

The boom in primary education reflected both government conscious policy and the need to accommodate the baby boom. By the late 1970s, primary school enrolments had begun to decline as a result of the baby bust. From 1974-5 (the peak year in primary school enrolment) to 1980-1, primary school enrolment (including preschool) fell 20 per cent. The remarkably adaptive school system increased junior high school enrolment by 121 per cent and senior high school enrolment by 427 per cent over the same period. Between 400,000 and 700,000 people per year were enrolled in adult education schools during the 1970s.

The primary school system reduced – but did not eliminate – the differences in access to quality education between urban and rural Cuba. A generous programme of scholarships also helped to reduce class differences in access to education at the post-primary levels. There were a number of serious problems of quality in Cuban schools during the 1960s – high

drop-out rates, low levels of teacher training, poor student and poor teacher performance in the classroom. Although some of these problems remained, the qualitative improvement in the 1970s matched the still excellent quantitative performance inherited from the 1960s. Many people deserved credit for these accomplishments, including Fidel Castro, whose concern with education was a key feature of the government's commitment. However, the long-serving vice-president of the Council of Ministers and Minister of Education, José Ramón Fernández, deserved special mention. He skilfully managed the transition from the baby boom to the bust, the adjustments and expansions of enrolment, and the marked improvements in the quality of education, notwithstanding the problems, that, as he recognized, still remained.

Higher education had a more tortuous history. Enrolment declined in the 1960s, to increase only in the next decade. Faculty ranks were decimated by politically inspired dismissals and emigration. Most students were enrolled only in night school, where the quality of the instruction and the experience ranged from poor to variable because many teachers were overworked, resources were limited and there were too many students. There was a strong technical bias to higher education that encouraged enrolment in engineering and discouraged it in the humanities. The academic study of the social sciences was neglected, and that which was undertaken avoided contemporary issues of political significance within Cuba. Since 1959, however, there had been superb historiographical scholarship whose crowning glory was Manuel Moreno Fraginals's trilogy on the sugar mill in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (*El ingenio*). Good historiography stops generally around 1935, just before the beginning of the subsequently embarrassing alliance between Batista and the Communist Party.

The universities were organized on a broad 'industrial model', to train professional personnel in a hierarchical system. They de-emphasized the development of the liberal arts or the possibility of active intellectual criticism of major political, social, economic or cultural problems. Many of Cuba's leading writers of the 1960s and 1970s lived overseas (Guillermo Cabrera Infante, Severo Sarduy, Reinaldo Arenas, Heberto Padilla, Edmundo Desnoes, Antonio Benítez Rojo, among others) or had died (Alejo Carpentier and José Lezama Lima). Political criteria were among the factors in making decisions on student admissions even to non-political professions such as medicine and despite the fact that the universities and the Academy of Sciences emphasized applied technical research. Medical



research, and research on the agriculture and processing of sugar cane, both with long pre-revolutionary traditions, were the major areas of scientific achievement.

Although Cuba had a high level of literacy (about three-quarters of all adults) and relatively high levels of school enrolment before the Revolution, these had stagnated in the middle third of the twentieth century. The revolutionary government thus took up the task of educational modernization where it had been left in the 1920s to institutionalize an educational revolution that was rightly the pride of its people and government and an outstanding example of sustained commitment to other countries. Cuban schoolteachers ably served their country's foreign policy and the needs of ordinary students over three continents. The educational system, however, was inhospitable to political and intellectual dissent; it restricted freedom of expression and repressed many critics. The fruits of education and culture were thus curtailed. For this tragic loss, Cuba served as a negative example of the uses of government power to limit the full development of human potential.

Government policies and performance in the area of health care also registered appreciable success. The government quickly established health care as the right of every citizen, expanding the system of free provision that had existed before the Revolution. There were early advances in the rural areas, improving the delivery of health care and narrowing the gap between town and country. However, general performance deteriorated during the 1960s compared to the quite highly developed pre-revolutionary health system, this trend largely resulting from the worsening health care in the cities, where most people lived. Many doctors and other health-care professionals left the country and because they had been concentrated in Havana the capital suffered disproportionately. Existing medical services and facilities were disrupted by political and military mobilizations. Inefficient production of medicines and the disruption of ties with the United States led to a shortage of medical supplies which had a particular impact on upper-income urban consumers with access to and resources to buy imported medicines. The emergency health-care training program to replace the departing exiles was uneven in quality, and the health system was affected as much as other areas of state enterprise by the disorganization of the 1960s.

During the early 1960s the general as well as the infant mortality rates worsened. The infant mortality rate (deaths under age one per 1,000 live

births) rose from thirty-five in 1959 to forty-seven ten years later, the rates for major diseases also worsening during these years. The commitment of government budgetary resources to urban health care faltered as resources were channelled to the rural areas. Indeed, until the early 1970s the performance of the health-care system was not unlike that of the Cuban economy: much better in redistribution among social classes and geographic regions than in growth. By the mid 1970s, thanks in part to preceding economic improvements, the system made great advances. The infant mortality rate fell to 18.5 per 1,000 by the time of the 1981 census, and morbidity rates fell across the spectrum of serious diseases. It must be remembered, however, that Cuba already had a rather mature health-care system on the eve of the Revolution. Thus, six of the top eight causes of death were identical in 1958 and in 1981; heart disease, cancers, diseases of the central nervous system, influenza and pneumonia, accidents and early childhood diseases. On the other hand, although acute diarrheic diseases, homicides, tuberculosis and nephritis were among the top ten causes in 1958, they had been replaced by suicides, diabetes, congenital malformations and respiratory diseases by 1981. These changes brought Cuba closer to the typical health profile for an industrial country in ways that could have been predicted from Cuba's long-term pattern of health-care modernization.

At the start of the 1980s the government's most significant accomplishment in health care remained the reduction of inequality in access to health care among social classes and regions. Havana's advantage over eastern Cuba narrowed. The set-backs of the 1960s were overcome and health standards genuinely improved, building on the good but insufficient levels of the 1950s. Cuba posted talented health-care personnel in three-dozen countries the world over. Some of these programmes sold their medical services to host governments, earning foreign exchange for Cuba's transnational state enterprises. Most such programmes, however, were free of charge to the recipient country.

The revolutionary government's poor performance in housing construction resulted from insufficient production, inefficiency and disorganization in the construction and construction-materials industries. The government did not give high priority in the allocation of construction resources to meeting the housing needs of the population. Its principal goals in this area included the building of hospitals, schools and military installations and the deployment of some of the best construction teams overseas.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, with a population half of that three decades later, pre-revolutionary Cuba built almost 27,000 housing units per year. In the early 1960s, the rate fell to just over 17,000 units per year; very little housing was built in the radical period of the late 1960s. During the first Five Year Plan (1976–80), just over 16,000 housing units per year were built. The trend in the late 1970s was towards a decline in the rate of housing construction at the same time as more construction workers were deployed overseas and the Cuban armed forces expanded: Cuba built almost 21,000 housing units in 1973 (the peak year since 1959) but not even 15,000 in 1980.

The housing situation was alleviated somewhat by the emigration. From 1959 to 1975, emigration made available about 9,300 units on the average per year; during those same years, average housing construction was about 11,800 units. This meant that about one-third of the new demand for housing went unsatisfied each year. Considering that much of the pre-revolutionary housing stock was already in deplorable condition and that there was much evidence that thousands of housing units collapsed out of poor maintenance, Cuba faced a terrible housing problem in the 1980s. The housing shortage and the resultant overcrowding have been among the major causes for Cuba's high divorce rate and rapidly declining fertility rate.

#### POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

The central figure in Cuba's revolutionary politics was Fidel Castro, his leadership remaining charismatic in the sense that it depended on the conviction that he did not depend on election by his followers but had been 'elected' by a supernatural authority or some 'historical force'. He also depended on the citizenry's sharing that conviction. Castro's sense of mission was a persistent theme in his many public statements. The concluding phrase to the edited version of his defence at his trial for attacking the Moncada barracks on 26 July 1953 provided the first major statement of this belief: 'Condemn me; it does not matter to me. History will absolve me'.<sup>6</sup> History-as-god elects the revolutionary leader to act with and for his followers. Or, as he put it in perhaps the most difficult speech of his government career when he reported publicly on the economic collapse of

<sup>6</sup> English text in Rolando Bonachea and Nelson P. Valdés (eds.), *Revolutionary Struggle, 1947–1958: The Selected Works of Fidel Castro* (Cambridge, Mass., 1972), vol. 1.

the late 1960s: 'If we have an atom of value, that atom of value will be through our service to an idea, a cause, linked to the people'.<sup>7</sup> The cause, the idea, history incarnate, elects the leader to rule. Castro's sway over his associates and many ordinary citizens has been the single most striking political fact of contemporary Cuban history.

Castro's political style emphasized active engagement as opposed to theoretical pursuits. It also highlighted the power of self-discipline and conscious action, as opposed to the pre-revolutionary Communists who were waiting for objective conditions to ripen to launch their revolution when Castro's forces swept into power and in contrast to those economists who argued that the strategy to produce 10 million tons of sugar in 1970 was madness. Subjective will was the fundamental resource for revolutionary leaders to overcome objective obstacles in war, politics or economics. A vanguard, an elite, must lead the people and awaken them to their historical responsibilities. Moreover, only the maximum possible effort toward the optimal goal was worth pursuing. The apparently unattainable goal was alone worthy because it was clear that the revolutionary consciousness of women and men provided the essential margin for victory. An activist, determined vanguard would reach for the future – and conquer it.

This approach to politics brought the Cuban Revolution to power and led the revolutionary government to undertake a number of successful activities, ranging from victory in the battlefields of the Horn of Africa to the overcoming of illiteracy. It also led to some disasters and tragedies, of which the economic and social experiments of the late 1960s provide the best general example. But many other smaller projects were also disasters, responding to a whim or a passing thought of Castro's to which subordinates dedicated themselves with fervour and commitment for no sensible purpose. This style of leadership bred intolerance toward critics, dissenters, or even those who were just somewhat unconventional. This style of rule rejected out of hand the hypothesis that the great leader's policies might be in error – until disaster struck.

Revolutionary rule was legitimized not only by charisma but also by performance. Cuba, its new leaders said from the moment they seized power in 1959, had been delivered from a terroristic, corrupt, abusive and illegitimate political system. Fidel Castro's consummate oratorical skills – alternately mellow and fierce, jocular or insulting towards his enemies,

<sup>7</sup> *Granma Weekly Review*, 2 August 1970, 6.

thoughtful or emotional, learned and complex before professional audiences or simple, funny and tender in dialogue with schoolchildren – became one of the Revolution's most powerful weapons. He commanded the airwaves of radio and television in a country where both were well established by 1959. He moved incessantly throughout the country as a revolutionary prophet touching, moving, educating and steeling his people for combat: to struggle for a new life, a better future, against known and unknown enemies.

The government continually emphasized its redistribution to the benefit of lower-income people, and especially the better-implemented policies in education and health care. Even when government leaders acknowledged the failure of economic growth strategies, they stressed the gains accomplished in redistribution and social services. A social cleavage, much clearer than at any other point in Cuban history, became the basis for majority support for revolutionary rule in the difficult days of the early 1960s. Nationalism was a further source of legitimacy, affirming the cultural, political and historical integrity of the Cuban nation and emphasizing the unity of the people rather than the legitimacy which might have been derived from any one segment such as the proletariat. Nationalism gained further strength from the struggle against the U.S. government. The class enemies became 'worms'; the foreign enemies 'imperialists'.

In the absence of national elections from 1959 to 1976, or of other effective organizational channels to voice grievances and opinions, charisma, political deliverance, redistribution and nationalism were the pillars on which the right to rule was claimed. The Revolution itself, and its maximum leader, were self-legitimizing, although this claim was certainly not universally accepted.

The mass organizations taken over in 1959 or created in 1960–1 have since mobilized the population to build political support for the government and to deter internal enemies. While they respond principally to centralized direction, they were by the 1970s exhibiting interest-group tendencies. The ANAP, in particular, was a strong lobbyist in defence of private peasant interests in the early 1960s and again from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s. It has sought higher prices, easier credits and freer markets for peasants, and it has tried to curtail the forcible expropriation of peasant land by the state. Only in the radical period of the late 1960s was the autonomy of this and the other organizations virtually destroyed. The FEU was dissolved between December 1967 and 1971;

the height of radicalism tolerated none of the autonomy or dissent typical of university students. By the 1970s, however, even the CDRs (Committees for the Defense of the Revolution) had changed. While their paramount task remained 'revolutionary vigilance', they also adopted other community self-help missions. The mass organizations participated in most campaigns, both effective and ineffective, launched by the leadership. Among their most successful tasks were the reduction of illiteracy and of diseases subject to control through mass immunization campaigns. The CDRs were just as effective in this as they were in political control. The FMC played a prominent role in the sharp reduction of prostitution and the re-education and incorporation of former prostitutes into a new life.

The role of the labour unions in the late 1960s was to support management. Unions were directed to struggle to increase production and productivity, to exceed the goals set in the economic plans, to organize competition ('emulation') among workers to accomplish official aims, and to reduce costs. Workers were to rise above narrow and temporary interests, such as better wages and better working conditions, to sacrifice themselves for the good of the people. Labour was exhorted to heroic efforts and to respond to moral incentives, voluntary work becoming a euphemism for unpaid overtime work. In August 1969, President Osvaldo Dorticós denounced the 'abuse of overtime and the deceit of overtime', but his was a lonely voice and he had little power notwithstanding his title.<sup>8</sup> In 1970 Fidel Castro produced the best epitaph for the unions in this period: 'Unfortunately, for the last two years, our workers' organizations have taken a back seat – not through the fault of either the workers' organizations or the workers themselves but through our fault, the party's fault, the fault of the country's political leadership'.<sup>9</sup>

By the second half of 1970 the workers had taken enough. They staged a general 'strike'. Strikes had been illegal since the early days of the revolution so the leadership described the 1970 event as 'large-scale absenteeism'. Although apparently uncoordinated, some 400,000 workers, a fifth of the work force, stayed away from work in August and September 1970 on any given day. In Oriente province, the cradle of the revolution, a majority of agricultural workers were absent from work in August 1970, and more than a fifth were still staying away in January 1971 even though

<sup>8</sup> 'Discurso del Presidente de la República, Dr. Osvaldo Dorticós Torrado, en la escuela de cuadros de mando del Ministerio de la Industria Ligera', *Pensamiento crítico* 45 (October 1970): 148.

<sup>9</sup> *Granma Weekly Review*, 4 October 1970, 2.

the new sugar harvest was under way. The elections in local labour unions in autumn 1970 were the freest and most competitive since 1959. Many controls over the election process were lifted. Approximately three-quarters of the local labour leaders elected at that time were new to the job. The changes in policy inaugurated in the first half of the 1970s thus responded, in part, to the 'leading role of the proletariat', forcibly communicating to the government that radical policies were no longer acceptable to labour.

As the conditions of labour improved in the early 1970s so were political controls re-established over the unions. By the time of the Thirteenth Labour Congress in 1973 elections by acclamation (rather than by secret ballot) for unopposed slates had reappeared. Representation at labour congresses came to favour the union bureaucracy, with only a minority of seats reserved for delegates elected at the grass roots. While the role of the unions in defence of the interests of the workers was emphasized anew in the heyday of the 1970 union elections, the more conservative approach prevailed again by 1973. Unions could make specific criticism of 'concrete' matters that were going wrong, but they were supposed to stay away from more autonomous political behaviour.

By the end of the 1970s, the membership of the mass organizations stabilized. The CDRs and the FMC encompassed about four-fifths of the adult population and of the adult women, respectively. Whereas the proportion of the relevant populations that belonged to these organizations rose until the mid-1970s, they remained fairly constant thereafter, subsequent growth in membership resulting mostly from demographic change. It became clear that about one-fifth of adult Cubans wanted nothing to do with the mass organizations, and vice versa.

Membership in the mass organization in the 1980s had become a prerequisite for a successful life in Cuba. Responsible positions were open only to those who were integrated into the revolutionary process by their membership in one or more such organizations. It was likely, therefore, that some proportion of the members did not support the regime but belonged to the mass organizations simply to make their own life easier; a substantial proportion of the 1980 exiles, for example, had belonged to such organizations. Some of the organizations, especially the labour unions, allocated certain resources: only those judged to have been vanguard workers had the right to acquire such consumer durables as sewing machines, refrigerators or television sets, and only they had priority access to scarce housing. Other workers could not acquire such goods even if they had the money.

The mass organizations thus became controllers of access to the good life – or at least to a bearable life.

The mass organizations and other political and bureaucratic institutions were subordinated to the party, a relationship which is made explicit in the Constitution of 1976. In the autumn of 1965, the party's name was changed again to the Communist Party of Cuba (PCC). At the same time, Fidel Castro unveiled the first one-hundred-member Central Committee, along with two smaller organs: the Political Bureau, responsible for the making of basic political decisions, and the Secretariat, charged with their implementation. Nevertheless, the party's influence remained limited for the balance of the decade. Not until the early 1970s were serious efforts made to turn it into an effective ruling Communist Party.

The party's first Congress was held in December 1975, the preparatory work for which was a major step forward to institutionalize PCC rule. The Congress approved party statutes, a programmatic platform and a number of statements or 'theses' on various subjects of national policy. It approved the draft of the new national Constitution, which was approved by a popular referendum in 1976. The Congress also approved the first five-year plan and other economic policies. The Central Committee was renovated and expanded to 112 members with a dozen alternates; new authority and activity were vested in the Political Bureau and Secretariat. Indeed, Cuba could be said to have had a functioning, ruling Communist Party only from the early 1970s when the preparations for this Congress were begun. A second party Congress was held in December 1980 and a third in February 1986. Each monitored, passed judgement, and largely ratified the previous half-decade's policies, renewing membership of the key party bodies, and approving new economic policies (including the second and third five-year plans) for the half-decade ahead.

The party's size grew from about 15,000 in 1962, when Anibal Escalante fell, to 50,000 at the time of the foundation of the Communist Party in 1965. There were just over 100,000 members in 1970; slightly more than 200,000 on the eve of the first Congress; 434,143 on the eve of the second Congress; and 523,639 on the eve of the third Congress. In 1980 about 9 per cent of the population aged twenty-five and older belonged to the party.

The principal change in the composition of the Central Committee was the decline in the military's share of the membership, down among full members from 58 per cent in 1965 to 17 per cent in 1986. The bureau-

cracy's share of the Central Committee remained remarkably constant at about one-sixth of the membership until 1980, rising to more than one-quarter in 1986. The military's loss has been the politicians' gain. The share of professional politicians (including leaders of mass organizations) in the Central Committee rose from 17 per cent in 1965 to 41 per cent in 1986. The Central Committee membership was thus increasingly reflecting the need for routine government skills.

The military understandably had much influence in the 1960s. Cuba had rearmed quickly and massively to fight the United States. Many military commanders were the heroes of the revolutionary war of the late 1950s and had fought successfully against the internal counter-revolution and at the Bay of Pigs. Led by Raúl Castro, the armed forces had become the only truly well-organized segment of Cuban society in the 1960s. The military organized the party within its ranks, retaining political authority under the command and leadership of the officers, four-fifths of whom were party members by the early 1970s. The armed forces possessed the routine and procedure necessary for party-building whereas these were often lacking in civilian sectors in the radical period of the late 1960s. As a result, the government often relied on the military to perform social, economic and political tasks. These 'civic soldiers', competent in a wide array of fields, were consequently predominant in the party's ranks at all levels in the 1960s.

As the civilian party grew in the 1970s many 'civic soldiers' were transferred fully to civilian tasks, the armed forces concentrating on their military expertise and shedding many (though not all) strictly non-military activities. As the radical period faded, non-military modes of organization expanded, but the decline in the military share of the Central Committee did not mean that individuals who had been officers were removed from it. On the contrary, the rate of turnover in Central Committee membership was slow, and those who left the armed forces to serve in civilian party or government posts in the 1970s and 1980s remained Central Committee members.

The share of top party organs accounted for by the old Communist Party (PSP) members remained at about one-fifth, albeit declining slightly over time (former PSP members were generally older than the rest of the leadership and more likely to have failing health). Particularly in the 1960s, the PSP share was affected by the factional splits among top leaders, of which the two most dramatic were the dismissal of Aníbal Escalante as party Organization Secretary in 1962 and the uncovering of a

'microfaction' (also linked to Escalante) in 1968. PSP influence declined markedly in the late 1960s.

In late 1967, the top leadership discovered what was called a 'microfaction' within the Cuban Communist Party. It was composed primarily of former PSP members who believed that government and party policies at home and abroad were wrong. Led by Aníbal Escalante, the microfaction developed ties to Soviet and East European government and party officials. Once uncovered, those who belonged to the Central Committee were dropped; many others were expelled from the party, and the leaders of the microfaction were sent to prison for their crimes of opinion and association, although they had taken no other steps that could be construed as counter-revolutionary. Since their diagnosis of mistaken Cuban policies would eventually prove correct, they were punished for having the right insights at the wrong time.

Microfactionists or not, most former PSP members supported close relations with the Soviet Union and correct relations with most governments. They opposed attacks on Latin American Communist parties and were wary of guerrilla movements; they believed in the need for material incentives during a period of transition to socialism and considered that labour unions had to play a more prominent role in politics. The microfactionists argued that mere reliance on the will and on subjective assessments was imprudent and that it was necessary to understand objective conditions in Cuba and abroad. Arguing that central planning, budgets, financial cost-accounting and other such tools were essential to build socialism, they were skeptical of mass-mobilization campaigns that sought to replace these conventional policies. The microfaction demanded the greater use and institutionalization of party organs and other political organizations, supporting the reintroduction of elections and a Constitution. Former PSP members were not the only ones who held these beliefs, but they constituted the most obvious 'faction'. The changes in policies in the 1970s followed these PSP preferences quite consistently not because the old politicians had defeated their rivals of an earlier day but because Fidel Castro and his close associates became persuaded of the wisdom of their arguments.

Former PSP members who, unlike Aníbal Escalante, remained loyal to Fidel Castro, emerged with special influence in the 1970s, Blas Roca and Carlos Rafael Rodríguez being two of the party's long-standing leaders. Roca took charge of the drafting of a new constitution and other basic legislation as well as overseeing their implementation. He made decisive

contributions to institutionalization in the 1970s. Rodríguez was the intellectual architect of the change in internal and international economic policies; in the 1970s and 1980s his advice was influential from relations with the United States to policies towards the arts and letters.

Among others who contributed to government reorganization, institutionalization and improved performance in the 1970s were education minister José Ramón Fernández, armed forces minister Raúl Castro, foreign trade minister Marcelo Fernández, Central Planning Board president Humberto Pérez, and interior minister Sergio del Valle. Marcelo Fernández, dismissed in the midst of the 1979–80 crisis, had diversified economic relations and had succeeded in thoroughly undermining the U.S. economic embargo policies against Cuba. Humberto Pérez had the thankless task of informing the government of basic economic truths, reorganizing the economy from the debacle of the 1960s. He endeavoured to bring supply and demand into balance, adopt the mechanisms common to centrally planned economies, stimulate increases in efficiency and productivity, and promote cost reductions, while seeking to enhance managerial and worker participation in economic affairs. The poor performance of the economy should be attributed to the difficulty of these tasks rather than to Pérez's inadequacies. Nonetheless, he was dismissed in 1985, when overall economic co-ordination tasks were given to Osmany Cienfuegos.

Interior minister Sergio del Valle's work cannot be assessed easily. His responsibility remained throughout to repress the opposition and to retain full political control at all costs. However, del Valle deserves credit for softening the harshness of authoritarian controls that had existed in the 1960s. According to the government's official figures, the number of political prisoners fell from about 20,000 in the mid-1960s to 4,000 in the mid-1970s, and to as few as 1,000 when del Valle was removed from his post in the midst of the 1979–80 crisis. The incidence of torture declined and changed in character during del Valle's tenure. Physical torture virtually disappeared and prison conditions improved although psychological torture remained an occasional tool. The police began to observe procedural safeguards to protect the rights of the accused. In the revitalized court system in the late 1970s, cases would be dismissed for lack of evidence or for violations of established procedures. The persistence of many internal security measures was still, of course, subject to criticism at the end of del Valle's tenure, but he had professionalized his service, enhanced the rule of law, and reduced arbitrariness.

Important changes in the organization of the government were introduced in the first half of the 1970s. In November 1972 the Council of Ministers was reorganized to create an executive committee comprising the Prime Minister and all the deputy prime ministers, each of whom would supervise several ministries. The executive committee became the government's key decision-making organ. An experiment in local government was also introduced in 1974 in Matanzas, one of Cuba's six provinces. These procedures would be applied with some variations nationwide under the constitution approved in 1976.

The Constitution of 1976 mandated the establishment of a new National Assembly with legislative powers, these having been vested in the Council of Ministers between 1959 and 1976. The National Assembly would elect the Council of State to function when the assembly was not in session. The president of the Council of State would also become the head of state and serve as head of the government (president of the Council of Ministers). Fidel Castro became head of state replacing Osvaldo Dorticós. Unlike other socialist constitutions, Cuba's requires that the head of state and the head of the government be the same person, a typical Latin American pattern.

A new political and administrative division of the national territory was also implemented in 1976. Instead of the six provinces inherited from the nineteenth century (Pinar del Río, La Habana, Matanzas, Las Villas, Camagüey, Oriente) there would be fourteen: Pinar del Río, La Habana, city of La Habana, Matanzas, Cienfuegos, Villa Clara, Sancti Spiritus, Ciego de Avila, Camagüey, Las Tunas, Granma, Holguín, Santiago de Cuba, and Guantánamo. The Isle of Pines, soon to be renamed the Isle of Youth, became a special municipality. The regions into which the provinces had been subdivided were abolished. There would be 169 municipalities. The most dramatic changes were the splintering of Oriente and of Las Villas provinces into four and three new provinces, respectively.

The Constitution also established elected provincial and municipal governments. The 1976 nationwide elections were the first since 1959. The only direct elections, however, were for members of the municipal assemblies, who themselves elected the executive committee for each municipal assembly, the delegates to the provincial assemblies, and the deputies of the National Assembly. Assembly membership at all levels was a part-time position, members retaining their jobs while serving on the assemblies. The National Assembly normally met twice a year, each session

lasting two or three days. Such conditions made it a weak counterpart to government and party organizations.

The electoral law, and some of the procedures in the Constitution itself, further limited the impact of these changes. Self-nomination for elections was impossible and candidates were only nominated in assemblies by a show of hands. Campaigning by the candidates was prohibited; they could not address issues. Only the Communist Party, or the government, could campaign and address the issues, making it impossible for critics to exchange views and information. They could not associate as a party because the Constitution accorded that right only to the PCC. The party and government published biographies of the candidates, who could not veto what may be included in those biographies. At times the only recourse to avoid public humiliation, if nominated against the party's wishes, was to withdraw from an election contest.

The electoral law strengthened the party's control over the higher offices. The lists of nominees for provincial delegates, for executives at the municipal and provincial levels, and for national deputies, was prepared by nominating commissions led by the party. Party members accounted for more than nine-tenths of the membership of the National Assembly. Moreover, provincial delegates and National Assembly deputies did not have to be elected directly by the people to the municipal assemblies in the first instance. The nominating commissions might put forth anyone judged worthy. Approximately 44.5 per cent of National Assembly deputies elected in 1976 to a five-year term had never faced the electorate directly.

The municipal, provincial and national assemblies played a modest role in politics. Their effective powers were far less than appears from a reading of the Constitution. Debate in the National Assembly on the bills that could be used to control the executive branch, such as the annual plan or budget, was perfunctory and votes were typically unanimous. At the provincial or municipal levels, the constraints of extremely limited budgets and the extraordinary authority reserved for central state organs had limited assembly effectiveness. Nonetheless, the National Assembly featured freer and somewhat influential debates on issues other than macro-economic policy or foreign and military policy. On such matters as common crime, environmental protection and family legislation deputies had some influence over the content of bills. At the local level, the job of municipal assembly delegates was not unlike that of an ombudsman. These delegates gathered citizen complaints and sought to break through

bureaucratic obstacles to improve the delivery of government services to their constituents. Indeed, the contacting of public officials to solve local needs – the hallmark of political machines – became one of the most effective means of political participation in Cuba.

The stimulation of citizen complaints to correct local government errors, and the satisfaction of some demands, marked a fundamental difference between politics in the first fifteen years of revolutionary rule and those thereafter. Such protests had been limited, and at times repressed, in the earlier years when the only permissible mode of political participation was mass mobilization. In a more institutionalized authoritarian setting, the regime now relied on subtler policies. At the local level citizens were allowed – at times encouraged – to voice criticisms of specific problems; for such purposes, Cuba now had considerable freedom of expression. The authoritarian constraints, however, limited freedom of association at all levels. Critics of the regime were not allowed to associate in protest or criticism of government policies. Moreover, even at the local level, more general or abstract criticism of the government was frowned upon.

Further constraints on freedom of political expression existed at both the provincial and the national level. Since the spring of 1960 all mass media had been in state hands. Except for occasional letters-to-the-editor that resembled the specific criticism of local problems just mentioned, the mass media provided relentless (and often dull) support for regime policies and activities. There was somewhat greater though still limited freedom of expression to publish artistic and scholarly materials. In 1961, Fidel Castro summarized the regime's cultural policies in an ambiguous phrase: 'Within the revolution, everything; against the revolution, nothing'.<sup>10</sup> Material opposed to the revolution was not published; that which was not explicitly critical of the regime but produced by its known opponents was also not published. Material produced by those whose behaviour was judged unconventional and unacceptable by the government (e.g., actual or rumoured homosexual behaviour) had an uncertain fate; homosexuals suffered greatest hostility in the late 1960s and again in 1980. There was, however, some freedom of expression for persons who supported the Revolution politically and who wrote on topics other than those bearing on contemporary politics.

Especially in the 1960s, Cuba's policies did not emphasize 'socialist realism' as the dominant form of artistic production. In contrast to the

<sup>10</sup> Fidel Castro, *Palabras a los intelectuales* (Havana, 1961).

Soviet Union, there was freedom to choose artistic and literary forms. By the 1970s the government was giving preference in exhibitions and publications to those who focused on 'the socialist reality', although this could still be done through some forms of abstract painting. One troubling feature of government policies towards artists and scholars was the possibility that policy might shift and that what appeared 'safe' to an author might not to the censor. Thus, self-censorship, rather than cruder measures, became the main limitation on artistic and scholarly freedom of expression.

One form of intellectual political activity with a modest history was the exposition of theoretical Marxism–Leninism. The main texts in courses on Marxism–Leninism were the speeches of Fidel Castro and other home-grown products. However, after the 1970s more serious efforts were made to disseminate the more abstract theoretical knowledge of Marxist–Leninist classics through the party schools and publications and through research and writing in the universities and the mass media. There was a more conscious effort to relate these theoretical writings to the specific concerns of contemporary Cuba. The main national daily newspaper, *Granma*, the official organ of the Communist Party, founded in autumn of 1965 from the merger of the newspapers of the 26 of July Movement (*Revolución*) and of the PSP (*Noticias de Hoy*), usually devoted a page to articles on theoretical and historical topics. Marxism–Leninism became a required subject in the universities for all professions.

As the 1980s began the regime had clearly consolidated its rule. It might be described as a consultative oligarchy under an undisputed leader. Fidel Castro retained the pivotal role that had marked Cuban politics since 1959, but his delegation of some responsibility to close associates gave the regime a more oligarchic, rather than simply personal, quality. There was an established elite interlinked at the top of party state and government organs. Eleven of the sixteen members of the Political Bureau elected at the Second Party Congress in December 1980 were also members of the Council of Ministers; fourteen of the Political Bureau members belonged to the Council of State (where they constituted a majority). Of the fourteen members of the executive committee of the Council of Ministers, eight were also Political Bureau members. By the 1986 third party Congress the need for greater delegation was recognized. Although every Political Bureau member retained one other major elite post, only six of the fourteen were simultaneously members of the Councils of State and of

ministers as well. Still, between two and three dozen people now occupied all the significant top jobs in party, state and government organs.

There now existed more clearly differentiated second and subsequent echelons of leadership where organizational specialists – in contrast to the generalists at the very top – predominated. These appointments specialized in technical economic issues, military matters or party questions, but they interlocked less. Historical factional splits, inherited from the pre-revolutionary period, also became less important. There was a fair opportunity for intra-elite debate and for the exercise of some influence through the party's Central Committee, the National Assembly and the routine relationships of enterprise managers to central ministries.

The political system concentrated decision-making powers very heavily at the top. Despite some trends towards decentralization in the mid-1970s, Cuba had still a highly centralized political system, where most fundamental decisions were made by a relatively small number of people in Havana, most of whom had held high posts for over twenty years. Power relations became more institutionalized than they had been in the 1970s thanks to the changes in the party, the mass organizations and the institutions of economic policy-making and implementation, especially central planning.

At the bottom of the political pyramid about one-fifth of the adult population was excluded from effective participation in the mass organizations because they were considered – by both themselves and the authorities – opponents of the regime. Although the levels of political repression against such people declined markedly in the 1970s, they increased again in late 1979 and 1980. Sergio del Valle was replaced as Minister of the Interior by his predecessor Ramiro Valdés, who restored, though not in full, some of the harsh internal security policies of the earliest years of the revolutionary rule. The Minister of Justice, the Attorney General, and the president of the Supreme Court were also replaced in the same period. They were responsible for the more 'lenient' exercise of police and court power earlier in the 1970s; they were more 'liberal' within the context of an authoritarian regime. In 1979–80 the government re-emphasized the pre-eminence of its power against social and political dissidents. (Valdés was dismissed as interior minister in December 1985 and from the Political Bureau in February 1986).

At the intermediate levels, managers now had greater discretion in the work place to hire, fire and discipline workers. They gained new, but limited, authority to dispose of enterprise profits, and they began to



demand more powers. The mass organizations began to display some interest-group features, above all the ANAP lobby on behalf of the private peasantry but also, though less effectively, FMC, the women's federation. In such an increasingly hierarchical political system, established practitioners of organizational politics such as the armed forces could claim a rising and disproportionate share of national resources, justified not only by the 'internationalist' missions acquired in the second half of the 1970s but also by new U.S. threats in the 1980s.

One effect of the revolution in the 1960s was to break the correlation between social class background and political power. Many of the formerly powerful were dead or imprisoned, or had emigrated. Many of the newly powerful came from humble origins; the revolution dramatically accelerating the circulation of elites in the early 1960s. By the 1980s, however, there was mounting evidence of correlations between positions of power and social rank, institutionalized revolutionary rule greatly diminishing the circulation of elites. Revolutionary leaders who were strikingly young – late twenties and early thirties – when they seized power in 1959, had aged, but their identities had changed little. The average age of the Central Committee had been increasing about one year per year. New Central Committee members tended to come from the same generation and the same types of background. There was little real renewal.

Oligarchy and hierarchy had been reinforced under institutionalization but more effective means for consultation were also developed. Gone were the days when the only means of consultation was raising hands at a public rally in response to Fidel Castro's persuasive exhortations. From the local to the national level, there was now a more systematic effort to consult those who might be affected by new policies, especially at the middle and top ranks of power. Consultation had become the main channel for interest group lobbying, although it was little more than symbolic in dealings with the mass of the population, and it clearly possessed the potential to attenuate the remaining arbitrary features of the authoritarian regime.

'Demand for orderliness', President Castro told the second party Congress, 'should never be neglected in a revolution'.<sup>11</sup> He thus summarized the response of his government to the tumultuous events of 1980: economic crisis, political opposition and repression, and massive emigration. He also signalled the increased importance of political stratification and order as concerns of the leadership. The question for the years ahead would

<sup>11</sup> *Granma Weekly Review*, 28 December 1980, 13.

be whether the new demands for orderliness in the revolution competed with, overcame, or excluded the demands for a revolution within the revolution: the great slogan of the late 1960s. Were the dreams of the late 1950s, which turned the revolution into a national epic for many Cubans, to be realized through rising political and social stratification? Would Cuba respond in the future more to order or to revolution?

#### INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Still threatened by the United States after the settlement of the missile crisis in 1962 – Washington boycotted all economic relations with Cuba and sought to enlist the assistance of other governments to strangle Cuba's economy and thereby bring down its government – and still uncertain over the extent of Soviet commitment, the Cuban government fashioned a global foreign policy to defend its interests. The survival of revolutionary rule in Cuba, the leadership's top priority, required a foreign policy that was both global and activist. Cuba built a large and capable foreign service skilled in diplomacy, international economics, intelligence and military affairs. From the outset, the leadership also sought to use foreign policy to obtain resources for Cuba's social and economic transformation. The relationship with the Soviet Union was the centerpiece of both these priorities. At the same time, Havana sought to maintain good relations with as many governments as possible throughout the world. This policy, consistent with the effort to break out of the isolation that the U.S. government was seeking to impose on Cuba, held open the possibility of economic relations with non-communist countries. Another priority was to expand Cuba's influence over international leftist movements, whether formally organized in Communist parties or not. Cuban leaders believed they had led a genuine revolution to power. The establishment of Marxism–Leninism in Cuba, unlike in most of eastern Europe at the end of the Second World War, was not the by-product of the country's occupation by the Soviet armed forces. This home-grown Caribbean revolution, moreover, had not been led by the old Communist Party. Cuban revolutionaries thought they had some fundamental insights into how Third World revolutions might emerge and evolve toward Marxism–Leninism: in short, they could teach the Soviets a thing or two about how to support revolutions in the closing third of the twentieth century.

The Cuban leaders were interested not just in influence but also in the actual promotion of revolutions. Their future would be more secure in a

world of many friendly anti-imperialist revolutionary governments. Revolutions, moreover, were on the cutting edge of history, and the future belonged to those who analyzed it correctly and acted accordingly. It was not enough to allow history to unfold – that had been the error of the old Communists – for peoples must make their own history, even if they cannot do so exactly as they please. It was the duty of revolutionaries to make the revolution. However, this position was often difficult to reconcile with the need to retain diplomatic relations with the broadest possible number of governments.

In the mid-1960s the Cuban government developed an independent foreign policy that brought it often into conflict with the Soviet Union. Cuba supported revolutionary movements vigorously in many Latin American countries and in Africa. Cuba gave material assistance to revolutionaries in most Central American and Andean countries, to those fighting the Portuguese empire in Africa, and also to friendly revolutionary governments such as those of the Congo (Brazzaville), Algeria and North Vietnam. In January 1966 Cuba hosted a Tricontinental Conference, from which were founded the Organization for Solidarity with the Peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America (OSPAAL) and the Organization for Latin American Solidarity (OLAS). Based in Havana and staffed by Cubans, both supported revolutionary movements. Cuban leaders sharply criticized those who did not take up the armed struggle to bring about revolutionary victory; most Moscow-affiliated Communist parties in Latin American countries were assailed for their excessive caution, if not their cowardice.

If armed struggle was the way forward, then the Moscow-affiliated Venezuelan Communist Party, Castro declared, committed treason when it sought to end Venezuela's guerrilla war in 1967 and to reintegrate itself into more normal politics. But the commitment to the armed struggle, though essential, was not enough. Some who refused to conform to Cuban policies (as the revolutionary Yon Sosa in Guatemala) were denounced as Trotskyites. Cuba wanted to promote revolution, but it wanted even more to maintain and expand its influence over the left. It was willing to split the left, internationally and in particular countries, to maintain its primacy, even at the cost of jeopardizing revolutionary victory. These policies brought Havana into conflict with other governments, especially in Latin America. When Cuba was caught actively assisting Venezuelan revolutionaries the Venezuelan government brought charges of aggression that led to Cuba's condemnation under the terms of the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (the Rio Pact) in 1964. Collective hemispheric

sanctions were imposed on Cuba, requiring all signatories to suspend political and economic relations with Cuba. The United States and all Latin American countries (except Mexico) complied.

These policies also brought conflict to Soviet-Cuban relations. In addition to the conflict over the role of Moscow-affiliated Communist parties, Cuban leaders – especially the Minister of Industries, the Argentine-born hero of the revolutionary war, Ernesto 'Che' Guevara – criticized the USSR for its superpower behavior, and niggardly help to the Cuban Revolution. Soviet and East European products were called 'old junk'. The Cuban government seemed to hold its Soviet ally in contempt as an unrevolutionary country at home and abroad. Cubans had taken up the fallen standard of revolution. When the Cuban leadership linked the USSR and its allies to the microfaction, a Cuban-Soviet confrontation erupted early in 1968. The Soviet Union retaliated by slowing down the rate of delivery of petroleum products to Cuba, forcing the revolutionary government to impose a drastic rationing of petroleum products. The Soviets also withdrew most of their technical advisers. After difficult negotiations, the crisis was overcome in the summer 1968 when Prime Minister Castro unexpectedly acknowledged on television that he was about to endorse the Soviet and Warsaw Pact intervention in Czechoslovakia. This was the historic turning point in Soviet-Cuban relations, the subsequent improvement reaching its peak in co-operation in the African wars of the late 1970s.

Foreign policy faced other sharp problems in the late 1960s. The death of Che Guevara and other members of the Cuban Communist Party's Central Committee in the heartland of Bolivia where they had gone to spark a revolution represented a significant set-back. More generally, the strategy of promoting revolution through armed struggle failed throughout Latin America, consolidating either democratic regimes, as in Venezuela, or dynastic tyrannies, as in Nicaragua. Non-violent strategies that promised change appeared more viable: a left-leaning military government came to power in Peru late in 1968 and a broad coalition of the Chilean left won the presidential elections in 1970.

Cuban relations with the People's Republic of China also soured during the mid-1960s. Notwithstanding the many similarities in outlook and policy between the leaderships and despite the considerable Chinese economic aid to Cuba in the early 1960s, relations deteriorated when the Chinese leadership demanded full Cuban support in the Sino-Soviet dispute and lobbied Cuban military and party personnel directly. When the

economies of both countries deteriorated in the mid-1960s there was intensified commercial conflict, and although trade and other relations were never cut off altogether, they were sharply reduced. Bilateral political relations continued to be poor after early 1966.

Despite these difficulties, the most fundamental priorities of Cuban foreign policy were met. Revolutionary rule survived, in itself a remarkable achievement. The pattern of policy gave priority to good relations with the Soviet Union over support for revolution. The Cuban government could not have survived in power without Soviet support, which had increased since the late 1960s. A major agreement signed in December 1972 postponed until January 1986 payments of interest and principal on all Soviet credits granted to Cuba before January 1973, repayments then being extended into the twenty-first century. (In fact, in 1986 repayments were deferred for several more years). Soviet credits to cover bilateral trade deficits for 1973–5 were granted free of interest, with the principal to be repaid from 1986. Between 1960 and 1974 Soviet subsidies of bilateral trade deficits with Cuba totalled approximately \$3.8 billion. These deficits would have been larger if the Soviet Union had not also subsidized Cuban sugar exports to the USSR during most years, to the tune of about a billion dollars during the 1960s. In 1976, in partial reward for Cuba's military daring and success in Angola, the Soviet Union again agreed to subsidize Cuban sugar sales through a complex formula that stipulated a price five or six times greater than that prevailing on the world market. In addition, the Soviet Union subsidized the price of the petroleum it sold to Cuba and of the nickel it bought from Cuba. After 1976, Soviet subsidies remained at a very high level, accounting for no less than a tenth of Cuba's gross product per year.

These subsidies predictably tightened Cuban–Soviet trade relations. Whereas commerce with the USSR accounted for an average of 45 per cent of Cuban trade up to 1975, it exceeded 60 per cent in the early 1980s. Cuban trade also increased with Eastern European countries when they agreed to subsidize sugar prices. These shifts were also caused by Cuba's difficulties in trading with hard-currency markets (most Cuban trade with the Soviet Union and East Europe was, in effect, barter trade with imputed prices). In addition, Cuba has received Soviet assistance for economic development projects, the training of Cuban technical personnel in the USSR, and the stationing of Soviet technical advisers in Cuba.

A notable element of Soviet assistance to Cuba was military. In addition to the military shield provided by the Soviet Union against the United

States, Moscow developed the Cuban armed forces into Latin America's premier military establishment. No other armed force in the region could match the skill, experience and sophistication of the Cuban army and air force. The Cuban navy was the only service whose development still lagged. Soviet arms transfers were free of charge, the equipment and modernization of the Cuban armed forces reaching its peak in a large build-up during the early 1980s.

A new phase of Soviet–Cuban military co-operation opened with Cuba's decision to send eventually 36,000 troops to support the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) in the civil war that broke out in that country in 1975–6. Although Cuba's entry into that victorious war would not have been possible without Soviet support, the chronology of engagement, the pattern of deployment and the testimony of key witnesses suggest that Cuba and the MPLA – rather than the USSR – took the major decisions. In January 1978, responding to a request from the Ethiopian government faced with a Somali invasion that had occupied a substantial portion of Ethiopian territory, thousands of Cuban troops, supported and led by Soviet and East German officers in addition to Cuban officers, helped repel the Somali invasion. The pattern in this case suggests that the Soviet Union and Ethiopia took the lead in formulating and implementing these policies.

In short, the Soviet–Cuban alliance by the 1980s was close and complex, responding to the perceived interests of both allies, respecting the independence of each and allowing each to formulate its own policies in close collaboration with the other. Although Cuban victories in African wars would not have been achieved without Soviet support, it is also true that Soviet victories would not have been achieved without Cuban forces.

Appreciable success was registered in improving state-to-state relations in general. Even in the years of a radical foreign policy in the 1960s, Cuba had maintained good trade relations with several Western European states. The case of Franco's Spain was noteworthy. From 1963 until Franco's death in 1975, Cuba had excellent economic relations with that country, desisting from the promotion of revolution there in order to maintain a mutually valuable official relationship. Cuba also retained correct diplomatic relations with the Mexican government, eschewing the temptation to support anti-government leftist protests in 1968–71. In the early 1970s Cuba moved steadfastly to improve its relations with most governments. Economic relations with Western European countries

and Japan improved further as the Cuban economy recovered from the ravages of the 1960s. In 1975 the collective inter-American political and economic sanctions were lifted, and several Latin American countries developed trade relations with Cuba. Mexican and Argentine trade with Cuba became important over the next five years, and even relations with the United States began to improve. Washington voted to lift collective sanctions and modified its own legislation to eliminate third-party sanctions embedded in U.S. economic embargo policies against Cuba. The Ford administration and the Cuban government held bilateral discussions in 1975, and although these talks were interrupted by the Angolan war, they were resumed in 1977 at the beginning of the Carter presidency. The new talks led to a series of modest bilateral agreements and to the establishment of diplomatic 'interest sections' by each country in the other's capital city. Although most of these procedures endured, relations began to deteriorate again in the wake of Cuba's entry into the Ethiopian-Somali war in 1978.

Cuban relations with Africa and Asia also improved in the 1970s. Cuba had joined the so-called Non-aligned Movement in 1961, and despite its increasingly close military alliance with the Soviet Union, Cuba became the movement's leader for a three-year term at the 1979 summit meeting of heads of state in Havana. Relations with these countries were significantly influenced by the deployment of thousands of Cubans serving in foreign-assistance missions. In the early 1980s some 15,000 Cubans served in overseas civilian missions in some three dozen countries; tasks in construction, health and education predominated.<sup>12</sup> In addition, about 35,000 troops and military advisers (including security experts) were ordinarily posted overseas in about two dozen countries (most were in Angola and Ethiopia). Relative to Cuba's population, the overseas armies represented a larger deployment than that of the United States at the peak of the Vietnam war. Cuba's sizeable military deployment in Angola endured for the same length as the U.S. wartime commitment in Vietnam.

<sup>12</sup> Cuban foreign assistance missions have operated in the following countries, among others, at the request of their governments: Chile, Peru, Panama, Nicaragua, Jamaica, Guyana, Grenada, Suriname, Algeria, Libya, Ethiopia, Somalia, Uganda, Tanzania, Seychelles, Zambia, Ghana, São Tomé and Príncipe, Mozambique, Angola, Zimbabwe, Congo, Nigeria, Benin, Burkina, Faso, Malagasy, Burundi, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, Sierre Leone, Mali, South Yemen, Syria, Iraq, Vietnam, Laos, and Kampuchea. In some of these, such as Libya and Iraq, Cubans are paid for their services, often working on construction or public-health projects, so that the relationship resembles that of a transnational firm selling services rather than foreign assistance.

The most decisive new initiative in foreign policy was the support from 1977 for the Sandinista insurgency against Anastasio Somoza's rule in Nicaragua, the first substantial commitment to promote insurgency in the Americas in a decade. After revolutionary victory in Nicaragua in July 1979, Cuba developed extremely close relations with the Sandinista government and also with the revolutionary government that came to power in Grenada in March 1979. Havana sent several thousand civilian and military personnel to Nicaragua and several hundred to Grenada. By its own admission, Cuba also provided political, military and economic support to the insurgents in El Salvador, especially in 1980 and early 1981.

Revolutionary success in Nicaragua was the first in Latin America since the Cuban revolution itself. It frightened neighbouring governments and, above all, that of the United States, which, following the inauguration of Ronald Reagan in January 1981, once again threatened Cuba with military invasion. Cuban reservists fought courageously (though to no avail) against the U.S. troops that invaded Grenada in October 1983 – the first such military clash in a quarter of a century.

If many internationally active Cubans fought bravely for their country in African fields and served foreign-assistance missions in three continents, nearly a million Cubans showed courage in breaking with their government, surmounting its controls and emigrating. The first wave of emigration occurred, as we have seen, in the immediate aftermath of the Revolution and came to an abrupt end in 1962; the second, from late 1965 until it tapered off early in the 1970s. The third wave of emigration occurred in one dramatic outburst in the spring of 1980. After several thousand Cubans had broken into the Peruvian embassy in Havana, the government allowed Cuban-Americans from the United States to come in small boats across the Florida Straits to Mariel harbor to pick up friends and relatives, provided they were also willing to ferry to the United States a substantial minority of people whom the Cuban government called 'scum'. These were rounded up by internal security forces or released from Cuban jails for what amounted to deportation from their own country. After Havana, Miami now became the city with the largest Cuban population.

The Cuban Revolution had burst on the world from a small Caribbean island, gradually becoming one of the central issues in international affairs. Cuba's foreign policy succeeded in ensuring the survival of revolutionary rule and obtaining resources from the Soviet Union. It had influ-

ence over many African governments but was less successful in turning insurgencies into revolutionary governments in the Americas. Its leaders commanded world attention; its policies had to be monitored by statesmen everywhere; its people could be found throughout the globe. The stage of the Cuban Revolution had become universal as its concerns and policies impinged on millions of its friends and foes in many countries.

#### CUBA IN THE LATE 1980S AND EARLY 1990S

Cuba's fortunes began to change in the late 1980s. The economic recession that had begun in 1986 lingered for the remainder of the 1980s. One reason for the recession was the decline in labour productivity as Cuban workers responded adversely to the policies of 'rectification' announced in 1986 that sought to de-emphasize the role of certain material incentives for work. Beginning in 1989, Cuba also began to feel the full force of the decomposition of the communist regimes in the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe. From 1989 to 1991, for example, Cuban imports of petroleum products from the U.S.S.R. dropped by two-thirds, forcing a severe rationing throughout Cuba's economy of many products dependent on energy inputs. All the Eastern European countries cancelled their economic assistance programmes and reduced their trade with Cuba; East Germany's incorporation into a larger Germany led to a particularly drastic reduction of Cuban trade. From 1989 to 1991 the U.S.S.R. reduced both its economic subsidies and the transfer of weapons free of charge to Cuba; both of these kinds of subsidies were eventually cancelled by the Russian Federation and by other successor states to the former Soviet Union. Cuban trade continued with most of the successor states, although generally at international market prices and at levels well below those of 1989.

Partly in response first to the end of the Cold War and then to the collapse of the Soviet Union, but also thanks to important Cuban battlefield successes, Cuban troops returned home. Withdrawal from Ethiopia was completed by the beginning of 1990, prior to full withdrawal of Soviet troops as well as prior to the collapse of Col. Mengistu Haile Mariam's government. Cuban troops had successfully prevented Somalia's conquest of the Ogaden. By the spring of 1990 Cuban troops and military advisers had withdrawn from Nicaragua at the request of the government that replaced the Sandinistas after their defeat in the 1990 national elections. Cuban troops had successfully advised the Sandinista military in

their battlefield defeat of the 'contra' military bands. Withdrawal from Angola was completed in May 1991. Cuban troops had stopped the South African military invasion of Angola and bloodied the South African armed forces, thereby contributing powerfully to a process of negotiation that culminated in South Africa's full withdrawal from Angola and its granting of independence to Namibia, as well as to the beginning of the end of the apartheid regime in South Africa itself. Angola's political regime, however, had begun to change contrary to Cuba's own preferences; the Angolan government moved to open its economy to market forces and to open its politics to multiparty competition.

Whether as a result of battlefield victories that no longer required a Cuban military presence or at the request of governments and as a result of international negotiations, the return of Cuban troops to their homeland in the early 1990s put an end to a remarkable chapter in Cuba's international relations and markedly reduced Cuba's influence in the world beyond its boundaries. This decline in Cuban influence overseas was accelerated also in the early 1990s by the formal end of Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship in Chile and by the negotiated end of internal warfare in El Salvador. By Fidel Castro's own admission, to the very end Cuba had supported armed violence against the governments of both countries. If for thirty years Cuba had been able to behave as an unlikely 'superpower', by the early 1990s it had once again become just an island in the sun.

The changes in domestic politics in the late 1980s and early 1990s were no less momentous. President Fidel Castro re-asserted his personal power and vision to prevent Cuban politics from evolving in the direction taken in Eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union, dismissing officials who, for various reasons not related only to those external changes, did not agree with his preferences. Whereas Cuba's top leadership had been remarkably stable from the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s, the membership of the Communist Party's Political Bureau was thoroughly revamped from the mid-1980s to the early 1990s. Nearly all the giants of domestic Cuban politics from the 1970s and early 1980s were demoted or disgraced. At the end of the Fourth Party Congress in October 1991 only five of the Political Bureau's members from 1975 were still at their posts.

In the summer of 1989 Fidel Castro recognized that corruption had spread throughout the upper echelons of the regime. Division General Arnaldo Ochoa, decorated Hero of the Republic of Cuba and architect of Cuban military victories in wars in Ethiopia and Angola, was arrested and shot for having committed acts of corruption; so too were three high-

ranking officers in Ministry of the Interior, which was put in receivership and thoroughly purged by Army Corps General Abelardo Colomé. Many other instances of corruption, albeit less dramatic, surfaced in other parts of the government, signalling to Cubans that power had corrupted many leaders who thirty years earlier had come to office promising to end corruption.

By the early 1990s the heightened economic austerity caused a sharp decline in living standards, though the government sought to protect its historic accomplishments in health and in education. Most goods and services came once again to be severely rationed. At the same time, political repression against dissident groups became tougher; the number of 'prisoners of conscience' rose. Political opposition groups remained small and divided, however. Public opinion polls conducted by the Communist Party itself, or by scholars working in Cuban think-tanks, showed a rise in disagreement over fundamental policies between government leaders and ordinary citizens; a loss of prestige by the Communist Party as an institution amidst the population; and sharp criticism of many government services as well as of the inadequate supply of goods. The same polls, however, showed considerable public admiration for many of the government's social policies as well as continuing high respect for many well-regarded individuals who remained Communist Party members.

At the beginning of 1992 Cuba's future remained uncertain. Only one thing seemed clear: living standards, at least in the short term, would fall for most ordinary citizens no matter who governed their country under whatever kind of regime.

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