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This volume contains a representative selection of articles, comments, poems which have appeared in English-language newspapers and periodicals in Ceylon during the year 1962. It has not been possible to include all that has been published in Ceylon this year about Cuba particularly the material that appeared in the Sinhalese and Tamil languages.

This volume is dedicated to Ceylon-Cuban friendship. The contents reflect not only the tremendous interest evinced in Ceylon about developments in Cuba but also the deep understanding and sympathy which the ordinary people of Ceylon have for the Cuban revolution.

November 30, 1962

“... What is Cuba's history but that of Latin America? What is the history of Latin America but the history of Asia, Africa and Oceania? And what is the history of all these peoples but the history of the cruelest exploitation of the world by imperialism?....”

— *II Declaration of Havana*

“... A great ideological battle was fought between the Cuban Revolution and Yankee imperialism. What did they represent? In whose names did they speak? Cuba represented the peoples; United States represented the monopolies. Cuba spoke for the exploited masses; United States for oligarchical interests, exploiters and imperialists. Cuba for sovereignty; United States for intervention. **Cuba for the nationalization of foreign enterprises; United States for new investments of foreign capital.** Cuba for culture; United States for the ignorance. Cuba for agrarian reform; United States for the big landowners. Cuba for the industrialisation of America; United States for undevelopment. Cuba for creative work; United States for sabotage and the criminal terror practiced by their agents, along with the destruction of cane fields and factories, their pirate planes bombing the labors of peaceful people. Cuba for the murdered crusaders against illiteracy; United States for the killers. Cuba for bread; United States for hunger. **Cuba for equality; United States for privilege and discrimination.** Cuba for truth; United States for lies. Cuba for freedom; United States for oppression. Cuba for the luminous future of humanity; United States for a past without hope. Cuba for the heroes who died at Playa Giron defending their country from foreign domination; United States for the mercenaries and traitors serving the foreigner against their country. Cuba for peace among nations; United States for aggression and war. **Cuba for socialism; United States for capitalism”**

— II Declaration of Havana

*At a meeting held in Colombo on July
26, 1962 at the New Town Hall to commemorate
Cuba Day.*

Hon. T. B. Illangaratne

Minister of Commerce, Trade, Food and Shipping.

“As a human being, one should strive to be free to the extent that one should not as far as practicable, encroach on another’s freedom. As citizen of a free country one should strive to see that one’s country does not lord it over another country, culturally, socially or economically to any degree”.

“As a free citizen of the world I strive to live and die contented leaving no room for my contemporaries to feel my presence and my survivors to feel my absence. As Minister of Trade and Commerce I shall strive to establish and strengthen friendly relations with all countries, without permitting exploitation by us or by others. And especially I shall fight colonialism of any and every brand.

“Our country and I will be with Cuba and the Cuban people to achieve these aspirations which I trust are the best for us all. Let us strive individually and collectively to be true to ourselves and to have permanent peace in mind and body at any cost.”

In conclusion he said that in making this speech he was reminded of the famous saying of Fidel Castro at the UNO Assembly. “End the philosophy of plunder and war will cease.”

Philip Gunawardena,

*Member of Parliament for Avisawella, and
leader of the Mahajana Eksath Peramuna*

“Socialism by name, without being put to practise,
would never help a country to achieve its ends. Cuba
has given everyone the lead by its fight to have a
socialist form of Government”.

Pieter Keuneman,

*Member of Parliament for Colombo Central
and General Secretary of the Ceylon
Communist Party*

“Cuba though a small country like Ceylon had given the whole world an outstanding example by its fight for freedom from the clutches and torments of the feudal colonial imperialists. While various Presidents of America had scourged this small nation and put all sorts of obstacles in its path of freedom yet those brave men of Cuba stood up and fought. It was a great achievement to be admired by all of us.

“Their fight was for freedom against imperialism and its manifestations, and their ultimate goal was socialism. Small countries like ours should also make decisions of this nature, sooner or later”.

Dr. N. M. Perera,

*Member of Parliament for Yatiyantota and
leader of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party*

“Cuba and Ceylon were similar in every way, so much so that even the names of the people sounded similar. And this country small like ours, proved to us that capitalism and the vandals of capitalism can never be an obstacle to socialism and a socialist way of life, which is the best for a democratic country.”

FIDEL CASTRO

FIDEL CASTRO was born in 1926, in Oriente Province, the heart of the Cuban sugar and rum industry and the place where his hero, Jose Marti, had died fighting for independence. His father, an immigrant from Spain, had built up a prosperous sugar plantation. Castro was sent to a boarding school, then to Belen Catholic College in Havana and then to Havana University. One of his teachers, a priest, wrote of him in 1947: "You are made of the stuff of heroes. A statue will be sculpted of you and the history of your country will speak your name."

Castro was already preparing for his role in history. Police records show that he was the leader of the revolutionary students of Havana University, who discussed Marx and Lenin, socialism and the struggle to free Cuba, while comrades with arms in their hands guarded against a possible police raid. In 1947, Castro joined an expedition of 3,000 Caribbean youth determined to help overthrow Trujillo, dictator of the Dominican Republic, whose name already stank in the nostrils of the world. But they

were betrayed. The ship they sailed on was sunk by Cuban gunboats, and Castro and others swam 3 miles to shore. Back at the university he studied law, qualified in 1950, and soon gained a name as a brilliant defender of workers, farmers and political prisoners. In 1952, he was nominated as a candidate for Congress in the elections Batista cancelled. He made one attempt to impeach Batista in the court for contravening the constitution on several points, but when this was inevitably thrown out, began preparations for armed uprising.

After the July 26, 1953, attempt against the tyrant, when Castro was captured, he was kept in solitary confinement. Attempts were even made to prevent him appearing at his trial by presenting a false medical certificate, but this was frustrated by cute lawyers friendly to him. Castro refused to plead not guilty. He admitted with pride his part in the attempt against the Batista dictatorship, and made a three-hour speech which was both a brilliant indictment of Batista and the US imperialists, jammed with facts, figures and quotations, all from memory, and a dignified and moving statement of men's right to freedom. "Sentence me if you will," he ended. "History will acquit me." And indeed it has.

From that time onwards Castro's story is the story of the victorious revolution of the Cuban people, their courage, steadfastness, and skill in resisting all attempts to destroy the freedom they have won, and the march they have now begun, guided by Marxist-Leninist principles, towards building a socialist Cuba.

Forward, July 27, 1962.

The Cuban Revolution and its lessons for us

by

KUMAR DAVID

In 1950, on the eve of a general election Batista took power in Cuba through a successful army *coup d'etat*. The terror of the Batista dictatorship was still to come. Hence at its birth the dictatorship enjoyed widespread support among the Havana townfolk, as it offered a positive alternative to the run of parliamentary governments which were corrupt and manifestly inefficient. In this respect at least the Batista dictatorship at its birth was the repository of hopes, similar to those illusions that the recent unsuccessful *coup d'etat* had for large sections of the Ceylonese petite-bourgeoisie.

What is it that made the Batista dictatorship historically unavoidable? To begin with Imperialist domination of the Cuban economy was more direct and more complete than Imperialist control of the Ceylonese economy. Indeed almost the entire Cuban production consisting of sugar cane, fruits and a few oil refineries was dominated by the U. S. almost to the exclusion of the national

bourgeoise. Further American interference in local Cuban politics was very great and America could lay down the line for any Cuban politician who desired to be successful. Although not an American colony by name, pre-Batista Cuba, like many other Latin-American states today, was geared to the needs of large U. S. companies (like United Fruit in Cuba) which exploited most of the country's wealth.

Batista's coup was preceded by two Parliaments, both of which were utter failures. The Cuban peasants and workers being far more backward than even their Ceylonese counterparts were unable to give the Parliamentary governments sufficient impetus and apply the necessary pressure that would force the U. S. imperialist interests. However, being elected from the people such a government dare not openly align itself with the foreign moneyed interests. The government appeared to be a collection of diverse interests pulling in different directions. Hence this period was one of instability and economic deterioration of all classes. The stage was set for Batista's coup, which, with Nelson Rockefeller's blessing, and due to the inactivity of the common people, was certain of success.

It is interesting to note that the recent army coup in Ceylon was foiled and in any case this coup was certain of defeat as it would have encountered a hostile population and a far more active and determined working class in Colombo and the plantations. What is even more interesting is that the Cuban masses who started off politically far behind us, nevertheless overtook us and by 1958 overthrew Batista and established a state that has very definitely taken on a markedly socialist character. This acceleration was no doubt earned at the cost of the terror and tyranny and repression of the Batista dictatorship. The environment for an extra fast-maturing

process was available. It is a fact that the Ceylonese masses do not require to mature from so low a degree and it is this that gives us hope that in Ceylon the beginning of concrete socialism will not have to be preceeded by a protracted period of tyranny. (The present military emergency rule may be intensified and civil liberties further suppressed but this is not at all the same thing as fascism). As a corrective to opinions too facily adopted we must add that violence cannot be totally avoided if we are to seriously oppose repression, but it can be asserted that military rule in Ceylon is possible only over the dead body of the Trade Union movement. In passing we must note that at the time of Batista's coup, the communist controlled Cuban trade union movement was ineffective and lacking in militancy.

It is not relevant to discuss the horrors of the Batista dictatorship in clinical detail: we will only quote the words of Thomas Erskine, a fearless fighter for freedom of two centuries ago.

“From minds thus subdued by the terrors of punishment, there could issue no works of genius to expand the empire of human reason... under such terrors all the great lights of science and civilisation must be extinguished; for men cannot communicate their free thoughts to one another with a lash held over their heads”.

To call Batista a sadist would be to confuse the currents of history with human beings who are its mere instruments. Batista was no sadist! The violence he resorted to was historically necessary violence. As the trusted accomplice of U. S. Imperialism it was not possible to aid, abet and partake of the exploitation of the Cuban people without first silencing their protests. Some of us in Ceylon will do well to remember that had the recent

coup been successful, irrespective of how gentlemanly its leaders appear to be, terror and repression is the inseparable companion of any military state. Anyway, to get back to Batista, he and his big friends blundered; and the Cuban petite bourgeoisie were the first to be revolted by his terror. It is among the petite bourgeoisie that ideas like liberty are cherished, it is out of the middle classes that ideas and philosophies rise. To the University of Havana must go the honour of having created the intellectual nucleus of the revolution. Havana University should be the victim of much envy from us in this sterile University. They have made their country a better place to live in. Could any achievement be finer? How else can a University achieve its purpose?

We must first appreciate that the Cuban revolution at the beginning was bourgeois-democratic in character. It demanded elections, freedom of thought and word, in short it counterposed democracy to tyranny. It did not set out to solve the problems of poverty, unemployment and hunger but rather to restore civil liberties. At the beginning of the revolution, the word socialism did not exist in the vocabulary of Fidel Castro and his men.

And what happened to the Cuban revolution after victory? The Cuban revolutionaries discovered for themselves that democracy first meant economic democracy. They could not offer their peoples freedom and liberty unless they freed them from exploitation and gave them bread and clothes and homes. The road to freedom was the road of national progress, so they nationalised sugar plantations and oil refineries and rolled their sleeves up and got down to work. The Cuban revolution, without any pre-conceived theories, was treading the path of national socialism. Jean Paul Sartre said "what is most refreshing is that no pre-conceived ideologies are being imposed on the revolution." This statement is all the

more illuminating in the light of what one of the foremost men in Cuba, Che Guevara, said "We practical revolutionaries in meeting the problems before us have in action re-discovered the laws enunciated by Marx the scientist."

Next we must try and discover the exact mechanism through which this democratic revolution over-stepped its bounds and turned socialist. In one word it is the Agrarian-Reform. Forced to hide in the hills, Castro and his men came closer and closer to the discontented and dispossessed peasants and agricultural labourers. When he made common cause with them he was enlisting the support of the only force that could ensure the success of the revolution and the force that would ultimately push the victorious revolution to its extremes. When Castro, in response to pressure from those labourers drew up the skeleton plans for the Agrarian-Reform he was unconsciously laying down the first pages of socialist planning. Thus when the time for action came, Castro's band of bearded men became the leaders of a movement in which the masses were the most weighty factor. Hence after victory it was the mood and need of the masses that shaped the policy of revolutionary Cuba. Once again proving, that at every historic moment there is a dynamic, beyond the will of individuals, that shapes events. First of all, though un-schooled in revolutionary theories, the Cuban revolution disarmed and disbanded the standing army and smashed the entire bureaucratic administration. The Cubans, once again, in their simple pragmatic approach were re-treading the Leninist road. To disband the army of the old state system and replace it by a people's militia is indeed the first task of any revolution fighting to consolidate its advances. What is a militia? It is a nation in arms, it is not a selected army but the broad masses. But for her militia Cuba would have fallen a victim to the counter revolution which is active in sabotage within the country and is engaged in direct aggression with U.S. aid from without. The old administrative system was created to run the country as it

best suited her rulers, it was geared to the needs of imperialist exploitation. It was therefore an impediment which had to be removed. It was removed.

Before leaving this section it would be instructive to consider the agricultural labourers of Cuba whose position is very similar to that of our plantation labourers. Their position in the sugar plantation was a vital one and no socialist program would have had any success unless it won their participation and co-operation. It is far more difficult to hold power than to take it, and in Ceylon no long-term plan can succeed until the plantation workers feel themselves part of a national enterprise. That is why for the sake of national development it is imperative that the communal barriers (which between one worker and another is in fact a purely artificial barrier), should be broken down.

Finally we must discuss the position of the Cuban revolution today and its prospects for the future. Economically, Cuba has firmly committed herself to state enterprise. The most vital part of the economy, the sugar plantation and sugar refineries are run as state co-operatives. The Agrarian-Reform has completely liquidated large privately owned estates. An enormous enthusiasm has gripped the people. State farms on the lines of voluntary communes have been opened up and are contributing in no small measure to improving consumer goods. What is most astonishing to foreign observers however, is the rapidity with which thousands of houses are coming up on those farms, and the swiftness with which all the old army barracks are being converted into schools. A chain of small state owned stores are being opened up across the country and people are buying things they could never have obtained in the past. The first major industrial projects, with Soviet and Chinese aid, are being launched.

It is when we scrutinize the method in which this planning and organisation is being carried out that we realize the greatest defect of the revolution to-day, and a defect that must be immediately ironed out. All planning in Cuba and all policy decisions are being made by the leaders in response to what they feel to be the general mood of the people. What in fact happens is that Castro and the government decide on some policy and call a general demonstration at which half a million people turn up and shout their approval. This sort of thing is all well and good for a newly born revolutionary state which has not as yet organised itself and settled down to business, but it contains the dangerous germs of bureaucratisation. What is really lacking in Cuba are the organs and institutions through which the active participation of the workers and peasants in the planning and arranging of the socialist system can be achieved. Whether they be in the form of trade-unions free from government control, or of soviets (i. e. committees), in every factory, farm and plantation or what you may, organised routes for the transmission of mass opinion and the participation of the masses in the state are the most vital need of the hour. Unless a means is found for the masses to decide things for themselves, instead of the leaders deciding for them the danger of bureacratism persists. We must remember that Cuba is isolated in a hostile continent and her revolutionary enthusiasm can be easily suffocated. Unless other Latin-American countries follow the revolutionary road and come to her aid, the Cuban masses may grow weary and their leaders may be driven to compromise and even to corruption. In this context, only mass organs of the type described can save the revolution from excessive bureaucratism.

There is a lesson that we in Ceylon can learn here; it is, that it is precisely this danger of bureaucratism that we are in a position to avoid. Hence at least pre-conceived

ideas should be a guide in indicating to us the measures that socialist organisation requires. Further our working class movement and its leaders have been tutored in the school of international socialist movements and are aware of the failures, and success of various types of organisations employed in other countries. As was pointed out earlier the need in Cuba today is for workers organisations through which the de-centralisation of power and the diversification and growth of the industry can be achieved. This very same problem will confront us one day. Working class activity today, in which organisations co-operate and work together will forge the chains that can, when the time comes, be welded together to give a firm structure.

Hence in conclusion we may say that if we are to correctly assimilate the lessons of the Cuban revolution, we must appreciate both the similarities and wide differences between the Cuban and Ceylonese situations. A correct appreciation of these differences will in fact prove invaluable to us in correctly orientating our political attitudes. However, apart from all this, a study of the Cuban revolution will in itself prove a fascinating pastime as what we see before us is the torch that will set Latin-America alight.

*Engineering Student Magazine,
University of Ceylon, 1962.*

THE BEGINNING

Cuba's Story

NEGRO REVOLTS

by

R. K. KARANJIA & RAMESH SANGHVI

With acknowledgements, we reprint chapter two from Karanjia's & Sanghvi's book **CASTRO — STORM OVER LATIN AMERICA**. In a nutshell, it tells the story of the colonialist conquest of Cuba by the Spanish **conquistadors** and **Catholic priests**. It is a terrible story of inhumanity and and beastliness — for **profit**.

The modern history of Cuba began on the morning of October 28, 1492. On that day Christopher Columbus landed on Cuban soil with Sword in one hand and the Cross in the other. On landing he had said: "The most beautiful land human eyes have ever beheld." The strange white man was greeted by the inhabitants of Cuba now known as Siboney Indians. They left their hammocks and rushed to the beach. They greeted the visitors with the words, "Peace, dear friend." That is how the Pearl of the Antilles was discovered by the old world.

A quarter of a century later the face of Cuba was changed. When Columbus arrived, there were 300,000 inhabitants on the island. They lived a comparatively simple and contented life. A scholar has written: "Life for the average Indian was undoubtedly on a very primitive scale. Yet all who were able to work did work; no sickness went uncared for; few crimes were committed; no aged or infirm lacked the necessities of life; and cooperation for the general welfare rather than competition for profit was the main-spring of economy."

The Spaniards who followed Columbus were not interested in peace. In fact, they were interested primarily in profit and not in co-operation. Here began the basic conflict between the Cuban Indians and the Spaniards. The Indians did not understand the Spaniards at the beginning. They could not understand why the Spaniards wanted to take more than they could consume. It was difficult for them to understand why even those who spoke in the name of God used the Sword as the main weapon of aggrandisement. They refused to go under. When force began to be used against them, they began to resist.

Seventeen years after Columbus had landed, King Ferdinand of Spain was threatening the people of the new world who were not willing to accept his domination and his way of life. He thundered: "We shall.....make war against you in all ways and manners and shall submit you to the yoke and batons of the Church and of Their Highness; we shall take you, your wives and children and shall make slaves of them."

Within a quarter of a century, Ferdinand's words came true. The Spaniards began killing Indians not only in Cuba but in all the territories acquired by them. The people first became slaves and then carcasses. The white men

brought new diseases, which took a heavy toll. The Spaniards became fond of sugar and with the lash of the whip worked the Indians to death on the sugar plantations.

The Church and the Conquistadors did not consider the Indians human beings. Two-thirds of the population of Cuba was soon wiped out. That was a period when in the Caribbean and Central America the Spaniards perpetrated the ghastliest of massacres which the world has seen.

It appeared that in their thirst for gold, silver and wealth, the Catholic Church and its Spanish adherents faithfully murdered men, women and children, right and left, and threw their bodies into the sea.

The extent of this brutality was graphically described by a Spanish priest, Bartolome de Las Casas. "And it was related to me for certain that a ship going from Hispaniola (Santa Dominica) to the Island of Lucaya sailed thither without any compass, guided only by the carcasses that floated up and down the sea." The Indians resisted, preferring death to slavery. It was then that the Spaniards adopted other means of providing labour for their plantations — that of chattel slavery. Thus came the Africans to the New World.

The Negro had better physique. He was apparently less "troublesome" because he was in a foreign land. It was true that an Indian slave could be purchased for five dollars, whereas a Negro cost fifteen times more. There was no way out. More Negroes were kidnapped and brought to the American continent to work on the plantations. There too, the approach of the Spaniards was extremely simple. Once they brought the Negroes they worked them to death because the "planters of West

Indies found it more profitable to work slaves to death while yet in their prime of life, than to support them in an idle old age."

The working life of an average Negro was six to seven years. The conditions under which the Negroes lived may easily be understood when it is realised that "refusal of sexual intercourse by a Negro woman with a White overseer was equivalent to mutiny." And the penalty for mutiny was death.

The Negroes eventually rose in revolt. Symbolically, the first Negro insurrection in the Caribbeans took place on a plantation owned by Diego Columbus, the brother of Christopher. In Cuba itself the first Negro insurrection took place in 1533. It was crushed, only to be followed by a second three years later. Another decade and the third insurrection took place in 1548.

This was a huge and massive revolt. The Spaniards repeated what the Romans did. They erected miles of stakes on which the Negroes were first crucified and then burnt alive as they bled. The Spaniards had purchased a period of peace: but, as long as slavery continued in the Caribbeans, the revolution of the Negroes was inherent in the situation.

As the eighteen century reached its end, in the nearby island of Haiti, the Negroes rose in revolt. This revolt broke out in 1791, a year after the French Revolution. Haiti was a French-occupied territory and the shots that were fired at the storming of the Bastille resounded in the distant Caribbeans. The Haitians revolution was led by a great Negro, Toussaint L'Ouverture. Not even the mighty Napoleon could reconquer Haiti, and a new spirit spread among the Negroes all over the Caribbeans.

In 1812, Jose Antonio Afonte led the slaves in Cuba in a slave revolt. Afonte distinguished himself by building a united front of the Negroes and the Indians. His leadership attracted the poorer Whites to join hands with the slaves. Though the Aftone insurrection failed, as indeed it was bound to, it marked the end of a chapter of the Cuban struggle for liberation.

It was no more a question of the Indians striving to hold on to their homeland; nor indeed, a matter of the Negroes striving to secure their right to live. Both the Negroes and the Indans had become Cubans, and the poorer Whites had realised that their future lay not with the Spanish aristocracy but with the indigenous population. The first sparks of the freedom struggle of Cuba were then lighted. This is when the long struggle of the united Cuban people for freedom began.

Tribune, July 28, 1962



THE STORY OF JULY 26

JULY 26, 1953, was the date of the first armed uprising in the Cuban Revolution, the revolution which only five and a half years later was to throw out the puppet dictator and establish people's power.

It was the first battle in the struggle which has ended US imperialist domination and enabled the Cuban people to set their feet on the path of socialist construction, building the first socialist state in the Americas.

On that day, nine years ago, 150 or so revolutionaries, led by Fidel Castro, attacked the 1000-strong fortress of Moncada, Batista's second-largest, on the outskirts of Santiago in Castro's native province of Oriente.

They planned a surprise attack, to capture the arms and ammunition, seize the radio stations and call on the people of Cuba to rally against the tyrant.

They intended, as Castro said, to call on the soldiers to "abandon the flag of tyranny and embrace the flag of liberty to run their guns around and fire on the enemies of the people and not on the people among whom were their sons and brothers....."

But as the revolutionaries were about to reach the fortress, a stray jeep appeared. The all-important element of surprise was lost. Castro raised his rifle and fired — the first shot of the revolution.

In the ensuing battle half were killed on the spot. Others were taken prisoner and many of them cold-bloodedly murdered. Castro's own life was saved only because his captors did not realise who he was.

The revolt was followed by a blood-bath of the kind which characterised the Batista dictatorship. Police and army men fired at men, women and children in the streets, hundreds were arrested, many savagely tortured.

But the revolutionaries had lit the fuse which was to burst into flames in 1957 and 58. The people had found a banner. The July 26 Movement had begun.

The roots of the July 26 Movement, and of the successful Cuban Revolution lie in the long history of the island's subjugation, in the growth of the Cuban nation and the birth of the Cuban working class, in the savage exploitation by the Spaniards and then by American imperialism, and in the weakening of imperialism in the face of the world socialist system, and the national liberation movements.

Christopher Columbus landed in Cuba in 1492 and took possession of Cuba for Spain. The Spanish conquerors grew rich on Cuban sugar. They drove the Indians onto the plantations as slaves, until exhaustion, cruelty, diseases brought by the white man and slaughter of those who resisted reduced the population to one third of what it had been.

The *conquistadores* brought negro slaves; and in the course of years, a poor white population grew up also.

The 400 years of Spanish domination saw the birth of the Cuban nation. When after many revolts and struggles, the final fight for liberation from Spain began in 1895, led by poet-patriot Jose Marti, he led not whites, negroes or Indians, but Cubans.

But with the decline of the Spanish empire in the 19th century, the US millionaires served notice, through the Monroe Doctrine, of their intention to dominate the whole of the two Americas. At the end of the century, with US monopoly capital established on a scale hitherto unknown, they decided on open war.

When the Cuban people were in sight of success, in 1898, they declared war on Spain, using the mysterious sinking of a US battleship in Havana harbour as an excuse.

The war was over in a few months. The Cuban people thought they were free.

But the US Congress passed the notorious Platt Amendment to its original resolution supporting Cuban independence, and asserted their sole right to military bases in Cuba, to control Cuban foreign policy and to intervene militarily there at any time they thought fit.

The Cuban struggle against US imperialism had begun.

The American monopolies established complete control of the economy, 62 per cent of the sugar industry, most of the tobacco industry. They set up private telephone, telegraph and electricity companies, built their own railways, controlled the harbours and shipping. They dictated the price of sugar and terms of trade which left Cuba with a permanent deficit.

The country became an American colony.

But the US did not administer it directly, relying on a series of puppet rulers.

One of the worst of these was Machado, who had taken power as a "liberal" by a coup in 1924, backed by the mass of the people. He immediately made himself a dictator and faithful servant of U.S. interests.

In 1933, the people were on the verge of revolt encouraged by President Roosevelt's substitution of the Good Neighbour Policy for the Platt Amendment. Machado appealed to Washington fruitlessly and left the country taking millions of dollars with him.

Another "liberal" appeared, an army sergeant (clerical) named Fulgencia Batista, who took power by a military coup. For a short time democratic parties functioned freely, trade unions were legalised, the eight hour day established.

But U. S. interests, aided by their main allies, the big landlords and the Catholic Church began to organise fascist terrorist groups. Batista did not fight them. He joined them and began a regime of bloody oppression, backed by the U. S.

Batista chose to remain in the background, functioning through presidents chosen by him. In 1944, he was actually forced to flee to Florida (taking a huge fortune with him) by popular unrest. But the president who followed him was indicted for graft, and Batista again gained control of the country, for his U. S. masters.

In 1952, popular discontent in Cuba had reached a new height. Batista, with no pretence of being "progressive" this time, staged a military coup and made himself absolute dictator of the island, on March 10 of that year.

It was after Batista's coup, when he cancelled the elections for which Fidel Castro was one of the candidates the Fidel and Raul Castro sold all their belongings and began to prepare for armed uprising against US domination and its agent, Batista.

The idea that 150 revolutionaries could set afoot a movement that would lead to the overthrow of the blood-stained Batista regime and defy the might of US imperialism seemed fantastic.

But Castro and his comrades had faith in the people. They knew the frustration of the peasants, the smouldering anger of the workers, the growing wrath of the intellectuals and professional people, the bitterness of the debt ridden small businessmen.

Castro described them in his trial in September, 1953, which he turned into an indictment of the Batista regime and US imperialism.

But he was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment, Raul to 12, and others to long periods. Batista's terror was everywhere. It seemed that he was stronger than ever. In 1955, flushed with conceit, he accepted advice to make a liberal gesture and announced an amnesty for political prisoners.

Then it was clear that the people had found out the torch bearers for their struggle. Castro was received like a hero. On walls and roads, everywhere, the words "July 26, 1953" appeared.

But it was plain that popular enthusiasm and feeling were not enough. Castro went to Mexico, where he was joined by other comrades from the July 26 battle, and they began to prepare armed attack against Batista.

After rigorous training and selfless preparation, Castro, Raul, Che Guevara, and a total band of 82 set out for Cuba. They had been betrayed. Batista's men were waiting for them. In the bloody massacre that ensued, only 12 escaped.

The 12 men disappeared. Batista's forces searched in vain for them. When they reappeared, it was at the head of a liberation army in the mountains of the Sierra Maestra, in Oriente Province.

Batista sneered. The US jeered. But the fuse that had been lighted on July 26, 1953 had burst into flame.

The liberation army advanced, welcomed everywhere by the people. Workers in the cities struck against the imperialist firms. A vast underground movement heaved into life.

On December 31, 1958, Batista fled. On January 2, 1959, the liberation army marched into Havana, with Fidel Castro as its head. The Cuban people had won their freedom. A new life had begun.

Forward, July 27, 1962

Castro Lashes Out on sectarianism....

By
CEDRIC BELFRAGE

This despatch from Havana was published in the *National Guardian*, New York, on April 2, 1962, and we reproduce the same with acknowledgements to the N. G. It is an on-the-spot evaluation and analysis of Castro's historic speech of March 12 and 13.

The manner in which he spotlighted the errors and mistakes of the government, his strictures on himself and his colleagues for not fulfilling targets and programmes constitute an object lesson in dynamic leadership in the face of tremendous odds.

After five weeks of public silence by Cuban Premier Fidel Castro — a silence that set off U.S. press speculations that he was the “prisoner” of the communists — Castro sternly expounded in speeches on two successive nights, March 12 and 13, 1962, his concept of revolutionary leadership and behavior.

He spoke as one Marxist-Leninist **companero** to others just after the announcement of the 25 "national leaders" of the Integrated Revolutionary Organization, the transition-period name of what will become the United Party of the Socialist Revolution.

Headed, by Fidel and Raul Castro, Che Guevara, President Dorticos and Blas Roca, the list comprises leaders of the three previous parties or movements, with the least representation from the smallest of these (Revolutionary Directorate) and ten from the Popular Socialist (Communist) Party.

The March 12 speech announced a rationing system of some food and other consumer items, which are in short supply because of errors of planning and judgement. For these errors Castro named no one as responsible except himself, as former titular head of the Agrarian Reform Institute; but the failures in performance of more directly concerned officials were already widely known. The second speech was made at a mass tribute at Havana University to the memory of Revolutionary Directorate leader Jose Echevarria, a Catholic student who died in the attack on Batista's palace in 1957.

In what seemed like an evocation of Lenin, Castro called for eradication of privilege and sectarianism among revolutionary cadres, whose only "privilege," he said, should be sacrifice and serving as an example to others.

"A thousand times we must insist that this has to be the revolutionary nucleus," Castro declared. "Whoever thinks he is going to find privileges in this political apparatus is mistaken. Great honors, glories and satisfactions, yet — but what he will find will be privileges of no kind, neither social, economic nor any other."

Castro startled his huge audience of students — and TV listeners throughout Cuba — by an off-the-cuff scolding for the chairman of the meeting, Student Federation President Ricardo Alarcon. Alarcon had read to the audience the revolutionary testament of Echevarria, written just before his death, and omitted this sentence: “We believe the moment has come to perform our duty, and trust that the purity of our intentions brings us the favour of God to achieve the reign of justice in our land.”

Castro assailed Alarcon for “cowardice and moral wretchedness” in deleting Echevarria’s reference to religious faith. “What sort of concept of history is that?” Castro asked. “How can one conceive of history in so miserable a manner, as something dead, an immovable stone? Can such cowardice call itself ‘the dialectical conception of history’? Can such a fraud be called Marxism, Socialism, Communism?”

With such a criterion, the Premier said, all the ideas of Cespedes (leader of Cuba’s revolt against Spain in 1868) and Bolivar, who were influenced by the bourgeois French revolution, would have to be suppressed — and even those of Cuba’s Marti, “because he was not a Marxist-Leninist.” It would mean the negation of “all history, of our own roots,” Castro said, and consign to oblivion “all the tens of thousands of Cuban heroes who died along the roads.....The invocation of his religious ideas does not take away from Echevarria any of his heroism and glory. Our country’s history was made with the blood of Mella [Cuban Communist martyr] and the blood of Echevarria and of many more like them. The grandeur of the revolution is knowing how to unite all this blood to carry the revolution forward.”

The Premier pointed out that the second Havana Declaration had called on all progressive, patriotic elements to join the struggle against imperialism, from the sincere

Catholic to the old Marxist militant. "We proclaimed that to the whole world; and we come here, with a cowardice that has no name, to remove from a *companionero's* testament his invocation of God."

Castro said that whoever was responsible for the censoring of Echevarria's statement (Alarcon had explained to Castro that he was "told" to omit the reference to God) "should undertake self-criticism . . . There are many who think that revolution is a matter of shouting 'Left, Left!' Others, instead of inviting people to study and be converted to Marxism, say in effect: 'Take it, whether you like it or not, and if you don't like it take a purgative.'"

Castro asked: "Whom are we going to win with that? . . . That isn't socialism: perhaps it is 'Leftwing Communism, an Infantile Disorder.'"

Castro called for "more than a socialist spirit, a communist spirit" to be created, and suggested that the Young Rebels organization change its name to the Young Communists' Association,

"The young people are a generation that must live in other, more advanced stages, not in socialism," he declared. "The future generations must be prepared for the future society, and we must forget the man of the future from now on—his feelings, his character, his spirit—and develop in him a consciousness that is more and more generous."

As an example of how not to do this, Castro referred to bright young revolutionaries holding ministry jobs at fat salaries far above their needs. "Is this creating the communist spirit? Aren't we corrupting such a young man? That way we won't make revolutionaries . . . Whoever expects to have privileges and pass as a revolutionary will win nobody's respect. . . Privilege never! Let us depart from this filthy

swamp of miserable sectarianism. Let us begin to do what history expects of us, what the fatherland and America and the world expect of us!"

The speech had all Cuba buzzing next day, and was replayed several times on Havana radio stations. Together with his public self-criticism of the previous night over the food muddle, it seemed to increase Castro's popularity. Castro was aware that the foreign press would make propaganda use of the admissions in the first speech, but in fact the announcement of rationing was long overdue and was welcomed by Cubans. While queues lengthened at sparsely supplied groceries, a black market has grown up which—together with the generous menus available in expensive restaurants—has been filling the bellies of those who do the least work.

Within hours of the speech local Revolutionary Defense Committees were issuing ration books. The rations of many items—for example, 12 ounces of beef per head per week, although with a 2 cent price rise to 45 cents a pound for top quality—are larger than most Cubans have been getting on the grocery queues. To round out the picture, it should be added that those eating "institutionally"—in school cafeterias, student hostels, even insane asylums—have hardly noticed any shortages.

Castro referred to the exceptional drought in this critical year for Cuba, to the enormously increased consumer demand, and to the fact that much food which formerly came to the cities is being consumed in the areas where it is produced. He also suggested the revolution had weakened itself by scaring into emigration some middle-class Cubans with administrative experience whom it might have won over. But he placed the chief blame on the administration for "lack of objectivity" in not including these factors in their calculations. He indicated that punishment up to the death

penalty was envisaged for speculators in basic consumer necessities.

With regard to the appointment of Carlos Rapheal Rodriguez, a communist, to run the Agrarian Reform Institute, Castro said: "This has been the cause of some intrigues by enemies of the revolution, and I will explain how that came about: It was simply and solely an initiative of my own." He said he regarded Rodriguez as the best man for what is now one of the most important administrative jobs in Cuba in view of his experience and success in previous assignments.

— *Tribune*, July 28, 1962.



The People in Power

The Cuban people have given a special name to each year since the victory of their revolution.

1959 was the Year of Liberation.

It was the year of consolidation of the people's power, setting up bodies to work it, establishing and building up the People's Militia (which is now 3 million strong—half the population.) It was a year of urgent measures like raising wages, cutting rents, nationalising the sugar industry and preparing for the greater measures of the next year.

1960 was the Year of the Agrarian Reform.

The Agrarian Reform decided upon in 1956 was carried out by the I.N.R.A. - the National Institute of the Agrarian Reform, led by Antonio Nunez Jimenez. Tenant farmers got the land they cultivated - at the rate of about 66 acres for a family of five, the sugar workers set up co-operatives on the plantations, fishing and other co-operatives were established, state farms set up, new crops such as rice, introduced, others increased such as vegetables, fruit, hemp, etc.

1960 was also the year that saw large scale nationalisation of foreign-owned companies, starting with the oil refineries, when the foreign companies refused to refine Soviet oil. It was the year when the US tried, to cut off Cuba's trade, and the socialist countries prevented this. It was the year when the Cuban people prepared to answer sabotage organised from the US and smoked the traitors out of their holes.

1961 was the Year of Education.

500,000 teachers, students and volunteers went into action. Within that one year, from having 1,800,000 of her 6 million people illiterate, Cuba virtually wiped it out. By that year, there were schools for all the children, new and much extended facilities for higher education. Cuba had already done more for her children than in the previous 50 years.

The Agrarian Reform went on, with more help in the way of tractors and other implements, greater development of agriculture, consolidation of co-operatives and people's farms. The nationalisation of the major industries was completed.

1961 was also the year when the US imperialist, unable to break the Cuban people any other way, attempted to mount an armed invasion mainly by emigres, against her shores, and were decisively beaten.

1962 is the Year of Planning, the year of laying the technical and economic basis for full scale socialist construction.

The Cuban people have nationalised the sugar refineries, banks, oil refineries, railroads, ships and port installations, the telephone company, textile, metal and chemical enterprises, soap, perfume, cigarette factories, breweries, the main commercial establishments and foreign trade.

They are developing new iron and steel, nickel, oil extracting and refining, cement, ceramics, machine, chemical and many other industries to lay the basis for further development and provide goods for the people. Agriculture is more advanced than ever before, and based mainly on co-operatives.

The education campaign is being consolidated and followed up. The people have got more schools, houses, clinics, hospital facilities, doctors, nurses, teachers, more wage, increases, more improvements in living conditions, in the last four years than in the previous 14. Unemployment, which was 6 lakhs in 1958. will vanish by 1965.

1962 is also the year when the US is trying desperately to organise a complete economic blockade of Cuba, using her puppet rulers in Latin American countries, or bringing pressure on those who are more independent.

The Cuban people have rationed themselves for certain goods that used to be imported. But they have no real shortage, for the socialist countries have again proved their solidarity, providing not only immediate needs of the people, but the assistance and equipment which will speed up industrial and economic development.

They challenge the might of aggressive US imperialism only a few miles away, and openly preparing for fresh attacks. Their slogan "My Country or Death" has never had more meaning, for with each month that passes, they are making their country a better place for themselves, and building a finer heritage for their children.

Forward, July 27, 1992.

Castro Challenges Kennedy —on Unemployment

IN a speech made recently at the first National Conference of the delegates of Councils of Technical Advisers, Fidel Castro issued a direct challenge to Kennedy on how to solve the problem of unemployment.

Unemployment before the Revolution in Cuba normally affected 25% of the labour force! Eye witness accounts now report that a bare two years after the revolutionary victory the problem had shifted to one of labour shortage.

Said Castro: "The solution of Cuba's unemployment problem was done with no sugar quota, without spare parts, without replacements in machinery, without deliveries of raw materials, without Yankee oil, without investments of private Yankee capital, without Yankee monopolies, without Yankee managers in our factories, without straw bosses, without foremen, without foreign administration, without those 'wise-men', without those 'geniuses'....."

Calling attention to five statements which Kennedy had made against Cuba within 20 days of assuming office, Castro said: "and it is extraordinarily strange that at the very mo-

ment when the rulers of that nation confess that unemployment is on the rise, and confess that they are entering a stage of real crisis, it is highly odd.....that they should not resign themselves to leaving in peace a people who are proclaiming unusual successes of their economy, a people for whom unemployment is not only not on the rise, but where unemployment has disappeared.....”

“And, we might ask Mr. Kennedy — if your system is better than ours, why is it that the number of millions of unemployed in the U.S. is increasing, while in Cuba we have to organise battalions of volunteers to go to work in the fields?

“Why is it that while your factories are closing down and your industries are working at 30% or 40% of capacity, our factories are going 24 hours around the clock, and many previously closed factories are being brought back into production.

“Why is it that while agriculture is paralyzed in your country thousands and thousands of tractors in Cuba are opening up more and more new lands to production?

“If your system is better than ours, why is it that in your country, facing no economic aggression, no embargo on machinery, with no one preventing you from free access to raw materials, why is it that..... you have problems, while in our country, faced with all this aggression, there are no problems?

“If your system is better than ours, why are you heading towards a crisis while we are heading toward progress?”.

The economic system in the U.S. is at fault, Castro declared. “You can see that this imperialist system is senile and condemned to failure. It is a system in which work has

become an enemy of progress; more work means more hunger. Such a system, you can see, is condemned to death. There they can't solve their problems by working; they have to lay off men and women.....to go on feeding the incomes of a caste of parasites”.

How did Cuba meet its unemployment problem? It was no secret, Castro indicated. “Does Mr. Kennedy want to end unemployment in the U.S.? Why, then let him nationalise the banks so that the banks can cease being private companies serving a few millionaires; let him put an end to military bases abroad; let him stop the armaments race, stop making rockets and battleships, pursue a policy of peace, and you will see how the problems and the crisis in the U.S. will be over”.

Instead of this, Castro pointed out, the U.S. follows an irrational course. “In place of copying us — with the water risen up to their necks—they try to wipe us off the face of the earth. And this is the irrationality of imperialism, prisoner of its own contradictions, prisoner of all the webs which they themselves have spun. That's why they have reached this absurd position where they can't find work. Why? Simply because it's a system operating for the benefit of an absolutely parasitic class”.

“The people have had to renounce labour. They do not know that nothing else but labour exists in the world capable of creating what we need. They do not know that no other force exists in the world capable of creating goods, capable of creating wealth. And when a people has to give up work, it is condemned to ruin. And the North American people have had to give up work simply to provide a living for the parasites.....that is, monopolists, millionaires, bankers, senators, ward heelers, priests, in short, generals, admirals, cops, international criminals, thugs, traitors, spies, piccards”.

Returning to Kennedy's five declarations against Cuba, Castro stated: "They are confessing that Cuba is coming out on top, they are confessing that Cuba is prospering, they are confessing that the triumph of the Revolution is growing, they are confessing their failure, that all their measures of aggression have failed; worse yet, that their campaigns have failed, that the solidarity of the brother peoples of Latin America with Cuba is more evident and warmer each passing day.

"And they have to resort to even worse things. We recall the campaign they waged against the Soviet Union saying that there was an 'iron curtain' around the Soviet Union, and they built up that legend; and yet, now they have ended up lowering an iron curtain around the United States. It is they who have forbidden North Americans from travelling here. Why?

"Now we could very well have adopted such a measure, which would have been well justified, to keep out saboteurs, spies, counter revolutionary messengers, carrier of bombs or mercenary gold; yet, you see how relations are between the United States and Cuba.

"We, the tiny country, the small country, we haven't been the ones to keep North Americans from coming here; but they, the powerful imperialism, mighty imperialism, they are the ones who have forbidden North Americans from travelling here. That is, they are completely on the defensive.

"Are you trying to harm our economy thereby? No. they succeeded in paralyzing the tourist trade sometime back; the tourist, looking for thrills and a good time, was scared away sometime back.

"For many months those coming to Cuba have been not such tourists looking for thrills and a gay time, but writers,

intellectuals, Negro leaders, youth leaders, honest news papermen; and they didn't leave behind foreign exchange. The motive was not economic this time; the motive was political.

"They didn't want Negro Leaders from the south of the United States to see the social equality that exists in our country. They didn't want the honest people of the U.S. the honest writers, honest newspapermen and honest political activists of the U.S., to come here.

"We didn't close any doors in their faces. We said: come and see for yourself; come and see how many schools we opened, how many fortresses we converted into schools come and see the support the Revolution has in the people; come and see the co-operatives; come and see the people's stores; come and see our mountains; come and see our fields; come and see the thousands and thousands of homes we are building; come and see and talk with the people. Come and see that all that stuff they are writing about us is a pack of lies. Result: Entry to Cuba prohibited.

"What are they confessing by doing that? Their failure, their fear of the example and truth, fear of the influence that Cuba could have, not just in Latin America but in the United States itself, because we are just as close to them as they are to us.

"And if a serious crisis comes in the United States worse yet, because there are a lot of honest North Americans capable of understanding Cuba's example".

Young Socialist, Vol. 2. No. 1.

“Our Country or Death! We will win !”

THE SECOND DECLARATION OF HAVANA—A COMMENT

The people of Cuba are the first to have victoriously unfurled the banner of the Socialist Revolution on the continent of America; and it is their heroic voice which speaks to the peoples of America and the world through the Second Declaration of Havana. The Declaration was made by Fidel Castro, on February 4, 1962, and approved at a meeting of the General National Assembly of the people of Cuba, which is said to have been attended by well over a million people.

The Declaration is deserving of a full reading by all those who stand for the liberation of mankind from exploitation and oppression. It is of historic significance, as a Revolutionary Socialist Manifesto to the exploited and oppressed millions of America. Not since the days of Lenin, after the victory in Russia of the world's first Socialist Revolution has such a declaration having the world historic outlook and permeated with the ideology and revolutionary spirit of Marxism been made by any nation. Clear is Cuba's reliance for the defence of its newly won

freedom and its advance on the Socialist road, not on mere statecraft, nor even on military alliances, but on the extension of the Socialist Revolution throughout Latin America.

“What is the history of Cuba but the history of Latin America? And what is the history of Latin America but the history of Asia, Africa and Oceania? And what is the history of all these peoples but the history of the most pitiless and cruel exploitation by imperialism throughout the world.”

It is in this vein that the Declaration proceeds to a straight Marxist analysis of capitalism, and follows this with an explanation of the true role of the United States as an imperialist power in America and of its fear of the Latin American Revolution,

“Cuba and Latin America are part of the world. Our problems form part of the problems engendered by the general crisis of imperialism and the struggle of the subjugated peoples; the clash between the world that is being born and the world that is dying.” So remarking, the Declaration asks: “What is it that is hidden behind the Yankees’ hate of the Cuban Revolution? What is it that rationally explains the conspiracy, uniting for the same aggressive purpose the most powerful and rich imperialist power in the contemporary world and the oligarchies of an entire continent, which together are supposed to represent a population of 350 million human beings, against a small country of only seven million inhabitants, economically underdeveloped, without financial or military means to threaten the security or economy of any other country? What unites them and stirs them up is fear. What explains it is fear. Not fear of the Cuban revolution but fear of the Latin-American revolution. Not fear of the workers, peasants, intellectuals, students and progressive layers of the

middle strata, who by revolutionary means have taken power in Cuba, but fear that the worker, peasants, intellectuals, students and progressive middle strata will by revolutionary means take power in the oppressed and hungry countries exploited by the Yankee monopolies and reactionary oligarchies in America, fear that the plundered people of the continent will seize the arms from their oppressors, and, like Cuba, declare themselves free peoples of America."

The Declaration warns: "By crushing the Cuban revolution they hope to dispel the fear that torments them, the spectre of the revolution that threatens them. By liquidating the Cuban revolution they hope to liquidate the revolutionary spirit of the people."

Then it goes on confidently to assert; "But the development of history, the ascending march of humanity does not hold back, nor can it be held back."

It mentions the subjective conditions for revolution: "The subjective conditions of each country that is to say the conscious factor, organisation, leadership, can accelerate or retard the revolution, according to its greater or lesser degree of development, but sooner or later, in each historic epoch, when the objective conditions mature, consciousness is acquired, the organisation is formed, the leadership emerges and the revolution takes place."

It reminds: "The peoples of America liberated themselves from Spanish colonialism at the beginning of the last century, but they did not free themselves from exploitation... Today Latin America lies beneath an imperialism fiercer, much more powerful and more cruel than the Spanish colonial empire."

It then explains the various methods by which "Yankee imperialism" seeks to preserve its domination of Latin

America and to isolate and crush the Cuban revolution. Such methods are the training of "the most reactionary and pro-Yankee officers of the Latin American armies", through the Inter-American Defence Council; the constitution of a permanent apparatus of espionage in each nation "directly tied to the Central Intelligence Agency (U.S.)" through the U.S. military missions in Latin America; and the organisation in the United States itself of "special schools to train Latin-American agents in the most subtle forms of assassination".

"U.S. imperialism's declared policy of sending soldiers to fight the revolutionary movement of any country in Latin America, that is to say to kill workers, students, peasants, Latin-American men and women, has no other objective than the continued maintenance of its monopolistic interests and the privileges of the traitorous oligarchies which support it."

The Declaration asks pointedly: "Why the shipment of arms which, even though technically outmoded for modern war, are yet efficient for smashing strikes, repressing popular demonstrations, staining the land with blood. Why the military missions, the pact of Rio de Janeiro and the thousand and one international conferences?" Then it goes on graphically to point out: "Since the end of World War II, the nations of Latin America have been impoverished more and more; their exports have less and less value, their imports cost more, the per capita income falls; the awful rate of infant mortality does not decrease, the number of illiterates is higher; the people lack jobs, land, adequate housing schools, hospitals, means of communication, and means of life. On the other hand, North American (U.S.) investments exceed ten billion dollars. Latin America, moreover, supplies cheap raw materials and pays high prices for manufactured articles. Like the first Spanish conquerors, who bartered

mirrors and trinkets for gold and silver — that is how the United States trades with Latin America. To guard that torrent of riches, to gain ever more control of Latin America's resources and exploit its suffering peoples — that is what is hidden behind the military pacts, the military missions and Washington's diplomatic lobbying."

Referring to the meeting of the Organisation of American States (O. A. S.) at Punta del Este, at which the U.S. succeeded in prevailing upon a majority of the Representatives of Latin American governments to vote for the expulsion of Cuba from the O. A. S., the Declaration indicts U.S. policy and its methods with this comment; "This policy of gradual strangulation of the sovereignty of the Latin-American nations and of achieving a free hand to intervene in their internal affairs culminated in the recent meeting of Foreign Ministers at Punta del Este. Yankee imperialism summoned the Foreign Ministers to wrest from them—through political pressure and unprecedented economic blackmail in collusion with a group of the most discredited rulers of this continent—renunciation of the national sovereignty of our peoples and the odious right of Yankee intervention in the internal affairs of Latin America."

The Declaration goes on forcefully to describe what Cuba did and to contrast what it stood for, at that conference, with what the U.S. stood for: "At that evil conclave, Cuba's thundering voice was raised without weakness or fear to expose, before all the peoples of America and the world, the monstrous intent, and to defend, with a virility and dignity that will be recorded in the annals of history, not only Cuba's rights but the forsaken rights of all our sister nations of the American continent. The word of Cuba could find no echo in that house-broken majority, but neither could it find a refutation; only impotent silence befell its demolishing arguments, the clearness and courage of its voice. But Cuba did not speak for the Ministers, Cuba spoke

for the people and for history, where its words will be echoed and answered."

"At Punta del Este a great ideological battle unfolded between the Cuban revolution and Yankee Imperialism. Who did they represent there, for whom did each speak? Cuba represented the people; the United States represented the monopolies. Cuba spoke for America's exploiting oligarchic and imperialist interests; Cuba for the nationalisation of foreign enterprises; the United States for ignorance; Cuba for agricultural reform; the United States for under-development. Cuba for creative work; the United States for sabotage and counter revolutionary terror practiced by its agents—the destruction of sugar-cane fields and factories, the bombing by their pirate planes of the labours of a peaceful people. Cuba for the murdered crusaders against illiteracy; the United States for the assassins. Cuba for bread; the United States for privilege and discrimination. Cuba for truth; the United States for lies. Cuba for liberation; the United States for oppression. Cuba for the bright future of humanity; the United States for the past without hope. Cuba for the heroes who fell at Playa Giron defending their country from foreign domination; the United States for the mercenaries and traitors who serve the foreigner against their country. Cuba for socialism; the United States for capitalism."

Systematic acts, by which the United States has sought to harass and undermine Cuba, in its heroic efforts to develop its economy and to create a better life for its people, are exposed :

"Cuba has lived three years of the revolution under intervention in our internal affairs. Private airplanes coming from the United States, dropping incendiary substances, have burned thousands of tons of sugar cane; acts of international sabotage perpetrated by Yankee agents, like the explosion of the ship ship "*LA COUBRE*," have cost dozens

of Cuban lives; thousands of North American weapons have been dropped in parachutes by the U.S. military services into our territory to promote subversion; hundreds of tons of explosive materials and bombs have been secretly landed on our coast from North American launches to promote sabotage and terrorism.....Our sugar quota was cut and an embargo proclaimed on parts and raw materials for factories and U.S. made machinery, in order to ruin our economy. Cuban ports and installations have been surprise-attacked by armed ships and bombers from bases prepared by the United States. Mercenary troops, organised and trained in countries of Central America by the U.S. government, invaded our territory, escorted by ships of the Yankee fleet and with aerial support from foreign bases, causing much loss of life as well as material wealth. Counter-revolutionary Cubans are being trained in the U.S. Army and new plans of aggression against Cuba are being made."

The Declaration tells next what the Cuban revolution has achieved so far, despite all these impediments :

"Cuba is the one country in all Latin-America which has provided land for 100,000 small farmers, assured year-round employment on state farms and co-operatives for all agricultural workers, transformed forts into schools, given 60,000 scholarships to university, secondary and technological students, created lecture halls for the entire child population, totally liquidated illiteracy, quadrupled medical services nationalised foreign interests, done away with extortionate rents which turned housing into a means of exploiting people, virtually eliminated un-employment, suppressed discrimination due to race or sex, rid itself of gambling, vice and administrative corruption, Cuba is the country which has armed the people, which has made the enjoyment of human rights a living reality by freeing man and woman from exploitation, lack of culture and social inequality, which has

liberated itself from foreign domination, and established the bases for the development of its economy, in order no longer to be a country producing only one crop and exporting only raw materials."

What an achievement this is! What an example of the possibilities of even an under developed little country of only seven million people, isolated economically and politically by all the reactionary forces on its own continent and subjected to repeated sabotage and even armed attacks from outside, once it has achieved a popular revolution and has set its course along the Socialist Road! What an example, not only to the exploited and oppressed millions of America, but to us in little under-developed Ceylon and to the whole colonial world!

But one does not get on to the Socialist road, by wishing for it, by distributing nice picture-books about other people's socialist achievements, or by being handed the power to do so in one's own country from outside! This, too, the Declaration sharply reminds :

"Revolutions are not exported, they are made by the people."

"What Cuba can give to the peoples, and has already given, is its example."

"And what does the Cuban revolution teach? That revolution is possible, that the people, that the people can make it, that in the contemporary world there are no forces capable of halting the liberation movement of the peoples.

"Our revolution would never have been possible if the revolution itself had not been destined to arise out of existing conditions in our socio-economic reality, a reality which exists to an even greater degree in a good number of Latin-American countries,

“It inevitably occurs that in the nations where the control of the Yankee monopolies is strongest, the exploitation of the oligarchy the most cruel, and the situation of the worker and peasant masses most unbearable, the political power becomes more vicious, states of siege (states of emergency) become habitual (!), and every manifestation, of discontact by the masses is repressed by force. Democratic channels are closed completely. The brutal character of the dictatorship, the form of rule adopted by the ruling classes, reveals itself more clearly than ever. It is then that the revolutionary explosion of the peoples becomes inevitable.” (Dictatorial coup conspirators, please note !)

The weakness of military forces under conditions of revolutionary guerilla struggle in the villages is next exposed, and the way in which this struggle links up with the mass movement in the towns and cities is explained.

“The armies, built and equipped for conventional war, which are the forces on which the exploiting classes rest, become absolutely impotent when they have to confront the irregular struggle of the peasants on their own terrain. They lose ten men for each revolutionary fighter who falls, and demoralisation spreads rapidly among them from having to face an invisible and invincible enemy, who does not offer them an opportunity of displaying their military academy tactics and their war-like noise, which they use so much in military displays to curb the city workers and the students.

“The initial struggle by small combat, units is incessantly fed by new forces, the mass movement begins to loosen its bonds, the old order, little by little begins to break into a thousand pieces, and that is the moment when the working class and the urban masses decide the battle.”

Even though the revolutionary struggle may be set going first amongst the rural poor, the necessity for the revolutionary leadership of the working class is emphasised, and so too, the incapacity of the "national bourgeoisie" to take the lead.

"But the peasantry is a class which because of the uncultured state in which it is kept and the isolation in which it lives, needs the working class and the revolutionary and political leadership the working class and the revolutionary intellectuals, for without them it would not by itself be able to plunge into the struggle and achieve victory."

"In the actual historic conditions of Latin America, the national bourgeoisie cannot lead the anti-feudal and anti-imperialist struggle. Experience shows that in our nations that class, even when its interests clash with those of Yankee imperialism has been incapable of confronting it, for it is paralysed by fear of social revolution and frightened by the clamour of the exploited masses.

"Facing the dilemma of imperialism and revolution, only its most progressive layers will be with the people.

"The actual world correlation of forces and the universal movement for liberation of the colonial and dependent peoples points out to the working class and the revolutionary intellectuals of Latin-America their true role, which is to place themselves resolutely in the vanguard of the struggle against imperialism and feudalism."

The Declaration moves to its climax with a stern reminder to all those engaged in the anti-imperialist struggle.

"Where the roads for the people are closed where the repression of workers and peasants is fierce, where the rule of the Yankee monopolists is strongest, the first and most

important task is to understand that it is neither honourable nor correct to beguile people with the fallacious and convenient illusion of uprooting by legal means which don't exist and won't exist — ruling classes who are entrenched in all the state positions, monopolising education, owning all media of information, possessing infinite financial resources — a power which the monopolies and oligarchies will defend with blood and fire and with the might of their police and armies.

“It is the duty of every revolutionist to make the revolution. It is known that the revolution will triumph in America and throughout the world, but it is not for revolutionists to sit in the doorways of their houses waiting for the corpse of imperialism to pass by.”

Then comes the stirring climax of the Declaration:

“Great as was the epic of Latin-American independence, heroic as was that struggle, today's generation of Latin-Americans is called upon to engage in an epic which is even greater and more decisive for humanity.....

“The struggle, to a greater extent than the first will be waged by the masses, will be carried out by the people. The people are going to play a much more important role now than they did then. Individual leaders are less important and will be less important in this struggle than in the one before.”

“This epic before us is going to be written by the hungry Indian (American) masses, the peasants without land, the exploited workers. It is going to be written by the progressive masses, the honest and brilliant intellectuals who so greatly abound in our suffering Latin-American countries' struggles of masses and ideas. An epic which will be carried forward by our people, unreckoned with till today, who are now beginning to shake off their slumber. Imperialism

considered us a weak and submissive flock; a gigantic flock of 200 million Latin-Americans in whom Yankee monopoly capitalism now see it grave diggers.....

“Yes, now history will have to reckon with the poor of America, the exploited and despised of Latin-America, who have decided to begin writing history for themselves for all time

“Already they can be seen armed with stones, sticks, machetes in one direction and another, each day occupying lands, sinking hooks into the land which belongs to them and defending it with their lives. They can be seen carrying signs, slogans, flags; letting them flap in the mountains, or prairie winds. And the wave of anger, of demands of justice, of claims for rights, which is beginning to sweep the lands of Latin America will not stop. That wave will swell with every passing day. For that wave is composed of the greatest number, the majorities in every respect, those whose labour amasses the wealth and turns the wheels of history. Now they are awakening from the long brutalising sleep to which they had submitted.

“For this great mass of humanity has said ‘Enough’! and has begun to march. And their giant march will not be halted until they conquer true independence—for which they have vainly died more than once. Today, however, those who die will die like the Cubans at Playa Giron. They will die for their own, true and never to be surrendered independence.”

“Patria O Muerte! Venceremos!”

Our country or death! We will win!

Young Socialist, Vol.2 No. 2

CUBA

The whole progressive world celebrates July 26th as the Cuban day. Even though Cuba is very far away, what is happening in Cuba is very much familiar to us. What is often overlooked and what is more important is the implication or rather the significance of the happenings in Cuba.

The story of the Cuban struggle is not merely the story of one socialist country. The significance of the Cuban struggle is more than this. It confirms the correctness of Marxism more than what even the Russian revolution itself did. For the Russian Revolution was accomplished by the workers and peasants of Russia led by a party that was "consciously applying the principles of Marxism". But the Cuban Revolution began under the banner of anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist ideology of the "humanist revolution", blessed by the Church, since the almoner of Catholic Action saw in it the victory of the "Christian Spirit" over "pagan materialism" came to a stage when the leaders, including Castro, of the the so called "humanist revolution" had to proclaim that the banner of Marxism-Lennism is the only way to consolidate and further their advance towards Socialist construction.

Further the Cuban Revolution gives ample proof to the concept that the National Liberation Movement is part and parcel of the world Socialist Revolution. Thus in the context of the present world scene where polarisation to Socialist and Capitalist camps is becoming more and more evident, it is impossible for any country genuinely carrying out the National Liberation movement to divert itself from the Socialist Revolution. This is clearly amplified by a statement made by Dr. Guevara which runs as, "In order to know where Cuba is going, the best thing to ask the government of the U.S. first how far it intends to go."

Directing our attention to our country, the government says that it follows a "middle path". This implies that there are two other paths and altogether there are three paths whereas in fact as the Cuban Revolution has shown there is one and only one path to complete our National Liberation Movement and to bring forth a Socialist Revolution.

*"Socialist," Organ of the Socialist Society,
University of Ceylon, August 1962.*





CUBA AND LATIN AMERICA

The history of ancient life in South America is a great book whose story tells of the Andean races so little understood by an alien world of adventurous mariners of Spain and Portugal in the fifteenth century and other mineral and fruit adventurers of the twentieth. Those prehistoric races were ones which had great civilizations. But all that won the concern of the colonisers were the abundance of coffee, bananas, gold, copper, silver and tin, and they offered only treachery and exploitation to these place of proud lineage and high culture. But the colonialists also had turbulent years at the hands of these races of indomitable courage who rose in insurrection time after time. They were helped by ardent young leaders imbued with new ideals of liberty they absorbed abroad. These patriotic leaders were at work in various regions of Spanish South America and as they learned of one another's activities they felt united by a common ideal — independence from Spain — “Viva la liberated” and “Fuera Espanoles” “Long live liberty” and “Away with the Spaniards” was the familiar cry. Many are the names of the martyrs of the revolutionary movements of South America outstanding among whom are the two liberators, Simon Bolivar in the North and Jose de Sam Martin in the South.

Out of the turmoil of 14 years of war 1810 — 1824 a group of young nations emerged to begin their new life free from Spanish bondage. England and United States had helped the struggle for independence. But in the same spirit that it helped Cuba — the acquiring of new possession, from which Europe had to be kept out all cost.

In 1823 President Monroe delivered his famous message to Congress gone down in history as the Monroe Doctrine as adopted by Congress for the protection of the United States from encroachment of European powers in the Western Hemisphere. The South Americans at first looked on the Monroe Doctrine as a safeguard from European aggression. The tragedy that befell Cuba with American exploitation is the same tragedy that befell Latin America. Dictators became necessary there too. During the past century, the U.S. employed armed aggression and intervention against the Latin American countries on more than 100 occasions. They annexed more than half of Mexico's territory; they committed armed aggression against nine Caribbean countries; they sent their troops to invade Cuba on four occasions and occupied Haiti for 19 years. They seized the Panama Canal Zone and are hanging on to it up till now. They have forced their military bases on many Latin American countries, trying to harness them to the U.S. war scheme. In the economic field, U.S. dollar imperialism has exported capital to Latin America to the tune of over 13,000 million U.S. dollars. U.S. monopoly capital controls 95 per cent of Chile's copper, 60 per cent of Venezuela's petroleum 80 per cent of Mexico's mining enterprises and almost all fruit production in Central America. Though rigged trade deals and other tricks of exploitation, U.S. squeezes out of Latin America "profits" amounting to more than 2,000 million U.S. dollars every year.

The Monroe Doctrine received much attention as time went on. Roosevelt amended it to mean that continued

disturbance in South American countries could force the U.S. to intervene to forestall intervention from Europe. So it was not Dulles really who invented the pre-emptive theory! Thus fortified with a carte blanche for any license, U.S. marines patronised the Caribbean cities, ordered customs houses to protect U.S. investments. This went on for 30 years. The Monroe Doctrine was good cover for economic exploitation. In due course the doctrine stank and it lay buried for a while, until Eisenhower resurrected it with an amendment, consequent to Khrushchev's statement: "We will help our Cuban brothers by causing the failure of the economic blockade declared against Cuba by the U.S." (1959 — May).

The Ike amendment was the "U.S. will not permit the establishment of a region dominated by International Communism in the Western Hemisphere." Khrushchev's statement of saving Cuba from American economic aggression suddenly promoted Cuba to the status of a communist protectorate. He further integrated the unilateral Monroe Doctrine duly amended also unilaterally with the multilateral concern of the 21 members of the Organisation of American States when Khrushchev made another wicked statement. "The Monroe Doctrine is dead and should be buried, that it should not poison the air by its decay". It was suddenly found by Eisenhower to have been remotely integrated with not only the O.A.S. Charter but even with the Rio de Janeiro Treaty of 1947!!

The O.A.S.—shades of Bolivar!—had originally been an inter-American treaty of 1826 to deal with common defense, peaceful settlement of disputes and abolition of slave trading. There it rested.

For many years it was a banquet society for which its American directors pinched some money for banquet expenses. In 1945 it met to defend its rights from interference

of the UN. The USA wanted to have a body through which it could engineer war outside the jurisdiction of UN Article 51 of the UN Charter accordingly granted right of regional self defence. Thus the renamed OAS became Washington's "Ministry of Colonies".

Against this avowed function in August 16th 1960 the OAS met to consider the "threat of Soviet intervention" at San Jose, Costa Rica. But the results were not gratifying. US had a phoney 78 page account of Cuba's plans to spread communist revolution in Latin America — No one was convinced. A hint was thrown out about a Latin American aid programme. The banana republicanism shown towards Guatemala made the attending members a little chary of those acts of benevolence. The US was not given any excuse for sending in the Marines! This farce only evoked another threat from Khrushchev—his offer to send Russian rockets to US if it did not lay its hands off Cuba. They described at this moment Cuba "as the glorious island in the middle of the Caribbean defended by the rockets of the greatest military power in history." Cuba walked out of the conference having impressed the others with its readiness to negotiate any economic "differences" in a bilateral way. The OAS broke up but it had spoilt the chances of the United Bogota Conference to discuss US "social development" aid for Latin America as it had hinted at already its intention to line up the participating delegates against Cuba, using it as the bait.

THE BOGOTA CASTRO PLAN

Against the San Jose blithe hypocrisy fiasco the Bogota economic conference was a big joke. The plan offered \$ 500 million to help the S. American countries to ease poverty by building houses, schools and roads! The countries saw through the trick. The plan was so belated and coming so close on the heels of Cuba's flourishing prosperity that some called it The Crew Plan for hemispheric development! The

US had taken up Cuba's challenge of exposing Yankee imperialism, Brazil's President Kubitschek sent his comments to Eisenhower, "Your Excellency knows very well that words have no meaning for people of stagnated regions where life is a continual sacrifice, patience and resignation."

Brazil's chief delegate Augusto Schmidt said "the US proposal is very kind, very generous but it is only a short term palliative made on the spur of the moment under the pressure of the Cuban crisis."

He left on one in doubt.

With the Cuban revolution and with all those stupid moves by a frantic gold mad US government, the Latin American revolution already simmering for long was set a flame. The Latin American revolutionaries have a long and glorious history and winds of revolt are already blowing there. It has been a long plundered, long exploited region and revolutionary fervour has never been extinguished there. Propped up by dictators, facaded by armies the so-called "Hemispheric democracies" will soon come into their own out of the bondage of "Hemispheric Defence." In six of those countries military regimes have been destroyed partially.

In recent times the political turbulence in Argentina and Venezuela was put down only by shooting, and repression. Guatemala and Nicaragua national uprisings were described as "Cuban inspired revolts prior to a Cuban invasion" and crushed by military power. When Haiti rose to shake itself of its chains the army declared martial law as it was a "Cuban supported revolt to overthrow the government". When Honduras and Costa Rica rose in insurgence, the armed forces there were called up on the pretext that the rebels (pro Cuban) were using them as invasion bases for attacks against Nicaragua and Guatemala. In El Salvador

people stood up successfully against all odds. In December last the US flag was dragged through the streets of Quito in Ecuador and the American Embassy stoned by 20,000 people, over the American created border issue with Peru. Last May, Nixon was stoned in Peru and Venezuela.

Everywhere US is facing set backs in its Western Hemisphere. In Managua, Nicaraguan students burned a US military camp. In Bogota, students burnt Uncle Sam in effigy. In Panama it was the same story of uprising and rebellion. Yes it was Marti who said "When people take up arms for a revolution, it ought to know where it goes and with whom it goes."

The US has stimulated the Latin American revolution to new heights. Now it has Somoza of Nicaragua, Trujillo of the Dominican Republic, Stroessner of Paraguay, Gustavo Rojas in Colombia lined up as its statellites but then the people of Honduras in Tegucigalpa threw eggs, tomatoes and even ripe avocados at the OAS June 1969 "investigating commission" successfully. Brazilians cheered its governments opposition to the International Monetary Fund Policies there. Peru also had a crisis on the same issue, and Argentina in 1959 had 77 strikes due to economic crises consequent to the IMF conditions which the Frondizi government had accepted. Venezuela overthrew dictator Jimenez in 1958 and refused a \$ 290 million loan, Uruguay is just establishing diplomatic relations with the socialist countries in defiance of US vetoing and even Guatemala's American Puppet Ydigoras was forced by the people to reject the American plan of a \$ 295 million international police force for Latin America.

All this proves that the South American national liberation movements which began 150 years ago are fast gathering momentum.

Communism

The bogey of communism is not going down in the Hemisphere. It is not going down in Cuba either. Ex-Premier Miradona accused Dorticos the President of allowing Cuba to go Communist. "So what"? was the reply he got. Khrushchev himself told Raul last year in Moscow "There are only 2 parties in Cuba. The radicals and the conservatives. The former are you and the latter are the communists." Fidel who was to have left New York after the UN Sessions in a Cuban Airlines plane which was impounded in New York by a court order in spite of diplomatic immunity afforded to trips to UN was given a plane by Khrushchev. "Is your government going communist?" asked a reporter as Fidel was about to board the 1L-18 turbo prop. The reply came. "You have nothing else but communism on your mind. Anyone who is not like Chiang Kai Shek, Franco or Adenauer is a communist for you. Ours is a revolution by the humble people, for the humble people, of the humble people you know — just like Lincoln".

Church

The church as a whole is not against Castro Fidel once said "Whoever condemns the Cuban revolution, betrays Christ and is capable of crucifying him again". In Cuba the Church never had a deep hold on the people as in other Latin American countries. It does not own any property. In Cuba there are 400 Spanish and 100 foreign priests. In fact it has been pointed out how the Archbishop Serentez helped Castro during the tyranny. Supporting Castro are the liberal minded Franciscan fathers, mostly Basque refugees from Franco's tyranny in Catholic Spain. A few Falangist priests on US instigation preach against the new regime.

The American reports of anti-Castro demonstrations after Sunday Mass are those which take place in the

churches of the swanky Miramar zone of Havana where anti-Castro priests denounce him. In Miramar live the privileged elite.

That they can denounce him and are allowed to do so is an indication there is no tyranny there

On February 8th 1960 Father P. Inaki de Aspiazua a Basque Catholic priest who escaped from a Franco prison and on the advice of his Bishop went into exile in Argentine wrote of Cuba.

"I have come to Cuba for the second time through the invisible, impalpable blockade of news despatches which impedes one from seeing the truth of Cuba from the outside. Behind it, in all of Latin America, I have met numerous friends who received joyfully the victory of the Revolution but today adopt an attitude of doubt and suspicion. They are the victims of counter revolutionary propaganda..... The truth about Cuba is in Cuba and not outside Cuba. I have a long experience in revolutionary justice. I have seen it and also suffered it in the rebel zone of Spain during the Civil war. No other revolution in the world is like this which came out of the Sierra Maestra and can present a complete list of the condemned and of their respective sentences as the Revolutionary Government of Cuba.

There were mothers, wives, children of 20,000 assassinated by the most cruel dictatorship in Latin America. Thanks to the wise campaign directed by Fidel the people of Cuba gave a high lesson in civic responsibility. They maintained serenity. The left to the tribunals the carrying out of justice, 700 convicted of assassination were shot. There are at present, 2,500 prisoners none of whom has been maltreated."

Cuba has convinced the people of America that the cause of independence for Cuba and for the whole of Latin America is indivisible.

From Costa Rica went a cable from the Women's Alliance to the San Jose conference to the Foreign Ministers of American states symbolic of this conviction:

“IN the eyes of all Latin America, Cuba is no longer just a Caribbean island, Cuba has become the heart of Latin America, the hope and faith of our people. Cuba has become the symbol of what they want to become, of what they want to achieve. We uphold as indispensable solidarity with Cuba. Today Cuba is living in all the noble and loyal hearts of our continent.”

Theja Gunawardhana, in 'Venceremos,' 1962.



Triumph of the Revolution

In June 1960, Jersey Standard, Texaco and Shell refused to refine 900,000 tons of Soviet oil. The Government waited until the Soviet oil arrived and "intervened" the refineries. The companies cut off imports of oil from Venezuela. Cuba had her counter move pat—she purchased all her requirements from USSR. Cuba thereby saved 20 million pesos. Further reprisals followed from USA. She cut of Cuba's quota of sugar supplies by 700,000 tons. Before long USSR gave \$100 million as aid to Cuba and agreed to buy a million tons of sugar. E. Germany agreed to buy 60,000 and Poland 150,000 tons of sugar. Cuba had been projected at breakneck speed by USA into the welcome arms of the Socialist countries who emerged as her friends—her sincere friends who did not exploit Cuba's desperate position and entered into trade pacts on Cuba's own rights. After all USSR could remember how in the early years she was under effective economic blockade.

Flea-bitten USA went on committing more faux pas. She went on indulging in the sterile pleasures of tit for tat, chagrined, that she had failed to deal a fatal blow to the Cuban economy. Fidel also enjoying the game and its rich

dividends nationalised on August 13th 1960 US assets in the electric and telephone companies, sugar mills and oil refineries. The US was offered compensation in the form of sugar proceeds above 3 million tons. In September the American rubber companies worth \$25 million, Minimax Chain Stores worth \$5 million and banks were nationalised.

On October 19th, US applied an embargo on all exports to Cuba, which could not care less. She had powerful friends—many of them and only one enemy. Even Canada informed by USA of the embargo, chose to treat the “information note” with the contempt it deserved. The economic warfare ended in a fiasco for the USA and a great triumph for Cuba.

75% of Cuba's imports had come from USA—\$400 million annually. This great reliance on USA was expected to be the great factor on which the Wall Street economist politicians banked for the paralysis of Cuba economy. Cuba had lost no time in setting up a Bank of Foreign Commerce to develop trade with all countries. Through this Bank Cuba bought over \$60 million worth of American goods through other countries and saved her foreign exchange in the process. In fact the termination of trade relations with USA helped Cuba to buy 2/3 of her imports without using foreign exchange. Cuba had losses amounting to 1,000 million dollars by her trade with USA as it was always on a basis of unequal footing. The Socialist countries' trade relations are always based on a basis of equality and mutual benefit.

Though US hoped her ban of shipping facilities would fatally affect Cuba, even that did not work; for Cuba discovered that just because the US companies had controlled her imports and exports the shipping charges had been unilaterally raised as they saw fit. While shipping charges from New York to Cuba per ton was \$30, that from China

to Cuba was only \$15. Besides spare parts for machinery and food US had exported chiefly luxury goods for the privileged elite in the form of sedans for \$30 million per annum, television sets, washing machines (18 million) to say nothing of chewing gum and pornographic literature. The importers being American companies, they had paid no taxes to Cuba, thus draining foreign exchange out of the country. To Cuba then the US economic war was a blessing to deliver her from economic bondage. Her real independence had been set afoot.

The embargo on spare parts had been wisely anticipated and Cuba had hurriedly bought shiploads of spark plugs, carburetors, fuel pumps, other auto parts, tin plate, newsprint, chemicals and agricultural machinery. The US had not been able to prohibit neutral countries from transshipping these stocks to Cuba. When everything had turned conducive to Cuban development in the long run, like the fox sadly looking at the proverbial luxurious grapes "Newsweek" wrote in January 1961: "This January, as the new crops of sugar swells with its juices, 900,000 tons of last year's sugar is beginning to go bad and scores of sugar mills are out of function for lack of spare parts." No one believed this bit of wishful fantasy—not even the hired hack who wrote it.

It was by the way that Cuba faced up to the challenge in the economic field that the working classes became active co-partners in the revolutionary schemes. The workers and peasants (who however needed no convincing) realized that if the economic development progress for Cuba failed, the counter revolution had a chance of triumphing. They voluntarily offered to work 9-10 hours a day to increase production, children gave their pennies, city worker donated 5 million pesos to buy agricultural machinery for the co-operatives and the campesinos in work gave 1 million

500,000 pesos for developing industry. The US economic sabotage turned out to be a liberating, ennobling and unifying experience for Cuba.

INRA forged ahead with Agrarian Reform in all its manifold aspects. Che Guevera and Regino Boti, Economy Minister (Harvard trained economist and one time Professor of Political Economy at the University of Santiago de Cuba) with their alert, receptive minds grappled with the problems of Cuba's fiscal needs.

Education Minister Amando Hart reorientated the educational system on modern lines and in line with the needs of new Cuba. One school city in each Province, 10,000 new schools and more teachers have already inaugurated the educational revolution of Cuba which having won the earnest concern of the rulers will undoubtedly have far reaching effects, changing the whole social structure of Cuba. In fact Cuba is the only country in the world where military fortresses have been transformed into schools—it is a symbolic feature of the unique character of the Cuban revolution. 35,000 "Alphabetadoras" (literally alphabet givers) volunteer teachers from cities, after brief refresher courses went to the schools of the remote countryside.

INAV (The National Institute of Savings and Houses) in the towns and cities is putting into effect a very ambitious programme. Cuban architects and planners have achieved a very individualistic touch in housing schemes varying in style and layout, each house of each group breaking up an otherwise deadly monotony. Painted in soft pastel shades the housing schemes of INAV embody the doctrine of the Revolution—people working, saving and creating hand in hand with the State in a manifestation of confidence in the Government.

They are a dream of elegance, colour, taste, beauty and harmony amidst variety. INAV draws its resources from the national lottery and Social Security pension funds. The former corrupt lottery is today a savings scheme. From 1952—58 the commission for each lottery ticket was \$31. The total surcharge came to \$ 44,640,000,00. This money was deposited in the private accounts of political racketeers in foreign banks — the money meant for the welfare schemes of the nation. At the time of our visit INAV had completed 25,000 housing units costing \$ 45 million, and this where there had been no housing programme prior to the Revolution. Over 19,000 low cost apartments 25 — 40 pesos per month have already been built in East Havana's new residential section. A dining room with low cost food is an attraction. The Supervisor is Rafael Lobez 23 years old, one time Oriente sergeant in the Rebel Army and now building new Cuba beaches, playgrounds, sports fields, auditoriums and shopping centres are all incorporated in this scheme.

14 months after the new regime came into power a planning Commission was formed (Junta de Planificacion — Abbr: Juce Plan)—to handle Planning (bureau of the Budget), Statistics and Economic organisation and to draw up the first Five year plan for Cuba.

The Department of Industrialisation began with \$40 million dollars collected from 4 percent contribution of the workers' wages. The Department however had an estimated expenditure of \$ 152 million for the organising and expansion of Industries related to Agriculture, the Chemical, Metallurgical Mining and Textile industries. Here the credits from socialist countries helped. China gave \$60 million for five years at no interest, offering also a 1/5 part of payment for the sugar purchases in convertible sterling and the balance in the form of vegetable oil, rice, cotton, manufactured food and

factory equipment. USSR gave \$100 million in aid and later increased it to \$250 million including an oil refinery, steel mill and power plants. By June 1960 Cuba's foreign reserves stood at \$196 million. 57 textile mills have been renovated and built. The Soviet aid will also enable to build factories producing knives, radios, screwdrivers, motors, hinges, bulbs, fare machines, printing presses and medical instruments. Dr. Ernesto Guevera has been recently appointed Minister of a Industries Ministry and Alberto Mora as Foreign Trade Minister.

In the Batabano zone we also visited a pencil factory. Cuba used to pay 5 — 5 dollars for every gross of pencils. Now she pays for them 62 cents per gross from Czechoslovakia which has given her the machinery for a pencil factory. Everywhere one goes, sight of expanding and fast developing economy greets one.

At Santa Maria de Mar a former seaside luxury resort formerly closed to Cubans, open only to Americans now offers holiday cottages at 15 pesos per week. For 10 centavos any worker can get the key to the locker in a sea bathing cabin with towel and soap. Dinners cost 60 pesos. Several thousands of such resorts are been planned for workers on the beautiful white sand beaches between Gunbo and Havana.

At Batabano we visited the fishers' cooperatives now building new fishing fleets or reconditioning on modern lines the old boats. The 13,000 miserable hovels of the fisherfolk are fast disappearing yielding place to modern cottages. There are 32 cooperatives in all. The cooperatives run building centres to train boat makers to work from a pattern model in 3 lengths 33,50 and 120 feet. Rural folks will soon

be eating fish delivered in refrigerator trucks. In the past 65 million dollars in foreign exchanges was swallowed in the imports of canned ling and sardine alone.

In the agricultural field there are 780 agricultural cooperatives embracing 75,000 rural households over an area of 150,000 cabellerias formerly lying idle or expropriated. Rice, peanuts, maize, cotton and soya beans have been grown in 12,000 cabellerias to reduce imports which in the past amounted to 40 million dollars. Peanut oil is replacing lard which is neither nutritious nor economical. Near peanut plantations the plants for processing the oil were coming up. There are enough tomatoes now to feed the nation and for export. Reforestation of wantonly destroyed areas is in progress. Pangola pasture whose protein content is high is replacing the maaribu brush and offering 115,000 cabellerias to over 1 million head of cattle. It is not only in Havana the meat consumption has increased by 25%, but the peasant too is enjoying chicken from 200 new poultry farms, meat and milk today.

Mass purchasing power increased in the cities with rent reductions and in the factories and farms with increased wages or income. The people's stores with credit facilities was also one reason for upsurge in purchase. Cotton is growing on 1500 cabellerias thus meeting 50% of the nation's needs and saving 10 million dollars in foreign exchange. Cane pulp which went waste before is being turned into paper. In 1959 there were 700,000 unemployed. By 1960, 200,000 had found employment.

Technical experts from Latin American countries, France, Germany (East), USSR, China and Czechoslovakia are all helping to build the New Cuba. \$ 50 million have been recovered from politicians who had enriched themselves at the expense of the people during the tyranny.

INRA owns today 13,244,800 acres of Cuba's 28 million acres. 605,333 head of confiscated cattle grazing on 2,091,600 acres of confiscated pasture lands, 1932 collective farms, 2000 people's stores, and 1215 new rural schools, 15 fishing cooperatives, some 80 sewing schools, and 150 adult literacy centres of "alphabetization."

A rural worker earns today an average of 88 dollars a month right through the year when he earned half that for only 4 months in the year. We saw many homes having meals of rice, eggs, beans and meat.

The revolutionary government gave on December 25, 1960 a yule tide bonus for each worker — the total amounting to 50 million.

The people as they advance in knowledge are boycotting reactionary newspapers which unscrupulously misuse the freedom of the press and foster counter revolution. One sees stacks of Prensa Libre lying unsold on the pavements proving to us visitors that in a country advanced in political consciousness where freedom of the press is unhampered, still no newspaper can survive merely on advertisements.

Rent Dumont, the Sorbonne's Agronomist, says, "The Cuban revolution is in the process of catching up on the economic plane with the very high level it had already attained on the political plane. Cuban agriculture given the right policies has fantastic potentialities. Cultivated with the same intensity as South China, the island could feed a population of 50 million."

The Zones of Agrarian regions are all in charge of the trusted leaders of the revolutionary war and they carry enormous responsibility and are often overweighed with a super abundance of work. The feverish pace thrills the one

time soldiers for it is a new kind of battle — one with vast constructive potentiality. The new Cuba has this priceless reservoir of dedicated leadership, the close friendship of the entire anti-imperialist world. Therefore, though the problems are manifold and handicaps immense Cuba has many advantages. Since the diplomatic relations with Cuba were severed by USA it has the further indescribable asset of having its enemy at a distance (if only 150 miles) and clear outside.

National Income of 2 years of the Tyranny
and 2 years of revolutionary power.

(Figures are of millions)

	National income	Population	Per Capita	Increase of
1957	2,294	6358	360.8	
1958	2,210	6499	340.0	
1959	2,500	6643	376.3	10. 6%
1960	2,800	6791	412.3	21. 2%

One fact we noticed wherever we went. It was to see schools cities, farms cooperatives dedicated, to Camilo Cienfuegos. In Batabano, the fishers Co-op bore the name "Cooperative Pescadores Camilo Cienfuegos." The school city in Oriente was "Camilo Cienfuegos School City."

One learnt more about this legendary soldier. He was the leader of one of the columns that descended from the Sierra in late November 1958 in Fidel's November offensive to complete the routing of the Army of the Tyranny and topple the Dictatorship. In October 1959 he was killed in an air crash under mysterious circumstances.

In his book on "Guerilla Warfare," Guevera writes of him :

"Camilo was the revolutionary without blemish, comrade of a 100 battles, the man in whom Fidel had most

confidence in the most difficult moments of war. He was the selfless fighter who always made of sacrifice an instrument to temper his character and to strengthen that of the troops. Such essential vitality of character, intelligence, bravery, ability for precise and rapid analysis of a situation, found in such exact proportion is present only in a few personalities of history". Fidel wrote of him "Camilo did not have book learning but had the natural intelligence of the people which made me choose him from thousands for the privileged position to which he arrived with audacious acts unequalled in tenacity and devotion. The nation will not pigeonhole him the symbol of the people's strength, the highest expression of what a man can give in defence of his dearest ideals. IN HIS IMMORTAL RENEWAL CAMILO IS THE IMAGE OF THE PEOPLE".

This same little book explains why we found the most important job of Director of Agricultural Zones of each province nearly always handled by one of the trusted leaders of the Rebel Army. This is what Che writes :

"The battle flag will be the Agrarian Reform embodying the secular hunger for earth on which the guajiro toils or wishes to toil.

"The guerilla fighter, as a conscious element or the popular vanguard, should have the moral calibre which will give him the credentials of the true high priest of the reform to which he aspires.

"To austerity imposed by difficult conditions of war he must add the austerity born of a rigid self control which prevents one single excess, one single slip on occasions which circumstances might allow it. The guerilla soldier must be an ascetic."

Here I may add that practically all in the high command observe this asceticism. In positions high they are the same

men as they were in the mountains — living in small unpretentious houses of abstemious standards, driving small cars, mixing freely and always with the masses. They are truly an inspiration to the world. We hope and believe time will not change this unique state of affairs. One day while we were dining in the restaurant of the hotel, unknown to any of us Fidel had been eating with some of the restaurant staff in the kitchen! To proceed.....

“The guerilla ascetic must always give the country, technical, economic, moral and cultural assistance. The guerilla soldier is a sort of guardian angel fallen into the zone to help always the poor and to molest the rich as little as possible, only punishing justly — treason. Co-operatives must be started at first on lines which the mental attainments of the inhabitants of the place allow. He is a social reformer and his own life must be an example. He must understand the necessary revolutionary changes in so far as they concern the social conditions of the country people.

Thus from the product of interaction between soldier and the people rises the progressive radicalisation which goes on accentuating the revolutionary character of our movement and goes on to give it a national magnitude”.

— Theja Gunawardhana
in ‘Venceremos’, 1962.



CASTRO THE MAGNIFICENT

I HAVE often wondered how Fidel Castro, the leader of a small island population of seven millions could have fired so quickly the world's imagination. Some answers as to the implied question are obvious — his personal heroism, the incredible courage of a small race standing up to the might of the U.S. His flamboyant personality and the fact that the Cuban revolution has retained something of the "romance" of revolution which went out with the Spanish civil war.

But we must add to all this, Castro's own remarkable personality. He is a mass figure and an intellectual. He is a brilliant orator who combines in his speeches a rare talent for both words and ideas. There are orators who can rouse mass emotion but without conveying any ideas of substance.

Castro, I find, appeals to both heart and mind.

Unfortunately, we do not, here in Ceylon, have easy access to his speeches — only small extracts trickling through an often unfriendly press. (This is a matter, incidentally, that the Cuban legation in Colombo can put right).

When we do get accounts of his speeches, it is generally long after the event. But this misfortune itself offers new confirmation of the outstanding personality that he is. The speeches are not limited by the moment's necessities of utterance. They can even be enjoyed in the privacy of one's study.

Here he is on a favourite subject of his: 'Yankee imperialism' — a speech delivered some months ago.

"By crushing the Cuban revolution they hope to dispel the fear that torments them, the spectre of the revolution that threatens them. By liquidating the Cuban revolution they hope to liquidate the revolutionary spirit of the people: They imagine in their delirium that Cuba is an exporter of revolutions.

"In their sleepless, merchants' and usurers' minds, there is the idea that revolutions can be bought, sold, rented, loaned, exported and imported like some piece of merchandise.

"The anxiety felt today is an unmistakable symptom of rebellion. The very depths of a continent are profoundly moved, a continent which has witnessed four centuries of slave, semi-slave and feudal exploitation beginning with its aboriginal inhabitants and slaves brought from Africa, up to the nuclei of nationalities which emerged later: white, black, mulatto, mestizo, and Indian, who today are made brothers by the scorn, and humiliation of the Yankee yoke and are brothers in their hope of a better tomorrow.".....

Observer, August, 14, 1962

CUBA AND WAR

The Kennedy Administration, stampeded by the Pentagon, is today very much on the warpath. The U-2 flights over Soviet territory in the Far East and over East China, and the bellicose preparations for war against Cuba, all portend the most sinister possibilities. Public opinion in Ceylon is horrified that these steps should be taken at this stage to disturb the peace of the world.....

Nor is US likely to find Cuba unprepared, or even without friends, as Hitler had found such countries like Austria and Czechoslovakia. The Cuban people, though a small nation, are a people awakened, and the entire freedom loving world will rush to their rescue should the US launch an attack as it seems very likely from the tone of Kennedy's speeches and the proclamations of responsible US newspapers. The *Time* magazine, September 14, stated that "since the day that the Bay of Pigs became a synonym for fiasco, U. S. policy towards Cuba has been based on the hope that the Castro's Communism would somehow curl up its toes and die. In its most positive form, the policy aimed at isolating Cuba, both economically and politically. It did not work — for the simple and foreseeable reason that Nikita Khrushchev did not want it to." After reviewing the total failure of US policy, and indirectly admitting the possibility that Cuban communism might prove successful with Soviet assistance, the

Time magazine concluded its note: "Just 17 months ago, Castro could have been erased by a relatively simple U. S. decision to back the Bay of Pigs invaders with the necessary arms and plans. That time is past; and the choices today are much more difficult. The U. S. might throw a naval blockade around Cuba — at the risk of setting U. S. and Soviet ships to shooting at one another. It could support military action against Cuba by anti-communist nations in Latin America. Or — and it may come to this — it could get the job done itself, once and for all. For whatever else, the U. S. simply cannot afford to let Cuba survive indefinitely as a Soviet fortress just off its shores and a cancer throughout the hemisphere." The *Time*, which is sharply Republican and anti-Kennedy, has sounded, the clarion call for war on Cuba on more than one occasion in the past, but the *Newsweek*, which is more sympathetic to the Democrats and the Kennedy Administration, was a little more cautious in its anti-Cuba tirade in the issue of September 17. It first sought to explain why Kennedy had resorted to bellicose statements and measures. "From almost every quarter, President Kennedy was beset with something few American Chief Executives have ever experienced: an exasperated let's-do-something-about-Cuba feeling; a sense of outrage that in its most extreme manifestation called urgently for strong and direct action. The President quickly sensed that the feeling was in deadly earnest. He did something....." He summoned a conference of eight Democratic and seven Republican Congressional leaders and presented his bloodthirsty statement on Cuba and his order to call up 150,000 reservists. The *Newsweek*, after examining the measures adopted by Kennedy to appease US opinion, went on to re-iterate why the Monroe Doctrine was still important. The *Newsweek* finally concluded "For the fact is that U.S. policy in Cuba remains essentially what it has been since the Bay of Pigs invasion failed, to let Castro demonstrate what the new Soviet build up in Cuba, is demonstrating: that Communism has failed in Cuba, and can be only saved,

however fleetingly, by an artificial infusion of Soviet material and technical assistance. But there is also no evading the cold fact that one new element has been added: the US has been confronted directly by Russian arms in Berlin for seventeen years; now that confrontation has been extended to an island 90 miles from the U. S."

The Newsweek does not seem to favour war as the Time does, but it is only a question of tactics as to how the "Cuban problem" should be resolved. Therein lies the danger. This great champion of democracy and "free world," the United States of America, is tormented by the thought that the Cuban people should choose a way of life different from what the people of US presently seem to favour. What is more, powerful forces within the U. S. are demanding that Castro and the Cuban people should be snuffed out by US military power, just like a small insect is dealt with by a fly-swapper. The irony of history is that some people never learn the lesson that history has often unfolded. In biblical times, the mighty Goliath was laid low by tiny David with a small catapult. The moral of this Bible story has unfortunately been lost on the war-mongers of the Christian U S A. The little David that Cuba is today, unlike the Biblical counterpart, has friends all over the world, some some mighty and others not so mighty, but all ready to defend the right of Cuba to choose her own way of life. In Ceylon itself, it can be safely predicted that any hostile move by U. S. against Cuba would outrage public opinion from rightwing to leftwing to such a degree that it would be safer for US nationals in this country to quit in a hurry if Cuba is attacked. War against Cuba by the United States will be tantamount to a declaration of war against the common people of the entire world.

Tribune, September 22, 1962

CUBA & CEYLON

islands in the sun

Tribune has so far never interviewed the envoy of a foreign country accredited to Ceylon, but for the first time in its eight years of existence a decision was made to seek an interview with a representative of a very small country which has just opened a mission here.

It was not merely an interview. For Tribune it was an opportunity to pay homage to a heroic people whose struggle for freedom and for a better life is a twentieth century saga that can never die, that can never be forgotten.

The interview began, a little formally, as all interviews do, but it was not long before it stopped being such an interview. It became a warm and lively conversation of the fight against privilege, against exploitation, against inhumanity. Several times during the discussion, this envoy from the far off land said: "Your country and mine are similar: our problems are similar: our difficulties are similar. Ceylon and Cuba have almost the same climate. We have practically the same kind of vegetation, the same kind of fruits, the same kind of landscape and scenery, the same kind of soil and the same kind of people. Our revolution has taken

different form and shape from yours, but that is because of the immediate historical past.....

It was the first time I had met a Cuban, a real Cuban, and had a long and purposeful discussion. In fact, I met two real Cubans. Armando Bayo, the Charge d' Affaires a.i. of the Cuba Embassy here, and his Secretary Augustin Canoura. Mr. Bayo is a linguist, Spanish (his mother tongue,) French, German, and English (a little hesitant but forceful). I was not able to find out if he knew any other languages.

Mr. Bayo has all the old world charm of a Latin American of Spanish descent, full of the culture and refinement of a mellow civilization, but he speaks the language of Castro's Cuba, of the emergent Latin America, determined to end colonialism Canoura, much younger, a little darker, seems typical of the new Cuban nation that has emerged from the baptism of fire of the tyrannical Batista regime (and the exploitation of the United Fruit Company) through the near-miraculous salvation wrought by the genius and dynamism of Fidel Castro.

I have read practically everything that I could lay my hands on the Cuban revolution which had ended the Batista regime in 1959, but it was nevertheless an exhilarating and unforgettable experience to listen to Armando Bayo recount the course of the revolution since Batista fled Cuba. "It was a revolution that was born in song, in joy, and in jubilationpeople were happy that tyranny was ended. The first and only thing that the Castro government did was to make democratic civil liberties a reality. And this had produced song and happiness. But it was not for long....."

"What was it that your Government did that drove the enemies of the Cuban Revolution to launch an offensive?," I asked him.

"Our Land Reform. It was a law taking over the big estates, (only the big estates), owned by big monopolists. At

first, the small estates were not touched. It effected mainly foreign monopolists like the United Fruit Company, but the law was less drastic than the one enforced immediately after the fall of the Bastille during the French Revolution. But our Land Reform angered the gentlemen of Wall Street. For them Cuba existed only to produce sugar for the United States. No sooner our Land Reform law was promulgated we were immediately branded 'communists,' and ordinary people, peasants and even workers began to ask 'what is communism?'.....That is how it all began.....The next law which provoked even greater resentment among the colonialists was the one which reduced rents for all buildings and houses by half, by fifty percent. The vast majority of the big buildings and houses in Cuba were owned by foreigners (mostly U.S citizens) and also by Cubans who were foreign in everything except the fact of their birth. This started the big fight. U.S. refused to buy our sugar. Their refineries refused to refine the crude oil we imported from the USSR for the sugar which Soviet Union bought when the US imposed the boycott..... And then, the fight began. It was indeed a fight, the real fight for emancipation, and this is still going on. For every measure the US took against us, we took two against their investments and property in Cuba. And all the time the newspapers abroad, the news agencies and other media of propaganda owned by capitalists abroad kept shouting 'Cuba had gone socialist, communist.....' That was how our people heard of socialism and communism. Even the illiterate peasant, who had benefitted by Land Reform said if this is socialism and communism, then it is good..... That is why they wanted more and more socialism and communism."

"You spoke of an illiterate peasant. I believe you have taken over the schools and almost eradicated illiteracy.. .."
I ventured to interrupt.

“Yes, there is no illiteracy now. In one year, we have wiped it out through the biggest mass campaign in history. This was in 1961. In January of that year we nationalised all schools, took it over from the Catholic Church. Many of the priests had turned against the revolution. These were mainly priests from abroad, from Spain. You know that the biggest export industry of Spain is priests. Our government warned these priests to keep out of politics. But when they did not heed the warning, they were put into airplanes and ships and sent to where they wanted to go. And we had no alternative but to take over the schools. Under the old system there was no education. A few lawyers, doctors and a handful of gentlemen-at-leisure were produced — but the vast majority remained ignorant and illiterate.....But that is a thing of the past.....”

Then, he slowly warmed up, speaking of the achievements of the Cuban revolution in the period of three years. “We are the first country in the whole of Latin America to end colonialism on our territory. In the shadow of the mighty United States, this is regarded everywhere in the Americas as an indescribably heroic feat. Next, Cuba is the first country in America, including the United States, to eradicate illiteracy completely.....and that in one short year. Many may refuse to believe this, but our country is an open book. Anybody is free to see for himself. Further, Cuba is the first Latin American country where the land, the mines, the factories, in fact everything, belongs to the people who work in themAnd, Cuba is also the first country in Latin America which has brought poliomyelitis under control and has almost completely eliminated all possibilities of an outbreak of that dreaded disease.....”

And so our discussion went on for a long time. I asked many questions. He answered all of them. I have yet many more questions, which I have kept for another occasion, as the time had far exceeded the time allotted for the interview.

We parted in the knowledge that we would meet again. It could not be otherwise. Indeed, no two countries could be as close and similar as Ceylon and Cuba. Each is an island—one, the pearl of the Indian Ocean, and the other, the pearl of the Antilles. Each country has a high mountain range or plateau: in Cuba it is still mainly jungle, in Ceylon it is covered with tea. In 1492, Columbus "discovered" Cuba, in 1505 Vasco da Gama's lieutenant's, Lourenco, was driven by a gale to Ceylon. Cuba has known two colonial masters, Ceylon three. Cuban economy was developed by the colonialists as a monoculture in sugar, Ceylon in tea. There are many races in each country: Spanish, Indians, and Negroes in Cuba; Sinhalese, Tamils, and Burghers in Ceylon. Colonialism had created a superior caste (which cuts across race) in Cuba as well as in Ceylon, an elite which looked down with contempt on everything indigenous and* looked up to colonial masters for favours by aping their culture, manners, customs, language and even religion. There were variations and differences no doubt. Ceylon did not have a Batista, but it had Sir John Kotelawela. Ceylon had a Parliament, and therefore the occasion had not arisen for a July 26th movement finally emerging in the mountains like Sierra Maestra.

There is much we can learn from Cuba. This does not mean that we must copy Cuba. That is unnecessary and unrealistic. But we can study the mechanics as well the dynamics of the history of Cuba in recent times to find out how we can do things better here.

But more than all this it is necessary to forge ties of friendship with the people of Cuba. Like us, they are struggling for emancipation, though they seem to have gone further and quicker, prodded by the mistakes of the money bags of Wall Street (British merchants are undoubtedly far subtler). And friendship between Ceylon and Cuba will

strengthen the world-wide fight against old style colonialism which still prevails and new style exploitation of the under-developed countries by international financiers.

There is one thing which is still vivid in my memory ever since my talk with Bayo and Canoura: the sparkle in their eyes, the Cuban sparkle in their Cuban eyes. It was the sparkle of a small people who have resisted a Goliath and registered many triumphs: the sparkle of a people ready to defend their victories and achievements with every thing they have, with their very lives. The sparkle in the eyes of Bayo and Canoura took me to the land of Cuba, to the supreme leader of a small people, Fidel Castro.

S. P. Amarasingam, *Tribune*
July 28, 1962.



CUBA DAY

by

Armando Bayo

One tragic result of the Batista rule of seven years (1952 -58) was the death of over 20,000 persons, mostly young people, for the " crime " of opposing the tyranny of the regime. Robbery, corruption, torture, exploitation, starvation, misery and anxiety were the heritage of the Batista regime, and this is what the people of our country still remember with horror.

During this period of the Batista tyranny, Cuban youth, intellectuals, workers, farmers, teachers and all democratic-minded men and women fought the dictatorship. They did not have arms and weapons. and had ranged against them a terrible army fully supported by foreign monopolies and colonial vested interests.

It was in this situation that a group of young men, full of patriotism, led by a young lawyer 23 years, started the fight against reaction and tyranny. Dr. Fidel Castro, at the head of 150 young people, attacked the hated fortress of Moncad in the city of the Oriente Province. It was an epic battle against the superior forces of the Dictator's well-armed and well-disciplined army. The rebel group was easily crushed in a most bloodthirsty manner. Eighty young men were murdered by the soldiers in the city streets and in their houses. A few had escaped, and among them were Dr. Fidel

Castro and his brother Raul Castro who was then only 20 years of age. Among others who escaped the massacre were Juan Almeida, the present Chief of the Army, and Ramiro Vlades, a Commander, and a few others who subsequently fought gloriously for the Revolution.

The attack on Moncada was symbolic. It was the fortress where progressive intellectuals and patriotic workers and peasants were tortured and imprisoned by the Batista regime. The attack on Moncada was an attack on political reaction, on foreign monopolists who supported the Batista regime. It was also a call for a freedom struggle to emancipate the country from the tyranny of a dictatorship which served only foreign masters and exploiters.

But Dr. Fidel Castro was caught, though he was lucky to escape death. He was imprisoned in a dark dungeon, and for a long time, he was not permitted to see the light of day. Finally, he was brought to court, heavily guarded. At the trial, he made a historic speech "History will absolve Me". It was not only a defiant outburst against tyranny and repression, but it was a proclamation of a policy and programme for the further struggle.

What was the Cuba he envisaged? It was to be a free country where tyranny and military rule was abolished: where there were no exploiters and exploited: where the land would belong to those who tilled it: where youth would have ample opportunities to learn: where vice and prostitution would be eliminated: where corruption and theft in government service would be rooted out: where men and women would preserve their individual liberty and dignity: where no Negro would be slighted or discriminated against on account of his colour

It is impossible to tell in a few words the story of the Cuban struggle for freedom against the mightiest imperial power the world has known. Cuba is against no one, but Cuba wants to be free, without being made a pawn by any country however powerful.

The Cuban revolution is humanistic. It is on the side of the people—the revolution having been made for the people by the people themselves. Illiteracy has been completely eradicated, and it is the first country on the American continent to accomplish this. At the beginning of 1959, there were 600,000 unemployed. Today the number is 200,000. And in the next two years unemployment will disappear from Cuba. Poliomyelitis has been completely eliminated. The government has given scholarships to 700,000 young people to enable them to study. Over 7000 students are studying abroad, mainly in socialist countries. There is free education from the kindergarten to the university.

In April 1961, Cuba was attacked by mercenaries trained in, armed by, and despatched from, the United States. This invasion was quelled by the people in 72 hours. The people of Cuba look to neutral countries like CEYLON to help them to maintain their independence through the machinery of the United Nations as well as mobilising public opinion throughout the world. Aid by socialist countries, particularly the USSR, have helped Cuba a great deal to build a new country.

Cuba even today lives under a big threat directed at her independence and integrity. But the people of Cuba will fight to the very end to sustain the freedom they now enjoy. That is why the main slogan in Cuba today is FATHERLAND or DEATH. WE SHALL WIN (VENCEREMOS).

Tribune, July 28, 1962

CUBA AGAINST COLONIALISM

by
Armando Bayo

By the imposition of the infamous Platt Amendment on our first Constitution by the U.S. Government, at the turn of this century, the entire wealth of Cuba passed into the hands of the U.S. monopolists. Not only did the U.S. monopolists, thereafter launch a shameless policy of ruthless exploitation of our country and our people, they falsified our History, our administration and moulded our politics to their own interests and our nation was subjected to over 60 years of political, economical and cultural asphyxia.

Thereafter the history of Cuba was the same as that of any other subject country in Latin America, Asia and Africa. The historic circumstances, which permitted certain European countries and the U.S. of North America to attain a high industrial development level, put them in a position which enabled them to subjugate and exploit the rest of the world.

What were the motives that lay behind the territorial expansion of the more advanced industrial powers? Were they

carrying out a "civilising" mission as some apologists try to make out? No, they had no such humane motives. Their only motive was economic exploitation and the boundless wealth of Latin America, Asia and Africa.

Once the countries of Latin America, Africa and Asia were brought under the domination of the imperialist powers, the imperialists saw to it that in their countries they broke down and ended relations that existed from time immemorial. For them it was very necessary to do it. Having destroyed the old feudal classes and the feudal relationships, they nurtured a new social class of merchants and producers of articles manufactured for commerce — a class whose efforts were promoted by the lust for gold. The lust for profit was the only incentive of their behaviour throughout history. With the expansion and growth of industry, and trade, the social influences of this new class also grew. The new productive forces released by imperialist forms of trade and industry, increasingly clashed with feudalism and its serfdom, its laws, its institutions, its philosophy, its morals, its art and its political ideology.

New philosophical and political ideas, new concepts of law and state were advanced by the intellectual representatives of the bourgeois class. These new ideas corresponded to the new necessities of social life. At that time they were revolutionary ideas in contrast to feudalism's outworn ideas.

Once feudal ties were broken, the productive forces developed greatly. Big factories appeared, where the numbers of workers grew greater constantly. More modern and technically efficient factories displaced less efficient competitors in the Market. Thus began the territorial and economic distribution of the world. By 1914, eight or ten imperialist countries had subjected to their economic and political dominations, territories outside their boundaries, with an

area of 53 million square miles and a population of 970 million. They had simply divided the world among themselves.

Cuba and Latin America formed part of this world divided among imperialist powers. Henceforth our problems formed part of the problems, the peoples of Africa and Asia had to face.

This system of ruthless imperialist exploitation brought about the inevitable clash between the peoples struggling for National independence and the mighty forces of colonialism. This clash, wherever it occurred, was a bloody clash between the world being born and the dying world. The hateful and brutal campaign launched against our freedom fighters in Cuba was as brutal as any other campaign unleashed by them against all other people's fighting for their National independence.

Cuba specially hurt the imperialist. What could rationally explain the plot which unites the wealthiest and most powerful imperialist power of the contemporary world? They represented a population of 350 million human beings, against a small nation of only 7 million inhabitants, economically under-developed, without financial or military resources. They are united and stirred up by fear. Fear explains it. It is not the fear of the Cuban Revolution; the fear of the Latin American revolution; the fear that the looted peoples of the continent will snatch the arms of their oppressors and declare themselves, like Cuba, free peoples of America.

The Yankees fear most the restlessness that is growing across the length and breadth of Latin America. It is an unmistakable system of rebellion. The very entrails are

shaking in a continent that has witnessed four centuries of slavery. Whites, Negroes, Mulattoes, Mestizos, and Indians today are made brothers by Yankee scorn. They are united in the hope of a better tomorrow.

Their hands are linked across the mountain tops and ridges along the great rivers and the deep forests.

Imperialism has nothing to offer 32 million Indians who extend from the U.S. borders to the Southern most point of the hemisphere. What can it offer the 45 million Mestizos? What can imperialism offer all these indigneous peoples? How can these forgotten men believe in any gift tendered by such bloody hands?

There are entire tribes still living in nakedness, others ara believed to practice cannibalism, others died like flies upon their first contact with the conquering civilization. They have been driven to exhaustion into the forests or the mountains where no particle of culture or light or bread or anything can penetrate.

And what of the Negro? Latin America's 15 million Negroes and 14 million Mulattoes know to their horror and anger that their brothers to the North cannot ride the same buses as the white compatriots or attend the same schools or even die in the same hospitals.

These people have not been able to enjoy an iota of any cultural, social or professional benefits, even where they make up the majority or where there are millions of them. They are maltreated by Imperialists in Ku Klux Klan disguise.

It is in this context that one must view the stand taken by Cuba against colonialism in all forms everywhere. When

we say "Cuba si, Yankee No" we mean a lot. Cuba today stands for agrarian reform; U.S. for the big landowners. Cuba for the industrialisation of America; U.S. for underdevelopment. Cuba for creative work; U.S. for sabotage. Cuba for bread; U.S. for hunger. Cuba for equality; U.S. for privilege and discrimination. Cuba for truth; U.S. for lies. Cuba for freedom; U.S. for oppression. Cuba for peace among nations; U.S. for aggression and war. Cuba for socialism; U.S. for capitalism.

Cuba has no revolution to export. What Cuba can give to the peoples' fighting for national independence, Cuba has already given—its example.

Afroasian Students Association Magazine, Colombo.



NATIONAL DAY

POLAND, UAR, CUBA. Three countries will celebrate their national days before the end of this month : Poland on July 22, the UAR on July 23, and Cuba on July 26. These three countries represent nations in variously different stages of development in the context of the struggle to emancipate the common man from exploitation and domination.....

The story of Cuba is perhaps the most interesting. It is a little outpost in the devastating empire of the Almighty Dollar. And yet the divine spark in man is such that the urge for freedom and emancipation had manifested itself in such an unpredictable manner that the Republic of Cuba became a reality. All attempts by the United States to crush this Republic, which had no use for American monopolies and vested interests, have so far failed. Even an attempt to physically invade the Island through the instrumentality of hirelings and exiles proved abortive. At present Cuba is threatened with a vicious economic blockade from America and all her satellites. The blockade is perhaps the greatest known in modern times. Yet Cuba survives, and survive she will. And, for this survival Cuba has found that the only road was socialism. Every attempt by the young Cuban Republic under Castro to pursue the "middle path" between capitalism and socialism was found totally unworkable and impracticable in a situation in which the leader of world capitalism (US) was intent on destroying the island Republic. Cuba is an example, where a small country has been driven to socialism, because the big capitalist countries were not willing to allow Cuba to develop as an independent capitalist country without submitting to the exploitation of foreign imperialist and vested interests. The spark that has been lit in Cuba will no doubt soon spread as a flame throughout Central and South America, which are at present held as economic serfs of the United States.

Tribune, September 21, 1962.

BACKGROUND HISTORY

In order to understand modern historical events of Cuba it is necessary to know the historical context against which they happen.

Cuba 44, 218 square miles, 744 miles west to east, is the largest and one of the most beautiful islands in the West Indies, blessed with fertile soil, minerals and semi-tropical climate, a plentiful supply of water. Columbus when he discovered Cuba on October 28, 1492 on a sabbath day exclaimed "This is the Pearl of the Antilles. Where else could one find a more favourable spot for human existence anywhere in the world!"

Cuba was inhabited by people of oriental stock — a people allied to the "Indians" of Central America and some Latin American countries. Some of the place names of Cuba (for example Damuji, Cuyaquateje, Zapata, Guanabacoa, Baiquir) many of which were super-imposed by Spanish words (modern Cienfuegos was one time Xagua) betray the antiquity of the race, the Siboney and Taimo that inhabited Cuba. Mexico is only 130 miles from Cuba across the Yucatan Channel.

Columbus found this race cultivating tobacco, Indian corn, tapioca and potatoes. They lived in adobe dwellings

thatched with palm leaves and in return for the warm welcome offered to the visiting Spaniards, these handsome, generous but naive copperhued tall Indians received only betrayal and a multitude of misfortunes. Unable to adapt themselves to the new civilisation many died in rebellious uprisings, or committed suicide being mild in temperament. This race by 1550 was almost decimated but many survived in the mountain fastnesses. A 19th century report speaks of the spread of communities in which Indian blood was dominant. Some of the traditions of the aborigines survived for a while but the language disappeared.

In 1508 Sebastian de Ocampo circumnavigated Cuba and discovered it to be an island whereas Columbus presumed it to be part of the Central American land mass. In 1511 Diego Velazquez began the conquest of the island. Baracoa the landing point, Santiago de Cuba, Puerto Principe, formerly Camaguey, Sancti Spiritus, Trinidad, and the original Havana were all founded in 1515. Velazquez's legends of wealth drew many immigrants to the island. By 1523 the African slave trade began. In 1544 the Indians who had resisted succumbing to forced labour in mines and fields were proclaimed emancipated. Local authorities were divided by bitter feuds. Brigandage, mutinies and intensive struggles disturbed the peace of the land. When Jamaica was transferred to England, the population of Cuba was greatly enhanced by Jamaican immigrants in the middle of the 17th century. Activities of English and French pirates began in the 16th century reached the high peak in mid 17th century. Dissatisfied with the economic regulations of the colonial systems there had begun illicit trade with privateers.

In 1762 Havana was captured after a vigorous and long drawn out resistance by a British force under Admiral George Pocock and the Earl of Albemarle with heavy loss to the British. It was returned to Spain in 1763 in exchange for Florida. But the British had opened the port to commerce and Spain now saw its potentialities.

In 1764 the government of Spain promulgated decrees liberalising the old monopolistic system of colonial trade, stimulating agriculture and commerce first in the form of monopolies. After the cession of the Spanish portion of San Domingo to France, hundreds of Spanish families emigrated to Cuba and many thousands of emigrants, mainly French, followed them from the island during the revolution of the black races. Most of them settled in Oriente Province where with their cafetales and sugar plantations they opened up and developed that region to their advantage and prosperity.

Under a succession of liberal governors particularly Luis de las Casas 1790-1796 and the Marquis de Someruelos (1799-1813) at the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century, when wars in Europe cut off Spain from the colony, Cuba enjoyed internal independence and political freedom.

Later on, sharp divisions between the Cuban-born Creoles and Spanish peninsulars, attempts by the United States to annex Cuba, struggles for independence, brought inquietude once more.

From 1820-1854 the USA tried to win Cuba by offering money for the colony, by threats to seize it and by abortive filibustering expeditions. In the early half of 1954 new developments brought USA and Spain to the brink of hostilities. The pro-slavery leaders of whom Governor Quitman of the Missisipi was a bulwark of strength, aimed wresting Cuba from Spain and using it as an appendaged annex, as a slave state.

A palace revolution in Spain held out hopes to the American dreamers of Cuba's annexation and pressure was brought to bear on the President with the result that the Ministers of the USA at London, Paris and Madrid-

Buchanan, Mason and Soule — were directed to meet and discuss the question. The result was their meeting at Ostend (Belgium) on October 18th 1854, and drawing up the notorious Ostend Manifesto which urged the purchase of Cuba for \$ 120,000,000. The purchase, they declared was not only advantageous to the United States but it should note that it could “never enjoy repose nor possess public security as long as Cuba is not embraced within its boundaries.” Therefore they argued if Spain refuses the sale, the U. S. A. should base its actions on the “great law” that “self-preservation is the first law of nature with states as well as with individuals,” (they admired the wild beasts of the forest) would be fully justified in wresting it by force of arms from Spanish control. Fortunately for the USA Secretary Marcy disapproved of this theory and advised the President not to base his action on it.

In 1850-1868 progressive and reactionary circles came into open conflict centred around the connivance of the Captains-general in the illegal slave trade, the immorality and squandermania of the government and the selfish exploitation of the colony by the Spanish government and Spaniards.

These conditions grew worse as the administration became more corrupt and ineffective. Then as Cuba awoke from her chained sleep to the call of freedom, Spain began to feel the winds of revolt. On October 19th 1868, with the cry of “Yara” began the struggle of Cuba for freedom from the Spanish yoke. Military repression followed. But the Ten Year’s war had commenced, a war which demanded reforms, abolition of illegal slavery, equal rights for peninsulars and creoles and guarantee of personal liberties. The struggle was headed by Carlos Manuel de Cespedes who proclaimed the revolution at Yara on October 10th. The war was confined throughout the ten years almost wholly to the Eastern Provinces of Oriente and Camaguey. The Spanish committed cruel excesses, the rebels never gave in, finally Martinez

Campos in January 1878 persuaded the rebels to accept the Zangon Pact promising emancipation and liberty for the slaves; reforms in government and colonial autonomy. 1893 saw equal civil status proclaimed by General Callejo to blacks and whites both creoles and peninsulars.

But final authority was reserved to the Captain General. The policy of autonomy was destined not have a practical trial though a government was organized under the new dispensation. The poet revolutionary Jose Marti who had already participated in the Ten Year War now spearheaded the revolt against exploitation. He wrote: "A true man does not seek the path where advantage lies. But rather the path where duty lies and this is the only practical man, whose dream of today will be the law of tomorrow, because he who has looked back on the upheavals of history and has seen civilizations going up in flames, crying out in bloody struggle, throughout the centuries, knows that the future well being of man, without exception lies on the side of duty."

Together with Jose Marti were the other leading chiefs of the Ten Years War once again preparing for the country's liberation, Maximo Gomes, Antonio Maceo, Calixto Garcia and others. With continued misrule, discontent grew and on February 23rd 1895 General Callejo suspended the constitutional guarantees. Revolt broke out again. Unlike the previous Ten Years War this was carried to the Western provinces and indeed was fiercest there. Among the means used by the Spaniards to isolate their foes were "trochas" (entrenchments, barbed wire fences and lines of block houses) across the narrow parts of the island and "reconcentration" of non-combatants in camps guarded by the Spanish forces, causing much starvation and suffering. There were half a million armed Spanish soldiers pitted against the rebels of Cuba, the entire population of which was about a million then. Today there are six million.

The modern and powerful arms of the Spanish held no comparison with the machetes of the Cuban whose cartridge belts were nearly always empty.

General Miro Argentes, a Catalonian general who became one of the leaders of the war of Independence and father of Dr. Miro Cardona the first Premier of the present revolutionary government, (the trusted adjutant of Antonio Maceo called the "Titan of Bronze" a spectacular warrior of this war) wrote then in his memoirs :

"Untrained men under the command of Pedro Delgado, most of them equipped only with machetes, were virtually annihilated as they threw themselves on the solid ranks of Spaniards. It is not an exaggeration to assert that of every fifty men, 25 were killed. Some even attacked the Spaniards with bare fists, without pistols, without machetes, without even knives. Searching through the reeds by the Hondo river, fifteen more dead of the Cuban party were found and it was not immediately evident to what group they belonged. They did not appear to have shouldered arms, their clothes were intact and only tin drinking cups hung from their waists; a few steps ahead lay dead a Spanish horse, all its equipment intact. We reconstructed the climax of the tragedy. These men, following their daring chief, Lieutenant Colonel Pedro Delgado, had earned heroes' laurels; the clash of metal which was heard around them was the sound of their drinking cups banging against the saddle-horn."

The American people had sent food to the reconcentrados. President McKinley while opposing recognition of the rebels affirmed the possibility of intervention. Spain resented this attitude. Finally on the 15th February 1898 the US battleship "Maine" was blown up — by whom it was never known—in the harbour of Havana. The ship was paying a "visit of courtesy to the harbour of Havana." American NEWSWEEK of January 16, 1961 writes "Cuba

owes its nationhood largely to the American defeat of Spain in 1898—after the battleship Maine was blown up in Havana Harbour”.

Whether American intervention was wholly out of good feeling for the Cubans must be now scrutinized carefully. Let us go back to the opening of the US Congress in December 1896 where President Cleveland called attention to the unhappy state of Cuba. These are his words :

“The spectacle of the utter ruin of an adjoining country, by nature one of the most fertile and charming on the globe, would engage the serious attention of the government and people of the United States in any circumstances. In point of fact, they have a concern with it which is by no means of a wholly sentimental or philanthropic character. Our actual pecuniary interests in it is second only to that of the people and government of Spain. It should be added that it cannot be reasonably assumed that the hitherto expectant attitude of the United States will be indefinitely maintained.”

The USA appointed a naval court over the Maine incident and it reported that the ship was destroyed by the explosion of a submarine mine which caused the partial explosion of two or more of her forward magazines. The Spanish board of inquiry reported that the explosion resulted from causes within the ship itself. The Spanish government urged that the whole question be referred to an international committee. U.S. declined to accept this proposal.

The tension between USA and Spain reached its climax before long when President McKinley sought permission from Congress to intervene “in the name of civilisation, in the name of endangered American interests which give us the right and the duty speak and act. The war in Cuba must stop” (Congress Record April 11th, 1898.)

The two Houses passed a joint resolution declaring that the people of Cuba are, and have a right to be, free and independent ; that Spain should withdraw from Cuba and the President was empowered to use the military and naval force of USA to make the resolution effective.

What is of importance in that this resolution in addition, disclaimed any intention on the part of the United States to assume, except for pacification, jurisdiction over Cuba, and declared its intention to "leave the government and control of the island to its people."

A state of war was declared "to exist and has existed since 21st of April 1898 between the United States and Spain" by Congress resolution of April 25, 1898. Many sections in Cuba welcomed the US intervention believing it was motivated by nothing but the highest motives. On 3rd July the Spanish squadron at Santiago de Cuba was destroyed after a blockade from May 29th by the American fleet. Simultaneously Spain's colonial possession the Philippines in the Far East, being coveted by USA, the President ordered Commodore George Dewey in charge of the US Asiatic squadron guarding that port. It was done. With these two naval victories Spain was effectually eliminated as a sea power.

By the Treaty of Paris signed on December 10th 1898, Spain relinquished Cuba to USA in truth—the temporary character of American occupation being recognised throughout the treaty in accordance with the terms of the American declaration of war in which the US disclaimed any intention to control the island, except for its pacification. Spain was also by this treaty forced to cede Puerto Rico and other islands under her sovereignty in the West Indies and finally also the archipelago of the Philippines for a consideration of \$20,000,000. The US in turn agreed to admit Spanish ships

and merchandise to the ports of Philippines for ten years on same terms as those of USA.

The Senate opposed the the ratification of the Paris Treaty on the ground of unwarranted acquisition of the Phillippines. Simultaneously> insurgent forces at Manila attacked US forces. The former were repulsed, but insurrections went on till in 1901 when the rebel leader Emilio Aguinaldo was captured. The Senate ratified the treaty on February 6, 1899, with 57 to 27 votes.

The results of the Spanish War had three far reaching effects on the U.S.A.

- (1) The chartering henceforward of a policy of colonisation
- (2) Emerging into candidacy as a world power
- (3) Unification of sections of U.S.A.

On the 20th May 1902, the US formally recognised the new republic of Cuba. Spanish rule had ceased on 1st of January 1899. Three years of American military rule had intervened. Much was done for Cuba during the period in reform of Administration, Civil Service, Education and Sanitation—particularly in the eradication of yellow fever.

But in the determination of the new relations to prevail between Cuba and USA the conditions known as the Platt Amendment were imposed on Cuba by USA on March 3rd 1901 and under threat forced to be accepted by Cuba. Fidel Castro details this Amendment in his speech at the UNO 15th General Assembly last year. (See Appendix One). By these conditions Cuba was forced to have “nailed in the heart of her territory” naval stations leased to the USA (since located at Bahia Honde and Guantanamo) and the right to intervene for “protection” of Cuban independence.

It was the story of Japan's military occupation, USA repeated here too and its subsequent hold over it for remilitarising and setting up military bases. Only the status thus created for Cuba so far back was very exceptional in the history of then prevailing international relations.

The US intervened on three occasions. First in the insurrection of 1906 against corrupt government when it sent troops and took over the government again for three years and to quell revolutionary revolts in 1912 and 1917. Each time the Cuban people were most resentful to see the results of the Platt Amendment in action but the corrupt governments welcomed them. Finally Franklin Roosevelt abrogated the Platt Amendment but replaced it with a treaty still including the right to maintain Guantanamo base.

The new colonisation of Cuba by USA continued economically by the acquisition of vast tracts of the best cultivable lands for the North American companies, by controlling the exploitation of natural resources, public service and labour. American economic interests dominated Cuba. And it came to pass that only tyrants could serve American interests in Cuba for they could by force repress the people's demands for national interests being supreme, for better conditions for life and higher wages and repress the peasants struggling to regain the land out of which they were ejected to expand the plantations. The Claudian yoke was in full effect. By 1896 American bankers had about \$30,000,000 of Cuban property. They began buying up the Cuban mines — iron, nickel managanese.

In 1901 the United Fruit Company bought 175,000 acres and set up two mills. Other big business groups followed. In 1903 December 17, a treaty was approved by Congress giving Cuban imports a tariff reduction of 20%, and given to Cuban American imports a tariff reduction of 20 — 40%. The Cuban patriot Manuel Sanguily objected to this

Reciprocity Treaty, as he saw through the trick for the USA had reserved the right to raise, unilaterally, its import tariff without detriment to the preferential tariffs, Cuba granted the USA. Time proved the truth of Sanguily's fears when Cuba was absolutely dependent on just USA alone to supply her imports. In 1900 the imports were 45% of the total, but soon after the Treaty rose to 80%. During, World War I, when there was a world wide shortage of sugar, USA, which had the monopoly of Cuban sugar, sold it for more than double the Cuban selling price. This system lasted till 1930, Cuba supplying 54% of the sugar requirements of USA. In 1896, 10% of Cuba's total sugar production came from American owned mills, in 1914 — 35% in 1936 — 26%. Just after World War II less than one tenth of all the sugar cane farms in Cuba held over two thirds of the land. Cuba had a climate and soil among the best in the world and yet Cuba could not naturally feed itself. 70% of foodstuffs Cuba needed was imported.

Tomas Estrada Palma was elected the first President of the Cuban Republic in 1902 and he was first in the long line of despots characterised by inefficiency and graft.

Gerardo Machado Morales who held power from 1924 — 1933 was generally hailed as "The Butcher" as his regime was stamped with the blood or repression and assassination. Gangsterism and graft were rampant.

The students of the Havana University have a special niche of honour in the freedom struggle of Cuba. They revolted against Machado who fled the country in August 1933. Roman Grau San Martin, popular leader of the liberal movement, which grew around the nucleus of intellectuals who campaigned against Machado, was elected. Reforms designed to alleviate the misery of his people was doomed to last only four months as the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt, which frowned upon the reforms, withheld recognition from the Grau government and engineered Grau

being ousted from office with the cooperation of the powered, privileged elite of Cuba. Batista who took over the government by force was given recognition instead. Like Mobutu he was made the "strong man" of Cuba in 1934 with the blessing of the USA and for ten years he ruled Cuba leading it to degradation and corruption. But the US administration called this state of affairs new heights of strong administration — and Batista and his legions thrived on all kinds of business favours — contracts and the usual methods of indirect bribery.

In 1934 at an extremely critical moment for the Cuban economy, Batista negotiated a new Trade Agreement with USA whereby Cuba allowed preferential reductions ranging from 20 — 60 per cent on the duties on several North American products. Hereafter no tariff rate could be modified unless the proposed modification was agreed to by USA, Cuba having to pay the respective compensation. This agreement not only cost Cuba heavy sacrifices but also involved long-winded negotiations. It was a definite setback to the economy of Cuba. Batista simultaneously agreed to the adoption of the sugar import quota system, Cuba thus not only losing the only reciprocal concession she ever had in her trade with USA, but henceforward her share of the consumption market of USA was regularly, unilaterally fixed for her in Washington. The American government was now free to change at will, disregarding Cuba's historical rights the amount of the Cuban sugar quota. Thus Batista sacrificed Cuba's legitimate interests at a time when Cuba was practically the only available supplier of sugar.

Cuba had also been made the victim at the same time of the dangers of a monoprodukt — sugar.

Batista joined alliance with Cuba's enslaver and Batista had for himself now a big mansion at Daytona Beach, Florida,

where he displayed proudly his medals of honour from the "Free World." These replaced the earlier ones gifted by Hitler and Mussolini. He dined and wined there with the big business politicians of the Free World.

Cuba thus became a bit of real estate of rich Americans. Batista had inaugurated the economics of destruction for Cuba.

Theja Gunawardhana, in 'Venceremos,' 1962.



SOLIDARITY

The first meeting of the Ceylon People's Committee for Solidarity with Cuba in Colombo decided unanimously to launch an island-wide propaganda campaign to organise a hands off Cuba movement. The Ven. Medagoda Sumanatissa Nayake Thera, the High Priest of the Sunethradevi Pirivena, Pepiliyana, presided. The Ven. Medagoda Sumanatissa Thera said that if a poll is taken of the opinion of the people of Ceylon, it would definitely be in favour of the Cuban people, who are heroically defending their hardwon freedom and who are now engaged in peaceful socialist construction in their motherland.

Dr. Armando Bayo, the Cuban Charge d'Affaires in Ceylon, who addressed the meeting as a guest speaker said that the press by giving wide publicity to the racial riots in Mississippi centred around the admission of a coloured student to an American University, gave indirect support for the cause of the Cuban people, who immediately after the revolution ended racial discrimination for ever.

The following office-bearers were elected unanimously:—
President: The Ven. Medagoda Sumanatissa Nayaka Thera.
Vice Presidents: Mrs. Theja Gunawardena, Senator Reggie Perera, and Senator Chandra Gunasekera. **General Secretary:** Mr. Ronnie de Mel. **Assistant Secretary:** Mr. P. Kumarasiri. **Treasurer:** Mrs. Badra Gunatilaka.

—Tribune, October 6, 1962

Hands off Cuba

Though war clouds threaten Cuba and
That little isle seems doomed,
The courage of her people is
For life with honour groomed.

A proud imperial mighty power
Has thrown a ring of steel,
Around her little neighbour bold,
But she will never squeal.

The fearless peasants in the fields,
The workers black and white,
Against the massive threat of arms
Will carry on the fight.

Beneath the crushing power of force
Brave Cuba shall not fall,
For other freedom loving men
Have answered to her call.

Soviet ships are steaming fast
With all the vital aid,
To help the gallant islanders
To beat the big blockade.

A head-on clash which may have spelt
The death knell of the race,
Has been averted by the good sense, —
But only for a space.

Abjure destructive nuclear power,
Let sanity prevail.
The human race will stand condemned
If mediators fail.

Mervyn Casio Chetty

TRIBUNE, November 10, 1962

29.10.62

BLOCKADE

PRESIDENT KENNEDY's order enforcing a naval blockade around Cuba is a high handed act of international piracy perpetrated against an independent and sovereign state. The Monroe Doctrine, if it ever had any validity at all, disappeared when the US interfered in the affairs of Europe in 1917, and thereafter in the Second World War. Today the US is very much in Western Europe. Of the three props on which the Monroe Doctrine was based, the second was that the US would keep out of Europe and as a reciprocal measure wanted European Powers (who alone mattered at that time) to keep out of the Americas. To invoke the Monroe Doctrine today is hypocrisy at its worst. Moreover, the Americas today consist of free and independent sovereign countries like Cuba which are entitled to buy arms from anywhere in the world. To impose a naval blockade is aggression, and to threaten other countries that their ships would be sent down to the bottom of the sea if the US Navy thinks fit is a reflection of US arrogance. Kennedy no doubt has to contend with the Congressional Elections on November 6, but sabre-rattling over Cuba and aggressive and warlike action by the US Navy on the high seas will not be tolerated by the freedom-loving peoples of the world. Ceylon will stand by Cuba and her right to buy arms from whatever source to defend her independence. Ceylon cannot but condemn the policy of brinkmanship followed by the USA which this time might lead to war. Has the US the right to tell Cuba, which is an independent country, and a member of the United Nations, to do her bidding? The Monroe Doctrine had completely vanished the moment Latin American countries were admitted to the United Nations even as it had disintegrated when the USA had entered the European scene to interfere in its politics.

— *Tribune*, November 3, 1962

Post Revolution and Agrarian Reform

The official census of 1953 records an economically active population of 1,972,286; of whom 221,939 were listed as owner farmers; 568,799 as farm labourers. Fidel, when he assumed power had as a ballast legacy :

700,000 Cubans without work.

500,000 Farm labourers who starved for 8 months in the year.

400,000 Industrial rural labourers.

100,000 Small farmers, 85 per cent who worked on land that is not theirs, who long to possess it, but pay rent for it and are ejected when they could not.

30,000 Underpaid teachers.

20,000 Small businessmen weighed down by debt.

10,000 Young professionals — doctors, lawyers, engineers, artists etc., facing frustration.

300,000 Cabellerias (a cabelleria is $33 \frac{2}{3}$ acre) of productive land uncultivated, owned by vested interests.

200,000 Huts and hovels with no sanitary services.

200,000 families in cities cramped in tenements.

2,200,000 Urban families paying rents — 1/3 — 1/5 of income
31% 6 year old children with no schooling while 29.4
had only 3 years schooling.

99% Rural children suffering from hookworm.

700,000 Unemployed totally.

37% Illiterates.

22,000,000 lbs. of tomatoes going out of Cuba and returning
in the form of imported products.

247 Brothels in Havana alone.

12% of the total number of proprietors of land con-
trolling 56% of the total area in Cuba.

American owned Sugar Cane Plantations covered half
the cultivated area of Cuba.

Cabellerias

Cuban Atlantic Sugar Co.	...	10,510
Cuban American Sugar Co.	...	10,720
American Sugar Ref. Co.	...	10,190
United Fruit Company	...	8,158
West Indies Sugar Co.	...	8,158
Camaguey Sugar Co.	...	7,943
Francisco Sugar Co.	...	5,343
Cuban Trading Co.	...	2,172
Central Soledad	...	894
Manati Sugar Co.	...	5,831
Francisco Sugar Co.	...	5,831
Cuba Company	...	5,096

Total 87,404 Cabellerias — 2,913,600 acres.

8 Cuban latifundists owned 46,290 cabellerias — 1,549,000
acres.

i e. 47 per cent in foreign hands

25.1 per cent in local hands.

72.5 per cent of land cultivated was owned by 8% of people (foreigners dominating).

These large plantations — controlled 20.1 per cent of the land. The small farms of less than 1 — 25 acres were 30 per cent of the total number and encompassed only 3.3 per cent of the land. 1½ per cent of the total number of proprietors was controlling 56 per cent of the total area of Cuba. 494,053 workers of 23 per cent of the labour force were sugar plantation and industry workers.

Banks, Oil Refineries, Sugar Mills, the Electric, Telephone and Transport systems were foreign owned. Balance of payment 1950 — 1960 had been in favour of USA and against Cuba 100 million dollars.

When Batista reached power in 1953 there were 500 million dollars in the national reserves.

The drafting of the law took into consideration the necessity for diversification of crops to stem the suicidal trend of monoculture — sugar. Even Jose Marti in 1890 had said: "A nation that practices monoculture commits suicide." It took into consideration the need for effective utilization of natural resources, for the eradication of inequality of land holdings, for the divergent conditions prevailing in the different provinces — share cropping, ground renting, squatting, uncultivated latifundia and cultivated latifundia.

The Cuban Agrarian Reform did not merely visualize expropriating private property and distributing it to the landless. No—it sought in the special case of American and Cuban owned corporations to replace monoculture in latifundia by co-operative production based on intensive diversified cultivation and technical means.

There were in Cuba, a variety of country people, individual farmers who had a few acres, middle class farmers who had more, latifundists who had thousands, many labourers imported as well as local, farmers who one time had been land owners but had been forcibly ejected or whose land had been incorporated on one excuse or another into latifundia by feudal plantation owners commandeering arable land until the guajiro had to leave the land of his ancestors and put up his shack on a bit of guardarraya roadside. Then there were the floating mass of labourers who found work during the Zafra living in long lines of miserable shacks for four months and wandering in search of work for 8. There was the small farmer—one time owner of his land — but now living and dying working on his land not his own any more, paying rent like a feudal serf for it, “looking at it with sadness as Moses did the promised land”—to die without ever again possessing it—living in mental anguish and agony in fear of sheriff and rural police guard wield the butt of their rifles and backs of their machetes on their backs before eviction and ejection. Besides money as rent they also had to give up portion of the yields of the earth they tended in misery and starvation.

There was also in rural Cuba in the sugar mills an industrial proletariat who had to their credit a traditional record of militant unionism.

Hence the problems presented by rural Cuba to the new government were vast and varied and called for specialised handling and the leaders were equal to the task as destiny had willed they should live amidst these problems for two years and come to understand their people and the life they led, by virtue of leadership in a specifically peasant revolution.

Hence the Reform Law laid down several norms for the new orientation in landholding. Extracts of it are of impor-

tance in understanding the unique character of Cuban Agrarian Reform.

Article—1. Large land holding is hereby prohibited. The maximum area of land that a natural or juridical person may own shall be thirty cabellerias (1000 acres). Land in excess of that limit will be expropriated for distribution among peasants and agricultural workers who have no lands.

Article—2. The following lands shall be exempt from the provision of the foregoing article :

- (a) Areas planted in sugar cane yield of which is not less than the national average plus fifty per cent.
- (b) Cattle raising areas that meet the standards for support of cattle per cabelleria.
- (c) Areas planted in rice that yield not less than 50% more than average production.
- (d) Areas devoted to one or more crops or a combination of agriculture and stock raising with or without industrial activity.

In all no person may own over 100 cabellerias i.e. 3,300 areas.

Article—5. The order of priority in each Agrarian Development Zone, for expropriation, when necessary and for the redistribution of lands shall be as follows :

- (a) State and private lands on which farmers are established as tenants, sub-tenants tenants growing sugar cane, sharecroppers.

Article—6. Privately owned lands up to 30 cabellerias will not be subject to expropriation unless affected by contracts with tenant farmers growing sugar cane, tenant

farmers, subtenant farmers and sharecroppers who hold parcels not larger than 5 cabellerias in which case they shall be subject to expropriation.

Article 16. An area of two cabellerias (66 acres) shall be considered as a vital minimum for a peasant family of 5.

INRA. The National Agrarian Reform Institute was set up with broad powers to promote state farms, cooperatives, administration of the law, pay compensation for expropriated land in the form of 20 years bonds bearing $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent interest, promote rural health, housing and education, establish research, equipment and machinery centres, collect and analyse statistics and appoint land courts, organise liberal credit privileges and *tiendas del pueblo* or people's stores where peasants buy the stores on credit.

By turning over vast plantations of sugarcane into State farms especially in Oriente and Pinar del Rio, Cuba very quickly was able to realize the benefits of collective cultivation. They resemble the Chinese Communes to some extent. Due to the presence of the large group of migrant landless workers this was possible. They had never owned land. They had worked for 4 months and starved for 8. They were more than happy to have houses, enough to eat, wear and live well, They had no desire to own land. Hence when INRA brings rural industrial centres, new state farms and cooperatives into being, hands for labour are available readily. The cooperative is formed by pooling of individual peasant holdings and each cooperative is now working out its details of management with INRA help as it goes along. Income is shared by members.

But to me above all the material and radical changes that have come to the *guajiro* in his physical environment, material well being and cultural level is the spiritual change.

At the outset of the revolutionary government, Fidel very wisely did not promise the sun, moon and stars at once but outlined the handicaps and appealed for patience. Travelling the length and breadth of Cuba, Fidel took pains to explain government policy to people whenever possible. Speaking to a group in Las Villas he said "Are you afraid of hunger? Then be prepared to face a little more hunger, And you will have bread tomorrow. In this first year of our revolution and the year of Agrarian Reform we do not have enough equipment, next year we will have the new equipment necessary and technique. If we have to draw our belts 3 or 4 notches—we will draw them 3 or 4 notches. The guajiro always had to draw his belt tight, as every day guajiros grew more as the land for cultivation grew less and less. If you have tightened your belts for 50 years it will not matter if you tighten them for 6 months more, while we are all working day and night, preparing everything to give Agrarian Reform a tremendous impetus.

As you have seen even in those first few months when we began to work on Agrarian reform everyday the impetus is greater. For example here in Las Villas we have the case of tomato cultivation. Those who were exporting tomatoes went off and it appeared as if thousands of workers would be without work.

What did the revolution do? It called the worker's representatives, the technical workers in charge of cultivation and asked what amount of land and money was needed? At once we placed at your disposal all credit necessary not only to harvest the tomatoes and give employment to all, but also to give houses and consumer's cooperatives with credit facilities. We not only solved the problem of unemployment but we also improved your conditions of life.

We have in this zone also established a cooperative for sugar cane where the workers in the fields which belonged to

the Municipality have now become members of the rural cooperative entrusted with the task of cultivating it. Already they are building a township with houses where they will live.

In the southern zone of Cienaga de Zapata we have organised the country people who produce charcoal. They not only collect the revenue for the wood but buy charcoal at a low price. We are not building shops there and will have soon a school, hospital and a good road for marketing their products. They will also have their own cows soon. 15,000—20,000 families are draining in the Cienaga area the swamps and they will soon have sufficient land not only to build their houses there but also to grow rice extensively and have livestock.

In the zone of Sancti Spiritus a rice field of 80 cabellerias was lying paralysed as its owner did not wish to cultivate it. Today it's a flourishing expanse of paddy plants. This is what the INRA, scarcely a month old, has done.

"We are establishing Agricultural Development Zones from one end to the other of our island. Already with only 100 million pesos we have established 26 zones."

The major part of cultivated land was in the hands of less than 2 percent of proprietors. Those affected by the Reform Law is less than 1% but this minority held the great mass of land in power i. e., 99% of owners who hold 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or less than 20 cabellerias is proportionately greater than those who hold over 30. Those who hold over 30 cabellerias are less than 1% but they hold the best and largest proportion of Cuban land.

Who is going to benefit by the Agrarian Reform? Over 200,000 rural families firstly, secondly all of Cuba. If the country people have resources and money they are not going to hoard it, but they are going to buy shoes,

clothes and food and who is going to benefit then? All those who work in cities who are going to have more work and better wages when only the country people have enough to buy what they need.

“If a peasant is living precariously in land of less than 2 cabellerias, the State is making over to him, without payment, ownership of the land.

“Has any peasant been ejected since the revolution triumphed? Further we give him credit at a low rate of 4%. We give him equipment because we are giving him land free. The equipment and credit is to be paid back over a long period. We are not only giving land, equipment and credit we are also giving houses which they will own some day by paying for 20 years without interest. We are giving you guaranteed price for production and we will also give you schools. For the first time the campesino is master of his land, never more the victim of the latifundist. We have finished with the earth-eaters and latifundists.

“All Havana will open its doors to the campesinos. From henceforward a country person will be a person, an individual in his own right, he will command respect and the consideration of all. From now on when he goes to the city he will not feel ashamed and depressed for he will be treated as a worthy person, a working man, a brother of the most decidedly enthusiastic and loyal defender of the revolution.

“Now when he comes to Sta Clara and Havana no one will make jokes at him because he is a hero and all heroes command respect. No one will lean over and watch how he walks, what he eats, how he holds his spoon and what he buys and the colour of the garment his wife, sister or furthest relation wears, because he comes today to buy what he wants and as he wants.

“Why this change? The feeling of hostility which latifundists created, the timidity which campesinos inherited by years of ill-treatment by latifundists, by demagogues, by rogues, boliteros and botellas is finished with now. On the 26th July this year country men and women are the honoured guests in the Havana homes where all doors open to them.”

These were Fidel's words. To me this is what the Agrarian Reform seemed to mean. The campesino has become the hero of Cuba, the undisputed hero of the revolution. He walks side by side, shoulder to shoulder with his town brother. He walks with his head high though his body and eyes carry the stamp of years of untold misery and starvation.

— Theja Gunawardhana
in 'Venceremos', 1962





ARMANDO BAYO, Charge d' Affaires, of the Cuban Embassy in Ceylon calls on the Prime Minister.
Tribune, July 28, 1962.

CUBA, USA & USSR

The question which is on the lips of many people is who is the winner in the Cuban crisis? Kennedy or Khrushchev? The USA or the USSR? Naturally there are persons who hotly argue for one side or the other, but there is no doubt that it is world peace which is the primary beneficiary, and secondary the people of Cuba whose territorial integrity has now been guaranteed by a pledge of the American President that the USA will not invade the island. In this crisis, the prestige of the United Nations under the able guidance of acting Secretary-General U Thant has gained immeasurably. However, the picture will not be complete without endorsing the sentiments expressed by the noted British philosopher and nuclear disarmament Bertrand Russell that it was the restrained and mature statesmanship of Premier Khrushchev which saved the world from nuclear destruction. The United States, which has well over 250 war bases in foreign territories, mainly around the Soviet Union, rushed into warlike action the moment she knew that Cuba had persuaded the USSR to set up missile bases in her territory for her self-defence in the face of open and unashamed threats of invasion from the USA backed by actual provocative landings, surveillance flights and assistance to subversive groups. Khrushchev brought this sharply home, when he first indicated that among other matters (which concerned the integrity of the Republic of Cuba) he would be willing to

remove the missile bases in Cuba if the USA would do likewise in Turkey. Kennedy, with all the peevish arrogance which the world has come to associate with the dollar-crazy Yanks, insisted that the Cuban bases should first be dismantled before he would even talk peace with the acting UN Secretary-General. It is possible that Kennedy took this tough sabre-rattling attitude for the benefit of US voters who go to the polls on November 6. Khrushchev no doubt took this fact about the U. S. Elections into consideration when he grasped the hint Kennedy had dropped that USA would be willing to pledge not to invade Cuba if the Soviet base was dismantled; and that if this were done, the USA would also be willing to discuss general problems of disarmament. Khrushchev, it is necessary to stress, had set up the bases in Cuba for the defence of the island against the constant threat from the CIA and the emigre counter-revolutionaries who were being encouraged by US reactionaries to invade Cuba. Once this threat to Cuba was removed with a U. S. Presidential pledge before the bar of world opinion through the UN, neither Khrushchev nor the Cuban people wanted the military bases and equipment. Nobody yet knows how big or how many were the bases set up by the USSR in Cuba, but everybody knows that the biggest base yet on the island, is the US base at Guantanamo a few miles away from Havana.

The Cuban situation has now eased, and the danger of war has receded. The people and the government of USA now realise that an invasion of Cuba would undoubtedly mean world world war. The Newsweek of October 22 had a special article entitled HOW U.S. VOTERS FEEL ABOUT CUBA. ("With Election Day drawing near, Listening Post reporters gauge the mood in 50 States"). In 2000 interviews, said the Newsweek, it was found out: "that nearly all Americans are deeply concerned—but not panicked by the presence of Russian arms and 'technicians' 90 miles from the Florida Keys: that 90 per cent don't want to invade Cuba now: that

there is wide confusion which actions 'short of war' would work against Fidel Castro or would be acceptable under international law." The same confusion which Newsweek discovered throughout the 50 states permeated the hasty "go-it-alone" action of Kennedy in declaring a blockade even before asking for UN intervention. Right through the Newsweek article, it was clear, that the ordinary people in the U.S.A. did not want war, just like people in every country of the world today. But "the vast majority of Americans interviewed by Newsweek want 'to do something' (about Cuba), yet they don't specify just what is they want done. And that really is the paradox, **Listening Posters** found. While Castro's Cuba, and the Administration's handling of the problem, have not switched a significant percentage of voters, US citizens are concerned and have an uneasy urge that 'something should be done'. But, again, they don't agree on just what risks, with the specter of atomic warfare always in mind, can be taken." President Kennedy's action in resorting to a totally aggressive blockade which violated the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Cuba and the freedom of the high seas betrayed the confusion prevailing in the American nation which has a superabundance of dollars as well as atomic and other military hardware. Khrushchev was determined to go to war if it was necessary for the defence of Cuba, and a showdown seemed imminent when Kennedy enforced the blockade. The appeals of Bertrand Russell and U Thant found Khrushchev at his diplomatic best, whilst they were rejected by Kennedy in the first instance. The consummate skill of Khrushchev was seen when he openly climbed down before Kennedy's loud demands, but in the process he got what the Cuban people all along had wanted — a guarantee of their territorial integrity from the U.S. It can be truly said of the battle of Cuba that whilst Kennedy could claim the technical victory, Khrushchev won the real battle for Cuban freedom which was really the vital question at stake. U Thant is already in Cuba, and there is no doubt that his superb handling of the whole situation has already

opened new vistas for world peace. Kennedy too is pledged to work for world peace, and his guarantee of Cuban freedom is a concrete example of this in spite of pressure from reactionary U.S. circles to invade Cuba. This must lead, sooner or later, to the withdrawal of the US bases throughout world, one by one. If US objected to a missile base in Cuba, how could it insist on its own bases in foreign territories? The Cuban people and their government wanted the Russian missile bases for their self-defence, but nevertheless the US rushed to the brink of war. Can Washington now pretend that its 250 bases scattered throughout the world have been installed at the request of the local governments for defence and that they could not therefore be dismantled? The hypocrisy of this argument is now all too apparent, and the US will be hard put to explain to the world why it wants bases in 250 outposts outside the USA.

In Ceylon there has been universal indignation at the conduct of the USA in restoring to the aggressive blockade directed at the little island republic which wants a place under the sun to enjoy a way of life which is different from that presently favoured by the norteamericanos. But every nation has right to decide on the way of life it wants for itself, and it was the height of folly for Kennedy or the Yankees to tell the Cubans what was good for them.

Tribune, November 3, 1962





ARMANDO BAYO, charge d' affaires, of the Cuban Embassy in Ceylon, with secretary Augustin Canoura places a wreath at the Bandaranaike Masoleum at Horagolla.

Tribune, July 28, 1962.

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