

# The Runaway Revolution

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**O**UR PROGRAM is part of the revolution," the Cuban Communist leader Blas Roca declared recently. "It is a program which reinforces and supports all the measures, laws, and positive actions of the revolutionary government and the orientations of its leader, Fidel Castro." And then he added: "It is a program to illuminate the road toward the historically inevitable transition to socialism."

Blas Roca spoke like a man who was satisfied with the way things were going, who considered himself and his party integral parts of Castro's revolution and expected it to go much farther. One of those alarmed by both the tone and substance of the speech was a popular radio and TV commentator, Luis Conte Agüero. His reaction was especially significant because he was known to be a personal friend of Fidel Castro. In a speech before the Havana Lions Club that was widely reported in the press, Conte Agüero charged that the Communists were "achieving their purpose, pulling us instead of marching by our side."

The reaction against Conte Agüero in the pro-Castro press was so violent that the commentator decided to go off the air in order to give himself time, as he put it, "to write and think." When he drove up to television station CMQ in order to make a farewell appearance, an obviously organized crowd of demonstrators pressed forward and blocked his way, shouting "traitor!" "counter-revolutionary!" and "servant of American imperialism!" After some scuffling, the police restored order and Conte Agüero rode away without making the broadcast.

**E**VERYONE WONDERED what Fidel—no one in Cuba calls him anything else—would say. Everyone knew that he and Conte Agüero had been classmates, that Conte Agüero had written Fidel's biography, and that Fidel himself had appeared on Conte Agüero's program.

Three days later, Fidel broke the suspense on a "Meet the Press" type of TV program. After four hours of uninterrupted oratory, the friendship was finished. Fidel raked up old differences, ridiculed the biography of himself, assailed Conte Agüero as a "divisionist" and "confusionist," and practically accused him of working for the U.S. State Department. On the subject of Communism, Fidel refused to give ground. He took the position that it was not his fault that the Cuban Communists fully supported the revolutionary cause, and that anyone who made an issue of growing Communist influence was actually serving the interests of counter-revolution.

Fidel talks so long and so often not because he has so much to say—he makes virtually the same speech every time—but because it is essential to his conception of democracy. The television and radio are the means by which he conducts a perpetual plebiscite; he knows how to make most Cubans, especially the women of all ages and classes, vibrate to his somewhat grating voice, lugubrious eyes, and weary gestures. At any rate, that night Fidel talked his way out of another tight spot.

After Fidel's speech, Conte Agüero took refuge in the Argentine embassy. The owners of the television station on which he had spoken were quickly punished: their bank accounts were frozen, their studios were taken over by the government. And Conte Agüero became another Cuban exile in the United States.

This incident showed, not for the first time, how Castro reacts to anyone, even a personal friend, who raises the issue of Communism. Yet Conte Agüero himself has made it clear that there is no simple and easy identification between Castro and the Communists. In an open letter to Castro, he wrote: "It is as evident to me that your government is not Communist as it is evident to me that the Communists wish it to be such, or at least that it should appear to

be such in order to speculate on your name and fame."

General C. P. Cabell, deputy director of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, testified before the Senate Internal Security subcommittee last November: "We know that the Communists consider Castro as a representative of the bourgeoisie, and were unable to gain public recognition or commitments from him during the course of the revolution." He added that "Fidel's brother, Raúl, and his close adviser, Ernesto ('Che') Guevara, are both strong friends of the Communist Party," but "we believe that Castro is not a member of the Communist Party, and does not consider himself to be a Communist."

But this still leaves unanswered what Castro is and what he considers himself to be.

## The Mountain and the Plain

Fidel Castro was first plunged into politics in the University of Havana between the years 1945 and 1950. He and others of his generation soaked up the traditional resentments against "American imperialism," American investments, and Cuba's economic dependence on the United States. Some turned to Communism, but many more were carried away by an extreme if somewhat vague form of nationalism containing some elements of Communism but without the specific discipline and ideology of the party. To the Communists, these young revolutionists were wild, uncontrollable "bourgeois nationalists" who sometimes served Communist interests and sometimes did not.

Castro came out of this nationalist ferment, but not, at first, in its extreme form. He entered politics as a disciple of Eduardo R. Chibás, an anti-Communist who built up a large popular following by campaigning against government corruption on a Sunday-evening radio program. Chibás committed suicide in 1951 by shooting himself before the microphone in a desperate attempt to

awaken the Cuban people. Unfortunately, he ran over his scheduled time and was cut off the air just before the fatal shot. Yet Chibás's martyrdom benefited his party, popularly known as the Ortodoxos, and it was heavily favored to win the next election. Its victory would have given Cuban democracy another chance.

ONE OF the Ortodoxo candidates for congress in 1952 was Fidel Castro. But his career in democratic politics was cut short by Fulgencio Batista, who once again, as he had done in 1934, seized power. The whole façade of liberal democracy collapsed ingloriously. Batista's coup made a revolutionary nationalist out of Castro and others like him. They abandoned the democratic path and have never found their way back.

But Castro and the Communists were still far apart. When Castro organized his 170 men to attack the Moncada Barracks in the second largest city, Santiago de Cuba, in 1953, and when he set out from Mexico with eighty-one men to invade Cuba in 1956, the Communists would have nothing to do with him. They considered the little band of twelve men who remained to fight in the mountains of the Sierra Maestra to be "petty-bourgeois putschists."

Long after the rebellion in the Sierra Maestra had taken hold, Castro did not head a homogeneous movement, and the larger it grew, the less homogeneous it became. It included those who merely wished to go back to the democratic constitution of 1940 and those who demanded "a real social revolution." It included some who were friendly to the United States and some who hated it. It included anti-Communists and fellow travelers.

Until 1958, Castro's strategy was based on two fronts: *el llano* (the plain) and *la sierra* (the mountain). His sympathizers in the plain numbered hundreds of thousands; his fighters in the mountain hundreds. These fronts differed politically as well as militarily. Castro's underground representative in Havana, a former medical student named Faustino Pérez, was an outspoken anti-Communist. The fighters in the mountain, conditioned by their hard-

ships, their increasing closeness to the impoverished, landless *guajiros*, and their own militant temperaments, were much less critical of the general principles of Communism than of the tactics of the existing Cuban Communist Party, which during the war had changed its name to Partido Socialista Popular (P.S.P.)

Castro did not expect to topple Batista with a few hundred men in the mountains. He rather hoped to use his hide-out to encourage revolt in the cities, where political decisions were traditionally made. He sent emissaries to organize Havana and put Faustino Pérez in charge of preparations for a general strike called for April 9, 1958.

The strike failed and the prestige of Faustino Pérez never recovered.



Castro and those closest to him in the mountains drew drastic conclusions from the setback. They decided that victory would depend principally on themselves and that their supporters in the cities could play only subordinate roles. The relative importance of *el llano* and *la sierra* was reversed; it was the first great victory of the extremists in *la sierra*.

Only the Communists could have made the strike in Havana a success. Though outlawed by Batista, they enjoyed far more freedom of movement than Castro's men, whom Batista considered his main enemy, and they had considerable strength in some of the chief unions, especially the transport workers. I have seen the "Declaration of the P.S.P.," which the Communist National Committee issued on April 12, three days after the strike fiasco. It accused Castro's movement of having called

the strike "unilaterally," and in effect attributed its failure to the refusal to consult them and reach an agreement in advance.

I was told by a top Communist leader that the official Communist line toward Castro changed in January, 1958, one year before his victory, and that offers of aid were made to him. The offers, such as they were, obviously did not extend to Faustino Pérez and the general strike. Late in June of 1958, a Communist leader was sent to the Sierra Maestra to establish liaison with Castro's forces. This was the first step toward closer ties between Castro and the P.S.P.

### U.S. Support for Batista

American policy also played into the hands of the extremists. In 1953, the year that Castro declared war on Batista at the Moncada Barracks, the new administration in Washington sent a new ambassador to Havana, Arthur Gardner, a businessman and political appointee. Gardner insisted on showing his affection for the dictator publicly and effusively. In her recent book on Cuba, Mrs. Ruby Hart Phillips, the long-time correspondent of the *New York Times*, writes that Gardner was so uninhibited in his admiration of Batista that he even embarrassed the dictator. There is a photograph, often reproduced, of Gardner hugging Batista's chief of staff, General Francisco Tabernillá, whose job it was to hunt down Castro's rebels.

When Gardner's successor, Earl E. T. Smith, came to Cuba a year and a half before Batista's fall, he seemed at first to represent a change in the official attitude of the United States. In blunt language Smith deplored the brutal treatment of a peaceful demonstration of women in Santiago de Cuba. But just when the majority of Cubans were turning to Castro, Smith turned against him. He spent the last months of his ambassadorship vainly attempting to arrange for an election under Batista's sponsorship long after Batista's power had eroded, and such an election was considered a subterfuge to preserve the substance of Batista's rule. The more knowledgeable career diplomats in the embassy pleaded with Smith to change his course, but he refused.

Smith resigned precipitately a few

days after Batista's fall, sent on his way by an article in the influential Cuban magazine *Bohemia* entitled "Ambassador Smith: Servant of the Despot." American arms to Cuba were cut off in March, 1958, but the U.S. military mission, which could have been withdrawn in the event of domestic or foreign hostilities according to a 1951 agreement, remained to the very end and largely canceled out the effect of the arms embargo.

**A** MOOD of friendless and reckless defiance characterized Castro's revolution from the beginning, and the sense of having won a miraculous victory against heavy odds still pervades the revolutionary atmosphere in Cuba. Certainly no Latin-American revolution was ever made in quite the same way—in the distant mountains, not in the capital; without an economic crisis, except as Batista's terror caused business to decline in the last months of 1958; without the active participation of the army and only the passive sympathy of the working class; and without an ideology or a party machine.

When Fidel Castro entered Havana a conquering hero on January 8 last year, no one knew what he was going to do. It is doubtful whether he himself knew, except in the most general terms. He renounced high office for himself and spoke of elections in eighteen months. He hand-picked a prime minister and a president, neither of whom he kept for long. Castro himself took over the office of prime minister in February. He virtually fired the first president, Manuel Urrutia, in July during a television program after Urrutia had raised the issue of Communism. And in Castro's first cabinet, nine ministers have been replaced.

These shifts have reflected the ever-increasing radicalization of Castro's policies. In large part, they have repeated in a new form the old struggle for power between the mountain and the plain. In the various reshufflings of his cabinet, Castro has in effect taken power away from the moderates in the plain and given it to the extremists from the mountain. Most of that power is now concentrated in the hands of three of

the old fighters—Guevara, Raúl Castro, and of course Fidel himself.

### The Triumvirate

There is no doubt in my mind that the present régime could not hold together or stay in power without Castro. He permits himself on all possible occasions to be called the "maximum leader," and in this case the title is justified. If ever there has been a "cult of personality," it is rampant in Cuba today. Castro's interminable monologues may be the despair of non-Cubans, but he knows his own people. They dote on his longwindedness, and he has overcome practically every moment of tension by making a speech that somehow reaches the most illiterate *guajiros*. For the first time in Cuban history a leader has given them a sense of human dignity and political importance, and they have paid him back by revering him.

Guevara's rise to the position of No. 2 man in the Castro régime took place at the end of 1959. When he left Cuba on a three-month trip to the Middle and Far East last summer, everyone assumed that he was on the way out. On his return early in September, he was named to a relatively subordinate job as head of the industrialization department of the National Institute of Agrarian Reform. "I don't know why," one informed observer told me, "but as soon as he got back, things began to happen here." Among the things that happened was his improbable appointment as president of the National Bank. No one in Cuba underestimates Guevara's abilities, but he does not get along well with many of Castro's associates: his Argentine background and quiet air of superiority hold them at arm's length. Unlike Castro, he speaks in calm, measured tones. Those who know him well say that he has the best-trained Marxist mind of all those close to Castro. He owes his power to his influence over Castro and he could never take Castro's place in the affections of the Cuban people.

Raúl Castro is generally rated the third member of the ruling triumvirate. He is an impetuous, hot-headed young man of twenty-nine who is credited with having done a good job organizing the new armed forces. Of the top three, Raúl is the

most extreme in policy and most immoderate in expression. He has a strong personal following in the army and he would be the one most likely to succeed his brother as the nominal head of the government if anything should happen to Fidel. But it is very unlikely that he could really take his brother's place.

**T**HEIR MAIN SUPPORT comes from young men like themselves. As I went from one government building to another and traveled by jeep in Oriente Province, I met the same kind of young man again and again—self-sacrificing, idealistic, all working devotedly for the régime. There is a rumor, half serious, that no one over thirty has a chance of getting a good government job and no one over forty need apply.

Anyone with technical training or almost any kind of education is apt to be given responsibilities that used to be reserved for men of middle age. In many cases, these young people are substituting zeal and fervor for technical knowledge, but they are going about it with the most contagious optimism and enthusiasm.

### Nationalism and Socialism

In one respect, Castro's revolution is classical—it was made by intellectuals and professionals in the name of workers and peasants. These intellectuals have been intoxicated, whether they admit it or not, by the two great revolutionary forces of our time to which countries seeking to pull themselves out of poverty and stagnation seem irresistibly drawn—nationalism and socialism. Nationalism enables them to oust the old ruling class with its close economic and political ties to foreign capital and to call forth the latent energies of national pride and ambition; socialism provides them with a rationale for installing themselves as the ruling class of a new type, using the full power of the state to change the social order. In Cuba today, nationalism runs riot, but socialism, Communism, or any variety of collectivism must never be mentioned in connection with the present régime.

To all appearances, Castro's revolutionists are doctrinaires without a doctrine. Soon after taking power, Castro tried to give his movement a

name, "humanism," to distinguish it from capitalism and Communism. "Capitalism may kill man with hunger," he said. "Communism kills man by wiping out his freedom." And what is "humanism"? He once defined it as "liberty with bread without terror." But nothing has been heard of "humanism" for several months. Castro now says, "We are building, not a theory—we are building a reality." What that reality should be called he refuses to say.

### INRA's Inroads

On paper, Cuba's agrarian reform would not make the new system socialistic. It limits landholdings to a maximum of 3,300 acres in cattle, rice, and sugar, and 990 acres for other uses. It undertakes to compensate the owners with twenty-year bonds at four and a half per cent interest. It promises each land worker a minimum of sixty-six acres. To carry out these measures, the Instituto Nacional de Reforma Agraria (INRA) was formed, headed by Fidel Castro himself, with a Cuban geographer, Antonio Núñez Jiménez, as executive director.

But Cuba's agrarian reform cannot be understood on paper. An INRA delegate, accompanied by a couple of armed soldiers, usually appears at a farm and announces that INRA is taking over everything but a certain portion. He may return later and cut the former owner's allotment in half. Though the law says nothing about farm machinery or cattle, they also are appropriated. The whole transaction is completely informal; there are no hearings, no inventories, no receipts. In some cases, if the owners are willing to accept INRA's offer, they may get paid in cash. No one has yet seen any bonds; the government says that they are being printed. In one zone, I was told early in April that Fidel had ordered the first three hundred titles to sixty-six-acre plots handed out; obviously that portion of the reform was far behind schedule.

In March, Núñez Jiménez reported that 13,250,000 acres, almost half of Cuba's total land area, will be affected by the agrarian reform. 8,800,000 of these acres have already been taken over, and the appropriation of another 2,650,000 is now taking place with the end of the cane

harvest. By the middle of this year, therefore, INRA will control about forty per cent of Cuba's total land area. Out of some of this land, it has already formed 764 co-operatives and plans to form five hundred more of cane land.

WHEN I VISITED a rice co-operative near the town of Bayamo in Oriente Province, I saw how the system works. The local INRA officials were particularly proud of it. I was told that the 1,500 acres had been owned by two lawyers who had never used them for productive purposes. To prepare the land for rice cultivation an expensive irrigation project was necessary, and when I was there it was about two-thirds finished. A



large machine shop, a school, and three of the houses planned for the thirty-eight families that will work on the co-operative had already been built. I was told that the chief qualification the workers possessed was that they were the poorest in the neighborhood. They were being transferred from the traditional one-room, thatched-roof *bohios*, which look like mud huts, to modern four and five-room cottages made of tile and cement. The attractive little school was used for the children in the daytime and for the adults, most of them illiterate, at night. The members of the co-operatives received a daily wage from INRA with the promise of shares in the profits. The "administrator" was a former rebel fighter who had been an ordinary day laborer.

The cost of this one project was

estimated at \$100,000. As a result of such co-operatives, Cuban rice has already become plentiful, but Cuban housewives complain bitterly that it is inferior to imported rice. When I was in Havana, the stores were forcing customers to buy one pound of Cuban rice with each pound of imported.

Except for one feature—the division of future "profits," if any—the entire co-operative system might just as well be owned by INRA and the members of the co-operative considered as employees of the state. The capital, machinery, fertilizer, and everything else are provided by INRA; the production is entirely turned over to and disposed of by INRA. The co-operatives are expected to pay off INRA's investment and most of the profits can always be plowed back into the enterprise. In practice, therefore, the system will probably amount to a fixed-salary plan plus an annual bonus, if and when the co-operative shows a sufficient profit. At a later stage, one minister told me, state farms will be introduced, especially in the cattle industry, and some co-operatives could easily be reclassified into this category.

No matter what one may think of the theory behind Cuba's land-reform program and no matter how the program turns out in practice, there is no getting around the fact that for the poor, illiterate, landless, outcast *guajiros*, the co-operatives represent a jump of centuries in living standards. They also represent a vast increase of constructive activity in the rural areas that were formerly the most backward and stagnant part of Cuba.

BUT AGRICULTURAL co-operatives are only one of INRA's undertakings. Second in importance are the *tiendas del pueblo*, or people's stores, of which Núñez Jiménez reported that there were 1,400. These stores are scattered in the hills and countryside and their purpose is to keep prices down by underselling the small, isolated traditional *tiendas*. They also provide at reduced prices various types of goods that the *guajiros* seldom saw before and could rarely afford. For the time being, these stores have not been set up in the cities. But urban store-

keepers are already wondering what they will do if INRA decides to compete with them. The whole system is entirely INRA-owned and INRA-operated without even the co-operatives' pretense of independence.

Núñez Jiménez also reported that INRA was operating 109 businesses valued at \$235 million; thirty-six sugar mills out of a total of 161; 36 fishing and six frog co-operatives. It has built 170 schools, three hospitals, seven dispensaries, and twelve clinics; and it runs sixteen radio stations and eight tourist centers. In Santiago, I ran across a small INRA group which, with the help of four Mexican engineers, was prospecting for iron ore. Hardly a day passes without an announcement in the newspapers that INRA has taken over another farm or factory and extended its other operations.

Cuba is still far from a state-owned economy, but in INRA it has the basis for one, and at the present rate of expansion INRA will soon dominate the economic life of the country, if it does not do so already.

#### Latecomers on the Band Wagon

It is clear from all this that Cuba is going through a social revolution of a collectivist nature unique in Latin-American history. It has no name, party, or ideology, but the reality speaks for itself. Once again, therefore, we are brought back to the question of where Castro stands in relation to the Communists.

The Cuban Communist Party was formed in 1925, the year before Fidel Castro was born. Its present top leaders, Blas Roca, Juan Marinello, and Anibal Escalante, are old-timers who had faithfully followed every twist and turn of Stalinist policies.

Castro caught the Communists by surprise in the early days of his rebellion, and it took them a long time to accept him and his "putschist" tactics. I have seen the open letter the official Communists sent to all the opposition movements, including Castro's, signed by Marinello and Blas Roca, dated June 28, 1958, which still put forward the prospect of overthrowing Batista "by means of clean, democratic elections." It may be true, as the Communists claim, that they decided to give

Castro's rebels some aid in January of that year, but they actually jumped on Castro's band wagon only in the last six months, after he had demonstrated that he could win without them.

Thus Castro and the Communists were rivals for power for more than five years, and Castro owed the Communists very little when he finally overthrew Batista. The wounds opened in this period were not immediately healed. As late as September 10, 1959, nine months after Castro's assumption of power, the semi-official government organ, *Revolución*, appeared with a polemic against the official Communists written by Euclides Vázquez Candela, its assistant editor. Last October, a collection of writings entitled *En Pie* was published by the present foreign minister, Raúl Roa, in which he reprinted an article on the Soviet suppression of Hungary in 1956 that denounced "the crimes, disasters, and outrages perpetrated by the invaders," meaning the Soviets. He also reprinted a review of Raymond Aron's anti-Communist *The Opium of the Intellectuals*, and said, "The central thesis of the book is objectively impregnable."

For some months in Castro's first year of power, there was visible evidence of discord between at least a considerable portion of Castro's movement and the official Communists. The turning point seems to have come last November. In that month, the anti-Communist leader of the former Havana underground, Faustino Pérez, was ousted from the government, and Guevara came in as head of the National Bank. At a congress of the Cuban trade-union federation that same month, the Communists were hopelessly beaten until Castro himself stepped in and appealed for a "unity" slate which, by including Communist sympathizers, saved the official Communists from a rout. Simultaneously the process of expropriation speeded up and INRA's type of collectivization—the co-operatives and people's stores—gathered momentum.

**B**Y THE BEGINNING of this year, a new situation had emerged. The official Communists moved in to become the strongest single force in the trade-union federation as the

result of a purge of "mujalistas," those trade-union leaders who had held posts under Batista's trade-union boss, Eusebio Mujal. In February, Soviet Deputy Premier Anastas Mikoyan paid a triumphal visit to Cuba, the Soviet exhibition in Havana was a great popular success, and the Soviet-Cuban trade treaty was hailed as the best thing that had ever happened to Cuba's foreign trade. A few days later, the explosion of a small plane flying from Florida made it impossible any longer to deny that United States-based planes had been dropping incendiary bombs on Cuban canefields. This and the explosion early in March of the munitions-loaded French freighter *La Coubre*, which Castro himself implicitly attributed to the United States government, set off an anti-American propaganda campaign bordering on hysteria. There is some question whether one plane brought down by the Cubans had been "arranged for" by the Cubans themselves. The last moderate in Castro's government, Finance Minister López Fresquet, resigned in the middle of March, and the incident of Luis Conte Agüero flared up shortly afterward.

It is evident from this brief summary of events that an important change took place between November, 1959, and March, 1960. While Mikoyan was holding court in Havana, the titular head of the Cuban Communist Party, Juan Marinello, declared in a television address on February 8 that "whoever raises the flag of anti-Communism is a traitor to the revolution." This principle has actually been adopted by Castro himself, though it is the most dangerous divisive force within his movement and opens him up to the most relentless attacks from the outside.

#### 'We'll Do It Our Own Way'

The men around Castro still betray a curious ambivalence about the official Communists. On the one hand, they regard old-time Communist leaders like Blas Roca and Marinello with scarcely concealed contempt. They speak of them with aversion for having served Stalin so slavishly, for having entered into an alliance with Batista in 1940-1944, for having backed away from force to overthrow Batista, and for still remaining

faithful to old-fashioned dogma. They even consider the official Communists too "conservative" and declare with pride that they are doing things that the latter regard as foolhardy and romantic.

On the other hand, when those in Castro's intimate circle are asked where, in essentials, they differ from the Communists, they seem to be stumped. Castro himself thought that he was crushing Conte Agüero when he asked why he should persecute the Communists if they do not differ from him. He failed to see—or preferred not to see—that this left unanswered the even more interesting question of where he differs from the Communists.

Not so long ago Castro did try to differentiate his revolution from the Communists', but that time has passed. The change has coincided with the increased tempo of expropriation and collectivization. It is as if a broad, general bond connected Castro with the official Communists which he could not break without betraying his own convictions, and as if he knew, too, that even if he decided to dump the official Communists he would still be charged with Communism.

**C**ASTRO, like Tito, made his own revolution by methods that the Russian-controlled Communists did not approve. This type of revolution has now made its appearance in different parts of the world by taking different roads and adopting different forms. Again and again, in long, frank talks with some of Castro's closest associates, I was struck by their insistence that "we'll do it in our own way," and they obviously considered their "it" to be on a par with the Russian, the Yugoslav, and the Chinese revolutions—different, yet related.

The Cubans' evident feeling of self-importance proceeds in large part from the fact that they consider their own revolution to be only the first of nineteen other Latin-American revolutions. "The battle of Cuba is the battle of America," said Guevara last March. He, Raúl Castro, and others place special emphasis on this larger mission. They believe that if they succeed, Castro-like movements will sweep the continent. And they are not merely

waiting; they are doing all they can to stimulate and, in some instances, to organize the movements. The recent visit of a Brazilian presidential candidate, Janio Quadros, who said that he would follow Castro's example if elected, made it seem not impossible in Havana that the tail might wag the dog. Castro's activities in the Caribbean area are especially reckless, and his press makes little distinction between the progressive democratic leadership of Governor Luis Muñoz Marín in Puerto Rico and the dictatorships of Somoza in Nicaragua or Trujillo in the Dominican Republic.

### Who Is Using Whom?

Thus it is a mistake to think of Castro as merely a Communist stalking-horse or a Soviet puppet. His ambitions go far beyond these modest roles. In his own mind, he is using the local Communists and playing off the Russians against the Americans. Just who is using whom remains to be seen. Meanwhile, the Cuban Communists meekly play second fiddle in Castro's orchestra, and the official Soviet press refers to Castro with cautious restraint.

One of Castro's young ministers said to me with obvious conviction: "Fidel is no Khrushchev; Fidel is a genius! Remember that Mikoyan treated Fidel as an equal when he was here. Anyone who imagines that Fidel thinks that someone in Moscow or among our own Communists knows how to make a revolution in Cuba or in Latin America better than he does—such a person does not know Fidel."

Other reasons for Castro's reluctance to accept the label of Communism, or any other label, are more

practical and opportunistic. The official Communists have gone all out in Castro's support, and they represent the only organized, disciplined party in Cuba today. General Cabell estimated their number at seventeen thousand toward the end of last year, and many of them undoubtedly fill numerous subordinate posts in the rapidly expanding revolutionary bureaucracy. Of the three major props holding up the new régime—the army, the trade unions, and the propaganda agencies—Castro strongly dominates the first, he shares control of the second with the official Communists, and he manages the third with Communist assistance. If he is not a prisoner of the official Communists, he has become increasingly indebted to them for their experienced cadres—available, as of now, on his terms.

For the official Communists, the setup is as favorable as they can expect under present circumstances. They are hardly in a position to take over Cuba without bringing down upon themselves the full weight of the United States in concert with other Latin-American countries. They would also encounter the militant opposition of the Catholic Church, which recently has begun to waver in its benevolent attitude toward Castro. They would run into the deep-seated aversion of most Cubans in all classes for any system of government that would admittedly be Communist—one of the reasons why Castro is so touchy about being associated with the name.

**C**ASTRO'S SUPPORT on taking power was so overwhelming that the opposition shaping up against him today must include many former ad-



herents. The small horde of exiles in Miami composed largely of Batista's former henchmen, the twenty thousand soldiers of Batista's former army walking the streets of Cuban cities apparently jobless, and the expropriated landowners and factory owners make up a considerable body of enemies who, it may be assumed, are doing everything in their power to overthrow Castro's régime. But the real danger to his survival comes from within his own amorphous "movement," which is no more homogeneous today that it ever was.

The new opposition includes many of the same people who made or sympathized with the revolution—students, professionals, intellectuals, businessmen. A year ago, the University of Havana, always the seedbed of discontent, was massively united behind Castro. Today the university is seriously split, and though the majority still extols Castro, a sizable minority, perhaps as much as a quarter, has become disaffected—and hence faces expulsion as "counter-revolutionary." Castro himself indicated the source of the opposition in his TV demolition of Conte Agüero: "What happens in the middle class is that it vacillates, it is greatly confused. On the other hand, the *guajiro* and the worker are always clearer, that is the truth."

The Cuban professionals and intellectuals have reason for vacillation and confusion. Castro offers most to the *guajiros*, much less to the workers, and nothing but liquidation or drastic transformation to the middle and upper classes. This distinguishes the Cuban revolution fundamentally from all previous Latin-American revolutions, such as the Mexican, which mainly benefited the middle class.

The Castro régime desperately needs the students, professionals, and businessmen to keep the country's economy functioning from day to day, but it welcomes them only as employees of state organizations such as INRA. A typical INRA worker I met had previously owned a grain-supply business. INRA had taken it over and had promptly hired him to supervise its own grain distribution. An architect told me that he had done very well during the building boom in Batista's last years; now he has gone to work for INRA,

which pays him much less but enables him to survive.

In this respect as in so many others, the full import of Castro's policies has become clear only in the last few months and therefore most of the new opposition is relatively recent. At first the cut in rents of thirty to fifty per cent and the reduction of telephone and electric rates, mainly favored those Cubans who lived in \$100-to-\$250 a month apartments and used telephones and electricity. But these concessions have been counteracted by the fundamental changes that have undermined this entire group—the wholesale expropriations, the choking off of American imports on which a large part of the Cuban business community depends, the lack of any hopeful prospect.

#### Cracking Down

Nor can Castro be sure that he will not have trouble with some of the urban workers. They constituted a relatively privileged class under Batista and showed it by letting others do the fighting. Now the workers are being asked to tighten their belts and for the first time to pay thirteen per cent of their wages in taxes. The trade-union federation virtually acts as an arm of the government and devotes its efforts to political propaganda rather than to economic demands. The leader of the sugar workers' union, Conrado Becquer, was the one who broke the news in the middle of April that it was necessary to freeze wages and maybe lower them in the sugar industry. For the first time in the history of the Cuban trade-union movement, the slogans for the May Day demonstration contained no demands for increased wages.

Castro could hope to reassure the



students, professionals, businessmen, and better-paid workers only if he agreed to define the nature of his revolution. Without defining it, he cannot set limits to it. But that is something he will not or cannot do. He is merely willing to say that the revolution is not Communist, it is not capitalist, it is uniquely Cuban. Very few of his early supporters expected it to go so far, and very few of them now know how much further it will go.

Instead of reassuring the new opposition, Castro has cracked down all the harder on any symptom of opposition. That is why the Conte Agüero incident disturbed so many of his former supporters and why it may be the turning point of his revolution. By giving the real and potential opposition no means of free expression or organization, especially on the burning issue of Communist influence, Castro is depriving his opponents of any possibility of opposing him except in the way he himself found it necessary to oppose Batista—by arms.

The government now has a complete monopoly of all television and radio. It does not completely control the press but that may not be far away. Havana still has two independent papers with an opposition slant, *Prensa Libre* and *Diario de la Marina*, and two "nonpolitical" papers, *Información* and *El Crisol*, but the first two survive under constant threat of suppression. *Diario de la Marina* has a limited circulation mainly among the former aristocracy and its existence bothers the government the least, but *Prensa Libre* has a relatively large circulation of more than 100,000 and its suppression would in effect end a free press in Cuba. As it is, these two papers tread very carefully; they cannot afford the luxury of really criticizing the government. The régime is supported by three main papers in Havana, *Revolución*, *Combate*, and *La Calle*, as well as the Communist organ, *Hoy*, and by every paper outside Havana.

CASTRO once spoke of his revolution as "liberty with bread and without terror." If he continues to push too hard, too fast, and too far, Cuba may yet have more terror without either bread or liberty.