The Cuban Revolution

Some Whys and Wherefores

Andrew Guilder Frank

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Is it a movement to liberate Cuba from American domination of its economy? Undoubtedly, but other Caribbean countries, like Guatemala and Honduras, are no less famed for American influence in their economic life.

Does the Cuban Revolution represent a battle against poverty, hunger disease and illiteracy? Certainly, but poverty in Haiti is much more severe than in Cuba. Indeed, per capita income in Cuba is higher than almost anywhere else in Latin America.

The absence of indigenous Indians perhaps facilitates the success of the Revolution, but Costa Rica similarly has no Indians, nor does Uruguay.

The author does not attempt to describe or explain the Cuban Revolution exhaustively. He merely wants to expose for inspection the background and the sources of the developments that Cuba and the world now witness.

He leaves it to the understanding and research of others to explore the many questions only raised here.

CUBANS proclaim themselves the first free country in Latin America. What do they mean? Why did the revolution which is developing in Cuba take place precisely there and not elsewhere? Why does the Cuban Revolution take the form it does rather than the form, for instance, of our of the Latin American revolutions which preceded it?

Several causes of the Cuban Revolution immediately suggest themselves, but none of them singly or in combination appear to offer a satisfactory explanation of the time and place of the Revolution. Did the Revolution grow out of the dictatorial repression of Batista? Yes, certainly it did. But the repression of Batista generated no more cause, for revolt than that of Trujillo in the Dominican Republic or that of Jimenez in Venezuela; yet the Dominican Republic has witnessed no revolution at all, and Venezuela one which has taken a form quite different from the Cuban Revolution.

Is the Cuban Revolution a movement to liberate Cuba from American domination of its economy in the fields of sugar, public utilities, and large parts of commerce? Undoubtedly. But other Caribbean countries, like Guatemala and Honduras, are no less famed for American influence in their economic life. Honduras has witnessed no revolution and Guatemala one which took a different form.

Does the Cuban Revolution represent a battle against poverty, against hunger, disease and illiteracy? Certainly. But poverty in Haiti is much more severe than in Cuba. Indeed, per capita income in Cuba is higher than almost anywhere else in Latin America. Moreover, it is this relative wealth which has given Cuba the ability and the strength to make so far-reaching a revolution. But such resources are available in concentrated form also in the Montevideo region of Uruguay or in the Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paula regions of Brazil.

The absence of indigenous Indians probably facilitates the success of the Cuban Revolution. But Costa Rica similarly has no Indians, nor does Uruguay.

Maybe it is less the absence of Indians than the presence of a middle class and of a pool of potential intellectual leadership which has facilitated the Cuban Revolution. But Brazil, Argentina, and Chile have similar sources of potential leadership; and there is evidence that in Mexico, which witnessed its own revolution fifty years ago, it is precisely the middle class which is the source of the increasing conservatism which militates against the extension of economic development into the Mexican countryside. Thus, without invoking the charisma of Fidel, an exhaustive causative explanation of the Cuban Revolution may not be possible. At any rate, I cannot provide one.

Historical Source

However a less ambitious explanation should not be beyond our reach. Every resolution is a reaction to the past, and that past is certainly open to our inspection. Indeed, today's revolution is a product as well of past reactions, that is, of earlier revolutionary attempts. By looking at the earlier attempts to deal with similar problems, particularly by prior revolutions in Latin America, we should be able to suggest how some alternative forms of the Cuban Revolution may have come to be excluded. Furthermore, no revolution can change everything. Paradoxically, a revolution must rely on well-entrenched social forms, such as paternalism in Cuba, to effect a radical change in other forms of social relations. Thus, a study of social and cultural forms which did and did not exist in the Cuba of old should yield some indications of the revolutionary possibilities for the Cuba of tomorrow. The present paper, then, is an attempt to explore these three sources of explanation of the Cuban Revolution: the historical source of the revolution, alternative solutions to Latin American problems which
have been found wanting, and the socio-cultural forms which determine not only the revolutionary necessities, but also the revolutionary possibilities. In pursuing these explorations, we should not however expect to find important answers as instead we find important new questions.

The history of Latin America might be summed up by saying that the Spanish came to exploit and their successors remained to exploit. The main social features of large parts of Latin America were well known: the consolidation of agricultural lands under latifundisla ownership, the role of the church in keeping people quiet and of the army if they were not, the role of the rising middle classes based in commerce and the professions which account for the very one-sided economic development that does occur, the alliance of American capital with all these groups, the right-wing dictatorships that are the capstone which ties the social fabric together by force and terror. Probably more than total mass poverty and ignorance, it has been the exclusion of the vast majority of Latin Americans from the social, political, and economic benefits enjoyed by some people in these societies which has resulted in the many sporadic social upheavals ranging from changes in the palace guard to full scale social revolutions.

Structure of Latin American Society

The Cuban Revolution has its roots in this general structure of Latin American society, in this same Latin American social movement to which that social structure has given rise (indeed, in the twentieth century world revolution as a whole) but it has its own history as well, in the peculiar Cuban conditions and the long history of revolutionary and liberation movements which have time and again attempted but failed to alter substantially the structure of Cuban society. Nearly a century ago, in 1888, Cuba revolts against Spain. The revolution is intellectually inspired and led, though it has some measure of popular support. The revolution fails and Spain retains its political supremacy. In the years which follow, American capital begins seriously to be invested in Cuban sugar. Indeed, a U.S. consular report of 1878 notes that "commercially Cuba has become a dependency of the United States although politically it remains a dependency of Spain." By 1895 Cuba is ready to wage a full scale revolutionary war of independence against Spain. Three years later, in 1898, the United States enters the war against Spain on the side of Cuba. Viewed in the context of a hundred years of U.S. and Confederate designs on Cuba, combined with more recently acquired direct economic interests, the Platt Amendment of 1902 which reserves the right to the United States to intervene at its pleasure in the domestic affairs of the supposedly sovereign Cuba, needed now as no surprise Cuba, exhausted by its war of liberation against Spain, is faced with the choice of outright annexation by the United States as befell Puerto Rico and the Philippines or presumptive sovereignty with American intervention. It chooses the latter and is visited by American military intervention three times until the repeal of the Platt Amendment in 1933 and by other forms of intervention until this day.

In the meantime the introduction of railroads and electricity into Cuba radically increases the distance over which sugar cane could be transported and the size of the mills in which it could be processed. As a result, the earlier small holdings of land and little mills increasingly become consolidated into large-scale latifundisla holdings of land and of large sugar centrals which reign over the landscape like feudal castles. As elsewhere in Latin America to this day, this fertile ground for right-wing dictatorships easily produces and supports the dictatorship of Machado during the nineteen twenties. When this dictatorship is overthrown in 1931, the reform movement which seeks to remove some of the social, political, and economic sources of such dictatorships fails, and, let it be noted, fails with the aid and intervention of the U.S. Department of Stat? and Embassy in the person of Sumner Welles who supports the conservatives, and only a moderate reform prevails.

When the effects of the depression and the decline of Cuba's sugar fortunes were combined with the substantial continuance of the old regime and after the temporary ruin of the second war has again disappeared, the time is ripe for a renewed dictatorship of the Machado type. After years of varying amounts of influence, Batista takes power in the coup of March 10, 1952. In the years of his power, he kills and often tortures twenty thousand people. As a nutshell index of the fortunes of Cuba during these years past, one might observe that following the 1895 war of liberation the literacy rate grew markedly; during the years of Machado's dictatorship the literacy rate again declined; it rose slowly during the years after Machado's exit and before Batista's entry; and literacy declined again during the six years of Batista's government.

Not Made in a Day

The current revolution in Cuba was not made in a day. It was born out of three hundred years of history and at least a hundred years of prior revolutionary activity. But even as the revolution was born in the decade of the 1950s it did not, like Athena, emerge full grown out of Fidel Castro's head. Indeed, the forms which the revolution was to take and still will take in the future grew out of its own eight-year history in Cuba and the revolutionary experience elsewhere in Latin America. To understand even in the most superficial sense the nature and causes of the radicalism which characterizes the Cuban Revolution today, it is necessary to examine the Revolution in the light of this recent history which has made it what it is. But as we do so, it will again be possible to do no more than raise questions as to how and why certain circumstances led to the decisions that were taken. In a sense what the following exploration can do is roughly to map the road of the revolution indicating some of the road forks at which choices had to be made to guide it one way or another. Much closer acquaintance with circumstances of the times would be necereto as sign serious explanations to these choices.

Elections were scheduled for the spring of 1952. When it became clear that the impending vote would not bring him into office, Batista assumed power by a military coup on March 10, 1952. Soon thereafter, Fidel Castro, then a lawyer, filed a brief in the courts changing Batista
The brief represents Fidel Castro’s first public challenge. As an attack on the illegality of the Batista dictatorship rather than as an attempt to initiate a far-reaching social revolution, this first challenge of the status quo was a far cry from the revolution which Fidel’s name has become associated. This revolution was to assume its present form only as a result of many events still to come in the six years following.

Weapons for Legal Arguments

The first further development in the direction of radicalism was to substitute weapons where legal arguments had failed. On July 26, 1953, Fidel led 125 men in an attack on Fort Moncada in the hope of capturing the weapons and supplies which might be used in an attack on the army, the real source of Batista’s power. The attack was unsuccessful. Most of the attackers were killed, not so much in battle as after becoming prisoners. Through a series of fortunate accidents, Fidel’s life was spared and he was brought to trial. Acting as his own attorney for defense, Fidel spoke four hours in defense of his attack against an unconstitutional government. His defense ended with the words, “Condemn me. I don’t care. History will absolve me.” Under that title his defense plea has become famous as an important document of the Revolution. Most of Fidel’s discussion was devoted to the circumstances immediately surrounding the ill-fated attack of July 26. But a part of his defense was devoted to the reform programme for which he had fought and the measures he would have initiated had his rebellion been successful.

Fidel listed five revolutionary laws which would have been immediately proclaimed. They dealt with the re-institution of the Constitution of 1940 and the assumption of legislative, executive and judicial powers by the revolutionary movement, the granting of property in land to those who work, two profit-sharing measures, and confiscation of ill-gotten gain. He went on in five pages out of eighty to outline the six major problems with which a Cuban Revolution would have to deal: land reform, industrialization, housing, unemployment, education, and health, “along with the restoration of public liberties and political democracy.” He offered solutions to only two of these—land: expropriation, redistribution and agricultural co-operatives; and housing: cutting rents in half and financing new housing. I emphasize this revolutionary document because it is today widely claimed in Cuba that “History Will Absolve Me” represents the blueprint of the revolution we are now witnessing. I suggest that this widespread Cuban view is mistaken. It does not appear that the form the Cuban Revolution takes today was conceived in 1953. Examination of the document with this question in mind—the emphasis on recourse to legality, the relative moderation of the five immediate laws, the failure to indicate, much less to spell out, any programme of attack on the six major problems—will, I believe, demonstrate that “History Will Absolve Me” may have contained some, goals and directional signposts, but that it certainly was not a blueprint, platform, or programme, written in 1953, of the revolution which was to take place after 1959. To say so does not, and is not meant, to condemn either Fidel’s 1953 position or his 1960 action. It is only to say that to find the roots of today’s revolution we must look a good deal further.

Landing in Oriente

The next step in the development of the revolutionary movement, which by then had taken the 26th of July as its name, was still further to radicalize the means of revolution. Fidel had, of course, been condemned by the court, but had regained his freedom shortly thereafter as a result of a general amnesty which Batista declared to reduce the growing pressure against his regime. Fidel used his freedom to plan a well-conceived coordinated military attack on the Batista government. On December 2, 1956, he landed with eighty-two men on a beach in Oriente Province. The landing was to have coincided with an uprising in Santiago, Oriente’s largest city. Bad weather delayed the ship’s arrival from Mexico, the uprising alerted the government, and the landing force was all but wiped out. Twelve men escaped death and reached the protection of the Sierra Maestre Mountains. It is probable that, had this 1956 rebellion succeeded, Cuba would not be experiencing the radical and profound social revolution which the world is witnessing today. For even then the revolutionary movement had not developed and matured into the radicalism and profundity which it was to have more than two years later. Still other events had to transpire, experiences had to arise, before the revolution could assume its present form.

Fidel had selected his landing place in Oriente not only because of the tactical advantage that the mountains could afford. There are mountains as well elsewhere in Cuba. However, Oriente has long been at once the poorest and the most militantly rebellious province in Cuba. Possibly due, in part, to the much greater prevalence of small private holdings in the coffee and tobacco country of Oriente, its peasants and its intellectuals at the provincial University of Oriente had been more active supporters of the revolutionary movement of the hundred years preceding. Fidel counted on their support.

Early in 1957 Fidel and his eleven companions sought to initiate guerrilla warfare against Batista’s army from their mountain hideouts. Batista had sometimes fifteen thousand, sometimes twenty thousand men under arms: Fidel had twelve. What were the sources of the support Fidel needed to fight such odds? The Communist Party, with a membership of possibly ten thousand, mostly in Havana, offered no support whatever. Not surprisingly, it regarded Fidel as a romantic, latter-day version of a Lord Byron or Robin Hood. Nor did the peasants of the Sierra, on whose account Fidel had landed there, support him or his movement. If they were interested at all, they regarded Fidel with suspicion and his movement as another intellectual and middle-class reform, not unlike that of 1933, which would promise no improvement in the lives of the large peasant majority. Who, then, did lend support to Fidel? Students mostly in Santiago, rather than Havana, and members of the middle-class in Havana. Not unlike the peasants, they thought that Fidel’s movement was one of middle-class reform. The middle-class supplied the money for weapons, and the students
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of Santiago supplied the commitment and courage to smuggle them into the mountains.

Movement Rallies Support

During 1957 and 1958 Fidel's group waged guerilla warfare in the mountains and sent an expedition across the plains of Camaquey. With the maturation and attendant repression of the Batista dictatorship and its battalialy by Fidel's group, the Movement of the 26th of July increasingly rallied support to its side. Seeing some peasants and Fidel's men fighting side by side, other peasants came to gain confidence in Fidel and his cause. Havana Negroes had lent some support to Batista, apparently because the combination of his Mullato blood with his rise to power had appealed to them, as a symbol of their own ascendance and recognition in the society. In the meantime, in Oriente (the only other province in which Negroes live in large numbers), Negroes came to sense that Fidel's movement represented so thorough a movement toward social equality that it augured emancipation for them as well. The growing popular support for Fidel's movement, combined with the complete failure of the March 1959 general strike which represented the capstone of their earlier tactics against Batista, resulted in the support of and subsequent collaboration with the 26th of July movement of the Communist Party of Cuba in April 1959.

Additional sources of support, campaigns against urban military garrisons with gun in one hand and microphone in the other; demoralizing Batista's army by disarming prisoners and then setting them free, that is, treating them as fellow victims of Batista rather than as his defenders, increasingly facilitated Castro's military campaign. Late in 1958, three hundred men under arms withstood and eventually destroyed the arms of twenty thousand men which sent a single expeditionary force of twelve thousand men to crush the rebellion once and for all.

Peasants Influence Movement

But for the long run of Cuba and of Latin America, possibly more important than Castro's influence on the peasants and others was the influence of the peasants on Castro and his movement. Notwithstanding Fidel's emphasis on land reform in 1953 and his selection of rural Oriente as the place from which to wage his war, the two years he and his men spent fighting and living among the peasants in the mountains undoubtedly resulted in an empathy and a depth of understanding of the peasants and their problems which they would have lacked had the 1956 attempt, to say nothing of the 1953 attempt, been immediately successful. The events and experiences of the years 1957 and 1958 thus became crucially important in shaping the form that the revolution eventually was to take, and, to anticipate an argument below, for the lesson that Latin Americans have undoubtedly learned about the difference between a resolution fought in the city and a revolution fought in the country.

No Reliance on Professional Army

On New Year's eve of 1958 Batista flees the country, and on January 1, 1959 Fidel Castro and his forces take control of the government. The rebellion against the dictatorship of Batista which grew out of 1952, 1953 and 1956 had ended in 1958. But the Revolution, whose ancestors were 1492, 1808, 1895 and 1933 had only just begun on that same day. In a sense, the six year rebellion was only the labour which made possible the birth of a revolution conceived in 1492. How would the new-born revolution develop, what form would it take? Its period of pregnancy and indeed its period of labour would determine the form it would take, but so would the environment into which it was born and into which it must grow. The first act of the revolutionary movement was to establish a government headed by a president, a prime minister, and important ambassadors.

What form might the Cuban Revolution take? In a sense, any of a large variety of forms. Why does it take precisely the form that it does? It is probably impossible to say. But the foregoing sections have pointed to the nature of Cuban society (it must be left to the reader to familiarize himself with the themes and details of Cuban and Latin American society), and they have sketched the development of response to these conditions. We have seen that some reforms have been relied upon in the past and have been found wanting. Cubans have seen it too, and it should not be surprising if they would seek not to make the same mistakes again. A rough and ready classification of some other alternative forms the revolution might take can be gleaned from the experience of other Latin American countries in their attempts to face in part similar problems. An outsider cannot, of course, claim that this experience elsewhere Mas steered the Cuban Revolution precisely into the course it has taken. But it is certain that the leaders of the Cuban Revolution, and in a less sophisticated way large masses of the Cuban people, have familiarized themselves with this Latin American revolutionary experience and themselves have sought to avoid its mistakes. We may thus briefly review this Latin American experience and suggest some lessons which, from the Cuban point of view, this experience has to offer.

It is common knowledge that in recent decades the largest part of rapid political change in Latin America has taken the form of intra-army changes in the palace guard. It is as obvious as it is familiar that such rebellions are stillborn and in no way further the revolutionary reform movement which Cuba has harboured all these years. Moreover, given the role that the Latin American army typically plays in safeguarding the conservatism of the society, keeping the professional army intact means that a major road block to social change has failed to be removed. Exiling the old leadership, as is so customary in Latin America, similarly maintains or provides a nucleus for the resurgence of the old regime. An alternative, important if the rebellion has been long and violent, is that the old leadership is mobbed by the angry people, in French Revolution style. But this alternative is also costly to the people themselves. Thus reliance on revolutionary courts, even though they may look like kangaroo courts and conviction and execution hold important benefits over the other two likely alternatives. So does rehabilitation of lower echelon leadership where it is possible. In this context, Cuban reliance for the rebellion on military forces outside of the professional army, and its subsequent destruction and elimination of the dictatorial leaders.
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Shift from City to Country

To the extent that Latin American rebellions have involved large-scale fighting, this fighting has, with the notable exception of the Mexican and Bolivian cases, occurred principally in the major city or cities. This military action in the cities has been at the same time symptom and cause of the urban rebellions which have so widely characterized the rural societies of Latin America. These urban rebellions have in turn resulted primarily in urban reforms. Where they have led to changes in the rural society as well, these changes have largely been brought to, if not forced on, the countryside. Even the most cursory acquaintance with urban-rural conflict, denied though it may be by generations of Soviet and Western writers, will forbode unhappy consequences for this process. The more intensive and extensive changes in the rural and rural-urban social relations which have been associated with the participation of Zapata's peasants in the Mexican revolution of 1910 and the two years of guerilla warfare by Castro's forces in the mountains of Cuba foreshadow a shift in the locus and nature of rebellion and revolution from city to country in the Latin American upheavals which are soon to come.

Argentina and Venezuela

An alternative form for the Cuban Revolution, more radical than the clearly inadequate changes of the palace guard considered and rejected above, may be represented by recent reforms in Argentina and Venezuela. Peron's government in Argentina adopted the course of a welfare state. In facing Argentina's economic problems, Peron sought to rely on the re-distribution of the income pie implicit in the welfare state, with hardly any concern for increasing the size of that pie. Urban workers were favoured, and in the meantime agricultural productivity declined. To continue to enforce the distribution his government desired, Peron became increasingly dictatorial and his government increasingly repressive. In the mean time farther north, Jimenez dealt with Venezuela's economic problems by resorting neither to re-distribution, nor to investment in growth, with the exception of the petroleum industry which filled the coffers of his treasury, but whose benefits hardly trickled into the countryside beyond Caracas' luxury housing and luxury highways. In both countries, but particularly in Venezuela, socio-political inequality was felt as repression by the rural majorities. Both dictators were overthrown after the mid-1950's. Both dictatorships were replaced by substantially middle-class based holders of power which have, particularly in the United States, been widely hailed as "Democratic Reform Governments."

"Free elections" and parliamentary coalitions have accompanied the Frondizi government in Argentina and the Bentacourt government in Venezuela. Note that the first step of the Cuban Revolution also resulted in filling the high government offices with similar highly respectable middle-class personnel. In several years of office, neither the Frondizi nor the Bentacourt government have brought any notable reform to the countryside, neither socially, politically, nor economically; not land reform, not education, not investment, nor, in the case of Venezuela, channelling the large income from its petroleum industry into diversified economic development.

From where the Cubans sit, having failed to introduce any reform in the structure, particularly in the rural structure of these societies, the pressures which Latin American social structure exerts on governments to become increasingly right-wing dictatorships (or to put it the other way around, the conditions which permit these dictatorships to flower have reasserted themselves), and both countries already find themselves again threatened with imminent return to Peron-Jimenez type dictatorships — just as Batista inevitably grew out of the undisturbed roots of the Machado regime in Cuba. From the Cuban point of view and from that of this writer, the fact that as these pages are being written, Bentacourt is patrolling the city with tanks and shooting students in the streets is not an accident. Such are the fruits of relying on the outward trappings of democracy without any attempt to reform, never mind democratize, the society. It should come as little surprise to discover that the Frondizi-Bentacourt form of revolution or type of reform is what the United States and, indeed, the middle and upper class elements in Cuba and Latin America would like to have seen as the form of the Cuban Revolution. But it should come as no less of a surprise that the leaders of the Movement of the 26th of July should have interpreted Argentine and Venezuelan experience as a sign that more radical and more wide-spread social change must be wrought in Cuba if the sacrifices of the rebellion and the past are not to have been made in vain.

Guatemala and Bolivia

A model of the form more radical than that discussed above may be found in the revolutions of (Guatemala in 1944 and Bolivia in 1952. Both revolutions were in part rural in character, in socio-political and economic change in the countryside. Yet, as is well known, both revolutions failed. The Bolivian one never even really got off the ground. The governments of Arevalo and later Arbenz in Guatemala did introduce social change to the countryside, but they did so gradually and on a catch-as-catch-can basis. The revolution did call for some popular participation, though not in the form of military defense by the armed populace; and when the counter-revolution attacked in 1954, the reform governments and with them ten years of work were an easy pushover. (As a sidelight, some Cubans have observed that the presence at the time of the revolutions of the American ambassador Bonsial in Bolivia and in Guatemala and then again in Cuba may not have been altogether coincidental.)

Finally, if none of the foregoing models for a Latin American revolution appear to promise the results which revolutionary Cubans desire and require, the example of Mexico, with the oldest, longest, and most far-reaching revolution which Latin America has-witnessed, still remains available for examination. The Mexican Revolution of 1910 came on the heels of the Diaz dictatorship of the preceding century which has universally been characterized as an alliance between private land owners, the Church, and American investment interests in Mexico. The rebellion was fought
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long and hard by various factions, some of which represented the peasants; it resulted in a revolution which made sweeping land reforms; eventually, though not until decades later, conducted a widespread and successful literacy campaign; increased education; expropriated all private and foreign holdings of subterranean mineral and petroleum resources in 1936; began the industrialization of the country; and, has raised the investment rate to a respectable 10 per cent per annum. Yet, per capita income in Mexico remained one-half of what it is in Cuba, the peasantry seems to have been all but bypassed by economic development, and every government since that of Cardenas in the mid-thirties have moved increasingly to the right until the middle-class industrial and commercial government of Lopez Mateos is today regarded as excessively conservative, even by Time magazine.

**Forced into More Radical Forms**

Without going into the details of the reform measures undertaken by the revolutions reviewed above and the revolution now unfolding in Cuba, it appears clear to this writer that, if the Cuban Revolution is no also to be either stillborn or to die in infancy, Cuba is forced into still more radical forms of revolution than any of those yet seen in Latin America. The haste with which revolutionary reforms are being undertaken; the expropriation of latifundista ownership of sugar cane, grazing lands; the distribution of land and agricultural credit to small holders; formation of agricultural co-operatives for diversification of crops and employment of the eight to twelve month unemployed rural proletariat which characterize Cuba's population as it does no those of many of the countries examined above; the immediate drive for industrialization, small and large, light and heavy, the establishment of INRA (National Institute of Agrarian Reform) as a sort of super TVA; 64 per cent increase of primary school enrolment and the three-fold increase of first-grade enrolment in the very first year of the revolution; the distribution of fire-arms to the nearly one million militia (national guard) members; the asceticism of those active in the revolution from the smallest rural community to the office of the prime minister; all these distinguished the Cuban Revolution as one more radical, more serious, more active, than any prior Latin American revolution which Cuba might use as its mode.

Thus, the very experience of social reform movements elsewhere in Latin America and in Cuba's own history itself, which has led Cuba to adopt revolutionary forms more radical than those for which models are available also leaves Cuba in the position of having to make and find her way in revolutionary territory unchartered by earlier experience in Latin America. The radicalism of the Cuban Revolution, induced partly by necessity and partly by design, has already set Cuba on a path for which history can no longer serve as a guide. It is implicit in the preceding discussion that the Cuban Revolution finds itself at this point without a pre-formulated procedure which might guide the revolution along its way. Moreover beyond the design for rebellion against the old dictatorship and the general intent for land reform and other reforms announced in "History Will Absolve Me", the revolution lacked these guides as well during the recent years that it has already traversed.

**Finds its Own Way**

Not, unlike other social movements, and probably more than many, the Cuban Revolution must and does find its way substantially in the dark as it goes along its way. Under the circumstances, I should not be surprising if many Cubans seek, and some yearn, for a model that might serve them as a guide. Quite obviously the West, and particularly the United States, can offer it no such model. Even where some American experience might serve as a guide, the United States has sought to close the channels of transmittal of such experience by withdrawing technical and material aid and trade, while particular American measures which might of themselves be inoffensive have come to be associated with the offensiveness of American imperialism in Latin America as a whole. In the meantime, the United States, far from making an effort to isolate the acceptable from the offensive, insists on continuing to sell the American way as a package deal.

Looking between East and West, it is possible to find a "Third Force" or a third or fourth way. But, to the extent to which they exist, these models and sources of possible alignment are largely in the field of international politics - India, Burma, the United Arab Republic, the new African states may offer alternatives in the United Nations, but they have no economic programme that Cuba might make its own. To this observer, among countries which are not aligned on either side of the cold war, only Yugoslavia appears as a source of any potential guide to a country like Cuba. The presence of a substantial number of Yugoslavian technicians in Cuba suggests that Cuba may yet come to look in that direction.

**West Offers No Guide**

There remain, then, only two other places for Cuba to look for guidance to its future; one is toward Russia-China, and the other is at home. The model of the Socialist camp, of course, holds profound attraction for any country or people who, like Cuba, have only just become determined to shape their own future. Even if the West were not so intimately associated with Imperialism, be it of the British-French or the American variety, the Western and particularly American programmer would suffer seriously from their heavy emphasis on economic problems alone. But from the Cuban, and in general the Latin American-African-Southeast-Asian point of view, the problems they fare are in the first instance and probably most importantly problems of social and political change. But it is to precisely these problems that the West offers no guide and Western supported elements in the "emergent" societies offer no programme.

It is commonplace among Western economists to miss the boat even on economic problems. Though they rightly point out that only increases and not changes in the distribution of the economic pie can ultimately serve to meet the problems of economic development, they are from this led to conclude and advise that the world-wide attempts at re-distribution are misplaced. But from the point of view of Cuba, or any other semi-feudal country, it is clear that re-distribution of wealth and therewith power are necessary to render possibly the increase in
output which Western economies prescribe. It is thus not surprising if Cubans look toward Russia and China as the only sources of models for furthering social, political and economic change.

**Most Important Solutions Home Grown**

Though the Cubans may look in part toward Russia and China, they work at home and the largest and most important solutions to their revolutionary problems are met with solutions home-grown on the spot. Even a casual observer can readily note how Cuba is relying on varied solutions to the problems of guiding their revolution through unchartered territory, and how these solutions in turn give rise to varied new problems. That is their revolutionary programme, and its procedure is largely devised where and when occasion demands. Viewed from the perspective of a place of stability, the Cuban Revolution appears as a tangle of confusion, of people running off in all different directions, of many projects started and few concluded of changes in direction. But viewed from the standpoint of the revolutionary, these are the very marks of vitality; they are the marks not of weakness, but of strength. Yet, not everything can be changed. In his analysis of the Anatomy of Revolution, Crane Brinton suggested that no revolution can change everything, that the new must be built upon the old.

But for a revolution, the old is not only a legacy and a base, it is also an instrument Paradoxically, it is the very radicalness of change to be introduced in Cuba which necessitates reliance on the old well-entrenched and thus reliable social arid cultural forms as vehicles for the introduction of that change. An attempt at wholesale substitution of a new society and culture for the old would surely result in no society, new or old. Thus, still another source of understanding of the Cuban Revolution lies in an examination of the old and existing sociocultural forms which serve as vehicle for the Revolution, and which thereby help to define the possibilities and limitations of social change through the Cuban Revolution.

**Family and Kinship**

Now, as before, in Cuba as in most other parts of the world, family and kinship relations serve as the most important bond and channel of communication between people. Many things are necessary to work a far-reaching change in a society, but one of them surely is to communicate the new. The changes in social relationship that have already occurred, the new opportunities and responsibilities, the spirit of the revolution — to the people. Any visit to Cuba's countryside, to its villages and towns, and if one looks more closely, to its cities, will show that television and other mass media, commercial and work relations notwithstanding, the extended family serves as the Revolution's most important medium of communication. It is the family which reaches from the countryside to the town, from one region to another, from the provinces to the capital, in short from one point of contact with revolutionary experience to another. And the experience with the revolution which is meaningful and important, which permits a sense of participation and produces a feeling of empathy, that experience is the one which is communicated between one member of a family and another.

**The Patron Relationship**

It is the experience of the son in a new school, the cousin in a new cooperative farm, the uncle in Havana, much more than Fidel's TV speeches, newspapers, mass rallies, or even cracker-barrel discussions which lend meaning to the revolution. At the same time it is existing family relations which continue in many instances to serve as the vehicles for the distribution of the new opportunities and responsibilities arising out of the revolution in land ownership, education, and out of the new tasks created in the revolution in general. Thus an acquaintance with the Cuban family can afford much understanding of the points at which change is or must be introduced, how it can be communicated and accepted or rejected, in short, of the possibilities for revolution and the limitations on change which Cuba's most important institution bodes for the Revolution.

Probably the most important social relationship in Latin American and Cuban society, both inside the family and out is the authority of the father, paternalism or the "patron" relationship. In the absence of this time-tested form of social intercourse, it would be impossible for Cuba to organize the construction of the new schools, roads, factories, and most important, to introduce any new forms of enterprise like agricultural cooperatives. Despite, may be because of, the less "indigenous" nature of Cuba compared with other Carribean society, paternalism has in Cuba played an even more pervasive role than elsewhere. However, a colleague of mine suggests that Cuban paternal relations have been less regularized and reciprocals than those of feudalism or heavily Indian populated societies like Bolivia. Thus, Cubans have often had to approach their patron with requests rather than relying only on his fulfilment of already specified reciprocal obligations.

**Administrators Run Cooperative Farms**

Consider agriculture. As one strolls through cities and towns almost anywhere in the world, America, Russia, Europe, Africa, other Carribean countries, one encounters outdoor markets in which 'nearby farmers sell vegetables and often meat of their own production. Not so in Cuba. And the reason is simple: much less than other rural countries does Cuba have small holders who are In a position to raise and market such produce on their own. Such small holders as there are tend to be isolated in the mountains, where they raise coffee and tobacco as cash crops and produce for subsistence. Most other Cuban peasants, if one may even call them that, have long been landless agricultural labourers, a veritable rural proletariat. They worked (only part of the year) on large and medium size landholdings, and the relationship between them and employers and supervisory personnel was substantially paternalistic. But in large part many peasants were not therefore automatically totally cared for. The term "guajero", now generalized to refer to all peasants, developed as the name of peasants who built their shacks along the roadside, for lack of any other land on which to live.

When Castro moved to establish cooperative farms, for sugar and other produce as well, the world expected a repetition of the collectivization problems which had plagued Russia, Eastern Europe and
China. They need have had neither fear nor delight. INRA (National Institute of Agrarian Reform) appointed administrators for each cooperative farm, and in important ways Cuba proceeded with business as usual. The community elders who pointed to the picture of ex-sugar mill administrator hanging in their company-provided club house and who noted with satisfaction that, though the picture is larger than that of Fidel Castro on the other wall, they have no reason to remove it, were saying just that. In many ways, the Revolution has, at least for the present, passed much of the initiative in the paternalistic relationship to the patron. In sugar lands already in production, the co-op members elect a “coordinator” from among their members, but the authority is vested in the INRA-appointed, non-member, “administrator” for the first five years or until the membership has learned itself to assume responsibility. In the new agricultural co-ops, which are largely breaking new lands and only just beginning construction, membership has generally not been established yet.

Continued Paternalism
The establishment of the farm is under the authority of the administrator, who in turn is under the direction of the chief of his agricultural zone; and the work is done by agricultural labourers hired by the day. Indeed, some of these farms, the largest, will never be transformed into cooperatives but will be maintained as “Granjas del Pueblo” with employed workers reminiscent of Soviet state farms. For the time being, none of these farms are really cooperatives in the sense that responsibility, and therewith benefits and costs residually rest with the participants. Even casual conversation with either the peasants or the supervisory personnel easily demonstrates that their experience in the past has been of paternalism and that they continue to rely on it for the present. The government has not tried to substitute cooperatives for small private landholdings where it does exist, and it is no accident that Cuba is probably the only country in the world in which serious land reform has not resulted in an initial decline in agricultural output.

The continued paternalism exhibits itself in the relation between individual peasants and the new agricultural extension and credit agencies, the new “stores of the people” which supplement and replace the private and company stores in rural areas. Paternalism and conversely lack of individual responsibility remain evident in student-teacher relationships in the many new schools. But at the same time the youth and non-professionalism of many of the new teachers and the individual initiative which underlies the very school attendance on the part of many teenagers and young adults, undoubtedly attenuate the paternalism in the student-teacher relationship. The 20-hour trip by three friends of mine, 18, 19, and 20 years of age, from isolated Sagua de Tanamo to previously strange and distant Havana to see the Minister of Education and ask him to build a technical high school in their town was undoubtedly visualized by both parties in the context of paternalism, but the same event would not have occurred before the Revolution.

There is, thus, a difference in the quality of the paternalism then and now. Though the authority and mutual responsibility and respect largely remain the basis of organizing the tasks of the Revolution as they did the tasks of old, both “father” and “son” appear to sense a difference in the source of that authority and respect. This change in source or base may be traceable in part to the very deep and widespread sense of participation in the Revolution and the new Cuba, and it might be due in part to the unusual youth of all at the top of much of the local leadership in the Revolution. The new Cuban paternalism has a quality of fraternalism. And this already represents and forebodes a profound social revolution.

Obligations Particular and Personal
Thus, a closer examination of paternalism in Cuban society can increase our understanding of how the new can come to be introduced and accepted, how real cooperatives with the individual and collective responsibility they imply can come into being, with worker participation in management, maybe on the Yugoslavian style, can and will be introduced, what fruits the educational reform will bear.

Another quality of Latin and Cuban social relations, not unrelated to paternalism, is their particularism and personalism. In Catholic societies more than in Protestant ones, obligations are particular and to persons rather than universal and to principles. Glance at any newspaper photograph of the revolutionary leadership, listen to any statement by “defectors who were close to Castro”, and the intense personal quality of the recruitment into positions of leadership and authority and of the continuing relations among those so recruited is immediately evident. The same particularism is the source as well of many of the social contacts between top leaders and other revolutionary actives and among the latter themselves. In the absence of such strong personalties and their importance, how would people in entirely new and often continually changing revolutionary roles and incumbencies relate to each other, how could the revolutionary leadership coordinate its activities at all?

And yet, at least in practice if not in design, the leadership of the Cuban Revolution scrupulously practices the dictates of two ultra-universalistic values: honesty and asceticism; no charges of fraud or financial self-aggrandizement have come to my ears — even from the lips of those most unfriendly to the government, and the spartan existence and hard work of those active in the Revolution is common knowledge. What the source and appeal of this behaviour in Latin America is, I do not know. Possibly, and paradoxically, it is to be traced in part to the much stronger influence that North American culture has exerted in Cuba than anywhere else in Latin America. Certainly the early days of the Mexican revolution were not famed for honesty or asceticism.

Northerners have long regarded Latins as authoritarian and yet as individualistic, free-wheeling and rebellious as well. No revolution can change national character, if that is what the above represents, overnight; and if the revolution is to introduce and change, it must rely on existing cultural forms as vehicles of that change. And so one may encounter cooperative farm administrators who will tell you that he will plant where and how the agronomist (there he sits, fresh out of school) tells him to, because only he has the necessary knowledge,
while another administrator, or indeed the same one, will point with pride to the new brickworks or new furniture factory he has established entirely on his own initiative and without the advice or consent of anybody: and if someone doesn't like it they can go to hell. So much of the old serves to shape, and also to bring forth, the new.

Pragmatic and Personalised

The pragmatism of the Cuban Revolution in its development and the variety of its current forms suggests that, as I argued earlier, the Revolution has no ideology. But as the past gives way to the future, as the focus of attention and as the variety of attempted revolutionary forms seems increasingly to dissipate the revolutionary force, pressures will surely form to create and adopt an ideology for the Cuban Revolution. Maybe that time is already here. To serve its purpose, that ideology must be widely communicated, and to be communicated it must be readily symbolized. Whence are the existing forms of symbolism and imagery which can serve to carry the ideology and thereby with the Revolution? One answer, but only one, is personalism again. Significant Latin images, as well as social relations, tend to be highly personal. Thus, probably more than the social movements of northern countries which tend to be more idealistically symbolized, the Cuban Revolution may become increasingly associated with the leadership and personality of Fidel. "We are all Fidelistas," Cubans say. If the Revolution is so personalized, how would Fidel's death affect the Revolution's course?

The foregoing discussion has not been an attempt to describe or explain the Cuban Revolution exhaustively. Its intent has been only to expose for inspection three sources of background and explanation for the developments that Cuba and the world now witness: The Cuban ancien regime and the development of the revolutionary movement within it, the experience elsewhere in Latin America with attempts to handle similar problems, and some socio-cultural factors in Cuban life which inevitably must influence the course of the Revolution. It must be left to the understanding and research of others to explore the many questions only raised here.

Tube Factory

THE Commonwealth Development Finance Company will provide a loan of £175,000 for the manufacture of non-ferrous tubes, pipes, rods, and sections in India.

The loan will provide the foreign-exchange requirements for a factory being erected in Bombay by Kamani Tubes Private Ltd, in collaboration with Yorkshire Imperial Metals Ltd, an associate of Imperial Chemical Industries, which has arranged the procurement of plant in the United Kingdom, and will assist in the early period of running, under a 10-year technical collaboration agreement.

The Yorkshire Imperial Metals' part in the scheme is largely one of supplying know-how. They also hope to provide assistance, from time to time by means of short visits to India by technicians from Leeds.