

CHAPTER 9

Bound to Outlast? Education for Socialism

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Abstract: This paper accompanies the leaders of the Cuban Revolution in their considerations as to how to educate a population in values and beliefs consistent with the perpetuation of the Cuban Revolution and the socialist system of production. The leaders of the Cuban Revolution try to replicate their own character in the youth but then they fear youth rebellion. They try to prevent this problem through telling their history to the young but then they create a dependent youth. They try to balance youth dependence by developing initiative and independence of mind among the young but then the possibility of future youth irreverence appears. In order to prevent future youth irreverence, the founders of the Cuban Revolution have promoted socialist values and beliefs among the young both through speech and through framing their life experiences. Whether this effort has paid off is too early to judge. Insofar as the promotion of the political leaders of the new generations depends on choices made by leaders of the revolutionary generation we cannot know if the behavior of the former is genuine and therefore the question is to remain undisclosed. Yet, as in every society, a degree of social diversity in Cuba and thus in the success of its leadership's political educational effort can be assumed. If so, the question of regime continuity also depends on the specific process of recruitment and preparation of cadres, which is promising direction of further research.

« It will be the duty of the leaders to gain an ever clearer insight into all theoretical questions, to free themselves more and more from the influence of traditional phrases inherited from the old world outlook and constantly to keep in mind that socialism, since it has become a science, demands that it be pursued as a science, that is, that it be studied.»

Fredrick Engels

Just as every modern state is founded on violence, every socioeconomic and political order is founded on values and beliefs. Qua humans, those persons or groups who control the means of coercion in every modern state have or claim to have values and beliefs through which they frame the ruling socioeconomic and political order and justify it. When their values and beliefs change, the socioeconomic and political order changes.

As theoreticians have repetitively pointed out through concepts such as “false consciousness,” “legitimacy,” and “hegemony,” this order strengthens as more and more people accept it for normative, or internal reasons, rather than for an either coercive or uncoercive external system of rewards and punishments. Thus, in order to strengthen the socioeconomic and political order at any given time, rulers can try to propagate their values and beliefs. In order to prolong it over time, they can try to transmit them from the old to the young. It is possible to call the process of transmission of values and beliefs “education.” This process is political when the values and beliefs concerned refer to the institutions of government. When the process of education flows from the incumbent government, as an iron rule it seeks both to strengthen the ruling socioeconomic and political order and to prolong it over time.

Now it has become clear that in the long run most state socialist experiences that have come to an end scored a political-educational failure. Notwithstanding the very strong efforts at times invested by leaders of state socialist regimes to propagate and perpetuate their dominant set of values and beliefs, whatever consent with the socialist rule existed constantly shrunk over time. Along with the shrinking of consent, social life came to transpire “within a lie,” to paraphrase Vaclav Havel, or contrary to the own values and beliefs of most citizens, including most if not all persons in leadership positions.¹ From here on systemic change—the adjustment of acceptable behavior with the “real” dominant set of values and beliefs—was only a matter of time, though of uncertain length until that the change effectively took place.

Whether Cuban state socialism is following or escaping that script depends to a degree on the ability of its political leaders to transfer the values and beliefs upon which it lies both horizontally, to the population, and longitudinally, from the old to the young. Their persistent effort to do so vacillates between fomenting the reverence or the autonomy of their pupils, and consists of two moments of “character” and two moments of “reason.”

1. Playwright, leading dissident, and first post-revolutionary president of the Czech Republic. The expression belongs to his famous 1978 essay, “The Power of the Powerless.” See Havel (1989, pp. 36-122).

The New Man

Creating anything new is never an easy task, the less so when it implies a change of human behavior.² Yet a new human morality is just what political leaders of state socialist regimes aimed to create. Early socialist thinkers and ideologues of socialist states alike hoped that the socialist revolutions would breed a man whose soul and mind would be compatible with the long-term development of socialist societies. Upon the appearance of that man were hung great expectations: the coercive features of the state would disappear, the economy would thrive, and the arts would flourish. What exactly this man should look like has never been, of course, fully clear. To conceive a new morality requires a non-negligible degree of imagination that to a lesser or greater extent is always delimited by what is known. The clearest characteristics of the new socialist morality have therefore always been depicted in terms of selflessness and subordination of the individual to the general interest, which are but the symmetrical opposite of those values implicit in the behavior of economic agents in any capitalist model that socialist believers generally despise. Beyond that, depending on speaker, thinker, or imperatives of time and place, the socialist citizen has been imagined mostly through universally accepted positive values open to broad interpretations, such as international solidarity, patriotism, fraternity, frugality, honesty, modesty, sincerity, discipline, optimism, humility, boldness, and so forth.³

Although in several of their most suggestive passages on the topic Marx and Engels subordinated the morality of men and women to their

2. The task is difficult to the extent that liberal thinkers tend to refer to individual social behavior as an unchanging given that is ultimately conditioned by human nature. If we accept their view, creating a new human morality is impossible, and any attempt at doing just this is inevitably doomed to fail. On extreme versions of this argument, the works of Hayek and Von Mises are obligatory consults, and the work of Popper (1966) strongly recommended, but any philosophical inquiry after the normative foundations of a free market economy leads in one way or another to this point. On another plane but equally to the point, on the difficulty of creating a new human morality was perhaps Niccolo Machiavelli (1950 [1513], p. 21) thinking when he wrote that there "is nothing more difficult to carry out, no more doubtful of success, no more dangerous to handle, than to initiate a new order of things." The sentence refers to a political regime and not concretely to a new human morality, but Machiavelli's overall insistence on the link between human morality and political stability gives some credence to this hypothesis.

material conditions,⁴ and although from these passages it can be understood that, in their thinking, material abundance and rational economic planning would be preconditions for the emergence of the new human morality,⁵ leaders of the state socialist regimes never merely waited for institutional change and economic growth to produce more or less automatically the expected change in human behavior. In all state socialist regimes—to degrees varying across time and place—the new morality was actively pursued, at a minimum, through a branch in the dominant party for the socialization of the youth and a universal schooling system with curricula specifically designed to promote the new morality.⁶ The moral engineering of man was justified, when needed (occasionally), by the particular local conditions upon which communism was being built, which necessarily differed to some degree from the theoretical expectations of Marx, Engels, or other theoreticians.

Thus, in his celebrated writing on the topic, Ernesto Guevara identifies the divergence of existing conditions for the building of a socialist society between those expected by Marx and those initially prevailing in Cuba. Whereas Marx saw socialist revolutions taking place in advanced capitalist societies and the new morality emerging upon conditions of material abundance, according to Guevara Cubans suffered from underdevelopment and material scarcity. In Cuba, therefore, he argued, to advance toward the construction of communism it is necessary to work on the modification of man's morality together with and as emphatically as on the modification of the material and institutional economic basis. The new man would then be the crucial agent to construct the communist society, rather than the one who would emerge as a result. To the degree that Cubans achieve concrete successes in creating a new man, they “will have

3. The statutes of the Communist Party of Cuba, to give one concrete example, define the “new morality of the Cuban society” in terms of “collectivism, solidarity, equality, social justice, mutual trust, conscious discipline, modesty, honesty, critical and self-critical spirit, and confidence in the socialist future.” These values, according to the same document, are against “individualism, racism, skepticism, lack of faith in socialism, libertinism, defeatism, populism, opportunism, hipper-criticism, double morality, paternalism... indiscipline, corruption and any other form of criminal behavior.” See *Estatutos del Partido Comunista de Cuba* in the Spanish bibliography under “sitios web.”

made a valuable contribution to Marxism-Leninism, to the cause of humanity.”⁷

In their effort to “contribute to the cause of humanity” in this sense, Cuban leaders have built over the years an all-encompassing system of socialist education, which literally accompanies the Cuban citizen from the cradle to the grave. This system encompasses the whole schooling system from preschool to universities, the mass organizations (for infants, youth, women, students, elders, or just citizens), the party, the army, and most workplaces. Within these spaces socialist values and beliefs are transmitted through the speech of high-ranking leaders, study materials of diverse kinds (including speeches of leaders), and formative experiences. It is no exaggeration to say that in these spaces and through these means in one way or another the attempt of the Cuban leadership to instill a new morality in humans has reached practically all Cubans who have grown up (and therefore been educated) since the institution of the revolutionary regime.⁸

4. Consider, for instance, the following two:

- 1) The phantoms formed in the human brain are also, necessarily, sublimates of their material life-process, which is empirically verifiable and bound to material premises. Morality, religion, metaphysics, all the rest of ideology and their corresponding forms of consciousness, thus no longer retain the semblance of independence. They have no history, no development; but men, developing their material production and their material intercourse, alter, along with this, their real existence, their thinking, and the products of their thinking. Life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life. (Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*, in Lewis S. Feuer ed. 1959, p. 247).
- 2) Just as Darwin discovered the law of development or organic nature, so Marx discovered the law of development of human history: the simple fact, hitherto concealed by an overgrowth of ideology, that mankind must first of all eat, drink, have shelter and clothing, before it can pursue politics, science, art, religion, etc.; that therefore the production of the immediate material means of subsistence and consequently the degree of economic development attained by a given people or during a given epoch form the foundation upon which the state institutions, the legal conceptions, the ideas on art, and even on religion, of the people concerned have been evolved, and in the light of which they must, therefore, be explained, instead of vice versa, as had hitherto been the case. (Frederick Engels, *Speech at the Graveside of Karl Marx*, in Foreign Languages Publishing House ed. 1949, p.153.)
5. See for instance the passage of the *Critique of the Gotha Program* (in Lewis S. Feuer, ed. 1959, p.119) quoted as epigraph to the first chapter of this dissertation.

The Founder's Challenge

Whoever is designing a system of socialist education for the first time in a burgeoning socialist society is inevitably confronted by the challenge of forming a man for a society that does not yet fully exist. He, she, or rather they, surely have to ask to themselves what the person compatible with the long-term endurance of the socialist regime might look like and what are the most appropriate methods to bring her about. A first, rather intuitive answer to such questions is that any ruling group that wants to preserve its rule over a long time “must design the education of the latest generation to build a character identical to the first.”⁹ The Cuban leaders of the first revolutionary generation made a conscious choice for socialism and profess to like it. They have also been able to preserve it, sometimes despite many difficulties. If they want the socialist regime to endure after their death, perhaps the safest rule of thumb for them to follow would be to try to replicate their own character among their chronological followers.

Through memory and the method of imitation much seems to be made in Cuba to replicate the character of the main protagonists of the Cuban Revolution. Ernesto Guevara in his aforementioned essay finds in the Rebel Army fighters a glimpse of the “man and woman of the future” and points to the propagation of their heroic attitude as the principle to follow in creating the new morality.¹⁰ Since his death, Guevara himself

6. On this point it is customary to distinguish between the more “mechanical” or less intrusive post-Stalinist Soviet approach to the formation of the new morality and the more voluntaristic or intrusive Maoist approach of China. But even the post-Stalinist approach in the Soviet Union and East Europe was far from passive by the standards of liberal education in liberal democracies. See Paul (1979) and Medyesy (1975) for evidence based on the cases of Czechoslovakia and Hungary respectively. If we were to place Cuba at some point in a continuum between these two extremes, as this chapter aims in part to show, it would be closer to the voluntaristic end most of the time.

7. For writing this dissertation and this chapter in particular I have used the version of Guevara’s seminal letter directed to Carlos Quijano, director of the Uruguayan weekly magazine *Marcha*, best known under the title “Socialism and Man in Cuba,” as it appeared in *Verde Olivo*, 31 December 31, 1967. The letter was first published in 1965 and since has been many times reprinted in almost every imaginable language. For a relatively A relatively recent translation to English see can be found in the compilation of essays by Ocean Press Guevara (2005, pp.147-168). I have used this translation as the main source for my quotes. This particular quote appears on page p. 163.

has become the quintessential example of the new Cuban man, to the extent that the schoolchildren pledge every morning that they “will be like Che.” The epic episodes of the revolutionary war are well remembered through their commemoration as national holidays. Part of their commemoration consists of their replication, even if symbolic. Every July 26, the best elementary school students of Santiago de Cuba “take” the Moncada barracks. Every beginning of January marches recall the victory caravan of the Rebel Army to Havana. On December 2, the landing of the *Granma* yacht is commemorated as Revolutionary Armed Forces Day. The commemoration does not include sea voyages from Mexico to Oriente, though this voyage has been replicated occasionally by groups of Cuban youth.¹¹ At least once in their life hundred of thousands of Cubans climb the Turquino peak, the highest in Cuba and located in the area of operation of the Rebel Army, where significant events during the revolutionary struggle took place.¹² In remembering and imitating the epic events of the revolutionary struggle, those who did not participate in them come to know better those who did and the circumstances under which

8. Given the considerable quantity of academic production in English devoted to the Cuban case, the relatively little attention being paid to the regime’s efforts at transforming political culture and the total ignorance of the socialist dimensions of this effort seem quite odd. Books devoted specifically to the topic of political culture include Fagen’s pioneering work (1969), Medin (1990), Bunck (1994), and Kacpia (2000). Despite their many differences, the first three have in common the focus on concrete cases such as the literacy campaign (Fagen and Medin) or else on particular fields through which the transformation of culture has been attempted, ranging from the military and literature (Medin) to gender relations and sports (Bunck). These books contain mainly policy description and assessment (Fagen and Medin) or reports on Castro’s speeches (Bunck). The vision or ideological purpose behind the policies and speeches being described is only barely scrutinized and therefore stays at the very general level of “revolutionary consciousness” (Bunck), “rejection of money,” “importance of youth” (Fagen) and “confrontation and heroism” (Medin). By analyzing messages of national content in depth, Kacpia has been able to show a basic continuity over time in the transference of Cuban national values since the foundation of the Cuban Republic. See the remainder of this chapter, as a “socialist” corollary, albeit a partial one, of Kacpia’s meritorious work.

9. McWilliams (1973, p. 218).

10. The phrase in the English translation reads: “In the attitude of our fighters could be glimpsed the man and woman of the future... Finding the method to perpetuate this heroic attitude in daily life is... one of our fundamental tasks.” In Guevara Ocean press ed. (2005, p.150).

11. See Blanco (1994), for an example of one.

they fought. By knowing them better and (symbolically) sharing their experiences, they can increase their likeness to them.

Yet for any group that achieved its power through rebellion, an exact replication of its character among the youth—even if possible—would be too dangerous a principle to follow in trying to perpetuate its rule for generations. The “problem of beginnings” looms large against this rule of thumb. Those Cubans who made the revolution attained power by rebelling against the incumbent socioeconomic and political order under which they grew up. If they transmit their rebellious spirit to the next generation, there is always the danger that the next generation will rebel against their rule, just as they rebelled against the rule of their time. Not for nothing are revolutions so often likened to Saturn, who devoured his own children out of fear of their insubordination.

The founders of the Cuban socialist regime have tried to mediate their own “problem of beginnings” through reason. The telling of history is the method par excellence in the service of reason. Through the telling of Cuban history, those Cubans who participated in the revolutionary struggle and instituted the socialist regime teach their chronological followers about the ills of the old society and the marvels of the new one. In their first contact with the history of the Cuban Revolution in the Cuban schools, children ages nine to ten read in their textbook that life in Cuba before the revolution was plagued by undernourishment, unemployment, and racial and gender discrimination.¹³ Peasants were pulled away from their lands, children had neither schools nor hospitals, and people could not speak their minds. The law favored “exploiters” and foreign interests, and Cuban governors were subordinated to the United States. With the revolution, Cubans “achieved their long-awaited liberty.” Now “Cuba is a free and sovereign Republic,” where “oppression, hunger, unemployment, illiteracy and discrimination” no longer exist. Rather than rebellion, Cubans who have come of age after the revolution have the historical mis-

12. Specifically, Fidel and other guerrilla leaders had a CBS televised interview with Bob Taber at the top of that peak on April 28, 1957. The episode is narrated in Szulc (1986, p.420). See also the article by de la Rosa Labrada in *Juventud Rebelde*, April 28, 2007, p. 4.

13. The book corresponds to the fourth grade. All quotes in this paragraph are taken from Santos Palma et. al. (1991, pp. 41-47).

sion to “maintain the conquests” achieved and to further develop the socialist regime. With greater historical detail and more elaborate data, this message repeats itself several times in the schooling system as students continue studying the history of their revolution in higher grades.¹⁴

If believed, this interpretation of history cannot but create a mix of sentiments such as admiration, veneration, respect, and gratitude, that is, *reverence*, toward the persons who overthrew the old regime and instituted the new. Those who substitute clean for corrupt government and convert oppression into justice and subordination into independence are great men and women, the more so when so many difficulties stand in their way. Thanks to them, by implication, Cubans born or raised under the revolutionary regime live in a good rather than an evil society.

That at least the leaders of the Communist youth organization (UJC) appear to revere their revolutionary elders comes to the fore in their writings and speeches. In newspaper editorials they often express admiration for the “exemplary generation” that built the revolutionary regime, “unbreakable, firm in action and thinking, altruist, of whose fertile legacy we are honored.”¹⁵ At youth congress after youth congress, all them invariably attended by historical leaders of the Cuban revolution, the young delegates thank their elders for “having given us the political weapons, the moral weapons, and the physical weapons that we have to defend the Revolution.”¹⁶ And they declare themselves privileged, for “getting the direct attention of a personality the size of Fidel.”¹⁷

Reverence fosters obedience. The leaders of the Cuban Revolution claim the right to ask obedience from their youth because they see themselves working for the future, that is, for the younger generations. “We do not work for us; we work for you,” said Fidel in a typical statement to his audience in a meeting with university students. “Therefore we have the right to demand from you,” he continued, “to expect the best from you.”¹⁸ The young Communists by and large correspond. It seems, at times, that

14. See for illustration Valdés López, Marta María, et. al. (2001 pp. 269-360) for ninth grade and Regla María Albelo, et. al. (2000), for high school.

15. “Digamosle a Fidel,” *Juventud Rebelde* April 11, 1982, 1.

16. “Manifiesto de Abril,” *Juventud Rebelde* April 4, 1992.

17. “Generación Privilegiada” *Juventud Rebelde* (digital edition), December 5, 2004.

at the slightest request the leaders of the Communist youth do the bidding of the high-ranking revolutionary leaders. When the revolutionary leadership decided to finance economic development through record sugarcane harvests, the young Communists invariably organized the most productive cane-cutter brigades. When the historical leadership decided to engage in international military campaigns, the young Communists fought heroically in faraway lands. When more recently Fidel declared an energy revolution, the young Communists substituted fluorescent for incandescent light bulbs all over Cuba.¹⁹ Communist youth leaders say they have a “commitment to Fidel, to Raúl, and to the historic generation of the revolution” that impels their behavior.²⁰ Making the historic leaders happy by fulfilling their requests is their satisfaction.

A generational division of labor thus develops. Drawing an organic analogy, the generation that made the revolution is the brain and the generations that grew up under the revolution are the body. Hardly ever was this differentiation of tasks more clearly uttered in speech than when the chief of revolutionary orientation of the CC of the PCC asked from the delegates to the 1972 UJC congress to be “doers “rather than “thinkers.” In his words, the Cuban exemplary youth should consist “not of philosophers but of fighters, of builders of socialism and communism.”²¹ The symmetrical correspondence of the Communist youth to advice such as this is evident in one of its slogans of the time (used until the early 1980s), which literally begged the “commander in chief” to tell them what to do. “Wherever, whatever and whatsoever,” the slogan went, “Commander in Chief, give us command!”²²

18. In his speech of January 10, 1987. An abridged version can be found in *Juventud Rebelde*, January 12, 1987, quote from page 2.

19. The descriptive “all” in the text in respect to the lightbulbs should not be taken too literally. See, in this order, UJC (1972, 13); UJC (1977, 3, 8.); UJC (1990, 131); María Julia Mayoral and Orfidio Peláez, “Nada detendrá a esta Revolución Socialista dispuesta a lograr la real igualdad,” *Granma Internacional* (digital edition) November 24, 2005; Fidel Castro (speech on January 17, 2006); Julieta García Ríos, “un año intenso de trabajo juvenil,” *Juventud Rebelde*, June 3, 2006, 8.

20. In the words of Otto Rivero, First Secretary of the UJC at the time of the VII (1998) and VIII (2004) UJC congresses. Quote from “Programa: Noticias del VIII Congreso” *Juventud Rebelde* (digital edition), secciones 2004.

21. See the speech of Orlando Fundora in the Congress as transcribed in *Juventud Rebelde*, April 1, 1972, 5.

If not for the biological tendency of the older to retire and die sooner than the younger, this generational division of labor could work well for the long-term endurance of the Cuban socialist regime. It has its clear advantages, for with tasks so clearly differentiated, time and other resources are not wasted in endless discussions between persons of different ages, who may see the world differently, over who decides what and what to do next. When reverence among the young is strong and their obedience to their elders ensured, generational conflict does not arise, so-called generational gaps do not develop, let alone a rebellion of the youth. And yet, in so much obedience there are clear dangers for the longevity of political regimes. Much obedience can easily slip into dependence. Dependent continuing generations may lose their way when left by themselves. When their elders are no longer around to tell them what to do, the leaders of the generations accustomed to obey may feel confused, unsure, and lacking such decision-making skills as confidence in themselves, creativity, and initiative, which are imperative for giving effective responses to the challenges of their time in a way consistent with preserving the ruling political and socioeconomic regime they have inherited from their elders and within which they have grown up.

Evidently aware of these dangers, at least a few high-ranking revolutionary leaders have tried to palliate the possible ill side effects of youth reverence by stimulating alongside it such skills and qualities as initiative, creativity, self-esteem, and self-judgment among the young. The possession of those skills and qualities among the new generations may help develop their *autonomy*, that is, their ability to control their own fate. Just as reverence is “that sentiment...which binds a generation to those who have preceded it,” autonomy prepares a generation to build a future of its own.²³ Chief among these leaders was Ernesto Guevara, who openly chastised the Cuban Communist Youth organization of his time for lacking creative spirit and for being “too docile, too respectful...not decisive in addressing its own problems.”²⁴ Likewise, in the speeches of Fidel Castro,

22. Translated from the Spanish: “Donde sea, cómo sea y para lo que sea, Comandante en Jefe, ¡ordene!” See also the exemplary of *Juventud Rebelde* at the closing of the congress, April 4, 1972. Upon a background of the commander in chief’s picture stands the eight-column inscription: “Ordene.”

23. Both the quote and the idea are taken from Smith (1985). The quote appears in page p.10.

the intention to create “young people who think,” who “accept nothing of which they are not convinced,” and who “learn by themselves to be revolutionary,” has always been a recurrent theme.²⁵

Here, however, that the Communist Youth leaders declare themselves “revolutionary by conviction and not simple repeaters of slogans, who do not think, who do not analyze, who wait always for orientations to act” speaks more of their ability to repeat the speech of their elders than of their possession of skills such as initiative, creativity, and self-judgment.²⁶ Nor does their behavior in the open manifest their possession of such skills as abundantly as it manifests their reverence and obedience to their elders. Given the dominant personality of the political leaders of the revolutionary generation, it seems by and large that the political leaders of the new generations find much security and comfort in their shadow, agreeing rather than debating, following rather than proposing.

Perhaps for this reason the political leadership's concern with increasing youth autonomy has seemed to be on the rise since the mid-end 1980s. Youth passivity, apathy, and lack of initiative certainly did not escape criticism in the critical atmosphere of the rectification process. Some policy responses to these problems seem evident. Study methods in schools and universities have been revised constantly with the stated purpose of stimulating “creative thinking, active participation of students, more independent work, and a dialectical approach to problems.”²⁷ Spaces have been opened for students on school boards and for representatives of high school and university student organizations in the national assembly.²⁸ More recently, under the umbrella title of “Battle of Ideas,” the leaders and former recent leaders of the UJC (best known as the Taliban) have played an unprecedented role in directing the revolution's current ideological campaigns. While welcoming youth representatives into decision-making bodies says nothing about their real participation in policy formu-

24. In his speech commemorating the second anniversary of the unification of revolutionary youth organizations, October 20, 1962. An English translation of the speech can be found in GevaraWaters ed. (2000, pp.101-117; quote from page p. 108).

25. Quotes taken from his March 13, 1962 and December 1, 1961 speeches. See also his October 24, 1961 and December 2, 1986 speeches.

26. See “Declaración Final del II Congreso de la UJC” in *Juventud Rebelde*, April 5, 1972, 6.

lation, it reveals the leadership's disposition, at least formally, to share decision-making with the youth. To the degree to which taking part in decision making requires thinking (of whatever sort), and the related information-processing and self-judgment abilities, through participating in decision making young leaders are likely to develop these abilities.

Some glimpses of autonomy appear. At the 1987 UJC congress, delegates finally denounced in the open the "paternalism" of their party elders, who assign them tasks without asking their opinion, kill their initiatives, and block their promotion to higher posts.²⁹ Even if this congress took place after Fidel signaled criticism as the order of the day, youth leaders nevertheless showed some ability to reflect upon themselves by criticizing their wrongdoings, ranging from the widespread "formalism" or insincere behavior in their practices to the numerous exemptions from compulsory military service given for figurative academic merit and faked medical illnesses.³⁰ The demands raised by the delegates to the congress of the Federation of University Students (FEU) earlier that year, in

27. As stated by the Program of the Communist Party of Cuba approved by the deferred session of the Third Party Congress in December 1986. See Redacción Política Actual Partido Comunista de Cuba ed. (19867, p.134-546). See also the interview with Secretariat member and chief of the education, science, and sports department of the CC, José Ramón Balaguer (Septiembre 1987, pp. 16-25). Academic and newspaper articles on innovations in education report changes in educational policy implemented in 1988, changes in study methods made official by the Ministry of Education in 1991, changes in educational plans and programs effective for the school years 1992 and 1993, and an "educational revolution" initiated in 2000, which by December 5, 2004, according to Castro's speech of that day, had brought "radical transformations" to secondary schools. See María Isabel Domínguez (Enero-Marzo 1995, p.90); FBIS-LAT-92-079, April 23, 1992, p.4, and article by Margarita Barrio in *Juventud Rebelde*, September 3, 2006. In the same vein, numerous proposals and experiments to increase innovation skills and self-esteem of Cuban students in the schooling system have been carried out. One particular experiment with influential implications for policymaking in the 1990s is Avendaño and Minujin (1988). For theoretical studies with strong policy recommendations in this direction, see González Rey (1995) and D'Angelo Hernández (2010). See also Lutjens (1996, pp. 167-8) for a general sketch of revamping study methods during "rectification," and Leal García (2000) for attempts at and proposals for continuing revamping methods for teaching history afterwards.

28. María Isabel Domínguez (2003); María Isabel Domínguez and Lutjens (2004); UJC (1998, p.3); Fidel Castro, speech in meeting with candidates to the national and provincial assemblies, February 11, 1993; and Yailin Orta Rivera, "Propuesta joven en el proceso electoral Cubano," *Juventud Rebelde* (electronic edition version), October 12, 2007.

turn, helped shape the policy on revamping study methods and programs.³¹ At the same time these organizations also showed a degree of creativity and originality in devising and implementing the so-called new working methods, which attempted to reach young audiences by combining political events with cultural and recreational activities like concerts in open spaces and dances in discotheques.³²

While these examples concern the most politically active young, other young have gone further in taking initiative and in showing creativity and criticism. Creators by vocation, the new generations in the visual arts have more than once since the late 1980s challenged political authorities by emphasizing the “individual” rather than the “collective,” as well as by experimenting with unconventionally erotic and satirical forms of expression.³³ Young musicians, for their part, have ventured into new genres for Cuban interpreters such as rap and rock, their lyrics often touching on taboo issues such as racial discrimination.³⁴

And yet, much youth autonomy is not without risk in ensuring the long-term continuation of the Cuban socialist regime—for autonomy can easily slide into irreverence. Irreverent continuing generations might step away from the socialist path out of an overdose of confidence rather than for a lack of it. With their elders no longer around to punish or else to pre-

29. See García Rodríguez (Mayo 1987).

30. See García Rodríguez (Mayo 1987); UJC (1990) and “todos los jovenes al servicio militar,” *Juventud Rebelde* April 3, 1987, 1, 4-5.

31. See the intervention of Ramón Sánchez, director of the Marxism department in the Ministry of Higher Education, in a roundtable moderated by Enrique Ubieta (Enero-Marzo 1996, p.140).

32. See the interview with then first secretary of the UJC, “Robertico” Robaina by Arístides Sotomayor González and Manuel Menéndez Díaz (Abril 1990). See also the article by Fernández in Baloyra and Morris eds. (1993, p. 200); Kacpia (2000, p.248); and María Isabel Domínguez (2003).

33. Among them Eduardo Ponjuán, René Francisco Rodríguez, Fernando Rodríguez, José Angel Toirac, Licet Castillo Valdés, Sandra Ceballos, Carlos Estévez, Roberto Fabelo, Abigail González, Tania Bruguera, and Angel Delgado, to name but a few. See Block ed. (2001) and Kacpia (20056, pp.191-192

34. Examples are the groups “Orishas,” “Los Paisanos,” “Obsesión,” “Hermanos de Causa,” “Anónimo Consejo,” “Cliente Supremo,” “Cien por Ciento Original,” “Alto Voltaje,” “Explosión Suprema,” “Instinto,” and “Primera Base.” See Sujatha Fernandes (Fall 2003) and Kacpia (20056, pp. 198-200).

vent what they would consider unacceptable behavior, much initiative, creativity, self-esteem, and self-judgment may awaken among the leaders of the new generations a desire “to open a new route, which has not yet been followed by any one,” even at the price of breaking with the sacred cows of their venerated predecessors.³⁵ For that not to happen, the founding leaders of the Cuban Revolution have tried to influence the impending choice of the new generations—for or against socialism—by appealing, in great part, to their reason.

The Conceptual Basis of Socialism

Hence we meet a second moment of reason in the attempt of the Cuban political leadership to perpetuate its revolutionary deed for generations and the one specific to “socialism” as such. In order to let the new generations of Cubans “understand” or rather “discover” the intrinsic high value of their socialist system of production, the Cubans who made the revolution have in part taught them “Marxism.”³⁶ Built upon the writings of Marx, Engels, and Lenin, this theoretical basis has always been broad enough to allow for different, even conflicting, interpretations. A look at the dominant strands of Marxism in Cuba and how they have been taught in universities and other centers of higher education over time may provide further insight on the unfolding attempt of the revolutionary generation to convince its successor generations of the desirability of having a socialist system of production.

Since the declaration of the socialist character of the Cuban Revolution, the conformation of any dominant Marxist view in Cuba has always been made through the interaction between international and institutional relations. Until the collapse of the Soviet Union, the relations between the two countries, or rather between their respective leaders, always constrained to a degree the relations between the Cuban political leadership and the Cuban “organic intellectuals,” in a Gramscian sense, whose com-

35. Quotation marks enclose Machiavelli’s famous phrase in his introduction to the *Discourses*. Quoted from Machiavelli (1950 [1513], 103).

36. For years the conventional name of this theoretical basis was Marxism-Leninism. With the collapse of the Soviet Union this term fell somewhat into disuse (rather than Lenin into disrespect) in Cuba as well as in academic circles elsewhere, being replaced by Marxism alone.

mitment to the incumbent social order is without doubt and who play a critical role in its maintenance through generating and disseminating the kind of knowledge needed to make it acceptable, or at least bearable, to the rest of society.³⁷ Throughout this period, the dominant strand of Marxism in Cuba always varied in tandem with the bilateral relationship between the Soviet Union and Cuba.

Throughout the 1960s, when Cubans were both building socialism by trial and error and testing the appropriate distance to take from Moscow, oscillations occurred in the favoritism of the political direction towards one of two developing strands of Marxism in universities and other centers of higher education. The 1962 university reform established the Marxist hegemony in universities and by extension in social thinking. Within this hegemony two main views can be differentiated according to the apparent politico-intellectual alignments toward the Soviet theoretical orthodoxies that were reaching Cubans through foreign assessors, books, and didactic materials of diverse kind, as well as through Cuban students returning from Soviet bloc countries in Europe.³⁸ The *reverent* position proposed to build socialism in Cuba by imitating, adopting, or at most adapting formulas that were proved effective-according to the criteria of the time-in the Soviet Union and other socialist states. The *autonomous* position, while hardly anti-Soviet, wanted to incorporate methods of its own creation in the construction of socialism in Cuba and also to create theoretical understandings based on the Cuban experience, which would put Cuban Marxism-in Fernando Martínez's felicitous phrase—"at the height of the Cuban Revolution."³⁹

37. Irrespective of the complex (and only superficially addressed in the text) question of how Gramsci defined organic intellectuals and what role they play in the maintenance of any given socioeconomic and political institutional order, the statement reflects the use of the term by at least some important Cuban political leaders and social scientists. See Jorge Luis Acanda (Abril-Junio 2002, pp. 13-14); Hart (Julio-Septiembre 1995, p.3); and Jorge Luis Acanda mod. (Abril-Junio 1997). For a similar interpretation of the function of the Gramscian organic intellectuals, see Femia (1981, p.164).

38. On the penetration channels of the Soviet versions of Marxism that reached Cuba in the 1960s see the article by Fidel Díaz Sosa in Plá León and González Aróstegui eds. (2006, pp. 78-96) or (preferable) its extended version downloadable from the website of Cuban contemporary thinkers (Spanish bibliography).

In the relatively free atmosphere needed for testing alternatives, the two views developed somewhat separately—each with its own epicenter of theoretical formulation and dissemination—yet at times also clashed with each other. In the “Great Debate,” high-ranking policymakers like the National Bank president, Marcelo Fernández Font, and the agriculture minister, Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, argued for the suitability of the Soviet “system of economic calculation” for managing Cuban enterprises.⁴⁰ Against them, Industry Minister Ernesto Guevara proposed the “budgetary financial system” based on his own analysis of the characteristics and needs of Cuban enterprises. In the “polemic on the manuals,” Humberto Pérez and Félix de la Uz from the schools of Revolutionary Instruction (ERI and EBIR) argued for the convenience of Soviet didactic materials for teaching Marxism to Cuban laypeople.⁴¹ Confronting them, Aurelio Alonso from the University of Havana philosophy department disputed the usefulness of these materials, arguing that because of their uncritical perspective they are inherently anti-Marxist.

Given the incompatibilities between these views, as definitions were reached one of them had to become hegemonic. By 1966 the autonomous view gained momentum as the whole Cuban economy adopted a version of the budgetary financial system and as the second national congress of philosophy endorsed the views on the study of Marxism promoted by the University of Havana philosophy department.⁴² Under the direction of members of this department, in February 1967 the first issue of *Pensamiento Crítico* came into being.⁴³ By giving voice to different strands of Marxist thinking, the journal purported to create an authentic Cuban Marxist thought.⁴⁴ That same month the Political Bureau of the PCC

39. Fernando Martínez (Julio-Septiembre 1995, p. 20). During the 1960s Fernando Martínez Heredia had a prominent role in the conformation of this view as member, and for a time director, of the University of Havana philosophy department, director of the journal *Pensamiento Crítico*, and president of the second National Congress of Philosophy held in 1966.

40. A comprehensive presentation of the debate can be found in the See compilation by Deuschmann and Salado (2006).

41. This exchange took place between July 1966 and January 1967 over the issues 28, 30, 31 and 32 of the journal of the schools of revolutionary instruction, *Teoría y Práctica*. For the complete set of articles in the exchange, see in the bibliography entries Pérez, Humberto and de la Uz, Félix on the one hand and Alonso Tejada, Aurelio on the other.

announced the temporary suspension of the publication of the Party's theoretical journal, *Cuba Socialista*, precisely for lacking a "theoretical elaboration of its own."⁴⁵ The ERI were closed in 1968. Their main organ of expression, *Teoría y Práctica*, ceased publication in December 1967.

This momentum, however, was short-lived. In the eyes of those engaged in creating an autonomous strand of Cuban Marxism, their chance ended before they could fully mature their views.⁴⁶ As a result of the failure to reach the production goal of 10 million tons of sugarcane in 1970, the Cuban leadership reconsidered its views and concluded that the Cuban Revolution had sinned from arrogance and idealism in trying to build socialism by methods of its own. "We thought we were approaching communist forms of production and distribution," expressed the main report to the first party congress, "whereas in reality we were drifting farther and farther away from the correct methods of building socialism." Time had come "to make use of the wealth of experience accumulated by

42. The latter event is widely known as the "institutionalization of the heterodoxy," because in this congress it was agreed that the materials for studying Marxism can be diverse and do not have to conform to any particular official line. Although public records on this congress have either not been kept or not made available to the public, in the accounts of the participants it invariably appears as the moment signaling the relative ascendancy of the view that here is named autonomous. Its president, Fernando Martínez, for instance, mentions it as a moment of breakdown with "the whole Soviet conception" of Marxism in Cuba. In an interview with Yohanka León del Río in Plá León and González Aróstegui eds. (2006, p.203).

43. The most easily available documentation for the lifetime of academic journals is the WorldCat electronic catalog. It contains the information reported on the lifetime of *Cuba Socialista* and *Pensamiento Crítico*, which was matched with the hard copies available at both the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., and the José Martí Library in Havana. The date of closing of *Teoría y Práctica* is reported by Fidel Díaz Sosa in Plá León and González Aróstegui eds. (2006, 92) and matched with the copies available at the José Martí Library. For a closer perspective of the motivations behind and the purposes of *Pensamiento Crítico*, see the interviews on the issue with Fernando Martínez Heredia. See in particular the interview with Nestor Kohan (1994) reprinted in Kohan (Enero-Junio 1995).

44. See the article by Natasha Gómez Velázquez in Plá León and González Aróstegui eds. (2006, especially p. p. 99).

45. The decision, however, can also be interpreted as denoting divided opinions or a personnel shortage in the party. See Buró Político (Febrero 1967, quote from p. p.3).

46. Fernando Martínez (Julio-Septiembre 1995, p. 22).

other people in the building of socialism.”⁴⁷ The ensuing reverent phase lasted for about fifteen years from the cane-cutting failure.

The event that marks the starting hegemony of the reverent view is the First National Congress on Education and Culture, held in April 1971. Aside from targeting homosexuality and extravagance (whatever its exact meaning) as aberrant behaviors, its declaration takes issue with “pseudo-leftist intellectuals who aspire to represent the critical conscience of society” and who “pretend to be Marxists but are against the socialist countries.”⁴⁸ As if to make clear where intellectuals of this type gathered in Cuba, that same year the University of Havana philosophy department was disbanded and *Pensamiento Crítico* ceased publishing, its last number appearing in August.

Beginning in 1976, the “social science cycle” was introduced to the study plans of higher education.⁴⁹ The plans dictated a uniform curriculum for the teaching of Marxism to all students in the system of higher education, composed of the Leninist triad of philosophy (with the division between dialectic and historical materialism), political economy (of capitalism and socialism), and scientific communism/socialism (the term varying according to the accent of the time). The textbooks for these courses were the didactic materials imported from the Soviet Union or translated from Soviet authors or in a few cases their copycats written by Cuban authors.⁵⁰ Completing the cycle was a course on the history of the Cuban working class and the Cuban Revolution.

Faculty and students in universities often recount that the reverent view was promoted with “extreme radicalism” under which there was “no room for doubt,” and therefore, as René Descartes would add, no possibility of generating new knowledge.⁵¹ Official policies projected great cer-

47. Quoted from the English edition of the report: PCCCommunist Party of Cuba (1976, p. 32 and 31 respectively).

48. Excerpts of the declaration can be found in Joaquín G. Santana ed. (1977, quoted from pagesp. 52, p. 61, and p. 63 respectively).

49. See the article by Vecino Alegret (Diciembre 1982-Febrero 1983, pp. 20-21). He was the minister of higher education at the time.

50. A partial list of these materials include Konstantinov, F. (1979, 1980) for the course on philosophy, Pérez, Humberto (1976) for the course on political economy, and Afanasiev (1984) for scientific communism.

tainty about what was the truly Marxist “scientific” interpretation of the world, and therefore what was left was to reveal it to those who did not know it yet. Given this certainty, through the study of Marxism professionals were trained to either eulogize what existed or apologize for it, in Cuba as well as in the other socialist regimes—neither to question nor to improve it. Whereas for its schematic introduction in teaching programs and the clarity of messages conveyed this view may have contributed to the systematic propagation of Marxism in Cuba, with the passing of time it became more and more clear that the drawbacks by far outweighed the gains. The credibility of the study materials was undermined by their inconsistency with real events in general, and with Cuban history in particular.⁵² Whereas according to the study materials feudalism precedes capitalism in a rather mechanistic evolving of history, feudalism was by and large missing from Cuban history as well as from most of the American continent. Whereas according to the study materials socialist revolutions are driven by a party of the working class, whatever the contribution of worker movements to the Cuban Revolution, it did not correspond to this script.

It is not clear, in any case, whether and how many students and faculty accepted in earnest this view. If a bit of inherent ability to autonomous thinking is credited to persons who after an ostensibly rigorous process were selected to learn and teach in universities, then probably not many. They may rather have developed a double morality, behaving at formal forums as good believers in what they preached or heard in class, but at the same time laughing in the more informal forums at the forced succession of stages throughout history and dubbing their course on Scientific Communism “Science Fiction,” because “many times the utopian and idealized worldview preached was very far from the concrete reality.”⁵³ Not coincidentally, therefore, the “double morality” was a main target of the process of rectification, which, as far as social thinking is

51. Amaro Cano (Enero-Junio 1997, p.15). By casting doubt on everything he thought he knew, Descartes (1989 [1637] pp. 30-31), of course, got to his maxim *I think, hence I am*.

52. For the following two examples, see Konstantinov (1980, pp.192-193) for the views expressed by the study materials. See Fernando Martínez in Kohan (Enero-Junio 1995, p.42) and Oscar Zanetti (Enero-Marzo 1995, p.122), for two Cuban authors who have pointed to these disparities in the order appearing in the text.

concerned, launched an authentic crusade against “dogmatism,” or the uncritical and ahistorical acceptance of truths.

This crusade can be traced back to Fidel's speech on October 8, 1987, in commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of Commander Ernesto “Che” Guevara's falling in combat. In this speech he made a forceful call for Guevara's economic thinking to be studied in Cuba and elsewhere, including the other socialist countries, just as Cubans read “many texts on many themes” produced there.⁵⁴ Though Ernesto Guevara was by no means a forgotten figure in Cuba by this or any other time, hereafter intellectuals and political leaders alike increasingly evoked his figure in ways that subverted the reverent view and by implication criticized the dominant practices in the Soviet Union and other East European socialist regimes. In line with what Fidel had said in his speech, throughout the process of rectification the figure of Che was evoked to assert the rights of Cubans to be and think differently from the rest of the socialist countries to a degree, especially as the Soviet Union proceeded with the perestroika process of reform.⁵⁵

After the Soviet collapse, the self-assertion claims turned into sheer irreverence, more from intellectuals than from political leaders, toward the former “big brother” and other allies.⁵⁶ Articles and public statements since the Soviet collapse have repeatedly criticized the former socialist states for their “bureaucratism,” “dogmatism,” and lack of political education, at the same time that they have proposed reading Che as preven-

53. See Fernando Martínez in Kohan (Enero-Junio 1995, p.42). Quote corresponds to Joaquín Santana Castillo in Hernández ed. (2003, p.167).

54. The speech can be downloaded from the website of the Cuban government. Statements of relevance appear also in the preface written by Aurelio Alonso to Plá León and González Aróstegui eds. (2006, p.16).

55. See, for example, articles by Miranda Hernández y Orteaga Paredes (1987); Chavez Antunes (1987); Barrios Osuna (1987); Turner (1988); Pupo Pupo (1989); Rivero Alvisa (Enero-Abril 1990) and Estevez (Enero-Abril 1990) as well as the book by Fernando Martínez (1989).

56. The analogy of the Soviet Union with a “big brother” is common among Cuban authors. See, for example, Yoss (Abril-Septiembre 2004, p.139) and Mayra Espina in Rafael Hernández ed. (2003, p.34). Political leaders have been equally or more critical than intellectuals toward the East European socialist regimes but markedly less toward the Soviet Union.

tive medicine for these illnesses.⁵⁷ Supporting both the diagnosis and the prescription are not only Che's public statements and writings, but also his private correspondence, unpublished prior to the demise of the other socialist regimes, in which he explicitly mocks the Marxist study materials imported from the Soviet Union by calling them "Soviet bricks which have the inconvenience of not letting you think."⁵⁸

In the social sciences, the crusade against dogmatism has resulted in some "opening."⁵⁹ Official documents during the rectification process repeatedly criticized the social sciences and the humanities for "lacking authentic debate and for their tendency to repeat supposed truths pre-established by others," while calling upon these disciplines to "resurge with strength and fulfill a grater role in the generation of knowledge and the transformation of social realities."⁶⁰ Aiming toward that end, new research institutes such as the Institute of Cuban History and the Center for the Study of Che Guevara have been created, and others like the Center of Psychological and Sociological Research (CIPS) and the Institute of Philosophy (IF) have been increasingly employed by the state in trying to respond to concrete social necessities. Between 1995 and 1996, five jour-

57. For a short yet representative sample, see Pañellas Álvarez mod. (Octubre-Diciembre 2005), Pérez-Rolo mod. (Julio-Septiembre 1997), Roig (Abril-Junio 1997, p.29), and Suarez Salazar (Abril-Junio 1997, p.39).

58. The letter sent to Armando Hart from Tanzania, dated Dec. 2, 1965, was first published in the July-September issue of the journal *Contracorriente*. See Hart (Julio-Septiembre 1997, p.142) and Ernesto Guevara (Julio-Septiembre 1997, pp.144-47). Reprinted in Hart (2005, pp. 18-27).

59. For general overviews on the evolution of the social sciences during the process of rectification and beyond, see Alvarez Sandoval and Alvarez Hernández (website of the Cuban Academy of Sciences.d.); Darío Machado Rodríguez (Septiembre-Octubre 1987) and (Enero-Marzo 1990); Casamayor Maspóns (Abril-Junio 1990); Fernandez Ríos (Septiembre-Diciembre 1990); Valdés Gutiérrez (Mayo-Junio 1989); Díaz Caballero (Julio-Agosto 1989); Ortiz Torres (Noviembre-Diciembre 1989); Toledo y and Nuñez Jover (Julio-Septiembre 1990); Limia David (1994) and (Enero-Marzo 1995); Yañes Quintero (Julio-Septiembre 1995); Enrique Ubieta mod. (Enero-Marzo 1996); Rafael Hernández mod. (Enero-Marzo 1997); Rafael Hernández ed. (2003); Juan Luis Martín (Octubre 1998 - Junio 1999) and (March-April 1999); Mayra Espina mod. (Enero-Marzo 2003) and Aurelio Alonso (Julio-Septiembre 1995).

60. Quote corresponds to the calling to the fourth Party Congress. See Raúl Castro (1990, p.14). Similar indications on the need to improve social research were made in the Plans for Social Research 1986-1991 and 1991-1995. See detailed account by (Alvarez Sandoval and Alvarez Hernández (n.d.) on the Cuban Academy of Science website).

nals of relevance to the social sciences either appeared for the first time or reappeared after being discontinued for lack of resources during the early years of the special period.⁶¹ Starting in 1989 with the application of the so-called study plans “C,” universities have received more freedom to choose their own programs and content of study in the social sciences according to the needs, interests, and abilities of faculty and students.⁶² Through these and similar policies, the climate was created for the ongoing widening diversity of research topics and of views expressed by social thinkers.

The evolution of the discipline of sociology illustrates this widening.⁶³ With the creation of the Ministry of Higher Education in 1976 and the introduction of the social sciences cycle, the only sociology department in Cuban universities closed under the conception that this discipline is comprehended within historical materialism.⁶⁴ Practitioners say, however, that in practice a narrowing of perspective occurred. Research on topics such as social stratification, downward social mobility, generations, civil society, social conflict, and the like was not supported by a policy view that could not recognize them as phenomena (let alone important) under socialism, and therefore it was not done.⁶⁵ Social problems such as youth alienation and gender, racial, and class inequalities did not disappear, however. In a May 1984 document, the Political Bureau of the Communist Party finally addressed the resulting detachment of the social sciences from reality.⁶⁶ That same year, the department of sociology in the

61. *Contracorriente* and *Debates Americanos* appeared for the first time in 1995. *Marx Ahora* appeared for the first time in 1996. *Temas* renewed publication in 1995, and *Cuba Socialista*, the theoretical journal of the Party, in 1996.

62. See Amaro Cano (Enero-Junio 1997, p.106) and Zardoya Loureda (Noviembre-Diciembre 1997, p.60).

63. The following account draws from Muñoz Gutiérrez (Julio-Diciembre 2005); Boves, González and Ravenet (Julio-Septiembre 1990); Toledo and Nuñez Jover (Julio-Septiembre 1990); Espina (Enero-Marzo 1995); and Espina in Hernández ed. (2003, pp.29-48).

64. The conception is very well reflected by the title: *Historical Materialism is the Marxist Sociology*, a book written by F. Konstantinov, the same author of the university textbooks for the course on philosophy as imparted under the predominance of the reverent view.

65. On this point in particular, see the article by Mayra Espina in Rafael Hernández ed. (2003, p. 42).

University of Havana opened again. After 1986 sociology was taught as a specialization (minor) in other disciplines within the faculty of philosophy and history, and since 1990 it has been reestablished as a major program. Today three universities in Cuba offer a bachelor's degree in sociology and the University of Havana offers in addition master's level and doctoral programs.⁶⁷ Along with the restitution of the career of sociology, research on its classical areas of inquiry has been promoted and evidently used by policymakers in tackling concrete social problems.⁶⁸ While aggregate social research may have influenced policymaking only indirectly, as elsewhere, practitioners have been able to point to specific policies on several issues, such as religion, the young, and education, which were preceded by recommendations of social research.⁶⁹

While a trend in the same direction has occurred in all other disciplines in the social sciences and the humanities, including economics and political science, these two disciplines at once seem to stand at the shortest end of the opening.⁷⁰ Policy recommendations are clearly limited by the predominance of state property and central management in economics

66. The document is mentioned as a turning point by Alvarez Sandoval and Alvarez Hernández (n.d.(website of Cuban Academy of Science)).

67. The other two universities that offer a B.A. program in sociology are the University of Oriente and the University of Las Villas.

68. Among the problems "rediscovered" by social research during rectification and the special period, Mayra Espina in Rafael Hernández ed. (2003, p.36) points out a weakening in popular participation; absolutism in the equation state property = socialist property; contradiction between an increase in state employees and a decrease in state productivity; low efficiency in the cooperative agricultural sector; deficit of qualified and surplus of professional workers; disproportion in the technical workforce occupied in productive and not productive enterprises; young professionals' lack of interest in promotion to posts of direction; lack of symmetry between the system of higher education and the requirements of the economy; proliferation of crime and black markets; and sexism within the family. María Isabel Domínguez (Enero-Marzo 1995, p.89) also identifies the predominance of class divisions and their tendency to reproduce across generations and low social mobility.

69. On this point in particular, see examples provided by Juan Luis Martín (Octubre 1998 - Junio 1999, p.150) and María Isabel Domínguez (Enero-Marzo 1995, p.91).

70. For greater detail in a few other disciplines within the rubric "social science and humanities," see Zanetti (Enero-Marzo 1995) and Torres Fumero (Julio-Septiembre 1995) for history; Joaquín Santana mod. (Julio-Diciembre 1999) for philosophy; Fernando González Rey (Enero-Mmarzo 1995) for psychology; and Alzugaray Treto (2005) and Valdés Paz in Rafael Hernández ed. (2003) for political science.

and the Communist Party in politics. When the outer edges of the opening have been tested, these limits have appeared. In March 1996, for instance, a Political Bureau document presented by Raúl to and approved by the Central Committee, singled out “several comrades” within the Center of the Study of the Americas for collaborating with U.S. interests, after economists within this center began speaking favorably about a transition to a “decentralized market economy with a high level of state participation.”⁷¹ The “restructuring” of the center followed.⁷² To this day Cuban universities do not offer a major degree in political science, and taboo topics exist, especially as research nears the political elite. If the Communist Party and the sociological, psychological, and institutional dynamics among its members have ever been researched by the Cuban “organic intellectuals,” the results have never made available to outside observers, for whom information remains restricted.⁷³

In spite of the many social problems appearing in the special period and the role that the social sciences have played in finding solutions, policy-oriented research has not been the only nor perhaps the principal task played by the Cuban social sciences in the wake of the disappearance of the “socialist camp.” Theoretical elaboration has been an equally or more demanding task. While increasingly questioned since 1986, the reverent view was ultimately removed by the flowing of events. The “Kostantinov”—the textbook for the basic philosophy course for all students in institutes of higher education as mandated by the study plans up to 1989-

71. Raúl's criticism appears in the report of the Political Bureau to the fifth plenum of the Central Committee delivered on March 23, 1996. The text appeared in the *Granma* newspaper on March 27, 1996, pp. 2-6. The particular accusations to the “comrades” within the Center of the Study of the Americas appear on page 5. For a version in English, see PCC Editora Política ed. (1996). The quote on proposals for economic reform is taken from the interview with Julio Carranza by NACLA (September-October 1995, p.31). He is commenting on his co-authored book with Luis Gutiérrez and Pedro Monreal (1995), which is the usual reference on proposals for far-reaching economic reform in Cuba made by Cuban intellectuals.

72. See Giuliano (1998).

73. The point is raised by Juan Valdés Paz in his contribution to Hernández ed. (2003, p.159). While anecdotal, my personal research experience fully confirms it. I requested official permits for gathering data in Cuba through diplomatic and academic channels. While two research institutes agreed to host me while gathering the data, none was able to obtain the required authorization from the political authorities in their respective ministries.

declared that “imperialism” was in crisis and that the “socialist regimes” headed by the Soviet Union were in line with the direction of historical progress and therefore destined to become hegemonic all around the world.⁷⁴ Since the status of “science” was ascribed to Marxism, these and similar assertions claimed the status of “scientific law.”⁷⁵ When the Soviet Union and other socialist regimes collapsed, what the reverent view specified as impossible phenomena thus happened. In light of its unequivocal refutation, heretofore (true and faking) believers confronted the dilemma of either to dispense with their theory or to reformulate it in such a way that it could account for the new events.

The dilemma was resolved by the decision of the political authorities to “stick” with socialism. The theoretical reformulation required for its rational justification has been taking place since the early 1990s. The social sciences have contributed their share. Once again, both Cuban political leaders and intellectuals have been engaged in constructing an autonomous strand of Marxism. In contrast to the 1960s, this time not as an option between two alternatives, but, under the transformed geopolitical realities, as the only possible option to base the socialist system of production on reason.

Repeated invitations to reread the classics of Marxism in the pages of Cuban journals and newspapers mark a logical, if not strictly chronological, beginning to this reformulation.⁷⁶ By the passages chosen and the interpretations offered, it turns out that Marxism as understood by its founders and highest authorities is a quite malleable and open-ended theory. Marx himself even denied being a “Marxist” in order to prevent “stiff” interpretations of his writings.⁷⁷ For Engels, “Marxism” was a

74. See Konstantinov (1980, especially p. 206).

75. The point could be taken to ridiculous extremes. One needs to go no further than to the very opening of the Afanasiev (1984, p.3) text on “scientific communism,” which describes the discipline as “the science about the inevitability on the destruction of capitalism and the triumph of communism.”

76. For a few examples see Armando Hart (EneroJanuary-MarzoMarch 1990; AbrilApril-JunioJune 1990; SeptiembreSeptember-DiciembreDecember 1990, p.14); Limia David (Enero-Marzo 1995, p.21); Fernando Martínez (Julio-Septiembre 1995, p.19); Rauber (Abril-Junio 1996, p.77); and Duharte Díaz in Ubieta Gómez mod. (Enero-Marzo 1997, p.126).

method as opposed to a doctrine, and for Lenin it was a guide for action rather than a ready-to-be-applied recipe.⁷⁸

Armando Hart, who as past minister of education and culture and as current director of the Martí studies program has throughout his trajectory stood rather permanently at this intersection of power and knowledge, has drawn an analogy between Marxism and mathematics, according to which Marx “invented the tables for summing, resting, multiplying and dividing” for the social sciences, but the solution to every particular problem depends on the applier.⁷⁹ In his opinion, the application of the Marxist method in the Soviet Union and other socialist regimes was characterized by an economic reductionism that sought answers to all questions in the objective or material basis. This application was wanting, for experience has demonstrated that changes in the material basis by themselves are not sufficient to produce a subsequent change in human behavior. The underestimation of the subjective or superstructure factors was the theoretical error with the most tragic consequences for the unraveling of these regimes. Yet the economic and social conditions that gave rise to the socialist regimes have by no means disappeared. With capitalism unchecked by a rival bloc, its evolution is causing more socioeconomic, demographic, and ecological strains worldwide than ever before in history. As the most powerful theoretical criticism of capitalism, Marxism is thus not only highly relevant for explaining the world surrounding us, but its ethics of equality and solidarity are key for the forging of any better alternative. If this alternative is to incorporate the lessons of past experience, its sustaining theory must now pay due attention to the subjective factor, or to the role that men and women *do* play in the making of their own history.

77. See excerpt from Engel’s letter to Conrado Schmidt in Hart (Abrilpril-Junioe 1990, p.11).

78. See excerpt from Engel’s letter to Werner Sombart in Hart (Abrilpril-Junioe 1990, p.14) and Hart (EneroJanuary-Marzorch 1990, p.2) respectively.

79. Quote from Hart (Enero-Marzo 2003, p.104). See also his comments on the roundtable on Lenin in Zardoya Loureda mod. (1999, p.189). This paragraph draws in addition from Hart (Noviembre-Diciembre 1997; 2005; Enero-Junio 2005) and “el socialismo del Siglo XXI,” *Juventud Rebelde* (digital edition) December, 9, 2006.

In line with Hart's *humanist* rather than materialist interpretation, over the pages of academic journals the search for an authentic Cuban brand of Marxism has expanded to figures and authors forgotten, ostracized, or banned by the Soviet Union and therefore of little or no diffusion in Cuba during the hegemony of the reverent view.⁸⁰ These figures include Leon Trotsky and Rosa Luxemburg, but especially the so-called superstructure authors for their emphasis on the relative autonomy of human consciousness, among them Georg Lukács and, above anybody else, Antonio Gramsci. Adding emphasis to the subject, even the emancipatory links between Marxism and psychoanalysis have been explored, as well as the points of contact between Marxism and postmodernism. While necessarily eclectic in the topics chosen, sources and references, and the ideas expressed in the journals, this theoretical reformulation is taking place within the Marxist hegemony and has a common denominator in placing men and women rather than their surrounding environment at the center of their own making.

A similar yet much less complex shift in theoretical orientation can be identified in the study programs and didactic materials used in universities, though much uncertainty during the early years of the special period made them change frequently and lack of resources has caused lags in both the discontinuation of the old and the introduction of the new textbooks, the latter usually written by collectives of faculty members.⁸¹ According to a high officer in the Marxism department in the Ministry of Higher Education, the changes introduced in the programs seek to present

80. For a brief synopsis of this expansion, see interview with Celia Hart by the Mexican newspaper *La Jornada*, April 6, 2005 (electronic edition). I reviewed all the numbers up to December 2006 of the journals *Temas*, *Debates Americanos*, *Contracorriente* and *Marx Ahora* to write this paragraph. For a few typical examples of articles appearing in these journals, which stress both the theoretician authors and the research directions mentioned in the next two sentences, see Jorge Luis Acanda mod. (Abril-Junio 1997); Díaz Castañón (Enero-Junio 1995); Jorge Luis Acanda (Abril-Junio 1998; Abril-Junio 2002; Octubre-Diciembre 2006); Azor Hernández (Julio-Septiembre 20056); Ravelo Cabrera (Julio-Septiembre 1995); and Soler Martínez (Enero-Junio 2001). See also the books by Jorge Luis Acanda (2002); Hiram Hernández (2006); and Centro Juan Marinello (2000).

81. These include Pablo Guadarrama González and Carmen Suárez eds. (2000, 2001) for the course on philosophy, García Fernández and Campos Alfonso (2004) and Ramón Sánchez Noda ed. (2002) for political economy, and Duharte Díaz ed. (2000) for socio-political theory.

Marxism as a coherent whole rather than in fragmented parts, to link teachings to the specific disciplines of students, and to incorporate more materials of Cuban intellectual history.⁸² The distinction between dialectic and historical materialism has thus been abolished, professors have now the discretion to choose additional literature and adapt textbook content to specific programs and abilities of students, and more writings by or about Cuban historical personages such as Martí, Che, Fidel, and others have been included in the curricula. As in the reverent period, the common social science curriculum for students in all disciplines now includes courses on philosophy, political economy, and Cuban history, though each with a rather different content except for the political economy of capitalism, perhaps under the criterion that its underlying mechanics have not changed much.⁸³ There is no longer a course on “scientific socialism/communism,” which has been replaced by a course on sociopolitical theory taught exclusively to students enrolled in programs within the social and economic sciences.

In content the changes in university study materials are consistent with both the rejection of the reverent view and the renewed attention to the superstructure. The textbook for political economy of socialism, for instance, from the outset clarifies to its readers that what they have in their hands “is not a manual,” in an explicit and somewhat belittling allusion (among many) to the materials of study used in the past. More important, students at this level no longer learn that socialism is unbeatable as revealed by “scientific” laws on the unfolding of history, but rather that its continuation in their country “depends on the subjective factor, on our moral and ideological clarity.”⁸⁴

Arguably, to the same extent in which what is more in accord with reality is also more believable, arguments that start from the premise that the future of the socialist system of production in Cuba depends on the determination and commitment of Cubans themselves sound more con-

82. These intentions are presented according to the explanation of Ramón Sanchez Noda in Enrique Ubieta mod. (Enero-Marzo 1996, p.140).

83. Compare textbooks written by Humberto Pérez (1976) with books written by García Fernández and Campos Alfonso (2004). These are basically identical in both structure and analysis.

84. Sánchez Noda ed. (2002, p. 8 and p. 335 respectively).

vincing in times of socialist debacle and crisis than anything promising predestined victory. For this reason and in the special period at least, even if eclectic and unconcluded, the subjective viewpoint has the potential to frame more reasonable arguments for socialism in Cuba than ever did the viewpoint prevailing during the “three black quinquennia,” as Jorge Luis Acanda has termed the period from 1971 to 1986.⁸⁵

The “Praxical” Basis of Socialism

Intelligent theoretical elaboration transmitted through speech in classrooms and printed materials may convince the leaders of the new generations, based on their own understandings of Marxism and socialism, to follow the socialist path traced by their elders. Yet it may not be enough for ensuring the long-term continuation of this path. Theoretical argumentation alone may well create coffee-shop Marxists and revolutionaries, able to make an erudite point on the suitability of the socialist system of production to Cuba and even to all the countries of the world, but not necessarily with the courage and determination to defend this system beyond the rhetorical space, whenever and wherever needed in the face of difficulties. Cuban political leaders know well that full commitment to socialist values and beliefs can neither be transmitted nor formed through spoken and written language alone. Their insistence that theory must be complemented by praxis, that is by theoretically informed action, simply cannot be overstated. A second moment of character in the attempt of the political leadership to perpetuate its revolutionary deed for generations thus takes place through the framing of some of the most important life experiences of practically the whole population raised under the revolution. This framing stems logically from basic Marxist notions about justice, freedom, and solidarity and has a stated purpose of promoting a socialist morality.

In the schooling system, for instance, the main directing principle is the unity of study and work.⁸⁶ From preschools to universities, Cuban students do manual labor as part of their study programs. The amount and

85. In Zardoya Loureda mod. (1999, p.180).

86. See Arbesú (1993, p.29); Departamento de Estudios para el Perfeccionamiento de la Educación Superior de la Universidad de la Habana (1985, p. 4); DOR del PCC ed. (1975, p. 119).

kind of manual labor varies, from watering seeds and plants in the gardens of elementary schools to tasks related to the professional training of students in universities. The highlight programs oriented by the work-study principle take place in the midlevel education stage, ages twelve to eighteen roughly speaking.⁸⁷ In secondary and pre-university schools (more or less parallel to high schools in the American system), students from cities either go to the countryside for about forty-five days each academic year to study and work in agriculture or are enrolled in boarding schools located in the countryside where they similarly study for half of the day and work in agriculture for the other half. Carried out systematically since the late 1960s and early 1970s, these programs are considered by their promoters as both the realization of Martí's vision of Cuban students holding the pen "after noon in the schools; but in the morning, the hoe," and in correspondence with the work-study principle, as "the only formula of communist education."⁸⁸

The communist educational purpose claimed by the work-study principle finds sustenance both in Marx's statements on the division of intellectual and manual labor as the source of class societies and therefore of all exploitation and in his depictions of the communist society where this division no longer exists.⁸⁹ By applying the work-study principle, the Cuban schooling system at least heuristically eliminates this division and by so doing advances values associated with justice as distributive equality or as the end of exploitation in labor relations. Assuming that people who do or have done manual labor are likely to value it as much or even more than intellectual labor, citizens educated in the work-study principle may keep wage differentials between intellectual and manual labor low, as well as attempt to even the standards of living between the city and the countryside.⁹⁰

Work, of course, is not only part of the study programs in the Cuban schooling system but also the main activity that most persons do for most

87. For more detail on these programs than possible here, see Carnoy and Wertheim (1979, pp. 96-105); Fitzgerald (1990, pp.76-80); Arbesú (1993, pp. 49-54); Figueroa et. al. (1974); DOR del PCC ed. (1975, p.119); and article by Odalis Riquenes Cutiño and Lisván Lescaille Durand, "El plan la escuela al campo se renueva," in *Juventud Rebelde*, November. 5, 2006 (digital editionversion).

88. Quotes correspond to Martí (1976, p.72) and Fidel Castro's speech of April 4, 1972.

of their lives. In a sense, what the schooling system in Cuba does, as anywhere else, is to prepare people to enter the labor force. As the main activity of humans, work distinguishes between societies or historical stages for Marx. According to his distinction between the realm of necessity and the realm of freedom, whereas in all past societies most people worked to obtain the barely minimum to satisfy their basic material necessities, in a socialist society an ever-growing amount of work will be done beyond what is dictated by material necessity.⁹¹ With the basic necessities fulfilled, people will feel free to create.

From the very first year of the Cuban Revolution in power, policies have tried to approximate the “realm of freedom” by promoting work in ways that do not involve material rewards.⁹² Besides a wage and other material benefits, the remuneration system in the workplaces includes moral incentives such as the public recognition for a worker or a group of workers as outstanding. Work that involves no external rewards at all, or voluntary labor, is often done in the framework of the mass organizations. When done en masse, as in the national journeys of voluntary labor, it

89. Hence the exquisite paragraph from the *German Ideology* (in Lewis S. Feuer ed. 1959, p. 254):

As soon as labor is distributed, each man has a particular, exclusive sphere of activity, which is forced upon him and from which he cannot escape. He is a hunter, a fisherman, a shepherd, or a critical critic, and must remain so if he does not want to lose his means of livelihood; while in communist society, where nobody has one exclusive sphere of activity but each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes, society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticize after dinner, just as I have in mind, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, shepherd, or critic.

As Bottomore (1993, p.105) observes, the same idea recurs in the first volume of the *Capital*: The detail-worker of today, the limited individual, the mere bearer of a particular social function, will be replaced by the fully developed individual, for whom the different social functions he performs are but so many alternative modes of activity.

90. For a detailed summary of additional particular goals pursued by the schools in the countryside, see Figueroa et. al. (1974, pp. 14-26).

91. For this distinction, see once again the passage from the *Critique of the Gotha Program* quoted as the epigraph to the first chapter of this dissertation.

92. That is, even before the bulk of nationalizations. The date that marks this beginning is November 22, 1959, when following an initiative of commander Ernesto Guevara, thousands of volunteer laborers began building a school facility for 20,000 children in the Sierra Maestra.

purports to represent the maximum expression of a people that is “free to create.” If a reward exists at all for voluntary labor it must be internal, or in Marx’s system of human motivations, “joy.”

How to create joy from work so that it motivates more work has always been a main concern of socialist practitioners. For Ernesto Guevara, voluntary labor may be initially motivated by social compulsion, at least for some, which becomes habit as it is repeated several times, and eventually turns into “joy” as workers perceive the fruits of their labor.⁹³ He did not live long enough, however, to see how deeply people could be disappointed when their voluntary effort does not bear fruit. Much resource misallocation and the general disorganization that prevailed in the journeys of voluntary labor during the 1960s indeed seem to have wasted the initial willingness of many to work voluntarily and therefore to have contributed to growing rates of absenteeism and lower productivity in the taxing voluntary journeys held during the 1970 harvest.⁹⁴ With the willingness of workers exhausted, incentives to work changed. Neither moral incentives nor voluntary labor disappeared in the years between 1971 and 1985. The former, however, were less used than in the earlier period and the latter was mostly fused with material rewards in hybrid forms of labor, such as the construction microbrigades of the early 1970s (and then from 1986), and the several contingents of youth, students, workers, and soldiers which did “crash-works” in infrastructure.⁹⁵

Since the launching of the general offensive against capitalist methods in the framework of rectification, moral incentives and voluntary labor have once again been emphasized. Some lessons from the experiences of the 1960s seem to have been drawn. Newspaper invitations, for instance, call to the voluntary journeys only laborers strictly necessary in

93. He repeated this idea in several of his speeches and writings, but to refer the reader to the same text as earlier in this chapter, see Guevara Ocean press ed. (2005, p.156, 159,160).

94. See Fitzgerald (1990, pp. 48-53) for an illustrative account on this process. Bengelsdorf (1994, p. 95) reports that about 20 percent of the work in the 1970 harvest was voluntary.

95. See in this order Pérez-Stable (1999a, pp.157-160); Kapcia (2005, p.152); Fitzgerald (1990, pp.63-4); UJC (1977, p.3); UJC (1982, p.3); UJC (1990, p.98); and Fidel Castro, speeches on April 5, 1987 and April 4, 1992.

both number and skill to do the assigned tasks efficiently.⁹⁶ And because organization makes a difference in the results of work, to the extent that the voluntary journeys have been better organized than in the past, they may have increased the chances for the voluntary workers to see the schools, hospitals, or sports facilities that they contribute to create. To the extent that the development of intrinsic rewards from work does indeed depend on the results of work, better results of voluntary labor do increase the chances to produce the expected joy of workers.

In theory, all young Cuban males spend from two to three years in the army.⁹⁷ In practice, most of them do. As in any national army, their military training teaches them discipline, friendship, courage, and patriotism to the point of ensuring their willingness to defend the motherland with their life if necessary, both from external aggressors and from internal threats to the incumbent socioeconomic and political order.⁹⁸ Since December 1963, the party has had a presence in the army. Party and Communist Youth members work as political assessors in the units. They give political guidance to the ranks, which includes the study of Marxism and the speeches of the Cuban revolutionary leadership.⁹⁹ Yet it is through the frequent engagement of the army in operational tasks that military service seems to play an important role in the formation of the new generations. Army units have always been involved in tasks such as voluntary labor

96. See, for a sample, Domingo Amador, "Las BET deben movilizar solo a las fuerzas necesarias," *Juventud Rebelde* March 29, 1987, 16; UJC (1998, 3); Alexis Schlachter "Jornada Nacional de Trabajo Voluntario," *Granma* October 29, 2006 (digital edition); Katia Siberia García "Este domingo, trabajo voluntario en cada cuadra," *Granma* November 1, 2006 (digital edition); "Convoca la CTC a jornada nacional de trabajo voluntario," *Trabajadores* January 8, 2006 (digital edition).

97. According to Tzvi Medin (1990, p.148), a bill of law of November 12, 1963, established compulsory military service in Cuba and the first contingent of conscripts was called up in April 1964.

98. See Vecino Alegret and Escavia Rivero (Enero 7, 1968).

99. The construction of the party in the army was initiated in December 1963 and concluded in 1966. Throughout this time Marxist instruction was generalized, and later systematized in concurrence with the processes of institutionalization begun in 1971. For a synopsis on this process, see Alvbariño Atienzar (Diciembre 1981). For further detail on the educational work of the party cells in the army, see Medin (1990, pp. 147-153); editorials in *Verde Olivo* December 1976, p. 59; Vellinga (January 1976, p. 253); and interview with Brigadier General Harry Villegas (Pombo) in *Pathfinder* (1999, especially pagespp. 146-150).

and prevention before and relief after natural disasters. During the Cold War, the army was also constantly deployed to missions abroad in the name of international solidarity.

Consistent with Marx's characterization of capitalism as worldwide in scope and with his famous urging for the workers of the world to unite for its removal, Fidel has famously defined internationalism as "the most beautiful essence of Marxism-Leninism and its ideals of solidarity and fraternity among the peoples."¹⁰⁰ By losing his life while practicing international solidarity, Ernesto Guevara set the standard for how far an exemplary revolutionary should go with this practice.

From 1963, when the first international contingent of the Cuban Revolutionary Army (FAR) arrived to Algeria, to 1991, when the last military contingent returned home, hundreds of thousands of Cuban volunteers served in international military missions.¹⁰¹ In Angola alone served some 300,000 military personnel, and over 2,000 of them lost their lives. The numbers do not include some 50,000 personnel in civilian tasks, nor do these include the undetermined number of Cubans who militarily and nonmilitarily sought to foster insurrections in Latin American countries and actively supported their allies in armed conflicts throughout the Middle East, East Asia, and the rest of Africa.¹⁰²

Although the post-1989 geopolitical realities forced the Cuban government to step away from international military campaigns, tens of thousand of Cuban doctors, nurses, engineers, technicians, and teachers have continued rendering services at no charge to populations in need the world over. In June 2007, for instance, an estimated 42,000 or more Cubans were fulfilling internationalist duties in about 101 countries. Of them, some 32,000 in seventy-six countries were health workers.¹⁰³ To these numbers must be added the physicians who have assisted in Cuba

100. In his speech for the commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the attack on the Moncada barracks, July 26, 1978.

101. Other kinds of aid to Algeria had begun as early as 1961. Reported as stated by late Division General Néstor López Cuba to his interviewers in *Pathfinder* (1999, p. 24).

102. These are the numbers generally managed by Cuban sources. See Castro's speech on December 2, 2005, for instance. See Eckstein (2003, pp. 171-175), additionally, for a synoptic map of Cuban military internationalism. For a detailed account on the initial involvement of Cuba in Angola, see Gleijeses (2002).

hundred of thousands of sick from other countries free of charge and the professors who have trained more than 47,600 foreign students, from some 126 countries, who have graduated from Cuban universities in about thirty-three programs since 1961.¹⁰⁴

Irrespective of any Realpolitik consideration that must surely apply to the Cuban government's internationalist practices, the exercise of internationalism, or the extension of free help to peoples of other nationalities, is also a "revolutionary necessity," in the words of Ernesto Guevara, for its educative value in strengthening the selflessness and solidarity characteristic of the socialist morality. Consonant with this educative aim, participants in internationalist contingents often speak of their internationalist experience as a "school," where they developed their sense of human solidarity through the contact with populations in need.¹⁰⁵ If so or otherwise, the practice of internationalism clearly fosters at the same time more practical and immediate understandings that may help strengthen support for the socialist regime. By comparing life in Cuba to the "unbelievable misery" of the people they help in their missions, participants in internationalist contingents are more likely to feel satisfied with their own standard of living in Cuba.¹⁰⁶ Relating to others by giving rather than taking, they may also develop a feeling of pride in their country and in their ruling socioeconomic and political system.

Internationalism, moral incentives, voluntary labor, and the work-study principle in the system of formal education—all them have in common the intention to promote the socialist morality through life experi-

103. Numbers taken from "Más de 42 mil cubanos brindan su aporte a otros pueblos," in *Granma* (digital editi version), June 19, 2007. See also the website on Cuban cooperation (Spanish).

104. Osviel Castro Medel, "Estudian en Cuba más de 27,000 universitarios extranjeros," *Juventud Rebelde*, (digital edit version) December 14, 2006; "Operación Milagro ha devuelto la vista a más de 300,000 personas," *Granma Internacional* (digital edition) June 21, 2006.

105. For a few accounts on the learning experiences while participating in international missions, see interviews in Baez (1996) and Pathfinder (1999) with military personnel, and the book by Tarek William Saab (2006) based on experiences of medical personnel fulfilling an international duty in Pakistan.

106. "Unbelievable misery" in the words of General Samuel Rodiles Planas (in Baez 2006, p.287), recounting his experiences in Angola.

ences. In theory, Cubans raised under the revolution would develop out of their own experiences at school, work, and in the army and the missions abroad values such as justice as equality, freedom from insatiable material want and therefore to create, and solidarity with the weak in the amounts needed to perpetuate the socialist system of production for long. To the extent that these experiences succeed in promoting the pursued values, Cubans of the new generations would feel committed to the project started by their revolutionary elders not only out of the reverence they feel toward them, but also, and mainly, out of their own experiences while plowing the fields in secondary school; while cutting cane, building hospitals, or cleaning the streets in the journeys of voluntary labor; or while serving the wretched of the earth in Angola, Ethiopia, Haiti, or Pakistan. The higher their commitment to the values forged through actions such as these, the greater their expected determination to follow the route started by their elders when these finally leave the political scene.

Is the Battle Won?

Whether, in the final account, the new man exists in Cuba is a question both necessary and banal. It is necessary because only by asking it can we gain some insight into the critical factor that will determine the fate of Cuban socialism in the long run. But lacking any clear-cut depiction of the features of this man, we can know whether he exists only by the results. The question is thus banal because only when we know whether socialism in Cuba has or has not lasted for generations, will it be possible to discuss on firm empirical grounds whether or not a man compatible with the long-term endurance of a socialist regime has been produced in Cuba. And because the unequivocal evidence has yet to arrive, all we can do at this moment in time is speculate.

Rather than conjecturing sharply cut yes/no answers into the future, any careful (perhaps timid) speculation should begin by stressing existing diversity. Logically, the Cuban leadership's attempts to build the new man have been experienced differently by populations of different age and social location. For any one member of the new generations it makes a difference for the engineered formation of his or her personality whether she or he came to age before or after 1970, or the transition from "trial-and-error" to "institutionalization;" before or after 1986, or the transition from "institutionalization" to "rectification;" and even before or after the

end of subsidies from Moscow in 1990-2, or before or after the re-booming of mass mobilizations and the Battle of Ideas started in 2000. Within any of these periods, further differences can be noted. To give one example, for the age group of “institutionalization,” it makes a difference whether a given person fought in Angola or was trained as an engineer in one of the socialist states instead. Because these experiences are hardly the same, their results in terms of human morality cannot be assumed to be uniform.

Nor is there any apparent reason to suggest that similar experiences of people with different personal traits have rendered the same normative results. According to different personal traits the effects of the same experiences on individual behavior can be worlds apart. Vladimir Cruz Naranjo lost an arm, a leg, and a testicle while fulfilling his international duty in Angola. Yet he maintains enough revolutionary morale to declare to the Cuban press his disposition to use what is left of his body “to continue struggling for the socialist regime,” which he finds “the only honorable way for Cuba.”¹⁰⁷ Like Naranjo, Froilan Osmany Rodríguez fought in Angola. However, he soon discovered himself clashing a local insurgency rather than defending a sovereign country from foreign invasion. Upon returning to Cuba, he decided to raise his voice on the issue and eventually joined the opposition to the regime.¹⁰⁸ Today he lives in Paraguay.

The most immediate implication of existing diversity for the stability of socioeconomic and political regimes is that “who rules” matters. People with different degrees of commitment to the established social order are unlikely to pursue similar policies should they reach positions of influence. And because “who rules” matters, the ability of the departing leaders of the Cuban Revolution to find, select, train, and promote to posts of leadership the most committed among the new generations acquires critical importance for the long-term longevity of the state socialist regime.

107. Iris Rosquete Pulido, “Travesía 250,” *Juventud Rebelde*, December 13, 1998, p.11.

108. Histories like this abound on the Internet. This particular one was taken from article by Shelyn Rojas, “Ahora soy opositor por enfrentarme a la mentira: Froilán Osmany Rodríguez,” *CubanNet*, March 31, 2006.