Shaping Subjectivities and Articulating Solidarity in Revolutionary Cuba

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(Sociology)
in the University of Michigan
2024

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Dedication

For Ana, Carolina, Olga Marta, and Val

Acknowledgements

This project, in one form or another, has been ten years in the making. From Mississippi and New Orleans to Havana, Ann Arbor, and beyond, I have accumulated many deep debts of gratitude along the way.

Since 2016, the University of Michigan has been my intellectual home, and there are many individuals, groups, and institutions therein whom I would like to thank for their unflagging support in bringing this project to its conclusion and guiding me through my graduate studies, beginning with my dissertation committee. Jaeeun Kim has been shaping my thinking since my first major project at Michigan, and her critiques of earlier drafts helped bring my first publication to fruition. Dan Slater provided crucial feedback at the prospectus stage, and I'm grateful to him for urging me to think more critically about comparative cases. Xiaohong Xu, like Jaeeun, saw every iteration of this project, and his insights on the relationship between revolutions and events, as well as the tensions between coercion and consent, greatly shaped the trajectory of this dissertation after the prospectus stage. He was a formidable thinker, generous advisor, and stalwart advocate of de-parochializing US sociology. Luciana de Souza Leão very generously volunteered to join my committee after Xiaohong's passing, and she lent indispensable support as I navigated the job market and prepared for campus visits. And then there is Rob Jansen, the chair of my committee and my advisor from day one. Rob is the ideal type of advisor. I mean this not in the Weberian sense, but rather in the sense that everything he does, he does extremely well. I have benefited immensely from the feedback that he has shared on drafts of my manuscripts, tips that he has offered for making the most of conferences, best

practices that he has imparted for writing and time management, and the endless encouragement that he has provided. Rob is one of the rare scholars who can see both the minute detail of the trees and the significance of the forest, and all my work has been deeply enriched from his insights. As I move onto the next chapter of my career as an Assistant Professor at the Sociology Department of the University of Colorado, Boulder, I can confidently say that I got here thanks in large part to my committee. Now, I heartily look forward to doing my best to emulate the exceptional example of Rob and each of my committee members as I further develop as an advisor and a scholar.

Many others at Michigan—including Juan Delgado, Greta Krippner, Silvia Pedraza, George Steinmetz, and Jonah Stuart Brundage—have generously shared feedback on my work, both in the classroom and as coordinators of or participants in the Sociology Department's Social Theory Workshop and Culture, History, and Politics Workshop. I am also grateful to Renée Anspach, Sarah Burgard, Alex Murphy, and Geneviève Zubrzycki for offering sound advice over the years and generally being supportive figures in my corner. And I thank the Sociology Department staff, especially Ellannee Rajewsky, Jill Hoppenjans, and Chloe Unrein, not only for keeping the place running but also for guiding me through program requirements and milestones and creatively solving problems as they arose.

For eight years, I have been inspired and encouraged by the intellect, tenacity, generosity, and camaraderie of my colleagues and friends at Michigan. I thank the members of the Cuba and Cuban Diaspora Interdisciplinary Working Group for offering me a metaphorical island sanctuary where there was no need to justify my case. Early in my career, I benefitted from the willingness of more senior colleagues like Tiffany Chuang May, Luis Flores Jr., Dana Kornberg, and Simeon Newman to offer thoughtful and incisive feedback on my work. I did some of my

best (and certainly most enjoyable) work from the departmental computer lab in the company of my fellow "Lab Rats" Jane Furey (thanks for the hand-made mascot that sits on my bookshelf), Jasmine Simington (thanks for instilling in new generations a love of the lab), Shauna Dyer, and Erin McAuliffe. I was kept on track by my supportive yet stern accountabili-buds, Jeff Bilik, Kim Hess, Anna Woźny, and Kristin Foringer, who deserves special mention for introducing me to the joys of holiday-themed cocktails at Applebee's and helping me through so many problems, both big and small. I'm thankful to the fresh faces who arrived in subsequent years—Jacob Caponi, Catalina Anampa Castro, Emma Banchoff, Xavier Fields, Joyce Ho, and Janet Wang—for livening things up around the department and around town. And, finally, I thank my dear friends from the 2016 co-hoard/mega-hort, Elizabeth Burland, Davis Daumler (my editor-in-chief and so much more), Elly Field, Billy Rothwell (my Red Hawk confidant), Briana Starks, and honorary members Giovanni Román-Torres and Grace Wallace (and Harper and Scout). I have the fondest memories of our happy hours, football games, and birthday candles and toasts, and I've been honored to see some of you get married and grow your families (welcome to Cameron, James, Molly, Margot, Jolene, and Duke). I am awed and inspired by y'all and deeply grateful for your support over the years, especially helping me with stats homework.

This dissertation was an international endeavor, and my gratitude spans the Gulf of Mexico. Most importantly, I am indebted to Olga Marta Pérez (to whom this dissertation is dedicated) of the Unión Nacional de Escritores y Artistas de Cuba (UNEAC) for opening dozens of doors for me as well as for being a true friend. Belkis Quesada Guerra of the Instituto de Historia similarly was indispensable in my fieldwork, as were the staff at "Casa C" of the Asociación Nacional de Agricultores Pequeños (ANAP). The financial support from Michigan's

Sociology Department, Rackham Graduate School, Center for Emerging Democracies, and Donia Human Rights Center made this fieldwork possible.

Although my intellectual formation began at St. Andrew's Episcopal School of Jackson, MS—with pedagogical powerhouses like Ann Marshall, Julia Chadwick, Patsy Ricks, and Dr. James Foley—Tulane University was my first true intellectual community. In the Classics Department, Dennis Kehoe (a fellow Wolverine) introduced me to the craft of research and guided me through my first large-scale independent project. And although I'll always have a soft spot for Etruscans and Roman monuments (thanks to Susann Lusnia), I found a home for life in the Roger Thayer Stone Center for Latin American Studies. I also found a friend for life in Jimena Codina. I thank Brittany Kennedy for doing her damnedest to teach me Spanish, Jimmy Huck for formally introducing me to the field, Guadalupe García for deepening my substantive knowledge of Cuba, and David Ortiz for directing my master's thesis. David Smilde deserves special thanks for stepping in and guiding me through the stressful and complex process of applying to PhD programs. I certainly wouldn't be where I am without his help at that stage and across the many years since. And I'm grateful to Ana López, Carolina Caballero, and Val McGinley, to whom this dissertation is also dedicated. For taking a chance on me to assist the Cuba program and for modelling excellence in research, teaching, administration, mentorship, and friendship, thank you, from the bottom of my heart.

Closest to home, I owe the biggest and longest-standing debt of gratitude to my family. I thank Tay (my brother, Monsieur Candy with the Brandy) and Ana (the sissy I always hoped for) for always providing a supportive space to get away from it all, and I'm so grateful to Lilly and Dot, my most precious nieces, for offering many joyful and hilarious distractions. I also thank Lonier, my partner in every sense of the word. He gave me kind and loving support while

pushing (dragging?) me across the finish line, and he whisked me away to Ship Island when he could tell that I needed a break. He also contributed indispensable research assistance, including a fresh take on organizing the dissertation, help with formatting photos, and, most importantly, reminding me to always check my math. I deeply appreciate his willingness to go on a new adventure with me (even though it'll be a chilly one), and I thank Coralia and Reynold, Randol, and Rodrigo for allowing me to have their son, brother, and uncle by my side. And to Linda and William, my parents: for your deep commitment to education; your hard work and sacrifice to give Tay and me everything we could possibly need; your generous support; and your unfailing, unconditional love for nearly 35 years—thank you.

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the culture-politics nexus through the lens of social revolution as a form of major transition. In addition to firmly establishing rule by solidifying their political, economic, and military bases of social power, the leaders of social revolutionary governments also ostensibly aim to capture the hearts and minds of people, thereby consolidating their ideological power. Furthermore, they often pursue these intertwined goals under unfavorable circumstances marked by episodes that threaten their claims to power, like counterrevolution or famine. When confronting situations such as these, leaders historically have tended to deploy coercion, violence, and even terror to preserve their governments. Examining instances in which leaders instead leveraged aspects of their ongoing ideological projects to help navigate could-be crises contributes to a sociological understanding of early revolutionary regime consolidation.

I investigate revolutionary consolidation through the case of the government that came to power in Cuba in 1959. In transforming from guerrilla fighters to heads of state, leaders sought to transform social structures, values, and practices. To do so, they promoted national solidarity and the formation of new revolutionary subjects, ideological projects that they pursued in the face of repeated could-be crises. At no point, however, did they turn to massive state-sponsored violence or terrors. How then, this dissertation asks, do leaders of the revolutionary government shape identities and create social cohesion, and how do potentially conjunctural episodes facilitate, constrain, or alter these ideological political projects?

I argue three points. First, the revolutionary government pursued consolidating their ideological power through the twin objectives of ideological transformation and subject formation. Second, in so doing, they relied on political articulation—that is, the process by which political elites link together diverse, cross-cleavage constituencies into integrated political blocs as they attempt to organize political life to their benefit. Third, while articulating individual-level revolutionary subjects and population-wide solidaristic cohesion, they faced a series of could-be crises. These crises offered leaders an opportunity to formulate a template for political articulation that they could repurpose and adapt while navigating later episodes.

Through rigorous interpretive qualitative analysis of roughly 30,000 pages derived from political speeches, newspapers, and magazines that I collected over several months in Havana, I trace articulatory processes over time (1959-1970), focusing on four crises. First, the 1959 Agrarian Reform alienated the upper classes but incorporated peasants into political life in unprecedented ways. Second, the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion threatened to topple Castro's government but also enabled leaders to define Cuban society by its opposition to American capitalism and imperialism. Third, in the 1968 Revolutionary Offensive, leaders leveraged policy to reinforce a communist collective identity in response to internal political factionalism. Finally, although leaders presented their articulatory project as a fait accompli by 1970, the failure of that year's Ten Million Ton sugar harvest campaign signaled the incompleteness of their project to forge new men and contributed to a subsequent shift toward routinization, bureaucratization, and Sovietization. These findings suggest that could-be crises do not automatically force leaders down paths of violence or terror. Rather, they highlight the importance of articulatory projects for navigating crises and mediate how leaders manage the cultural dynamics that intersect with their projects to make new people, solidarities, and societies.

Introduction

Speaking to a crowd assembled in Sagua la Grande (central Cuba) to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the 1958 general strike against then dictator Fulgencio Batista's government, Fidel Castro wanted to issue a clarification.[1] "We must say and clarify," he began, "why we said that January 1, 1959 was the triumph of the *rebellion* because certainly, with all justice, we cannot say that January 1 was the triumph of the *Revolution*."[2] Castro continued, "On January 1, when the rebellion triumphed, all the past, all the inheritance of the past, all the deformations of the past, and all the ideas of the past subsisted" (Castro 1968d).[3] Earlier in the speech, Castro reminisced to the crowd about that fateful strike. He recounted the work that went into planning it, commended the bravery of those who participated in it, and described the parallel armed struggle that unfolded in the mountainous rural regions alongside the urban resistance. His point was not to discount the hard work and sacrifice that a revolutionary movement's successful seizure of the state required. Rather, it was to signal that the triumph of what he referred to as "the rebellion" was the point at which the *real* work—that is, transforming the economy, the political panorama, and even society itself—began.

[1] Sagua la Grande, in the province then known as Las Villas, was an apt location to hold the commemoration rally of the general strike because it was there that supporters of the anti-Batista rebels took control of the city after subduing the dictator's officers. As Sweig explains, "most of the towns in Las Villas joined the uprising, holding Sagua la Grande until the Cuban air force [then under Batista's control] bombed commandos out of their positions the next day" (Sweig 2002).

[2] Emphasis added. All translations from Spanish are the author's own.

[3] Of course, this clarification came after nearly ten years of official discourse referring to January 1, 1959, as the "triumph of the Revolution." Castro's speech did not signal a lasting lexiconic change, as the original phrase remains so ubiquitous even today that, after several years of working and researching in Cuba, I struggled to come up with any other, less ideologically charged way to describe that moment in history.

While transitioning from revolutionary fighting to revolutionary governing, the Cuban rebel leaders immediately pursued their stated goals of political sovereignty, economic independence, and social transformation, and strove to rally universal popular support and mobilization in the process.[4] However, their removal of Batista had created a paradox of success by eroding the foundation of the negative coalition that facilitated their ascent to power. Prior to 1959, there was broad, diverse public sentiment against Batista (Martínez-Fernández 2014:54), but the rebels' victory meant facing the new challenge of coming up with something else to unite the people behind the goals of the new government and to orient them to a new way of life. As historian Ada Ferrer puts it, "to do the things it wanted to do, the revolutionary state needed Cubans to do things differently than they had before" (Ferrer 2021:394). To create this positive coalition, leaders launched a large-scale project to transform society's hegemonic ideology and foster the development of political subjects aligned with this emergent worldview.

Adding to this project's complexity, it unfolded neither overnight nor in a vacuum. Even the most charismatic and persuasive leaders cannot instantaneously replace one hegemonic ideology with another or immediately transform individuals' sense of self or ways of being in the world. Castro himself noted the durability of existing "cultural stuff" (Barth 1969), referencing the persistence of the "inheritance," "deformations," and "ideas" of the past in his speech. Furthermore, as they developed their project to promote solidarity and shape new subjects, leaders faced a long string of situations—including challenges from domestic political rivals, foreign economic sanctions, and even military invasion—that had the potential to threaten the revolutionary government's existence. Given all this, I ask, how do revolutionary government

[4] As Nichols has argued, "Castro and his lieutenants knew that the success of the government depended on their ability to integrate disparate sectors of Cuban society and collectively mobilize them behind the goals of the communist Revolution" (1982:1) However, it should be noted (and will be discussed later), the revolution was not explicitly communist until 1961.

leaders shape identities and create social cohesion, and how do potentially conjunctural episodes facilitate, constrain, or alter these ideological political projects?[5]

Castro's clarificatory remarks at the strike commemoration speech, while directed to the Cuban people, find resonance with a tendency among scholars to be more concerned with where revolutionary movements come from and how they carry out their armed insurrections than what those movements upon taking command of the state. The area of revolution studies is broad and has undergone various generational iterations.[6] But despite these ontological, epistemological, and methodological shifts over time, scholars have focused remarkably consistently on the time leading up to and during a revolutionary movement's attempt to seize state power. We know considerably less about what unfolds immediately after a revolutionary *movement*, once successful in ousting incumbent leadership, becomes the revolutionary *government* or *regime*.[7]

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[5] A note on terminology is warranted here. In describing the government led by Castro and his colleagues as "revolutionary," I refer to the fact that they rose to power through an armed insurrection that ultimately aimed to transform social structures. I recognize that this choice of wording can run the risk of reifying leaders' own rhetoric, like Mao's terminology of "continual revolution." As Wagner-Pacifici points out, "The very word *revolution* bespeaks the event's continuing vitality. The word seems to present itself as that which is perpetually new, often involving a kind of 'elongation of the present,' in the historian Lynn Hunt's words" (2017:87). Indeed, scholars of Cuba urge caution on this count. Grenier, for example, suggests that "the concept of revolution—like the related concepts of crisis or transition—should be reserved for transient phenomena, not for power arrangements that are successfully institutionalized and reproduced over decades" (2020:323–34). While I agree with Grenier's point generally, I nevertheless feel the term is appropriate to describe the government in the early years as it was still very much in the process of consolidating power.

[6] Lawson identifies four generations of theories of revolutions: (1) the "natural," Parsonian account, which "considered revolutions to be analogous to a fever" in the sense that they were "deviations from standard settings of system equilibrium"; (2) the modernization account, which attributed revolutions to "increased levels of public frustration as anticipated notions of material progress fail to take place"; (3) the structuralist account, which "saw revolutions as determined by the emergence of particular structural alignments"; and (4) the current generation, which "sees revolutions as conjunctural amalgams of systemic crisis, structural opening, and collective action, which arise from the intersection of international, economic, political, and symbolic factors"(Lawson 2016:107–10).

[7] While the differences between "government" and "regime" may seem trivial, I argue that there are important distinctions. Here, political scientist Peter Levine's definitions are helpful for seeing those differences (2023). A government, he says, is "the legislative, executive, and judicial authority of any entity that wields significant autonomous political power (whether it's territorial or not), or else a specific group that controls that authority for a time." A regime, by contrast, encompasses "the state [which is "a government plus the entities that it directly controls, such as the military, police, or public schools"] plus all non-state entities that are closely related to it, e.g., political parties, the political media, and sometimes the national clergy, powerful industries, etc." Given these definitions, as well as the periodization of consolidation that I discuss in detail below, I have chosen to refer to Cuba's leaders as a "government" for the period covering 1959 to 1965 and as a "regime" for the years 1966

When scholars do attend to the "after" of revolutions, they often focus their attention on fully consolidated regimes. This scholarly interest has yielded large literatures on what Walder and Lu term the "dynamics of collapse" in authoritarian China (Cao 2001; Cao and Hu 2007; Sun 2017; Walder and Lu 2017), as well as the disintegration of the Soviet Union (Evans 2006; Garcelon 2006; Mayer 2002; Pfaff and Kim 2003; Valdez 2011). Scholars' efforts to understand thoroughly the rise of revolutionary movements and the demise of revolutionary regimes has left a somewhat large gap in between.[8] In other words, we know relatively little about the initial consolidation of revolutionary governments.[9]

Consolidating a revolutionary government ultimately involves consolidating power, understood as "the ability to pursue and attain goals through mastery of one's environment" (Mann 1986:6). Leaders often strive, for example, to "reestablish national order," "consolidate the socioeconomic transformations wrought by the class upheavals from below," and "enhance [their] country's power and autonomy over and against international competitors," all to secure the survival of their fledgling government (Skocpol 1979:163–64). Activities such as these relate to what Michael Mann refers to as the political, economic, and military bases of social power (Mann 1986:6). But Mann identifies a fourth basis of social power, ideological, to which the historical and sociological literature has given short shrift, primarily focusing instead on the role

through 1970. I also recognize that both "government" and "regime" can be "flattening terms […] as if to reference an abstract, always centrally controlled conspiracy" (Bustamante 2019b:14). However, it is my intention that the ample space I devote to discussing processes of political consolidation within Cuban leadership during the 1960s avoids the reductive tendency often tied to the vocabulary of governments, states, and regimes.

[8] There are certainly some important exceptions to this general trend, however. For example, there is a great deal of scholarship about China's Cultural Revolution (Andreas 2007; Obukhova, Zuckerman, and Zhang 2014; Song 2009; Xu and Reed 2023).

[9] Speaking to this point, Selbin argues, "researchers have paid relatively little attention to the revolutionary process as it continues *after* political victory. […] The very aspect that defines the social revolutionary process—the effort at fundamental transformation of society and the people in it—has been largely ignored" (1993:3). Writing close to three decades later, Arjomand makes a strikingly similar point, arguing, "we naturally think of revolution in terms of its consequences. Yet, the sociology of revolution has grossly neglected its consequences" (2019:12).

that political and economic variables play in leaders' survival of existential threats (Selbin 1993:3). For revolutionary regimes, however, surviving is not enough. Maintaining a hold on the state is rather, ostensibly, a means to achieve other ends, namely the transformation of social relations and the birth of a new kind of society. This has been particularly true for the socialist revolutions of the twentieth century because creating a subjectively cohesive, united, and fraternal populace is a prerequisite for the objective transition to socialism and communism. It is imperative, therefore, to attend also to ideological power—which "flows from a deep-seated human desire to understand the nature of 'the world' and how one should act in it, and to belong to a community which shares and enacts these understandings" (Gorski 2006:103)—when examining processes of consolidation in cases of socialist revolutions.

I argue that political actors, such as leaders of a revolutionary government, consolidate their ideological power in no small part through processes of political articulation. "Political articulation" refers to the linking together of diverse constituencies, "who, even by virtue of sharing circumstances, may not necessarily share the same political identity," into a cohesive, mobilizable, and durable political bloc (de Leon, Desai, and Tuğal 2015:2). Key to this perspective on politics is the autonomous role of political actors in articulating new elements of social organization like parties, electoral blocs, and mass political identities. Using various "means of articulation" (ibid.:3), including both policy and discourse, Cuban leaders fostered a universal revolutionary identity—termed in their lexicon the "pueblo cubano"—to promote unity and solidarity despite existing social differences related to class, race, gender, and region.[10] As I

[10] "Pueblo cubano" here means the "Cuban nation" or the "Cuban people" (while "pueblo" literally translates to "village" or "community"). The use of pueblo cubano and similar terms to unify the Cuban people is well documented in Cuban historiography (Guerra 2012; Pérez 2013; Pérez-Stable 1999). Leaders' use of the term "pueblo" here parallels populist rhetoric, which, as Jansen points out, "represents an attempt to forge a solidary 'people' through its rhetorical invocation" by "posit[ing] the natural social unity and inherent virtuousness of 'the people'—of the majority of ordinary members of the national community" (2017:31).

will demonstrate, the Cuban revolutionary leaders established early on a general template for political articulation that included both dimensions of subject differentiation (ingroup and outgroup) and mechanisms of subject formation (identity-based and action-based). This template consisted of three principal tasks: establish, emphasize, and enact. Leaders *established* the pueblo cubano by ascribing it certain desirable traits, values, and beliefs; they *emphasized* the character of the pueblo by distinguishing from its enemies (however construed in any given moment); and they encouraged the *enactment* of this shared political identity by promoting specific behaviors and modes of interaction that were rooted in values congruent with their changing ideological worldview. Through this project, leaders "intervened in the ideas and beliefs, habits and customs of society" (Rojas 2019:43), with the goal of creating new social solidarities and new people.

I furthermore contend that critical episodes or "could-be crises"—by which I mean situations that call into question or threaten the government's political, economic, military, or ideological bases of social power—mediate how political elites incorporate different social groups into their fold because such episodes offer leaders an opportunity to either retrench their vision of society and its people or adapt it to changing circumstances. The work of managing such episodes itself becomes a means of articulation. During each subsequent could-be crisis, Cuba's leaders returned to their establish-emphasize-enact template but consistently reformulated its contents in response to both the changing macrostructural landscape and the nature of the episode at hand. For example, the enemies against which leaders emphasized the character of the pueblo in the 1959 agrarian reform (long-standing self-interested economic elites) differed from those of the 1968 microfaction affair (opportunistic factionalists from within the Left). These findings suggest that moments of could-be crisis do not interrupt or impede

articulatory projects as we might expect, but they do mediate how leaders incorporate shifting circumstances and contexts into their projects to make new people, new solidarities, and new societies.

In the remainder of this Introduction, I will lay out the empirical and theoretical foundations of this dissertation. I begin by discussing my empirical case. After justifying the appropriateness of 1960s Cuba for examining processes of revolutionary consolidation, I will offer a brief panoramic overview of both pre- and post-1959 ideological projects on the island. I will then synthetically review existing theoretical literature related to ideological consolidation, political approaches to group making, and events before outlining the theoretical model I have developed in response to these literatures and based on my empirical research. I will describe the research design, including a description of my data and methods, and will conclude with a bird's-eye sketch of the chapters that follow.

The 1959 Cuban Revolution from Historical and Comparative Perspectives

Cuba in the 1960s offers an important opportunity for understanding how episodes within events shape elite-led projects to articulate revolutionary subjects and social solidarity for two key reasons. First, it is reasonable to expect to find robust evidence of political articulation in this specific setting. The far-reaching nature of the revolutionary government—in terms of control of state structures and resources—presumably would have allowed its leaders to undertake broader and deeper articulatory work than otherwise would have been possible. Specifically, the government's early monopolization of mass media, which I discuss further in Chapter 2, severely diminished oppositional political actors' abilities to communicate with potential sympathizers.[11]

[11] In their analysis of Cuban mass media in the 1960s, Pierce and Nichols make a similar point, claiming that, "Government control of the media served several purposes," including "to eliminate verbal opposition to the

Furthermore, leaders commanded institutions and structures, such as a wide array of mass organizations, that afforded them relatively unincumbered reach into individuals' daily lives. Second, the decade after the Cuban revolutionary government came to power was quite tumultuous. Within their first decade in power, leaders confronted a series of existential threats, both exogenous and endogenous. Episodes of this nature threatened to destabilize the government and demoralize (and, therefore, demobilize) the populace. Thus, these episodes are windows into how leaders struggled or succeeded to use political articulation to pursue ideological consolidation during moments when their political, economic, and military bases of power were challenged or called into doubt. The four could-be crises around which this dissertation is based are the 1959 agrarian reform, the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion, the 1968 microfaction affair and Revolutionary Offensive, and the 1969-70 Ten-Million-Ton sugar harvest campaign.[12] The Cuban case thus presents an opportunity to examine several types of episodes in a single country setting, which means that other factors, such as regime leadership and type, are held constant.

This study begins in 1959 and concludes in 1970. Of course, 1959 is a natural starting point because it is when Batista fled the country and was replaced by the leaders of the armed insurrection. I use the 1970 as an endpoint for analysis because, as many scholars have pointed out (Cabrera Arús 2019a; Guerra 2023; Yordanov 2021), the 1970s ushered in an era of routinization, bureaucratization, and Sovietization that was qualitatively quite distinct from the

Revolution," "to promote greater unanimity of public opinion," and "to achieve the major revolutionary goals of mass integration and mobilization" (1979:82). Farber makes a similar point, also noting the breadth of the monopolization. He says, "Castro established media unanimity through the state monopoly of the mass media, whether major or minor, national or local" (2011:15).

[12] For further discussion of my rationale for selecting these specific sub-cases, see the Appendix.

previous decade.[13] Furthermore, this timeframe strategically covers several years both before and after the point at which leaders had largely consolidated their economic, military, and political power. Because processes of consolidation are ongoing, often continuing across the lifespan of a revolutionary government, it can be difficult and indeed counterproductive to insist on a single moment by which we can officially label a government or regime "consolidated." But, if we take consolidation as the point by which "a new ruling elite" succeeds not only in "seizing power" but also in implementing "policies that radically alter the political, economic, and social structures of society" (Grenier 2020:318), then it is reasonable to see the end of 1965 as a useful marker for periodization.

From the beginning of 1959 through the end of 1965, we can see several clear indicators of the government's consolidation. Leaders quickly took control of the economy via nationalizations and sweeping reforms in both urban and rural areas; quashed a variety of existential threats, including a US-backed military invasion and bands of counterrevolutionaries that roamed the Escambray Mountains in the center of the country; and coalesced into a single ruling party after having eliminated many actual and potential political rivals. They also created a massive infrastructure—including, for example, a nationalized school system, population-wide literacy campaigns, and a multi-media propaganda apparatus—for socializing Cubans across the island into new ways of thinking, being, and doing.[14] While leaders continued to issue policies and change tactics after 1965, it was through having already consolidated their military,

[13] For example, quoting Luis Martínez-Fernández, Grenier notes, "The 1970s were years of 'institutionalization,' evoking 'images of stability, inertia, absence of change; the freezing in time of an established ruling elite; the end of experimentation and improvisation; conservatism and reaction—in short, the opposite of revolution'" (Grenier 2020:323). Although Fitzgerald stakes a claim against a strong version of what he calls the Sovietization thesis of Cuba, he simply suggests a more balanced assessment of the degree of Soviet influence rather than disputing it altogether (Fitzgerald 1978).

[14] These benchmarks are in line with Skocpol's description of consolidation, in which revolutions are "fully consummated only once new state organizations—administrations and armies, coordinated by executives who governed in the name of revolutionary symbols—were built up" (Skocpol 1979:163).

economic, and political power that they were able to do so.[15] Accordingly, this temporal aspect of my research design allows for ascertaining whether ideological consolidation operated on a different (that is, longer) timescale.[16]

The Long, Winding Path to Cuban Sovereignty

As Castro indicated in the speech referenced earlier, upon taking power, the rebel leaders encountered not a tabula rasa to do with what they pleased but rather a society shaped by more than 350 years of Spanish colonial rule and another 50 of US neocolonial influence. Fortunately for Castro and his colleagues, *some* of the long-standing and deeply ingrained values, attitudes, and beliefs that tended to characterize Cuban society up to that point would prove ideologically quite useful moving forward. This bundle of cultural dispositions has gone by many names, including "cubanía," first coined by Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz (1947); "cubanidad," favored by historian Alejandro de la Fuente (2001a) among others; or simply "Cuban national character," historian Louis A. Pérez's preferred term (1999). Despite variations in naming, scholars have developed a shared understanding of what comprised this supposed national character. Forged during the long, multiple wars for independence from Spain, Cubans held "an innate belief in Cuba's right to independence" as well as "anti-imperialist sentiments and a desire

[15] In the historiography of Cuba, debates about periodization are particularly complex because they often involve discussions of both consolidation and the revolutionary-ness of the government (sometimes conflating the two). Here, I do not take a position on the question of when "the revolution," however construed, ended, although this is indeed an interesting and ongoing debate within the field of Cuban Studies (Bustamante and Lambe 2019; Cabrera Arús 2017; Grenier et al. 2019; Guerra 2012; Pérez-Stable 1999).

[16] My periodization of the first decade of the revolutionary government overlaps with one developed by Carmelo Mesa-Lago and Jorge Pérez-López but is driven by a different rationale. Their periodization prioritizes a socio-economic perspective, tracking mainly on major economic policy changes as well as shifts between what they label (economic) idealism and pragmatism. "For the sake of simplicity," they explain, "'idealist' cycles are those dominated by policies that move away from the market, while 'pragmatist' cycles are market-oriented" (Mesa-Lago and Pérez-López 2013:1). Thus, for Mesa-Lago and Pérez-López, phase one (1959-1966) was characterized by "market erosion, Soviet orthodox model, and socialist debate (idealist)," while phase two (1966-1970) witnessed the "adoption and radicalization of the Guevarist model (the strong idealist)" (Grenier et al. 2019:148).

for social justice" (Clayfield 2019:9).[17] "Ideas of inclusion based on race and bloodlines" (Frederik 2012:41), which emerged during the struggle for independence, likely stemmed from Cubans' experiences of fighting together—across racial divisions—against their Spanish colonizers (Gordy 2015:55; LeoGrande 2017:224).[18]

After gaining independence from Spain in 1898, the commitment to social justice so integral to the independence wars seemed to recede into the background.[19] At that time, "Cuba had a marked class structure, plagued with racial discrimination against former African slaves, mulattos, Chinese, and other nonwhites, as well as scorn for the *blanco sucios*—poor and often

[17] Cuba's independence from Spain was secured through a series of conflicts that spanned three decades. The first attempt, the Ten Years' War (1868-1878), began when sugar planter Carlos Manuel de Céspedes freed his slaves so that they could join him in fighting against Spain. Unable to take or hold much territory, the rebels arranged a peace with Spain, but the fighting had left the country devastated (Ferrer 2021:129-34). A series of minor skirmishes interrupted the "peace" over the following fifteen years until rebel leaders again called for war in 1895. Troops grew massively (up to 50,000 over the course of 18 months) and the rebels successfully established a "Cuban home-rule government" on January 1, 1898 (Pérez 1998:7–8). The Spaniards knew, according to Stewart L. Woodford (President McKinley's minister to Spain), "that Cuba [was] lost" (ibid.15). The United States then intervened in May (in what they call the "Spanish-American War") to prevent Cuban sovereignty from passing into another's hands. All parties agreed to an armistice on August 12, and Spain renounced its claim to Cuba via the Treaty of Paris on December 10, 1898 (Berle 1960:40). On May 20, 1902, the establishment of the Cuban Republic became official (Pérez-Stable 1999:37).

[18] The minimization of the political salience of race—what Ferrer terms the "ideology of raceless nationality" (1999:9)—stemmed in large part from the writings of poet and politician (and, later, national hero) José Martí. Martí, quoted by Ortiz, went as far as to deny the very existence of race, saying, "There is no hatred of races, because there are no races" (Ortiz 1942:260), though it does not seem that Martí meant this literally, based on his other writings. His more fundamental point, however, was essentially one of political articulation. In comparison to the cleavage that separated the independence seekers from the colonial sympathizers, all other social differences paled in comparison. This is evident, for example, when he spoke of "the passion for liberty which reduces differences and places love in its legitimate position, and affection for those who defend it, over and above all consideration of color" (ibid.:267-68). While Martí was the primary figure associated with this ideology, he was not alone. As Ferrer points out, Antonio Maceo, a mulatto general and Martí contemporary, is quoted as saying, in the independence wars, "there 'were no whites nor blacks, but only Cubans'" (1999:7).

[19] Martí's rhetoric of racelessness, though politically expedient in the wars for independence, created an environment in which it was unpatriotic, un-Cuban even, to discuss race and racial discrimination. His ideas then "profoundly limited the space for public debate around the effects of racism and the legacies of slavery" (Wood 2022:647). The 1910 Morúa Law, which prohibited political parties based on race or class, further proscribed debates on racism and opened the door for the 1912 massacre on the Independent Party of Color (Partido Independiente de Color, PIC) when they protested the legislation (Henderson 2020:259). This "patriotic silence" surrounding race and racism would continue, with a few important exceptions (see Henderson 2020; Wood 2022), well past 1959 (de la Fuente 2001b, 2001a).

so-called uncivilized classes of whites" (Frederik 2012:42).[20] Even political elites were not immune from racial prejudices. On this count, it is telling that Fulgencio Batista, who was first elected president in 1940 before later retaking power through the 1952 coup, was allegedly denied entry from the Havana Country Club because of his "off-white complexion and 'Indian' features" (Booth 1976:144–45).[21] The deeply unequal social structures that shaped colonial Cuban society thus endured well into the twentieth century.

Upon becoming a Republic in 1902, Cuba also entered a new sort of unequal power relationship in the form of a US neocolonial arrangement and, in many senses, still lacked national sovereignty and remained politically unfree. The United States' occupation of Cuba ended in 1902, but soldiers' physical presence was replaced by the Platt Amendment, attached as a bilateral treaty to the Cuban constitution in 1903 (Paterson 1995:5).[22] Quoting from the Amendment, Pérez explains, "The Cuban government was denied authority to enter into 'any treaty or compact with any foreign power or powers,' denied, too, the authority to contract a public debt beyond its normal ability to repay, and obliged to cede national territory to accommodate a US naval station," which would be established at Guantánamo Bay (1998:33). Cuba also granted the United States "the right to intervene," meaning, in short, "the new Cuban republic was to be shorn of all essential properties of sovereignty" (ibid.). This arrangement

[20] Frederik's use of "mulattos" is an English translation of the Spanish "mulatos," which refers to a person of mixed white and black ancestry. It is a term that is part of a broad and complex system of racial classification categories with roots in the Cuban colonial era, which "categorized people of African descent in multiple ways (negro, mulato, mestizo, trigueño)" (Wood 2022:644).

[21] While in Cuba it is held as conventional wisdom that Batista was of mixed racial ancestry (specifically, mulato) and experienced racial discrimination on the Havana social scene as a result, I only found one (US-based) scholar who writes about Batista being barred from the Country Club. In contrast, his racial background has been subjected to much debate (Booth 1976; de la Fuente 2001a; Henken 2007; Portell Vilá 1986; Thomas 1971), but there does seem to be some degree of consensus that he was "of dubious whiteness" (de la Fuente 2001:134). As de la Fuente points out, even during his own lifetime, "Batista's 'race' was always a contested issue" (ibid.:136).

[22] After the signing of the Treaty of Paris in December of 1898, US troops remained in Cuba through 1902 "to safeguard order, property, and privilege" (Pérez-Stable 1999:37).

lasted until the 1930s when, after the tumultuous government of Gerardo Machado, Cuba's nationalist politicians led by Ramón Grau San Martín "unilaterally abrogated the Platt amendment, launched a host of reforms that diminished US interests, and then refused to bend to US demands that the changes be moderated" (Paterson 1995:5).[23] Cubans, it seemed, were no longer willing to tolerate either domestic dictators or US indirect influence and—what is more—were prepared to do something about it.[24] Given this context, and Cubans' deeply entrenched aversion to unfreedom, it is unsurprising that the anti-Batista movement of the 1950s gained such popularity.

In 1952, Fulgencio Batista became president of Cuba for a second time after leading a military coup to oust the sitting president, Carlos Prío Socarrás. Batista proved popular in his earlier term (1940-1944), but his forcible seizure of power, coupled with an intensification of corruption and violence under his watch, disturbed many Cubans (Ferrer 2021:271).[25] Over the course of the 1950s, a variety of groups from across the political and economic spectra—including "students, intellectuals, workers, and segments of the urban middle class" (Martínez-Fernández 2014:54)—began organizing against the increasingly authoritairan nature of his

[23] The presidency-turned-dictatorship of Machado, known in Cuba as the machadato, lasted from his election in 1924 to his disgraced flight to the Bahamas in 1933. A veteran of Cuba's last independence war, Machado was elected and initially enjoyed great popularity, but his eventual refusal to adhere to the constitution or electoral law lost him public favor quickly (Ferrer 2021:225; Henderson 2020:261). Finding Machado's corruption and repression unbearable, university students led the campaign to oust the dictator and were quickly joined by broad swaths of the working class (Pérez-Stable 1999:39). The 1933 summer of chaos—a drawn out back-and-forth between Machado's forces and the opposition—ended through US intervention in the form of mediations led by Assistant Secretary of State Sumner Welles. Unfortunately, allowing Welles to broker the situation's resolution meant that "Cuban political forces, including many but not all of the 1930s generation, gave the United States carte blanche to continue this role well into the future" (Sweig 2002:3).

[24] Evidenced by the strong stance of Grau and his colleagues, the machadato energized elite Cuban nationalists. These sentiments pervaded the grassroots as well, and the experience of participating in the anti-Machado movements of the 1930s had a profoundly politicizing effect on average Cubans that carried into the anti-Batista efforts of the 1950s. As Sweig notes, in the 1930s, younger generations of Cubans "took on a leading role in the island's politics and in the effort to resurrect the ideals of unity, sovereignty, and independence" (2002:2).

[25] Commenting on the magnitude of graft under the Batista administration, Pérez-Stable notes that Batista collected 1.3 billion pesos in government revenues during his first four years in power (1952-1956) compared to the 1.9 billion pesos that former presidents Grau and Prío had collected in *twice* that amount of time (1999:54).

presidency. Pérez argues that, in so doing, Cubans "drew freely upon what were already well-established narratives of the unrealized nation and unfulfilled aspirations" (2013:192).

By 1955, though the anti-Batista groups were nearly too numerous to count, several stood out in the crowded field. On the side of committed pacifism, the Society of Friends of the Republic, comprised of "moderate political opposition and civic groups," tried negotiating directly with Batista, to no avail (Sweig 2002:6). Initially averse to violent tactics, upon seeing Batista's unwillingness to heed the will of the people, the Revolutionary Directorate (Directorio Revolucionario, DR) became committed to his violent overthrow (Ferrer 2021:291).[26] Always on the side of armed insurrection, Fidel Castro's 26th of July movement (M26-7) reemerged on the scene in full force in 1957.[27] Notably absent from the scene was the Popular Socialist Party (Partido Socialista Popular, PSP).[28] Contrary to popular imagination, "Fidel Castro was not the leading figure of the opposition," and "the movement against Batista was not a singular one; no one figure clearly dominated" (Ferrer 2021:290).

With pacifism waning, the armed insurrection against Batista reached a fevered pitch in 1957 as the various opposition groups struggled to work together against their common enemy, who was putting up his own viscous resistance. The leaders of M26-7 and DR signed a pact of

[26] The DR was founded in 1955 by José Antonio Echeverría and other student leaders who formerly belonged to the University Student Federation (Federación Estudiantil Universitaria, FEU) at the University of Havana (Paterson 1995:28–29). As Ferrer points out, this group was better known and more popular than Castro's and even helped secure the release of Castro and his groupmates who were imprisoned for an earlier attempt to overtake the Moncada Barracks in Santiago de Cuba, the second-largest army installation in the country (2021:291;278).

[27] Castro named this group (founded June 12, 1955) to honor the date on which they stormed the Moncada Barracks in 1953. Their plan quickly went awry, and those who were not killed in the fray were tortured and imprisoned until being granted amnesty in 1955 (Pérez-Stable 1999:53). At that time, the two Castro brothers headed to Mexico to regroup, raise funds, and begin military training of their recruits. In November of 1956, Castro and others who had been in Mexico sailed back to Cuba on a yacht called *Granma* (the name to which the revolutionary regime would later give to the Cuban Communist Party's daily newspaper in 1965).

[28] The PSP did not initially back M26-7. In fact, they "dismissed the Moncada assault as nothing more than a 'desperate form of adventurism, typical of petty bourgeois circles lacking in principle and implicated in gangsterism'" (Paterson 1995:28). They also rejected violent tactics in general, "favoring a 'peaceful road' toward removing the Batista dictatorship" (ibid.). These early disagreements between the leaders of the PSP and the M26-7 would have implications for the process of political consolidation down the line (see Part I Coda and Chapter 3).

cooperation (Pérez-Stable 1999:58), but the DR was left gutted after their failed assassination attempt on Batista at the Presidential Palace on March 13, 1957. Echeverría, the founder of the DR, died in the attack with around 40 other members (Paterson 1995:83).[29] Internal rivalry between the urban and rural factions of the M26-7 also complicated the group's progress, but the urban faction was left weakened by the death of their primary leader, Frank País, in a police shootout. By mid-1957 then, it was clear both that "opposition to Batista was pervasive" and that, "while opposition was pervasive and growing, the number of prominent leaders was narrowing" (Ferrer 2021:308). The April 1958 general strike, which succeeded in Santiago and other major cities but failed in Havana (Pérez-Stable 1999:55), cemented the primacy of Castro and the rebels with him in the countryside.[30] Batista's resistance began crumbling thanks to a US arms embargo, and the M26-7 rebels made a final, successful, stand against the Cuban army in Santa Clara under the direction of Che Guevara and Camilo Cienfuegos. Batista fled the country, abandoning his presidential palace on January 1, 1959.

In this moment of joyous triumph, the political terrain remained unsettled, but leaders did converge around some points of consensus regarding the ideological project that lay ahead. Most Cubans celebrated Batista's flight from power as the conclusion of a particularly dark and corrupt chapter of the nation's history. By 1959, generations of Cubans had been involved in some version of a struggle for independence for ninety years, a shared history that "is essential for understanding the fervor, the almost euphoric support, the revolution enjoyed in its early years" (LeoGrande 2017:223). Though leaders of different rebel groups jockeyed for power

[29] As Paterson notes, Batista continued helping Castro's cause in indirect and direct ways. His "strong-arm tactics, police and military intimidation, and electoral fraud" inflamed public sentiment and made "organized violence" seem to be "the only viable alternative to achieve political change" (1995:29). "The government also eliminated Castro's rivals," Paterson continues, "by killing them, imprisoning them, or forcing them into exile" (ibid.).
[30] It was at this point (when the rebels' victory seemed likely) that the PSP became involved and offered support to the M26-7 (Paterson 1995:29; Pérez-Stable 1999:58).

(Yordanov 2021), Castro and his fellow 26th of July elites quickly solidified a position of dominance (Selbin 1993). Despite disagreements, leaders banded together "to alter the political landscape by creating a set of collective beliefs and values that would bolster and legitimize the developing revolutionary project" (Clayfield 2019:6). Thus, alongside the practicalities of "ensuring government stability and survival" (Selbin 1993:44), leaders launched an ideological project to remake Cuban society and its people.

This project varied over time and underwent three distinct phases within the revolutionary government's first decade in power. Humanism and nationalism were the main ideals that guided the leaders' ideological project in the first period, which began in January 1959 and ended in April 1961.[31] The nationalist angle—that is, the ideology that underpinned the government's goals of political and economic sovereignty—stemmed from "the same revolutionary nationalism inaugurated by separatist and antislavery leaders of the nineteenth century," including José Martí (Rojas 2019:36). In the post-1959 panorama, this nationalism gave urgency to leaders' goal of diminishing the direct and indirect control of the United States over Cuban affairs.[32] The humanistic element, which gained prominence after Castro's visit to the United States in May of 1959 (Amaro 1995:44), justified many of the social policies that followed.[33]

Mounting US aggression during the revolutionary government's first two years in power, however, pushed Cuban leaders to search for powerful allies, which they found in socialist

[31] As anthropologist Pablo Alonso González puts it, "The new ideology that emerged during the early years of the Revolution can be conceived as a mixture of Cuban nationalism embodied by Martí and Marxist-humanist ideas embraced by figures such as Che Guevara" (2016b:55).
[32] Even at this early stage, however, the tendency toward *inter*nationalism (which would increase steadily as time wore on) was present, evidenced by the "armed expeditions" that Castro sent to several Caribbean countries, including Panama, Haiti, Nicaragua, and the Dominican Republic, prior to 1961 (Yordanov 2021:1183).
[33] In a television appearance during this unofficial visit, he said, "With its thesis of humanism and social justice," the revolution "will solve Cuba's problems, because this revolution is not red, this revolution is olive green" (as cited in Pedraza 2007:60).

governments to the east. In April 1961, Castro officially announced the socialist character of the revolution, marking a new phase in the project of ideological consolidation.[34] As Cuba's leaders expected, this pronouncement generated support from Moscow, but the Cuban way of pursuing communism soon rankled their more orthodox peers. Among the chief complaints was Cubans' consistent disregard for objective conditions, which translated into their insistence on (1) the exportation of armed revolution and (2) the simultaneous construction of socialism and communism. Castro and his colleagues took aim at Caribbean dictators—many of whom were supported more or less overtly by the United States—and began promoting armed insurrection in Latin America, often against the wishes of local communists who adhered more strictly to Moscow's way of doing things.[35] Thus, Cuba's "revolutionary messianism" drew the ire of both the United States and of the Soviet Union (Lachapelle et al. 2020:565).

Regarding the economy, the leaders' plan seems to have been to overcome inapt objective conditions by leveraging subjective ones to propel themselves straight to communism. As sociologist Frank T. Fitzgerald neatly summarizes the project, it was an "appealing, quixotic attempt to skip the transitional phase of socialism and rapidly create a 'New Man' in an equalitarian communistic society through the development of consciousness, the use of moral incentives, and labor mobilization" (1978:19–20).[36] Che Guevara was a driving force behind this

[34] While Castro's announcement painted the turn to socialism as a radical new chapter in Cuba's history, as many historians have pointed out and as I discussed previously, "Cubans' sense of national identity" had long included an "egalitarian element," encapsulated in independence hero José Martí's phrase "With all, for the good of all" (LeoGrande 2017:224).

[35] As Brown points out, however, this foreign policy of exporting revolution had important domestic political implications as well. Specifically, he argues, it was an example of how "the military radicals were maneuvering to displace the moderates within the revolutionary government," such that "the aggressive domestic agenda begat a radical foreign policy and vice versa" (2017:51).

[36] This "utopian-romantic concept of socialism, based on the overstated role of the subjective factor and consciousness" (Yordanov 2021:1182), characterized other realms of social life outside of the economy as well. In the military, as Clayfield points out, "The idea that popular forces can prevail would underpin the language surrounding mobilization efforts in the years that followed and remains central to Cuba's national defense strategy" (Clayfield 2019:24).

component of the revolutionary ideology, and he "believed strongly that people were conscious actors who could create their own reality" (Selbin 1993:73). Through written treatises such as *Man and Socialism in Cuba* (Guevara 1965), he promoted the development of a new kind of Cuban—"the altruistic producer who works hard and unreservedly for the good of the whole society rather than to accrue material possessions for himself" (Nelson 1972:132)—as the crux of Cuba's communist development. In other words, subjective values of altruism, self-sacrifice, and community-mindedness would drive concrete behaviors, including acceptance of moral incentives and willingness to perform volunteer labor, which would help create the objective conditions necessary for a communist economy. This approach, too, drew criticism from allies.[37]

Despite repeated failures in both foreign and domestic policy, Castro and his colleagues kept pushing forward this idealistic and optimistic phase of their ideological project.[38] As political scientist William LeoGrande points out, the repeated economic missteps of the 1960s "demonstrate how stubbornly Castro held on to his distrust of markets and his belief in radical egalitarianism, even after it failed repeatedly to deliver the goods economically" (2017:226). I suspect that leaders' initial insistence on pursuing a uniquely Cuban version of communism—what Martínez-Fernández terms their "heroic idealism" (2014)—also stemmed in no small part

[37] Some critics took issue primarily with Cuba's economic strategy, particularly their insistence on reducing agricultural production with an eye toward import-substitution industrialization. "Moscow," according to Brown," did not approve of Guevara's plans for industrialization any more than it had liked China's Great Leap Forward" (2017:84). But other socialist allies took aim directly at the ideology behind these concrete economic policies. The German Democratic Republic's ambassador to Havana, for example, reportedly complained, in Yordanov's words, that "the pseudo-scientific and pseudo-revolutionary 'fidelism' […] was based on an eclectic-pragmatic mixture of petty-bourgeois ultra-left adventurism, national arrogance, Trotskyist and Chinese conceptions, and Western European neo-Marxist theories" (2021:1182).

[38] It is worth noting that their persistence in domestic affairs eventually overshadowed their commitment to the export of revolution, at least for a few years. The death of Che Guevara in Bolivia in 1967 certainly dampened leaders' militaristic internationalism. At that time, as Yordanov explains, "the Cuban policy of exporting revolution had failed, presenting Fidel with no other alternative but look at the situation in the world more realistically […] and bolster the relationship with the Soviet Union as the solution to the island's security problem" (2021:1184). However, this commitment would later see a revival in the form of Cuban support to nationalist movements in several African countries, though that is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

from their aversion to the imperialistic tendencies of the Soviet Union.[39] The CIA reportedly perceived this stubbornness, too. A 1968 report said of Castro, "He has no intention of subordinating himself to Soviet discipline and direction, and he has increasingly disagreed with Soviet concepts, strategies, and theories" (as cited in Yordanov 2021:1185). Neither the leaders nor the Cuban people had interest in replacing one neocolonial arrangement with another.

But, as I noted earlier, leaders' project of ideological consolidation did not exist in a vacuum. That is, there was a "complex interplay between Havana's revolutionary ideology and pragmatic state instincts," and leaders could not ignore "the realist imperative of state survival" (Yordanov 2021:1171). Toward the end of the decade, with the 1969-70 Ten-Million-Ton sugar harvest campaign (the subject of Chapter 4), leaders' idealism finally abated, and Cuba inched toward the Soviet line. Even prior to the sugar harvest campaign, there were indications that Cuba was again gravitating toward the Soviets after a long period of coolness dating from the October Crisis (known as the "Cuban Missile Crisis" in the United States). Castro's 1968 speech supporting Soviet leaders' decision to invade Czechoslovakia to crush the Prague Spring movement can be taken as evidence of this.[40] The Ten-Million-Ton sugar harvest campaign then was one final push toward realizing communism on the Cubans' own terms. When this campaign failed to reach the numerical sugar target, leaders finally seemed to be convinced that their way of doing things was untenable. The 1970s then ushered in a long era of closeness with Moscow, marked by both economic and ideological pragmatism, and the abandonment of a decade-long experiment in utopian idealism.

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[39] As Kapcia points out, many of Cuban leaders' decisions regarding their relationship with the Soviet Union seemed colored by "what they saw as a potentially quasi-colonialist Soviet desire to force Cuba into a role that suited 'the other' superpower" (2021:80). These suspicions only deepened after the 1962 October Crisis (referred to in the United States as the "Cuban Missile Crisis"), proving, in Castro's view at least, that "the Soviets were not only unfaithful and unreliable, they were [also] imperialists" (Blight and Brenner 2002:93).

[40] For further discussion of the Prague Spring and Castro's reaction to it, see Chapter 4.

Violence and Consent in Revolutionary Consolidation

The leaders of the Cuban revolutionary government were not the first to endeavor to remake society and fill it with new men, nor were they the first to do so while facing the exigencies and existential threats characteristic of revolutionary consolidation. All revolutionary regimes have faced could-be crises. By their very nature, revolutions that come to power are almost guaranteed to generate opposition, if not counterrevolutions, which may be "restorative," in the sense of seeking "to restore the former regime to power following a successful revolution" (Clarke 2023:1345); from below, as in the Vendée (Tilly 1964); or from the right (Halliday 1999); and there can also be opposition from within the ranks of the revolutionaries in power. Thus a normal part of governance in any context—"responding to unforeseen and unforeseeable problems" (Kenez 2006:48)—is intensified.[41] And despite the fact that leaders of revolutionary governments ostensibly have been guided in their decision-making at least partially by ideologies, ideology "does not provide a blueprint for policy, nor does it dictate a single course of action" (Hoffmann 2011:239).[42] It was thus up to leaders to decide how to manage could-be crises.[43] In many times and places, they chose to do so through violence, both soon after seizing power and well after the government or regime was fully consolidated, through what Mayer

[41] Of course, governments that come to power through revolutions are not the only ones that engage in violence as a tactic for managing could-be crises. As Reed points out, during periods of state formation, "In response to [an] emergency, acts are taken 'in the name of the state' to kill, injure, coerce, threaten, or negotiated with named adversaries" (2019:340).

[42] Hoffman seems to be building here on Skocpol, who makes a similar argument. She says, "Any line of reasoning that treats revolutionary ideologies as blueprints for revolutionaries' activities and for revolutionary outcomes cannot sustain scrutiny in the light of historical evidence" (Skocpol 1979:170)

[43] It is entirely possible that ideology does play a role in leaders' decision to solve problems through violence. Marxism, for example, through its "emphasis on class conflict and violent proletarian revolution" can provide "an ideological justification for violence" (Hoffmann 2011:239), as can nationalism (Slater 2009:248). However, as Hoffman also points out, "Marxism's emphasis on class war does not explain Soviet leaders' decisions to use state violence in particular situations, or the forms of state violence they deployed" (2011:239).

terms "the violence of foundation, which sets up and anchors a new order of legitimacy," and "the violence of conservation, which maintains and enforces it" (Mayer 2000:75).[44]

Here, I briefly examine literature regarding the use of state violence in other revolutions (France, Russia, China, and Iran), before returning to the Cuban case. I discuss a variety of could-be crises, including challenges (or, perceived challenges) from within the ranks of the revolutionaries in power. I will show that, of these cases, leaders of the Cuban revolutionary government relied less—in terms of both intensity and frequency—on violence as a means of consolidation.[45] While it is beyond the scope of this dissertation (and, likely, not accurate) to claim that these other governments relied on violence *instead* of articulation, I can say that Cuba's leaders favored a relatively largely non-violent approach to consolidating their ideological power.[46]

Pierre Victurnien Vergniaud once famously remarked that revolutions had a Saturnine tendency: eating their own children. "The reason for this 'cannibalistic' trait," Edelstein has argued, "can be found in the murky figure of the counterrevolutionary" (2017:94). In addition to those whom leaders would clearly deem enemies, like the Whites in the case of the Bolsheviks, the ambiguity and malleability of the category means that "anyone can be a counterrevolutionary" (ibid.). In the unsettled time that follows a revolutionary movement's

[44] Stinchcombe refers to this approach to consolidation as "totalitarian 'stabilization'" (1999:62).
[45] On the broad spectrum of the use of state force against its population (specifically, against civilians or noncombatants), Cuba falls on the low end. However, in comparison to other Latin American revolutions, Cuba was more violent. For example, leaders of the post-revolutionary Mexican government eviscerated old institutions like the army and the Catholic Church (Levitsky and Way 2013:8). However, they pursued these goals nonviolently. On the military front, they enticed officers into the private business sector with material incentives to eliminate them as rivals in the political sphere (Hamilton 1982:41). They did not execute them, as was the case in Cuba. (The decision by the Institutional Revolutionary Party [PRI] to brutally repress student protesters in Mexico City in 1968 is, of course, an exception to the generalization [Levitsky and Way 2013:12]).
[46] To cite just one counterexample, the Chinese Cultural Revolution was explicitly (according to regime discourse anyway) an effort to make new people. As Xu and Reed explain, "To attain their avowed goal of an unprecedented revolution peopled by 700 million 'new men,' Cultural Revolutionaries were compelled to overcome hermeneutic ambiguities by staging collective performances that would render 'real' the experiences of revolutionary new time" (2023:235).

seizure of state power, leaders may act to preemptively eliminate potential rivals, seizing on the conflicts that do arise as "both a justification and the means to destroy other (often allied) political organizations" (Levitsky and Way 2012:7).[47] The case of the French Reign of Terror through the Thermidorian Reaction—a "top-down terror […] designed to punish, avenge, and educate as part of a quest to reestablish a single political and legal sovereignty (Mayer 2000:101)—is one well-known case. Stalin's purges in the Soviet Union (1933-38) are another.[48] Estimates of casualties vary.[49] But somewhere around 700,000 people were killed as a result of Operation 00447 (Kuromiya 2001:194), officially titled "The Operation to Repress former Kulaks, Criminals, and Anti-Soviet Elements" (Viola and Junge 2022:2).[50] Likewise, the principal leader of the Iranian revolution in power, the Ayatollah Ruholla Khomeini led a "ruthless campaign" to liquidate the Mojahedin-e-Khalq, a leftist Islamist group (Levitsky and Way 2013:7). Based on these examples, we can see that leaders of revolutionary governments often choose to confront potential rivals, even those unaffiliated with the ousted regime, though violence.

[47] In these settings, Arendt argues, is where we are most likely to see "totalitarian terror" (1994), in which terror becomes used "as an institutional device, consciously employed to accelerate the momentum of the revolution" (1963:99).

[48] It is worth noting, however, that his were not the first. Before the dust of the civil war had even settled, Bolshevik leaders set about eliminating political rivals (that is, others who were anti-tsarists), particularly popular ones, like the Socialist Revolutionaries, who had won more support than any other party in the post-revolution elections (Levitsky and Way 2013:7). Underscoring the speed with which a person or group could be deemed once friend and later foe, Edelstein points out that some of the first victims of the Cheka were the very anarchists who supported the October Revolution just six months prior (Edelstein 2017:94).

[49] The field of research into state-sponsored mass violence unsurprisingly is an exceedingly difficult terrain. In addition to administrative roadblocks erected by governments barring access to archives, often, records have been lost or destroyed, or were never produced to begin with. Furthermore, researchers' personal ideological position may influence their interpretation of data. In this section, I have therefore tried to find ranges of the estimates and focus on average figures of those, where available.

[50] In resonance with Edelstein's claim that "anyone can be a revolutionary," Viola and Junge point out that although the campaign was nominally against "kulaks," "The kulak or former kulak figured prominently in this operation but was not the sole socio-political category subsumed. Nor should the figure of the kulak be confused with an objective socioeconomic category. The kulak was mostly a political construct, defined oxymoronically as a 'capitalist peasant' during collectivization" (2022:2).

In addition to these numerous cases of violence against potential political rivals, there are also several examples in which revolutionary regimes faced could-be crises and reacted violently. Crisis, in fact, serves as the justification for extreme measures. Edelstein reports that Mao once said, "Under normal circumstances, it is easy to tell a good person from a bad person. But under special circumstances, when there are bad people behind the scenes, you may be easily deceived" (2017:94). Soviet state-led collectivization and dekulakization campaigns in the 1930s are one example. These campaigns were a response to an economic could-be crisis stemming from the New Economic Policy (NEP), and as a result "thirty thousand peasants were executed as kulaks and close to two million peasants were subject to expropriation and internal exile" (Viola 2014:49).[51] The Chinese Cultural Revolution was a response to a political could-be crisis, the "shadowy 'May 16 conspiracy,'" which, Edelstein points out, "is widely acknowledged today (even by official Chinese communist historians" to have been "entirely fabricated" (2017:95).[52] Although it ostensibly began as a campaign aimed at "the destruction of the national bureaucracy and the purge of alleged revisionists" (Walder 2015:200), it quickly devolved first into popular violence (Edelstein 2017:95; Walder 2015:201; Xu and Reed 2023:241), followed by state-sponsored and -orchestrated violence (Su 2006:121; Walder and Su 2003:74).[53] Finally, the 1981

[51] Furthermore, the process of carrying out the campaigns begat more violence, as peasants protested (sometimes violently) and were harshly repressed as a result (Fitzpatrick 1994:5; Viola 1990:747).

[52] It is worth noting that this political conspiracy bears striking resemblance to the microfaction affair examined in depth in Chapter 3 which, incidentally, took place in 1968, just two years after the beginning of the Chinese Cultural Revolution. Cuban leaders did not sentence any of the conspirators to death.

[53] In their article examining the extent of Cultural Revolution violence in rural China, Walder and Su "derive an estimated death toll of between 750,000 and 1.5 million, a similar number of people permanently injured, and 36 million who suffered some form of political persecution" (for perspective, the population of China in 1971 was around 843 million) (Walder and Su 2003:74). In addition to this important advance in demonstrating the effect of the Cultural Revolution on rural areas, they also find that the "vast majority" of those deaths took place between 1968 and 1971, "after the end of the period of popular rebellion and factional conflict and the establishment of provisional organs of local state power" (ibid.). That is to say, "The fact that most of them occurred after the new revolutionary committees were put in place indicates that mass killings were the result of the repression by the local state rather than the result of conflicts between independent mass groups" (Su 2006:121). It is also worth noting that violent problem-solving was not unique to the leadership of Mao, as evidenced by the Chinese Communist Party's "high-intensity crackdown" against Tienanmen Square protests in 1989 (Levitsky and Way 2012:12).

Iran purge, while fitting into the discussion of political rivals discussed above, was also an example of violence as problem solving. The regime created its own could-be crisis through a series of conservative Islamic reforms that generated widespread popular protest (Nasiri and Faghfouri Azar 2024:166). After Khomeini issued a fatwa against the protesters, stating that "all critics of Sharia law 'have dug their graves with their own hands'" (ibid.), thousands of supporters of the Mojahedin-e-Khalq "were executed on the street or in jail, and many thousands more were imprisoned" (Halliday 1982:3).[54]

State-sponsored violence did not characterize the process of revolutionary consolidation in Cuba to the same extent that it did in the prior and subsequent revolutions discussed above, which is not to say that it was completely absent either.[55] Leaders of the Cuban revolution in power did violently put down the counterrevolutionary rebellions in the rural mountainous regions during the 1961-65 Lucha Contra Bandidos ("Struggle against the Bandits," discussed in Part I Coda), but, by all available accounts, those targeted by the Revolutionary Armed Forces (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias, FAR) were armed.[56] In other moments of could-be crisis, leaders relied heavily on coercive measures. Such was the case with the mass roundup and detention of dissenters (confirmed or suspected) and even their families during the time of the Bay of Pigs invasion (the subject of Chapter 2). And, in non-crisis moments, the state security

[54] Nasiri and Faghfouri Azar, through careful archival field work in Iran, verified the deaths of 3,400 individuals that occurred between June 1981 and March 1982 (2024:185). They also note that the 1981-82 purge was followed by another, better known purge in 1988, during which "thousands of political prisoners were sentenced to death by the Islamic Revolutionary Courts. These prisoners were executed in large numbers, and most were buried in secret mass graves all over the country" (ibid.167-68). Finally, more recently, the Iranian revolutionary regime used violence to quell the 2009 Green Revolution protests" (Levitsky and Way 2012:12).

[55] As Centeno puts it, "notwithstanding its clear authoritarian character, the Cuban regime has never engaged in the mass killing of many other communist countries" (2002:9).

[56] It should also be noted that, of the armed counterinsurgents from the Lucha Contra Bandidos who did not die in the skirmishes with the FAR or local government-sponsored militias, many were forcibly relocated after the fighting concluded. This was a "system of reinserting resisters back into society—yet away from their home province" that Cuba's leaders imported from Moscow (Brown 2017:160).

apparatus generously exercised "low-intensity coercion" (Lachapelle et al. 2020:571), sometimes punctuated by more extreme measures.[57] For example, just as the Lucha Contra Bandidos was subsiding (that is, at the tail end of a could-be crisis) the regime established forced labor camps under the auspices of the FAR.[58] These examples make clear that Castro and his colleagues understood coercion (of varying intensity)—but not mass terror—as a tool of governance and problem solving.

My point is neither that 1960s Cuba was devoid of repression, nor that France, Russia, China, and Iran lacked non-violent ideological campaigns. Castro and his colleagues did inflict suffering on those who appeared to deviate from the New Man standards established by the regime. They lost their livelihoods, families, and even freedom for their nonconformity (Guerra 2012;2023). But the historiographical records show that Cuban leaders—particularly in comparison to the leaders of other revolutionary regimes—used high-intensity coercion sparingly and tended not to use violence as a crisis management strategy. There are many possible explanations for why Cuba's leaders avoided mass violence and terrors to manage could-be crises. Scholars have noted that terrors tend to arise after the elimination of all "credible resistance" (Mayer 2000:113), but Cuba never (to this day) has succeeded in eliminating all

[57] Lachapelle and his colleagues define "low-intensity coercion" as including "surveillance, harassment, [and] routine detention" that "inhibits collective anti-regime mobilization or allows governments to nip it in the bud" (2020:571). To this, Levitsky and Way add "'legal' persecution of critics on libel, tax, or corruption charges" (2013:11). High-intensity coercion, by contrast, includes "highly visible acts of repression that target large numbers of people, well-known individuals, or major institutions" (ibid.:11).

[58] For further discussion of these camps, see Part II introduction. While these camps were closed after only about three years of operation owing to intense international scrutiny and criticism, the youth "reform camps" on the Isla de Juventud off the country's south coast is a slightly more ambiguous but nevertheless troubling case. As Benson notes, filmmaker Sara Gómez—one of the only black filmmakers in the Cuban Institute for Cinematographic Arts and Industry (Instituto Cubano del Arte e Industria Cinematográficos)—was interested in these camps because they were touted as "a utopia where young people could construct a revolutionary consciousness without the bourgeois prejudices of adult Cubans," but children were sent there forcibly (2018:144). That is, "revolutionary authorities sent kids to the island if they got into trouble with the law, if they failed to show the appropriate ideological formation, or if their parents could not care for them" (ibid.). Gómez's desire to create documentaries about Isla de Juventud stemmed from her observation that there seemed to be a disproportionate amount of black and mulato children in the camps (ibid.:143).

"credible resistance" due both to the large population of anti-communist Cubans and Cuban Americans in Florida and to the continued antagonism of the United States more broadly.[59] Relatedly, Guerra argues that the looming threat of US invasion under the guise of preventing human rights atrocities checked Cuba's leaders from relying too heavily on high-intensity coercion.[60] Perhaps, owing in part to internal opposition's relatively easy exit option, Cuba's could-be crises were less threatening; it could be that out-migration of the discontented, rather than leaders' deft governance, explains why the could-be crises I examine did not develop into full-blown crises. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to assess these different possibilities. But my analyses of these four cases do permit me to suggest that Cuban leaders' approach to managing could-be crises was, at least in part, to conceptualize them as an opportunity to intensify their articulatory project by appealing to new men in-the-making to internalize the values of collectivity and self-sacrifice and to act on those values to help the nation weather the storm together.

Literature Review

Revolutions have long been a core object of inquiry within the subfield of political sociology (Goldstone 1991; Moore 1966; Skocpol 1979), but they also offer fertile ground for examining the relationship between culture and politics. Revolutions, which Xu and Reed describe as "the most paradigmatic of modern political crises (2023:231), are "rapid, basic transformations of a society's state and class structures" that are "accompanied and in part

[59] Building on the work of Quinet, Mayer argues that "terror does not become, in Quinet's sense, a system or a form of government until 'after the extermination of real enemies has been completed and the hunt for "objective enemies" [has] begun.' In sum, and paradoxically, credible resistance is 'the last impediment to [the] full fury' of terror, not just its urgent justification or 'pretext'" (2000:113).
[60] She argues, "the threat of the United States taking advantage of open, mass repression to justify military invasion undoubtedly tempered strategies of control as much as the Cuban Revolution's embrace of 'moralism' over 'militarism' did" (2012:25).

carried through by class-based revolts from below" (Skocpol 1979: 4). But in remaking the objective structures of the state and the economy, revolutions also have the potential to transform a society's most fundamental cultural elements. Examining revolutions, therefore, shines a light on how political elites navigate culture to build solidarity as they consolidate power during moments of transition. In this section, I lay out existing sociological theory related to ideological power and its consolidation, political forms of group making, and events. I begin by defining ideological consolidation and exploring its relevance for broader revolutionary consolidation and some of the challenges that leaders face when pursuing it. I then discuss political approaches to social group making, introducing the concept of political articulation as an important mechanism of constructing universal revolutionary identities. Finally, I conclude this section with a discussion of the literature on events, temporality, and crises. Together, these literatures help me make the case for an eventful conceptualization of political articulation as necessary for understanding processes of revolutionary ideological consolidation in the following section.

Ideological Consolidation

Despite sparking many normative debates, the concept of ideology is a useful one for providing a fuller, more cultural understanding of political elites' attempts to consolidate power. As such, I first define ideology and ideological power. For Marx, ideologies are tools of oppression and means of perpetuating an unequal status quo. He argues that they are superstructural elements that reflect, reinforce, and reproduce a society's economic base to the advantage of political and economic elites, harming non-elites in the process (Marx 1978:154). But from a less normative perspective, an ideology simply "links a theory about society with a cluster of values about what is right and wrong as well as norms about what to do" (Oliver and Johnston 2000:44). Ideology as a base of social power, following Mann, then "derives from the

human need to find ultimate meaning in life, to share norms and values, and to participate in esthetic and ritual practices" (1993:7). Ideologies, which "help insiders make sense of the things they do and see—ritually, repetitively—on a daily basis" (Fields 1990:110), do so by linking abstract ideas, values, and beliefs to concrete norms, behaviors, and practices.

It is easy to imagine why political elites, particularly during moments of transition, would have an interest in influencing how people "make sense of the things they do and see." Ideological consolidation has important implications both for uniting ruling elites and for gaining and maintaining popular support. In terms of political elites, ideologies promote unity and inform leaders' decision-making. Remarking on China's revolutionary elite, for example, Mann notes that "the party ideology provided unity of goal, and its discipline gave it a vanguard of party cadres—ideological, ascetic, fairly uncorrupt—hotly debating the party line but then implementing it collectively (2012:409–10). Furthermore, ideology guides short-term policy decisions that have long-term consequences. As Lachapelle and his colleagues have argued, "the extraordinary risk-accepting behavior exhibited by new revolutionary governments [through policies] suggests that ideology plays an important role in shaping revolutionary regime trajectories" (2020:559). Beyond the central party and regime elites, ideological consolidation aims to get the masses on board with (or at least dissuade them from actively sabotaging) the political and economic projects pursued by the new regime. Even under Stalin in the Soviet Union, Mann points out, "There remained a widely shared belief in the ideals of the revolution," which meant that "ideology still exercised its power in obtaining compliance," despite people's "disillusionment with the present regime" (2012:362). Ideology can thus cohere both the ranks of leadership and the population at large in the face of economic or political difficulties.

While consolidating ideological power clearly benefits political elites, doing so is a complex and at time protracted process. Its complexity stems from the fact that such projects are often broad in scale and ambitious in scope. Shaping new people must be a society-wide project to ensure that revolutionary elites obtain the legitimacy and support required to carry out what are often sweeping structural reforms. In the case of Cuba, Fagen points out, "Every Cuban a revolutionary and every revolutionary a militant [was] the goal" (1966:257). But the breadth of such projects stands in tension with their ambitiousness. Subject formation involves remaking individuals' sense of self and others—as well as modifying long-standing attitudes, norms, and behaviors—all of which are deeply individually embodied and historically embedded. Relatedly, although it is tempting to see revolutions as radical rupture, times in which anything goes, ideologies have staying power.[61] This is evident, for example, in the way that durable sexist attitudes about women's appropriate place in society prevented women from joining the pueblo cubano as originally planned (Triplett 2022).[62] The targets of subject formation are not empty vessels and may resist such efforts, consciously or otherwise.

Finally, because of the scale and scope of ideological consolidation, elites' projects to shape worldviews and subjects necessarily take time. As leaders pursue the lengthy project of

[61] For Gramscian scholars, the association of revolution with rupture seems to stem from Gramsci's concept of "organic crisis" (1999:217–19). Organic crises open the way for new configurations of social organization because they are characterized by "a generalized weakening of the relational system defining the identities of a given social or political space" (Laclau and Mouffe 1985:136). As the argument goes, whether these moments arise from economic crisis, political scandal, war, or revolution, they create disidentification among the general population and open up previously unimagined or unimaginable possibilities, politically speaking. Ackerman claims, for example, in his recent comparison of the Mexican and Bolivian revolutions, that "a post-revolutionary scenario offers the closest thing to a tabula rasa, where the 'noise' of the past can be muffled for the purposes of analysis," at least as far as party formation goes (2022:24). As de Leon similarly argues, "parties have more autonomy than usual to act […], whether in absorbing challenges to their power […] or in launching new, sometimes even revolutionary, hegemonic projects" (2017:525).

[62] Further complicating matters, a revolutionary government's own ideological project at one point in time can constrain its articulatory efforts down the line. Describing students during the Chinese Cultural Revolution, for example, Xu and Reed explain that "students were baffled by the contradiction between the glorification of the past Communist revolution—widespread in state propaganda—and the ordinary time they were assigned as builders of socialism, inheriting the fruits of the earlier revolution" (2023:239).

consolidating ideological power—because revolutionary governments often initiate plans for sweeping political, economic, and cultural change, they tend to make a lot of enemies, both at home and abroad (Lachapelle et al. 2020:570)—they are also fending off existential threats from those who desire a return to the pre-revolutionary status quo. As a result, it is important to consider how these moments of contingency—moments in which actors had many paths from which to choose—punctuate ongoing processes of ideological consolidation that are, in essence, political elites' attempts at group-making.

Political Group-Making

Because of the integral role they play in organizing societies, promoting social solidarity, and aiding individuals in making sense of the world in which they live, group-making and boundaries have become common subjects of sociological inquiry. The literature on boundaries emphasizes that they are ubiquitous and meaningfully shape many realms of social life, as seen through studies of national and ethnic groups (Barth 1969; Brubaker 2004; Kim 2016; Starr 1992; Verdery 1991; Wimmer 2013), as well as identity categories (Brubaker 2016; Brubaker and Cooper 2000; Jenkins 1996; McAdam et al. 2001; Tilly 1998). Boundaries also relate to how states attempt to create, maintain, modify, or impose the categorical boundaries that give order to their populations (Bourdieu 1991; Brubaker 2004; Giddens 1985; Wilson 2011). This subset of the literature on group-making deals with how political actors deploy symbolic or cultural power and resources to create (or modify) categories and sort individuals into them, processes which may influence how individuals see and understand themselves. As Loveman explains, "Through practices of classification […] modern states not only naturalize certain distinctions and not others, but they also help constitute particular *kinds* of people, places, and things" (2005:1655).

Given this, the concepts of boundaries and group-making should also draw our attention to the relationship between politics and social organization.

Understanding the relationship among identities, social cohesion, group formation, and political power has long been a fundamental aim of political sociology, dating back to Karl Marx. Historically, scholars conceptualized political parties as reflective of existing social cleavages and the groupings that result from them. As Marx's distinction between a class-in-itself and a class-for-itself implies, cleavages (at least class-based ones) are ontologically real—independent of members' perception of their existence—and certainly irrespective of organized party activity. As Ackerman succinctly puts it, "For classical Marxism, parties were the endpoint of a process of class formation" (2022:11). Building on this argument, in the 1960s, pluralist political scientists developed the so-called "reflection hypothesis," positing that parties are essentially mirrors. Party leaders perform an expressive function as they "develop a rhetoric for the translation of contrasts in the social and cultural structure into demands and pressures for action or inaction (Lipset and Rokkan 1967:5). In both literatures, then, parties primarily reflect and institutionalize already-existing social identities, relationships, and cleavages.

More recently, however, political sociologists have begun to challenge this structurally deterministic understanding of the relationship between political parties and social organization. Specifically, the literature on political articulation foregrounds the agency of parties in making specific social cleavages more or less salient in order to create constituencies. Rooted in the writings of Gramsci, this approach argues that politics plays an autonomous role in "crystalizing and prioritizing certain cleavages and rebuilding society around them" (Tuğal 2015: 87). The articulation approach further maintains that there is nothing natural or necessary about where political fault lines fall or which aspects of social identity emerge as politically salient in a given

time and place (Desai 2002; Desai and Roy 2016; Gramsci 1999; Laclau 1977; Laclau and Mouffe 1985; de Leon 2017; de Leon, Desai, and Tuğal 2009; de Leon et al. 2015; Przeworski 1977; Slater 2015). In these projects, leaders use various "means of articulation" (de Leon et al. 2015:3)—including discourse, legislation, policies, and programs—to rearrange, repurpose, or paper over existing social cleavages with the goal of configuring multiple, often dissimilar groups into a shared political identity.

But leaders do not articulate freely or in a vacuum. To say that parties have agency is not to say that their will alone determines this outcome of their projects. Newer work emphasizes this contingency by drawing our attention to constraints on articulatory projects, pointing to a variety of structural and cultural factors that may condition what leaders are able to accomplish (Ackerman 2022; Eidlin 2016; Triplett 2022; Tuğal 2015). I have argued elsewhere that existing cultural elements of social organization—like identities, categories, and boundaries—complicate articulators' attempts to paper over differences and suture distinct groups together (Triplett 2022). While this newer body of research convincingly demonstrates that cultural and structural dynamics can constrain projects of articulation, I furthermore suggest that these constraints are not constant over time. Indeed, a better understanding of this political approach to group-making requires a deeper consideration of temporality and events.

Temporality and Events

In recent years, scholars have expressed a renewed interest in the study of events as important objects of sociological analysis.[63] Sociologists understand events as "transforming

[63] While many attribute the resurrection of the sociological study of events primarily to Sewell (1996), he was by no means the first or only scholar in this new wave of eventful sociology (Abbott 1992, 2001; Abrams 1982; Griffin 1993). Specifically, as Wagner-Pacifici points out, Abrams "was among the first to claim the legitimacy of the sociological purchase on events by highlighting their constructed nature" (2010:1364).

social relations, trajectories, and structures" (Meyer and Kimeldorf 2015:429), in part by creating what Berezin (2012) terms "templates of possibility," in which old patterns may be forcefully retrenched or new patterns emerge and replace the old. What an "event" *is*, however, depends largely on how one understands the relationship between events and historical change. For some scholars, events worth studying are those that are so disruptive, their effects so massive and far reaching, that they transform the very structures of society. In this vein, Sewell defines an event as "(1) a ramified sequence of occurrences that (2) is recognized as notable by contemporaries, and that (3) results in a durable transformation of structures" (1996:844). For others, smaller, localized, and even seemingly mundane events are worth examining because they too have transformational capabilities. Meyer and Kimeldorf, for example, introduce the concept of "eventful subjectivity" to argue that small-scale events also matter because of their "potential impact on subjectivities at a more micro-level" (2015:434).[64] In the case of a living wage campaign in Chicago, these authors find that microevents (here, collective acts like marches and demonstrations) affected individuals' sense of self and of group solidarity, which contributed to the success of the campaign. But the theoretical ground between Sewell's sweeping, structure-smashing events and Meyer and Kimeldorf's microevents has proven broad and fertile.

Whether referred to as "hysteresis" (Bourdieu 1977), "unsettled times" (Swidler 1986), "turning points" (Abbott 2001), or "emergencies" (Reed 2019), scholars are interested in situations where "something is the matter" (Sendroiu 2022:301).[65] These sorts of episodes matter

[64] In addition to small-scale events being important for the reasons that Meyer and Kimeldorf explore, both Patterson and Steinmetz have called for looking beyond Sewell's narrow focus on singular events that durably transform structures. They point to the importance of "the accretions of minor, unnoticed events over time" (Patterson 2007:1288), in which "numerous microscopic changes finally give rise to a structural change" (Steinmetz 2008:538). Nevertheless, they remain interested, like Sewell, in macro-structural changes.

[65] Indeed, the proliferation of terms to describe situations in which "something is the matter" has emerged as an obstacle to adequately theorizing. Scholars both use different terms to describe a seemingly singular phenomenon and use the same term to describe clearly different objects of analysis. Sendroiu (2023) has taken an important step

politically and culturally. Not only can they allow leaders to "suspend everyday, taken-for-granted constraints on the exercise of power" (Polillo 2020:12), but they also open up possibilities for the transformation of "identities, loyalties, emotional registers and repertoires, and our purchase on the past and the future" (Wagner-Pacifici 2017:84). Additionally, they have material impacts to the extent that they "activate an assemblage of institutions, laws, and social class relations" (ibid.:85). Given the potential impacts of situations such as these, it is clear they merit our attention.

Recent literature in this subfield has demonstrated new approaches to understanding time, events, and crises. These new conversations involve boundaries, in more or less explicit ways. Events and crises certainly invite analysis of temporal boundaries. As Sweet and her colleagues point out, "Crises are characterized, in part, by the way they seem to mark everything that came before as 'in the past'" (2024:123; citing Wagner-Pacifici 2017:42). Although conceptualizing crises as stark ruptures or clearly defined moments of before-and-after "takes away much of our ability to conceptualize crisis as lived experience" (Sendroiu 2022:302), it is nevertheless fruitful to consider how events or crises may serve to demarcate one type of temporality from another. In their work on the Chinese Cultural Revolution, Xu and Reed do not use the language of boundaries, but—in introducing a new tripartite typology of temporalities—they are talking about distinctions between what they term ordinary, carnival, and new time (2023). Other recent work draws attention to spatial boundaries in the context of events or crises. In their examination of backlash against the erosion of the public-private divide (a boundary that is at both symbolic and metaphorical as well as real, material, and physical) during the COVID-19 pandemic, Sweet and her colleagues make the argument that, "When transgressed boundaries are sacralized, crisis

in explicitly naming this conceptual confusion and offering one way forward (though, as I will argue below, her theoretical intervention, as is, does not adequately account for could-be crises during revolutionary consolidation).

rhetoric therefore ironically reasserts and preserves the structure that it names 'in crisis" (2024:121). They build on similar arguments that Braun makes in his work on antisemitism and border crossings (2022). As I discuss below, I extend this ongoing conversation to include symbolic and categorial identity boundaries.

Scholars have also begun to examine more closely the ontology and epistemology of crises, including the important question of recognition. Whether we want to call them turning points, episodes, crises, emergencies, situations, or something else, they *do* happen and are ontologically real. "A crisis," Sendroiu maintains, "can affect actors' lives even if they do not recognize the crisis as such" (2022:301).[66] However, scholars within the performative tradition on crises maintain that what crises *mean* depends on how actors perform them (Reed 2016, 2019; Sweet et al. 2024; Wagner-Pacifici 2000, 2017; Wagner-Pacifici 2010; Xu and Reed 2023). A "strongly performative understanding of crisis," Sendroiu argues (2022:301), "would effectively preclude the matter of crisis recognition inasmuch as crises would not exist outside the performance, so there is nothing to recognize." Because I am concerned with how Cuban leaders reacted to could-be crises, this work obviously hinges on leaders' recognition of these episodes as such. But I will also argue below that the situations "really" existed, independent of leaders' best "guesses" about them (Sendroiu 2022).

[66] Prior to this, Sendroiu also says that "A crisis has ontological status as a set of shifting sociocultural scaffoldings no matter performances by actors" (2022:301). While I agree, this statement also demonstrates one of the main difficulties of working with the literature on events: concepts and terminology. What Sendroiu defines as crises' ontological status bears striking similarity to Sewell's definition of an "event." But, as I will argue below, conceptual distinction between events and crises (or, could-be crises) is imperative for understanding the relationship between the two.

Theoretical Framework

In this section, I present my theoretical model, which is informed by both the literatures reviewed previously and the empirical case of revolutionary consolidation in 1960s Cuba. I begin by discussing two key adjustments for making the concept of political articulation more useful for understanding ideological consolidation. First, as established earlier, political articulation calls our attention to the relationship between group-making and social solidarity. However, work remains to be done with regards to how the "suturing" of articulation takes place and the factors that enable or constrain it. While the "lumping" and "splitting" (Zerubavel 1991:27) that political articulation entails are central to governance generally, my research shows that they are particularly important for nascent revolutionary regimes, whose survival often depends on constructing a broad base popular support. Second, as a process, political articulation necessarily unfolds over time and is rarely complete (if ever). It is therefore necessary to take a more longitudinal lens to articulatory projects to ascertain not only how leaders react to changing macro-structural contexts but also how they respond to could-be crises that may either facilitate or enable their political group-making. I conclude by revisiting the core argument of the dissertation within the terms of this theoretical framework.

Internal Dynamics of Political Articulation

In the literature on political articulation there is an overt emphasis on social cleavages accompanied by a more implicit concern with group formation. As de Leon and his colleagues explain, "parties perform crucial articulating functions in the creation and reproduction of social cleavages" (2009:193). The cleavages can relate to axes of difference like class, race, ethnicity, religion, or region, to name a few. They matter in this perspective because cleavages are the organizing elements around which new groups are formed through the articulation process. The

creation of Turkey's Justice and Development Party (AKP) offers a prime example of this process (Tuğal 2015). In emphasizing a "neoliberal 'democratic' program," Tuğal argues, the AKP successfully denaturalized ethnic, religious, and class differences to articulate an electoral bloc that united "Kurds and Turks, secularized and pious sectors, upper and lower classes, and ultimately ruling elite and the people" (87). Scholars frequently employ the metaphor of "suturing" to explain the construction of blocs around specific cleavages (de Leon et al. 2009; Slater 2015). Parties and their leaders suture together varied social groups, around or across cleavages, into a unified and mobilizable bloc.

The language of suturing is useful because it invokes the agentic nature of articulation, the bringing together of disparate pieces to form a distinctive whole, and the potential for disintegration, as sutures "always threaten to come apart" (de Leon et al. 2009:199). However, in the existing literature, scholars seem more interested in the finished product (a sutured bloc) than in the suturing process. In emphasizing sutured blocs, our attention is drawn more to the new resulting external boundaries, which differentiate one articulated bloc from another, than to its internal dynamics stitching across old (now "internal") cleavages. Between-bloc dynamics hinge on what I call "external differentiation," which involves creating a political identity that is logical, consistent, and coherent, from the outside perspective. Such identities enable electoral competition.[67] At the same time, overemphasis on external differentiation draws attention away from what I term "internal coherence." Internal coherence requires "establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice"

[67] This insight builds on the work of anthropologist Fredrik Barth, who, in reference to ethnic groups, argued that scholars should be paying more attention to "the ethnic *boundary* that defines the group" than to "the cultural stuff that it encloses" (1969:15). As Lamont and Molnár explain, Barth "rejected a view of ethnicity that stressed shared culture in favor of a more relational approach emphasizing that feelings of communality are defined in opposition to the perceived identity of other racial and ethnic groups" (2002:174). If group identification results at least in part from group differentiation, then a party's ability to distinguish itself from competitors matters greatly for elections.

(Laclau and Mouffe 1985:105). The existing literature is so concerned with what suturing enables that it tends not to account for what enables suturing. In other words, the metaphor of suturing—which is a rote, mechanical, and mundane activity—underestimates the constraints on articulation and the barriers that articulators may face when attempting to suture across existing cleavages and to fundamentally alter individuals' understandings of self and others.

I argue that revolutionary regimes are the ideal setting in which to consider the relationship between political articulation, external differentiation, *and* internal cohesion. Existing empirical studies of articulation focus overwhelmingly on electoral democratic contexts, albeit with an emphasis on "integral parties," which "orient to transformational questions" (de Leon et al. 2015:4–5). In such cases, the main goal of an articulatory project consists of suturing together an electoral bloc large enough to win elections and durable enough to continue winning long enough to implement policies in furtherance of the integral party's transformative goals. In revolutionary cases, by contrast, regime leaders must do far more than get voters to the polls (if they do so at all). In situations where a revolution comes to power thanks to a broad coalition that transcends many social cleavages (rather than, say, a class-based coalition), the revolutionary regime faces the immediate and pressing task of converting the constituents of that broad coalition from mere critics of the old regime to supporters of the new one.[68] According to Patricia and S.V. Utechin, Lenin recognized this, as "he was concerned with substituting for the grievances of the different social, religious, ethnic, etc., groups in Russia a general antagonism to

[68] Support matters in terms of the people's willingness to participate in the regime's projects and to grant the regime's leaders legitimacy, but there is also a practical aspect to successfully bringing broad swaths of people "under one banner," to borrow Gramsci's phrase (1999:218). As U points out in the case of Chinese intellectuals, "The incorporation of the intellectuals into the revolutionary project enabled the party to pursue otherwise unachievable goals, such as expanding industrial production, deepening rural mobilization, developing multifaceted propaganda, and increasing literacy in the Red Army" (2019:66). As we will see, Cuban leaders were not so successful in articulating technical experts into the revolutionary pueblo. Many of them emigrated, which proved detrimental to economic development plans.

the autocracy" (1963:19). Furthermore, given that articulation is ultimately guided by the underlying revolutionary ideology, it also requires fundamentally altering individuals' worldviews and their understanding of their place in society. Shifting analytical focus to include both external differentiation and internal cohesion will be useful for better understanding how revolutionary regimes construct mass revolutionary identities in furtherance of consolidating their ideological power.

Temporality and Events in Political Articulation

The second adjustment to the existing literature on political articulation that I propose is a greater appreciation of the temporal dimension of this mechanism of political group-making. Scholars who work with the concept of political articulation frequently note that it is a "process" (Desai and Roy 2016; Eidlin 2016; de Leon 2017; de Leon et al. 2009, 2015; Li 2000; Tuğal 2015). De Leon and his colleagues, for example, express that, "Neither the parties nor the blocs they mobilize are static" (2015: 28). To this, Tuğal adds, "articulation is an open process, which remains challenged, at least from some directions" (2015: 102). Given this emphatic characterization, there is surprisingly little discussion in the empirical literature of how specific events impact projects of political articulation. This lacuna, I suggest, is related to another gap in the literature on political articulation which scholars have recently begun to address, that of constraints, discussed earlier. Often, ideological projects to create universal revolutionary identities and new types of political subjects unfold contemporaneously to the consolidation to the other bases of social power, which work together to change the macro-structural context. And, furthermore, as leaders navigate processes of revolutionary consolidation, they are likely to run into challenging situations—snags, problems, crises, emergencies, and the like—that require their attention and that may force leaders to reconsider their articulatory approach.

If social revolutions are themselves events, in a Sewellian sense (1996), then how should we conceive of situations that arise after a new government has come to power via a revolution and that threaten to slow down, erode, or even undo entirely the structural changes already underway? I suggest that it is useful to think of such situations as "could-be crises." Could-be crises are moments that either provide revolutionary leaders with the opportunity to further entrench their vision of a new society *or* present them with a challenge—to their economic strategies, military plans, political projects, or ideological worldview—and require them to respond. This sub-category of events that threaten revolutionary regime consolidation are both endogenous and exogenous. On the one hand, regime leaders themselves conjure could-be crises when they make mistakes, fight against each other, experience unintended consequences, or implement policies and programs that have the potential to be rejected by the population due to their radical nature. Popular rejection was certainly a strong possibility in the case of the 1959 agrarian reform (Chapter 1), during which a population that had been thoroughly united against Batista did not unanimously agree on who or what should replace him. Endogenous events then may disrupt the process of uniting the population "under one banner" (Gramsci 1999:218), an essential component of making a new ideology hegemonic. On the other hand, leaders face exogenous challenges, including natural disasters and global economic crises. Furthermore, revolutions tend to generate resistance from other states, creating the possibility for exogenous geopolitical tensions, invasions, or war, because "they disrupt neighboring states governed by older political and economic institutions" (Brown 2017; see also Lachapelle et al. 2020). Paying attention to could-be crises then shines a light on how leaders react to challenges to their revolutionary projects.

That revolutionary governments and regimes face could-be crises seems difficult to deny, but what might we expect their impact on projects of articulation to be? Here it is helpful to return to the earlier discussions about the socially constructed nature of crises and their relationship to boundaries. Sweet and her colleagues (to take one example) have argued that part of what allows crises to serve as a mechanism for retrenching socially regressive boundaries is the "political construction of crisis," through which "crisis rhetoric is used to create a sense of 'new time' that is deeply insecure, facilitating a conservative political movement of some kind" (such as the regressive retrenchment of the public/private boundary) (2024:122). But there are several issues when applying this perspective to revolutionary regimes in general and to the Cuban case specifically. First, the could-be crises I examine in this dissertation are actual, observable situations. In the 1959 agrarian reform, economic elites voiced their discontent with the government's policy and sought aid from powerful figures in the US to undermine the reform. In the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion, heavily armed men stormed the beaches and tried to (in their own words) overthrow the government. Would-be members of the Cuban pueblo heard and saw these situations unfold. Second, the discussion of the political construction of crisis seems to presume a conservative project in which crossing boundaries produces anxiety (Braun 2022; Sweet et al. 2024). Yet in the case of social revolutions—ostensibly inherently progressive and egalitarian movements—leaders may repurpose ontologically real could-be crises as a means of articulation. Rather than creating anxiety, adjusting the us-them boundary can soothe it because, in that way, the body politic may come to exclude more people who ostensibly wish to cause it harm. Could-be crises, then are key for understanding how political articulation affects subject formation and solidarity within ongoing processes of ideological consolidation at different key moments throughout the period of revolutionary regime consolidation.

Argument Revisited

To conclude this section, I will revisit the core argument of the dissertation with the above theoretical considerations in mind. I argue that, with the first episode they faced (the 1959 agrarian reform), leaders of the revolutionary government developed a template for intensifying their articulatory project during moments of heightened uncertainty or threat. This template consisted of three core tasks: establish, emphasize, and enact. Leaders *established* the collective identity of the pueblo cubano by describing desirable traits and emphasizing national unity. They then *emphasized* these traits through juxtaposition, that is, by contrasting the pueblo against the undesirable traits and negative behaviors of the enemies, however construed at the time. Finally, leaders called for the *enactment* of the pueblo's previously defined shared values by identifying and prescribing concrete, specific behaviors that people could engage in to display their inner commitment to said beliefs.[69] The core tasks of this template, which leaders conveyed publicly through both discourse and policy, were adaptable to the specifics of the could-be crisis at hand as well as to changes in the broader macro-historical context. While the precise content of this articulatory template changed from event to event, the overarching form remained constant.

The establish-emphasize-enact template formed an integral component of leaders' project to shape new revolutionary subjects and articulate national unity and solidarity. Establishing the

[69] Scholars of Cuba have previously called attention to each of these three elements. Guerra (2012) and Frederik (2012) dedicate quite a bit of space in their respective monographs to discussing the traits by which Cuba's post-1959 leaders defined the pueblo. Similarly, that Castro and his colleagues relied heavily on real and imagined enemies for purposes of regime consolidation is well established (Aguirre 1984:563; Brown 2017:51; Guerra 2019:111–16; Rojas 2019:42). Nor am I the first to call attention to leaders' enactment of values through behaviors and practices (Aguirre 1984:563; Ritter and Henken 2015:59;61). However, what is novel about my approach from the historiographical perspective is how I trace this tripartite template across a series of could-be crises and connect it to the broader project of political articulation as part of the process of consolidating ideological power. Fagen (1966) develops a similar list of tasks that leaders hoped to accomplish in the process of politicizing the pueblo. But he arrives at this list through a structural approach, by identifying the structural elements of what he terms the "political environment," which consists of "mass media, armed forces, mass organizations, special schools and structures, and the Party" (257).

core traits of the revolutionary pueblo gave primacy to bravery, self-sacrifice, unity, and, ultimately, homogeneity, thereby contributing to internal cohesion. Being a "revolutionary"—that is, a "member of the revolutionary pueblo cubano"—superseded being a "Black Cuban," "illiterate farmer," or "debutante from Havana" (Triplett 2022:81). Emphasizing the traits of the pueblo by setting them in contradistinction to those of the pueblo's enemy, on the other hand, emphasizes external differentiation. The pueblo is what it is, in part, by virtue of what it is *not*. Finally, whereas establishing and emphasizing the pueblo are identity-based modes of subject formation, the enactment of these traits via prescribed behaviors and practices signals the presence of an action-based mode of subject formation as well. A Cuban would become a revolutionary Cuban by *doing* revolutionary things. Leaders defaulted to linguistic discourse as their identity-based means of articulation. However, when it came to the practice-oriented aspect of subject formation, they encouraged broad participation not only through establishing official channels like programs, policies, and initiatives, but also by offering visual models of what exemplary enactment of the pueblo's shared values looked like through official media. Given the exigencies of the could-be crisis at hand, leaders had the flexibility to shift the balance between emphasizing internal cohesion or external differentiation as well as to rebalance their mixture of identity- and action-based articulatory work.

Tracing the regime's discourse and policies across time also provided several insights into how articulatory projects interact with temporality and events. First, while the articulatory template proved durable, the overarching project did not remain static. Leaders used each subsequent could-be crisis as an opportunity to continually refine their efforts to make new subjects and adapt it to ever-changing circumstances. Articulation was an ongoing project with, at times, a moving target, best exemplified the reframing of the goal of the Ten-Million-Ton

harvest after the pueblo failed to meet the designated numerical threshold (Chapter 4). As Clayfield puts it, "there was no room for complacency" (2019:75). Second, fine-grained analysis of official discourse across the decade revealed that even when the content of the articulatory template appeared to be similar across different could-be crises—for example, seemingly consistent calls for self-sacrifice and resilience—the same values and phrases took on new meanings and were translated into embodied revolutionary subjectivity via distinct actions and behaviors. Finally, my longitudinal analysis shows that leaders' survival of could-be crises and construction of revolutionary subjects became mutually constitutive and reinforcing processes. Castro and his colleagues created revolutionary subjects in part by engaging ordinary people in the work of navigating critical episodes, through which their revolutionary subjecthood was deepened, better preparing them to face the next could-be crisis.

These three principal findings have important implications beyond the Cuban case. My finding that the consolidation of ideological power played an integral role in the government's initial period of revolutionary consolidation suggests that scholars would do well to pay more attention to these pivotal moments in revolutionary government trajectories. At this key moment of shifting, rearranging, emphasizing, or papering over certain social cleavages in service of promoting national unity, it is possible that leaders end up retrenching old inequalities or even allowing new ones to emerge, despite their ostensible goal of eliminating inequality. My finding that leaders pursued the consolidation of their ideological power in part through political articulation means that we may also be able to use this model to better understand both early revolutionary consolidation and later political projects in post-revolutionary contexts, such as the presidency of Andrés Manuel López Obrador in Mexico, as I will discuss further in the Conclusion. Finally, I find that could-be crises mattered for revolutionary consolidation and

political articulation, a finding that draws attention to further questions regarding the temporal boundaries and actors' recognition of could-be crises as well as the importance of their sequencing, in the sense that prior could-be crises may become reference points during later ones and modes of activity that proved successful in earlier episodes may resurface in later ones.

Research Design

As evidence of Cuban leaders' project of political articulation, I relied principally on primary sources including the speeches of Fidel Castro, weekly general-interest magazines, and daily newspapers, which totaled to nearly 30,000 pages of text.[70] I gathered these materials both online (a state-maintained database, in the case of Castro's speeches) and from several months of archival work in Havana, primarily at the José Martí National Library (Biblioteca Nacional José Martí) and the Institute of History (Instituto de Historia). Between January 1, 1959, and December 31, 1970, Fidel Castro delivered 339 speeches preserved in the online database (5,864 pages).[71] These speeches offered insight into what the highest-ranking government official and main ideological figurehead of the revolution said across the decade and during specific could-be crises. I supplemented Castro's speeches with two types of print media expecting that the format of the magazines and newspapers could offer audiences some things that Castro's speeches could not: fine-grained detail regarding leaders' programs, policies, and initiatives and visual discourse

[70] For a detailed discussion of how I selected these data sources as well as thorough descriptions of each source, see the Appendix.

[71] This figure does not include other forms of communication from Castro, such as communiques and television program appearances, which were often (but not always) reprinted in the daily newspapers. Generally, the speeches fell into two categories: (1) national commemorative speeches for a general audience—such as those marking the victory of the revolution on January 2, the DR's failed attack on the presidential palace on March 13, the Bay of Pigs victory around April 19, and the M26-7 storming of the Moncada barracks on July 26—and (2) speeches for non-recurring special events or specific audiences. Examples of the latter include the opening ceremony for the school year (September 14, 1959), the ceremony for the delivery of literacy certificates to 4,000 individuals (June 18, 1961), the farewell ceremony for the Soviet Komsomols (members of the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League) who worked in Cuba (May 14, 1965), and the Bean Fair hosted by the National Association of Small Farmers (Asociación Nacional de Agricultores Pequeños, ANAP) (June 16, 1967).

acting as easy to understand representations of ideal new people. I therefore analyzed *Bohemia*, a weekly general interest magazine that spanned the entire period of my investigation (approximately 17,400 pages), and a combination of daily newspapers. Because there was no single daily that covered the entire 1959-1970 period, I consulted both *Hoy*, the official organ of the PSP (1959-1965), and *Granma*, the official organ of the PCC which was founded in October of 1965 and replaced all other dailies in circulation at that time (approximately 6,500 pages between the two). Across these four sources, I reconstructed the regime's articulatory project in terms of both discourse and policies, as reported on in the print media.

I approached these data through rigorous, processual, fine-grained qualitative-interpretive textual analysis.[72] Through systematic reading of the texts, I was able to discern rhetorical shifts in Castro's speeches, including adapting and repurposing words or phrases to new contexts. By analyzing the speech corpus comprehensively rather than sampling on the could-be crises alone, I have obtained a fuller picture of a source that is frequently examined but in a partial and piecemeal fashion as well as robustness against basing my interpretation of patterns on a handful of instances or particular category of speech. Finally, the processual nature of my analytic approach situates leaders' claims within the ongoing process of revolutionary consolidation. By looking at ideological consolidation as a longitudinal process punctuated by could-be crises, it became apparent how the consistency of the form of the articulatory template (establish-emphasize-enact) belied variation in content. The context itself thus provided analytical leverage for understanding both how leaders continually renewed, revamped, and recalibrated the project—given changes in the surrounding macroeconomic and (geo)political circumstances—

[72] In this, my method of analysis is similar to Xu and Reed's, which they describe as a "processually oriented interpretive approach" (2023:236). For a full discussion of how my approach to textual analysis differs from others', see Appendix A.

and how it built upon itself over time. Taking the events in order (that is, analyzing them sequentially) illuminated whether and how earlier moments of articulation affected later ones. By this I mean, the object being articulated in T_2 is distinct from the object being articulated in T_1, owing at least in part to leaders' decisions in T_1. This is apparent, to name just one example, in the invocation of the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion (Chapter 2) during both the 1968 microfaction affair and Revolutionary Offensive (Chapter 3) and 1969-70 Ten-Million-Ton sugar harvest campaign (Chapter 4).[73]

I conducted two separate phases of analysis. Across both phases, my goal was to look for evidence of ideological consolidation through discussions of an overarching worldview; values, beliefs, and attitudes; and norms, behaviors, and expectations. In phase one of the analysis, I examined the entire corpus of Castro's speeches from the 1959 to 1970, focusing on paragraphs that contained the word "pueblo," to establish the general contours of the articulatory project across the decade.[74] It was in this phase of analysis that I discerned differences between internally- and externally-oriented discourse (that is, subject differentiation) and between idea- and action-oriented discourse (that is, modes of subject formation). Table 1 shows some examples of codes from these four high-level categories. This part of my analysis was important as a baseline against which to compare periods of could-be crisis. Phase two of the analysis entailed narrowing the focus to the four could-be crisis event time periods.[75] After determining the temporal window of each episode, I analyzed every issue of *Bohemia* that fell within those

[73] Xu and Reed point to a similar finding in their examination of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, explaining that, "These performances were then subject to extensive interpretation and reinterpretation, becoming the reference point for further performances" (2023:240).
[74] I chose this approach to sampling Castro's speeches based on my prior empirical research establishing the importance of the idea of the pueblo cubano in leaders' project of political articulation (Triplett 2022). While there were 21,750 mentions of the word "pueblo," manual examination of those occurrences yielded 10,460 quotations because there were instances in which Castro used the word in its most literal sense (to refer to towns) or to refer to other "pueblos" of the world (the Peruvian pueblo, the Vietnamese pueblo, and so on).
[75] For an explanation of how I determined the bounded event timeframe for each of the four events, see Appendix A.

boundaries, as well as each issue of whichever daily was in circulation for a given event (*Hoy* for Chapters 1 and 2, *Granma* for Chapters 3 and 4). Finally, I revisited Castro's speeches to read those that fell within the episode's timeframe in full.

Table 1. High-Level Categories and Specific Code Examples

High-Level Categories	Specific Code Examples
Internal-Identity	- Self-sacrificing - Suffering - Enthusiastic - Worker - Campesino - Women
Internal-Action	- Donate - Letter/statement of support - Lightning rally - Volunteer labor - Unpaid overtime
External-Identity	- Selfish - Hypocritical - Opportunistic - Worm - Imperialism
External-Action	- Disrespect - Exploit - Confuse/deceive - Threaten/intimidate - Attack

Dissertation Structure and Chapter Overview

This dissertation is structured around the analysis of four episodes that occurred during the revolutionary government's first decade in power and is divided into two parts that correspond to two broad phases of revolutionary consolidation: an active period (1959-1965, Chapters 1 and 2) and a maintenance period (1966-1970, Chapters 3 and 4). For each episode, I begin by situating it within the panorama of leaders' ongoing efforts to consolidate the

economic, military, and political bases of power. I then trace their articulatory project across the time frame of the episode, attending to both axes of subject differentiation (ingroup and outgroup) and means of subject formation (identity-based and action-based). This approach illuminates which aspects of the universal revolutionary identity become fixed and rigid and which remain variable and fluid over time.

Chapter 1 centers the first agrarian reform, a flagship law that revolutionary leaders enacted on May 17, 1959. This endogenous episode of policymaking was initiated by the revolutionary elite but quickly involved traditional economic elites who opposed the land reform and looked to influential players abroad to support their opposition efforts from the United States. Whereas the desired outcome was macrostructural economic transformation that would incorporate peasants and other marginalized groups into the body politic, the policy initiative ran the risk of inducing political fragmentation and energizing a successful counter-articulatory project that could undermine popular support for the revolutionary government. I find that, to avoid these undesirable outcomes, leaders incorporated the peasantry (a previously relatively unincorporated constituency in need and deserving of social transformation), underscored unity within the pueblo, differentiated the pueblo from leaders' enemies via juxtaposition, and translated these identity-based criteria into specific activities, which included the people's donation of attention, time, money, and effort to support the new policy and ensure its successful implementation.

Chapter 2 focuses on the Bay of Pigs invasion of April 17, 1961. This exogenous and overtly military (but implicitly political) episode was instigated by counterrevolutionary opposition that originated from the political right and from outside of Cuba. Although the attack had the potential to pull people of the pueblo onto the side of the opposition and even unseat

Castro and his colleagues by force, repelling the military invasion would discourage the opposition, prove Cuba's resilience to an international audience, and rally the people behind the revolutionary leaders. I find that, as Cubans prepared for, battled, and vanquished the invaders, regime discourse prioritized communicating the enemy's negative traits (including cowardice and viciousness), associating national unity with self-sacrifice and resilience, and promoting episode-specific activities like joining militias, donating blood, and maintaining vigilance.

Chapter 3, the first of Part II, looks at the microfaction trial of late January 1968 as well as leaders' response to it in the form of the Revolutionary Offensive from March of that year. This endogenous episode took the form of political factionalism—this time originating from the political *left* and from *within* Cuba—to which revolutionary leaders responded with a bundle of policies and campaigns known as the "Revolutionary Offensive." The microfaction episode posed a danger for the government's leaders because the challengers could have emboldened other malcontents (from any part of the political spectrum), created divisiveness, and given outside opposition an impression of internal instability and weakness, thereby priming them to attack. Conversely, the episode was also an opportunity to publicly vilify internal opposition and double-down on the project of subject formation. I find that leaders chose to turn the microfaction into an enemy par excellence, setting up a striking juxtaposition between the "pseudo" and "true" Cubans. Leaders portrayed the microfaction members as traitorous, selfish, and hypocritical. But, through the campaigns associated with the Revolutionary Offensive, leaders encouraged members of the pueblo to prove themselves as loyal, self-sacrificing, and solidaristic through their actions.

Chapter 4 foregrounds the national campaign to harvest a record-shattering ten million tons of sugar cane between late 1969 and mid-1970. Like the agrarian reform, the harvest

campaign was an endogenous policy episode with important economic and ideological implications. Leaders claimed that the campaign could cement Cuba's economic independence and solidify their project to form new people. However, failure could result in continued economic dependence as well as the demoralization and demobilization of the people. I find that, while the harvest campaign failed in terms of not meeting the specified numerical target of sugar, leaders used relentless optimism to prioritize resilience and redefined the goal of the campaign to suit the needs of their ideological project in that context. Even when failure to meet the material goal was unavoidable and immanent, leaders pointed to the Cuban people's commitment to continue harvesting and processing cane knowing they would never reach their ten-million-ton target as evidence of their revolutionary development and consciousness.

In the Conclusion, I begin by revisiting the three primary arguments of the dissertation and drawing out the theoretical and methodological implications of each. I then point to the dissertation's substantive contributions by way of a brief, preliminary examination of a more recent could-be crisis, the widespread protests of July 11, 2021, that were met with repressive state violence. This postscript draws our attention to key remaining tasks for future research, namely examining how the targets of articulatory projects understand and internalize—or reject—them.

Part I: Creative Revolutionary Consolidation, 1959-1965

Introduction

The period of most active consolidation following the revolutionary government's ascent to power (1959-1965) was characterized by a uniting theme: out with the old and in with the new. Across the military, economic, and political spheres, the revolutionary leaders sought not only to destroy existing structures but also to create new ones to replace them. Here I discuss the ongoing backdrop of revolutionary government consolidation against which the 1959 Agrarian Reform (Chapter 1) and the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion (Chapter 2) unfolded.

Militarily, the revolutionary regime was starting out at quite a deficit compared to Batista's army.[76] Leaders therefore focused on completely dismantling the Batista-era institutions while building up their own professional army and establishing an internal security apparatus. Eliminating all vestiges of past military institutions was a clear priority from a standpoint of minimizing existential threats, and, in fact, some of the very first laws passed under the new revolutionary government dissolved the existing national army and disbanded Batista's secret police forces (Ferrer 2021:320). Of course, many old military rivals were not simply stripped of duties and titles. They were instead executed.[77] In their place, leaders including Camilo Cienfuegos and Ramiro Valdés set about building up "the strength and effectiveness of the

[76] As historian Jonathan C. Brown notes, towards the end of 1958, the combined rebel forces numbered somewhere around 3,000 compared to Batista's roughly 40,000 officers and troops (2017:1–2).
[77] During the first three months of 1959 no fewer than 500 such individuals—"most of them former army, police, and state intelligence members accused of multiple counts of torture or murder of prisoners"—were summarily put to death (Ferrer 2021:321).

emerging organs of law and order" (Kapcia 2021:90), including the National Revolutionary Police and the General Directorate of Intelligence (known as G2).

Leaders complemented the professional sector by militarizing daily life in both discourse and practice. They linguistically constructed the Cuban citizenry as a huge, all-inclusive army, evidenced in part through Castro's speeches. Speaking to a campesino (peasant) gathering in the city of Camagüey, Castro remarked that "the pueblo is today the best army in the Revolution" and that "all the pueblo, men and women, old people and children […] must be a soldier of the Revolution" (Castro 1959n). In practice, revolutionary elites incorporated citizens into the military sphere by creating patrols, vigilance groups, and militias. Camilo Cienfuegos and Che Guevara spearheaded the creation of workers' militias in April of 1959 (Manke 2014:28), just before the rollout of the first agrarian reform (Chapter 1).[78] In October of 1959, Castro called for the creation of the National Revolutionary Militias (Clayfield 2019), which would be comprised of civilians who "received part-time military training to help guard targets" (Ferrer 2021:365). By 1961, 300,000 people—only a few of whom "ever had any participation in fighting against Batista" (Brown 2017:149)—had joined militia groups. The militias not only aided in national defense, but they also encouraged average citizens to participate in ongoing revolutionary projects. Ultimately, the discursive and practical militarization of daily life complemented broader efforts to consolidate military power via more traditional avenues.

The continuing deterioration of Cuban-US relations in the early 1960s (discussed in economic terms later) triggered the perception of intensifying external threats and a concomitant bolstering of Cuba's armed forces. Vague overtures of aggression emanating from Cuba's northerly neighbors during the Agrarian Reform episode (Chapter 1) took on new meaning after

[78] In fact, Manke argues that the creation of these militia was a direct response to US concern over the plans for agrarian reform (2014:28).

the explosion of the French freighter *La Coubre* on March 4, 1960.[79] The ship, carrying munitions from Belgium, was docked in Havana's harbor when an explosion onboard killed 75 and injured another 200 (García Luis 2001; LeoGrande and Kornbluh 2014). The effects of this episode were manifold. First, as Ferrer explains, "In the face of what appeared to be a deadly attack on Cuban soil, Cubans answered the calls for unity and resolve" (2021:343).[80] The funeral for the explosion's victims, Guerra points out, brought together groups from across the political spectrum, including from religious circles. "Even fiercely anti-Communist youth groups like the Juventud Obrera Católica [Catholic Working Youth]," she notes, "voiced absolute solidarity with the government" (2012:125). Second, complementing internal unification was external repulsion against the United States. Despite the ongoing nature of the investigations into the causes of the explosion (Ferrer 2021), Castro "implicitly attributed the attack to the US government, setting off a strong anti-American propaganda campaign" (Yordanov 2021:1178).[81]

Finally, the explosion of *La Coubre* invigorated leaders' sense of urgency surrounding military consolidation, with both international and domestic implications. Because one very concrete outcome of the freighter's explosion was the loss of the munitions that had been shipped from Belgium, Cuba's leaders turned to Moscow for reinforcements, and Soviet First Secretary Nikita Khrushchev obliged (Yordanov 2021:1178). They also continued recruitment

[79] It is worth noting, however, that even before this incident, there were reports indicating that US leaders had already begun to make good on their threats of direct intervention in Cuba. As García Luis points out, "The year 1960 began with air incursions from Miami, with planes dropping bombs and incendiary materials on sugar mills, sugarcane fields, and towns in Cuba in an attempt to disrupt the sugarcane harvest" (2001:34).

[80] Ferrer's characterization of the *La Coubre* explosion as an incident that "*appeared* to be a deadly attack on Cuban soil" (emphasis added) resonates with other accounts in the secondary literature that underscore the lack of an evidentiary basis for Castro's claims that the explosion was, in fact, an attack rather than an accident. As Guerra puts it, "Fidel wasted no time in announcing, on the basis of no evidence, that the United States was to blame" (2012:125).

[81] Brown, however, has a slightly different perspective here, arguing that Castro's vituperative rhetoric was angled less at US leadership and more at "Cuban *gusanos* [worms] employed, armed, and directed by the American intelligence agency" (2017:111), thereby blurring the boundaries between the government's domestic and foreign enemies.

into the standing army. In the time between the revolution's successful ouster of Batista (1959) and the invasion of Cuban exiles at the Bay of Pigs (1961), Cuba's standing army grew from approximately 5,000 members to 300,000 (Lachapelle et al. 2020:570). This already staggering increase is even more impressive considering that regime leaders took care to avoid incorporating those who had been loyal to Batista into the revolutionary armed forces.[82] On the civilian side of militarization, Fagen points out that the *La Coubre* incident spurred "discussion of the growing need for some form of urban-based civil defense against sabotage and counterrevolutionary terror" (1969:70). The outcome of these discussions was the creation of the Committees for Defense of the Revolution (Comités para la Defensa de la Revolución, CDR) in October 1960. CDRs—"the most immediate and most personal contact between ordinary Cubans and 'the Revolution'" (Kapcia 2008:81)—were block-level organizations that assisted in a broad range of revolutionary projects but focused, in the early years, on national defense via vigilance.[83] The *La Coubre* incident thus intensified ongoing practices of military consolidation in both the professional and civilian sectors.

While the new leaders pursued economic growth and independence as a necessary precondition for true political sovereignty, given the conditions they inherited from the previous regime, leaders faced a difficult task. Through intensive study of the Cuban economy at this time, economist Carmelo Mesa-Lago identifies five core issues facing the new leaders: low growth rates, reliance on sugar, dependence on the United States, un- and underemployment, and geographically unequal standards of living (1971:278-80; see also Pérez-Stable 1999:14). To cite

[82] As Castro put it in early 1961, "we have destroyed the old military apparatus and built an entirely new military apparatus" (Castro 1961h).
[83] Selbin notes that the CDR were fundamentally vehicles of mobilization. As he explains, "these institutions were charged with the dual responsibilities of promoting and channeling the population's energy and involvement in the transformation of society" (1993:18).

just a few of his statistics, per capita GNP growth rates averaged a mere 2.1 percent (1950-1958); sugar consistently accounted for at least 25 percent of Cuba's GNP; on average (1949-1958), business with the United States made up 68.6 percent of Cuba's foreign trade; and un- and underemployment rates sat at 16.4 percent and 13.8 percent, respectively, in 1958. In the middle of the decade, Pérez-Stable points out, fully one-third of the labor force "did not hold full-time jobs" (1999:27). To put Cuba's situation at that time into comparative perspective, it is worth noting that Philip W. Bonsal, US Ambassador to Cuba remarked that "the average income in Cuba was about one-third of that in Mississippi, the poorest state in the union" (as quoted in Patterson 1995:41).[84] Leaders set about addressing these issues through both immediate policies and long-term, macro-level strategic plans.

Many of the government's first economic policies targeted uneven standards of living and the exploitation that, in leaders' views, accompanied the predatory capitalist neo-imperialism that controlled most of Cuba's economy during the Republican era (1898-1958).[85] These policies prioritized increasing workers' wages while lowering the cost of basic needs. Whereas wages rose 4.2 percent in 1957 and 1958, workers saw an increase of 14.3 percent during the revolutionary government's first year in power (Ferrer 2021:324). Leaders lowered utility rates by nationalizing the country's telecommunications providers and slashed rents by 50 percent via the March 1959 Urban Reform Law.[86] Policies such as these reflected and reinforced the humanist commitments of Cuba's new leaders.

[84] To put this in numerical terms, Patterson notes that, in 1957, Mississippi's per capita income was $1000 while Cuba's was $374 (1995:41).
[85] It is worth noting that, in 1959, the revolutionary regime was not communist (openly anyway). Castro would not declare the communist character of the revolution until the eve of the Bay of Pigs invasion two years later. However, even from the outset, most policies enacted by the new government were at least somewhat socialist, at least in the sense of blaming the poor lot of the humble masses of average Cubans on the greed and self-interestedness of a few.
[86] Patterson notes that, before leaders nationalized Cuban Telephone (an "unpopular company" and a "symbol of corruption and outside control"), it was first "intervened" by the government in March 1959 (1995:45).

In terms of macro strategy, Castro and his colleagues conceptualized agricultural diversification as a springboard to rapid industrialization, which would require both creating a larger internal market to drive demand and making funds available for industrial investments to drive supply. Baked into the plans for diversifying the agricultural sector was an move away from sugar's dominance (Fitzgerald 1978:4; Mesa-Lago 1971:281; Ritter 1972:315), which had both material and symbolic implications. "Sugar," as Ritter points out, "had been increasingly seen as the major medium through which Cuba was subjected to 'Yankee Imperialism'" (1972:332). The 1959 Agrarian Reform (Chapter 1) was designed to play a key role here because the law's limits on holding size created smaller plots more conducive to growing other crops. On the industrial side, leaders began purchasing manufacturing equipment from the Soviet Union, East Germany, and Czechoslovakia (Mesa-Lago 1971:283). The twin strategy of agricultural diversification and industrial development would, in theory, facilitate a rebalancing of trade deficits with the United States via import substitution industrialization.

Practically from the outset, however, this macro-economic strategy foundered in the face of both domestic and international challenges. As Mesa-Lago points out, as impressive as "the power of the Revolution, the zeal of the new leaders, the audacity of improvisation, and the enthusiasm of the people" were, they were a poor substitute for "expertise, knowledge, [and] available resources" (Mesa-Lago 1971:282).[87] Furthermore, it quickly became apparent that US leaders intended to do everything in their power to ensure the failure of Castro and his colleagues' experiment, especially after they started drifting toward the Soviets. The tenuous Cuba-US bilateral relations began deteriorating precipitously in 1960. In May, Cuba

[87] Interestingly, as Mesa-Lago points out, this approach was not wholly novel. It had been tried—and proven ineffective—earlier in Russia. "The other false premise (which Lenin also mistakenly employed in his early days in the Soviet administration)," Mesa-Lago explains, "was romantically to expect that a complex economy in a modern state could be managed with improvisation, audacity, and lack of knowledge" (1971:282).

reestablished diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and began importing oil from the USSR in exchange for sugar (Brown 2017:88). However, US-owned companies based in Cuba refused to refine the Soviet oil, prompting Castro to nationalize the petroleum industry. Unsurprisingly, as LeoGrande notes, the nationalizations were followed swiftly by "Washington's declaration of economic war," which began with the reduction of Cuba's sugar quota (2017:226). This move set off a long line of retaliatory measures between the two countries. Two days after the quota reduction, on July 5, revolutionary leaders expropriated "US industrial banking and commercial operations in Cuba"; on July 6, Eisenhower cancelled Cuba's 1960 sugar quota altogether; and, on July 20, Moscow expressed interest in taking over purchasing the quota (Yordanov 2021:1178). These US economic sanctions—which also included restricting the export of machinery, spare parts, raw materials, and oil to Cuba—further exacerbated long-standing economic ills, like unemployment, which continued to demand leaders' attention.[88] Given these circumstances, Cuba slid into an increasingly amicable relationship with the Soviet Union that would have serious implications for Cuba's ability to withstand US aggressions in the future.

Political consolidation centered on purging the old establishment and replacing factionalism with unity in the process. The new government disbanded Congress, dissolved existing political parties, and stripped many elected officials of their duties (Ferrer 2021:320). At the same time, revolutionary elites named a president and assembled a cabinet comprised of "the best of liberal Cuba" (Pérez-Stable 1999:62). The cabinet was not packed with socialists, communists, or other stripes of radicals, a seemingly deliberate move toward building consensus and smoothing over differences of opinions and approaches within the revolutionary elite (at

[88] Unofficially, US leaders also seemingly hoped to deprive Cuba of its human capital. According to Castro, "Imperialism is all about stealing our technicians, not because they need them, but to hurt us, and it tempts, bribes, intimidates, and buys them, to leave us without doctors, without engineers, without architects" (Castro 1961e).

least for the time being).[89] As far as Castro was concerned, political consolidation during 1959 also meant solidifying a position of supremacy both for himself and for the rebel group that he led, the 26th of July Movement (M26-7). There was initially space for different voices and opinions, but Castro and his collaborators were indubitably angling to secure their dominance.[90] In fact, as early as January 8—in his first address to the nation given from its capital—Castro publicly and powerfully skewered other revolutionary groups, shaming the Revolutionary Directorate into handing over their weapons and vacating the University of Havana.[91] Essentially, Castro and other M26-7 leaders seemed to view the ousting of Batista as *their* accomplishment and the leadership of the subsequent government as their right (Clayfield 2019:6).

Over this period, a steady migratory outflow of regime skeptics, critics, and outright opponents contributed to consolidating political power. Many ordinary middle- and upper-class Cubans who grew suspicious of Castro's intentions chose simply to leave, with as many as 260,000 having emigrated by the mid-1960s (Brown 2017:11). Some high-ranking officials, like Huber Matos, chose to voice their hesitations. Matos was a commander in the Rebel Army overseeing and enforcing the implementation of the Agrarian Reform in Camagüey province. Although he overtly supported the regime and carried out his sworn duties faithfully, he privately disagreed with the direction in which the regime was moving and expressed his concerns to Castro in a personal letter in October of 1959. Specifically, Matos "protested the granting of

[89] Despite the moderate position of most cabinet members, they did collectively agree on some rather extreme policymaking. This included amending constitutional articles to legalize summary property confiscations and to permit the death penalty (Ferrer 2021:321).
[90] To be more precise, there were no *de jure* prohibitions on freedom of speech during the revolutionary government's first year in power. However, as Farber points out, "already at this early stage Fidel Castro was becoming an untouchable figure whom even right-wingers were afraid to criticize and only did so with a great deal of tact and diplomacy" (2011:11).
[91] Specifically, Castro asked the crowd, "Weapons for what, to fight against whom, against the Revolutionary Government, which has the support of all the people? […] Weapons for what, is there a dictatorship here? Are you going to fight against a free government, which respects the rights of the people?" (1959a).

officer commissions in the Rebel Army to what he felt were undeserving PSP [Popular Socialist Party] militants" (Bustamante 2021:55). Matos resigned but was arrested, found guilty of treason, and sentenced to twenty years in prison, which he served before emigrating (Farber 2011:14). Matos was not alone in his concern about the government's leftward drift—or lurch, as the case perhaps was—but, given his status, Matos' private dissent proved opportune for a very public display of enforcing political unanimity among the leaders of the new government. This unity, official discourse posited, was essential for surviving existential threats, as we will see in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2.

Chapter 1 "Agrarian Reform or Death": The High Stakes of Campesino Incorporation and Activated Unity in Year One of Cuba's Revolutionary Government[92]

On July 26, 1959, reportedly more than half a million campesinos from all corners of the island descended upon the nation's capital for what Prime Minister Fidel Castro called the "concentración campesina," or the campesino mass gathering.[93] They joined the roughly 1.5 million residents of Havana to revel collectively in the triumph of the revolutionary forces over those of dictator Fulgencio Batista who fled the country on January 1 and to celebrate the agrarian reform which was signed into law on May 17.[94] This event was the culmination of countless hours of logistical planning to organize the campesinos' transportation to Havana as well as their meals and homestays for the duration of the festivities. In the days leading up to July 26th, there were concerts, dance performances, and even a baseball game pitting the bearded rebels (including Castro and Camilo Cienfuegos) against the revolutionary police. On the big day itself, there were parades, military exercises, and, of course, speeches. As historian Lillian Guerra notes, the concentración campesina was "arguably the greatest drama that Cubans had witnessed since the fall of the dictatorship itself" (2012:67). The event was designed to publicly demonstrate enthusiastic support of the new revolutionary government and its policies in general,

[92] "Agrarian Reform or Death" was a phrase from Raúl Castro's speech at the First National Forum of the Agrarian Reform that later became a popular slogan for supporters of the agrarian reform.
[93] The term "campesino" is a catch-all word that encompasses many types of rural inhabitants, including peasants, farmers, and other agricultural workers. It is a classed term, implying poverty, and therefore is *not* used to refer to the rural landowning elite.
[94] The date chosen for the concentración campesina was also significant as it commemorated the sixth anniversary of the storming of the Moncada barracks. Many (revolutionaries and academics alike) consider that event—in which Castro and other rebels attempted to overtake the garrison but were handily overpowered, captured, tried, and exiled to Mexico—to be the origin of the revolution that would eventually succeed in ousting Batista.

but it also had a special emphasis on fostering city-countryside unity and social acceptance of the campesino.

This scene of camaraderie and jubilation, however, belies a great deal of conflict and strife surrounding the development and passage of the Cuban agrarian reform law in 1959. The episode of the agrarian reform is a useful lens through which to analyze the ebbs and flows of the government's articulatory project because it was a situation that could have gone very differently. In general, while the first few months of 1959 were certainly characterized by euphoria, excitement, and seemingly endless possibility, there was also tremendous uncertainty as the revolutionary government attempted to consolidate its power. Militarily, leaders needed to regularize and professionalize; economically, they needed to grow, industrialize, and establish independence; and, politically, they needed to bring many different anti-Batista groups together into a solid, cohesive ruling coalition. Related to this last point, they also needed to turn the people—as a whole—from an anti-Batista coalition into a pro-*something* coalition.

Specific to the agrarian reform, there were several possible outcomes. The policy episode could deepen revolutionary consolidation, but it also had the potential to erode or even erase it completely. While the reform was popular among most classes of people *in theory* or *to a degree*, the extensiveness of the reform—which one press outlet initially referred to as the "Agrarian Revolution"—undoubtedly went too far for the tastes of the national agricultural elite and could have gone too far for the liking of the centrist majority.[95] As O'Connor puts it, "When the law was finally disclosed, a storm broke over the island and the revolution quickly began to polarize" (1968:170). As he notes, Cabinet members resigned in the wake of the law's passage, and the reform became the tip of the wedge driving the separation between Cuba and the United

[95] *Revolución*. February 3, 1959:1.

States. However, it is because the revolutionary government captured that centrist majority by articulating them into the revolutionary pueblo that the economic elite failed to articulate them into the counterrevolution. Had the economic elite been more successful in their articulatory efforts, they would have had a viable chance of overthrowing the revolution in power. How then did the revolutionary government go about tailoring their ongoing construction of the revolutionary pueblo to the particular moment of agrarian reform?

According to my analysis of Castro speeches during the first year of the revolution in power, the articulatory project, though embryonic, did have a clear focus: it was more concerned with internal cohesion than external differentiation and emphasized subject formation via identity work rather than through action.[96] During the timeframe of the agrarian reform, however, the speeches reveal an intensification of articulatory discourse—particularly in terms of internal cohesion and subject formation via both identity work and action—relative to the rest of the calendar year. Fine-grained examination of the three textual data sources (daily newspaper *Noticias de Hoy*, weekly popular magazine *Bohemia*, and Fidel Castro's transcribed speeches) shows that, during the timeframe of the agrarian reform, the project of articulating the revolutionary pueblo unfolded along four discrete but intimately connected lines of subject formation: defining the campesino, emphasizing unity, differentiating the pueblo from the external "other" via juxtaposition, and promoting unified action. In terms of identity work, revolutionary leaders discursively portrayed the campesinos as in need of transformation and, furthermore, deserving of it. The revolutionary discourse also emphasized a national unity that cut across and papered over pre-existing social cleavages or identity-based social boundaries.

[96] The relative minimization of concern with external identity and action is unsurprising given the state of US-Cuba relations at this time. While US leaders were wary of the direction that the revolutionary regime would take, especially given the nationalization of the telecommunications company, they were still unsure what to expect from Castro and his new government.

The emphasis on unity is also quite logical given the paradox of success that the new government faced after ousting and eliminating the common enemy that had previously united the country. This unity, which foregrounded the peasantry, was further reinforced by juxtaposing the unified Cuban pueblo against a plethora of enemies and undesirables, both internal and external. Finally, the unity was also activated, meaning that it was solidified through practice via the promotion of active participation by pueblo members in various programs, initiatives, and campaigns related to the agrarian reform.

In what remains of this chapter, I will first contextualize the agrarian reform articulatory project within broader processes of revolutionary consolidation. I will then discuss the four event-specific lines of articulation—defining the campesino, emphasizing unity, differentiating via juxtaposition, and activating unity—in more depth. Afterwards, I will discuss my empirical findings in two sections, reflecting the internal temporal division of the agrarian reform into pre-signing and post-signing periods, while highlighting a key exemplar from both: the *Bohemia* magazine fundraising campaign and the concentración campesina. Finally, I will discuss the implications of these findings both for the articulatory project in particular and the broader consolidation project in general.

Ideological Consolidation and Political Articulation in 1959

In general, ideological consolidation entails changing what people think and how they act as one hegemonic ideology is replaced with another. The Cuban case was no exception. In the immediate aftermath of the elimination of the people's common enemy, Fulgencio Batista, leaders of the revolutionary government were eager to promote unity and suppress factionalism. Essentially, they needed to forge a "nationalist revolutionary identity" to replace the "anti-Batista pluralism" (Rojas 2019:35). In establishing new shared values and collective beliefs, the leaders

of the revolution in power would also build popular support and bolster their legitimacy (Clayfield 2019:6). Their project took the form of levering discourse and practices to variably emphasize (or minimize) certain axes of social difference and to form new subjects via identity-work and promoting specific norms, behaviors, and modes of interacting.

How then did the process of designing and implementing an agrarian reform of unprecedented scale reinforce or detract from broader consolidation efforts and the ongoing articulatory project? The agrarian reform law signed in May of 1959 was not the first attempt at agrarian reform, either in Cuba generally or even by Castro and his companions. Land reform had been on the minds of political elites since the United States' intervention in the Cuban war of independence at the very end of the nineteenth century, when US agricultural companies (predominantly related to sugar and cattle) grabbed much of the land that was previously held by the government (García Luis 2001:23). Even the 1940 Constitution, which was adopted under Batista, included provisions related to limiting latifundia (large land estates) and foreign ownership of Cuban lands (though these were never actually implemented) (Nelson 1972:74). Later, Castro mentioned land reform as a priority in his famous "History Will Absolve Me" speech that he gave during his trial after the attack on Moncada barracks in 1953 (Schoultz 2009:93). This policy point arose again during the period of armed insurrection. On October 10, 1958, Castro signed "Law No. 3 of the Sierra Maestra" that granted ownership to people working the land and capped holding sizes to five caballerías (165 acres; one caballería equals roughly thirty three acres) (Díaz Castañón 2019; Nelson 1972).

Although the revolutionary government's land reform plan was not novel, it was the broadest and most ambitious proposed to date. It was also portrayed as the centerpiece of the revolution's policy agenda at that time, both economically and socially. The idea was to use the

agrarian reform to intensify agricultural production, which would then augment the country's own internal market (creating *demand* for industrially produced goods) and generate revenue that could jumpstart industrialization (ensuring a *supply* of domestically produced goods) (Bustamante 2021; Farber 2011). As Castro explained to Philip Bonsal, United States Ambassador to Cuba at the time, "The purpose of this creative policy, the cornerstone of which is Agrarian Reform, is to increase productivity, encourage investments, raise the standard of living, and eliminate unemployment" (Chomsky 2015:68). Thus, the reform would benefit not only campesinos as the direct recipients of granted land but also unemployed people, industrial workers, and the country as a whole.

To accomplish these goals, according to Castro and the authors of the law, it was essential to (1) limit landholdings to Cuban nationals and (2) constrain the size of landholdings to 30 caballerías (990 acres). Domestically, agrarian reform—at least in theory and to some extent—seemed palatable to the general public, as many "lamented the passing of the period in their history when land was widely occupied by families farming it for their own benefit" (Nelson 1972:73). But the specifics of Castro's proposed law, discussed in detail below, drew the ire of the Cuban economic elite, US owners of companies operating in Cuba, and the US federal government. In fact, several scholars identify the episode of the agrarian reform as a tipping point in which the US government shifted from a skeptical ambivalence over the new government to outright opposition (although not publicly so) (Farber 2011; García Luis 2001). It was this concern, backlash, disagreement, and dissent that contributed to the eventful nature of the agrarian reform as an existential crisis that intervened in the ongoing project of political articulation.

It is easy to see looking back how the agrarian reform, were it to have gone differently, could have dramatically altered the course of the revolutionary government's plans for consolidation.[97] And both powerful actors and the general public at that time seemed to have recognized the stakes as well. The entirety of the first half of 1959 was, of course, momentous, and both Castro and the press characterized it as such, referring to that time as "brilliant," "luminous," "not normal," "extraordinary" (Castro 1959h); "exceptional," "historical"; and "decisive."[98] But even in this context of generalized exceptionality, the agrarian reform was particularly noteworthy and pivotal. *Bohemia* referred to it as "the fundamental law of the Revolution," and Castro designated it as "the decisive fight" in which "the entire working class must concentrate its efforts" (Castro 1959g).[99] The law became synonymous with the revolution itself. Castro argued that "talking about the agrarian reform almost means talking about our Revolution" (Castro 1959c), and *Hoy* agreed, noting that "We must launch ourselves to defend and save the Agrarian Reform: to defend and save the Revolution."[100] While much discourse emphasized the importance of the law's success, it also highlighted the stakes of the reform by explaining what would happen were it to fail. Castro prophesied that "if the agrarian reform is not carried out, the country will sink into misery, ruin, and, perhaps, anarchy and blood" (Castro 1959q). Given this, it is safe to say that revolutionary elites understood the agrarian reform as a situation of existential crisis.

Ultimately, the agrarian reform law was a means of political articulation in and of itself, a practical way through which to bring more individuals into the revolutionary fold and form them

[97] Perhaps for this very reason, in his 1600-page account of Cuban history, Hugh Thomas titles the section on the first agrarian reform (in Book XI, "The Clash, 1959-62") as "Agrarian Reform: Politics and Crisis" (1971).
[98] *Bohemia.* March 1, 1959:70; *Hoy*. May 20, 1959:4.
[99] *Bohemia*. June 28, 1959:79.
[100] *Hoy*. June 5, 1959:1;7.

into subjects suitable for membership in the pueblo cubano. As noted above, within the process of developing and passing the law, I identified four distinct but intertwined lines of articulation unfolding concurrently: defining the campesino, emphasizing unity, differentiating via juxtaposition, and promoting action. First, elite and public narratives took great pains to define the campesinos in terms of their character, traits, and habits. This task was important because the urban majority was somewhat unfamiliar with the campesinos. Second, emphasizing unity was a way to remind both campesinos and all other pre-existing population sub-groups that, in order for the revolution's projects to come to fruition, the collectivity had to be placed above individual or group interests. Revolutionary cubanidad (Cuban-ness) had to supersede all other facets of self. Third, in addition to defining the pueblo in positive and inclusionary terms (i.e., defining who "we" are), the textual data also reveal a pattern of defining the pueblo in negative, exclusionary terms. This often took the form of rhetorical juxtapositions in which the positive traits and actions of the pueblo were contrasted against the negative traits and actions of the non-pueblo. Finally, while the first three lines of articulation relate to the formation of new subjects via identity work, the fourth deals instead with action. The print media (and, to an extent, Castro) promoted specific activities and patterns of interaction related to the agrarian reform to retrench and *enact* the three points related to identity: including the campesinos, promoting unity above all else, and excluding negative elements from the pueblo.

In the sections that follow, I will discuss in detail how these four lines of articulation manifested before and after leaders signed the agrarian reform into law. The first phase, which begins in early February and leaves off directly before the signing of the law, was a preparatory period during which the revolutionary elite educated and primed the people for the implementation of the law while simultaneously shaping them as subjects in the four ways

discussed here. The preparatory phase revolved mainly around debates, planning and research, education of the general population, and gaining support via direct forms of participation and concrete actions. The second phase, which begins on May 17 with the signing of the agrarian reform law and runs through the end of August (at which point newspaper coverage of the agrarian reform drops off precipitously compared to previous months), centered on rallying popular support while also dealing with the fallout from discontented economic elites in both Cuba and the United States.

Phase One: Paving the Way for Agrarian Reform

As previously noted, the idea of an agrarian reform did not appear from thin air with the advent of the revolutionary government; it was something that political leaders of many stripes had considered for several decades and was even enshrined in the 1940 Constitution due to its popularity among many political parties (de la Fuente 2001a:215).[101] And even though many leaders had already spent, in some cases, several years contemplating the form that agrarian transformation might take, they did *not* rush into the process or act without diligently weighing many possibilities. They took care to communicate this to the people, with *Bohemia*, for example, explaining that "The agrarian reform has been duly planned, technically and scientifically."[102] But even so, the revolutionary elites could not risk taking for granted that the general republic would wholeheartedly support agrarian reform *in this specific form*. Building population-wide support and making each Cuban feel as though they—as part of the greater

[101] de la Fuente further points out that this support carried through after the ouster of Batista. As he explains, a group of Communist Party members, including several prominent black political leaders like Blas Roca and Nicolás Guillén) sent a letter to President Urrutia with a list of sixteen demands, first among which was "national application of the agrarian reform launched by the Rebel Army in the territory under its command during the insurrection" (2001a:261).
[102] *Bohemia*. April 16, 1959:41.

pueblo—had stake in agrarian reform was a priority. These goals were pursued in no small part through the formation of new subjects via identity work and activated, action-oriented unity mentioned above.

Defining the Campesino

Here I will discuss the top-down efforts to define campesinos in such a way that would enable their incorporation into the revolutionary pueblo. This identity-work appeared in both Castro speeches and in the pro-government print media, where it was conveyed in several different formats, including statistics, photo essays, interviews, letters, and more. The content of these messages generally fell into two categories: first, emphasizing the *need* for campesino transformation (with the implication being that, in their present state, peasants were unable to adequately contribute to the construction of the new revolutionary society) and, second, establishing campesinos' worthiness of the regime's transformative projects. In short, improving the campesinos' access to education, healthcare, technology, and culture was necessary for the wellbeing of both the campesino and the revolutionary pueblo.

It was common knowledge (or common perception anyway) that Cuban campesinos were suffering terribly and had been for some time, in what Castro referred to as the "tragedy in the countryside" (Castro 1959i). Print media was well positioned to add detail and nuance to the public's perhaps vague understandings of the specificity of campesinos' hardships. A plethora of articles elaborated on the varieties of difficulties that campesinos faced in various facets of their daily lives. They lived in poorly constructed huts, without land of their own, and in towns lacking all sorts of basic infrastructure like sewers, pavement, schools, and even electricity; they

were malnourished and in poor health (see Fig. 1 and Fig. 2).[103] They lived, quite simply, at "the level of the beast."[104] As one *Bohemia* exposé noted, most campesinos ate meat only once per week, 14 percent suffered presently or in the past from tuberculosis, 64 percent of homes had neither toilets nor latrines, and 44 percent of all campesinos were illiterate.[105] One specific case brought this issue of illiteracy to the fore of national attention. As relayed to readers in *Bohemia*, a young woman went to court to testify against her Batistiano abusers—the trials of whom were televised, radio broadcasted, and recapped in daily newspapers—and "had to 'sign' with her fingerprints because she did not know how to write her name."[106] Regime discourse made clear that the long-suffering peasants were living in subhuman conditions and required salvation and transformation.



Figure 1. A dentist performing a procedure on a patient who had never previously received dental care.



Figure 2. Woman hulling coffee beans by hand.

[103] *Bohemia*. April 26, 1959:41. The caption of the photo on the left reads, "Dr. Lambert, while performing an extraction, in the Mobile Unit. The patient, Teresa Pérez, eighteen years old, is receiving dental services for the first time. The one on the right describes the process of the woman (described as a "young mountain girl") manually hulling coffee, noting that "The Agrarian Reform will put in the hands of the farmer a more modern and comfortable livelihood.

[104] *Bohemia*. April 12, 1959:104.

[105] *Bohemia*. April 26, 1959:41.

[106] *Bohemia*. February 15, 1959:31-32.

In addition to describing and depicting campesinos' harsh realities, public discourse also educated the public regarding who was to blame for their unfortunate state. As leaders explained, peasants' suffering stemmed from the abusive and exploitative activities of non-pueblo "others," who were only concerned with their own wellbeing and privilege. Highest on the list of those culpable were the landowners.[107] *Bohemia* rhetorically asked its readers, "What kind of freedom is that of the malnourished and bent-over peasant, with a prematurely aged wife and children eaten by parasites, who works from sunrise to sunset on a piece of foreign land to enrich the unscrupulous landowner or the geophagous exploiter?"[108] While the landowners, at the top of the economic food chain in rural Cuba, were the most visible symbol of peasant abuse, the entire rural hierarchy atop which they sat also participated in the exploitation and denigration of campesinos. Castro stated that the campesinos "Were the victims of the rural guard, of the overseer, they were the victims of everyone" (Castro 1959f).[109] Closely linked to the landowners were the politicians, those responsible for enabling them to amass such power and economic privilege. Elected officials also manipulated the campesinos in their own way, taking advantage of their precarious situation to swap the provision of basic needs for votes: "That is why there were no hospitals. Since there were no hospitals, […], when the peasant's son got sick, when the peasant's wife got sick […], they had to knock on the doors of a politician" (Castro 1959o).

[107] Detailing one tactic by which economic elites secured their own privilege while exploiting the peasantry, Guerra explains, "Historically, owners of large estates in Cuba had kept peasants dependent on the meager wages they received as workers by buying up as much land as they could and letting it lie fallow, rather than providing peasants access to the land to farm for their subsistence" (2012:59).
[108] *Bohemia*. March 15, 1959:50. "Geophagous" means of or relating to a geophage, a living organism that eats dirt.
[109] The Rural Guard, "a branch of the Cuban military," was a "militarized police force" that was established at the beginning of the Republican period "to protect rural property and expand the reach of the new state into the countryside" (Casey 2018).

Linking campesinos' long-standing suffering to the existing land tenure system strengthened the tie between the need for campesino transformation and the need for agrarian reform.

Campesinos were not just needy, however; they were also worthy. On the one hand, their humanity meant that they deserved social justice just like anyone else. On the other hand, as regime discourse pointed out, the nation actually owed the campesinos a fairly sizeable debt due to the crucial role they had played in Cuba's national liberation, dating to the first wars of independence from Spain.[110] More recently, they were instrumental militarily in the revolution that ousted Batista. Castro, for example, attributed the public's support for the agrarian reform to their gratitude for the role that peasants historically played in these armed struggles:

> I believe, first of all that, due to a feeling of solidarity with the peasant, a feeling of recognition towards the peasant who has been the most forgotten part of our people, the sacrificed part that gave their blood in each of the struggles of independence, who gave their blood generously in this last fight for our liberation and that, as a sign of gratitude and recognition, all the people have joined their cause, the cause of agrarian reform, which benefits above all the peasant. (Castro 1959p)

Another aspect of campesinos, as a social group, that made them worthy of the government's transformational assistance was their "inherent" possession of desirable traits. Castro frequently referred to them as humble and hardworking. He even went as far as to say, "I prefer a thousand times the stoic, serene and noble patriotism of our peasants, to the vociferous patriotism—which has very little that is pure and noble—of many of those who swarm in the capital of the republic" (Castro 1959q). Given these redeeming qualities, as well as the debt owed to them by the country for their role in gaining and maintaining national independence, the campesinos were constructed as deeply deserving of assistance, transformation, and incorporation into the revolutionary pueblo.

[110] I discuss this point further in the context of the *Bohemia* fundraising campaign.

Emphasizing Unity

Over the first few months of 1959, leaders' discourse made clear that members of the revolutionary pueblo were expected to be many things. They should be brave, intelligent, self-sacrificing, enthusiastic, cooperative, resilient, proud, patriotic, and vigilant, just to name a few of the adjectives that repeatedly appeared in Castro's speeches and on the pages of *Bohemia* and *Hoy*. However, none of those individual characteristics mattered if the pueblo was not also united. Unity—in the form of a broad, anti-Batista coalition that cut across social cleavages of race, gender, class, age, and region—was what enabled the rebel forces to emerge victorious from the revolutionary struggle, and it was necessary once again to ensure the successful realization of the new government's goals. Unity, in short, was that which undergirded the "primacy of the national sense over all personal, group, economic circle, sect, creed, and class interests."[111]

Much of the discourse around unity prior to the signing of the agrarian reform involved simply declaring the unity of the people, as if to speak it into being. The unity of the Cuban people—and accompanying unanimity behind the revolutionary government's agenda—was described as an accomplished fact by both Castro and the print media. Castro used the word "united" to describe the revolutionary pueblo several dozens of times in the months leading up to signing the agrarian reform into law, while a *Bohemia* article resolutely claimed that "The people are with the agrarian reform, industrialization, and revolutionary politics."[112] The article even went as far as to say that "Unity is what has already been produced, what exists, what cannot be denied."

[111] *Bohemia*. March 22, 1959:75.
[112] *Bohemia*. May 10, 1959:99.

Although unity was an allegedly accomplished fact, it was not portrayed as a permanent or irreversible one. The united pueblo could not be taken for granted, and multiple sources warned against the dangers of divisions and sectarianism, which enemy elements allegedly leveraged to undermine leaders' efforts to pursue justice via a massive agrarian reform. An article from *Hoy* made this point in a printed analysis of a speech made by Faure Chomón of the Revolutionary Directorate, the same rebel group Castro vilified in his January 8 speech. It highlighted how Chomón "underlined the importance of maintaining unity among all sectors, without exclusions, for the fight for the Revolutionary program, and drew attention to the danger represented by elements lying in wait who try to sabotage the constructive revolutionary effort."[113] A subsequent edition included a report on the United Civic Youth Conference held in the eastern city of Santiago de Cuba. Youth leader Francisco Domínguez reportedly "spoke about the importance of the Agrarian Reform and the dangers that the youth confront in the face of those who fight to divide it in order to defeat it."[114] The fragility of the pueblo's unity thus contributed to the atmosphere of uncertainty and existential threat surrounding the developmental phase of the agrarian reform.

Differentiating via Juxtapositions

Whereas unity and unanimous support quintessentially defined the Cuban revolutionary "us," the coherence of the pueblo cubano was also undergirded by marked juxtapositions that discursively differentiated the pueblo from its enemies—that is, those who opposed the agrarian reform. One task of revolutionary discourse was to identify the enemies of the reform. Proportionally, according to Castro, only a very small part of the population (somewhere

[113] *Hoy*. February 5, 1959:4.
[114] *Hoy*. March 26, 1959:1.

between one and four percent) would be harmed by the reform (Castro 1959j). But, he warned, they would be vocal, active opponents. He explained that "when the foreign companies, the United Fruit Company and all the companies that have thousands and thousands of caballerías of land here see that the latifundia are going to be outlawed, they are going to shout to the heavens" (Castro 1959q).[115] Many of the opponents were not even Cuban. As one *Bohemia* article pointed out, "Among those interested in stopping the agrarian reform were Cuban American Sugar, […] the United Fruit Company, […] King Ranch, an American cattle trust, to which the tyranny provided vast tracts of land; and the Cuban Land Company, monopolizer of the best tobacco lands."[116]

Landowners were joined by others in their opposition. For example, some conservative groups, among them some Catholic organizations, supported *a* version of agrarian reform but not *this* version. An editorial in *Hoy* called out their conservativism, noting that the type of agrarian reform favored by Catholic civil society group Acción Católica "includes many things, except the proscription of large estates, censuses, and the distribution of land to peasants."[117] Of course, from the point of view of the revolutionary elite, agrarian reform without "proscription of large estates" and "distribution of land to peasants" was hardly worth pursuing. Summarizing the unacceptability of the Catholic group's position, the article went on to note, "If things were in the

[115] Arboleya reports that the ranchers, at least, did shout to the heavens, although it is not clear through what medium they shouted. Citing a book written by Antonio Núñez Jiménez (whom Castro appointed to head INRA), he says, "'The ranchers will fight to the death if they [the government] try to enact into law the current draft,' said Armando Caíñas Milanes, president of the Asociación de Ganaderos de Cuba [Cuban Cattle Ranchers Association]" (2000:46).
[116] *Bohemia*. March 1, 1959:94.
[117] *Hoy*. March 4, 1959:3. In contrast to *Hoy*'s characterization, Brown suggests that both the Cuban Association of Colonos and some Catholic officials *did* agree with both proscription and redistribution. He says, "They favored the expansion of private ownership of the land by reducing the size of plantations and guaranteeing each peasant household a parcel of sixty-six acres" (2017:68). Guerra makes a similar point when she notes that "Even the Papal Nuncio of Havana called on all to accept the law as 'good Cubans and even better Christians,'" a statement that was published in *Bohemia* (2012:61). The portrait of Church support present in the secondary literature then provides evidence of the tendency of pro-government discourse to flatten nuanced arguments and paint the opposition with broad strokes.

hands of such Catholics, agents of the latifundistas [large landholders], the Agrarian Reform would take a millennium."

The members of the opposition, as described in Castro speeches and the pro-government media, had different nationalities and different relationships to the agricultural economy, but almost all of them were economic elites occupying structural positions of privilege. Furthermore, according to leaders' discourse, they shared certain negative traits like greed and self-interestedness, and they conspired together to exploit and abuse the Cuban pueblo. *Bohemia* poetically referred to them as "opulent defenders of national stagnation," who—owing to "their small personal or group interests"—"do not have the integrity to accept inevitable sacrifices for the great achievement that the Homeland is conquering."[118] Their personal and group interests manifested as abuse against the economic non-elites, especially the peasants. "While the big landowners consumed Cuba's agricultural wealth, bought bills from legislators, founded political parties, and lived in opulence," the first article pointed out, "the peasant population was the victim of backwardness, parasitism, and malnutrition." This characterization dichotomizes the Cuban population, internalizing the peasant while externalizing the landowner and pointing to the power imbalances implicated therein.

The externalized enemies of the agrarian reform shared collective traits and interests, but they acted collectively as well. For instance, pro-revolutionary media claimed that they worked together to stall the reform's progress by aiming to undermine the unity of the pueblo and purposefully misinform and confuse the public. The factionalist tactics of the opposition highlighted in *Hoy* and *Bohemia* included emphasizing social differences along the lines of religion, region, or political orientation. One source of internal division was regionalism. A

[118] *Bohemia*. March 8, 1959:94; *Bohemia*. April 12, 1959:73.

common complaint among the economic elite from the eastern side of the island was historical favoritism for Havana and the western portions of the island. Speaking at a meeting in Santiago de Cuba in March, for example, Castro warned of the dangers of regionalism. He said, "these must be some intriguers and some reactionaries who, not being able to say anything to the peasants about their problems, have begun to agitate regionalist passions. Since they couldn't talk about anything else, they tried to create a regionalist division; anything to divide the people, anything to weaken the Revolution" (Castro 1959o). Economic elites also reportedly played into differences of political ideology. They tried to turn the people against the agrarian reform by characterizing it as "communist," a quite pejorative term at the time. *Bohemia*, however, shot back, saying that the people calling the revolutionary regime's proposed reforms "communist" were "ignorant." As one article explained, "it is being said, by those who are generally perfectly ignorant of these things, that all this 'agrarian reform,' 'rent reduction,' and 'abolition of the latifundio' are communist matters."[119] Castro expressed similar sentiments, referring to communist name-calling as "ringing false bells" (Castro 1959o). By decrying the enemy's divisive strategies, revolutionary leaders simultaneously reinforced to the Cuban people the importance of their own unity.

Meanwhile, opponents' arguments that the agrarian reform simply would not work were, according to regime discourse, grounded on dubious claims. Those against the policy argued that, rather than raise agricultural production, the agrarian reform would in fact create declines. On occasion, pro-government press printed their criticisms. For example, the president of the National Association of Cuban Ranchers, Dr. Armando Caiñas Milanes, penned an open letter

[119] *Bohemia*. March 22, 1959:61. Eventually, the agricultural elite took concerted action to all but ensure that these dire predictions would come to fruition. As O'Connor puts it, "Cuban landlords waged an economic war against INRA on many and varied fronts," including refusing to prepare farmland for the next year's crop" (1968:174).

that was published in *Bohemia*. In it, he issued the following prophesy: "We will all be ruined; production will fail alarmingly and painfully. Alarming due to the lack of food as fundamental as meat and milk and painful because it would be due to lack of foresight or a lack of faith in the men responsible for that production."[120] Leaders of the opposition even coined a term, "minifundismo" (the opposite of latifundismo), to refer to the fact that the revolutionary government was about to carve the land into such tiny pieces that it would essentially become useless, all for the sake of giving titles to peasants. Essentially, the economic elites alleged that Castro was buying off peasant support, against the nation's interests. But the pro-government press mocked the economic elites' strategy. This cartoon printed in *Hoy* at the beginning of March shows a hulking, corpulent man labeled "latifundista," partially obscured by a portico column (see Fig. 3). While his left arm clings tightly to the island of Cuba, his right hand holds a pole, to the end of which is attached a menacing ghostly figure labeled "minifundio."[121] While the ghost appears menacing, the image suggests, it is nothing to be afraid of because, in reality, it is a mere ruse invented by the economic elites.

[120] *Bohemia*. March 29, 1959:72.
[121] *Hoy*. March 1, 1959:1.



Figure 3. Cartoon depicting the specter of "minifundismo."

Although Castro and the revolutionary press quickly tore down the minifundio arguments—going as far as to say that minifundios already existed to some extent and that the agrarian reform would address that issue, in part, through the creation of cooperative farms—it nevertheless provided the reform's opposition something to rally around.[122]

Promoting Action

In the early months of 1959, before the agrarian reform was signed into law, Castro and the revolutionary press encouraged people to take action in support of the agrarian reform, to give their attention, time, money, and efforts to support the new policy and ensure its success. Castro told the people that the only way the agrarian reform could succeed, owing to the amount of work involved, would be for everyone to participate. He explained, "despite the fact that the work is enormous, the help of the pueblo, the good will of the pueblo, the intelligence of the

[122] *Hoy*. February 27, 1959:3.

pueblo, the understanding of the pueblo, is an enormous help and factor of triumph" (Castro 1959e). Many individuals, groups, and organizations were quick to declare their support. Statements of support were particularly common among workers—who were already organized into workplace groups, unions, and federations—as evidenced by declarations issued by the National Union of Workers of the Wood Industry, the National Association of the Tobacco Harvesters of Cuba, the dock workers, and the transportation workers.[123]

The accord of the National Front of Sugar Workers (Frente National de Trabajadores Azucareros, FNTA) is exemplary in this regard. In a declaration issued from their national plenary assembly, they noted their enthusiastic support for Castro, emphasized the importance of the agrarian reform, encouraged all their workers to get involved in supporting the reform efforts, and denounced the economic elite of the sugar industry:

> The motion reads as follows: First: The national plenary assembly of the FNTA supports with all warmth and enthusiasm the pronouncements made by the Commander in Chief of the Rebel Army and leader of the Revolution, Dr. Fidel Castro, raised as the most important task at the present time, the realization of the agrarian reform that delivers the land to those who work it and liquidates latifundismo, the main cause of backwardness, misery, and unemployment in our country. Second: The plenary assembly of the FNTA agrees that the struggle for the agrarian reform is and must be a task of the union organizations and the labor movement as a whole, for which it is agreed to develop the most active and powerful mobilization of sugar workers in support of the realization of the agrarian reform. The national plenary assembly of the FNTA denounces the provocative attitude of the great magnates of the sugar industry who are creating all kinds of conflicts and disturbances, as part of a plan previously elaborated by internal and external reaction, and which is aimed at preventing the realization of the agrarian reform and making the revolutionary government fail.[124]

This single statement illustrates all four components of the articulatory efforts underway during the time of the agrarian reform. It defined the peasants by referencing the "backwardness, misery, and unemployment in our country," which revolutionary discourse made clear were

[123] *Hoy*. February 24, 1959:1; *Hoy*. February 28, 1959:1; *Hoy*. March 10, 1959:4; *Hoy*. March 13, 1959:4.
[124] *Hoy*. February 11, 1959:3.

issues that disproportionately plagued the countryside. It called for unity, urging "the union organizations and the labor movement as a whole" to mobilize in support of the policy.[125] It singles out the villains in the national narrative: the landowners who, historically, were to blame for peasants' misery and, presently, were trying to thwart the reform. Finally, it calls for unified action, in the form of "the most active and powerful mobilization of sugar workers."

The sugar workers' declaration was powerful, but voicing support was not the same thing as acting on that support. The details of the "powerful mobilization" were far from clear, perhaps leaving readers wondering what, concretely, they should *do* to support the agrarian reform efforts. Fortunately, *Bohemia* and *Hoy* were replete with descriptions about how average citizens supported the reform through their daily activities, thereby serving as an example for others. One type of popular participation that the press showcased was people's volunteer labor, donating their time and talents to various projects, campaigns, or initiatives related to the successful implementation of agrarian reform. In the cities, this often took the form of establishing workplace militias or volunteer brigades.[126] In the case of the former, workers were responsible not only for maintaining their lines of production operating at full capacity but also for keeping vigilance against potential sabotage from reactionary elements. In the case of the latter, workers would gather at designated times (generally either after work hours or on Sundays) to perform tasks related to the reform.

Volunteer labor in rural areas looked different. People—mainly young, university-aged students—helped implement pilot programs related to agricultural cooperatives that would be

[125] What is implicit here (and what would have been clear to readers at the time) was that this call for "labor movement" unity was also urging listeners and readers to put aside worker factionalism and union politics. The labor movement at this time was experiencing a sort of revolution of its own, given how intertwined previous national-level union leadership had been with the Batista regime (Fuller 1992:47).
[126] *Hoy*. April 4, 1959:4; *Hoy*. April 15, 1959:1;3.

scaled up after the passage of the agrarian reform law. “La Sierra” farm was one such program. A *Bohemia* article, titled “Redemptory Crusade” (recalling campesinos’ need for “salvation”), described the “self-sacrificing and fruitful work of the Rural Commandos” who volunteered to get La Sierra up and running (see Fig. 4 and Fig. 5).[127] It explained, “These guys, who do not charge anything for their magnificent work, […] are true and noble soldiers of the agrarian reform. When they leave the mountains, they will leave behind a trail of affection and a monolithic campesino organization, as strong as the mountains, that nothing and no one can destroy.” The young men entered their mission with a defined set of priorities as they “had a primary mission to fulfill,” which was to “spread the idea of cooperatives and teach agriculture and hygiene.” Through the course of their service, however, their daily activities expanded. The article explained, “But they have had to do everything: from injecting and treating to giving classes […] as well as distributing mail and directing the construction of roads. The guajiros [campesinos] admire, love, and respect them.” Both urban and rural volunteer efforts were noble, important, and highly praised.

[127] *Bohemia*. April 26, 1959:38-43;123. The caption of the photo on the left adds that, “These guys, all university students, do not charge anything for their work and fight selflessly for the Agrarian Reform.” The caption of the photo on the right explains that the Rural Command is delivering a plow to the farmer because, “In this rugged terrain, rubber tractors cannot be used and oxen plows must be used instead.”



Figure 4. A Rural Command delivering mail to La Sierra.



Figure 5. A Rural Command delivering a plow to a farmer.

However, the quickest, easiest, and, arguably, most accessible way for average Cubans to actively participate in the agrarian reform efforts was to donate their money. Whether one cent or one million dollars, donations of every quantity, from individuals of all walks of life, were encouraged and welcomed by the government's new leaders. The biggest, longest, and most visible fundraising campaign was organized by *Bohemia* magazine. The *Bohemia* fundraising campaign neatly exemplifies the pre-signing phase of the agrarian reform episode. It combined all four articulatory elements—defining the campesino, emphasizing unity, differentiating enemies, and promoting action—as was evident from the very first article introducing the campaign. It stated, "We repeat: We must contribute, Cubans! The task belongs to everyone, rich and poor, black and white, children and elderly, women and men. The revolution does not make distinctions; it united us all to overthrow tyranny, now it needs all of us to consolidate its victory. No one can deny your contribution, no matter how small. No one can hide the right hand; it must

be extended to give, to serve, to save Cuba."[128] Campesinos are not explicitly named here, presumably because, as the poorest sector of Cubans, they were not expected to contribute in the same way as others. But the passage clearly emphasizes unity over subgroup distinctions, juxtaposes the Cuban pueblo against the common enemy of "tyranny," and calls the people to act collectively to consolidate the unity of the pueblo.

Bohemia introduced the fundraising campaign in late February of 1959. The article announcing it explained that the magazine's editors decided to organize the campaign, called the "Patriotic Movement for Economic Support for the Agrarian Reform and Industrial Development of Cuba," due to demands from the public.[129] The article said, "Hundreds of telegrams and letters from all over the country have forced *Bohemia*, always a spokesperson for Cuban causes, to take the leadership of this revolutionary crusade into its own hands." Subsequently in the March 1 and March 8 issues, magazine articles explained the logistics of the campaign, including how to make out and mail donation checks and where the collected money would be stored. Weekly, *Bohemia* printed updates—at least two pages but generally many more—about how the campaign was going.[130] Each update featured the grand total collected to date in massive font and highlighted particularly impressive donations in an inset textbox (for example, see Fig. 6).[131] The updates also praised specific donors, both individuals and groups, by including photos of them

[128] *Bohemia*. March 1, 1959:71. Instructing against "hiding the right hand" seems to be a biblical reference to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6:3-4). In it, he instructs the audience not to let the left hand know what the right hand is doing, which is to say that people should not be showy about giving alms to the poor. Here, by contrast, people are encouraged to show the right hand to the left, to give openly, presumably encouraging others to do the same.
[129] *Bohemia*. February 22, 1959:87.
[130] With the June 7 issue, the updates switched from weekly to fortnightly.
[131] *Bohemia*. April 12, 1959:84. In addition to listing the running total from the campaign, the inset singles out two donations—one from Crusellas y Cía and one from the employees and workers of Crusellas and Cía—each totalling 20,000 pesos. Interestingly, according to the company's current website, Crusellas was nationalized by the Cuban government in 1960, at which point the owners moved to Miami to reestablish their business in the United States (which is still in operation today) (https://www.crusellas.com/).

presenting their checks in the offices of *Bohemia* (see Fig. 7).[132] Finally, every single individual donor who had contributed over the course of the previous week was recognized via the printing of their name.



Informe al Pueblo

COLECTA de la LIBERTAD:

$12.723,673,31

(SEXTA RELACION)

Saldo anterior	$12.605,803.74
Contribución de Cruselias y Cía.	20,000.00
Contribución de Empleados y Obreros de Crusellas y Cía.	20,000.00
Total de esta Relación	117,869.57
Total General	$12.723,673.31

Esta es la Sexta Relación, la sexta lista de los que, oyendo el llamado de la Revolución han venido a expresar, tangiblemente, su afán de ver convertido en hermosa realidad el más bello plan Revolucionario: la Reforma Agraria.

Es la sexta relación. En ella figuran centenares de nombres, cientos de grupos de cubanos que, desde sus hogares o sus centros de trabajo, vienen a depositar su óbolo en las arcas de la Revolución. Pero ¿cuántos nombres faltan aún? Para darles cabida quedan todvia unas cuantas listas. ¿A qué esperar a la última? ¿Por qué no aparecer en la séptima relación? Estás a tiempo, cubano. Estás a tiempo extranjero que, por

Figure 6. Report highlighting the contributions of Crusellas y Cía to *Bohemia*'s agrarian reform fundraising campaign.

[132] *Bohemia*. April 19, 1959:78. In the photo, we can see the check exchanging hands in the left portion of the frame. In addition to identifying the subjects of the photo, the caption also editorialized about the nature of their gesture. It said, "They know that those pesos that they have taken out of their pockets will be used in a great work, in the redemption of the always forgotten Cuban guajiro."



Figure 7. Doctors and staff of the "La Caridad del Cobre" clinic delivering their donation check to the *Bohemia* offices.

Like much revolutionary discourse up to this point, *Bohemia* portrayed the campesinos to its readers—now potential donors—as needing and deserving transformation. In their calls for donations, the magazine explicitly named the campesinos as beneficiaries of the campaign and signaled that contributing monetarily would redeem them from their misery: "If you, reader, have not done it yet, don't leave it for later! You still have time! Come join your brothers, come give your contribution! You can help free man from the countryside, give him land and peace of mind! You can and must help the Industrial Development of Our Nation!"[133] Readers' statements of their rationale for giving to the campaign suggests that this messaging resonated. Such was the case with the women workers of the "Baroques" clothing factory who said they gathered their funds to donate because they "understood the enormous tragedy of the Cuban campesino and have wanted to contribute to his redemption."[134] Others explained that their motivation for

[133] *Bohemia*. March 15, 1595:84. Along with beseeching readers for donations, passages such as these also served a didactic purpose, reminding readers of leaders' overarching economic plans. In this case, the article explicitly links the agrarian reform to industrial development.
[134] *Bohemia*. May 10, 1959:83.

donating was campesinos' deservingness. La Cervecería Tropical, a large, prominent brewery and bottling company on the island, took out many ads in *Bohemia* in which they encouraged people's donations by referring to the agrarian reform as a "debt of honor." One such ad stated,

> Those who sacrificed everything for our political freedom have earned well our effort and even our sacrifice for their economic freedom. And the debt is not just from now. Campesinos were, for the most part, those of 1868; and those who with Gómez and Maceo made the first Liberation invasion. Let's commemorate this February 24 by helping the success of the agrarian reform, to begin to pay our Debt of Honor with the Cuban campesino.[135]

By participating in the collection campaign, any average Cuban could help repay the national debt to the needy and deserving campesinos.

In addition to defining the campesino, the *Bohemia* campaign also frequently invoked unity as a good and necessary attribute of the revolutionary pueblo that facilitated collective solutions to collective problems. The rhetorical strategy of naming many different subgroups or types of actors only to then unite them and blur away their differences characterized this campaign as well. *Bohemia* called on lawyers, doctors, ranchers, engineers, teachers, nannies, maids, masons, journalists, carpenters, artists, manual laborers, store clerks, construction workers, ad men, businessmen, housewives, bankers, children, and more to come together in support of the agrarian reform.[136] "Everyone," one article emphasized, "comes to bring something, to contribute, to say, 'present!'"[137] This idea of everyone having something to contribute, regardless of their profession or abilities, also offered people a chance to repay their own debts to the rebels who had saved them from Batista's tyranny. As Díaz Castañón points

[135] *Bohemia*. March 1, 1959:78. "Gómez and Maceo" refers to two of the most celebrated war heroes of Cuban history, Generalissimo Máximo Gómez and Lt. general José Antonio Maceo. February 24 is the anniversary of the Grito de Baire (1895), the official call to war that restarted Cuba's battle for independence from Spain after a failed first attempt in the form of the Ten Years' War (1868-1878).
[136] *Bohemia*. March 1, 1959:71; *Bohemia*. March 22, 1959:76.
[137] *Bohemia*. April 19, 1959:76.

out, the campaign "marked the first incorporation into the revolutionary arena of that citizen who 'did not know how to fight,' as Núñez Rodríguez had written, but who could now collaborate" (2019:105). In other words, the campaign allowed those who had never protested, delivered a secret message, or picked up a rifle during the anti-Batista insurrection to now "claim a role in the essential tasks of the nation" (ibid.). The Cuban people were not without distinctions—they had different occupations, genders, and socioeconomic statuses, according to *Bohemia*'s subgroup lists—but all differences needed to be set aside, ignored, or papered over for the sake of unity and unanimity in the face of threats from the agrarian reform's opponents.

The *Bohemia* campaign also highlighted unity when it described individuals putting collective interests above personal ones. Many articles did this by drawing attention to people who donated money despite being relatively poor themselves, implying that those people were good and true members of the revolutionary pueblo. As Castro explained,

> That is why one receives with so much pleasure the donation of the workers, the day's salary that is given to the agrarian reform with such generosity and joy, because that is money earned with the sweat of their brows, because that is the sacrifice from the humble family that takes away a day's salary from the family, takes away a day of outings from the family, that perhaps takes away the most essential things from the family and comes to give it spontaneously, generously to the agrarian reform. (Castro 1959g)

This sentiment was reflected in *Bohemia* editors' decision to list every single donor, even if they had only given a cent or two. In the April 19 update, from one paragraph alone, the donations ranged from the single peso given by Angel Huesta Hernández to the 570 pesos collectively donated by the workers, employees, sellers, and managers of the Unica cookie shop.[138] Groups singled out for giving their "widow's mite" included children (Castro 1959s), women, and even

[138] *Bohemia*. April 19, 1959:78.

prisoners, all people who had limited rights and limited opportunities for political participation prior to the triumph of the revolution (see Fig. 8).[139]



Figure 8. Students from Public School No. 24 delivering their donations to the *Bohemia* offices.

Finally, descriptions of the campaign presented united, collective action as the pathway to collective goods. After the campaign ended, Castro linked it back to the benefits that were forthcoming to the revolutionary pueblo, both for the campesinos specifically and for the country as a whole. Thanking the people for their donations, Castro explained, "These contributions to the agrarian reform mean that everyone gave something of their own to technify and revolutionize agriculture, to increase agricultural production, [and] to redeem the peasantry of the country, whose redemption will also allow the redemption of the rest of the country" (Castro 1959g). Castro also singled out the urban participation in the fundraising as particularly praiseworthy and a good show of unity and solidarity. In remarking that "the agrarian reform

[139] *Bohemia*. April 19, 1959:76,79; *Bohemia*. May 10, 1959:83; *Bohemia*. April 26, 1959:84. This photo of schoolgirls from Public School No. 24 not only showcased donations from those who did not have much to give, but it also drew attention to the future and to the role that the children of today would play in the revolution of tomorrow (albeit in very gendered terms). The photo's caption read, "This has been a beautiful practical civics lesson for them. This is how the women and mothers of tomorrow are forged, a tomorrow that the Revolution tends to make better and more promising every day" (*Bohemia*. April 19, 1959:79).

[…] has aroused even more enthusiasm in the city than the urban reform itself" (Castro 1959p)—a rent-reduction policy that directly benefited city dwellers—Castro praised urban residents for putting the interests of the collectivity above their own.

For the roughly four months leading up to the passage of the Agrarian Reform Law, regime leaders deployed discourse and practice to define the campesino, emphasize unity, differentiate the pueblo from its enemies via juxtaposition, and promote pro-Agrarian Reform activities. Through speeches, newspapers, and magazines, leaders of the new revolutionary government defined campesinos as backwards and suffering yet deserving of assistance and of a prominent place in the revolutionary pueblo. Leaders tried to make individuals see themselves as part of a broader collectivity, one where the traits of unity and revolutionary spirit superseded all other aspects of existing personal identities based on class, race, gender, religion, or geographic region. And they painted those who opposed the agrarian reform as enemies of the people and enemies of the state while minimizing their (sometimes legitimate) concerns over the specifics of the planned reform. This intensive and multi-faceted groundwork aimed to rally Cuban non-elites together into concerted action in defense of the agrarian reform. In the section that follows, I will discuss the implementation of the law, the backlash it generated, and how leaders continued leveraging these four lines of political articulation to maintain a supportive and mobilizable broad base of popular support in the face of powerful and vocal opposition.

Phase Two: Passing and Celebrating the Agrarian Reform Law

The second phase of the agrarian reform episode began with the signing of the law on May 17, 1959. In the second phase, revolutionary elites continued rallying support as they began implementing the long-awaited reform. After the law's passage, revolutionary leaders channeled public support for agrarian reform toward demonstrating to the government's enemies and the

rest of the world just how supportive and united the pueblo was. This phase, however, was more externally oriented compared to the first. The pivot to a more external orientation was due in part to the boldest move in US foreign policy since the revolutionary movement came to power: the issuance of a diplomatic note on June 11, which I discuss in detail below. This escalation of US involvement in Cuban domestic affairs, however minor it may seem retrospectively, added to the contemporary understanding of agrarian reform as a could-be crisis for the new revolutionary leaders. In this section, I will first discuss the signing of the law and its general contents. I will then demonstrate how revolutionary discourse during this second phase of the event defined the campesino, emphasized unity, differentiated via juxtaposition, and promoted action, culminating with the exemplar of the concentración campesina introduced at the beginning of the chapter.

The official ceremony to sign the agrarian reform into law was a special moment, a spectacle nested within a larger event. After so much planning, research, debate, discussion, education, propaganda, and preparation, it is unsurprising that the revolutionary elite felt it important to turn the signing into a symbolic performance as well as an enactment of legislation. Like any good theatrical production, leaders chose the setting and date carefully. They would sign the new law in "the very heart of the Sierra Maestra," in La Plata, "the place where the Revolution won its first battle against the forces of tyranny."[140] And they would do so on May 17, which they simultaneously declared Campesinos' Day, in commemoration of the death of Niceto Pérez García, a small farmer who was murdered by the Rural Guard in 1948 for protesting campesino evictions in the area. On the designated day, revolutionary elites, members of the pro-government press, and campesinos from surrounding areas converged on La Plata to

[140] *Hoy*. May 14, 1959:1.

witness history.[141] Felicitously, there was a "torrential downpour."[142] This photo from *Bohemia* captures the historic moment in which Castro, surrounded by fellow heroes of the revolution, the president, government ministers, dignitaries, and members of the press, signed the agrarian reform into law (see Fig. 9).[143] An article printed later in *Bohemia* detailed the ceremony: "The signatures begin in order: [President] Urrutia, Fidel, the ministers. They all look excited. Fidel's eyes shine with satisfaction. Now the martyrs can rest easy. The fruits of their sacrifice begin to be seen. Celia [Sánchez] keeps the pen with which Fidel has signed the historic document."[144]


Ministros y asesores del gobierno revolucionario rodean a Fidel en el histórico momento de estampar su firma a la ley de la reforma agraria. En la foto, Urrutia, Agramonte, Hart, Luis Orlando, Martínez Páez, Manolo Fernández, Núñez Jiménez y Crescencio Pérez.

Figure 9. Fidel Castro signing the Agrarian Reform Law alongside other high-ranking officials

After a few days, the press made the full contents of the law accessible to the public, highlighting the specifics of the policy and the parameters for its implementation. *Hoy* printed

[141] *Bohemia*. May 24, 1959:71; *Hoy*. May 17, 1959:1;7.
[142] *Hoy*. May 19, 1959:1. Because rain makes it even more difficult and unpleasant to stand around for hours at a time while revolutionary leaders perform some sort of act, it is often construed by revolutionary discourse as a symbol of the extraordinary and exceptional dedication of the members of the revolutionary pueblo.
[143] *Bohemia*. May 24, 1959:71.
[144] *Bohemia*. June 14, 1959:sup.2. Celia Sánchez was one of the few women who participated in the armed insurrection in the Sierra Maestra mountains alongside the 26th of July Movement. After the revolutionary government came to power, she remained a close friend and confidant of Castro until her untimely death from cancer in 1980.

the law in full on May 19 and again on June 7, this time accompanied by the transcription of a lengthy, informative speech by Blas Roca explaining different facets of the law. In the interim, on June 5, a large section of *Hoy* highlighted key provisions of the law, including how many caballerías would be distributed, which lands were subject to redistribution, the order in which the different types of lands would be doled out (state lands, personal lands that are in excess of the maximum limits, then all other "affectable lands"), who could own the land (owners had to be named entities of Cuban extraction), who had the right to receive or acquire land, and how to request a land grant. Luis Orlando Rodríguez (Minister of the Interior), seemingly forgetting high illiteracy rates among the campesinos, "personally delivered to Dr. Fidel Castro Ruz 20,000 copies of the Official Gazette [*La Gaceta Oficial*] with the text of the Agrarian Law to distribute among the campesinos"[145] (H 59.06.07:1).

The most crucial (and controversial) articles of the law related to landholding limits and the prioritization of land grants. For the most part, privately held lands would be capped at 30 caballerías (990 acres). As far as determining the amount of land to be granted to each individual recipient, the National Institute of Agrarian Reform (Instituto Nacional de Reforma Agraria, INRA) developed the concept of the "vital minimum," which would vary from place to place as it was to be calculated in consideration of variations in local land conditions, including "the

[145] *Hoy*. June 7, 1959:1. *La Gaceta Oficial*, according to the "history" section of the state-run website that houses the newspapers' digital archives, *La Gaceta* dates to Cuba's colonial era and was the "Official Government newspaper" (Anon 2015). During the republican era (1902-1959), the paper included articles about "the legal life of the country," in addition to notices of "legal regulations, citations, summons, sentences; judicial proceedings, calls, and notices; and other issues of commercial life such as auctions, private business announcements, etc." After 1964, however, the scope of *La Gaceta* was reduced to "only publish the legal provisions of the State bodies and agencies."

location of the land, its quality, the possibilities of obtaining water, and other similar factors"[146] (B 59.06.14:sup3). Lands would be granted to the specified groups in the following order:

> (1) Campesinos who have been evicted from the land they cultivated; (2) residents of the same area who lack lands and only cultivate an area sized less than the "vital minimum"; (3) agricultural laborers who work and habitually reside on the land to be distributed; (4) campesinos from neighboring areas, who lack land or have an area less than the "vital minimum"; (5) agricultural workers from other regions; and (6) to any other person who makes the corresponding request, preferring in the latter case to those who demonstrate experience in agricultural matters.[147]

Once the specifics of the law were in full public view, leaders again turned to articulation along the four lines discussed above, this time in the context of even more defiant opposition, both domestically and internationally.

Defining the Campesino

So that average members of the pueblo did not lose sight of their original motivation for supporting the agrarian reform, revolutionary discourse continued reminding people of the campesinos' suffering, which was long-standing and intense. An article from *Hoy*, for example, reiterated to readers that "the Agrarian Reform Law does justice to the man from the countryside who for more than fifty years has lived without a home, without bread, and without culture."[148] Meanwhile, Castro referenced the historic victimization of the campesino at the hands of the Rural Guard, arguing "they will never be able to burn their houses again, to take away their lands" (Castro 1959k). He later enumerated various social ills that had historically plagued the campesinos, including high illiteracy rates, insufficient schools and teachers, high rates of infant

[146] *Bohemia*. June 14, 1959:sup.3. The formation of the INRA (which was a provision of the law itself) to oversee the implementation of the agrarian reform was not merely a pragmatic solution for enacting sweeping land reform. Rather, as Kozameh points out, the INRA was born of leaders' skepticism of the Ministry of Agriculture. Specifically, "The revolution's more radical leaders feared that the Ministry of Agriculture, with its more politically moderate bureaucracy, would fail to push for the full implementation of the law" (2022:32).
[147] ibid.
[148] *Hoy*. June 13, 1959:3.

mortality, and a deplorable lack of medication assistance and sanitary conditions (Castro 1959m). It was equally important not to let Cubans forget who was responsible for creating this sad situation, especially since those to blame were the same individuals who opposed the agrarian reform, which was campesinos' only hope for long-awaited salvation. As Castro noted, the campesinos' ignorance and illiteracy were by design. "The unfortunate rural man could neither write nor speak," he explained, because "They [economic and political elites before 1959] wanted to keep him ignorant because an ignorant man can be deceived, an ignorant man can be confused" (Castro 1959o). Leaders' discourse during the post-signing period thus repeatedly reminded the revolutionary pueblo of campesinos' need for transformation.

In addition to this discourse, leaders created policies and programs that reminded Cubans of the need to transform campesinos before incorporating them into the pueblo. The Ministry of Defense, for example, housed an entity called the "Department of Technical, Cultural, and Material Assistance to the Peasantry." Its stated mission was to "carry out an intense culture-promoting campaign among the guajiros."[149] Through various campaigns and initiatives, this office promoted "practices of cooperation and self-development," which would foster in campesinos an "interest in participating in the solution of common problems [and] love for the land and work." These behaviors and attitudes were presented as prerequisites for cooperative agricultural farming. Beyond questions of agriculture, the Department was charged with "providing campesinos with the basic knowledge for the proper interpretation of cultural values and their rapid incorporation into social life […], providing them with necessary methods that allow them to enjoy the benefits of modern life adapted to rural areas." In this way, the ministry aimed to "contribute to eradicating ignorance, unhealthiness and misery once and for all."[150]

[149] *Hoy*. July 19, 1959:1.
[150] *Hoy*. May 27, 1959:4.

After the agrarian reform law's passage, campesinos participated in their own self-definition, often confirming the narratives presented by revolutionary elites and the pro-government press. For example, in an interview with *Hoy*, one rural-dwelling woman explained that campesinos (unsurprisingly) understood well their own suffering and were ready for a change. "Look, for a long time we lived without hope of anything. You see," she said to the reporter, "in what conditions we live. Our huts are unhygienic, they do not have any type of sanitary service, we do not have electricity. We are living like animals."[151] Corroborating this perspective, when another *Hoy* reporter asked a group of campesino children what they hoped to gain from the agrarian reform, a little girl shouted, "A toilet!"[152] Pointing to the stark city-countryside contrast, the journalist then mused, "Such a natural thing for us here, in Havana. What house—however humble it may be—doesn't have toilets?" Such articles illustrate that every Cuban, whether rural or urban, young or old, understood campesinos as defined by their need for transformation and modernization.

In the post-signing period, leaders' discourse also explained how campesinos' transformation would allow for their full incorporation into the revolutionary pueblo. As noted previously, leaders framed the agrarian reform as the lynchpin in the overarching economic development program that would secure Cuba's economic independence and sovereignty. But it could never come to fruition without the participation of the Cuban peasantry. The campesinos were the ones who, according to regime leaders, would be responsible for spurring agricultural production, thereby creating an on-ramp for Cuban industrialization for the first time in the country's history. The first step was granting campesinos land. *Hoy* began documenting the distribution of land to the campesinos: 250 caballerías (8,250 acres) went to 80 campesino

[151] *Hoy*. June 14, 1959:4.
[152] *Hoy*. June 17, 1959:4.

families on May 27; 400,000 caballerías (13.2 million acres) were allotted to the direct benefit of 200,000 campesinos families on June 5; and 313 small farms were granted to the campesinos who were already working them on July 14. But to ensure their ability to fulfil their mission of augmenting agricultural production, campesinos also received other benefits. INRA helped create farming cooperatives (see Fig. 10), offered technical and material assistance (including technicians to make recommendations and troubleshoot problems and no-interest loans to purchase farming equipment), favorable terms of credit, price-setting, and infrastructure, like roads to get their goods to market (Amaro 1995:46).[153] These benefits positioned the campesinos to improve their own material standard of living *and* to contribute to the national economy.

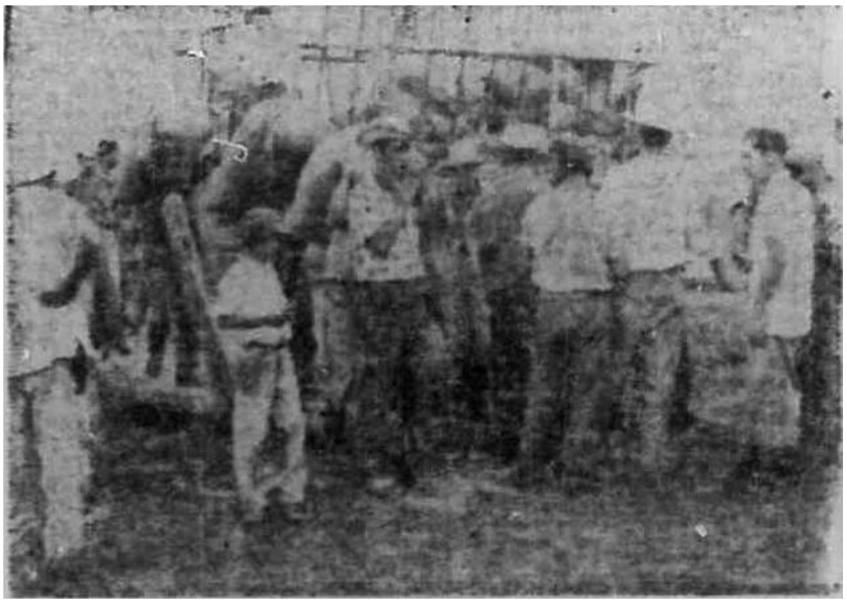


Figure 10. Farmers of the newly formed Aridane cooperative unloading sacks of rice seeds for planting

This material assistance would convert campesinos into economically productive members of the Cuban pueblo, but it did not address their alleged social, political, and cultural backwardness. For that, the agrarian reform also promised to improve campesinos' standard of

[153] *Hoy*. June 21, 1959:1. An article titled, "The Aridane cooperative: An example of what the revolutionary spirit can do!," described the work of the cooperative which, with the help of INRA began planting rice after the agrarian reform was signed into law. The caption of this photos read, "The campesinos unloading the rice seeds."

living. Their needs—"having a piece of land to work and live, farm implements, schools, communication routs" as well as "medical assistance, hygienic and adequate housing, food and everything that a family may need to sustain itself and grow decently"—were many.[154] And the agrarian reform law signed on May 17 could, allegedly, address them all. As *Bohemia* explained, "The Agrarian law will […] bring health, education, and order to where disease, illiteracy, and anarchy were. It will eradicate backwardness and exploitation. […] The huts will be a thing of the past. It will open the highways and electrically light the path of progress"[155] Bringing campesinos into the twentieth century would facilitate their incorporation into the revolutionary pueblo. Once treated with distain and even "hostility," Castro declared, "that is over now, and the campesino comes to the city, and everyone welcomes him" (Castro 1959k). Rather than hapless victims of landowners' malice and avarice, he continued, campesinos would be "counted," for the first time, "as an essential factor of the nation" and "will have the respect and consideration of the whole world."

Emphasizing Unity

Public-facing efforts after May 17 continued to foreground unity as the key ingredient to the success of the new policy. However, because unity was the motivation, means, and end goal of the concentración campesina to be discussed below, I will examine the role of unity in the post-signing period only briefly here. The post-signing discourse again declared the unity of the pueblo and pointed to its importance for staving off enemies. According to Castro—and later corroborated by *Bohemia*'s national survey—basically all Cubans were united in their unanimous support of the agrarian reform. In a speech given the day the law was signed into

[154] *Hoy*. May 17, 1959:5.
[155] *Bohemia*. May 31, 1959:64.

place, Castro proclaimed, “It can be said without any doubt that 98% of the people support the agrarian reform” (1959r). The unity that Castro described here mattered both from a perspective of supporting the new revolutionary government and from the standpoint of being able to defeat its enemies, who were already “preparing to fight by all means at their disposal.”[156] As *Hoy* succinctly reminded its readers, “Our people have to march as united as possible, to undertake the largest mobilization and reject all kinds of maneuvers organized by the counterrevolution to make the great Agrarian Reform Law fail.”[157]

If united action brought the agrarian reform to fruition, united action would also bring about the collective benefits that the new policy aimed to generate. Materially, the agrarian reform would “build an independent, progressive, advancing and developing structure to an economy destined to satisfy the national needs, to raise the standard of living of the pueblo, [and] to eliminate mono-production and the part of endemic unemployment caused by the backward character of the Cuban economic structure.”[158] This chain of development would impact various economic sectors differently. With respect to industrial production, shoemakers, for example, would witness a massive boost in demand due to “a new internal market of more than one million pairs a year” for the campesinos who previously had no shoes.[159] Railway workers could also expect to be positively impacted, as rising demand and supply would increase transportation needs.[160] Finally, *Bohemia* argued, the campesinos’ improved economic position would also benefit city dwellers. An article from late May explained, “And since everything is interdependent, since the man from the city influences the man from the countryside and the

[156] *Hoy*. May 20, 1959:4.
[157] *Hoy*. May 23, 1959:1.
[158] *Hoy*. May 28, 1959:1.
[159] *Bohemia*. June 28, 1959:111.
[160] *Hoy*. July 7, 1959:5.

latter over the former, every Cuban will end up being improved. The one in the countryside is healthier and stronger. The one in the city is safer and happier."[161]

Differentiating via Juxtaposition

In a departure from the pre-signing period of the agrarian reform era, the post-signing period witnessed a marked upswing in discourse related to enemy actors who opposed the reform and sought to foil its implementation. Leaders' discourse identified these enemies and outlined their grievances. The press grouped opponents together, despite internal heterogeneity, under the label of "the opposition." As *Bohemia* pointed out, "In other words, those who are dissatisfied here are the geophages, the landowners, the loan sharks, the speculators, politicians and embezzlers, the informers, and the *botelleros*; all these people constitute the opposition."[162] And, although different subgroups of the opposition had specific gripes—for example, the sugar growers' grievances were not identical to those of the cattle ranchers—they ultimately all had the same complaint: that, in the process of finally realizing a free, sovereign, and independent Cuba, their personal, material interests would be harmed.[163] *Bohemia* thus ascribed the opposition's "bitter criticism" to the belief that "their interests have been injured by some of the articles or provisions of the aforementioned Law."[164]

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[161] *Bohemia*. May 31, 1959:64.
[162] *Bohemia*. June 21, 1959:sup.3. "Botelleros" were "individuals who drew salaries only to snitch on fellow workers" (Casey 2014).
[163] As Guerra points out, citing official communications emanating from the US Embassy, not all opponents of the reform would have been considered elite. For example, in Pinar del Rio, a famous tobacco cultivation area to the west of Havana, "A thousand smallholding tobacco farmers protested the law's prohibition on sharecropping, a major source of income for them" (2012:62). Citing an article from *The Havana Post* (an English-language paper published in Cuba from 1900 to 1960), O'Connor notes "the demonstrators warned that they would face execution before surrendering their land" (1968:172). Despite the tobacco farmers' relatively low status compared to the upper echelons of Cuba's economic elite, however, that their self-interest motivated their opposition to the new law nevertheless positioned them squarely within the ranks of the enemies of the people, according to pro-government discourse.
[164] *Bohemia*. June 28, 1959:62.

There was also increasing attention to enemies' alleged strategies to undermine the implementation of the new law. Seemingly anticipating that the enemy would orchestrate further misinformation campaigns (similar to their fearmongering about minifundismo), Castro and the other revolutionary elites tried to curtail enemies' abilities to do so by educating the pueblo thoroughly about the new law. The pro-government press reminded readers of the opposition's past tactics and warned what they could be expected to do now, calling the people to vigilance moving forward:

> First, they tried to mediate [the reform] by bribery; then they tried to paralyze it with threats; later they tried to hinder it by coercion. And now, the bribery having failed, the threats having been contained, and the coercion neutralized, a new tactic is tried, more subtle, but perhaps more dangerous. They want to destroy it by discrediting it, fraudulently falsifying its intentions, intentionally confusing its purposes, and arbitrarily interpreting its precepts.[165]

Education, then, was a key weapon of defense against the enemy.

With the supposed myth of minifundismo seemingly neutralized by the pro-government press, the economic elite searched for new ways to discredit the reform.[166] One tactic seemed to have been to convince small and mid-sized landowners that they would be harmed by the implementation of the law. The largest landowners took a few, isolated instances of small and

[165] *Bohemia*. July 19, 1959:58-59. This article's discussion of bribery seems to refer to the situation in which Cuba's economic elites offered material support for the agrarian reform, donations which Castro later framed as bribery. In March 1959, the National Association of Cattle Ranchers of Cuba donated 10,000 dairy heifers to rural communities so campesino children could access milk (*Bohemia*. March 8, 1959:109). Similarly, the following month, the National Association of Landowners of Cuba offered 100,000 tons of sugar and $2.5 million to support the reform efforts (*Bohemia*. April 5, 1959:73). In June, however, Castro impugned the donors' motives, claiming that, "They had hypocritically offered us their loaded heifers, their millions of pesos, as a handout to see if the law would come out less radical, if they would lose fewer caballerías […]. That is why we have simply returned their loaded heifers and their money" (Castro 1959g). Díaz Castañón corroborates this narrative by situating it within historical context. She points out that the National Association of Cuban Landowners, during the Republican period had similarly meddled in national-level political affairs and likely "envisioned (1) heading the Reform themselves and (2) telling the revolutionary government how it should proceed" (2019:99).

[166] While the government's attention turned away from addressing the specter of minifundismo, some of the law's opponents continued to reference it in their publicly stated objections. In an article published in *The Havana Post* on May 23, for example, sugar mill owners argued that implementing the reform would create "serious economic consequences on the national economy in general and the sugar industry in particular" (as quoted in O'Connor 1968:180).

mid-sized landowners who were going to have a portion of their lands seized because of the law and turned them into the unfortunate posterchildren of agrarian reform gone horribly wrong. Extrapolating from these cases, economic elites aimed to convince all landowners that their holdings were in grave danger. A cartoon printed in *Hoy* aptly illustrates the situation. It depicts a wolf—dressed as a sheep and labelled "latifundista/geophage"—typing a letter of protest (that reads "We Protest!") signed by the "small harvesters" (see Fig. 11).[167]



Figure 11. Cartoon depicting a "latifundista" wolf in sheep's clothing writing a letter of protest

Castro, always particularly sensitive to hypocrisy, lambasted the large landowners in their attempt to manipulate the less powerful. He said,

> What is unusual is that the inhuman landowners, those who have not had an atom of mercy for the pueblo, are now the humans who—incapable of the courage to speak in defense of their indefensible interests—take as their flag, and agitate, and incite those who by exception can be harmed by the law, to take flags that can arouse citizen sensitivity, to put them as victims, when the perpetrators here in our country have been them. (Castro 1959b)

[167] *Hoy*. May 29, 1959:1.

To discredit the economic elites and assuage the fears of smaller landowners, leaders pointed out (as they had done with the case of minifundismo) that the internal mechanics of the agrarian reform itself would sort out anyone inadvertently harmed by the reform, on a case-by-case basis, with the assistance of the INRA (Castro 1959d).

When Cuba's agricultural economic elites failed to win over the small- and mid-sized landowners, they turned toward even more powerful enemies, working with foreign owners of Cuban lands to pressure the US federal government to intervene.[168] The rumblings of discontentment emanating from the United States began with protests from senators, who, due to concerns that the agrarian reform would decimate Cuban sugar production, called for the reduction of the sugar quota.[169] *Hoy*, in turn, argued the senators were issuing a self-fulfilling prophesy of the failure of the agrarian reform. "Several Yankee senators and spokesmen for the USDA have made statements about their 'fears' that Cuba will not be able to cover its sugar quota in the US market in 1961 due to 'the effect of the Agrarian Reform,'" the paper reported, "to try to paralyze the activities of the cane farms, affecting next year's sugar production, and then to blame the Agrarian Reform for such a provocative situation."[170] The press explained that mere fears over declines in production could *cause* a failed sugar harvest by inducing panic,

[168] Based on her examination of official US diplomatic records, including memoranda of conversations sent from the Embassy in Havana to the Department of State, Guerra suggests that economic elites' overt opposition to the law did not last long. "By June," she says, "not even the sugar Mill Owners' Association was willing to make public their criticisms of the law" (2012:63). Although Guerra does not explicitly say this, given that her sources here are US official records, it seems plausible that Cuba's economic elite quickly turned to covert opposition and collusion with the United States when their open protestations proved ineffective.
[169] As Dye and Sicotte explain, "From 1934, except for the period of price controls during the Second World War, the US sugar market was quantity-controlled," meaning that a quota system governed "all suppliers, domestic and foreign" (2004:676). The senators' demand to reduce Cuba's quota had precedent, as domestic growers' demands for higher quotas provoked a reduction in Cuba's share in both 1951 and 1956 (ibid.).
[170] *Hoy*. June 6, 1959:7.

which would create scarcity, hunger, and discontent, to try to turn the pueblo against the revolutionary government.[171]

An official diplomatic note, issued by the US State Department on June 11, lent legitimacy to the complaints that the US senators had previously lodged. Pro-government press decried the note as inflammatory, paternalistic, condescending, and reminiscent of the Platt Amendment era.[172] Though the note "admitted both that Cuba had a legal right to expropriate foreign property and that land reform was a step towards social progress," it also insisted on "prompt, adequate, and effective compensation" (Thomas 1971:1223).[173] The concern with indemnification was logical given that five US-owned companies—Punta Alegre Sugar Company, Cuban Land, Atlántica del Golfo, Vertientes-Camagüey, and the United Fruit Company—owned a majority of the land that stood to be expropriated (Arboleya 2000:46). The note declared that Cuba's agrarian reform was indeed a matter of US interest, as US businessmen and consumers would be affected. As a result, the note expressed, the US federal government intended to carry out their own studies about the effects of the agrarian reform, suggested less radical means of achieving the same desired results (that is, increases in agricultural production to fund industrialization), and issued thinly veiled threats.[174]

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[171] *Hoy*. June 7, 1959:1.

[172] Though Berle describes the note as "courteous" (1960:45), the act of sending a diplomatic note, regardless of its actual contents, was a strikingly bold move in and of itself, according to pro-government press. The practice of sending "notes" between the countries was proscribed and had not been a standard diplomatic practice since the early days of the twentieth century (*Bohemia*. June 12, 1959:1). The note, then, reminded Cubans of the indignity they suffered because of US attitudes and actions at the dawn of the first republic and through the signing of the Platt Amendment, which codified the fact that Cuba's own national independence victory was snatched away from them by their "friends" to the north (*Bohemia*. June 21, 1959:sup.16).

[173] In a similar vein, LeoGrande and Kornbluh point out that, "Initially, the US government seemed to take the reform in stride. Bonsal was instructed to tell Castro that the United States recognized Cuba's sovereign right to expropriate land, was 'not opposed to sound land reform,' and would even be willing to provide aid to implement a well-designed program" (2014:22).

[174] *Bohemia*. June 21, 1959:76.

The thin veil covering the threats was lifted just a few days later when Spruille Braden, a prominent US diplomat at the time, called for direct US military intervention in Cuba, saying, "the only way to remedy things in Cuba is by force."[175] Cuba's leaders were outraged, and *Hoy* referred to the note as "an insolent intervention in national affairs."[176] The Cuban public was portrayed in the press as equally unimpressed, evidenced by headlines like, "Support for the agrarian reform and rejection of the Yankee note: clamor in the country; assemblies, rallies, telegrams and letters from workers, campesinos, and students."[177]

While defining the enemies of the agrarian reform and identifying their tactics, leaders' discourse also sought to create distance between the undesirables and the members of the pueblo by pointing out the profound differences between them. *Bohemia,* for example, explicitly stated that "The agrarian reform has divided Cubans into two camps […]. On one side, the vested interests and the occasional reformist theorist who accompanies them. On the other, the great popular masses. That is to say: those who see today and those who look at tomorrow."[178] The people themselves, as reported in the pages of *Hoy*, echoed these sentiments. As one worker put it, "The landowners are some 'henchmen,' those are not Cubans."[179] He went on to say, "We must fight those who fight agrarian reform." In another article, Ignacio Lugones, "a seasoned and resolute worker," identified the enemies, called out their problematic behaviors, and suggested a rather drastic solution. He said, "I support the revolutionary government because it is doing a good and honest work, and the landowners…shoot them! They are the ones who are to blame for our delay."[180] The use of quotations such as these convey the impression that non-elite members

[175] *Hoy*. June 14, 1959:1.
[176] *Hoy*. June 12, 1959:1.
[177] *Hoy*. June 26, 1959:1.
[178] *Bohemia*. June 7, 1959:68.
[179] *Hoy*. July 9, 1959:5.
[180] *Hoy*. July12, 1959:8.

of the pueblo understood—and, furthermore, endorsed—the discursive and even literal separation and elimination of those who opposed the reform specifically and the revolutionary government more generally.

Promoting Action: The Concentración Campesina

Given the increasing prominence of enemy elements and their activities, phase two of the agrarian reform was presented as one of increased mobilization and militarization. The unity of the pueblo had to be leveraged not only to *support* the agrarian reform and the revolutionary government but also to *defend* them. In this section, I will highlight the planning, execution, and effects of the grand "concentración campesina," mentioned in this chapter's opening, as illustrative of the type of mobilization that revolutionary elites encouraged after the signing agrarian reform into law. Castro announced the plans for the concentración campesina on June 21—just after the State Department's insulting diplomatic note and Braden's inflammatory comments—which amplified the militaristic tenor of the moment. In this climate, *Bohemia* called for activated unity. An article also dated to June 21 urged, "We must fight for the agrarian reform as a decisive battle, which must be won by any means. We must be aware of this combat, increase the struggle, [and] increasingly mobilize the people."[181] The concentración campesina would mobilize the public into working collectively for a common goal: a massive event, by and for the members of the revolutionary pueblo, that would demonstrate unity, support, and eagerness to defend that which they held dear.

The concentración campesina may not appear as more than a footnote in most history books dealing with the post-1959 government, but some scholars have noted its symbolic importance. For example, Guerra argues that, "Undoubtedly, the Concentración Campesina

[181] *Bohemia*. June 21, 1959:sup.4.

represented more than just a watershed in the political process of revolution. As an image and an experienced, poignant reality of cross-class, cross-racial interaction, it became a vehicle *for* and a reflection *of* redemption: it was the grand narrative of the Revolution in the flesh" (2012:74). Bustamante makes a similar point, stating that, "the event and its epic imagery suggested that the Revolution was bringing the backward countryside out of its underdeveloped past toward a modern future" (2021:33–34). Furthermore, the press coverage at the time signaled the significance of the gathering. Articles about the concentración saturated the pages of *Bohemia* and *Hoy* for nearly two months.

The concentración was an ambitious, logistically complex spectacle of allegedly unprecedented proportions that involved relocating at least half a million campesinos from across the island to Havana for several days of celebrating, relationship building, and displaying unity for all the world to see. To bring the event to life was a herculean task, so organizers began their work early and involved many groups of people in the process.[182] For example, leaders of the centralized national workers union, the Confederation of Cuban Workers (Confederación de Trabajadores Cubanos, CTC) convened "a mobilizing assembly […] in which a concrete plan of activities will be developed by the federations, by each and every union."[183] Unity and collective action were therefore integral to planning the event itself.

After a month of preparation, the campesinos appeared. Organizers arranged for some of the visitors to arrive in Havana as early as July 19th—a full week before the main events—because it would take several days to transport everyone. More campesinos arrived over the

[182] Interestingly, even celebrities offered their talents to generate interest in and excitement for the event. For example, Celia Cruz, the "Queen of Salsa," lent her voice to a radio jingle promoting the concentración (Guerra 2012:67).
[183] *Hoy*. June 26, 1959:3.

subsequent days, with "5 trains running daily with 20 or 30 cars each" (see Fig. 12)[184] While many visitors traveled to the city via train, bus, and truck, the newspapers also drew attention to a contingent who entered Havana on horseback (see Fig. 13). Commanders Camilo Cienfuegos and Félix Torres led the Agrarian Column No. 3 "Antonio Maceo," consisting of four hundred campesinos on horseback, riding their horses nearly 400 kilometers from Yaguajay (in Sancti Spíritus province, roughly in the middle of the island) all the way to Havana, collecting hundreds more campesinos along the way.[185] According to *Bohemia*, the number of riders eventually reached 10,000 men.[186]

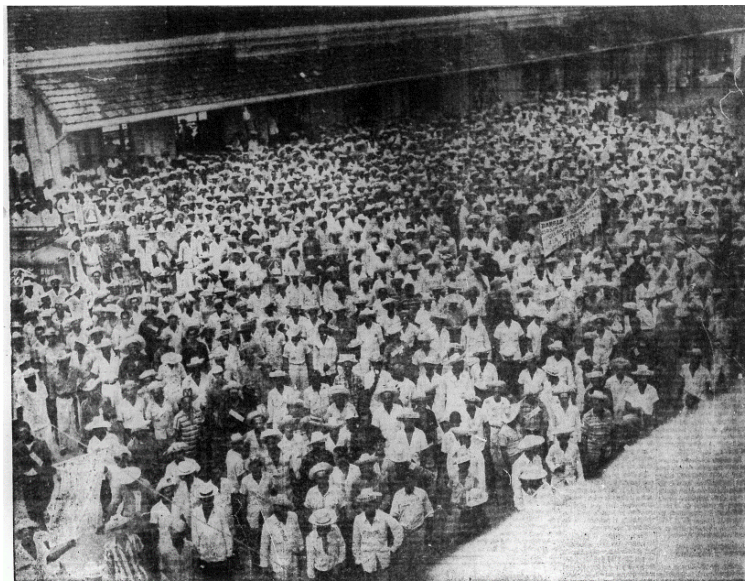


Figure 12. Hundreds of campesinos at the train station in Santiago de Cuba waiting to go to Havana for the concentración campesina

[184] *Bohemia*. August 2, 1959:62. Figure X shows a massive throng of campesinos lined up at the train station of Santiago de Cuba, waiting on the trains to take them to Havana (*Hoy*. July 26, 1959:15).
[185] *Hoy*. July 14, 1959:7.
[186] *Bohemia*. July 26, 1959:sup.14.



Figure 13. Photo depicting Commanders Cienfuegos and Torres leading the Agrarian Column No. 3 on horseback

Once all the visitors had made it to town, the festivities began. Host families and university students showed their guests around town, highlighting zoos, sports fields, movie theaters, and important buildings in the nation's capital.[187] The revolution's leaders provided wholesome entertainment in the form of a baseball game: Bearded Rebels versus the Military Police. *Bohemia* subtly ribbed the Prime Minister, saying that, "Fidel's shots, not as accurate as those from his telescopic sight rifle, could be considered a strike, with a little benevolence" (suggesting that Castro's pitches were not squarely in the strike zone) (see Fig. 14).[188] Finally, July 26th arrived. The morning was consumed by a nearly four-hour-long military parade that culminated with artillery practice and other military exercises, while, by 4:00 pm, the throngs had converged on Civic Plaza (today known as Plaza of the Revolution), constituting "the largest

[187] *Bohemia*. August 2, 1959:54.
[188] Ibid.:88.

crowd in the history of Cuba."[189] Many leaders, including Castro, addressed the massive crowd that evening.[190]



Figure 14. Castro throwing a pitch on behalf of the "Barbudos" team during the concentración campesina festivities

For months now, Cuban audiences had been told over and over, through speeches, photos, interviews, and statistics, just how pitiful the campesinos were. Their suffering defined them. But these face-to-face interactions, just over two months after the agrarian reform was signed into law, allowed urban denizens the opportunity to see the need for campesinos' transformation with their own eyes.[191] In the process of reading about—and now *meeting*—

[189] *Bohemia*. July 28, 1959:11; *Bohemia*. August 2, 1959:85.

[190] In addition to the general atmosphere of excitement that accompanied the concentración campesina, Castro's appearance at the event was noteworthy for another reason as well. In it, he agreed to reclaim his position as Prime Minister, which he had dramatically resigned from not even two weeks prior. On July 16, Castro announced his resignation "due to differences with the president" (Ferrer 2021:331), against whom he then "unleashed a savage political and personal attack" (Farber 2011:40), which prompted Urrutia's resignation as well. Urrutia, it seems, was too moderate for Castro's liking (Brown 2017:31–32). On July 26, Castro agreed to resume his duties as Prime Minister under the new president, Osvaldo Dorticós.

[191] Admittedly, by this point, leaders' progress on implementing the agrarian reform law was still very partial and piecemeal. Educational and cultural campaigns which required little organization or new infrastructure quickly emerged under the auspices of INRA. General infrastructural improvements arrived rapidly as well. Kozameh notes

campesinos, urban Cubans were reminded of just how difficult rural life had been (and would continue to be, absent agrarian reform). Through personal interactions, the pueblo came to see the suffering first-hand rather than through the pages of a newspaper. As *Bohemia* recounted retrospectively, "Now the people of Havana welcomed into their homes the illiterate man, rude and gnarled as the bark of the fields from which he comes and sat him at his table and took him for a ride in his car and put his fraternal hand on his shoulder."[192] City dwellers invited these strangers—people who had likely never left their towns, who had neither electricity nor running water—into their homes, ate with them, conversed with them, and were thus able to understand better the condition of the Cuban campesino and the need for change.

Narratives of campesino deservingness also characterized the discourse surrounding the concentración campesina. As *Bohemia* pointed out, Havana's residents relished meeting campesinos because it was an opportunity to thank them personally for all their hard work and sacrifices, both as agricultural producers and as supporters of Cuba's various independence movements. It was a "happy occasion to shake [their] hands, the hands that produce, that ignite and split the earth, and that so many times in a cup of coffee has returned our forgetfulness."[193] *Hoy* furthermore reminded readers of the campesinos' patriotism and historic service to the nation, referring to campesinos as "the main quarry of the glorious Rebel Army" and "today one of the fundamental pillars on which the Cuban Revolution rests."[194] In recalling the myriad ways

that INRA "built over 10,000 homes and 150 shopping centers, social centers, supermarkets, and sports parks" in the first two years alone (2022:33). But, by June of 1961, only 3.8 million hectares (out of 5.2 that had been marked for nationalization) had come under state control (ibid.34). O'Connor similarly points out that INRA records show that only 32,000 small growers (out of 125,000 eligible) ended up receiving land due to logistical issues like "a shortage of conveniently located land which was formerly the property of the large estates" (1968:185–86).

[192] *Bohemia*. August 9, 1959:71.

[193] *Bohemia*. August 2, 1959:57.

[194] *Hoy*. July 26, 1959:3.

that campesinos historically and contemporarily contributed to the wellbeing of the nation, the pro-government press rallied urban Cubans to fight for the cause of the deserving campesinos.

The days-long festivities of the concentración campesina were an important opportunity to display unity to the nation, to its enemies, and to the world. In fact, the entire month leading up to the event was a vivid example of activated unity and its promotion of internal cohesion, characterized by a flurry of activity that involved people from all walks of life giving their time, energy, and material goods, just as they had previously done in the *Bohemia* donation campaign. Just three days after Castro's speech announcing the idea for the event, the editors of *Hoy* set to work in preparing the people for the types of tasks necessary to pull off such a spectacle and the amount of teamwork that would be involved. A June 24th article explained that everyone—all people, all social sectors, and especially, the city workers—needed to assist with logistics, including coordinating "lodging and food for the duration of the stay of tens of thousands of campesinos in Havana."[195] According to articles in *Bohemia,* all Habaneros (not just working-class ones) were willing and eager to pitch in, as people incessantly wrote to the magazine asking how they could help. Once again, even the children were eager to lend a hand, as was the case with a four-year-old boy who "ran away from home and [later] appeared with a policeman" while trying to deliver his twenty-nine cents to the *Bohemia* offices to help with the event preparations.[196] People offered their homes—both as individuals and through their workplace organizations—and other goods to their campesino brethren.[197] As the event neared, "For five days, covering more than 135 continuous hours, the people paraded through, contributing presents—clothes, food, money—taken from their own poverty and offering a show of genuine

[195] *Hoy*. June 24, 1959:3.
[196] *Bohemia*. August 2, 1959:65.
[197] *Bohemia*. June 28, 1959:88; *Hoy*. June 28, 1959:11. *Hoy*. July 12, 1959:11.

humanism, without fanfare."[198] In all, the urban Cubans were quite generous toward their less privileged rural counterparts and were willing to make personal sacrifices for the sake of bringing them to the capital to celebrate collectively.

The concentración campesina itself was designed to communicate many different messages, including the country's support for the agrarian reform, the general strength of the revolutionary government, and the rejection of enemy elements both internally and externally. The main goal, however, seems to have been presenting a united front. At a speech in Santa Clara, when Castro first introduced the idea of the event to the people, he explained that it would be a "demonstration before the whole world, that the Cuban Revolution has the invincible support of the campesinos, the workers, the students, the professionals, and all of those citizens who have the interests of the homeland above pettier personal interests" (Castro 1959k). He relied again on the rhetorical construction of gesturing toward different groups only to then subsume them under the united banner of the "homeland." Furthermore, according to Castro, the pueblo's unity was key to self-defense. The concentración would "demonstrate the strength of our pueblo," he said in the same speech. But it also showed "proof" that the campesinos who gathered in Havana to parade with their machetes did so "to defend the Revolution from traitors and enemies of the homeland, to defend the Revolution from the reactionaries, [and] to defend the Revolution from counterrevolutionary activities" (Castro 1959l).

Key to the unity displayed through the concentración campesino was the erasure of regionalist divisions and the promotion of city-countryside unity. The concentración was described as "the communion of the city and the countryside," "the total identification and integration of the country," and "the embrace that marks the symbol of the union between the

[198] *Bohemia*. August 2, 1959:65.

countryside and the city" (Castro 1959k).[199] An article from *Hoy* commented that "The workers welcome their brother farm workers with fraternity and tender affection, lodge them in their unions and in their homes, and try to make them feel all their solidarity."[200] Seemingly in one fell swoop, the concentración campesina meant that "one of the greatest weaknesses and misfortunes of our country, the separation between the city and the countryside, was overcome in Cuba."[201] Painting a rosy picture of the exchanges, *Bohemia* further maintained that "each habanero made a friend of each guajiro."[202]

In all, the pro-government press surrounding this event illustrated how the four lines of articulation permeated its planning and execution. The portrayal of campesinos as needing and deserving transformation took on new meaning as Cubans of the capital city saw signs of rural suffering with their own eyes. The collective celebration emphasized unity and built internal cohesion by bringing together people from all walks of life and corners of the island. Furthermore, the preparations for the event promoted activated unity as Habaneros cooperated to prepare the capital city for its visitors. Finally, the event was yet another opportunity to draw distinctions between the supporters and opponents of the revolution. One the one side, as an article from *Hoy* put it, stood the revolutionary pueblo. They were represented by "the half million raised machetes, the half million Havanans gathered around the raised machetes," who "have given a formidable boost to the revolution, to the march of the revolution forward."[203] On the other side, the article continued, were the enemies. For them, "the formidable concentración has been a tremendous defeat for the imperialists and their lackeys, for the counterrevolution, for

[199] *Bohemia*. July 26, 1959:74; *Bohemia*. June 28, 1959:88.
[200] *Hoy*. July 26, 1959:1.
[201] *Bohemia*. August 2, 1959:46.
[202] Ibid.:56.
[203] *Hoy*. July 29, 1959:5.

the enemies of the people." As much as the jubilant event united Cubans of all stripes, it also homogenized, separated, and excluded those who had shown disagreement with the new regime. In these ways, the concentración campesina was the symbolic culmination of the post-signing period of the agrarian reform episode.

Conclusion

During the agrarian reform episode, as was the case throughout 1959, leaders' primary articulatory emphasis was on internal subject formation. However, the prevalence of articulation-related discourse intensified during the months before and after the May 17th signing of the agrarian reform law and manifested in ways that were specific to the agrarian reform process itself. Across these months, leaders' discourse related to shaping new subjects and promoting solidarity displayed three distinct trends: defining the campesino, emphasizing unity, and differentiating via juxtaposition. Leaders furthermore leveraged policies, campaigns, and programs to shape behaviors, practices, and patterns of interaction, in a fourth articulatory pattern, promoting unity through collective action. Here I briefly summarize each tendency.

Defining the campesino: Revolutionary discourse in early 1959 defined the campesinos by portraying them as needing and deserving transformation. In theory, the new government's policies and projects would transform the campesino, thereby enabling their incorporation into the pueblo cubano. Owing to striking disparities between the city and countryside in terms of life chances, choices, and outcomes, "the campesino population was a victim of backwardness, parasitism, and malnutrition."[204] The pro-government press relied on essays, photos, and statistics

[204] *Bohemia*. March 8, 1959:94. As Mesa-Lago points out, national statistics from the late 1950s positioned Cuba quite favorably compared to other Latin American countries in terms of literacy (fourth-highest in the region), social benefits for the elderly and infirm (second-highest), and morbidity index (second-lowest), for example (1971:280). These aggregate figures, however, belied severe regional disparities, with wealth and wellness indicators in rural areas being "very much below the national averages" (ibid.).

to convey the pitiful state of the Cuban campesino to its urban readership. These outlets also assigned blame for the campesinos' conditions by pointing to the abuses of large landowners: "how they exploit the campesino, how they keep in him in an incredible cultural backwardness, how they rape his daughter."[205] Moreover, the campesinos were deserving of this proposed transformation thanks to the pivotal role that they played in historical armed struggles for Cuba's freedom and sovereignty. Given their desirable traits—humble, hard-working, self-sacrificing—the campesinos could be saved, humanized, modernized, and, finally, articulated into the revolutionary pueblo.

Emphasizing unity: In emphasizing unity, leaders' overarching narrative was that Cuban society was composed of many different subgroups but that social distinctions based on class, race, gender, age, or regional origin were now secondary or even completely irrelevant. Castro and other regime leaders argued that Cuban society was greater than the sum of its parts and encouraged everyone to place collective wellbeing over the needs and interests of specific social subsectors in the name of unity and solidarity (Castro 1959i). Unity was key not only for the success of the government's projects and initiatives, like the agrarian reform, but also for its very survival. A fractured pueblo was easy prey for enemy forces. As Castro warned, "when United Fruit expeditions come here and find a weak pueblo, a skeptical pueblo, whose faith has been killed, divided, and confused, consequently they will return here to reign in our homeland" (Castro 1959q). Leaders' discourse urged average citizens to conceptualize unity as a powerful weapon in defense of themselves and their homeland. As *Hoy* succinctly put it, "Unity is the best means to defend and advance the Revolution."[206]

[205] *Bohemia*. February 15, 1959:59.
[206] *Hoy*. April 25, 1959:1.

Differentiating via Juxtaposition: As the agrarian reform law was in its developmental stage, political divisions began to emerge, and a nascent counterrevolutionary movement began to take shape, prompting leaders to respond. To further reinforce national unity and to cleave off undesirable elements, both Castro and the print media relied on juxtapositions to discursively distinguish and distance the enemies from the pueblo. This approach had multiple components. First, leaders discursively homogenized the government's enemies. Undesirables' shared traits of self-interest, greed, exploitation, and willingness to sabotage the new government's projects eclipsed the fine-grained distinctions that existed among them. For example, in his speech at the university in Santa Clara, Castro named several specific subgroups of people—including landlords, egoists, politicians, the privileged, the opportunists, the traitors, and the country-sellers—but then noted they were all bound together by their desire to "continue enjoying all their privileges while the pueblo suffers" (Castro 1959s). Once leaders discursively bound the enemies into a single, monolithic group, they then drew attention to the differences between that group and the true revolutionary pueblo. This distancing is exemplified in an excerpt from *Hoy*'s analysis of a recent Castro speech:

> Fidel Castro went to the very center of Cuban history when he assured last night that the struggles of our country had always been between 'Cubans' and 'non-Cubans.' […] It is time to align the ranks of the patriots for a battle that is now being waged by legal and democratic means but that the 'non-Cubans,' outside and inside, insist on turning again into a fight, conspiracy, and even war, even though they know beforehand that they will be frustrated.[207]

This process of bundling and differentiating their enemies facilitated leaders' subsequent externalization of this group.

Activated unity: The government's articulatory discourse was, in many instances prescriptive and aspirational rather than descriptive of Cuban society at that moment. But active

[207] *Hoy*. March 18, 1959:1;3.

participation in the regime's programs, policies, and projects aimed to bring the strong national unity to fruition. Collective action would solidify collective identity. *Hoy*, for example, explicitly stated that action—like participating in the volunteer brigades responsible for assisting in the implementation of the agrarian reform—would unite the people. The article explained, "In this way we will be fulfilling the integration of our nation, the greater understanding and brotherhood between Cubans, between men from the city and the countryside, between whites and blacks, between men and women of all sectors and social classes, through disinterested, altruistic, and spontaneously joyful activity."[208] The newspapers and magazines clarified that collective identity hinged not just on unity but on an *activated* unity. They called on Cubans to fight, work, and produce together, transcending subgroup boundaries. And just as the traits and character of the pueblo were juxtaposed against those of the non-pueblo, so were their actions. By pointing out the types of activities that enemy elements engaged in, Castro underscored how different they were from true members of the pueblo, in thought and in deed.

Both before and after the signing of the agrarian reform law, a culminating campaign or project, directly related to the agrarian reform efforts, served to convert the unity described in discourse into concrete practices that would reinforce the revolutionary identity leaders sought to articulate as a replacement to the broad anti-Batista coalition that had welcomed their ascent to power at the beginning of the year. In the post-signing months, however, concrete activities by US actors (both governmental and private), spurred a reorientation of the articulatory project to address *both* internal coherence and external differentiation.[209] Thus, whereas the *Bohemia*

[208] *Hoy*. April 4, 1959:4.

[209] Although likely unbeknownst to the revolutionary leaders at the time, even before Castro's celebratory speech at the concentración campesina, upper-level security personnel were already investigating the feasibility of removing Castro from power. As LeoGrande points out, "senior US officials reached that conclusion informally in June 1959 and President Eisenhower made it official in November" (2017:226). Similarly, García Luis refers to the signing of the agrarian reform law as "the event that led the US Government to use any and all means to try to overthrow the new power in Cuba" (2001:23).

fundraising campaign primarily translated the top-down identity work into concrete actions that would develop subjects through engaging in practices, the concentración campesina privileged national unity but did so for both domestic and foreign audiences.

While the radical nature of the government's 1959 agrarian reform law alienated many economic elites and certain sectors of the agrarian economy, this policy initiative nevertheless contributed to the consolidation of the regime's power on several fronts. On the one hand, the process of designing, implementing, and celebrating the agrarian reform brought broad swaths of the population together, a meaningful step toward rebuilding a positive coalition in the vacuum left by the disintegration of the negative (anti-Batista) one. Through pro-government discourse, the campesinos, a sizeable proportion of the national population, were humanized and brought to the fore of urban dwellers' consciousness, alerting the public of the need to transform and modernize them. Additionally, along with the agrarian reform came collective projects, shared goals, and concrete steps to achieving them, which promoted activated unity. On the other hand, the agrarian reform—a policy that regime leaders framed as an integral first step toward growing the national economy and achieving true sovereignty—highlighted divisions and disagreements within society. As Brown puts it, the land reform "widened the breach between the moderates who had supported the fight against Batista and the [26th of July] leaders who had fought to bring about his downfall" (2017:69). Through their words and actions, leaders of the revolutionary government homogenized and alienated those who opposed the reform. Discourse that labelled voicing discontentment as anti-pueblo activity paved the way for pushing the revolution's "enemies"—however defined—further away from the "true" Cuban people. Ultimately, whereas the agrarian reform prioritized campesino's incorporation into the body politic, the next could-be crisis, the Bay of Pigs invasion, precipitated the development of an outward gaze in which

defining the Cuban pueblo by differentiating it from its enemies took precedence over explicit efforts to promote internal cohesion.

Chapter 2: Heroes versus Mercenaries: Defining Self and Enemy in the 1961 Bay of Pigs Invasion

Just shy of the second anniversary of the concentración campesino, on May 1, 1961, hundreds of thousands—if not millions—of Cubans once again crammed into Havana's Civic Plaza, stood shoulder-to-shoulder, and waited for Castro to speak.[210] It had only been two weeks since Castro's last in-person address to the nation, but much had changed in the interim. The day after the prime minister's previous appearance, a speech given on April 16 just outside the city's large Colón Cemetery, roughly 1,400 Cuban exiles, trained and backed by the United States, invaded Cuba's southern coast with the hope of toppling Castro's government. It took not even three days for Cuba's standing army and its auxiliary militia forces to handily overpower the invading brigade, the vast majority of whom surrendered as prisoners.[211] As countless historians have pointed out, that the Cuban army and militia dealt the invaders a crushing defeat is wholly unsurprising. But, in addition to being a resounding military victory for the Cuban side, the Bay of Pigs episode also signified important political and ideological victories for the still-consolidating revolutionary government.

Perhaps to an even greater degree than the agrarian reform episode, the Bay of Pigs could-be crisis constituted an existential threat to the revolutionary government, one that could

[210] Although I did not encounter any references to attendance statistics in the primary sources, historian Michael Bustamante, citing the weekly periodical *Obra Revolucionaria*, notes that two million residents were either actively participating in the festivities of that day or were present observing them (2021:103). As he points out, if that statistic is correct, an entire third of the country's entire population was present for the parades and speeches on that day.

[211] Of the approximately 1,400 members of Brigade 2506, about 200 were killed in the fighting, leaving another 1,200 who were taken as prisoners after surrendering to Cuban troops (García Luis 2001:71).

have ended very differently. Certainly, those who orchestrated the attack and participated in it expected as much.[212] Based on intelligence from anti-Castro informers, the CIA seemed to believe that Cubans on the island were ripe for counterrevolution.[213] Even a modest invasion, they wagered, would be sufficient to rally the discontented against Castro and remove him from power. Of course, history proved otherwise; the attackers were quickly intercepted and overpowered, US air support failed to materialize, and the supposed masses of counterrevolutionaries never appeared.[214] But this outcome was far from certain. Given these circumstances, did the revolutionary leaders opt to amplify or scale back their articulatory project during this time? How did the specific features of the Bay of Pigs crisis imprint onto the articulation happening during the surrounding months?

Consistent with my findings related to the agrarian reform, my analysis of Castro's speeches for the entirety of 1961 suggested a notable intensification of the articulatory project during the time of the Bay of Pigs crisis, which I define as extending from December 31, 1960 (when Castro first instituted a state of alert against imminent US military intervention) through May 1, 1961 (when the invaders were behind bars and the public was celebrating Victory-Labor Day in Civic Plaza). In contrast to the agrarian reform, however, I found that the increases in discursive articulation across the crisis period were generally more externally oriented than internally directed. This pattern could be, in part, a byproduct of existing articulatory efforts across the first two years of the government's time in power. The prioritization of external

[212] As Ferrer describes it, "Their plan was to secure a beachhead, spur internal resistance movements, and spark a general rebellion. Three days in, a new provisional government for Cuba was set to arrive from Miami. Once that happened, the brigade would proceed north from the beachhead, turn left, and march on Havana" (2021:355).
[213] As Brown notes, "The biggest failure of the Bay of Pigs, according to the CIA inspector general, arose 'from operators' failure to secure accurate intelligence'" (2017:118), meaning that CIA informants on the ground (or with connections to those on the ground) seem to have based their intelligence reports more on wishful thinking than on actual measures of public opinion.
[214] On the point of air support, Kennedy had authorized an airstrike prior to the land invasion but, "mindful of international public opinion," he "called off a second strike" (Brown 2017:87).

orientation could have merely been the result of leaders' confidence that Cubans already understood who they were, in a revolutionary sense, and what they were supposed to be doing. However, given the differences between the nature of the "enemies" of the agrarian reform and the "enemies" of the Bay of Pigs crisis, it is unsurprising that revolutionary leaders took great pains to identify and characterize this new type of enemy and to instruct the people on how to respond. Even in moments of intense focus on internal unity and solidarity—including the celebration of victory and the commemoration of martyrs that characterized the Victory-Labor Day speeches of May 1—the contrast against the enemies of the Cuban people was ever present, evident, for example, in the ample discussion of the imprisoned invaders. The continued and common use of juxtaposition simultaneously deepened the gulf between the "true" Cubans and their enemies while clarifying the desired traits, roles, and responsibilities of the revolutionary Cuban people.

In the remainder of this chapter, I will first present an overview of the government's project of ideological consolidation in the time since the agrarian reform. I will then outline briefly the three phases of the Bay of Pigs crisis, pointing out the general trends that characterized each period. Finally, I will trace the development of the articulatory project in each phase, unpacking the general trends I identified and delving into key examples from each period.

Ideological Consolidation Since the Agrarian Reform

Castro's discourse from the months surrounding the Bay of Pigs invasion included many positive assessments of how far the leaders' project of ideological consolidation had come over the course of the last two years. He admitted that, at first, the public seemed more grateful for the ousting of Batista than they were concerned with the revolutions' ideological missions. "The leaders of the Revolution," Castro argued, "had great support from the people, the Revolution

itself had an extraordinary sympathy, for what it had taken away, not for what it had done" (Castro 1961h). The seeming ideological apathy of the people could have been simply a reflection of how overwhelmed they were after several exhausting years of violence and uncertainty. But it also stemmed from the fact that leaders themselves did not, at that point, have a wholly cohesive shared vision for the shape that their new, revolutionary worldview would take. Castro explicitly stated, referencing the early post-victory months, that, "ideologically, the Revolution was weak" (ibid.). However, over the span of two years, according to Castro, the people's revolutionary consciousness had grown by leaps and bounds. Noting that "things that today are indisputable truths for us, were ignored until very recently," Castro went on to point out several terms—colonialism, imperialism, exploitation, and others—that previously were poorly understood by most Cubans (Castro 1961d). In addition to Castro's proclamations of ideological progress, however, structural changes in the fields of the media and education lend some credence to the leader's claims that ideological consolidation had become a priority for the revolutionary government.

By May of 1960, print media had fallen under the exclusive control of the government. Tolerance, both official and popular, for anti-government rhetoric in Cuban newspapers and magazines waned toward the end of 1959, when attacks on newspaper offices became more common, with supporters of the new government gathering to burn papers that included criticisms of the new government. Newspapers responded to these pressures from above and below by adding "coletillas," or "little tails," to the end of any article that negatively portrayed the government or its leaders (Farber 2011:14).[215] These addenda aimed to discredit unfavorable

[215] As Lent explains, the practice of printing coletillas was initiated by the Journalists' Guild of Havana in the form of a resolution that "allowed printers to edit, as well as to set type" (1989:261). Other papers, including *El País*, "avoided having to print coletillas by not publishing international wire stories at all" (Ferrer 2021:340).

coverage, often from foreign wire services like the Associate Press, by impugning the journalistic integrity of their authors (Guerra 2012:107).[216] In February of 1960, the state seized two widely read conservative papers, *El Mundo* and *El País*. But the battle over the independent press came to a definitive end in May when *Diario de la Marina*, the only remaining conservative and state-critical paper, and even its left-leaning rival, *Prensa Libre*, were shuttered in short succession (Guerra 2012:132; Nelson 1972; Ripoll 1987:96–100). Roughly one year later, speaking at the ceremony honoring the pro-government paper *Revolución* for the international journalism prize it was recently awarded, Castro connected the government's command of the press to its project of ideological consolidation. Describing papers like *Revolución*, he explained, "being in the hands of the Revolution all the means of spreading ideas, we can put all that formidable force at the service of the formation of a strong revolutionary consciousness in the people" (Castro 1961h). However, translating this print media monopoly into an effective mechanism of ideological consolidation hinged on people's ability to read.

Illiteracy was an unfortunate byproduct of Cuba's colonial and neocolonial past, as well as a barrier to current educational efforts. Leaders therefore prioritized its eradication, evidenced most clearly by the 1961 Literacy Campaign, which was in its earliest stages during the months surrounding the Bay of Pigs invasion.[217] In April of 1959, Castro established the "Literacy Commission" within the Ministry of Education, which aimed to understand the scope of the problem of illiteracy and evaluate possible solutions (Fagen 1969:38). According to the most recent census (1953), approximately 75% of all Cubans emerged from the school system "either

[216] One example of a coletilla postscript Lent offers was: "The contents of this article do not conform to the truth, nor to the most elemental journalistic ethics" (1989:261).
[217] Though the Literacy Campaign is not a focal point of this chapter (and indeed extended several months beyond the conclusion of the period of analysis presented here), it did intersect with the Bay of Pigs mobilizations in important ways and will therefore be discussed at different points below.

illiterate or at best semieducated," given that 25% had never attended any school and another 50% had dropped out by sixth grade (ibid.:35). Castro announced a nation-wide mobilization campaign to educate the illiterate population with volunteer teachers in August of 1960. Planning began in the fall of that year, while pilot programs were implemented starting in January of 1961. Both the materials and methods used in the campaign promoted ideological consolidation. As Guerra points out, "The manuals used to teach pedagogical methods to brigadistas [literacy volunteer teachers] relied on a morality-driven interpretation of Cuban history" that highlighted "a before-and-after logic" (2012:165). Furthermore, the structure of embedding volunteer teachers in their target communities for long stretches "enabled participants to transcend class, cultural, and racial differences and create bonds based on a unique experience" (ibid.: 164). Through both its process and stated objectives, the Literacy Campaign thus played an important role in the revolutionary government's ideological consolidation.

Periodization of the Bay of Pigs Crisis

Not even three days passed between the time that the first exile invader stepped foot onto Cuban land and Castro's declaration of victory. However, the crisis moment that eventually culminated in the Bay of Pigs invasion spanned a much longer time horizon. Based on my analysis of primary data and secondary sources, I identified three distinct phases of the Bay of Pigs could-be crisis, beginning with the speech in which Castro first declared a state of emergency in response to an imminent threat of US-sponsored military intervention (December 31, 1960) and ending with the massive popular celebrations of Labor-Victory Day on May 1, 1961. In this section, I will present my rationale for dividing this roughly five-month-long period into three distinct phases of articulation, before later delving into the general articulatory patterns that characterized each one.

Phase one—December 31, 1960, through January 19, 1961—was a period of feverish domestic mobilization, both military and civilian, in the face of what leaders and the public believed to be a *truly* imminent military intervention instigated by the United States. By this, I mean that Castro publicly predicted that the US military would attack Cuba before President Eisenhower left office on January 20, 1961. Why the certainty and specificity? Over the course of the previous two years, Cuban leaders' decisions continually, and increasingly, drew ire from their northern neighbors, creating a generalized sentiment that the United States was nearing the point of military intervention against Cuba to halt what it viewed as the spread of communism in Latin America.[218] As discussed previously, US leaders were disappointed over several aspects of the Cuban government's landmark agrarian reform as well as its blossoming allyship with the Soviet Union. However, the vague but persistent threat of intervention largely operated in the background of daily life, with US leadership seemingly unwilling to actually back up their aggressive rhetoric with concrete actions. That changed, however, in late December of 1960. Cuban officials announced that they had learned of a covert US plan to try to convince other Latin American governments that immediate armed intervention in Cuba was necessary because the revolutionary government was allegedly equipping itself with offensive weaponry. As Castro explained to the Cuban public in a speech on New Year's Eve,

> We received information from a very reliable source informing us that the Central Intelligence Agency, directed by Allen Dulles, had hatched a plan to provoke our country, […] to create a fictitious incident, […] and in any case to carry out the plan which consisted of using this provoked incident to propitiate a military intervention of the imperialist forces in the national territory. (Castro 1960)

[218] As US diplomat Spruille Braden's comments surrounding the agrarian reform signaled, at least some people in positions of power and influence had been considering armed intervention in Cuba within just a few months of the revolutionary government's ascent to power (see Chapter 1).

In the remainder of his speech, Castro denounced the US plan, called global public opinion to rally to Cuba's defense, and put Cubans into a state of alert and ready themselves to repel the attack. Not even one week later, Eisenhower announced his decision to sever diplomatic relations with Cuba. The first phase of the crisis—in which leaders defined their internal and external enemies in ways designed to rally popular participation in both national defense and production—ended when the US transition of presidential power passed without incident.

Because Eisenhower left office without initiating an attack against Cuba, on January 20, Castro called for the demobilization of the excess troops and militia who had been waiting in the trenches for the invaders. This speech marked the beginning of the second phase of the crisis, which lasted until April 14. During this period, particularly in late March and early April, there was an increase in the number of domestic acts of sabotage and terrorism, as reported in the print media. Sabotage against centers of agricultural and industrial production took place during the first period, but they continued and were also now accompanied by an increase in terroristic acts against civilian targets, like schools and shops. At this same time, during these months of watching and waiting, Castro and other revolutionary leaders continued messaging the importance of defense and production but also pushed for increased mobilization in other areas of life and toward other revolutionary goals, like the Literacy Campaign. Revolutionary discourse emphasized that, while aggressive acts perpetrated by internal and external enemies were unlikely to taper off any time soon, the progress of the revolution and its myriad projects could not afford to be stalled. Abandoning business-as-usual activities would merely play into the hands of the enemies.

On April 15, as Cubans were going about their daily lives and revolutionary tasks, business as usual was abruptly and violently interrupted by series of bombings that took the

country by surprise. At 6 a.m., three different sites across the island were simultaneously bombed by aircraft bearing Cuban markings. So began the interlude of military entanglement that separates the second and third phases of the government's articulatory project surrounding the Bay of Pigs invasion. On April 16, Castro gave a rousing speech at the funeral for the victims of those bombings in which he forcefully condemned the United States for their alleged hand in the attacks. Early the following morning, the first members of Brigade 2506—the invading force, composed primarily of Miami-based Cuban exiles, who were trained in Guatemala and materially supported by the United States (Brown 2017:86)—made landfall in the Bay of Pigs area, about 130 miles southwest from Havana, on the island's southern coast. Fighting continued, but, by 5:30 p.m. on April 19, Castro declared victory after most invaders (more than 85%) surrendered to the Cuban forces.[219] Given the emergency nature of this brief period, discursive articulation took a back seat to more expressly pragmatic concerns.[220] The primary goal of leadership during this short interlude was to communicate instructions about mobilization and to keep the public informed as to the progress of the Revolutionary Armed Forces and the National Revolutionary Militias as they battled their attackers.

Once the dust—and sand—settled, the third and final phase of the could-be crisis began. As soon as the immediate military threat passed, Cuba's leaders quickly set about both celebrating the crushing defeat of the invading forces (which also entailed mourning those who died in the entanglement) and characterizing the invaders through a series of spectacular public interviews to establish who the prisoners were, their social identities, their motives for participating, and the role the United States played in the whole affair. Both a handful of

[219] *Hoy*. April 20, 1961:1.
[220] I base this assertion in part on the absence of Castro speeches during this time. However, while he did not give any formal addresses to the pueblo, he did nevertheless issue updates via communiques that were shared via print media, some of which I analyze below.

influential, pro-government journalists and Castro himself spent numerous hours over the course of several days talking to the prisoners in front the national audience who viewed these proceedings both in-person and through their television sets. These two trends—the celebration of the victors and the inquisition of the vanquished—mirrored the clear juxtaposition that government leaders sought to firmly establish between the *true* Cuban people and their enemies, Cuban or otherwise. This stark contrast served as the guiding philosophy that motivated and pervaded the Labor-Victory celebrations of May 1, in which existing plans for a monumental public celebration of International Workers' Day were fused with victory parades and speeches reflective of the recent events.

The memory of the invasion remained an important part of the government's articulatory project for many years to come. The trials, sentencing, and negotiations over prisoners dragged on for more than a year, and leaders' discourse continued referencing the crisis long after the invaders had been returned to the United States. As it had during the thick of the crisis, the Bay of Pigs invasion endured as a discursive shorthand for the enemies' duplicitousness, cowardice, and determination to undo the progress of the revolution. At the same time, it offered seemingly irrefutable evidence of Cubans' bravery, willingness to sacrifice, and proven ability to defend themselves and their new way of life from those wishing nothing more than to destroy it.

Phase One: Feverish Mobilization and Imminent Attack

As was becoming customary, Castro marked the second anniversary of the revolution's victory over Batista with a lengthy speech on January 2, 1961. Given the acute threat of US invasion, on this occasion, he took his address to the nation as an opportunity to rally the Cuban people to the ready. Introducing a theme of resilience that would permeate all three phases of the invasion period (as well as the subsequent could-be crises I discuss in Chapters 3 and 4), Castro

urged the audience to ready themselves to act with conviction rather than shrink away in fear. He said, “Therefore, let us wait confident and alert, let us wait serene and firm. The danger that looms over the homeland does not intimidate but rather inflames the pueblo. Let us wait confidently, for any eventuality; as criminal and treacherous as the blow may be, it does not intimidate us” (Castro 1961i). From the time Castro issued the state of alert on New Year’s Eve to the day of Kennedy’s inauguration when he demobilized the militias, most of the regime discourse—whether oriented internally or externally, toward identity or toward actions—was organized around the themes of defense and production. Together, defense and production assured victory.

Identifying and Characterizing the Enemy

“Defense,” perhaps unsurprisingly, was not used only in a literal sense. In addition to physically combatting any enemy attacks that might arise, defense also served a broader purpose of ensuring the government’s survival, preserving the gains of the revolution, and preventing Cuba from backsliding into neocolonial subjugation. Seemingly hoping to ensure that the broad public understood the true scope and the high stakes of defense, Castro and the revolutionary print media took great pains to identify who the enemies were, explain the various strategies of aggression they would deploy, and assign specific tasks to different subsectors of society. This was true of both internal and external enemies.

It could have been difficult for the “true” Cubans of the revolutionary pueblo to identify these internal enemies—that is, those Cubans, still living in Cuba, who wished and plotted for the downfall of the new government—given that they were hiding in plain sight as coworkers,

neighbors, and even friends or family.[221] Accordingly, a great deal of leaders' discourse at this time focused on defining these internal enemies by their subgroup affiliations, associated traits, and actions that their attitudes and characteristics inspired. In the now familiar strategy of using subgroup listings to point out similarities across difference, Castro noted that many people who held specific occupations under the Batista regime had since made the transition to enemy status. The "henchmen, confidants, politicians, botelleros, men who lived on vice, or gambling, or drug trafficking, or smuggling, or crime, or because they rented their arm to the powerful to defend their privileges," Castro pointed out, were the social elements that now constituted the counterrevolution (Castro 1961i).[222] Castro also imputed certain values onto this class of pre-revolutionary occupations, arguing that the people who constituted these categories were "cowardly," "vicious," and "miserable" (ibid.). While these occupational categories offered a somewhat "objective" way of sorting different types of enemies into the same overarching anti-pueblo camp, leaders also developed distinct, ideologically laden codes to refer to these groups of people, terms that were anchored in other shared values.

[221] While the most official discourse from this time focuses on characterizing the enemies and illustrating how their actions reflect their attitudes and beliefs, secondary sources offer some clues as to who these individuals actually were. As Brown points out, the domestic counterrevolutionary camp consisted of "two branches," an urban one, composed mainly of middle-class youth and representatives of the Catholic Church, and a rural one, consisting of "traditional sectors of rural society" (2017:104–5). Here, the focus is on the urban anti-Castro actors. I use the term "actors" because it remains unclear the extent to which domestic opposition was formally organized, in contrast to the exile-based reactionaries, who did form recognizable, named groups (Swanger 2015:237). In addition to the lack of clarity surrounding the structure of domestic Castro resistance, it is also difficult to determine how much of this movement was grassroots versus astroturf. As Sweig points out, "There is no doubt, and now plenty of documentation and oral history records prove, that the Central Intelligence Agency and the White House were absolutely determined to get rid of the Cuban Revolution" (2016:47). From the perspective of those involved who have spoken and written about their experiences, none "have made efforts to conceal the fact of CIA assistance" (Swanger 2015:216). Independent of the role of CIA influence or material assistance, however, the fact remains that "the revolutionaries' determination to completely remake Cuban society was bound to draw criticism and resistance in some corners of Cuba" (Sweig 2016:48).

[222] "Botelleros" were "individuals who drew salaries only to snitch on fellow workers" (Casey 2014).

Castro used "parasites" and "worms" most frequently to refer to the internal enemies of the revolution and the pueblo.[223] Parasites and worms were labeled as such for their aversion to hard work and willingness to exploit others in their quest for wealth and power. Given that they had been able to successfully thrive off exploitation in the pre-revolutionary period, the parasites, according to government leaders, were unified as a group by their desire to return to the Batista-era status quo. Speaking of the parasites, Castro argued, "they want to destroy the work of the revolution and want to destroy the example of the revolution. […] And while we work to make light, they work to plunge us into darkness, slavery, and backwardness" (Castro 1960). In a relational sense, just as parasites' true desire of topping Castro's government brought them together behind a common purpose, it simultaneously distinguished them from the revolutionary pueblo. Castro characterized the struggle between the internal enemies and the true Cuban people as "the forces of the past and the forces of the future; those who are attached to yesterday and those who are attached to tomorrow" (Castro 1961i).[224] With these words, Castro made clear that the victory of the counterrevolution would mean not only a change of government but also the loss of a new way of life, one that benefitted a large proportion of Cubans.

[223] Castro and the pro-government press' use of terms like "worms" ("gusanos") has received a fair amount of scholarly attention over the years. Brown notes that the first use of the term to describe a high-profile individual was the case of Major Pedro Luis Díaz Lanz. Díaz Lanz was a M26-7 member whom leaders appointed to head the air force at the beginning of 1959. However, he soon soured on Castro's leadership, alarmed at "the sudden presence of communists in the military academies," resigned, and left to live in the United States (Brown 2017:29–30). As Guerra points out, however, the term's roots stretch further back into history. Independence hero José Martí, she explains, applied this term to disparage Cubans who opposed independence from Spain (2012:100).

[224] Not all critics of Castro's government passively accepted these characterizations. Members of one prominent exile group, the Revolutionary Democratic Front (Frente Democrático Revolucionario), vehemently denied desiring to return to the pre-1959 status quo, citing their support of many aspects of agrarian reform (Guerra 2023:414). Furthermore, through leaflets that they dropped from a plane in Matanzas City, they rejected discourse that equated all anti-Castro critics to pro-Batista shills. The text of the pamphlet read, "Who fights against Fidel? Castro says that it is the Batistianos. Lie! The Batistianos are lying on beaches in Florida, inactive and impotent. We proclaim that we fought against Batista and we will keep fighting against the traitors of the Revolution [referring to Castro and his colleagues]" (ibid.:60).

Whereas Castro's discourse tended to identify and define the internal enemies based on their shared group affiliations, values, characteristics, and goals, the revolutionary press focused instead on the concrete actions that the counterrevolutionaries took in pursuit of these goals. Primarily, this meant sabotage of production and attacks on civilian targets. Initially, the anti-Castro Cubans who remained on the island sought to disrupt the revolution's plans through a sustained series of attacks on economic targets. As time wore on, acts intending to disrupt production and economic growth stalled, but attacks on civilian targets like stores and schools began to emerge. One particularly noteworthy example was the bombing of El Flogar, a store with a restaurant inside that was attacked during peak lunch hour. As *Bohemia* recounted, "at 12:50 p.m., when a large and peaceful clientele was having lunch in the cafeteria," the explosion of a "high-powered bomb" that had been placed in the restroom was detonated and "hit men, women, and children with its shrapnel, leaving more than twenty wounded."[225] The article went on to add that some of the victims were in critical condition, "about to lose their lives as this note [was] written." In addition to provoking popular outrage (see Fig. 15), press coverage of incidents such as these illustrated to the people how the internal enemies of the revolutionary government had transitioned from counterrevolutionary thoughts to terroristic acts.[226]

Government leadership took a harsh stance against such conduct. In the aftermath of the El Flogar bombing, Castro introduced a new law, the Law for the Repression of Terroristic Activities, that permitted capital punishment for terroristic and counterrevolutionary activities, including "not only placing bombs, but having explosives of any kind in their possession" as

[225] *Bohemia*. January 1, 1961:56.
[226] *Hoy*. January 8, 1961:51. The photo—showing a densely packed crowd holding a banner that spans almost a dozen people proclaiming "we protest against the brutal attack"—is captioned: "Following the criminal sabotage perpetrated at Flogar, a demonstration of workers from the Federation of Commerce and other workers' groups marched to the Presidential Palace to protest against terrorism and demand the execution of the guilty parties."

well as merely having possession of "explosives or flammable substances that serve to make sabotage" (Castro 1961i). The pro-government press (unsurprisingly) reported that the law enjoyed popular support. The tobacco growers' association, for example, declared their "full support to the Revolutionary Government and its security measures that have been ratified, mainly the Law for the Repression of Terrorist Activities" (see Fig. 16).[227] Public endorsement of this law and the punishments it entailed suggested that pro-government Cubans had internalized the characterization of the country's internal enemies as "parasites," essentially consenting to have them "exterminated."



Figure 15. Popular protest following the bombing of the Flogar department store

[227] *Hoy*. January 11, 1961:4. The photo's title reads, "Tobacco growers support measures against terrorism," while the caption states, "One aspect of the National Tobacco Growers Plenary, held at the Tobacco Growers Union in Havana, ratified the full support to the Revolutionary Government and its security measures, mainly the Law for the Repression of Terrorist Activities, and condemned the provocative maneuvers of Yankee imperialism against our Homeland."



Figure 16. Rally of the Tobacco Growers' Union in support of the Law for the Repression of Terrorist Activities

Although the parasites and worms presented a clear and present danger to the survival of the government, the backroom intrigue that came to light at the end of December 1960 meant that external enemies—chiefly, the exploitative and imperialist United States—were the clear priority. Unlike the parasites and other varieties of internal enemies, external ones were quite easy to identify for the most part. They were clearly distinct from the pueblo in many senses, geographically, linguistically, and, as Cuban leaders pointed out, in terms of ability, morality, and values. Revolutionary press often painted US leaders as unhinged and inept. One particularly spicy headline from *Hoy* reported, "The crazy anti-Cuban conspiracy is exposed to an inevitable failure."[228] Castro, for his part, focused his verbal attacks on the hypocrisy of US leaders. He pointed out that the United States never had any concerns over the state of democracy in Cuba when Batista ran the country and that they never would have dreamed to encourage the sabotage

[228] January 11, 1961:1.

of Cuban production when the fields and factories belonged to foreign millionaires (Castro 1961i). Ultimately, however, given the self-evident otherness of Cuba's external enemies, leaders spent more time and energy calling attention to their actions than their attitudes.

Discourse during this initial phase of feverish mobilization focused on explaining the United States' apparent anti-Cuba strategy to the pueblo. This strategy, according to Castro and the press, was anchored primarily in overt "aggressions" and covert misinformation campaigns, both of which made manifest the expansionist and exploitative tendencies of Cuba's northern neighbor. "Aggression" was an umbrella term that applied to a wide range of activities but referred in general to anything US officials said or did contra the interests and needs of the revolutionary government and the Cuban people. On the economic front, as discussed previously, US leaders had already slashed the sugar quota. Then, Eisenhower took the drastic step of severing diplomatic relations with Cuba on January 3, seemingly in response to Castro's announcement one day prior that he intended to expel a portion of US diplomatic officials stationed in Havana at that time, after accusing those officers of being "a plague of agents of the intelligence service, disguised as diplomatic officials of the American embassy" (Castro 1961i).[229]

Of all the different types of aggressions, however, the most pressing of course were the overtures of an armed attack. Even though Castro had warned the people of a looming invasion and issued the state of alert at the end of December, more news regarding the concrete preparations continued arriving throughout the first few weeks of January, including reports from

[229] An article from *Bohemia*'s January 8 edition recapped this episode. It said, "Washington considers that the mere request to equalize the number of personnel in both embassies, reducing to a fair proportion its swarm of officials—many of them undercover spies and agents of sabotage—assigned to its mission in Havana, is sufficient reason for the rupture" (72).

Guatemala that referenced training camps near military bases and secret airfields.[230] It was in this context that a new type of enemy, the "mercenary," emerged. The mercenaries, whom Castro would later describe as those who "live from foreign gold" and who were "sold to imperialism" (Castro 1961l), were not mercenaries in a common-sense understanding of the word. Although these combatants were paid by the CIA—and reportedly quite handsomely by Cuban standards (Matthews 1975:196)—few could accurately be described as trained professionals. Furthermore, most were tied to *both* competing parties, with many having "deep social embeddedness" on the Cuban side (Bustamante 2021:110). Castro lumped them together with the ranks of the usual enemies (the worms, parasites, henchmen, and landowners) and painted them as work-shy sissies who lived comfortably off the sweat of others. Most offensive to the revolutionary sensibility, however, was their hypocrisy and betrayal. They were hypocrites for having never lifted a finger against Batista, and they were traitors for attacking their own country while operating as puppets of the United States. "Mercenary" quickly became the antithesis of the new revolutionary man.

Adding insult to injury, the US leaders were also guilty of perpetually orchestrating misinformation campaigns, more or less overtly, that painted Cuba in a negative light and allegedly sought to isolate Castro from his neighbors and allies. As noted previously, the entire reason for issuing the state of alert in the first place was the news that US officials were talking to the leaders of other Latin American countries to convince them that Cuba was preparing to attack others. *Bohemia* reminded its readers of this alleged falsehood that sparked the period of crisis at the end of December. The article, condemning the United States for its unscrupulous methods, explained that, "the pretext mendaciously invoked to perpetrate this typical act of international piracy is the 'construction on the island of Cuba of seventeen ramps for launching

[230] *Hoy*. January 11, 1961:3.

Soviet rockets,' as stated, with impartial cynicism, in a confidential note from the US government circulated among the governments of Latin America."[231] As if one inflammatory rumor were not sufficient, the issue of *Bohemia* printed the following week reported a second: that Cuba planned to attack the US military base in Guantanamo. Referring to this new alleged falsehood, the article explained, "It is clearly intended to create the impression that Fidel Castro's government is determined to attack the naval base, a fact that is absurd from all points of view, both military and diplomatic."[232] Both *Bohemia* and Castro (1961i) maintained that the goal of these baseless accusations was "carrying out a maneuver to isolate Cuba diplomatically in Latin America."[233]

Revolutionary leaders' discussion of these campaigns to discredit them underscored their position that Cuba's foreign enemies were willing to go to any lengths, no matter how immoral, to see their mission through. Accordingly, Castro and the revolutionary press also took pains to highlight the common thread that served as the underlying motivation behind the United States' stance toward Cuba: imperialist tendencies rooted in a passion for exploitation. Exploitation, *Hoy* reminded its readers, was what made the Cuban revolution necessary in the first place, referencing "the opprobrious regime of imperialist exploitation that Cuba suffered until the achievement of the revolutionary triumph."[234] Furthermore, it was through the elimination of these exploitative forces from their domestic affairs that permitted Cubans to enjoy the improved quality of life that they experienced thanks to the benefits afforded to them by the revolutionary

[231] *Bohemia*. January 8, 1961:sup.6. Yordanov's research based on Czechoslovakian intelligence archives shows that the Czechoslovakians corroborated the Cuban version of events on this point. He says, "As this piece of Czechoslovakian intelligence stated, the US was covertly planning to use the Organization of American States (OAS) to attack Cuba militarily on the assumption that the Soviet Union was building rocket bases on the islands" (2021:1179).
[232] *Bohemia*. January 15, 1961:61.
[233] *Bohemia*. January 8, 1961:sup.6.
[234] *Hoy*. January 11, 1961:3.

government. Finally, exploitation served as a motivation for the future. Castro, in particular, emphasized that the disintegration of the revolutionary government would bring about a return to the past, in a word, to exploitation. Should the foreign enemies succeed in their mission, the future that awaited the pueblo was one of renewed suffering and misery. The frequent discussion of both overt aggressions and more subtle misinformation campaigns—and the discursive anchoring of both in US tendencies towards imperialism and exploitation—legitimated the intensification of the crisis atmosphere as the people of Cuba began mobilizing in defense of their homeland.

Defending the Pueblo

As these above analyses suggest, government leaders viewed Sun Tzu's dictum of "know thy enemy" as a crucial component of motivating members of the pueblo to act in defense of their revolution and their nation. But it remained important to explain *what* to do, in addition to *why* they ought to do it. An obvious step one could take to support the defense efforts was to join the militias. *Bohemia* urged readers to head to the trenches to be one of the "tens of thousands of men [who] are in strategic positions and on guard, so that our homeland cannot run the risk of a surprise attack from the treacherous claw of imperialism."[235] Many, like the university students pictured below, heeded these calls (see Fig. 17).[236] Of course, as I will discuss in greater detail below, not *everyone* could mobilize to the trenches and leave all the workplaces empty, so there were other tasks for those left behind as the "rearguard." For example, leaders' discourse made

[235] *Bohemia*. January 8, 1961:sup.1.
[236] *Hoy*. January 11, 1961:6. This photo belonged to a series grouped with an article titled, "We know, like Mella, how to honor the Patria," referencing Julio Antonio Mella, a founder of the pre-1959 Cuban Communist Party who studied at the University of Havana until he was expelled for his anti-government organizing against Gerardo Machado (Ferrer 2021:227). The caption reads, "Prepared behind sandbags and attentive to any movement, the militiamen and university students Rosa Legón Ruiz and Raúl Ondina, are ready to fulfill the slogans "Homeland or Death" and "We Shall Overcome" in the face of the threat of armed attack by the US imperialists."

clear that average citizens were supposed to give both material goods and their time and showcased and praised their efforts to do so. Just as they had during the agrarian reform, people aided the revolution's cause by offering donations. Now, instead of contributing their daily wage to *Bohemia*'s fundraisers, their donations supported the wartime mobilization efforts. Some offered food and goods to the soldiers in the trenches, while others lined up to donate their blood and plasma (see Fig. 18).[237]


Parapetados tras unos sacos de arena y atentos a cualquier movimiento los milicianos y estudiantes universitarios Rosa Legón Ruiz y Raúl Ondina, se encuentran dispuestos a cumplir las consignas de Patria o Muerte y Venceremos ante la amenaza de ataque armado por los imperialistas norteamericanos.

Figure 17. University of Havana students, armed, standing behind a barricade of sandbags

[237] *Hoy*. January 11, 1961:3;4. This photo depicts workers and members of the Allied Bus Cooperative (Cooperativa de Ómnibus Aliados, COA) donating blood. The caption reads, "Chaired by Captain Juan Nuiry Sanchez, COA General Administrator and the Board of Directors of the Company, members of the Executive Committee of the COA Workers and Employees Union and the Union of Inspectors, as well as the Workers' Delegates and Administrators-Intervenors of the different routes, went to the Blood Bank to offer their voluntary donation."


DONAN SANGRE OBREROS Y MIEMBROS DE LA COA

Presididos por el Capitán Juan Nuiry Sánchez, Administrador General de la C.O.A. y la Junta Directiva de esa Empresa, acudieron al Banco de Sangre a ofrecer su donación voluntaria los miembros del Comité Ejecutivo del Sindicato de Obreros y Empleados de C.O.A. y el Sindicato de Inspectores y Despedidores, así como los Delegados Obreros y Administradores-Interventores de las distintas rutas.

Figure 18. High-ranking officials of the Allied Bus Cooperative donating blood

Maintaining vigilance away from the front lines was another essential element of defense, one that required a united, collective effort. The Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR) ran frequent ads in *Bohemia* throughout the month of January, calling for widespread participation in the neighborhood groups.[238] One ad said,

> Let us all fulfill our duty as citizens by joining the Committees for Defense of the Revolution in our neighborhoods, to prevent the imperialists, reactionaries, counterrevolutionaries, and their lackeys, who are trying to bloody our homeland once again, from moving freely. What can you say to mortally wound the counterrevolution? In every block, field by field, a Committee for the Defense of the Revolution.[239]

Framing vigilance as "our duty as citizens" not only posits CDR participation as a necessary and obligatory activity but also subtly reminds readers of its obverse, that is, of the rights and benefits that hang in the balance. The ad also mimics Castro's discursive strategy of splitting while lumping the enemies discussed previously. Finally, bestowing upon average civilians the

[238] For further information on the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, see the Introduction to Part I.
[239] *Bohemia*. January 15, 1961:73.

ability "to mortally wound the counterrevolution" both militarizes daily life and the rearguard and empowers them to contribute concretely to victory. The following week, another CDR ad appeared in the pages of *Bohemia*. This one suggested that, perhaps, the vigilance committee members were taking their work a bit too seriously. The second ad clarified,

> When exhorting to the vigilance and prevention of all counterrevolutionary maneuvers, we do not want in any way to propitiate false accusations or to sow espionage among the population, but to clean healthily the national rearguard in times of energetic patriotic readiness, when the terrorist worm moves in the shadows against all noble eagerness and every effort of human ascension in the island.[240]

Once again borrowing from Castro's discursive tendencies ("terrorist worm"), the ad initially seemed to caution against overzealous vigilance. But, by ending with a reminder that the enemy is intent on destruction, it underscored once again the emergency nature of the crisis at hand and the concomitant need to act accordingly. Aside from the CDR, all workplaces were encouraged to create their own, internal vigilance committees to guard against counterrevolutionaries and saboteurs on the assembly lines and in the fields.[241] The idea was "to prevent the counterrevolutionary elements crouching in production."[242] What the workplace militias underscored was the deep connection between defense and production, which was reframed as a "second front" of national defense.

Maintaining and Augmenting Production

If the primary goal of defense was existential survival, the secondary one (and only by a slim margin) was to prevent US interference from negatively impacting any other aspect of the government's projects. This meant prioritizing, maintaining, or even augmenting production

[240] *Bohemia*. January 22, 1961:3.
[241] *Hoy*. January 11, 1961:4.
[242] *Bohemia*. January 15, 1961:62.

despite all the material resources and manpower that had to be shifted towards physical defense. Castro made this priority clear even as he issued the state of alert in December. He declared, "production will not be paralyzed," explaining that "it is necessary to occupy the positions of the tens of thousands of men who are in the trenches […], so that no service is paralyzed, so that no workplace diminishes its effort" (Castro 1960).[243] Because many people responsible for doing the producing, in both factories and fields, had to be relocated to the trenches to participate in the physical defense, the country was left with gaping holes in workplaces that had the potential to greatly slow down both industrial and agricultural production.

To solve this problem, everyone had to cooperate and collaborate. People who were non-mobilized existing members of the workforce needed to work more efficiently and longer, even volunteering to work overtime and on weekends. *Hoy* called for the creation of "Patriotic Brigades of Voluntary Work," which were to "maintain and increase production in free working days, making up for the absences of the militia comrades who are on the Front and making it possible to pay their salaries."[244] An ad that appeared in *Bohemia* from Hatuey Brewing Company encouraged workers to do their utmost to maintain production: "And the worker surpasses himself at this point! Now he doubles his efforts, increases the quantity, improves the quality, and the nation yields more!"[245] But even the most dedicated efforts of these existing workers would have been insufficient to close the gap. As a result, people who normally did not contribute to production—white collar workers, women, and even retirees—were called in to fill

[243] Production was not the *only* revolutionary project that members of the pueblo were meant to maintain. For example, an article from *Bohemia* insisted that the Literacy Campaign proceed as planned, declaring that, "This year, without ceasing to fight, without ceasing to produce, a formidable impulse will be given to popular instruction. Armed with both the rifle and the book, defending its conquests, and increasing its light, the New Cuba, which is nothing but the reaffirmation of the perennial Cuba, advances heroically towards a better future" (January 1, 1961:62). However, given that most revolutionary projects were also contingent on economic inputs of one kind or another, it is not surprising that production took precedence over the others.
[244] *Hoy*. January 11, 1961:4.
[245] *Bohemia*. January 15, 1961:116.

the empty positions. *Bohemia* revered "the worker in the suit and tie [who] had the honor to take up the broom and get greasy," while other articles praised women for their contributions, like Mrs. Josefa Pumeda (aged 65) who took over her militiaman son's factory position, and Norma Consuegra, who replaced her father (see Fig. 19).[246] Whether by giving blood, keeping tabs on neighbors, or working extra shifts, the members of the pueblo answered leaders' calls to defend the safety of the nation and its growing economy.

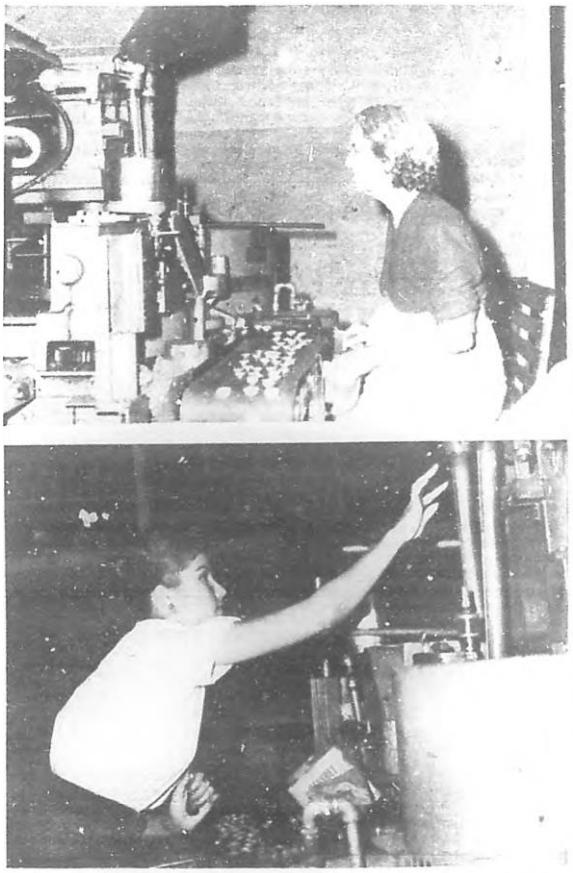


Figure 19. Josefa Pumeda (above) and Norma Consuegra (below) standing in for male factory workers

[246] *Bohemia*. January 15, 1961:62;61. Here, Pumeda is pictured above and Consuegra below. The caption describes the two women as "examples of abnegation, patriotism and bravery," later adding, "Youth and old age are equally ready to fill the vacuum left in production by the militiamen, firmly at their combat posts. Nothing exhibits so profoundly the moral profile of the new Cuba" (62).

Amidst all the feverish wartime mobilization efforts, by mid-January, there was evidence that Cuba's leaders began to suspect the US attack would not arrive before Eisenhower's departure from the White House after all. On January 13, President Dorticós gave a speech at a workers' parade communicating that, if no new evidence or notices appeared soon, the state of alert would expire on January 20.[247] But even as leaders were preparing the public for the likelihood of an eventual demobilization after an attack that never materialized, they seemed intent on assuring everyone that the state of alert and resultant wartime efforts had been both necessary and useful. First, the extent of the mobilization was entirely necessary, as it matched the intensity of the perceived threat at that time. In a speech at an event honoring and thanking the recently demobilized forces, Castro reminded the audience of the situation's severity by offering a lengthy laundry list of the vast range of recent US-based aggressions against Cuba. He said,

> From Washington they have been seeing all the aggressions against our revolution and our people; economic aggressions came from Washington; from Washington came this smear campaign against our country; from Washington came the threat; from Washington came aid to war criminals and counterrevolutionaries; from Washington came the guidelines for organizing mercenary armies; from Washington came the complicity with the planes that burned our cane and attacked our towns; all the evils have been coming from Washington: all the dangers, as well as all the deeds that interfere with our right to work, our right to build, our right to progress, and our right to live. (Castro 1961d)

According to Castro, the dangers were real and mounting; an attack was certain, but its timing was not. Indeed, explosive newspaper coverage—full front-page articles, massive headlines, and accompanying photos—of a relatively minor event seemed like a last-ditch effort to remind people of the threats in advance of Inauguration Day. The Cuban armed forces, according to this article, thwarted a small-scale "invasion" and prevented further escalation of the situation.

[247] *Hoy*. January 14, 1961:1.

Apparently, five US-born "mercenaries" had been captured attempting to "invade" Cuba by yacht (just as the revolutionary leaders had done nearly five years prior), planning to join the supposedly thousands of counterrevolutionaries whom they thought awaited them in the western province of Pinar del Rio (see Fig. 20).[248] This type of discourse painted the enemy as a relentless one and reframed the pending attack as a question of *when* rather than *if*.



APRESAN 6 MERCENARIOS YANQUIS

LOS ENTRENABA MASFERRER
LOS RECLUTO ALLEN DULLES

Llegaron y quedaron

NOTICIAS DE Hoy
UN DIARIO AL SERVICIO DEL PUEBLO
AÑO XXIII — No. 16 TERCERA EPOCA SEGUNDA EDICION
LA HABANA, JUEVES 19 DE ENERO DE 1961 PRECIO: 5 CENTAVOS

Seis ciudadanos norteamericanos, algunos de ellos veteranos de la II Guerra Mundial y de la Guerra de Corea, procedentes de uno de los campamentos de mercenarios que funcionan en el Estado de la Florida, fueron detenidos a bordo del yate "Aries", después de frustrárseles el propósito de desembarcar y unirse a supuestos alzados en las lomas de Pinar del Río.

Los detenidos se nombran: ALFORD EUGENE GIBSON, natural de Durbin, North Carolina, hijo de Simón y de Maude, de 33 años de edad, mecánico de aviación, con residencia en RT. 3 MT Gelead, North Caroline. Perteneció a la Fuerza Aérea de Estados Unidos de 1945 a 1947, destacado en la base Homestead, Fla., y en la base Keesler Fields, Miss.

LEONARD LOUIS SCHMIDT, natural de Chicago, hijo de Leonard y de Birman, de 31 años de edad, soltero, residente en 3308; South Union, Chicago, Illinois. Trabajó en el restaurant "New Victory", de Chicago, hasta que decidió trasladarse para Miami. Perteneció al Ejército de EU de 1957 a 1959, destacado en el Ejército de ocupación de Alemania Occidental.

GEORGE R. BECK, natural de Tauton, Massachusetts, hijo de George y de Beatriz, de 24 años de edad, soltero, operador de máquinas eléctricas, residente en West No. 193, Main, Norton, Mass. Trabajaba en una planta secreta de energía atómica de D. F. Makepeace, hasta que decidió ir a Miami para entrenarse para invadir a Cuba.

TOMMY L. BAKER, natural de Dothon, Alabama, hijo de James y de Mary, de 28 años de edad, soltero, chofer y vecino de 202 Madison Avenue, Dothon, Alabama. Perteneció al *Ejército americano* desde 1948 a 1954. Participó 14 meses en la Guerra de Corea matando, según dijo, a 500 norcoreanos. Trabajaba en la "King Promacy Co.", en Pinkard, Alabama, hasta que decidió venir a Miami para ingresar a entrenarse en los campamentos de mercenarios de MASFERRER, donde ingresó teniendo como jefe al también norteamericano KEN PACTOR.

DONALD JOE GREEN, natural de Montreal, Canadá, ciudadano americano, hijo de Jimmy y de Mary, de 28 años de edad, soltero, residente en RED-3 Clover South, Carolina del Norte. Ingresó en el *Ejército americano* de 1950 a 1953, destinado a la artillería pesada y como piloto de aviones Jets. Estuvo en Corea de 1950 a 1951 donde manipuló como Oficial, aviones F-86, F-100 y F-107. Trabajaba en una oficina hasta que decidió venir a Miami para participar en el asalto a Cuba.

JAMES B. BEANE, natural de Carolina del Norte, hijo de Anderson y de Connie, de 34 años de edad, marino mercante, casado y vecino de la calle Beck Nº. 64, RFT. Nº 1, Cedar Falls, Carolina del Norte. Peleó en Okinawa y en las Filipinas durante la II Guerra Mundial. Estuvo en la Marina de Guerra de Estados Unidos de 1949 a 1951. Fué a Miami para participar en la aventura de venir a pelear a Cuba.

Según las investigaciones practicadas, estos mercenarios yankis estaban siendo entrenados en un campamento de mercenarios que dirige el prófugo y asesino ROLANDO MASFERRER, en las cercanías de Miami, recibiendo adiestramiento militar de Oficiales cubanos de la tiranía y de Oficiales yanquis al servicio de la *CIA. Central Inteligence Agency*, de ALLAN DULLES.

Una vez terminado su entrenamiento, ROLANDO MASFERRER les dijo que contaba con 5.000 alzados en la provincia de Pinar del Río y que ellos podían entrar fácilmente por la costa noroccidental de Cuba, muy poco vigilada, y unirse a los "patriotas" que estaban combatiendo y obteniendo grandes victorias.

Siguen exponiendo los detenidos que MASFERRER les prometió que una vez logrado el triunfo ya cercano de la contrarrevolución, ellos podían aspirar a lo que quisieran en Cuba, bien grados en el nuevo ejército, o concesiones para el juego en los grandes casinos, o negocios de suministros

Figure 20. News of the five US-born "mercenaries," in custody after their failed "invasion"

[248] *Hoy*. January 19. 1961:1. The second edition of that day's paper (pictured in Fig. 20) ran a bold and large headline "6 US mercenaries arrested; trained by Masferrer, recruited by Allen Dulles; they came and stayed." ("They came and stayed," which became a popular warning that the Cuban people often painted on posters or quoted in interviews, essentially meant that any invader who came to attack Cuba should be prepared to either be imprisoned or die in Cuba.) As the article explains, "Six American citizens, some of them veterans of World War II and the Korean War, from one of the mercenary camps operating in the State of Florida, were detained aboard the yacht 'Aries,' after being thwarted in their attempt to disembark and join the alleged rebels in the hills of Pinar del Rio." It then listed the detainees as Alford Eugene Gibson, Leonard Louis Schmidt, George R. Beck, Tommy L. Baker, Donald Joe Green, James B. Beane

In addition to highlighting the necessity of the January mobilization, leaders also underscored its usefulness for building a national identity and forming new subjects to match. In his aforementioned speech to the workers, Dorticós referred to the initial mobilization period as a "bloodless victory," arguing that Cubans won the non-battle because they showed—to themselves, their enemies, and the world—what they were capable of.[249] *Hoy* reiterated this "bloodless victory" framing a couple of days later, while Castro praised everyone for doing exactly as they were told, fulfilling all required tasks, and working together in the process (Castro 1961d). He went on to refer to the past few weeks as a "test" that "our people and our Revolution" passed "with flying colors." Adding more specificity, Castro clarified, "We were able to do what seemed very difficult and, despite the urgency of the effort, the people were mobilized and yet the civilian life of the people was not paralyzed. The trenches were filled with men and yet the factories were not paralyzed." What the mobilization showed, in short, was the determination of the people to persevere in the face of challenges, written quite explicitly on giant posters at a public rally that said, "to win or die is the determination of the Cuban people."[250] The preparatory process also allowed them to identify areas of internal weakness to address for the future.[251] Ultimately, the post-mortem of those weeks of wartime mobilization both praised the Cuban people for their efforts and, importantly, reminded them that the danger had not truly passed and that much work remained to be done.

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[249] *Hoy*. January 14, 1961:1.
[250] *Hoy*. January 14, 1961:3. This photo was taken at a pro-government rally and included in an article whose headline read, "The militiamen at the front; the workers in production; from the neighborhoods, in gushes, the people flowed warmly; singing in the rain, the people marched to the palace." Beneath the photo, the caption reads, "Vigorous and combative slogans, expressing the energetic and courageous determination of the people to confront the artful aggression of imperialism, and of monolithic unity with the Revolutionary Government': 'Vigorous and combative slogans, expressing the energetic and courageous determination of the people to confront the artful aggression of imperialism, and of monolithic unity with the Revolutionary Government."
[251] Ironically, as will become clear later, one of the military deficits that Castro identified related to air attacks. He noted, "This time, for example, we had almost no protection against air raids, and we were very concerned about the civilian casualties that might result from an air raid" (Castro 1961d).

Phase Two: Escalating Aggression, Escalating Mobilization

The first few days of the second phase of the Bay of Pigs crisis period—January 20 through April 14—were a brief reprieve from the intensity of the mood and mobilization of the prior few weeks. After Castro's speech on January 20, similar small-scale celebrations welcoming the militiamen home from the trenches appeared in cities and towns across the country. Families were eager to welcome these men home, and people seized the opportunity to publicly thank them for their sacrifice with parades, speeches, and other displays of support. Though their deployment was relatively brief, their work was intense. As *Hoy* reported, "They holstered their weapons, dug trenches, and set up shelters."[252] The men thus exhibited two of the most prized traits of the revolutionary pueblo—hard work and self-sacrifice—and were therefore heralded as positive examples that others should emulate in the coming weeks and months as government leaders oriented their attention and efforts back to other revolutionary projects.

This phase of the Bay of Pigs could-be crisis seems rather paradoxical at first glance, as the two major trends—escalating aggression from the enemies and escalating *non-military* mobilization among the people—seem to contradict each other. As I will discuss in detail, by mid-March, nearly every issue of *Hoy* contained multiple mentions of both domestic acts of sabotage and terrorism as well as coverage of the increasingly aggressive posturing and international maneuvering coming from the United States. Yet, rather than have people hunker down in the trenches or hide away in their homes, Castro and the print media encouraged people to rush forth into the streets and participate in various vital non-military projects that the government was undertaking at that time. This strategy was surely at least somewhat pragmatic. No one could afford to simply sit around and do nothing, waiting for an attack that was certainly

[252] January 21, 1961:1.

coming but on a wholly unpredictable timeline. It was therefore imperative to carry on with business as usual, as discussed previously. However, the push for mass involvement in ongoing, non-military revolutionary projects like the Literacy Campaign or the sugar cane harvest, also allowed leaders to lean into the values and practices of resilience once more. While actively benefitting the pueblo both materially and ideologically, individuals' participation in revolutionary projects dealt a symbolic blow to their enemies, demonstrating Cubans' unwillingness to go back to the pre-revolutionary status quo.

Escalating Aggressions, Without and Within

After January 20, leaders generally downgraded their discussion of external enemies, who were reduced to a secondary threat level given that no attack materialized before the predicted date and given that this period coincided with a sharp uptick in internal unrest. At the risk of allowing the Cuban people to forget the real "man behind the curtain," however, leaders did still try to keep the public informed of the newest anti-Cuba machinations of the US president and the "Central Yankee Idiots Agency," as Castro once called the CIA (1961j). The economic sanctions started to show their effects. As a result, Castro urged the members of the pueblo to use the US-imposed scarcity as an opportunity to show their resilience.[253] He said, "And it is true that the imperialist aggression will inevitably mean sacrifices for our people; but we know that those sacrifices are the price of holding our heads high, they are the price of being able to look them in the face and tell them, you will never defeat me!" (ibid.). Other economic

[253] As I discuss in the Part I Coda, the dire economic situation in Cuba at this time resulted both from external US sanctions and from internal economic mismanagement. Leaders' discourse, however, unsurprisingly focused on the former over the latter when discussing the presence of material hardship.

aggressions from around this time included threats of a total economic blockade, refusal to sell agricultural inputs to Cuba, and the banning of US tourism to Cuba (Castro 1961b).[254]

Geopolitical aggressions ran the gamut as well, including restricting the mobility of pro-Castro Cubans living in the United States, issuing allegedly slanderous remarks against Cuba in international venues such as the Organization of American States, harboring and offering material resources to the counterrevolution's "government in exile" that was residing in the United States (Castro 1961l), and US leaders' outright declaration of their refusal to accept "communist domination of the hemisphere."[255] Finally, militarily, the US continued aggressive discourse, kept training and supporting the "mercenaries" (Castro 1961e, 1961b), and maintained their tactical positions in the Caribbean, which allegedly resulted in more than fifty violations of Cuban air or water space between February 15 and April 15 (Castro 1961l).[256] Despite this flurry of activity originating from beyond the coasts of Cuba, the intensification of domestic issues required even more extensive attention.

In his March 13 commemoration speech, Castro characterized the current situation in stark and unforgiving terms, laying bare the existential nature of the crisis at hand.[257] He said, "the Revolution is a struggle to the death between the interests of the pueblo and anti-pueblo interests, between revolutionaries and counterrevolutionaries. And that if the Revolution does not annihilate the counterrevolution, the counterrevolution annihilates the Revolution" (Castro 1961g). This delineation of the two sides of the battlefield is unsurprising given the context of

[254] *Hoy*. March 3, 1961:3; *Hoy*. March 12, 1961:3.
[255] *Hoy*. February 1, 1961:1; *Hoy*. March 9, 1961:1; *Hoy*. March 25, 1961:1; *Bohemia*. February 12, 1961:64.
[256] *Hoy*. February 9, 1961:3; *Hoy*. February 26, 1961:1; *Hoy*. February 22, 1961:1; *Hoy*. February 4, 1961:1; *Hoy*. February 23, 1961:1. I was unable to independently verify record of these airspace violations in the secondary literature.
[257] For many years after the revolutionary government came to power, Castro made a habit of delivering a speech on March 13 to commemorate the martyrdom of student rebels who were killed in the attack of the Batista-occupied presidential palace in 1957.

intensifying counterrevolutionary activity that, according to the revolutionary press, began seriously impinging on Cubans' daily lives. These attacks, of varying disruptiveness, were attributed to both long-standing and newly emerging internal enemies. On the one hand, people still needed to maintain vigilance against "the henchman, the traitor, the anti-pueblo," as well as the "thieves, criminals, exploiters, discriminators, and mercenaries" (Castro 1961j).[258] All these people—whom Castro characterized as "orphans of reason" and "orphans of morality" (Castro 1961h)—were all well known to the pueblo by point. On the other hand, US meddling in Cuban economic affairs was producing a new type of internal enemy: the complainer. As Castro explained to the people, some seemingly harmless behaviors were actually very pernicious, and the people who engaged in them should be considered enemies of the people as well. The complainers did not burn cane fields or bomb stores; they stood in lines and complained. The lines, a new phenomenon allegedly resulting directly from US economic sanctions, emerged in response to material shortages. Castro said that they were hotbeds for reactionary chit-chat. Impugning the character of the complainers, he remarked, "Those who do not have a strong conscience, those are the ones who usually complain when something is lacking. And in their complaint is implicit their spirit of surrender, in their complaint is implicit their cowardly spirit, and in their complaint is their willingness to give up" (Castro 1961j). As a result, the pueblo needed to be on alert against even the most subtle forms of counterrevolutionary activity.

In a more immediate and tangible sense, however, direct physical attacks escalated during this period of the crisis. Counterrevolutionary violence increasingly targeted civilian-filled places of work and leisure rather than empty factories or fields. Few events in February drew much media attention, apart from a bombing at the University of Havana.[259] But, by March, there was a

[258] *Bohemia*. February 15, 1961:103.
[259] *Hoy*. February 7, 1961:1.

new report each day, referencing bombings, shootings, and general scheming that sought to undermine the revolutionary government. One particularly gruesome incident was a bombing at a Catholic girls' school, Nobel Academy. Although the alleged saboteurs detonated the explosive after school hours, several children were still present. One girl was hospitalized with an eye injury (Fig. 21), and the building sustained damages (Fig. 22).[260] This episode unsurprisingly sparked vociferous public outrage with protesters demanding death for those responsible.[261] During that same month, there was also the murder of a young worker, José Méndez Navarro (see Fig. 23); a drive-by shooting at the event commemorating those who died in the *La Coubre* explosion of 1960; a car bombing in the upscale neighborhood of Vedado that killed two civilians; and the bombing of the offices of two different revolutionary magazines, *Verde Olivo* (of the Revolutionary Armed Forces) and *Vanidades* (the women's magazine at that time).[262] In April, denizens of Havana were shocked by a "mysterious fire" that engulfed El Encanto department store (Bustamante 2021:103).[263] Most press coverage of these episodes gave details of the events and included photos of the victims and collateral material damages. Furthermore,

[260] *Hoy*. March 1, 1961:1;7. The caption of Fig. 21 reads, "This is the infamous work of the counterrevolutionary assassins! María Eugenia Echániz, an innocent young girl, lies on the hospital stretcher, moments after being treated by the doctors, with very serious wounds caused by the explosion of the bomb placed in the Nobel Academy, and which will probably deprive her of the sight of her left eye. Wall for the henchmen and counterrevolutionaries! This is the unanimous cry of the people and of the Homeland" (1). "Wall" (translated from paredón) is how the Cuban people referred to death by firing squad. The caption of Fig. 22 explains that the photo depicts damages to the windows and doors of the classrooms and restrooms of Nobel Academy after the bomb exploded (7).
[261] *Hoy*. March 2, 1961:4.
[262] *Hoy*. March 4, 1961:1; *Hoy* March 5, 1961:5; *Bohemia*. March 12, 1961:67; *Hoy*. March 22, 1961:1; *Hoy*. April 5, 1961:1; *Hoy*. April 6, 1961:3. Fig. 23 illustrates the scene where José Méndez Navarro was killed, just outside a commercial center in Alta Habana. Arrows superimposed over the photo show the crater left in the parking lot's asphalt from the impact of the explosion (*Hoy*. March 4, 1961:1).
[263] The front page of *Hoy* on April 14 (the day after the fire) had headlines that said, "'Execution for the worms who set fire to El Encanto!,' shout the people." The April 15th edition included extensive interviews with members of the public to gauge their reaction to the fire in which, predictably, outrage featured prominently (7). The people (speaking through the press) clearly blamed CIA-backed counterrevolutionaries. We will likely never know the full circumstances surrounding the fire. But, as Pérez points out, if the CIA were to blame, their Cuban operatives were likely to have chosen the target, as "Cubans could point to El Encanto with pride, an institution, actually, that served to validate the Cuban claim to cosmopolitan" (1999:503).

there were often follow-up stories that covered the public displays of outrage and calls for punishment for the perpetrators, some of which extended for several days.



Figure 21. María Eugenia Echániz, student of Nobel Academy, injured in the hospital

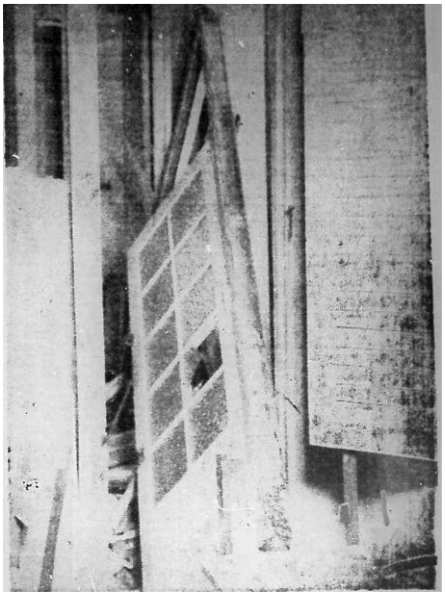


Figure 22. Damages to Nobel Academy after the explosion



Puede verse el lugar donde estallara la máquina infernal, indicado por las flechas. En el extremo superior, el lugar en que cayera el infortunado joven Méndez Marrero.

Figure 23. The aftermath of the explosion that killed José Méndez Navarro

Business-As-Usual: Mounting Non-Military Mobilizations

During this period of increasingly frequent disruptions of daily life, the revolutionary press made certain that the public was aware of the attacks and dangers but simultaneously

encouraged them to channel their time, energy, and attention toward contributing to revolutionary projects. Of course, the outrage provoked by some of these events was too profound to contain. People took to the streets to protest the bombings of Nobel Academy and other public spaces, holding signs with pro-revolutionary slogans and chanting for the execution of the perpetrators of these heinous acts. But, between these high-profile attacks and on a more regular basis, people filled their spare time by voluntarily participating in revolutionary projects, like the Literacy Campaign and the sugar harvest. Here I will focus on the latter.

In discussing phase one of the Bay of Pigs crisis, I noted the importance of production and its material and ideological linkages to defense. During the second phase, the emphasis on production continued, but its relationship to defense was backgrounded to the imperative of economic development. *Bohemia* in particular gave extensive coverage of the most seemingly mundane advances in production, ranging from potato harvesting and pencil manufacturing to fleet fishing and fruit cultivation.[264] Even the thriving production of sweets and confectionaries was noted.[265] But sugar cane production stood out from the rest owing to the role that average citizens could play in making that year's harvest a success. A productive cane harvest was important for many reasons, not only as a source of national pride, since historically Cuba had been world-renowned for its sugar production, but also as a matter of geopolitics given the newly instituted sugar quotas for the Soviet Union that needed to be fulfilled.[266] However, the harvest was suffering from a paradox of success. Because the government had made such impressive progress in reducing the unemployment rate, the surplus workforce that historically would have

[264] *Bohemia*. April 9, 1961:89, 22-23; April 26, 1961:24-25, 16-18.
[265] *Bohemia*. March 12, 1961:20-21.
[266] For further discussion of the Soviet sugar quota, see the Introduction to Part I.

been available to aid in the harvest was now otherwise occupied, meaning that the harvest would have to rely on voluntary labor. As Castro explained,

> The Revolution must call on the people to voluntarily cut cane because there is a lack of workers. Before, when the harvest came, tens of thousands of men who had no work for the whole year would go there to earn a wage for a few weeks. Today, when enormous extensions of land are opened to work and cultivation, hundreds of thousands of men have found permanent employment, and so it is necessary to mobilize the workers so that they voluntarily go, in their leisure time, in these times of harvest, to cut cane. (1961j)

Print media coverage during March and April was therefore saturated with stories about workplace militias, youth groups, and women's committees flocking to the fields to lend a hand, and volunteers competed to break records and out-harvest one another (see Fig.24).[267]



Figure 24. Ministry of Justice employees volunteering to cut cane

In mid-March, Castro declared, "We must fight against the counterrevolution and sabotage, with vigilance and revolutionary work" (Castro 1961g). As this directive illustrated,

[267] *Hoy* March 18, 1961:11. This photo depicts a group of functionaries and employees of the Ministry of Justice voluntarily cutting cane, as they did "every week since the volunteer labors to cut cane in the Harvest of the Pueblo began."

regime discourse still emphasized that danger was never far off and therefore continued promoting alertness and vigilance alongside encouragement to partake in the healthy and productive distractions of the Literacy Campaign and the sugar harvest. The CDR continued printing their ads in *Bohemia*, reminding readers that, "The henchman, the traitor, the anti-pueblo, thinks only of himself and of doing evil—if there is one in your neighborhood, watch out for him."[268] As usual, however, the calls to action were also specific to the events at hand.

During phase two of the Bay of Pigs crisis, anti-regime saboteurs continued attempting to disrupt both industrial and agricultural production. However, as Castro explained, workers now needed to be vigilant both outside and *from within*, as some workers and other lower-class people had reportedly joined the counterrevolution. Pointing out the irony in this, Castro said, "It is very sad when a worker serves the cause of the exploiters, it is very sad when a worker sides with the monopolies, when a humble man joins the ranks of his enemies, of those who have always exploited him" (Castro 1961g). While Castro's speech referred mainly to urban centers, it is important to note that counterrevolutionary activity in the Escambray, the mountainous region in the center of the island, was then at an all-time high.[269] People living in that area were asked to help apprehend leaders of the reactionary resistance who were at large. Calling the people to action, Castro exhorted (1961f), "But remember the task of the people, I repeat, of the workers, of the young rebels, of the women's federation, of the students, of the entire pueblo, which is to be vigilant during the next few weeks to prevent a single counterrevolutionary leader from escaping. That is the task we assign to you!" In fields, factories, and warehouses, the vigilance of the pueblo was construed as a necessary condition for forging ahead with the daily progress of revolutionary plans and projects.

[268] February 15, 1961:103.
[269] For further discussion of this conflict, see the Coda of Part I.

Interlude: The Invasion

On April 15, the long-awaited military threat finally arrived in the form of a surprise coordinated US airstrike that targeted three geographically disperse locations simultaneously.[270] Reporting on the event, a *Bohemia* article from the following week commented that, "The past 15th will remain in the history of Cuba and America as a date marked by an unprecedented crime: the surprise, cowardly, indiscriminate and cruel bombing of the national territory by Yankee planes that left from and returned to the territory of the United States."[271] Both *Hoy* and *Bohemia* featured several stories and photo series that graphically depicted the physical damage and human casualties for all the world to see (see Fig. 25 and Fig. 26).[272] Two key themes running through these portrayals of the event were the values attached to the attack—barbarism and savagery—and the refusal of the United States to admit to any responsibility. In referencing the "barbaric Yankee attack against Cuba," an article from *Hoy* pointed out that "not even the children," who were injured in the attacks, "were respected by the Yankee aggressors."[273] It was bad enough that the attackers had victimized vulnerable old people, women, and children, but, adding insult to injury, the United States maintained that they had *nothing* to do with the affair. Reading an Associated Press cable in his speech the following day, Castro said, "Miami, April

[270] The purpose of these strikes, Ferrer explains, was to incapacitate the Cuban air force so that they would be unable to attack Brigade 2506 as they invaded Cuba's beaches. However, she points out, the strikes were largely ineffective and only managed to reduce the air force by 22 percent because Castro had previously ordered most Cuban plans to be relocated and hidden in an attempt to keep them from being found by US reconnaissance flights (2021:366).
[271] April 23. 1961:35.
[272] Fig. 25 shows airstrike damages at the "Antonio Maceo" civilian airport in Santiago de Cuba. The caption describes the "loss of this Cubana Aviation commercial airliner, hit on the ground by one of the enemy projectiles that caused the explosion of its gasoline tanks" (*Bohemia*. April 23, 1961:48-49). Fig. 26 shows a striking and well-known artifact: a wall panel from the building where young militiaman Eduardo García Delgado was fatally injured. As the story goes, "with blood, when his courageous life as an honest Cuban was slipping away, destroyed by foreign shrapnel, assassinated by imperialism, Eduardo Garcia, militiaman, flesh of the people, gathered his last energies to write Fidel's name on the wall. Blood of the people. At his combat post, in front of the enemy's fire, Eduardo Garcia chose dignity and solidarity with the ideals and the future of his beloved island" (*Bohemia*. April 23, 1961:62). The panel hangs to this day in an exhibit in the Museum of the Revolution in Havana.
[273] April 16, 1961:1.

15. Cuban pilots who escaped from Fidel Castro's Air Force, landed in Florida with World War Two bombers after blowing up Cuban military installations" (1961l). The US denial of responsibility enraged both Castro and the public, recalling the characterizations of duplicitousness that were so common during phase one of the crisis.[274]



Figure 25. Damages at the "Antonio Maceo" civilian airport in Santiago de Cuba

[274] In his famous April 16 speech, Castro spent paragraphs and paragraphs talking about how the United States was clearly covering up their involvement in the attacks. His main piece of proof was that US leaders refused to release the names of the allegedly Cuban pilots who were flying the planes. US officials argued that their refusal was for the pilots' protection, as they feared reprisals against their families who remained on the island, but Castro maintained that revealing the pilots' names would irrefutably demonstrate their non-Cuban origin. Referring to the author of the AP cable, Castro went as far as to say, "It is indisputable that the American who wrote this was completely drunk yesterday morning" (1961l). The historiography does not arrive at definitive consensus surrounding whether there was Cuban involvement in the attacks, but there is clear agreement that the CIA was involved (Bustamante 2021; Matthews 1975). Regardless of who the bombers *really* were, Castro's insistence on the incredulity of the idea that one of the pilots could possibly have been Cuban was the main message repeated to the Cuban public.



Figure 26. "Fidel" written in the blood of young militiaman Eduardo García Delgado

The following day, April 16, a large state funeral was held for the victims of the bombings in which Castro delivered one of his most famous public addresses (see Fig. 27).[275] Part of the noteworthiness of this speech stems from the fact that it was the first time Castro openly referred to the Cuban revolution as a "socialist" one.[276] But, for the purposes of understanding the government's articulatory project during the Bay of Pigs crisis, it holds other importance, as it was a prime opportunity to discursively define the enemies, in contradistinction to the pueblo. Castro leveraged a lengthy juxtaposition between the victims and their attackers to highlight some key differences between the pueblo and the anti-pueblo. He said,

> Those we have come to bury here are not parasitic millionaires, they are not mercenaries sold for the gold of any foreigner, they are not thieves, they are the beloved sons and daughters of our pueblo! They are young workers, children of humble families, who do not steal from anyone, who do not exploit anyone, who

[275] *Bohemia*. April 23, 1961:57. Before being buried in Havana's Colón cemetery, the "corpses of seven combatants against imperialism who offered their lives in defense of the homeland" were placed in "the atrium of the University of Havana, cradle of heroism," for public viewing, as shown in Fig. 27.

[276] Rallying the people to action, Castro proclaimed, "That is what they cannot forgive us for, that we are there under their noses and that we have made a *socialist* Revolution under the very noses of the United States! And that we defend that *socialist* Revolution with our rifles! And that we defend that *socialist* Revolution with the courage with which yesterday our anti-aircraft gunners riddled the aggressor planes with bullets!" (1961l) (emphasis added). While this was Castro's first open pronouncement of the socialist character of the revolutionary government, Che Guevara had referred to it as "Marxist" in July of the previous year (Yordanov 2021:1178).

> do not live off the sweat, nor off the work of anyone, and who have more right to life than the millionaires, more right to life than worms! Because they do not live from the work of others, like the Yankee millionaires; they do not live from foreign gold, like the mercenaries, worms sold to imperialism; they do not live from vice, they do not come from theft; and they have the right to have their lives respected, and no miserable imperialist millionaire has the right to send planes, bombs, or rockets to destroy these young and dear lives of the homeland! (1961l)

According to Castro, the members of the pueblo—both the victims being laid to rest at Colón Cemetery and the larger public—embodied all the essential traits of the New Cuba: they were humble, hardworking, and exploited. The attackers and their imperialist backers, on the other hand, were rich and avoided working by exploiting the labor, energies, and resources of those around them. Castro closed his rousing speech by reissuing the general state of alert and ordering the troops and militiamen to report to their stations.

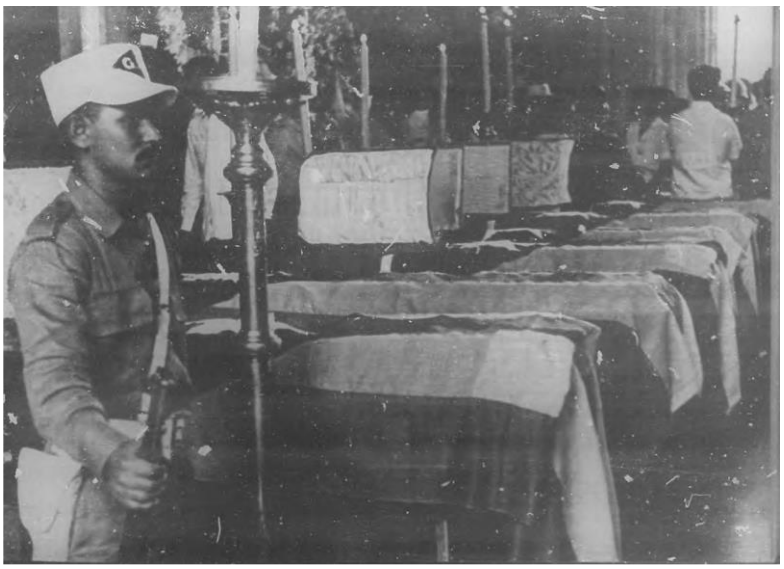


Figure 27. Bodies of the victims of the April 15th attack displayed at the University of Havana

Just a few hours later, early in the morning of April 17, the first members of Brigade 2506 made landfall on Cuba's southern coast. As an article from *Bohemia* explained after the fact, "irregular forces arriving from abroad, trained, equipped, and oriented by American military personnel, disembarked at the Bay of Pigs in combat gear and tried to make their way into the

interior."[277] As would later be revealed during prisoners' interviews with journalists and Castro, the invaders had been led to believe that members of the Cuban armed forces would be eagerly waiting to greet them on the beach and that the supposedly discontented people from all over the island would quickly back the rebellion. In this belief, they were mistaken. The "tiny detachments of militia who were on guard" valiantly defended their territory from the invaders (García Luis 2001:70), suffering numerous casualties but successfully detaining the enemy until the regular armed forces arrived (Brown 2017:87). The fighting continued to the following day, and Castro issued a communique to the people regarding the army's progress.[278] He stated, "The Revolutionary Government announces to the Cuban people that the armed forces of the revolution continue to struggle heroically against the enemy forces in the southwest zone of Las Villas Province, where the mercenaries have landed with imperialist support."[279]

On April 20, the huge headline splashed across the front page of *Hoy* said, "Invaders annihilated! 'The revolution has emerged victorious,' Fidel proclaims." Castro's fourth and final communique from this period, also printed on the front page, explained that the enemies had been vanquished by 5:30 p.m. the previous day, when "the forces of the Rebel Army and the National Revolutionary Militias took the last positions that the invading mercenary forces had occupied in the national territory." Castro went on to describe how "the revolutionary fighters who confronted the invaders and attacked them incessantly without a single minute of truce" were to be praised for "destroying, in less than 72 hours, the army organized for many months by the US imperialist government." Approximately 200 members of Brigade 2506 died during the

[277] April 23, 1961:78.
[278] The same day (April 18), Khrushchev issued a statement of support on behalf of the Cubans that would later have relevance for the October Crisis of 1962. He "vowed to provide the Cuban people and its government with all the necessary assistance to repel the armed invasion of their sovereign territory" (Yordanov 2021:1179).
[279] This communique did not appear in the primary sources I analyzed but is catalogued in the Castro Speech Database maintained by the Latin American Network Information Center (LANIC), a digital repository of the Benson Library of the University of Texas, Austin.

skirmish, while the remaining roughly 1,200 soldiers were taken into the custody of the national security forces (see Fig. 28).[280] As *Bohemia* vividly described the outcome, "the reptiles in human form, born by mistake in the same homeland as the founders, […] have been handed over to the summary justice of the revolution."[281] Cuba's victory was thus swift, complete, and an utter embarrassment for the United States.



Figure 28. Members of Brigade 2506 in custody of the Revolutionary Armed Forces

Phase Three: Post-Victory Celebrations and Momentum

Beginning on April 21 and lasting until May 1, the third and final phase of the Bay of Pigs crisis encompassed three key trends. First, while celebrating victory (which also entailed mourning the fallen), leaders offered the pueblo positive reinforcement, praising both their commitment to the concrete tasks that the crisis demanded of them and their willingness to make the ultimate sacrifice by dying for the sake of the homeland and the revolution. Second, despite

[280] *Hoy*. April 21, 1961:1. Fig. 28 shows the surrender of the members of the Brigade in an article titled "Defeated invaders surrender en masse." The photo of the caption says, "The caravan of prisoners marches forward. They arrived as invaders and some remained forever on Cuban soil and others in the prisons awaiting the moment to appear before the revolutionary tribunals."
[281] April 23, 1961:79.

taking time to revel in what Castro described as the dazzling defeat of imperialism, leaders also seized the moment to revive a danger discourse, insist on the presence of ongoing threats, and persuade the people to maintain their vigilance. Finally, turning their lens toward the invaders, official discourse used the prisoner interviews as an opportunity to make Cubans who had turned against the government—whether by invading the national territory from abroad or by engaging in counterrevolutionary terrorist from within—into fully foreign entities and pernicious pathogens that had to be excised from the body politic. While I discuss each of these broad trends in turn, I will also conclude by examining how all three were artfully woven together in one culminating event, the Labor-Victory Day celebrations of May 1.

Celebrating Victory, Commemorating Martyrs

Judging by the photos and descriptions from *Hoy* and *Bohemia*, the Cuban people had not experienced such profound collective euphoria since the rebel forces successfully ousted Batista back at the beginning of 1959. Furthermore, the press suggested, the excitement was not confined to the island nation. Allies, sympathizers, and well-wishers from across the globe flooded the papers with their congratulations and statements of support. But victory was fundamentally an internal achievement, so leaders wanted to make explicit the aspects of revolutionary Cubanness that made the triumph possible.

All *true* members of the Cuban pueblo deserved praise for their role in securing victory. However, because different social sectors played various roles in the process, their numerous wartime efforts were valorized in state discourse for distinct reasons. A key attribute that leaders continuously highlighted when discussing the military angle of the victory, for example, was bravery. Given the surprise nature of the invasion—and given that the members of the Cuban armed forces and militia had been told repeatedly over the course of several months that the

invaders were both trained and armed by the United States, a known military superpower—it is likely that Cuba's professional soldiers and amateur militiamen were at least somewhat frightened. Nevertheless, they boldly faced their enemies. Castro remarked that the men "behaved with extraordinary bravery."[282] As they convalesced in a military hospital, wounded soldiers spoke with journalists from *Hoy* about their fearlessness and willingness to face Cuba's enemies again when needed, corroborating Castro's characterization of their courage.[283] One interviewee, Leonel Gonzales, was a militiaman and carpenter from Alquizar, a small town about thirty miles southwest from Havana (see Fig. 29). As he was awaiting surgery for a ruptured kidney and perforated intestines, he told *Hoy*'s reporter, "As soon as I am well, I will fight for Cuba Libre, as we militiamen have plenty of courage." Bravery in the face of danger was valorized by Castro and other leaders and lifted up as a point of pride for those who participated directly in the military entanglement.

[282] *Hoy*. April 25, 1961:10. This quotation comes from a television appearance that Castro made on April 23, 1961 on the program "Popular University, "to inform the pueblo about the mercenary invasion." Although Castro's television appearances are not included in the state-maintained database of his speeches, I was able to analyze those that were reprinted in the newspapers and magazines. On occasion, the editors seemed to have deemed Castro's televised remarks as important enough to merit reprinting in full. Such was the case during the Ten-Million-Ton sugar harvest campaign (Chapter 4).
[283] *Hoy*. April 28, 1961:4.

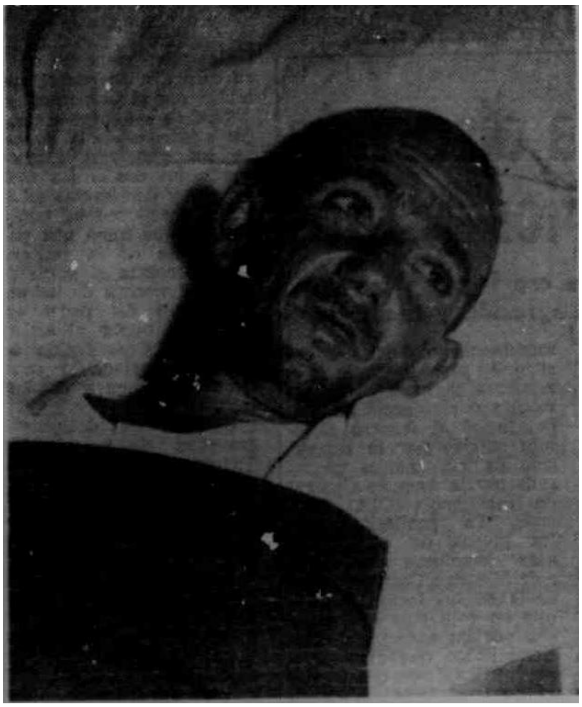


Figure 29. Militiaman Leonel Gonzales recuperating in the hospital

The victory at the Bay of Pigs was, foremost, a military one. But the civilian populations played important supporting roles as well, for which leaders subsequently thanked them and singled out their resilience for praise. Even though civilians were also likely afraid—and even though they faced tremendous constraints on time and resources—they nevertheless quickly mobilized once again to support the wartime efforts. For example, an article from *Hoy* effusively praised the people of Santa Clara, noting the rapidity with which they snapped into action. It read, "The population of this city mobilized with the urgency required by the devious and treacherous attack of Yankee imperialism that sponsored the mercenary invasion against our homeland."[284] Another article the following week gave further detail about the specific actions that the Cuban people organized on such short notice. It explained, "In the face of the cruel attack on [the Bay of Pigs], the revolutionary organizations mobilized marvelously and

[284] *Hoy*. April 20, 1961:8.

decisively. The FMC, together with the other revolutionary sectors, rendered great help in the collection of gusanos [worms]; in the hospitals taking care of and treating the wounded; and collecting medicines, clothes, food, and money."[285] Highlighting specific exemplars such as these, the press not only praises people for their prior commendable actions but also lifts up their behavior as a model for others, an example to be emulated in the case of future similar attacks.

Of course, the people of Cuba already had recent experience with some of these wartime activities, thanks to the January mobilization. But leaders nonetheless painted it as remarkable that the people accomplished these necessary tasks, at such short notice, *and* while carrying on with other ongoing revolutionary projects. Pointing to the people's resilience, Castro praised this monumental accomplishment, saying,

> The fact that this work [of the Literacy Campaign] has not been paralyzed in the midst of the tension and national commotion is an extraordinary merit, and it demonstrates the faith, enthusiasm, and tenacity of the Revolution and how, in the midst of the blockades, economic aggressions, and military aggressions, the people continue to carry out their work and carry it forward.[286]

Seemingly motivated by the prized values of bravery and resilience, the Cuban pueblo had acted precisely how the leaders had asked them to, which garnered them praise as a result.

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[285] *Hoy*. April 28, 1961:4. FMC refers to the Federation of Cuban Women (Federación de Mujeres Cubanas), the all-women's mass organization founded by the revolutionary government the previous year. The role of the women in the "collection of gusanos" refers to their assistance in "rounding up people who they suspected might support the US invasion" (Ferrer 2021:366). These women and other volunteer detained these suspected counterrevolutionaries "in schools, churches, theaters, public buildings, and whatever other structures could be pressed into service and made fairly secure" (Fagen 1969:73). The timing and scale of these detention initiatives remain the subject of scholarly debate. For example, Ferrer (2021) and Fagen (1969) make the detentions sound like a byproduct of the April 15th attacks, but Guerra (2023) states that they occurred for several months leading up to the invasion. Nevertheless, most agree that somewhere between 50,000 and 200,000 Cubans were held for some amount of time owing to denunciations of their character, attitudes, or behaviors. From the US perspective, whether the detention of individuals affiliated with the urban underground resistance against Castro affected the likelihood of the invasion's success, historian Hugh Thomas gives a mixed portrait. From a personal interview, he reports that Richard M. Bissell (a high-ranking CIA officer and architect of the invasion) said, "Our operations were *not* hampered by the arrest of so many people in Havana after the raids…we did not expect the underground to play a large part" (Thomas 1971:1356). Thomas goes on to note, however, that Bissell's account contradicts the statement of Lyman Kirkpatrick (another high-ranking CIA official), who said that the detentions were "the first catastrophic blow to the […] operation." Regardless of the arrests' effects on the operation, CIA officials did seem to be aware of them at the time.

[286] *Hoy*. April 25, 1961:10.

Unlike the "bloodless victory" of January, the Bay of Pigs invasion did leave a trail of casualties and injuries in its wake, and leaders heaped praise upon those who suffered bodily harm or death at the hands of the invaders for embodying the revolutionary value of self-sacrifice. "To die for the homeland is to live," proclaimed *Bohemia* in its first issue printed after the invaders were vanquished, echoing a phrase from Castro's April 16 speech.[287] The willingness of 87 soldiers and militiamen to sacrifice their lives, Castro later pointed out, "saved tens of thousands of Cuban, tens of thousands of women, tens of thousands of children, tens of thousands of fighters."[288] The celebrations of the heroic martyrs who died in service of their country was a clear reminder of the importance of making sacrifices, no matter their magnitude, for the good of the homeland and the revolution. Furthermore, those who made the ultimate sacrifice lent even greater urgency to the regime's calls for resilience. "For every work they destroy," one *Bohemia* article argued, "we will raise up a thousand more" because "the ruins are not ruins but rather a pedestal of the future, when over them floats the banner of the lone star [the Cuban flag]."[289] Relenting to the pressures of the imperialist aggressions or diminishing by even an ounce the collective efforts being poured into revolutionary projects would dishonor the memory of the deceased heroes. It was the duty of those who remained to push onward: "The fallen dictate the slogan: resist."[290]

[287] April 23, 1961:39. Castro did not coin this phrase specifically for the Bay of Pigs invasion, however. It appeared more than a dozen times in his speeches, with the first instance I found dating to January 7, 1959. Castro attributes the phrase to José Martí. But I suspect it is Castro's own interpretation of a noteworthy line from Marti's epic poem, *Abdala*, which reads, "Oh, how sweet it is to die, when you die / Fighting to defend the Homeland!" Martí, in turn, clearly borrowed heavily from Horace's oft-quoted line, *Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori* ("It is sweet and proper to die for one's homeland").
[288] *Hoy*. April 25, 1961:10.
[289] April 23, 1961:46.
[290] *Bohemia*. April 30, 1961:65.

Identifying and Characterizing the Invaders

In sharp contrast to the Cuban heroes—that is, the combatants, civilians, and martyrs who helped the revolutionary government weather its most serious existential threat in nearly two years—stood the "mercenary" invaders. Over the course of several days, some of the nearly 1,200 prisoners who had surrendered during the invasion were interviewed publicly (and broadcasted), ostensibly so that leaders and the pueblo could understand who they were, why they chose to attack their homeland, and what role the US played in the situation. The prisoners who participated ranged from the sons of elite families, like the Babum brothers (see Fig. 30), to one of the Brigade's priests, Segundo Laheras Cobo (see Fig. 31).[291] The first interviews, which were conducted by some of Cuba's top pro-government journalists at the time, took place from April 21 through April 25. The information from the interviews enjoyed a broad reach because, in addition to the taking place before a live audience, they were also televised and subsequently transcribed and printed in both *Hoy* and *Bohemia*. After the journalists' turn concluded, Castro himself had one-on-one conversations with the prisoners which were likewise available to the public. In this section, I will discuss the portrait of the prisoners that leaders discursively constructed through these interviews.

[291] *Bohemia*. April 30, 1961:83;84. The three Babum brothers, according to the caption beneath their photo, were "from a wealthy lumber family in the East" and "came encouraged by the idea of recovering the properties that the revolution distributed to the peasants" (83). As for the priest ("cura"), the caption explains, Segundo Laheras Cobo "came among the mercenaries as a paratrooper and as a captain of the parachute battalion. His status as a priest was not compatible with his functions as a warrior. He declared that the Church is condemned to failure if new aggressions are attempted against Cuba, because the revolution is firm and united, now more than ever, and because it has complied with the postulates of true Christianity" (84).



Figure 30. The three Babum brothers in their interview with journalists



Figure 31. Segundo Laheras Cobo, one of Brigade 2506's priests

According to the Cuban government, Brigade 2506 was diverse in some senses but remarkably homogeneous in others. The press, in their summaries of the information gleaned from the interviews, employed the previously discussed subgroup-unity rhetorical tactic (that is, noting distinctions between subgroups but ultimately emphasizing commonalities across the groups). For example, in describing the invading group's composition, an article from *Hoy* claimed, "It is evident that among those recruited by the United States to invade Cuba there were various elements […]. Henchmen, Batista loyalists, opportunists, the ex-privileged, the ambitious, thieves, criminals, speculators, and the intoxicated are those who constitute the base

of betrayal of the homeland and the service to US imperialism."[292] The article thus identified and categorized the participants by their pre-revolutionary "occupations," but concluded the description by pointing out the one thing they all had in common: "betrayal of the homeland." Another article, this time summarizing Castro's interactions with the prisoners, included some more explicitly classed phrases to describe the subgroups of Brigade 2506 participants.[293] The article rhetorically asked and answered, "What was the composition of the mercenary invasion? Daddy's little boys and well-to-do children with their corresponding 'spiritual' advisors. The Phalangist Worms, siquitrillados, latifundistas, politicians, and professional botelleros. Henchmen, ex-crooks, ex-cops, assassins, and torturers."[294] Despite some minor variations in the (upper) class composition of the invaders, leaders' larger point was that they all benefitted personally from the pre-revolutionary status quo.

Their backgrounds of privilege—whether from family wealth or prior affiliation with the Batista regime—seemed to automatically endow them with certain shared characteristics. The sons of Cuba's most prominent businessmen were rich without having ever lifted a finger, making them sissy and work-shy. Castro "proved" this to the public when he asked the prisoners to raise their hands if they had ever cut cane. Very few did (Bustamante 2021:110–11). Even the less wealthy of the invaders, those previously affiliated with Batista's army or security forces, still enjoyed privileges at the expenses of others. Almost as damning as their shared status as

[292] April 23, 1961:1. Historian Julio García Luis specifies that the prisoners reportedly included "over 100 large landowners, 35 industrialists, 194 members of Batista's army, 67 urban landlords, 112 merchants, 89 high-ranking company officials, over 415 members of the middle class, and 112 men who were classified as lumpen elements because of their criminal and social records" (2001:71).
[293] As historian Michael Bustamante has pointed out, "class provided a crucial anchor around which revolutionary authorities repeatedly attempted to cement audiences' understandings of who the exiles were and the kind of past the represented" (Bustamante 2021:112).
[294] *Hoy*. April 29, 1961:8. According to Guerra, "siquitrillados" comes from the word "siquitrilla," which was a word that campesinos commonly used to refer to "the part of an animal's spine that must be broken to kill it" (2012:62). "Botelleros," as noted previously, were "individuals who drew salaries only to snitch on fellow workers" (Casey 2014).

exploiters was another trait that Castro frequently decried: hypocrisy. Many of the prisoners claimed that they had never been involved in politics prior to their participation in the invasion and that they preferred to stay out of it. What the journalists and Castro pushed them to admit, however, was that they never questioned the political status quo while they benefitted from it. Some prisoners mentioned signing up for Brigade 2506 so that they could honor the 1940 constitution, but, as the interviewers pointed out, the 1940 Constitution wasn't being honored by Batista either. One journalist asked,

> Why, Mr. Prisoner, did you not stand up against the violators of those theoretical rights advocated by the 1940 Constitution, against the tyranny of Batista, and yet now you have shown such warrior spirit with respect to the Cuban Revolution that has made possible the Agrarian Reform, which was theoretically formulated and outlined in the 1940 Constitution, and which ended the latifundia?[295]

He went further, pointing out how easy it would have been for that specific interviewee to have joined the rebel forces against Batista, given his geographical proximity at the time. The journalist said, "You abstained. Being three steps away from the Sierra Maestra [where the anti-Batista rebels were then concentrated], you did not take up arms for the 1940 Constitution, even though all the Cuban people, as you say, were against Batista." Through their questions and statements, the interviewers demonstrated to the people that the Cuban invaders did *not*, in fact, have the pueblo's best interests in mind.

While some prisoners rationalized their participation using the sanctity of the 1940 Constitution, others had different—seemingly benign—justifications for their involvement, all of which were similarly dissected and rejected by Castro and the journalists. One commonly stated motive was that the exiles were tricked by US propaganda into joining the invasion. Some claimed that they had not set off to Cuba to fight Cubans but rather to fight the Russians, the

[295] *Hoy*. April 22, 1961:6.

Czechoslovakians, or the Chinese, whom they were led to believe were running the country. This became clear in one prisoner's conversation with a journalist:

- [journalist] And why did they tell you that you were coming to fight in Cuba?
- [prisoner] Well, because they said that there were many Chinese communists here, and Czechoslovaks, and that they were taking thirteen- and fourteen-year-old children from here to Russia, and all that sort of thing.
- [journalist] So, you were deceived?
- [prisoner] Yes, sir, exactly.[296]

Another said, "We had been told that this country was ruled by foreigners, completely managing everything; that the Rebel Army, what little army that was left, was managed by Czechs and Chinese."[297] Other prisoners reported being told that the Cuban people *wanted* them to come remove Castro from power. One prisoner explained, "according to what they told us, there was already chaos here, they were waiting for a military force to come and join them."[298] Another expressed that he "expected to find a hungry, discontented people, lack of work, and, well, in short, a series of things" because "that was what they told us, what the press commented, everything they were instilling in us, and we believed it."[299] Through these interviews, the prisoners seemed keen to present themselves as hapless victims of the United States' coordinated misinformation campaigns.

But neither the journalists nor Castro accepted these excuses. One interviewer took the tact of illustrating to the prisoner he was questioning that the prisoner must have been stupid or crazy to believe that the rural people—those who benefitted so much from the projects of the revolution—would be interested in giving up their improved way of life to support the invaders who would then take it all away from them. Frankly addressing the prisoner, he said,

[296] *Hoy*. April 22, 1961:8.
[297] *Hoy*. April 23, 1961:7.
[298] *Hoy*. April 26, 1961:4.
[299] *Hoy*. April 22, 1961:8.

> Listen to me, prisoner, and tell me honestly. In three months, you were so 'brainwashed' in the United States that they could convince you that the charcoal makers from your farm in the Ciénaga [swamp] were going to join you, that those charcoal makers who today are literate, who today have houses, who earn a higher salary—all of which you knew, because that was three months ago and you must have had news from your farm since then—you believed that these charcoal makers were going to return to live exploited as they lived when you owned that farm?[300]

Castro, for his part, pointed out that there were far more than 1,400 Cubans living in exile (referencing the number of invaders). Why hadn't the others fallen prey to the propaganda and joined the invasion?[301] Ultimately, the revolutionary elites were unwilling to accept any explanation that absolved the invaders of any guilt; the prisoners' stated motives were flimsy and insufficient.

Through their lines of questioning, Castro and the journalists aimed to reveal the invaders' "true" motives to the Cuban people. Rather than coming as a liberatory force to save average Cubans from the oppressive yoke of Castro and his government, the invaders "actually" chose to attack their homeland to reclaim what they saw as their rightful properties and privileges. This suspected motive was suggested forcefully, for example, when one interviewer said (after a string of seemingly benign inquiries), "Last question: was your decision to incorporate yourself into the counterrevolution influenced by the idea that participating with the North Americans in the attack on Cuba would rescue your lands?"[302] The question seemed

[300] *Hoy*. April 26, 1961:5. This discussion of the Ciénaga (referring to Ciénaga de Zapata, or Zapata Swamp) relates to what scholars have identified as a key reason the invasion failed so spectacularly. From a tactical perspective, that beachhead "was extremely hard to get to" and even harder to navigate (García Luis 2001:70–71), with the shoreline consisting of what Cubans refer to as "dog teeth" beaches (full of sharp, craggy rocks rather than sand). From an ideological perspective, of all the places to expect to find anti-Castro domestic resistors, Ciénaga Swamp was not it. The region was exceptionally poor prior to the rebels' coming to power, "an impoverished backwater where the island's economic inequalities and rural injustices were at their worst" (Bustamante 2021:98). It therefore became a sort of pet project for the revolutionary government and the subject of intensive investments in infrastructure and social assistance. In short, exiles "wade[d] into a physical and figurative quagmire" (ibid.:101).
[301] *Hoy*. April 27, 1961:4.
[302] *Hoy*. April 22, 1961:6.

intended as a bold "gotcha" moment. Similarly, an article from *Hoy* summarizing the proceedings juxtaposed the invaders' stated motives against their supposedly true ones: "They talk about ending communism, saving the western world, free enterprise, the Constitution of 1940, elections in 18 months, freedom, representative democracy, religion, and family."[303] "But," the article continued, "their real program was: defeat the Cuban Revolution, the patriotic, Democratic, and Socialist Revolution of the Humble and reestablish the old regime." These questions and commentaries made clear to the Cuban people that they had collectively just escaped a fate worse than death, a return to the pre-revolutionary status quo, full of exploitation, misery, and suffering.

A final element that was common across the discussions with the prisoners was interviewers' attempts to make explicit the role that the United States had played in the whole affair. We have already seen that many of the Cuban exiles blamed US propaganda for convincing them to join the attack. But the alleged propaganda was the tip of the iceberg, and further conversations revealed the extent of the "invaders' evident collusion with, and evident subordination under, Washington's plans to turn back the revolutionary clock" (Bustamante 2021:107). According to several prisoners, US military personnel planned the entire attack-turned-fiasco and then hung the invaders out to dry. One prisoner gestured toward the level of US involvement when he expressed his incredulity about how off-base the tactical plans had been. He remarked to the journalists, "what I cannot explain to myself is how the American intelligence service did not know that here there are machine guns, cannons, and launching brigades," and later referred to the debacle as "one of the biggest crimes that will fall on the

[303] *Hoy*. April 23. 1961:5. This mention of "elections in 18 months" refers to Castro's initial promise (made in speeches while he was in the United States) that the rebel government would hold elections within 18 months of coming to power, which, of course, they did not (Phillips 2018).

backs of the Americans, this premeditated massacre they have made."[304] Another, insinuating that things would have gone better for the invaders if they had been part of the planning process, expressed his ire for the US higherups who were making the tactical decisions, noting that "if they leave five of us alive," referring to the Cuban security forces charged with caring for the prisoners, "we will kill the commanders who screwed us over."[305] Comments such as these suggested the subordinate role of the invaders. And while playing the part of the puppet in no way absolved them as their guilt, it did clarify the role of the United States as master puppeteer.

Ever Vigilant, Ever Ready

Taking this dynamic of dominance to its logical conclusion, it would be reasonable to assume that the captured patsies could simply be replaced and that the US government and military leaders would press on with their quest to destroy Cuba's revolutionary way of life. Vigilance was, still, the order of the day. As an article from *Hoy* pointed out, various forms of aggression would continue and perhaps even worsen, as it announced that the US planned to impose a "total embargo on imports from Cuba."[306] Castro, for his part, insisted that the enemies of the people "want to shed more blood."[307] It is not surprising then that, even after the invaders had capitulated, *Hoy* urged its readers to maintain alertness, saying, "don't lower your guard and remain vigilant."[308] Even the father of a young wounded soldier said to a reporter from *Hoy*, "I just ask Fidel, that they give me my son's rifle and allow me to occupy his post to continue defending my Homeland."[309] The wounded soldier's father seemed to be heeding Castro's words, as just a few days earlier the prime minister made clear that everyone, no matter their age or

[304] *Hoy*. April 22, 1961:6.
[305] *Bohemia*. April 30, 1961:54.
[306] *Hoy*. April 26, 1961:1.
[307] *Hoy*. April 25, 1961:10.
[308] *Hoy*. April 23, 1961:4.
[309] *Hoy*. April 28, 1961:4.

gender, had an important role to play in national defense: "And that is why our people must be in that spirit: men, women, children, old people, everyone here, everyone is useful. And if you do not have a weapon, you take the place of any comrade who falls."[310] The pueblo, it seemed, was ready to fight.

On a practical level, ongoing efforts at self-defense through vigilance continued through familiar activities of joining workplace militias, participating in neighborhood Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, and keeping an eye out for possible counterrevolutionary activity. On a more symbolic level, the celebration of May 1—an already-planned International Workers' Day extravaganza which, given the circumstances, conveniently doubled as an occasion to celebrate the Bay of Pigs victory—would allow the Cuban people to showcase their continued preparedness and willingness to fight, in addition to their general collective spirit of cooperation, resolve, strength, sacrifice, and resilience.

May 1: Victory-Labor Day

Just as regime leaders marked the triumphant end of the agrarian reform could-be crisis with the elaborate concentración campesina, so too did they commemorate the closure of the Bay of Pigs episode with a massive public display (see Fig. 32 and Fig. 33).[311] Even before Brigade 2506 landed on the shores of the Bay of Pigs, the May 1st celebrations seemingly gestured toward a symbolic meaning well beyond the traditional one of honoring laborers. As early as Castro's speech on April 7, which launched the planning process for all public and collective initiatives related to the May 1st celebrations, regime discourse framed the event as a response to US aggressions. Castro explained to the people, "The imperialists have just published a 'white

[310] *Hoy*. April 25, 1961:6.
[311] *Bohemia*. May 7, 1961:58; *Bohemia*. May 14, 1961:58. These two photos show scenes of the crowd from the Victory-Labor Day celebrations in Havana, which took place at Civic Plaza.

paper,' and apart from the thorough response that the government will give to the imperialist 'white paper,' let us, the people, the workers, peasants, students, youth and women, give, on May 1st, the response that the Yankee 'white paper' deserves!" (Castro 1961j).[312] After the military's crushing defeat of the "mercenary" invaders, May 1st took on new meaning. As an article from *Hoy* explained, "On May 1st, the working class and all the Cuban people will commemorate International Labor Day, which this year will also be the Day of Victory of the Revolutionary Armed Forces that crushed the criminal and devious invasion of the mercenaries and their capitalist masters."[313] Here I will discuss how Castro's May 1st speech and subsequent print media coverage prominently featured the three main trends that characterized the third and final phase of the crisis: celebrating the pueblo for its victory; characterizing and vilifying the enemy combatants; and calling for vigilance, alertness, and preparedness moving into the future.

[312] This "white paper" (which Castro called a "libro blanco," "white book") was issued by the State Department on April 3, 1961. González Barrios reports that the white paper stated that "The current situation in Cuba presents the Western Hemisphere and the Inter-American system with a serious and urgent challenge" (2015:29). According to the US Office of the Historian, this White Paper "was initially drafted in the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs but was extensively revised in the White House by Arthur Schlesinger, with the assistance of Richard Goodwin. President Kennedy carefully reviewed the final draft." Arthur Schlesinger was a close Kennedy confidant and "court historian" (Tanenhaus 2007), while Goodwin was a "senior adviser and speechwriter" (McFadden 2018). Among the accusations listed in the White Paper were "that Premier Castro had instituted a 'repressive dictatorship' in Cuba, had delivered his country 'to the Sino-Soviet bloc,' and was mounting an attack on the entire inter-American system" (https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10/d79).

[313] *Hoy*. April 25, 1961:1.



Figure 32. A view of Civic Plaza during the Victory-Labor Day celebrations



Figure 33. "Young creole athletes" in formation, waving Cuban flags

Discourse surrounding the May 1st Labor-Victory celebrations called attention to the attributes of the pueblo that, leaders had argued, made the victory at the Bay of Pigs possible: "joy, courage, discipline […], and, above all, strength, the invincible strength of a people on the march."[314] Press coverage also alluded to the merits of unity and how the same solidaristic spirit that enabled the pueblo to defend their homeland against the invaders also contributed to the

[314] *Hoy*. May 2, 1961:1.

successes in the areas of production, a logical connection to make on Labor-Victory Day. *Hoy* specifically referenced this power of the collectivity, describing "the strength based on the working-class consciousness of its historical responsibility, the strength that arises from the alliance of that working class with the peasants and with the other classes that make up our people."[315] Castro also discussed how core values of the pueblo were symbolically manifested through the May 1st celebrations. He specified the importance of dedication and perseverance, pointing out that, "We have been on the parade route for fourteen and a half hours. I believe that only a pueblo invaded by such infinite enthusiasm is capable of withstanding such trials" (Castro 1961m). The references to these values highlighted their ability to carry the Cuban people through any situation, whether it be one of intense difficulty or one of celebration.

Alongside the victorious revelry, once more, was commemoration of those who died during the events surrounding the Bay of Pigs invasion. Castro framed the May 1st festivities as an acknowledgement of the fallen Cubans' sacrifice, remarking that "each smile today was like a tribute to those who made this happy and hopeful day possible" (Castro 1961m). In addition to thanking the martyrs posthumously, he again leveraged their deaths to define the pueblo in juxtaposition against its enemies, as he had done in his landmark April 16 speech. Castro discursively drew a sharp line that divided certain kinds of people with certain kinds of values from others. On the side of the "good and true" Cubans were the workers and peasants, who together constituted a very broad swath of the population and whom Castro described as humble, honorable, hard-working, and creative patriots. On the side of the others was a long list of villainous subgroups: "large landowners," "millionaires," "gamblers," "thieves," "criminals," and "exploiters." Castro concluded this passage by suggesting that these differences in values

[315] Ibid.

also led to differences in behaviors. Whereas both good Cubans and Cuban exiles participated in combat, the former did so as "workers who voluntarily and spontaneously enrolled in the country's army" whereas the latter were defined collectively as "the mercenary who sells his soul for the gold of the powerful empire." In this way, the Cubans who died during the attacks were a perpetual and immortal example of the values to which all true Cubans should aspire.

The way that Castro discussed the captured invaders in his speech further reinforced the differences between the pueblo and its enemies by reminding the audience who the prisoners were and what had motivated them to join the assault on their former homeland.[316] Castro devised a clever and persuasive way of illustrating to the public the social class and character of the invading "mercenaries." The leaders of the revolution conducted a survey among a sample of prisoners (1,000 out of a total of 1,200) to ascertain their collective wealth, statistics which Castro reported to the public at the May 1st celebration (1961m). He said that among the 1,000 surveyed, 800 "were from wealthy families" that together owned "27,556 caballerías affected by the revolution; 9,666 houses, 70 factories, 10 sugar mills, 2 banks, and 5 mines." Of the remaining 200 prisoners—that is, those who were not from the wealthy families—"135 were ex-military from Batista's army." This summation quantified and reinforced the main point already made via the prisoner interviews. Regardless of whether it derived from wealth or position, the privileges that the invaders had enjoyed before the revolutionary government came to power were indisputable, this time illustrated through cold, hard statistics.

This laundry list of seized assets, Castro argued before the crowd, was the real motivation behind the actions of the invaders and their imperialist backers. He again chastised their stated

[316] Bustamante, among other historians, considers this speech to have been a pivotal moment in the characterization of the prisoners, arguing that, "In terms of public representations, Fidel Castro's May 1 address probably offered the definitive, or at least most influential, word on who the invaders were and what they were about" (2021:115).

motives, such as defense of "free enterprise," noting that the defense of free enterprise does not explain the facts: "that they came to murder peasants, that they came to assassinate workers, that they came to make the people shed blood" (1961m). The prisoners' self-proclaimed motivations, Castro declared, were mere illusion, poor attempts to confuse the Cuban people. Rather, he maintained, the members of Brigade 2506 landed at the beaches on the Bay of Pigs for one reason alone: to reclaim the 27,556 caballerías of land, 9,666 houses, 70 factories, 10 sugar mills, 2 banks, and 5 mines that the regime had stripped from the invaders and their wealthy families. Despite whatever the prisoners said, leaders of the revolutionary government saw only one motive that truly explained the actions of the "mercenaires": destroying the progress of the revolution and returning Cuba to its pre-revolutionary status quo.

Whereas most of the Brigade members stood to gain financially from a successful invasion, their supporters hoped to curry favor with those whom they expected to quickly return as Cuba's national power elite. Among those who lent support to the now captive invaders, Castro singled out clergy and private school teachers and took the opportunity of having a large crowd assembled before him to announce new policies related to those two groups. The prime minister first announced that all foreign priests would be expelled from the country, owing to their direct participation in the Bay of Pigs invasion as well as their general alliances with and support of various counterrevolutionary groups and their ideas.[317] Castro explained, "we are going to announce here, to the people, that the Revolutionary Government, in the next few days, will decree a law by virtue of which it will declare null and void all permission to remain in the national territory to all foreign priests in our country" (1961m). However, not wanting to punish

[317] Pedraza notes that three Catholic priests accompanied Brigade 2506 on their invading mission (2007:95). Crahan puts the figure at four, specifies their Spanish nationality, and adds that Manuel Artime, who was the leader of the Catholic anti-Castro group Agrupación Católica (Catholic Group) helped to lead the invasion (1989:9).

all for the deeds of many, he did acknowledge that any priest who "has not maintained an attitude against the government" could be granted special permission to remain on the island.

Castro also had long publicly considered private schools to be hotbeds of counterrevolutionary activity, a stance made clear after the explosion at Nobel Academy. He argued that teachers with reactionary attitudes were taking advantage of their proximity to young people to indoctrinate them with counterrevolutionary ideas when they were too young to know better and therefore announced that a decree to nationalize all remaining private schools would be issued in the coming days.[318] Through this, the government would gain monopolistic control over another important mechanism of ideological consolidation and subject formation: the educational system. These policy declarations demonstrated to the people that the revolutionary regime intended to take a harsh and definitive stance not only against the invaders themselves but anyone who had contributed to their devious efforts.

After celebrating the people, thanking the martyrs, castigating the invaders, and lambasting their supporters, Castro concluded his speech by turning toward topics of the future and instructing the people on their next tasks. The primary objective, he noted, was to remain ready to defend the pueblo because the threats from the North had not disappeared. As Castro explained to the people, "we know that at any moment we can be victims of aggression, that at any moment the imperialists fabricate any pretext, with the same cynicism and the same brazenness with which they bombed our towns here and said they were our airplanes" (1961m). Here, Castro presented his version of the April 15 bombings as facts, even though they were not beyond dispute, to "prove" a key aspect of US leaders' collective character. Devious and

[318] He expressed this concern, for example, in a speech he gave at the closing ceremony of the First Student Plenary of Young Rebels on March 27, 1961. Attacking reactionary teachers, he said, "it is those intellectual guides, or accomplices of those classes, who sow the counterrevolutionary spirit and betrayal in the minds and hearts of that youth" (1961k).

unscrupulous, they were willing to go to any lengths to achieve their goal, which, in this case, was the toppling of the Castro-led government.

After issuing this warning, Castro turned inward, reminding the people of the values that he asserted characterized the new pueblo. The people must, he urged, be both unafraid and willing to sacrifice. Speaking their bravery and self-abnegation into existence, Castro proclaimed, "Fear never belongs to the humble; the humble are unafraid. The people who fight for their freedom are not afraid, and they are willing to pay whatever price is necessary" (1961m). Thus, just as the imperialist enemies would stop at nothing to destroy Cuba's revolution, the people should stop at nothing to defend it. Finally, given the dangerous and unpredictable nature of the enemy, Castro insisted that everyone become involved in national defense. He illustrated this all-hands-on-deck approach when singling out different subgroups of the population that marched in the May 1st parade and demonstrated their willingness to fight. He praised the people, saying, "Because against the imperialist invaders here, even the *pioneros* that you saw marching here, even the school children, the peasant women, not just the workers, but the whole town, are going to fight. Even the children are going to fight against the imperialists here!"[319]

Conclusion

The May 1st celebration officially and publicly marked the end of the Bay of Pigs episode in the sense that the immediate, existential crisis seemed to have passed. However, the aftermath of the invasion dragged on for quite some time, in both practical, political, and symbolic terms.

[319] "Pioneros" (pioneers) was the name given to children who participated in the youngest division of the UJC (Unión de Jovenes Comunistas, Young Communist League): the League of Rebel Pioneers (Unión de Pioneros Rebeldes, UPR), which was renamed to the League of Cuban Pioneers (Unión de Pioneros de Cuba, UPC) in 1962 (Luke 2018:83).

The prisoners' trials took place roughly a year after the invasion, at which time all surviving members of Brigade 2506 were found guilty of "high crimes and treason" and assigned a ransom whose price varied according to their level of involvement with the planning and execution of the attack (Bustamante 2021:116). A protracted series of negotiations surrounding the terms of the prisoner exchange dragged on for several more months. By December of 1962, President Kennedy had finally agreed to a price: 53 million dollars' worth of medicines and other goods that had been made inaccessible to Cubans because of the US trade embargo (Guerra 2012:159).

Politically, the Bay of Pigs debacle offered the revolutionary government an easy opportunity for political consolidation via purging of the opposition. Basically, as Ferrer explains, the United States' handling of the Cuba situation did a great deal of Castro's work for him, arguing that, "Rather than defeat Castro, the US operation helped Fidel purge many of his most committed opponents" (2021:367). This is because US intelligence officers recruited disaffected Cubans and removed them from the country to train them. Although some of those agents never returned to Cuba, others did but were ultimately captured and subsequently imprisoned or even executed. Others still joined Brigade 2506 and were neutralized as a threat through their imprisonment and eventual deportation. In fact, Che Guevara reportedly went as far as to *thank* Richard Goodwin, a Kennedy advisor, for the invasion, with Goodwin explaining that, "Their hold on the country had been a bit shaky […] but the invasion allowed the leadership to consolidate most of the major elements of the country around Fidel" (LeoGrande and Kornbluh 2014:45). Kennedy himself made a similar observation, allegedly remarking that "Fidel Castro ought to be grateful to us. He gave us a kick in the ass and it made him stronger than ever" (Matthews 1975:206). Finally, the episode offered Cuba's leadership a clear and compelling rationale to justify strengthening their connection with the Soviet Union. Convinced

that the United States would not let their defeat stand indefinitely, Castro—in declaring the socialist character of the revolution on April 16th—signaled Cuba's alignment with the Soviets, which was later solidified through military support (Ferrer 2021:368).[320] Thus, rather than draw Cuban popular support over to the side of the counterrevolutionaries, the Bay of Pigs episode instead gutted the anti-government opposition, especially in urban areas.[321]

On a more strictly ideological level, the events surrounding the Bay of Pigs invasion—as a symbol of the difference between the Cuban pueblo and their imperialist enemies (both internal and external) and of the unbeatable will and determination of the people—reverberated through revolutionary discourse and policy for months, years, and even decades to come. Whereas leaders stressed unity and unanimity for surviving the agrarian reform episode, "the Bay of Pigs provided a new reminder that revolutionary unity could be a matter of life and death" and greatly narrowed the space within which the public could voice "heterodox, centrist, or constructive critiques of the Revolution's leftward orientation" (Bustamante 2021:96). In the near term, Castro continued referencing the invasion to highlight the people's resilience and motivate their participation in the government's various projects and initiatives. For example, in a May 14th speech honoring the mothers of the young campesina women who had traveled to Havana to study, Castro noted, "the fact that not even the mercenary attack has been able to interrupt the work of the Revolution is a good proof of what our people are capable of" (Castro 1961c). This statement was both retrospective and future-oriented, in that Castro praised the significant accomplishment of the pueblo (resiliently continuing with all important duties despite the chaotic

[320] Castro and his colleagues were right to suspect that the Bay of Pigs did not close the chapter on US attempts at foreign-imposed regime change. The Bay of Pigs invasion, as Stodden and Weiss point out, "was merely a small part of a larger overall program to destabilize the Castro Government. That the invasion itself failed ultimately only caused the US to adopt other measures to weaken Castro relative to his domestic opponents" (Stodden and Weiss 2017:76). For further discussion of these measures, see the Coda of Part I.

[321] In contrast, the "rural *bandido* counterrevolution" unfolding in the Escambray Mountains would continue until mid-1965 (Brown 2017:139), as I discuss in the Coda of Part I.

climate generated by the invasion), while insinuating that their recent feat was evidence of what they could achieve in the future.

Even after Cuba returned the prisoners and received their ransom, the Bay of Pigs episode continued to appear regularly in revolutionary discourse and practice. The heroic defeat of the invaders entered into the cannon of the most highly celebrated events on the revolutionary calendar and was thus commemorated annually for several years with a speech by Fidel Castro.[322] Beyond Castro's discourse, references to the episode consistently appeared in the arts and in popular culture. For example, the national symphony orchestra staged a memorial performance in 1963 in which the organizers used the concert's printed program to draw explicit connections "between the music and the biographies of the conductors and composers and the nationalist spirit that the Bay of Pigs victory represented" (Quevedo 2019:27). In 1968, revered Cuban filmmaker Tomás Gutiérrez Alea released *Memorias del Subdesarrollo* (*Memories of Underdevelopment*), widely considered "a classic of the Cuban and New Latin American cinemas" as well as "a masterpiece of revolutionary film-making" (López 1995:6). Based on Edmundo Desnoes' 1965 novel of the same name, the film follows Sergio—"a bourgeois intellectual" from Havana, "trying to make sense of the changes in his life, and that of the country, following the self-exile of his family after the failed Bay of Pigs invasion" (Thakkar 2010:705). Gutiérrez Alea beckons viewers to relive their memories of that episode by interspersing documentary footage from 1961 throughout the film. Whether through speeches,

[322] Leaders orchestrated annual celebrations in which Castro spoke every year until 1969 and 1970, when many traditional celebrations were suspended for the sake of the Ten-Million-Ton sugar harvest (Chapter 4). Bay of Pigs commemorations resumed in 1971 (the invasion's then anniversary) and continued on a ten-year basis until 1991, at which point they became more frequent (once every five years). Castro delivered his final Bay of Pigs anniversary speech on the event's 40th anniversary in 2001.

newspapers, special commemorative events, literature, or even a museum, reminders of the meaning and impacts of the Bay of Pigs were never far from the pueblo's eyes and ears.

Cuba's leaders had many reasons to continue referring back to the Bay of Pigs could-be crisis and its triumphant resolution. It was genuinely a point of pride among the Cuban people and rightfully so given that they, through their collective efforts and sacrifice, were able to not only resist but also handily defeat and invading force that was trained and equipped by one of the world's foremost military powers (Bustamante 2021:96–97). However, the experiences of that episode also proved pragmatically useful. First, leaders seemed to have interpreted the attacks of early 1961 as offering an opportunity not only to further highlight, clarify, and entrench the pueblo-enemy dichotomy but also to extend the policing of that boundary beyond the narrow confines of the military context and into the realm of artists, writers, and intellectuals.[323] Second, the aura of enthusiasm and even invincibility generated by the months surrounding the invasion were feelings that leaders could attempt to "harness the self-sacrifice and collective consciousness that had enabled the guerrilla fighters to win the revolution and to defeat the invaders at the Bay of Pigs, by putting them to work in solving more mundane economic challenges" (Ritter and Henken 2015:61). This tactic of channeling emotion and directing it toward the large-scale projects that remained on leaders' agenda would reach full maturity in the Revolutionary Offensive.

[323] One noteworthy example of this process was the "*P.M.* Affair." In 1961, a short film (*P.M.*, as in post-meridiem) directed by Sabá Cabrera Infante and Orlando Jimenez Leal was censored by the Cuban Institute of Cinematographic Arts and Industries and not permitted to be shown in public. Officials argue that the film—which documented Havana nightlife in a cinema verité style—upheld counterrevolutionary ideals. As Benson explains, "The Afro-Cubans caught on camera for *P.M.* saw little reason to give up their nightly leisure activities, nor did they fit into the parameters of appropriate blackness, which valued clean-cut and grateful workers and *brigadistas* [brigade members]" (2018:139). Following the censoring of the film, Castro led a series of meetings for artists and intellectuals at the National Library in Havana, culminating with his speech on June 30 in which he discussed intellectual and artistic liberties under the revolution. He famously sated, "within the Revolution, everything; against the Revolution, nothing" (Castro 1961a), setting the tone for what artists, writers, professors, and other intellectuals could and could not do under the new regime.

Coda

As leaders continued consolidating their ideological project of shaping solidarity and articulating revolutionary subjects, there were several parallel developments on the military, economic, and political fronts during the remainder of the first phase of consolidation that concluded in 1965.

Cubans reveled in their victory at the Bay of Pigs, but Castro's warnings—sometimes seemingly verging on paranoia—that the leaders of the United States would continue their quest to remove him from power proved well founded. The years after the invasion (1961-1965) constituted a period of "intensified US covert action against Cuba" (Blight and Brenner 2002:100). Just a few months after the botched invasion attempt, in November of 1961, President Kennedy authorized "Operation Mongoose" and appointed his brother to implement it. It was a "massive, multifaceted campaign of overt diplomatic and economic pressure to isolate and impoverish the island, and covert paramilitary operations to overthrow the Communist regime" (LeoGrande and Kornbluh 2014:43). These ongoing external threats contributed to the perpetuation of a siege mentality among the population and a commitment on the part of leaders to remain militarily always at the ready.

This atmosphere likely contributed to Cuban leaders' decision to enter into an agreement with Khrushchev to place offensive nuclear missiles on the island, a choice that ultimately provoked the 1962 October Crisis. The Crisis encompassed the roughly month-long period of time between President Kennedy learning about the presence of Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba

(October 16) and Khrushchev deciding to remove the missiles (November 20).[324] Castro initially agreed to Khrushchev's weapons proposal because, as the latter argued, "Soviet rockets in Cuba would protect socialist republics everywhere from US aggression" (Brown 2017:73). By July, the weapons were on their way (Ferrer 2021:371; Matthews 1975:210). United States U-2 spy planes detected and photographed the Soviet missiles in Cuba on October 14, setting off a rapid series of events: Kennedy's security advisers alerted him to the missiles on October 16; six days later, Kennedy gave a speech alerting the public to this development; the next day, October 23, Castro gave his own address to the Cuban people, informing them of the situation and ordering them to mobilize immediately.[325] Within a week, on October 28, Khrushchev—"without consulting or even informing the Cuban Government" (García Luis 2001:124)—capitulated, having "lost his nerve" in the face of the US naval blockade of the Caribbean (Brown 2017:74). Khrushchev agreed to remove the missiles in exchange for Kennedy's verbal guarantee that the United States would not sponsor another invasion of Cuba.

Though primarily military in nature, this episode had a profound impact on geopolitical relations moving forward. On the one hand, Cuban leaders felt abandoned.[326] The outcome of the crisis was successful in the sense that leaders managed to avoid nuclear war, but Kennedy's promise not to invade Cuba again resolved neither the situation of the economic blockade nor the

[324] While the main events of this episode unfolded in late 1962, US leaders were already concerned about Soviet intervention in Cuban military affairs given that, during the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion, Khrushchev said, "As to the Soviet Union, there should be no misunderstanding of our position: We shall render the Cuban people and their Government all necessary assistance in beating back the armed attack on Cuba" (Matthews 1975:207).
[325] Military personnel and civilians worked together to ready the island for imminent attack by building "sandbag barriers around machine guns on the Malecón seawall" and helping "dig trenches and barbwire the shore" (Ferrer 2021:377). Radio emissions offered instructions to the public: "to collect buckets of sand to use in case of fires, to not hoard food, and to 'keep a small piece of wood handy to place between teeth when bombing begins'" (ibid.:378).
[326] This sense of abandonment would seemingly play a leading role in the next could-be crisis, the 1968 microfaction episode (Chapter 3). As Blight and Brenner point out, "the missile crisis had become for Cubans what psychologists call a 'primal event,' one in which the pattern, fear, and outcome of a very traumatic experience becomes so layered over time that it is difficult for outsiders even to detect the influence of the precipitating event" (2002:xxv).

question of Cuban airspace (Brown 2017:74–75).[327] And why would Cuba's leaders be satisfied to take Kennedy at his word?[328] In short, Cuba was in a vulnerable position.[329] On the other hand, however, this vulnerability was liberating in a sense; Castro and his colleagues seemed to interpret the Soviet abandonment as offering them carte blanche. "Cuba felt unfettered," Yordanov explains, "by [the] East's objections to the expansion of its revolutionary exploits across Latin America" (2021:1181).[330] This fragile state of Cuba-Soviet relations in the mid-1960s then is an important factor in analyzing the could-be crises of the second half of the decade.[331]

While Cold War dynamics consumed the Cuban military's outward gaze, internal dissent demanded attention as well.[332] Between mid-1959 and 1965, the Revolutionary Armed Forces

[327] Only several months later would Castro and his colleagues learn the full extent of Khrushchev's betrayal. In his visit to Moscow during spring of the following year, Castro learned, "due to a slip of the tongue by Khrushchev," that a third component of the October Crisis resolution was the United States agreeing to move NATO missiles out of Turkey and Italy, obviously to the benefit of the Soviet Union (Blight and Brenner 2002:99–100).
[328] Their skepticism would soon prove well founded. In line with Operation Mongoose, in September of 1964, counterrevolutionaries based in Miami headed to Cuba to attack the *Sierra Maestra*, Cuba's merchant marines' largest vessel. However, they instead inadvertently attacked the *Sierra Aranzazu*, a *Spanish* general cargo ship, killing three men and wounding eight others (Anon 1964). Brown argues that this blunder prompted a recalibration of US covert efforts toward regime change in Cuba, with Washington "now convinced that it had to temper the monster it created with CIA funding" because "it was one thing to encourage émigré groups to infiltrate into Cuba and commit acts of subversion but quite another to allow these groups to select their own hit-and-run targets" (2017:187; see also Arboleya 2000:128).
[329] "Within two short years," Kapcia points out, "the Revolution had shifted from a confident defiance of Washington and an enthusiastic adoption of socialism to complete isolation, economic failure, potential dependence, and resentment against its new Communist allies" (2008:34).
[330] Although, by Blight and Brenner's account, Cuban leaders continued at least professing a commitment to toe more closely the Moscow line. Specifically, Cuba agreed to a pair of resolutions coming out of a congress of Latin American communist parties held in December of 1964: "that armed struggle was *one* valid means of achieving socialism *and* that each communist party should assess the particular means appropriate for its country" (2002:xxi).
[331] Although Cuba-Chinese relations are largely beyond the scope of this dissertation, it is worth mentioning that another geopolitical byproduct of the October Crisis was the gravitation of some Cuban government leaders to the Chinese model. As Kapcia explains, the Soviet's "climb-down" in October—coupled with their insistence on economic orthodoxy (that is, urging Cuba to prioritize agriculture over industry)—"reactivated old suspicions and pushed several [leaders] towards different interpretations of communism," including "the Chinese model (independent, agrarian, and mobilizing)" (2008:96).
[332] Similar to discussions of the urban anti-Castro resistance, the secondary literature on the Lucha Contra Bandidos is scant, owing in no small part to a lack of availability of evidence. As Brown points out, "evidence and statistics on this 'terrorism' comes from sources of the revolutionary government" (2017:146), which obviously would have had a vested interest in minimizing the scale of the conflict and extent of counterrevolutionary sentiment in rural areas

and militias fought against small bands of rural resistance in what the revolutionary government called the "Lucha Contra Bandidos" (the Fight against the Bandits).[333] These rebel groups initially consisted of people who were negatively impacted by regime change in and of itself, meaning those close to Batista who still remained in Cuba (Brown 2017:136). Like the urban resistance, records indicate that these bands sprouted from indigenous grievances but blossomed with CIA assistance (Guerra 2010:208). As time wore on, people negatively affected by regime policy—like "smallholders and their rural allies" (Brown 2017:138)—and people who actively fought *against* Batista but became disaffected with the government's leftward turn joined their ranks as well. In what seems to have been the first official retrospective statement on the Lucha, Raúl Castro admitted that the opposition side of this "civil war" consisted of "179 guerrilla units across all six provinces, including rural Havana" (Guerra 2023:46). Across the period of the Lucha, there were 177 "outlaw gangs" that consisted of 2,000 combatants aided by another 6,000 or more collaborators (Brown 2017:161). These bands organized guerrilla-style attacks—in which they "committed sabotage, set fire to tobacco drying sheds, and descended to the plains to burn fields of maturing sugarcane" (ibid.:145-46)—in protest of the revolutionary government. After 1962, these activities dropped off precipitously as groups disbanded when revolutionary forces captured their leaders, and they continued dwindling until January 1965 when the government announced that the last of the bandidos had fallen.

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and among campesinos. Writing in 2010, Guerra claimed that no one—"neither the revolution nor the forces of external counterrevolution"—had "engaged in any serious, open analysis" of this conflict (2010:207). Since then a couple of books have covered the topic (Brown 2017; Swanger 2015), including one published in Cuba, which Guerra notes acknowledges "the blank spot in the historiography of these years" (2023:413).

[333] As Guerra points out, the derogatory use of "bandidos" to describe Cubans dated to the independence era. It was used then by the Spanish to describe the anti-imperial rebels and, later, by Batista to describe Castro and the other rebels (Guerra 2010:213). Interestingly, this was not a uniquely Iberian phenomenon. The Bolsheviks, too, used "bandits," which Hoffman suggests demonstrated their "new understanding of peasant insurgency not as political opposition but as criminal deviance and rebellious lawlessness" (2011:262).

Within only a couple of years, it had become painfully clear to Cuba's economic planners that their initial strategy—leveraging agricultural diversification to jumpstart import-substitution industrialization—had several issues that prevented it from working as planned.[334] On the one hand, there was a deficit of human capital. As Ritter aptly puts it, "Cuba lacked the technical and administrative capacity to implement an industrialization program of the dimension, and with the speed, envisaged by the revolutionary leaders" (1972:319). In the wake of the emigration of many managers and technicians, leaders filled their absence with "loyal revolutionaries, but incompetent administrators" (Mesa-Lago 1971:285). On the other hand, there were problems with the socialist aspects of the model, including "inefficiency and waste" (ibid.). According to Mesa-Lago, René Dumont, a French agronomist who advised Cuba's planners, found that state-run farms were producing only half as much as privately-owned ones (ibid.:286). In 1963, agricultural output fell below that of 1957, and, in comparative perspective, Cuba had the lowest average annual rates of industrial output among all socialist bloc countries (ibid.:286;293). Cuba furthermore saw declines in the production of sugar and other crops alongside increases in the importation of raw materials (Ritter 1972:321). In sum, it was impossible to expect to achieve goals of economic growth under these conditions and with the present strategy.

Accordingly, the revolutionary government launched a new economic development plan. Heeding the long-ignored pleading of their Soviet advisors, Cuba's leaders opted to capitalize on their comparative advantages and lengthen their projected timeframe for industrialization (Mesa-Lago 1971:281; Pollitt 2004:323; Ritter 1972:323). Sugar, of course, was Cuba's premier

[334] One clear indicator of the plan's shortcomings was the implementation of a national rationing system in March 1962, at which time "rationing was imposed and rapidly spread to practically all consumer goods" (Mesa-Lago 1971:290). As I have discussed elsewhere (Triplett 2022, 2024), official discourse emphasized the role of the US economic embargo in making the ration system necessary. However, the domestic economic mismanagement discussed here played a sizeable role as well.

comparative advantage. With this in mind, Castro first planted the seed of an idea for a sugar harvest so massive that it would surpass ten million tons:

> And since we are in better conditions, since no country can produce sugar in the conditions in which ours can produce it, since we have a developed sugar industry, since we are in a position to apply modern techniques, since we are in a position to increase the yield of our sugar cane lands year by year, someday those bourgeois competitors will realize that they cannot compete with us and that, in the matter of sugar, we will have the "sugar atomic bomb" in our hands [applause]. What does this mean? That by the year 1970, we may be in a position to surpass the figure of ten million tons of sugar [applause], *we will be in a position to export 10 million tons of sugar* […]. (emphasis added) (Castro 1963)

Formalized via the 1964 Cuban-Soviet Sugar Agreement (Thomas 1971:1438) and the 1965-1970 Sugar Perspective Plan (García 1971:8;4), Cuba's new path to economic growth and independence was lined with sugarcane.

The main feature of political consolidation between 1961 and 1965 was the iterative reorganization of the government's ruling coalition and the various factions of pre-revolutionary groups that comprised it. In July 1961, key leaders announced the formation of the Integrated Revolutionary Organizations (Organizaciones Revolucionarias Integradas, ORI), which consisted primarily of members from three different groups: the 26th of July Movement, the Revolutionary Directorate, and the Popular Socialist Party (Partido Socialista Popular, PSP), which Selbin describes as "Cuba's old-line, Moscow-oriented, prerevolutionary Communist party" (1993:43). In March of 1962, the organization's secretary, Aníbal Escalante (a key figure in the microfaction affair covered in Chapter 3) and other old-guard communists became the subject of bitter criticisms coming from Castro.[335] Castro painted Escalante and his coterie as

[335] While the formation of the ORI itself was the culmination of "gradual improvement in the relationship between the Communists and Cuba's political leadership" (Fuller 1992:168), the organization's short lifespan was a testament to lingering suspicion of prerevolutionary communists among Castro and his closest allies in leadership. Part of this skepticism stems from the PSP's role in the Batista government and involvement (or, lack thereof) in the anti-Batista movement. PSP members developed an alliance during his 1940-44 constitutional presidential term, but

"'ambitious sectarians' who had tried to turn ORI into an instrument for personal power" (Aguilar 1995:127). But the whole organization was corrupt, in Castro's estimation, and needed to go. It was "a garbage heap, a hotbed of sectarianism, a nest of privilege, a haven for opportunists, a center of arbitrariness and distrust of the masses, and a bureaucracy packed with power seekers" (Fagen 1969:116). Thus, Castro sent Escalante away to Czechoslovakia, dissolved the ORI, and reconstituted the ruling coalition as a ruling *party*: the United Party of the Cuban Socialist Revolution (Partido Unido de la Revolución Socialista de Cuba, PURSC), as I discuss in greater detail in Chapter 3.

The PURSC lasted only until October of 1965, at which point party leaders officially established the Cuban Communist Party (Partido Comunista de Cuba, PCC), "thus marking a more organized structure within the leadership in line with the Soviet system" (Clayfield 2019:58).[336] On October 3, Castro gave a speech introducing to the public the members of the PCC's Central Committee (Comité Central) (Castro 1965). That committee, however, would not formally convene until three years later when, in January of 1968, factionalism reemerged within the left in the form of the microfaction episode of Chapter 3.

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they also occasionally collaborated with his police forces after his 1952 coup (Yordanov 2021:1175). Furthermore, PSP instructed its members not to get involved in the armed insurrection during the later 1950s because they had their own skepticism regarding Castro and his, in their eyes, questionable communist credentials (ibid.)

[336] Given the timing—a return to agricultural comparative advantage of growing sugar, which required Soviet cooperation both in providing inputs for growing the cane and in purchasing the final product—it is reasonable to suspect that the decision to formally establish a communist party in Cuba in 1965 had at least some consideration of the Soviet perspective behind it. However, "The Soviet leadership," Blight and Brenner contend, "was not impressed by this" (2002:109). They base this assertion on a quote from Soviet Minister of Foreign Trade, Anastas Mikoyan, who said, "in creating the PCC in 1965, Fidel was merely trying to stop attempts by other Latin American communist parties from characterizing him as—many called him at the time—a 'petty bourgeois adventurer'" (ibid.).

Part II: Maintaining Revolutionary Consolidation, 1965-1970

Introduction

By the dawn of 1966, the leaders of the Cuban revolutionary regime stood on fairly firm ground, and their project of consolidating the military, economic, and political bases of social power had entered into a more mundane, less frenzied stage. As existential military threats abated, leaders embarked on a new economic pathway expected to invigorate lagging growth rates after having coalesced into a single communist party from which to lead the pueblo. Nevertheless, there were some important developments in the second half of the decade that are crucial for understanding the final could-be crises I examine: the 1968 microfaction affair and Revolutionary Offensive (Chapter 3) and the 1969-70 Ten-Million-Ton sugar harvest campaign.

Cubans' confidence in their ability to independently defend themselves, coupled with the diversion of US attention toward Vietnam, resulted in a militarily calmer atmosphere that allowed leaders to turn their attention once more to revolution in the hemisphere. Part of Cuba's seeming military independence came from experience. Having managed to repel armed invaders at the Bay of Pigs and quell internal rebellion during the Lucha Contra Bandidos, the "revolutionary army and militia forces were trained, indoctrinated, and armed" (Brown 2017:100–101). In short, they had outgrown their need for direct Russian support in terms of, for example, artillerymen. The other part, however, came from neglect. A pattern of Soviet inaction suggested to the leaders of the FAR that they would be unwise to rely on their socialist patrons for direct military assistance. After failing to defend Cuba in the October Crisis and leaving

Vietnam to its own devices in the face of US aggressions, "the Soviet union seemed less powerful, reliable, and respectful of Cuban sovereignty than Cuban leaders had first thought would be the case" (Pérez-Stable 1999:110). Additionally, given the fact that the United States, "the island nation's primary aggressor" (Brown 2017:101), was increasingly deeply engaged in its crusade against communism in East Asia, leaders at last could deprioritize defense against armed aggression. This freed up energy and resources for leaders to pursue their ideological and material interests in promoting Latin American revolutions.[337]

Alongside—or perhaps because of—this relative sense of international security, the second half of the sixties witnessed and intensification of activity on the part of Cuba's *internal* security apparatus. This tendency is perhaps best exemplified by the creation of the euphemistically named Military Production Assistance Units (Unidades Militares de Ayuda a la Producción, UMAP). The somewhat neutral moniker belied the more sinister nature of these forced agricultural labor camps that consisted of "dozens, if not hundreds, of separate sites" (Guerra 2019:132). Though estimates vary greatly—"ranging from a few thousand to eighty thousand" (Nelson 1972:108)—there is strong historiographical consensus about who these camps targeted.[338] In short, they were ideological diversionists. State security authorities targeted individuals they perceived as not conforming to the standards of revolutionary subjecthood in terms of religion, sexuality, and politics: Catholics, Protestants, Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh-Day Adventists, and practitioners of Santería, including Abakuá, a secret Afro-Cuban society; perceived or professed gay men, lesbians, or anyone deviating from norms of heterosexuality and

[337] Ideologically, Cuban leaders' interest in spreading revolutionary movements throughout the Americas was rooted in their ideological commitment to a global socialist revolution. Materially, however, as Pérez-Stable has pointed out, "With allies in the Western Hemisphere and more economic resources, Cuba would lessen its dependence on the Soviet Union" (1999:110–11).

[338] As Nelson himself notes, precise estimates are quite difficult owing to the unavailability of official statistics, but he points out that the 80,000 figure "may be far too high" (1972:108). Bustamante puts the number at "as many as 30,000" (2021:119), whereas Guerra offers a less precise figure of "tens of thousands" (2012:227).

gender in the binary; and political dissidents (Farber 2011:21; Guerra 2012:227; Nelson 1972:108; Pedraza 2007:123; Rojas 2015). Even an affinity for "alternative Western youth culture, exemplified by long hair, blue jeans, and 'rock n' roll'" could be cause for internment in a UMAP facility (Ritter and Henken 2015:61). The UMAP served both practical and ideological purposes. They were "work farms conceived as centers of agricultural production but also as institutions that would correct moral 'deviations'" (Rojas 2015). Although they were closed in 1968 due largely to international protest (Guerra 2019:132), for the few years they operated, the UMAP were a mechanism for isolating ideological deviants from the rest of the population until they could be sufficiently rehabilitated, in the eyes of party leaders, to rejoin the pueblo.

As noted previously, due to a confluence of factors, Cuba's economic planners reformulated their growth plan in the latter half of the 1960s. Because their initial strategy not only failed to produce the desired material results but also angered Soviet allies in the process, "'Export propulsion,'" as Ritter puts it, "replaced 'import substituting industrialization' as the central core of the strategy" (1972:323). The product fueling the "export propulsion" was sugar.

From 1965 onward, the economists focused on recovering from lower sugar yields earlier in the decade to be able to meet Soviet demand and to build up capacity for the 1970 Ten Million Ton sugar harvest campaign. The revolutionary government's first two years in power saw higher sugar yields (6.2 million tons annually, on average) than in the previous period (5.4 million tons annually, on average, between 1950 and 1958) (Pérez-Stable 1999:85). However, from 1961 to 1963, rather than seeing sugar yields increase to 7 million tons per economists' projections, production actually fell, first down to 4.8 million tons in 1962 and again to a mere 3.8 million tons in 1963 (ibid.). Increasing sugar production was imperative for meeting the sugar quotas established in the 1964 Cuban-Soviet Sugar Agreement discussed previously. The

Soviets were scheduled to purchase 3 million tons for 1966 and another 5 million for the 1968-1970 period. Furthermore, as Castro intimated in his 1963 speech, leaders hoped to build up to 10 million tons by 1970, with the 1965-1970 Sugar Prospective Plan forming the onramp. Formulated by the Ministry of Sugar (Ministerio del Azúcar, MINAZ, created in 1964), the Plan "defined the various spheres of responsibility and called for cooperation from all levels of production" (García 1971:5). Laying these preparations out in advance, leaders hoped, would facilitate reaching the ten-million-ton goal by the decade's end.

Much like the international security scene, the panorama of domestic politics was—with one notable exception covered extensively in Chapter 3—relatively stable. The establishment of the Cuban Communist Party (Partido Comunista de Cuba, PCC) in 1965 gave some measure of finality to the inter-group struggles that lingered after the ouster of Batista. And the creation of "Local Power" ("Poder Local") instituted a system of municipal-level, participatory governance designed to facilitate the collective resolution of minor political grievances. According to one article from *Bohemia*, through the institutional structures of Local Power, "Each municipality manages its own assets, takes advantage of its resources and wealth, solves its problems, and freely develops its initiatives."[339] At least in theory, the article explained, "popular assemblies, lively and dynamic" would "replace the old structure of the mayor and councilors, once symbols of politicking." Thus, leaders focused on preserving unity and avoiding factionalism at the upper echelons of the regime's government and on incorporating average Cubans into political processes at the grassroots level.

Internationally, however, the geopolitical panorama at this time was less settled. Castro's continuing commitment to what he termed "true tropical communism" complicated an already

[339] *Bohemia*. April 26, 1968:31.

fraught relationship with the Soviet Union (Castro 1968b).[340] Describing this period, Mesa-Lago remarks, "As Cuba has become more radical in her ideological line, difficulties with the USSR have increased" (1969:208). Castro's insistence on spreading revolution in Latin America threatened both US hegemony in the hemisphere and Soviet hegemony in the socialist world (Blight and Brenner 2002). Tensions flared, for example, in the wake of the Tricontinental Conference, held in Cuba in January 1966. The meeting gathered anti-imperialist leaders from across Africa, Asia, and Latin America to discuss pressing world issues, like the war in Vietnam, and to build solidarity across disparate movements. At the meeting, however, explicit support for the revolutionaries in Vietnam was frequently accompanied by more or less implicit criticism of the Soviet Union for its "policy of 'peaceful coexistence'" (Brown 2017:98), which delegates blamed for the "allegedly weak Soviet support for North Vietnam" (Blight and Brenner 2002:xxii). Castro specifically renewed calls for global armed insurrection, skewered Latin American communist parties for their adherence to Moscow's directives, and "expressed [Cuba's] readiness to give Vietnam not only its sugar but also its blood" (Yordanov 2021:1184). The Conference thus "upset the fragile peace" that had been established after the fallout over the October Crisis (Blight and Brenner 2002:xxi). This unsettled atmosphere would soon become directly relevant to the regime's next could be crisis, representing "the lowest point in the ideological conflict between Havana and Moscow in the 1960s" (Yordanov 2021:1174): the 1968 microfaction affair and Revolutionary Offensive.

[340] Though beyond the scope of this dissertation, this period also coincided with a roll-back of Cuba's engagement with China. After the October Crisis, some leaders flirted with the idea that China could be a helpful partner in pursuing Cuba's goals of an unorthodox road to Communism. "Guevara and others," Kapcia notes, "admired what they knew of China, and his emphasis on the peasantry's revolutionary potential took heart from Maoism" (Kapcia 2021:84). But later, in light of a disagreement over rice shipments (Kapcia 2008:122), and considering China's inward turn resulting from the domestic unrest caused by the Chinese Cultural Revolution (Brown 2017:100–101), exchange between the two countries was quite limited toward the end of the 1960s.

Chapter 3: Making Unity out of Sectarianism: The 1968 Revolutionary Offensive as a Response to the Trial of the Microfaction

It was no surprise to find Fidel Castro standing atop the imposing outdoor staircase of the illustrious University of Havana. Every March 13th since coming to power, he occupied the same spot, addressing a massive crowd in commemoration of the student martyrs who died storming Batista's presidential palace in 1957. But 1968 was distinct. In addition to lauding the sacrifice of those heroic youths who gave their lives in hopes of a free Cuba, Castro also made an announcement: effective immediately, the revolutionary regime intended to nationalize or permanently close all remaining privately-owned businesses in the country. He pointedly asked the crowd, "Are we going to do socialism or are we going to do timbiriches" (Castro 1968a), referring to the small snack carts belonging to ambulatory street vendors. Castro's question made clear that no private enterprise, regardless of how infinitesimal, would remain. These nationalizations formed one major facet of what leaders called the "Revolutionary Offensive" and what scholars have characterized as a primarily economic bundle of policies and initiatives (Clayfield 2019:70; Mesa-Lago 1969:203; Ritter and Henken 2015:51). The Offensive—in foregrounding private enterprise, agricultural production, and labor discipline—angled to improve Cuba's flagging economy. However, I argue that the Revolutionary Offensive was also, if not *primarily*, an important mechanism of ideological subject formation that leaders launched in response to a decidedly *non*-economic crisis that unfolded earlier in the year.

This earlier episode, known as the trial of the microfaction, came to the public's attention via the front page of *Granma*, whose January 28 headline read, "The Microfaction Unmasked."[341] That day's issue began informing readers of the details of the event, which was the principal subject of discussion at the first ever convening of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party (Partido Comunista de Cuba, PCC). According to a minutely detailed report, a small—hence "micro"—faction of wayward leftist individuals carried out a variety of activities against the dominant party line.[342] These actors, led by Aníbal Escalante (a long-time fixture of Cuba's political left), allegedly criticized regime policies, spread anti-regime propaganda, disparaged the good works of the revolution, and, worst of all, colluded with Soviet agents with the goal of undermining international relations and, ultimately, provoking a change in leadership of the PCC. Though both the microfaction trial and the Revolutionary Offensive appear in the Cuban historiography, examining the *relationship* between these two events provides an opportunity for understanding the contours of the regime's articulatory project during 1968, a year on the cusp of a watershed moment for the revolutionary regime.

Although scholars debate the extent to which the microfaction posed a "real"—that is, existential—threat to Castro and his colleagues, it was nevertheless a situation that required a response. One option would have been to look beyond Cuba's borders. Leaders could have emphasized the connections between the microfaction and the CIA, shifting the blame, not for the first time, to their imperialist neighbors to the north.[343] Alternatively, given the group's

[341] *Granma*. January 28, 1968:1.
[342] This report was first presented to the Central Committee by Raúl Castro and later reprinted in full in *Granma* and *Bohemia*.
[343] While it seems counterintuitive that the CIA would have an interest in supporting a radically leftist group like that of Escalante and his colleagues, it is actually quite reasonable when considering the geopolitical circumstances. In the best-case scenario (from the CIA perspective), Escalante's meddling could have caused general instability in Cuba, making it more vulnerable to attacks from the outside and creating an opening for the anti-Castro exile community in Miami to step in. Even if the microfaction's machinations ultimately resulted in the preservation of

purported linkages to foreign actors of other socialist countries, Castro also could have explicitly fingered the Soviets as the masterminds behind the group's schemes. This would have been a perfectly plausible accusation, given the renewed friction between the two countries that I will discuss in detail below. Finally, considering the degree to which the regime had solidified their coercive apparatus over the previous nine years, leaders might have chosen to react with a show of force, compelling citizens to fulfill the responsibilities of New Men via threat of punishment.

But they ignored those options. Instead, leaders chose to look inward and seize the microfaction trial as an opportunity to intensify revolutionary subject formation.[344] Careful analysis of regime discourse and policies makes clear that Castro and other decision-makers reacted to this second "Escalante Affair" in two parts. First, they repurposed a now very familiar tactic of naming and characterizing internal enemies while attending to the translation of their attitudes and beliefs into concrete actions. Whereas leaders leveraged such discourse against the Cuba's former economic elite during the agrarian reform and against the reactionaries during the Bay of Pigs invasion, this time leaders' sights were set on enemies from within the left itself. Second, official discourse leveraged specific aspects of the wrong-doer's misdeeds to form the justificatory foundation of the Revolutionary Offensive. While characterizing the microfaction members as hypocritical, traitorous, and selfish, regime leaders called on the true people of the pueblo to be honest, loyal, and selfless. In this way, the Revolutionary Offensive allowed leaders both to send a clear message that dissent—even from the left—would not be tolerated and to make a concerted push to develop revolutionary subjects by promoting certain practices within

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the existing regime, a change in PCC leadership to a more Moscow-friendly figurehead, like Escalante, would still have been good news for the United States, given the Soviet commitment to peaceful coexistence that had emerged by this point.

[344] In fact, as evidence of this inward turn, Castro used the speech in which he launched the Revolutionary Offensive to prime listeners to this inward orientation. He explicitly told the audience that the speech would not be dealing with international affairs, which he considered "not something of utmost importance," in contrast with the "national issues […] that, in our opinion, are much more relevant" (Castro 1968a).

the context of nationalizations, agricultural productivity programs, and a labor discipline campaign.

In this chapter, I begin by discussing the context in which the microfaction trial and the Revolutionary Offensive unfolded. Here, I refer both to the general milieu of a revolutionary regime on the cusp of a major transition as well as to the eventfulness of the two episodes that I analyze in detail. I then show how regime leaders discursively constructed microfaction members as enemies within, focusing on their alleged betrayal of the pueblo, opportunism, and hypocrisy. Finally, I examine the relationship between the microfaction trial and the Revolutionary Offensive, finding that each of the three main components of the Offensive—the nationalization of small businesses, mobilization initiatives in agriculture, and a labor discipline campaign—can all be linked directly to the attitudes and activities of the microfaction that so deeply offended the collective revolutionary conscience. In this way, I show how Cuban leaders converted a somewhat embarrassing political challenge into an opportunity for subject formation on a massive scale.

The Generalized and Specific Eventfulness of 1968

At the dawn of 1968, nearly ten years after coming to power, the leaders of the Cuban revolutionary regime found themselves staring down unrealized goals and unmet expectations. Throughout their time in power, leaders' aims had been quite clear and consistent: military, political, economic, and ideological sovereignty. Beginning in 1961, all four of these goals angled toward the broader mission of creating a socialist (and, ultimately, communist) society. As Ferrer puts it, "The push for communism between 1963 and 1970 aimed to defeat the past once and for all, to make change total and irreversible" (2021:386). However, the regime's progress in consolidating power along these four axes was uneven, and at least some members of

the public seemed to agree, judging by signs of generalized discontent, including public protests over shortages.[345] Furthermore, the broader historical context—the recent death of Che Guevara and the 100-year anniversary of Cuba's first war for independence from Spain—conspired with renewed tensions with the Soviets to create a sense of urgency in 1968.

In October 1967, Che Guevara died in battle in Bolivia, which produced lasting domestic and international effects. Within Cuba, his death shocked the public, many of whom refused to believe the tragic news until Fidel Castro, armed with "irrefutable, detailed information" (García Luis 2001:150), confirmed it publicly. The people had lost a beloved hero. But Castro stood by ready to fill the void, one which had already begun to form when Guevara left for the Congo, but which was now complete and permanent.[346] As Mesa-Lago puts it, "the death of Guevara, the former leader of the [Chinese] line within Cuba"—coupled with many leaders' deep distrust of the Soviets—"left Castro as the sole ideologist and guide of the Revolution" (1969:209). There were international reverberations from Guevara's death as well. His failure in Bolivia solidified the reality that "the Andes would not become the Sierra Maestra of Latin America" (Pérez-Stable 1999:117), and put a damper on Castro's commitment to global, armed socialist revolution.[347] It also put more strain on Cuba's relationship with the United States and the Soviet Union, both of which allegedly played a role in Guevara's demise. Part of the evidence that Castro presented to the public, for example, was a photo of his body that included Félix Rodríguez, a known CIA operative, thereby "proving that the United States had taken part in Che's death" (García Luis

[345] Blight and Brenner, for example, suggest that "there was considerable cultural ferment in Cuba at that time," citing as evidence that "Havana was awash in graffiti and juvenile vandalism, which leaders associated with a growing 'hippie' movement (2002:34). Furthermore, both Castro (1968a) and the lead prosecutor in the microfaction case publicly referenced the protests from early 1968 (*Bohemia*. February 9, 1968:34).
[346] Before heading to Bolivia in late 1966, Guevara had gone to Africa in 1965 to assist leftist groups in the conflicts following the Republic of Congo's independence from Belgium.
[347] Castro's aspirations to aiding armed revolutionary movements across the globe sat largely dormant until 1975 when Cuba became involved in the Angola Civil War, backing the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola group. I briefly discuss Cuba's involvement in the Coda of Part II.

2001:150). But Castro and other leaders also intimated that the Soviets were mixed up in the affair as well, evidenced by the alleged involvement of members of the Bolivian Communist Party, whom Castro maintained would never have acted without first consulting with Moscow (Blight and Brenner 2002:xxii). Apart from these political implications of Guevara's death, there were ideological ones as well.

While Castro and his colleagues respected and referenced Guevara's ideological writings during his lifetime, leaders' reverence for the guerrilla's ideas and their centrality to policymaking seemed to intensify after Guevara's death. Alive, Guevara was a hero; dead, he was beatified and canonized. As Clayfield points out, "The sanctity attached to Guevara's image and ideas have rendered them somewhat untouchable, thus transforming them into potent symbols of the essence of what a true revolutionary should be" (2019:33). Clayfield's characterization is perhaps best applied to one work in particular, Guevara's 1965 *Man and Socialism in Cuba* (*El socialism y el hombre en Cuba*). As noted in the Introduction, this treatise essentially provided a guidebook on revolutionary subject formation and instructed readers how to develop revolutionary consciousness.[348] In part through Guevara's rendering of the new man ("hombre nuevo"), as Frederik points out, "Cooperation, sacrifice, struggle, political loyalty, and dedication to revolutionary heroes and legends became the backbone of national identity" (2012:11). While I do not claim that Guevara's death caused the leaders to embed his roadmap for subject formation within the Revolutionary Offensive, his influence— "the implementation

[348] While *Man and Socialism* can be read as an instruction manual for how to gain membership in the pueblo Cubano, scholars have also pointed to the exclusionary nature of the text. Bustamante, for example, notes that "increasingly exclusionary discourses and political practices" became "crystallized" in this essay (2021:119), due in no small part to the sexist, homophobic, and heteronormative attitudes and claims contained therein.

of moral incentives, the expansion of the state's role in the economy, and the emphasis of collective and voluntary labor" (Yordanov 2021:1191)—is evident.[349]

Also coinciding with the microfaction trail and the Revolutionary Offensive were a slew of events, programs, and initiatives commemorating the 100th anniversary of Cuba's first efforts to win their independence from Spain. I suggest that regime discourse around this milestone—what leaders dubbed "100 Years of Struggle" ("Cien años de lucha")—served two distinct purposes. On the one hand, the discourse angled to legitimate the goals and strategies of the revolutionary regime by positioning them as a continuation of Cuba's most revered independence era leaders (Kapcia 2021:91–92; Pérez 2013:239; Rojas 2019:36). As Rojas has pointed out, "Castro argued that the socialist model that the Cuban Revolution had adopted was not so much due to an ideological turn toward Marxism-Leninism as it was a natural consequence of the same revolutionary nationalism inaugurated by separatists and antislavery leaders of the nineteenth century" (2019:36). On the other hand, celebrating the centennial of Cuba's independence efforts justified the timing of leaders' attempt to lurch towards communism via the Revolutionary Offensive. As Castro claimed, the efforts of the revolutionary regime were "culminating the work of those who 100 years ago fired the first shots for the conquest of the independence of this country" (1968b), and 100 years was more than enough time for any nation to have to wait for its full sovereignty and freedom. At least in retrospect, the late 1960s seemed

[349] In fact, Castro made this connection explicitly in his speech on July 26, 1968. He said that "the great task of the Revolution" was "essentially the task of forming the new man that was spoken of here, the new man that Che spoke of, the man of truly revolutionary conscience, the man of truly socialist conscience, the man of truly communist conscience" (1968c).

like one last, heroic heave "toward a utopian future" that leaders had imagined (Eckstein 2003:33).[350]

But 1968 had scarcely begun when Cuba's leaders already faced unanticipated challenges. As I noted earlier, there was some degree of popular unrest (Domínguez 1978:410). Mesa-Lago points out that the people's grievances were primarily economic ones due to the unavailability of many consumer goods. Leaders reduced ration allotments of milk to adults in Havana and began rationing gasoline, which prompted a flurry of rumors that restrictions on other basic goods like bread and eggs would soon follow (1969:210). Those rumors, in turn, produced a rush on the state stores, creating long lines and further exacerbating existing shortages (ibid.). On top of these existing domestic difficulties, relations with the USSR complicated the situation further. Expecting the Soviets to maintain the precedent they had previously set of fronting Cuba oil ahead of schedule, Castro once more expected an advance from Cuba's allotment. However, they only granted 64.2 percent of Castro's request (Blight and Brenner 2002:xxiii). This episode both highlighted Cuba's dependency on the Soviets and created an economic "bottle-neck" (Clayfield 2019:72; Mesa-Lago 1969:208).

Between the unfinished projects of military, political, economic, and ideological consolidation; the recent death of Che and a desire to honor his memory; the centennial of the first efforts to make a free and sovereign Cuba; the delicate situation with the Soviet Union; and the monumental Ten-Million-Ton harvest project coming into view over the horizon, it seems

[350] As the historiography makes clear, 1970 *was* a watershed moment for the Cuban revolutionary regime. Beyond a discursive turn—evidenced, for example, in Castro's declaration of an "unshakeable alliance" with the Soviet Union (Clayfield 2019:72)—a series of institutional and structural reforms brought Cuba into closer alignment with Moscow. As Selbin puts it, "Faced with a crumbling economy and a revolutionary process that was starting to wear thin, in 1970 the government moved to institutionalize Cuba's governmental processes" (Selbin 1993:45). So, while the events I analyze between 1968 and 1970 ultimately did constitute one last big push for communism on Cuba's own terms, it is unclear whether leaders at that time were aware of this or thought of their policies in this way.

likely that 1968 was a year of hopeful uncertainty. Within this generalized atmosphere of eventfulness, how noteworthy were the two episodes that I discuss in this chapter?

In both the regime discourse from 1968 and the subsequent scholarly works written about this period, there is consensus that the microfaction did *not* pose a genuine existential threat in the same way that, say, an armed invasion would have, particularly since the challenge was coming from within the Left itself. Leaders at the time did not voice concern that the microfaction could topple the standing regime, and there has been no new evidence in the interim to suggest, for example, high-level coordination between Moscow and the microfaction.[351] Raúl's report, the prosecutor's speech, and the Central Committee's declarations all generally minimized the scope and abilities of the microfaction. Discourse referred to the group as a "microfaction" because, according to the prosecutor who tried the case, "due to its magnitude, [it] cannot be classified as a true faction."[352] The group was not merely "small," it was "very small" (reducidísimo) and "miniscule" (minúsculo), and it came "from the margins of the Party."[353] LeoGrande similarly points out that those accused of participation in the microfaction were not significant players within the PCC, noting that they were "second- and third-echelon officials," who were "so obscure and so few as to be inconsequential" (LeoGrande 1979:473).[354]

[351] Blight and Brenner came close to obtaining compelling evidence of Cuban leaders' direct *accusations* of Soviet involvement in the microfaction (2002). In 1992, they requested and received from the Cuban government a copy of Castro's marathon speech to the Central Committee of the PCC on January 25-26, 1968. The Cuban government acquiesced but, missing from the version that Blight and Brenner received, was the portion of Castro's "secret speech" dealing directly with the microfaction affair. Nevertheless, as Blight and Brenner point out and analyze extensively, the portions of the speech that they did obtain shed important light on Castro's understanding of the 1962 October Crisis. And while the available evidence still consists of insinuations rather than overt accusations, the fact that Castro dedicated so much of his speech—at the meeting of the Central Committee where the purpose was to decide what to do about the microfaction—talking about the Soviet's betrayal of Cuba in October 1962, is still quite telling. Of course, even that speech would not come close to answering the question of *actual* Soviet involvement.
[352] *Bohemia*. February 9, 1968:33.
[353] *Granma*. January 28, 1968:2;1.
[354] This characterization does seem to rely primarily on regime discourse, however, as it bears striking similarity to Raúl's description of the microfaction in his report, which refers to the defendants as "unknown to the pueblo" (*Granma*. January 28, 1968:2).

And Kapcia characterizes them more as an exception that proved Castro and his colleague's absolute control over the party (2021:91).

Although the microfaction did not seem to threaten the regime's very existence, leaders nevertheless took the situation seriously. They defined the group's crime as treason, and Castro himself clarified the nature of the threat: "the microfaction as a political force—as a political force—lacked significance; as a political intention, its actions were of a serious nature" (Castro 1968a). This episode, as Blight and Brenner have pointed out, "was filled with high drama and potentially high stakes for the Cuban revolution" (2002:33). Regardless of how leaders communicated about the microfaction to the public, the group's actions could have resulted in dire geopolitical implications, depending on how much blame Castro put on the Soviets. Albeit an indirect one, Mesa-Lago argues, "The trial against the microfaction was in effect an accusation to the Soviet Union of intervention in Cuban internal affairs" (1969:209). It could have been the straw to break the camel's back of Cuba's relationship with the Soviet Union, which was "at the point of rupture" (Blight and Brenner 2002:xxiv). Setting aside the question of existential threat and geopolitical impact, the microfaction episode also proved to leaders that they were not fully free from internal political threats and that, perhaps, other members of the pueblo were also critical of the regime's approach to realizing its goals. The trial then served two purposes. First, it put dissenters (open or otherwise) on alert. "The trial," LeoGrande explains, "served as a warning to potential dissidents that opposition to prevailing policies was, in itself, counterrevolutionary" (1979:473). Second, it became available as a backdrop against which to stage the Revolutionary Offensive.[355]

[355] To be clear, my data give no indication of (nor was I able to pinpoint via secondary literature) when leaders started planning the Revolutionary Offensive and therefore make no argument as to whether the microfaction crisis *caused* the Revolutionary Offensive. Given the speed with which the Offensive was rolled out—Castro's speeches

Existing approaches to understanding the importance of the Revolutionary Offensive tend to foreground the pragmatic elements of the initiative. Many scholars attend primarily to the Offensive's economic design and impacts, which Mesa-Lago argues, "represented an acceleration of the economic policy towards capital accumulation and rapid development even at the cost of further restricting consumption" (1969:203). Clayfield, for example, contends that, "The aim of the reform program was to ameliorate the country's economic position by eradicating the elements of private enterprise and material incentives and launching a mass mobilization drive intended to improve agricultural production" (2019:70).[356] Similarly, in their work on small enterprise in post-1959 Cuba, Ritter and Henken focus on the economic impacts of the Offensive (Ritter and Henken 2015:51). Certainly, on the surface, each line of action contained in the Offensive—the nationalizations, the agrarian mobilizations, and the labor discipline campaign—had some overt economic purpose.

However, I argue that shifting from an economistic lens to an ideological one can offer a better understanding of the nature—and the stakes—of the Revolutionary Offensive. As Grenier has pointed out, the impact of the Offensive on the national economy was far from monumental (2020:318). And, despite his near exclusive emphasis on the economic aspects of the Offensive, Mesa-Lago does point out that one byproduct of this episode was "greater efficiency in the ideological control of the people" (1969:205). Each line of action mentioned above was imbued

on the 13th and 15th of March were followed up as early as March 18th with the CDR meetings to discuss the speeches *and* the National Directorate's plans for nationalization—coupled with the surveys that Castro quoted in his speech, it seems that the Offensive had been under development for at least some time. But, as I discuss below, the Offensive was framed in reference to the microfaction trial, and many of the issues that arose during those January proceedings were later addressed through various initiatives bundled together under the umbrella of the Offensive.

[356] Clayfield as also emphasized the militarizing aspect of the Revolutionary Offensive. In fact, she argues, "It was the launch of the offensive and the style in which it was organized that initially prompted several academics (Bonachea and San Martín 1972; Dumont 1974; Malloy 1971) to comment on the 'militarism' of the Revolution" (2019:62).

with the revolutionary values of self-sacrifice and cooperation. And, in calling on the pueblo of 1968 to give tirelessly of themselves for the greater good, regime discourse routinely situated the Revolutionary Offensive within a long list of epic battles that the revolutionary regime had faced and won. As one editorial from *Granma* expressed in early April, roughly two weeks into the Offensive, "The country is experiencing a moment of revolutionary exaltation that can be compared to the luminous and historic days of Girón or the October Crisis."[357] Castro similarly discursively placed the "battalions" of the Offensive alongside "the battalions of the workers and students of Havana [who] mobilized in each difficult circumstance, in numbers of dozens of thousands, fighting against the bandits in the Escambray, or marching towards the meeting of the mercenaries who invaded this country in Girón, or in each of the difficult moments, such as the October Crisis and on other occasions" (Castro 1968a). To understand the Revolutionary Offensive primarily as an economic policy episode misses the role it played in the project of revolutionary subject formation at the critical juncture of 1968.

Unmasking, Trying, and Punishing the Microfaction

In this section, I will discuss what the leaders of the Cuban revolutionary regime said and did in response to the dissident microfaction led by Aníbal Escalante. After briefly outlining how official discourse informed the public of the details of this episode and offering a synopsis of the charges against the microfaction, I dedicate the bulk of the section to discussing the regime's characterization of the microfaction members and their alleged actions. I highlight how three negative traits—betrayal, selfishness, and hypocrisy—repeatedly appeared in the trial's coverage. These attributes defined the defendants as individuals and, according to regime elites,

[357] *Granma*. April 2, 1968:1. Official discourse tends to refer to the Bay of Pigs invasion as the invasion at Playa Girón, the name of the beach where the landing took place, within the larger Bahía de Cochinos (Bay of Pigs).

served as the guiding motivations for their treasonous activities. In this way, regime leaders not only vilified the microfaction members but also provided the pueblo with clear examples of what *not* to do that would later be recalled during the Revolutionary Offensive.

In breaking the news of the microfaction to the public, the front page of *Granma* called attention "to a small group of elements who, from the margin of the Party, oriented and encouraged by Aníbal Escalante, for two years have been realizing activities against the Party and the Revolution."[358] Over subsequent issues, the newspaper provided public access to the avalanche of evidence and arguments against the microfaction that the Central Committee encountered during their three-day meeting.[359] The centerpiece of this evidentiary dossier was a report compiled under the direction of Raúl Castro, in his capacity as the leader of the Commission of the Revolutionary Armed Forces and State Security within the Central Committee. This report, which filled multiple pages of *Granma* across three separate days (and was subsequently reprinted in *Bohemia*), detailed "the steps, activities, and objectives of the factional group during the last two years, providing the documents and evidence that irrefutably supported the content of the report."[360] Raúl's report was supplemented by the accused's

[358] *Granma*. January 28, 1968:1.

[359] One notable exception to this was the speech that Fidel Castro delivered to the Central Committee, which reportedly lasted nearly twelve hours (*Granma*. January 1, 1986:1). Later, in his March 13 speech, Castro explained that his prior speech was not printed, even though it was customary to print his speeches in full, "Because there are issues of a diplomatic nature, issues that have to do with relations between States," and "issues that, should they become known to the enemy, could be harmful" (Castro 1968a). Blight and Brenner hypothesize, based on their access to a heavily redacted version of the speech, that, "Had the Cuban head of state made his criticisms public, it would have been far more difficult to overcome the tensions with the Soviet Union" (2002:34). To this day, its full contents have not been made publicly available.

[360] *Granma*. January 28, 1968:1; *Bohemia*. February 2, 1968:43. The press further provided details regarding the state's project of gathering evidence against the accused, which also included setting up an "operative program" in which Castro's agents infiltrated the microfaction to track their activities (*Granma*. January 29, 1968:2). It furthermore clarified that the report only included descriptions of activities to which the accused had confessed (with no comment, of course, on the circumstances under which those accused were interrogated) (*Granma*. January 30, 1968:3).

admissions of guilt, party members' testimonies, the prosecutor's findings, and the Central Committee's accords in light of the evidence they reviewed.

As the press coverage unfolded, the public learned of the breadth of the group's activities over roughly the past two years, via Raúl's report.[361] Furthermore, the accords that the Central Committee reached at the conclusion of their plenary meeting included the official list of charges that was brought against the accused in the revolutionary tribunals. These consisted of:

> Attacks, through intrigue and slander, on the main measures of the Revolution; distribution of clandestine propaganda against the Party line; attempt to provide distorted guidelines to various nuclei of the Party; offering false and slanderous information to officials of foreign countries about the plans of the Revolution, with the purpose of undermining Cuba's international relations with other governments; theft of secret documents from the Central Committee and the then Ministry of Industries; work of proselytism and ideological diversion among some party members who came from the ranks of the PSP [Popular Socialist Party, Partido Socialista Popular], as well as other acts aimed at destroying the unity and firmness of the revolutionary forces.[362]

Although their activities were diverse, the allegation that the members of the microfaction had been "plotting against the Cuban leadership to change Cuban policies across the board, at home and abroad" (Kapcia 2021:83), formed the crux of the case against them.

Defining the Perpetrators, Scrutinizing their Actions

Forty-three individuals were arrested and remanded in relation to these charges, but a pair of high-ranking officials who belonged to the Central Committee, José Matar and Ramón Calcines, along with Escalante received the most attention.[363] Raúl's report traced José Matar's

[361] It remains an open question why the regime's leaders allowed Escalante and his followers to carry out their machinations for such a long time. But Mesa-Lago has convincingly argued that leaders sat on this information until "the most propitious moment," noting that the disappointment over Che's failure in Bolivia and discontent over the hardships wrought by the deficient Soviet oil supplies created especially low morale among the general public (1969:209). This observation further bolsters the argument that the microfaction affair was more an act of political theater than existential threat.
[362] *Granma*. February 2, 1968:1.
[363] *Granma*. January 31, 1968:3.

chief offense back to his time as the National Coordinator of the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR). In that capacity, Matar had expressed concerns about the structure, function, and organization of the CDR. Importantly, this was *not* his crime. Matar's conduct took an unacceptable turn when, after the Secretary of the Central Committee requested that Matar write up a report about his concerns for further discussion, he consulted with Aníbal Escalante before submitting it.[364] Ramón Calcines faced two charges. First, in his capacity as the director of state-owned company FrutiCuba, he allegedly fostered the development of "a microfactional 'foco' that fought through slander and defamation both the international policies of our Revolution as well as each and every one of the revolutionary measures and laws, distributing, at the same time, clandestine propaganda, and realizing other similar activities."[365] Second, upon being dismissed from this post for poor performance, Castro requested that Calcines draw up a report explaining his lackluster efforts on the job. Like Matar, Calcines took this report to Escalante for his input before submitting it to Castro.[366] While regime leaders held these men responsible for their actions, in both instances, their malfeasance was anchored to Aníbal Escalante.

Escalante had long been a fixture in Cuba's leftist political arena, serving as a leader of the PSP before 1959, but he had fallen in and out of favor after the revolutionary government came to power. In 1962, Escalante was serving as the secretary of the Integrated Revolutionary Organizations (Organizaciones Revolucionarias Integradas, ORI), when Castro removed him from his post and sent him to Czechoslovakia—"on a prolonged vacation" (Pérez-Stable

[364] *Granma*. January 28, 1968:2.
[365] A foco, refers to "a small guerrilla band located in the mountains," per Che Guevara's "foco theory" (also referred to as "foquismo"), which "refers to the primacy given to the rural armed struggle centralized in the sierra with emphasis on subjective conditions" (Childs 1995:594). Essentially, "foco" means an "insurrectionary force" (ibid.) Its use to describe the group Ramón Calcines both identifies him as an insider to the revolution and insinuates his plans ultimately had "insurrectionary" goals.
[366] *Granma*. January 28, 1968:2.

1999:101)—for his alleged efforts to deepen factionalism within the ORI via his group of so-called "sectarians" (Blight and Brenner 2002:90).[367] At that time, Castro showed leniency to Escalante, whom he reportedly characterized as "a communist who had erred, like many other communists who had gone down the wrong path."[368] And Castro allowed him to return to Cuba in 1964 upon the death of his brother, César, "a faithful and much honored Cuban communist" (Blight and Brenner 2002:91). According to Raúl's report, César's death was a turning point after which Aníbal grew increasingly bold in his machinations against the ruling regime.[369] The press and reports referred to Escalante as the "main instigator," "the main axis of the microfactional conspiracy," and the "center of this small, muddy group," who, "with his self-sufficient, egocentric personality, could not give up feeling like the center of a group."[370] In short, Escalante was the personification of all that was socially unacceptable about the microfaction.

Across the coverage of the microfaction trial, print media emphasized the linkages between concrete actions and the implicit attitudes that purportedly motivated them. The prosecutor accused the group of amorality, saying, "It is not only small because of its number but also small because of the moral quality of the majority of its components," referring to the men in the group.[371] Even the accused themselves admitted to their fatal character flaws. Emilio de Quesada, a doctor who confessed to fostering anti-party sentiments in the hospital where he worked, said that the individuals of the microfaction possessed "a large number of personal

[367] For further discussion of the first "Escalante affair," see the Coda of Part I.
[368] *Bohemia*. February 9, 1968:33. Although memories are often colored by hindsight, others who testified before the Central Committee regarding the case of the microfaction recalled viewing Escalante in a much less kind light, even in 1962. For example, Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, whose testimony is discussed further below, recalled his feelings during the original Escalante affair. He said, "Aníbal Escalante had proven to be an evil personality or abnormal, and we wanted to be generous when we then said that it seemed to us that he was more abnormal than evil" (*Bohemia*. February 9, 1968:30).
[369] *Granma*. January 29, 1968:3.
[370] *Granma*. January 28, 1968:2; *Granma*. January 29, 1968:1; *Bohemia*. February 9, 1968:30;36.
[371] *Bohemia*. February 9, 1968:30.

defects," which included "an attitude tending toward pessimism," "naïveté," and "believing that one's ideas are correct without trying to confront them with reality."[372] Using familiar rhetorical devices, including the repetition of key words and phrases as identifiers of the accused and stark juxtapositions between good and bad, the press' recounting of events not only reported on the group's alleged activities but also tied their practices to betrayal, selfishness, and hypocrisy, key ingredients of discursive villanization that first emerged during the agrarian reform.

Whereas *Granma* broke the news under the headline of "The Microfaction Unmasked," the editors of *Bohemia* augmented it to read, "Traitors to the Revolution: The Microfaction Unmasked."[373] With their metaphorical "miserable dagger of betrayal," the members of the microfaction showed disloyalty to the party, the pueblo, the patria, and the Revolution.[374] Accusations of "political disloyalty" referred to the accused's unwillingness to support the goals and unity of the Party.[375] For example, in the hospital where he wielded considerable influence, Quesada orchestrated "meetings and study circles where they were criticizing the party line, judging the measures taken by the revolution, and defaming the revolutionary leaders."[376] Escalante and his followers also attacked party leadership, both as a group and as individuals, essentially for not being communist *enough*. A key point singled out in the reports was the microfaction's allegation of "the penetration of the Central Committee by the petit bourgeoisie."[377] According to the dissidents, those in charge of the PCC held "contempt for the working class and ignorance of the vanguard role that it should play."[378] Rather than involve

[372] *Granma*. January 31, 1968:2.
[373] *Granma*. January 28, 1968:28; *Bohemia*. February 2, 1968:42.
[374] *Bohemia*. February 9, 1968:34.
[375] *Granma*. January 28, 1968:1.
[376] *Granma*. January 29, 1968:2.
[377] Ibid.
[378] Ibid.

workers in the leadership of the Revolution, the microfaction alleged, those in power simply used them to make their mass mobilizations and production efforts successful.

Members of the microfaction attacked prominent individuals within the Party, including Armando Hart, Faure Chomón, Haydé Santamaria, Raúl Roa, and Celia Sánchez, many of whom were integral to the revolutionary efforts in the 1950s and filled important governmental positions during the 1960s.[379] They even went after Fidel Castro directly, with one admitting to saying, "The problem is that Fidel wants Cuba to become the belly button of the world, and himself to reach a stature superior to that of Marx."[380] Another accused Castro of silencing dissent and even debate within the Party, arguing that the Central Committee was just his mouthpiece, as members did not "have the opportunity either to discuss or to express their opinions."[381] Causing perhaps the most offense to public opinion, the microfaction even went after Che Guevara—a hugely popular figure who had ascended to martyr status after his death in Bolivia just a few months before—"going as far as so state that Commander Guevara had gone as a Trotskyist."[382] Members of the public likely would have viewed such commentary as "pure sacrilege" (Blight and Brenner 2002:136).

Worse than betraying the Party with their divisive attitudes and ad hominem attacks, however, the microfaction also betrayed their own pueblo and the very revolution itself, according to the reports at the time. Members were labeled as traitors, "shamelessly conspiring against the success of the Revolution," with their "counterrevolutionary and treacherous"

[379] *Granma*. January 29, 1968:2.
[380] *Granma*. January 30, 1968:3.
[381] Ibid.
[382] *Granma*. January 29, 1968:2.

activities.[383] These betrayals to the homeland took the form of disparaging the revolutionary regime's accomplishments and doubting its potential for future successes.

Down to the smallest policies, no regime initiative was safe from the group's critiques, with Raúl's report noting that Calcines' "foco" negatively assessed "each and every one of the revolutionary measures and laws."[384] Raúl pointed out that he combed through every bit of data his investigators had gathered, searching for one shred of positivity. He explained, "we didn't find a single thing that would count as support among these people. Or rather, that whatever measure, whether important or not, that was realized by the revolutionary powers, we found, in those documents, systematic criticism."[385] (G 68.01.29:2). According to the microfaction members, the bus driver plans were ill-conceived, the agricultural initiatives were never going to solve anything, the Camarioca boat lift was a geopolitical disaster, and the free entry to sporting events was demagogic.[386] Perhaps most damning, "absolute abandonment of material stimulation," in favor of purely moral incentives, was "ignoring the laws of the development of society," a popular critique levied by representatives of the Soviet Union against Castro and his colleagues.[387] The betrayal lay, according to Raúl and the prosecutor, in the criticism of programs and initiatives that had radically improved the quality of life for many Cubans.

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[383] *Granma*. January 28, 1968:1-2.
[384] *Granma*. January 28, 1968:2.
[385] *Granma*. January 29, 1968:2.
[386] Ibid.:3. Raúl's report explained most of these complaints. The bus driver plans entailed reducing the number of drivers, which microfaction members reportedly said "was going to increase the number of absentees and that there would be more conflicts on the buses." The accused said that the agricultural initiatives were irresponsible because they took industrial laborers away from important factory tasks to put them in fields where they were at a comparative disadvantage to the campesinos with years of experience. The Camarioca boat lift (not discussed at length in Raúl's report) referred to the decision of the revolutionary regime to allow Cubans living in the United States to return to Cuba, by boat, to collect any relatives who also wanted to leave from the port of Camarioca. Arboleya says that, between October and November of 1965 when the boat lift began, 2,800 individuals left (2000:187). He adds that, over the course of the following eight years, until the boat lift ended, 250,000 additional Cubans emigrated to the United States (though he does not specify whether all through the port of Camarioca).
[387] *Granma*. January 30, 1968:2.

And the microfaction went beyond critiquing what they viewed as the regime's mistakes of the past. They also targeted future initiatives, most notably the Ten Million Ton sugar harvest campaign set to begin the following year. Raúl's report quoted one microfaction member as saying, "the possibilities of reaching the ten-million mark in 1970 are all but impossible."[388] In his letter to the Central Committee, a sort of confession that the press referred to a "self-criticism" (auto-crítica), Escalante walked back his claims, noting that "to me, it seems that if by this date we get not ten but eight million tons, that would be a tremendous success of the revolution" and conceding that his doubts about the harvest were just speculation because he did not have access to concrete information regarding the plans and prospects of the campaign.[389] However, the damage was done. Castro latched onto the microfaction's slanderous doubts, revisiting them in his March 13 speech in which he launched the Revolutionary Offensive. He said,

> The enemies have made all the best that our goal will not be reached; the microfactionalists enjoyed and predicted the failure of the Revolution—that is, the failure of the revolutionary line within the Revolution—with their idea that ten million would not be reached, and then we would have to be more calm, more docile, more submissive, in two words: stop being revolutionaries. And of course, revolutionaries would rather cease to be than cease being revolutionaries! (Castro 1968a)[390]

In the press of late January, and again in Castro's later speech, the comments of the microfaction were discursively constructed as a betrayal based in members' lack of confidence not only in Party leadership but also in the people of Cuba, who were the ones in whose hands rested the fate of the Ten Million Ton harvest.

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[388] *Granma*. January 30, 1968:2.
[389] *Granma*. January 31, 1968:3. Somewhat ironically, Escalante's estimate ended up closer to the final tally of sugar for that harvest than Castro and his colleagues'.
[390] At this point, it is difficult to tell whether Castro was addressing the accused of the microfaction or the higher-ups in Moscow who had long criticized Cuba's unorthodox approach to Marxism and leaders' attempts to simultaneously construct socialism and communism—that is, "the revolutionary line within the Revolution," to which Castro refers.

Selfishness was another key trait that official discourse ascribed to the microfaction's members. Publications continuously pushed the narrative that Escalante and his followers were, quite pettily, resentful over feeling as though they had been edged out of the political process and, quite dangerously, motivated by personal ambition and a thirst for power. The prosecutor of the case routinely referred to the defendants as "resentful opportunists," further noting that, "If one element stands out as a common denominator in almost all of them, it is precisely opportunism and resentment."[391] The significance of selfishness being foregrounded as a unifying trait of the microfaction is the degree to which it stands as the direct inverse of the new man. Whereas the true pueblo—literally illustrated through press coverage of citizens' actions in the agrarian reform and the Bay of Pigs invasion—is self-sacrificing and solidaristic, the enemies of the pueblo (in this case, the members of the microfaction), are self-serving and egocentric.

Charges of the defendants' resentfulness stemmed from their allegations of exclusion against regime leadership. According to Raúl's report, on numerous occasions, members of the microfaction were recorded saying that they had no meaningful position of power within the Party due solely to their former membership in the PSP. These individuals, according to the prosecutor, "have wanted to create the sensation that the Revolution is persecuting those of its members who come from the ranks of the old PSP."[392] However, Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, himself a former militant of the PSP, gave a lengthy testimony to the Central Committee (also reprinted in full in both *Granma* and *Bohemia*) that undercut the microfaction's claims. In an anecdote regarding Ramiro Puertas, one of the accused, Rodríguez explained,

[391] *Bohemia*. February 9, 1968:36;35.
[392] *Bohemia*. February 9, 1968:35. To a certain point, these complaints may have been founded. Castro often prioritized 26th of July Movement members for advancement over those belonging to the PSP. For further discussion of the friction between the Castro-led government elites and the members of the pre-1959 PSP, see Part I Coda.

> About four or five months ago, […] Captain Manolo López told me that, once, in the presence of other people, Ramiro Puertas stated that he had been removed from the ICR [Cuban Institute of Ratio and Television, Instituto Cubano de Radio y Televisión] for being an old communist. And Captain Manolo López told him: 'Wait a minute. You and all of us here know that you were removed from the ICR for immorality, for having done this, this, and this'"[393]

Thus, even if those who heard the microfactions' claims of exclusion did not fully buy them, the claims stood as evidence of the defendants' resentfulness, which was ultimately rooted in their concern over their own position within the Party above all else.

Relatedly, the charge of opportunism alleged that the microfaction members acted on their resentment and their perceptions of being excluded by attempting to leverage factionalism to create space for themselves in the Party structure by displacing the existing leaders. The information presented in the press emphasized that, seemingly, nothing was beneath the members of the microfaction. Rodríguez charged that Escalante took advantage of his brother César's good standing and reputation to start to build his own microfaction even as his brother lay dying of cancer.[394] Similarly, the microfaction members used the memorial services of important figures to meet and discuss their heretical ideas. As Raúl's report explained, "These occasions of mourning were taken advantage of by the members of this group without scruple or any pity, to gather, interchange opinions, and criticize the Revolution."[395] Photos of these gatherings, like the one below (see Fig. 34), appeared in both *Granma* and *Bohemia,* lending visual evidence to Raúl's claims.[396]

[393] *Bohemia*. February 9, 1968:32.
[394] *Bohemia*. February 9, 1968:31.
[395] *Granma*. January 29, 1968:3.
[396] *Granma*. February 3, 1968:3. The caption of this photo explained, "on the occasion of the memorial of Fernández Roig in Colón Cemetery, organized by Inaudi Kindelán [one of the accused]," several members of the microfaction used the occasion to "speak with Aníbal Escalante, exchange ideas with him, and, at the same time, receive directions."



Figure 34. Accused microfaction members at the memorial of Fernández Roig in Colón Cemetery

These unseemly activities, authorities alleged, all pointed to the group's ultimate desire of wanting the government to fail and to personally replace those in charge. Two of the accused, Octavio Fernandez and Inaudi Kindelán, admitted to believing that "the failure of the economic plans of the Revolution would mean a failure of the petit-bourgeois leadership, obliging a rectification of the line and consideration of the points of view of the [microfaction] group, calling upon some of those to occupy positions within the Party and the workers' movement."[397] Informants said this was especially true of Escalante. Of him, one person alleged, "the fundamental factor that motivated him was to again figure in the Leadership of the Party because of his personal pride and self-sufficiency" (G 68.01.31:2).[398] Although Escalante denied these accusations—"I have committed grave errors, but I was never an aspirant to anything. I never

[397] *Granma*. January 30, 1968:3.
[398] *Granma*. January 31, 1968:2. Once in state custody, however, the accused walked back these claims, describing those plans as nothing more than a pipedream. "That would have been ridiculous," one said before continuing to suggest that "Aníbal could not unite or achieve the unity of the revolution and no one else in the group even remotely met the conditions for that."

was"—Raúl and others argued that the group's actions clearly demonstrated their true and self-interested intent, stated or not.[399]

Since the time of the agrarian reform, hypocrisy has stood out as a hallmark of the enemy in official discourse, and this charge, too, was levied against the microfaction. Those presenting evidence to the public pointed out this hypocrisy on several occasions. Raúl's report emphasized the irony of the fact that Escalante and his followers made claims about the Central Committee being overrun with petit bourgeoisie as they themselves sat in a bar, sipping cocktails, plotting against the regime. He said, "many of these conversations—and you all can later see the evidence—were with a 'highball' glass, relaxing in a bar" (see Fig. 35).[400] The public could also view the photographic evidence, including the photo below, in both *Granma* and *Bohemia*.

[399] *Granma*. January 31, 1968:3. In his testimony to the Central Committee, Rodríguez comically used Escalante's own aforementioned "self-criticism" to prove the point of his desires for power. As Rodríguez pointed out, "he is incapable of understanding—and he has demonstrated this in his own letter—to what extent he is unimportant and to what extent he cannot direct anyone. Because, even in the situation he finds himself in today, he is—as it was said yesterday by Comrade Fidel—giving advice on how to resolve his own situation" (*Bohemia*. February 9, 1968:3). Rodríguez here refers to the part of Escalante's letter in which he suggests appropriate punishments for himself to the Central Committee.

[400] *Granma*. January 29, 1968:3. Here, Raúl's use of the English word "highball" seems like a gesture towards the socioeconomic class of the microfaction members and, perhaps, an attempt to establish a mental association between them and English-speaking CIA operatives. The caption of Fig. 35, which refers to the men pictured as "strategists" also maintains the English "highball" (*Bohemia*. February 9, 1968:57).



Figure 35. Accused microfaction members drinking "highballs" at a bar

Another intriguing bit of hypocrisy was related to the group's critiques of moral incentives and voluntary labor. At the same time these individuals disparaged production initiatives that relied on voluntary labor, they, as leaders of various factories, brought their employees to Escalante's aviculture farm to perform free work for him. Raúl alleged, "They were criticizing volunteer labor, and, on the other hand, they were going there so that Anibal could succeed."[401] These instances of hypocrisy spoke, once more, to the deformed character of the microfaction participants.

But the hypocritical practices of the defendants did something more. It allowed the leaders of the revolution to discursively align the offenders with the regime's traditional enemies, externalize them, and cleave them off from the body politic. Reminiscent of the imagery of the agrarian reform cartoon depicting the wolf in sheep's clothing, Raúl's report alleged that this threat did not emanate "exactly from the lines of enemies, but from people who were moving

[401] *Granma*. January 29, 1968:3.

within the very ranks of the Revolution, acting from supposed revolutionary positions."[402] Although the report clarifies that the defendants are not "from the lines of enemies"—presumably meaning that they are not, themselves, Yankee imperialists or the like—the evidence offered to the public clearly highlighted how the microfaction's members appropriated the very tactics used by the "actual" enemies and turned them against their own pueblo.

Just as the landowners had done during the agrarian reform, the microfaction waged their own misinformation campaign, reportedly angling to obtain their goals by "confusing" the people. They pursued this tactic within the Party itself, via what officials termed "ideological diversionism."[403] This was, in part, a strategy of recruitment, and members of the microfaction received instruction from Escalante on how to approach people from the Party and assess their receptiveness to the ideas of the group. In Quesada's testimony, he recounted that he "received instructions from A. Escalante about the form in which to plant his opinions, about the distinct topics they should discuss in the circles of said nucleus, and that things should be done in a subtle way."[404] The content of the messaging also borrowed from classic arguments that more traditional, right-wing "enemies" used against the regime. The prosecutor drew these connections by responding to a series of rhetorical questions:

> What do the enemies of the Revolution say? What did imperialism say about our Revolution? That the Revolution had been for the petit bourgeoisie and that Fidel betrayed it. What a coincidence, that now the microfactionalists accuse the Revolution of being petit bourgeoise! What does the enemy say about the guerrillas and the armed struggle of other peoples? That this is not the way, that there are no conditions, that social changes must be carried out in another way. What do the cables from the UPI, the AP, and other imperialist agencies say? That Cuba's economy is disintegrating, that agricultural plans will not be able to yield

[402] *Granma*. January 29, 1968:2.
[403] *Granma*. January 28, 1968:2. Recall, this was the same charge levied against non-conforming individuals who were interred in the UMAP camps earlier in the decade (see the Introduction of Part II).
[404] *Granma*. January 29, 1968:3.

> the expected results, that the sugar harvest will fail, that only one man governs in Cuba.[405]

In this way, regime leaders associated the arguments of the microfaction with the known, external enemies of the revolution, providing further evidence to the people of their intentions to harm the pueblo.

More direct evidence of the microfaction's relationship to the long-standing enemies of the revolutionary regime related to their dealings abroad. In part, this allegedly took the form of allying themselves with communist parties in Latin America who, backed by Moscow (Blight and Brenner 2002:23), had openly criticized Castro, like that of Venezuela, which the Cuban regime considered to be "right-wing."[406] In aligning themselves with these parties, Raúl's report argued, microfaction members were also positioning themselves on the side of the CIA. He said, "The microfaction came to coincide with the arguments and positions that have been adopted against our Revolution by the pseudo-revolutionaries of Latin America and by the Central Intelligence Agency of the United States."[407] More damning than this alignment of "arguments," however, was the congruence of their aims. Leaders accused the microfaction of attempting to persuade the Soviets to cut off aid to Cuba, which would make life on the island more difficult and force a change of government (Blight and Brenner 2002:33; 135; Halperin 1969:42). It is quite likely that readers would have understood leaders' arguments as hinting at microfaction involvement with the situation over Soviet oil shipments earlier in the month, and they certainly would not have needed an overt reference to the US blockade to see the similarities.

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[405] *Bohemia*. February 9, 1968:37. Interestingly, nested in the middle of disparaging accusations normally stemming from right-wing or US-based critics is a jab at the Soviets. When the prosecutor asked what the enemy says "about the guerrillas and the armed struggle of other peoples," he is criticizing Moscow's stance on peace, which anti-imperialist leaders discussed and criticized at the 1966 Tricontinental Conference. This rhetorical question then is another accusation of the microfaction as puppets of the Soviets.
[406] *Granma*. January 29, 1968:1.
[407] *Granma*. January 28, 1968:2.

Based on the evidence in Raúl's report, Rodríguez argued to the Central Committee that the microfaction members "have reached the point of betrayal, of wanting the economic situation of our country to get worse, to allow the 'friendly' political intervention—as they say—of the Soviet Union, to force their boss Aníbal to be called upon the country."[408] Microfaction members, allegedly, "offered false and calumnious information to functionaries of foreign countries regarding the plans of the Revolution."[409] They furthermore "talked about there being a strong anti-Soviet current" in the Party, and emphasized Cuba's economic relations with France as evidence of leaders' plans to "distance [themselves] from the Soviet Union and the socialist camp."[410] In sum, as Raúl posited succinctly, the microfaction's hypocritical appropriation of enemy tactics evidenced an "equality of goals between the microfaction and the CIA."[411]

The microfaction was small, and the threat it posed to regime survival was minimal. But exposing, trying, and sentencing the members of this group constituted a public spectacle that dominated the news cycle for several weeks and offered regime leaders an opportunity to reinforce the attitudes and behaviors they hoped to see in the pueblo. Leaders continuously emphasized the limited scope and abilities of the group. Raúl's report said, "We are talking

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[408] *Bohemia*. February 9, 1968:31. As Blight and Brenner have pointed out, there is ample reason to believe that Moscow would have been on board with this plan. Coming out of the missile crisis, Castro's unwillingness "to adhere absolutely to a line laid down in Moscow" rendered him a massive liability to the Soviets (2002:90). "If Castro and his colleagues cannot play by these rules," they explain, "then either the Soviets must abandon their Cuban investment or, less embarrassingly, perhaps a Cuban with good communist credentials could be found who could lead his country in a manner more to the liking of Cuba's Soviet patron" (ibid.). Aníbal Escalante seemed to fit the bill.

[409] *Granma*. January 28, 1968:2.

[410] *Granma*. January 29, 1968:2. A passage of Raúl's report indicates that Party leaders may have feared that the microfaction's tactics of driving a wedge between Cuba and the Soviet Union was working (although it was common knowledge that the relationship had been tense since the 1962 October Crisis). In it, Raúl took pains to praise and thank the exemplary conduct of the majority of Soviet people living and working within Cuba. He said, "I want to, however, clarify as a question of elemental justice, that, aside from the conduct of a very small number of advisors, journalists, and civil servants who participated in the activities of the microfaction, in our country, the technicians from USSR and other communist countries have always maintained, at all times, exemplary conduct and absolute respect for our Revolution." (*Granma*. January 30, 1968:3). This passage suggests that, while not keen on the idea of subservience to the Soviets, neither were regime leaders eager to destroy the relationship altogether.

[411] *Granma*. January 30, 1968:1.

about, exclusively, nine members of the Party and a few dozen opportunists, whose names are unknown to the pueblo and are totally divorced from the great tasks and plans of the Revolution."[412] He continued, "The fact that the goals they proposed turned out to be unrealizable and absurd, because they totally lacked support among our pueblo, does not diminish the importance of the criminal and anti-party action that they have developed."[413] Even if their plan was "absurd," their actions were harmful.

Those involved therefore had to be punished. José Matar and Ramón Calcines avoided jail time but were removed from the Central Committee. Matar, owing to "extenuating circumstances," was allowed to remain in the party, while Calcines, due to "aggravating circumstances," was expelled.[414] As for the other microfaction members, two, who were members of the FAR, were court martialed in a separate process; two were remanded to house arrest for a period of two years; twenty-five received a sentence of between three and ten years in prison; eight individuals, including Emilio de Quesada Ramírez and Inaudi Kindelán, received twelve years; and Aníbal Escalante, was given a sentence of fifteen years in prison.[415] Despite the emphasis on betrayal and hypocrisy, coverage of the microfaction affair offered a hopeful path forward. "The publication in *Granma* of all the minute details of the trial of the microfaction," Blight and Brenner contend, "served to reinforce in a very effective way what lay 'within the Revolution,' and what was therefore an acceptable view to take, and what lay 'outside the Revolution,' and was thus unacceptable" (2002:136). Rodríguez clarified how the whole affair represented an opportunity for growth, remarking near the end of his testimony, "we must take

[412] *Granma*. January 28, 1968:2. While I was unable to locate statistics for 1968, Guerra reports that the PCC has 55,000 members in 1969 (2023:267). The Central Committee had 100 members (Domínguez 1978:330), so 2 percent were involved in the microfaction.
[413] Ibid.
[414] *Granma*. January 28, 1968:2.
[415] *Bohemia*. February 9, 1968:40.

advantage of this to save our pueblo, to firmly consolidate the unity of our Party and our pueblo."[416] Just over a month later, Castro revealed the regime's concrete plan of action to accomplish this: the Revolutionary Offensive.

Waging the Revolutionary Offensive

Examining the policies of the Revolutionary Offensive in conjunction with the discourse that surrounded them facilitates looking beyond surface-level economic concerns to understand the role that this event played in the regime's project of ideological consolidation. Both regime discourse and scholars' commentary acknowledge that the policies embedded in the Revolutionary Offensive had economic goals. An editorial from *Granma*, titled "The Objectives of the Revolutionary Offensive," pointed out that, "We fight intensely to increase productivity, savings, work discipline, and control of the economy."[417] Writing soon after the launch of the Offensive, economist Carmelo Mesa-Lago argued, "Production problems have been crucial in the inception of the Offensive" (Mesa-Lago 1969:210). But, as with the agrarian reform, which was fundamentally an economic measure, the Revolutionary Offensive was also imbued with meaning and promoted revolutionary subject formation by closely linking prescribed actions with desirable attributes and attitudes.

Furthermore, the actions that leaders instructed the pueblo to undertake as part of the Offensive (and the attitudes and attributes they entailed) can, in several instances, be traced directly to the issues that emerged through the discovery and trial of the microfaction.[418] They

[416] *Bohemia*. February 9, 1968:32.
[417] *Granma*. March 30, 1968:1.
[418] Mesa-Lago makes a similar point, but he stops short of explaining how the two episodes are connected or in what ways the Offensive specifically addressed issues that arose during the microfaction trial. He says, "the Party emphasized the necessity to guarantee the control of the masses by the State apparatus and other organizations, in order to build up a solid bloc in support of the Offensive and against 'sectarianism'" (Mesa-Lago 1970:205).

aimed to create, in the pueblo, the antithesis of the microfaction. Whereas the microfaction was selfish, the Offensive called on the pueblo to be self-sacrificing and solidaristic.[419] Contradicting the microfaction's accusation that leaders represented the petit bourgeoise, they shut down all remaining private enterprise. Escalante critiqued the use of volunteer labor and moral incentives, but leaders made those central to achieving the objectives of the Offensive. To his doubts of the pueblo's ability to carry out the Ten Million Ton harvest campaign, leaders responded by using the Offensive as an opportunity to begin laying extensive groundwork for the 1969-70 harvest. Leaders even addressed the microfaction's disparagement of Che by dedicating the operation to him: "This Revolutionary Offensive is inspired by the glorious example of Commander Guevara. Let us remember Che's teachings, let us be inspired by his example and give new impetus to all the work of the Revolution."[420] Below, I discuss the three main phases of the Revolutionary Offensive—the nationalizations, the agricultural production plans, and the labor discipline initiative—and their relationship to both the past situation of the microfaction and the ongoing project of forging new people.[421]

[419] In his speech that launched the Offensive, Castro said, "We cannot encourage or even allow selfish attitudes in men if we do not want men to follow the instinct of selfishness, of individuality, the life of the wolf, the life of the beast, the enemy of man, the exploiter of man. The concept of socialism and communism, the concept of a superior society, entails a man devoid of those feelings, a man who has subdued those instincts above all else: a feeling of solidarity and brotherhood among men" (Castro 1968a).

[420] *Granma*. March 19, 1968:1.

[421] Leaders introduced these phases of the Offensive roughly sequentially, although the agricultural mobilizations continued after the introduction of the labor discipline campaign. From my reading of the available sources, it is unclear whether the second and third phases were planned from the beginning or were added on after leaders perceived popular enthusiasm around the first phase. Castro's two speeches in which he launches the Offensive (1968a, 1968f), for example, refer exclusively to the nationalizations. But *Granma*'s initial coverage of the event notes that one goal of the Offensive is to increase "the spirit of work […] of the masses," in which could be read as a reference to the labor discipline campaign that followed the nationalizations (*Granma*. March 14, 1968:1).

Nationalizations: Addressing the Last Vestiges of Bourgeois Society

As stated previously, on March 13, Castro announced the regime's intent to nationalize or shutter all remaining privately-owned enterprises, effective immediately (Castro 1968a).[422] Regime discourse explained that private businesses—the number of which had actually *grown* since the revolutionary regime came to power (Gordy 2015:93)—had become intolerable.[423] But the problem these entities posed was *not* primarily an economic one. As Grenier argues, "expropriating (or closing) thousands of small remaining private properties did not radically alter the political system or even the economic model in place" (2020:318–19). Rather, the regime's aims were ideological, an effort at "liquidating every vestige of capitalism, parasitism, and exploitation."[424] Much like the members of the microfaction, the owners of these establishments were enemies within the revolution, "unscrupulous, selfish elements, who refused to participate in the construction of the new society."[425] And calling to mind a Durkheimian view of social ills vis-à-vis the body politic, print media described Cuban entrepreneurs as "parasites lurking in the

[422] In this section, I focus on the nationalization of small, privately-owned businesses. But there were other measures associated with this phase of the Revolutionary Offensive (Halperin 1969:44). Castro also announced the closure of all bars, the elimination of the state-run lottery, and the criminalization of cock fighting, all of which Mesa-Lago termed "measures designed to emphasize the puritan spirit of the Revolution" (1969:210). With respect to cock fighting, for example, *Granma* described the organizers of the fights as "elements that have always lived off dirty businesses" and who "for the most part are indifferent elements or enemies of the revolution" (March 30, 1968:2). Much like the bars, once frequented by the scheming members of the microfaction, cock fight arenas had "become a place for rumors and comments against the revolution" (ibid.).

[423] It is worth noting that, while regime leaders refused to tolerate privately-owned business, they did not take the same position toward privately-owned land. Castro's rationale for this was two-fold. First, small landholders were historically more marginalized than any other group and were therefore entitled to keep their land. Castro explained, "It is true that the peasant is an owner, but he is an owner who has always lived very exploited, a person who works with his own efforts, contributes to the development of the country, and is an ally of the workers" (1968f). Second, small land-holding peasants were being folded into large agricultural plans (which also formed part of the Revolutionary Offensive). So, although the land belonged to the peasants in title, it was continuously being put to the service of the state. As an article from *Granma* explained, "Although 30 percent of our lands are individually owned, their production is being placed within the large agricultural development plans" (March 19, 1968:1). Eckstein has argued, however, that leaders' approach with the landowning peasants did not pay off. She says, "Private farmers took advantage of excess liquidity that stimulated black-market deals […]. In due course, private farmers became some of the wealthiest Cubans" (2003:40).

[424] *Granma*. March 16, 1968:1.

[425] *Granma*. March 18, 1968:2.

shadows" and "dying worms," who needed to be "swept away […] to the trash can.[426]" Language such as this could have aided members of the pueblo in reconceptualizing business owners (who were neighbors, friends, or even family) as an issue that needed to be dealt with.[427]

Before calling on average citizens to aid in the implementation of the nationalizations, however, leaders took pains to describe in great detail the scope of the problem facing the pueblo. In Castro's speech on the steps of the University of Havana, he read, verbatim, long excerpts from a report compiled by a committee of PCC members who worked, alongside CDR militants, to gather data from several different areas of Havana related to private enterprises and the people who owned them. Specifically regarding bars, 72 percent of owners surveyed "maintain[ed] an attitude contrary to our revolutionary process," while 66 percent of the clientele interviewed in those establishments was found to be "antisocial elements" (Castro 1968a).[428] As for shop owners, over 10 percent had established their businesses within the last year, with a full 36 percent having done so within the last 8 years—that is, after the revolutionary regime came to power. Finally, Castro used the report to identify the worst of the worst: the timbiricheros (owners of timbiriches). Reading from the report, he said, "The moral and social behavior that

[426] *Bohemia*. March 22, 1968:67; *Granma*. March 21, 1968:2.

[427] Here, again, I suspect that timing is a crucial element for understanding the Revolutionary Offensive. The quantity of private businesses had been increasing over the past several years. As an article from *Bohemia* pointed out, "For a time, a time that lasted almost ten years, the revolutionary government adopted a policy of tolerant waiting, leaving behind the days of progressive liquidation of what seemed to be obsolete remnants of capitalism" (*Bohemia*. March 29, 1968:59). "Private entrepreneurship," as Domínguez puts it, "flourished in revolutionary Cuba during the 1960s wherever it had not been banned" (1978:507). Yet Castro and his colleagues did not act against business owners until after the trial of the microfaction, which I believe adds further credibility to the argument that the two events are inextricably linked.

[428] These statistics are a bit perplexing. It is difficult to believe that individuals, knowing that they are speaking to representatives of CDR or the PCC itself, would have admitted to counterrevolutionary ideas, attitudes, or activities. One possibility is that the statistics are entirely fabricated. Another potential explanation is that the surveyors took a very liberal and expansive stance on what would count as an "attitude contrary to our revolutionary process" or what would merit categorizing an interviewee as an "antisocial element." Apart from the veracity of the statistical reporting, there remains the question of what Castro stood to gain from making such figures public. They are a compelling warrant for undertaking the Revolutionary Offensive, which Castro was launching in this speech, but they also seem to provide damning evidence of the shortcomings of the regime's project to transform the ideological panorama and create new revolutionary subjects. It seems that Castro deemed admitting that ideological consolidation was far from complete as a necessary step for making their articulatory project come to fruition.

goes hand in hand with the revolutionary attitude was assessed in the survey of the timbiricheros; where 18 individuals were interviewed, 18 were antisocial and amoral elements." These figures provided citizens with a sense of the breadth of the problem and offered motivation for their participation in the nationalization campaign.

While Castro delivered the news of the nationalizations to the pueblo in his speeches on March 13 and 15, *Granma* furnished the details as to how the process would unfold. Basically, volunteer workers would visit all the shops identified for nationalization, catalogue the contents of the establishment, and create a plan for managing it as a state-owned enterprise. Unlike during the rollout of the agrarian reform, most owners would *not* be indemnified.[429] Furthermore, the owners and any staff they employed would be redirected to employment through the state, primarily into agriculture and construction work (unless they were physically unable or of retirement age) (Castro 1968f).[430] Below, I will discuss in further detail how the nationalizations unfolded, organizing the discussion around the two main characters of this drama: the villains and the heroes.

Official discourse attacked the entrepreneurs relentlessly. As Guerra aptly puts it, "the state media took the demonization of small business owners to a higher level" (2012:301). Regime leaders and the press characterized them as the physical embodiment of ideological backwardness, mired in the morass of a pre-revolutionary bourgeois past. Collectively, they acted as an antagonistic "octopus," ensnaring those around them with their metaphorical tentacles, while the establishments they ran "constituted nests of parasites, centers of corruption,

[429] *Granma*. March 21, 1968:6. This article did note an interesting exception to this norm, however. It explained, "The regional commissions transfer to the banking agencies the exceptional cases of former owners who, due to their conduct and social attitude and as a result of the analysis carried out, consider that they should be compensated." In making these determinations, the assessors would also account for whether the establishment was opened before or after the revolutionary regime came to power.
[430] *Granma*. March 19, 1968:1; *Granma*. March 22, 1968:2.

smuggling, and counterrevolutionary conspiracy."[431] In my analysis of Castro's speeches and the print media, I found that the main criticism of private business owners fell primarily into two categories: their status as counterrevolutionaries-in-waiting and their exploitation of fellow man.

According to regime leaders, much like the members of the microfaction, business owners had links to the enemy that facilitated labelling them as "counterrevolutionaries," willing to betray their homeland now or in the future. *Granma* intimated direct links between the private business sector of Cuba and the CIA. One such article explained, "the Revolutionary Offensive is a strong blow not only for the parasites and internal exploiters but also for the largest exploiters of the world, for Yankee imperialism. In the parasites and exploiters, the imperialists and CIA agents had a good 'breeding ground' to develop their counterrevolutionary and criminal activity."[432] Shop owners' intent to migrate was also leveraged as evidence of their relationship to Cuba's northern enemy, which Castro touched on in both of his key March speeches (1968f, 1968a).[433] In addition to noting how many shopkeepers "for some time have been anxiously awaiting the opportunity to go there [to the United States]" (Castro 1968a), he explained their purported motive to the audience: "the more they hate the pueblo, the better they will be received there; the more wormy they are, the better they will be received there; the more lazy, the more parasitic, the more lumpen, the more counterrevolutionary, the better they will be received there" (Castro 1968f). The press reiterated the alleged link between migration and counterrevolutionary tendencies, referring to shop owners as "the unpatriotic […] people who are disaffected by the revolutionary process or who are waiting for their 'turn' to leave the country."[434]

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[431] *Bohemia*. March 22, 1968:67; *Granma*. March 19, 1968:1.
[432] *Granma*. March 19, 1968:1.
[433] As Brown points out, early in process of revolutionary consolidation, migration "helped flush out internal opposition at no cost to the revolutionary state" (2017:133). And as time wore on, "out-migration gave Fidel's government a permanent enemy with which to rally those who remained behind" (ibid.:134).
[434] *Granma*. March 19, 1968:1;6.

Regime elites also accused entrepreneurs of leveraging enemy tactics against the pueblo, another charge brought against the microfaction. Just as Escalante and his followers had corrupted perfectly good revolutionaries through deceptive means, business owners, according to Castro, tried to get honest peasants caught up in their schemes. "Many of these people," Castro said of business owners who hoped to procure products for their shops illicitly, "come to the peasant offering him villas and castles, offering him money, and what they do is corrupt the peasant" (1968f). Just as the microfaction colluded with foreign representatives to deepen Cuba's economic difficulties, business owners engaged in activities that exacerbated scarcity and, what was worse, leveraged the imperialist blockade to improve their own position at the expense of average Cubans. Castro pointed out that shop owners' speculative buying worsened already-long lines at sate-run stores. He said, "They almost forced it [eggs and chicken] to be rationed" (1968a). Later, an article in *Granma* vilified a shop owner for hoarding medications and reselling them at inflated prices. The article explained, "While our pueblo faced difficulties as a result of the imperialist blockade, José Pelayo Fernández speculated with medicines, without caring about the health of the pueblo, and had dozens of bottles of Meticorten, injectable Decadron, milk of magnesia, and other medications."[435] Clearly, official discourse argued, business owners cared not for their fellow Cubans but only for themselves.

Finally, regime leaders accused entrepreneurs of waging misinformation campaigns, along the lines of those initiated by the microfaction members. Castro labelled business owners as "rumor-spreaders" and "sowers of pessimism and defeatism," who were "spreading such perfidious species for the benefit of the imperialists (1968a). In one instance, these enemies of the pueblo tried to convince women that the state was going to come after their sewing machines.

[435] *Granma*. March 22, 1968:4.

"This is absolutely untrue," explained an article in *Granma*. It went on to clarify the situation: "Only sewing workshops, where several employees work, have been nationalized. Dressmakers who work at home, alone, receiving materials from the client, will not be affected."[436] The Confederation of Cuban Workers (Confederación de Trabajaodres Cubanos, CTC) urged members to make "no room" for "complainers and cowards, panic-mongers and gossipers."[437] And both the National Association of Small Farmers (Asociación Nacional de Agricultores Pequeños, ANAP) and the Federation of Cuban Women (Federación de Mujeres Cubanas, FMC) made targeted pleas to their members, calling for alertness and defiance in the face of those spreading rumors.[438] These ties between entrepreneurs as enemies within and the imperialists to the north—whether direct through contact and future migration plans or indirect through appropriation of enemy tactics—also implicated them as capitalists and, therefore, exploiters of their fellow Cubans.

Using the paper as a vehicle for ideological instruction, *Granma* explained to readers why the entrepreneurs were exploiters. Simply put, they were "those who do not want to work, but rather intend to live off the sweat and effort of others."[439] As noted above, many businessmen established their enterprises after the revolutionary regime came to power, meaning (in leaders'

[436] *Granma*. March 20, 1968:5.
[437] *Granma*. March 20, 1968:6.
[438] *Granma*. March 21, 1968:1,6; *Granma*. March 22, 1968:6. For the part of the peasants, ANAP leaders urged members to be on the lookout for "the parasitic elements" and "enemies of the people," who "did not miss the opportunity to sow fear and distrust among the peasants, spreading rumors to create confusion around the micro-plans, the livestock census, or scholarships for their children" (*Granma*. March 25, 1968:2). The FMC similarly urged women to be "ready to reject any ill-intentioned insinuation" (*Granma*. March 22, 1968:6). This special attention to the peasantry and women might suggest that regime leaders saw them as especially ideologically vulnerable. In the case of women, however, there was also a practical element. They generally were the members of the household who stood in the line to procure food and other basic goods for the family, and, in these lines, they risked exposure to such counterrevolutionary rhetoric.
[439] *Granma*. March 19, 1968:1. In his speeches, Castro also added a gendered dynamic to this definition of exploiters. He assailed their manhood, pointing out that they are "Lazy people, in perfect physical condition, who set up a timbiriche, […] while they watch the trucks of women as they go by to work in the Cordón of Havana or to pick tomatoes in Güines or wherever else" (1968a).

view) that they were exposed to the ideas of Marxism, understood relationships of exploitation, and nevertheless chose a life of profiting at the expense of others.[440] Within this group of post-revolutionary entrepreneurs, special ire was reserved for business owners of working class origin. Reportedly, 27 percent of owners in the metro Havana area "came from the popular masses and betrayed their class, becoming exploiters of the pueblo."[441] *Granma* described these owners' transitions from "a worker, whose work benefits the entire pueblo" to "a selfish hoarder of pesos and exploiter of the pueblo" as "intolerable."[442] Through this vilification, the need for nationalizations should have become clear to readers.

In a variety of articles, both *Granma* and *Bohemia* explained to readers how business owners exploited not only the people they employed but also the pueblo as a whole. The initial report that Castro cited in his March 13 speech found that 44 percent of owners employed workers; furthermore, in some cases, "the owner does not work personally but only collects the sales" (1968a). Again, *Granma* took on a didactic tone in explaining the relationship between workers and their private employers: "The principle is as old as it is unjust; it is called private appropriation of labor. It has existed since society was divided into antagonistic classes. Since a man once said: this is mine."[443] Owners also exploited the public by failing to maintain health

[440] The continued growth of private enterprise after the declaration of the socialist character of the revolution in 1961 certainly seems like damning evidence of the shortcomings of the regime's project of ideological consolidation, but Castro does not address the cause of this growth, except to blame the vestiges of the prior society. He also addresses the regime's lack of action on this front. Castro stated that he and his colleagues believed that small enterprises would dwindle as existing owners retired or passed away (1968f). Ironically, during the Revolutionary Offensive, leaders declined to nationalize private trucking and transportation businesses on similar grounds—that the cars and trucks would eventually fall out of circulation "because the cars get old and disappear" (ibid.). Famously, those cars (driven by chauffeurs who personally own them) are still on Cuba's roads today.

[441] *Bohemia*. March 22, 1968:67.

[442] *Granma*. March 19, 1968:1.

[443] *Granma*. March 20, 1968:5. This same article also comes close to explaining why people continued to involve themselves in private enterprise, despite the state's ideological efforts. It essentially argues that capitalism is contagious. Providing readers with an invented inner monologue of an entrepreneur, the article said, "While I get fat, I act in such a way that the worker begins to doubt the effectiveness of his own system—socialism—and his condition as a worker. [The worker thinks to himself] How nice it would be to have a winery, a bar, a timbiriche, a

and hygiene standards. While one bar owner endangered patrons by filling bottles with grain alcohol, a shop owner exposed customers to all sorts of health hazards.[444] As the article explained, "Mice, rats, and even a snake were seen in a bodega on Abelardo street. […] A dozen or so men had to work for various hours to clean the filth from the place."[445] Beyond the conditions of the shops, which "were a source of disgust and irritation to the masses," owners also engaged in price gouging, smuggling, and speculation—in short, "hindering the equitable distribution of products, introducing favoritism and privilege."[446] Photographic evidence illustrated the owners' greed to readers (see Fig. 36). This photo was taken at the "Numancía" jewelry store, where "Three thousand five hundred and give grams of gold and another number of items of clothing valued at 46,300 pesos were seized."[447] *Bohemia*'s description of the "fritero" (a fryer, one who owns a timbiriche) offered readers a sort of ideal-type, composite character that drew all of these negative tendences together. As the magazine explained,

> The most common was the fritero, with his timbiriche, his easy income, his furtive contacts with oil speculators, his connections with the counterrevolution, sometimes with papers ready to leave the country, producing low quality material, without requirements of hygiene, selling meatless croquets and cod fritters without cod. These enemies of popular health frequently had employees, whose work they exploited, at their service: a whole chain of vice, extortion, and fraud against customers.[448]

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hardware store! That is better than cutting down cane, planting coffee, sorting cows, and getting up early […]. How well the merchants live and how I have to work!" Because regime leaders declined to stamp out small businesses early on, trusting they would dwindle organically, the businesses and their owners continued perpetuating inequality and confusing the working class.

[444] *Granma*. March 19, 1968:6.
[445] *Granma*. March 18, 1968:2.
[446] *Granma*. March 19, 1968:6; *Granma*. March 29, 1968:1.
[447] *Bohemia*. March 22, 1968:70.
[448] Ibid.:67.

This type of information characterized owners, as a discrete social subgroup, as self-interested, greedy, and opportunistic, much like the members of the microfaction.[449]

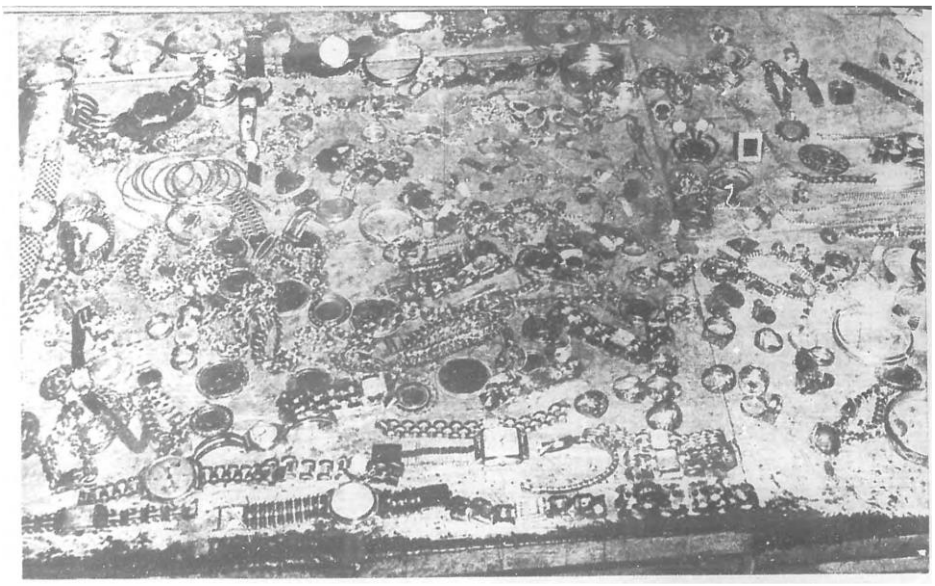


Figure 36. Jewelry and watches seized from the "intervened" jewelry store, "Numancía"

On the obverse of the coin were the heroes of the Revolutionary Offensive, those who sprinted to their local CDR office after hearing Castro's speech to inquire about getting involved. During the first week of the Offensive, *Granma* reported, "There are millions of eyes and hands, alive and active, demonstrating that a Revolution can do anything, that there is nothing that can suffocate, mutilate, or stop it."[450] In this section, I will discuss the distinct role of the CDR in implementing the nationalizations, the involvement of other sectors of society, and the ways in which appeals to revolutionary consciousness were woven throughout.

[449] It is worth noting that, despite the discursive homogenizing of the entrepreneurial class, both Castro and print media did clarify that not *all* business owners were capitalist scum. For example, *Granma* pointed to the case of "an owner of a small printing press, who was a volunteer machete cutter out cutting cane, who returned to the city, after hearing Fidel's speech, handed over his establishment because he considered the measure correct, and then returned to the cane field" (March 19, 1968:6). Nevertheless, this anecdotal evidence of decent business owners served primarily as exceptions that proved the rule (or, perhaps, fictions that established the rule).
[450] March 18, 1968:2.

Beginning on March 18, just five days after Castro's initial speech launching the Offensive, CDR branches across the country held assemblies to discuss Castro's speeches and lay out the workplan that the National Directorate of the CDR had developed.[451] In those assemblies, CDR leadership selected members to participate in the nationalizations, which they often referred to as "interventions." *Granma* reported that, as a result, there emerged, "truly overnight, an army of interveners and administrators from the pueblo, thousands and thousands of men and women who have the task of transforming the nationalized units into exemplary work centers."[452] CDR leaders made interveners of "those with the greatest prestige and authority in their neighborhoods," many of whom were women.[453] Once assembled, the army of interveners took to the streets to begin their work.

While the CDR was tasked with the initial rollout of the nationalizations, it also continued providing support for its members who had, overnight, been converted into managers of shops, restaurants, salons, auto shops, and the like, all of which had been transferred into state hands. One goal of the nationalization was to make things better than they had been before—to improve the treatment of customers, to maintain standards of health and hygiene, and to ensure "the best functioning of the units."[454] Because most of these interveners had no prior managerial experience, they were required to attend meetings in which CDR leadership would assess their

[451] *Granma*. March 16, 1968:1; *Granma*. March 18, 1968:1.
[452] March 18, 1968:2. Militarizing discourse—"an *army* of interveners"—pervaded this period as the policy itself was construed as a war maneuver—an "*Offensive*" against the "enemies" of the pueblo. As further evidence of this, another *Granma* article stated, "Thousands of *cadres* and members of the CDR are being designated to carry out this measure. These comrades will become popular administrators of these *units* and will exercise their function on behalf of all our people and in *defense* of the interests of the Revolution" (March 19, 1968:1, emphasis added).
[453] *Granma*. March 26, 1968:4; *Granma*. March 18, 1968:2.
[454] *Granma*. March 19, 1968:6.

performance and help analyze and resolve issues that arose in the context of the stores.[455] Even in late April, *Granma* continued reporting on the progress of these meetings.[456]

Of course, not every supporter of the Revolutionary Offensive could participate as an intervener; there were only so many businesses to nationalize. Instead, the other mass organizations offered their members a plethora of options for getting involved.[457] The Federation of Cuban Women, to take just one example, issued a powerful rallying call to their members. It said, "The counterrevolution must be crushed, and we must act decisively against the laggards who could hinder the advance of our Revolution."[458] The FMC's declaration went on to provide detailed, step-by-step instructions for women's involvement, targeting housewives in particular:

> The housewife, who although she does voluntary work, has not been able to definitively join production, takes her place in this Revolutionary Offensive, not only by fighting counterrevolutionary misinformation campaigns, but also by: maintaining in her own home a revolutionary spirit of saving and austerity; improving herself culturally and technically to be more useful to the revolution; looking after the education of the new generation; maintaining revolutionary vigilance in her neighborhood; contributing to the hygiene and beautification in her neighborhood or town; fighting against every antisocial manifestation in her community; [and] participating in all tasks of the Civil Defense […].

These instructions called women's attention to the importance of self-sacrifice and their role in subject formation as the mothers of the next generation of "new men." And as they prescribed specific actions, these orders simultaneously invoked certain attitudes and values.

While some of the identity-work involved in the execution of the Revolutionary Offensive was subtle or implied, the print media was also rife with examples of explicit connections between people's revolutionary actions and, ostensibly, their motivating attitudes.

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[455] *Granma*. March 26, 1968:4.
[456] *Granma*. April 24, 1968:6.
[457] Even certain occupational sectors not closely affiliated with any of the mass organizations developed their own initiatives in line with the spirit of this phase of the Offensive. Journalists, for example, voted to eliminate holding dual appointments and collecting fees for collaborations while emphasizing a renewed emphasis on ideological education (*Granma*. March 25, 1968:2; March 26, 1968:2).
[458] *Granma*. March 22, 1968:6.

Praising new popular administrators, one *Granma* article attributed their success to their character. It said, "they overcame the challenge, demonstrating that revolutionary consciousness, the sense of duty and dignity, and not selfishness or the desire for profit, is capable of moving man towards the most gigantic tasks."[459] Judging from the print media of this time, the primary ideological goal of the Offensive was to erode old ways of thinking and firmly entrench new ones: "egoism will be banished, and communist consciousness will advance."[460] CDR official communications urged members to carry out their tasks with their revolutionary consciousness in mind, "fully aware of the political and ideological importance of this work."[461] In its declaration to members, FMC leaders not only gave instructions on how to act but also reminded readers to "worry also about our ideological formation."[462] That is, specific activities—"force yourself to always be an example for the children" and "pay attention to the revolutionary attitude and educative influence that anyone who has to do with the formation of your children: teachers, pioneer guides, assistants, friends"—were a mechanism of ideological subject formation, within women's "immense responsibility for the formation of the new man, one who must be like Che, one who must not know selfishness or pettiness."[463] Through their assigned activities in the Offensive, regime discourse explained, members of the pueblo were not only *doing* but also *being* or, rather, becoming.

[459] *Granma*. March 26, 1968:4. This tribute to the popular administrators also seems to be priming readers for further discussions of moral incentives that would surge to the fore during the subsequent two phases of the Offensive that focused on agricultural and industrial production, respectively.
[460] *Granma*. March 20, 1968:1.
[461] *Granma*. March 19, 1968:6.
[462] *Granma*. March 22, 1968:6.
[463] Ibid. As Fleites-Lear points out, these directives toward women were part of a broader "Leninist conception of 'social motherhood,'" through which the revolutionary elite portrayed household management and child rearing as "a decisive task," endowing these activities which had long characterized women's daily routines with a "revolutionary character" (2008:60).

By the end of March, regime leaders and the national press declared the nationalizations a complete success. Over the course of roughly two weeks, around 55,000 businesses—including timbiriches, bars, soda fountains and cafes, guest houses, hotels, car workshops, carpentry workshops, hardware stores, bodegas, butchers, poultry shops, laundromats, shoe repairs, barbers and salons, florists, photographers, and more—had passed into the hands of the state and the management of the pueblo. [464] *Granma* reminded readers of the sheer quantity of merchandise and other material goods that were returned to the people through this process.[465] But beyond the material dynamics of this first phase of the Offensive, articles heralded the ideological triumph that the nationalizations represented. In an interview with *Granma* reporters, a group of the new popular administrators tasked with running the nationalized entities, declared, "We have won a transcendental battle against parasite and imperialism."[466] The press presented the victory as absolute: "a decisive blow […] to the antisocial, parasitic, and exploitative elements" that "has definitively crushed the old bourgeois conceptions, exploitation, discrimination, softness, and obscurity."[467] Nevertheless, work remained. In late March, *Granma* informed the public that "The revolutionary offensive does not stop with the last nationalization."[468] Rather, moving forward, "the Revolutionary Offensive must concentrate on production and political and ideological struggle."[469]

[464] *Granma*. March 20, 1968:5.
[465] *Granma*. March 22, 1968:4.
[466] *Granma*. March 26, 1968:4.
[467] *Granma*. March 29, 1968:2; *Granma*. April 5, 1968:5. Statements like these throw into sharp relief the tendency of official discourse from this period to exaggerate the accomplishments of the revolutionary regime and to blur the boundaries between description and prescription, the present and the future. While it is plausible that leaders indeed succeeded in practically implementing their nationalization plan, it is utterly incredulous that they also "definitively crushed" old ideas and behaviors in the span of two weeks when they had been unable to do so in the previous nine years.
[468] *Granma*. March 29, 1968:1.
[469] *Granma*. April 2, 1968:1.

Agricultural Mobilizations: Enacting Solidarity through Everyday Heroism

Even though the nationalizations were declared a smashing, definitive success, the Revolutionary Offensive raged on, with the attention now turned from the cities to the fields. Published in an early April edition of *Bohemia,* this pair of full-page calls to action bookended an article profiling a volunteer cane cutter (see Fig. 37 and 38).[470] The anchoring initiative of this agricultural phase of the Revolutionary Offensive was the "Jornada de Girón" (the Girón Workday, a bit of a misnomer given that the initiative lasted for nearly a month).[471] The photo on the right referenced the Jornada, saying, "In Cuba, everyone to cut, sow, cultivate, and fertilize in the 'Jornada of Girón.' To the revolutionary offensive in the sugarcane fields and in the agricultural plans!" In this section, I discuss the agricultural workplans that formed the second phase of the Offensive, which I argue was inspired, at least in part, by the microfaction's skepticism regarding the pueblo's ability to successfully carry out the Ten Million Ton campaign of 1970. Furthermore, I suggest that these initiatives, including the Jornada of Girón, were activities imbued with meaning and that regime leaders used them to introduce and entrench a new facet of revolutionary subjecthood: everyday heroism.

[470] *Bohemia*. April 5, 1968:43;47.
[471] "Workday" was a bit of a misnomer, given that the initiative lasted for nearly a month, and "Girón" refers to the landing place of the Bay of Pigs invasion. The Jornada of Girón, discussed also in Chapter 4, was not a new phenomenon. As an article from *Granma* explains, it was initiated in 1965, the "Year of Agriculture," to spur mass volunteer mobilizations in various agricultural projects while honoring those who perished in the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion (April 1, 1970:2). After the Jornada was extended to cover the full month of April in 1968, that became the standard duration moving forward.

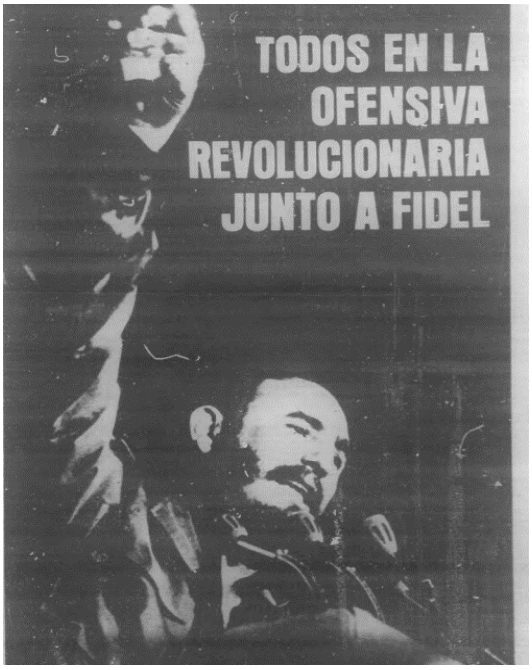


Figure 37. Call to action in the Revolutionary Offensive, featuring Fidel Castro

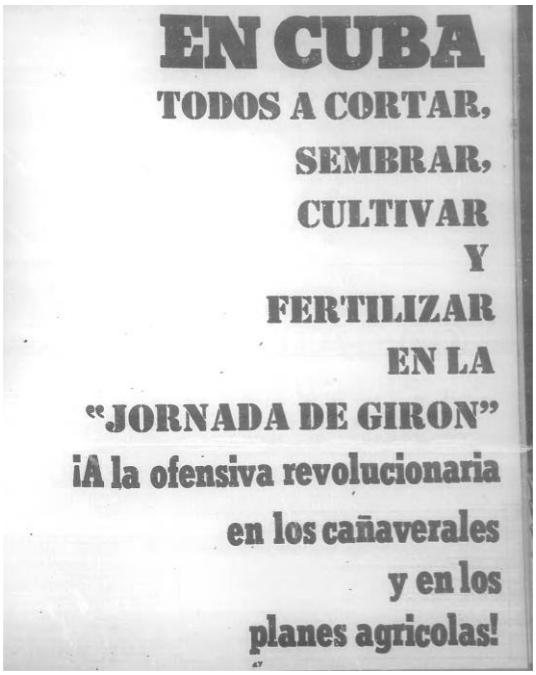


Figure 38. Call to action in the " Jornada of Girón"

In the weeks leading up to the Bay of Pigs anniversary, through the Jornada of Girón, Cubans organized on a massive scale in dozens of different agricultural sectors to honor the memory of the fallen heroes and pay tribute to those who fought. *Bohemia* catalogued these efforts and offered photographic evidence of the magnitude of the mobilizations, like in the photo below (Fig. 39). The article which the photo accompanied read, "Scenes like this have been multiplying throughout the country since the beginning of the week. The cities turn to the countryside to start the Jornada of Girón. Huge trails leave from the concentration points with their cheerful load of workers. The pueblo responds massively to the Revolutionary Offensive […]."[472] As Mesa-Lago points, militarizing discourse characterized this phase of the Offensive as well, as, "In the province of Oriente, […] 'troops of workers' are being organized in a military

[472] *Bohemia*. April 5, 1968:59.

fashion and sent to the 'production front'" (1969:205). From the east to the west, people flocked to the fields to cut marabou, pick coffee, and expand agricultural infrastructure.

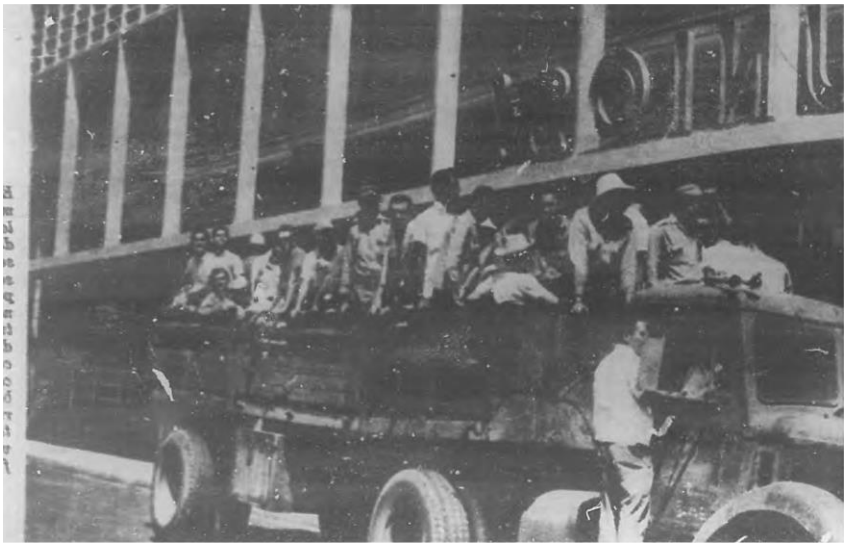


Figure 39. Volunteer workers loaded into a truck, heading off to participate in the Jornada of Girón

Print media highlighted both the number of individuals involved as well as the wide array of groups that they represented. According to *Bohemia*, "The week was described as one of the most aggressive and dynamic in initiative and revolutionary action, similar, in popular mobilization to the great days of '59, '60, and '61."[473] Some articles focused on the involvement of women. Titled "Jornada of Girón in Sancti Spíritus: Enthusiastic Contribution of Women," one showed images of women volunteer laborers making large bundles of cane (see Fig. 40).[474] Explaining that, "On this commemorative day, as in other mobilizations for agriculture, women rival men in combativeness and enthusiasm, both in the extreme vanguard and the rear," the article praised women and put them on equal footing with men.[475]

[473] *Bohemia*. April 5, 1968:58.
[474] *Bohemia*. April 26, 1968:16.
[475] Ibid.:18.



Ni un solo cogollo quedará en los cañaverales. Las trabajadoras habituales sobrepasan la norma diaria de 2,500 y las voluntarias de la Jornada de Girón están impulsando la recogida. Entre estas últimas figura la jovencita Celerina Fariñas, a quien vemos junto a su madre, Renilda Hernández.

Figure 40. Women volunteer cane cutters in the Jornada of Girón

There was also extensive coverage of groups within the pueblo who, in other societies, perhaps would have been considered above the hard manual labor of working in fields. Such was an article titled "INDER [National Institute of Sports, Physical Education, and Recreation; Institution Nacional de Deportes, Educación Física y Recreación] says 'present!'" It explained how the nation's top athletes dove into "trenches" of agriculture like everyone else: "Hundreds of thousands of workers are mobilized for agricultural work and, as part of our pueblo, INDER colleagues, like athletes, are facing the fields."[476] Famous artists similarly flocked to the fields, helping to harvest crops and offering entertainment to the workers assembled there. One article included an interview with well-known actor Carlos Moctezuma, who explained the impact of the Revolutionary Offensive on the art world.[477] He said, "We are marching towards a true awareness of the artistic function in our country; and our objective, in the development of the Revolutionary Offensive, is to offer our art to those who work hard and not to the lumpens and

[476] *Bohemia*. April 12, 1968:36.
[477] *Bohemia*. May 3, 1968:34-39.

parasites, as it was before."[478] Regardless of their standing in pre-revolutionary society, members of the pueblo came together to collectively ensure the success of the Jornada of Girón.

While the Offensive, as channeled through the Jornada of Girón, attacked agricultural production on all fronts, there was a particular emphasis on sugar. From Castro's first speech launching the Offensive, the importance of sugar pervaded the discourse of the moment.[479] Periodic updates the press quantified the progress to date. In early April, *Bohemia* announced, "The Revolutionary Offensive, covering all fronts, projected its momentum on the people's VIII harvest. On Saturday [March] 23, at 7 pm, workers had produced 3,002,457 tons. The next goal would be reached during the month of April, during the Jornada of Girón, with the massive turn of the urban population towards agricultural work."[480] In addition to praising the pueblo's hard work in the fields, *Bohemia* also covered the country's progress along the road toward the technification of the sugar industry. One such article explained, "To produce ten million tons of sugar in 1970, the first thing to do is increase installed industrial capacity. For this reason, the expansion and modernization of the Antonio Guiteras plant revolves around the vast investment plan that is being developed in the sugar industry."[481] Ultimately, in direct opposition to the pessimism of the microfaction, the print media showcased the ways in which the work of today ensured the success of the 1970 campaign. An article titled "Fighting for the 10 Million"

[478] Ibid.:34.
[479] In the March 13 speech, Castro spoke extensively about the groundwork already being laid to ensure the success of the Ten Million Ton campaign. He said, "And the country is currently making a considerable effort, first of all, to increase plantings and will exceed the figure of 25,000 new cane plantings this year; and aspires to exceed the figure in the next 18 months of some 20,000 new caballerías of irrigated sugarcane" (1968a).
[480] *Bohemia*. April 5, 1968:58. Highlighting the role of urban denizens in the Jornada both recalls the early days of the revolutionary era, in the rollout of the agricultural reform—where the people of Havana eagerly welcomed their poor, backward peasant brethren into their homes during the Concentración Campesina—and comes across as an effort to display their revolutionary credentials since most of the vestiges of old society (the target of the Revolutionary Offensive) were concentrated in urban areas. City dwellers thus ultimately had more to prove than the peasants, who were seemingly innately revolutionary due to their long history of suffering and low-class status.
[481] *Bohemia*. March 22, 1968:30.

exemplified this. Below is the first page of that article (see Fig. 41).[482] The photos depicted members of the pueblo toiling in the fields and linked their indefatigable work ethic to their purported revolutionary spirit, claiming that, "In this Jornada there is greater organization because there is more revolutionary consciousness." Materially, the Jornada was a leap toward the goal of the Ten Million Ton harvest; symbolically, it was a rejection of the old-society values that pervaded both the microfaction and the small business owners whom the first phase of the Offensive targeted.



Figure 41. Agricultural volunteers laying the groundwork for the Ten-Million-Ton sugar harvest campaign

In addition to shedding old tendencies related to selfishness and opportunism, the Offensive intended to instill new qualities, such as everyday heroism. Castro introduced the idea

[482] *Bohemia*. April 12, 1968:32.

of everyday heroism—contrasted against epic heroism—in his speech that launched the Offensive (1968a). Addressing the crowd before him, he explained,

> We are still a pueblo that is characterized by great enthusiasm and decision in decisive moments, a pueblo […] capable of any heroism in a minute, but a pueblo that still lacks the virtue of *everyday heroism*; a pueblo that still lacks the virtue of tenacity and displaying that bravery and heroism not only in dramatic moments, but in each and every day. That is to say, a pueblo that still lacks a certain tenacity, a certain constancy in heroism. (emphasis added)

Although Castro spoke these words in mid-March, the focus on everyday heroism did not reach a crescendo in the state press until the Jornada of Girón initiative.[483] "Let us create," urged a *Granma* editorial from early April, "a pueblo whose main virtue is heroism in the face of everyday tasks."[484] An article from *Bohemia* followed shortly after, reinforcing this sentiment. It explained, "The message of 'More Revolution,' ignited in the collective consciousness is *not* like an emotional slogan to be cried out at the assemblies for the 26th of July or the 2nd of January, but as part of the daily duties, in the *anonymous heroism of the everyday,* each playing his own part"[485] (emphasis added). This resulted in an odd tension between everyday heroism and the siege mentality, in which leaders discursively perpetuated a constant ambiance of war by militarizing the mundane. For example, a *Bohemia* article praising a group of volunteer laborers said, "These comrades, true exemplars of what will be the new man in our country, demonstrating that every bit of selfishness or petty interest has no place in their excellent revolutionary spirit, have decided to fight the battle of the Zafra from the same furrow,

[483] Ritter and Henken also point out the connection between the Jornada of Girón and the quest to forge everyday heroes. They say, "The goal was to harness the self-sacrifice and collective consciousness that had enabled the guerrilla fighters to win the revolution and defeat the invaders at the Bay of Pigs, by putting it to work in solving more mundane economic challenges" (2015:61).
[484] *Granma*. April 2, 1968:1.
[485] *Bohemia*. April 5, 1968:59.

permanently."[486] Thus, though the metaphorical battles were ongoing and indeed "permanent," the goal of the Offensive was to imbue even the most ordinary tasks with a heroic spirit of work.

Labor Discipline: Economic Growth through Moral Incentives

The agricultural plans and mobilizations of the Revolutionary Offensive continued well after the Bay of Pigs anniversary passed, but the Offensive also entered a third and final stage.[487] With an eye toward May 1st, International Workers' Day, leaders launched a labor discipline campaign aimed primarily at industrial production under the broader umbrella of the Revolutionary Offensive. In this phase, as *Granma* succinctly explained, "We fight intensely to increase productivity, savings, work discipline, and control of the economy."[488] The CTC echoed this directive, calling on its members to "double, multiply, centuplicate our efforts in production."[489] *More*—in terms of quantity, quality, and efficiency—was the driving force behind this campaign. Achieving greater industrial output, leaders argued, required improved worker discipline; but, as an editorial from *Granma* pointed out, "Discipline at work does not arise or develop spontaneously but is a product of the organizational and political effort in the direction of production."[490] It thus encouraged workers to engage in specific activities, including

[486] *Bohemia*. April 12, 1968:16. This tension between the epic and the everyday was further exacerbated by leaders' continual references to literal war and the ongoing existential threat allegedly posed by US imperialism. For example, Castro exhorted that "it must be the purpose of this country to never let its guard down" (1968b), while a *Granma* article argued that "Our country lives under the constant threat of imperialism, which continually provokes and attacks us" (April 25, 1968:6). Raúl's May 1st address to the people was perhaps most explicit on this front. He said, "Let us not think that because of the great things that the heroic people of Vietnam have been giving to imperialism that imperialism has stopped thinking about us. […] The imperialists have continued working, preparing the convergence of several factors, [and] waiting for the best opportunity to strike us with a blow" (*Granma*. May 2, 1968:4).

[487] To give just one example, the "Great Spring Sowing" ("la Gran Siembra de Primavera") unfolded in mid- and late-May. Calling the people to action, *Bohemia* heralded the start of the planting initiative: "With the spring rains, nature throws a new challenge to the working people of our country. The time has come to call the Great Spring Sowing […] to mobilize half a million Havana residents, in a phased manner, toward the Cordón of Havana! To the Great Spring Sowing in step with the Revolutionary Offensive!" (*Bohemia*. May 17, 1968:28).

[488] March 30, 1968:1.

[489] *Granma*. March 20, 1968:1.

[490] May 7, 1968:1.

"strict compliance with the working day," "punctuality at work," and "the absolute eradication of absenteeism, a sworn *enemy* of our economic and ideological development" (emphasis added), drawing on the ideological concepts of everyday heroism and, increasingly, moral incentives.[491]

Revolutionary discourse portrayed the labor discipline campaign as both an economic necessity and a mechanism of subject formation. On the economic front, Castro stressed the importance of hard work during the initial launch of the Offensive, saying, "What we must teach the pueblo is that their work, their sweat, their effort is the only thing that can make them enjoy the goods they need, it is the only thing that can make the people rich" (1968a). Seeming to have internalized this message, one interviewee told *Granma* reporters that "Manna does not fall from the sky, as in the old biblical stories, nor does it come from outside."[492] *Granma* later heralded labor discipline as the best way "to develop our national wealth to the maximum."[493] But physical, productive labor was tightly coupled—both in regime discourse and specific workplace practices—to ideological labor. The opening page of *Bohemia*'s April 19 issue stated this explicitly, arguing, "the pace of work in production must advance in parallel with ideological formation and political development."[494] Raúl's May 1st speech further clarified the connection between the material and the ideal. Assembling some key quotations from this speech, *Bohemia* printed two full pages to highlight some of his most important messages to the people (see Fig. 42).[495] The first two quotations—"The Revolutionary Offensive is currently concentrating on

[491] *Bohemia*. May 24, 1968:51. In rallying its members to action, CTC discourse drew heavily on the idea of everyday heroism. For example, one articles said, "We have to give ourselves fully to productive work; the same courage, the same enthusiasm, the same determination, the same self-denial that we have when fighting against our enemies, we must *maintain them day after day* in the face of production" (*Bohemia*. April 19, 1968:62; emphasis added).
[492] *Granma*. March 18, 1968:2. This reference to help arriving "from outside" could plausibly refer to the situation with the Soviet oil supplies earlier in the year which, according to Castro's speeches, provided further evidence of Moscow's unreliability.
[493] *Granma*. March 30, 1968:1.
[494] *Bohemia*. April 19, 1968:3.
[495] *Bohemia*. May 3, 1968:sup.8-9.

production, savings, and ideological and political struggle" and "We do not want a morality of timbiricheros for our pueblo"—call attention to this nexus of the economic and the ideological. Just as the nationalizations aimed to curb selfishness by eliminating private enterprise, the labor discipline campaign sought to eliminate negative tendencies of Cuban workers.

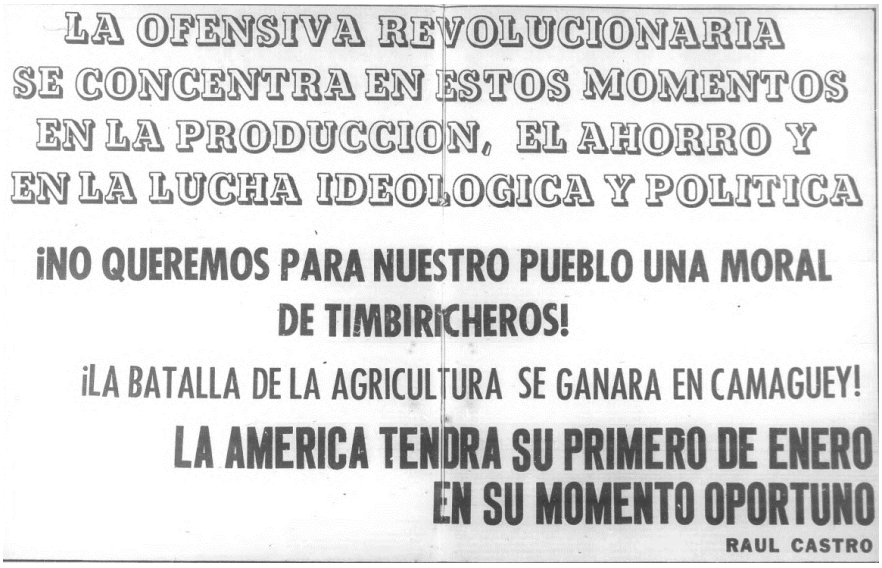


Figure 42. Large reprinted quotations from Raúl Castro's May 1st speech

Judging from regime discourse, absenteeism, tardiness, and sloppiness were serious issues that pervaded Cuban workplaces.[496] An editorial from *Granma* urged the people to be "intolerant of botched work" and "indolence."[497] Furthermore, the CTC issued an order to its members "that non-compliance, absenteeism, irresponsibility, indiscipline [be] harshly

[496] Existing scholarship has also noted the scope of the issue around this time. Historian Ada Ferrer, for example, noted that, "In some regions of the country, 20-29 percent of the labor force was absent from work on any given day. […] One study conducted in 1968 estimated that between one-quarter to one-half of the workday was wasted owing in part to" strategies like "foot-dragging, tardiness, and absenteeism" (2021:395). Eckstein makes a similar point, arguing that, "foot-dragging, absenteeism, black-market activity, and other forms of quiet resistance became widespread, adversely affecting productivity in the state economy" (2003:40).
[497] *Granma*. April 2, 1968:1.

combated."[498] Depending on the sector in question, the offending behaviors varied, but leaders took pains to clarify the kinds of unacceptable activities that workers must avoid. For example, in the area of gastronomy, leaders called on workers to

> Eliminate all measures that irritate the public, including: closing the unit for cleaning during service hours, stopping the sale of snacks during lunch or meal hours; eradicate any attitudes towards work that limit speed in service, preventing customers from being served with the maximum capacity. This negative attitude manifests itself in the following ways: paralyzing service due to the register at shift change, not making the greatest effort at times when service requires it like when queues have formed […].[499]

Official discourse thus left no ambiguity regarding what type of workplace behaviors were appropriate and which were not.

While pointing to specific undesirable activities, regime discourse also emphasized the detrimental impact they had on the pueblo. *Granma* called on workers to hold each other accountable and to help teach their wayward colleagues the errors of their ways. As one article exhorted, "Let's start a deep offensive against absentee workers; let's carry out ideological work that demonstrates to those who maintain this antisocial behavior how harmful it is, both to production and to the rest of their co-workers."[500] The article went further, arguing that a worker's negative behaviors were damaging to his own household, since "such an attitude is a negative example for his own children…that future generation that necessarily has to be more revolutionary than the present one." Articles like this one clarified the non-material, ideological consequences of the activities previously identified as economically problematic.

In juxtaposition to the harms of absenteeism and tardiness, regime discourse extolled the merits of desirable behaviors, including volunteer labor (including refusing pay for overtime

[498] *Granma*. April 15, 1968:1.
[499] *Granma*. May 23, 1968:5.
[500] *Granma*. June 7, 1968:2.

work) and efficiency measures. Workers reportedly agreed amongst themselves to forgo overtime pay and extend their workdays, in addition to volunteering in the ongoing agricultural projects organized as part of the Revolutionary Offensive. One headline from *Granma* said, "More workers join the Revolutionary Offensive; they renounce overtime pay and will do work in agriculture."[501] (G 68.03.26:2). The CTC highlighted the quantity of workers who refused compensation for overtime work, saying, "A symbol of selflessness and communist spirit is the massive incorporation of workers into the movement to renounce overtime pay."[502] With extended hours, laborers were able to complete more tasks in fewer days. For example, "The 536 workers of the INRA [National Institute of Agrarian Reform, Instituto Nacional de Reforma Agraria] of the province of Camagüey, in a period of 42 days, carried out work that normally takes four months or more, giving us proof of what the Revolutionary Offensive is."[503] Similarly, workers completed the Cauto River diversion dam in 120 days, a stark contrast to the estimated 2 years the project was supposed to take (Castro 1968e). With the introduction of workers' marathons, teams labored in 24-hour shifts to maximize their output.[504] Earning special recognition from the newspaper, the dock workers of the Port of Havana contributed 171,397 volunteer hours—or 19.5 years—during the month of April.[505] Finally, model workers aspired to the rational use of raw materials and fuel. The below cartoon from *Bohemia* shows how the simple act of using a funnel (embudo) could aid workers in conserving scarce resources, like oil (aceite) (see Fig. 43).[506] Across the board, the coverage of this labor discipline campaign and the coverage of workers leading up to the Bay of Pigs invasion exhibited striking similarities with

[501] *Granma*. March 26, 1968:2.
[502] *Granma*. March 20. 1968:1.
[503] *Granma*. May 21, 1968:5.
[504] *Granma*. June 21, 1968:3.
[505] *Granma*. May 11, 1968:4.
[506] June 14, 1968:70.

one glaring exception: the motivation driving the workers of the Revolutionary Offensive was not defense against a looming existential threat but rather the ethos of everyday heroism.



Figure 43. Cartoon depicting one worker encouraging another to conserve supplies

The notion of everyday heroism was deeply intertwined with that of moral incentives. According to regime discourse, getting average Cubans to give tirelessly of themselves in the workplace was a necessary but insufficient condition for forging new men; workers also needed to understand *why* they worked. Remarking on the character of the pueblo, Castro said, "it is not the attitude of a pueblo of fanatics, it is not the attitude of a pueblo accustomed to blind obedience, of a pueblo who does things because they are told, because they are ordered or because they are required, but of a pueblo who really do things because they understand them, because they want to do them" (1968c). And while those who gave their maximum effort to maintain production while the nation was on war footing back in April of 1961 were noble and praiseworthy in those circumstances, regime leaders could not rely indefinitely on fear as

workers' guiding motivation. Moral incentives—not negative inducements or material incentives—would motivate Cuban workers and new men moving forward.

During the time of the labor discipline campaign, official discourse explained the concept of moral incentives to the people, acknowledged the difficulties of establishing a new incentive system, and showcased people who had ostensibly internalized the system as a positive example for others to follow. If material incentivization was defined as "translat[ing] money or wealth into conscience," as Castro put it, moral incentivization was its inverse: "create[ing] wealth with consciousness and increasingly more collective wealth with more collective consciousness" (1968c).[507] In other words, as Raúl explained to the crowds on May 1st, moral incentives were rooted in "the idea of work for the benefit of all."[508] The CTC explained the concept to members by placing it in juxtaposition with the shared suffering of the past: "If before there was 'hunger discipline,' and we worked to enrich the exploiting capitalists, today there is revolutionary discipline, which is based on our proletarian consciousness; we work for ourselves, for our children, for our pueblo; [and] that is why 'We must all redouble our efforts in our daily work.'"[509] Although workers sometimes received physical tokens of appreciation—including "diplomas, pennants, [and] flags" (Eckstein 2003:34)—the moral value of these awards far outweighed the material.

[507] It is important to note, however, that the issue of moral incentives was not a purely ideological one. There was a pragmatic angle as well. As Kapcia has argued, "the principle of moral incentives was underpinned by the practical reality that any salary increases implied by material incentives would create inflationary pressures in an economy where demand would fast outstrip the severely limited supply" (Kapcia 2021:83). Castro himself conceded this. In launching the Revolutionary Offensive, Castro essentially admitted that the revolutionary regime could not afford maintaining a system of material incentives: "[C]an an underdeveloped country afford to do any other thing? […] Is it not understood that this country must invest every last cent, that it cannot invest in anything superfluous? Are we going to encourage people by giving them tokens and not being able to buy anything with them?" (1968a).
[508] *Granma*. May 2, 1968:3.
[509] *Bohemia*. April 19, 1968:62.

But like the durable attitudes of laziness, selfishness, and opportunism, material rewards were deeply socially entrenched, and official discourse conceded they could be difficult to abandon. *Granma* praised the efforts of workers while acknowledging the challenges of overcoming legacies of pre-revolutionary society: "we make efforts in production, we strengthen our defensive capacity, and, at the same time, we confront all the ideological survivors of the past."[510] Raúl drew on these themes for his May 1st speech as well. Communicating frankly with the audience, he admitted, "We do not deny the difficulty of the path, especially when it is necessary to break with prefabricated schemes, with ossified dogmas, with established myths, while also having to continue fighting firmly against many deficiencies that we still have."[511] Furthermore, it would be exceedingly difficult to get *everyone* on board. "There will always be," one *Granma* editorial emphasized, "the isolated case of someone who is left behind or lazy."[512] In these ways, leaders reminded the pueblo that ideological change would take time.

Nevertheless, regime discourse focused on the positives and highlighted cases in which people had successfully shifted their mentality to accept moral incentives. This phenomenon was particularly noteworthy, Castro pointed out, among the younger generations, such as students, who "have said that material stimuli do not matter to them and that what matters to them is the conscience of duty" (1968c). But whereas the students' commitments were largely unproven, the workers toiling away in the labor discipline campaign were, according to the Castro, demonstrating their acceptance of moral incentives through their actions. He pointed to the workplace accomplishments of the Heroic Viet Nam battalion and the Nuevitas cement factory, and he praised the workers for operating "in an increasingly higher collective consciousness, in

[510] April 15, 1968:1.
[511] *Granma*. May 2, 1968:3.
[512] May 7, 1968:1.

an increasingly higher revolutionary consciousness" (1968d). These workers offered compelling evidence that moral incentives were successfully replacing the "dented weapons of capitalism."[513]

By the time Castro gave his July 26th speech, the Cuban pueblo had spent more than four months in the trenches of the Revolutionary Offensive, which had come to permeate all aspects of daily life, no matter how mundane. In addition to sweeping away the perfidious and parasitic small business owners, regime leaders sought to foster self-sacrifice, everyday heroism, and moral incentives through the myriad initiatives they nested under the umbrella of the Offensive. A cartoon from *Bohemia,* occupying two full pages of a late May issue, illustrates well the extent to which regime discourse linked these desirable attitudes to concrete actions (see Fig. 44).[514] The large print above the cartoons said, "there are many ways to carry out a revolutionary offensive," while the smaller subheading below explained, "the revolutionary offensive is to *conscientiously* fulfill each task of the revolution" (emphasis added). Each of the eight squares depicted a vignette showing members of the pueblo going about their daily lives. The captions pointed to the myriad small ways that people could contribute to the success of the Offensive: "carry out cleaning and beautification tasks on your block," "join any of the civil defense activities," "collect jars and other raw materials," "join your work to the productive work of other men and women," "cooperate with surveillance in your CDR," "attend to blood donations, vaccinations, and all work on the health front," "improve yourself or help the improvement of other members of your CDR," and "respond with word or action to the detractors of the revolution." Thus, the culmination of the Revolutionary Offensive was the idea that, in contradistinction to the egoism of the internal enemies—including both microfaction members and small-business owners—the

[513] *Bohemia*. February 9, 1968:39.
[514] May 24, 1968:58-59.

ideal revolutionary subject would practice selflessness and solidarity not only in unsettled moments of crisis and threat but also during the wholly ordinary moments of daily life.



Figure 44. Series of eight cartoons depicting people contributing to the Revolutionary Offensive through their daily activities

Conclusion

When the misdeeds of the microfaction came to light, leaders of the Cuban revolutionary regime had several options. If, as they themselves maintained, the microfaction was small enough to be contained without incident, they could have simply swept the whole affair under the rug or, at least, relegated it to a single column of *Granma* rather than covering it extensively in the state media for several weeks. Alternatively, leaders could have looked beyond the nation's borders for someone to blame, as both US and Soviet actors might plausibly have influenced the microfaction's misdeeds. Yet, as discussed in this chapter, they chose to highlight

the episode, thrusting it into the spotlight of public discourse. Official discourse converted the microfaction into a physical representation of what regime leaders considered to be some of the most ideologically dangerous attitudes, despite emanating from the Left. The defendants were betrayal, selfishness, and hypocrisy, personified. They were a powerful example of what *not* to do and, as such, provided one side of a potent juxtaposition against which leaders could position the true, revolutionary members of the pueblo.

Castro and his colleagues, as well as the state press, encouraged average Cubans to *be* the antithesis of the microfaction members—to be loyal, selfless, and solidaristic. The Revolutionary Offensive thus offered an opportunity for the pueblo to prove their commitment to those values through concrete actions associated with the three main lines of activity: the nationalizations, agricultural development projects, and the labor discipline campaign. In managing newly "intervened" stores; picking coffee, clearing marabou, and constructing irrigation systems; and in combating tardiness and absenteeism with volunteer labor and efficiency measures, average Cubans purportedly expanded their revolutionary consciousness, developed their revolutionary subjecthood, and contributed to the construction of the socialist utopia.

However, an even bigger test loomed just over the horizon. The Revolutionary Offensive was merely the groundwork that leaders laid down for another project, one which would help solidify Cuba's economic independence and prove the viability of moral incentives for spurring economic growth: the 1969-70 Ten-Million-Ton sugar harvest campaign. During the Revolutionary Offensive, Castro reminded the people that, "a few months ago there were some who doubted the ten million" (1968b), referring to the allegations that microfaction members had voiced skepticism of the pueblo's ability to accomplish such a feat. In calling attention to the impressive work being accomplished under the rubric of the Offensive, he furthermore pointed

out that the selflessness and dedication of the people would prove the naysayers wrong. Castro reminded the public how much work they had already done, “like never before,” to prepare for the harvest (ibid.). With a pueblo recommitted to the ideals of the revolution, it seemed that the goal of ten million tons was within reach.

Chapter 4: Measuring the New Man: Assessing Subject Formation through the 1969-70 Ten-Million-Ton Harvest Campaign

In late 1969, as a long and tumultuous decade ended, the Cuban nation entered what leaders termed the "massive stage" ("etapa masiva") of the wildly ambitious Ten-Million-Ton sugar harvest campaign.[515] To put the magnitude of this goal into perspective, it required the people to more than double their output from the previous year (Ritter 1972:327).[516] Preparations for the 1970 harvest, as previously noted, were well underway during the agricultural mobilizations that formed part of the Revolutionary Offensive. Now, the time had finally come to cut the cane—one by one, and ninety-nine percent by hand (Martínez-Fernández 2014:60)—so that it could be bundled and transported to agro-industrial centers called "centrales" for processing into sugar and other cane byproducts.[517] The physically demanding task of cutting

[515] Prior to this "massive stage," leaders had organized the "first phase" of the harvest that began on July 14, 1969, "the earliest date that a sugar harvest had ever been started in Cuba" (García 1971:48). (The harvest season normally runs from November through May.) As García explains, although Cubans harvested and processed cane during this period (outputs they would ultimately count toward the total for the 1970 harvest), those summer months constituted, as a Radio Havana emission stated, "a dress rehearsal to test the equipment under operating conditions, the overall battle plan, and the organization patiently prepared for the gigantic effort" (ibid.:49).

[516] Adding to the grandiosity of the project, Martínez-Fernández points out, was the fact that the target of ten million tons of sugar "was not set as the result of scientific deliberations or agro-industrial feasibility studies; it was, rather, an arbitrary decision" (2014:58). The "sustained exodus of agricultural workers from manual cane cutting throughout the 1960s" meant that there were only about half as many professional cutters as there had been in the 1950s, another challenge for meeting the goal for the harvest (Pollitt 2004:324). Finally, recent harvests had not met expectations. As Mesa-Lago points out, "The nonfulfillment by 35% of the sugar output target for 1968 had cast serious doubt about the possibilities for achieving the 1970 goal of 10 million tons of sugar (nonfulfillment increased to 50% by 1969)" (1969:210)

[517] The reliance on human cane cutters, who used the "sixteenth-century technology" of machetes and mochas (shorter, stubbier machetes), was not part of leaders' original plan for the 1970 harvest. As Martínez-Fernández explains, "Government officials had hoped to produce or import enough harvesting machines to mechanize 30 percent of the 1970 harvest," but, in reality, "only 1 percent of the cane was machine harvested" (2014:60). The reliance on people to cut cane—work that one *Bohemia* article described as "bestial, inhuman" (November 11, 1969:51)—was also somewhat ironic. "There was something fundamentally incongruent," Martínez-Fernández notes, "about improving literacy, education, and healthcare and then handing machetes to the people to cut cane in the most rigorous conditions" (2014:59).

enough cane to produce ten million metric tons of sugar required an untold number of cane cutters, or "macheteros," named for the implement used to cut the cane: the machete. An article from *Bohemia* explained how the corpus of macheteros would be composed of "thousands of members of the FAR [Revolutionary Armed Forces, Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias], the Centennial Youth Columns, and both habitual [professional] and volunteer workers, including men, women, and children."[518] The project, in short, would require the maximal efforts of the whole nation to succeed.

But this type of labor also required something more than sheer numbers and brute force. In the colonial era (prior to 1902), Cuban cane cutters were motivated by fear: slave labor powered the sugar industry at that time, and macheteros worked to avoid corporal punishment (Pollitt 2004:346). In the Republican era (1902-1959), professional cane cutters performed their labor for wages, albeit meager ones. In the Revolutionary era, however, given leaders' rejection of material incentives (and economic constraints), they needed the macheteros to be driven by something else.[519] Given this, to what extent did leaders draw on the attitudes and practices they promoted during the Revolutionary Offensive to motivate members of the pueblo to participate in the 1970 harvest? And how did various could-be crises, including the eventual failure to arrive at the ten-million-ton benchmark, shape the articulatory project during this period?

I find that the Revolutionary Offensive, to build on the regime's own military metaphor, was merely a training exercise in preparation for the all-out "battle" that the Cuban pueblo would wage beginning with the massive stage of the 1969-70 sugar harvest. The microfaction episode

[518] *Bohemia*. November 11, 1969:66. The Centennial Youth Columns, created in 1968 during the 100-year anniversary of the first Cuban wars of independence, drew 100,000 youths into their ranks and supported an array of agricultural projects through voluntary labor (Luke 2018:42).

[519] Though most cane cutters who participated in the 1970 harvest did so voluntarily, this was not a universal condition. "Labor shortfalls were also supplemented by coerced labor," Martínez-Fernández notes, which included "100,000 conscripted soldiers, forced to work under military discipline; penal labor; and those who had applied for visas to leave the island" (2014:60).

of January 1968 concretized the antithesis of the new man, and the Revolutionary Offensive constituted a trial run at implementing what leaders touted as the key socialist values of self-sacrifice, everyday heroism, and labor discipline. But the Ten-Million-Ton harvest was an opportunity for leaders to gauge the degree to which the revolution's project of subject formation had taken hold among the members of the pueblo. In the very speech that launched the Revolutionary Offensive, Castro suggested, "The issue of the million-ton harvest is an issue that has become more than just an economic goal; it is something that has become a matter of honor of this Revolution; [and] it is something that has become a measure of the capacity of this Revolution" (1968a). Implicated in "the capacity of this Revolution," of course, is the pueblo. And, in measuring the Revolution's "capacity" with metric tons of sugar, leaders also established a proxy by which to compute the revolutionary mettle of average Cubans. Though the 1970 harvest exhibited a high degree of continuity with the Revolutionary Offensive, there were some important distinctions.

As in the Revolutionary Offensive, the articulatory project carried out during the 1970 harvest was predominantly inward facing. External enemies, chiefly the Yankee imperialists, still existed, of course, and references to them appeared sporadically throughout this period. But these mentions were sparse (especially compared to during the agrarian reform and Bay of Pigs invasion) and, as I will show, clustered around key moments of could-be crises. Although US imperialism loomed in the background, official discourse prioritized giving attention to other revolutions-in-the-making, like Vietnam, to emphasize their determination, bravery, and self-sacrifice. In this vein, most references to external actors were positive and showcased the participation of socialist delegations from around the world who traveled to Cuba to aid in the

harvest.[520] The global panorama then emerged as a rosy one in which Cuba was surrounded by allies, rather than enemies, who were eager to assist the pueblo in achieving their goal.

Internally, leaders consistently relied on statistics to quantify the support of the pueblo but complemented those facts and figures with qualitative evidence that "proved" the existence of revolutionary subjects. Throughout their first decade in power, leaders trumpeted volunteer hour counts and overproduction statistics to demonstrate the diligence and self-sacrifice of the Cuban pueblo. The scale of quantifying revolutionary subjects reached new heights, however, in the period of the 1970 harvest. Print media was saturated, from cover to cover of each issue, with both individual and group-level counts of progress toward the ten-million-ton goal. This trend dovetailed with the practice of issuing daily (sometimes hourly) updates about the harvest, enabled by computing systems that evidenced leaders' prioritization of the technification and mechanization as a pathway to economic development. Descriptions of exemplary people humanized these numerical reports. Often based on individuals' accounts of their participation in the harvest, articles offered readers information about what motivated people to undertake seemingly superhuman feats of agricultural productivity. Furthermore, discussions of internal enemies—whether literal, in the sense of counterrevolutionaries, or metaphorical, in the sense of absenteeism and labor inefficiency—were extremely limited. Through statistical reporting, interviews with members of the pueblo, and key anecdotes about exemplary individuals, regime

[520] As I will show, much of the press coverage of foreign allies showcased evidenced of the renewed camaraderie between Cuba and the Soviet Union. Shortly after the microfaction affair, perhaps the lowest point in Cuban-Soviet relations, Castro issued what seemed like a dramatic about-face on his stance toward Moscow in August. Cuban official press coverage throughout the summer had been largely favorable to the Prague Spring, "the attempt, led by Alexander Dubcek, to construct what he called 'socialism with a human face'" (Blight and Brenner 2002:139). However, Castro ultimately sided with the Soviet Union, giving a public speech supporting their invasion of Czechoslovakia (Brown 2017:101; Yordanov 2021:1185). While Castro was sympathetic to the Czech efforts—"here was a small country trying, in the shadow of a great superpower, to carve out its own unique approach to the construction of a socialist society" (Blight and Brenner 2002:139)—he ultimately prioritized a united front against US imperialism. "The Czech reforms and decision to leave the Warsaw Pact," Kapcia points out, would have appeared to Castro as "dangerously breaching the global front against imperialism" (2021:83).

discourse during the 1970 harvest presented revolutionary subjects as already existing and as the norm rather than the exception.

Finally, the most remarkable aspect of the Ten-Million-Ton harvest, the most monumental undertaking conceived to date, was just how *un*eventful it was. Whereas the Revolutionary Offensive responded to leaders' seemingly purposeful overdramatization of the microfaction affair, the 1970 harvest represented a sharp departure from what economist Archibald R.M Ritter has identified as the regime's long-standing reliance on "contrived crisis" (1972). As the months wore on, difficulties emerged, and the country fell increasingly further behind the projected dates for reaching each million tons of sugar. At the same time, there occurred many could-be crises in the form of alleged foreign (US-backed) interference with Cuban affairs that regime discourse *could* have used to help account for the harvest's suboptimal progress. Yet leaders declined to blame lagging production on external entities. Furthermore, after Castro announced the failure of the harvest ("failure" in the sense of not reaching the goal of ten million tons), the regime's articulatory project remained starkly unchanged. The primary difference was a renewed discussion of the internal enemy of labor inefficiency. Unlike in the pre-failure period, discourse about shortcomings within the pueblo—including absenteeism, shirking, and underdeveloped technical capacity—presented these failings as pervasive, not as aberrational, meaning that the formation of ideal revolutionary subjects remained incomplete and imperfect. "Turn the Setback into Victory" was the slogan Castro coined for the last two months of the 1970 harvest. This phrase encouraged resilience in the face of obstacles, just as leaders had done throughout their time in power, but what distinguished the determination of the post-failure phase of the 1970 harvest was the nature of the obstacle at hand. For the first time, it was one of the regime's own creation.

I interpret leaders' refusal to leverage external circumstances to account for the failure of the 1970 harvest as an investment in the longevity of the revolutionary project. Two attributes that characterized the revolutionary milieu up to this point—perpetual crisis and seeming infallibility—were likely not sustainable in the long term. Leaders infused crisis into the genetic makeup the Cuban revolutionary subject, but establishing and maintaining a siege mentality among the population did come at a cost. During one of this period's could-be crises, a man attending a rally remarked, "In the difficult moments, I feel more Cuban than ever."[521] Instilling this type of resilience in the pueblo, redefining crisis as an opportunity for strengthening the revolutionary project, served leaders quite well during their most intense period of consolidation earlier in the decade. But, as Guerra has pointed out, "alienation" and "exhaustion" replaced belonging and jubilation by the end of the 1960s (2023:303). Whereas supporters' convictions were initially rooted in morality, they increasingly became based on feelings of inevitability, she suggests. Additionally, as I will show, official discourse admitted that it simply was not true that foreign meddling was chiefly or even marginally to blame for the country's failure to meet the harvest's goal. Admitting so likely bolstered leaders' credibility through a show of transparency and, furthermore, made space for imperfection, not just externally driven attacks, as a generator of revolutionary resilience. In an endeavor as ambitious as a social revolution, leaders were bound to make mistakes at least sometimes. The people's ability to persevere through such missteps would be essential to the long-term survival of the revolutionary project. [522]

[521] *Granma*. May 16, 1970:3.

[522] Here, I take a position contra Guerra, who argues that Castro's approach to long-term regime stability relied, in part, on "generating belief in the infallibility of an earthly messiah who would inspire citizens to feel that limitations on their agency, choices, and identity were both empowering and worthwhile" (2019:135–36). While it certainly would have been practically useful for Castro and his colleagues to have the support of willingly obedient masses, I disagree that said obedience—to the extent that it existed, which is a separate question—rested on Castro's infallibility. In the failure of the ten-million-ton harvest campaign I discuss below, in the 1986 "Rectification of Errors" campaign (Selbin 1993:17,45; Yordanov 2021:1191), and even in Castro's apology for his regime's historic

In this chapter, I first contextualize the harvest by outlining the stakes of the project and describing the periodization that leaders used to structure the long stretch of time between the launch of the "massive stage" on October 27, 1969, and the final day of the harvest, July 23, 1970. I then discuss the regime's articulatory project across these nine months, pausing at moments of could-be crisis to point to the remarkable continuity of the articulatory approach that characterized the harvest period. I conclude, much as I began in Chapter 1, with an analysis of Castro's 26th of July speech, in which he reflected on the harvest and looked to the future. My examination of official discourse and policy during the 1970 harvest reveals that the regime's approach to articulating solidarity and forging revolutionary subjects—despite all efforts to adapt it to changing circumstances and in response to key events across the decade—remained a work-in-progress. The juxtaposition between super-macheteros and work-shirkers in the final months of the harvest illustrate well that "collective consciousness was developing unevenly" (Fitzgerald 1978:11). Rather than the 1970 harvest representing the debut of a perfected revolutionary pueblo, it revealed remaining contradictions, inconsistencies, and flaws, but it also embodied leaders' turn to a more sustainable yet imperfect model of ideological consolidation.

Establishing the Stakes of the Ten-Million-Ton Sugar Harvest

The decision of Castro and his colleagues to attempt to wrest Cuba from the clutches of underdevelopment using sugar was likely made with no small measure of bitterness, given the complex history of the sweet substance on the island, and it certainly was not the revolutionaries' original plan. Sugar's legacy was one of exploitation. Martínez-Fernández, drawing on works by famed Cuban intellectual Fernando Ortiz, argues that sugar was "a bitter fruit deceptively

treatment of sexual minorities (Anon 2010), Castro has, at times, admitted to having made significant mistakes since coming to power.

wrapped in sweetness, the source of Cuba's chronic misfortunes: slavery, latifundia, social hierarchy, dependency, colonialism, neocolonialism, and dictatorship"; it was, in sum, "essentially un-Cuban" (2014:53). The irony of trying to convert sugar from shackles into a pathway for freedom would not have been lost on regime leaders. Their reluctance to rely on sugar was made manifest in their initial approach to economic growth, which first took the form of import substitution industrialization, as I noted in Part I. Only when this strategy proved unsuccessful did leaders turn toward sugar once again, this time envisioning it merely as a means to an end because sugar would provide them with the cash they needed to spur industrialization, which remained their long-term plan for economic growth and diversification.

Evidence from this period illuminates the degree to which the harvest's eventfulness permeated daily life. Unsurprisingly, there frequent declarations of the project's monumental scale and importance. In launching the massive stage of the harvest on October 27, 1969, Castro claimed, "The ten million harvest is a decisive battle for the future, it is historic" (1969b), and an article from *Bohemia* speculated that "this epic of the Great Harvest of Ten Million" would "provide living material for history three thousand years in the future."[523] The harvest changed the nature of time itself, as leaders claimed it required the creation of an 18-month year to accommodate the heroic efforts.[524] This generalized monumentality seemed to have been felt on the ground. One journalist, on a visit to the dorms where cane cutters lived, remarked, "in the lodgings, you can already breathe the harvest."[525] In March of 1970, *Bohemia* covered a collective wedding.[526] This story was noteworthy not for the mass matrimony of dozens of couples, which were quite common in the early- to mid-1960s (Hynson 2020), but rather for the

[523] *Bohemia*. November 14, 1968:49.
[524] *Bohemia*. July 3, 1970:68.
[525] *Granma*. October 28, 1969:5.
[526] March 27, 1970:56-57.

way that the harvest became intertwined with the nuptials. As the below photo illustrated, "The mocha, symbol of the tenacity of the pueblo, replaced the knife in the delightful act of cutting the cake" (see Fig. 54). By these accounts, members of the Cuban pueblo understood the magnitude of the challenge, appreciated its implications for the revolutionary project, and were eager to contribute to the harvest's success.



Figure 45. A couple cutting the collective wedding ceremony cake with a mocha

At the macro level, discourse from this period also spoke to the importance of the harvest for the overall consolidation of the revolutionary regime. Leaders intimated the importance of the ten-million-ton goal by situating it alongside other critical events in recent memory, including the Bay of Pigs invasion, the Lucha Contra Bandidos in the Escambray, and the October Crisis. One *Granma* editorial exhorted the pueblo to face the 1970 harvest "with the same enthusiasm and firmness" with which they faced these earlier crucial episodes.[527] Speaking even more explicitly to the role of the harvest for revolutionary consolidation, a statement from the Provincial Bureau of the Party for the province of Oriente said, "No one can have any doubt […]

[527] December 19, 1969:1.

that this is the most important task in the economic, political, and ideological order undertaken by the Revolution in power."[528] Textual references such as these clearly established that leaders portrayed this period of the 1970 harvest as an event of crucial importance.

Economically, the stakes could not have been higher. Leaders presented the 1970 harvest as Cuba's best and, perhaps, last chance to finally achieve economic sovereignty. "If […] the Revolution was the culmination of Cuba's attempts at achieving the political independence that had been sought since 1898," Serra points out, "the hypothetical success of the Sugar Campaign was seen as the signal of full economic independence" (2007:87). Serra echoes Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, a key regime official, who referred to the harvest as Cuba's "second national liberation" (Yordanov 2021:1186). The regime's sense of urgency was clear, for example, when an editorial in *Bohemia*, calling for a boost in volunteer labor, referred to the 1970 harvest as the "Economic Girón" and "another War of Independence."[529] Castro also spoke to the harvest's economic importance. First, ten million tons of sugar were worth, he claimed, more than a billion pesos, which would "allow our country to have considerable export surpluses."[530] That sum would mean "almost doubling our income," according to a *Bohemia* editorial.[531] Second, Castro noted, the harvest's boost to the domestic economy would elevate Cuba's international reputation; reaching the goal would "consolidate all the confidence of those who have granted credits to Cuba" (1969b). Finally and relatedly, Cuba had a Soviet sugar quota to fulfill. Leaders thus made clear that sugar, once intertwined with slavery and exploitation, would become the pathway to Cuba's economic freedom.

[528] *Bohemia*. November 7, 1969:63.
[529] April 3, 1970:69.
[530] *Granma*. February 10, 1970:6.
[531] April 3, 1970:59.

Leaders also construed the monumental harvest as a political and ideological triumph not only for Cuba but for revolutionary movements around the globe. Achieving the goal would provide definitive proof, for a world-wide audience, of "a triumph of socialism, a triumph of the revolutionary ideas of Marxism-Leninism, [and] a defeat for the reactionary lies of imperialism," which would constitute "a triumph for all pueblos."[532] Because an ideology involves not only ways of seeing the world but also ways of being, doing, and interrelating, the 1970 harvest would also, Castro argued, lend legitimacy to the revolutionary leaders' way of running the country and, in particular, to their use of moral incentives rather than material ones. Speaking of the imperialists, Castro claimed, "they have tried to make the world believe that man has to be a slave, that man has to be spurred by hunger to work, that man is incapable of living in a more fraternal way, […] [and] that man is only capable of carrying out a task through the strongest material pressures" (1969a). The Cuban pueblo's successful realization of this goal would prove them wrong; it would "disarm them ideologically" (ibid.).

To present the evidence of the regime's articulatory project during the great 1970 harvest, I follow the periodization offered by regime leaders but also use could-be crises to reassess the nature of the project at different times. Section one begins with Castro's speech of October 27, 1969, given at an event launching the "massive stage of the Ten-Million-Ton harvest," and stretches to early February, 1970. Section two starts with Castro's television and radio appearance of February 9, 1970, in which he updated the public on the status of the harvest and announced a new strategy to improve production rates. I chose this as a point to reevaluate the patterns established since October, anticipating that Castro's appearance and the new strategic plan—along with the fact that the harvest was falling behind the established calendar—would

[532] *Granma*. January 1, 1970:1.

precipitate a change in their articulatory project as well. As I will discuss, it did not. The third period begins with a could-be crisis, the invasion of a band of "mercenaries" on the island's northeastern coast in Baracoa. Once again, the patterns held consistent, and the enemy threat had little discernable impact on the articulating discourse. Phase four, the final phase of the harvest, begins with yet another could-be crisis, the kidnapping of eleven Cuban fishermen at sea, whose return coincided with Castro's announcement that the ten-million-ton goal had become impossible to reach. I conclude with an analysis of Castro's 26th of July speech and discuss the implications of the failure of the 1970 harvest for the regime's efforts to create new subjects in both the near and long-term future.

Launching the "Massive Stage" of the 1969-70 Sugar Harvest

Castro's speech on October 27 of 1969 set the emotional tone for what was aptly termed "the massive stage" of the 1970 harvest, that is, the months during which most of the cane would be cut, bundled, and transported to the centrales for processing. Like a general rallying the troops before battle, the Commander in Chief said to the pueblo, "Tonight all of us are truly overcome with deep emotion since, for a number of years, we have worked for this battle that begins in full force, massively, tonight. The cuts will begin tomorrow in many centrales in the country, but the battle in its most critical phase begins from this very moment" (1969b). In the speech, Castro reminded the people of all the difficult labor they had already invested into the 1970 harvest—creating irrigation systems, building new roads, repairing the centrales, and, of course, planting cane across the island—and called on them to give even more. This address served as a blueprint for the regime's discursive articulation of the pueblo during this first phase of the 1970 harvest. The focus was emphatically inwardly oriented and, when discussions did address external actors, they tended to focus on allies rather than enemies. Furthermore, in the conversations regarding

the pueblo itself, positivity outweighed discussions of negative attitudes or behaviors. Although there were scant references to the types of "internal enemies" identified during the Revolutionary Offensive, leaders tended to characterize them as scarce, isolated, or even metaphorical rather than real. These patterns would endure largely unaltered through the end of the harvest.

During this period, official discourse dealing with external enemies reminded the pueblo of past abuses and warned against future ones. As the country entered a new decade, an editorial from *Granma*, for example, cataloged for readers the long list of US-based abuses and how they instilled resilience in the people. It referenced "all aggressions, blockades, sabotage, mercenary bands, and invasions of imperialism," which had left the people with "much more consciousness, strength, and experience than ever before."[533] However, the most publicized discussion of Cuba's external enemies was future oriented, which began with Castro's speech to the Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR, Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias) on November 4, 1969. This speech—and other leaders' published reactions to it—made clear their stance that no foreign intervention, regardless of the magnitude, should distract the pueblo from their main mission of the harvest. Castro explained that the servicemen's participation in the cane cutting efforts did not signal a diminution of their military duties and that the regular armed forces, as well as all militia, would remain ever ready for an attack, as always. Beyond telling these men something they presumably already knew, Castro framed his speech as "a warning to charlatans and those dealing in counterrevolutionary adventures" (1969a). "If in the middle of this harvest," he continued, "they propose to create interruptions for us, if in the middle of this harvest they carry out some infiltrations in our country, we can assure you in advance that none of them will leave alive!"

[533] January 1, 1970:1.

(ibid.). The troops then would be in the fields cutting cane, but they remained ready to jump into the battle trenches at a moment's notice.

Castro's speech became the subject of extensive editorializing. FAR leadership issued a statement about the speech, and the National Directorate of the CDR (Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, Comités de Defensa de la Revolución) responded to that.[534] It turns out that Castro's remarks to the FAR in November were rooted not in hypotheticals but rather in real attempted attacks. The FAR statement claimed, "Sabotage, subversion, and crime have been the purpose of recent infiltrations," such as the one at Playa Mocambo, in which "ten mercenaries, trained by the CIA and encouraged by the usual freeloaders, landed."[535] The CDR statement followed a similar logic, describing "the plans that imperialism, the CIA, and all their lackeys are hatching to hinder the pace and development of our harvest.[536]" But at no point, in the speech or the statements, did regime leaders suggest that enemy plans had succeeded, or would succeed, in derailing the harvest efforts. This discussion put the pueblo on alert for possible future attacks, but it did not open the door for blaming external enemies for any possible shortcomings in the harvest.

These examples aside, the remainder of externally oriented discourse from the massive stage of the harvest focused on friends rather than foes. In addition to proving Cuba's creditworthiness to global audiences, the 1970 harvest was an opportunity to put discourse of international socialist solidarity into practice. According to an article in *Granma*, "The ten-

[534] The FAR statement first appeared in their own magazine, *Verde Olivo*, and was later reprinted in *Granma* and *Bohemia*.
[535] *Bohemia*. December 26, 1969:68. Although it is possible that this Mocambo Beach invasion constituted a could-be event, I did not encounter any mention of the incident apart from these references in the FAR statement and the CDR response. It did not appear either in the press or in Castro's November speech (at least not directly by name), leading me to believe that the invasion occurred prior to the launching of the massive stage and therefore outside my window of analysis for the 1969-70 harvest.
[536] *Granma*. December 24, 1969:3.

million harvest has become something like a symbol of internationalism."[537] Groups of youth—from North Korea, Bulgaria, and even the Unites States—flocked to Cuba for a chance to cut cane in the unprecedented harvest.[538] Even foreign dignitaries, like Soviet Minister of Defense, Andrei Grechko (pictured below with President Osvaldo Dorticós [far left] and Castro), made symbolic contributions by visiting the cane fields and taking a few swings with a machete (see Fig. 46).[539]



Figure 46. Dorticós, Castro, and Grechko standing together in a cane field

The centerpiece of socialist internationalism in this period of the harvest, however, was the unveiling of a campaign named for "two great battles united": "Ten Years of Anti-Yankee Struggle of the Vietnamese Pueblo, Ten Million Tons of Sugar"—or, simply, the "10-10" campaign—whose slogan was "Like in Vietnam."[540] This campaign, meant to encourage high productivity among the Cuban macheteros, was based on the premise that the Vietnamese, for their fierce determination to defy the United States, were a positive example to emulate during

[537] December 1, 1969:1.
[538] *Granma*. January 2, 1970:3; January 13, 1970:1; January 10, 1070:1; January 19, 1970:4; December 9, 1969:1; December 18, 1969:3; *Bohemia*. December 12, 1969:66.
[539] *Bohemia*. November 12, 1969:58-59.
[540] *Bohemia*. November 7, 1969:62.

the harvest and that the Cubans should take the same combative attitude toward the harvest that the Vietnamese had against the "Yankee imperialists." A few Vietnamese soldiers travelled to Cuba to help cut cane, but the main goal was to motivate the Cuban macheteros, evidenced by dozens of articles about different brigades and workgroups signing onto the accords during "acts of commitment."[541] Throughout November, December, and even into January, new Cuban cane cutters pledged to undertake their duties "Like in Vietnam."

As for the internally oriented discourse and policy of this "massive stage" of the harvest, there were continuations of conversations related to the domestic "enemies"—attitudes, actions, and people—leaders had foregrounded during the Revolutionary Offensive. Attacks on absenteeism still appeared, especially in statements from mass organizations designed to rally their members into emulative action. The CTC (Confederation of Cuban Workers, Confederación de Trabajadores Cubanos), for example, in announcing a new emulation plan tied to the eleventh anniversary of the revolution, noted that, "the eradication of absenteeism will be prioritized among the tasks to be accomplished."[542] Similarly, the Revolutionary Orientation Committee (COR, Comité de Orientación Revolucionaria), a main propaganda producing entity within the PCC (Cuban Communist Party, Partido Comunista de Cuba), implored members of the pueblo to "remain constantly vigilant and alert to correct deficiencies, to avoid errors, to maximize organization, to combat inability and laziness, to grow in the face of difficulties, [and] to advance the harvest at all costs."[543] Statements such as these spoke generically to the lingering existence of some of the issues that the Revolutionary Offensive sought to eliminate.

[541] *Granma*. November 8, 1969:1.
[542] *Granma*. November 1, 1969:1.
[543] *Granma*. January 30, 1970:2.

There were also a handful of more pointed references to internal enemies, but these were either redemption stories or metaphors, creating the impression that regime leaders were hard-pressed to find actual, concrete examples of negative traits within the pueblo. One such instance chronicled how a central in the Amancio-Santa Cruz region successfully raised its attendance rate from 49 to 88 percent in just a few months.[544] Another article detailed how a cane-cutting brigade improved attendance (from 13,000 to 17,000 macheteros) and utilization of the workday (from 6 hours to 8 hours), thereby performing an additional 58,000 hours of work per day.[545] Apart from these real-world cases, other discussions of internal enemies were metaphorical. Such was an article that followed a day in the life of a man who decided to skip work only to find that everyone else had done the same thing, meaning there was no school for the children to attend and no bread in the bakeries to eat. Fortunately, the man was only dreaming, sleeping through his alarm clock. When his wife woke him up, he bolted out of bed and rushed off to work without even stopping to brush his teeth.[546] Together, these stories suggest that the negative traits and activities targeted in the Revolutionary Offensive had not been stamped out completely but endured only in a minority of the population.

Castro pointed out that there were two "extremes," "the one who talks a lot and cuts a little and the one who cuts 400, 500, and 700 arrobas" (1969b), but positive stories of efficiency and self-sacrifice dominated the news cycle.[547] Official discourse framed commendable actions in ways that recalled the Revolutionary Offensive and reiterated the core values promoted therein. This connection was clear from the beginning of the massive stage, in which Castro's inaugural speech informed the pueblo that "quiet, silent, everyday heroism" was necessary to see the

[544] *Granma*. November 11, 1969:1.
[545] *Bohemia*. December 5, 1969:38.
[546] *Granma*. November 17, 1969:2.
[547] An arroba is a measurement of weight equivalent to roughly 12.5 kilograms or 25 pounds.

harvest through (ibid.). Enthusiasm was necessary but insufficient (Castro 1969a). Truly exemplary workers embodied a whole constellation of traits: "more revolutionary consciousness, greater technical qualification, and a maximum of productive effort."[548] In the discourse surrounding the harvest at this stage, I identified two key patterns in the discussions of domestic positive examples: press coverage of extreme new men—that is, individuals and groups capable of seemingly super-human feats—and the use of anecdotes to convey specific messages.

One avenue for promoting extreme productivity was the CTC emulation plan, "Steps to the Million," which meticulously counted and cataloged each arroba of cane that individuals and "brigades" (groups of macheteros) cut during the massive stage of the harvest, tracking their progress in increments and issuing awards at each stage. Early articles reported on brigades that had achieved the first step, 250,000 arobas, including the "Guerrilleros of Bolivia," which would become the first "millionaire" brigade in the province of Havana, and the "Jesús Menéndez" brigade, which was comprised entirely of volunteer macheteros.[549] One of the most efficient brigades, "The Ten Million Go," made it to the third step (750,000 arrobas) by late November. Fig. 47 showed these macheteros posing with their step-three flag, with a caption that read, "Jubilant, they pose for *Bohemia*, the most outstanding macheteros of the brigade, who made it possible, with their selfless effort, for the brigade to obtain such a prestigious award in just 25 days of work."[550] By January, the number of brigades with millionaire status had skyrocketed.[551]

[548] *Granma*. November 1, 1969:2.
[549] *Granma*. November 8, 1969:3; November 21, 1969:3. While "millionaire" referred here to one million arrobas of cut cane, Guerra points out that it signaled a broader lexical shift. She says, "the word 'millionaire' acquired a meaning utterly distinct from that of the capitalist world" because, "no longer connoting personal wealth, *millonarios* were champion cane cutters who cut more than a million *arrobas*" (2012:306).
[550] *Bohemia*. November 21, 1969:62.
[551] *Granma*. January 6, 1970:3; January 14, 1970:1; January 19, 1970:4.



Figure 47. Members of the "The Ten Million Go" machetero brigade posing with their 750,000 arroba award flag

During this phase, readers also learned of key groups and individuals whom the media followed over the course of the harvest, tracking their record-shattering efforts in minute detail and reporting on the macheteros' motivations. At the group level, the "Turcios Lima" brigade, composed of FAR members from the eastern provinces, became "a two-millionaire in just 67 effective cutting days."[552] Pedro del Toro, who by the harvest's end had become a true folk hero of the pueblo, single-handedly cut 10,000 arrobas of cane in 11 days of effective labor.[553] Part of del Toro's efficiency came from experience because, at only 25 years of age, the "Titan of the Mocha" had already participated in several harvests. The journalists of *Granma* and *Bohemia* often interviewed these exemplary macheteros, which both revealed the cane cutters' motivations in their own words and offered advice to others on how to harvest more efficiently. For example, in one article, the members of the "Camagüey-Oeste" brigade compiled a list of tips to help other macheteros increase their efficiency:

> [M]aintain a constant work rhythm (you must avoid cutting 'hard' in the first moments and 'soft' in the final moments); (2) To maintain that rhythm of constant intensity, you must match your breathing and movements; (3) Movement uses

[552] *Granma*. December 29, 1969:3.
[553] *Granma*. November 27, 1969:3.

> energy, and oxygen is needed. You must avoid unnecessary movements and, in each one you make, make the most of it; if you are going to grab a cane, try to cover two, three, or the entire row […]; (4) Make sure the cut is clean and fast; (5) Avoid shade: in it, your body cools down, and the ascending rhythm of the cut is lost; (6) If you waste time, you won't get rid of your cane: talk less, smoke even less; […]; (8) You have to apply logic to everything you do: to do more and get less tired.[554]

As Edel points out, "the visibility of the effort made it more likely too, that people would cheer or egg each other on to greater effort" (1970:1228). Articles such as these calculated, counted, and documented the existence of extraordinary revolutionary subjects and provided inspiration and knowhow to average readers.

Regime discourse at this time also used anecdotes to convey specific messages. For example, no one was above manual labor for the good of the pueblo, suggested a story that chronicled 300 artists voluntarily cutting cane.[555] Conversely, everyone, regardless of their physical abilities, had something to offer to the harvest. CDR members, many of whom were not seen as particularly well-suited to cutting cane, devised a unique way to contribute.[556] Castro mentioned that one source of underproduction was cane that fell onto roadways and train tracks en route to the processing centers, so CDR members trekked along roadways looking for scattered cane to salvage.[557] The elderly, not often highlighted as heroes of the revolution, also featured prominently in press coverage, like the case of Mario Torres Infante (see Fig. 48), who told a *Bohemia* reporter, "Don't ask me about my age, ask me how many arrobas I cut!"[558] Other articles used anecdotes to highlight the importance of technology in the harvest. One told the

[554] *Granma*. December 9, 1969:2.
[555] *Granma*. February 7, 1970:5.
[556] The most active members of the CDR were those who did not routinely labor for the formal economy, meaning housewives and retirees, who had more disposable leisure time than the average working-age man (Chase 2015; Fagen 1969; Halbert-Brooks 2018). Coincidentally, these same demographic groups would have also been seen as the population's least competent cane cutters, though there were exceptions, as I discuss later.
[557] *Bohemia*. January 1, 1970:43.
[558] *Bohemia*. December 19, 1969:33.

story of the employees of the "Mario Herrero Toscano" Provincial Workshop of Agricultural Implements of Camagüey who rescued machine parts that had been damaged from wear and acid erosion.[559] The article described their enthusiasm and labor discipline, nothing that the men were "glued" in their workplace, "from bell to bell," as they salvaged pieces to be used in that province's sugarcane mills, an important component of the technification of sugar production.

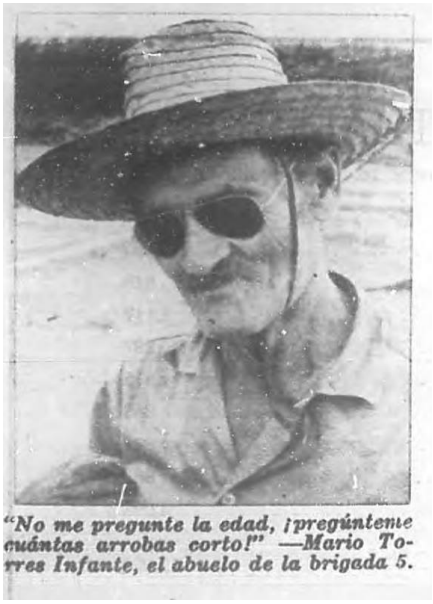


Figure 48. Elderly machetero Mario Torres Infante

Finally, other stories highlighted the importance of determination for the successful completion of the 1970 harvest. As Castro said, to achieve the ten-million goal, "Another type of courage is needed: the value of perseverance, the value of tenacity, the value of resistance" (1969a). The press highlighted people who enacted these values. In one case, truck drivers needed to affix large wooden structures to their flatbeds to secure the cane in transit. No wood was immediately available, so they went up to the mountains to cut it themselves, and, when they discovered upon their turn that all the carpenters of the workshop were busy on other projects,

[559] *Bohemia*. November 7, 1969:24-25.

they set about constructing the wooden rails themselves (see Fig. 49).[560] Leveraging the words of one of these truck drivers, the *Bohemia* article showed the importance of perseverance in action: "Look, friend, if we had stayed with our arms crossed waiting for the manna to fall from the sky, at this hour, when we are about to crack open the harvest, we would still be without the cane beds, which are so important for loading the cane." Resilience in the face of challenges would make meeting the harvest goal possible.



Figure 49. A truck driver assembling the wooden framing to contain the cut cane during transport

From November of 1969 through January of 1970, the pueblo rallied together, largely ignoring external enemies, embracing allies from abroad, and focusing on their own strengths rather than their shortcomings. This period, which passed without major incident, saw the pueblo achieve their first and second million tons of sugar on December 23, 1969 and January 18, 1970, respectively. Congratulating the pueblo on reaching the first million, a statement from the National Directorate of the CTC credited the people's hard work, both in the cane fields and beyond. Their statement said, "The production of that first million tons is an undeniable triumph

[560] *Bohemia*. October 31, 1969:54-55.

for all the workers and our pueblo, an expression of the efforts of those incorporated into the harvest and of the millions who remain in the rearguard, carrying out the plans of each workshop, factory, or service unit."[561] Despite the jubilant mood, however, issues arose with sugar yields, and the pueblo began to fall behind the official schedule (see Fig. 50).[562] A change of tack, Castro announced, was needed.



Figure 50. The official calendar for the completion of each million tons of sugar

Course Correction in the "Battle of the Low Yields"

On February 9, Castro appeared on national television to give an update on the progress of the harvest, supplementing the scads of statistics that appeared in the daily paper.[563] Whereas the first million tons of sugar arrived only three minutes behind schedule, the second came a day late, and the third, projected to be finished on February 9, had not been completed by the time of Castro's speech, meaning that it, too, was officially behind schedule. In his appearance, Castro described and diagnosed the problems causes these delays. Subjective factors, he clarified, were *not* an issue. He said, "As for the spirit of the workers in Oriente province, it is magnificent. The

[561] *Bohemia*. January 1, 1970:69.
[562] *Granma*. January 30, 1070:1.
[563] His appearance was also broadcast on the radio and subsequently reprinted in full in *Granma*.

work spirit of the cadres, of the leaders of the province, is certainly very good."[564] Rather, he explained, "We have a double problem to address: the grinding problem and the yield problem. And in our opinion the problem of yields now occupies the first place."[565] In other words, each stalk of cane was not yielding as much sugar as the agronomists initially projected. The potential yield of a cane diminishes from the moment it is cut, so a mismatch between cane availability and milling capacity can lengthen the time between cutting and processing, thereby decreasing the yield. High-capacity mills suffered from shortages of raw inputs while low-capacity mills struggled to process the locally available cane. The solution, Castro proposed, was to move millions of arrobas of cane to high-capacity mills in a huge undertaking called "Plan Linkage," which began almost immediately following his appearance.[566] During this period (February 9-April 16), the previously identified patterns held constant, varying only slightly by degrees.

Discussions of external enemies remained minimal during this period. Like press coverage of the previous months, discourse about enemies centered on the "Yankee imperialists" and increased in the weeks leading up to the anniversary of the Bay of Pigs invasion. CDR members were not responsible for patrolling the coastline or airspace in search of enemies entering from abroad, but they were on the lookout for Cubans still on the island who, having purportedly been manipulated by agents of US imperialism, posed a threat to Cubans and their massive harvest project. One article from *Granma* described how the organization's 1,535,266 members across the country deployed "collective revolutionary surveillance" to avoid "possible attempts of the counterrevolution on the property of the pueblo involved in our historic great harvest of 1970."[567] Additional calls to "intensify revolutionary vigilance" emerged around the

[564] *Granma*. February 10, 1970:2.
[565] Ibid.:4.
[566] *Bohemia*. February 27, 1970:59-63.
[567] March 9, 1970:2.

anniversary of the Bay of Pigs invasion, the most noteworthy enemy attack in the revolutionary regime's brief history. These directives made special appeals to "the members of the organization, but particularly workers, housewives, students, and retirees who do not directly participate in the mobilization to the countryside" so that ensuring revolutionary vigilance would not draw energy and labor power from the harvest itself.[568] However, with no news of direct nefarious meddling in the harvest, mentions of the revolution's external enemies remained low.

Coverage of Cuba's international allies continued cataloging the diversity of people who came to help cut cane, including both youth brigades and dignitaries. While the "10-10" campaign continued motivating Cuban cutters to put forth heroic efforts in the fields, as evidenced by press mentions of additional groups that signed the accords, most foreign-oriented press attended to the new arrivals and in-country successes of foreign macheteros.[569] In addition to the Bulgarians, North Koreans, and United States youth who arrived prior to February 9, there was coverage of newcomers from Chile, the German Democratic Republic, Mongolia, and Romania.[570] Ambassadors, diplomats, dignitaries, and professionals from several countries joined the efforts as well. Among the nations represented in the press were Algeria, Czechoslovakia, the Republics of Guinea and the Congo, Poland, and various Arab countries.[571] Articles covering the arrival of each new group touted the foreign participation as clear evidence of socialist internationalism at work.

Articles regarding internal enemies were, again, sporadic and focused primarily on downplaying the level of threat while emphasizing stories of improvement. For example, when

[568] *Granma*. April 6, 1970:1.
[569] *Granma*. February 11, 1970:3.
[570] *Granma*. February 21, 1970:3; March 21, 1970:1; March 4, 1970:3; February 26, 1970:3; March 8, 1970:1; March 10, 1970:3.
[571] *Granma*. April 9, 1970:3; March 16, 1970:3; March 30, 1970:1; March 23, 1970:1; April 6, 1970:1.

the CDR issued directives to its members in the national press, these pronouncements minimized the scale of enemies' presence, calling for "the complete neutralization of the micro-minority that still lurks to do harm" as well as for "the mental rehabilitation of other resentful, confused, or simply expectant minorities."[572] These descriptions of the pueblo's internal enemies recalled the language used to describe the microfaction members in January of 1968. As in the previous months, there was also triumphal coverage of work centers in which absenteeism had been all but eliminated. In Las Villas, for example, a "recovery program" was responsible for reducing one central's absenteeism rates from 13.5 percent to 3.3 percent, thanks to "the enthusiastic participation of the advanced workers, after a process of organizational strengthening in the Party, the UJC [Communist Youth Union, Unión de Jóvenes Comunistas], the union, and the administration."[573] Stories such as these depicted internal enemy forces as negligible and dwindling.

As before, most press coverage of the harvest was glowingly positive and foregrounded the domestic heroes of this nationalist saga, concentrating on exemplary workers and specific messaging through targeted anecdotes. Although the "10-10" campaign continued operating in the background, a domestically oriented emulation plan emerged near the anniversary of the Bay of Pigs invasion: the Jornada of Girón, which also featured prominently in the Revolutionary Offensive. "From April 1 to 30," a *Granma* article explained, "Cuban workers, conscious and organized, will redouble their efforts to the maximum to permanently ensure cane supply to the recovery plants in the industrial units," which would help push the country toward the half-way

[572] *Bohemia*. April 10, 1970:68.
[573] *Bohemia*. February 20, 1970. "Advanced workers" refers specifically to those who participated in the "Advance Movement" of the CTC. "Because one way of increasing production is to talk workers into doing more than is justified by wages," Domínguez points out, the CTC used this program to create "a vanguard within the working class" (1978:275). The number of workers who qualified for this movement—by overfulfilling production quotas, performing volunteer labor, and working toward self-improvement—increased from 120,000 in 1968 to 235,000 by early 1969 (ibid.).

point of the harvest: five million metric tons of sugar[574] Macheteros went out into the fields, as suggested by the cartoon below (see Fig. 51), with "the same spirit"—that is, the bravery, heroism, determination, and self-sacrifice—of the Bay of Pigs combatants in their minds and inspired by the slogan to "make each sapling and each central a trench!"[575] This Jornada offered the Cuban macheteros yet another structured opportunity to pursue the highest degrees of cane-cutting efficiency, living out the key values of revolutionary subjecthood with each whack of the machete.

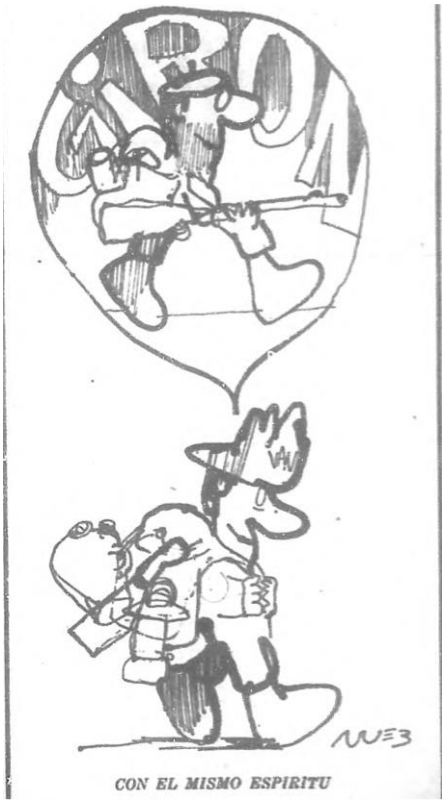


Figure 51. Cartoon depicting a volunteer cane cutter remembering the heroes of Girón

[574] March 27, 1970:2.
[575] *Bohemia*. April 17:65;69. This slogan references "saplings" because the Jornada of Girón contributed to both the harvest and to the efforts of the "Simultaneous Battle," which was the term leadership assigned to agricultural plans designed to prevent non-sugar sectors of agriculture from falling behind during the harvest (*Granma*. March 30, 1970:4-5).

Through both "Plan Linkage" and the Jornada of Girón, scores of workers, according to the revolutionary press, seized the opportunity to prove their exceptionalism and distinguish themselves as elite new men of the pueblo. The number of brigades in the "Steps to the Million" CTC emulation plan had more than doubled since mid-January, totaling 2,194 by late February, and the number of millionaire brigades had increased dramatically.[576] In the province of Las Villas alone, there were 30 by early March.[577] But the workers did not stop at one million. "Turcios Lima," the first two-millionaire brigade, had cut its third million arrobas of cane by mid-February—at which point they also drew public admiration for requesting to postpone a huge public ceremony to honor their accomplishments so that they could instead continue their work in the fields—and was the first group to become four-millionaires.[578]

Individuals, like Pedro del Toro, also continued receiving favorable coverage. In March, del Toro became the first machetero in the country to cut 150,000 arrobas with technical norms, and the CTC even established an emulation plan named in his honor.[579] But del Toro and the other famous macheteros were not alone. Gerardo Mora, for example, was an otherwise unknown driver, "who at the helm of a cane transporting truck, managed to load 2,600 arrobas of cane in an uninterrupted 18-hour day."[580] In another instance, *Granma* lauded the work of Serafin Rodríguez Fuentes, a twenty-year-old volunteer who spent *thirty-two* hours pulling cane in an ox-drawn rubber-wheeled cart.[581] The article leveraged the young man's own words to explain his deep commitment to the projects of the revolution. He said, "The revolution needs it, and one has to do it. We must be where the revolution asks us. […] It's the first time in my life driving a

[576] *Granma*. February 25,1970:1.
[577] *Granma*. March 4, 1970:3.
[578] *Granma*. February 19, 1970:1; April 1, 1970:1.
[579] *Granma*. March 20, 1970:2; February 24, 1970:4.
[580] *Bohemia*. April 3, 1970:66.
[581] March 26, 1970:3.

cart. But, for the 10 million, I will do anything." By counting macheteros' accomplishments and accounting for their motivations, print media thus provided evidence for the large, and ever-increasing, presence of exemplary new people among the Cuban pueblo.

The press also continued to leverage anecdotes to make specific points about the people's participation in the harvest. Like previous articles about artists trading their paintbrushes in for machetes, coverage of professional athletes proved that no one was above cutting cane. After returning from the Central American and Caribbean Games in Panama, the athletes went practically directly to the fields. In a speech to the athletes, after congratulating them on their wins, Castro explained, "They are going to work for a month in the area of the Uruguay mill—after they spend a few days with their families—and they are going to the canes that have to be cut where there is excess to send them to some mills in the province of Las Villas" (1970b) a reference to "Plan Linkage." An article from *Bohemia* chronicled the athletes' participation, including the photo below (Fig. 52), the caption of which quoted the members of the women's athletics team saying, "We must do our best, because we must win this battle."[582] In contrast, those with little physical strength or cane-cutting ability continued their work in adjacent projects, like the CDR's efforts to rescue abandoned cane. In one province alone, "More than 45,000 women from Camagüey […] were organized into 825 brigades to collect scattered cane and provide help in the centrales and collection centers."[583] Efficiency in the service of the technification and mechanization of the harvest was also again a notable feature of the press coverage during this period, including the case of the "Nico López" repair center, where laborers completed their project of servicing machines 24 days ahead of schedule.[584] Finally,

[582] April 10, 1970:48.
[583] *Bohemia*. April 3, 1970:66.
[584] *Granma*. March 14, 1970:3.

determination remained a salient theme in descriptions of people's participation in the harvest. In a front-page feature from *Granma,* the Provincial Committee of the PCC of Oriente province congratulated its residents on successfully producing one million metric tons of sugar in that province alone.[585] The people of Oriente reached this goal, the statement explained, because of the "enormous effort of the workers, in agriculture and in industry, facing and overcoming the difficulties imposed by nature and in the midst of the enormous work carried out to expand the capacity of our plants." Stories such as these documented the progress of the pueblo on the road to meeting their goals and living out socialist ideals.



Figure 52. Members of the women's athletic team voluntarily cutting cane

Between Castro's February television appearance and mid-April, the Cuban people reached their fourth and fifth million metric tons of sugar produced, but they did so increasingly further behind the projected dates of their completion.[586] The fourth million, projected for February 28, did not arrive until March 5, while the fifth million, scheduled to be completed on March 17, was reached a full nine days late. Despite the delays, the tone of these months

[585] April 3, 1970:1.
[586] *Bohemia*. March 6, 1970:1; March 27, 1970:71.

remained overwhelmingly positive. In the only public speech Castro gave during this period (welcoming the athletes home from competition), he exuded optimism and exhorted determination, saying, "If adverse weather occurs, we will also fight the weather. Because in this tough competition we don't simply want moral victories, we want a gold medal, a gold medal in the ten-million harvest!" (1970b). He continued, "So we encounter difficulties, but we fight, and we will continue to fight and reach the end by cutting all the necessary cane, down to the last cane, in any circumstance!" These words would soon be put to the test, however, in the face of a new threat from abroad.

Enemies Invade, the Pueblo Perseveres

In the precise moment when external intervention would have afforded regime leaders a convenient opportunity to give the pueblo an exogenous explanation for the flagging progress of the harvest, a group of "mercenaries" landed on Cuba's northeast coast, on the very anniversary of the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion.[587] The April 15 edition of *Granma* informed readers that the country stood on the cusp of completing their sixth million metric ton of sugar, "with a delay of 13 days."[588] This news was soon eclipsed, however, by a could-be crisis. Details of the invasion reached the public through a communique that Castro issued on April 18. "On Friday the 17th," the statement began, "in the early hours of the morning, a group of mercenaries from the United States, equipped with modern automatic weapons from the Yankee army, landed near the

[587] Though I was unable to corroborate this specific incident with secondary sources, I did find evidence that this sort of landing was not unheard of. In fact, in July of the previous year, Arboleya reports that a counterrevolutionary named Amancio Mosquera reportedly arranged "the landing of a group […] that was to establish a guerrilla front in Baracoa, at the eastern end of the island," near the Guantánamo Naval Base" (2000:144). While he notes that 'they were all captured and the operation ended in complete disaster" (ibid.), Arboleya does not specify whether they were intercepted before landing on the coast or not. Even earlier, in 1964, another counterrevolutionary, Eloy Gutiérrez Menoyo, landed in Cuba in December of 1964 and did successfully make it to land (ibid.:131). However, "among his men was a Cuban security agent, and he was captured scarcely a month later."
[588] April 15, 1970:1.

Yumuri River, 22 kilometers east of the city of Baracoa."[589] The text went on to describe the enemy's entanglement with the Cuban forces; to mourn the death of four Cuban soldiers; and to report that two mercenaries died during the struggle, another was imprisoned, and others remained at large. Within a week, the situation was fully contained, according to a FAR statement that said, "The operation to locate, pursue, surround, and liquidate the mercenary band that tried to interrupt the work of the pueblo has concluded.[590] On April 19th, Castro presided over a military funeral for Cuba's fallen soldiers, whom he praised as "energetic, dignified, and courageous" (1970f). At his speech honoring the 100th anniversary of Lenin's birth a few days later, Castro again uplifted the deceased for performing their duties "without giving an inch" (1970e). Considering the mercenary invasion, this period of the harvest unsurprisingly showed external discourse that was more oriented toward enemies than allies. But the internal dialogue—minimal discussion of negative traits and actions contrasted against positive examples of heroic hard work—remained consistent with earlier months.

In the days following the Baracoa episode, official discourse attacked the character of the invaders and situated them within a long line of US-backed aggressors. Although leaders decried the invasion as "bandit activities," most negative characterizations of these foreign enemies in print media were drawn from interviews with members of the pueblo.[591] Daniel Pérez Matos, a militiaman serving in the Baracoa area, portrayed the invaders as self-centered and having "no friends or family, nor anyone," while an unnamed young boy declared, "those people are bad […] because I know they are Yankees, and the Yankee is bad at all times."[592] Editorials in the press, for their part, connected the invasion to past abuses. "When Girón happened," one article

[589] *Granma*. April 20, 1970:1.
[590] *Granma*. April 27, 1970:1.
[591] *Granma*. April 20, 1970:1.
[592] *Granma*. April 24, 1970:7.

said, “there were many Cubans who, for the first time, held a rifle. The same thing happened during the October Crisis. Now, in the region of Baracoa, after a new mercenary aggression against the Homeland, history repeats itself.”[593] Unscrupulous US-backed attackers were not novel and, as before, the pueblo was ready to defend itself.

Linking the event to the contemporary moment, several actors emphasized the invaders’ *desire* to derail the harvest while also declaring their *inability* to do so. A mountain peasant living near the invasion site, Roberto Acosta Duran, explained, “Those degenerates land here so that we do not reach the Ten Million. But I believe that those who are not going to reach the Ten Million are them,” insinuating that any attackers would be dead long before the pueblo reached its goal.[594] The same anti-Yankee young boy then added, “They landed in Cuba because they don’t want there to be a ten million…but the ten million are going!”[595] More than deter the pueblo’s progress, regime discourse proposed, the attack should spur them on, motivating their work. A CTC statement expressed this sentiment. It said, “We face this stage [of the harvest] with the same faith in victory, the same combativeness and revolutionary passion, with which our combatants faced and crushed the imperialist landing of the mercenaries in Baracoa!”[596] Rather than appropriate the “mercenaries” as a well-timed scapegoat, leaders instead used the

[593] Ibid.:6.
[594] *Granma*. April 24, 1970:6.
[595] Ibid.:7. In my analysis of the texts from this period, I only encountered one instance in which an interviewee claimed that the invasion *did* disrupt the harvest work. Rogelio Alarcon Leyva, head of the millionaire brigade “Antonio Maceo,” reported that the search for the fugitive mercenaries prevented his brigade from working, although he did not specify how. He said, “they come to hinder the harvest. In my group, we are 150 men who were bringing 55,000 arrobas to the central each day. We have already lost two days—110,000 arrobas—and these mercenaries cannot pay for that, even with their lives. […] But how shameless they are, boy! What they are doing is harming the harvest. They cannot pay even with their lives” (Ibid.:6).
[596] *Granma*. May 1, 1970:2.

situation as an opportunity to stoke resilience and determination among the pueblo, thus neutralizing a could-be crisis.[597]

During this period of the harvest, discussions of labor discipline issues remained similarly minimal with one noteworthy exception, a study that was published in *Bohemia* on May 1, International Workers' Day.[598] It outlined a new, "scientific" approach to studying and quantifying workplace inefficiency that divided explanans into two categories: TINO (Unproductive Time Dependent on the Worker, Tiempo Improductivo Dependiente del Obrero) and TINDO (Unproductive Time Not Dependent on the Worker, Tiempo Improductivo No Dependiente del Obrero). TIDO examples included "late arrivals, unwarranted conversation, [and] unexcused absences […]," while TINDO explanations were primarily objective. Among them were "lack of raw materials; lack of semi-finished products; lack of work organization; lack of tools; broken equipment; lack of energy (electricity, for example); […] [and] lack of equipment." Although TINDO factors outweighed TIDO issues in the workplaces evaluated in this pilot program, together, "In total, a quarter of the day [was] lost, or, in other words, it [was] as if a quarter of the workers did not exist." Unexcused absences, illustrated with a photo of what appears to be a worker napping in a boat (see Fig. 53), were only part of the problem. As Armando Hart (then Minister of Education) explained in a quotation included in the article, "it is not only this problem of 'absenteeism of the absent'—pardon the redundancy—but also the underuse of the workday, so absenteeism that can occur in those who are present." This article suggested that the labor discipline issues attacked so visibly and fervently during the

[597] Following the Baracoa invasion, discussions of foreigners turned positive once again as state media continued showcasing evidence of socialist solidarity and Cuba's global network of allies. This included updates on the German and Japanese youth who arrived in previous months (*Granma*. April 21, 1970:4; April 28, 1970:1; *Bohemia*. May 1, 1970:66).
[598] *Bohemia*. May 1, 1970:32-37.

Revolutionary Offensive still lingered, preventing the pueblo from reaching its full potential and signaling the continued underdevelopment of Cuba's revolutionary subjects.

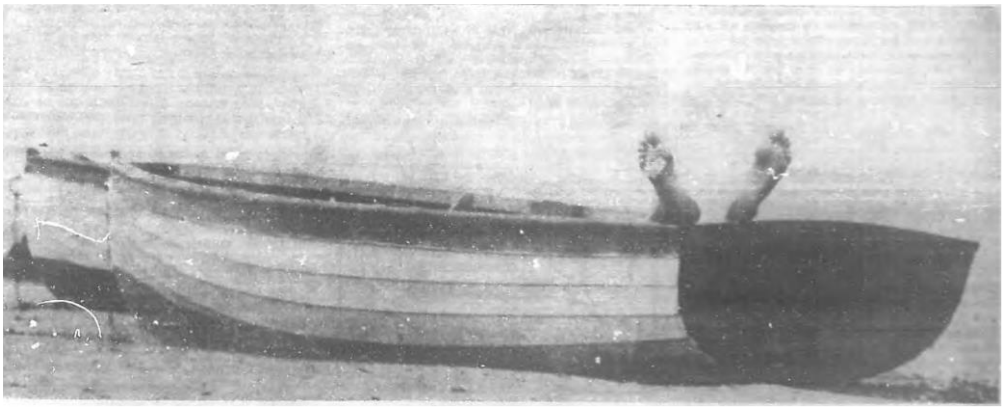


Figure 53. A worker napping in the bottom of a boat

Most news coverage from the post-Baracoa period, however, painted a very different picture from the scientistic TIDO-TINDO analysis and report. With the invaders contained, the pueblo wasted no time in pressing on toward their seventh million ton of sugar, and regime discourse was once again replete with stories hardworking, self-sacrificing Cubans. The Jornada of Girón continued throughout the month of April and was then replaced by one to honor International Workers' Day (May 1). It promoted the mobilization of volunteers in various sectors of agricultural work.[599] Like many national celebrations that occurred during the "18-month" harvest year, May 1st also looked different from previous years. As one *Bohemia* article explained it, "This time the parade alters its course. To the countryside instead of the Plaza. The mochas take the place of the banners and flags. It is no longer about goals or slogans but rather a living commitment that overflows with figures and almanacs."[600] These large-scale work initiatives, designed to prevent other agricultural sectors from falling into abandonment during

[599] *Granma*. May 2, 1970:3.
[600] May 1, 1970:3.

the harvest, also framed *all* agricultural work as contributing the harvest by complementing the labor of those directly involved with handling the cane and sugar.

Stories of extreme efficiency continued saturating the press, and the number of noteworthy groups and individuals mounted. By late April, the number of brigades involved in the CTC's "Steps to the Million" emulation program had doubled once again, totaling 4,343.[601] Every few days, a new two-, three-, or four-millionaire title was awarded. Women also joined the ranks of the honorees when the "Rosa la Bayamesa" brigade became the first all-women's cane-cutting brigade to reach one million arrobas."[602] Hailing their achievement as a victory for all women, a *Granma* article opined, "What better tribute to the mothers of the world and the heroic Vietnamese people than to become the first millionaire women in the history of our sugarcane harvests!"[603] Pedro del Toro meanwhile again shattered his own record when he reached 200,000 arrobas cut.[604] To accomplish this feat, which he dedicated "to the Victory of Girón, the centennial of the birth of Lenin, and as a salute to May Day," del Toro "kept cutting cane for 31 hours straight, from 4 a.m. on Friday the 24th to 11 a.m. on Saturday the 25th, taking only 2.5 hours of this time to go home to eat. In total, on this day, he cut more than 2,000 arrobas of cane." Del Toro's interview with a *Granma* journalist shortly after achieving that feat also revealed to readers that the young man was admirable for more than his cane-cutting credentials. In speaking of the Baracoa incident, del Toro revealed he had requested his brigade leader allow to him to join the hunt for the invaders. "But," he explained, "they didn't want to let me go. Because of the respect I have for the Party, since they explained to me that I could help more by

[601] *Granma*. April 28, 1970:3.
[602] Rosa Castellanos Castellanos, known as Rosa la Bayamesa, was a heroine of Cuba's wars for independence. Born into slavery, Rosa later became a messenger, cook, and nurse for the rebel armies in their fight against Spain but also joined in the physical combat on several occasions and was the only woman to make the rank of captain in the Liberator Army (Ejército Libertador) (Rubiera Castillo 2011).
[603] *Granma*. May 9, 1970:1.
[604] *Granma*. April 27, 1970:1.

cutting, I stayed."[605] Del Toro's willingness to set aside his own desires for the sake of the harvest further cemented his status as a hero of the pueblo and provided readers with a model for both their actions and their attitudes.

Other coverage of the harvest continued to reinforce the messaging of the previous periods. The idea that each member of the pueblo could contribute something to the great project was further solidified through the case of the "Hospital de La Plata" ("La Plata Hospital") brigade, which was composed of patients and staff from Havana's psychiatric hospital. Despite their infirmities, these volunteer laborers managed to collectively cut four million arrobas of cane by late April.[606] Narratives of the importance of efficiency via mechanization also endured. Workers at the "Guaso" Industrial Plant managed to manufacture 10,400 hoes in 29 days of work, despite the labor having been projected to take 40 days.[607] Technology and know-how continued playing an important role in confronting the issue of low yields, which plagued the harvest even after the implementation of "Plan Linkage." In an article titled "The Battle for Yields in Las Villas," *Bohemia* outlined the efforts of a working group—"made up of members of the Cane Group of the Agriculture Command Post, of the Provincial Technical Directorate of MINAZ (Ministry of Sugar, Ministerio del Azucar), and colleagues from the Basic Industry with high technical qualification and long years of experience in the sugar industry"—to increase yields in the low-producing region.[608] Finally, just as Castro had called for determination in the face of foreign attempts to sabotage the harvest, several articles outlined positive examples of resiliency in confronting another force: nature. Such was the case of the women of the "Mariana Grajales" brigade, whose "legs were sinking in the mud" as "bundles of cane had to be carried

[605] *Grama*. April 30, 1970:3.
[606] *Granma*. April 28, 1970:3.
[607] *Granma*. April 27, 1970:4.
[608] May 1, 1970:16.

from the end of the field to the road" since vehicles could not navigate the terrain.[609] These stories reinforced the attitudes that leaders demanded from the revolutionary pueblo, both in the harvest and beyond.

In this phase of the harvest, leaders encountered a could-be crisis in the form of a "mercenary" invasion, but, instead of spinning the situation into an explanation for the underproduction of sugar relative to the projections calendar, they minimized the seriousness of the situation and focused on the positives. Men and women, youth and the elderly, and able-bodied and infirm people, according to the revolutionary press, all found ways to contribute to this high-stakes national project. Nevertheless, despite their heroic and sometimes seemingly superhuman efforts, sugar production lagged well behind the established targets. The seventh million ton of sugar, scheduled for completion on April 20, arrived to muted celebration on May 8, more than *two weeks* late. And as the people slogged toward the eighth million, it seemed that only a miracle could save the harvest.

A Kidnapping, an Earthquake, and a Plan to "Turn Setbacks into Victory"

Instead of a miracle, another could-be crisis rattled the pueblo. In a communique issued on May 12 and published in *Granma* on May 13, Castro informed the public of more foreign interference, this time in the form of an attack on Cuban fishing vessels, which "agents of imperialism" destroyed after kidnapping their crew of 11 men.[610] "A Yankee station from

[609] *Bohemia*. May 1, 1970:62.
[610] *Granma*. May 13, 1970:1. Pirate-like raids emerged as a counterrevolutionary tactic as early as 1962. After the failed Bay of Pigs invasion, and purportedly with CIA backing, small groups orchestrated hit-and-run attacks on both still and moving targets. The Student Revolutionary Directorate (Directorio Revolucionario Estudiantil, DRE, not to be confused with Echeverría's Directorio Revolutionario [DR], which had been instrumental in the anti-Batista rebellion) organized one such attack, shooting at a hotel and theater on Havana's coast from the water. Afterwards, "the participants held a press conference on their return to Miami and the principal North American news media reported the event in great detail" (Arboleya 2000:121). Though Kennedy denounced these types of attacks in early 1963 (ibid.:125), they continued. In 1963 alone, Arboleya reports there were 137 such attacks "against Cuban shore installations and vessels," though the number had fallen to 12 by 1968 (133;138).

Miami," Castro explained, broke the news. The report said, "artillery boat manned attack by forces of the Alfa-66 Movement—boarded, seized, and took prisoner 11 crew members of the Castro-communist boats 'Platform 1' and 'Platform 4.'" Alfa-66, Castro reminded readers, was a counterrevolutionary group, "created by the CIA a few years ago as a screen to cover up its pirate attacks on Cuba."[611] Rounding out the communique, Castro again stressed US involvement— "The US government knows perfectly well where the fishermen are, who has them, and with what means they carried out the action"—and assured the pueblo they would emerge victorious in the face of any threat, as usual.

The fishermen's kidnapping became a flashpoint for a population that was likely feeling frustrated by persistent issues with the harvest and surely exhausted from several months of brutally difficult manual labor. The fact that *Granma*, contrary to standard practice, published on a Sunday to cover the fallout of the kidnapping—coupled with interviewee statements comparing the situation to the Bay of Pigs episode—contributed to an aura of eventfulness. Almost immediately, people took to the streets in protest, first in Caibarién, where the fishermen were from (see Fig. 54), and later in several major cities, including Santa Clara, Santiago de Cuba, Matanzas, Pinar del Rio, Camagüey, and Havana.[612] In Havana, demonstrators convened a large rally outside the former US embassy building, which signaled both their pro-Cuba patriotism and their stand against the imperialists whom they "knew" to be responsible for the attack (see Fig. 55).[613] The protest reportedly swelled to 200,000 attendees by day five of the episode.[614] A host of famous people, including a star baseball pitcher, TV and radio personalities, Bay of Pigs

[611] As Arboleya notes, the group emerged in 1962 and as a result of counterrevolutionary Antonio Veciana's "ties to the CIA" (2000:130). He further says that Alpha 66 "specialized in carrying out naval raids" and were "known during this period for their hostility." They were, reportedly, the reason for Kennedy's public statement against the sea raids.
[612] *Bohemia*. May 22, 1970:48-49; *Granma*. May 14, 1970:1.
[613] *Bohemia*. May 22, 1970:sup.4.
[614] *Granma*. May 18, 1970:1.

combatants, and even the “Titan of the Mocha” Pedro del Toro addressed the crowds, expressing the indignation seemingly shared by all.[615]



Figure 54. Crowds protesting the fishermen's kidnapping in Caibarién



Figure 55. Crowds protesting the fishermen's kidnapping outside the building that formerly housed the US Embassy in Havana

As was the case with the Baracoa invasion, print media focused on defining the enemies, discussing the relationship of the event to the sugar harvest, and calling for determination in the face of difficulties. “Stateless bandits,” “counterrevolutionary lackeys,” “pirates of the CIA,” “cowardly […] worms,” and “sons of bitches” were just a few of the phrases that members of the

[615] Ibid.

public used to describe the fishermen's kidnappers.[616] They were cowardly for attacking unarmed fishermen and hypocritical as well. As the mother of one captured fisherman stated, "Those 'dogs' were supposed to free the Cubans and what they did when they were here was to keep all of our fishermen enslaved," referring to the claims of invaders, in both Girón and Baracoa, that they had come to liberate the people.[617] Several rally attendees, echoing the public outcry after the Baracoa invasion, accused the kidnappers of aiming to foil the harvest. One young man, a student at Barlovento Higher School of Fishing, claimed that the kidnapping was "one of the CIA's plans to hinder the harvest of the ten million, but we are already alert, as Fidel said."[618] A student of the Victory of Girón fishing school expressed a similar opinion. He said, "Maybe they think that with this they are going to prevent us from making the Ten Million Tons of sugar? Yes, that's what they want, but they won't achieve it!"[619] Like before, however, the key takeaway was determination and resilience. Members of the pueblo pledged not to permit the kidnapping to distract them from work, including fishermen and the macheteros of the cane fields, all of whom promised to continue their business as usual.[620] For example, speaking on behalf of small farmers, the ANAP (National Association of Small Farmers, Asociación de Agricultores Pequeños) vowed, "we will not be intimidated; we will continue to advance victoriously in the development of our economy; and we will make ten million tons of sugar."[621] Seemingly prooving the pueblo's resilience, amidst the kidnapping and ensuing commotion, the papers announced that the 1970 harvest had broken the "world record in the production of cane sugar."[622]

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[616] *Granma*. May 14, 1970:5; May 16, 1970:4; May 15, 1970:3; May 17, 1970:6.
[617] *Granma*. May 15, 1970:1.
[618] *Granma*. May 14, 1970:3.
[619] Ibid.
[620] *Granma*. May 17, 1970:4.
[621] *Granma*. May 16, 1970:4.
[622] Ibid.:1.

The front page of *Granma*'s May 19 issue shared the cheerful news that the fishermen had been located and were on their way home. Their captors, according to the press, abandoned them in the Bahamas before fleeing to the United States. To celebrate what Castro and others framed as another popular victory of the pueblo and to welcome the fishermen home, the Commander in Chief addressed the public assembled around the former US Embassy. After warmly welcoming the fishermen, praising their courage, and chastising the cowardice of their captors (and their alleged US-backers), Castro turned to the topic of the harvest, updating the audience on the progress so far and addressing some of the lingering difficulties. Halfway through that speech, he abruptly declared, "But if you want me to tell you the situation very clearly, it is simply that we will not make the ten million. Simply. I'm not going to beat around the bush to say it" (1970a).

The next day, Castro delivered a televised address regarding the harvest situation, a presentation that, together with the public speech in Havana, raised two noteworthy points. First, he declined to leverage the kidnapping specifically (or US-backed interference generally) as an explanation for the harvest's shortcomings; that is, he explicitly avoided creating a contrived crisis. In fact, he explained that the timing of the failure announcement was originally scheduled for later in May.[623] However, CIA accusations that Cuban leaders "had organized this entire mobilization [protesting the kidnapping] looking for an incident on which to blame the difficulties of the harvest" compelled Castro to disclose the failure at the fishermen's homecoming to defend against these claims.[624] More pointedly, he said,

[623] *Bohemia*. May 22, 1970:sup.36.

[624] Castro said he learned of the news himself early in May, stating that, "on May 7, in the last evaluation, it was shown that there was no possibility of harvesting the 10 million" (*Bohemia*. May 22, 1970:sup.36). He does not explain why he planned to wait until late May to inform the public of this development. It is not likely that Castro was waiting for a crisis to blame (since he did not blame the could-be crisis that actually emerged), but it is plausible that, upon the fishermen's kidnapping, Castro decided to wait until that situation was resolved to share the news of the harvest's failure with the public.

> We have encountered difficulties. Are we going to blame someone else? No! Are we going to throw blame at the imperialists? No! We are not going to blame even the mercenaries who landed. They wanted to interrupt the harvest. We are not going to blame these miserable CIA people who kidnapped the fishermen. No! We'll have to blame ourselves. (1970a)

With this series of rhetorical questions and answers, Castro rejected blaming the failure on foreign intervention and, furthermore, transparently took responsibility for it. Second, in this pair of addresses, Castro identified the path forward. Rather than end the harvest early, he explained, everyone was to continue pushing toward the goal they already knew to be unrealizable so that the pueblo collectively could "turn the setback into a victory" (ibid.), which became the ubiquitous slogan of the harvest's last period. The way the Cuban people responded in the face of failure—not any number of metric tons of sugar—was to be the new yardstick by which their revolutionary fervor would be measured. While the rest of the world would likely continue to judge them based on the final tally of the harvest, Castro elaborated, "above all, we will measure ourselves with the attitude towards the setback, with the attitude towards the pain, [and] with the attitude towards the blow," recognizing that "it will be a demonstration of courage and revolutionary condition to fight even when that goal is not in sight, even when we know that goal will not be reached" (ibid.). In the same breath as he announced the harvest's failure, then, Castro instructed the people to get back to work, harder than ever, and "fight until the last cane."

According to the revolutionary press, support for Castro's new slogan flooded forth, both abroad and at home. Various foreign dignitaries condemned the kidnapping of the fishermen and declared their continued support for the 1970 harvest. The president of Algeria, for example, sent his best wishes for "bring[ing] the harvest to a successful conclusion, a gigantic economic achievement to which [Cuba] has dedicated itself with faith and self-sacrifice."[625] And new

[625] *Granma*. May 23, 1970:1.

contingents of foreign youth and dignitaries continued arriving in Cuba to help cut the remaining cane. Nordic youth from Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Finland reinforced the "Solidarity with Cuba" brigade; more Bulgarians joined their brethren in Camagüey; the Vietnamese macheteros vowed to cut until the last cane; and the North Korean "Jinetes de Gullima" ("Guillima Jockeys") brigade drew praise for cutting nearly 2.5 million arrobas.[626]

Internally, the pueblo reacted to Castro's devastating news with surprise, sadness, and, above all, determination. One machetero from Las Villas, in an interview with a *Granma* journalist, reported, "For me it was a big surprise, because we were fighting hard for the ten million."[627] A construction worker added, "to believe it, Fidel had to say it."[628] "Fidel's bitter expression touched me to the depths of my being," recalled a physics teacher, while Anita Bernal, a housewife and volunteer secretary for the Vietnam Solidarity Committee, admitted to breaking down in tears upon hearing the announcement.[629] But for all the sorrow, commitment to "turn the setback into victory" dominated the official discourse. Particularly among the macheteros, the will to keep cutting shone through in their interviews: "It shook us but did not collapse us"; "this makes us firmer, more determined, and more capable of facing the most difficult tasks"; and "If we do not reach ten, we must try to do as much as possible."[630] In addition to sending messages of support to Castro, the people gathered in rallies to show solidarity, arranged lightning meetings to organize their next steps, and signed pledges affirming their commitment to the slogan of "turning the setback into a victory."

[626] *Granma*. June 29, 1970:1; May 28, 1970:1; June 4, 1970:3.
[627] May 27, 1970:2.
[628] *Granma*. June 3, 1970:2.
[629] *Granma*. May 22, 1970:2.
[630] *Granma*. May 22, 1970:2; May 26, 1970:2.

Most importantly, the people *acted* on these attitudes. The last battle—the so-called "Olympic Final of the Harvest"—was to take place in the eastern provinces where most of the uncut cane was located.[631] Carrying out this last campaign required shifting some of the country's most decorated macheteros (18,000 in total) from the western provinces, where the cutting and milling of cane had largely concluded, to Camagüey and Oriente.[632] This enormous operation relied on assistance from everyone, as even the logistics of getting the cane cutters across the country was a sizable undertaking. Such was the case with the mechanics from "Brigade Number Three," who logged hours and hours of volunteer labor after their regular shifts to ensure that buses would be repaired in time to transport the macheteros.[633] The revolutionary press exalted the campaign as the embodiment of the pueblo's reaction to the failure. It was a key mechanism for living out Castro's new slogan, supposedly echoed even by the very trains transporting the macheteros to the East. "Along the rails of the Central Line," the trains went," with an iron rhythm of six syllables, as if to say: setbacks-victory, setbacks-victory, setbacks-victory, victory-victory-victory."[634]

Despite the rather dramatic changes in circumstance, members of the pueblo toiled on much as they had in the three previous periods. *Granma* reported that 927 brigades had surpassed the million-arroba mark by mid-June, and the numbers of three- and four-millionaire brigades grew as well.[635] The famed "Turcios Lima" brigade had cut their sixth millionth arroba prior to Castro's announcement, but they still pressed onward, reaching a staggering seven million arrobas in early July.[636] At that point they finally conceded to being honored in a national

[631] *Bohemia*. May 15, 1970:46.
[632] *Granma*. May 26, 1970:4; *Bohemia*. May 29, 1970:66.
[633] *Granma*. May 22, 1970:2.
[634] *Bohemia*. June 5, 1970:49.
[635] *Granma*. June 13, 1970:3.
[636] *Granma*. July 7, 1970:1.

ceremony.[637] Testimonies of several super-macheteros appeared in both *Granma* and *Bohemia* during late June and early July, providing readers with further evidence of the revolutionary attitudes behind their inspiring actions. From an article titled "Men Who Make History," exemplary cane cutter Héctor Rodríguez Diaz commented, "we work hard, day to day, to cement the economic prestige of our country in the world; that is one of the most powerful weapons with which we fight Yankee imperialism."[638] After aggregating responses from several macheteros, another *Bohemia* article claimed to have discovered the secret to macheteros' outstanding efficiency.[639] "It may be petulant to present a specific formula," the article explained, "but there are very important elements to consider: organization, discipline, consciousness, revolutionary fervor, capacity for sacrifice, and esprit de corps." Press coverage like this provided readers with models of—and a roadmap to—excellence through efficiency.

Other press coverage highlighted the messaging consistent with the pre-failure periods as well. Assuring readers that all members of the pueblo could participate in the harvest's final phase, an editorial from *Granma* stated, "In every Cuban, no matter the age or occupation, there is a combatant willing to face, with revolutionary fortitude and sufficient courage, the tasks assigned to him to transform the harsh setback into a jubilant victory."[640] The members of the "Hospital La Plata" brigade again provided a powerful example for emulation, amassing more

[637] *Granma*. July 9, 1970:1. Interestingly, as they were being hailed as national heroes for their dedication to the arduous manual labor of cutting cane, the "Turcios Lima" mateteros also became the faces of the campaign to mechanize the harvesting stage of sugar production. In a letter congratulating them on their accomplishments, Minister of Labor Jorge Risquet Valdés wrote, "I propose to you, comrades, that you become combine operators; may your contribution to the next combat be not only that of courage and strength, but also that of technical qualification, focused on a powerful machine that can cut in a week what each of you has cut in long months of work in your heroic endeavor" (*Granma*. July 11, 1970:1). Rather than taking Risquet's message as belittling their contributions, the brigade members wrote back, "We will operate the Henderson combines next harvest" (*Granma*. July 18, 1970:1).
[638] *Bohemia*. June 6, 1970:88.
[639] May 22, 1970:40.
[640] May 23, 1970:3.

than six million arrobas of cane cut, despite their illnesses (see Fig. 56), while CDR members continued their project of rescuing scattered cane from roadways and train tracks, eventually gathering a total of 9,381,148 arrobas of cane across the country by late June (see Fig. 57).[641] Regime discourse also continued emphasizing the importance of technification and mechanization. In part, this was tied to the massive operation in the East, including the four convoys of 200 pull-carts that workers quickly repaired before sending them to centrales in Oriente.[642] Finally, determination to turn the setback into victory also took the form of resilience in the face of difficult work conditions. Many articles discussed macheteros slogging through rain and mud, swatting mosquitoes aside, to reach the last of the standing cane.[643] Speaking on behalf of its members, the CTC wrote to Castro, "we are willing to remain firm in the sugarcane fields, without the rain or cyclones able to dislodge us from this trench or break us away from our purpose."[644] Even cartoons conveyed this message, such as one with a caption that read "we cut the last one, even with an umbrella" (see Fig. 58).[645] The pueblo's commitments to full participation and determination in the face of any obstacle continued in the post-failure period.

[641] *Bohemia*. July 17, 1970:22-23; June 26,1970:68.
[642] *Granma*. May 28, 1970:3.
[643] *Bohemia*. May 22, 1970:34.
[644] *Granma*. May 26, 1970:1.
[645] *Granma*. May 27, 1970:2.

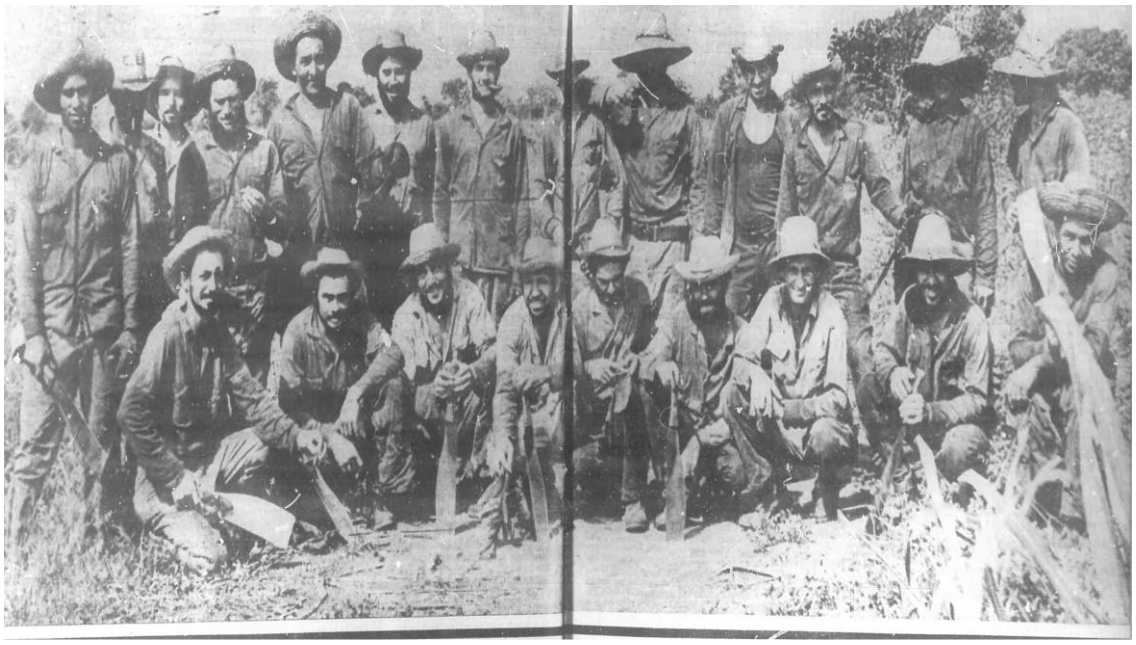


Figure 56. Members of the "Hospital La Plata" brigade posing with their machetes



Figure 57. CDR members picking up scattered cane along railroad tracks



Figure 58. Cartoon depicting a man holding a machete to cut cane in one hand and an umbrella in the other

Despite the decidedly positive tone of Castro's May 19 and May 20 speeches, as well as the rosy coverage of exemplary participation in the harvest, the post-failure period contained more extensive coverage of labor discipline issues, an important internal "enemy" of the pueblo, than the previous periods. Simultaneous to the nation-wide campaigns to "turn the setback into victory" and "leave no cane standing" was a parallel effort to identify and address the subjective roots of the failure to reach the ten-million-ton goal. The strong echoes of language that appeared in the Revolutionary Offensive suggest that the exemplary individuals and heroes of the harvest were not, perhaps, as representative of the pueblo as the media coverage implied. Speaking directly to this point, the CTC's post-failure letter of support to Castro outlined some of the issues at hand. "We will not forget," the letter read, "that, despite the existence of a numerous and growing vanguard of the working class, with communist labor consciousness, there remains a rearguard of absenteeism and negligence."[646] It went on to specify the "weaknesses that still exist in the behavior of the working class," including "indiscipline, absenteeism, the waste of the working day, [and] cultural and technical backwardness." Examples of worker indiscipline, seemingly so difficult to locate in the previous periods, rushed to the fore.

To fully understand the scope of these problems, the CTC undertook an "extensive analysis," the results of which labor leaders discussed with more than a half million workers in meetings throughout the country.[647] The findings, outlined below (see Table 2), were neither new nor surprising.[648] Echoing both the TINO-TINDO report of the previous period as well as the core values promoted during the Revolutionary Offensive, CTC leaders simply reiterated to workers what they already knew—they needed to work more diligently, more efficiently, and

[646] *Granma*. May 26, 1970:1.
[647] *Granma*. June 29, 1970:1.
[648] *Granma*. July 8, 1970:1.

with more technical expertise. This last point was also the subject of Castro's commentary in his May 31 speech at the dedication of a newly completed town built for rice industry workers in Oriente. Looking to the future, beyond the scope of the 1970 harvest, Castro said, "I believe that one of the great tasks of the labor organizations, of the unions in the province of Oriente, is the fight to raise the cultural levels, the technical levels of our workers, not only the very important decisive question of increasing productivity. […] We must be very aware that the levels are low" (1970d). Although Castro ended the speech on a positive note, praising the Orientales for their hard work and affirming his hopes for their future improvement, his speech on that day made clear the extent of worker underdevelopment. It also signaled the shortcomings of moral incentives. "If workers could not exchange their money for goods," Fitzgerald points out, "many of them 'exchanged' it for leisure, either by absenteeism or by low productivity on the job" (1978:10–11). The discourse surrounding worker inefficiency in the post-failure period had a clear, overt message: keep working, harder and smarter. But the implication lurking just under the surface was, in some senses, an admission of defeat (or, at least, delay) in the regime's pursuit of forming ideal revolutionary subjects.

Table 2. Merits and demerits of workplaces

Merits	Demerits
- Working overtime as a voluntary contribution to resolve production or service needs - Striving for technical and cultural improvement, expressed in school grade qualifications obtained through study - Contributing to technological advancement in the workplace with any sort of inventiveness or innovation - Participating in mobilizations for agricultural work, guerrilla jornadas, or any other effort promoted by one's workplace - Contributing to the defense of socialist property - Observing heroic conduct in the performance of their work in situations of natural disaster, danger of aggression, or war, and other outstanding attitudes that are considered appropriate to incorporate	- Absenteeism - Leaving the workplace without authorization or justifiable cause - Abandoning the camp, without authorization or justified cause, before the expiration of the time for which one has voluntarily committed oneself to the 1970 harvest or any other mobilization - Negligence in the handling of tools, equipment, or machinery, and in the handling of raw materials and fuel - Causing damage to socialist property - Other labor indiscipline

At the end of May, one country's tragedy became another's redemption, as a massive earthquake in Peru created an opportunity for Cubans to exercise international solidarity and refocus their post-failure narrative away from enduring labor discipline issues and toward their immense capacity to give selflessly. In the days and even weeks following the seismic event, stories of aid for the Peruvians saturated the press. *Granma* referred to Cuban's reactions as a "moral gesture without precedent in our pueblo," while a *Bohemia* article remarked that the earthquake "has served to demonstrate that the Cuban people are pioneers in the hour of solidarity."[649] The article continued, "In the midst of a national movement that calls for all

[649] *Granma*. June 15, 1970:1; *Bohemia*. June 19, 1970:3.

efforts—that of Turning Setback into Victory—Cubans have given ample space and insurmountable fervor to an international need: that of providing unlimited aid to their brothers in Peru." Helping the Peruvians provided a way for Cubans to prove, domestically and internationally, the measure of their revolutionary worth.

Emergency aid to Peru became another quantifiable indicator of Cubans' revolutionary spirit, just as the number of remaining standing cane—the previous measure of the development of revolutionary subjecthood—dwindled to none. Almost immediately, news stories reported, Cubans flocked to blood donation centers to assist Peru's recovery. In addition to Castro and President Dorticós, "Thousands of workers, students, and housewives [went] to the blood banks […] to donate as much as the Peruvian brethren need."[650] Within ten days, the number of donations had reached 104,594, at which point officials had to suspend the campaign because it had outpaced processing capacity.[651] Here again, news coverage included statistics, quotations, and anecdotes. One donor, demonstrating his eagerness to act selflessly, said, "I am disposed to give all the blood in my veins for the brother pueblo of Peru."[652] Another expressed, "A little blood is not a sacrifice; we would give it all for a brother pueblo."[653] Just as in the harvest, people contributed what they were able. An elderly woman, for example, reported that she went to donate blood only to be told she was too old, at which point she insisted that the staff give her something useful to do.[654] She stayed all night preparing bandages and equipment for the blood draws. Determination emerged as a theme here as well. Zoila Degournay Crespo, a blood bank technician, told a *Bohemia* interviewer, "I have been drawing blood for more than twelve hours,

[650] *Granma*. June 5, 1970:1.
[651] *Granma*. June 15, 1970:1.
[652] *Granma*. June 5, 1970:4.
[653] *Bohemia*. June 26, 1970:12.
[654] *Bohemia*. Jun 12, 1970:53.

and I do not plan to return home as long as my services are needed."[655] A statement from the PCC's Revolutionary Orientation Commission explicitly confirmed what all this information seemed to imply. "If we wanted to measure the great ideological development achieved by the pueblo," it said, "we could do so with three events that occurred in the recent months: the mercenary landing in Baracoa, the battle for the liberation of the fishermen, and the campaign to help the brother pueblo of Peru."[656] These episodes, not the failed Ten-Million-Ton harvest, were the appropriate lenses through which to view revolutionary subjects' development.

Even after the difficult news that the ten-million-ton goal for the 1970 harvest had become unattainable, the people banded together to go beyond the world-wide record for a single harvest and reach more than eight million tons of sugar by mid-June. The province of Matanzas surpassed its one-million-ton pledge, while the province of Las Villas, for the first time in its history, produced more than two million metric tons of sugar.[657] The millionaire macheteros who had gone east for the "Final Olympics" of the harvest remained there until just shy of the 26th of July celebration. On July 25, *Granma* announced, "The last canes that were left standing on the northern coast of Oriente were felled yesterday by thousands of Havana's macheteros."[658] The pueblo had persevered in the face of low yields, a "mercenary" invasion, the kidnapping of the fishermen, Castro's announcement of the failure, their own subjective shortcomings, and Peru's catastrophic earthquake, which they felt "as [their] own."[659] The 1970 harvest was, in short, "a barometer indicating the growth of revolutionary consciousness."[660]

[655] June 12, 1970:53.
[656] *Granma*. July2, 1970:3.
[657] *Granma*. July 3, 1970:38.
[658] July 25, 1970:5.
[659] *Granma*. June 5, 1970:4.
[660] *Bohemia*. July 3, 1970:88.

At the conclusion of nearly eighteen consecutive months of sowing, cutting, bundling, hauling, and milling sugar cane, the pueblo prepared for a grand 26th of July celebration despite failing to achieve their original goal. Castro had insisted on it. In his May 20 speech, he consoled the people, saying, "The spirit with which we must face the setback and fight against it does not have to be at odds with the joy when we finish making this effort. That's why we owe the same thing as if we had made the ten million: organize the parties throughout the country."[661] The press coverage gave not even a hint of melancholy as it detailed the usual preparations. The CDR members of Havana busied themselves cleaning and beautifying the city, while the bottling company workers labored extra hours to ensure the supply of beer and rum "to give 'character' to the celebrations of July 26."[662] Mass organizations set goals for their members: CDR called for more vigilance, more ideological work, and greater public health efforts; FMC, for more women in the workforce and "social prevention"; and the unions, for emulations and more productivity, labor discipline, and technical capacity.[663] And the whole pueblo eagerly greeted foreign dignitaries—from North Korea, Vietnam, and USSR; Laos, Mongolia, and Romania; and Bulgaria and Brazil—as they arrived.[664]

Castro's speech reflected the mixed results of the harvest and, by extension, the contradictions within the regime's ambitious project to remake average Cubans into revolutionary subjects. As Guerra points out, "while he praised the people for acting heroically, he also mandated that they 'learn' the lessons of humility (*vergüenza*) for losing the war on Cuba's underdevelopment" (2012:309). On the one hand, he extoled the people's dogged determination. He noted how the pueblo persevered, "incessant in their work," when "the

[661] *Bohemia*. May 22, 1970:sup.39-40.
[662] *Bohemia*. July 3, 1970:20.
[663] *Granma*. June 30, 1970:1.
[664] *Granma*. July 22, 1970:1; July 23, 1970:1; July 24, 1970:1.

problems began to appear: yield problems, transportation problems, and industry problems" (Castro 1970c). And he commended the heroes of the harvest who "insisted on cutting every last cane, even knowing that ten million would not be reached." On the other hand, Castro also echoed the findings of the CTC report. In speaking of the underlying issues behind the harvest's failure, he clarified, "I am no longer referring to those problems that may be beyond a man's power to solve, but rather those that are in his hands and are delayed and not resolved." The "shortage of spare parts," for example, was not the responsibility of the pueblo, but "the high level of absenteeism, which [was] one of the highest in recent years," certainly was. However, Castro ended on a positive note. Despite this litany of objective and subjective issues, he claimed that the revolutionary spirit was "that of the vast majority" and that "the few lumpen elements that may exist" do not matter. Near the conclusion of his speech, he declared, "We are not fighting an ideological battle like the one in the early days. It is a battle in the field of the economy that we must fight with the pueblo, and only with the pueblo can we win it." With these words, Castro framed leaders' project of ideological consolidation as largely complete, justifying the prioritization of economic issues as they moved into the future.

Conclusion

From the launching of the "massive stage" of the harvest to Castro's annual 26th of July commemoration speech, the articulatory project embedded within the 1970 sugar harvest remained remarkably consistent even in the face of several convenient opportunities to shift course. Across all four periods, discourse relating to issues beyond Cuba's borders was, on the balance, both minimal and positive. External enemies made sporadic appearances across the harvest time frame, surging only in the context of the could-be crises of the Baracoa invasion and the fishermen kidnapping. In contrast, external allies—in the form of several hundreds of young

people and foreign dignitaries who traveled to Cuba and helped cut cane—occupied a prominent position in the discourse of the harvest, drawing attention to what leaders considered the unshakeable bonds of socialist internationalism. Internally, print media portrayed the pueblo as composed of exemplary and impressive national heroes. Imperfect, flawed subjects-in-the-making made few appearances, and they were largely included as odd exceptions that proved the rule or as examples of redemption. Only in the final, post-failure phase of the harvest did a serious consideration of the internal "enemy" of worker inefficiency come to the fore. And, even then, the discussion was quickly eclipsed by another show of revolutionary exceptionalism in the pueblo's reaction to the Peruvian earthquake. Despite numerous opportunities to scapegoat the nefarious agents of US imperialism for the harvest's shortcomings, leaders declined to do so, making the failure of the harvest their own responsibility. Irrespective of whether, as I suggest, taking ownership of this failure was a deliberate gesture of transparency to signal leaders' fallibility for the purposes of long-term regime durability, it certainly was an admission of the incompleteness of their project to form revolutionary subjects.

As could be expected, the 1970 harvest had lasting consequences for the Cuban regime and pueblo. Regardless of the discursive mantle of victory that Castro and other leaders draped over the 1970 harvest, in the material realm, the harvest was an abject failure, and not simply for falling short of the ten-million benchmark.[665] As Kapcia has pointed out, the process itself—considering technical and mechanical investments as well as all the requisite agricultural inputs and labor hours—"cost far more than what the sugar was worth commercially" (2008:36).[666] The

[665] As I discussed earlier, this episode was not the Cuban revolutionary regime's first experience with economic failure. Their initial import-substitution-industrialization strategy was a main contributing factor for having to establish a rationing system on the island. And, as Fagen points out, the regime would survive this economic debacle largely unscathed once again. He says, "The Cuban revolution has survived and even prospered in adversity because the integrative and mobilizational politics of the regime have given second, third, and even tenth chances to a revolutionary state which has, in general, managed the economy poorly" (1986).
[666] Yordanov makes a similar claim, stating that the harvest "nearly wrecked the national economy" (2021:1186).

failure also seemed to prove Cuba's critics right. Based on the diagnoses that Castro himself offered in his various addresses to the people, the harvest "laid bare the ineptitude and perhaps naïveté of the Cuban government when it came to financial planning and large-scale administration" (Clayfield 2019:72). In the short term, the harvest created scarcities in fresh and preserved vegetables and fruits, beef and poultry, fats and beans, soft drinks, beer and alcoholic beverages, tobacco and cigarettes, and a whole host of manufactured goods, including detergent, toothpaste, fabric, and clothes (Castro 1970c). In the long term, the damage from neglect wrought on non-sugar sectors of the economy (including other areas of agriculture, manufacturing, and mining), as Martínez-Fernández points out, meant that "Dependence on sugar production could no longer be viewed as a temporary evil: it had become the country's only feasible option" (2014:61). The attempt to use the 1970 harvest to finally break free from dependency on sugar perversely cemented the centrality of cane in the Cuban economy.

The revolutionary regime seemed to have fared roughly equally poorly on the ideological front of the battle for the ten million tons as well.[667] Based on the discourse surrounding the harvest between the launching of the "massive stage" and Castro's concession speeches, one of the primary ideological objectives of the harvest was to prove that revolutionary subjects *already* existed, to showcase their feats, and to praise their perfectioning. It was not to admit that those to whom Guerra refers to as "heroes-in-training"—that is, "average citizens, the vast majority of whom would never by Party members"—were actually still numerous and still in need of much training (2023). As noted above, Castro's May speeches prompted the CTC to conduct an

[667] Synthesizing recent work on this period of Cuban history, LeoGrande points out that multiple scholars, including Perez-Stable (1999) and Guerra (2012), have identified the failure of the ten-million-ton campaign as the root of growing disillusionment with the revolutionary regime because it was at moment that "the distance between the narrative and reality became so vast it could no longer be ignored" (2017). Edel, however, has a different take. He argues that the campaign was a success (according to the regime's own terms) because leaders used moral incentives rather than material awards to mobilize the people (1970). On this point, he is not incorrect, but his explanation does not consider a third factor: peer pressure, coercion, fear of social or workplace sanctions, and the like.

intensive and island-wide assessment of labor in/discipline and in/efficiency. The same culprits of the Revolutionary Offensive—absenteeism, inefficiency, shirking, and underdeveloped technical expertise—persisted into 1969 and 1970 and contributed to the Ten-Million-Ton harvest's failure. Even at the CDR anniversary speech in September of 1970, Castro continued discussing these issues. As Guerra points out, "Fidel resurrected the old enemy of laziness, supposedly vanquished by the [Offensive], to explain the failure of socialism to produce prosperity. Vagos [idlers] and *ausentistas* (chronically absent workers) were constantly 'robbing' the people of resources simply by dint of their existence" (2012:313). Castro's speech was translated into policy the next year through an anti-loafing law that required all physically and mentally capable men between the ages of 17 and 60 to work, enforced with penalties including (paradoxically) house arrest and forced labor through confinement at a "rehabilitation center" (Mesa-Lago 1971:322).The regime's shift to focusing primarily on the economic battle did not mean, then, that they had definitively won the ideological one.

As leaders of the Cuban revolutionary regime moved deeper into their second decade in power, their project of articulating solidarity and forming new subjects entered a fundamentally new phase.[668] Scholars have pointed to 1970 as a watershed moment in Cuban revolutionary history, and for good reason. Leaders' "heretical" positions vis-à-vis the Soviet Union—including promoting the simultaneous development of socialism and communism and encouraging global armed revolutions— "softened" after the 1960s (Fitzgerald 1978). This turn

[668] Based on his conversations with several prominent Cubanists, Grenier points out, "For many, the years 1968-1971 marked the death of the revolution as 'utopia'" (2019:318). Bustamante, not among those interviewed by Grenier, echoes this characterization, saying, "As reliance on moral mobilization gave way to more mundane patterns of central planning, the true 'time of History' for Cubans seemed to have come and gone" (2019a:221). Selbin echoes these assessments, but he does so in terms of his consolidation/institutionalization distinction discussed in the Introduction. He explains, "By 1969 government by consolidation—exhortation and mobilization—had become exhausting for both the population and the leadership. […] Faced with a crumbling economy and a revolutionary process that was starting to wear thin, in the 1970s the government moved to institutionalize Cuba's governmental processes" (1993:45).

had implications for their articulatory project as well. The failure of the 1970 harvest, which "could be seen as Cuba's last attempt at asserting the importance of moral rather than material incentives" (Gordy 2015:92), may have indicated to leaders the impossibility of their ideological plans, as originally conceived. They had reached an "imperfect plateau" rather than a "eutopia forged on the blood of martyrs" (Bustamante 2019a:234). Regardless of the harvest's outcome, however, regime leaders had created an ideological apparatus with profound influence over individuals' actions, if not their attitudes and beliefs. By the end of the 1960s, "Almost no significant poles of resistance remained in Cuba," Kapcia has argued, owing to a combination of the state's ideological project, its coercive apparatus, and the outmigration of "the discontented" (2008:144–45).[669] The project to create a solidaristic pueblo fully saturated with ideal revolutionary subjects was not perfect, but, perhaps, it was good enough.

[669] Guerra makes a similar point, arguing that, by the 1970s, "the diminishing right to choose—whether about what to wear, who to love, how to contribute to the social good, how to raise one's kids, or how to spend one's leisure time—became a barometer of the state's reach into citizens' personal lives" (2023:15).

Coda

As an ongoing process, necessarily incomplete and imperfect, revolutionary consolidation plodded along in more incremental and mundane ways during the 1970s, a period characterized by the interrelated trends of institutionalization and Sovietization. After 1970, when "the stability of the Cuban government appeared in little doubt" (Bustamante 2021:129), leaders shifted their focus from consolidation to institutionalization. "Five-year plans" and "mundane patterns of central planning" replaced "the urgency of improvisation" and the "reliance on moral mobilization" (Bustamante 2019a:221–22). Leaders' early preoccupation with consolidation meant that, even after a decade in power, many "state structures still remained embryonic at best" (Kapcia 2021:89).[670] Since the institutionalization of state structures coincided with the improvement of Cuba-USSR relations, many scholars have pointed to the ways in which military, economic, political, and ideological changes developed with a decidedly Soviet flavor (Cabrera Arús 2019b:192; Clayfield 2019:72; Guerra 2023:15; Yordanov 2021:1188). Yet Cuba's engagement in the 1975 Angolan civil war and the resurgence of the popularity of Martí suggest that Castro's ideological heterodoxy, though tempered, stubbornly endured.

Continuing with the relative domestic military stability that emerged after the resolution of the Lucha Contra Bandidos in 1965, moving into the 1970s, Cuba's leaders enjoyed a calm

[670] Kapcia notes the exception of the defense and internal security apparatus here. Selbin makes a similar point, suggesting that "there were no permanent, stable institutions of any significance" (Selbin 1993:45).

that allowed them to pursue supporting international armed revolutions once again.[671] Though dormant since Guevara's death in Bolivia, the martial internationalism that had long motivated Castro and his inner circle remerged as strong as ever, this time focusing on African nationalism, most paradigmatically in the Angolan Civil War (Clayfield 2019:14;81; Farber 2011:113; Kapcia 2008:106).[672] Although Cuba became militarily involved in Angola in 1975, the relationship between Cuban leaders and the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) was established much earlier. In fact, the MPLA was the only Angolan organization invited to attend the 1966 Tricontinental Conference (Ferrer 2021:424), discussed earlier. When the post-Portugal ruling coalition disintegrated, Castro made the decision to send 36,000 troops to Angola (ibid.:426), armed with Soviet weapons (Farber 2011:113), in a military initiative called "Operation Carlota," in honor of an African woman who led a slave revolt in 1843.[673] Although, with Cuban assistance, the MPLA emerged victorious, the celebrations were short-lived, and conflict (and Cuban involvement) continued for another fifteen years.

Though a military intervention, Cuba's involvement in Angola had ideological motivations. First, entering the Angolan conflict was an opportunity for Cuba's leaders to reclaim an aspect of their international reputation that had been backgrounded with Guevara's

[671] While Cuban leaders' actions make it reasonable to surmise that they viewed their relatively high degree of internal stability as permitting them more leeway for internationalist projects, this was also the view of external parties at the time. As Ferrer reports, a US National Intelligence Estimate from 1975 "suggested that Castro was in a strong position to project his prestige internationally," citing the fact that "the revolution was stable and institutionalized; his popularity and power were on the rise; [and] the economy was 'better than at any time since 1959'" (2021:427).

[672] The Angolan Civil war erupted shortly after the nation's independence from Portugal, which announced in January of 1975 that it would withdraw from Angola in November of that same year. A coalition government comprised of three separate organizations—the MPLA, the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), and the National Liberation Front of Angola (FNLA), the latter two of which were backed by the apartheid government of South Africa (Pérez-Stable 1999:149)—was set to govern the country upon Portugal's exit. However, this coalition "broke down almost immediately," which saw the resumption of fighting among those three groups, with Cuba backing the MPLA militarily (Ferrer 2021:425).

[673] As Ferrer notes, Cuban and South Africa were not the only external parties to become entangled in the Angolan Civil War. The United States, gave "indirect and discreet" support to the South African-backed Angolan groups, and "more than thirty countries became indirectly involved in the Angolan conflict" at various points (2021:426;425).

death (Pérez-Stable 1999:149). Socialist internationalism had long been a driving force guiding the revolutionary regime's foreign policy and geopolitical decision-making, and the increasingly stable environment of the 1970s offered a propitious moment to support, militarily, global armed revolutionary movements once again.[674] Second, there was an important component of racial ideology intertwined with Operation Carlota. As "a country that had been built upon the bodily sacrifice of enslaved Africans," historian Christabelle Peters points out, Cuba had, according to official discourse, a "moral responsibility to come to the defense of an African nation being threatened by racist and imperialist forces" (2019:181). Furthermore, Cuba's ties to the African continent were not merely historical, as many of the very soldiers who crossed the Atlantic to support the MPLA were themselves "descended from those nineteenth-century Angolan captives" (Ferrer 2021:426). It was thus an opportunity for Angolans and Cuban soldiers of Angolan descent to work together against forces of racism, capitalism, and empire.

And although the Angolan conflict unfolded some 6,000 miles away from the island of Cuba, there were political and material consequences domestically. On the positive side, Operation Carlota signaled Cuba's autonomy from Moscow to an international audience. Although the Cuban soldiers were equipped with Soviet weaponry, Castro and his colleagues did not ask permission from anyone before sending their troops to Angola, although Farber notes that, in contrast to Cuba's forays into Latin American guerrilla revolutions, the case of Angola was "generally compatible with the overall strategy of Soviet policy in the region even if

[674] In this vein, Guerra even suggests that Castro's decision to send troops to Angola was driven, at least in part, by a desire to succeed where Guevara had failed. She says, "According to top foreign policy analysts, Fidel Castro intervened in Angola primarily because he sought to fulfil the failed missions of Che Guevara in the Congo, where anticolonial aspirations to social democracy were snuffed out at CIA direction" (2023:260).

occasional tactical disagreements arose between Cuba and the USSR" (2011:113).[675] Furthermore, the operation was ultimately a success that earned Cuba international renown for having stared down and triumphed over South Africa's apartheid government. On the negative side, however, there were substantial human and economic costs to Cuba's involvement, which meant that domestic support for the project was ambivalent. Across the fifteen years of conflict, Cuba sent around 430,000 people (377,000 of whom were soldiers), but the exact number of casualties on the Cuban side remains unknown, with estimates ranging from 2,000 to 12,000 (Ferrer 2021:429). The scale of human capital sent to Angola during this time unsurprisingly contributed to depressed growth rates and declines in standard of living in Cuba (Farber 2011:116). As a result, while most Cubans seemed to acknowledge and appreciate the role their nation played in bringing about the demise of apartheid, "the war was far from uniformly popular" (Ferrer 2021:430).[676]

It was on the economic front where the 1970s perhaps differed most profoundly from the previous decade. In a highly successful move, Cuba's leaders turned toward aligning Cuba's economy with the Soviet model, which entailed a focus on "relative decentralization, profitability criteria, material incentives, and self-financed enterprises" (Pérez-Stable 1999:126).[677] With these adjustments, and a heavy infusion of material support from the Soviet Union (Ritter and Henken 2015:63; Yordanov 2021:1174), Cuba's growth rates exploded,

[675] As evidence of Cuba's independent action on this front, Ferrer cites an exchange between then US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and the Soviet ambassador to the United States. When Kissinger asked the ambassador to instruct Cuba to withdraw their troops from Angola, the ambassador responded that the Cubans had acted "on their own and without consulting us" (2021:427).

[676] Official state museology seems to reflect (if not also reinforce) the popular ambivalence regarding the role of Cuba in Angola. To my knowledge, there is only a single museum dedicated exclusively to commemorating Operation Carlota. It stands as a two-room exhibit in a separate building at the former Triunvirato plantation in Matanzas province that also houses the Rebel Slave Museum that memorializes the 19th century slave rebellions that predated Cuba's wars for independence.

[677] As Ritter and Henken point out, other initiatives designed to spur production included the elimination of voluntary labor and the implementation of work quotas (2015:64).

jumping from an average per capita growth rate of *negative* 1.3 percent (1966-1970) up to an average of 14.5 percent (1971-1976) (Guerra 2023:259). At long last, the Cuban revolutionary regime seemed to be on sure footing in its quest for economic sovereignty.

In line with the Soviet reorientation of the economy, Cuba's leaders developed a mix of "sticks" and "carrots" to address the labor productivity issues that became so apparent in the late 1960s (Martínez Fernández 2014:61). On the side of negative inducements, as discussed in the conclusion of Chapter 4, regime leaders enacted the Anti-Vagrancy Law (Ley contra la vagancia) in 1971. By legally defining and making sanctionable "laziness," this policy criminalized a whole host of seemingly minor infractions, including "failure to register at a government workplace" and "three unexcused absences from the job" (Guerra 2012:313). On the side of positive inducements, leaders reintroduced material incentives. "Rather than rely on the commemorative diplomas, fraternal slaps on the back, and political ceremonies of the late 1960s," Guerra explains, "after 1971, workplaces returned to material rewards and differential salary scales to propel productivity" (2023:262).[678] An interesting byproduct of the diminution of moral incentives, however, was that volunteer labor then took on an even deeper ideological significance. That is, because Soviet subsidies eliminated volunteer labor as an economic necessity, "voluntary work in agriculture shed much of its economic urgency to take on an even more intense political role" (Guerra 2019:121). While the Cuban New Man did not disappear

[678] While scholars tend to emphasize the depth of the differences between the 1960s and 1970s, painting the 1970s as a total break with the past, Fitzgerald urges caution on this front, noting that moral incentives did not disappear entirely just because material ones were reintroduced. He explains, "the Cubans since 1970 have not overthrown moral for material incentives […]. They have rather rationalized their material incentive system, so as to gain both economic efficiency and a New Person, with a more balanced, but still mixed, incentive system" (1978:20). His position is a direct critique of Mesa-Lago, whom he quotes as describing material incentives 'as a managerial tool for the control of labor productivity,' which Fitzgerald asserts "oversimplifies matters considerably" (ibid.22). More in line with Mesa-Lago's position, however, Martínez-Fernández points out that Castro himself critiqued moral incentives quite strongly, stating that they had become 'a pretext for some to live off the work done by others' (2014:61).

entirely during the 1970s, he did shed some of his idealistic sheen and assume a more pragmatic patina.[679]

Keeping with the general trends of institutionalization and Sovietization, the consolidation of the political power of the Cuban revolutionary regime during the 1970s involved new initiatives at both the elite and grassroots levels. Though the decade opened with the PCC still on shaky ground after the 1968 microfaction affair (evidenced in part by the choice to forgo the Party Congress that had been scheduled to take place in 1970), efforts to grow, diversify, and empower the Party gained momentum over the course of the decade.[680] Leaders decided, it seems based on available evidence, that the PCC was far too small. "Deliberately, but quietly at first, membership was expanded," Fuller notes, resulting in the Party nearly quadrupling in size from 1969 to 1975 (1992:65). And it was not merely the size of the party that concerned Castro and his colleagues, but its composition as well, evidenced by successful efforts to increase the proportion of membership consisting of workers and decrease that of "administrative and political leaders" (ibid.:71). Apart from these changing intra-party dynamics, however, there was an even greater shift in the position of the Party vis-à-vis the rest of the political field. "Strengthening and broadening the Communist party," as Pérez-Stable puts it,

[679] While certainly a poetic rendering of the regime's project to shape new revolutionary subjects, Martínez-Fernández's assertion that "the 1960s 'New Man' had been buried in the cane fields, where the battles for the ten million tons were fought and lost," seems a bit overly simplistic (Martínez Fernández 2014:61). If the endeavor to create New Men could not come to fruition overnight, neither could it disappear instantly or entirely. Given the available evidence, I suggest that Ferrer's position—that, "though still ideologically significant, the idea of the new man ceded ground to a different conception of work and personhood"—more accurately describes the ideological panorama of the 1970s.

[680] Kapcia makes a similar point, arguing that "the lack of a PCC congress in 1970 (as scheduled by its own constitution) indicated that internal debates were only temporarily settled" and that "leadership did not feel the need to be accountable to a nationally structured party" (2021:89). Elsewhere, speaking more to Sovietization than institutionalization, Kapcia also ties leaders' hesitation to make the PCC more central in domestic politics to fears over bureaucratization. That is, they worried that "a powerful party would engender, as it had done all over the Socialist Bloc, a bureaucracy that would, they felt, inevitably slow down the revolutionary process and create structural inertia" (2008:74).

"became central to the politics of the 1970s" (1999:143), and the Party began taking a leading role in crafting policy and making decisions (Fuller 1992:62).

At the grassroots level, institutionalization took the form of establishing official channels for direct participation in governance, both within the workers' movement and the general population, though the results were far from an ideal-type democracy as several scholars have noted. On the one hand, Castro and his colleagues took steps to democratize unions—which, in the late 1960s, were essentially "adjuncts of management and the party"—by reconceptualizing them as mass organizations (Pérez-Stable 1999:128). While the lack of workers' participation in leading the revolutionary regime ranked highly among the microfaction's critiques, Fuller attributes union democratization to "widespread dissatisfaction with hypercentralization" during the previous decade (1992:161). As a step towards decentralization, regime leaders facilitated elections for the CTC in late 1970 (García 1971:127), while union leaders "began to organize and prepare their members to take part, in various stages of the decision-making process, in a variety of forums both at the worksite and above it" (Fuller 1992:18). Outside the workers' movement, regime leaders established the Organizations of Popular Power (Organizaciones de Poder Popular, OPP) to replace Local Power (discussed in the Introduction to Part II). With a purpose similar to that of Local Power, OPP were designed to manage municipal affairs, including the oversight of everything from schools and clinics to grocery stores and movie theaters, but also to "supervise state administration" (Pérez-Stable 1999:123). One key difference of the OPP, however, was their structure, in which the municipal assembly delegates were elected rather than appointed (ibid.). But, as Kapcia puts it, "direct democracy" most often took the form of "rhetorical exchanges in the Plaza de la Revolución between Fidel and the listening crowd" (2021:88–89). Even official discourse recognized this, with *Granma* critiquing OPP

meetings as mere "fulfilment of a liturgy" (Pérez-Stable 1999:124). While both union democracy and the OPP gave Cubans' some voice over matters brought to the table, they remained unempowered to decide how that table was set (Bachrach and Baratz 1971).

In terms of the regime's consolidation of ideological power, the project of shaping revolutionary subjects and articulating solidarity both conformed to and deviated from broader trends of Sovietization. Trending toward Sovietization, the 1970s brought the intensification of "ideological oppression" during a period that later became known as the Gray Five Years (Quinqueio Gris), which lasted from roughly 1968 to 1976 (Frederik 2012:8). Artists, creatives, and intellectuals—eager to avoid personal and professional sanctions at the hands of "powerful bureaucrats under the spell of orthodox socialist realism" (Gordy 2015:62)—"learned to muffle swallow, and silence criticisms" (Guerra 2023:253). Due to the faithfulness with which Cuba's leaders and bureaucratic apparatus internalized the tenets of socialist realism and the Soviet model for the role of intellectuals in socialism, Guerra suggests that those years should be called "red" rather than "gray" (ibid.). Though scholars consider the 1976 founding of the Ministry of Culture under Armando Hart as the formal end of the Quinquenio Gris, its effects on cultural production in Cuba lingered for years. Yet, in stark contrast to the patent Sovietization of culture undertaken during the Gray Five Years, the 1970s also saw the durability of Castro and other leaders' ideological independence. In 1977, the Center for Martí studies, "dedicated to the exhaustive study and widespread dissemination of his writings and ideas" (Kapcia 2008:107), opened in Havana. While Martí and his ideological writings did not displace canonical socialist thinkers, they did assume a more prominent place in public discourse during the regime's second decade in power. Whereas, "according to Soviet orthodoxy," as Clayfield points out, "his status should have been relegated simply to that of a bourgeois intellectual" (2019:74), more than

during the 1960s, Martí became *the* national hero. The resurgence of interest in Martí's thought, coupled with Cuba's military engagement in Angola, demonstrate that while Soviet influence (and economic patronage) undoubtedly intensified greatly during the 1970s, Castro and other leaders nevertheless held on to certain aspects of their desire for communism in a Cuban way.

Conclusion

By way of conclusion, I will here summarize the three principal findings of this dissertation and outline some of their substantive, methodological, and theoretical implications. First, I found that, in consolidating their power, leaders of Cuba's new revolutionary government swiftly instituted several concrete changes in 1959. They took steps to formalize and professionalize the Rebel Army that was instrumental in the ouster of Batista; they issued urban and rural reforms and began nationalizing key economic sectors and industries; and they dissolved congress, assembled a new cabinet, and appointed their own president. But they also set about consolidating their ideological base of social power through a two-pronged approach that entailed transforming the ideology that was hegemonic in the nation at that time and creating new, revolutionary political subjects. Leaders' efforts at changing not only existing military, economic, and political structures—but also the hearts and minds of Cubans—were integral to the consolidation of their new government.

What happens after a revolutionary movement takes power and becomes a revolutionary government is equally as worthy of sociological attention as the conditions that enabled the seizure of power in the first place. While it is true that periods of revolutionary consolidation remain underexamined and undertheorized in the existing literature, there have been some recent attempts to address this lacuna, including evaluations of the revolutionary Iranian government as a developmental (Kadivar 2022) and welfare (Harris 2017) state. Though not stated explicitly in these terms, part of what Kadivar and Harris implicitly address is the question of just how

revolutionarily progressive revolutions really are. In this vein, future research should also address how such ostensibly liberatory governments may, rather than emancipate populations, oppress them in familiar or even new ways. As Ferrer poses it, "In Haiti and Cuba, as in perhaps all revolutions, the story of how revolution destroys particular forms of domination prompts other critical questions about how new—and sometimes not so new—forms of domination emerge out of those very same processes" (2019:286). Emancipating subordinated and oppressed groups is a revolution's purported raison d'être, but leaders must consolidate military, economic, political, and ideological power to govern. When a social revolutionary movement successfully seizes the state, its leaders are thus faced with a paradoxical task that entails dynamics of both dominance and liberation.

In a new project, I plan to contribute to this conversation by asking how leaders of the Cuban revolutionary regime characterized different social subgroups as ideologically vulnerable and how they managed those perceived vulnerabilities via paternalism in both policy and discourse. Paternalism—a form of domination that limits personal freedoms for the benefit of the governed—blurs the boundaries between coercion and consent. Against the backdrop of the regime's first decade in power, I will examine leaders' treatment of both peasants and women. Using a variety of primary sources, including key pieces of agrarian and gender-based legislation as well as political speeches and print media, I will trace how leaders discursively constructed the ideological vulnerability of peasants and women, which they then used as the justificatory foundation for paternalist policies targeting these two groups. Because these policies often also had clear economic motives and impacts, I hypothesize that the lens of paternalism highlights the tensions between emancipatory projects and the exigencies of governance. Paternalism as a form

of domination, therefore, may constrain leaders' abilities to equitably incorporate marginalized groups into the body politic, even when they supposedly wish to do so.

My second finding is that leaders pursued ideological consolidation in part through a project of political articulation. As early as the agrarian reform episode (Chapter 1), around two months after coming to power, leaders began using various means of articulation to define the identity of the revolutionary pueblo cubano using long-standing national commitments to independence, sovereignty, and social justice as a starting point.

With the first could-be crisis they faced as a revolutionary government, the rebel leaders leveraged both policy and discourse to establish a tripartite articulatory template that entailed establishing the identity of the pueblo cubano; emphasizing that identity by juxtaposing the pueblo against its various enemies; and enacting the pueblo's values through specific behaviors, activities, and modes of interaction. The "establish" component of the template directly contributed to internal cohesion within the populace (which, in 1959 lacked a singular purpose after the elimination of their common enemy, Fulgencio Batista) by identifying ostensibly shared characteristics, traits, and attitudes, including bravery, determination, and self-abnegation. The "emphasize" element of the template deepened internal cohesion in a relational sense. It aimed to do so by naming and characterizing enemies and underscoring the differences between the pueblo and its enemies, whether those were armed exiled invaders as in the 1961 Bay of Pigs (Chapter 2) or divisive and selfish pseudo-revolutionaries as in the 1968 microfaction affair (Chapter 3). In addition to the dimension of subject differentiation (internal cohesion versus external differentiation), the articulatory template also encompassed various modes of subject formation. The identity-work that fell under the rubric of "establish" and "emphasize" was furthermore "enacted." That is, leaders also encouraged Cubans to attain membership in the

pueblo cubano by performing certain ideologically motivated tasks, like participating in campaigns, volunteering their leisure time, or even giving blood. This articulatory template became particularly salient during moments when national unity and individual self-sacrifice were needed the most.

Though part of the theoretical contribution of this dissertation is demonstrating the benefits of applying a lens of political articulation to a revolutionary context (in contrast to the tendency of scholars to focus instead on competitive electoral democracies), these findings can also help us better understand articulatory projects in places with revolutionary pasts. In other words, I suggest that a revolutionary government's efforts at political articulation matter for later political projects (1) even after the revolutionary government is no longer in power and (2) even—or, perhaps, *especially*—if its articulatory project was weak, short-lived, or failed. Though it merits thorough comparison in future research, I have suggested elsewhere that the articulatory projects of the Mexican revolutionary governments were less broad, deep, or systematic when compared to that of the Cuban government in the 1960s (Triplett 2024). Furthermore, in Mexico between roughly 1970 and the 2010s, macro-level processes including the strengthening of the plutocracy and explosion of the drug trade "eviscerated the historical bloc associated with the formation of the Mexican nation-state" (Coughlin 2023:20). That is, the articulatory sutures came undone over time.

The disarticulation of the "pueblo mejicano," however, presented an opportunity for new leaders to bring an unfinished project to fruition. President Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO), elected in 2018, perceived and capitalized on this opening for a *re*articulatory project,

which was exemplified by his "Fourth Transformation" initiative.[681] This banner plan emblematically blended both discursive and practical means of articulation to welcome back (or for the first time) marginalized sectors of Mexican society into the body politic and promote national unity. AMLO's approach to rural development, for example, "connects expanded capital accumulation to an ongoing ideological project of reinscribing Mexicans within a revitalized nation-state" (Coughlin 2023:16), similar to Castro and his colleagues' plans for peasant incorporation via agrarian reform. Furthermore, the Mexican president routinely portrayed his administration as a rupture, emphasizing the juxtaposition against an imagined collective past of shared suffering under political corruption and a brighter, more just future for all. Seemingly emulating the Cuban revolutionary government's Ministry of Ill-Gotten Goods (Ministerio de Bienes Malversados), AMLO established the Institute for Returning to the People What Was Stolen (el Instituto para Devolverle al Pueblo lo Robado) (Beck, Regidor, and Iber 2020:109). The case of AMLO and the rearticulation of the pueblo mejicano illustrates the need for further research around historical learning and political articulation.

The third finding of this dissertation is that could-be crises mattered for revolutionary ideological consolidation in general and the project of political articulation in particular. Each could-be crisis, regardless of its particular characteristics (endogenous, exogenous, military, political, economic, and so on), was an inflection point in which leaders (1) had to react to preserve the regime's existence and (2) faced a choice of whether to turn to state-sponsored mass violence and terror or not. In the Cuban case, leaders consistently rejected mass violence as a

[681] The title of AMLO's initiative situates his approach in historical continuity within a long line of political projects striving to finally secure Mexican "freedom and justice against foreign domination" (Coughlin 2023:24). The first three iterations of this project were the Mexican War of Independence (1810-1921), the War of the Reform (1857-1861), and the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920). This discursive strategy strongly echoes the 1968 "100 Years of Struggle" discourse and campaigns from the Cuban case.

problem-solving strategy and, instead, intensified their articulatory project in the months leading up to and directly following each of the four could-be crises I analyzed. Furthermore, while the form of the establish-emphasize-enact template afforded leaders with a degree of predictability in how they could manage could-be crises, it also lent them flexibility. Though "enemies" tended to share common traits and engage in similar behaviors, the category was nevertheless malleable enough to contain extremely disparate groups of people, ranging from wealthy and powerful economic elites (Chapter 1) to radical leftists embedded within the regime itself (Chapter 3). This flexibility was especially advantageous given that, parallel to leaders' project of political articulation, their initiatives in other areas of governance often wrought changes on the macro-political and -economic context.

My analysis of the four episodes presented in this dissertation point to two primary methodological implications. The first relates to the temporal boundaries of could-be crises and the question of recognition. In several instances, had I begun my analyses with the point at which leaders openly discussed their recognition of a given situation as a could-be crisis, I would have emerged with a severely truncated understanding of the case at hand. For example, by broadening my window of analysis, I saw how the January mobilizations in 1961 were an articulatory trail run for the main event. Leaders rapidly recycled the version of the template they enacted at the beginning of the year when the actual attack (beginning with the April 15 bombings) started. While leaders ostensibly suspected an attack to take place pre-inauguration day, the situation did cross the threshold of becoming a could-be crisis until the bombings began. Similarly, had I ended my analysis of the 1968 microfaction at the point when leaders declared the danger to be passed (that is, once the accused were tried and imprisoned), I would have missed its connection to the subsequent Revolutionary Offensive. The second methodological

implication relates to the interconnectedness of could-be crises and the importance of sequential and processual analysis. My findings suggest that earlier could-be crises shaped subsequent ones in multiple ways. On the one hand, prior events became reference points during later ones, as was the case with the Bay of Pigs invasion being used as an impetus for volunteer labor during the Revolutionary Offensive and as a mobilizing metaphor during the Ten-Million-Ton sugar harvest campaign. On the other hand, modes of activated unity that proved successful in T_1 could be recycled and repurposed in T_2, as with the blood drives that featured in both Chapters 1 and 4. In future research, scholars—whether focused primarily on revolutionary regimes, leaders' consolidation of ideological power, or politicians' articulatory projects—would do well to consider these temporal and eventful dynamics.

Postscript

Cuba has changed a great deal since the revolutionary regime's initial period of consolidation in the 1960s, evidenced most recently by the explosive protests that shook the island nation on July 11, 2021 (commonly referred to as 11-J). Monumental changes—the collapse of the Soviet Union (1991), Raúl Castro's replacement of his brother as president (2008), the reestablishment of diplomatic relations with the United States (2015), the death of Fidel Castro (2016), the intensification of the US blockade under the Trump administration (2017-2021), and the presidency of the first non-Castro (Miguel Díaz-Canel) since 1976 (2019), to name a few—have transformed the (geo)political, economic, and social context. The covid-era 11-J protests were the first of their kind since in 1959.[682]

[682] I do not mean that these were the first protests ever in post-revolutionary Cuba. However, their size and geographical dispersion differentiated them from previous protest incidents. For example, Cubans protested during the Mariel boatlift crisis in 1980 as well as in the rafter crisis of 1994, but these were confined to Havana (López Segrera 2021:37). Similarly, in November of 2020, artists and writers protested in Havana to demand greater

On that occasion, thousands of Cubans took to the streets to voice their discontent with material conditions, their disapproval of the governing elite, and their disillusionment with the violation of their civil rights.[683] What started as an isolated incident in San Antonio de los Baños (a small town about an hour southwest of Havana) quickly spread to towns across the island (López Segrera 2021:38,40; Oppmann 2022a), often with the aid of social media (Yaffe 2021), whenever there was a respite from the Internet outages that lasted intermittently for more than a week.[684] Some of the protesters turned destructive and even violent, "with windows smashed, shops looted, cars overturned, rocks thrown, and people assaulted" (Yaffe 2021). Compared with all other collective displays of discontentment during this period, there were more protesters, in more cities, who, as I will discuss, were met with more state repression than ever before.

If the protests were "unprecedented," so was the context in which they took place, to borrow that ubiquitous adjective that politicians, the media, and the public alike so frequently ascribed to the COVID-19 pandemic and the disastrous damages it wrought. Cuba was not immune to its impact. In closing the nation's borders to protect its people's health, Cuban leaders also shut off one of its main sources of revenue, tourism, which already was flagging due in part to Trump-era restrictions (López Segrera 2021:40). GDP fell by a staggering 11 percent (Brenner 2021).[685] Food and medicine seemed scarcer each day, a reality that Marta Perdomo, the mother

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freedom of public expression, but the composition of both the protesters and their grievances were far more homogeneous and narrower by comparison (Brenner 2021).

[683] Given the nature of the event and the limitations of internet connectivity on the island (both in general and due to the intentional blackouts I discuss later), it is difficult to ascertain the exact number of people who participated. However, Amnesty international reported that "thousands of Cubans" were present at various demonstrations across the island (2022), and CNN's Patrick Oppmann described it as "the largest anti-government protests to take place in Cuba since the 1959 revolution" (2022a), though it is unclear how he accounts for population growth.

[684] With regard to the role of social media in the spread of the protest events, Yaffa notes, "the protest was amplified by members of the external and domestic opposition, including Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara of the San Isidro Movement, who urged the population to take to the streets across the island" (2021).

[685] Though government leaders had two enormous scapegoats—the tightened US economic sanctions and the COVID-19 pandemic—it is also important to note the role that domestic monetary policy played in the disastrous

of two young men detained during 11-J, cited in rationalizing her sons' participation. She said, "My sons went out because like every Cuban they were desperate over the situation. […] Every day we have less. There was no medicine. It was a very sad moment with the pandemic" (Oppmann 2022a). Even when compared to the "Special Period"—that is, the economic catastrophe that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union—the chaos, scarcity, and material hardship brought on by the pandemic and economic crisis was deemed by many to be worse.[686]

The unique circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic brought new grievance to the fore, but it also exacerbated existing ones, ones that had nothing to do with people's basic survival. As López Segrera aptly puts it, people were furthermore protesting "the government's tendency to exclude, minimize, and ignore alternative proposals" (2021:38); protesters wanted "freedom and better government management" (Acostarana 2021). When she interviewed five Cuban youths for the magazine *Alma Mater* (the official organ of the University Student Federation, Federación Estudiantil Universitaria, FEU), Rita Karo was met, perhaps somewhat surprisingly, with candor. One of the interviewees, "young intellectual" Ernesto Teuma Taureaux, pointed to how 11-J reflected the confluence of new salt and old wounds (Karo 2022). "In calmer times," he

economic situation leading up to 11-J. In January 2021, when the world was still in the throes of the pandemic, Cuba's leaders decided to unify the dual currency system which they had long delayed due to economists' dire predictions of the chaos that would likely ensue. The issues with the currency unification abounded, including that "many were adversely affected when converting [the outgoing currency] into Cuban pesos or dollars" (López Segrera 2021:40).

[686] The term "Special Period" is a shortened form of Castro's euphemistic label for the situation in the 1990s: "The Special Period in the Time of Peace." (The period began with the collapse of the Soviet Union, but its endpoint lacks scholarly consensus. The worst years, however, were 1991-1995.) This sentiment was expressed to me by dozens of Cubans at the time, both through phone calls leading up to 11-J and during my in-person conversations with them two weeks after the protests. On my first trip to Cuba after the onset of the pandemic (I was there working with a group of Emory University students in March 2020), I arrived in Havana on July 19, 2021, and, for the first time in a decade of frequent travel to Cuba, I was questioned by an immigration officer as to the purpose of my trip. She asked me if I had heard about the protests, if the purpose of my trip was related to the protests, and what my opinion of the protests was. After I was released from my quarantine hotel five days later and began reuniting with my colleagues, friends, and family, two common themes emerged from our conversations: disbelief that the protests had taken place at all coupled with disbelief that they had not happened sooner, given the (in their words) worse-than-Special-Period conditions Cubans faced at that time.

said, “the incompetence of certain cadres, mediocrity, bureaucratism, waste, bungling, lack of foresight, corruption, indolence, sectarianism, [and] top-down, arbitrary, opaque, and undemocratic practices are harmful, harmful and unforgiveable.” “But in a scenario like today’s,” he continued, “with the narrow room for maneuver left by all these economic conditions, they can be politically deadly.”

On July 11, Cubans acted, and agents of state reacted, leveraging both low- and high-intensity repression against the protestors and anyone who could conceivably (or even inconceivably) be confused for one. Internet blackouts were one type of low-intensity repression that leaders used in their attempts to contain the protests and manage their fallout (Amnesty International 2022). Disrupting internet service was a way to curtail protesters’ abilities to organize themselves; to prevent people from documenting, sharing, and publicizing the events that were taking place; and to allow the government’s narrative to be the only public one. According to Acostarana (2021), “detainees were flung to the floor of the vehicle and beaten in broad daylight in front of dozens of cell phones that recorded what happened.” Without internet, observers would have to wait to share this documentation with the world. Though the regime’s control of mass media is almost negligible compared to what it was during the consolidation period of the 1960s, President Díaz-Canel nevertheless took to the airwaves to disseminate the “official” response to the protests.[687] That appearance included “denouncing the protesters and

[687] In his interview about the protests with Rita Karo, Denis Alejandro Matienzo Alonso, a Geography student at the University of Havana, makes a similar point. Whereas before “the state media were the only ones consumed in Cuba,” he points out, now, “access to the Internet and alternative media to the state structure have given Cubans more access to national and international realities” (Karo 2022). This comment suggests that young people are well aware

calling on ‘revolutionaries’ to confront those involved in the ‘provocations’” (Brenner 2021), which spurred violence from both pro-government counter-protesters and state security forces.[688]

Rather than engage peacefully with the protesters, leaders chose to respond with broad and indiscriminate violence.[689] Oppmann reports that “government supporters carrying bats alongside police began to break up the protests” (2022a), while police issued massive arrests, often brutally handling detainees. Offering an overview of these interactions, LeoGrande writes, “Regular police and the ‘Black Beret’ riot police deployed in force, backed by ‘rapid reaction’ battalions of plainclothesmen armed with clubs. Videos showed numerous incidents of police beating people and, in a few instances, firing their weapons at them” (2021).[690] Heidl notes two particularly egregious cases: Abel González Lescay, “who was taken out of his home naked” during his arrest, and Joel Daniel Cárdenas Díaz, “who was shot in the presence of his two-year-

[688] Another one of Karo’s interviewees, Mauro Díaz Vázquez (a fourth-year journalism student at the University of Havana who joined the protests that day), claims, “If at some points the demonstrations became violent, it was precisely because of that call. The forces of order beat and arrested, [and] men dressed in civilian clothes attacked the protesters with shovels” (2022). Researcher Carolina Salas, remarks in her inverview, “the president used phrases like ‘the order of combat is given’ and ‘revolutionaries to the streets.’ There is no room for ambiguity in any of those sentences and, if there is, body language, tone, and context are enough.” This argument resonates with some made in response to the events that transpired in the United States just a few months prior on January 6.

[689] The July 11 episode was not the first time that agents of the state had violently responded to protesters. To name just one example, in 2010, a demonstration by the Ladies in White (“Las Damas de Blanco”) was met with police violence. The Ladies in white—formed in 2003 after the incarceration of their spouses and other family members for alleged political crimes (Del Riego and Rodriguez 2011)—were walking around Havana when “Cuban police grabbed members of the opposition group […] by their hair, dragged them into a bus, and drove them away,” while “government supporters” stood by and shouted, “Worms, get out of here. Viva Fidel! Viva Raúl!” (Israel 2010). However, the state violence during the 11-J protests was qualitatively and quantitatively different than this and other previous occasions.

[690] It is worth noting that LeoGrande’s is one person’s interpretation of the events, and at least one source I reviewed maintains that state police did not use disproportionate force. López Segrera writes, “The photos and videos circulating in the media (e.g., BBC Mundo and others), which are very critical of the ‘Cuban regime,’ show that neither the National Revolutionary Police nor the special troops of the Ministry of the Interior nor any other law enforcement agents deployed disproportionate force” (2021:41). He does not offer any specific evidence for this claim, however, nor does he define “disproportionate force.”

old children" (2023:136).[691] Worse yet was the death of 36-year-old Diubis Laurencio Tejeda, who died during a clash with the police (Anon 2021; Guanche 2021; Heidl 2023:136).[692]

It is difficult to know for certain the extent of the violence and arrests, but independent groups operating on and off the island have offered estimates. Cubalez, a legal monitoring group working inside Cuba, estimated that at least 1,175 were arrested on July 11 and over the course of the following days (Oppmann 2021). Officers arrested minors, elderly, and people who did nothing more than film the unfolding events on their cellphones (Oppmann 2022a). Citing a report issued by the Cuban Attorney General's Office, Heidl notes that 55 Cubans under the age of 18 were charged in connection with the protests (2023:137).[693] Finally, many detainees were allegedly sequestered, subjected to mass trials, denied legal representation, and sentenced to prison terms disproportionately long for their purported offenses (Acostarana 2021; Amnesty International 2021; Council of the European Union n.d.; Oppmann 2022b, 2022a). Regardless of the exact numbers, LeoGrande maintains, "the police violence shocked the conscience of many Cubans" (2021), and, as Guanche put it while writing in the immediate aftermath of the protests, "three historic days have already been documented in verified videos that will never be erased from our collective memory" (2021).

[691] While Guanche does not comment directly on the violence that transpired, his recommendations for the future imply what he believed had taken place: "Immediately halt all police repression against the unarmed population which expresses itself peacefully. Contain violent civil actions taken against people and property, using norms of proportionality and clear rules of responsibility. Prohibit the use of lethal weapons except in the case of the imminent danger of death to any person. Members of the military should not be on the streets in civilian clothing. People should not be called to report to work centers, military service units, etc., to participate in violent acts against protesters" (2021).

[692] Heidl notes that the officer involved in this fatal shooting, Yoennis Pelegrín Hernández, is alleged to have shot five others and is "the only officer who has been tried for his actions so far" (2023:136).

[693] Offering evidence that no one was immune from the detentions, Acostarana writes, "The indiscriminate arrests of intellectuals, folks on street corners, top-level athletes, minors, the elderly, mothers with young children, university students, doctors, artists, civil servants, the self-employed, and even the mentally ill speaks of the regime's ineptitude and inability to make progress" (2021).

I have shown in this dissertation that, historically, leaders managed could-be crises through non-violent means. Why then did violence become a part of the regime's problem-solving repertoire during 11-J?[694] Though it remains for future research to tackle this specific question, I tentatively make two observations regarding possible explanations. One, which scholars have pointed out, is that 11-J was the first time that leaders genuinely believed that a could-be crisis had the potential to develop not only into a full-blown crisis but an actual government-toppling revolution. Leaders seemed to accept that the popular discontent (or some of it anyway) was both genuine and well-founded. As Salém Vasconcelos points out, Díaz-Canel's address to the earliest protesters in San Antonio de los Baños "provided a relative legitimacy to the discontent, mimicking Fidel Castro's gesture of dialogue in the *Maleconazo* in 1994" (2021:196).[695] Furthermore, they seemed to think that this discontent could pose a real threat to regime survival. "In the harshness of their crackdown against so many protestors," Brenner contends, "Cuban officials acted as if they viewed July 11 as a pre-revolutionary situation" (2021).

While I think this is a plausible explanation—an unprecedented level of repression to combat an unprecedented level of threat—I suggest that it is also possible that the old tools of could-be crisis management lost effectiveness over time. A cursory examination of statements from both the Cuban government and anti-government protesters suggests that the establish-emphasize-enact template that I have called attention to through this dissertation remained an

[694] A related but separate question for future research might also be addressing why the violence did not devolve into a terror.

[695] The "Maleconazo" is so named because it took place along Havana's "Malecón," or sea wall. López Segrera similarly notes that Díaz-Canel reiterated this position when he spoke from the Malecón on July 18, in that he "expressed firmness in the face of aggression but also acknowledged his mistakes and the diversity expressed in the protests, making an effort to distinguish between antinational, manipulated motivations and legitimate ones, those expressing genuine discontent" (2021:42).

important element of the state's order-maintaining repertoire. At the same time, elements of this template seem to have been appropriated and subverted by average people to justify their anti-government stance. Here I will briefly discuss both the state and the protesters' references to long-standing themes like enemies, confusion, unity, and determination.

Díaz-Canel spoke publicly on several occasions on and immediately following July 11, in which he both offered his own diagnosis of the problem and prescribed a path forward. He portrayed the protesters as "those aspiring to reestablish US hegemony in Cuba, malcontents, criminals, and young people" (López Segrera 2021:38).[696] Recycling well-worn Castro-esque language, "focusing on the few who were violent, ignoring police violence against peaceful protestors, and dismissing legitimate grievances" (Brenner 2021), the president referred to those involved as "mercenaries" and "lackeys of the Yankee empire," a clear call-back to the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion. Díaz-Canel's use of this specific lexicon implied an association between the protesters and the United States. The president made this connection explicit. He claimed, "there is also a group of people […] paid by the US government, or indirectly paid through US government agencies, to set up this type of demonstration" (as quoted in Yaffe 2021). He suggested that the protesters—like those influenced by the misinformation campaigns of the latifundistas in the 1959 agrarian reform or the wayward leftists in the 1968 microfaction affair—were, simply, confused. Cuba's purported enemies in Miami and elsewhere "confuse young people, [and] they confuse residents of those neighborhoods where we have [social] problems" (Díaz-Canel 2021). In a sense, according to official discourse, 11-J was no different

[696] Incidentally, Díaz-Canel's representations of the protesters came under scrutiny from Amnesty International. One report from the organization said his "official statements branding the demonstrators as enemies are inadmissible and reckless," arguing furthermore that such declarations "stigmatize protest, foster an atmosphere that tolerates violence, may encourage clashes between citizens, and are incompatible with international standards to protect the right to protest" (Amnesty International 2021).

from any other could-be crisis the revolutionary government had faced during its roughly 62-year tenure. The same external enemies (US imperialists and disgruntled Miami Cubans) used the same tactics (manipulation and misinformation campaigns) to attempt to confuse good, revolutionary Cubans into becoming enemies within the pueblo.

In his communications with the public, Díaz-Canel also invoked two key traits that had played an integral role in the regime's project of ideological consolidation during the 1960s: unity and determination. Whatever the issues underlying protesters' decisions to take to the streets, Díaz-Canel suggested, they could be solved together. "Our problems are resolved among Cubans in the Revolution, that is how it has always been in these 60 years," he pointed out, before continuing, "Therefore, we must defend, ensure, and sustain our sovereign tranquility, calling for the unity of all the pueblo, for the unity of all Cuban families, for the unity of all institutions within our population" (2021). Just as during agrarian reform, the Bay of Pigs invasion, the microfaction affair, and the Ten-Million-Ton harvest, official discourse touted popular unity as the key to resolving the could-be crisis at hand. This unity is also activated, tied to his exhortations to "defend, ensure, and sustain" the national sovereignty that had been so coveted since the first war of independence and so fiercely protected since 1959. Still, so many decades later, Díaz-Canel implies, the pueblo must work together to defend itself from the duplicitous machinations of the United States that angle to rob Cuba of its sovereignty.

Another important passage from Díaz-Canel's Mesa Redonda speech was his invocation of determination and bravery. Reading the passage quickly at first, I was struck by the degree to which his repetitive rhetoric emulated Fidel's; upon a second reading, I realized Díaz-Canel was quoting a speech Castro gave during another could-be crisis, the Special Period. Díaz-Canel said,

> I think it is also a time to reaffirm convictions. I want to bring up Fidel's ideas from the year 1992, the Special Period, when Fidel said: 'Difficult times are

> difficult times. In difficult times the number of hesitant ones increases; in difficult times—and that is a law of history—there are those who get confused, there are those who become discouraged, there are those who cower, there are those who soften, there are those who betray, there are those who desert. […]' I believe that the majority of our pueblo are worth something, they are worth a lot and they are going to act this way: without disappointment, without fear, with a lot of bravery, and with a lot of courage. (2021)

Though Castro spoke these words in 1992, they would have been equally at home in any of his speeches given during the four could-be crises I analyzed in this dissertation. Here, in describing the ones who "get confused" or "become discouraged," he accentuated the values of the true members of the revolutionary pueblo, those who persevere no matter the difficulty, no matter the danger. Díaz-Canel's own addition is to make the juxtaposition explicit. Rather than "cower" (Fidel's word for the non-pueblo), Díaz-Canel urges people "to act […] without fear, with a lot of bravery, and with a lot of courage." United and bravely, Díaz-Canel seems to suggest, the pueblo will survive this and any future could-be crises.

Three discursive patterns related to the establish-entrench-enact template also emerged in the discourse of the protesters: spontaneity, unity, and determination and bravery. In the 1960s, official discourse often described the rallies, lightning meetings, and parades of the pueblo as "spontaneous," defending against charges from the United States that leaders cajoled or coerced popular participation in such activities to create a façade of regime legitimacy. Such was the case with the demonstrations over the fishermen's kidnapping in 1970, accusations which Castro said forced him to disclose the failure of the Ten-Million-Ton sugar harvest campaign (Chapter 5). Protesters, following Castro's example, openly refuted claims that they were acting of someone else's accord. Marta Perdomo, quoted above, said, "my sons weren't paid" (2022a), and another article linked to a video in which a protester shouts to the camera, "This is authentic! It's spontaneous!" Similarly, against charges of US influence, protester Mauro Díaz Vázquez said,

"When citizens express themselves, it is because the discontent is real and palpable. The opinion of so many cannot be so easily delegitimized" (2022). At stake here is not whether the 11-J protests were "really" spontaneous.[697] Rather, the key point is that protesters turned "spontaneous" rallies and demonstrations—once construed by official discourse as a key vehicle for activated unity *in support* of the revolutionary regime—against the government.

Similarly, whereas Díaz-Canel urges for unity in the face of classic imperialist threats, protesters suggest that they too are united in opposition against the government. "Opposition activists insist," Alzugaray points out, "that [11-J] was the tip of the iceberg of millions of Cubans who want a 'radical change' and the immediate overthrow of 'the dictatorship'" (2021). Other commentators on the situation, in describing the heterogeneity of the protesters, imply unity despite differences. "For the first time in history since 1959," Acostarana observes, "every level of social class in Cuba came out to demand something from the government" (2021). Agitated counter-protesters—that is, those who "gathered outside some workplaces […] ready to defend them in case of attack" (Yaffa 2021)—illustrate a lack of total unanimity against the government. In fact, López Segrera says, the protests "did not involve a national majority" even if they "took place in several cities on the island" (2021:41). Again, the veracity of the protesters' claims is less relevant than the fact that they are making them and, in so doing, leveraging a classic rhetorical strategy of the regime against it.

Finally, official discourse since 1959 has centered determination and bravery as foundational traits of Cuba's revolutionary new man. Díaz-Canel continues that tradition, as

[697] Indeed, the degree to which the protests were home-grown or astroturfed has arisen as a key point of contention among scholars and other observers commenting on the events (Brenner 2021; López Segrera 2021; Yaffa 2021). The truth, likely, is that a combination of actors—"the Miami exiles, the island's own dissidents, and the US government" (López Segrera 2021:39)—helped the protests come to fruition and spread. In any case, there is consensus around the fact that "unrest would not have flared up inside Cuba if it had not found a fertile ground provoked by numerous political mistakes on the part of the government" (Alzugaray 2021).

evidenced in his Mesa Redonda speech discussed previously. Based on protesters' statements, it seems that they too value these characteristics and recognize them as essential traits of Cubans. "Help the Brave of 11-J" is the name of a grass-roots mutual aid initiative organized after the protests to assist the families of those imprisoned as a result, collecting funds to buy them food and other necessary goods (Heidl 2023:140). The name nods to the courage of those who dared to stand up to the government. Speaking to both bravery and determination, Marbelis Vázquez Hernández (wife of Daniel Joel Cárdenas Díaz, who was imprisoned after the protests and faces a possible sentence of 18 years) said that she would not be intimidated by what she describes as the government's campaign against the protesters. She said, "I am not afraid; they have made me stronger" (Oppmann 2022b). While the government urges bravery and determination in the face of Cuba's enemies, the protesters call for the same in the face of the government itself.

The July 11 protests show the potential fruitfulness of several lines for future inquiry. First, as the protests themselves show, could-be crises did not disappear after the regime's first decade in power. Although scholars generally consider the 1970s and 1980s to be relatively more "settled" as compared to the 1960s (owing to the routinization, bureaucratization, and Sovietization that I discussed in the Part II Coda), these decades also have received scant attention.[698] Extending the temporal boundaries established in this dissertation could then offer a useful window into understanding how the regime's project of political articulation unfolded during these relatively less eventful periods. But it would also present an opportunity to examine could-be crises in otherwise seemingly mundane times—with the 1980 Mariel Boat lift and the

[698] While scholars have spilt oceans of ink analyzing the 1960s (because of the revolutionary movement coming to power), the 1990s (because of the collapse of the Soviet Union and ensuing "Special Period"), and the 2010s to the present (because of major events like the death of Fidel Castro and the reestablishment of bilateral relations with the United States that seemed to portend some sort of major change on the horizon), there is a real dearth of literature on Cuba in the 1970s and, to a slightly lesser extent, the 1980s. With good reason, Kirk, Clayfield, and Story titled their edited volume "Cuba's Forgotten Decade: How the 1970s Shaped the Revolution" (2018).

Special Period of the 1990s being two of the most obvious candidates—as well as to assess the extent of the presence of the establish-emphasize-enact template for crisis management over time. Finally, as I noted in the Introduction, political elites do not articulate in a vacuum. The 11-J episode suggests that it is essential not only to delve into how the targets of such political projects *hear* the official line from those in power but also how they *speak back*.

Appendix: Episode Selection, Data, and Methods

Episode Selection

My objects of analysis are could-be crises—"disruptive, unsettling occurrences" (Xu and Reed 2023:232)—that reached the level of national or international consciousness and that ultimately did *not* transform the structures of society or provoke a change in leadership, although each one *could* have. Such situations, I contend, force leaders to respond, offering an opportunity to view the ongoing project of articulation during moments of duress and against the backdrop of changing contexts.

In selecting the could-be crises for analysis, I took a staged approach. I began by surveying the Cuban historiography to determine which historical situations other scholars had identified as important moments of contingency. Much of this work helpfully draws attention to episodes in which leaders (1) must do *something* and (2) have a variety of paths they can take. But I also took leaders at their word. By this, I mean that I identified moments that *they* portrayed as being eventful and that they recognized (or at least claimed to recognize) as threatening (or potentially threatening) to their consolidation of ideological, economic, military, or political power. Leaders left hints, like discursively referring to an episode as a "battle," implying that it was a high-stakes situation that could be "lost," presumably to the detriment of the government and/or the Cuban people. Furthermore, all episodes but one appeared in

Bohemia's retrospective article, "The '60s: 13 Events [acontecimientos]."[699] Of course, leaders were not neutral in portraying certain episodes in a specific light. In general, leaders' characterizations of episodes may serve "to phenomenologically reinforce their boundaries, to give them a definite shape in time and in space, [and] to anticipate their trajectories" (Wagner-Pacifici 2000:163). In the Cuban context, Guerra suggests that the revolutionary government's leaders were well aware of the power they exercised through what Wagner-Pacifici terms the "process and art of naming situations" (2000:163). "According to a series of televised classes taught by Fidel [in 1961]," Guerra explains, "interpretations of contemporary events could ensure either the success of the Revolution or its immediate collapse" (2023:37). Ultimately, because this is an investigation of how leaders navigate episodes during their projects of ideological consolidation, whether leaders construed a particular situation as a could-be crisis matters.

Finally, I sought diversity in the types of episodes to analyze. In this, I take an approach similar to that of Antoni Kapcia, who describes two different types of episodes: (1) those that are "an endogenously generated outcome of internal processes, developments or discussions" that thus shed light on "the internal tensions of the Revolution" and (2) those that are "a result of external pressures, whether political or economic" that thereby illuminate "the global context in which the Revolution has been obliged to exist and to which it has had to react" (2008:26).

[699] *Bohemia*. December 26, 1969: 4-17. The thirteen events listed included (in this order) the death of Che Guevara, agrarian reform, the Bay of Pigs invasion, the Literacy Campaign, the First and Second Declarations of Havana (important Castro speeches), the October Crisis, the formation of the Communist Party, the Tricontinental Conference, the Cultural Congress of Havana (which occurred simultaneously with the microfaction trial of 1968), the Centenary of the Demajaga (the name Carlos Céspedes' plantation from which he issued the Cry of Independence that marked the first Cuban war of independence from Spain), and Cuba's victory at the world baseball championship. The one episode I selected for analysis that does not appear on this list was the microfaction trail and the subsequent Revolutionary Offensive. As Chapter 3 will make clear, it is unsurprising that *Bohemia*'s editors did not include this twinned episode because of the nature of the "enemies" of that episode (who came from within the Left).

Weighing all these factors, I selected the following four episodes: the 1959 agrarian reform, the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion, the 1968 microfaction episode and Revolutionary Offensive, and the implementation and eventual failure of the 1969-70 Ten-Million-Ton sugar harvest campaign.[700]

After selecting these four could-be crises, I had to determine how to temporally bound them for the purposes of my analyses. Often, the secondary literature offered hints as to when a could-be crisis began and concluded. However, I only used the start- and end-points given in existing literature as an initial point of departure. For example, by looking further back in the primary data before the actual Bay of Pigs invasion (April 17, 1961), I discovered the period of mobilization that spanned from Castro's call for the country to be on war footing (December 30, 1960) to President Kennedy's inauguration (January 20, 1961). Similarly, although my initial primary object of inquiry in Chapter 3 was the Revolutionary Offensive (launched March 13, 1968), by looking at the print media in earlier months, I discovered the microfaction affair of late January. The timeframe for each could-be crisis is listed below in Table 3. In addition to establishing the beginning and end points of each episode, I also looked for signals of internal periodization. Though this ultimately was a useful exercise for organizing the empirical material presented in each chapter, it also serves an analytical purpose. I approached each event with some a priori (though informed by secondary literature) ideas of where I expected to see turning points, new tactics, or shifts in discourse. For example, comparing the pre- and post-signing phases of the agrarian reform (Chapter 1) was a natural place to start. However, I also paid attention to moments that emerged in the primary data through the course of my analysis. I was

[700] Although I began my analysis of primary data with these four events in mind, I did also maintain a list of somewhat minor episodes that I paid attention to as I coded the materials so as to avoid prematurely foreclosing the possibility that less sensational events also affected leaders' articulatory project. That list included, for example, Hurricane Flora (1963), the formation of the Cuban Communist Party (1965), the death of Che Guevara (1967), and the 100 Years of Struggle commemorations (1968).

not, for instance, planning to subdivide the pre-failure period of the Ten-Million-Ton sugar harvest campaign (Chapter 4), but the Plan Vinculación, invasion at Baracoa, and kidnapping of the fishermen all emerged as could-be crises nested within the broader episode of the harvest.

Table 3. Beginning and endpoints of selected could-be crises

Event	Beginning Point	Ending Point
Agrarian Reform	February 3, 1959 - First Castro speech that mentions agrarian reform	August 1, 1959 - One week after the July 26 commemoration and the concentración campesina
Bay of Pigs	December 39, 1960 - Castro's speech calling on the people to stand "on war footing" in response to intelligence regarding US plans to convince other Latin American countries' of Cuba's plans for offensive weaponry	May 7, 1961 - One week after the Labor-Victory Day celebrations
Microfaction Affair and Revolutionary Offensive	January 28, 1968 - Print media breaking the news of the "unmasking" of the microfaction	August 1, 1968 - One week after the July 26 commemoration speech
Ten-Million-Ton sugar harvest campaign	October 27, 1969 - Castro's speech announcing the launch of the "massive stage" of the harvest	August 1, 1970 - One week after the July 26 commemoration

Data

I use discourse, in the form of political speeches and print media, as a window into the regime's project to make hegemonic their ideological worldview and create new subjects to

match.[701] I suggest that external manifestations of regime discourse such as these are an appropriate choice for this project for several reasons. First, discourse is, by very definition, intimately connected to questions of hegemonic ideological consolidation. Power defines discourse as "the surface manifestation of a system of thought" (Power 2011:46), which calls to mind Oliver and Johnston's definition of ideology discussed earlier. Discourse, then, plays an important role in communicating ideologies. But it also plays a role in ideological transformations because, as Clayfield argues, discourse "acts as the primary medium through which those in power are able to express and in turn embed certain beliefs in the social consciousness, thereby creating a new political culture" (2019:8). Of course, such a process involves hegemony. Given its "ability to create and naturalize ideologies," discourse "constitutes an essential element in the struggle for hegemony" (ibid.).

Second, discourse, I argue, is also connected to the project of forming new subjects, which hinges on both ideational and active components. Insofar as they "open up and foreclose imagined possibilities and social solidarities" (Jacobs and Smith 1997:67), discourses allow leaders to speak directly to people's values, beliefs, and attitudes, which are a central ingredient of subject formation. They thus matter for their elocutionary force. As Guerra has pointed out, the leaders of Cuba's revolutionary regime "hoped that images of a united people would inspire genuine social unity; the impossible would become possible by sheer force of will" (2012:317).[702] But discourses are also important for their ability to guide people, in a quite literal

[701] Of course, discourse can be expressed through a variety of cultural forms. In the Cuban context, both leaders of the revolutionary government and key figures in the realm of cultural production relied on myriad media to convey and further the project of ideological consolidation. The robust scholarship on other means of transmitting ideology includes attention to theater (Frederik 2012), dance (Schwall 2019), and monumental materials (Alonso González 2016a).

[702] Based on Guerra's archival research, it seems as though at least some members of the pueblo saw leaders' discourse in this way, too. From her examination of soldiers' testimonies to a US documentary filmmaker, Guerra remarks that, "the most interesting quality of their stories is not their authenticity or inauthenticity but, rather, their

sense, into doing the types of activities that would serve the regime's broadest goals. As Oliver and Johnston point out, ideologies "have to be learned" (2000:47). Print media in particular carries certain advantages for its didactic and pedagogical potential. Magazines and newspapers, which combine textual and visual discourse allow leaders not only to promote certain norms, practices, and modes of interaction but also to connect those concrete actions to the ideological meanings behind them (Triplett 2024). Furthermore, visual discourse like photos and illustrations have the added benefit of clarifying dense, complex language and increasing accessibility for undereducated and/or illiterate populations. Given these considerations, I draw on primary materials that include political speeches, magazines, and newspapers to assess the Cuban revolutionary government's project of ideological consolidation.[703]

Castro's Speeches

Political speeches clearly fall into the category of discourse as outlined above, and Castro's speeches were important to the broader project of ideological consolidation both for his structural position within the revolutionary government and for the style and content of his speeches. Despite a lengthy and contested period of consolidation among various political factions vying for power, there is little doubt about the integral role that Castro played in guiding the revolution from its outset (Guerra 2012; Pérez-Stable 1999). He emerged as the most prominent rebel leader in the beginning of January 1959, but the road to his preeminence did not begin at that time. Rather, Castro had been laying the groundwork to become the principal

bald illustration of how seriously revolutionaries took the connection between discourse and the validity of structural change" (Guerra 2012:321).

[703] This choice to rely on existing texts, produced in the historical context that I am examining, brings with it an implicit epistemological stance on culture, that is, that culture is knowable through materials like transcribed speeches, newspapers, and magazines. As Biernacki points out, "the move toward greater reliance on archival and published records" reflects how scholars studying culture "began to designate publicly shared symbols or repertoires as the repositories and makers of whatever is communicable, therefore thinkable" (2012:17).

guiding force of the revolutionary government over the course of several years as he helped lead guerilla forces in the Sierra Maestra mountains. As Guerra explains, "if Fidel was ultimately able to effortlessly claim the mantle of national leadership in the immediate aftermath of Batista's flight, he did so in large part because of the brilliant public relations campaign that he and his supporters had forged in the Sierra Maestra" (2019:69). It is logical then that the symbolic and, in many senses, practical figurehead of the revolutionary government would leverage his public platform to further the ideological agenda that he played such an integral role in formulating.

In addition to Castro's discourse being noteworthy because of his high status in the government, his speeches—that is, the act of delivering them—quickly took on a legacy of their own. On the one hand, the speeches were used to communicate basic information to the public and, as such, could be mundane. Some of his speeches were extremely detailed, offering the pueblo updates regarding ongoing programs and policies. As Nichols has pointed out, "In those marathon speeches, he informed the public of every new development or setback, no matter how insignificant it appeared. He expounded in detail everything from sophisticated monetary policy to artificial insemination of cattle" (1982:1). On the other hand, however, the speeches could be genuine spectacles, impacting how time itself was understood and measured (Xu and Reed 2023). "Time itself ceased to be a given and became instead something Cubans could master," Ferrer suggests, noting that "Fidel Castro routinely spoke for hours on end as if he could bend time to his will, condensing it in a way that made a late hour in an hours-long speech no longer late at all" (2021:317).[704] As if he were in a pageant or a play, Castro also paid attention even to

[704] Long-winded speeches became the norm from the beginning of Castro's time in government. In his first speech from Havana (January 8, 1959), Castro began around 8 pm, and "at 1:30 in the morning, he was still talking. He wasn't even tired, he said, but he understood that people might have to travel far to get home. People shouted, 'It doesn't matter! Keep going!' It was as if time, distance, [and] even sleep were no impediment to the new revolution" (Ferrer 2021:319)

where he stood. “In placing himself between the monument [of Martí in the Revolution Plaza] and the people,” Alonso González has argued, “Castro became an organizational leader drawing on public performance to provide the official interpretation of ideology and to stage state power” (2016b:57).

Of course, political speeches, Castro’s included, have certain biases and it is prudent to approach them with caution, particularly when relying on them to reconstruct a faithful portrait of events or what “really” happened. They are, it could be argued, pure propaganda, a linguistic manifestation of cynical pragmatism. These arguments have merit, and that is precisely why Castro’s speeches are an ideal source of data for this specific study. Propaganda—whether as speeches, print media, posters, maps, banners, or songs (Bonnell 1997; Grandin 2004; Zubrzycki 2011)—is an important means of informal ideological education.[705] Therefore, Castro’s speeches were an important tool that leaders had at their disposal to disseminate discourse in furtherance of their project to shape solidarity and create new subjects. And, as I discussed earlier, there are compelling reasons to believe that Castro genuinely personally believed many of the things he said. Certainly, Castro’s speeches were more instrumental in some moments than in others, but this does not necessarily mean they were cynical as well.

Print Media

[705] Informal education stands in contrast to both formal and nonformal education. Nonformal education, championed perhaps most famously by Brazilian educator and author Paulo Freire (Freire 1976, 2014), consists of “any organized, systematic, educational activity carried on outside the framework of the formal system to provide selected types of learning to particular subgroups in the population, adults as well as children” (Coombs and Ahmed 1974). Further, La Belle helpfully distinguishes informal from nonformal education by noting that, “A major difference between these two processes rests with the deliberate instructional and programmatic emphases present in nonformal education but absent in informal education” (1982:162). I do not to suggest, however, that informal education is indeliberate from the perspective of elites. For example, based on these definitions, propaganda—discourse intentionally designed “to govern people through the management of perception and behavior” (Florian 2019:331)—would fall into the category of informal education.

From a research design perspective, I opted to supplement Castro's speeches with mass media textual data for three main reasons. First, although I did not expect to see the newspapers or magazines contradicting Castro's messaging, I did anticipate that they would flesh out non-discursive components of the ongoing articulatory project by including coverage of policies, programs, initiatives, campaigns and the like. Castro certainly mentioned such activities, but the press had more opportunity to explain policies in detail and provide examples and instructions to readers through the combination of textual and visual information. Second, as I noted previously, such forms of communication provide clarity and augment accessibility. Guerra similarly points out that "the government's popularity meant that a lot of illiterate and semi-literate people who might not formerly have picked up a newspaper started doing so," and, as such, journalists relied heavily on images (Guerra 2012:28).[706] As Roberto Salas (a photographer for *Revolución*) explained, "the only way to tell the people what the hell was happening was through pictures" (quoted in Guerra 2012:28). Finally, the use of mass media for disseminating propaganda, a key component of ideological consolidation, is a classic Marxist-Leninist strategy. In *What Is to Be Done*, Lenin identifies propaganda as a fundamental task of the revolutionary vanguard and papers as a key medium for communicating propaganda to broad publics (Lenin 1963). Consequently, once in power, the Bolsheviks "utilized new media (films, leaflets, propaganda posters) and existing institutional structures (in particular the military) to reach as broad an audience as possible" (Hoffman 2011:212). It is reasonable to expect, then, that Cuban leaders would have pursued a similar tactic, particularly after April 1961.

The leaders of Cuba's revolutionary government acted quickly to put the press into the service of their ideological project (Nichols 1982; Pierce and Nichols 1979). Nationalizing pro-

[706] In 1961 government leaders sought to eradicate illiteracy in Cuba through a massive campaign that I discuss briefly in Chapter 3.

government newspapers and encouraging the shuttering of the opposition press was one way in which leaders went about gaining control of mass media (Lent 1990:125), as I discussed in Chapter 2.[707] With the monopolization of print media by May of 1960, revolutionary elites could encourage specific actions. In addition to providing news and entertainment, they used the papers "to mobilize and influence behavior by featuring exemplary individuals or mass organizations" (Lent 1985:610), which they hoped would contribute to the formation of New Men "through a 'learning by doing' process" (Ritter and Henken 2015:59). But mass media also permitted anchoring these concrete activities in core, ideological beliefs. "The function of the press in this new era," as Ripoll suggests, was "to change the Cuban people's way of thinking" (1987:101).

The first mass media source I analyzed was *Bohemia*, a weekly general interest magazine founded in 1908 that came under state control in 1960 and ran continuously across the period of this study. Originally an exclusively cultural affair covering mainly art and literature, *Bohemia* underwent politicization during the presidency-turned-dictatorship of Gerardo Machado (1925-1933), when it published "anti-government editorials" (Luis 2001:62). Its political angle emerged again after Batista's 1952 coup at which point it became the subject of censorship. The magazine's owner and editors refused subsidies from the Batista government (one of his main strategies for ensuring favorable press coverage) (Rooney 2022:3), while Batista ordered 55,000 copies of the magazine confiscated for including photos of Castro and other rebel leaders (Lent 1989:257–58). Despite Batista's shutdown of the magazine in 1958 (Guerra 2012:42), its reputation as "the most militant of the antigovernment periodicals" endured (Ripoll 1987:85).

[707] State control of mass media outlets certainly hampered journalists' and editors' "freedom of the press," in that they were not able to freely criticize the revolutionary government for the most part. However, the absence of private ownership of the press also meant that media workers were not beholden to particular private interests. In other words, in capitalist societies, "Because mainstream newspapers are themselves capitalist enterprises, there is an inherent tension between their critical role as a free press in a democratic society and capitalist enterprise more broadly" (Isaac et al. 2022:1605).

After the rebel leaders triumphed, the magazine played a key role in conveying to the public just how horrific the Batista regime (and its key supporters, including the Catholic church) had been by putting their crimes in graphic terms, publishing photos of mangled rebel soldiers and civilians, and denouncing "iconic figures in Batista's administration" (Guerra 2012:42). Before too long, however, then editor Ángel Quevedo resigned and fled the country in July of 1960, at which point the magazine passed into the hands of Enrique de la Osa, who had reported first-hand on the rebels' activities in the Sierra Maestra, and other intellectuals loyal to the new revolutionary government (Pierce and Nichols 1979; Ripoll 1987; Rooney 2022).[708] Although the magazine was under direct state influence, it remained somewhat distinct from other mass media because it was not affiliated with any specific organization, institution, or branch of the government.[709]

In terms of newspapers, there was no single daily that ran continuously from 1959 to 1970, so I selected two different papers to cover the span of my study. In the first period (1959-1965), there were two daily papers that survived the closures of early 1960. *Noticias de Hoy* (known simply as *Hoy*) was the official organ of the Popular Socialist Party (Partido Socialista Popular, PSP), while *Revolución* was the official organ of the 26th of July Movement. Both of those papers continued to be published until October of 1965 when they were shuttered and replaced by *Granma*, the official organ of the Cuban Communist Party (Partido Comunista de Cuba, PCC) formed earlier that same year, which continues publishing to this day.

Hoy and *Revolución* were not identical papers, and indeed there was some infighting between them, a testament to the complexities of ongoing processes of political consolidation in

[708] Quevado later became a voice of the Cuban exile community after settling in New York in 1960 and founding a new magazine called *Bohemia Libre* (*Free Bohemia*) (Bustamante 2021:69–71).
[709] Most other mass media were official organs for various state entities like the Federation of Cuban Women's *Mujeres*, the Ministry of Sugar's *Azucar*, or the Revolutionary Armed Forces' *Verde Olivo*.

which there was not unanimity even among the extreme left as to what exactly should be done, how, and when.[710] Expecting to see considerable overlap between the two papers, I initially planned to analyze only *Hoy*. If there were to be any dissent or deviation from the contents of Castro's speeches, it would be less likely to appear in his own movement's newspaper. However, I decided to analyze both papers for a single test case, the October Crisis (the name for the "Cuban Missile Crisis" in Cuba), to determine whether there were important differences in the paper that merited analyzing both for each event.[711] I found that there were minimal differences in the way the papers approached the event in terms of specific information ("facts") that they presented the public as well as in their use of ideological discourse. I thus chose to analyze *Hoy* because it was the more comprehensive of the two, that is, I found details of the event in *Hoy* that did not appear in *Revolución*, but not vice versa.

For part two of this study (1965-1970), I analyzed the only daily in production, *Granma*, named for the yacht that carried Castro and his companions back to Cuba from Mexico where they had been exiled following their attack on the Moncada Barracks in 1953. Under the direction of close Castro affiliates, "the paper serves as an outlet for Castro's propaganda" (Greene 1987:39).[712] As Harbron puts it, "*Granma* can be counted on to be ideologically correct because its publishers have been Castro's cronies from the years before the revolution"

[710] To name just one example of such conflicts, the papers developed a minor feud after the release of Fellini's film, *Dolce Vita*. *Hoy* panned the film, "which portrayed decadence in contemporary Rome," as not "appropriate entertainment for the Cuban workers" (Pierce and Nichols 1979:88). *Revolución* then critiqued *Hoy*'s criticism of the film, calling it a "deformation of Marxist-Leninist philosophy" (as quoted in Pierce and Nichols 1979). Castro ultimately intervened, chastising the papers for their (in his opinion) unimportant tiff. However, as Pierce and Nichols point out, it is likely that Castro was primarily upset over the public display of internal disagreement rather than the contents of the argument (ibid.).

[711] I initially designed the project to include a fifth could-be crisis, the 1962 October Crisis. However, after completing the preliminary analyses of the Bay of Pigs invasion, I found considerable overlap between the two. It seemed nearly as though the leaders copied and pasted their articulatory project from the Bay of Pigs invasion onto the Cuban Missile Crisis. I thus decided to only include one for the purposes of this dissertation.

[712] Further clarifying this position, Greene notes that *Granma* does not include negative press, such as coverage of "cultural repression," "the jailing of anti-Castro dissidents," or "the poor shape of the Cuban economy" (1987:40–41).

(1995:474). Much like Castro's speeches, these daily newspapers undoubtedly tell only a certain version of events, but it is precisely because of this that they are useful windows into the government's project of ideological consolidation.

Analytic Approach

As noted in the Introduction, I describe my analytical approach as rigorous and fine-grained qualitative-interpretive textual analysis. I situate my method within the broader field of cultural textual analysis in part by what it is *not*. It is not a study in the semiotic or (post-) structuralist traditions.[713] Nor is it computational textual analysis or what Biernacki describes as an uncomfortable middle ground of "decontextualizing" content analysis (2012:6). Biernacki refers here to conventional content analysis, in which a researcher divides texts into discrete and uniform "units of analysis" (such as paragraphs or sentences) and then reads those units to assign them codes based on the appearance of specific words (manifest coding) or extrapolated themes (latent coding). The idea here is that content analysis helps ensure that codes are "rigidly and consistently applied" to maximize the replicability of the study (Berg 2001). Biernacki's critique, with which I tend to agree, is that, "by approximately 'measuring' the meanings of populations of texts, coding tries to approximate the best from two universes: the contextual appreciation of the humanities and the sampling and variable analysis of 'hard' sciences" (2016:6). In essence, it is an exercise in "turn[ing] meaningful texts into unit facts for the sake of converting these units back into meanings" (ibid.:2). The issue is that in its attempt to "approximate the best from two universes," it misses the mark on both counts.

[713] I do, however, draw some inspiration from political discourse analysis, which "combine[s] linguistic-based analysis with social and political theory to examine how discourse—written or spoken language—contributes to social change" (Clayfield 2019:8). Objects of analysis include topics, superstructures, local semantics, lexicon, syntax, rhetoric, expression structures, speech acts, and interactions, according to van Dijk (1997).

My analysis of Castro's speeches and print media is not based on identically uniform units of analysis, and the codes I developed are neither mutually exclusive nor independent. It is therefore difficult to quantify my findings. However, I offer here an analysis of a brief excerpt from one of Castro's speeches to demonstrate the importance of context over quantification.[714] Castro delivered this speech on April 9, 1968 (between the microfaction affair and the launching of the Revolutionary Offensive) in commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the general strike that contributed to rebels' eventual victory over Batista. In reminding the crowd of the long litany of aggressions the United States perpetrated against Cuba earlier in the decade, he said,

> They had incurred an obvious underestimation of our people; they believed they were going to bring us to our knees; they believed they were going to starve us to death; they believed that with their criminal blockades they would encourage counterrevolution; they believed that with the deprivations they would impose on our pueblo and the difficulties they would impose on our economic development, discontent would grow, the counterrevolution would have a basis and, in the end, once and for all, they would destroy the aspirations of this small country whose possession they longed for and which 90 miles from its coasts had been able to maintain its independence and to carry out its Revolution. (Castro 1968d)

If we are to take, as many researchers do, the sentence as the unit of analysis, here we have one unit of text.[715] The subject of this sentence, repeated six times, is "they" (which, without further context would have no referent whatsoever). Given the sentences surrounding this one, I know that "they" refers to the United States. But to code this unit of analysis as relating primarily to the United States misses, I suggest, the degree to which this passage characterizes the pueblo Cubano by highlighting (albeit implicitly) its fierce and unyielding determination: the people will not be brought to their knees, they will not be destroyed, and they will not give up. In the

[714] As a reminder, by "context" I mean: (1) the situation of the could-be crisis itself, (2) ongoing macrostructural changes resulting from leaders' decisions on how to implement socialist revolution (the best practices of which were themselves subject to change), (3) shifting geopolitical terrains, and (4) prior iterations of the articulatory project as carried out during prior could-be crises.

[715] Incidentally, this passage also aptly illustrates the impracticality in this case of pursuing uniform units of analysis. In Castro's speeches, some sentences consist of a single word (given that Spanish verbs have their subjects baked in) and others consist of twenty lines of text.

theoretical terms laid out in the introduction, the primary emphasis based on the existing words on the page seems to be external differentiation; however, in describing the enemy and their actions, Castro makes a strong statement about the pueblo itself, lending to the promotion of internal cohesion.

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