

CUBA: PEASANTS AND REVOLUTIONARIES

Randy Rappaport
University of California, Berkeley

It was the result of our history, this miserable poverty. In the middle of your riches, maybe it is difficult for you to know what poverty is. Poverty is mean, Yankee, in case you've forgotten, or if you never knew, poverty is dreary. It is a way of dying yet not dying. Poverty means no shoes, and the rich fat worms crawling in the intestines of your children, up through the naked soles of their feet. Poverty in Cuba meant eight people existing--who could say living?--in a miserable, filthy shack, with a floor of dirt, a leaking roof of thatch, and open fires to cook on, huddling around, coughing in the smoke.

And these are the people our learned young men joined up with, and mobilized, to make our revolution. Know that well: these people are the base, the thrust, the power. It is from them that the rebel soldiers came. They are the revolutionaries.

Listen, Yankee
C. Wright Mills

HISTORICAL AND ECONOMIC BACKGROUND: 466 Years of Colonial Status

When you come down to it, our fight for independence began way back in 1868 and it has taken us almost one hundred years of continuous struggle to achieve the freedom we have today.

Fidel Castro, June 1960

Until the advent of Castro, the United States was so overwhelmingly influential in Cuba that...the American Ambassador was the second most important man in Cuba, sometimes even more important than the President [of Cuba].

Earl E. T. Smith, former
American Ambassador to
Cuba, September 1960

For the fifty-seven years of its independence, Cuba has lived more as an appendage of the United States than as a sovereign nation.

Tad Szulc, correspondent
for the New York Times,
April 24, 1960

Quotes taken from Scheer
and Zeitlin 1964:34.

Columbus "discovered" Cuba on October 28, 1492, and for the next four centuries the island remained a colony of Spain. Spanish settlers came in droves to Cuba, expecting at first to find vast gold deposits, but later, when this hope was unfulfilled, discovering the tremendous agricultural potential of the island endowed so favorably with good soil and climate.

Indian laborers were allotted to settlers under a system known in Cuba and throughout the Spanish empire as the encomienda, which was related to the repartimento, or distribution of tracts of land. Sizes of these tracts usually depended on the social status of the settler. The result of the encomienda and the subsequent brutal treatment of the Indians was the almost complete annihilation of the native population of the island. One of the major cultural differences between Cuba and other countries under Spanish domination results from this situation. The extermination of the indigenous group in the early years of Cuba's history removed a major cultural stratum, one which has obviously been no small influence in the development of other Latin American societies (Nelson 1950:141).

The Spanish influence obviously is central to the history and development of Cuban society, but the importance of African influences from the very large number of slaves brought to Cuba beginning in 1517 as a result of the extermination of the Indians should not be forgotten. The major concern here, however, is not so much the cultural influences of the African slaves as the fact that throughout Cuba's turbulent social and political history black men have played a major role in rebellion and

revolution. While Cuban social structure did not simply show a white upper class and a black lower class, the tendencies in this direction, noted by Nelson (1950:151-152), have been no small factor in Cuban history.

Cuba was the last of the Latin American countries to achieve independence from Spain, and also was the last to legally abolish slavery. The struggle to achieve independence, as well as the abolition of slavery with which it was intimately connected, was long and difficult. The Ten Year's War (1868-1878), centered largely in Oriente Province, was the first phase of the struggle. The final phase began in 1895, and was led by Jose Martí, the great symbol of the Cuban spirit of independence. But with United States intervention in 1898, the situation took a new and crucial turn. The U.S. quickly defeated Spain, but then, rather than leave the island of Cuba to be run by its own people, Americans appointed an American military governor. The Platt Amendment of 1901 in effect made the island a political protectorate of the U.S. Thus, Cuba never actually achieved independence. Her colonial status was merely transferred from Spain to the U.S., with the only change that the island no longer had blatantly legal colonial status. More important for our concerns here, however, is the economic colonialism of Cuba-U.S. relations. This will be dealt with shortly.

The political history of Cuba subsequent to independence from Spain is inseparable from the island's relations with the United States. As Scheer and Zeitlin point out, "Within the next twenty-five years [after the Platt Amendment of 1901] at least five attempted revolutions were suppressed or influenced by the presence of U.S. Marines--as well as countless other 'warnings' by the U.S. Government which served the same end" (1964:38). The brutal Machado regime was overthrown in 1933 by a fairly unified, widespread movement, while the U.S. vacillated about whether or not to support the Cuban dictator. After refusing to support any of a succession of presidents whose politics the U.S. considered questionable, the U.S. finally supported Fulgencio Batista, who

was dictator for over six years, and then finally agreed to the passing of the Constitution of 1940, which guaranteed, among other things, a modicum of civil liberties. Batista was succeeded by Grau San Martín and Carlos Prío Socarrás, but during their presidential terms he remained tremendously influential, and finally, in 1952, he staged a military coup which launched the exceptionally totalitarian bloody period leading up to the Cuban Revolution of 1956-58.

These political events need not concern us in detail here, but the foregoing brief summary should serve to set the historical backdrop for the events of Castro's peasant revolution. This kind of political history may well have had a major effect on the political attitudes of the rural Cuban. Although some of these regimes concerned themselves with the problems of the urban workers, whose unions were fairly significant political forces, they almost totally neglected the rural peasant. The suspiciousness and hostility with which many peasants traditionally regard the government has been noted by several anthropologists (Berreman 1963, Lewis 1960). In Cuba also was a long tradition of cynical and hostile attitudes among the peasants toward government.

The political situation in Cuba prior to the peasant revolution cannot be separated from the complex economic situation, and indeed is probably subsidiary to it. Like the political situation, the economy of Cuba in that period cannot be viewed other than in its relation to U.S. economic interests. However, before beginning a discussion of the economic situation of Cuba prior to the revolution, it may be useful to clarify the applicability of the term "peasant" as used in this paper. To do so it is necessary to assert some notions which will be made clear only later. A primary principle for economic and social organization in Cuba rested on the existence of the huge latifundium, or plantation. The workers on these plantations, and in the mills often attached to them, were wage-laborers, and therefore were more "rural proletarians" than "peasants," in the sense that this term is traditionally used. Mintz (1953), in discussing the rural proletarian community type, points

out that it has both "folk" and "urban" characteristics, though he prefers to see it as a toally distinct community type, rather than as a synthesis of the polar categories of this continuum. Using Mintz's definition, the crucial points for our purposes are, first, that the aspirations and demands of the rural proletariat in Cuba prior to the revolution were for better wages and, related to that, for work which would not be so crippling by its rigid seasonality (as the sugar industry is). The second point is that the rural proletariat at the same time retained much of the "folk" mentality, with, for example, the extreme importance of the kin group, the social relations of the small community, and the isolation from urban patterns of life.

Ché Guevara, in an essay entitled "Cuban Exceptionalism?", discusses the role of the small land-holding peasants and the rural proletariat, which he almost sees as being part-peasant and part-proletariat.

In most places in Cuba the peasants had been proletarianized by the needs of big semi-mechanized capitalist agriculture, and had reached a stage of organization which gave them greater class-consciousness. We can admit this. But we should point out, in the interest of truth, that the first area where the Rebel Army...operated, was an area inhabited by peasants whose social and cultural roots were different from those of the peasants found in the areas of large-scale, semi-mechanized agriculture. In fact, the Sierra Maestra, locale of the first revolutionary beehive, is a place where peasants struggling barehanded against latifundism took refuge.... Concretely, the soldiers who belonged to our first peasant-type guerrilla armies came from the section of this social class which shows most strongly love for the land and the possession of it....

....The workers supported the demands against the latifundists. The poor peasant, rewarded with ownership of the land, loyally supported the revolutionary power and defended it against its...enemies (1967:29).

The extreme relevance of this statement will become clear in the final section of this paper. It is important to note that Guevara seems to view these two types, the small farm-owner and the wage-laborer, as two sections of a single social class, the peasants. Suffice it to say at

this point, however, that in the context of this paper, "peasant" remains a useful term since it describes quite well those people living in the area where the revolution was for the most part fought and won. Further, rural proletarians and "true" peasants were in many ways subject to very similar economic and cultural pressures in the decades before the revolution, and therefore we should keep the similarities as well as the differences in mind.

The economy of Cuba was almost totally dependent on the production of a single crop--sugar. While other crops, such as coffee, tobacco, and pineapple, were fairly widespread, the production of sugar cane, its refinement, etc., provided the economic base of Cuba. The price of sugar in the world market has always been extremely flexible, and as a result the Cuban economy was long subject to the severe fluctuations of that price. The Cuban peasant was thus inextricably tied with market conditions beyond his control and his understanding. The Cuban peasant, even closer to the brink of the modern industrial system and its concomitant effects for the peasant social and economic order than his counterpart in other Latin American countries, was thus constantly battered about like a piece of driftwood on the stormy seas of the world-wide sugar market. In commenting on this general problem, Wolf notes:

As the peasant sector becomes more firmly committed to marketing through network markets and grows increasingly dependent upon prices set in those markets, it will also be affected by even quite small changes in pricing. This may have astonishing implications for the entire economy of a country...In recent decades price fluctuations have frequently been much larger than 5%, thus causing serious economic dislocations among the peasantry, as well as in the larger society affected (1966:44-45).

This situation would of course apply not only to sugar production, but also to other crops, such as coffee and pineapple, which were also sold in external markets.

The structure of the rural land-holding system is of course an important aspect of this single-crop economy. The major tenure classes

before 1959 in Cuba were the owner-operator, who owned the land he farmed; the manager, hired by the land-owner to operate the farm; the renter, usually paying cash; the sub-renter, sub-renting from a tenant; the share renter or sharecropper, who pays a share of the crop for rent; and squatters, unauthorized settlers on land, the title to which is held by others (Nelson 1950:163).

As can be seen from Table 1, owners, renters, and sharecroppers make up the bulk of the tenured classes. However, as Nelson points out, "Small farmers, though numerous, have a pitifully small share of the land. Those with farms under 25 hectares in size (about 63 acres) constitute 70 per cent of all operators and have only 11 per cent of the land--about 9 hectares (22 acres) each, on the average, but most have much less" (1950:168).

Who, then, controlled the vast majority of all land? The answer is clear--the huge plantations which produced the overwhelming bulk of the sugar, coffee and tobacco sold in the external markets. Sugar-producing latifundia were generally connected to a mill, and thus employed a large number of industrial workers. But in addition, the workers on the latifundium, both the permanent and seasonal ones, were wage-laborers. According to Nelson, "Those who work for wages make up the bulk of the rural population of Cuba" (1950:166). These wage-laborers were of various types, especially either permanent employees or part-time farmers who worked on the latifundium during the three to four month period of the zafra, or sugar harvest, returning to their own small farms during the other months, known as the tiempo muerto ("dead season"). This situation is discussed by Wolf, when he points out that the "exigencies [of the market] may compel the peasant...to turn some special skills of his own into a part-time occupation capable of earning him money.... Although his capacity to produce some new, other crop may be limited, his capacity to dispose of his surplus labor offers greater flexibility." And again, stated in another way, "Thus, the peasant may find himself not only a participant in a produce market, but also in a

market in which one commodity exchanged for money is labor" (1966:45, 46). It should be noted that the fluctuation of sugar prices in the external markets affected many small farmers not only because the fluctuation had a bearing on what they received for their own sugar cane, but also because it affected what wages they received from their work on latifundia during the zafra. Thus, as Wolf indicated, even the peasants who operated their own small farms, either owning or renting them, may have been dependent on the latifundium for extra money. Obviously, the true "rural proletarians" who worked only on the latifundium were also seriously affected by the fluctuations in sugar prices as were those Cubans who were "pure" peasants, like many of those in the Sierra Maestra, where the revolution first took root.

A few brief comments on the way in which the latifundia system developed may be useful here, especially as they may shed some light on the attitudes of Cuban peasants toward those large agricultural concerns, attitudes which, as we shall see later, played an important role in the mobilization of peasants for the revolution of 1956-1958. Scheer and Zeitlin indicate that the process of the concentration of land in the hands of a dominant minority began under the Spanish, but continued, and indeed accelerated, even after Cuban independence from Spain.

American business interests maintained the plantation system when they replaced the formerly dominant Spaniards. Where the peasants could produce titles to their land, those titles were purchased. But in most instances they could not produce titles. With the power of the Cuban courts, as well as the Cuban upper classes, on the side of the U.S. business interests, the peasants were stripped of their land (1964:23).

Lowry Nelson describes the situation in much the same way, and further indicates: "Many colonos sold or otherwise lost ownership of the land, and...became tied by a 'triple bond' to the mill: they were dependent on it for land to rent, for the milling of the cane, and for credit" (1950:97). The latifundium and mills thus had tremendous power over peasants in all the various tenure classes, as well as over those peasants who no longer worked on small farms at all, but had become tied

totally to the plantation system as wage-laborers. The development of this economic spider web was probably within the memories of a large number of peasants at the time of the Cuban Revolution.

The second aspect of this situation was that the ownership of the centrales (mills usually associated with latifundium) was primarily in foreign hands. As can be seen from Table 2 U.S. interests were the most prominent in this regard, directly controlling about 40% of the mills. The development of the overwhelming concentration of land in the hands of a minority, along with the dependence on the mills, which were mostly foreign-owned, culminated in the 1933 revolution against Machado, a revolution in which the cry for agrarian reform was widespread. In discussing this, Scheer and Zeitlin comment:

The revolution was directed not only at Machado, but also at United States capital, which by now controlled the sugar industry, the railroads, banks, public utilities, and a major share of the island's commerce. At that time U.S. interests held more than \$1,500,000,000 of property in Cuba. U.S. sugar holdings were estimated at close to 70 per cent of the annual output of Cuba. The aims of the revolution, then, went well beyond these previous rebellions. The principal revolutionary groups sought not only to destroy the evils of the traditional political system, but also to do away with United States' "economic imperialism" (1964:48).

At least one sentence of that last quotation deserves repeating: "U.S. sugar holdings were estimated at close to 70 per cent of the annual output of Cuba." Thus, it was essentially U.S. business interests that controlled the huge latifundium which so pressured the Cuban peasantry in the various ways outlined earlier. In addition, it is fairly clear that even the peasants themselves understood something of the origins of the forces impinging on them, as is suggested in Scheer and Zeitlin's comment on the revolution against Machado.

The central role played by the latifundium in Cuba's total economy as well as in the life of the rural peasants has been emphasized in all accounts of Cuba's economic situation prior to the success of the recent revolution. An additional and extremely important factor has not often been noticed, however. The essentially stagnant quality of the

economy was, in fact, also due to the latifundium, a fact perhaps simply the other side of the same coin. Cuba's potential for crop diversification, expansion of industry, and so on, was clear, but the fulfillment of this potential obviously would have required tremendous amounts of capital which only U.S. business interests, particularly sugar interests, could have provided. Thus this potential was essentially a frustrated one, as U.S. interests made no attempt to undertake projects which would have aided the Cuban economy in general and in the long run aided America. They "simply were not pioneering or adventurous" (Scheer and Zeitlin 1964:31). One of the most important aspects of this frustrated potential lay in the fact that "the latifundia did not begin to utilize the huge areas of land which they held. While 82 per cent of Cuba's land area was farm land, only 22 per cent of that was cultivated." In other words, "at least 78 per cent of the farmland lay dormant" (Scheer and Zeitlin 1964:24, 25). This was not some subtle, hidden economic factor. It must have been quite visible to the landless wage-workers and peasants owning or renting minute tracts of land. This situation is rather different from that found in many peasant societies around the world where the pressure for land is so great that even redistribution would often not provide anything more than a very temporary solution. It would seem quite possible, and this will be discussed at greater length in the conclusion to this paper, that the very visibility of this aspect of Cuba's frustrated potential, the visibility of unused land, was an important factor in the peasants' understanding of their own position and their resulting mobilization for the revolution of 1956-1958.

The previous description of the economic and political complexities of Cuba's situation prior to 1959 should serve as a basis for understanding what may well be the most crucial aspect of the Cuban Revolution--that it was, essentially and fundamentally, a nationalist revolution.

Chalmers Johnson, in his book Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power, sets forth the thesis that "The rise to power of the CCP and YCP

[Communist Parties of China and Yugoslavia] in collaboration with the peasantry of the two countries can best be understood as a species of nationalism" (1962a:19-20). That is, the historical situations of Japanese imperialism in China and German occupation in Yugoslavia created conditions under which the peasants could be mobilized to struggle against the foreign forces, and eventually to expel them. Clearly the historical situation of Cuba prior to 1956 was not directly parallel to this, but the relevance of Johnson's thesis to the Cuban example is nevertheless strong.

While the United States was not a foreign occupying force in Cuba, the island nevertheless stood in a colonial relationship to its powerful neighbor. As should be clear from the previous discussion of the political and economic situation in Cuba prior to the revolution, the United States, both in the operation of its foreign policy and in the related operation of U.S. business interests, controlled what went on in Cuba.

Political scientists in particular have commented on this general situation so common in the world today. John Kautsky sees nationalism in underdeveloped countries as essentially equivalent to anti-colonialism.

Unless they are virtually inaccessible, underdeveloped countries almost by necessity stand economically in a colonial relationship to industrial countries.... Anti-colonialism, then, must here be understood as opposition not merely to colonialism narrowly defined, but also to a colonial economic status.

It is opposition to colonialism so defined and to those natives who benefit from the colonial relationship that constitutes nationalism in underdeveloped countries (1963:38-39).

But one could suggest that this train of thought is too sophisticated for the ordinary peasant, that in fact he would not make these connections, although the educated intellectual easily would. However, as Kautsky clearly states,

such peasant communities unaffected by and indifferent to the outside world are no longer a rule in most underdeveloped countries. Colonialism itself has put an end to their isolation (eg. influences of latifundium in rural Cuba). Through the extension of its influence, the peasant has become integrated into a wider money economy... (1963:40).

This is not to suggest that the Cuban peasant necessarily understood the complexities of the economic web in which he was caught, but simply that he could have understood without any great difficulty just who the spider spinning that web was.

ETHNOGRAPHIC AND SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

Both data and analysis of a truly ethnographic nature are almost non-existent for Cuba. The following discussion and analysis, therefore, rest on scattered comments mainly found in Lowry Nelson's study of Rural Cuba, and to a lesser extent on generalizations drawn from general Latin American cultural models, generalizations being made possible by Cuba's long history of Spanish settlement and domination.

Some of the complexities of describing the Cuban peasantry should be clear from the earlier discussions of the economics of rural Cuba. Essentially, the population of rural Cuba was divided between wage-laborers and those who operated (owned or rented) their own farms, with a great deal of overlap existing between the two groups. Those who were wage-laborers, however, were probably in a majority. This group included both workers who remained attached to one latifundia or mill, and those who moved around, though generally within the same county, or at least the same province (Nelson 1950:172). In the mobile group (about half of all wageworkers), it may well have been that the younger men predominated. Thus, it would seem that despite the fact that such a large part of this population consisted of wageworkers, the substantial stability of these workers was a factor differentiating them from workers in a modern, industrialized country.

The peasant village in Cuba was essentially of two kinds-- that composed of farm operators (owners or renters) and that composed of wage-laborers. This second type, called bateyes, though not conforming to the traditional definition of a peasant village, nevertheless had many of the characteristics of such a village, since the laborers were "often as stable in their occupancy as they would be if they were operators" (Nelson 1950:66).

In order to have any real anthropological understanding of village life we would need to know something more of the kind of relationships which existed in these villages. Nelson indicates several items which at least give us some hints about this. First of all, the importance of kinship groups, especially the nuclear family, are emphasized in several accounts of Cuban rural life (MacGaffey 1962:51; Nelson 1950:174). The explanation given, however, is that "the family is the most important social institution not so much because of its own strength and scope as because other institutions--church, school, community--have been weak" (MacGaffey 1962:51). Nelson further explains: "In Cuba the church plays only a minor role among farm people. In rural areas not only is the church usually non-existent as a regularly functioning institution, but often there is no school and usually no other formal group or association" (1950:175). MacGaffey further emphasizes the importance of family over non-family relationships: "At all social levels in pre-Castro Cuba the special claims of relatives were recognized and often determined the choice when privileges were distributed" (1962:51). The general pattern of the strong family ties along with weak ties outside the family seems to be one of the most recurrent features of peasant village life, especially in Latin America.

Nelson makes an interesting comment on a particular feature of Cuban village life which was also noticed by Lewis in his study of Tepoztlán, Mexico (1960:49-50) and Foster in his study of Tzintzuntzan, Mexico (1965:305fn). This feature concerns the difficulty, if not impossibility, of achieving cooperation among villagers in projects which

would seem to be of mutual benefit to all. Nelson quotes a woman leader in one Cuban community as saying: "Cubans will not work together; they don't trust each other; they are afraid someone will get more benefit from such a project than they will. While they can comfortably sit and smoke as long as the house does not fall on their heads, they do nothing" (1950:246). This lack of "a sense of local initiative or of responsibility to work cooperatively to achieve solutions to problems of which they [the peasants] may be generally aware" (1950:247), or "this lack of community cohesion" as Nelson more succinctly puts it, raises some extremely interesting questions with regard to the mobilization of the peasants in the revolution. These questions will be clarified shortly, but first it may be useful to discuss the relevance of some of the ideas contained in Foster's "Image of Limited Good" model.

Foster derives his model of the "Image of Limited Good" primarily from his analysis of the Mexican village of Tzintzuntzan, though he draws widely on sources relating to other Latin American peasant groups, as well as to peasants in other parts of the world. The questions for us here include whether Foster's model could be applied to an understanding of the Cuban example; if so, in what ways; and finally, what bearing would it have on an analysis of the mobilization of Cuban peasants in the Cuban revolution.

From the previous discussion concerning the strength of the family unit, the weakness of community institutions and of relationships extending outside the family, as well as the difficulty of achieving community cooperation, it would seem that there was considerable similarity between the Cuban village before 1959 and the general Latin American model which forms the basis of Foster's view of the cognitive orientation of peasants as being one of an "Image of Limited Good." In other words, it would seem that this cognitive orientation probably would have applied to the Cuban peasant, and perhaps even to the rural proletarian to the extent that he retained something of the peasant mentality, before the success of the revolution. If this is true, however, then certain

problems concerning the willingness of the peasants to become involved in the activities of the revolution, whether as armed guerrillas or as suppliers of food, clothing, shelter, intelligence information, and so on, must be answered. In order to deal with these crucial problems, however, it is first necessary to describe more fully the role the peasants actually did play in the activities of the revolution.

MAKING THE REVOLUTION

The Cuban Revolution, like other successful revolutions, had two phases, the second of which is not yet finished. It is the first phase only with which this paper is concerned. This phase includes the war which was fought primarily by guerrillas, with the active support of the Cuban peasantry, against the regular army under the control of Fulgencio Batista, the dictator of Cuba from 1952 through 1958.

The events of the Cuban Revolution began in 1952, when Batista staged a coup d'état, seizing all military and political power in the country. Several weeks later, on July 26, Fidel Castro led an abortive attack on Fort Moncada, outside of Santiago de Cuba in Oriente Province. Although the rebels who participated in that attack, including Castro, were either killed or later jailed, the attack soon became a symbol of the revolution, which became known as the 26th of July Movement. Fidel Castro, along with his brother Raúl and other participants were imprisoned on the Isle of Pines. Several years later, in May 1955, in a move to win popular support, Batista released the prisoners, and Castro soon went to Mexico. There, after having raised money from exiled Cuban radicals throughout the U.S. and Latin America, he undertook the planning and preparation for an invasion and subsequent guerrilla war aimed at bringing down Batista, and, in his own words, bringing about "something more than a mere change of command. Cuba earnestly desires a radical change in every field of its public and social life" (quoted in Huberman and Sweezy 1960:50). It was on a ranch outside Mexico City that Fidel and Raúl Castro, Ernesto "Chē" Guevara, an Argentinian-born physician,

and other radical veterans of Cuba's internal struggles met and trained for a guerrilla war.

In December of 1956 the invasion was carried out, but because of stormy seas and other events of bad luck, only twelve of the original eighty-two guerrillas in the invading party made it safely to Pico Turquino, the top-most peak in the Sierra Maestra. They had lost all their supplies and most of their weapons.

The war which followed was essentially a guerrilla war in both its tactics and its support. The question of peasant support for the guerrillas has several aspects--how much support there was, in what ways this support was manifested, and finally, the reasons behind the support. This third problem will be discussed briefly here, but will be dealt with at greater length in the conclusion to this paper.

Chalmers Johnson, in writing of "Civilian Loyalties and Guerrilla Conflict," says: "the mounting of a guerrilla movement as well as the possibility of guerrilla victory depends upon the loyalties of civilians in the area of operations.... The irreducible characteristic of successful guerrilla warfare is the close cooperation between full-time guerrillas and a population almost wholly in sympathy with the guerrillas' goals" (1962b:649). Ché Guevara, the master tactician of the guerrilla forces of the Sierra Maestra, clearly states much the same principle when he writes, "The guerrilla counts, therefore, on the support of the entire population of a locality" (1961:337). The very nature of irregular warfare, or guerrilla tactics, essentially requires the support of the peasants. Criticism of the claim of the Cuban revolutionaries that they were supported by the peasants in their guerrilla struggle has recently become common (Alroy 1967:87-99), but it is not necessary to rely solely on their work or on the word of the academic analyst to support this crucial contention. An American journalist, Dickey Chapelle, who stayed for a time with the guerrillas, wrote that "more than half the rebelde fighters I knew had been field hands in the cane fields or coffee plantations of Oriente Province." And then,

"Their combat intelligence was unexcelled in quantity and of dependable accuracy. It was not organized on any military basis, but originated in the civilian population which felt itself a direct participant in every action" (1960:328, 335).

It would seem clear that peasant support, as well as support from the rural proletariat, for the guerrillas was widespread. What was the nature of that support? Johnson (1962b:654) and Guevara (1966:293) agree that military intelligence, in addition to actual participation by some peasants, is the most crucial. This is supported by the previous quote from the account of the American journalist. It would seem likely also that food and other such supplies were acquired through the peasants, and Guevara makes several comments which would indicate that this was in fact the case (1966:291).

The conduct of Batista's forces in the war against the guerrillas needs to be briefly discussed here, as it relates to some of the reasons underlying the peasant mobilization. Militarily, Batista's troops compared to the far fewer guerrillas were hampered by their lack of mobility, the inability to stage surprise operations, and so on. The most important aspect of the question, however, is the nature of Batista's reaction to participation by civilians in support of the guerrillas.

Chalmers Johnson's thesis that the revolutions in China and Yugoslavia were essentially nationalist in character has already been discussed. The second part of his thesis suggests that the social mobilization of the Chinese and Yugoslavian peasants and their willingness to support the Communist forces opposing the invaders were primarily the result of the absolute brutality, the widespread cruelty inflicted on the civilian population whether or not it was actually supporting the guerrilla fighters. The question here, then, is whether or not the widespread support the Cuban guerrillas received from the peasants can be credited to a parallel force, i.e., the brutality of Batista's military units. Only a tentative answer to this question can be presented since the available information is not specific enough on this matter.

Certainly, Batista's army was excessively brutal in its campaign against the guerrillas. However, the totally indiscriminate killing and terror which characterized the activities of the Japanese forces in China and German forces in Yugoslavia does not seem to have been as widespread in Cuba as it was in those two situations. The emphasis on "indiscriminate" is important, since this meant that whether or not a peasant supported the guerrillas he was in danger of suffering at the hands of the Japanese or German forces. Johnson suggests that "the failure of the Japanese leaders to offer a better alternative than resistance or slavery" was a major factor in the peasantry's widespread support of the Communist guerrillas (1962:69). The operation of Batista's forces does not appear to have been this extreme. The terror was directed mainly at those who appeared in some way to be supporting Castro's guerrillas. Thus, it would not appear that the peasants were necessarily forced into supporting the Cuban guerrillas, as Johnson seems to be suggesting was the case in China and Yugoslavia.

Another factor further weakens the argument that the peasants supported the guerrillas solely because of Batista's terroristic activities. When one compares the support in the city and the rural areas, clearly the overwhelming support did come from the rural areas. This raises several very complex problems relating to the character of the urban trade unions which cannot be dealt with here. Briefly, however, it should be noted that when the embryo underground in the cities, mainly Havana, was brutally crushed by Batista's forces, further support did not arise in reaction to this, but rather remained extremely quiescent. In fact, the general strike of April, 1958, which centered in the urban areas was a failure, to a large extent because the Communist-led labor unions refused to support it.

All of this is not intended to deny totally that the terror spread throughout Cuba by Batista was an element in mobilizing peasant support for the guerrillas, but rather that, counter to Johnson's explanation of peasant support for the guerrillas in China and Yugoslavia,

this terror and brutality was not the major reason for peasant mobilization. The major factors underlying this mobilization will be dealt with in the concluding section of this paper.

CONCLUSIONS

In preceding sections of this paper, we have attempted to describe the context in which the Cuban Revolution took place; that is, the context in which peasants became mobilized to support the guerrilla movement which was centered in the Sierra Maestra of Oriente Province. The analysis up to this point has followed two somewhat distinct lines. The first related to identification by the peasants of a struggle against Batista and the economic interests he represented as being essentially a nationalist, and anti-colonialist struggle, although it is certainly unlikely that the peasants used these or similar terms. The second related to the cognitive orientation of the peasants in rural Cuba. This second line of discussion must now be dealt with more fully, and its relationship to the first made explicit.

It was suggested earlier that Foster's model of the Image of Limited Good probably would have been applicable to rural Cuban society and especially to areas like the Sierra Maestra prior to 1959. Foster presents this model as one which describes the patterns of behavior common to many peasant groups, particularly those in Latin America. The basic notion is that "the desired things in life such as land, wealth, health, friendship and love, manliness and honor, respect and status, power and influence, security and safety exist in finite quantity and are always in short supply.... In addition, there is no way directly within peasant power to increase the available quantities" (1967:304; his emphasis).

Would this cognitive orientation contradict the mobilization of peasants for activities supporting the guerrilla movement? An important logical contradiction seems to exist here. If the peasant does not see the possibility of increasing the available quantities of these

desired things, then it would seem unlikely that he would be willing to participate in a dangerous movement to support the guerrillas who claimed, counter to his view, that the availability of these things could be increased. Furthermore, a logical extension of the Image of Limited Good, an extension which Foster himself mentions, is that cooperation among peasants on projects of mutual concern and benefit are extremely difficult to bring about "since an individual or family can improve a position only at the expense of others" (1960:305, fn). In other words, suspicion and hostility towards the motives of others may easily prevent such cooperation. However, by the very fact of the support which the peasants gave the guerrillas, as well as the character of that support, the peasants in fact did achieve rather high levels of cooperation with each other as well as with the guerrillas, and mutual hostility and suspicion was minimal in a situation requiring and actually achieving comradeship and trust.

If a logical contradiction between the cognitive orientation suggested in the Image of Limited Good and the mobilization of the peasants does exist, how did this mobilization and consequent support come about? The answer seems to lie in two areas. First, this cognitive orientation had been weakened in the several decades preceding the Cuban Revolution by the historico-political and economic forces which fostered the growth of nationalist sentiments among the peasants. Second, a cognitive re-orientation was fostered during the period of the revolution by the actions of the guerrillas themselves.

The basis for the first part of this explanation, that the cognitive orientation was weakened by historico-political and economic forces in the several decades before the revolution, has already been set forth. One element in this weakening rests on the idea that the visibility to the peasants of unused land could suggest to them that at least this one desired thing, land, was not in such short supply. To put it in a rather trite way, a carrot was held before their eyes, perhaps not intentionally, but nevertheless the result may well have been

to suggest to many peasants that more land, and as a result, more wealth, comforts, and so on, could be acquired, since in fact these desired things did exist within the peasants' sphere.

Another, and certainly more important, element in the weakening of the traditional cognitive orientation of the peasants was the growth of nationalist sentiment which resulted largely from their beginning to see that their own destinies were controlled from outside their villages, from outside Cuba. They came to see their village, their own economic sphere not as a closed system, but as an open one which could affect, as well as be affected by, what went on beyond the limits of their own batey or village latifundia. The experience of the revolution against Machado, for example, in 1933 may have indicated to some peasants that certain kinds of actions they could take would have an effect outside their small world. Furthermore, nationalism viewed as anti-colonialism assumes an open system, and therefore may suggest that the desired things in life need not necessarily exist in finite or limited quantities. As was pointed out earlier, colonialism itself brings to an end villages existing as closed systems.

The second part of this explanation, that a cognitive re-orientation was fostered during the revolutionary period rests on several bases. Karl Deutsch has suggested the useful concept of social mobilization, which he defines as that "process in which major clusters of old social, economic, and psychological commitments are eroded or broken and people become available for new patterns of socialization and behavior" (1961:583). Chalmers Johnson, in using Deutsch's definition of social mobilization, says that it "refers to the pressures that cause populations to form political communities--in other words, the changes that cause people of towns, villages, and regions to knit together into new political orders which transcend these areas as their inhabitants realize that their mutual interests extend beyond daily contacts" (1962:22). By reasonable extension, the concept of social mobilization as defined by Deutsch and refined by Johnson could explain the process whereby the

cognitive orientation of individuals who are suspicious of or hostile to those outside their immediate family, and thus are unwilling to cooperate with others, is changed to allow individuals to see beyond their immediate self-interest. Suggested here is that the experience of the revolution, and specifically the actions of the guerrillas, fostered this process of re-orientation which Deutsch and Johnson call social mobilization.

Clearly the peasants of Oriente Province did not jump to provide immediate support for the small band of guerrillas, as Guevara himself readily admitted (1966:291), but this support did develop over a period of months. The French journalist Régis Debray, in his description of the Cuban Revolution, indicates that an integral part of the work of the guerrilla force was the education of the peasant population to the goals of the revolution (1967:55-56). Furthermore, as the rebels gained control of territory, they began to set up school-cities in which illiterate peasants were taught to read and write. In fact, "Within two years there were thirty rebel army schools" (Huberman and Sweezy 1960:57). Whenever possible, the guerrillas actually enacted the agrarian reform they had promised the peasants by distributing the large land-holdings of latifundium within the territory they came to control. Guevara describes how the rebels distributed livestock to guajiros who had never possessed any before (1966:293). When a field hospital was constructed high in the Sierra Maestra, the campesino and guajiro families were urged to come and receive medical care (Huberman and Sweezy 1960:57).

Guevara describes the attitudes of the rebels toward the peasants in the following way:

Every person in the Rebel Army remembered his basic duties in the Sierra Maestra and other areas: to improve the status of the peasants, to participate in the struggle to seize land, and to build schools. Agrarian law was tried for the first time; using revolutionary methods we confiscated the extensive possessions of the officials of the dictatorial government and distributed to the peasants all of the state-held land in the area. At this time there rose up a peasant movement, closely connected to the land, with land reform as its banner (1966:292).

Caught in a war situation which jarred their previous modes of existence anyway, and faced on the one side by Batista's forces and on the other by the rebels, the peasants gradually became willing to support the rebels with whom their experience had so far been extremely positive. The experience of the peasants in relation to the actions of the guerrillas would seem to have been conducive to social mobilization. Stated very specifically, the actions of the guerrillas served to actually "increase the availability of desired things" such as land, wealth, and health, and thus to demonstrate that the traditional cognitive orientation (which was weakened anyway even before the revolution) was no longer a correct one. The re-orientation was in the direction of more openness, cooperation, trust, hopefulness, and so on. A full understanding of just what the new elements in the cognitive orientation of the Cuban peasant are would require a study of events following the victory of the rebel forces on January 1, 1959, and this is certainly not within the scope of this paper. What we have tried to elucidate here was something of the process whereby the traditional cognitive orientation of the Cuban peasant, an orientation corresponding somewhat to Foster's Image of Limited Good model, was changed or modified such that he would be willing to actively support the efforts of the guerrillas in the Sierra Maestra and later on in other areas.

TABLES

TABLE 1. PERCENT OF CUBAN FARMERS IN EACH TENURE CLASS. 1946.

TENURE CLASSES	PERCENT
Manager	5.8
Owners	30.5
Renters	28.8
Subrenters	4.4
Sharecroppers	20.6
Squatters	8.6
Others	1.3
Total	100.0

Source: Nelson 1950:160.

TABLE 2. MILL OWNERSHIP BY NATIONALITY. 1940.

United States	67
Cuba	55
Spain	33
Canada	10
Britain	4
France	3
Netherlands	2
Total	174

Source: MacGaffey 1962:61.

REFERENCES

- Alroy, Gil Carl
1967 The peasantry in the Cuban Revolution. *Review of Politics* 29:87-99.
- Berreman, Gerald D.
1963 *Hindus of the Himalays*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Chapelle, Dickey
1960 How Castro won. In F. M. Osanka, ed., *Modern Guerrilla Warfare*. New York: The Free Press.
- Debray, Régis
1967 *Revolution in the Revolution?* New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Deutsch, Karl W.
1961 Social mobilization and political development. In David Apter and Harry Eckstein, eds., *Comparative Politics*. Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press.
- Foster, George
1967 Peasant society and the image of limited good. In Jack Potter, May Diaz, George Foster, eds., *Peasant Society: A Reader*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.
- Guevara, Ernesto "Ché"
1961 La guerre de guerrillas. In F. M. Osanka, ed., *Modern Guerrilla Warfare*. New York: The Free Press.
1966 A new old Ché Guevara interview. *Hispanic American Historical Review* XLVI:288-300.
1967 *Ché Guevara speaks*. New York: Merit Publishers.
- Hobsbawm, E. J.
1959 *Primitive Rebels*. Manchester, England: Manchester University Press.
- Huberman, Leo and Paul Sweezy
1960 *Cuba: Anatomy of a Revolution*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Johnson, Chalmers
1962a *Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
1962b Civilian loyalties and guerrilla conflict. *World Politics* 14:646-661.

- Kautsky, John
 1963 Political Change in Underdeveloped Countries. New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Lewis, Oscar
 1960 Tepoztlán, Village in Mexico. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.
- MacGaffey, Wyatt
 1961 Social structure and mobility in Cuba. Anthropological Quarterly 34:94-109.
 1962 Cuba. New Haven: HRAF Press.
- Mills, C. Wright
 1960. Listen, Yankee. New York: McGraw Hill Book Co.
- Mintz, Sidney
 1953 Folk-urban continuum and the rural proletarian community. American Journal of Sociology 59:136-143.
- Mitrany, David
 1951 Marx Against the Peasant. Durham: University of North Carolina Press.
- Nelson, Lowry
 1950 Rural Cuba. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Scheer, Robert and Maurice Zeitlin
 1964 Cuba, An American Tragedy. England: Penguin Books, Limited.
- Thomas, Hugh
 1963 The origins of the Cuban Revolution. World Today 19: 448-460.
- Wolf, Eric R.
 1966 Peasants. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc.
- World Today
 1959 Cuba: A peasant revolution. Unsigned. World Today 15: 183-195.