



**the
new
man
in cuba**

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this collection of writings on the New Man in Cuba is to serve as an introduction to a seminar organised by the Britain Cuba Association on this theme on 22 November at the Africa Centre. I hope, however, that it has some intrinsic value in that it presents as complete a picture as possible of Cuban discussion of the concept as well as including articles written especially for the seminar by people who have a deep commitment to the Cuban Revolution. What is under discussion here is the quality of a revolution. When Che puts forward the idea of the new man in Cuba he is attempting to define the end product, the purpose of the revolutionary struggle, to show how human lives and not just the distribution of property are affected by the change over to a socialist society. The new man is the justification of the sacrifices and the effort involved— a radically different human being forged out of and during the revolutionary process, a more complete man, a more fulfilled man than it is possible to produce under capitalism. The image of this new man emerges clearly from Che's writings, a man dedicated to the revolution, with a deep love for his fellow human beings but an abiding hatred of all systems which oppress and exploit them, willing to make great sacrifices to ensure the success of the struggle for a new social order in both his own and other lands: this is the man whom Che calls to be the vanguard of the revolutionary movement. But equally clear is the need for some programme of re-education, for the revolution is dealing not with a new generation but with a generation born and educated under capitalism, whose social reflexes are those of exploitation, personal gain, self-interest and the fear of commitment. And the new generation of the revolution will be the children of these people.

What form this re-education will take is obviously a crucial problem and one which the revolution has been dealing with since the end of the military phase of the struggle. To a large extent the debate in Cuba has centered around the introduction of moral incentives as a means to change the motivation and the attitudes of workers in their relation to the economy and in this way to integrate them into the revolutionary process. Certainly Fidel's speech on 26 July 1968 seems to suggest that this substitution of moral for material incentives will in itself go most of the way to effecting a change of consciousness, while some of the practical problems involved in implementing this are set out in Armando Hart's speech earlier this year where he refers to the resentment and distrust which can be generated by a too bureaucratic attitude to those who are apparently not sufficiently morally motivated. The Cubans make no secret of the fact that absenteeism and evasion of work are serious problems for them, and it is obvious as Armando Hart stresses that explanation and participation in the process of re-education of workers must not be replaced by coercion or by moral pressure being brought to bear on those who prove less amenable to the ideals of the revolution, even though the revolution is sorely in need of their man-power. For this would be a disaster for the very concept of regeneration under a new system, it would thrust the older generation back into their old habits of thought, revive in them the old resentment of all authority and suspicion of all work as being a grim necessity forced upon them by a society indifferent to them as human beings, and it would foster these attitudes in a new generation who have been educated to value more highly their own worth and who no longer see themselves as passive cogs in the machinery of production but who hope to make a more conscious and deliberate contribution to the development of their own society. Work will not and cannot become overnight a joy instead of a burden, physical labour has been since the formation of organised societies a degrading and dehumanising way of passing one's life and it is a tribute to the humanity of the Cuban Revolution that Fidel talks not only of the necessity of work but also of the time when there will be machines to replace the machetes. The intellectual's six weeks in the agriculture may teach them much but even that cannot really make them aware of the adjustments that have to be made in the new revolutionary situation by a man who in the old society had been compelled to tear his living from the land in the most exhausting of labours, working for a system alien to his interests and waiting in line for that work and going hungry when he was not chosen to lose his sweat on another man's land struggling to bring in another man's crop. And this is the same man whose father and whose father's father passed their lives in this way. It is against this background that the revolution in Cuba is attempting to rehabilitate the *zafra* as a symbol not of exploitation but of independence and achievement, and it is an attempt of some psychological complexity which it is difficult for us to appreciate fully. Upon how this crucial change is effected depends the question of whether it will be effected at all.

It is with these difficult problems of the education of the new man that the Cubans are now concerning themselves, and any proper discussion of the subject involves an analysis of the schools as well as the workshops and workers councils of post-revolutionary Cuba. In fact what is under discussion is the function of all Cuban institutions which have a bearing on the nature of life in Cuba, and in a socialist society that means all of them. What I hope will emerge from these articles and from the seminar is some real sense of the nature and direction of the education of the new man in Cuba, of just how it is possible to form a new kind of human being, fully integrated and able to find self-expression and freedom to develop in a society built for this purpose, how this new man will take shape while attitudes and prejudices remain from the old society and still have influence, while the old superstitions linger and may be passed down to a new generation and while the revolution is struggling to survive in the face of almost overwhelming economic odds, the victim of external aggression and indifference and scepticism.

It is as a means of expressing our support for the aims of the Cuban Revolution that the seminar and this compilation of writings which serves as an introduction have been organised. I would like to thank Arnold Wesker, Andrew Salkey and Ken Coates for contributing articles and everyone who helped me in the preparation of this booklet.

Jacqueline Kaye.

CHE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPT OF THE NEW MAN

The Government will, on occasion, have to ask sacrifices of certain types of workers. It has asked them, and twice the sugar workers have responded, have shown themselves to be – I say this sincerely – the most combative and class conscious working group, the workers most aware of their revolutionary duties. But, at some time or another, we will all have to face up to those duties and temporarily renounce some of our privileges or rights at a given moment, for the common good. That is the job of the labour leader: to recognise that moment, to analyse and make sure that the workers sacrifice, if it is necessary, be the smallest possible one, but at the same time, to show the worker comrade that the sacrifice is necessary and to explain why, and to make sure that everyone is convinced. A revolutionary government cannot demand sacrifices from above: they must be the result of everyone's will – of everyone's conviction.

Speech to Havana assembly of workers, 18th. June 1960

We must review again each of our lives, what we did and thought as doctors, or any function of public health, before the Revolution. We must do this with profound critical zeal and arrive finally at the conclusion that almost everything we thought and felt in that past period ought to be deposited in an archive, and a new type of human being created. If each one of us expends his maximum effort toward the perfection of that new human type, it will be much easier for the people to create him and let him be the example of the new Cuba.

It is good that I emphasise for you, the inhabitants of Havana who are present here, this idea: in Cuba a new type of man is being created, whom we cannot fully appreciate here in the capital, but who is found in every corner of the country. . .

Individualism, in the form of the individual action, of a person alone in a social milieu, must disappear in Cuba. In the future individualism ought to be the efficient utilisation of the whole individual for the absolute benefit of a collectivity. It is not enough that this idea is understood today, that you all comprehend the things I am saying and are ready to think a little about the present and what the future ought to be. In order to change the way of thinking, it is necessary to undergo profound internal changes and to witness profound external changes, especially in the performance of our duties and obligations to society.

Speech to militiamen, 19th. August 1960

But we too must also defend our Revolution, the one which we are carrying on every day. In order to defend it, we must build and fortify it with that work that youth today does not like or that, at least, it considers the last of its responsibilities. Youth maintains toward work the old mentality, the mentality of the capitalist world – that is, the attitude that work is, yes, a duty and a necessity, but a sad duty, an unfortunate necessity.

Why does this happen? Because we have not yet given to work its true meaning. We have not been capable of uniting the worker with the object of his work. And, at the same time, we have not imparted to the worker a consciousness of the importance of the creative act he is performing every day.

The worker and the machine are still two different and antagonistic things. We must concern ourselves with this situation in order to mould new generations of men who will take the greatest interest in their work. They will know how to find in their work a permanent and constantly changing source of new emotions – how to make of work something creative, something brand new.

Speech to an assembly of Communist Youth, 20th October 1962

We must develop with great effort, a political program to eliminate the lack of inner motivation: i.e. the lack of political clarity, which shows itself in the lack of productivity. The paths to follow are: continuous education by means of concrete explanations of every task: the arousing of interest in specific jobs among the administrative employees; the setting of example by vanguard workers on the one hand, and the instituting of drastic measures to eliminate the parasites, either those who hold an attitude of deep hatred toward socialist society or those who totally dislike working.

Article in Cuban magazine "Cuba Socialista", No. 18, February 1963

We must banish totally every thing that means thinking that being elected a member of some organisation of the masses or of the ruling party of the Revolution – being chosen a leader in one of the Revolution's different activities – permits a comrade to enjoy the slightest opportunity to get something more than the rest of the people. We refer, in other words, to the policy of rewarding excellence with material things, to rewarding with material things the one who has shown greater conscientiousness and spirit of sacrifice.

There are two things that are constantly conflicting and dialectically becoming part of the process of creating a socialist society. On the one hand, material incentives are made necessary by our having emerged from a society that thought of only material incentives, and we are creating a new society on the foundation of that old society through a series of transformations in the minds of the people of that old society. On the other hand we still do not have enough to give each individual what he needs. For these reasons, interest in material things will be with us for a time during the process of creating a socialist society.

But precisely for this reason the function of the vanguard party is to raise the opposite banner as high as possible – the banner of interest in non-material things, the banner of non-material incentives, the banner of men who sacrifice and hope for nothing but recognition by their comrades. Such is the approval you have shown today to the comrades you have chosen to become part of the Partido Unido de la Revolucion.

Material incentives are something left over from the past. They are something that we must accept but whose hold on the minds of people we must gradually break as the revolutionary process goes forward. One type of incentive is definitely on the rise; the other must be definitely on the way to extinction. Material incentives will not play a part in the new society being created; they will die out as we advance. We must establish the conditions under which this type of motivation that is operative today will increasingly lose its importance and be replaced by non-material incentives such as the sense of duty and the new revolutionary way of thinking.

Speech to textile workers, 24th. March 1963

" But man is a child, laborious and stupid,
Who has turned work into tiresome toil,
He has turned the drumstick into a hoe,
And instead of spreading over the earth a song of happiness,
He began to dig . . . (from "Juegos" by Leon Felipe, ed.)

I quote these words because today we could tell that great desperate poet to come to Cuba and see how man, after passing through all the stages of capitalist alienation, and after being considered a beast of burden harnessed to the yoke of the exploiter, has rediscovered his way and has found his way back to play. Today in our Cuba, every day work takes on new meaning. It is done with new happiness.

And we could invite him to our cane fields so that he might see our women cut cane with love and grace, so that he might see the virile strength of our workers cutting the cane with love, so that he might see a new attitude toward work, so that he might see that what enslaves man is not work but rather his failure to possess the means of production. When society arrives at a certain stage in its development and is capable of initiating the hard struggle, of destroying the oppressive power, of destroying its strong arm- the army- and of taking power, then man once again regains the old sense of happiness of fulfilling a duty, of feeling himself important within the social mechanism. He becomes happy to feel himself a cog in the wheel, a cog which has its own characteristics and is necessary although not indispensable, to the production process, a conscious cog, a cog which has its own motor, and which constantly tries to push itself harder and harder and to carry to a happy conclusion one of the premises of the construction of socialism- creating a sufficient quantity of consumer goods for the entire population.

And together with that, together with work which every day is fulfilling the task of creating new riches to distribute throughout the society, the man who works with that new attitude is perfecting himself.

Therefore, we say that voluntary work ought not to be viewed for the economic importance it has today for the state. Fundamentally, voluntary work is the factor that develops the conscience of the workers more than any other; and still more so when those workers carry out their work in places that are not habitual for them. Our administrative workers and technicians know the fields of Cuba and know the factories of our industry by having done voluntary work in them, at times under very difficult conditions. As a result of this, a new cohesion and comprehension is established between the two sectors, which the capitalist technique of production always keeps separate and in rivalry because it is part of the capitalist effort of constant division to keep a large army of unemployed, desperate people ready to fight for a crust of bread, despite all long term goals and at times despite all principles.

Voluntary work, then, is changed into a vehicle of union and of comprehension between our administrative workers and the manual workers. It is a way of preparing the road toward a new stage of our society, a new stage of society where classes will not exist, and therefore, where there will be no difference between a manual worker and an intellectual worker, between worker and peasant.

Speech to workers' rally, 15th. August 1964

I shall now attempt to define the individual, the actor in this strange and moving drama that is the building of socialism, in his twofold existence as a unique being and a member of the community.

I believe that the simplest approach is to recognise his unmade quality: he is an unfinished product. The flaws of the past are translated into the present in the individual consciousness and constant efforts must be made to eradicate them. The process is twofold: on the one hand society acts upon the individuals by means of direct and indirect education, while on the other hand the individual undergoes a conscious phase of self-education.

The new society in the process of formation has to compete very hard with the past. This makes itself felt not only on the individual consciousness, weighed down by the residues of an education and an upbringing systematically orientated toward the isolation of the individual, but also by the very nature of this transition period, with the persistence of commodity relations. The commodity is the economic cell of capitalist society: as long as it exists, its effects will make themselves felt in the organisation of production and therefore in man's consciousness. . . .

But the process is a conscious one: the individual receives the impact of the new social power and perceives that he is not completely adequate to it. Under the influence of the pressure implied in indirect education, he tries to adjust to a situation that he feels to be just and whose lack of development has kept him from doing it so far. He is educating himself.

We can see the new man who begins to emerge in this period of the building of socialism. His image is as yet unfinished. In fact it will never be finished, since the process advances parallel to the development of new economic forms. Discounting those whose lack of education makes them tend toward the solitary road, toward the satisfaction of their ambitions, there are others who, even within this new picture of over-all advances tend to march in isolation from the accompanying mass. What is important is that people become more aware every day of the need to incorporate themselves into society and of their own importance as motors of that society.

We have been greatly restrained by the fear that any formal aspect might make us lose sight of the ultimate and most important revolutionary aspiration: to see man freed from alienation.

Notwithstanding the lack of institutions, which must be overcome gradually, the masses now make history as a conscious group of individuals who struggle for the same cause. In spite of the apparent standardization of man in socialism, he is more complete; his possibilities for expressing himself and making himself heard in the social apparatus are infinitely greater, in spite of the lack of a perfect mechanism to do so.

It is still necessary to accentuate his conscious, individual and collective, participation in all the mechanisms of direction and production and associate it with the idea of the need for technical and ideological education, so that the individual will realize that these processes are closely interdependent and their advances are parallel. He will thus achieve total awareness of his social being, which is equivalent to his full realization as a human being, having broken the chains of alienation.

This will be translated concretely into the reappropriation of his nature through freed work and the expression of his own human condition in culture and art

It is clear that work still has coercive aspects even when it is voluntary: man has still not transformed all the coercion surrounding him into conditioned reflexes of a social nature, and in many cases he still produces under the pressure of the environment (Fidel calls this moral compulsion). He is still to achieve complete moral recreation in the presence of his own work, without the direct pressure of the social environment but bound to it by new habits. That will be communism.

The change in consciousness does not come about automatically, just as it does not come about automatically in the economy. The variations are slow and not rhythmic; there are periods of acceleration, others are measured and some even involve a retreat.

In the field of ideas that lead to non-productive activities it is easier to see the division between material and spiritual needs. For a long time man has been trying to free himself from alienation through culture and art. He dies daily in the eight or more hours during which he performs a commodity to resuscitate in his spiritual creation. But this remedy itself bears the germs of the same disease: he is a solitary being who seeks communion with nature. He defends his environment oppressed individuality and reacts to esthetic ideas as a unique being whose aspiration is to remain immaculate.

Let me say, with the risk of appearing ridiculous that the true revolutionary is guided by strong feelings of love. It is impossible to think of an authentic revolutionary without this quality. This is perhaps one of the great dramas of a leader; he must combine an impassioned spirit with a cold mind and make painful decisions without flinching. Our vanguard revolutionaries must idealize their love for the people, for the most hallowed causes, and make it one and indivisible. They cannot descend, with small doses of daily affection, to the terrain where ordinary men put their love into practice.

Our sacrifice is a conscious one: it is in payment for the freedom we are building.

The road is long and in part unknown; we are aware of our limitations. We will make the 21st. century man; we ourselves.

We will be tempered in daily actions, creating a new human being with a new technology.

The personality plays the role of mobilization and leadership insofar as it incarnates the highest virtues and aspirations of the people and does not become detoured.

The road is opened by the vanguard group, the best among the good, the party.

The basic raw material of our work is the youth: in it we place our hopes and we are preparing it to take the banner from our hands.

Extracts from "Man and Socialism in Cuba", written as a letter to Carlos Quijano, editor of the Uruguayan weekly "Marcha," in early 1965

CHE, MODEL OF THE NEW MAN

If we wish to express what we expect our revolutionary combatants, our militants, our men to be, we must say without hesitation: "Let them be like Che". If we wish to express what we want the men of future generations to be, we must say: "Let them be like Che". If we wish to say how we want our children to be educated, we must say without hesitation: "We want them to be educated in Che's spirit". If we want the model of a man who does not belong to our time, the model of the man who belongs to the future, I say from the depths of my heart that such a model, without a single stain on his conduct, without a single stain on his actions, is Che! If we wish to express what we want our children to be, we must say from our very hearts as ardent revolutionaries: "We want them to be like Che."

Che has become a model of what men should be, not only for our people but also for people everywhere in Latin America. Che carried to its highest expression revolutionary stoicism, the revolutionary spirit of sacrifice, revolutionary combativeness, the revolutionary spirit of work. Che brought the ideas of Marxism-Leninism to their freshest, purest, most revolutionary expression. No other man of our time has carried the spirit of proletarian internationalism to its highest possible level as Che did.

Eulogy delivered by Fidel at the Plaza de la Revolucion in memory of Che, on 18th October 1967

CHE, INCARNATION OF THE NEW MAN by Manuel Galich

When Guevara analyses for us the function of the individual in the first moments of the revolutionary war: the role, the importance and the purpose of the revolutionary vanguard with respect to the masses; the later incorporation of them into

the process; the vanguard's increasingly decisive function and the close relation - Guevara called it dialectical- between it and the leadership- in the case of Cuba, Fidel Castro - while he interprets perfectly the collective aspirations and a great many other aspects of the revolutionary development, he does it with the veracity and the authority of one who was one of the first commanders of the guerrillas, ideological orientator of the masses and the holder of the foremost responsibility in the government which assumed the task of rebuilding - we might almost say ex-novo- Cuban society. But also when he was formulating, through his critical speculations, about what is and what should be, the image of the new man and when it rises up splendid and magnificent, one realizes that one is facing a possibility, facing something which has become a reality already, not a utopia or a conception of the human being full of embellishments called "rights", only possible on the level of abstractions, like that which grew out of the liberal philosophy of the eighteenth century. And one thinks like this because the existence of Comandante Guevara was a constant ascent and uninterrupted exploration towards that perfection of the new man. In other words he was truly the incarnation of that image of humanity which rises out of the pages of "Man and Socialism in Cuba". Because Comandante Guevara, an exceptional man, never criticised what he had not previously done and did not put forward postulates which he did not exemplify immediately by his own actions.

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The image of the new man is what we have to reach, it is the goal towards which revolutionary society in transformation must move. But the point of departure is another and it cannot be otherwise: it is still the old society in the process of disappearing but what remains is tough. It is possible that the classes of that old society as such have been swept out; but it is impossible that there should not be human beings left whose concepts and values were inculcated in them in such a society or who received its inheritance. And here we are not dealing with the counter-revolutionaries, the conscious element which dreams of the return of the former regime with the desire to rescue its interests or simply because of some dogmatic distortion and incapacity to expose himself to any innovation. No. We are dealing with the opposite, with the same person who was a victim as an individual and as a member of a class in the old society, who precisely because of that lagged behind society as a whole which he cannot cease to consider as being the same as before: that force which he had to oppose in order to survive. We are dealing also with the one who accepts the change or, even more, incorporates himself into it with enthusiasm, with faith, with the greatest desire to be part of the transforming process, but on whom weigh, consciously or unconsciously, habits and inherited ideas which limit his actions and cloud his conception of the revolutionary act. It is that human element, "actor in the surprising and thrilling drama which is the building of socialism," which Comandante Guevara characterised as a "quality of incompleteness, an unfinished product."

In this, as in so many other things, one can see how the thinking of two revolutionaries coincide when they emanate from a superior kind of man who have gone through their respective revolutionary experiences. That is to say, how from these experiences, principles or theses can be derived which, in conjunction with their new doctrinaire validity, have another universal value. Thus, on the question of the point of departure in the construction of socialism "we can (and must) begin the construction of socialism not with an extraordinary human material nor with one specially created for us, but with that which capitalism left us as an inheritance. This is not to say that this will not be very difficult, but any other way of tackling the problem is so superficial that it is not worth talking about."*

Comandante Guevara, in defining the role of the individual in the building of socialism, said: "The new society taking shape has to compete very hard with the past. This makes itself felt not only in the individual consciousness, upon which weigh heavily the remains of an education systematically orientated towards the isolation of the individual but also through the very character of this period of transition, with the continuation of mercantile relations."

But this inescapable reality - the acceptance of the material from capitalism in order to undertake the construction of socialism - should not be misunderstood at the risk of committing a mistake against which Comandante Guevara warned: to persist in the delusion of bringing socialism about upon the same foundations, the "spent weapons," which capitalism has bequeathed to us, that is to say the commodity as the economic cell, profitability, individual material interest as a lever etc. Because all of that would keep society turning upon a dangerous principle: profit. Which is an indication that although there is talk of socialisation of the means of production, of the suppression of the exploitation of man by man, of the elimination of class privileges and of other real triumphs in the form of the social order, there remains in the consciousness of individuals that impulse capable of turning them imperceptibly towards capitalist attitudes. That is to say, the individual could be acting as a socialist but his consciousness will not yet be ready for the advent of communist society. In other words he will not be a new man.

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But while that complete liberation is being reached, while the new society is being brought about, while it is in the stage of transition from that which is decrepit to that of the future, it is necessary that a generation at least assumes the responsibility of that hard transition, difficult, full of sacrifices. "The individual of our country", says Guevara, "knows that the glorious time in which he has to live is one of sacrifice, a time in which the task of the revolutionary vanguard is by turns magnificent and anguishing." It is here where heroism starts to be characteristic of the revolutionary man. But in Guevara's conception heroism takes on a new dimension of permanence. He evokes with admiration the heroic deeds of his comrades of the Sierra Maestra, from the initial heroic time during which they rivalled each other to obtain a load of greater responsibility, of greater danger, without any other satisfaction than the fulfillment of their revolutionary duty. It is not necessary to say here that the most heroic in that confrontation about responsibility and danger was always Comandante Guevara himself. No one could have said it better or with more grandeur or with words which honour more the memory of the departed comrade than Comandante Fidel Castro.

That heroism is what Guevara wishes to see changed into a permanent virtue of the man of the future. He glimpsed that man when he saw the acts of heroism of the fighters of the Sierra Maestra and during the October crisis and in the days of hurricane Flora and on a thousand other occasions. "to discover the means of perpetuating in every day life that heroic attitude is one of our fundamental tasks from the ideological standpoint," he sums up. And it will be without doubt, the fundamental task of the whole revolutionary process in its stage of transition and while there has not vanished from the earth the

*V. I. Lenin, "Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder, Collected Works, Vol.3, Moscow

final imperialism, the final voracious capitalism : while the peoples in self-transformation might be seen as absorbed by the necessity for surviving , against armed aggression as much as against economic circumstances, the attempts at suffocation . Only upon the basis of an heroic decisiveness as an every day attitude will the revolution survive and bring itself to full realisation .

Extracts from article in "Casa de las Americas", No. 46, January-February 1968.

CHE GUEVARA' S SOCIALISM

by Ken Coates

What was it that Che believed, that made his actions so sure?

To understand this fully, it would be necessary to make a very thorough study, not only of the development of the Cuban Revolution, but of the growth of international socialist thought over the whole of the past half century. Socialism began as a movement for freedom, which means for the unlimited development of the individual personality, for the infinite extension of the capacity for self-realisation. If poverty and squalor appalled socialists, they were not merely interested in feeding the poor, and sweeping out the slums, vital they have always seen these two interim tasks to be. The real problem was to liberate the enormous, but stifled, ability and feeling of the poor, to enable them to choose to become what they had it in themselves to be. Mute, inglorious Miltons have been scythed down in their legions, not by the hand of nature, parsimonious with the genes of generous imagination; but by sheer, brutal social deprivation, by the continuous failure of capitalist society to open, for the majority of its citizens, even the smallest possibilities of insight into the enormous treasury of human culture which is their proper birthright

This appreciation went underground in the years of repression in the Soviet Union. Freedom became a recognition of the necessities of production, and booming pig-iron statistics replaced the ideals of the romantic socialist forebears as the justification for acts of public policy. Compassion was mangled in the pursuit of productivity. There were serious reasons for this development, and it was not simply a random triumph of philistinism: but however sound the reasons, the result was gruesome. Lenin's aphorism, "Freedom equals subjectivity", became translated into a harsh mockery, in which the goal "from each according to his ability, to each according to his need" was devalued to become "from each according to his ability, to each according to his work". Of course, in the first formula, each is his own arbiter of ability and need: subjectivity is the criterion. But in the second, "work" is something which is measured objectively, by men with clocks and weighing machines, and "ability" in such a context will also be carefully assessed, by a variety of "objective" tests and screens. One word has turned this classic statement of the socialist goal into its opposite.

Of course, we are speaking here of a goal: no one thinks that the equality of man, which implies the abolition of money and the overcoming of the division of labour itself, can be established in a day. But by establishing fixed "stages" of development to freedom, in which the first phase includes at its heart decidedly unfree institutions, the Russian pioneers fell into a deadly trap. True, there were voices in Russia which spoke against this at the time. But the plain truth is that you cannot educate men for freedom by exposing them to the control of unlimited authority: that you cannot create, as Fidel Castro has expressed it, "a new moral man" at the end of a long process of payments by results.

It is this truth which was first explicitly recovered by Che Guevara, in the famous debate on the Cuban economy, in which abundant advice had been offered by Soviet and other planning experts, that in order to plan, the Cubans must initiate a whole plethora of material incentives, a hierarchy of ranks of workers paid "according to their work". Che resisted this. While not denying the need for certain material incentives, he insisted on the primacy of moral incentives, on the need to avoid at all costs the growth of a commercially motivated "socialism" in which the market began to exert more and more distorting influences on economic decisions, displacing the human priorities which the Revolution had laboured to assert. In an underdeveloped country, the capacity for such distortion is far greater than it is in an advanced one: and our own permanent housing crisis, to say nothing of the starvation of our health service and the constant erosion of our public welfare, should convince us that the market is quite incapable of meeting human needs unless they have their own monetary underpinning. Private affluence and public squalor are infinitely more affluent and squalid respectively in the third world than they are in the metropolises. And to avoid the growth of the power of this market, as well as to prevent the undermining of the solidarity of the working people in a rat race for premiums, Che Guevara insisted that the Cubans should establish their own models for planning, in which moral commitments formed the firm core of the incentive system. As Fidel Castro expresses it today, "We are building socialism and communism at the same time". And if he is accused of heresy, he then replies, "Very well, then, we are heretics".

This heresy, which Che expresses so perfectly, is the beautiful heresy of humanism. It extends from denying the sovereignty of balance-sheets (although those who do this must always watch the enemy closely, or it will win) out through all the most crucial areas of social policy. Because his socialism is about freedom, Che Guevara can write, as he does in his coruscating essay "Socialism and Man", about the unfettered development of the creative arts in (not "alongside", still less "against") the revolution. And what Che says in this essay is what is practised in Cuba today. The avant-garde and the revolution, divorced since the twenties, embraced one another again in the Cuban Revolution.

Extract from an article written in "London Bulletin", No. 8, Feb.-March, 1969

THE NEW MAN IS TO BE FOUND IN VIETNAM

by Melba Hernandez

Member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba

The new man of whom Che spoke, the new man needed for the construction of a new, different society, is to be found in Vietnam. We are beginning to find, in Vietnam, the new man, the man of whom Che spoke, the man we aspire to in our Cuban Revolution, the man who must exist in the new world.

We begin to find this man through his attitude towards all tasks, towards his duties to his country. Young men and old men, women and children alike, the people in general, have a profound awareness of their duties, and this, in turn, is expressed very spontaneously in work combat and every other task. The women of North Vietnam fight shoulder to shoulder with the men, with equal courage and heroism, and they have scored victories as important as those of their male comrades. When we visited Uncle Ho the first thing he spoke about was the contribution made by the women of Vietnam. When we paid a visit to Prime Minister Pham Van Dong, the same thing happened. In every meeting the first thing that came up was the women's contribution to and participation in the struggle, the degrees of equality attained at this moment by the women in Vietnam.

Interview given to "Granma", 6th April 1969

THE NEW MAN - a Cuban Report

We hope to form the new man moulded to become one who is not easily moved by the physical need of being sold as merchandise. A man capable of acquiring the qualities of the man of the future without any of the blemishes of the past. One who puts forth all without expecting material retribution, guiding each one of his acts by the deepest feelings for the people and the oppressed of the world and by an eternal hatred for the oppressive and criminal enemy. A man that will never become stagnant in the fulfillment of the most important tasks on a local level, who will never forget internationalism and who will conceive it as an obligation and a necessity. Becoming a transformer of nature and of himself through free work, and through science and integral education, bringing forth his human conditions through authentic revolutionary culture and art. . . .

Cuba intellectuals have verified for themselves within their own social medium, during the course of the Revolution, how work is being reestablished as a man's first necessity, to behave humanely; and how there is a return to the essence of man, with work as his first necessity, a return to his urge for creation, and along with it to see in the new work, not a dehumanizing punishment but the most profound of his satisfactions.

Cuban intellectuals wish to deliver that vivid message to their world comrades, and in particular to the intellectuals of America, Asia and Africa, as an additional encouragement to the struggles for national liberation that are under way in the three continents, representing the reveille of the new society that the new man will create.

Cuban intellectuals have discovered that in social practice and in their contact with the workers and farmers during the activities of productive voluntary work, the transformation of a deformed backward economy into a scientifically directed and technically diversified one, not only generates great social motivation for the workers of all sectors that today constitute the beautiful cultural panorama of our country, towards studying and attaining cultural and scientific knowledge, but also creates the new structure and its consequent social relations impel deep transformations in the moral of the manual and intellectual workers, and acts as a base and pedestal for the formation of the new man, through an eliminating process of his essential differences, that in our youths constitute a massive phenomenon by means of the impressive educational plans that set up a relationship between study and work and between theory and social practice through experimentation and scientific research.

Moral is a concrete historically determined manner of social conscience, and therefore, has its roots in the beginning of society, as an instrument of the practical need of the standards of living together. The determination of what is good or bad, emerged then as a guarantee of the continuity of community development.

It is known that although the words moral and ethics have the same etymological meaning referring to customs, they do not reflect the same conceptual content. The spontaneous moral of the exploited classes is an objective moral, resulting from traditional customs as opposed to the elaborated moral of the dominant classes, to the ethics of subjective foundation during the process of development of antagonistic social classes.

This historical contradiction between moral and ethics finds its identification and unity in the society that we Cubans are building, once the exploitation of man by man has disappeared, and the highest humanist ethics in the new social relations have been enforced as an elaborated science objectively based on the formation of a complete man, and not as a pseudo-science at the service of the exploiting classes, and of imperialism that oppresses its own peoples and the nations enslaved by colonialism and neo-colonialism.

This new moral, enlightened by the ethics of the new society, determines that the moral factors should gradually become the main lever of the economic, social, and cultural development of our country, as against the individualist incentives that in the Cuban Revolution give way progressively to the conscientious transformation of nature, society and thought itself.

Extracts from the Cuban report to the Commission II of the Cultural Congress of Havana, January 1968

And we can certainly say, with complete assurance, that there is no person or thing on earth that can make this revolutionary process retreat! There will be nothing and no one that can hold back this revolutionary process! Because its strength stems not just from the number of men and women who defend it, from the mass of people who support it, from the formidable weapons which we have to fight with in a war, but basically from the degree to which it has taken root in the people's conscience, from the very high degree to which it has become the conscience of the people. And when a whole people takes up a cause, an idea, there is no force in the world capable of destroying it.

It is not the attitude of a nation of fanatics, it is not the attitude of a people accustomed to blindly taking orders, of people who do things because they are told to, because they are ordered to or because it is demanded of them. This is the attitude of people who really do things because they understand them, because they grasp them, because they want to do them.

No human society has yet reached communism. The ways along which a superior kind of society is reached are very difficult. A communist society means that man will have reached the highest degree of social awareness ever achieved; a communist society means that the human being will have been able to achieve the degree of understanding and brotherhood which man has sometimes achieved within the close circle of his family. To live in a communist society is to live in a real society of brothers; to live in a communist society is to live without selfishness, to live among the people and with the people, as if every one of our fellow citizens were really our brother.

Man comes from capitalism full of selfishness; man is educated under capitalism amidst the most vicious selfishness as an enemy of other men, as a wolf to other men.

If we agreed that man is an incorrigible individual, that man can only make progress through egoism, through selfishness; if we agreed that man is incapable of learning; if we agreed that man is incapable of developing his conscience - then we would have to say that the "brainy" economists were right, that the Revolution would be headed for defeat and that it would be fighting the laws of economics.

But the actual fact is that the history of this Revolution has furnished with many examples, repeated examples of the fact that those who were in error were those who did not believe in man, that those who made the mistake and failed were those who had no confidence in the peoples, who had no confidence in man's ability to attain and develop a revolutionary awareness.

In the past, those of us who proclaimed the revolutionary struggle, who proclaimed the need for a revolution, were told the same thing: that we were a bunch of dreamers and that we would fail. This was what the politicians, the "savants" of politics, the leaders of the traditional, bourgeois parties had to say. They did not believe in the people; they underestimated the people. They thought the people incapable of accomplishing anything. They thought of the people as an ignorant herd to be manipulated at their will. Those of you who are here today - specially those of you who are here as guests - and can take a good look at this enormous congregation of people which is the living expression of our Revolution's power, should not forget that only 15 years ago we were a small group of youngsters whom many considered dreamers, who had been told they would fail because it was impossible to make a revolution in a country only 90 miles from the United States, that it was impossible to make a revolution in a country of illiterate, ignorant people. And yet, what is it that we see today? What has been the result of the effort started 15 years ago by a small group of youngsters at that stage of our revolutionary history? How much has been accomplished by this people? How much has this unarmed people accomplished? How much has this people that they called ignorant, that they underestimated, that they considered lacking in every virtue, accomplished?

And the certitude that we felt yesterday is the same that we feel - stronger than ever - today when we assert that this people, that with its awareness, revolutionary spirit and firmness, has been able to win such difficult battles, will also win, and is already winning, the battle of the economy and will also win the battle to attain a higher form of society.

We have set forth some ideas, a few ideas in order to describe some of the things that are practically communist. I also explained that today it is materially impossible to do everything in a communist way.

The basic social services: education, health, housing, sports, all those services that contribute to the development of the people in all spheres - the Revolution provides them today in a communist manner; but most material goods are still not distributed in a communist way; there are still many inequalities. And one of the first battles of the march towards communism is to move progressively upward - I repeat, lessening income inequalities, moving toward income egalitarianism. This still does not mean communist distribution, but it will be a big step in the right direction of that form of communist distribution.

We made this, explanation thinking of the words of the students, how they said that the problem of payment is no longer discussed among the students. At first the students acted as teachers; they taught classes, and they received some payment; and the students progressively have been acquiring awareness, above all because many of them were scholarship students who received everything, and it made no sense that they who had received everything free, all that they needed to develop, should demand payment for giving a little of their efforts and knowledge to others. They have said that material incentives do not matter to them, that what does matter is the awareness of their duty, and that their behaviour is not motivated, nor will it be motivated, by money; their acts are motivated not by material incentives, but by their conscience and their sense of duty. Does this mean that they give up what they need? No, of course not. Give up food, clothing, all that they need? No. What they are giving up is the method, the procedure based on material incentives. With this they express their confidence in the future, their confidence in the possibility of a communist society, their confidence in a society where all work for all and receive all they need. They said they were not going to work by the clock, but that their workday would be dictated by their conscience. They stated very well that our country must emerge from underdevelopment; they expressed the idea that our people have to work very hard in these years - as much as they possibly can give or take a few hours. Some day - and that day will not be far off - at a surprisingly rapid pace, with the aid of technology, with the aid of machines, with the aid of chemistry, many of the hard jobs done by our people today will become unnecessary. In the not too distant future no one will have to cut cane with a machete, no one will have to weed a field with a hoe, no one will have to do those hard jobs that we have to do today while we don't have those machines, while we don't have that technology to win the battle of underdevelopment. Our students expressed here ideas of high moral worth by giving voice to those opinions, to those thoughts, by unfurling those banners: the idea that each person work according to his conscience and that work is

not an individual tool with which to earn one's living but is rather the tool of the whole of society, not the resources of an individual. An individual alone can do nothing, an individual alone is very little, but an individual integrated into the strength of society is everything.

They expressed the opinion that the Revolution will not use the tool of material incentives as the instrument for raising productivity, for raising the level of accomplishment. Of course this does not mean that in our society all citizens - not by any means - have reached these levels of conscience: there are many who have achieved this, but there are many who still have not done so.

What this means is that they express the conviction that every day the awareness of our people will become more developed in the direction of communist mentality and attitudes.

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This example shows us that without the development of political awareness we cannot act as Communists. If the old, selfish concept is maintained - the more I work, the more I earn - then, when such a man gets sick, society has to pay him less: when that man retires, society has to give him less. And on the basis of these concepts, of these incentives, man depends exclusively on himself, and society can do very little for him. A collective sense, a communist conscience, is not instilled.

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And we should not use money or wealth to create political awareness. We must use political awareness to create wealth. To offer a man more to do more than his duty is to buy his conscience with money. To give a man participation in more collective wealth because he does his duty and produces more and creates more for society is to turn political awareness into wealth.

As we said before, communism, certainly, cannot be established if we do not create abundant wealth. But the way to do this, in our opinion, is not by creating political awareness with money or with wealth, but by creating wealth with political awareness, and more and more collective wealth with more collective political awareness.

The road is not easy. The task is difficult, and many will criticize us. They will call us petty bourgeois, idealists: they will say we are dreamers: they will say we are bound to fail. And yet, facts will speak for us, realities will speak for us and our people will have the capacity to comprehend these roads and to follow these roads.

In the same way, some day we will all have to receive the same. Why? Some will ask: will a cane cutter earn as much as an engineer? Yes. Does that mean that an engineer will receive less? No. But some day a cane cutter - and I say cane cutter symbolically, because in the future we won't have any cane cutters - let us say, the driver of a harvest combine or a truck, will earn as much as an engineer today.

And why? The thing is clear, very logical. The Revolution has thousands of young students in the universities. The Revolution has thousands of young people studying abroad, dedicated to studying, to becoming engineers, chemists, specializing in different fields. Who pays for their expense? The people.

If the Revolution needs to send many young people to study in Europe and others in universities, all right: we ask them to study, and they do it in a disciplined way, but that doesn't mean they are privileged. It is important to the Revolution that they study, that they prepare themselves. But at the same time that thousands of our young people study abroad, thousands of others have to go into the fields to plant cane, to weed cane, to do very hard work. Within a few years there will be much more wealth in our country. The former will have finished three, five years of studies and will have become technicians, engineers: and the latter will have been working those years in the fields, and they will not become engineers, but they will develop our economy, they will be building the future of our country.

Under what concept and in what way would it be just for us to tell these young people after a few years, in a more prosperous country, in a country with much more wealth: you are earning one fourth of an engineer's wages? Would it be just, would it be basically just, that those whom the country called on not to go to the university but to work to win the battle of the economy to make the effort which at this time we cannot make with chemistry or with the machines which we not have, but must make with our hands, with our sweat - would it be just whenever the nation is able to enjoy the riches which they are creating now, for us to treat them as fourth- or fifth class citizens, entitled to receive from society an insignificant part of what in the future will be received by those who are in the universities, those who are studying abroad?

No. Not at all. Communist conscience means that in the future the wealth that we create through everybody's effort should be equally shared by all. That is communism: that is communist conscience. And there will not be a single honest citizen, there will not be a single head of a family, there will not be a single person in this country with human sensitivity who will not be able to understand how just this concept is which our people defend, which our Revolution proclaims and which our students have made their watchword.

Speech on 26th July 1968 from "Granma", July 28th 1968.

SPEECH BY CAPTAIN JORGE RISQUET, MINISTER OF LABOUR

Risquet pointed out that the most serious forms of lack of work discipline - absenteeism, not taking full advantage of the workday and not doing the work properly - were ever more frequent phenomena against which a many-sided struggle was necessary.

He explained how, while a vanguard with communist conscientiousness regarding work is developing, there still remains a "rear guard" that reflects the ideology of the capitalist past.

Risquet pointed out how the ranks of the working class have been swelled by thousands of people from the residual private sector; loafers and lumpen proletariat typical of capitalism, who are now forced to work; and exconvicts, who must all undergo a long process of reeducation before becoming conscientious workers. On the other hand, the ranks of the workers are also swelled by thousands of woman and young people who must acquire disciplined work habits and the conscientiousness of advanced workers.

"The heterogeneous makeup of the working class must be clearly understood so as to avoid becoming confused by a complex situation in which, as the number of centers winning Heroes del Moncada banners rises and as volunteer work, the development of the Advance Workers Movement and the renouncing of overtime pay - all indicating a growth of communist conscientiousness toward work - on the other hand, cases of absenteeism, negligence and not taking full advantage of the workday - which indicate the opposite and which are remnants of capitalist ideology in man's behaviour - spread and become more frequent."

In analyzing the ways to fight these negative manifestations, the Minister of Labor said that "The Labor Justice Law has become outdated, and it will be necessary to pass a new one.

"In the present Law," he added, "there are two sanctions which do not correspond to the present situation: monetary discount and suspension of employment and wages. Both are typical capitalist sanctions which no longer apply."

"Discounting wages is an economic sanction that is ineffective when applied to people with higher incomes than needed. When applied to people with limited income it hurts the domestic economy, and the children suffer through no fault of their own. Besides being ineffective, these sanctions do not help to form the new man, to take his mind off money or to eradicate the notion that one can buy one's way out of fulfilling a social duty."

"The temporary suspension of employment and wages is equally obsolete and hardful. It is condemning a worker to being idle, to being lazy - that is, to committing the worst of crimes - besides the harm it causes to the family of the worker. Even though they are legally in force, we will have to advise the organizations of labor justice to refrain from applying those sanctions."

Risquet added that "Temporary transfer and permanent severance are two sanctions that do remain in force and can be applied when the case requires."

"Permanent severance should be regulated in such a way that the day following its application the Regional Delegation of the Ministry of Labor should be notified so that it can immediately send the sanctioned worker to another work center, taking into consideration the skill, physical condition, residence, etc., of the worker, as well as the seriousness of the offense and the need for manpower in the region."

"But if we think that sanctions are the only way or the best way to combat these antisocial manifestations, we are wrong. Sanctions must be the last resort. Education and reeducation through collective criticism and the help of the other workers are the basic weapons in this struggle, which, by the way, will be a long one."

Risquet mentioned the Law on Work Records for each worker that the government is studying. "The merits and demerits of a worker will be entered in his record. Moral stimulus will be applied through the listing of work feats in the worker's record - the worker's history - and also, as a moral sanction, the record will show any serious offense committed by the worker.

"In a society based on merit there cannot be a more lasting moral stimulus or a stronger moral sanction than the maintenance of records which show the conduct, attitude and contribution of the worker regarding the common task."

"The capitalist society," he emphasized, "is based on the power of money; it is guided by the principle that a man is worth as much as he owns. A thief lucky enough to amass a fortune becomes an illustrious man and might even get to be President of the republic. Our society is based on merit, and the most precious things a man can amass are the merits in his record and the awareness of having fulfilled his duty and the tasks dictated by his generation, his homeland and his Revolution."

Speech at the closing of the National Plenary Meeting on Labour Laws, from Granma, August 17, 1969.

SPEECH BY ARMANDO HART

Today thousands and thousands of men are mobilizing for weeding the canefields in response to their revolutionary conscience. And today there are not enough men for weeding, not enough for agricultural work. On one occasion a certain imperialist agency said, to illustrate the failure of the Cuban Revolution, that the Cuban Revolution had not been able to resolve the problem of the cane cutting and that before the Revolution this had been resolved. This argument, used by the imperialist press, reflects, in fact, one of the Revolution's virtues.

Before, thousands and thousands of men stood in line in the canefields to get work as canecutters. There was a surplus of men for weeding the canefield. Today there are not enough.

It is of interest to the School of Humanities and of great importance to the Revolution to study and analyze these matters. Today the mechanisms of terror and hunger do not operate, but the entire previous society was based on these mechanisms and the organization of production was based on them.

The mills operated at a specified level of efficiency because if they didn't the workers would be dismissed and because the overseers in the canefields saw to it that the cane cutting was done correctly.

Today these mechanisms do not, and cannot, operate. Mechanisms have to be created which relate to a society of free people. And, what is more, technology, science and mechanization must be developed to help.

Absenteeism at work centers and the inadequacy of the agricultural work force are interesting subjects for study in many of the departments in the School of Humanities.

What social measures, what organizational measures, what political measures and even what judicial measures will have to be adopted to ensure high production in a society such as ours and how? This problem raises important questions for students and professors in the departments of sociology, political science, law and philosophy. If we set about to study these carefully we will be able to reach many interesting conclusions.

The study of social, educational and health problems of the people and the repercussions these have in men's lives all raise topics of absorbing interest for those who wish to study or to write. The study of present conditions as compared with previous conditions and with the history of our people raise interesting topics for history students.

Many of these topics and many of these confrontations with reality you will have to make yourselves in the next few months; you will have to face them, analyze them, study them and then you will be more closely linked with social practice, to concrete practice.

This would appear difficult, for example, in the field of law. I am going to give you a practical example to show that the link between this and the field of law are very real.

A few months ago, in a discussion with a group of comrades from a sugar mill in Camaguey, the matter of the very slack labor discipline there was raised. Someone said that severe measures had been taken against a chronic absentee and that, since then, he had set about to intrigue with the masses, claiming that an injustice had been committed. The Party comrades assured us that the measure was just because the comrade in question was a chronic absentee. I asked them how this measure was taken and they explained that the chief of personnel at the mill called him in and applied the measure. Afterwards the worker who was punished created a lot of trouble among the workers, many of whom also turned into absentees. I explained to them that if the chief of personnel calls him in and bureaucratically penalizes him without assembling all the workers and without assembling the Labor Council, the penalty has not served its educational function and the man in question could go and stir up trouble.

If, instead of using this procedure, all the workers had been assembled and the norms of work discipline and the struggle we are waging against absenteeism had been explained to them, then the measure would have originated from the workers as a whole, it would have become an educational tool and the man in question would not have been able to scheme or create anarchy or discontent. The moral of this is that any disciplinary measure which is not dictated by the workers themselves under the conditions of our society does not work. Under the previous society a disciplinary measure worked on a basis of terror and because of the power structure of that society. But in a liberated society, obviously, no notice is taken of the administrative official who passes the measure because these are free men and no rural police are going to come and arrest them.

By studying the problems which arise in these matters one may even arrive at theoretical analyses or carry out special studies aimed at proving and confirming the fundamental theses of the Cuban Revolution as to the roads to communism: what factors propel human productive activity, what encouragements increase human productive activity, how can one guarantee greater work efficiency, how can one ensure more efficient organization of production.

I would say that one of the essential factors under consideration here is the participation of the people in the discussion of work plans and in other matters requiring decisions. To the extent to which workers participate in the problems of their work centers, that they are taken into account in regard to difficulties that arise, said work center will be that much more productive. In certain agricultural projects and work centers where comrades with a high degree of political and ideological development have gone the workers have played a greater part in solving problems and more positive results have been achieved.

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The multiple reality of what is happening before our eyes, of what we are doing, of what the people are doing; the reactions and attitudes of men, the changes in men's attitudes, the reactions of thousands upon thousands of men, the reactions of thousands upon thousands of youths who leave the cities and go to work in the countryside, the reactions of thousands of workers willing to leave their factories or public service centers to go to work in the countryside in the 1970 harvest, the activities of those men, the willingness of those men; the problems created by those men when they leave their factory or public service center, the complex human and social situations and all those created by the impetuous development of the Revolution and which the Revolution itself is solving; that is, the impetuous advance of a people determined to overcome underdevelopment - isn't all this appropriate material for a rich literature? Isn't this appropriate material and fascinating subject matter for anybody who wants to write and create literature? Human imagination cannot be richer than actual, multiple, varied and infinite reality. Because that's the source of true literature! There you can find the true science of society. There you can make a real study of the psychology of men, of the attitudes of men and of the real new culture!

On one occasion I asked a group of comrades: The men who went with Che, were they free men or were they not free men? And the iron discipline that had to be imposed on them within the guerrilla movement, was it discipline or not? The decision to go was a decision of free men. But once in the guerrilla movement, based on confidence in Che, in Che's capabilities, in Che's genius, the discipline of those men was a strict discipline but it was a discipline of free men.

Let us not look upon discipline as something apart from the truly free man. It is necessary to establish disciplinary principles, principles of organization. Without these, no society can advance. Therefore the Party militants must accept discipline, a discipline based on these principles, based on confidence in the revolutionary leadership. And their opinions, their ideas, their judgments, will be passed on to the Party bodies in the proper form and manner. They will submit them to the revolutionary leadership and they will follow the revolutionary leadership and the Party leadership.

Speech on the introduction of the Party into the Faculty of Humanities, University of Havana, from Granma, September 28, 1969.

THE NEW MAN IN THE WEST INDIES

Andrew Salkey

Each and every one of us will pay, on demand, his part of the sacrifice, knowing that all together we are getting ever closer to the new man whose figure is beginning to appear.

Che

... now waking
making
making
with their
rhythms something torn
and new
Edward Brathwaite

If, indeed, Revolution is as Revolution does, then Cuba is doing her own a whole new world of good. Going by my West Indian view of the evidence of the ten years of its intense struggle and advance, the quintessence of the Cuban Revolution is its development of the new man and woman in the most attractive of all possible societies: a revolutionised people within a highly revolutionised Socialist State, constantly exploring and re-newing itself, as it moves along. In this regard, Cuba's people, their governing Party and the State are assuredly the only exemplary features of West Indian and Latin American social and political life, today.

Looking at the Cuban phenomenon from the West Indian neighbour's vantage (ironically my own Island home, Jamaica, and its uncaring ruling elite, more ruled from without than ruling, are ninety miles to the south of Oriente Province), it is easy to see the enviable differences between the two brother nations. Cuba has made a very courageous and necessary revolution, while, just across the water, the most immediate English-speaking neighbour and the others farther south have not, preferring the cautious, unsuitable, evolutionary process of gradual change into something else, somehow, some day, maybe.

What are Cuba's lessons for the rest of the West Indies? First, Cuba teaches that a Socialist revolution is desirable, and that it is made in the Area at great risk but with phenomenal benefits to the people concerned. Cuba also teaches that such a revolution, although seemingly diametrically opposed to the ebb and flow of the contemporary history of the region, must, of necessity, be root and rhythm of the people and the place in which it is made; and it is hoped that it will survive and burgeon, because of the will and the physical and moral efforts of the revolutionaries. Our Socialist revolutions throughout the West Indies, including Guyana, must be fashioned into natively West Indian and Caribbean phenomena of change. Cuba's example, further, shows us that the revolution is nothing if it is not people-centred, and, as such, the new man and the new woman are the only assets of the radical upheaval.

How do we recognise the new man in the revolutionised West Indies? The new West Indian is, in practice, the true evidence of change; he is the Revolution; he is the new citizen, because he is free to assume the burdensome responsibilities of self-sacrifice and self-determination; he is the revolutionary who will choose the moral incentive above the material one, at enormous loss to his former vanity and greed and with incalculable gain to his new well-being; and ultimately he is himself for the first time in his history, liberated, inventive and disciplined.

With the revolution, as Cuba continues to demonstrate, come all the possibilities, once concealed or frustrated, of initiative, inventiveness and imaginative daring. Education, for example, becomes a supremely creative challenge rather than a mere so-called revolutionary priority. Agriculture achieves the importance of a people's crusade, and ceases to be a joyless, class-antagonistic series of ministerial programmes, as it is throughout the Caribbean. All the intricate facets of the people's energies, dreams and achievements in industry, trade, housing, science, foreign affairs, and human relations are raised to the level of just, fruitful, broadly-based successes, in spite of the interim snags, belt-tightening, and dispiriting failures, together with the deprivations caused by the crushing outside political pressures.

Cuba's new people are determinedly, in every possible way, so far ahead of all the 'fortunate' nations and neo-colonies in the Anglophone West Indies that the gulf has assumed nightmare proportions. A quick look at the ignored Jamaican peasantry, or at the spiritually depleted urban proletariat is enough to make even the most uninvolved observer shudder at the inevitable comparison with the parallel Cuban condition. And all this, a matter of ninety miles away from the only credible West Indian example with which a young country like Jamaica, albeit with a foolish government, ought to be identifying and making things over into its own image, according to the Island's needs and future.

One's final set of questions has to be directed to the view which the Cubans, themselves, take of their new man and new woman. Who are they? How were they introduced into the revolutionised society? What is their destiny, and Cuba's?

At the Cultural Congress of Havana in 1968, Commission Two uttered the following statement as a part of its resolution concerning 'The Integral Growth of Man': "The rise and development of the new man in our underdeveloped world cannot be conceived without the earlier total liberation of the people of that world, or without the profound structural changes of the economic and social features which such a liberation must contain implicitly. In a society, bound by the considerations of class and caste, and one in which the exploitation of man by man prevails, it is simply not possible to realise the rise and development of a complete man, because the regime of the status quo makes impossible the existence of the conditions in which this new man is able to fulfil himself completely."

The Commission I attended stressed the fact that the new man in Cuba, throughout the West Indies, Latin America, Africa, Asia and elsewhere is that man who possesses an acute social and political awareness, who feels a deep love for his country and for the mass of humanity, and who will go so far as to prove his pledge to the Revolution, at home and abroad, by his fundamental understanding of the principles of internationalism within the Third World, and, above all, by his total withdrawal from the incompatible tradition of material incentives.

For me, and indeed, for most of the delegates in my Commission, and for the West Indies I care about and hope to see emerge, free, sovereign and productive, any society in Revolution, one such as Cuba's, with its Socialist re-construction, is a self-liberating unit in which the new man must be a critic of himself as well as a vigorous contributor to his new and just and shared society; the new society, with the new people in the mass vanguard, should strive to achieve an internal coherence of ideology; and, of course, for the new socialists, in a continuing Revolution, as Cuba's struggle has reflected, the reserve of energy required to launch the new society, in the face of internal and external opposition, should come from the people's own transformation and social recovery, and from their trust in the profound power and scope of the true Revolution which they have made, not so much for themselves as for all deprived and suffering humanity.

Very nearly all I've been attempting to say about the new man in the West Indies may be summed up, accurately and with impact, in the following words of the Cuban writer, Onelio Jorge Cardoso: "We were resolved that we all needed a positive, protective, dynamic political awareness, a thorough grasp of the meaning of social justice, a new dignity, and a new Cuba, which was another way of saying that what we most needed was a revolutionary consciousness."

And so, the possibility of the new man in the West Indies became a working, transforming reality. His memorable date of birth was 1959.

AIE CUBA! AIE CUBA!

Arnold Wesker.

Cuba is like one enormous kibbutz and Fidel Castro very like a Jewish prophet. Listen to Isaiah (33.14.)

'Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire?
Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?
He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly;
He that despiseth the gain of oppressions,
That shaketh his hands from holding of bribes,
That stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood,
And shutteth his eyes from looking upon evil;
He shall dwell on high;
His place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks;
His bread shall be given, his waters shall be sure.

Listen to Fidel (April 9th 1968)

"Who would dare feel that he has the right over the people? What moral position can be maintained before the people by those who never gave anything - who shed no blood, who made no sacrifice or effort - who lived and had everything without giving anything in return and who, after the triumph of the Revolution, still refused to give anything and only wanted to live off the sweat of the people, off the sacrifices of the people? What authority, what moral rights, can a privileged person have over those who gave everything in the past and are giving everything in the present? This is what gives authority, moral rights and strength to the Revolution to face the most difficult tasks..."

Living in England, an enfeebled country that is neither making history nor affecting it, it is difficult to remember that history is the graph of failure and achievement man leaves behind of his efforts to find the most just society. Ask in the streets if the people care about a just society and, aside from the level of justly being allowed to think (though not always act) what he likes, he will not be sure what you are talking about. And so, experiencing Cuba is a shock because she is making history and one realises that Europe, indeed most of the world, is filled with grey, political leaders who are either pathetic - as in England, or dangerous - as in the United States.

Cuba has made a revolution and is like a young and beautiful girl growing up; constantly looking at herself, amazed at her features, what she can do, eager to please, daily making embarrassing mistakes and overflowing with both arrogance and generosity. She is hungry for compliments and chatters all the time about what she's done and what she will do when she grows up.

"If, in these hard years, the people have put forth the effort they have, what won't this people be able to do when, starting in 1970, this food production will be firmly established?... what won't they be able to do? For us, who have lived through these years - who have lived through each year, each month, each week, each day, each hour ... when we were a handful of men in mountains we were unfamiliar with ... who have lived ... through each minute of this experience, we are in a position to soberly appreciate and see how this people has transformed itself; we can see that a people has grown up today which our enemies would not even be able to recognise." (Fidel, April 9th, 1968).

When you criticise her she's startled, momentarily hurt, but soon recovers with explanations and promises to change and you vaguely feel you are to blame for having offered the criticism in the first place. When tired old men meet her they resent her and want only to point out how life is not as beautiful as she imagines, how one day all her plans will turn to ashes and the evil of the world overcome her. They are cynical, unbelieving, sour or at best tolerantly patronizing. Coming to Cuba from Europe we come as tired old men for we cannot any longer believe it is possible to create conditions in which the greatest justice and the pursuit of happiness are possible; we have even lost the appetite for its desirability and so have no vision of a 'new man'.

In Cuba they talk only about what Che Guevara called the 'new man' who will be for them, simply, the man whose personal and social incentives will be moral rather than material. Man will work not because his pay will increase but because his fulfillment as a human being is complete in knowing the degree to which he has contributed to the well being of his society; and this fulfillment will affect his personal relationships with his neighbour, making them richer; it will affect his need and capacity for education and the enjoyment of art, making them natural and inevitable. (It's questionable whether he should be called the 'new man' rather than the 'real man' - but I'll discuss this later.) Reporting such ideas in an English magazine in 1968 must cause boredom, cynicism and even some embarrassment; that is why Cuba is a shock and we can't believe our eyes; they are actually looking at the acquisitive and competitive nature of man as we have believed it must always be and saying: he is like this only from centuries of conditioning and we are now going to completely change that conditioning.

"...and it is clear that capitalism has to be pulled out by the roots. We cannot encourage or even permit selfish attitudes among men if we don't want man to be guided by the instinct of selfishness, or individuality; by the wolf, the beast instinct; man as the enemy of man, the exploiter of man, the setter of snares for other men. The concept of socialism and communism, the concept of a higher society, implies a man devoid of those feelings; a man who has overcome such instincts at any cost; placing above everything his sense of solidarity and brotherhood among men. And this brings to mind the famous topic of incentives. For a long time they were theoretically discussed, and it appeared to be a question of method, but, in our opinion, it is a much more profound question. And we don't feel that the communist man can be developed by encouraging man's ambition, man's individualism, man's individual desires. If we are going to fail because we believe in man's ability, in his ability to improve, then we will fail, but we will never renounce our faith in mankind..." (Fidel March 13 1968).

Such social experiments have been tried before by isolated, utopian communities in the States and by the kibbutz movement in Israel, but never on a national scale and so thoroughly. It could not happen in Russia or China because there were too many millions to cope with; but the most important factor about the Cuban revolution is that it took place in a country of only 7 million - two thirds the population of London. It was a 'family' situation. Fidel could gather everybody around him at the same time and say: look, all this is ours now; the problems are to make it work as efficiently as the past

owners while at the same time educating ourselves in such a way that will change our very natures; now, you do this and you do that and tomorrow I'll tell you each how the other is doing and what mistakes were're making. It was easier to relate everyone's efforts, engage, inform and inspire them together; to call, for example, on artists to help cut sugar can and plant coffee, or send students to the mountains to teach the peasants to read and write. Fidel used to talk to the people for up to eight hours at a stretch - they'd been kept in ignorance for so long that there was a great deal to tell them and not much time to waste.

Of course it is not possible here to discuss in depth the enormous problems such ambitions produce, nor to question all their statements and assumptions; such as what does Castro mean by 'man's individualism' which he 'doesn't want to encourage'? Is he referring to the individualism that thrives at the expense of others or does he refer to that unique spark that is in every man and which contribute's to the world's rich diversity? Of course I've loaded my distinctions and hope that he is talking only about the former. And how do you produce a 'new man' if, as Guevara once urged, in order to wrestle power into his own hands and retain it that 'new man' must fill himself with the old-fashioned human emotion: hatred. Of course Guevara needs to be understood at a much more complex and subtle level than that but both he and Castro should not have used words and ideas as loosely as this because they are leaders of men addressing oppressed peoples who have not the time or ability to work out the sophisticated meanings of such language. And this conflict between shortage of time and the need not to over simplify problems points to another aspect of the complex nature of the Cuban revolution - all revolution in fact. But though this article cannot deal with such complexities, nevertheless the first part offers a brief historical account, the second part reports on the Cultural Congress of Habana, and the third part attempts random observations. And from all this it is hoped to evoke something of the spirit and shape of this unique and romantic revolution.

Part one - history

On the 26th July 1953, 125 young men led by Fidel Castro, a lawyer, attacked the Moncada barracks at Santiago de Cuba in an attempt to establish a base from which to carry out a revolution. The revolution would rid them of a cruel and corrupt general called Batista and of economic dependence on the United States; it would enable them to establish a new constitution involving all those many socialist principles and reforms. The attack failed and Castro was brought to trial. At the trial he pleaded his own defence - now published as a book entitled 'History will absolve me' - but he was sentenced to thirty years imprisonment. He was 26 years old.

In 1955, having served 2 years, he was freed under an amnesty and left for Mexico. After raising funds in the United States he gathered 82 men and left from Mexico in a boat called Granma armed with small weapons and landed at Las Colorados in Oriente province. Because they were betrayed and were bad navigators (complicated by being bad seaman - they suffered dire sea sickness) they were involved, on landing, in a tragic battle with Batista's men. Only twelve survived and they escaped to the Sierra Maestra mountains where they became the nucleus of the rebel army. Guerilla warfare began, the army grew and in January 1959 Batista was defeated, fled the country taking millions of dollars with him and left Fidel Castro to establish the first revolutionary government. He was just 32 years old.

My insistence on remembering his age is not to sensationalise what took place but to draw the conclusion that his youth and that of his comrades, who after fighting the battles then had to take over the tasks of ministers, is responsible for all the colourfulness and idealism of the Cuban revolution; and that this idealism is so infectious that its making Castro and the tiny island of Cuba the focal point not only for the hopes and aspirations of the under-developed countries (who are roughly two thirds of the world) but also for Europe's artists, intellectuals and perhaps, soon, for Europe's tired and despondent younger political leaders. One thing is certain, and that is that the success of Cuba's revolution and the personalities and words of its leaders can be directly linked with the confident revolts running through Europe's students. Their claim to share in the shaping of their own education is inspired by the proclamations of Fidel and Che claiming Cuba's right to shape its own destiny outside the control of major powers.

"...unfortunately, we cannot eliminate money at this stage as an instrument of distribution, but we must cut off at least unlimited access to and any privilege connected with money. At present we still cannot eliminate money but, some day, if we are to reach communism, we will do so. There are thousands of people here, tens of thousands, who do not, even now, use money: they are the scholarship students. Of course money is still a means of obtaining many things...because there are not enough of each of those things and money serves as a means of distribution, but it is a bitter instrument, a transitory instrument, the elimination of which we should set as a goal. I know perfectly well what saving some of these things will cost, and how some outdated academicians devoid of revolutionary sensitivity, some great-grandchildren of revolutionaries, will call us idealists, will say we propose idealistic, unfeasible things...but...the rule of money, the corruption it causes is the instrument standing between man and the goods he creates..." (Fidel March 13 1968).

A speech made this year and he is still only 40 years old.

So the country seethes with activity, from experiments in communities without money to round-the-clock working to design a cane harvesting combine which, when perfected, will release hundreds of thousands of workers for Cuba's ambitiously conceived agricultural plans; from creating an island run by and for young people - the Isle of Pines - to inaugurating the first ever international protest song festival. Cuba is the kind of country where the purchase of a prize bull for 250,000 dollars from Canada to enable them to produce, as never before in their history, their own livestock, is a national event. In late 1960 the universities were told to close so that students could go out into the cities and mountains to teach everyone to read and write. The miracle took one year to accomplish; by the end of 1961 Cuba reported to the United Nations that every Cuban was literate - and invitations were issued that foreigners might come to see for themselves. They've made sport free and plan to make art free. Local telephone calls cost nothing and for 4d you can travel from one end of the huge city of Habana to the other. Most of the time eggs are given away and often fish. In June, 1962, after three meetings with Cuba's intelligensia, Castro put most of the artists and intellectuals at ease with his famous 'Words to the Intellectuals'.

"The Revolution...should therefore act in such a manner that the whole group of artists and intellectuals who are not genuinely revolutionaries can find within the revolution a place to work and create, a place where their creative spirit, even though they are not revolutionary writers and artists, has the opportunity and freedom to be expressed. This means: with the revolution, everything; against the revolution, nothing. Against the revolution, nothing, because the Revolution has the right to exist. Inasmuch as the Revolution understands the interests of

the people, of the whole nation, no one can justly claim a right in opposition to the Revolution..."

Even their mistakes are impressive for the youthful spirit motivating them, as when they decided to abandon the sugar cane as an industry because it symbolised the poverty and hardship of the Cuban people. But Cuba's economy had rested on sugar and such hasty idealism brought them near to bankruptcy forcing them to return to the hated crop; as when they nationalised too quickly so that the best technicians fled before the new Cuba could train her own generation of technicians. And, to complicate everything, the United States, frightened of losing its economic grip on Latin America if Cuba survived and showed the way to independence, began its blockade which crippled them materially and created intellectual isolation. The shops are empty and sad and consumer goods scarce. Meat, butter, coffee, clothes and petrol are rationed; the cars - ninety per cent American - are falling to pieces from lack of spare parts; foreign firms trading with Cuba are blacklisted by the States.

But some British firms (with government blessing) ignore this and so Leyland buses and trucks dominate Cuba's roads. We've also just negotiated a deal for a multi-million pound fertiliser plant and recently bought 250 tons of Cuban beef. Russia, it is said, subsidises Cuba at the rate of \$1 million a day - mainly in oil - and without it Cuba would collapse. But even their own quest for oil is on and they are looking for the oil vein running, they say, from Venezuela which the American experts, who did not leave charts behind, had almost found.

But Russian aid does not prevent Castro from pursuing his own vision and in the speech to the delegates of the Cultural Congress he speaks with a fresh and youthful voice:

"...there cannot be anything more anti-Marxist than dogma, there cannot be anything more anti-Marxist than the petrification of ideas. And there are ideas which are used on behalf of Marxism which even look like genuine fossils..."

and the left wing artists and intellectuals from 70 different countries, many of whom are weary of left wing dogmas, rise to their feet as Castro confirms at last what they've always wanted to believe: that real communism and free intellectual enquiry are not merely compatible but essential to each other. And so Russia is embarrassed for in the same speech he questions her dogmas and still claims the right to call himself a communist:

"...No one can say that he possesses the whole truth; no one can declare today in the midst of all the complexity of the world that he has the whole truth. We have our truths here...but we never intended to be masters, we have never intended to be monopolisers of revolutionary truth..."

But the hand that fed them was really bitten when Guevara presumed to teach Russia elementary truths of socialist economics. Addressing the Afro-Asian economic seminar in 1965 he suggested that Socialist countries were applying the values of a Capitalist world market when trading with underdeveloped countries. His solution was simple:

"The development of the countries now starting on the road to liberation must be at the cost of the Socialist countries...Socialism cannot exist without a change in conscience provoking a new fraternal attitude toward humanity, as much in the character of the individual in the society which is building or has built socialism, as in the world-wide attitude toward all peoples suffering from imperialist oppression. We believe the responsibility for aiding dependent countries should be approached in such a spirit, and there should be no more talk about developing 'for mutual benefit trade based on prices' imposed upon the underdeveloped countries by the law of values, and on international relations of unequal exchange brought about by that law of values. How can one call 'mutual benefit' the selling, at world market prices, of raw materials costing limitless toil and sacrifices to buy manufactured goods produced in large present-day automated factories?...Socialist countries have the moral duty of liquidating their tacit complicity with the exploiter countries of the West..."

A price is paid for such independence, aid has decreased; but despite the hardship that follows from a refusal to do what others want, the majority of Cubans feel with Fidel a need for independent dignity. He is slowly shaping a people who are learning how to cherish and not be embarrassed to hold certain values as sacred; and this induces a spirit of humility and respect, not only towards countries involved in a fight for independence, such as Vietnam, but also towards each other; the Cuban under blockade is like the Londoner during the blitz - communism seems to sit easily on his affectionate temperament; the disciplines of revolutions are softened. And the United States is frightened because Cuba proves their one excuse for armed intervention in Vietnam as false - namely that the west must protect itself against communism because it denies intellectual and spiritual freedom. This is why Cuba must be viewed and discussed in fresh terms - their position is unique and courageous.

There is the story of a Jew born in Russia who, when the revolution came, fled to China; when the revolution came to China he fled to Cuba and when the revolution came to Cuba he was so weary he decided to settle down and study Marxism on the assumption that there must be something in it.

One last example of the 'family' tone of the dialogue between Fidel and the people, again from the April 9th speech: "In those early days could we say, in truth, that we knew what a revolution was?...how many were there...no one could understand that a revolution did not mean that the people would simply enter an era of wealth, but that it meant they would begin to create that wealth...How could the Revolution raise the sugar cane worker's standard of living to that of a bank employee? It couldn't be done. What could the Revolution, faced with an underdeveloped economy, provide for the millions of hungry or undernourished people?...many who could not understand what the Revolution was all about began to work less than they had before, began to work seven, six, five, four hours a day. The tendency in the early days of the Revolution was for efforts not to increase but to fall off. And this is something that anyone can understand...When our country is developed...distribution of wealth will be equitable...but in order to distribute something...you must first have something to distribute..."

And if any Cuban still does not like this revolution he can emigrate, though the flow outwards is a slow one.

All this is brief and impressionistic; there is much else that is moving and much that is disturbing and debatable; but before I ask questions and make observations let me describe the Cultural Congress of Habana.

Part two-the congress

In recent years a new name has been given to and taken up by populations located in the continents of Latin America, Asia and Africa: the THIRD WORLD. They live in countries which are colonies fighting for independence; or were recently someone's colony but have entered independence crippled by vast, inherited economic problems; or which have independence but whose local political leaders have taken over the values of the old colonial administration thus creating a

neo-colonialism. The 'first world' is the technically advanced and materially rich U.S., U.K., British Commonwealth and Western Europe all of whom run the competitive economy we call capitalism; the 'second world' is Russia and Eastern Europe, also technically advanced, but who run a so-called co-operative economy we call socialism. The statistics from the United Nations are almost unbelievable - they reflect such criminal inequality: the 'third world' occupies 64% of the world's land and contains 72% of the world's population but they only share 11% of the world's income, while America and Western Europe with only 22% of the world's population enjoys 73% of the world's income. Whether they actually produce the 73% they enjoy I don't know, neither is that the point since a moral issue arises from the fact that a minority have access to far more than they need and a majority have access to less and in many cases nothing; and, further, questions arise such as: do 72% of the population even have the opportunity to produce more for themselves? And who was responsible for their history during which, we must conclude, they were not allowed or encouraged or taught to produce for themselves? So that one of the most painful issues for the next 20 years will be the issue of the have-nots demanding their right to share in more of the world's opportunities. The Cultural Congress of Habana in 1968 was an attempt to bring artists and intellectuals together from all over the world in order that they should learn the facts, attempt to discover what their attitude should be to those facts and decide what they could do.

Approximately 500 writers, painters, scientists, economists - artists and intellectuals of all kinds - were invited from 70 different countries to be the guests of Cuba and attend a congress to discuss five main issues. They came from the United States and Mongolia, from Japan and Columbia. It was a massive feat of organisation, a moving manifestation of the kind of universal hope and trust many artists and intellectuals place in Castro and the Cuban revolution and a unique opportunity for some of the century's best minds and talents to meet in private. As such it was a great success. In all else the congress fell flat on its face. There were too many people and the Cubans were not selective enough; the result was that the wrong people said much that was inconsequential. Paper after paper was read in a dead, 50-year-old left wing jargon which betrayed attachment to the very ideas Castro was to describe later as 'genuine fossils', and which revealed vast deserts of intellectual laziness and dishonesty such as I will hint at later. Then, as a congress of intelligentsia gathered for their express ability to face the truth with courage and honesty - to say nothing of subtlety - it was a non-starter; for despite Castro's independent and imaginative thinking on so many other issues he did not have the courage to face Arab hurt pride and invite delegates from Israel - the only country not called to participate. The logic is totally incomprehensible to me. They invited delegates, most of whom were Jewish anyway, from the United States without fearing to offend the North and South Vietnamese delegates; but Israel, a country whose foundations were built upon communist settlements hundreds of which still exist and which could have sent delegates able to contribute to the dialogue from a unique experience, were left out for fear of offending the Arabs - most of whom spent their time trying to convince the congress that their greatest enemy was world Zionism and their great danger the Zionist conspiracy. A congress concerned with unfair distribution of the world's wealth snubbing the Jews for defending a tiny land area when the Arabs possess such vast - unused - territories, immediately rendered the honesty and courage of such a congress suspect; though it must be said in favour of the Cuban organisers that they became very bored with the Arab's persistent attempts to detract from the major issues of the commissions and patiently argued them out of their positions.

The congress was organised in this way: a number of very good discussions were held by Cuban artists and intellectuals to decide what should be the lines along which the congress should run; many say these discussions were of a higher quality than those of the congress; and they decided to divide the gathering into five working sessions to discuss:

1. Culture and National independence.
2. The integral growth of man.
3. The responsibility of intellectuals with respect to the problems of the underdeveloped world.
4. Culture and Mass Media.
5. Problems of artistic creation and of scientific and technical work.

The titles were foreboding; what could possibly happen? It was possible to hear a paper begin in commission one, find it continuing in commissions two, three and four and arrive in time to hear the end in commission five. Delegates were giving the same speech containing attacks on American vulgarity and violence, calling for the abolition of bourgeoisie culture, lamenting their country's cultural penetration by U.S. which caused the destruction of their own cultures, but in such generalities and over-simplifications that the validity their arguments had was lost as delegates competed with each other to utter the greatest number of easily recognisable clichés. No one made distinctions between culture and art, between artist and intellectual; no one asked what was the bourgeoisie art they wanted to reject. Picasso? Da Vinci? Shakespeare? Dante? Tolstoy? Proust? Cervantes? And no one paused to ask how 'new' the art of the 'new man' could be since surely he would be confronted by the same basic passions as all men at all times - love, sadness, joy, confusion, awe, fear? And no one excepting a man called Orsini from Italy paused to question the mystique of the 'third world' and suggest that the third world existed in the west also. If it can be accepted, as I suggested in the beginning, that a way of looking at the history of man is as a story charting his efforts to find an economically just society within which the pursuit of happiness and personal fulfilment can best take place, then surely the only true division is not simply between those who have and those who have not but between those who enjoy and who do not, those who are fulfilled and those who are unfulfilled? That the three continents of Latin America, Asia and Africa contain the majority of those who have not and enjoy not shouldn't blind us to the fact that it's not so long ago - in my life time in fact - that the rest of the world also had not and enjoyed not and still, today, share with the 'third world' a majority who remain unfulfilled.

Neither did anyone question the temptingly phrased concept of 'the new man'. What 'new man'? Surely there is and only ever was - man? And it's because we have glimpsed at him, seen hints of him and guessed at his potential that we persist in trying to create new societies where his true nature can emerge, can be revealed. Revealing is the operative word. There can be no 'new man' only the slow revealing of what man was always intended to be. Such a distinction is necessary because in the name of the 'new man' congress delegates were being asked to destroy and dismiss so much; but care must be paid lest the seductive idea of a 'new man' leads to the wanton damaging of that which we could not see was the most tender and vulnerable in him. He's a pearl covered by old sands, one must gently clear away in order to reveal, as one carefully removes rubble to reveal the child bombed in a Vietnam village; more explosions won't help her surface - the child is there, revolution means revelation not only more destruction. But no one said such things at the congress.

Perhaps the most significant points made were to do with the infiltration of American attitudes and values into the alien cultures of underdeveloped - and unprotected - countries, and the draining off from these countries of their doctors, professors and technicians who, like their British counterparts (though how much more so) find the financial attractions of the U.S. irresistible, and thus leave Puerto Rico, Columbia, Guatemala and countless other third world countries with insufficient medical, educational or administrative manpower. Otherwise, attending the sessions was a depressing ex-

perience when in fact it could have been a congress to start cultural guerilla warfare the world over. Castro's speech, on the final day, echoed this failure. I still consider him the most dynamic and inspiring political leader alive in the world today, but at this congress he missed his most golden opportunity to revitalise the cream of the world's artists and intellectuals (even though they were not all there they were listening). It was a three hour speech which contained 30 minutes of any value and although he thanked us in what I believe was an honest spirit yet he had played a most extraordinary trick on us, perhaps even despite himself. It was this:

One of the big debates raging through congress corridors was on the need for intellectuals to be men of action. It is of course, a sterile discussion because it is irrefutable that men of letters and ideas have, contributed to the changing of society as surely as any bloody revolution. Still, artists and intellectuals being usually modest and humble men (they are only arrogant before fools) are always prepared to accept guilt for what they are told is inaction and believe in their own ineffectuality, so that tremors of defensiveness - born of many years conditioning by political bullies - are always present among such delegates and Fidel played on this defensive twitch, suggesting that history is always placing its cautious eyes on us as though you could never rely on the artist; condescendingly listing our good and bad behaviours and giving us marks out of ten, saying where we'd done well and where not, playing God to existence. And when he gave us top marks we were so delighted that we stood up to applaud him for having recognised and praised our endeavours as though our bravery was a surprise even to ourselves.

"What really called our attention (to the October missile crises) was the fact that when peace was really in danger, that when the world was really on the brink of a nuclear war, we did not see in Europe - and it was to be expected that war would also break out in Europe...we did not see any big mass mobilisations. And the fact is that if there were any, we never heard about them...and if it is a false impression we would deeply appreciate that this false impression be dispelled from our minds...Where were the vanguards? Where were the revolutionary vanguards?..."

We got no marks out of ten for that issue though the Italian delegation at once wrote to Fidel to inform him that they had organised protest in Italy and - a flamboyant characteristic of his - he called them to meet him just as they were boarding the plane to return home. However we were patted on the back a few minutes later:

"But we have a very recent example...which touches us very closely, and that was the death of the heroic comrade Ernesto Guevara. It will be difficult to find a revolutionary more pure than him...more exemplary...Yet, who were the ones who raised his flag? Who were the ones who lifted and exalted his example? Who were the ones who mobilised themselves, painted signs and organised demonstrations all over Europe? On what sector did the death of Che Guevara make the deepest impact? It was precisely among the intellectual workers...not in the organisations, not in the parties..."

All this so hypnotised us that we forgot it has always been the poet, the artist, the intellectual who has dreamt of and fought for a more just and beautiful society and that it has always been the politician and statesman who has betrayed us and that it should be us who say to Fidel that he has done well and that we approve and that we hope he will not change as so many statesmen before him have done. Let Fidel recall how he constantly reminds us that it was a Cuban poet - Jose Marti - who inspired this present Cuban revolution and who died in the abortive Cuban war of independence in 1895. Where were the politicians and the people's leaders then? And when they did come they sold their independence to the United States. The politician always does a hundred years later what the poet has told him should have been done a hundred years before; and therefore Fidel ought to pause, constantly, and ask himself is there not a poet in Cuba telling him something today which he is ignoring but which, after much misery, some people's leader will recognise and hold up banners for in a hundred years time? Yet the final words of that speech are faintly reassuring even if they seem like belated afterthoughts.

"And for us, it is unnecessary to say that your presence among us has been a very high honour. We hope that our people have expressed to you in a thousand ways their warmth, their gratitude and their sympathy. It has been a great honour that you have shared these days with us - you, men and women of value, of prestige, whose masterpieces, who works are much better known than you yourselves can possibly imagine. And we shall always remember this great honour...Many thanks to you all. And you can be certain that this effort towards progress in all fields, in that of economy, in that of culture, in that of the revolutionary struggle...will not cease, and that our Revolution will not betray the confidence and the hopes that you may entrust to it. Patria o muerte! Venceremos!"

Part three - the questions

Many questions now emerge, some of which I am not in the least qualified to answer; is Cuba acting responsibly or not by encouraging similar guerilla activity in other Latin American countries where the same 'family' situation does not exist and, even more relevant, who are not as advanced or rich in industrial experience as Cuba was, due to U.S. investment? Is she not like the brilliant enfant terrible who is innocently rushing about telling her friends how easy it is if only they tried and thus raising hopes which can never, in this way, be fulfilled? I'm not sure; I only know that many left wing elements in Latin America are asking Russia to force Castro out of his policies because, they say, he's undermining their patiently built political organisations based on non-violence. Castro's reply to his left wing critics - mainly old-style communists - is that they've been patient too long, have achieved nothing and are encouraging the status quo by giving the ruling elites the opportunity to claim democracy by pointing to their existence. Yet again some of the delegates from Chile spoke to me with distaste and laughter at the idea of guerilla warfare in their country. It would be like trying to overthrow a Tory government by attacking and trying to capture the Welsh mines from hideouts in the Black mountains.

This is a second aspect of the complicated quarrel Russia has with Cuba - the first was the difference I have already pointed to in their vision of what makes a communist society. A third aspect of this quarrel is that Russia, being a nuclear power, is engaged in finding a way of peacefully co-existing with the nuclear west - neither want to blow the other up. But, says Castro, while you're desperately laughing at each others' jokes in order to prevent an atomic war - which is very worthy - two thirds of the world's population are starving or undernourished or ignorant or living in cruel societies; let's have peace, but not at their expense, that's immoral, and if you continue, as you're doing, to ignore their plight then they have the right to claim a just society even if by armed struggle. It is a terrible dilemma and the major one to be placed before the Congress.

Nevertheless, even if Castro is morally justified to incite it must be asked how practical the outcome can be? Guerilla forces exist in Guatemala and are seriously disturbing the United States and the Guatemalan government. Guerrillas

also exist in Columbia, Venezuela and elsewhere on that vast continent; we hear too of Negroes stock piling arms and training for guerilla war inside the United States; but their effectiveness must surely be questioned in such vast territories. It may be easy to turn to the Cuban experience and say twelve men changed the history of that country but its size must be remembered; and even the story of the twelve men of the Sierra Maestra is more of a heroic and poetic truth as Castro himself now recognises:

"And in all justice there is something else we should speak of here this evening. There is something else which we consider to be a matter of elementary justice and it is the following...the fact that the struggle began in the Sierra Maestra and that, when all is said and done the decisive battles were waged by guerilla forces, meant that, for a long time, almost all attention, almost all recognition almost all the admiration and almost all the history of the Revolution has been centred on the guerilla movement in the mountains. And it should be stated, as well, since there is nothing more reasonable and more healthy than being just, that, in the history of the Revolution, this fact tended to play down the role of those who fought in the cities, the role of those who fought in the clandestine movement, and the extraordinary heroism of the thousands of young persons who died fighting under very difficult conditions". (April 9th 1968)

Perhaps Russia is right - the Cuban situation was unique and cannot be projected on to all Latin American countries; but we would be more sympathetic to such paternal concern if the United States did not have so many investments in Latin America. Such ironies render the politics of Latin America as confusing as politics in the rest of the world where you can find papers in Fascist Spain reporting in headlines how 'Russia supports Spain's claims to Gibraltar' (to say nothing of the strange friendship between Spain and Cuba), and where British dockers support the racist speeches of a Tory shadow minister.

From all this, despite hopes I would have for Cuba, it becomes difficult to forecast her ultimate effectiveness as a focus for world change. If everyone in the street could talk with Fidel or the handful of other leaders then it would be alright; but like most great leaders Fidel and his cabinet are ten years ahead of everyone else and the people are left to the mercy of mediocre bureaucrats such as all states breed and who don't always know how to interpret Fidel's words. When I was last in Cuba, in 1964, I heard Fidel attack the bureaucrats 'despite' he said 'the fact that my cabinet said they would shoot me if I started to talk about Cuban communist bureaucracy'. It was a joke but made about real internal cabinet discussion and it's necessary to record the frankness of such statements in order to understand the unique and attractive nature of Castro's personality; he does not recognise normally accepted political discretions and frightens diplomats who fear he will reveal everything because he does not play at politics - you don't play political games with people's lives.

Such frankness touches everyone. Castro's intelligence, his humour and humanity seem to permeate Cuban society affecting the soldiers - who are kind and civil; the actors - who close down their theatres and go to plant coffee; the school-children - who stand up to greet and show respect when visitors enter a class; counter-revolutionaries are given, as a matter of law, second chances; the old colonial houses, abandoned by the rich, are not wantonly ravaged but turned into schools and residential colleges. His personal and public life are calculated to set examples and he constantly moves about the country, restlessly urging, explaining, encouraging, questioning and above all learning. Agriculture is the central need of his country and so this lawyer makes great study of agricultural techniques and is always arguing with the experts he has himself invited from abroad. Visiting journalists and diplomats are tired out by him. Despite his constant wearing of a uniform I suspect him to be a man of great refinement and gentility; watching him wait to address the crowds he looks like a shy girl and sits with hands clasped between turned-in knees. In 1964 I heard him talk to a massed rally and say: "Not everyone in the country is pulling their weight or being honest, we know, but what must we do?" Someone in the audience cried out, "Shoot them", and Fidel turned on him angrily and replied: "Did we bring about a revolution against injustice in order to behave like savages?" And so they learn and a civilised spirit is created because the next day people say it to each other: "Did we bring about a revolution against injustice in order to behave like savages?"

But many contradictions remain; perhaps not contradictions but ineptitude or just simply the problems of revolution. I've travelled to villages with no roads leading to them and found the miracle of a school there - but they were only teaching Cuban history; local citizens working in 'Committees for Defence of the Revolution' sacrifice free time to guard the streets with guns in case of U.S. invasion, and they tackle simple though urgent community projects, but too often they use these committees to interfere in each other's lives. New schools and housing estates are proudly erected but a state of hygiene exists in public places equal to the worst industrial slums. A name is given to each year: 'The year of heroic Vietnam' 'The year of the heroic guerilla' - I wish they wouldn't be so pompous and would devote one year to heroic public health and clean, un-spattered streets and lavatories; they seem not to have learnt the degree to which a depressed environment offends and hence depresses the spirit of a people. And I wish they didn't fill their streets with so many posters of Che or Fidel or Caiille Cinefuegos thereby reducing the inspirational value of their heroes; or all those posters saying 'We will win through' and 'Long live the glorious revolution' which flutter usually in a tattered and torn condition in the windows of shops that are empty or on walls that are falling apart. As the years pass no nation can be immune to the oppressive irony of the juxtapositioning of papered inspiration alongside decay.

And I wish they weren't so righteous about the 'noble role of the worker'. In times of crisis men will work in filth to save their nation, but to urge him on with assurances that the work is beautiful is to insult both his intelligence and the spirit in which he makes the sacrifice. Roberto Retamar, one of Cuba's most respected poets, gave a paper at the congress in which he tells a story of an American friend who was pro the revolution but anxious for his stocks and shares, and he says of him 'he was verbally anti-imperialist but actually an accomplice'; then, not without justice but deserving of more understanding, he goes on to be very savage about the hypocrisy of western leftists who are also accomplices in one form or another in a society where men exploit each other. But Retamar doesn't confess to, or he's aware of, another kind of exploitation of which he is guilty; that of living a satisfactory intellectual and social life - albeit a highly moral, revolutionary and responsible life - while his material goods are being provided by people who hate having to provide them. You can talk from today till tomorrow to the miner about the contribution he is making to his society and how important to it he is, and you can provide him with cultural and material improvements and you can respect him and shower him with honours and he can, from all this, feel a new dignity - but still he hates having to be down the mines, and who can, in all honesty, blame him? 'I know' he might say - the miner that is - 'that you love me for it, that you pay me well in bread and homage, and I think of the people being warmed and receiving light; and although I know I'm not capable of doing anything else yet, while I'm actually doing it, it depresses me; and the more you make me conscious of higher things and describe to me how beautiful life can be the more I hate it.'

Such points were not made to the congress nor is it considered a valid or desirable issue in the internal dialogue

surrounding 'the new man'. Perhaps its psychologically wrong to pose such questions at this moment in Cuba. I can accept this, but I can't accept the intellectual and political dishonesty which romanticises in order to ease guilts. What Retemar needs, though he could not articulate it, is that the worker will become conscious but not too conscious, that he will assume new dignity but not get too carried away with it, that he will have respect for culture but not imagine he's too cultured, that he'll honour professors but not actually demand to be one; in other words that he'll 'know his place' and find it a 'privilege to serve' - as the English aristocracy was always suggesting to its servants. And it is sad to trace the difficult psychological path Fidel must take when, confronted with a working population whose history has encouraged in them a casual rather than an urgent approach to work, he must both chastise and spur in the same breath, and to chastise them he must tell them they are one thing in one moment and to spur them he must pretend they are something else at another moment. Consider these excerpts from the speech of March 13, 1968 and April 9, 1968 (twenty seven days separate the two):

"And at certain moments perhaps the Revolution did not curb in time the creation of certain tendencies among the masses. One of these tendencies led to something of an attitude of complacency; the idea that we were defended... In my opinion this 'we-are-defended-let's-cross-our-arms' attitude led to a sit-back-and-take-it-easy mentality... in the economic field also, in the use and abuse of the idea that, in the event of any problem, help would be immediately forthcoming to solve it... And we must say that our masses have still not rid themselves sufficiently of these very real factors, of these subjective factors, which hang on to a certain degree. We are still a people characterised by great enthusiasm and decision at decisive moments, a people capable of giving up life itself at any hour, on any day, capable of any heroism at any moment, but a people that still lacks the virtue of tenacity, the demonstration of this courage and heroism not only in the dramatic moments but on each and every day..."

And on the following day all the bars and night clubs were closed. But only twenty seven days later:

"... Those traitors would not recognise this country. They could not know this people of today - the illiterate, exploited slaves of yesterday - this people that, in endless caravans, streams out to work, confidently, optimistically, with high morale, in an atmosphere of dedication to gigantic tasks, with heightened conscientiousness, with an all-pervasive austerity..." (the closed bars and night clubs? A.W.) "... and with complete honesty, to work for the nation, to work for the future..."

It is such demagoguery, such unnecessary hypocrisy - and in a way I'm writing these last words as though Castro and Retemar and all my beloved Cuban friends were reading them: I wish it didn't happen, I wish the Cuban revolution could be one hundred percent honest; this tired world looks for it and needs it. The language of Fidel's speeches is a very righteous language; he talks of a past of oppression and points to a present of liberty, he rouses people to a sense of dignity, high morality and justice. Therefore every corner of his country is under microscopic view from those of us who sense that his revolution promises hope and new frontiers of experience. Every unjust act to an individual makes mockery of his ardent attacks upon 'cruel, imperialist systems' - and there were stories of injustice which, though I could not verify them, came to me from sources I have every reason to believe were well intentioned. It is true I came from a continent whose past and present deeds are bloody, but I am critic to them also and if I am critic to the systems I despise then how much more anxious must I be for the systems from whom I expect so much. I wish they wouldn't persecute their homosexuals or that they didn't still have 20,000 political prisoners - even though those prisoners are mostly working happily in agriculture living the life of open prison camps; I wish they didn't dress their school children in uniforms and insist on short hair in school or apply moral pressures to work rather than rest content with pointing out moral responsibilities. I wish they didn't have mediocre functionaries who unfortunately are left to carry out the instructions of a visionary leadership; it is perhaps this single factor alone that defeats all brave revolutions in the end. What is it about revolts to do with injustice, liberty and equality that attract the bigoted, the pompously self-righteous, the opportunist and the grey, grey, grey men who end up inhabiting the countless desks of authority? Yet despite all these things Cuba and her revolution and the countries this revolution is influencing must be considered and taken notice of now, because our children are going to inherit tomorrow the world which Fidel Castro and the third world are shaping today. Yet despite all these things Cuba and her revolution must be considered now; she must be watched and listened to because she, of all Socialist countries, appears to have taken, at last, a real plunge into Utopian actions based on the goodness and energy of man's conscience. And she must be helped now because we shall benefit from and inherit her experience and we had better start earning the right to such benefits.

Arnold Wesker, playwright, finished his last play *The Four Seasons* while in Cuba in 1964. He had been invited for a 3 week theatre festival by the Cuban Casa De Las Americas and they gave him leave to remain 3 weeks longer as their guest in order to finish his play. He developed so much respect and affection for the country that he dedicated the play to Cuba. In January 1968 Cuba organised an international congress of artists and intellectuals. Wesker, along with David Mercer, playwright, Adrian Mitchell, poet, the political historian, Eric Hobsbawm and many others accepted the invitation to participate. While there Wesker was asked to stay on and direct *The Four Seasons*. At the same time a telegram came from New York saying they also wanted him for rehearsals of *The Four Seasons*. He cabled his agent saying 'Cuba more important to me than New York.' And so, though he'd never directed a play before, he remained 3 months in Habana, until 31st March, to direct the play in Spanish - a language he does not speak.

At this moment Wesker is looking over the letters he wrote from Cuba to his wife and friends in order to see if they will make an interesting document about the country; and later these letters and extracts will be published in book form. But to celebrate the 26th July movement in Cuba he has written this article specially for ENVOY which, he confesses, he's written in the hope that Fidel Castro will read it.

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