

## Revolution in Cuba

The revolution in Cuba was not a result of economic deprivation, nor because of high expectations in the economy, it was the political factors and expectations which evoked the civilians to revolt. The Cuban economy was moving forward at the time before the rebellion but the dominant influence of the sugar industry made the economy "assymetrical" and encouraged no "dynamic industrial sector". Because of the dependance on sugar, the unemployment rate ranged between 16 and 20% rising and falling with sugar prices, ebbing and flowing as the season changed. The rural wage levels were incredibly unsteady and unpredictable; the standard of living was low. Dependance on the sugar industry did not retard the economy of Cuba, just the wages of its workers. It was the leaders of the nation who reaped profit from this dependance, and it was the leaders of the nation who insisted on keeping the nation the way it was. By the mid 1950's, however, the middle class had expanded to 33% of the population. Democracy, as we

know it, broke down: the large middle class did not assert democratic leadership, there was no social militancy in the working class ranks, and the people found order preferable to disarray. Batista could no longer legitimize his regime . Failure in the elections of 1954 showed the discontent of the people, and failure in communications with the United States illustrated its discontent. Finally, opposing forces confronted Batista's power: there were street protests, confrontations with the police, assault, sabotage, and urban violence. This began the revolution in Cuba.

America, with its stubborn ideas and misjudgements of character, forced Castro to turn to the Soviets for alliance and aid. When Castro visited the United States in April, 1959, there were different respected individuals holding different views of him and his future actions. Nixon

believed Castro to be naive, some others thought him a welcome change from Batista, still others called him an "immature but effective leader, without a well formed view of how to lead a revolutionary movement and not overly concerned with abstract of philosophical matters" (p. 55). Why, then, did the United States impress nit-picky ideals like "there should not be communists in the Army or in labor", or "Cuba's approach to the Batista trials is totally unacceptable, too casual, too nonchalant" on this "forming" leader? Castro was like an inexperienced murderer with a gun in his hand: any rustle in the background could set off his nervous trigger finger causing death, destruction, and liaisons with the U.S.S.R. When America expressed dislike of the trial procedures Castro was holding, of course he (Castro) would try to prove he was able to run his country by himself and snub the U.S. ambassador. The United States had so much invested in Cuba that it was stupid to think that Cuba could not retaliate when the U.S. cut off sugar imports. America was just too sure of itself

thinking it could get away with criticism and acts like that when an "immature" leader was in control. Cuba was not totally dependant on the United States and proved itself so. If Cuba could not find help and support in America, it sought elsewhere for those who smiled on its actions and ideals. Castro found friends in Russia; the United States made this so.

Succeeding and failing have alot to do with judgement. For the United States, the revolution was a failure because the result was a communist nation in the Carribbean. For the revolutionarie s in Cuba, the revolution accomplished many of their goals: capitalism was abolished and socialism installed eroding class distinctions and eliminating private property, the working conditions improved, women's rights improved, labor unions were recogniz ed, the military became more modern and advanced, political order was restored, the status of the country improved from dependant to

independent, and many more. For the people of Cuba, therefore, the revolution can be viewed as a success (if communism can be seen as acceptable), but for America, the result was a failure.

Latin America is one of the poorest and underdeveloped sections of the world. Because of this fact, it is difficult for its nations to compete and thrive in the world market with modern nations as they struggle to industrialize and improve their status. Capitalism, as a basis for an economy, means that each man has to struggle to make a living, that each man may fail and starve, and that each man may get a lucky break and thrive. We saw this struggle of the lower classes clearly in Mexico during their industrialization. With communism, a man may not become of greater status than he is born with, but then again that status is no better than his neighbors; this man is, however, guaranteed a certain amount of land, for example, and a certain home and a certain salary. To the poor, those

threatened by the extreme of starving, this idea is very appetizing. To a nation undergoing change, where there are many poor and these poor could get hurt by the industrialization, communism is appealing in every way.

The United States has to learn that it is not in total control. We cannot go around condemning countries which hold procedures different than our own. The developing countries in Latin America must struggle through economically and politically hard times to reach their own maturity; this means experimenting with different styles of government to find out which is best for the specific country. If America wants democracy to reign over the Caribbean, Central, and South America, it should make the idea appealing, show these countries that it can work. America should support strong democratic leaders, encourage capitalistic moves they (the countries) make, and advise the nations when they need or ask for it.

Mexico is an example where democracy worked, in Cuba, it didn't. Force will get us nowhere in preventing the spread of communism, either will cutting off relations with countries who are still debating U. S. A. or U. S. S. R. America has too many interests in Latin America to force it into alliance with the Soviets. If America is supportive and acts like a friend--not a dictator--these nations will develop naturally and see that democracy is the best for them.