

MAURICE ZEITLIN

Revolutionary
Politics and
the Cuban
Working Class



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REVOLUTIONARY POLITICS
AND THE CUBAN WORKING CLASS

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BY MAURICE ZEITLIN

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To Marilyn

Preface

✱ THIS book is based on data drawn from interviews with industrial workers in revolutionary Cuba in the summer of 1962 at a time when, as we know, the United States government ordinarily prohibited American citizens from traveling to Cuba. The needs of scholarship and of our government's foreign policy scarcely coincided. Indeed, I have written this book on the assumption that the Cold War and the needs of American policy should not dictate the problems, premises, or analytical framework of scholarship, nor inhibit scholars from writing on socially relevant and "controversial" subjects. Since the U.S. government did allow correspondents special permission to travel to Cuba, I made both of my trips to the island as a correspondent, in 1961 for Radio KPFA, Berkeley, of the Pacifica Foundation, and in 1962 for *The Nation*.

Throughout the summer of 1962 my wife, Marilyn, and I traveled the length of the country interviewing workers in 21 plants scattered over its six provinces. (See map.) Marilyn's companionship and her willingness (while pregnant) to endure the rigors of three months of travel over rough roads, in semi-tropical climate, lodging in uncomfortable quarters and living on the rather meager diet that was then available in Cuba in order to share the interviewing with me went far beyond the bounds of duty. Without her aid, this study would not have been possible.

Neither would it have been possible without the cooperation I received from the Revolutionary Government and its various bureaus, especially the Ministry of Industry and its head, *Comandante* Ernesto "Ché" Guevara. *Comandante* Guevara had his ministry provide me with the necessary credentials to enter any factories, mines, or mills I found necessary, and to take from their work—for whatever time required—any workers I wished to interview. I am grateful to the Revolutionary Government for its courtesy, and to the many other individuals, too numerous to mention, in various government

offices who gave me substantial aid. The cooperation of the workers we interviewed was, of course, the *sine qua non* of our research, and I am indebted to them for their willingness to speak freely and frankly to a couple of visiting "Yanquis." I hope that after reading this book they feel that it was worth sitting through those rather long and often irritating interviews.

This book began as a doctoral dissertation (to which it scarcely bears resemblance) in the Department of Sociology of the University of California at Berkeley. I want to thank Seymour Martin Lipset, who was chairman of my dissertation committee, for his willingness to guide me through the least exciting parts of the work that led to this book—namely, the dissertation itself. He and Martin Trow, the committee's second departmental member, contributed substantially to whatever merits this book may possess. This is true, as well, of all those professors with whom I have been privileged to study.

My colleague, Sidney Verba, gave me helpful advice in the construction of the interview schedule; Frederick Stephan's aid in designing the sample was inestimable, as was my benefit from the methodological acumen of Michael Aiken. My thanks are also due to Mike Smith, who drew the excellent map showing the location of the plants in which the workers were interviewed, to Vicki Weiner, who transcribed the interviews with the workers onto cards, and to Silvia de Cabezas, who typed most of the final manuscript of this book.

In part, this study was supported financially by the Center of International Studies, Princeton University, and I want to acknowledge that support and the encouragement of the center's director, Klaus Knorr.

I owe much to the following individuals who read various parts of the manuscript and made valuable comments and suggestions: Michael Aiken, Robert Alford, C. Arnold Anderson, Marion Brown, Peter Blau, David Chaplin, Robert

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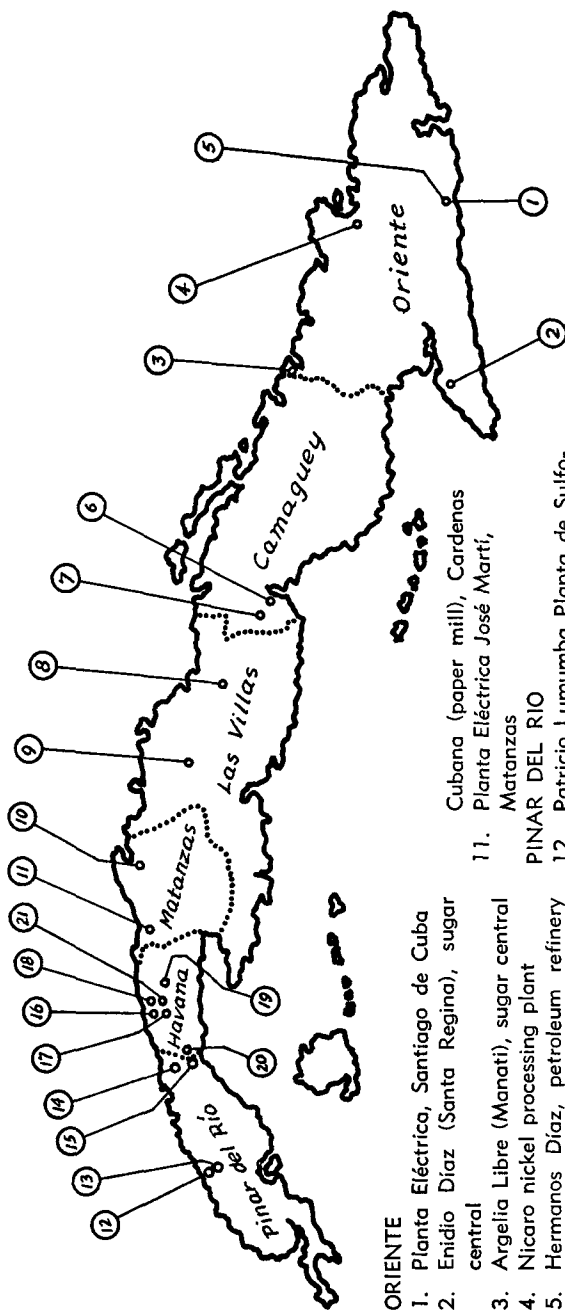
I am especially grateful to Richard Hamilton, Barrington Moore, Jr., and James O'Connor, for their careful reading of the entire manuscript, and for their exceptionally helpful comments.

I am also grateful to the following journals for their permission to adapt some of my earlier articles for use in this book: *The Nation*, *American Sociological Review*, *American Journal of Sociology*, and *Social Forces*.

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Approximate Location of Plants in Survey of Cuban Industrial Workers



ORIENTE

1. Planta Eléctrica, Santiago de Cuba
2. Enidio Díaz (Santa Regina), sugar central
3. Argelia Libre (Manati), sugar central
4. Nicaro nickel processing plant
5. Hermanos Díaz, petroleum refinery (formerly Texaco), Santiago de Cuba

CAMAGUEY

6. Venezuela (Stewart), sugar central
7. Uruguay (Jatibonico), sugar central

LAS VILLAS

8. Tabaco Torcido, Unit 51 (cigar factory), Placetás
9. Cervezas y Maltas, Unit 4 (beer and malt brewery), Manacas

MATANZAS

10. Guillermo Gerlin, Papelera Técnica

11. Cubana (paper mill), Cardenas
12. Planta Eléctrica José Martí, Matanzas

PINAR DEL RIO

13. Patricio Lumumba Planta de Sulfometales, Puerto de Santa Lucía
14. Matahambre copper mine
15. Fábrica de cemento, Unit 1 (formerly Portland Cement), Mariel
16. Derivados del Cuero, Unit 101 (boot factory), Guanajay

HAVANA

17. Populares (cigarette factory), Vedado
18. Cervezas y Maltas, Unit 1 (beer and malt brewery), Marianao

19. Nico López petroleum refinery (formerly Esso and Shell—now combined), Regla
20. Derivados del Cuero, Unit 205-01 (shoe factory), Managua
21. Hilados y Tejidos Planos, Ariguabato (textile mill and printing), Bauta
22. Cubana de Acero (agricultural equipment), Vibora

CHAPTER 1

Orientations, Setting, Methods

Introduction

✱ THIS is a revolutionary era whose distinctive feature “is the entry of the masses as participants in the making of history.”¹ The Cuban workers have played a decisive role in their revolution—the first socialist revolution in the Western Hemisphere, and the only socialist revolution that has taken place in a capitalist country in which wage workers constituted the most numerous and perhaps most cohesive class in the population. How the workers see the revolution has been and doubtless will be basic to its continued vitality and to the course taken by the revolution’s leaders. A study, therefore, of the shared experiences which led the workers of Cuba to favor or oppose the revolution is of primary historical, social, and theoretical relevance.

Revolutionary politics has a long and venerable tradition in the Cuban working class dating to the very foundation of the Republic itself. The workers were among the most dedicated advocates of the cause of colonial liberation from Spain; anarchosindicalist ideology was widespread if not dominant among them in the early decades of the twentieth century; the workers formed the major social base of the Communist-led anti-imperialist movement of the late twenties and early thirties that culminated in the abortive popular revolution of 1933-35—a revolution which had as one of its principal declared aims the abolition of United States control of the country’s political economy. Until the advent of the Cold War, the Communists were predominant in Cuban labor’s leadership and, even with their purge in 1947-48 from official positions in the *Confederación de Trabajadores de Cuba* (CTC), the island’s central labor organization, the Com-

¹ Lewis S. Feuer, ed., *Marx and Engels: Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1959), p. xviii.

munists retained the allegiance of an estimated 25 percent of the workers. Thus, the Cuban revolution and socialist ideology had a significant base in the working class long before the revolution's leaders began to think and speak of themselves and their revolution as "socialist."

This book, then, is a modest attempt to ascertain some of the major social determinants of pro-Communist and revolutionary political attitudes in the Cuban working class, through multivariate quantitative analysis of survey research data gathered in interviews with Cuban workers during the summer of 1962. Thus, this is the first (and only to date) study to utilize the empirical methods and theory of contemporary sociology for sustained and systematic inquiry into the causes of the differential response of the workers to a social revolution—while that revolution itself was still "young."

In his essay on the sources of Marxism, *The Unfinished Revolution*, Adam B. Ulam writes that

No sociological surveys enable us to ascertain exactly the ideas of the French and English proletariat during the period of the great economic transformation. The wealth of memoirs, political reports, and even rudimentary economic surveys helps, but the picture of the impact of industrialism is still like the proverbial iceberg: a small part of it visible in the form of theories, statistics, and political and social movements; the greater part of it, the feelings and thoughts of the people affected by industrialization, is submerged. We are forced to speculate about the latter from an analysis of the former.²

Our primary concern in this study is to analyze the social determinants of the workers' political attitudes. Yet to some extent the richness of individual motivation—the conscious and expressed reasons the workers have for how they feel about the revolution—is obscured by such an analysis.

² (New York: Random House, 1960), p. 72.

Since we personally interviewed Cuban workers and recorded the verbalized "feelings and thoughts of the people affected" by the Cuban revolution, since we *did do* a sociological survey of the Cuban "proletariat," excerpts from these interviews will be presented wherever relevant in the workers' own words, commenting upon the revolution as they see it. Thus we hope, at least, that Professor Ulam's lament about the lack of sociological surveys of the French and English workers during the industrial revolution will not have to be repeated in quite the same anguished terms by students of the Cuban revolution whose wish it is "to ascertain exactly the ideas" of the Cuban workers.

What the workers actually said in our interviews is not only of historical but also of analytical relevance because the very language the workers use to define their situation defines for us, at least indirectly, their perceptions of social reality—perceptions which themselves become determinants of their political behavior. Their language gives us some insight, at least, into "the phenomenology of the revolutionary consciousness, the world as it is experienced in crisis by the revolutionary workingmen."³

In any study of political attitudes based on survey research, one is perforce compelled to focus on the recurrent, the generalizable, and the quantifiable, and much is left unexamined and unsaid that undoubtedly was and may still be of decisive political importance. Among the "determinants" of Communist and revolutionary support in the Cuban working class, for example, it should hardly require saying that the *content* of revolutionary socialist ideology itself is of central relevance; for it promises to the workers a new and transformed world of equality and plenty and social justice, of the abolition of the exploitation of man by man, of a socialist society run by the workers themselves—a society that is *theirs for the making* through social revolution. More-

³ Feuer, p. xix.

over, not only the content of socialist ideology but also the talent of the movement's leaders, their tactical skills, their knowledge, their daring and courage, both physical and intellectual, their oratorical gifts and organizational abilities, their personal persuasiveness and integrity—all these qualities of a movement's leadership enter into and may have a determining effect on the political course the workers will take. The whole gamut of qualities that competing political organizations and movements present to the workers—and what types of workers they try to organize and appeal to—will condition their success. A variety of factors, in other words, proper to the Communists and revolutionaries themselves and to their opponents, rather than to the social structure as a whole or to the working-class structure in particular, are obviously significant in "real life." They enter into the very creation and persistence of a distinct working-class political culture, and into determining workers' political attitudes and behavior. No really adequate understanding of the workers' attitudes is possible without the systematic exploration of these facets of the working-class movement. In this study, I have not dealt with them, and I claim only to offer *some* understanding of the sources of revolutionary politics in the Cuban working class.

Nor is an adequate understanding of the workers' political attitudes possible without knowing the history of the workers. "History itself" (a metaphysical term I dislike but whose meaning is clear) was a major source of working-class attitudes toward the revolution and toward the Communists before the revolution. The major struggles the workers were involved in, the tales propagated in the working-class subculture and the meanings given and the memories retained of these events, the men who figured as important leaders and later as heroes or martyrs of working-class battles, and as symbols of working-class struggle, the compromises and conciliations of their leaders, the workers' victories and their defeats, all in one way or another entered

the workers' consciousness and influenced—even now—the workers' political behavior in ways which cannot easily (if at all) be detected through survey research methods. I have tried, though, in my chapter on political generations to do something along these lines.

To put the matter somewhat differently, while I have used survey research and multivariate analysis to try to discover some of the determinants of the political attitudes of Cuban workers and of workers' political radicalism in general, I am not convinced that out of such types of analysis there will emerge some day a general theory of workers' political radicalism. Our substantive hypotheses and their verification must be related to a given historical reality in which the variables examined take their effect. Not only are the independent variables themselves rarely alike in comparative analysis, but they affect human beings who have had different historical experiences and who, therefore, may well respond differently to apparently identical stimuli. I have tried, therefore, in this study to closely link my theoretical generalizations to the specific historical experiences of the Cuban workers.

History is significant even on the simplest levels; for had a study using survey methods been done of working-class politics in Cuba some forty years ago, an "index of attitude" toward the anarchosyndicalists who were then dominant in the labor movement would have been necessary, rather than toward the Communists who were still in their infancy. And we cannot argue, a priori, that anarchosyndicalism would have appealed to the same types of workers as Communist ideology. This raises the question: Is it valid to consider attitudes toward the Communists before the revolution as an index of *political radicalism* among Cuban workers? We know, after all, that the Communists gained stature among the workers not merely as revolutionaries but as good unionists, as honest leaders who were able to successfully pursue militant and forceful union policies that

(to use their own phraseology) were in essence straight "economism." And especially in the anti-Batista struggle, the Communists were scarcely a radical political force but were displaced by the 26th of July movement. I do not discount this, but believe that such straight union appeals as the Communists undoubtedly had were complemented by the general Communist image as a revolutionary alternative to Cuban capitalism. Unlike most other Latin American Communist parties, the Cuban party *did* lead not only militant and violent confrontations with the armed forces of Cuba, but had nearly led the workers to power in the abortive revolution of the thirties. The content of Communist education, indoctrination, and agitation among the workers was anti-imperialist, anticapitalist, and revolutionary socialist. Thus, in "concrete reality," their roles as honest unionists and revolutionary socialist agitators were inseparable. It is highly likely that procommunism among the workers in prerevolutionary Cuba was permeated with revolutionary socialist values. My reading of the history of the Cuban working class convinces me that this is a legitimate assumption, and it is this assumption that I make throughout this book. There was no other socialist party of national significance in the working class during the lives of most of the workers we interviewed for this book; therefore, it is not likely that the few anarchist or social democratic workers whom our question about prerevolutionary attitude toward the Communists would miss would seriously alter our findings and interpretations.

Orientations

The major working hypothesis of this study is a simple one: just as a society's class structure is a major basis of its political diversity and cleavage, so too is *intra*class social differentiation politically significant, and by exploring the structure of the working class it will be possible to locate fundamental sources of its political behavior. This does not

mean that *interclass* differences, or conflicting class interests, are in any way secondary to the internal structure of the working class as the source of its politics. Quite the contrary. Any conflict between classes tends to erase or minimize the significance of *intra*class differences and to maximize *inter*-class differences. Nonetheless, as Roberto Michels once put it: "Working-class history abounds in examples showing how certain fractions or categories of the proletariat have, under the influence of interests peculiar to their sub-class, detached themselves from the great army of labour and made common cause with the bourgeoisie."⁴ The principal task of our study, then, has been to identify such "fractions" or "categories" of the working class in Cuba and to observe whether or not and in what manner they have led to their members' differential political behavior.

This study is based on the generic sociological assumption that the individual's position in the social structure determines, to a great extent, the nature, intensity, and variety of social pressures to which he will be subject, that different types of social roles both recruit (or select) and train (or form) different types of social individuals and, therefore, the view of the world they carry around in their heads. The variety of social interaction, patterns of communications, deprivations, and conceptions of themselves that individuals experience varies significantly in accordance with these different social roles and, in turn, result in observable differences in their behavior—from the most intimate and personal values and attitudes to the most public of political stances. To the worker, his *work* is at the very center of his life and *the social pressures to which he is exposed at work play a major role in determining his political views*. Much of his evaluation of the "class struggle" or labor-management conflict, of the general quality of his society and his place within it, whether he believes himself exploited or emancipated,

⁴ *Political Parties* (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1949), p. 290.

whether he believes his interests are opposed to those of the owners and managers of industry, or that capitalism might better be replaced—by revolution if necessary—by another economic and social system he calls socialism or communism—much of his political behavior can be explained by observing the position he has in the structure of the working class, and the consequent variations in the pressures and deprivations to which he is subject.

Deprivations, as I shall show, in themselves explain little or nothing, for it is the structure of social relationships in which the worker is implicated that determines, in the first place, how he perceives these deprivations (if he perceives them at all) and their objective impact on him. What he perceives and what he experiences of the world, and therefore what he thinks about the world, will vary to a great extent with the role he plays in the process of production, with its concomitant social relations and patterns of interaction and communication.

Take the question of income, for example. Is there some reason why income in itself should relate to a worker's politics? Does the range of social pressures that he experiences significantly vary from those of workers in different income brackets? Does higher income mean conservative politics? And unemployment or underemployment? Are these experiences that qualitatively differ from the experience of the economically secure worker? Unemployment, we shall see, is not merely a deprivation in itself but has a direct effect on the situation from which the worker views the world. It changes his social location. What does this imply? Does the unemployed worker quit participating in union activities and withdraw from politics, or does he become activated by his situation? Is he more or less amenable to revolutionary appeals than the employed worker? What did the experiences of recurrent unemployment and widespread underemployment in prerevolutionary Cuba mean for the

workers' responses to Communist agitation and to the revolution itself?

Did unemployed Negro workers respond the same way as their fellow white workers? If not, why not? To what extent did the collective situation of Negro workers in general affect the particular situation of the Negro unemployed and their perceptions of their unemployment? Long ago, Marx said something about the exploited Irish workers who, while in the process of organizing, were bringing their "revolutionary fire" into the English working class and thereby transforming the character of the class struggle. Is there a parallel to the Negro workers of Cuba? Were Negro workers more likely to support the Communists in the labor movement in the decades preceding the revolution, and are they now more or less likely than their fellow white workers to support the revolution? What is the basis of their political differences?

Take, for instance, the question of the skilled worker. The cleavage between skilled workers and the semi- and unskilled workers is quite nearly as old as industrial capitalism itself, and the types of trade unions, political movements and parties supported by them have varied considerably within each country. In many countries the skilled workers have been the moderate and "conservative" ones in their class, while the unskilled have formed the basis of the "extremist" or revolutionary parties and unions. In other countries the pattern is reversed. Why? Under what conditions, or in what sort of situations, are the least deprived and most "successful" workers likely to be even more radical than their less fortunately situated semi- and unskilled working-class peers?

Will the worker's social origins affect his political views? Will his experiences growing up in a peasant or agricultural laborer's household, or in a petite bourgeois, white collar or industrial working-class family affect his political views—despite the fact that he is now a worker like other workers? If his father was a small trader, say, will he not bring different

views with him into the working class—views assimilated in association with his parents and early peers—that will differ from those of his fellow workers who are the sons of workers, and require him to make adaptations not required of them? Will not the very same experiences have a different impact on him than on them? The question is, what kind of an impact, and why?

Or take the question of sex. Here are men and women at work, both doing the same sorts of jobs, working in the same kinds of plants. Will their politics be the same? If not, why not?

Whether the worker happens to work in a big plant or small plant and where that plant is located, the region and size of city and the type of neighborhood in which he lives in the community, and therefore the heterogeneity or homogeneity of his political environment, will subject him to still different pressures which, in turn, may interact with the personal satisfaction he draws from his work, and how he conceives his role in social production.

Do their attitudes toward their work affect the workers' political views? How? What political differences, if any, are there between workers whose dissatisfaction with their work derives from different sources?

Finally, there is the question of history and the workers' role in it. What effects, if any, do the workers' early experiences in the labor movement, and the historical experiences through which that movement is then passing, have on their lifelong political behavior? In particular, what effects did their insurrectionary and revolutionary experiences during the abortive revolution of the 1930s have on the Cuban workers? And how did the anti-Batista struggle affect their responses to the Fidelista revolution?

These are some questions raised by the political experience of the working classes of different countries; and we try to answer them in the context of prerevolutionary and postrevolutionary Cuba—questions which are significant not

only because of their obvious historical interest, but also because they are questions that are relevant to the development of valid social theory. They are questions which require our attention because of their social relevance, and because in the process of trying to answer them we may contribute to the understanding of the variables at work in determining political behavior.

The Setting

This study is based on interviews my wife and I had with a national, random sample of workers in Cuba in the summer of 1962. This was a critical period for the revolution (as almost any period of any revolution is), since the revolutionary leadership was in the process of rediscovering its own direction and dissociating itself from the modes of rule associated with the so-called old Communists. Throughout the country a series of actions took place which resulted in the elimination of old Communists from positions of power and influence—without yet severing the ties between the “old” and “new” Communists. This may have resulted in a crisis of conscience for many veteran Communist supporters in the working class—a working class which was long led by the Communists and which, as we said, even in the period of illegality, still maintained the “secret support” of an estimated fourth of the workers. The period following the “purges” of 1962 was also one of increased administrative flexibility, of a return to local initiative which gradually had been usurped by the center, namely, the Communist apparatus in the Integrated Revolutionary Organizations. It was a period of heightened invasion fears, less than a year from the Bay of Pigs events, and preceding the Missile Crisis of October by a month. All of this was felt in direct and indirect ways by the workers—from nationalist and revolutionary exhortation to mobilization of the militia. During this very period, the Cuban economy had been experiencing grave

difficulties—perhaps the gravest in the three and a half years since the establishment of the revolutionary regime. The 1962 *zafra* was far below expectations and earlier revolutionary harvests; there were severe scarcities in foods and consumer goods, the transportation and internal distribution systems were inefficient, and raw material and spare part shortages were noticeably affecting production in some industries. Some plants were working part time, while others were forced (as in hemp production) to close down completely. The general scarcity of goods, the production problems, the intense social pressure to be “revolutionary” and the local abuses and poor administrative methods of many officials only recently fired from their posts must obviously have had its effects on the workers’ morale and view of the revolution.

On the other hand, there were major accomplishments to the credit of the Revolutionary Government in health care, education and welfare improvements for the workers, in the dignity given work, in the changed in-plant relations between administrative and technical personnel and production workers, and in the elimination of corruption and gangsterism in the unions, that apparently made the scarcities and difficulties less onerous than they might have been.

Thus, on one hand, this was a period in the revolution which in some ways was a particularly difficult one for the workers, one likely to evoke discontent especially among the least politically interested and involved; on the other hand, it was a period of revolutionary euphoria, nationalist enthusiasm, and combativeness; a spirit of social solidarity appeared to be present among the workers akin to and more intense than what can be observed among workers at the height of a major strike anywhere. A year before we did the interviewing for this study, for instance, immediately after the abortive invasion of 1961, it was reported by the *London Observer* correspondent (April 30, 1961) in Cuba that:

At the moment, the working classes and the militia would follow Dr. Castro anywhere and in anything. Talk of "defending the country to the last drop of blood" is not for them an idle thought. There is a wide degree of national unity.

Another observer, Ruth Knowles, a petroleum specialist who lived in Cuba for eight years before the revolution and who spent more than a month in Cuba touring the island *during the same period we were interviewing the workers* for this book, reported in the *Wall Street Journal* (November 9, 1962) that "In Cuba the labor unions and the young people back him [Castro] fanatically and there are many groups who are living better than they ever did before."

The important point here, from the standpoint of our study, is that the Revolutionary Government had by the time of our interviews (1962) clearly consolidated its power; the original relatively undifferentiated popular euphoria had by now long been replaced by relatively clear lines of social cleavage generated in response to actions taken by the Revolutionary Government; it was now more than three years since the establishment of the Revolutionary Government, two years since the nationalization of private, American-owned industrial enterprises, and more than a year since Fidel Castro had declared the revolution to be "socialist." It was, in other words, a period in the "youth" of the revolution, when decisive differences in social class support for and disaffection from the revolution already had emerged, yet when a new social structure, with clearly established institutions and norms, had not yet fully crystallized. Whatever might be the possible future form and content of the new social structure in Cuba, as of the time of our interviews with the workers it was clear that the old class structure was in disarray and dissolution and a new one had not yet emerged. Therefore, a study of the differential appeals of the ideology

and social content of the revolution to industrial workers could now be meaningful and valuable.

This study is based on interviews with a randomly selected national sample of industrial workers. Before describing the technical details of the sampling and interviewing method, therefore, it is necessary to discuss a fundamental methodological criticism which might be made of this study, a criticism which, were it true, would raise serious problems in the evaluation and utilization of our interview data.

The methodological criticism might be phrased as follows: Is it possible to utilize the methods and data of survey research to arrive at reasonable indicators of opinions and attitudes in the context of a police state? Since the interviewers were United States citizens, it might be argued that the interviewed workers could have reason to believe they or any American residing or doing research in Cuba as late as the summer of 1962 must have been, at the very least, "acceptable" to the regime. In an issue of *Cuba Socialista*, for example, something of a theoretical organ of the regime, the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, organized in factories, and neighborhoods, are described as a "system of collective revolutionary vigilance, in which everyone knows who everyone is, what each person who lives in the bloc does, what relations he had with the tyranny, to what he is dedicated, whom he meets and what activities he follows." Thus, it might be argued that in such an atmosphere interviews are hardly effective indicators of opinions or attitudes.

This is a thoughtful and relevant, but incorrect assessment of the possibility of doing the study we did, when and where we did it. I have no doubts that in many respects the atmosphere in Cuba was hardly the most conducive to interviewing workers (especially for American interviewers, since the United States and Cuba were already in conflict with each other), and that many individuals may have had legitimate fears of stating their views openly. In fact, because there were obviously some workers who were suspicious, even

frightened, of the purposes of the interview, we made every effort to establish rapport quickly and put the respondent at his ease, by stressing emphatically that the interview was voluntary and completely anonymous. Occasionally, a respondent would ask that his words not be recorded until the interview had terminated, and we agreed readily. It should be noted also that the interviews ranged from 45 minutes to three and a half hours in length, averaging about an hour and a quarter, in a private atmosphere (see below) and that a great effort of the will would be required in that situation to give answers consistently which were thought to be suitable to the government and the interviewer. It would require a certain level of dramatic skill to feign enthusiasm or to manifest feelings where these did not really exist. Moreover, it must be said that the refusal rate was very low (eight of 210 respondents selected), and that in only a few instances did opponents of the regime evince either hesitancy or fear in speaking their minds freely. Cubans are highly voluble, volatile, and loquacious, regardless of their political views.

Moreover, the objection that Cuba was a "police state" or totalitarian country when we did our interviewing must be put down, insofar as I am concerned, as at best a very serious exaggeration. It is true that things had tightened up considerably in Cuba in the year since the invasion. This was certainly to be expected of a country whose leaders had some evidence that their country was the possible target of another major foreign attempt to overthrow them. During our stay in Cuba there were several false invasion scares, a number of bombings in public buildings, a mortar attack on the hotel housing foreign diplomats, technicians, and visiting dignitaries, which narrowly missed the apartment we were staying in at the time, and so on; and within a month of our return to Cuba, there occurred the "missile crisis" of October 22-28, 1962. Thus, the country in a significant sense was on a war footing, whether based on real or imaginary fears of invasion. *Organized* dissent was not possible

in Cuba at this time and yet it was our observation throughout the country that Cubans could and did speak freely about whatever they wished, without fear of government reprisal.

By the time of the cut of the Cuban sugar quota by the U. S. government on July 6, 1960, for example, it was widely believed in the United States that Cuba already had become a police state. Thus, it is relevant that Lloyd A. Free, Director of the Institute for International Social Research in Princeton, New Jersey, who was responsible for a public opinion survey carried out in Cuba during April and early May 1960, wrote:

Much to our delight, we found that very few respondents refused to answer our questions, probably in part because the wording was indirect and innocuous on the surface. And, as the report will show, a great many at least among the overwhelming majority who did answer all of our questions talked very frankly, indeed. We cannot be sure, of course, that the great bulk of respondents who expressed support for the Castro regime were telling the whole truth (in view of the intolerance of the political climate toward dissenting opinions); but we can be absolutely certain that the substantial proportions which expressed opposition or criticism were not only being courageous but honest.⁵

We found essentially the same situation in Cuba during the summer of 1962 when we did our own interviewing. Just prior to our arrival in Cuba, Fidel Castro had made a major speech denouncing what he termed the sectarianism of the old Cuban Communists, their antilibertarian actions and disregard for the rights of others, and declared that "The Revolution must be a school of courageous men. The Revo-

⁵ Lloyd A. Free, *Attitudes of the Cuban People Toward the Castro Regime, in the late Spring of 1960* (Princeton: Institute for International Social Research, 1960), p. ii. This study was designed by Free and Hadley Cantril.

lution must be a school in which there is liberty of thought!"⁶

Consistent with this attitude, bookstores throughout Cuba still sold whatever remained of books by Western scholars, as well as polemically anti-Socialist and anti-Communist books: books, for instance, in Spanish, such as *Religion en alcance de todos*, *La iglesia catolica frente al comunismo*, and Lerner and Cassel's *Teoría general de Keynes*.

The *Biblioteca Nacional*, Cuba's central public library, was still receiving more or less regularly such U.S. publications as *Time*, *Life*, *U.S. News*, *Look*, and the *New Leader*, as well as such journals as *The New Republic* and *The Nation*. British newspapers such as the *London Observer* and the *Manchester Guardian* were also available. The full spectrum of political opinion, then, could be read in the foreign press by anyone with the knowledge and inclination to do so.

The libraries of the University of Havana, the Central University of Las Villas, and the *Biblioteca Nacional* at this time had general scholarly collections comparable to those in our own college libraries. Among the many polemically anti-Communist books (in Spanish) in the *Biblioteca Nacional*, for example, here were some catalogued under "Communism" (with their call numbers):

335.43: Ponce de Leon, *Los Monstruos que Acechen*.

337.47: S. J. Walsh, *Imperio Total*.

At the University of Havana library:

335.E: Max Eastman, *Reflexiones sobre el fracaso del socialismo*.

335.4K: Arthur Koestler, *El mito soviético ante la realidad*.

943.7S: Dana Adams Schmidt, *Anatomía de un estado satélite*.

⁶ See my two articles, "Labor in Cuba," *The Nation*, Vol. 195 (October 20, 1962), 238-41; and "Castro and Cuba's Communists," *The Nation*, Vol. 195 (November 3, 1962), 284-87, for a more detailed presentation of my observations in Cuba during the course of my research.

There were also such varied works as Trotsky's *Terorismo y comunismo*, Hans Kelsen's *Teoria comunista del derecho y el estado*, M. Ketchum's *What Is Communism?*, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.'s *The Vital Center*, Blas Roca and Earl Browder's *La conferencia del cancilleres de la Habana*, and Raúl Roa's *En pie*. (The last two, because of their revisionism and anti-Soviet polemics, respectively, could be particularly embarrassing to two prominent Cuban politicians.)

It was still possible to hear broadcasts from the United States clearly on ordinary radio in many parts of Cuba, and the government had not attempted, so far as we could observe, to prevent this in any way. American movies glorifying the American way of life, Hollywood-style, still played at almost every Cuban movie theater and on afternoon television.

It was quite easy to find vocal opponents of the regime—especially in Havana. Taxi drivers and bus boys, department store clerks and grocers would, with the slightest encouragement, engage in a vituperative denunciation of the government. One could travel, as my wife and I did, from one end of the country to the other, knocking on doors at random, talking to people in their homes, in public squares and parks, in factories and schools, on the university campus or in buses and theatre lobbies, without being interfered with—talking and questioning, and even giving the United States government's viewpoint on international affairs.

In one factory after we finished our interviews, a group of workers cornered us to ask some questions of their own. Since it was closing time, the crowd soon grew to over 50 workers who raised questions about everything from the inevitable American "Negro problem" to Soviet nuclear testing. And they received a brief lecture on our federal system of government in explanation of the President's difficulties in enforcing the Supreme Court's desegregation decision, and an opinion that the Soviet resumption of nuclear testing had led to increased tensions and given credence to the view that the

Soviet Union is an aggressive power. An exciting interchange continued for more than a half hour until the bus arrived to take the workers home.

We believe that Cubans could and did inquire and speak freely about whatever they wished—at this time. On the other hand, the newly reorganized curriculum of the University of Havana already required that every student must take one year of a course entitled “Dialectical Materialism,” regardless of what he was studying. The textbooks in most courses were direct translations of Soviet texts. The great majority of books sold on news stands and in bookstores were then from the Soviet bloc countries, China and Yugoslavia. More important, the Cuban newspapers, radio, and tv were, essentially, instruments of the government, and there were no noticeable differences among the opinions expressed by the various editorial writers and news commentators (many of whom lifted their “opinions” bodily from Tass). A view of international issues was constantly given in the mass media which glorified the Soviet Union and denigrated the United States. Cuban newsreels seemed to us masterful propaganda documents which emphasized the seamier side of American life.

There were no formal safeguards of freedom of speech and association or of personal, civil, and political rights, of the kind traditional to Western political democracies. Such freedoms as did exist depended only on what Fidel has called “the revolution’s generosity to its opponents.” There were certainly no established institutional mechanisms or judicial procedures designed to protect the individual and guarantee his freedom from unreasonable search and seizure or arbitrary arrest and imprisonment. The members of the government, the Cabinet ministers, were responsible not to the general citizenry—who did not elect them and who had no direct voice in their selection—but only to themselves and the handful of revolutionary leaders—Fidel, Raúl, “Ché,”—who appointed them.