

## **Leadership, Ideology, and Political Party**

THE Cuban Revolution is too near in time to allow us to draw definitive conclusions about its nature. The task of this chapter is to contribute to a better understanding of the deep transformation that has taken place in Cuba in the last twelve years by describing and analyzing the main elements of interest to the political analyst.

Most studies of the politics of the Revolution stress sociological factors. Regarding the origins of the Revolution, the standard attitude has been to explain everything as the result of tensions, conflicts, and a disequilibrium in the prerevolutionary social structure. Another approach has been to focus on the classes or groups that integrated the revolutionary movement, mainly prior to their ascension to power. In discussing the revolutionary process itself, attention has been centered on an analysis of social groups, such as workers, peasants, etc. There are few scholarly studies analyzing such political elements as the leadership, the party, or the struggle for power by the various political factions. These problems have been more commonly discussed in a journalistic fashion with little sophistication.

Recently two scholars in the field of political development, Samuel P. Huntington and Aristide R. Zolberg, have concentrated their attention on the "creation of political order."<sup>1</sup> Huntington identifies political development with the creation of political institutions and gives a decisive role in the developmental process to the political party and the party system. Zolberg emphasizes the obstacles faced in the creation of political order and, besides the party, analyzes the role of leadership and ideology. This approach selects elements of the political system that are also present in the Marxist-Leninist analysis of political development, although the latter usually plays down personal leadership by referring to it as "personality

cult.”<sup>2</sup> Therefore this chapter concentrates its attention on the three mentioned political elements: leadership, ideology, and political party.

### The Leader

Notwithstanding the disparate character of the normative judgments about the Cuban Revolution, there is general consensus about the decisive role played by Castro in the movement. According to Lockwood, Castro “has been at once the creator, motor force, guide and spokesman for the Revolution.”<sup>3</sup> In spite of the obvious preeminence of Castro, very little of note, with the exception of Lockwood’s book, has been written about this fascinating personality.<sup>4</sup> A promising approach to the study of Castro is to employ the concept of charismatic leadership as developed by Weber.<sup>5</sup> The characteristics of the Weberian ideal charismatic type are summarized below.<sup>6</sup>

1. It is only in times of crisis that the conditions for the appearance of charismatic leadership are ripe and, especially, at times when the other two types of legitimate leadership studied by Weber—the traditional and the rational—have lost their hold on the people.

2. There is an interaction between the leader and his disciples or followers. The leader, endowed with exceptional qualities and under the increasing conviction that a “mission” has been assigned to him, performs extraordinary activities that set him apart from the ordinary man, thus winning the devotion of the masses. Contemporarily at least, the most significant quality of the leader, proving his charismatic power, is the ability to produce powerful results in the absence of apparent power.

3. The leader not only reinforces his authority by expressing popular grievances, but also by identifying himself with past heroes, exploiting popular myths, and, last but not least, by using modern means of communication.

4. Administrators who serve the leader do not occupy a job in the usual sense, but are personal disciples, inspired to work by loyalty and enthusiasm. The leader determines the limitations of the disciples’ authority, usually in terms of the exigencies of the moment.

5. Charismatic leadership can be established, and maintained, only through success; it is essentially unstable and is subject to the process of “routinization,” so called by Weber. Through this process, the followers, especially the members of the new administrative staff, try to institutionalize the new regime, securing their positions, whereas the leader strives for the fulfillment of his “mission.”

The vagueness of the charismatic concept has permitted its application to such different characters as Napoleon, Hitler, Nkrumah, and even Eisenhower, thus casting doubts upon its utility. But more concrete typologies have not been created, and the Weberian concept—together with other elements to be discussed later—can help us emphasize some features that, in our judgment, have made Castro's charisma credible.

It does not seem necessary to go to great lengths to "prove" that Castro's leadership, in the early years of the Revolution, corresponds to elements of the Weberian ideal type. His leadership was established at a time of profound crisis and during a vacuum of authority. His magnetism and strong personality cannot be denied and he has taken advantage of a modern communications system to spread his word to the masses. Castro was able to produce powerful acts (in spite of his apparent absence of power), such as defeating the Batista dictatorship, defying U.S. corporations and U.S. government restrictions, and winning the battle of the Bay of Pigs. He has proven his talents as the articulator of the anxieties and expectations accumulated by his fellow citizens with a low level of income and education through long years of national frustration, and has been capable of partially satisfying some of these expectations, such as education and medical care. The effort of the Cuban news media to identify Castro's goals with those of José Martí are obvious. But there are two elements in Weber's ideal type with which Castro's leadership appears to correspond only slightly: the leader's belief in a "mission" and his *continuing* production of powerful actions.

Fagen stated in 1965 that Castro was strongly possessed by a sense of "mission," which according to the latter consisted of perceiving the Revolution "as part of a greater historical movement against tyranny and oppression." This is an interpretation, among many others, based on the vague word "mission," used by Weber as applied to Castro. But despite differences in objectives, one characteristic of "mission" is the performance with a sense of permanency of a special duty or task in which the leader believes. This author has profusely illustrated elsewhere the multiple shifts in Castro's apparent beliefs and duties from 1959 to 1966.<sup>8</sup> In contrast to his earlier views about dictatorship and national independency, in his most recent turn Castro has endorsed the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, manifested a close relationship with the USSR, poured scorn upon those who do not share his admiration of the Soviets (including some leftist adherents of the Cuban Revolution abroad), and has given his support to military regimes in Latin America. Thus, unless one is willing to define "mission" in the very broadest of terms, the identification of Castro as a leader with a particular, permanent "mission" seems hazardous.

To arrive at such a conclusion is not necessarily to imply a negative value judgment. It is quite possible that the repetition of sudden political turns was produced by the gigantic problems created by the small size of the island, the closeness of the United States, and the nature and goals of the Revolution. But whatever the causes may be, our contention is that the available data do not allow us to characterize Castro's performance in terms of a stable and continuous "mission," but rather the opposite.

With reference to the continuous performance of extraordinary activities, it has clearly become more and more difficult for Castro to exploit significant victories, especially after his climactic triumph at the Bay of Pigs. In fact, there have been serious setbacks for Castro's image: the failure of the rural guerrillas and their attempts to extend the Revolution in Latin America; the inability to lift the rationing system as promised; and most recently, the nonfulfillment of the ten-million-ton sugar target. Thus, Castro has attempted to capitalize on events of lesser importance to maintain his prestige or to distract public attention when significant failures have occurred. Note the extensive media coverage recently given to the victory of the Cuban sport team in the Eleventh Central-American and Caribbean games, the defeat of a tiny force of exiles that landed in Baracoa, in the province of Oriente, and the successful pressure exerted on British authorities in the Bahamas and on the Swiss embassy in Havana to obtain the release of eleven fishermen captured by counterrevolutionaries. The latter event is particularly significant because it coincided with the announcement of the failure of the ten-million-ton sugar goal.<sup>9</sup>

If the leader no longer performs powerful acts and does not have a well-defined mission, either these two elements of the model are not indispensable for charisma or there is some erosion in Castro's charismatic leadership. We will return to this point later.

### The Ideology

The term "ideology" has a long history and its use is far from being clear or uniform. To Marx, ideology was a part of the general process of alienation by which the mental products of human activity assume a life of their own, a case of "false consciousness."<sup>10</sup> To Lenin, ideology was a belief implemented by an elite of class-conscious leaders among a mass of potentially class-conscious workers. In present Soviet doctrine, the central feature of ideology is not any specific theoretical formulation, but the basic demand for belief in the party itself.<sup>11</sup>

Among these and other present uses of the concept of ideology, the one offered by Daniel Bell seems to us particularly useful. Bell, after distinguishing between values, norms, and ideologies, states: "In societies (or social

movements) that seek to mobilize people for the attainment of goals, some sharper specification of doctrine is necessary. The function of an ideology, in its broadest context, is to concretize the values, the normative judgments of the society."<sup>12</sup>

There are several factors that make it a difficult task to assess the nature and role of ideology in the Cuban Revolution. Castro is not an ideologist and he has shown little concern for ideology. Before its triumph, the July 26 movement produced neither a coherent program nor an ideological scheme. Actually, the movement's goals were so similar to the goals of Cuba's populist and progressive political parties that they did not generate ideological discussion.<sup>13</sup> After his ascension to power, Castro not only radically changed the movement's goals but later modified his political line many times, both internally and externally.

Recently, it has been speculated that Castro's lack of clear ideology may lead him to surprising internal changes, such as dropping the current revolutionary emphasis on moral incentives if confronted with failure of the experiment. Apparently, important Cuban personalities such as Osvaldo Dorticós, Raúl Castro, Haydeé Santamaría, and Raúl Roa share this belief.<sup>14</sup> Fagen has somewhat changed his previous views and has recently stated, "While hardly consistent over the years in some of his policies and public pronouncements he [Castro] has been *extremely* consistent in reasserting his dominance over the shifting revolutionary power struggle."<sup>15</sup>

If we exclude the early efforts made by Ernesto (Che) Guevara, it was only at the end of 1966, more than seven years after being in power, that the revolutionaries produced a formulation of a hemispheric ideology. This ideology is contained in the last of Guevara's works, Regis Debray's essays, Castro's speeches of the period 1966–1968, and the resolutions adopted by both the Tricontinental Conference of 1966 and the First Conference of the Latin American Solidarity Organization (OLAS) held in Havana in 1967.

The Cuban report to the OLAS conference is a sort of blueprint of Cuba's ideological formula for the hemisphere.<sup>16</sup> The report is actually "a declaration of war against imperialism and the oligarchies of Latin America."<sup>17</sup> Applying a general Marxist approach (e.g., use of class struggle to explain historical events), and ascribing to the revolutionary potential of the Latin American masses (as continuously shown since the Wars of Independence), the report asks for a radical transformation of the current economic, social, and political structures in Latin America. The immediate program, which does not present any radical departure from the common position of the Latin American left, is synthesized in five points: (a) elimination of *latifundia*, (b) nationalization of foreign monopolies, (c) devel-

opment of broad agricultural and industrial plans, (d) assurance of a stable and fair price and financial system, and (e) improvement of the mass educational system. The ultimate goal, however, is to make "a single revolution of the oppressed peoples which will not stop until it becomes a socialist revolution."<sup>18</sup> The guerrilla band established in rural areas was to be the only instrument to achieve such a goal. The report pointed out as most promising sources for recruitment peasants, workers, middle-class intellectuals, students, and finally "in certain countries certain strata of the bourgeoisie."<sup>19</sup>

Other documents and speeches publicized at the time refer to economics and social change, for example, the use of moral incentives and the attempt to build a "New Man." But the Cuban report to OLAS "concretizes" an additional new set of political values, for example, the total dedication to revolution ("the duty of every revolutionary is to make revolution"), the identification of this task with violence, and the exaltation of the guerrilla as a way of life. If internalized, these political values are to result in a radical transformation of the present "bourgeois" values prevalent in the hemisphere.

However, recent events make unnecessary any discussion on whether such a process of internalization is taking or has taken place. Cuba's ideological blueprint of 1967 is today undergoing drastic revision. Nothing is heard about the OLAS, the organization founded to implement the new ideology. No Cuban documents reiterating the heroic themes of those glorious days are now circulating. Guevara's attempt to implement the theory failed in Bolivia. Castro has turned to domestic economic problems, postponing or neglecting his external "revolutionary duty," as the Venezuelan guerrilla leader Douglas Bravo has reproached.<sup>20</sup> Castro has also offered his support to Peru's military junta, manifesting his belief that the guerrilla road to power is not really the only road to revolution in Latin America.<sup>21</sup> Finally, in 1970, Carlos Rafael Rodríguez introduced new clarifications that significantly changed some of the basic ideological principles of 1967.<sup>22</sup>

Obviously, if the ideology is so elusive as to be hardly ascertainable in terms of content, it is difficult to claim a significant role for it in the regime. Therefore, let us look at the third political element, the political party, in relation to the Cuban political system.

### The Party

Although the concept of party seems much more definite than the concept of ideology, nevertheless, the appraisal of its role in Cuba requires some previous clarifications. First, we must say that the concept of political party

prevalent in the West (according to which the party is a "part of the whole," competing with similar organizations for political power) is difficult to apply to single-party states such as those of Communist countries. This single-party type rejects competition, monopolizes power, demands ideological loyalty, and imposes strict conditions of both admission and militancy upon its members. One quotation from Lenin will help to clarify the characteristics of such parties, which are relevant to this essay. A party can only be called Communist, wrote the founder of Bolshevism,

if it is really the vanguard of the revolutionary class, if it really contains all its best representatives, if it consists of fully conscious and loyal Communists who have been educated and hardened by the experience of the persistent revolutionary struggle, if this Party has succeeded in linking itself inseparably with the whole life of its class, and through it, with the whole mass of exploited, and if it has succeeded in completely winning the confidence of this class and this mass.<sup>23</sup>

Once Bolshevism took power, such leaders as Sun Yat-sen and Kemal Atatürk tried to emulate the single-party model stripped of the Leninist requirements. And after the Soviet Union achieved great economic and political power, the same imitation has been attempted by a large number of underdeveloped countries. Space does not permit a discussion of these experiences, but Richard Lowenthal, for one, has written on this subject.<sup>24</sup> His conclusions can be compared to those arrived at by Harry Bretton in Ghana, after the fall of Kwame Nkrumah. According to Bretton, the Convention People's Party never was anything other than the personal political machine of Nkrumah.<sup>25</sup>

Theoretically, Cuba should be a different case because the formal model of the Leninist organization has been imported, the party has taken the title of Communist, and the leaders call themselves Marxist-Leninists. Yet it must be seriously questioned whether there is in Cuba a real Communist party, fulfilling the characteristics stressed by Lenin and playing the role typical of a single party in Communist countries. This author has documented extensively the antecedents of the Communist Party of Cuba (PCC).<sup>26</sup> Here we will refer to these antecedents only briefly and then discuss the more recent data in attempting to answer this question.

There have been several predecessors to the current PCC in Cuba. The traditional Communist party was founded in 1925 and, after various changes, became the Popular Socialist Party (PSP). The PSP and other revolutionary organizations (i.e., the July 26 movement, the Student Revolutionary Directorate) merged loosely into the Integrated Revolutionary

Organizations (ORI) in 1961. The affair against Aníbal Escalante, then main organizer of ORI, led to some changes and ORI became the United Party of the Socialist Revolution (PURS) in 1963. In October 1965 the party was finally organized and became officially the Communist Party of Cuba (PCC). The PCC lacks a program or bylaws, has never held a congress, and only very rarely is something published about its activities or decisions. The first congress of the PCC was announced for 1967, but it did not take place.<sup>27</sup> The congress was then scheduled for 1969 but was cancelled without public debate on the allegation that all the nation's efforts had to be concentrated on the production of sugar.<sup>28</sup> With the exception of some declaration of solidarity or endorsement of political communiqués, mainly for external consumption, the last public activity of the PCC (and perhaps the only relevant one) took place in January 1968, when the "microfaction" of the PCC was purged (see chapter 4).

Current members of the Central Committee were not chosen in 1965 by the rank and file of the old PURS and, according to Zeitlin, there seems to be no inclination to carry out such elections within the party in the future.<sup>29</sup> Even the vacancies in 1967–1968 in the Central Committee produced by the Marcos Rodríguez affair and the microfaction purge (e.g., Ameijeiras, Calcines, and Matar) or the killing of some of its members in Bolivia (e.g., Acuña, Sánchez, and Reyes) had not been filled by mid-1970.<sup>30</sup>

There are no official figures on the PCC rank-and-file membership. According to Blas Roca, a member of the PCC Secretariat and former secretary general of the PSP, in 1969 the party had some 55,000 members.<sup>31</sup> In the province of Havana, party membership increased slightly in 1967–1968 from 11,179 to 11,824 members.<sup>32</sup> These figures should be contrasted to a total population of more than 8 million inhabitants and a labor force of some 2.6 million workers.

How well does the PCC fulfill the requirements set by Lenin for truly Communist parties? For simplicity, two factors will be analyzed: whether the working class supplies its best representatives to the party; and whether the party members are "fully conscious and loyal Communists who have been educated and hardened by the experience of the persistent revolutionary struggle."

At the highest levels of the party hierarchy, that is, the Politburo and the Secretariat, there were no labor leaders in 1965 and only four of the one hundred members of the Central Committee were labor leaders: Lázaro Peña, Ursinio Rojas, Ramón Calcines, and Miguel Martín. Since then, Calcines has been purged. Two of the remaining members (Peña and Rojas) come from the PSP and only one (Martín) has emerged after the triumph of the Revolution. The PSP faction defeated in the Tenth Labor

Congress held in November 1959 now has two representatives in the Central Committee; the delegates elected by the majority of workers at the congress are now either in jail, exile, or in oblivion; and only one among the new leaders has been promoted to the Central Committee.

The percentage of workers who are rank-and-file members of the party seems to be very small, as suggested by the sample presented in table 1. Scattered data reinforce the previous impression. Thus, the delegate of the Politburo in the province of Matanzas has given examples of sugar mills in which the party cell is composed of three or four members.<sup>33</sup> And sugar is the basic industry of the country.

TABLE 1  
A SAMPLE OF WORKERS' MEMBERSHIP IN THE PCC: 1968

<i>Factories and Industries</i>	<i>Number of Workers</i>	<i>Members of the Party</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Automatic loading dock (Cienfuegos)	240	40	17%
"Venezuela" sugar mill (Camagüey)	1,500	74	5
Fertilizer construction site (Cienfuegos)	1,583	533	34
Machine-building shop (Santa Clara)	1,700	200	12
Fertilizer industry (national)	2,363	140	6
Electric industry (national)	8,340	404	5
Machine-building industry (national)	12,743	367	3
Total	28,469	1,758	6%

*Sources:* Armando Hart, "El proceso de crecimiento y de construcción del partido," *Granma Revista Semanal*, May 25, 1969, p. 3; and Gil Green, *Revolution Cuban Style* (New York, 1970), p. 82.

In evaluating the fulfillment of the requisite that party members should be "fully conscious and loyal Communists who have been educated and hardened by the persistent revolutionary struggle," three sets of data will be analyzed. One pertains to the ideological education of the party members. In August 1968, 1,649 members were enrolled in the "Schools of Study and Work," which apparently were the successors of the Schools for Revolutionary Instruction (EIR) closed in February of the same year.<sup>34</sup> Although the figure increased to 5,622 in March 1969, this represents little more than 10 percent of the total party membership.<sup>35</sup>

The second set of data pertains to the party "cadres" in charge of ideological instruction. In 1966, out of a total of 573 cadres, 109 came from the July 26 movement, 27 from the PSP, 13 from the Socialist Youth Party branch, 6 from the Student Revolutionary Directorate, and 418 had no political or revolutionary record before 1959.<sup>36</sup> In other words, 73 percent of the personnel entrusted with the teaching of Marxism-Leninism and with ideologizing the new generation did not participate at all in the revolution-

ary struggle against Batista. Furthermore, only 7 percent—the former members of the PSP and the Socialist Youth—could be considered “fully conscious and loyal Communists.”

The third set of data pertains to the party leadership. Out of eight members of the Politburo, none was a “conscious and loyal Communist” before 1959, and only two among the six members of the Secretariat, and twenty-two out of the one hundred members of the Central Committee have such qualifications. If we take into consideration the guerrilla experience of many other members of the top party hierarchy, the situation substantially improves. However, these members lack the condition of permanency and loyalty to the Marxist-Leninist ideology, being principally followers of and loyal to Castro throughout his numerous ideological shifts.

What is the role of the PCC as an institution in Cuban politics? A sympathizer of the Revolution, Lockwood, who has recently visited Cuba and has studied Castro’s personality, asserts that the party and other political institutions have no real power and that the administrative-political apparatus is constructed as a pyramid, at the top of which Castro’s power remains undisturbed and supreme.<sup>37</sup>

Castro, in addition to holding the title of first secretary of the party, is also premier, commander in chief of the armed forces, and, usually, the only one who speaks in the name of the PCC. The strong asymmetry in the distribution of power within the party is obvious. In fact, the most important officials of the administration and the armed forces in Cuba also hold the top positions in the PCC. The consequence of this dual role is the lack of defined, separated political and administrative functions in the Cuban government. In 1962, Aníbal Escalante, a prominent member of the PSP and main organizer of the ORI, was denounced by Castro for attempting to subordinate the administration to the party, but today it is obvious that the party is subordinated to Castro and a group of his inner circle who are in charge of the administration. In spite of this situation, in May 1970 Castro blamed the party’s intervention into administrative affairs as one of the causes of the failure in achieving the ten-million-ton sugar goal and announced that in the future the party’s role will be restricted to the stimulation, coordination, and supervision of the administrative function.<sup>38</sup> In actuality, Castro personally directed the sugar campaign and his first step after its failure was to dismiss an administrative official, the minister of the sugar industry. In a more realistic speech on July 26, 1970, Castro seemed to accept his own responsibility for the failure, said that the masses might change their leadership if they wanted to, and admitted that there were problems, discontentments, and irritations. Although he announced that there would be changes in the party, he did not elaborate on them.<sup>39</sup>

### Problems in the Classification of Cuba's Political System

The previous analysis of three political elements is helpful to characterize the Cuban political system by, first, the prominence of a leader with charismatic attributes and, second, the rather elusive and ancillary—if not insignificant—role played by both ideology and party in that system. It is obvious that the analysis of these three elements does not exhaust the analytical possibilities, but to attempt a further description of the Cuban regime that would be useful for the comparative study of politics is a difficult task. Neither Western political science nor Soviet doctrine provides more than meager help.

Robert Dahl, for example, has offered a typology of political systems by following such criteria as the distribution of power, the level of legitimacy, and the number of subsystems.<sup>40</sup> According to this classification, the Cuban regime probably would be placed among those characterized by a personal autocracy and a relatively low level of subsystem autonomy and legitimacy.<sup>41</sup> To recognize the inadequacy of Dahl's classification, it is enough to point out that Trujillo's former regime in the Dominican Republic could be put in the same group.

Gabriel Almond's typology is more complex but no more satisfactory to our purpose. According to Almond, among the "authoritarian systems" (a subgroup of the "mobilized modern systems"), there is a variety of "radical totalitarian systems" whose paradigm is the Soviet Union. Almond, however, adds that "the Communist systems of Eastern Europe and Cuba . . . are by no means identical with that of the Soviet Union." Although he then explains that the Eastern European systems are more representative of the "conservative totalitarian type of systems" (another variety of the authoritarian systems), he does not discuss at all what makes the Cuban system different from the Soviet model.<sup>42</sup>

The recent studies on comparative communism are no more illuminating. Skilling, Tucker, Little, Jacobs, Kautsky, Sharlet, and Meyer simply ignore Castro.<sup>43</sup> Nevertheless, Meyer has written before, "If Cuba is a Communist country, then the meaning of 'communism' has become exceedingly vague."<sup>44</sup> Shoup shows more prudence, "Cuba comes to mind as a country whose claim to be Communist is still open to question."<sup>45</sup> And Lowenthal follows him, "It is still an open question how far Castro's regime has really become a communist party regime in the classical sense."<sup>46</sup>

Hauptmann, after trying a typology of Communist systems based on the criteria of "rationality" and "sophistication," includes Cuba in the group of Communist regimes called "non-rational" and "non-sophisticated." He goes even further by saying that "Cuba is an exception to nearly every

generalization made above," and more, "One may even sometimes wonder whether the Castro phenomenon cannot best be explained by reference to the traditional Latin American caudillism."<sup>47</sup>

Soviet doctrine is not very helpful either. According to this doctrine, there are four "basic features" or "principles" that characterize the countries of the socialist commonwealth.<sup>48</sup> They are (a) the significance of the role of the people led by the working class and under the guidance of the Communist party; (b) an economy founded on the public ownership of the means of production; (c) a new social structure characterized by two social groups, the toiling classes of workers and peasants, and the people's intelligentsia; and (d) a new culture based on the Marxist-Leninist ideology. Evidence accumulated in this paper shows the absence of the first feature in today's Cuba. The second, however, is clearly present in Cuba. In the case of the third feature, workers, peasants, and intelligentsia all exist in Cuba. However, the latter term, although it could be extended to cover highly specialized technicians, is difficult to apply to other significant sectors such as the military who are neither workers nor peasants. (This objection, of course, is applicable to the USSR also.) There is the additional problem of whether these groups are actually fully integrated into the new social structure. Finally, it has been clearly established that Cuba has not developed the fourth feature, that is, a "new culture" or set of values based on the Marxist-Leninist ideology. Frequent ideological shifts have impeded the development of a firm base to build a "new culture," although such a thing could yet occur. Perhaps it is not so surprising, in light of these observations, that the Soviets and their domestic group of old-guard Communists have been constantly pushing for the development of party and ideology within the last nine or ten years; they apparently feel that Cuba has some distance to travel before it can be accepted as a Communist state.

The analysis of this special external factor (Soviet pressure) may help to further explain why it is so difficult to classify the Cuban political system. Our contention is that the Cuban leadership did not have an original commitment to adopt the Soviet model but accepted it under particular international circumstances and, since then, there has been a permanent conflict between the Soviet desire to have its model fully implemented in Cuba and the Cuban leadership's resistance to such full implementation. Thus, this factor has operated, together with the personalistic factor represented by Castro, as a deterrent to the political institutionalization of the socialist revolution. This aspect requires more detailed discussion.

The Castroite regime emerged in 1959 as a consequence of the following essential factors: a long-standing crisis of legitimacy that became acute with the coup of March 10, 1952, and climaxed with the military collapse of December 1958; the appearance of Castro as a charismatic leader; and

the international situation in which the Soviet Union decided to explore the value of Cuba as a pawn in its conflict with the United States. The power formula discovered by Castro under such circumstances was based on his own leadership and massive popular support, but also on Soviet external protection and aid.

However, Soviet help had not been granted with the extension and thoroughness demanded by the Cubans. Furthermore, the Soviets, in exchange for their help, asked for internal reforms, such as a significant role for the party, greater ideological rigor, and domestic-economic and foreign-political policies congruent with their own.

Neither the July 26 movement, the Student Revolutionary Directorate, the Cuban people, nor, perhaps, even Castro, fought against Batista for the purpose of establishing a regime of the Soviet model in Cuba. What happened was that, at a certain stage of the process, Castro was able to capitalize on Cuba's international position to make the Revolution a much more intense and profound phenomenon than previously projected. The Cuban people followed the charismatic leader in his decision. But when the costs of the decision began to materialize in the form of rationing, regimentation, hemispheric isolation, etc., popular support entered into a process of contraction. At the same time, the Soviets asked for the reforms mentioned above, and Castro faced a dilemma: to resist or to yield to Soviet pressure. In spite of the risks involved, Castro chose the first alternative, at least until 1968.

It is not our purpose here to discuss the ability shown by Castro both to delay the process of contraction of popular support and to resist Soviet pressure. These aspects are documented in other chapters of this book. The significant point for our study is that, in this process, the original Castroite power formula—charismatic leadership, popular support, and external protection—began to weaken and conflict with each other. Another important point is that the armed forces have been very helpful to Castro in this difficult process, working as an instrument of “routinization” and regimentation.

Although very little is known about the armed forces, the scant data available seem to indicate an increase in its personnel and role in the Cuban political system.<sup>49</sup> Three conditions explain this phenomenon: (a) both the leader and his closest followers feel a strong vocation for military life, (b) the U.S. threat justifies the presence of a powerful military instrument, and (c) diminishing popular support makes it advisable to substitute regimentation and coercive means for voluntary adhesion in the Castroite tripartite power formula.

Thus, in the summer of 1970, the Cuban political system could be characterized as a variant of the charismatic model, in which ideology and

party play a minimal role and in which the process of institutionalization is very weak, obstructed by the personality of the leader and his resistance to accept a foreign model of routinization. Institutionalization does not appear to be taking place at the level of the top leadership, the formal state apparatus, the party, or even the mass organizations, but it does seem to be present in the armed forces, which has been given an increasingly large role in the regime. If the transition to direct military rule should become the case in Cuba, not only would the system become easier to classify, but we might also be able to draw on the increasing literature about the behavior patterns of the military in developing nations that could help us to understand the Cuban phenomenon better.

### Future Outlook

There are too many variables involved in the Cuban phenomenon to make valid predictions about the future. Hence, the hypotheses presented here should be considered with this caution in mind. If our previous remarks are substantially correct, that is, if the USSR is exerting pressure in the indicated direction, thereby increasing the difficulties of the leader in trying to keep his popular following, and if the other factors (especially U.S.-Cuban relations) remain constant, then the preservation of the present structure of power in Cuba is improbable.

If this juncture is reached, three alternatives are available: (a) an open confrontation with the Soviets, with unforeseeable consequences; (b) nominal subordination, but practical resistance to fully implement the Soviet model as practiced in 1966-1968; and (c) subordination and growing acceptance of the Soviet model. The first alternative would be suicidal because it would result in a cut of Soviet supplies and external protection. The second alternative may no longer be possible since the 1966-1968 situation has led to the current state of affairs. There were indications visible in 1968-1969 (which will be discussed in chapter 4) and in 1970 (which are discussed below) suggesting that the Soviet influence in Cuba is increasing and that the leader's charismatic power may be eroding.

The failure to achieve the ten-million-ton goal of sugar placed Castro in a difficult bargaining position to negotiate with the USSR for the renewal of the Cuban sugar treaty that expired as of 1970. In his speech of July 26, 1970, Castro apparently accepted part of his responsibility for the failure and said, "The best would be to tell the people that they should find another leader . . . the people may substitute us whenever it is convenient, right now if they wish."<sup>60</sup> (In later speeches, however, Castro has managed to avoid his own responsibility by emphasizing the negative role that, according to him, the administration and the party played in the failure.)