

structure remains in the hands of civilians. In the post-Trujillo era, the Dominican Republic has undergone tremendous transformation, not the least of which has been the change from a quasi-private fiefdom to a national state. The army has accepted, sometimes reluctantly, the results of the national voting and allowed the presidents to serve out their terms of office. The Dominican Republic in the late 1980s, therefore, has joined the rest of the Caribbean (except Cuba and Suriname) in the practice of a modern political culture based on free, competitive, regularly held elections. Regular elections, however, do not provide the full test of the maturity of the nation-state. Political stability remains precarious as long as basic economic expectations are unfulfilled. In that sense, the challenges to Caribbean nationalism derive equally from internal as well as external sources.

FRANKLIN KNIGHT,
THE CARIBBEAN: THE
GENESIS OF A FRAGMENTED NATIONALISM

Chapter 8 • Caribbean Nation Building 2: Cuba, 1868-1989

Cuba could easily provide for a population three times as great as it now has, so there is no excuse for the abject poverty of a single one of its present inhabitants. The markets should be overflowing with produce, pantries should be full, all hands should be working. This is not an inconceivable thought. What is inconceivable is that anyone should go to bed hungry, that children should die for lack of medical attention. . . . What is inconceivable is that the majority of our rural people are now living in worse circumstances than were the Indians Columbus discovered in the fairest land that human eyes had ever seen.

Fidel Castro, *History Will Absolve Me*, October 16, 1953.

We are a fighting people, setbacks have not got the better of us, and we have come through some difficult times. We won when we were just a handful. Today we are millions, and no external or internal force, no objective or subjective conditions can hold back our victorious march to the future.

Fidel Castro, Armed-Forces-Day speech, December 5, 1988.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, Cubans had already begun to manifest a rebellious sense of national identity more preco-

cious than any found elsewhere in the Caribbean and perhaps in the Americas. It is not easy to explain why Cubans should have been so politically self-conscious at the beginning of the eighteenth century, but its historical experience varied slightly from the other Caribbean colonies. Geography was a major factor. Cuba was a large island, the largest in the Caribbean—although size had little to do with its early colonization. It was bountifully endowed with gently rolling, fertile, cultivable land, dense hardwood forests, and fine harbors making it immensely habitable. That was not considered an asset until the late-eighteenth-century agricultural revolution. Its early importance derived from its perfect strategic location when maritime transportation depended on ships driven by sail. After the Spanish imperial reorganization in 1585, Cuba became an important nodal point in the transatlantic communication network. The excellent harbor at Havana provided a convenient collection point for the protected galleons sailing back from the New World. Soon Havana was preeminent among the notorious fortified Spanish-American cities including San Juan in Puerto Rico, San Juan de Ulloa in Mexico, and Cartagena in New Granada. Military fortifications and expanding administrative functions infused importance to the city and stimulated its gradual prosperity. Cuba was a major beneficiary of the late-eighteenth-century administrative and economic reforms of Charles III (k. 1759–1788). By the eighteenth century, the island had already possessed a critical mass of settlers, that is, a large enough population base to fulfill all the complex occupational functions of the community and a coherent culture, albeit heavily concentrated around Havana in the west and Santiago de Cuba in the east. As John McNeill shows in *Atlantic Empires of France and Spain*, “Cuban society reflected Spanish society a good deal more than did most parts of Spanish America.” A diversified white population included peasants and landless laborers; artisans, construction workers, shopkeepers, import and export merchants, prostitutes, butchers, salters, stevedores, ditchdiggers, tailors; a bureaucratic class serving city, colony, and empire; a professional class of officers in the army and navy, lawyers, doctors, chemists, priests, scribes, ships’ captains and university professors. Rounding

out the population were a growing number of slaves and a small but expanding landed aristocracy and nobility.

The island underwent a tremendous population explosion and frenzied economic development after 1750. Under the impetus of an impressive annual subsidy (until 1808) from Mexico, a series of free-trade agreements (beginning in 1776), and the aggressive penetration of North American merchants into the Cuban trade, the overall transformation was phenomenal. The population increased from 160,512 in 1757 to 272,000 in 1790 and reached more than 1,300,000 in 1860. By 1899, the population had reached 1,631,687. Between 1790 and 1860, the fastest growing segment of the population was that of the slaves, imported legally and illegally from Africa and needed to boost production on the sugar plantations then taking advantage of the collapse in Saint-Domingue. By 1840, nonwhites outnumbered whites by a small number. At that time, the original settler society had already been severely strained by a series of sugar revolutions but, unlike Jamaica or Barbados, had not been totally converted into a plantation and slave structure. Mindful of the situation in Haiti, the Cubans actively reduced the number of nonwhites by restricted immigration—eventually ending the slave trade—and wanton slaughter (as after the *La Escalera* conspiracy of 1843 in Matanzas). After 1860, the greater increase in the population occurred among the white sector. Between 1860 and 1920, more than 600,000 Spaniards migrated to the island, increasing the proportion of whites in the population, shattering the stereotypes of occupation and race, but, surprisingly, not diluting the nationalist sensibility on the island.

The city of Havana grew physically and almost doubled its population by the end of the eighteenth century. A measure of this transformation may be gauged from the fact that Havana was by 1790 the largest American port city—and third in population size after Mexico City and Lima in the hemisphere. With a population of 51,307 in 1792, Havana far exceeded in size its Caribbean rivals: Cap Français (15,000), Kingston (23,508), Port-au-Prince (6,200). But Havana also substantially surpassed its competitors or trading partners on the mainland. At about the same time, Boston had a population of

18,038. New York had 33,131 inhabitants. Philadelphia, whose traders did most of their business with Havana, had a population of 42,444. Vera Cruz, the main Caribbean export city of Mexico, had a population of about 15,000; Rio de Janeiro, 38,707; and Buenos Aires, roughly 30,000 inhabitants. Even excluding the 17,000 slaves, Havana was a big and important city at the end of the eighteenth century, ranking among the most prominent anywhere in the Americas. What was more, Havana had a university (established in 1728) and a dynamic cultural life.

Modern Cuban history may be divided into three periods: the late colonial period, ending in 1898; the period of republican independence between 1902 and 1959; and the Castro revolution that replaced it after 1959.

During the nineteenth century, the Cuban sugar industry achieved monumental success. Although it relied considerably upon slave labor—and African slaves continued to be imported in large numbers until the late 1860s—it also incorporated a variety of free laborers, drawn from Europe, Asia, and Mexico. In addition, it was an innovative society. The first sugar revolutions at the end of the eighteenth century restructured land use and concentrated production on sugarcane growing, milling, and boiling. The process resembled the conventional structure of production that had been in existence for centuries, uniting in a single labor-intensive frenzy the combined complementary tasks of agriculture and manufacturing. Given the technological constraints at the time, much duplication was inevitable and the maximum unit of production remained around three hundred metric tons per year per unit. After that, the producer duplicated the entire structure in a semiautonomous unit. In that way, one owner had many estates, each a virtual carbon copy of the others. Most sugar estates at the end of the eighteenth century, however, produced closer to thirty tons of sugar per harvest.

By 1840, however, a new series of technological revolutions overtook the sugar industry, making it the most mechanized and efficient in the world, employing steam-powered mills, vacuum-drying vats, and narrow-gauge railroads to boost productivity and production enor-

mously. These technological innovations destroyed the old formula for sugar production and engineered a voracious expansion of the industry eastward from Havana, expelling or absorbing small landholders, eliminating subsistence farming, and converting the island's famous and extensive hardwood forests of pines, mahogany, cedar, and *lignum vitae* into unbroken fields of sugarcane. The output per mill was impressive, increasing from about 30 tons per mill in 1790 to 72 tons per mill in 1830, to 120 tons in 1840, to 300 tons in 1860, to 500 tons in 1870, to 1,330 tons in 1890. Equally significant is the already high average production of the sixty-four mechanized mills in 1860: an average of 1,176 tons per mill. By the 1860s, the sugar industry accounted for 83 percent of all exports, and with an annual harvest of more than 500,000 tons of sugar, Cuba alone produced nearly a third of all cane sugar traded on the world market. Higher production indicated a smaller number of sugar factories and increased productivity. Even before the arrival of United Fruit Company, a pattern of concentrated landholding was apparent. In 1857, *ingenio* Santa Susana had 11,000 acres with 1,700 in cane, 866 slaves, and a harvest of 2,700 tons. *Ingenio* Alava, owned by Miguel Aldama had approximately half of its 5,000 acres in cane and produced more than 3,500 tons of cane with a labor force including 600 slaves. By the 1880s, the construction of *centrales* (central factories) indicated the separation of the industrial from the agricultural process in sugar manufacturing and further augmented productive efficiency. By 1894, as Eric Williams noted in his study, *From Columbus to Castro*, "Cuba produced more than fifty times as much [sugar] as Jamaica exported, ten times as much as British Guiana, four times as much as the French West Indies." In the twentieth century, corporate enterprises boosted production even more.

The sugar revolutions fundamentally altered the structure of Cuban society and economy, creating a new, rich class of slave owners who used their wealth to augment their political power and social status. The small landed aristocracy in the middle of the eighteenth century moved enthusiastically into sugar production and commerce. The elite comprised families such as the Arango y Parreño, de las Casas,

Montalvo, O'Farrill, Calvo de la Puerta, Peñalver, Beltrán de Santa Cruz, Barreto, Zayas Bazán, Mateo Pedroso, Herreras, Nuñez del Castillo, Recio de Oquendo, and Kindelán, some of whom had established residence in Cuba in the sixteenth century. These families demonstrated the common eighteenth-century pattern, especially of mainland settler families, of intermarriage and overlapping participation in Church, bureaucracy, economy, and military. By 1790, Cuba boasted a titled nobility of twenty persons, a fourfold increase over the number in 1760. The titled nobility ranked at the top of the elite. Beginning in the 1790s, an increasing number of the elite took advantage of the penurious state of the Spanish treasury to purchase supernumerary captaincies and colonelcies in the regular army and militia. Indeed, by 1800, Cubans held a majority of the offices in the local garrison in Havana, a majority of the colonelcies, and a majority of positions in municipal government. The Cuban elite was unusually cosmopolitan. It not only established conjugal links with distinguished families all along the Atlantic seaboard from Massachusetts to the Río de la Plata but it also fraternized with the metropolitan elite, sending members to the Spanish court and even placing offspring in the highly select Royal College of Nobles. Gonzalo O'Farrill (1754-1831), born in Havana, rose to be lieutenant-general of the Spanish army and minister of war. A Cuban, Joaquín Beltrán de Santa Cruz y Cárdenas, spent seven years at the Spanish court and returned to Cuba as the Conde de Santa Cruz de Mopos, a brigadier in the regular army and the subinspector-general of the army in Cuba—unique achievements for a Creole in the Spanish empire.

The individual achievements of the Cuban Creole elite were not, in the great majority of cases, unique in the history of the Caribbean or of the mainland colonies. What appears exceptional in the Cuban case, however, is the relatively large size, cohesiveness, and self-confidence of this group. While political astuteness encouraged the Cuban settler elite to support Spanish government, it identified increasingly with its homeland—and by the beginning of the nineteenth century, that homeland was unmistakably Cuba. Then the aristocracy came to concentrate more on landed investment while retaining dominance over the merchant community in the Consulado. Nowhere else in the

Caribbean was this the case. When the Spanish government was no longer required to support slavery at the end of the century, the Cuban elite abandoned Spain and supported the cause of independence. Their imperial loyalty derived from the convenience of self-interest.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the Cuban sugar society was already a volatile mixture of constricting feudalism *cum* modern technologically advanced capitalism. It was international in its connections. The society needed workers from Africa; food from Spain and North America; machinery and technicians from England, France, Germany, and North America; and markets in North America, England, and Spain. With commerce expanding, Havana became an important international port of call, above all for North American merchant traders. The number of North American-registered ships calling at Havana increased from 150 in 1790 to 1,886 in 1852. By 1877, more than 82 percent of Cuban exports went to the United States, while only 6 percent went to Spain. Clearly, Spain no longer served as the economic metropolis for the island. The mercantile interests of the colony and those of the metropolis inevitably began to diverge.

Changing economic interests had some effect on political opinions. Throughout the century, the island produced a steady number of articulate spokesmen and activists who advocated its independence: Félix Varela y Morales (1788-1853), José Antonio Saco (1797-1879), Carlos Manuel de Céspedes (1819-1874), Francisco Aguilera (1821-1877) Ignacio Agramonte (1841-1873), Enrique José Varona (1849-1933), and José Martí (1853-1895). In the 1820s and 1830s, Spain had to suppress a number of conspiracies designed to unite Cuba with the centrifugal forces on the mainland. In the 1840s and 1850s, a number of filibuster expeditions supported by proslavery forces in the southern United States tried to wrest the island forcefully from Spain. At the official level, the United States government tried unsuccessfully to purchase the island. Nevertheless, the issue of slavery divided the elite, and Spain managed to extend an uneasy control throughout the century, exiling dissidents and hanging conspirators, while undulating between promises of reform and disappointing displays of performance. Cuban nationalism, still in its infancy, suffered

the vitiating effects of race, class, color, and occupational discrimination.

By the 1860s, the centrifugal factions had become strong and broad based. Spain promised political autonomy, and Cuban participation in the metropolitan Cortes in 1867. The following year, a domestic military revolt toppled the Spanish monarchy, and almost a month later, on October 10, 1868, Carlos Manuel de Céspedes and thirty-six nationalist companions declared against Spanish colonial rule in their famous *Grito de Yara* (Yara Declaration) that heralded the first war of Cuban political independence. The war lasted ten years and ended in a stalemate, reflecting the deep internal divisions politically, socially, and economically in the island. The rich sugar producers of the western part of the island and the vast majority of their slaves supported the metropolis. The insurgent nationalists rallied a motley variety of supporters: reformists willing to live within the Spanish empire; advocates of total independence; small and middle-level landowners who objected to increased taxes; abolitionists seeking the abolition of slavery; small slaveholders who enjoyed amicable relations with their slaves and had nothing much to lose; annexationists proposing incorporation into the United States with an eye to reconciling their politics with their economics; and peasants and shopkeepers from the eastern part of the island who derived no tangible benefits from the colonial government and were more indifferent than committed. They formed elusive guerrilla bands and fought doggedly against the Spanish army and its coalition of wealthy volunteers in a series of indecisive campaigns across the eastern half of the island from Camagüey to Oriente. At the Pact of Zanjón in 1878, Spain, quite exhausted by the war, again promised major political and economic reforms: a general amnesty for all insurgents and unconditional emancipation for all African slaves and Asian indentured workers participating in the rebel armies. But a number of nationalist leaders including Antonio Maceo (1845–1896) refused to accept the Spanish conditions of surrender and left the island to continue preparations for a renewed struggle for total independence. The Ten Years' War sounded the death knell for slavery, and in 1886 Cuba became the last Caribbean country—and second to last

(with Brazil last) in the Americas—to abolish that despicable system of human suffering and exploitation.

In the 1890s, political and economic crisis in the island increased. Four factions clamored for attention: those who were satisfied with the status quo; those who wanted a sort of dominion status (like that recently bestowed on Canada by Great Britain) within the Spanish empire; those who wanted annexation to the United States; and those who wanted unqualified independence. The disparate organizations operating both inside and outside of the island were coordinated and magnificently mobilized by the brilliant poet and propagandist, José Martí. But economic conditions in the period after the Ten Years' War were miserable for the vast majority of Cubans. During the 1880s, capital was scarce. Interest rates on credit soared, sometimes to 30 percent per year, beyond the reach of modest producers. Sugar prices declined as competition increased, leading to a number of bank failures. Employment opportunities in government, in the shipyards, in businesses, and in cigar factories plummeted. Wages fell, and the cost of living rose. Cuba experienced broad-scale social and economic unrest at the moment when the political system in the metropolis found itself least able to attend to colonial affairs. Conditions improved during the early 1890s, but by then the Cuban Revolutionary party of José Martí had forged a broad coalition with the single goal of fighting for the independence of Cuba.

On February 24, 1895, a second war of independence broke out, and it quickly became a far more total war with far more serious consequences than the first. Geographically, the war covered the entire island and, thanks to the tireless organization of Martí, spanned all groups and classes. Spain deployed more than 200,000 troops. Both sides killed civilians and burned sugar estates, coffee plantations, and towns, waging war without quarter. Approximately 10 percent of the population died or were exiled. The economy was shattered. By 1898, commercial activity had virtually come to a standstill. Sugar production dropped from more than 1,500,000 tons in 1894 to less than 200,000 tons in 1897. The United States, with investments exceeding \$50,000,000 in Cuba and trade with twice that amount, became concerned and excited. After a mysterious explosion

aboard a visiting warship, the USS *Maine*, the United States entered the war against Spain on April 25, 1898. By August, Spain had signed a peace protocol in Washington that ended hostilities, and with the signing of the Treaty of Paris on December 10, 1898, the Spanish empire in the Americas came to an inglorious end. Unfortunately for the Cubans, it did not result in their political independence.

Instead, victorious Cuba found itself occupied by the military forces of the United States. The U.S. occupation was a mixed blessing. It brought peace, though it increased the level of popular discontent and dissatisfaction by disbanding the Cuban army. It built a number of schools but imposed an inadequate American-style educational system on the island. It busily built roads, paved the streets of Havana, repaired and extended the telephone system, started sewer works, and extended public sanitation. But the major beneficiaries of most of the renovation and new construction were U.S. contractors and entrepreneurs. The occupation restored the economy but at the price of establishing a U.S. hegemony. It institutionalized politics but disfranchised Cubans. Only about 30 percent of adult males qualified to vote in the elections of 1900 that created the first government of a free Cuba. Moreover, the Platt Amendment (1901), reluctantly accepted by the Cubans, conferred on the United States the right to dictate all international agreements, to regulate the local economy, to intervene in domestic political affairs—"for the welfare of the people, politically, mentally and morally" as General Leonard Wood declared—and to establish a naval station at Guantánamo Bay on the southeastern coast of the island.

Tomás Estrada Palma (1835–1908), a veteran of the Ten Years' War who had succeeded Martí as leader of the independence movement, assumed office as the first elected president of Cuba on May 20, 1902. An unabashed annexationist, Estrada Palma proved to be the wrong man at the wrong time. Vain, weak, incompetent, and greedy, he could not stand up to the United States or to the increasing domestic political factions. U.S. economic interest expanded by leaps and bounds. Hundreds of thousands of acres of prime sugar and tobacco land passed into North American ownership. By 1905, more than thirteen thousand North Americans had acquired land in Cuba.

Foreigners controlled iron and copper mines, the railroad companies, the utilities, shipping companies, and banks. In 1911, North Americans had capital investments amounting to more than \$200 million, compared with British investments of \$60 million, French investments of \$12 million, and German investments of \$4.5 million. Cubans were finding it difficult to compete in their own country. Latifundism grew in the twentieth century like mushrooms on compost. By 1959, large local and foreign corporations controlled 75 percent of the best arable lands in Cuba. The United Fruit Company owned 93,000 acres. The Punta Alegre Company owned 112,000 acres and leased a further 43,000 acres. The Vertientes-Camagüey Company owned or leased 800,000 acres. The Cuban Atlantic Sugar Company had 400,000 acres, and its rival, the Cuban-American Sugar Company, had 500,000 acres. The Manatí Sugar Company owned or leased 237,000 acres, most of which was cultivated in sugarcane. Julio Lobo, the world's largest sugar vendor, owned or otherwise controlled 1,000,000 acres. The Administración de Negocios Azucareros, owned by the heirs of the Spaniard Lureano Falla Gutiérrez, had 300,000 acres. The name "Cuba" almost became synonymous with "sugar."

The political stability that the United States ardently sought to serve their strategic purposes and as a guarantee for their investments proved elusive from the very beginning. Estrada Palma rigged the presidential elections in 1905 and won a Pyrrhic victory. Immediately he faced a revolt of the losing Liberals, and was driven from office the following year. The result was a second military occupation by the United States beginning in October 1906. This occupation was less offensive and more indirect than the first. Charles Magoon (1861–1920), a lawyer who had been governor of the Panama Canal Zone, assumed the position as provisional governor of Cuba. The Cuban constitution remained in force, and the Cuban flag continued to fly (alongside the American flag) from public buildings. Assisted by a civilian advisory commission, Magoon revised the electoral procedure, broadened the franchise, and held elections that returned the Liberals to office. José Miguel Gómez (1858–1921) took office on January 28, 1909, and supervised an economic boom that accentuated the gulf in Cuban society between the "haves" and the "have nots."

The "haves" comprised a small group of foreigners and local bourgeoisie. The others constituted an amorphous congregation of dispossessed, unemployed, itinerant workers, seasonal immigrants, frustrated politicians—in general, the lower classes of all races.

Between 1902 and 1959, Cuban politics, despite a record of frequent elections, could hardly be described as an exercise in democratic process. It consisted of graft, corruption, malfeasance, administrative incompetence, and blatant social insensitivity to the lower orders, especially the Afro-Cubans. It was government that operated in the shadow of the political and economic interest groups of the United States. Cubans became adept at playing the United States card to serve their interests, but it was a most difficult and unpredictable game. In the long run, it did not serve to enhance the political maturity of the Cubans or the political interests of the United States or the cause of peace and prosperity. Social unrest was endemic. The pattern set by Gómez was followed by his regularly elected successors, Mario García Menocal (served 1913–1921), Alfredo Zayas (1921–1925), Gerardo Machado (1925–1933) Fulgencio Batista (1940–1944 and 1952–1959), Ramón Grau San Martín (1944–1948) and Carlos Prío Socarrás (1948–1952). All used public office to serve private ends and showed scant respect for human rights. Machado and Batista were the most notorious, employing military force, selective assassinations, and constitutional manipulations to gain and keep office. Political corruption extended to the lowest ranks of government. One-fifth of the candidates in the 1922 elections had criminal records, and a frequent occupation of the legislatures was the passage of amnesty bills exonerating members of the government from past criminal actions. Besides general amnesties, presidential pardons were abusively abundant, further enhancing the power of the presidency. Between 1933—when he overthrew Machado with the connivance of the United States—and 1959—when having lost that base of support he abandoned the country—Batista was the most powerful politician in Cuba. But presidential power rested on brute force, not on the legitimacy of popular support. In 1912, a group of aspiring middle-class Afro-Cubans led by Evaristo Estenoz and Pedro Ivonet organized themselves to secure better jobs, to obtain access to the political

patronage system, and to protest the 1911 Morúa law aimed at eliminating political associations based on color and race. The response of the government was swift and brutal, resulting in the loss of more than three thousand Afro-Cuban lives, mainly in Oriente Province. That effectively destroyed the Afro-Cuban political aspirations to use the process. Thereafter, a modified version of U.S. racism colored race relations in Cuba. In 1917, having lost the elections, the Liberals resorted to revolt as they had successfully done in 1906. The Americans sent military units into Camagüey and Oriente and, to the surprise of the Liberals, supported the conservative government of Menocal and defused the protest. But there was no consistent pattern to United States intervention in Cuban political affairs. In 1933, the United States intervened on the side of the opposition, abruptly ending the Machado dictatorship.

In the meantime, the economy of the island was integrated with the mainland. Cubans used U.S. currency, bought U.S. commodities, and sold virtually all of their products in the U.S. market. Sugar, despite wild fluctuations, was the principal money earner. But the income from sugar was augmented by a vigorous tourist business promoted by luxury hotels, gambling casinos, and brothels catering to every vice. Havana gained prominence during the years of the legally enforced alcohol prohibition in the United States (1919–1933) as the place for easy booze, willing bedmates, and indiscriminate betting. The island exuded an air of prosperity, but it was superficial, restricted to a small circle of politicians, their families and cronies, and their foreign patrons. The recurring cycles of boom in the 1920s, 1940s, and 1950s did not penetrate much below the upper classes, nor beyond the suburbs of Havana and Santiago.

For the majority of Cubans in the 1950s, life was brutally miserable and often miserably short. Unemployment and underemployment were rife, especially in the sugar zones. Public services were appallingly inadequate and, even worse, unevenly distributed. Greater Havana, with 17 percent of the Cuban population, had 60 percent of the dentists, 66 percent of the chemists, 60 percent of the nurses, and a disproportionate share of everything. But even in Havana, the contrast between the affluent of Miramar, Vedado, and El Country Club

and the poor of Old Havana and Pogolotti was remarkable. Still, the contrast between urban and rural Cuba remained astonishing. Rural Cuba in 1958 as a world apart. Only 9 percent of rural homes had electricity compared with 87 percent in the cities. Well over 90 percent of rural Cubans did not regularly drink milk or eat fish, meat, or bread, despite living in a country with one of the most highly developed cattle industries in the Americas. Rural illiteracy was four times that of urban areas. The city of Havana boasted a ratio of 1 doctor for every 220 persons, but that fell off to 1 for 2,423 in rural Oriente. Although the national per capita income of \$353 in 1958 was among the highest in all Latin America and the Caribbean, the average rural worker made merely \$91 per year. Worker incomes declined relatively and absolutely between 1951 and 1955, although overall conditions in 1958 were slightly better than in 1955. Moreover, with government income lavished on an excessive bureaucracy and the army, there was little flexibility for setting priorities.

Economic discontent was not a major factor in the unforeseen collapse of the Batista dictatorship in 1959, for more than fifty years, Cubans had endured illegitimate governments, corrupt politicians, and a system apparently incapable of regenerating itself. The tug-of-war between Washington and Havana produced a succession of political jugglers whose main goal was to play their game as long as they could. The opposition remained fragmented by class, by political orientation, by geography, and by goals. In 1933, a glimmer of hope appeared with the end of the Machado dictatorship and the attempt at substantial political reforms. That proved short-lived. A promising constitution promulgated in 1940 offered effective suffrage and no reelection, but Batista's coup d'état in 1952 turned the clock back beyond 1933. The dozens of frustrated groups that sprung up after 1952 all declared themselves, in common with the rhetoric in Latin America at that time, to be revolutionaries. No consensus existed in Cuba in the 1950s on what precisely comprised a revolution, although the precedent of Mexico in 1910 and the contemporary evolving situation in Bolivia were suggestive references. What all the various organizations in Cuba agreed on, however, was that no revolution could begin without first getting rid of Batista, by ballot if possible or

by force if necessary. Since balloting was impracticable, violence and force became the instruments of political discourse. A faction led by Fidel Castro (b. 1926) attacked the Moncada military barracks in Santiago de Cuba on July 26, 1953—the centenary of Martí's birth—giving lasting significance and a catchy appellation to a suicidal fiasco. Castro, after serving a brief prison term, was amnestied and left the country for exile in Mexico, vowing to return. He did so in 1956, arriving on the yacht, *Granma*, with about eighty sympathizers, including the Argentine doctor Ernesto "Che" Guevara (1928–1967), whose idealistic volunteer work in Guatemala had been abruptly interrupted by a United States-inspired coup d'état against the legitimate government of Jacobo Arbenz (1917–1971). Opposition to Batista was the political coagulant of the day. Since very few entertained the immediate possibility of change in 1959, no concrete programs existed when the 26th of July Movement assumed the government on January 1 of that year. The Batista government had collapsed totally and unexpectedly, and the rapidity of its demise left the opposition groups under a loose coalition of political aspirants controlled by the charismatic Fidel Castro and the idealistic, ideologically committed Ernesto "Che" Guevara.

The Castro revolution, despite its series of inauspicious starts, quickly established itself as nothing less than the evasive, discomfiting reconciliation of nation and state energetically pursued since the early nineteenth century. The civil wars between 1868 and 1898 created a state, but at the expense of a unified and cohesive nation. After 1959, the alienated nation erratically found its home. And the unquestioned head of that home was the popular, loquacious Fidel Castro.

Like all previous revolutions, the Castro revolution was a confused, ambiguous progression of pragmatism and idealism. Unlike most previous revolutions, the level of violence was minimal, partly because most opponents chose to emigrate rather than fight. Most observers and participants anticipated the calling of early elections to legitimize the government of the victorious 26th of July Movement. In the first flush of victory, Castro himself spoke often of an early return to the constitution of 1940. But by the spring of 1959, Guevara was omi-

nously stating that the people wanted "revolution first; elections later." Ad hoc government by "guerrillas in power" became the order of the day. But in 1959, very few regretted the departure of the tyrant Batista.

In retrospect, it is easy to delineate a series of changes, or overlapping phases, through which the revolution passed: the liquidation of capitalist enterprises and the introduction of socialist models between 1959 and 1963; a period of flux between 1963 and 1965; a period of radicalization at home and abroad between 1966 and 1970; a period of political evaluation and institutionalization at home and military activism abroad between 1970 and 1979; and retreat and consolidation after 1980. Some of the changes were subtle; some of the changes were abrupt and contradictory. Each major phase, in addition, had its own internal subdivisions. But the revolution tried to keep one major objective in mind and to pursue it narrowly to the end. The turning points were determined partly by the exigencies of the revolution—its general principles of bringing social justice, dignity, and a strong sense of national purpose—and partly as a self-protective stance against external attacks and internal conspiracies. Defending the revolution always had the highest priority. But the revolution was not a passive, reactive revolution. It began with the ambitious goal of rectifying immediately the accumulated economic, political, and social grievances of a century, passing about 1,500 decrees in the first nine months. In the end, the revolutionaries achieved, by trial and error, the complete restructuring of Cuban society. But it is important to note that they worked in a conducive political climate and with a population with great expectations of the redemptive power of politics. As Jorge Domínguez wrote, "When the revolution came to power, government intervention in the social system was expected and acceptable as desirable. The Cuban revolution changed the characteristics of participation. All of it became politicized, nationalized, centralized. The government discouraged political indifference and began to harness political participation to transform society and to increase its own power and control."

The first three years were perhaps the most confused as the revolutionaries boldly sought, against great odds, to dismantle the capitalist

state and to construct a socialist, centralized one. With breathtaking pace, the revolution instituted a series of measures that gave land to the landless, work to the unemployed, higher wages to the employed, and reduced rates to renters and the clients of public utilities. In March 1959, the government legally abolished discrimination wherever it existed publicly in hotels, restaurants, night clubs, country clubs, resorts, and beaches. All Cuban facilities were opened freely to all Cubans regardless of race, class, color, age, sex, or occupation. The lower orders of society—urban and rural workers, peasants, the unemployed, renters, consumers of all sorts, and Afro-Cubans—were the primary beneficiaries, and they immediately embraced the revolution enthusiastically. By the summer of 1959, the government was deliberately vague about whether its reform measures presaged a socialist revolution. But the speed and thoroughness of the reform measures were not designed to give local and foreign capitalists great peace of mind. Out went the remnants of the Batista army, the old political parties, labor unions, and professional and farmers' organizations. In came a set of new, aggressively enthusiastic institutions: the National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA) and the Cuban Institute of Cinematic Arts (ICEAC) in 1959; the Central Planning Board (JUCEPLAN), the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC), and the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR) in 1960; the National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP), the Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR), the Ministry of the Interior (MININ), and the Integrated Revolutionary Organizations (ORI, reorganized in 1963) in 1961; and the Young Communist League (UJC) established in 1962.

The opposition to these reforms came from four not entirely unrelated sources; and although it came slowly and was uncoordinated, it came with incredible vehemence. One group of opponents were former comrades-in-arms against Batista who lost out in the reshuffling of power in 1959. Some of these left genuinely disappointed by the socialist rhetoric and blatant anti-Americanism of Castro's speeches as well as the indefinite delay in holding free elections. They left the country early, mainly for the United States, and organized from self-imposed exile the first anti-Castro community abroad. An-

other source of opposition comprised the property owners, local and foreign, whose rents were arbitrarily reduced or whose land had been appropriated by the Agrarian Reform Laws; the entrepreneurial classes; and the political organizers and trades union bosses who were gradually put out of business by the dismantling of the old patronage system. They were vocal in their protests, but through the first year and into the second, they tried unsuccessfully to work within the system, hoping for deliverance from abroad. Most of these local opponents were to leave shortly after the fiasco of the Bay of Pigs. The third source was the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church in Cuba. It supported the early reform and only started to express reservations late in 1959 when, despite Castro's vacillation over ideological direction, socialists and communists were gaining visible positions in the upper echelons of the revolutionary government and Cuba agreed to sell sugar to the Soviet Union. But like the other groups, the Catholics seriously underestimated the genuine popular support and political skill of the revolutionaries and in the end lost out. Finally, the fourth source resided in the official and private business interests in the United States. Their opposition was reflected in government attitude and action emanating from Washington. From the beginning, Cuban-American relations were made more complicated because the United States insisted on viewing Cuba through the opaque lens of its cold-war-influenced geopolitical East-West diplomatic conflict. The revolution presented official Washington with a sharp dilemma. On the one hand, communist influence could not be allowed to expand in the Western Hemisphere, especially in what had been regarded since the turn of the century as "an American lake." On the other hand, it was not clear whether Castro and his group were communist sympathizers with a concrete blueprint or simply well-meaning political reformers bent on cleaning up a politically messy situation and therefore deserving the benefit of the doubt. Caught without a coherent policy, the government of the United States stumbled from one erratic tit-for-tat scheme to another. In response to the nationalization of hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of U.S. landed property by the National Institute for Agrarian Reform, Washington abruptly reduced the sugar quota in

1959. In early 1960, the Soviet Union offered Cuba petroleum at prices considerably below the then current world-market rates. The U.S. refineries—Standard Oil, Texaco, and Shell—refused to refine the oil, and the Cuban government responded by appropriating their Cuban assets in June 1960. Washington retaliated by canceling the sugar agreement with Cuba in July, abruptly terminating its most important market as well as its principal source of foreign exchange. In August, a variety of private U.S. enterprises were nationalized, including banks, sugar mills, and service stations. In October, the United States imposed a trade embargo on Cuba, forbidding the export of all nonmedicinal items. Almost immediately the Cubans expanded the expropriations to include all foreign property and a large number of designated Cuban businesses. In addition, a second urban reform law restricted ownership to no more than one urban residence, creating an immediate supply of state-owned residences with their occupants paying a reduced rent. The government then agreed to compensate the owners of appropriated properties at the fixed rate of \$350 per month. By the end of 1960, foreign investments in Cuba had been virtually eliminated, and the Cuban government ended up controlling about one half of the national economy. By January 1961, when the United States broke diplomatic relations, the Cubans had no option but to extend their commercial relations with the Soviet-bloc countries.

The United States, having played the economic pressure card and lost, abandoned the opportunity to negotiate meaningfully with the Cubans. In early 1960, the Eisenhower administration had approved a plan to overthrow the Castro government, using a slightly modified form of the familiar method used to overthrow the socialist government of Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala in 1954. Cuban exiles were armed, trained in Nicaragua, and given logistical support to invade Cuba. The new Kennedy administration continued to support the military option in early 1961 but realized that simply overthrowing Castro by force was not the solution to the Cuban problem or to radical revolution in Latin America. Instead, in March 1961 President Kennedy announced a bold new Alliance for Progress at a meeting of the Organization of American States held at Punta del

Este, Uruguay. With \$500 million seed money from the United States, Kennedy tried to steal the thunder from the Cuban revolution by promising that his "vast cooperative effort, unparalleled in magnitude and nobility of purpose," would by the end of the decade produce a social and political metamorphosis throughout the region. "The standard of living of every American family will be on the rise, basic education will be available to all, hunger will be a forgotten experience, the need for massive outside help will have passed" as "free men working within a framework of democratic institutions" would make violent revolutions unnecessary. Then the United States president expressed the beguiling hope that Cuba and the Dominican Republic would "soon rejoin the society of free men." The president knew more than he implied. On April 17, 1961, some 1,300 Cuban anti-Castro exiles, armed and trained by the American Central Intelligence Agency, arrived from Nicaragua to an unfriendly reception at Playa Girón or the Bay of Pigs in south central Cuba. On May 30, a small group assassinated the dictator of the Dominican Republic, Rafael Trujillo.

The fiasco at Playa Girón was just another move in the political chess game between the United States and Cuba. But it was an important one. On May 1, Fidel, having easily rounded up and imprisoned the beleaguered pawns of the Central Intelligence Agency, emphatically announced that Cuba would be a socialist state. No internal opposition would be tolerated. There would be no room for neutrality; no patience for dissidents. One had to be for or against the revolution. More than 100,000 persons suspected of antigovernment activity were quickly imprisoned, although most were released after interrogation. Those who had expected the messiah to arrive with the invading army at Playa Girón lost all further hope. Thousands desperately abandoned Cuba for the United States, inadvertently strengthening the revolution by depleting the forces of resistance at home. Approximately 200,000 persons joined the exodus from Cuba in the first three years of the revolution, many, no doubt, thinking that they were undertaking a temporary sojourn. The emigration decimated the ranks of the wealthy and skilled, created a shortage among various important occupations, and weakened public

administration. But it also cleared out the vast majority of the disaffected, making powerless the counterrevolution. After 1961, the revolution could no longer be overthrown from within. In January 1962, the United States voted for the expulsion of Cuba from the Organization of American States, but unlike the sanctions against the Dominican Republic in 1959, the trump had already been played. Expulsion proved inconvenient diplomatically and an irritant but not a calamity and not unexpected. In October 1962, the United States discovered that the Soviet Union had begun to install ballistic missiles in Cuba. President Kennedy imposed a naval blockade around the island and negotiated the removal of the missiles in return for a guarantee that the United States would remove the blockade and refrain from invading the island. At the end of the year, Cuba exchanged the survivors of the Bay of Pigs for \$53 million worth of medical supplies, drugs, and food.

The hostility of the United States forced the Cubans to move closer to the Soviet bloc. In 1960, Cuba and the Soviet Union re-established full diplomatic relations, broken in 1952 as part of the cold-war fallout, and quickly thereafter the Soviet Union and its allies became the major market for Cuban exports, especially sugar. The Soviets generously supplied enormous quantities of military hardware, offered petroleum at bargain-basement rates, and extended low-interest loans as well as grants to help the faltering economy in the difficult throes of dislocation and transition. By the 1980s, the Soviet subsidy would be worth several billion dollars per year. The dominant Soviet role forced Cuba to support the Soviets in their dispute with China, although "Che" Guevara vocally admired the Maoist model of a virtually self-sufficient enclosed economy with its emphasis on moral rather than material incentives. This difference might partly explain the departure of Guevara in 1965, two years before his tragic death in the mountains of Bolivia. Disappointed by the denouement of the missile crisis, the Cubans retreated for a while and concentrated on domestic matters after 1962, but the outbreak of the Vietnam war and the invasion of the Dominican Republic encouraged a discreet move back into the Soviet orbit. Full integration into the socialist mainstream, however, did not come

until after the failure of the vaunted ten-million-ton harvest in 1970. Soviet military and economic support were crucial for the revolution, especially in its early phase. Between 1961 and 1979, the Soviet Union supplied approximately twenty-two billion dollars in military and economic aid to Cuba and supplied about 98 percent of Cuban oil imports. Apart from the economic aid and war matériel, Nikita Khrushchev's (1894-1971) repeated declarations that he would retaliate for any attack on Cuba directed by the United States gave Washington serious cause for concern. Cuba-American relations could not be confined to a local bilateral issue but had potentially serious international ramifications. The Soviet Union effectively entered the geopolitics of the American hemisphere. The Cuba-Soviet Union relations were complex, however. The Soviet Union benefited from having a political satellite conveniently close to the United States, but had the Cubans not demonstrated capable internal political strength, their usefulness would have been of limited value. Nor have the relations been entirely free of friction. Relations were strained between 1963 (partly as a result of the missile agreement done without Cuban input) and 1970 and again in the late 1980s when Mikhail Gorbachev's politically liberal introductions of *perestroika* and *glasnost* made the Cubans uncomfortable.

The revolution has continually had to balance domestic and international concerns equally. The domestic concerns were serious. Although internal political opposition diminished significantly by 1962, the economic problems increased. The distribution of resources produced an immediate amelioration of material conditions for the lowest sector of the population. The losers were those at the top, a substantial proportion of whom had left the island. But the challenge was in creating an economy of plenty that would maintain the new living standards and satisfy the raised expectations of the first year. That proved elusive. At first, there was an attempt to diversify the economy and reduce the inordinate reliance on sugar exports. The goal was to balance economic development between an agricultural sector with an agrarian revolution boosting the production of food crops, beef, pork, eggs and milk; and a manufacturing sector replacing the shortfall created by the U.S. trade embargo. It did not

work. In 1962, rationing of scarce commodities began, steadily increased, and by the end of the decade had been extended to basic, formerly abundant consumer items such as cigars and sugar. Sugar output fell, but neither production nor productivity in other areas compensated for the decline. Constant mobilization for war, the ad hoc nature of decision making, and the shortage of competent technicians frustrated the attempt to create a brave new world for Cubans.

Between 1965 and 1970, the Cubans concentrated on domestic matters. Already the state had become extremely centralized, with power tightly held in the hands of Fidel Castro and a growing military under the command of his brother, Raul. The departure of Guevara allowed Castro to advocate openly the Chinese model of socialism, albeit with a strong modification to the Cuban circumstances. The government expanded appropriations of private property, extended the collectivization of agriculture, reorganized the Communist party, and, in light of the increasing scarcity of domestic goods, placed an emphasis on building a moral "New Man" indifferent to material incentives. By early 1968, Castro was boasting that Cuba was constructing the most orthodox communist society in the world. Mass mobilization increased, and a campaign against bureaucrats and bureaucracy resembled the chaos produced by the Cultural Revolution in China. Some unsuccessful attempts to export their brand of revolution—the concentrated *foco* (cell) of revolution—to the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Argentina, Venezuela, and Bolivia ended in fiasco and alienated Cuba diplomatically from most of the rest of the hemisphere during the early and mid-1960s. The lofty rhetoric to create "One, many Vietnams" or make the "Andes the Sierra Maestra of Latin America" saw no follow-through in action but helped keep the revolutionary enthusiasm high on the island. In 1968, Castro announced that he had changed his mind on the economy. Rather than disparage monoculture and demote the production of sugar, he admitted that making sugar was the one area in which the Cubans could incomparably excel—and they were going to produce the unprecedented amount of ten million tons of sugar in 1970. Sugar prices had been rising, and the calculation was that in the

1970s the trend would continue, bringing enormous financial benefits to the island. At about the same time, Cuba gave a qualified endorsement of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, thereby facilitating a rapprochement. It was a timely move. The 1970 harvest came in at 8.5 million tons, higher than ever before but far short of the symbolic target. The economic cost of the decline in nonsugar productivity and general dislocation was enormous and a serious blow to the idea of moral incentives. After 1970, Cuba abandoned Sino-Guevarist-style idealism for orthodox socialism, increasingly directed by the Soviet Union. In December 1970, a Cuban delegation headed by Carlos Rafael Rodríguez (b. 1913) went to Moscow and after some discussion established the Cuban-Soviet Commission of Economic Scientific and Technical Collaboration.

Under Soviet auspices, the 1970s saw the methodical orthodox institutionalization of the state. On the economic side, the Russians agreed to train Cuban scientists and to supervise the construction, renovation, and expansion of steel, fertilizer, and pharmaceutical plants; sugar factories; and electricity. The military received new supplies of the most modern planes, tanks, and naval vessels in the Soviet arsenal. In 1974, local and municipal political organizations (Poder Popular) were restructured in the province of Matanzas and extended later to the rest of the island. In 1975, the First Party Congress approved a new comprehensive Family Code that detailed the regulation of domestic life. The following year, a new constitution reorganized the national political structure, replacing the six previous provinces with fourteen administrative divisions: Pinar del Río, Havana, the city of Havana, Matanzas, Cienfuegos, Villa Clara, Sancti Spiritus, Ciego de Ávila, Camagüey, Las Tunas, Holguín, Granma, Santiago, and Guantánamo. The government was restructured along socialist lines, with a Council of Ministers headed by the president, Fidel Castro, and a legislative National Assembly. Creating new political institutions did nothing to diminish the influence and personal domination that Fidel Castro held over the island.

Orthodoxy in the 1970s paid handsome economic dividends. Castro paid two visits to the Soviet Union, reciprocated by top Soviet officials, including Premier Leonid Brezhnev. Partly as a result of the

depressed conditions of the 1960s, the national economic growth rates between 1971 and 1976 were statistically impressive. Russian aid was munificent. The Soviet Union increased the price paid for sugar and nickel, increased technical aid, deferred payments of previous loans, suspended some interest, and agreed to increased Cuban sugar sales on the free market. But part of the improved economy had to do with the escalation of sugar prices between 1972 and 1974, peaking at the historic high of sixty-five cents per pound on the world market in November 1974. Although Cuba sold most of its sugar in the socialist countries at generous prices, it also sold an increasing proportion on the free market and benefited from the favorable trend. The Cubans miscalculated, however, that the price "would never drop below 16 or 17 cents per pound." By late 1976, the world sugar market price had fallen to nine cents and by the early 1980s hovered discouragingly at six cents—some eight cents below estimated production costs. Before the fall, substantial strides were made in education, housing, health care, and the overall quality of life. In the mid-1970s, with consumer lines shortening, the Cubans had good reason to believe that they had turned the corner. For one brief shining moment it seemed that the good times had finally arrived, justifying the revolutionary sacrifices of a decade. Then, like the rest of the Americas, the economic aftereffects of OPEC II suddenly turned all hope to frustrating despair. Cuban export earnings fell rapidly, and even restricting imports could not alleviate the deteriorating economic situation. By 1976, Cuba was running serious trade deficits and borrowing money on the capitalist market. By 1979, only forty million dollars could be raised, most of which went to retire short-term interest. The restrained expectations helped produce the general dissatisfaction and discontent that spurred more than 125,000 Cubans to abandon their country during the Mariel-boatlift months of 1980.

The 1970s also saw significant changes in foreign policy. The international ambience changed in the late 1960s. In Latin America and the Caribbean, much, too, had changed since the heady, idealistic days of the 1960s when Cuba blithely promised to help any revolutionary group overthrow an imperialist government. Restricting

reality replaced the unbridled ideals of the early 1960s. In 1967, "Che" Guevara died and with him the romantic notion of rural guerrilla *focos* spontaneously and gallantly subduing governments as advocated by the participants of a tricontinental congress held in Havana earlier that year. The domestic economy forced Cubans to look inward. The resources simply were not available for the indiscriminate support of disparate groups in desperate situations, and the quest to produce ten million tons of sugar absorbed all their energies. Romantic revolution was not quite compatible with the new pragmatic orthodoxy of the 1970s. But external conditions facilitated the transition. By 1970, socialist governments—one civilian, one military—had come to power in Chile and Peru and had further reduced the diplomatic isolation of Cuba. That same year, Chile established commercial relations with Cuba. Slowly Cuba changed both its rhetoric and its attitude toward its Latin American neighbors and gradually reestablished diplomatic ties with a number of Latin American states. By 1975, despite hesitation by the Organization of American States, eleven Latin American and Caribbean countries independently resumed diplomatic and commercial relations with Cuba: Chile, Peru, Barbados, Jamaica, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Argentina, Panama, the Bahamas, Colombia, and Venezuela. Without having formal diplomatic ties, Cuba had sent generous disaster assistance to the earthquake victims in Lima, Peru, in 1970, and Managua, Nicaragua, in 1972 (despite being antagonistic to the Somoza government). Disaster relief was also sent spontaneously to Jamaica, Grenada, Guatemala, Honduras, and Chile. This was followed by volunteer brigades of teachers, agronomists, doctors, and construction workers dispatched to Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname, and, after 1979, to Nicaragua and Grenada. In addition, Cuba offered more than ten thousand scholarships in medicine, engineering, agronomy, and other technical and vocational skills to students from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean. In 1977, Cuba and the United States established Interests Sections in Washington and Havana, but further normalization of relations foundered on the intransigent attitude of the United States toward Cuban involvement in Latin America and Africa.

In the 1970s, Cuba became an important player on the world scene. Nowhere was this more evident than in Africa and among other Third World countries. The Cuban involvement in Africa went back to the earliest ideological and idealistic days of the revolution, with modest military and technical assistance to the Algerian Liberation Front in 1960 and Ghana in 1961. In 1964–1965, "Che" Guevara toured Algeria, Ghana, Congo-Brazzaville, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Dahomey, Tanzania, and the United Arab Republic. One result of the tour was Cuban assistance to the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO), and the African Party for the Independence of Portuguese Guinea and the Cape Verde Islands (PAIGC). Also, in April 1965, Guevara escorted some two hundred Cuban fighters (later reinforced) to Congo-Brazzaville, where they accompanied the anti-Tsombe guerrillas until the end of the fighting in December. Although Guevara himself then left for Bolivia (where he was killed), the Cubans remained as part of military training missions to freedom fighters in Angola and Guinea-Bissau as well as to help President Sékou Touré (1922–1984) in Equatorial Guinea. These first Cuban initiatives suffered a setback with the coups d'état that overthrew Ben Bella in Algeria in 1965 and Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana in 1966.

The policy of the 1970s represented a slight modification and a major expansion of the 1960s policy. Cuba began to support friendly progressive governments encountering internal or external threats, downplaying the individuals, ideological groups, and revolutionary capture of the state. By 1975, Cuba had small military missions in Sierra Leone, Equatorial Guinea, Somalia, Algeria, Tanzania, South Yemen, Oman, and Syria. In 1975–1976, Cuba sent more than thirty thousand combat troops to prevent the annihilation of the MPLA and to help consolidate and maintain the Angolan government in power. In May 1977, Cuba sided with the Ethiopians against the Somalians in the Ogaden dispute—thereby leading to a break in Cuban-Somalian relations at the end of the year. In 1978, some seventeen thousand Cuban troops joined the Soviet Union in a campaign that ousted the Somalians from the Ogaden. Cuban support has been indispensable for Angolan security, and Cuban intervention repre-

sents a major factor in the politics of southern Africa. In 1989, the Cubans agreed to withdraw their troops from Angola by 1991 and participated prominently in the international agreement to establish the independence of Namibia. Partly as a result of its admired active involvement in Africa, Cuba hosted the Sixth Summit Meeting of Non-Aligned Countries in Havana in September 1979 and chaired the organization until its 1983 meeting.

The 1980s were tantalizing years for the Cubans. The sharp decline of commodity prices, rising interest rates, and rapid increase in industrial goods aggravated the domestic economic situation. A few years of plenty gave way to a decade of scarcity. Budget deficits appeared in 1980 and by 1982 totaled some 785 million dollars. Not only did the deficits continue throughout the decade but trade deficits also complicated the picture as natural disasters, crop diseases, and machinery breakdown reduced industrial output. Reduced spending in the dominant social economy contributed to the disruptive Mariel exodus in the late spring and early summer of 1980. Ironically, the majority of those who left during the Mariel exodus were the pampered products of the revolution, young men and women who had no experience of life before Fidel. In the late 1970s, the government moved to reduce the amount of free services and goods, implementing a modest charge (often optional) for previously gratuitous services such as day care for infants, bus fares, and utilities. Malingering and other petty antisocial conduct increased, affecting production and morale. Shortages returned, and hard currency became very scarce. To compensate for inadequacies, parallel markets (where excess state-produced goods could be sold at fixed prices) and *mercados libres* (free peasant markets) were created in 1979, and small-scale private enterprise and entrepreneurship was encouraged. These were revoked in 1986 as disruptive to proper socialist development. By late 1987, Fidel Castro was exhorting Cubans to join a new revolutionary process of "rectification" against materialism, consumerism, individual enrichment, fraud, corruption, embezzlement, and poor performance. In a speech on October 8, 1987, commemorating Guevara's death, Fidel extolled: "We are rectifying all those things—and there are many—that strayed from revolutionary spirit, from revolutionary work, revolutionary vir-

tue, revolutionary effort, revolutionary responsibility; all those things that strayed from the spirit of solidarity among people." Cuba had, indeed, traveled a long, weary way, but there was no rest in sight; no laurels to be garlanded. The monumental achievements of the revolution created an insatiable appetite for more. The revolution could never fulfill the expectations that it had itself engendered.

The popular disenchantment at home had parallels in international relations. Friction developed with Barbados in 1976 over the transshipment of military forces to aid Angola. The sabotage of a Cuban civilian airliner by anti-Cuban exiles in Caracas that year led to the suspension of diplomatic relations between Cuba and Venezuela from 1980 until 1989. The prestige of heading the nonaligned nations suffered a major setback when the Soviets invaded Afghanistan, a member state, in 1980. Cuban unwillingness to lead the condemnation of the invasion—an unpopular gesture among Third World nations—reinforced the opinion that Cuba was a Soviet satellite and not truly a nonaligned state. At the same time, Cuba's bid for membership in the Security Council of the United Nations, opposed by many Latin American and Caribbean states, failed. In 1980, Michael Manley, Fidel Castro's close friend, lost the elections in nearby Jamaica and was out of power for eight years. In 1982, Cuba championed the cause of Argentina against Great Britain in the Malvinas/Falkland Islands war that went badly for Argentina and worse for the Argentine military. In October 1983, an internal coup toppled and murdered Maurice Bishop in Grenada. This precipitated an invasion by United States troops that expelled the Cubans working on the Point Salines airport and ended the local, Castro-style experiment. Even in Nicaragua and El Salvador, the promises of the early 1980s did not shine with the same electrifying luster.

The achievements of the Cuban revolution lie not merely in the prosaic compilation of comparative statistical information—houses, schools, and hospitals built; doctors, teachers, agronomists, and technicians trained; communications and utilities provided; roads, factories, and farms constructed; number of men in arms—or the discussion of human costs in death, exile, and alienation. The achievements of the revolution transcend the mere introduction of a socialist so-

ciety and a socialist economy. The success of the revolution also lies in the tremendous infusion it gave to Cuban and Caribbean nationalism. The Cubans demonstrated that race, color, class, and limited natural resources do not constitute insuperable handicaps to the creation of an independent, just, and equitable society. The revolution instilled national pride and a sense of regional identification in those Cubans who remained and struggled and survived to construct a society where equality of opportunity became truly an operational inalienable right. Equality of opportunity unleashed tremendous creative energy that manifested itself in all aspects of Cuban life: organization, literature, the creative arts, sports, diplomacy, construction. The revolution did not create a paradise; but what it accomplished against such odds is truly impressive. Not all Cubans are well-fed, well-housed, well-cared for, and well-educated. But the overwhelming majority of Cubans currently enjoy facilities and opportunities that before 1959 remained the preserve of the privileged few. The national government has a legitimacy, popularity, and international respectability never before experienced in the history of the republic. Cuban advice and assistance are accepted in countries where once both were despised and detested. Only Washington hosts more diplomatic missions than Havana in the Americas.

Across the Caribbean, the revolution still holds magnetic appeal to young, progressive, idealistic political aspirants. As nationalism finds wider roots throughout the mini-states of the Caribbean, the Cuban model of ethnic pluralism and economic development is an attractive option for local leaders trying to mold social cohesion within the confines of a fragile state. But the Cuban appeal has waned considerably, overtaken by events in Eastern Europe and Nicaragua. The revolution and Fidel Castro have become synonymous—and that does not augur well for the future of the revolution.

Chapter 9 • Caribbean Nation Building 3: Puerto Rico and the Ambivalent Identity

But the sentiment of independence is real enough among young fellows and the common people, and it only awaits to be organized by a politician with some poetry in his make-up.

Miguel Muñoz Marín, 1925, quoted in Roberta Johnson, *Puerto Rico: Commonwealth or Colony?*

The Puerto Rican does not have an easy patria as others do. Ours is difficult, but good. The identity of a people is affirmed by growing with the times, rather than by disappearing with the times.

Miguel Muñoz Marín, quoted in Kal Wagenheim, *Puerto Rico: A Profile*

The slow emergence of Puerto Rican nationhood resulted, as elsewhere in the Caribbean, from the fortuitous conjunction of external and internal forces. It was a classic victim of circumstance. In order to understand the historical process of development, one must constantly bear in mind the prevailing domestic social and economic