

The *Machadato* and Cuban Nationalism, 1928-1932

JULES R. BENJAMIN*

THE LEGAL AND ECONOMIC SUBORDINATION of Cuba to the United States in the twentieth century caused the expression of nationalism in the island to be characterized by extremes of timidity and explosiveness. In most circumstances, United States power led Cuban dissidents to express themselves in very moderate terms. This accommodationist wing of Cuban nationalism placed appeals to North American liberal opinion foremost in their programs and usually sought to avoid antagonizing United States business interests. Arising from the middle and upper classes, this form of nationalism perceived the interests of the Cuban nation as being ineluctably bound up with those of enlightened international forces within the United States. This moderate nationalism was doubly flawed: 1) because the necessity of accommodating certain North American interests precluded an emotional commitment to Cuban nationhood sufficient to inspire mass allegiance, and 2) because it undercut attempts at significant political or economic reform.

To the more militant nationalists, the very necessity of acknowledging North American influence in the island confirmed such influence as the principal enemy of Cuban nationalism. Thus the nationalist sentiments of the romantic, status-deprived, or economically superfluous members of the middle class—and of the populist and Marxist movements among the proletariat—focused directly on anti-Yankeeism and tended to move in the direction of radical reform or even socialist revolution.

Each of the three major expressions of Cuban nationalism in the twentieth century has illustrated the struggle between accommodationist and revolutionary solutions. The first of these—the resistance to the Platt Amendment—was accommodationist in character, while the third—the movement against the Batista dictatorship—was of a radical and eventually revolutionary character. The second nationalist up-

* The author recently received the PhD from the University of Pennsylvania. He does not presently occupy a regular academic appointment in the field.

surge—the struggle against the Machado dictatorship and its overthrow in the “revolution” of 1933—resulted in no clear predominance for either wing of Cuban nationalism. The nationalist movement of the years 1925-1933 contained a wide spectrum of tactics and programs, and the overthrow of Machado in 1933 failed to establish the hegemony of a particular school. This led, in the late thirties and forties, to a period of shifting coalitions that failed to create a respected regime, and which generally discredited all groups involved—left, center and right. The resulting vacuum of allegiance and legitimacy created the background for a major shift in historical direction in the 1960s.

The present work is a study of the origins of the various strains of Cuban nationalism as they developed during the movement against President Gerardo Machado. It hopes to shed some light on the workings of both moderate and radical nationalism in the period just prior to the “revolution” of 1933.

In 1924, Machado, a leader of the moderately reformist Liberal Party, was elected President of Cuba. He was generally popular and successfully combined a realistic support for United States interests in the island with the image of a defender of Cuban sovereignty—the ultimate achievement for a Cuban politician. However, in 1927, despite earlier promises that he would not seek reelection, Machado prevailed upon the Cuban Congress to initiate a series of resolutions seeking to extend the term of office of the president. These resolutions were adopted as constitutional amendments by a Machado-controlled constitutional convention in 1928, which body also called upon Machado to accept a new term of office. All the political parties then endorsed Machado's candidacy, and he was elected to a new and extended (six-year) term in 1928. This act of *continuismo* came at a time when Machado's nationalist image was tarnished because he was contracting heavy debts with United States banks. Moreover, it roughly coincided with the decline of world sugar prices that had begun in 1925 and that had become more drastic subsequent to the onset of world industrial depression late in 1929. This latter event literally tore the heart out of the Cuban export economy, set back Cuban living standards some 30 years or more, and made unemployment and destitution the lot of most Cubans. The combination of *continuismo*, growing indebtedness, profound economic depression and political repression, all combined to turn the wrath of the Cuban people against their president.¹

1. For background on the politics of the Machado period see: Luis Aguilar,

Dependence upon the United States in the first three decades of the twentieth century had brought well-being to those Cuban merchants, professionals, and politicians allied to the North American economic presence. However, it had also created structural deformities in the Cuban economy, leaving large segments of the population without a sense of efficacy or a satisfactory standard of living.² Prominent among those groups hurt by the dependent relationship to the United States were the proletariat, the students and intellectuals, and certain elements of the middle class. When the sugar (1925-) and industrial (1929-) depressions increased the burdens upon these groups, they adopted the weapon of Cuban nationalism to attack an economic system that was proving itself incapable of providing a decent level of existence to the large majority of the Cuban people. Those who were held to be supporters of that system, both in the United States and in Cuba, became the principal targets of that nationalism. The central emotional and tactical focus of attack after 1928 was the Machado regime.

Those who benefitted from the United States economic presence were, for their part, dissatisfied as well. Economic decline had greatly reduced the rewards of association with United States business interests, and there was always the tempting thought among the entrepreneurially oriented that despairing North American investors might at some point be frightened into selling out part of their holdings to local capitalists. However, the main motive for the questioning of the propriety of United States economic domination by its beneficiaries was the growing belief that they could not long hold power as defenders

Cuba 1933: Prologue to Revolution (Ithaca, N.Y., 1972); Alberto Arredondo, *Cuba: tierra indefensa* (Havana, 1945); Aldo Baroni, *Cuba, país de poca memoria* (México, 1944); Raymond L. Buell, *Problems of the New Cuba* (New York, 1935); Gonzalo de Quesada y Miranda, *En Cuba libre!* (Havana, 1938) Vol. 2; Mario Riera Hernández, *Cuba política, 1899-1955* (Havana, 1955); Hugh Thomas, *Cuba: The Pursuit of Freedom* (New York, 1971).

2. For a discussion of the distortions caused by the domination of the internal economic development of one state by the hegemonic position of the capital, goods, technology, and personnel of another more highly developed state see: Paul Baran, *The Political Economy of Growth* (New York, 1957); André Gunder Frank, *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America* (New York, 1969); Dale Johnson, *The Sociology of Change and Reaction in Latin America* (New York, 1973); Robert Rhodes, ed., *Imperialism and Underdevelopment* (New York, 1970); Gail Omvedt, "Toward a Theory of Colonialism," *Insurgent Sociologist*, 3:3 (Spring, 1973), 1-24.

For non-Marxist approaches to this subject see: Celso Furtado, *Development and Underdevelopment* (Berkeley, Calif., 1964); Keith Griffin, *Underdevelopment in Spanish America* (London, 1969); Fernando Henrique Cardoso, *Dependencia y desarrollo en América Latina* (México, 1970); Stanley Stein and Barbara Stein, *The Colonial Heritage of Latin America* (New York, 1970).

of United States interests in a society whose reaction to severe economic decline was a concerted attack on those very interests. Thus, almost every constituency on the island had a need for proclaiming its defense of Cuban nationalism.

The Cuban Labor Movement and the Machadato

The modern Cuban labor movement arose during the last decades of Spanish colonial rule, with the introduction of radical labor doctrines by Spanish immigrants. In this period, anarchism and anarcho-syndicalism vied with doctrines of labor peace based upon cooperatives. The combination of Spanish resistance to all forms of labor organizing and the depressed economic conditions of the late nineteenth century led to the victory of the anarcho-syndicalist position by the 1890s. The Cuban labor movement was to be dominated by this philosophy for some 35 years.³

Organized labor in Cuba supported the independence struggle, but failed to extract a political price for its efforts. The 1901 Constitution contained no reference to the rights of labor, and the harsh restrictive legislation of the Spanish Penal Code remained in force.⁴ Despite such legislation, and despite, moreover, a division within labor between native and immigrant (Spanish) workers, the first decade of the republic saw several militant strikes, especially among port workers. In addition to recognition and wage issues, an early concern of the labor movement was to prevent the importation of low-wage field labor from Haiti and Jamaica by the large United States sugar companies. Labor also struggled against a high cost of living occasioned by the impact of United States capital and goods in the Cuban economy.⁵

The Cuban export economy, with its high prices, recurring inflation, and sharp cycles due to changes in sugar income, created among labor a complex combination of job insecurity and organizational militancy that tended to drive unions in the direction either of bureaucratic collaboration with government or of violent syndicalist struggles increasingly political in character. By the second decade of the century, the liberal, reformist unions had in the main become collaborationist, and the central ideological struggle in the labor movement was between

3. Charles Page, "The Development of Organized Labor in Cuba," (Diss. University of California, Berkeley 1952), pp. 13-14, 18-23; Ramón Eduardo Ruiz, *Cuba: The Making of a Revolution* (Amherst, Mass., 1968), pp. 118-119.

4. Charles Page, p. 40. For relevant provisions of the Penal Code see *Monthly Labor Review* (September, 1929), p. 508.

5. José R. Álvarez Díaz, *A Study on Cuba* (Coral Gables, Fla., 1965), pp. 180, 275; Víctor Alba, *Politics and the Labor Movement in Latin America* (Stanford, Calif., 1968), p. 289; Charles Page, p. 40.

anarcho-syndicalists and socialists. By the early twenties, the socialists, too, had made their peace with government—with the exception of a small group of socialist intellectuals and labor leaders who helped to found the Cuban Communist Party in 1925.⁶ The cutting edge of the labor movement thus came under the control of anarcho-syndicalists and their militant strike tactics.

Those unions that cooperated with the state were rewarded with protective legislation, and by the 1920s Cuban labor codes were more progressive than those in most states in Latin America.⁷ Thus, by the time of the severe depression of the late twenties, one part of labor had gained some protective legislation that enabled it, in part, to shift the burden of economic decline away from itself, while the remaining segments of labor had a militant ideology and practice on which to base the defense of its interests. This combination of factors was to give Cuban labor organizations a prominent position in the social upheaval of the early thirties.⁸

Under President Alfredo Zayas (1920-1924), there were violent strikes by port workers, railway workers, and, for the first time, sugar mill workers. Severe repression by Zayas, and later by Gerardo Machado (1925-1933), was aimed mainly at the direct-action leadership of the anarcho-syndicalist unions, which dominated most of the strike efforts. Assassination and deportation weakened the syndicalists vis-à-vis the reformist and the state-supporting socialist unions. More importantly, governmental destruction of the anarcho-syndicalist leadership created an opening on the left wing of the labor movement, which the newly founded Cuban Communist Party would fill in the years after 1928.⁹

Despite ideological and national divisions, and despite severe governmental repression, labor organizing was achieved in the 1920s on regional and even national levels. The most powerful labor organization during the years 1925-1935 was the Confederación Nacional Obrera de Cuba (C.N.O.C.), founded and until 1928 dominated by anarchist leadership. By the end of the decade, however, C.N.O.C.

6. For discussion of labor repression and collaboration under the Presidency of Mario Menocal see: León Primelles, *Crónica cubana, 1919-1922* (Havana, 1958), p. 388; Mario Riera Hernández, *Historial obrero cubano* (Miami, 1965), p. 44; Charles Page, p. 54. For socialism during this period see Aguilar, p. 85 and Ruiz, p. 121.

7. Codes more advanced than those in Cuba were to be found in Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, and Mexico.

8. *Monthly Labor Review* (September, 1929), pp. 508-509; Álvarez Díaz, pp. 276-277.

9. Charles E. Chapman, *A History of the Cuban Republic* (New York, 1927), pp. 628-629; Riera Hernández, *Historial*, p. 50; Charles Page, pp. 55-58.

had come under the leadership of the young Partido Comunista de Cuba (P.C.C.). The rival union federation, the Unión Federativa Obrera Nacional (U.F.O.N.), had been adopted by Machado as the "legal" labor movement. The leaders of this federation—much of whose membership was on paper only—were staunch supporters of the Machado regime, and even accepted its brutal treatment of labor. Machado came down heavily against the non-collaborating unions, raiding their offices and jailing, deporting and even murdering their leaders. Even the conservative American Federation of Labor felt constrained to declare its opposition to Machado's tactics, though it remained affiliated through the Pan American Federation of Labor to the unions which supported the Cuban government.¹⁰

During the depression the Cuban proletariat responded to the organizing drives of the militant unions. By the early thirties, all the major trades, except for sugar workers, were highly organized, with by far the largest number of workers belonging to unions strongly opposed to the Machado government. These latter unions—all of which Machado called "communist" though most were not—reacted to Machado's repression with strikes that included both economic and political demands. When Machado declared the most radical of these unions illegal in 1930, they called a general strike. The shutdown was only partially successful, but was followed thereafter almost continuously by a long series of militant work stoppages by one union or another. By this time, the legal structure of labor-management relations had all but disappeared, and the police state that was soon to descend on other opposition political elements had already begun to function in regard to labor. From this point on, there was a gradual coalescence of labor movement aims (though there was neither tactical nor philosophical unity) with those of the middle-class political opposition in regard to the expanding Machado dictatorship.¹¹

At this time also, communist labor leaders were beginning to have success in organizing on a mass scale the largest proletarian group on the island—the sugar mill and cane field workers. Faced with almost feudal conditions, sugar workers' strikes broke out during the 1931-

10. Buell, pp. 186-187; Moisés Poblete Troncoso, *El movimiento obrero latinoamericano* (México, 1946), pp. 193-195; Riera Hernández, *Historial*, pp. 60-63; Charles Page, pp. 60-63. For a discussion of the pro-government unions see: Memorandum on labor unions in Cuba by F. J. Flexer, Third Secretary, United States Embassy, Havana, June 18, 1931, National Archives, Washington, D.C., General Records of the United States Department of State, Central Files, Record Group 59, 837.504/331. (Hereinafter referred to as R.G. 59.)

11. Reports to the State Department on Cuban labor activities from U.S. Ambassador Harry F. Guggenheim, April 11, 1930, and June 18, 1931, R.G. 59, 837.504/325 and 837.504/331.

1932 harvest, and in late 1932 the first national sugar workers union (Sindicato Nacional de Obreros de la Industria Azucarera) was formed. By 1933, Cuban labor was more highly organized and more radically led than almost any proletariat in Latin America.¹² This fact, coupled with a dictatorial and anti-labor government and severe economic hardship, made for an explosive situation.

The relationship between Machado and “Yankee imperialism”—which radical labor leaders were propounding as the key to the situation—now began to command public attention. Fear and hatred of the United States, basic components of Cuban nationalism from the very first days of the republic, were now to become the cement binding the labor rebellion to those posing more immediate threats to Machado’s power—the university students and intellectuals and the disaffected middle class.

The Student Movement and the Machadato

During the United States Occupation (1899-1902), the Secretary of Public Instruction, Enrique José Varona, carried out a reform of the University of Havana, the only institution of higher learning in Cuba. Despite a somewhat more technically oriented curriculum, however, most students continued to study in the Faculties of Law and Medicine. The inability of a dependent Cuban economy to absorb all these aspiring professionals, the influx of radical ideas from the Mexican and Russian revolutions and the Córdoba Reform movement, and the conservative attitudes of most of the faculty all combined to turn the student generation of the twenties toward questions of university reform and social change.¹³ These concerns, arising within the context of a hemisphere-wide climate of anti-Yankeeism among intellectuals, eventually led the more radical students to attacks upon United States influence.

Early student protests centered almost wholly on academic reforms. In 1923, the Federación de Estudiantes de la Universidad de la Habana (F.E.U.) was formed to press for university autonomy, the dismissal of incompetent faculty, and student representation in university governance. However, the Secretary of the F.E.U., Julio Antonio Mella

12. Charles Page, pp. 64-65. The Chilean and Argentine labor federations were the only comparable ones.

13. Jaime Suchlicki, *University Students and Revolution in Cuba, 1920-1968* (Miami, 1969), pp. 18-19; Aguilar, p. 68. For statistics on matriculation at the University of Havana see Buell, pp. 154-155. During the late 1920s, about 86 percent of all graduates obtained degrees in medicine or law.

(far more radical than his fellow students), also raised the question of governmental corruption, thereby tending to enlarge the impact of student demands. Nevertheless, the mainstream of student protests remained focused on intramural matters. Sporadic student strikes achieved the removal of some professors and the occasional appointment of progressive rectors and deans. While President Zayas resisted the central demand for university autonomy, he nevertheless made enough concessions to weather the storm.¹⁴

By the time of the inauguration of Machado, the activist minority of the F.E.U., led by Mella, had come under the influence of Aprista or Marxist philosophy, and were directing their energies away from the university, which had become generally quiet due to the partial reforms gained under Zayas. Machado thus inherited an isolated radical fringe of students and a calm campus, one that even accepted the expulsion of Mella and the reinstatement of many professors removed by the progressive reforms of a few years before. Though Mella, who was now in jail and soon to be exiled, called Machado a "tropical Mussolini," the President did not run into trouble with the majority of student opinion until 1927-1928, when he engineered the irregular extension of his mandate. In response to this political maneuver, which even the Cuban Supreme Court found of doubtful legality, students carried out a series of anti-Machado demonstrations, to which the President responded (unlike Zayas) by dissolving the F.E.U., abolishing the reform commission acceded to by Zayas, and even temporarily closing the University.¹⁵

Militants among the student body at the University created a new student organization, the Directorio Estudiantil Universitario (D.E.U.), which issued a manifesto attacking the regime. The group was later expelled from the University, but it continued to meet nonetheless and to maintain contacts within the student body. In 1929, when Mella was assassinated in Mexico City where he was in exile, the students held Machado responsible, and support for the militant student position increased. In 1930 the Directorio was reestablished with a larger following, and it carried out a massive anti-Machado demonstration that ended in a confrontation with the police and the death of one of the student leaders. Machado, by now besieged on other fronts as well, suspended constitutional guarantees, declared the University a seat

14. Raúl Roa, *Retorno a la alborada* (Santa Clara, 1964), I, pp. 234-251; Suchlicki, pp. 20-21; Thomas, p. 565.

15. Eduardo Suárez Rivas, *Un pueblo crucificado* (Miami, 1964), p. 21; Roa, I, pp. 251-255; Suchlicki, pp. 22-24; Aguilar, pp. 76-77.

of communism and closed the entire institution. Student opposition had by now spread beyond the University, and Machado was forced to close most of the high schools as well.¹⁶

The situation by this time had acquired a momentum of its own. Support for the students arose amongst the middle-class opponents of the regime, and the newly published Program of the Directorio became a focal expression of militant anti-Machado Cuban nationalism. This Program called for political change as a precondition to university reform and the signatories pledged to fight for "deep social transformation." Students now joined with middle-class professionals to carry out urban guerrilla warfare against the police apparatus of the regime, and murders and bombings by both sides became commonplace. In January, 1931 most of the leadership of the Directorio were arrested, and indictments for conspiracy were issued against almost the entire University faculty because they had openly supported the Directorio Program.¹⁷

An ideological split developed among the Directorio leaders while in prison in 1931, and a group of them with Marxist tendencies founded the Ala Izquierda Estudiantil. This group focused its attack not on the Machado dictatorship but on "Yankee imperialism" and moved, as will be noted, toward the position of the Cuban Communist Party. The Ala Izquierda looked to the peasantry and proletariat rather than to the university community and middle-class as the force for overthrowing Machado. The majority of the Directorio, on the other hand, thought in terms of a multi-class uprising, similar to that of the struggle against the Spanish, and saw the symbol of imperialism less as Wall Street than as the Platt Amendment. Throughout 1931 and 1932 these moderate students joined forces with the middle-class and nationalist political movements, which were the main focus of the struggle against the *Machadato*.¹⁸

Middle Class Reform Movements and the Machadato

The abnormal development of the Cuban bourgeoisie due to United States economic predominance in the island put this class in a difficult position when depression and dictatorship coincided to set the mainstream of Cuban nationalism against both the incumbent regime and

16. Suchlicki, pp. 25-26; Aguilar, pp. 102-103.

17. Aguilar, pp. 104-106; Suchlicki, pp. 27-28. The Text of the D.E.U. "Manifiesto Programa" of October 23, 1930 can be found in José Duarte Oropesa, *Historiología cubana* (Hollywood, Calif., 1969), V, pp. 332-335.

18. Aguilar, pp. 116-117; Suchlicki, p. 28. The Program of the Ala Izquierda Estudiantil can be found in *Pensamiento Crítico* (April, 1970), pp. 123-129.

United States hegemony. In the twenties this class was still absorbing the effects on its life-style brought about by the immense onrush of investments in Cuba by oligopolized industries in the United States during the previous decade. Though most of the members of the Cuban bourgeoisie benefitted enormously from the increasing United States presence, they were uneasy about their growing dependence upon that presence and about the cultural shocks administered to Cuban society by the intensity and all-pervasiveness of the flow of foreign capital, goods, and ideas. Their uneasiness was increased when, in 1921, a collapse of the World War I sugar boom led to the bankruptcy of the major Cuban banks and consequently of many of their native commercial depositors. Branches of United States banks subsequently dominated the Cuban banking industry.¹⁹ As a result of the bank crash, the small but growing entrepreneurial segment of the Cuban bourgeoisie was decimated, and its remaining professional and commercial elements then stood out, more clearly than before, as mere adjuncts of United States dominance.

Cuban nationalism and the myths surrounding Cuba's long struggle for independence made it politically unwise, if not psychologically impossible, for even these beneficiaries of United States capital to accept the annexationist implications of such a situation. They attempted, through a moderate economic nationalism (which Machado in his first term tried vainly to reflect), to gain some control over the pace and direction of United States investment, though this did not imply or include opposition to United States capital.²⁰

When Machado proved unable to use state intervention to stabilize the effects of United States economic penetration, and when economic depression forced him to accept the priority of protecting that penetration—in short when moderate economic nationalism failed—the Cuban bourgeoisie was deprived of its major ideological weapon in the struggle against a rising anti-Yankee nationalism. Furthermore, when Machado responded to the social and economic tensions of depression by imposing constraints upon the political arena (party-government amalgamation, *continuismo*, suspension of constitutional guarantees, censorship, etc.), large numbers of the middle class began to identify him as the prime cause of these tensions, and—without

19. Leland Jenks, *Our Cuban Colony* (New York, 1928), pp. 240-245; Prielles, p. 375; Alvarez Díaz, p. 232.

20. Philip Bonsal, *Cuba, Castro and the United States* (Pittsburgh, 1971), p. 256; Aguilar, pp. 44-47. In 1927, a mildly protectionist tariff was installed, and efforts were made to renegotiate the United States-Cuban trade treaty. North American resistance to both of these efforts, coupled with deepening economic depression rendered them ineffectual.

adopting the radical nationalism of other opposition elements—joined the movement against the *Machadato*.²¹

Artists and Intellectuals

Cuban intellectuals shared in the themes of Latinism, Indianism, and anti-Yankee nationalism that were attracting widening support in Latin America during the period surrounding the First World War. In addition, these intellectuals were still possessed by the idealism of the very recent independence period and were sensitive to the failure of the hopes (both economic and cultural) engendered during that struggle.²²

The first significant action taken by intellectuals was their response to the corruption of Cuban life exemplified by the actions of the Zaya administration. Growing out of a group of young revisionist writers and poets, and coinciding with the early protests by the University students, this action was known as the *protesta de los trece*. It was triggered by the presence of Zaya's Minister of Justice at a meeting of the Academy of Science on March 18, 1923. To protest governmental corruption, thirteen writers, led by poet Rubén Martínez Villena, walked out of the Academy and the next day published their *protesta*, in which they promised to carry out similar acts whenever "unpatriotic" politicians appeared in public.²³

Developing out of the *protesta* was the Grupo Minorista, a vanguardist literary movement with political implications in that its members criticized the apolitical escapism of the arts. The works of this group came to reflect social and political themes within Cuba as well as hemisphere-wide racial and cultural motifs. In a 1927 statement the group referred to its task of "ideological renovation," reiterated its stand against United States policy in Mexico and Nicaragua, and renewed its support of Cuban student protests.²⁴

21. The failure of the "business nationalism" of the 1920s eventually caused the destruction of the regime which espoused it and led to a period of radical nationalism, which broke with liberal economic theory and experimented with corporate and socialist alternatives.

22. Arthur P. Whitaker, *The Western Hemisphere Idea* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1964), pp. 128-129; Wyatt MacGaffey and Clifford Barnett, *Twentieth Century Cuba* (New Haven, Conn., 1965), pp. 259-265; Aguilar, pp. 68-69.

23. José Antonio Portuondo, "El contenido social de la literatura cubana," *Jornadas*, #21, 64-65; Aguilar, pp. 70-71. The revisionist writers later concentrated around the journal *Revista de Avance*. See: Carlos Ripoll, *La generación del 23 en Cuba* (New York, 1968), pp. 49-50. For the text of the *protesta* see Riera Hernández, *Historial*, p. 276.

24. Emilio Roig de Leuchsenring, *Colección histórica cubana y americana*, "Curso de introducción a la historia de Cuba" (Havana, 1938), I, pp. 420-422; Portuondo, *Jornadas*, #21, 65; Ripoll, p. 50; Duarte Oropesa, p. 321. For the

The populism and nationalism embraced by the early *Machadato* (1925-1928), and its lack of corruption compared to the Zayas years, temporarily deflected the rising political concerns of Cuban intellectuals away from their own government. But the growing political repression and economic depression after 1928 brought most of the Minorista intellectuals into the forefront of the struggle against the later *Machadato* (1929-1933). The struggle sent this generation of young Cuban intellectuals in many ideological directions. A few were attracted to fascism, some to Aprismo, and a few actually chose to stay on as advisors to Machado even after the extension of his mandate and the eclipse of his nationalist image. The majority, however, became supporters of either the moderate political opposition or one of the Marxist organizations, especially the Partido Comunista de Cuba.²⁵

The Moderate Political Opposition

Political reform movements had also arisen early in the twenties. Fernando Ortiz, the well-known Cuban anthropologist, formed the National and Civic Renovation Committee in 1923. Its manifesto reflected *decadencia* doctrine, which attributed the weaknesses in Cuban government to a lack of honesty, morality, and efficiency. These weaknesses were seen as the result of the four hundred years of Spanish colonial rule. In August of the same year the Veterans and Patriots Association (the organization of the veterans of the Independence War) began a campaign for governmental reforms. In April of 1924 this organization actually fomented an armed uprising against Zayas. After its pleas for intervention against Zayas were ignored by the United States, the movement was easily suppressed by the government.²⁶

Despite the Veterans' movement, political reform up to this point

members of the *Grupo Minorista* see Riera Hernández, *Historial*, p. 278. For their statement of 1927 see Duarte Oropesa, pp. 319-320. This statement had certain anti-liberal elements that were fascist in tone. Also in keeping with fascist expression during this period was the theme of anti-imperialism. Nevertheless, many of the leaders of *Minorismo* moved to the left and became members of the Cuban Communist Party. See Riera Hernández, *Historial*, pp. 276 and 278.

25. Portuondo, *Jornadas*, #21, 70; Roig de Leuchsenring, I, pp. 421-425. Two of the major supporters of Machado were the authors Ramiro Guerra y Sánchez and Alberto Lamar-Schweyer, both of whom served in the Cabinet. See Alberto Lamar-Schweyer, *How President Machado Fell* (Havana, 1938).

26. Robert F. Smith, *The United States and Cuba: Business and Diplomacy, 1917-1960* (New York, 1960), pp. 97-98; Thomas, p. 567; Russell H. Fitzgibbon, *Cuba and the United States 1900-1935* (New York, 1964), pp. 184-185; Jenks, p. 269.

was generally contained within the established political parties and dealt with in the electoral realm. However, in 1925, when Machado's pliant Congress prohibited the creation of new parties and fixed party control in members of Congress, reform politicians were frozen out of the legitimate political process. All of the official parties supported Machado's pseudo-legal act of *continuismo* in 1927, thus forcing anti-Machado elements to break with their parties and form groupings outside the traditional party structure. This closing off of the political arena rendered even moderate anti-government organizations all but illegal, and tended to blur the distinction between them and the radical and revolutionary groups that were gathering strength during this same period. This led in time to intermittent alliances between elements of the radical and moderate opposition, and for a time it fostered the impression of a unified movement against the dictator.²⁷

Segments of the old parties, led by Mario G. Menocal (insurgent Conservatives), Miguel Mariano Gómez and Carlos Mendieta (dissident Liberals), moved into formal opposition after 1928. These men were not really reformers as much as political rivals of Machado who refused to join his all-party coalition. (Only one of the groups created by these men—the *Unión Nacionalista* of Mendieta—had something of a moderate reformist base.) The efforts of these groups from 1928 to 1931 were directed toward convincing the United States to intervene against Machado and, failing that, to obtain enough United States pressure on Machado to force him to open up the legal political arena once again. These groups periodically undertook negotiations with the Cuban president to determine the conditions for their reentry into the political arena while also raising legal challenges to the regime before the Supreme Court. Despite minor concessions by Machado, the negotiations and the legal challenges failed.²⁸

Machado, for his part, tried to frighten the moderate opposition away from alliance with radicals by references to the possibility of communist revolution should he be overthrown. He denied that he was a dictator and stated that restrictive laws were necessary to thwart the aims of "an implacable communist aggression directed by powerful, hidden, foreign powers. . . ." Economic depression was

27. The amalgamation of the traditional political parties into the *Machadato* led to the destruction of much of their strength after the fall of the regime. See Riera Hernández, *Cuba política*.

28. Fitzgibbon, p. 187; Aguilar, pp. 92-93. For the efforts of the *Unión Nacionalista* to obtain the invocation of the Platt Amendment see: United States Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1930 (Washington, D.C., 1949), II, pp. 649-680. Also see Cosme de la Torre, *Cuarenta años de mi vida* (Havana, 1939), pp. 225-231. In 1924 Carlos Mendieta had been Machado's rival for the presidential nomination of the Liberal Party.

not, in Machado's opinion, the cause of the unrest but merely a pretext utilized by subversive forces.²⁹

By 1931, the Unión Nacionalista, the largest of the groups of the moderate political opposition, had become convinced that the United States policy of passive support for Machado would not be altered unless a serious internal challenge to the dictator arose. The more radical student and middle-class opposition did not favor a traditional armed uprising in the interior, especially at this time, for fear that it would provoke a United States military intervention. Nevertheless, the Unión Nacionalista was able to arouse sufficient support to organize a guerrilla uprising, including a filibustering expedition from the United States. The revolt, which took place in August of 1931, was an uncoordinated affair, and when an expected army uprising did not materialize, it was quickly overcome by Machado's forces.

With the failure of the revolt, Machado became more confident of his strength, while the moderate political opposition, despairing of a change in the United States policy toward the dictator, resolved to win whatever protection they could through a new round of negotiations with him. Their removal from active opposition—and the discrediting of their tactics—brought more radical groups to the center of the struggle against the *Machadato*.³⁰

The most intransigent and perhaps the only truly class-conscious middle-class opposition came from the secret terrorist organization known as the "ABC." Its members were a mixture of the petty bourgeoisie, professionals, and students, and its pronouncements were couched in a broad range of classless nationalist and populist appeals. The original ABC ideology was generational, elitist, developmental, reformist, and corporatist. Some of its early statements also stressed anti-imperialism and the goal of Cubanization of the island's economy. Its Program Manifesto, issued in 1932, marked the end of middle-class acceptance of political and economic liberalism. The document, holding that Cuba's troubles derived from her dependent economic status, called for state intervention to: control the latifundium, protect the native farming class, aid cooperatives, regulate major corporations, nationalize public services, establish a native banking system and progressive taxation, protect the small merchant and industrialist, and inaugurate protective labor legislation. Its political program called

29. Presidential proclamation reported in the *Havana Post* of February 3, 1931, contained in "Report to the Secretary of State by the Ambassador to Cuba" [Cuggenheim], February 3, 1931, R.G. 59, 837.00/2971.

30. Aguilar, pp. 107-108; Cosme de la Torre, pp. 245-247.

for a corporately based upper house and a narrowing of the franchise to literates, but also included programs of civil liberties and demilitarization. The *Manifiesto* attempted to supplant liberalism and solve the problem of dependency without accepting the mass or class doctrines usually considered the only non-reactionary alternatives.³¹

The ABC was known not so much for its ideology, however, as for its tactics—urban terrorism. Its bomb attacks against well-known figures of the regime and its police apparatus (mainly carried out by student members) made ABC a popular symbol of the revolt against Machado. Moreover, the retributive torture and assassination against these sons and daughters of the Cuban middle class by the agents of the *Machadato* destroyed the cohesion of the bourgeoisie, splitting that portion of it desiring the overthrow of the regime from that which—for fear of the consequences—still supported the President. By the end of 1932, as both the economic and political tensions approached crisis proportions, the ABC began to show signs of concern over its lack of a mass base and the possibility of radical revolution. Like so many in the reformist opposition before them, they began an effort to convince the United States (which alone had the power both to remove Machado and suppress radical revolution) that theirs was a “realistic” nationalism which did not threaten the United States economic presence.³²

The exile organizations were a final segment of moderate political opposition. Between the expulsion of the communist Julio Antonio Mella in 1926 and the emigration of much of the moderate political opposition early in 1933, many hundreds of anti-Machado Cubans left the island for Mexico City, Madrid, Paris, Miami, Washington, D.C., or New York City. Exile organizations were established in all these cities, with the largest and most influential—known as the New York Junta—based in New York City.³³ The Junta disseminated anti-Machado propaganda, raised money to support clandestine activities,

31. José Álvarez Díaz, *Cuba: geopolítica y pensamiento económico* (Miami, 1964), p. 403; Samuel Farber, “Revolution and Social Structure in Cuba, 1933-1959,” Diss. University of California, Berkeley 1969, pp. 84-92; Aguilar, pp. 118-121.

For the text of the *Manifiesto Programa* see: Partido ABC, *Doctrina del ABC* (Havana, 1942). The *Manifiesto* was written by Jorge Mañach, Francisco Ichaso, and Joaquín Martínez Sáenz.

32. Farber, pp. 87-90; Alberto Arredondo, *Cuba: Tierra indefensa* (Havana, 1945), pp. 472-473.

33. For background on the work of certain of these exile organizations such as the Cuban Information Bureau, the Cuban-American Friendship Council and the Cuban Patriotic League see: Carleton Beals, *The Crime of Cuba* (Philadelphia, 1938), p. 347 and Cuban Information Bureau, *Ambassador Guggenheim and the Cuban Revolt* (Washington, D.C., 1931), p. 14.

debated internal political differences, and, most important of all, worked to obtain support for its cause from the United States Government. Due to their strategic location, the United States-based exile organizations were able to keep the image of a bloody dictatorship before the Congress and the foreign-policy-concerned middle and upper classes of the United States. Their propaganda, combined with increasing repression on the island, slowly dissolved the existing general support for Machado, especially that in business and government circles.

The Cuban Communist Party and the Machadato

The Cuban Communist Party sprang from many sources: the Bolshevik Revolution and its attempt to create an international movement of communist parties under its direction, the Cuban student reform movement of the early twenties, the development of Cuban socialism and anarcho-syndicalism, and the effects of United States hegemony on Cuban society. In an immediate sense, however, the Party's founding was the work of a small number of Cuban intellectuals and an agent of the Comintern.

Prior to World War I several abortive socialist parties had been established, most notably as a result of the efforts of Carlos Baliño (a founder of the Partido Revolucionario Cubano, which initiated the final anticolonial struggle against Spain), who had become a socialist around the time of Independence. By the early twenties, when socialist and anarchist movements in Europe and the Western Hemisphere began to divide along Bolshevik and anti-Bolshevik lines, Baliño led a small group out of the Agrupación Socialista de Habana to found the Agrupación Comunista. Between 1923 and 1925 other communist *agrupaciones* sprang up, including one among Jewish immigrants from Poland.³⁴

The student movement against the corruption of the Zayas regime brought the first new recruits to these *agrupaciones*. One of the leaders of the F.E.U., Julio Antonio Mella, was among the first of this generation of students to raise the question of class struggle within the University. When Mella met Baliño in 1923, he had already come under the influence of the Mexican Revolution and the thought of Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre. The following year Mella and several fellow students joined Baliño's Agrupación Comunista. Mella had a very forceful personality and was the best known of the student leaders. He was a tireless worker and vibrant orator, and his conversion

34. Ruiz, p. 121; Thomas, p. 576.

to socialism brought a prestige to left-nationalist sentiments that far outstripped their previous influence in Cuba even among intellectuals.³⁵

In 1925 the Comintern took an interest in the Cuban situation and sent Enrique Flores Magón, then a member of the Mexican Communist Party, to Havana to help form a Cuban Communist Party. In August of that year, at a series of meetings in Havana, six of the *agrupaciones*, under the urging of Flores Magón, formed the Partido Comunista de Cuba. The Party established a journal, formed a youth group and applied for membership in the Comintern.³⁶

The young Communist Party attracted a small group of intellectuals, professionals, students, and workers. Almost immediately Machado's police moved against them, and the Party itself was declared illegal in 1927. Under the unofficial leadership of the poet Rubén Martínez Villena, the Party slowly rebuilt in 1928 and 1929. Its major success during this period came in the struggle against the anarcho-syndicalist leadership of the Confederación Nacional Obrero de Cuba (C.N.O.C.). While the Party's ideas and supporters gained influence in that labor federation's hierarchy, its membership worked to create "revolutionary fractions" within the railway and tobacco workers organizations—the areas of strongest union activity up to that time. They also began the first tentative efforts at organizing the agricultural proletariat. By 1929, however, the Party still had only a few hundred members, and its organ, the underground *El Comunista*, had a circulation of less than one thousand. The majority of its membership were

35. Ruiz, p. 122; Thomas, p. 576; Suchlicki, p. 21. Baliño died in 1926. For a different interpretation of Mella's early intellectual development see Suárez Rivas, p. 17.

As early as 1923, Mella moved his political activities outside of the University. He established the *Universidad Popular José Martí*, which was inspired by the ideas of Haya de la Torre. In the four years between his becoming a member of the P.C.C. and his assassination, the indefatigable Mella organized the Cuban Anti-Imperialist League, the Anti-Clerical Federation, and the Association of Cuban Revolutionary Emigres. (See Suchlicki, p. 353 and Riera Hernández, *Historial*, p. 281.) For the story of Mella's short and stormy career in international communist affairs see: Alberto Baeza Flores, *Las cadenas vienen de lejos* (México, 1960), pp. 81-85; Eudocio Ravines, *The Yenan Way* (New York, 1951), pp. 57-58; Riera Hernández, *Historial*, pp. 73-77. For Mella's own writings see *La lucha revolucionaria contra el imperialismo* (Havana, 1940).

36. Thomas, pp. 577-578; "The Communist Movement in the Caribbean Area," June 6, 1934, R.G. 59, 837.00B/180. Other sources treat the principal international influence as coming from Fabio Grobart, a Polish Jew who arrived in Cuba in 1922 and became a leader among the Jewish communists of Havana. See Boris Kozolchyk, *The Political Biography of Three Castro Officials*, The Rand Corporation, Memorandum RM-4994-RC (Santa Monica, 1966), pp. 1-7. Also see Stephen Clissold, *Soviet Relations with Latin America, 1918-1968* (London, 1970), p. 16.

in Havana, and most of its working class adherents were in light rather than basic industry.³⁷

By 1930, though strained by policy disputes within the leadership,³⁸ the Party had reorganized the C.N.O.C. under its control and had won leadership positions in most of its constituent unions. The C.N.O.C. was by then the largest union federation and had some 16,000 members. Party propaganda during this period was both anti-Machado and anti-Imperialist. In addition, party spokesmen attacked the moderate opposition, especially the U.N., accusing it (correctly) of desiring United States intervention. While thus attempting to discredit the bourgeois political opposition, the Party nevertheless took cognizance of the fact that the depression was impoverishing the petty-bourgeoisie. Accordingly it supported the petty-bourgeois boycotts then taking place to protest the high rates charged by the "imperialist" telephone and electric companies.³⁹

A major test of the strength of the movement occurred in March of 1930, when Machado suspended the legal rights of certain of the communist-led unions. The C.N.O.C. call for a general strike to demand their reinstatement resulted, for the first time, in a tie-up of the transportation network and many services in Havana. The general strike, however, failed to gain the support of the more moderate unions and did not bring about the withdrawal of sanctions. Indeed, as a result of the strike, Machado arrested the C.N.O.C. leadership and suspended the labor federation.

The more moderate unions, most of which were by now engaged in vigorous strike activities of their own, also suffered suspension or police harassment during this period. Machado's public position by

37. Robert J. Alexander, *Communism in Latin America* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1957), p. 271; Aguilar, pp. 85-86; Thomas, pp. 580-581; Buell, pp. 195-196.

38. Aguilar (p. 93) relates a division between the "intellectuals" and the "workers" in the Party over the question of "Bolshevization" and "proletarianization." An actual split in the Party did occur in the early 30s, as a result of which a small faction, led by Sandalio Junco, was expelled. This group had opposed the belief of the majority of the leadership that a socialist revolution was possible in Cuba without a prior or simultaneous revolution in the United States. (See "The Communist Movement in the Caribbean," R.G. 59, 837.00B/180, p. 16.) Junco's group later formed themselves into a Trotskyist party—*Partido Bolshevique Leninista*—and eventually became established as the labor leadership of the Auténtico Party. (See Alexander, p. 280n.)

39. Thomas, p. 596; Havana Embassy memorandum on Cuban labor unions, June 18, 1931, R.G. 59, 837.504/331, p. 9; Havana Embassy report on communist activities, February 13, 1930, R.G. 59, 837.00B/28, pp. 48-49; Copy of letter from Cuban Anti-imperialist League to that body's International Secretariate in Berlin, in dispatch from Havana Embassy, May 28, 1930, R.G. 59, 837.00B/29.

this time was that all unions, with the exception of those few which actually supported his regime, were “communist.”

Despite its illegal status, the C.N.O.C. led a series of strikes in 1931 and 1932. Many of the moderate unions struck as well, occasionally in support of efforts by C.N.O.C. unions. By the end of 1932, the militant response of the Cuban proletariat to both the depression and the dictatorship had become one of the major threats to the regime. Moreover, the C.N.O.C. for the first time in Cuban history, had organized a large union of sugar workers. Given the central position of the sugar industry for the entire economy, an effective and communist-led harvesttime strike by large numbers of these workers contained the prospect of bringing down the government and possibly of creating a revolutionary situation.⁴⁰

Machado took this threat seriously and furnished the United States Embassy with the files of his secret police to convince the State Department that his regime was under attack by a revolutionary labor movement that was directly tied to the Communist International. However, by the time it became apparent that the Red scare that Machado had falsely used to divide his opponents for the last five years was finally coming to have some substance, the threat to his regime from other opponents (students, non-Communist labor, and middle-class opposition) was even more immediate.⁴¹

The ideology of the Partido Comunista de Cuba (P.C.C.) during this period generally conformed to the aggressive posture taken toward both the bourgeoisie and reformist movements within the “Third Period” of the Communist International. The Party attacked the moderate nationalist opposition to Machado, although seeking to organize among the petty bourgeois followers of these groups. Because the Party was the strongest force among significant segments of organized labor, its unwillingness to join with the middle class opposition meant that these two broad streams of protest would remain generally un-

40. Report from the United States Ambassador (Guggenheim) on labor activities in Cuba, April 11, 1930, R.G. 59, 837.504/325; Report by Chargé d’Affaires ad interim (Reed) on general conditions in Cuba, Oct. 4, 1930, R.G. 59, 837.504/329, pp. 3-4, 8-14; Memorandum by Third Secretary (Flexer) on labor unions, June 18, 1931, R.G. 59, 837.504/331, pp. 8-11; “The Communist Movement in the Caribbean,” June 6, 1934, R.G. 59, 837.00B/180, pp. 22-23.

Concerning the general strike of 1930, see Jorge García Montes, *Historia del Partido Comunista de Cuba* (Miami, 1970), pp. 106-108. For a discussion of the major labor strikes of the period 1931-1932 see García Montes, pp. 112-113 and Riera Hernández, *Historial*, pp. 79-81.

41. Report from the Ambassador to Cuba (Guggenheim) on Communism, Dec. 31, 1931, R.G. 59, 837.00B/44; Report from the Consul General (Dumont) on Communism, Dec. 16, 1931, R.G. 59, 810.00B/73.

supportive of one another in the struggle prior to the overthrow of Machado. Indeed, they came into opposition in the attempt to construct a successor regime.⁴²

Despite schisms, by late 1932 the Party leadership had coalesced around a mass revolutionary line based on the proletariat. It analyzed the situation in Cuba as follows:

The Cuban revolution is in its initial bourgeois-democratic stage and therefore takes the form of anti-feudalism and anti-imperialism. The victory of the [subsequent] agrarian and anti-imperialist revolution will be achieved by means of an alliance of the working class and the peasantry, carrying along with it the poorer stratum of the urban petit bourgeoisie, under the hegemony of the proletariat and the direction of the Communist Party, [and will] overthrow the power of imperialism, and the feudal (latifundist) elements and the native bourgeoisie tied to them, and [will] establish the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants based upon soviets.⁴³

By the beginning of 1933, although the revolutionary proletarian line of the Central Committee of the Party was not yet fully effective in terms of Party discipline, the mass line had established a powerful base for the Party among labor, especially sugar, urban transport, and tobacco workers. The Party could claim membership of 3,000 and organizations in all the major towns. It had a cell structure in many factories and plantations and a youth league of several thousand. In addition it had established Cuban branches of the Anti-Imperialist League and the International Labor Defense. Among students, the *Ala Izquierda Estudiantil* represented Marxist ideology and boasted a University membership of some 300. The Central Committee of the *Ala Izquierda*, however, was not wholly Marxist, and among those

42. Aguilar, pp. 94, 122-124; García Montes, pp. 111, 114-117. An analysis of Comintern ideology during this period can be found in Kermit McKensie, *Comintern and World Revolution 1928-1943* (New York, 1964), chaps. IV and V.

43. El Partido Comunista de Cuba, *El Partido Comunista y los problemas de la revolución en Cuba* (Havana, 1933), pp. 10-11. The main burden of this work is an attack upon the "opposition" or "Trotskyist" position within the Party. This opposition group held that the Cuban proletariat, in and of itself, was incapable of making a socialist revolution in Cuba. The opposition maintained that the vanguard of the present phase of the struggle in the island was the petty bourgeoisie and that revolution in Cuba was impossible until it had first occurred in the United States. They held, in effect, that the Party should cooperate with the moderate opposition to Machado.

For a statement of the majority within the Party at this time see: Rubén Martínez Villena, "The Rise of the Revolutionary Movement in Cuba," *Communist* 12:6 (June, 1933), 560-569.

Committee members who were, many rejected the revolutionary proletarian line.⁴⁴

Thus the Party, while isolated from the nationalist spearhead of the revolt against Machado, had a firm base among the proletariat. Its goal was to use this base (with timely additions from the peasantry, students, poor petty-bourgeoisie, army ranks, and blacks) to expedite the overthrow of Machado and then to build upon that success so as to heighten the contradictions of the subsequent bourgeois nationalist regime and force the “growing over” [*sic*] of the bourgeois revolution into a socialist revolution.

The Overthrow of Machado and Its Aftermath

Under the major theme of anti-dictatorial nationalism and the growing minor motif of anti-imperialism, the movement against the *Machadato* came to encompass the majority of the population. As 1932 came to an end, there seemed no way out of the deepening social and economic crisis in Cuba. Sugar prices continued to fall, draining the lifeblood of the Cuban economy. Economic hardship had propelled the proletariat into labor agitation which, infused with syndicalist and communist doctrine, bordered on civil conflict. Status deprivation and romantic libertarianism and equalitarianism were inflaming the entire post-independence generation of Cuban students. The middle and upper classes were in revolt against a regime that, partly due to forces beyond its control, had frozen them out of the political and civic dialogue in which they had always been accustomed to participate. Forming the backdrop to this entire scene was the specter of Yankee hegemony, a force which now made uncomfortable even its beneficiaries and whose mixed blessings were turning into unmitigated burdens as the economic depression deepened.

By early 1933, when Machado's police and army passed over to full scale military confrontation with striking workers, demonstrating students and middle-class urban guerrillas, and when revolutionary minorities gathered in the wings, even United States policy makers began to consider withdrawing support from the Cuban President. The stage was now set for the overthrow of the dictator. However, when that event occurred in August, neither the moderate nor radical wings of Cuban nationalism had achieved a dominant position in the anti-dictatorial struggle. As a result, the “revolution” of 1933 had a

44. Buell, p. 196; “The Communist Movement in the Caribbean,” R.G. 59, 837.00B/180, pp. 18-22; El Partido Comunista de Cuba, *El Partido Comunista y los . . .*, pp. 43-48.

schizophrenic character, at times attacking and at times appeasing United States interests, while constantly at war with itself.

Radical nationalist forces, though growing in strength, failed to dominate the political scene after 1933. Two major factors undermined their position. First, was the division between the bourgeois left and the communists. This division arose, in great degree, from the belief held by the international communist movement between 1928 and 1934 that bourgeois nationalism, despite its rhetorical anti-imperialism, was objectively counterrevolutionary. This was felt to be so because the native capitalist class was defined as structurally tied to foreign capital and thus incapable of carrying to fruition the bourgeois revolution, the incompleteness of which characterized "colonial and dependent" states such as Cuba. Under such circumstances, as elaborated in the organs of the Comintern and the Cuban Communist Party, the role of the Cuban party was to struggle against both the Machado dictatorship *and* the bourgeois opposition to it. By infusing communist leadership and ideology into the organizations of the proletariat, of the petty bourgeoisie and of the lumpenproletariat, the Cuban Communist Party would ride the crest of the bourgeois anti-imperialist and anti-dictatorial struggle and be in a position to prevent the newly accomplished bourgeois-democratic revolution from falling back under imperial hegemony, leading it on, instead, into a socialist revolution. To insure that the masses did not fall under the influence of the bourgeois nationalists in this process, the Cuban Party faced the task of winning away the popular following of moderate nationalism by challenging its program as accommodationist and as unrelated to the needs of the masses. Thus the period of the overthrow of Machado (August 1933) and the brief rule of the bourgeois left (September 1933 to January 1934) was witness to great tension and occasional armed conflict between these two forces. A unified left wing ideology and organization never arose.⁴⁵ Secondly, the under-

45. For the position of the Comintern on the question of "states of less than complete capitalist development" during its so-called Third Period, see McKensie. Also see Comintern, Sixth Congress, *Theses Passed Unanimously by the Sixth Comintern Congress* (London, 1929).

For Comintern pronouncements concerning the situation in Latin America during this period see Conferencia Sindical Latino Americano, *Resoluciones* (Montevideo, 1928) and *Los partidos comunistas de América del sur y del caribe y el movimiento sindical revolucionario* (Barcelona, 1932).

For statements of the position of the Cuban Communist Party see Partido Comunista de Cuba, *El Partido Comunista y los problemas de la revolución cubana* (Havana, 1933); R. Gómez, "Yankee Imperialism in Cuba," *Communist*, 10:1 (January, 1931), 48-65; O. Rodríguez, "Our Present Tasks in Cuba," *Communist*, 10:6 (June, 1931), 516-524; O. Rodríguez, "The Present Struggle in Cuba," *Communist*, 10:10 (November, 1931), 928-934; and Rubén Martínez Vil-

mining of the radical nationalist position was a function of the changing attitude of the United States toward the Cuban president in the early 1930s.

In the initial phase of the movement against Machado (1925-1930), the United States had been regarded by most Cubans (more or less correctly) as a major prop of the Havana administration. Consequently, during these years the anti-dictatorial and anti-imperialist aspects of the nationalist movement were compatible. However, when Machado himself became a destabilizing factor, owing to his suppression of the legitimate opposition, United States policy turned first neutral, then hostile.

North American hostility toward the dictator, coupled with Machado's alienation of the moderate political opposition, led to the dual result of weakening the compatibility of the anti-dictatorial and anti-Yankee strains within the original nationalist movement, while at the same time diluting the radical thrust of that movement by joining to it the now outcast moderate political opposition. United States attitudes during this period further complemented this disorientation of nationalist ideology. Washington began to take a stand in favor of political reform in Cuba and held forth the progressive goals of the early New Deal as indicative of its new policy toward the island.

In 1933 the United States took a careful but effective stand against the Machado tyranny, using its power to insure—and, in part, preempt—the success of the anti-dictatorial movement. This seemingly benevolent use of United States power divided the diluted and schizophrenic nationalist movement into two groups: moderates, who wished to cooperate with an apparently friendly government in Washington to find a way out of the profound economic depression; and radicals who, distrustful of any increased United States interference in Cuban affairs, sought to ease Cuban poverty by altering the exchange relationship between North American capital and Cuban land and labor.

lena, "The Rise of the Revolutionary Movement in Cuba," *Communist*, 12:6 (June, 1933), 559-569.

For United States Department of State translations of Soviet Union publications on this subject see: R.G. 59, 810.00B/77; 837.00B/95 and 180. For contemporary publications by the Cuban Communist Party see R.G. 59, 837.00B/78 and 82; and 337.1153 Cuban American Sugar Co./60. For strike bulletins and agitational literature by communist-led unions see Harvard University, Houghton Library, Manuscript Collections, Box SA 1642.01.

For general histories of the Cuban Communist Party see Pedro Serviat, *40 aniversario de la fundación del Partido Comunista* (Havana, 1963) and Jorge García Montes and Antonio Alonso Avila, *Historia del Partido Comunista de Cuba* (Miami, 1970).

This division of the nationalist movement laid the basis for an alliance between the United States and a new native elite. The moderate nationalists now gained the support of Washington, thus replacing the old conservative supporters of the pre-Machado era. With these new native allies, and with the power to nourish them and to deprive the noncooperative nationalists, the United States acquired maneuvering room in which to arrange a tighter economic relationship with the island, one which would continue the close tie between the Cuban economy and North American markets and capital.⁴⁶

In this manner, and despite the temporary rise to power of radical nationalism in the fall of 1933, North American hegemony in Cuba was retained. Nevertheless, as a consequence of the revolutionary upsurge of the early 1930s, populism came to be the only viable theme for Cuban politicians. Henceforth, United States hegemony never went unquestioned, and its functioning became fraught with tensions and compromises that had been unknown in the pre-Machado period.

The Stalemate Society

The continuation of United States hegemony in the period after the rise of populist nationalism created a stalemate in Cuban society between status quo and radical forces. While North American power blocked autonomous or non-capitalist development, the radicalized proletariat and the newly organized middle sectors gained enough political leverage to force Cuban governments into experiments with

46. Aiding United States diplomacy in this process was a State Department policy that sought to find a place for a modest Cuban economic recovery within the larger United States recovery program. Such a policy was facilitated by Cuba's prior integration into the North American economic sphere, which made dual recovery both possible and, in the case of sugar, necessary. Within the United States, this same integration made it difficult for protectionist forces to treat Cuba as a foreign state. Moreover, it allowed internationalists in Washington to utilize Cuba as an example of the benefits to be derived from expanded foreign trade. See: Jules R. Benjamin, "The United States and the Cuban Revolution of 1933: The Role of United States Hegemony in the Cuban Political Economy," Diss. University of Pennsylvania, 1974, chap. VII.

For United States policy toward Cuba during this period see: Fitzgibbon; Emilio Roig de Leuchsenring, *Historia de la Enmienda Platt* 2 vols. (Havana, 1935); Robert F. Smith, *The United States and Cuba: Business and Diplomacy 1917-1960* (New York, 1960); Bryce Wood, *The Making of the Good Neighbor Policy* (New York, 1961). For unpublished works see: Jules R. Benjamin, "The United States and the Cuban Revolution of 1933 . . ."; Francis V. Jackman, "America's Cuban Policy During the Period of the Machado Regime," Diss. Catholic University, 1964; and Peter F. Krogh, "The United States, Cuba and Sumner Welles, 1933," Diss. Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, 1966. Also see United States, Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States* (Washington, D.C.) volumes for this period.

interventionist economics, which continually exacerbated relations with the United States.⁴⁷

An important feature of the stalemated Cuban society of the 1940s and 1950s was the presence within the ranks of organized labor of a generation of Cuban workers whose determining political experiences had come during the intense proletarian insurgency of the early 1930s. While integrated through their unions into the labor institutions of the Batista and Auténtico governments (1940-1944 and 1945-1952), they nevertheless retained a sense of political purpose and radical expectation. As a result, with the exception of the 26th of July generation (that is, those who came to political maturity during the 1950s), the population group that had experienced the struggle against the *Machadato* and Yankee intervention turned out to be the strongest supporters of the leftward movement of the Castro government in the early 1960s.⁴⁸

The failure of any class in Cuba to achieve social hegemony in the post-Machado period was in many ways the result of the frustration of the revolution of 1933. The ideological flowering which produced the nationalist renaissance of the late 1920s and early 1930s—with its newly articulated neoliberal, socialist, and corporatist social visions—produced no viable working model for Cuban society. The result, rather, was a superficial populism and state capitalism, combined with a bureaucratized army and cartelized labor unions and middle sector organizations. This structure, from which any truly conservative forces had long been eliminated and into which the reformist

47. The collectivization of the middle sectors was a fundamental aspect of the stalemated Cuban society. Sugar and tobacco planters, for example, resisted forces pushing them into tenantry during the sugar depression of 1925-1940 by forming associations that pressed for government protection. Eventually, the planting segment of the sugar industry took on a structure similar to that of the oligopolized millers. See Aguilar, *Cuba, 1933*, pp. 233-234; Álvarez Díaz, *A Study on Cuba*, pp. 336-339.

Concerning the broader effects of stalemate on the Cuban economy see: James O'Connor, "The Political Economy of Pre-Revolutionary Cuba," Diss. Columbia University, 1964; and Dudley Seers, ed., *Cuba: The Economic and Social Revolution* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1964).

For United States problems with Cuban populism see: United States, Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1944, VII, and R.G. 59, 711.37/289, dated 11/9/38; 711.37/299, dated 12/29/38; 711.37/306, dated 7/29/39; and 711.37/307, dated 7/31/39 all concerning difficulties with debt repayments. For problems with Cuban nationalism and communism see *Foreign Relations*, 1946, XI; 1947, VIII; and 1948, IX. Also see George S. Messersmith Papers, University of Delaware Library, Special Collections, Diplomatic Papers, Box II, 1940 and Box III, 1941.

48. Maurice Zeitlin, *Revolutionary Politics and the Cuban Working Class* (New York, 1970), chap. 9.

and revolutionary organizations of the 1930s had been successfully integrated, attracted scant allegiance from the Cuban people.

The lack of legitimacy which characterized the regimes of the 1940s and 1950s created an ideological vacuum that served as an important precondition for the decisive victory of a new generation of radical nationalists in the 1960s and their subsequent intellectual alliance with socialism.