Introduction[1]

The Cuban Revolution and World Change

by
Donald W. Bray and Marjorie Woodford Bray

The Cuban Revolution that triumphed in 1959 and perseveres in the twenty-first century earned an important place in world awareness. It is celebrated throughout the South, debated in the North, and is a recurrent theme in U.S. political life. In Latin America it is the only postindependence revolution that has not been vitiated or reversed. In the era of world neoliberal corporatization it stands as the foremost alternative social system.

When the Soviet Union and allied economies of Europe were swept away by the neoliberal tide, Cuba resisted. Now in Russia health, education, and social security programs have been gutted, life expectancy has dropped into the 50s, and crime and social alienation are rampant. Cuba, in contrast, has held fast to its social programs, and conditions of life are gradually improving after the economic crisis provoked by the rupture with the former socialist economies of Eastern Europe.

That crisis has been a great shock to Cuba. Over 80 percent of its trade had been with the USSR alone. Havana had to make do with only 15 percent of its prerupture energy supply, and blackouts resulted. Right-wing U.S. Congressmen and the Miami-based Cuban American National Foundation (CANF) gleefully fashioned what they believed to be the *coup de grace*: the Helms-Burton Act, which sought to end the Cuban experiment in social change. But the Revolution survived, albeit with sacrifice and social cost. In the crisis low-point years of 1993-1994, policy choices had come down to accepting the dollar as legal tender and encouraging increased foreign investment or

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having Cubans go hungry. These measures have worked. Conditions of life, while still below prerupture levels, are improving, and the basic well-being of Cubans has been preserved (Azicri, 2000).

In 2001 came a startling declaration from an unlikely source: James Wolfensohn, president of the World Bank, said that Cuba had done "a great job" in providing for the social welfare of its people (Lobe, 2001). Even the new leaders of the CANF seem to have realized that positive changes had been achieved by the current regime. In the summer of 2001 they indicated that they did not want a sudden collapse of the Cuban system à la Eastern Europe. However, this apparent moderation of the CANF, the World Bank, and potential U.S. investors did not signal a willingness to accept indefinitely the existence of a socialist model in Cuba. Could its accomplishments survive the neoliberal changes that are still being demanded as the price for U.S. tolerance?

It must be acknowledged that permitting free circulation of dollars has challenged the long-standing social justice goals of the Revolution by providing greater income to those fortunate enough to receive dollars from friends and relatives abroad or positioned to earn dollars from foreign tourists or investors. Ingenuity will be needed for the eventual amelioration of this disparity. In the meantime, hard-currency earning has generated new employment opportunities for some Cubans, and a high markup in dollar stores funds food and other social programs for the less well-off.

The Cuban Revolution has demonstrated remarkable adaptability in overcoming external and internal threats without perverting its ideals of social justice. This gives promise to the proposition that ways will be found to preserve those ideals even after an eventual normalization of relations with the United States gives rise to a corrosive invasion by free-marketers and dollar-bearing tourists from the North. It is disheartening to contemplate that Havana might become another profit-driven Shanghai or a socially deformed "export platform" like Honduras or the Dominican Republic.

Life in Cuba today is Spartan, but it is not bleak and without texture. The absence of commercial advertising, the consumerism infatuation/satiation ethos, "mall rats," and other hallmarks of modern capitalist civilization is breathtaking. Human relationships seem less superficial and scant material things more appreciated. Popular culture is vibrant, and art is nourished and flourishing. Afro-Cuban religion and culture are in renaissance. In 2001 the Revolution set out to place an art instructor in every neighborhood to join the physician and nurse already there.

photography: David Sandoval design: Dolores Rivera

CUBA AND THE STRUGGLE FOR A NEW KIND OF WORLD

In the 1960s-to-1980s period people referred to the "movement" to mean the multiple national and social liberation efforts then under way. After the end of the cold war, with the collapse of most socialist systems and the powerful surge of neoliberalism, the movement foundered. However, in the 1990s the blatant and effective attempt by transnational corporate interests to dominate the world economy and public policy shocked people concerned about democracy, the environment, and justice into action. Corporate control polarized income distribution everywhere. At the end of the century the Battle of Seattle marked the launching of a unifying global struggle. All persons subject to victimization by the corporate onslaught had common cause.

That half the world's people attempt to survive on less than US$2 a day is unacceptable. That people in the South are paid pennies to make shoes selling for US$75 in the North and rural workers are not paid enough to buy shoes for their children is unconscionable. Enlightened Northerners cannot make peace with a world in which the people producing many of the products Northerners enjoy are unable to provide their children with minimal nutrition. This is not a viable planetary culture; this is the world that "free" markets make. Creating a world of fair wages and fair trade will have to be a political project carried out by government and civil society. It is not surprising that neoliberals seek to leave the state unfunded and impotent and to reduce civil society to lady-bountiful organizations that do not challenge the power structure of transnational corporations seeking superstate status.

Part of the reconceptualization of traditional radical formulations is the enlargement and rethinking of the venues of conflict. Six major levels or—to use a venerable term—"points" of struggle are now production, consumption, domestic politics, culture, the environment, and international transaction.

The point of production. It is in their workplaces that people feel most alone against the world, and it is in trade unions and professional associations that collective empowerment is usually discovered. After more than a century of vitiation by divisive nationalism and management manipulation, emphasis is being placed upon the globalization of the labor movement. Cross-continental union cooperation and cross-border organizing are under way as never before.

The point of consumption. The organizing of consumers to modify their spending on behalf of human rights and the environment is proving to be a powerful weapon. One example is the effort to promote the sale of fair-traded coffee and bananas. Fair trade is much more than a matter of price. To be a

fair-trade item, a product must be produced under human- and environment-friendly conditions wherein workers are joined in protective unions and associations. The antisweatshop movement is a major part of the point-of-consumption struggle. Consumers linked with workers and small producers have the muscle to confront agribusiness and other corporate giants.

The point of domestic politics. From small community organizations to the national political arena, collective effort can advance progressive goals as never before. This opportunity is augmented by the antihuman and antienvironment consequences of neoliberal globalization.

The point of culture. Cultural production is being recognized as an important aspect of collective strength. The commodification of people's authentic expression needs to be resisted to retain the integrity and strength that this expression can provide as a space outside market forces. Resisting corporate control of education is an important component of this effort.

The point of the environment. The struggle for the environment, in addition to being vital for the survival of life on the planet, is coming to serve as a focal point for local and international organizing. These concerns can mobilize persons who might otherwise be marginalized from a progressive movement.

The point of international transaction. Massive computer-assisted activism is being directed against the instruments of international corporate dominion: the World Trade Organization, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the Group of 8 (the leading industrial nations). It is occurring alongside of pressures for core labor standards and environmental protection when it comes to the establishment and modification of common markets and free-trade areas. The George H. W. Bush/William Clinton version of the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) as an expanded North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is coming under particularly heavy fire, as well it should. These Mr. Hyde parts of international organization should not detract from the many Dr. Jekyll United Nations organizations in which a more just world is being conceptualized. Initiatives in these agencies have often been undervalued by progressive persons and groups whose attention has been upon the Mr. Hyde bodies and the U.S.-dominated Security Council.

The points of domestic politics, culture, and international transaction have become particularly important to the struggle of indigenous peoples to retain their identity and ways of life.

The objective conditions for world revolution are present as never before. It is a beginning of history. In times of beginnings, intellectual, political, cultural, and spiritual leaders need alternative conceptions for remaking reality. Cuba is a keystone element in world reconstruction. That reformation is seen in all of the ideas and forces coming together to resist and transcend neoliberal globalization. Despite obvious problems, Cuba has many alternative life features worthy of study. Just as Cuba was a standout during the "movement" period of world experience, so it is in this era of new beginnings. This is the time of the struggle for a new kind of world, the *transformation*.

TRANSPERIALISM AND U.S.-CUBAN RELATIONS

Enfolded in what we have named transperialism (Bray and Bray, 1998) are both the globalization-as-neocolonialism thrust of the North in general and the world hegemony drive of the United States. Prominent in the latter is U.S. global control of resources, especially oil. "Free" trade is a power system for transperialism as the doctrine of laissez-faire was a power system for the British Empire when it ruled the world's waves for the century after 1815. In the case of Cuba, the U.S. embrace of transperialism manifests itself in its most primitive form, a political and economic stranglehold seeking to asphyxiate a challenging countersystem. This is done in blatant defiance of international law and opinion. It offends the rest of the world, even the North. It is comparable to President George W. Bush's world-offending proposal to achieve U.S. military offensive control of outer space under the guise of defense.

CUBAN RECOVERY SINCE l994

During the Cuban economic crisis of 1993-1994, economic breakdown seemed imminent. Many embarked on dangerous over-water departures from the island. Florida champagne corks popped prematurely, but the crisis was weathered and the Revolution placed back on course. The money that Cuban-Americans brought or sent to Cuba became the largest source of foreign exchange, surpassing sugar. Booming tourism attracted Canadians, Europeans, and Latin Americans in particular. In addition to those U.S. citizens who traveled legally to Cuba, tens of thousands visited each year without the required special license from the Treasury Department. Cuban music and art won world attention as never before. An estimated 60 percent of the population had access to dollar earnings. Eighty-five percent lived in family-owned homes. The overall economy began growing again. Alienation has not

disappeared, but some measure of alienation can be a good thing; it can lead to positive change. Breaking with the heavy-handed influences of the Soviet model and the challenges of the attendant economic crisis awakened new initiative and dynamism, especially among youth. In "Development as an Unfinished Affair: Cuba after the 'Great Adjustment' of the 1990s," a leading Cuban economist, Pedro Monreal, outlines the serious challenges Cuba must overcome in moving away from its traditional agriculturally based economic structure.

THE ROLE OF FIDEL AND HIS LEGACY

North Americans think of Castro's Cuba; Cubans think of their Cuba. Obviously, the successful Cuban Revolution has had ten million points of light and is not the work of one person, but Cubans also think of their Fidel. He has provided transformative leadership as opposed to the transactional leadership that characterizes U.S. politics. Such leadership was necessary to break the mold of the old social order and to protect the new one against the colossus of the North. Now, as the Cuban leader deals with his tenth U.S. president, his authority and legitimacy remain remarkably high—surely higher than that of George W. Bush when he assumed power under a Florida cloud.

Fidel Castro is a serious person who has made being Cuban a serious matter. All Cubans are expected to help carry the banner of an alternative world. If Cuba doesn't carry that banner, who will? This alternative recognizes that good consultative social planning is better than marketplace depredations of the quality of life; that people need space to grow community and culture outside of market forces; that social and economic justice precede real democracy; and that popular power is more democratic than "no-option, two-party plutocracy."

There are civil rights protections yet to be achieved in a less threatened Cuba, but the prerequisites for real democracy are in place. The danger is that these will be undone in the name of a bogus democracy introduced from abroad. Fidel is still an important guardian of the Revolution, and most Cubans—no matter how much they complain—understand this. In Part 2 of this issue, Saul Landau describes a dramatic incident in 1994 in which Fidel's courageous personal intervention was decisive. His presence and example have prevented the descent into corruption that contributed to the ending of the socialist systems of the other former members of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA), the former Soviet-dominated trading bloc in which Cuba found shelter and help. From the "war against bureaucracy"

launched early in the revolutionary process to the 2001 establishment of a Ministry for Auditing and Control, whose mission included preventing and detecting corruption, the Cuban Revolution has made administrative integrity a priority. Fidel's role as guardian of the Revolution does not mean guardian of the status quo. When asked how he perceived his role, he replied, "the innovator."

The Cuban Revolution has made an extraordinary contribution to economic and political uplift in the South. Timely Cuban military assistance in Angola in 1975 may well have prevented an invading force sent by the apartheid regime in South Africa from reversing the independence struggles of the tier of nations from Angola to Mozambique. Later Cuban soldiers helped Angolan forces drive South African troops from Angola, a struggle that also led to the independence of Namibia and the ending of the apartheid system itself. Late in the Reagan administration, Namibian independence and pressure against apartheid had also become U.S. objectives; to that extent, Cuban soldiers were acting in concert with U.S. policy. For this "cooperation" normalization of U.S.-Cuban relations should not have been an unreasonable result. But once again the United States moved the goalposts with additional demands: not only did Cuban troops have to leave Africa, but a Florida-born political and economic system had first to be imposed in Cuba itself.

The Cubans have provided technical assistance to numerous countries of the South and helped to educate thousands of Southern students in Cuba. For these and other contributions, Fidel Castro was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize in 2001.

ADDRESSING THE CUBAN REVOLUTION

The articles in the two parts of this issue (see the July Issue, Number 125, for Part 2) take up the challenges engendered by the "Special Period in Time of Peace." This concept refers to the severe difficulties imposed on the Cuban economy by the end of the Soviet Union and the breakup of the CMEA. The most important of the reforms undertaken was the encouragement of investment in certain sectors of the economy from capitalist nations and the legalization of use of the dollar as a currency for domestic transactions. It is important to remember, however, that some of the reforms, including seeking foreign investment, had been undertaken before the collapse of the socialist bloc during the previous period of Rectification.

Now that Cuba has survived the initial shock of the rupture with its economic dependence on the former Soviet Union, it is a good time to address the impact of the reforms on Cuban society. We are fortunate to have the issues

raised by these changes addressed by a distinguished group of leading experts on the complex problems of sustaining a socialist society in a sea of hostility with dimensions never before confronted by a Marxist-led government. These writers represent the cutting edge of scholarship from Europe, North America, and Cuba itself.

"Whither Cuban Socialism? The Changing Political Economy of the Cuban Revolution" by Douglas Hamilton provides a brief overview of the stages of Cuban political economy since 1959. He emphasizes the two most salient questions confronting those responsible for the construction and survival of Cuban socialism: the introduction of market measures into a socialist economy and the contradictions between centralized power and popular participation and representation. These issues form a thread that links the articles in this issue.

Hamilton calls attention to Haroldo Dilla's observation that the Cuban Revolution had provided not only social equality but also social mobility without the creation of a privileged class. This is now threatened. He provides a set of futures related to the insertion of Cuba into the world economy, emphasizing the writings of Julio Carranza Valdés, Dilla, and Ken Cole. (Remarkably, all of these writers are represented in this two-part issue, although addressing other matters.) Dilla's concerns regarding the present moment are summarized in three principles: the need to maintain national unity; the need to strengthen the "people" and their organizations, recognizing the growing complexity of Cuban society; and the need to provide democratic mechanisms to maintain popular hegemony by negotiating with and subordinating the emerging "classes" created by restructuring. Hamilton's references to Carranza focus on the elaboration of his call for the "preeminence of social ownership of the fundamental modes of production." He sees the need to create efficient and profitable concerns in a market context. Large and some medium-sized ventures should be wholly state-owned or joint ventures with foreign capital; other medium-sized companies, while state-owned, should be allowed greater autonomy; and medium-sized and small enterprises such as crafts and services could be under private, individual, cooperative, state, or mixed ownership. Hamilton then discusses the critique of Carranza's position by Cole, who sees it as an abandonment of socialism because it does not provide a context for people's social evolution. (Carranza's contribution to Part 2 of this issue takes up that problem.) He notes Cole's call for emphasis on "social participation in the regulation of the economy," but he believes that Cole's vision and that of Carranza could be reconciled without too much difficulty.

In "Cuba: The Process of Socialist Development," Ken Cole begins by sketching some dimensions of the Special Period and the degree to which

Cuba has recovered economically. He emphasizes that many of the changes that have been implemented came out of the Rectification campaign that had been undertaken as a result of the realization that the Soviet-style economic model adopted in 1973, which emphasized material incentives, would not lead to socialist development in Cuba. The Rectification campaign promoted participation. For Cole, Rectification has "defined" the characteristics of the Special Period. The process of political participation has been "deepened."

Cole develops in some detail the concept of socialist development, which is characterized by "the fulfillment of individuals' changing social, creative potentials," arrived at through the struggle of people themselves. Although he acknowledges the criticism offered by Dilla that a technocratic bloc with "privileged access to the world market" could challenge the distribution of power, overall he takes an optimistic view of the economic opening. He sees in it an opportunity for Cuba to specialize in those areas, such as pharmaceuticals, in which it has the potential for maximizing its foreign-exchange earnings. If these are allocated democratically, socialist development can be achieved.

Hans-Jürgen Burchardt, in "Contours of the Future: The New Social Dynamics in Cuba," addresses the question of the durability of the Cuban system without the charismatic leadership of Fidel Castro. He believes that the present stability is based on the social and cultural capital provided by the national unity that arises from social cohesion and national independence. This collective identity is in jeopardy from the new social inequality. He cites the importance of developing a political culture that would, among other things, promote internal democracy in the Communist Party, increase the importance of the parliament (Popular Power—see the review by Dilla, *Challenge to Cubanología*, of Peter Roman's book in Part 2 of this issue), make the legal system politically independent, and allow unions and other mass organizations to represent the interests of their members. The revised political culture would also permit a pluralistic debate in the communications media—in other words, encourage a civil society that would also be a "civic society" with a synergistic relationship to the state.

In "The Virtues and Misfortunes of Civil Society in Cuba" (in Part 2 of this issue) Dilla and Philip Oxhorn challenge the liberal ideology of those who see the presence of a capitalist market as necessary for the existence of civil society. They point to the contradiction between the individualist focus of existing liberal democracies and the collective emphasis implied in the concept of civil society as composed of "autonomous associative projects." They also believe that a state can "build civil society." In discussing the Cuban case, they point to the associative entities that exist there. Before the 1996 passage of the vindictive Helms-Burton Act (see Castro in Part 2 of this issue)

there were 2,154 registered associations in Cuba. With the impending passage of the act, the Cuban government ended recognition of additional associations. Dilla and Oxhorn discuss the kinds of groups that compose Cuban civil society, which include, in addition to the simple interest groups that make up the majority but are not likely to contribute to general public discourse, a wide range of organizations. Prominent are the mass associations—the women's organization, the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, and the unions—and the smaller student and farmers' associations, but these have so far shown limited autonomy from the state. There are also religious groups, development nongovernment organizations, academic centers and publications, community social movements growing out of initiatives coming from state agencies, and cooperatives. The unregistered "dissident" groups, involving only a few hundred persons, are viewed as insignificant in influence. The "new economic actors" engendered by economic reforms are seen as having a potential role in civil society, particularly the "technical-entrepreneurial sector" because of its capacity for rapid communication. Also important are the growing numbers of self-employed, who have no organizational linkages and have been encouraged to affiliate themselves with relevant unions.

For a long time in Cuba the idea of a socialist civil society was viewed as theoretically invalid because of the conventional liberal democratic construction of the concept. However, beginning in the 1990s the term began to enjoy use by people from different theoretical perspectives. This was in large part a recognition of the fact that civil society was indeed emerging (the registry for associations was established in 1989). The suspension of recognition of new organizations coincided with the publication of a semiofficial article condemning the idea of civil society. It was followed by an official Communist Party condemnation of some NGOs and ultimately the dismantling of the Center for Studies on the Americas (CEA—see Edelstein's book review, "The Centro de Estudios sobre América: An Account of a Regrettable Loss," in Part 2 of this issue), where seminal discussions of these issues had been undertaken. Dilla himself was a member of the Center. These actions were accompanied by a definition of "socialist civil society" in a manner that Dilla and Oxhorn characterize as "an attempt by the state to implement a kind of control over civil society and its dynamic."

Dilla and Oxhorn recognize that the threat of subversion from U.S.-sponsored NGOs was a valid concern, but they cite another explanation—the existence of "a political class and a bureaucracy . . . willing to allow competition over the distribution of resources." They also point to the fact that the "tolerance" of civil society was "minuscule" compared with the "concessions made to the market and its agents." Relevant to this issue are the

strategies that were embarked upon by what progressive writers once called "really existing socialism," that is, the Soviet Union, its associated nations, and China.

As the Cuban Revolution with all that it entails—the leadership, the party, the bureaucracy, mass organizations, a small but growing civil society, the legislative system (Popular Power), the Cuban people—seeks to advance and survive in the post-Soviet era, it confronts fundamental problems similar to those faced by the Soviet Union itself and by China. The choices presented can be characterized (albeit in an oversimplified manner) by the concepts introduced by Mikhail Gorbachev, glasnost (openness) and perestroika (restructuring). Gorbachev himself opted to emphasize glasnost and opened Soviet society to possibilities that ultimately—largely because of entrenched bureaucracy and past failures to respond to the desires of the people—culminated in the collapse of the system. In contrast, while maintaining political control, the party leadership of China has adopted perestroika, drastically restructuring the economy but in so doing partly sacrificing the basic socialist character of the society.

The Cuban leadership has tried to steer a course between these two extremes. Before the crisis, egalitarian considerations were paramount in economic policy decisions. In order to recover and sustain national well-being, a form of perestroika was implemented that linked foreign capital to tourism and mining and allowed agricultural cooperatives and small private enterprises. This has restored some economic dynamism to the system. It has somewhat reduced economic equality while retaining the other fundamental priorities of the Revolution.

So far, glasnost, as illustrated in the article by Dilla and Oxhorn, has not been undertaken, and openness has even suffered setbacks—which is understandable in the light of the intransigent belligerence demonstrated by the United States, a theme taken up in Soraya Castro's meticulously researched "U.S.–Cuban Relations During the Clinton Administration" (in Part 2 of this issue). Castro documents the remorseless efforts of the executive and legislative branches of the U.S. government to undo the Cuban Revolution, an effort engaged in by both Democratic and Republican parties despite opposition from U.S. allies in Europe and from sectors of the U.S. capitalist class. The instruments of this policy were the 1992 Cuban Democracy (Torricelli) Act and the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (Helms-Burton) Act of 1996. The Torricelli Act both strengthened the existing economic blockade of the archipelago and included a Track 2 that sought to use persuasive means to dislodge the Castro regime. These provisions were utilized by the Clinton Administration. The Helms-Burton Act tightened the economic screws even more and alienated U.S. allies by including provisions that would have

imposed sanctions on third parties trading with and investing in Cuba. The most stringent of these were waived by President Clinton, and in 2001 George W. Bush did the same.

Castro ascribes U.S. intransigence to the perception by both political parties that keeping commitments made to powerful Cuban-oriented groups in Florida and New Jersey was necessary for them to retain power. She shows, however, that when U.S. national interests were threatened, as in the case of the flood of Cubans seeking to escape the economic crisis of the early 1990s, the administration held secret meetings to resolve the situation. (Saul Landau, a contributor to Part 2 of this issue, helped set up the talks between Morton Halperin and Ricardo Alarcón that led to the 1994 immigration agreements.)

An additional element in understanding U.S. policy toward Cuba is that agents of the U.S. state are behaving as Marx suggested: as the general staff of the U.S. ruling class, who realize that in order to retain hegemony the United States cannot afford to let short-run profits from investments in Cuba override the necessity to eliminate the still destabilizing presence of a socialist country outside the U.S. orbit in the Western Hemisphere. The traditional Monroe Doctrine sphere of control has become even more important given the challenges to U.S. world dominance represented by European unity and Asian competition.

After the tragic loss of life in the United States on September 11, 2001, relations between the United States and the Cuban Revolution may have been altered. The United States has sought to recruit all the nations it could to its global "war on terrorism," and the Cuban government proclaimed its opposition to the attacks carried out in New York City and Washington. After Hurricane Michelle in November, Cuba bought food and medical supplies directly from U.S. companies using Cuban dollar reserves, and the supplies were transported by U.S. ships.

Nevertheless, in the face of the overwhelming power of the United States and the forces of the neoliberal market, how can Cuba or, for that matter, any Third World nation maintain its own system based upon values developed by its own people? Julio Carranza's "Culture and Development" (in Part 2 of this issue) begins to grapple with these issues. Using the analysis of culture articulated in recent UNESCO research and conferences, Carranza emphasizes that culture and development cannot be separated; culture is not an instrument for material progress but the essential fabric of a society, its major internal force. It is made up of a people's beliefs, aspirations, environment, knowledge, and ways of doing things. In the present globalized world, dominated by transnational corporations, it is a challenge for underdeveloped countries to maintain their own cultures.

Although in its broad sense culture encompasses more than artistic culture, Carranza does address the role of cultural production in an underdeveloped nation. The merchandising of artistic creation risks sacrificing its spiritual and historic significance, but it can also be an important potential source of income—a context in which he also discusses tourism. The surplus income from these activities is critical for the support of other aspects of culture that do not generate immediate profits, such as education.

The socialism of Eastern Europe emphasized economic change and imposed bureaucratic criteria on all aspects of society to the detriment of the ethics and aesthetics needed for true social transformation. The Cuban experience, coming out of its nineteenth- and twentieth-century struggles based on the legitimate aspirations of the majority, was historically different from that of those nations. The force of its national history and culture has preserved the autonomy of the Cuban process. (In his book review in Part 2 of this issue, Dilla notes the importance of this tradition at the community level.) Although the threat to the Revolution is perhaps greater than ever, Carranza believes that the nation's rich culture, in the most inclusive sense, is the reservoir of strength that can guarantee the permanence of the fundamental principles of Cuba's emancipating project. Anyone familiar with Cuba can attest to its unique and dynamic culture. In this context the decision to fund the training and placement of a teacher of the arts in every neighborhood is telling.

Indications that U.S. hemispheric economic and political control is in jeopardy can be seen in the restive movements at home and throughout the Americas in response to the relentless promotion of the FTAA. After all, activism has succeeded before: ending the Vietnam War and advancing civil rights in the United States are cases in point. Now that the world has advanced from "movement" protest to "transformation" initiative, it is only a matter of time before the archaic U.S. harassment of the Cuban Revolution is swept away in the winds of activist-led change. Movement protest was directed at the correction of specific injustices. The new twenty-first century initiatives carry designs for a more humane and livable world. Remarkably, the Cuban Revolution of 1959 anticipated the politics of the twenty-first century, whereas the nihilism of neoliberalism and postmodernism are beginning to be discarded. Martin Luther King also anticipated the need for transformation: "We must rapidly begin to shift from a thing-oriented society to a person-oriented society. When machines and companies, profit motive and property rights are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, materialism, and militarism are incapable of being conquered."

As we consider the struggle of the Cuban people and their leaders to construct a just and socialist society, it is essential that we not measure their accomplishments against some abstract concept of what that society should

be. Ken Cole's article emphasizes the principle of praxis as a requisite in the human effort to achieve fulfillment. He concludes with a quotation from Karl Marx that epitomizes the human condition: "Men make their own history, but they do not do it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but circumstances directly encountered."

Sympathetic observers of the Cuban Revolution come in many political colors, especially on the left. *Latin American Perspectives* has striven to avoid sectarianism in its assessment of this groundbreaking struggle for social justice. *LAP* contributors to this issue view the Revolution's twists and turns, failures, learning, and setting off in new directions as a pattern reflecting resilience rather than simple confusion. Cuban commitment to education, health, rewarded labor, and dignified later life has not been altered by drastic shifts in world political circumstances. The right of Cuba as a nation to pursue an independent course has not been abandoned despite the blows administered by the colossus of the North. While acknowledging this heroic dedication to principle, thoughtful and supportive commentators would be remiss not to bring constructive suggestions to the discussion of the Cuban Revolution. Cuba belongs to the world as do all of the world's other parts. Non-Cubans and Cubans together can work toward promoting enhanced rights of privacy, intellectual openness, economic justice, and effective democracy everywhere. This is the spirit in which the works in this issue are brought together.

NOTE

1. The subject of the Cuban Revolution will comprise this issue (Part 1) and the following issue (Part 2—Issue 125, Volume 29, Number 4, July 2002) of *Latin American Perspectives*. The Introduction contains references to articles in both issues. Those pieces to be published in the next issue will be identified as being in Part 2.

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