

THE CHALLENGE OF FIDELISMO

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IT IS NOW about six months since the CIA-trained Cuban "freedom fighters" landed on the Bay of Pigs. In the agonizing post-mortem on what is now known as the Cuban fiasco, all the bones have been dug up with painstaking thoroughness by the American and the rest of the world press. Yet the confusion and ignorance over Cuba has continued to hound us, and the implications of *fidelismo* on the vast underdeveloped areas of Asia, Africa and Latin America have remained vague and incomprehensible to most of us. It is little surprising that a Manila newspaper of vast pretensions can still refer to the 26th of July Movement as

"the biggest hoax and cruellest betrayal yet perpetrated on the Cuban people" without so much as drawing a line of perceptive comment from any of its readers.

Yet this "hoax" of the Cuban social revolution is such a reality that President Kennedy has been compelled to launch in mid-August his \$20 billion "Alliance for Progress" program of aid to Latin America, precisely to wean away the perennially poor and largely illiterate Latin American *campesinos* from the enticing winds of *fidelismo* blowing from the Caribbean. For Mr. Kennedy sees radical social reform as the best hope of economic progress and political stability, not only in Latin Amer-

ica, but in the other underdeveloped areas of Asia and Africa, where the United States must face the relentless Soviet challenge to ride the crest of a surging social revolution.

Such political solutions, however, are anathema to the privileged landed gentry and their foreign backers who have exploited the underdeveloped areas of the world. And, as in the case of Latin America, in the apt words of a *New Statesman* editorial, "a skin of capitalism has been grafted onto a feudal framework, and this ugly and inefficient hybrid — kept alive indeed only by constant injections of dollars and arms — has cannibalised democracy in order to live. The peasants have got neither bread nor votes."

Land reform must come if there is to be any social progress. There is the immediate challenge that faces the Kennedy Administration. In effect, how to counter the lure of *fidelismo*. "It is an image with many faces," writes *The Economist* in a special issue on the Latin American Future. "At its simplest, it means to millions of Latin Americans that in a remote but still a sister, country, a man as glamorous as any

film star has given land to the poor, rooked the rich, and put *gringos* in their place. It is a concept that pleases them. The young President and his ebullient corps of Harvard dons now realize only too well that so many Latin Americans are irresistibly drawn towards the lights of *fidelismo*. And they must offer the Latin Americans a third option which is, in the words of Walter Lippmann, "economic development and social improvement without the totalitarian discipline of Communism".

It is a picture of *fidelismo* in action that the eminent sociologist, C. Wright Mills, etches in his book *Listen, Yankee* in an earnest plea to his fellow Americans to wake up and listen to the "angry voice" of Castro's Cuba so that they may not commit "disastrous mistakes of ignorance." This plea, it would seem, was unheeded. About a year later came the Cuban blunder. There were similar pleas from no less eminent sources. Besides Lippmann: Herbert Matthews, Ray Brennan, Jules Dubois, Fred J. Cook, and the liberal weeklies, among others. And there were also the consistently objective and penetrating studies in British journals and

newspapers like *The Economist*, *The Manchester Guardian*, *The Observer*, *The New Statesman*, and the staid *London Times*. By and large, however, the American press simply reneged on its jobs. "In my 30 years on the *New York Times*," Matthews told the American Society of Newspaper Editors on April 21, 1960, "I have never seen a big story so misunderstood, so badly handled, and so misinterpreted as the Cuban revolution."

Mills tries to capture the collective voice of Cuban revolutionaries and to express something of their reasons for the revolution and how they feel about it. He pens his chapters in the form of letters from the Cubans to the *Yanqui* and spells out the Cuban mood as gleaned from his discussions and interviews with Cubans, from Castro and the intellectuals to the rebel soldier and the lowly peasant, during his month's stay in Cuba in August, 1960. A sociologist, he applies the same searching analysis and uncanny insight that he uses in his now classic *The Power Elite* to the story of the Cuban social revolution.

He delves into the long history of the colonial exploitation of Cuba, its place in the

American dream as a slaver's haven, the repeated intervention by American Marines on behalf of the "Yankee bankers," the old order that went out with the "butcher" Batista — "an order of police terror and grief and poverty and disease and illiteracy and the corrupted politics of the thief and the capitalism of the robber." He tells of the revolution, its beginnings, its leaders, its trials and problems, its ends, its meaning. And he recounts its gains in terms of social reform and political stability — higher literacy, more employment, rising production, new schools, better homes, lower rents, better food, lower prices, and other benefits of an agrarian revolution. The Cubans admit, says Mills, they are influenced by the Soviet Union, just like other peoples in under-developed areas, but they deny they are "under Communist orders." Their economic deals with the Sino-Soviet block are business deals. "We are going to take the help we need from whoever will give it to us."

It is pure McCarthyism, asserts Mills, to call Castro and his revolutionaries Khrushchev's stooges. He stresses the fact that the Cubans' "only real fear," their "only real worry," is the "menace" of

the United States to all their efforts. (The Cuban invasion merely confirms this fear.) He sums up what Cubans want from the United States: "Just let us alone." Or, simply: "Nothing." He underscores the problem of Latin America vis-a-vis the United States: So long as U.S. corporations own Latin America's riches they will control its politics. The beneficiaries of U.S. aid have all been the feudal oligarchies. "Inside Latin America, the U.S. Government has supported reactionary circles and do-nothing ruling strata," writes Mills. "Its role has generally been and continues to be that of stabilizing their dominion and so the continued sloth. Its aid has been largely to give them arms and other military support, in the name of 'Hemispheric Defense,' which has meant defense against their own people."

Harper's Magazine in a review of *Listen, Yankee* says the message Mills put in the mouth of the Cuban is, in effect, "a piece of propaganda—uncritical, emotional, oblivious of the faults of the Castro regime." This is perhaps true. Yet it is not so easy to dismiss his documented testimony. For his conclusions are reflected in the main by other competent

writers and observers, American and British, in many articles and studies written before and since the Cuban fiasco. Moreover, there is little about Castro's Cuba that has reached us through the American press and other news media that has not turned out to be propaganda. This explains the failure of intelligence all around on the Cuban fiasco — of the press, of the ICA and other intelligence services, of the diplomatic corps. All these men, to quote *The Nation*, "seemed to have been fettered by ideological blinkers of the kind that obscure social, economic and political realities."

The Cuban fiasco was the aftermath of the Big Deception. Even Mr. Kennedy and his intellectual coterie were taken in. Castro had ranted as early as last December that the United States was preparing an invasion, and he kept at it right up to the eve of the landings, the while beefing up his defenses. The U.S. press ridiculed this claim as a figment of the Latin imagination. Yet, from scattered sources had come reports of feverish preparations in Guatemala and Florida under the CIA. (These preparations clearly had "the knowledge and consent of

the American government.") A few other sources may be mentioned. The *Hispanic American Report* described in detail such preparations by Cuban exiles under the CIA in its issue of October, 1960. On information supplied by its editor, *The Nation* reported on November 19, 1960 the existence in Guatemala of a training base for anti-Castro guerrillas. British journals with competent observers abroad similarly sounded the alert. In February, two months before the invasion, *The Observer* reported: "It is now officially and widely believed by the Cubans that the United States intends to destroy their revolution. They believe that the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in Washington is financing a counter-revolution based on Miami to repeat their Guatemala success of 1954." *The Economist* and *The New Statesman* carried similar reports on the eve of the invasion.

For the first time, writes *The Economist*, in a perceptive comment two days before the invasion, there seem to be grounds for Castro's repeated assertions that Cuba is about to be invaded by counter-revolutionary forces supported by the United States. It notes the publica-

tion of the State Department's White Paper of April 3, 1961 denouncing Cuba "bell, book and candle," followed by the Cuban exiles' call to arms in New York, and then Mr. Kennedy's warning a week before the invasion that Castro "would grow more dangerous unless action were taken against him." Solemnly, *The Economist* says: "If Mr. Kennedy has decided to encourage an attack by the exiles, the United States is entering an extremely dangerous period in its relations with Latin America." And it adds: "If the invasion (still) fails, it will be a major disaster for the reputation of the United States."

And so it came to pass. The debacle was swift. Without an air umbrella, the invaders did not have a chance. The simultaneous "popular rising" the CIA was sure the landings would touch off simply did not materialize. The American failure, and ignominy, was no more sharply drawn than by the unhappy figure of the respected Adlai Stevenson denying categorically before the United Nations, in reply to the Cuban delegate's charges of U.S. intervention, that the United States had had any hand — any hand at all — in the attempt to overthrow Castro! Such

charges, he said, were a tissue of lies delivered "in the jargon of Communism." Apparently, even he had not been told the truth!

The disenchantment among thinking Americans that followed in the wake of this debacle is perhaps best expressed in what the American students at Oxford, including 14 Rhodes scholars, wrote in a letter to the White House:

"We had hoped that under the new Administration the United States foreign policy would reach a new level of honesty and good will. We did not expect that our Ambassador to the United Nations would have to resort to deception and evasion; and that our actions would have to be justified by balancing them against Soviet suppression in Budapest; and that consequently world opinion would turn against them."

A group of Harvard professors bought a half-page ad in the *New York Times* to pour out their anger and disappointment over the American involvement in the Cuban affair.

Manila's newspapers for the most part felt let down, after the first day's flurry

of screaming headlines of new landings, new beachheads, thousands of freed prisoners joining invaders, a reign of terror in Havana, and all the wildest claims of the anti-Castro forces. Taking the cake was a scary one: REBS MISS FIDEL, BAG RAUL. Correspondents burned the wires of the *Associated Press* and the *United Press International*, and the *Agence France Presse*. Fact and propaganda were never so happily, so recklessly blended. An American writer who was in Havana at the time of the invasion, said an AP story of street fighting in Havana and a UPI story that the Hotel Havana Libre had been "totally destroyed" after an air attack on Havana were only typical of 25 "completely false dispatches" by the two major U. S. news agencies he had seen. "I rode and walked through the streets of Havana from the evening of April 14 when I arrived, until the afternoon of April 26 I left," he said. "There was no fighting anywhere, any time. I lived in the Havana Libre that entire period — quite a trick, isn't it, to eat and sleep in a hotel that has been 'totally destroyed.'"

But when the big story of the CIA's complicity in the

invasion was carried on the AP wire, only one Manila newspaper printed it. The rest of the morning dailies, which had played up every anti-Castro claim no matter how fantastic, were silent. They gingerly picked up the story only after Washington had made grudging admissions. Yet, this was the one big story about Cuba: who plotted the invasion and why it failed. Only a week later, when the whole story of the CIA's ignominious role had been exposed, did one paper feel it necessary to express "the people's sympathy" to the United States for its patience and forbearance in the face of Castro's provocations. "Such sympathy, however, is tinged with regret (sic!) that the U.S. has fumbled in its chosen task," it said.

The American intervention in Cuba raised questions and issues that found the United States and its Western allies, notably Britain, in sharp disagreement. One big issue was the Monroe Doctrine. Was the United States justified in intervening in Cuba in the interest of hemispheric security? Even if Castro were a Communist?

The *London Times* raps Mr. Kennedy on the knuckles for stretching the Monroe Doc-

trine to mean that in the last resort the United States "unilaterally reserves the right to use force" to reverse a regime in a neighboring country where the regime might be considered to rely on or encourage "outside Communist penetration." Who could "unerringly draw the line between indigenous Communism and outside influences" asks the journal. Even more open to question, it says, was Mr. Kennedy's point that were the United States to intervene in a neighboring country, it would have, after the suppression of the Hungarian revolt, no lessons to receive from Moscow. "If the leader among the free nations of the West is going to justify its conduct by the example of its opponents, then there will be nothing left but naked self-interest as the mainspring for action."

Even more pointedly writes *The Manchester Guardian*, "No one outside the United States sees anything sacrosanct in the Monroe Doctrine. Even if Dr. Castro has become a Communist stooge, that is no justification for trying to remove him by force. Rhetoric about an ideology 'alien to the Western hemisphere' will cut no ice in Africa or Asia, or even in Europe."

"To the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America," comments *The Observer*, "the United States is not a revolutionary power, but — although Americans can never believe this — the greatest and most powerful fulfillment of Western imperialism. To them, Castro is not a communist dictator, but the heroic champion of an oppressed people or (at worst) a rather muddled man who has been forced to rely on Russian aid because of American hostility. In their eyes Cuba may be a Russian ally but is certainly not a Russian satellite, or a military danger to the United States."

(At the height of the debate on Cuba in the U.S. Congress, Congressman Frank Kowalski (D-Conn) said: "Castro may be an unpleasant irritant, a thorn in our side, but I certainly hope no one believes Cuba is a serious challenge to the United States." This was what Lippmann referred to when he said: "They need to cool off. They might ponder the wisest remark which was uttered during the debates about Cuba—that Castro is a thorn in our flesh, but he is not a dagger in our hearts.")

But adds *The Observer*, even if Mr. Kennedy's pic-

ture of the situation were true and were seen to be true, "it would still be doubtful if his tactics were right." These "dangerous tactics" ignore the long-term diplomatic interests of the West, which are to build up the international order. "The aim should not be to play Mr. Khrushchev's game," it stresses, "but to press him to accept new rules." American power "cannot be used to impose an American anti-Communist ideology on other nations."

A week later, *The Observer* castigated the Americans even more sharply. Commenting on Mr. Kennedy's speeches and actions since the fiasco, and the reactions of the American press, *The Observer* says the Cuban adventure appears to be "not an isolated blunder," but the result of an "anti-Communist blindness," which seems almost universal in the United States. "To a far greater extent than they would like to admit our American friends are the prisoners of an ideology almost as narrow as that of the Communists and just as fervently believed." The American ideology "equates capitalism not only with freedom but very nearly with virtue." Saying that Mr. Kennedy seems to believe that

destiny has chosen him to lead the forces of freedom in a desperate attempt to stop the rot by using the same, (i.e., Communist) methods, *The Observer* soberly concludes: "It would be a grotesque and disabling consequence of an emotional anti-Communism if the West, which ought to be the pioneer of tolerance, came to appear almost as intolerant and blinkered as those it opposes."

John Douglas Pringle, the brilliant deputy editor of *The Observer*, analyzed this "anti-Communist blindness" candidly in a series of on-the-spot studies of the basis of Mr. Kennedy's foreign policy. "Except in a lunatic fringe," he writes, "this anti-Communism cannot be called hysteria; it is a dogma deeply held and sincerely believed." The great majority of the Americans could not see that there was anything wrong with the invasion. The failure was humiliating, but the fact that Mr. Kennedy had tried at all "proved that he was sound of heart."

Mr. Kennedy "exploited" this feeling with "consummate skill to turn the crisis from a Suez into a Dunkirk." The response was overwhelming. A Gallup poll showed that Mr. Kennedy, elected last autumn by the barest

majority, now had the support of 84 per cent of the nation. The President (remarks Pringle) must have reflected ironically that "nothing succeeds like failure."

Therein lies the danger. The United States is now in "a dangerous mood of frustration which would not easily accept another defeat." Says *The Economist*: "Frustrated by their failure to get the first man into space, and Dr. Castro out of Cuba, they (some Americans) are tempted to conclude that the time for negotiation is over and the moment for blunter measures is at hand." It notes that *Time* magazine has expressed this mood. Saying that Mr. Kennedy had come into office with some naive notions about the possibilities of easing cold war tensions by negotiations, *Time* magazine declared that the events in Cuba had brought his three-month pursuit of this "will o'the wisp" to an end.

More bluntly, the columnist Stewart Alsop wrote that one lesson Cuba taught the Americans is summed up in the old adage: "If you strike a king you must strike to kill." The implication is plain. "Some day, one way or another," says Alsop, "the American commitment

to bring Castro down will have to be honored. The commitment can only be honored if the American government is willing, if necessary, to strike to kill, even if that risks the shedding of American blood." (Under-scoring supplied)

Those who hold this view, *The Economist* points out, misunderstand both the nature of the cold war and the causes of its recent frosting over. The only thing the Cuban fiasco proved, says the financial journal, is that "there will be a sharp heightening of tension in the world (and a sharp drop in respect for the United States) if the Americans combine an attempt to organize the overthrow of a foreign government with an incapacity to do the job properly." And it reminds the Americans that they "can never be in a position of exact equality" in the competition with Communism.

In this situation, there is the danger, as John Pringle points out in his study of cold war issues, mentioned in an earlier paragraph, that, if Mr. Khrushchev proves unwilling to discuss cold war solutions, Mr. Kennedy "may decide too quickly that the tough school is right" and that the only practical poli-

cy to meet Communism is to "fight fire with fire"—which means the use of subversion, guerilla warfare and even, if necessary, direct intervention. "The Administration does not seem to have considered," remarks Pringle, "whether it can reconcile such a policy, which must in some cases mean breaking international law (as it did in the Cuban invasion), with the support of the United Nations against Communist transgression, which is at present one of the great strengths of the West."

This was why the revelation of the CIA's role as the chief instigator of the Cuban invasion was so shocking to America's allies. The historian Arnold Toynbee termed the CIA actions in the invasion attempt "another example of governmental gangsterism." If intelligence agencies are made responsible for policy as well, as the CIA was in the Cuban intervention, "the information they get will be coloured to fit their policies." *The Observer* therefore suggests: "Governments should reflect that if their under-cover activities are not compatible with a democratic open society, it is not the open society which is at fault but their activities. The first duty of a free press

everywhere is to stop its government doing silly and shady things by reporting all the news that's fit to print." Clearly a dig at the American press for its sins of omission in the Cuban fiasco.

More succinctly, Walter Lippmann comments: "In a free society like America's, a policy is bound to fail which deliberately violates her pledges and her principles, her treaties and her laws. It is not possible for a free and open society to organize successfully a spectacular conspiracy... In the great struggle with Communism, America must find her strength by developing and applying her own principles, not in abandoning them. x x x The only real alternative to Communism is a liberal and progressive society."

On a similar vein, *The Nation* writes: "If we believe in democracy and support its adherents everywhere, if we abhor dictatorship and oppose it everywhere, we may not triumph, but no one will despise us. All that is certain is that our present course of expediency will convict us of hypocrisy and, as Cuba shows, will not even prevail militarily."

The change must come. In the final analysis, the American attitude towards Cuba

remains a decisive factor. In Latin America, the battle is now joined. For Mr. Kennedy must realize that in Latin America, as it is in Asia and Africa, the race is, as John Pringle has noted in *The Observer*, between a social democratic revolution, helped by the United States, and a Communist revolution, helped by Russia. But there is again the question: How will the United States congress, whose support he must have, react to the change he envisages in his "Alliance for Progress" for Latin America? Will it interpret land reform as "subsidising socialism"? A social-democratic policy is a policy of the Left, "but the United States is a country of the Right. Americans are conservative because they are wealthy and see no reason for change." Can such a country, asks Pringle, "really conduct a policy of social revolution abroad with any hope of success."?

The Economist poses the problem more concretely: To what extent is America willing to let capitalism be blended with socialism in Latin America? Decisions must be made in three fields: land reform, capital formation, and trade expansion. How far will the United States

support land reform? The raising of capital for rapid economic growth is a "harsh business" for backward countries. If the processes of capitalism strike them as sluggish, "they will experiment with Marxism." How will Mr. Kennedy react? Trade should flow where the price and the service are best rather than along channels marked out by ideologies. This means more trade with the Communist countries. How far will the United States agree to let the Latin Americans expand their trade with the Communist world?

There is as yet no evidence that the Kennedy Administration has thought its way through these three questions. Until it does, the Latin Americans are in a difficult position. "They are tempted," says *The Economist*, "to imitate many of the measures of the Cuban revolution." But here again they are up against the stubborn American attitude towards *fidelismo*. What has been attacked in Cuba (according to *The Economist*) is not Russian influence but an "indigenous revolutionary movement." But Americans do not believe that *fidelismo*, with its virtues and its vices, is a native Cuban product. They therefore insist on applying the

Monroe Doctrine to Communism in Latin America.

And indications are that they will not back down on this issue. For one thing, it has become clear in the wake of the Cuban fiasco that Mr. Kennedy is even more vigorously hostile to Castro than Eisenhower was. The Americans are still interventionist at heart because they cannot see that intervention is "imperialism." In so doing, they justify to some extent Russian policy in Eastern Europe. Pringle makes this point in his discussion of U. S. foreign policy. "If Mr. Kennedy can say that Communism is 'not negotiable' in Cuba," he says, "why should not Mr. Khrushchev continue to say that democracy is 'not negotiable' in Hungary or Poland or East Germany?" Clearly Mr. Kennedy labors under a big handicap. "With all its fearful faults Mr. Khrushchev's Communism is a reality which all can recognise. President Kennedy's social democracy is still but words."

How will this race end? The sombre words of *The Observer* commend themselves to our conscience: "One will begin to believe in the possibility of ending the cold war by negotiation only when the two leaders tell their peoples

WORLD'S LARGEST SUN TELESCOPE

Construction work is now under way on a new astronomical observatory which, when completed early in 1963, will house the largest solar telescope in the world. The observatory is on a mountain in Arizona, a state in the southwestern part of the United States. It will be known as the Kitt Peak National Observatory.

The telescope will be housed in a ten-story high tower near a sheer mountain cliff. Its top-most part will be a two-ton flat mirror, 80 inches (203 centimeters) in diameter, known as a heliostat.

Moving automatically, the heliostat will follow the sun as it travels across the sky. The sunlight that strikes it will be reflected to a 60-inch (152-centimeter) parabolic mirror located 480 feet (144 meters) away, at the bottom of a shaft drilled into the mountain. From this mirror, the sunlight again will be reflected to a 48-inch (122-centimeter) mirror. This mirror, in turn, will reflect the sunlight to an underground observing room.

There a 34-inch (86-centimeter) image of the sun, several times larger and more brilliantly illuminated than images obtained with any other existing telescope, will appear on a sheet of white-painted metal mounted on a table top. Scientists will be able to study the image through dark glasses, and will be able to photograph it, and direct its light to spectroscopes.

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that the cold war is not going to be won by anybody, that it is much too dangerous to go on fighting it at all and that the only sane object for human beings in the twentieth century is to cooperate in building up an

international order under which Cuba can choose Communism or Hungary democracy, or India some system of her own, without upsetting the balance of power and endangering the lives of everyone else in the world."