

Two Views—

Castrologists and Apologists: A Reply To Science in the Service of Sentiment

2. Irving Louis Horowitz

TO BEGIN HIS CRITIQUE of my article on *The Stalinization of Fidel Castro*, as C. Ian Lumsden does, with a complaint about analytical weakness and internal inconsistency is one thing. But to fail utterly to deliver even a reasonable not necessarily true (only reasonable) optional model, is quite another. Were the rhetorical aspects of Mr. Lumsden's remarks to be discounted, and we were to ask: just how does he perceive the present Cuban social system, the answer necessarily would be: not very differently from the picture provided for within my own comparative analysis.

On my point that in Cuba there is a subordination of society to the Party State, my critic must say: "This feature is undoubtedly present in Cuba today. It has been recognized for the last few years as one of the weaknesses of the Revolution, and was surely the essence of the 1962 Escalante affair."

On my point that Cuba witnesses the emergence of a leader and his small coterie as exclusive spokesman for the Communist Party, my critic must say: "Indeed, one of the less pleasant aspects of the Revolution has been the glorification of the maximum leader as reflected in the slogan: '*Comandante en Jefe, ordene*' which began to appear all over Havana as long ago as 1962."

On my point that Cuba reveals the promotion of inner political struggle as a substitute for class struggle, my critic makes reference to the apolitical character of various purges. Mysteriously enough, he fails to mention the complex struggle between party and movement (and the host of figures therein involved). Even more mysteriously, he fails to see any political significance whatsoever in the two year absence of Ernesto "Che" Guevara. His "absence" is dismissed by a bland and meaningless assertion that he was not an alternative leader of the Revolution.

On my point that the passion for development displaces the politics of debate and the passion for socialist democracy (which is what I said in the article, and not the simplistic phrase "dominates all political activity in Cuba" as is improperly ascribed to me), my critic must say: "Admittedly, public debate has diminished with the exit of Guevara." Yet, he finds no peculiarity in adding that "Cuba continues to make progress toward a socialist democracy." As evidence, he cites new municipal and regional administrations. Clearly, Lumsden cannot distinguish between *civics* (which is what such local reform entails) and *politics* (which is what public debates, including "fiery public polemics") is all about.

On my point that Stalinization of Cuba has brought to a halt discussion of alternative strategies for economic development, my critic must say: "This statement appears to be the one nearest to the mark," with the gratuitous addendum, "at least superficially." And if Mr. Lumsden's follow-up remarks pass for profundities, then heaven help us all. "Guevara's permanent legacy to his adopted land, is the simultaneity of socialism and communism." May we be preserved from the puerile. My point on single crop socialism stands on the evidence of seven years of economic stagnation. No profundities can eliminate the dreary reports on Cuba made plain in the United Nations *Statistical Yearbook-1965*. The downward trends, not only in comparison to pre-Revolutionary periods, but with respect to the highs reached in the 1962-63 "Che period" are amazing

On my point that Stalinization in Cuba has meant the nearly exclusive concentration of energies on national rather than international problems, my critic must say: "It would not be surprising if this were, indeed, the case, for Cuba can hardly expect the Soviet Union to keep on subsidizing its economy indefinitely." Aside from obvious misinterpretation, since my point had to do with political consolidation and not with economic mobilization, the brute fact is that Cuba's agrarian economy is in rough shape. Droughts and hurricanes are Caribbean constants, the shifts and twists of Cuban agricultural policy are not. And it is political indecision, confusion and just plain technical ignorance, that accounts for the present economic dilemmas, and not geographical, climatic factors.

JUST WHAT IS IT THAT HAS SO upset my critic? Here we come not to matters of fact (although we shall address ourselves to some points raised in this connection later on), but to matters of sentiment. This use of science in the service of sentiment is made plain only late in his piece, when he writes: "In the face of inadequate information one would have expected Horowitz to have given Castroism the benefit of the doubt, rather than to subject it to an analysis which draws parallels with one of the most savage regimes known to mankind." My critic keeps talking about the "obligations" of socialists, my interests are the "obligations" of understanding the mechanisms of the Cuban social system, not a false patriotism. It has been my impression that terrorist practices or the absence of them do not determine one's attitudes toward a regime. Once people make up their minds about the good or evil of a regime (as my critic has about Cuba), they tend to take their terrors in stride—as historically necessary events, as really quite mild in comparison to other terrors. Such comparative judgments on the amount of terror used may be heuristically justifiable, but they hardly justify turning one's mind away from obvious historical parallels.

I take a very different moral tack: scientists and socialists have a double obligation (not half an obligation)—to ascertain the facts as accurately as possible, and to make moral judgments as firm and as binding as the facts allow. Would Mr. Lumsden argue, for example, that the regimes of Castelo Branco in Brazil or Juan Carlos Onganía in Argentina are not as bad as they appear to be, and that we ought to suspend judgment until all the information is available? Does one have to exhume the corpses before facing the likelihood

that things are as bad as they seem to be—or perhaps even worse. My critic makes mention of the fact that I have the temerity to compare Cuba to Stalin's Russia. Surely, he is neither adolescent nor addled and should realize that for decades criticisms of Stalin were blunted and stymied in much the same fashion. The supporters of the Communist movement in the thirties took exactly the position that it would be temeritous and dangerous to compare Stalin to Hitler, that such comparisons would be outrageous and a travesty upon the facts (meaning *ideology*). Now, in 1966, it is quite fashionable not only to make the linkage between them, but to stretch their similarities even though differences were indeed very real.

What I am trying to point out to Mr. Lumsden, hopefully in a not too indelicate manner, is that chores of social science and of socialists may not always be compatible. Priorities of the former over the latter might lead to serious examination of Castro's Cuba on factual grounds, which in turn might or might not stimulate equally probing examination on moral grounds if we start from a socialist standpoint. I did not urge a puritanical position toward Cuba in my paper. Indeed, I bent over backward not to take a position that rested on the quantum of terror as uniquely defining the social system. Lumsden's distortions on this point are classic: he confuses a necessary ingredient for explaining Stalinism with a sufficient explanation. In this light, his remarks that terror is intrinsic to Stalinism are meaningless. Terror was used by Stalin. But terror has also been used in various sizes and shapes by all dictators—developmentally oriented or otherwise. My definition sought to move beyond terror as an explanatory device either for what Stalinism is or for what Castroism is. I addressed myself to basic structural features of the polity and the economy. Regrettably, my critic failed to do likewise.

Mr. Lumsden so utterly and completely misses the thrust of my remarks that were it not for the audience beyond him, I would not try everyone's patience by restating my position. It is simply that socialist Cuba finds itself in a double bind (what some might insist on terming a dialectical situation). On one hand, it is being subject to *strangulation* from external sources, primarily the United States; and suffering *stagnation* as a result of internal sources, primarily the oligarchical political élite directed by Premier Fidel Castro. My concluding three paragraphs make this explicitly evident. I point out that the Cuban Revolution is an authentic one. The process of Stalinization should provide small comfort for Washington Castrologists, since, by the destructive nature of the United States policy toward Cuba, the worst possible features of the Cuban regime came to the fore.

I emphasized the internal rather than the external characteristics of the Castro regime. The reason for this should be evident: namely, that whatever the external conditions Cuba is confronted with, its internal response is the measure of the regime's worth. After all, few new social systems come into the world in pristine innocence and with *ancien régimes* singing the praises of the *nouveau régime*. To chalk up all errors made by a social order to meet the external threat would simply be evasive. Cuba might have responded in a far more rational and morally worthy way were this island surrounded by good neighbors providing wise counsel. My point is, it should have responded rationally and morally precisely because such ideal typical conditions were not

present. This is the point of my concluding remarks. To ignore this is simply to blot out of consideration what was actually written in my essay.

It is written that "Horowitz has failed to contribute to the analysis of Cuban politics, while unfortunately leaving the sour traces of an emotive evaluation which he had claimed to eschew at the outset." It must first be stated that I made no such pretentious claim to eschew an emotive position. I clearly have emotions about Castro and have expressed them. What I actually said was quite different: "The emotive use of the term (Stalinism) will herein be eschewed." It is quite possible to be precise about a term, and emotive about about a subject-matter. And to this I plead guilty. As for the first part of the phrase, my failure to contribute to the analysis of Cuban politics, that I leave for others to judge. If I am wrong, this will soon enough become apparent. What I attempted was a difficult argument by analogy. Even with the safeguards listed in my article distinguishing and separating Castro from Stalin, it rests on an argument by historical analogy. Clearly, the argument by analogy is not the strongest framework for casting theories. But it is at least a framework. It takes on added weight when one realizes that Castro is guiding an ideological State, along lines laid down by Marxism-Leninism. This very fact makes the analogy not a creation of my imagination, but quite evidently, a set of guidelines within which, and through which, Castro desires to realize his goals—such as they may be. If my attempt "fails," it will take considerably more than an eclectic critic climbing on my back to prove it!

MY CRITIC DOES NOT like Stalinism. On the other hand, it is even plainer that what he does not know about Stalinism can fill (and has) many volumes. This is not the time nor place for a dress review on the nature of Stalinism. But if one compares two sentences in a single paragraph the muddle-headed quality of my critic's remarks become manifest. First, he says "I too have observed an increasing conservatism and bureaucratization of Cuban socialism." But this is utterly unconnected to the next statement: "What still holds Cuban communism together is, to a surprising extent, the charismatic appeal of Fidel Castro." Anyone with a remotely compassionate disposition of mind would have understood my piece as an effort to bridge these apparent incongruities between charismatic and bureaucratic forms of rule that leave my critic so puzzled. This I did by showing how, in a Weberian context, the Stalin-Castro phenomenon has a shared basis organizationally in patrimonial restorationism. The revolution is conducted in the name of collective leadership principles, but the charismatic element, far from being enveloped by the bureaucratic organization, becomes transformed into a super-government. Traditional Latin American personalism resolves itself in private government. From this stems the social origins of terrorism of the socialist type. The parallel structures of social system and state system are parallel in name only. In fact, the super-state system mediates the claims of all social sectors. In this way, the forms of legality are kept intact, but the actual conduct of affairs is channeled into totalitarian directions. One may, as Lumsden does, give his approbation to Castro's *jefatura* principle, but to talk of him as leading a march toward democracy is something else again.

Lumsden's capacity for irrelevant banalities is endless. He proves the case

for Cuban internationalism by "the solidarity of the Cuban people with Vietnam"; something, we are told, that is "genuine and deep felt." This rhetoric is supposed to stand as a reply to various aspects of the nationalization of the Cuban Revolution I adduced: the impotence to assist the Dominican Republic (whatever the subjective intentions), the outrageous imperial attacks on the Guatemalan revolutionary movement, the utterly spurious condemnation of men long loyal to the Cuban socialist cause. Just how the case for Castro's "revolutionary integrity" can be supported by the attitude toward the Vietnam war is hard to fathom. Was Stalin's revolutionary integrity preserved because of his support for the Spanish Republican cause in the 1936-39 period? At least, Stalin could justifiably claim to have played an integral role in the Spanish Civil War. Can Castro make any similar claims for the Vietnamese Civil War? Obviously this whole point about internationalism is a rubric without meaning. The support for democracy and freedom *abroad* is a traditional ploy of dictatorships of the Left. When they do likewise at home, Mr. Lumsden's point will take on some relevance.

THE FINAL *chutzpah* is Mr. LUMSDEN's self-appointment as keeper of the facts about Cuba. You would think that at least here he would be sure to get the record straight—if only to score some much needed points. But he does not much bother.

What are my "serious factual errors"?

(1) I refer to counter-insurgency forces operating in Cuba's central provinces, when according to my critic "they were virtually wiped out by 1964." Now, while I do not place much faith in the importance of such counter-insurgency operations, that they exist is beyond a doubt the case. In 1965 (at least a year after Mr. Lumsden had wiped them out) the following *confirmed* engagements took place: an air attack on sugar producing facilities in Pinar del Rio province; the capture of guerrilla leader Eloy Gutierrez Menoyo along with several of his comrades; a center of military opposition was stamped out in the port of Nuevitas. Also, an unconfirmed (but undenied) report, in mid-1965 concerned the military plot to overthrow Castro. While the plot was thwarted, it was reported that 350 officers and soldiers were arrested. Later in the harvest season, acts of sabotage were widely reported. As for United States complicity in these acts, the Cuban government itself spoke of the Central Intelligence Agency as masterminding sabotage efforts. The likelihood is that there has been an increase rather than a decrease in counter-insurgency. The question of new tactics was raised by the Revolutionary Recovery Movement during 1965. The new sophistication at least involved the shutdown of training camps in Central America under CIA sponsorship, and the commencement of indigenous and self-directed operations.

(2) An example of my critic's argument by innuendo is his remark that "Marxism-Leninism became the official ideology of the Revolution in 1961, not 1963." I never even raised, much less contested this point. In fact, I pointed out the socialist stage in Cuba corresponded to the adoption of the Marxian ideology in 1961. What did happen in 1963 were the beginnings of the Communist stage. The *Partido Comunista de Cuba* became pre-eminent in an attempt to resolve the organizational dilemmas posed by the loose affiliative and partici-

pactory type of system still present in the early sixties. I could hardly care less when Marxism-Leninism became orthodox—unless it relates directly to the organizational structure of the Cuban political system.

(3) The third factual “error” is my passing comment on the absence of a strong factory proletariat in Cuba, and the reliance on the peasant-agrarian sector for Cuban economic well-being. First, Lumsden makes the frequent mistake of equating industrialization with urbanization. Just because 57 per cent of the population is urbanized (measures of urbanization are themselves subject to examination, has little to do with the degree to which a nation depends on industrialization. Correlations between the two broad indicators of modernization vary extensively. In Cuba, there is a relatively low correlation between urbanization and industrialization. Indeed, one might argue that this is itself an important element in the cause of the revolution. The fact that under Batista there was a high degree of unionization only indicates organizational strength, not sizes, or for that matter effectiveness. The factory workers of Havana no more made the Cuban Revolution than the factory workers of Shanghai made the Chinese Revolution.

It is plain to all concerned that Cuba is primarily an agricultural society. Sugar is the most important single item in the economy. And as I pointed out in my article, while the role of sugar was downgraded in the early sixties, when various industrialization programs failed to lead to diversification, the role of sugar was once again made central. After sugar, comes tobacco, coffee, cacao, corn, rice, and potatoes. Despite the stagnation in this sector, the powerful agricultural base provided a great deal more in the way of a self-sustaining economy than the imagined benefits of rapid industrialization. To examine the *Statistical Yearbook* of the United Nations, is to be struck by the even greater stagnation of industrial production. Not only is there a seeming absence of production increase, but an equal absence of growth of new plant equipment. At the same time, it is interesting to note the increase in the national budget. The pressures on the Cuban economy compelled the reestablishment of agricultural preeminence in the economic sector, i.e., of a return to single-crop socialism. The size of the Communist Party under Batista, or the degree of trade unionism in the fifties, is as irrelevant to a serious general characterization of the economy, as these two factors were to a general characterization of the polity at the time of the Castro revolution.

(4) I provided no “implication” that Cuba has failed to attempt to trade with capitalist countries. Indeed, I made much of the power of the international economy to thwart just such attempts on the part of Cuba to increase its dollar yield. I wrote: “Cuba is a small nation dependent on the world economy, dependent on a single group, and above all, simply dependent.” I further made quite clear that simple increase in crop sizes would be of no avail, since the manipulation of the world price of sugar is controlled by the United States. It is difficult to estimate trade by Cuba with other nations. One thing is clear, Mr. Lumsden is incorrect to assert that “in 1964, more than a third of its trade was with the non-socialist countries.” All that can be said on this score is that one third of its *cash* transactions (this is the meaning of trading within the limits of dollar reserves) were with the non-socialist bloc. But since so large a portion of Cuban trade is now made within a barter framework, and such barter

terms are nearly exclusively worked out with Communist bloc nations, the actual degree of trade conducted with the capitalist sphere (Spain, Japan, Canada) is much less than one third of its total exports.

(5) Finally, the fact that I mention a nepotistic tendency in Castro, and more important, his humiliation of old-line associates—and their displacement either by himself or by nonentities, is made light of. The family power held by Fidel Castro, Raúl Castro, Vilma Espín, is dismissed despite the fact that Raúl and Vilma, along with Dorticos, are about the only visible faces left in the new Cuba. But the politics of the purge, the dismemberment of any possible opposition, is so clear that one wonders about the purpose of Mr. Lumsden's dismissal of the evidence. The *purging* of Aníbal Escalante, Joaquín Ordoqui, Edith García Buchaca, Juan Marinello, Manuel Luzardo, Lázaro Peña, had nothing to do with their collective competences, but simply with their politics.

My critic chides me for drawing attention to various purges in Cuba. He does not deny their existence, only their magnitude and their political character. Indeed, he adds a Robespierist note: that “many, many more junior officials could be ‘purged’ on grounds of inefficiency or lack of revolutionary integrity.” The resignation of Carlos Rafael Rodríguez as head of the National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA) can hardly be considered a non-political event. The fact that Castro himself assumed this post is illustrative of his organizational concentration of power in his self. Further, the appointment of a military man, of Major Raúl Carbelo—Chief of the air force—as Vice President of INRA indicates the general militarization of Cuban society which I alluded to in the article.

MY CRITIC HAS NO OBLIGATION to accept the interpretation of the Castro reaction to Trotskyism and Maoism which I presented. But since he seems so certain that my explanation is incorrect, one might imagine he would put forth an alternative explanatory device. But no. What we get instead is a display of Mr. Lumsden's fuzziness. “Castro's criticisms of the Latin American Trotskyists are not easy to understand unless they were really directed against the sectarian Posadist faction. Nor is the severity of his denunciation of China readily explicable . . .” The ready-to-hand explanation: that the distinction between Trotskyism and Maoism has intentionally been made ambiguous, since *both* represent a redirection of foreign affairs along the lines originally stated by Guevara, is too obvious, and evidently true, for my critic even to test, much less take seriously. Unless the evidence I adduce for this thesis is seriously confounded, my explanation remains at least worthy of application to concrete events.

What I find particularly depressing about my critic's position is that he insists that my “article does more to aid the enemies of the Revolution than to facilitate its comprehension.” This is where I came in. Precisely this sort of genteel fanaticism is adduced to prevent scholars from expressing their outrage at political evils in Vietnam, the Dominican Republic, or elsewhere. “Do not speak up, perhaps you are right, but mortifyingly, you may provide aid and comfort to the enemies of the United States.” Of those who have spoken against the war in Vietnam, probably including Mr. Lumsden himself, how many actually know all the facts, or even most of them. Yet, even though there

is an abundance of information to indicate that Cuba sails on troubled waters, it is urged upon me to adopt either a judicious posture or silence altogether.

Let me say, in all fairness to Mr. Lumsden, that I did give very serious thought to being silent on the Cuban catastrophe, precisely on grounds he indicates. I did not want my work to provide comfort to professional reactionaries. But ultimately, I decided that the real comfort to reaction is silence. For silence now, often means embarrassment later. This has been the history of the Left in America. Tailoring and temporizing with events are among the defining characteristics of sections of the old Left. If we, as radicals, have not learned the dangerous aspects of unreflective support for errors which seem congenial, we will scarcely be spared the wrath of error which in fact is uncongenial.

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Aftermath of the Berkeley Revolt

ON THREE SEPARATE OCCASIONS I have been asked by friends of mine visiting the Berkeley campus: "Why is Berkeley so dead politically nowadays? Is it because of LSD?"

Time recently carried an article commenting upon the big change from a more approving point of view: "... while sit-in protests over draft-deferment tests swept Chicago, Wisconsin, CCNY and Stanford, Berkeley students kept their cool, and the campus moved hopefully toward creation of a cohesive community." (July 1 1966)

LSD is not responsible; the few people who have taken up psychedelics as a religion were never more than casual devotees of politics. As for marijuana, which is much more widespread than LSD, it has had about the same effect on the student movement as beer has had on the labor movement. But there is no denying that during the past six months or more we have been *figuratively* drugged. Here are some of the symptoms:

- Ten thousand people attended the Vietnam Day Committee teach-in in May, 1965, and fifteen thousand people joined the VDC anti-war march in October of that year. But in March, 1966, when Arthur Goldberg was presented with an honorary degree, less than a thousand students walked out in protest; and only five hundred people attended the VDC teach-in of May, 1966.
- In the Fall of 1964, the University Administration was never able to take disciplinary action against students for violating campus regulations on political activity. Each time it tried, it provoked massive demonstrations of solidarity. (The famous Sproul Hall sit-in was the FSM's response to the Administration's attempt to summon four students to a disciplinary hearing.) Yet in the Spring of 1966, the Administration succeeded in expelling three students and disciplining in lesser ways a score of others, with hardly a ripple of protest.
- In campus elections last Fall, the left-wing party SLATE won a heavy majority in the convention charged with drafting a new constitution for the student government. In the Spring, when the draft constitution was ready, the Chancellor declared his opposition to it and a student referendum voted it down.

Chancellor Roger Heyns is gratified with what he has achieved, but he recognizes that the Berkeley campus is far from tamed. As long as the regular noon rallies on the Sproul Hall steps continue to be held, the specter of radical Berkeley will haunt not only Chancellor Heyns but the entire State of California as well. Heyns has taken preliminary steps toward abolishing the Sproul Hall rallies, but the battle is hardly joined and the outcome far from certain. Nevertheless, that Heyns could even propose "taking away the steps" shows how much the mood at Berkeley has changed.

The Sproul Hall rallies began during the Free Speech Movement, when students set up sound equipment on the steps without ever bothering to ask permission. Chancellor Edward Strong was powerless to prevent these "illegal" rallies. In January, 1965, the new regime of Chancellor Meyerson began by *providing* sound equipment, at University expense, for the rallies. By the time Chancellor Heyns took office last Fall, the rallies were as much a part of