

# Young Cuba Rises

By Carleton Beals

*The author of "The Crime of Cuba" interprets the startling popular eruption there and our part in it.*



CUBA is a cork; it always floats," is a current proverb of the neighboring islanders, who from African and Spanish ancestors have inherited an easy faith in fatalism which the balmy climate has done little to alter. Rich in tropical resources, Cuba, whatever its political or financial difficulties, despite the recurrent depressions of her one-crop economy (sugar), always stages a come-back. Good-luck is one of the outstanding gods of the Cuban pantheon.

But this buoyant philosophy puts undue responsibility upon Divine Providence—a rôle generously assumed in the past by American experts, politicians, marine officers, and our State Department. Certainly our powerful chancellery does and should take its practical and metaphysical obligations with due seriousness: in Cuba's case those obligations are precisely set down in a perpetual treaty commonly referred to as the Platt Amendment of 1901. So seriously have our obligations been taken during the past thirty years that it may be confidently asserted that none of our anointed statesmen from Root to Hull has taken much stock in the cork theory. Cuba has been a busy laboratory for a transplanted democracy which despite our earnestness has rarely thrived even in so proximate a place as one hundred miles south of Key West.

Notable American names have been closely associated with Cuban affairs—statesmen, financiers, taxation experts, business men, military officers, sugar wizards: Brookes, Wood, Rathbone, Magoon, Root, Crowder, Hord, Morrow, Kellogg, Stimson, Norman Davis, Catlin, Woodin, Percy Rockefeller, Rubens, Professor Seligman, Harry F. Guggenheim, Hughes, Coolidge, Hoover—all have had a finger in the pie where rich plums were not always lacking. Charles E. Mitchell praised President Zayas; Thomas Lamont praised President Machado; Coolidge praised Cuban democracy and ballot-boxes with easy disregard of machine-gun elections and imprisoned students. The list of knight-errant



Americans who have tried to rescue fair Cuba from the flames could be indefinitely extended.

Of course some of these were motivated by lofty purpose, but others have kept their eyes on the main chance. Cuba's wealth is largely American-owned—to the tune of \$1,500,000,000 (now somewhat shrunk in value)—a total investment exceeded in no other Latin American country. Nearly ninety per cent of the arable land of the country is owned or leased by Americans, nearly sixty per cent of the total area. Most of the public utilities, the banks, railroads, sugar and coffee industries, telegraph and telephone lines are in American hands. None of these interests has suffered the regulation imposed upon them in the United States; in Cuba they

have had a free hand to work their will. Today probably a dozen Americans in high financial and corporation circles hold Cuba's economic destiny in their hands, and until the recent revolt have largely controlled its political destiny.

The promptness with which Roosevelt bravely rushed thirty war vessels to Cuban waters suggests that a Cuban revolution is an event that merits our watchful concern.

Yet for all our tutelage, for all our dollars, all our high-priced experts, all our able statesmen, over a period of thirty years the Cuban cork has been growing more water-logged with corruption and social injustice. Each successive Cuban government has shown less and less respect for life and liberty, but a great deal for property, especially American property. Each government has proven more vicious than the last, justice under each more a figment of the imagination, public morality lower, crime of all sorts more rampant. Education has decidedly deteriorated since the Wood military occupation, and under Machado well-nigh disappeared. All cultural manifestations and all individual freedom have increasingly been trampled under foot. For three dec-

ades, despite an occasional feverish sugar-boom, Cuba has been disintegrating politically and socially. Cuba's best government was that of its first president, Estrada Palma; its worst was the brutal Machado dictatorship. Cuba's brightest days were right after independence and General Wood's strenuous cleaning up; her darkest days, those of 1933.

Today Cuba is a bankrupt country. Our sixth largest market has vanished. Cuban trade has dropped down to the 1895 level when Cuba was under backward Spanish rule and there were no marvellous sugar machinery, no magnificent highway leaping across the rolling hills from Havana to Santiago, and only a fraction of the present railway mileage. After ten years of persistent depression, its people have been reduced to misery and starvation, unable to earn a livelihood. Even in the heyday of the sugar industry, wage-scales were beaten down by the importation of ignorant blacks from Haiti and Jamaica. And until the recent upheavals, the Cuban people were pinioned under one of the most heart-breaking and atrocious military tyrannies history records.

Yet during nearly fifteen of those thirty years, Cuba was either occupied by military forces of the United States or was directly under the supervision of American experts with almost unlimited powers. During the remaining fifteen years a watchful eye has been kept upon all of Cuba's governmental activities, and we have maintained an almost constant *sub rosa* financial supervision. The net result of all our good intentions has been abysmal failure.

Why is it that our Sir Galahad efforts have brought no better results? Is it that the obstacles are so insurmountable? Are the Cuban people so difficult to govern? Or is it that American formulas are not suitable for Cuban political practices? Could it be that our real aim after all was not human justice but profits? Were certain selfish American interests undermining the good efforts of our statesmen? Or were our statesmen occasionally doing the bidding of certain powerful interests?

No glib answer can be given. But the various Cuban governments have become increasingly divorced from the Cuban people and more closely allied with the absentee control of capital directing Cuba's productive activities. Cuba's political life has been functioning in a sort of vacuum from which the popular will had been carefully exhausted. This perhaps made the efforts of our good experts so futile, a thankless attempt to set up democratic machinery when the social forces for democratic control were utterly lacking. We have been busily interested in the mechanics of good government in Cuba but have ignored the economics and spiritual increment of real popular government.

Somewhat at variance with the cork maxim of a people that frequently loves the rumba and the siesta more

than grave burdens of state, is the remark by José Martí (father of Cuban independence): "We are men, and are not going to want any paper-doll governments." But Martí was a meteoric patriot, and Cuban independence has produced no comparable luminary. All of Cuba's past governments have been paper-doll affairs. All have been directly or indirectly the product of American supervision by experts, of American marine or army elections, or the creatures of American sugar or banking interests. For in Cuba we have carried further than we have anywhere else our traditional Caribbean policy of exercising protectorates over neighboring republics without avowing them officially. Assiduously we have insisted upon the outward semblance of constitutionality and legal elections in accordance with ill-adapted machinery cut to an American model, sometimes regardless of the basic social forces or the will of the Cuban people. More than once, as in the case of Menocal and Zayas, the will of the people as expressed at the ballot boxes and in revolt has been arbitrarily set aside by representatives from Washington to satisfy a narrow legal principle.

This paper-doll character of government was evident from the first. Our first military occupation after the Treaty of Paris told the Cuban patriots to pack up their provisional government (established in 1895) and go home; and we catered to the Tories. If the French who helped us achieve independence from England had maintained a subsequent three-year military rule over the Thirteen Colonies, during which time they refused to treat with Washington, Adams, Hamilton, or Jefferson, but played ball with the Tories and set up a French model government, if we had then been forced to sign a treaty legalizing French intervention whenever we might wish to alter this imposed state of affairs, conceivably our subsequent history might have been less felicitous and more turbulent.

In Cuba's case, one of the results of such an ingenious procedure was to submerge the more worthy and intelligent leaders, and while Cuba's first President, Estrada Palma, had been head of Cuba's New York revolutionary Junta, the state thereafter became the prey of less enlightened militarists of the independence wars. Cuba has been ruled by the bayonet for thirty years, and with increasing brutality.

Much water has run under the bridge since Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders milled around in the death-trap on the road to Las Guasimas River, and their leader charged up Kettle Hill on the heels of the Tenth Cavalry to become the hero of a victory he never won. Five months before the Spanish-American War, President McKinley had said: "I speak not of forcible annexation, for that cannot be thought of. That by our code of morality would be criminal aggression." But during the war, he scribbled on a scrap of paper,

"While we are conducting the war and until its conclusion, we must keep what we get; when the war is over, we must keep what we want." By the end of the brief war sundry sugar gentlemen and traders and their politician friends were bemoaning our rash nobility in promising Cuba her freedom. But we soon worked out a substitute for both freedom and annexation. •

The instrument of our control over Cuba has been the Platt Amendment, shaped by Root and the Senator whose name it bears, and forced upon the Cuban constituent congress in 1901 as the price for the withdrawal of our army. The Platt Amendment gives us the right to intervene in order to maintain a government which will guarantee "life, property and individual liberty." By the Amendment we undertake supervision of Cuba's foreign loans and foreign relations; and the document insists on that peculiarity of American Caribbean policy—sanitation; Cuba promised to stay clean. And along with these obligations and doubtful benefits, we scooped in the naval base at Guantánamo.

The Platt Amendment has been given every conceivable interpretation. Root promised solemnly that it would never mean intermeddling in Cuba's domestic affairs; yet the so-called "preventive policy," inaugurated by Taft and Crowder, for years established strict supervision over all the minutiae of Cuban governmental activities; our financial supervision has been, if usually secret, continuous and persuasive.

Most leading Cubans, aside from a few politicians currying favor, have bitterly condemned the instrument. Márquez Sterling, the De Céspedes Ambassador to Washington, has declared that intervention springs "fatally from the political clause of the Amendment," which "provokes tyranny as a cause and terrorism as a result." "Credit" is but "the conventional device of this system: interventionist concessions to prevent intervention." What "the Dictator is trying to salvage (by paying his debts) is the tolerance of the American chancellery." According to the eminent scholar, Doctor Fernando Ortiz, "The Platt Amendment has served only to support improper governments in Cuba and never to correct them." The Platt Amendment invariably serves flamboyant South American writers with a point of attack to demonstrate America's imperialistic intentions.

Undoubtedly Cuba needed a guiding hand at the outset, but whether the constitution we helped them elaborate, the American school-books we translated for their use, the race-prejudices we fostered, or the Platt Amendment which froze the relations of the two countries into a set mould allowing for no real evolution of policy, were the proper solutions, or whether the Amendment has done anything but serve as a shield for dictators, speculators, and corruption, is most doubtful.

But to contend, as some Latin-American writers do, that the desire for imperialistic territorial expansion animates any considerable sector of American opinion, is fantastic. And following our ill-starred Nicaraguan intervention with its Sandino boomerang, the general tendency of our government has been to avoid armed intervention; we plan to withdraw as soon as possible from Haiti as we have done from Nicaragua; and efforts have been made to release the Philippines. Perhaps we are really beginning to ask ourselves, as did Representative John Sharp Williams at the time of the signing of the Treaty of Paris, "Who made us God's globe-trotting regents to forestall misgovernment everywhere?"

But if we have abandoned more overt forms of aggression which we labelled with polite names, Cuba, along with several other countries, still suffers from a heritage of dollar diplomacy and the flouting of her popular opinion with the sanction of Washington for the benefit of petty tyrants and American corporate interests. The system thus evolved will not be easily or promptly corrected.

## II

Now for the first time since achieving freedom from Spain, only to be caught in the toils of the Platt Amendment, Cuba is definitely on the move to win economic and political independence. The recent turnover in Cuba does not represent just another Latin-American flare-up. Its roots go deep into Cuban life.

The recent disturbances mark the end of an epoch and probably will have more far-reaching consequences in our relations with Latin America and the world than most of us now appreciate. Cuba has stuck a new banner on the masthead bearing the motto: Cuba for Cubans. A new deal is on the way in Cuba. New names. New men. New aspirations. A few years ago we heard much of Young Turkey, Young Italy, Young Germany. Young Cuba has been definitely born.

Already a whole political generation has been swept away—the so-called men of '95. Cuba is today in the hands of her youth, her younger professors, her young journalists, and the rank and file of the army. The Cuban politicians of the period just closed will be remembered for their vacillation, their corruption, their supine bowing to foreign influences and to piratical high finance. In their subservience to Washington and to a small clique of banking interests, they failed to safeguard the rights of Cubans, failed at every turn to promote honest government. The politicians of yester-year have merely served as instruments of force and murder to further the disinheritance of the mass of Cubans.

The millennium has not come in Cuba—the old vices



will probably corrode the incoming group—but a new spirit has been born in Cuba which had never existed until the last days of Spanish oppression. It is therefore fortunate that we have a man in the White House who can view this movement with tolerance, for had we acted in the customary manner of past decades, on this occasion we should probably have had on our hands a Cuban Sandino to arouse not only the patriotism of the islanders but to inspire statues, verse, and moral sympathy in the rest of Latin America. Before Machado's downfall, a mass-meeting of two thousand—even though the meeting itself was made possible by the negotiations of the American Ambassador—denounced the ambassador's efforts at mediation as an unwarranted interference in Cuban affairs. And the alarmed haste with which we rushed battleships to Cuban waters stirred the Cubans to a pitch of threatened resistance new to the people on the island.

During these years, the younger generation in Cuba found all doors closed to it. With the wealth of the country in foreign hands, they discovered that even the professions offered little outlet. The legal business of American corporations was handled by large American law firms; the teaching profession was occupied by petty politicians desiring sinecures; the entire government was monopolized by a narrow military clique. The native sugar and tobacco planters had been crowded to the wall by the big absentee owners.

Less than 200 sugar mills control more than  $5\frac{1}{2}$  million acres. One company alone owns nearly one-eighth of all Cuban sugar lands. Some plantations are more extensive than the counties, and their government; whole towns, such as Banes in Orient, are inside the foreign estates and obey only the law of the American administrator. Private company railways make every one dependent for miles about. The private ports are centres of contraband. "If this process is carried to completion, all Cuba will be converted into a vast sugar plantation with a population of West Indian Negroes, a cowardly native bureaucracy, a government receiving orders from Wall Street, and a flag—symbol of its independence."

The political causes of Cuba's plight are equally discernible. Both the Spanish Captain General and the "Yankee" Governor established a tradition of absolutism. Each succeeding President has hastened to transform himself into an omnipotent Captain General. This could be done because unfortunately the Cuban constitution, elaborated under American military supervision, imitated the American constitution; but the checks on the Executive Power did not correspond to Cuban actualities and did not serve, so that the Executive remained quite immune from all popular control. The public will is further vitiated by official dependence on foreign capital and the consequent interference

of foreign corporations in electoral activities. As Cubans have no economic resources, public posts became extraordinary prizes to be fought over at the point of the gun. Since power is the prize, the government organizes a professional army to retain it. The privileged army is another means of living off the state, for it is paid and fed well, though the rest of the population starve. Its mission—since Cuba has no foreign enemy—is purely political, to uphold Presidential impositions. An instrument of oppression, it was given immunity to commit the most repellent crimes.

Cuba's cultural life has been pauperized in direct relation to the alienation of the country's resources. The university and other schools were closed. Newspapers were suppressed. "Bad governors know the great power of thought and culture." Machado was merely the culmination of all these evils.

Caught in this closed circle, young Cuba has battled its way out valiantly, with self-sacrifice, martyrdom, and courage against a super-military establishment. Denied all freedom of press and assemblage, denied all exercise of political rights, the new generation gradually forged the weapons for retrieving Cuba from the hands of Machado and the men of '95. Over a hundred students and professors met death at the hands of the Machado police, but slowly arms and ammunition were accumulated; gradually the island was honeycombed with secret societies, principally the A. B. C. (the initials of the cellular units) and the O. C. R. R. (Radical Revolutionary Cellular Organization). By 1932 these secret societies began to make headway in the rank and file of the army.

Along with this organization activity a definite program was developed. The A. B. C. first announced its program about a year ago. It demanded not merely the elimination of the Machado régime, but wished also "to remove its causes and maintain sane public opinion as a permanent force." The evil conditions then existing, the A. B. C. averred, arose primarily from the displacement of the Cuban from the wealth of the country. The first President, Estrada Palma, began the subjection of his government to foreign capital and closed all doors to native development of fields, mines, and industry, so that Cuba gradually became "a nation of bureaucrats and proletarians instead of property owners." The foreign bank "extends its tentacles everywhere. Master of credit, it is also master of production and commerce." The Cuban government has aided foreign capitalists to disinherit the Cubans.

An extensive program of thirty-five measures was presented as a guide to the manner in which the Cuban people could regain control of the national wealth and their government. This program provides for the reinstatement of the peasants on the lands, rate reductions, and the regulation of public utilities, the planned reor-

ganization of the sugar industry, the reduction of the army, the establishment of a new constitution providing for proper democratic control of elected officials, the reorganization of the courts and justice, the establishment of popular tribunals to survey the acts of officials and punish them for derelictions and corrupt practices.

By the end of 1932 the Opposition forces had become powerful. From that time on the days of Machado, who in 1928 had brought about an illegal alteration of the constitution in order to seize power for an additional six years, were numbered. Our own out-going administration, represented in Havana by Harry F. Guggenheim, had maintained a so-called "hands-off" policy, in reality a policy of secretly sustaining Machado while letting things drift from bad to worse—in the vain hope that catastrophe might be averted.

By the time President Roosevelt was sworn in, the Cuban situation had become acute. By April those of the Cuban Oppositionists exiled in the United States had formed a united front. By the end of April the revolutionary Junta meeting in New York was thrown into a flurry by secret overtures from one of Roosevelt's brains trust. The Junta was asked to agree upon its demands and was given to understand these would be met. Sumner Welles hastened to Cuba and took up negotiations between Machado and part of the Oppositionists. The University Students, however, repudiated his efforts. "We cannot enter into any discussion, even by proxy, with our executioners and assassins or acknowledge a juridical status which we will continue to consider illegal."

It now became a race between this diplomatic solution and a spontaneous uprising throughout the island, with secret army and labor units of the A. B. C. and O. C. R. R. swinging into action. A diplomatic agreement could not be reached, for its sine qua non was the elimination of Machado, who now suddenly breathed fire and brimstone against the United States.

Undoubtedly the mediation of Welles—of course labelled unofficial—hastened subsequent events. Machado was taken into custody by the army and permitted to leave the country. The change of régime entailed an estimated loss of sixty lives, a bagatelle compared to the "thousand murders" of Machado.

The formation of the coalition government, hastily patched up, headed by De Céspedes, former ambassador to Washington and personal friend of Roosevelt, with a cabinet more or less hand-picked by American aid, involved us deeply, more deeply probably than was desirable. For the new administration was at once torn between the constitutional gentility demanded by Welles and the real forces behind the overthrow of Machado which were demanding that the old-time politicians all be swept into the dust-bin, that the government declare itself frankly revolutionary, that the eco-

nomic and political renovation be launched immediately through the calling of a constitutional assemblage.

De Céspedes sought a compromise by declaring invalid the constitutional changes engineered in 1928 by Machado—as the Supreme Court had vainly done on two previous occasions—and abolishing the Congress elected with machine-gun tactics under Machado. All this over the protest of Welles.

Undoubtedly the tug-of-war between the new government and the United States regarding the conservation of rather doubtful forms of legality was one of the underlying causes of the second military coup in the first days of September, when officers of the army were deposed by the lower ranks under the leadership of Sergeant Fulgencio Batista. The Youth elements in the new government feared the gradual insinuation of the older politicians into the folds of the government and the betrayal of the revolution which would then make all proposals to revamp Cuba's constitutional system ineffectual.

Most of those in the new military Junta have a record of long self-sacrificing struggle against the previous tyranny. President Grau San Martín and Secretary of State Portela, both university professors, were thrown into the Isle of Pines penitentiary four years ago because they had refused to continue teaching at a university occupied by bayonets. Sergió Carbó, Secretary of War and Communications, was the editor of the suppressed magazine, *La Semana*, which first exposed the unbelievable brutalities of General Ortiz. Carbó was arrested and later fled into exile. José Iziarri, economist and writer, was much persecuted. Against Machado's improper arrest and military trial of Ramiro Valdes Daussa, whose brothers were later ruthlessly assassinated by the government, Borah protested on the floor of the American Senate. Julio Guanard, editor of suppressed *Karikatao*, was arrested and fled into exile. Guillermo Barrientos had to flee into exile and became the student representative of the New York Junta. Octavio Seigle, prominent lawyer, and author of a vigorous pamphlet attacking Guggenheim's support of Machado, lived in poverty in Miami.

One of the aims of dictatorship is suppression of opposition leadership. This creates a situation in which the dictator is apparently indispensable. Who can take his place? Hence on the fall of a dictator, it is difficult to achieve immediate stability, for only through trial-and-error method can strong, competent leadership assert itself. All that can be said of the new Junta, behind the Grau government, is that it is composed, not of politicians, but of younger men who have fought the immoralities of the dictatorship.

Through outside coercion, the new government in Cuba may fail. Through failure to unite the various factions, the inevitable outcome of dictatorial suppression,

the government may not consolidate its power. As this article goes to press, the possibility that Grau, backed by the meteoric Colonel Batista, the student and professor groups, and part of the labor movement, may not survive is strong. His government is faced with strikes, communism, armed revolt, political machinations, armed mutiny and threatened internal dissension. Even more than the De Céspedes government, Grau is pulled between the fear of American intervention which invokes cautiousness, and a country going rapidly more revolutionary which is taking the solution of various economic problems into its own hands by seizures of sugar estates and factories. The parallel with the Kerensky 1917 government in Russia has already been pointed out. The energies released by the overthrow of Machado are far greater than our American diplomatic representatives originally believed. In any case Cuba has passed definitely into the hands of its youth movement, a new generation determined to renovate Cuban life on a broader basis of social and economic justice, and insistent upon full Cuban autonomy. The new and inexperienced officials may revert to some of the evils of past political practices—probably they will—but in any event, the next few years are likely to witness a continuing effort to establish a new deal in Cuba. In this effort many conflicting interests will be involved, both domestic and international.

### III

The problems confronting the new régime are enough to daunt the bravest. Machado left the island in ruins. The sugar and tobacco industries are shattered. The mass of the people were and are unemployed and they have no access to the land. Revenues and trade have declined to a point lower than at any time this century. The foreign debt eats up nearly half the national income. The teachers have gone unpaid for nearly a year, other employees nearly as long.

Today the white ghost of Cuba is sugar. This dread spectre of Cuba's once flourishing industry stalks the sun-drenched land, striking fear through every heart. Her consort has been black-robed tyranny; behind her is a trail of murder and desolation and starvation. Ex-Ambassador Márquez Sterling recently wrote: "Sugar-cane does not make colonies happy, or a people cultured, or republics opulent; and the independence we won with the war against Spain, we must consummate in a war against sugar-cane, which perpetuated in the golden island an inexhaustible tradition, the despotism of the major-domo and the hatred of the slave."

Undoubtedly Cuba was happier in Spanish days when the crops were more diversified, when land-holding was more equitably distributed than in recent years. The Cuban *guajiro* or peasant has been reduced to a

proletarian status, enjoying a few months' work a year at a miserable salary and semi-starvation the rest of the time. Today the sugar industry has drifted almost entirely into the hands of the banks, an absenteeism twice removed, with primary emphasis upon immediate profits rather than the welfare of the industry and of the people engaged in production.

The key to the prompt, but not necessarily to the fundamental, solution of Cuba's major problems is the rehabilitation and reorganization of the sugar industry and the sugar market. This is not merely a domestic problem; it is also international. And here the new government is likely to meet its first snag in its program of Cuba for Cubans.

We owe Cuba a debt with regard to sugar which we have largely ignored. Trade reciprocity was more or less the promise we gave in return for the adoption of the Platt Amendment. During the World War, Cuba expanded her sugar industry at our request to help us in the fight against Germany. Sugar and geography made Cuba declare war on Germany. Geography and sugar made Cuba more than ever an American vassal. Both have cost Cuba dearly, for most of her subsequent economic disasters are due to her willingness to co-operate with us whole-heartedly during an international crisis, to bend every effort to expand sugar production at the expense of all other crops—and to let us reap the cream of the profits and subsequently protect ourselves at her expense. Of all our foreign allies, we treated Cuba, the best of all of them, the worst. But the ingratitude of nations is proverbial.

Quite aside from this moral obligation, we have contributed to our own economic suicide in order to protect the artificial beet-sugar industry in the United States. Sugar can be grown more economically in Cuba and Java than in any other two places in the world. It was to our own interest to safe-guard Cuban sugar rather than promote the industry in Puerto Rico, Hawaii, and the Philippines where production costs are higher. The benefits which we should derive from a flourishing condition in Cuban sugar are threefold: Cuba has been and might be one of our most important world markets; it is now ruined. Cheap production costs should mean cheaper sugar for the American consumer. Only a little over two per cent of our rural population is engaged in the sugar production; the whole nation consumes sugar. The policy of a high tariff and the bankers' Chadbourne Plan for mulcting the Cuban sugar industry has cost the American consumer over two hundred million dollars annually. And finally, sugar is a necessary war-time product. We cannot produce enough for our domestic needs, and it is one of the twenty-seven products listed by our War Department which are absolutely necessary in time of conflict which we cannot supply from within the con-



finer of our own country. To create a system by which sugar shall be grown in the Philippines at the expense of Cuba's production is to jeopardize our national security. The American market should be opened to Cuban sugar on an equal basis with our insular possessions. A sliding-scale system could be worked out which would protect the American beet-growers without permitting them to fleece the American public.

At the same time Cuba should bend every effort to diversify her crops and open up the land to her starving people. This again brings the problem back to the sugar companies which control most of the available land. If Cuba is to meet her problem successfully, she must take steps to create a planned sugar industry, conserving the most efficient sugar plants and seeing that they are so distributed as best to provide for domestic and foreign needs; she must devise a system by which the lands not needed for sugar cultivation be made available for her people. Just as the oil pipe-lines in this country were made common carriers to avoid complete oil monopoly, so the company railroads in Cuba, which now have a stranglehold on vast areas, whole counties and towns, should be made accessible to all who wish to pay for their use. The same should be made true of the present company ports. Taxation should be more equitably distributed. At present the burden of taxation falls upon urban property, the last refuge of the Cuban, rather than on the powerful foreign companies who have made the greatest profits.

These steps would give Cuban labor a better bargaining power. The dispositions forbidding the importation of ignorant black labor from Haiti and Jamaica should be rigidly enforced and heavy penalties put upon any one who makes use of smuggled labor. Cuban labor should be given protection not less than that guaranteed by our own NRA.

Only a broad-gauge meeting of this problem can bring Cuba out of the economic doldrums and make her again a going concern; for to enforce labor scales

without providing a market for sugar would court disaster. Cuba, though she is insisting on being relieved of our tutelage, should have our co-operation, which she earnestly wants, in undertakings which are conditioned by her relations with us.

Tax equalization should extend to public utilities. The public utility companies had a direct protector in Machado, former official of one of the largest companies, who reduced taxes for them, refused to permit the safe-guarding of proper labor conditions and allowed the raising of rates to outlandish figures, while making consumers' strikes a treasonable military offense.

The new government will never make its way and at the same time meet the foreign debt obligations. A moratorium is imperative to avoid default. In the interim of non-payment these loans and the manner of contracting them, in some cases in violation of the Platt Amendment, should be carefully examined and the debt justly scaled down.

Such, in any event, are some of the problems, about which Young Cuba is concerning itself; and the solutions proposed are those here presented. Against these efforts will be brought to bear every sort of pressure upon the new government and upon Washington. But if any one is likely to see with sympathy that the Cubans should have the same right to take steps to restore national economy as we ourselves have, especially when their crisis has been even worse than ours, that Cuba is equally entitled to a New Deal, it is the present incumbent of the White House. The advantages to both Cuba and the United States of a completely Cuban solution are so great that our government should lean backward, even accepting property loss and the temporary emigration of resident Americans, rather than resort to armed intervention, which would render such a solution impossible, which would pile upon us grave responsibilities without evolving any real Cuban capacity for self government, and which would bring upon us the reproaches of all of Latin America.

## GREEN TREE, MY BODY

*By Gilbert Maxwell*

SLOWLY the puzzled brain in shaping a thought  
Has come upon this truth beyond denial:  
Only by grief is the stupid body taught,  
Only by cold and fear and the fire's trial. . . .

Green tree, my body, that had grown so tall,  
Wherefore, I said, are you so stricken now?  
Sere is the leaf, and shortly with its fall  
Sorrow will lie like snow along the bough. . . .

Slowly the mind made answer: "Though the root  
Be nourished in distress, the bough shall bear  
In greater measure, wisdom for its fruit;  
The thorn of grief shall blossom on the air!"