



Cuba's pragmatism and post-war opportunism are found in two other facets of the international field. (7) In international practice, which Cuba is keenly aware is being subjected everywhere to re-evaluation and re-statement, she hopes to establish precedents. What she can get away with today, she hopes will become international practice of the future. Her current attitude toward delayed trials, reciprocal rights for merchant vessels, claims, expropriation and non-compliance with treaties, appear to be only a start. Instead of accepted practice, the approach today might be reciprocal advantage, with reprisals applied where necessary. (8) In inter-American cooperation, Cuba, conscious of the interest which her relations with the U.S. arouse in the other republics has tried to enlist the sympathy of the latter to gain even greater concessions from us. We might exploit the interest and natural jealousy of these republics for Cuba's uniquely favored position, by keeping them discreetly informed on Cuba's subjective attitude toward her international obligations, and recalling to them the present conformity of the rest of the hemisphere in this regard.

A corpus of principles for Cuban-American relations might thus include: (a) our community of outlook in world politics and our advocacy of the settlement of differences; (b) quid pro quo applied over a broad field; (c) an appeal to standard practice, particularly those with the other Latin American nations; (d) a policy of "inaction" as a lever for concession when Cuba again becomes the suppliant; (e) an improvement in the manner of dealing with Cuba locally and in keeping the other republics informed.

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US/Cuba  
Pending Matters

Study in Cuban-American Relations: Some Causes

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**A STUDY IN CUBAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS:  
Some Causes of Tension and Suggested Approaches**

Prepared by H. Bartlett Wells

**FOREWORD:**

This report was prepared by Mr. Wells, Second Secretary of Embassy, on the eve of his departure after a four-year assignment to this post. It is the study which was mentioned as being in preparation in my despatch No. 4235 of August 4, 1947, and is the fruit of Mr. Wells' long experience here. My own experience confirms the observations and conclusions set forth, and I propose shortly to submit a despatch to the Department commenting on this report and relating some of its points to the Latin-American field and to our foreign relations as a whole.(1)

The present study is a political one, with little specific reference to the economic issues; nor does it mention the graft and corruption which loom so large in Cuban political life. This last is a subject which has already been reported upon at length and with regard to which the Department has adopted a public policy; moreover, it is not a matter which affects directly the formal relations between the two States and their official representatives.

For convenient reference and quick assimilation, the report is prefaced by an outline so full as to be a précis; but I considered this inquiry into our relations with Cuba important enough to warrant the length of the report itself and I believe that for some time to come it could be profitable "required reading" for any newcomer to the Cuban Desk and to this Mission; also for officials of other agencies of our Government having to do with Cuban problems.

R. Henry Norweb

(1) My despatch 2160 (Secret) of September 12, 1946: "A Year of 'Reconversion' in our Cuban Relations", closely supplements the present report but ends on a rather more sanguine note.

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**The Cuban split personality vis-a-vis the  
United States**

The proximity of the United States to Cuba has brought it about that his attitude toward that country very largely determines the mental outlook of every Cuban.

There is no need to describe in detail the many ways in which American ideas, institutions, and articles of manufacture impinge upon Cuban life. It is sufficient to say that the closeness of the relationship, particularly with regard to material things and with regard to abstractions on the least deliberately exalted ideological planes (the motion picture, the press, popular magazine articles, urban social customs) appears far greater than is the case with any other Latin American country. The reason is not far to seek - the only other Latin American country which is comparable to Cuba in proximity and at the same time in its state of political, economic, and social development, Mexico, is larger in size and population, has the advantage of nearly seventy years longer independent political existence, and as a plateau country was until perhaps fifteen years ago less susceptible to the penetration of such influences than a country whose life is so largely concentrated around seaports as is Cuba's. Perhaps in no country in the world is the concept of the United States so ever-present in the minds of its citizens as is the case with Cuba, although Canada may constitute an exception.

In April 1947 the Cuban Communists issued a pamphlet in which they lamented that practically every article the Cuban used, practically every idea to which he was exposed, was yankee, yankee, yankee. The conservative newspaper "Diario de la Marina" replied, in brief, "Yes, and a good thing, too." At the moment the Communists are our most concerted antagonists among Cubans; until 1941 the "Diario de la Marina", under the influence of the pre-Axis local reactionaries of Spanish Falangist type, served as mouthpiece for our most embittered opponents. There is consequently no question in Cuban minds, of either extreme, as to the impact of the United States on Cuban life.

The Cuban is constantly faced with the problem of what he is to do about this enormous incubus which is forever fastened upon his mind through no fault of his own - or of ours either for that matter.

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One solution is found in surrendering entirely to the preponderant foreign influence. Save in the cases of persons who have emigrated to the United States, or who intend to emigrate at the earliest opportunity, this solution is rarely encountered in its pure form. Those who tend toward it are without influence in the Cuban political scene, though they are relatively more important in society and in commerce.

Another solution is a complete revulsion against the concept of the United States. This also is rarely found in a pure form. The Cuban Communists have a good word for the American people, groaning under the yoke of Truman, Vandenberg, Taft, and the reactionary press; the reactionaries of Spanish Falangist type applaud the figures of the National Catholic Welfare Council for annual conversions to Catholicism, and support the United States in its resistance to the further expansion of Communist influence; and the nationalist Auténticos, however severe in their criticism of American ownership of businesses and sugar mills in Cuba, or of the employment of Americans in managerial capacities locally, have, so far as can be determined, no hostility whatever toward American policy on the world scale, nor with respect to the American people. These same examples, however, may also be cited to show that while complete and pure revulsion against the United States is rare, fairly pronounced types of revulsion may be found at all times. Each of these types is accorded further analysis in subsequent sections of this memorandum.

Generally speaking, the individual Cuban will be found to fall between the two extremes. With respect to the United States (which represents such a very large factor in his thoughts) he is a duality bordering on schizophrenia. The Cuban who maintains complete equanimity on the question is perhaps as rare as the extreme example of the tendency toward adulation, or toward repudiation, in pure form.

In the case of the individual exhibiting this duality, and even more certainly in the average of many or all such cases, fluctuation in time is easily remarked. The changed position of the "Diario de la Marina" now as compared with 1940 is a case in point. A much weaker example is that of the Communist attitude toward the Roosevelt Administration during the war, as compared with that toward the Truman Administration. A better one is the international outlook of Carlos Prío Socarrás, an Auténtico, at the Pan-American Conference of December 1933, at Montevideo, as compared with what it is at present.

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Fluctuation with respect to place is also observed: Auténtico nationalism has now absolutely no quarrel with the American people or with American policy - outside of Cuba.

These combined contribute to the phenomenon of fluctuation within the individual. A single Cuban will usually embody a complex of attitudes on a multitude of subjects, shifting in time and in proportion as the subjects are remote and general or intimate and immediate, reflecting every degree of favor or disfavor toward the United States.

The attitudes of disfavor are a contributing factor in the difficulties of our foreign relations with Cuba. They introduce a suspicious and meditative mien which is usually but not always in conflict with the communicativeness which is characteristic of Cubans. Not always, I say, because the Cuban may harbor misgivings and still be pretty direct in saying what occasions them. But we have at present the example of officials in the highest positions in whom - as a consequence chiefly of native temperament, I think - reserve prevails over frankness on most occasions.

The approach to these problems is fairly clear. If the Cubans are generally with us on the world scene, an effort should be made, where possible, to relate the particular to the general. Where it is impossible, we are reduced to quid-pro-quo. And where it is difficult yet not quite impossible, reference to standard international practice (though without burdensome detail) carries some moral weight.

Further than this we cannot go. Recognizing the duality, and the likelihood that we may encounter it, we can and should examine the extent of the common ground, and emphasize its existence and importance.

#### Hispanic Sentiment and Reactionary Doctrines of Spanish Falangist Type

Reference has been made to three specific attitudes of disfavor toward various aspects of the phenomenon of the United States. These three - Hispanism, Communism, and Auténtico nationalism - merit more detailed description, each in turn.

Reactionary doctrines of Spanish Falangist type were once fairly widespread in Cuba, especially among the higher social classes and among those of recent Spanish family background. They were something of a threat to the interests of the United States in 1940-41. Their exponents

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were then the late José Ignacio Rivero, Senator Elicio Argüelles, and Senator José Manuel Casanova. At present their appeal is much more limited, and they are expounded chiefly by Gastón Baquero, José Ignacio Rivero Jr., and - in absentia - by Eugenio de Sosa.

With respect to internal policy, the true believers in these things are not in conflict with the interests locally of the United States Government nor of American commerce - said the torrent of abuse which greeted the Sugar Act of 1948 and its Section 202 (E), the one outstandingly favorable comment was that made by Gastón Baquero, and José Manuel Casanova was among the few writers who tempered passion with understanding. The writers of this group and their followers are the defenders of established property rights, as well as of traditional Catholic morality.

In the international field, the present confrontation of Anglo-American policy on the one hand and Soviet policy on the other calls for our side their most outspoken sympathy. Their only regret is that we do not move far or fast enough for them. Their press hailed enthusiastically the exchange of letters between President Truman and the Pope which was published on August 28, 1947.

The fly in the ointment is the fact that they are supporters not only of Franco, but - enthusiastically - of Perón and his proposed Latin bloc. They work hand in glove with the local Argentine Embassy in giving favorable publicity to President Perón, his wife, and his government. They constitute a potential source of anti-American opinion; on the ground, earlier stated by them in so many words, that the United States is an immoral and somewhat degenerate Protestant, Jewish, and atheist society.

But they have little obvious influence within the present Cuban administration, which does not seem to have been much impressed by the Perón proposals. The potential danger to American-Cuban official relations constituted by the activities of Eugenio de Sosa Jr. appears for the moment to have been averted through the timely nipping in the bud of the Gulfport plot and the seizure of various items of equipment belonging to the Marcellis Construction Company. They defend two causes generally unpopular in Cuba; that of the Franco Government of Spain, and that of Trujillo in the Dominican Republic, and that money does not pass for this work is something that the knowing Cuban public is not to be gulled into believing.

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At this moment it does not appear that the potential increase in appeal is high. The Rio Conference has given rise to no divergences which might lend support to this line of thought. The consolidation of a Spanish-Argentine axis (lacking the participation of France and Italy) would create in Cuba more misgiving than sympathy, and the adhesion of France and Italy to such a nucleus does not appear likely. Should the reported attempt to establish a tie-up of French leftist intellectuals with Latin American intellectuals in a move to pack the Latin American delegations and use the UNESCO General Conference at Mexico City as platform for agitation against "United States cultural materialism assure form, it is possible that, in spite of the leftist inspiration of this move, the Cuban Hispanists may find in it material to use in opposing the cultural influence of the United States; but given the temper of their minds with respect to Communism, the exact contrary is a far more likely possibility.

But the basic weakness of the Hispanidad doctrine, like that of other forms of Fascism, lies in its static, particular, and retrospective character. It is the defender of established institutions among a people turbulent with the desire for change; it endeavors to appeal to a public largely of mixed race in the name of particular Caucasian nation of Europe; and it looks back with longing upon a history the latter reaches of which are regarded with antipathy by the bulk of Cubans. Its proponents emphasize, as much as they can, culture and religion rather than history and race. They are not entirely unsuccessful - the mulatto Gastón Baquero is understood to have a respectable following among mulatto and even negro readers - but their fight is an uphill one.

For the foreseeable future we need take no action against the ideas of this group. Just as German, and perhaps Russian, attempts to create a breach between the United States and England have only served to draw these countries closer together, so here by taking adverse action we would invite an emotional reaction, playing into the hands of Franco's and Trujillo's anti-Communist manoeuvres, and giving a foothold for further Communist propaganda endeavors as well. The question is, indeed, whether the reactionary doctrinaires do not support us at present in a sufficient number of respects to threaten us with embarrassment through having them as our sole local defenders in the economic field at least. The moment is here one for observation and reflection rather than for action.

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### Cuban Communism as a factor in official Cuban-American Relations

The second attitude of disfavor toward the United States in Cuba finds its expression in Communism. The subject has been reported upon in great detail. It may be remarked, as affording the briefest possible sort of summary, that Communism in Cuba is represented by a party, calling itself the Partido Socialista Popular, having about 151,000 members (of whom about 15,000 are militants), an able and tenacious leadership, and an active and prosperous press; that the party mastered about 180,000 votes in the 1944 Presidential election; that it receives ideological support from abroad, and from Soviet Russia in particular; that it perhaps does not receive nor need financial support from abroad; that though it opposed Dr. Grau in the 1944 elections it was able, even before his inauguration, through a skillful display of its force within the central labor organization (the Confederación de Trabajadores Cubanos) to win a position of pronounced influence in his administration in exchange for a very tenuous support on the part of its representatives in the legislature; that this influence has shown marked signs of decreasing over the past two or three months; and that the party is wholly opposed to the policies of the United States.

Three questions may be posed in connection with this party:

1. Has the policy of the Popular Socialist Party ever diverged from Communist policy as laid down by the Soviet Union and by its occasional spokesmen in other countries such as France?

The answer is never, in the slightest respect. The nearest the Cuban Communists have come to taking an egregious stand on any matter was in their daily newspaper "Hoy's" printing without comment, rather than with the adverse comment one might have expected, the official statement of the Minister of State regarding Cuba's reasons for signing a separate treaty of peace with Italy, instead of the Paris Treaty which embodied so many concessions to the Soviet point of view.

2. What is the party platform of the Communists in Cuba?

According to official statements, the main points are the following:

A. Thoroughgoing and energetic agrarian reform, with the abolition of latifundia and "censos" (approximately copyhold leases), and the creation of an Agricultural Credit Bank, cooperatives for sale of agricultural produce, development of country roads, irrigation systems, and periodic revision of freight tariffs.

B. Suppression

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- B. Suppression of racial discrimination.
- C. Organization of State on a modern basis through establishment of an Accounting Tribunal, of a Civil Service, tribunals for the political rights of the individual, and organic laws for provinces and municipalities - all called for by the Constitution.
- D. Creation of a National Bank.
- E. Industrialization, and its protection through "tariff reform" of a highly protective character.
- F. Provision of occupation for every Cuban who lacks it.
- G. Administrative honesty.
- H. Maintenance and enforcement of price controls.
- I. "National liberation".

It is interesting to note that the administrative sector of the Auténtico Party may give support, ranging from lip-service in the case of point G. to enthusiastic approval in the case of point B., to every one of these platform planks.

The meaning of these planks as they affect United States interests is not so innocent. Agrarian reform would be interpreted to cover forced expropriation, for the benefit of small proprietors, of parts or the entirety of large estates (some of which are American-owned), with very doubtful compensation. A National Bank would be a measure to counter American (and Canadian) banking predominance in Cuba. Industrialization and tariff reform would be directed against the introduction of American goods primarily. The administration Auténticos are thoroughly in accord on the question of agrarian reform, and probably in sympathy on the bank and industrialization-protection items.

3. What is the difference, then, between the Communists and the Auténticos? What is the attitude of the administration toward the Communists? How do the Communists affect the administration's attitude toward the United States?

The struggle between the Auténticos and the Communists is not based on any divergence in their announced programs for national development. It arises from 1) a purely political struggle for office and advantage, particularly within the Confederation of Cuban Workers (CTO);

2) misgivings

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2) misgivings of the administration with regard to its international standing as a Communist-supported government tending to show exceptional complaisance toward that party's immediate demands.

The political struggle within the ranks of organized labor is bitter. Auténtico labor leaders have brought it sharply to President Grau's attention. Every Cabinet Minister expresses himself privately in opposition to the Communists. And Ambassador Belt, as well as presumably the Minister of State, has warned the President of the dangers to Cuba's international prestige in seeming to be too yielding toward the Communists.

The President, in turn, is well aware of these considerations, and is proud of his canniness in "dividing and ruling" the labor organizations, though he acknowledges that with a presidential election campaign in the offing he must play his cards carefully and that he cannot at once scorn Communist support. But there are indications that he may have taken the decision.

During the second quarter of 1947 the annual congress of the CTC was held. Differences of opinion between the predominant Communist and the minority Auténtico representation among its directorate brought it about that the Auténticos and independents boycotted the congress held on the appointed date, which was in effect a purely Communist affair, and that these dissidents held their own congress a few weeks later, claiming, as had the Communists, that they alone represented the central Cuban labor organization. The Government was called upon to decide between the rival claims. A final decision has not yet been rendered, but an action of such significance was the Government's move to eject the Communist group from its tenure of the building in which the organization has its seat, on the ground that it belonged not to either group but to organized labor as a whole.

As to how the Communists affect the administration's attitude toward the United States, they do so just so far as the Administration can, or cannot, afford to do without their voting support in the 1948 election. But the Administration may indeed, as the foregoing paragraph shows, have decided to risk foregoing this support - the decision may enlist a counterweight of votes which would have been alienated by continued solicitude for the Communists. If the break becomes complete, Communist influence on our relations with this Administration during its remaining year in office will be nil.

But if - as now does not appear likely - the breach is healed, or if it is merely prevented from becoming open and definite, the Administration will continue to

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defer to the Communist viewpoint on subjects where the official Auténtico policy is not entirely out of harmony with the Communist attitude. Our difficulties will become no less with respect to the following matters:

1. Expropriation of lands belonging to American sugar estates.
2. Employment of Americans locally by American-owned enterprises.
3. Increases of customs duties or other charges in violation of the Trade Agreement.
4. Labor controversies involving American firms.
5. Obstructions to maritime trade on vessels under the American flag.
6. Press vilification of American policy.

Since there is so wide a range of sympathy between declared Communist and Auténtico policy regarding internal aims, it would probably be well to concentrate on the incompatibility of Cuban and Soviet aims in the international field, and on the great importance of the local field in determining the light in which Cuba is regarded internationally.

#### Auténtico Nationalism and its Effect on Cuban-American Relations

Auténtico nationalism, some features of which furnish a stage for the third Cuban attitude of disfavor toward the United States, does not affect the coincidence of Cuba's interests with those of the United States on the world scale. It is not possible to name one leading Auténtico figure who regards the United States as a sinister element in the global politics of today.

But Auténtico nationalism is no less important than Cuban Communism in occasioning difficulties between Cuba and the United States in their immediate reciprocal relations.

With respect to agrarian reform, the President himself is known to desire urgently that certain lands known as "Laguna Blanca", the property of an American sugar company, be expropriated in defiance of the findings of the courts. The Communists could hardly go further. (Decisive executive action has not yet been taken in the case, but continues to be a latent threat.)

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With respect to labor, the Constitutional provision that 50 percent of those employed in any given enterprise shall be native Cubans (extended in practice virtually to the point where 100 percent must be native, not naturalized, Cubans) is Auténtico-inspired. The Communists do not go so far; their outlook is traditionally more international. For this reason Spanish-born non-Communist workers sometimes vote Communist rather than Auténtico in the fear that their Cuban naturalization would avail them little in seeking to hold their jobs were an Auténtico landslide to take place.

In observing the course of the relations of American firms with their Cuban labor, there has been noted on the part of the Communists uniformity, and conformity with a line determined from a common center; on the part of the Auténticos, unpredictability of behavior, sometimes friendly and understanding, but sometimes characterized by no less inflexibility, and even more passion, than in the Communist case.

It has been pointed out in an earlier section of this memorandum that with respect to banking, merchant marine, industrialization and protective tariff measures (which would presumably be taken in violation of the Trade Agreement) the Auténticos and Communists coincide.

A break between the administration and the Communists would not imply, per se, the former's softening on any of these points. It might so weaken the administration as to make it seek more support from outside, thus conducing to an attitude more receptive to persuasion, though reluctantly so.

It should be borne in mind that the first Grau administration in 1933 was supported by the few Cuban Communists of that time; that a number of men who were members of the Communist Party then are Auténticos now, and the converse is perhaps also the case; and that the present platforms of the Auténtico and Communist parties are close to identical as regards domestic improvements. The conflict between Auténticos and Communists in Cuba is over political control, not over domestic social and economic policy.

This is a not unfamiliar rivalry. Despite the disorder and indiscipline of the Auténtico way of doing business, which are virtually matters of principle, this party has a certain affinity with the Socialist parties of the Second Internationals all over the world - there is, of course, more of nationalism and less of nationalization in the Auténticos. Hence the struggle is like that between the French Socialists, or to choose another example the English Laborites, with their local Communists. The Auténticos have a closer affinity, and indeed strong

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personal ties, with the Betancourt group in Venezuela and the Apristas in Peru. The Apristas, at least, are understood to be anti-Communist; their relations with Peruvian Communism, one might guess, would be quite similar to those existing here between the national "socialist" party and the international one.

Auténtico nationalism showed great vigor in the presidential election of 1944. Although President Grau has more recently lost a great deal of his prestige, his popular support has drained away chiefly, so far as can be perceived, to the so-called "orthodox Auténticos", the Partido del Pueblo Cubano, which reaffirms the platform on which he was elected and claims only that he himself has (whether stupidly or maliciously) been led to abandon it. Despite the present schism, the two Auténtico groups represent a powerful, deep-rooted, native emotional complex which is by no means limited to voters within the ranks of their membership. The complex shows signs of far more perennial vigor than does either Hispanic traditionalism or Cuban Communism.

Auténtico nationalism, within the scope, is an ineradicable factor in the direct dealings of President Grau and the leading representatives of his administration with the United States, its locally domiciled citizens, and their properties. It is likely to continue as such a factor for many administrations to come. Any endeavor on our part to combat this hedgehog of emotions with what we might imagine to be enlightened persuasion would be about as successful as an attempt by the British Ministry of Information to teach American history to Big Bill Thompson. The only way of curbing the zealous excesses of Auténtico nationalism insofar as they affect our interests is, for the time being, through strict trading on a quid-pro-quo basis.

#### The Cuban Tradition of Indiscipline

Civil authority is probably more lax, and indiscipline rife, in Cuba than is the case in most of the other Latin American countries or in the United States.

This is a rather delicate subject to make guesses about. We have our own troubles along this line, and something of indiscipline and disrespect for authority does exist throughout the Continent. But when, after taking due note of the beam in our own eye, we examine the Cuban mote, we observe a particular situation.

Only fifty years ago Cuba was still engaged in its revolutionary rising against Spain, in connection with which insubordination was raised to the level of a virtue.

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Thirty years later revolt against the oppressions of Machado commenced to brew, principally among those who were at that time barely out of grade school. Five or six years later it reached its culmination in the overthrow of Machado. Those who assumed high office thereafter were for the most part very young. Belt was thirty or less when he became mayor of Habana; Guitera was Minister of Gobernación at about the same age, and hardly over thirty when he was killed; Carlos Prío, a contemporary, was a thorn in the side of the Pan American Conference at Montevideo in 1933; and Chibás today is in his early forties. All these young people got where they did through concerted insubordination. It would be fair to say that organized indiscipline has become, for historical reasons the force of which has not yet passed off, a fetish of Cuban public life. Hardly in any other country would you find the adjectives "inquieto" and "rebelde" applied in the sense of praise to a rising public man, as they are applied daily and almost obligatorily here.

If you have insubordination and indiscipline on one face of the medal, you have weakness of authority on the reverse. The insubordination and indiscipline were invoked to combat an exercise of authority which was regarded as bad and cruel; the remnants of the old authority continue to be fair game, and hardly a month goes by that the papers do not carry news of the shooting of some once oppressive henchman of an earlier regime. The natural corollary, in the minds of the new man, to the evil inherent in the abuse of authority is that the very authority itself must at least be tested for excesses and extravagances and tempered accordingly. This goes far beyond the mere police field, and encroaches upon the territory of the old social restrictions, just as has been the case in the United States, where the taboos of earlier generations have not only been dissected with curiosity, but flouted to the accompaniment of jeers, sometimes to the subsequent regret of the assailants. The Catholic Church is understood to possess relatively little sway over the conduct and outlook of the Cuban people, in spite of their passable faithfulness in religious observances. Cuban children seem to mind their parents very little, even compared with what we are told about American children. Schools exercise very scant control, and as for the University, it is the symbol of youthful insurrection and has been for twenty years.

Contributing to the reinforcement of both these tendencies and exercising a sort of baleful influence in the no man's land between them there are the criminal fringes from both sides of the fence. The abusiveness and brutality of the rough soldiery and police whom Batista used to enforce his will have brought them retribution in the form of more than fifty politico-

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police murders in the Grau administration to date, and the perpetrators of these murders have been what is now the more powerful element, the revolutionaries who have slipped over the edge into outright criminality or the criminals who have clothed themselves in the banner of revolutionary antecedents.

It would perhaps be safe to say that no Cuban is guided by any system of restraints in his political, social, or perhaps even commercial conduct, save by those which, with increasing years, he has himself found through experiment and experience to be productive of results in making life smoother and easier. As in most countries, the absence of restraint is most noticeable among the young; elderly Cubans seem to be a slightly different sort of people. It is a tribute to their intelligence and fundamental good nature that things remain on so even a keel as they actually do. With time they come to have some little private code of conduct which usually keeps damage down to superficial scrapes.

It is rather difficult to relate this state of social ferment and license to the nation's foreign affairs. But it does seem to come out in making the Cuban approach an exceptionally subjective one. No nation is objective; yet here, especially, the slogan is: we want it now. It is probably what is behind the frequent disregard of the clear provisions of the trade agreement, for one thing; Belt's apparent irresponsibility and merely personal reaction toward many of the problems which come up at United Nations meetings; the supercilious attitude and specious defenses evidenced when we try to discuss claims; locally, the lack of cooperation between the Executive and the Legislature, and in more extreme degree the alienation between the Executive and the Judiciary (the Judiciary is made up of old-timers, still representative of the hated authority of earlier days). And lastly, what could be more insurrectionary, more subjective, more childish, in fact, than the Government's equivocal attitude toward its international responsibilities in its fostering the movement against the Dominican Republic? - at a time, he it remarked, when it was campaigning vigorously in every theater against Section 202 (E) of the United States Sugar Act as constituting "economic aggression".

This is a condition which is not curable save through the development of a sound and general social character as a result of a prolonged period of internal peace, fairly well sustained prosperity, and absence of irritation. All these things seem too much to hope for.

The Personality

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### The Personality of President Grau

What President Grau represents in the conduct of our relations with Cuba is peculiar because his personality runs counter in a special respect to what is typical of Cubans generally.

The Cuban is characteristically - one need not say frank, as he has a shrewd and not disinterested control over what he is letting you know - a communicative person. Young Cuban government officials, professional and political alike, are in the habit of furnishing members of the American Embassy staff with information on personalities and policies within the Cuban Government which, if the reverse were to occur in the United States, would seem almost treasonable. Many of these subordinate figures have their points of difference with us, but one thing you can practically always rely on is that they will tell you what these consist in. This, with both its concomitant virtues and its accompanying defects, is indeed one of the outstanding peculiarities of Cubans among Latin American nations.

Cabinet Ministers and the various subsecretaries would in most cases not be less friendly and open than their subordinates if they could spare time to see more of Embassy visitors. But here we are up against three obstacles - their inefficient way of organizing work; their universal concern with local politics; and, partly as a consequence of the above, the constant thronging of their offices with other callers. One must consider carefully the importance of a matter before deciding to perch on a Cabinet Minister's doorstep. But in general there is no reason to feel that the Cabinet bears rancor toward the Embassy, or toward the United States.

Passing to the Foreign Affairs organization, which is two-headed, we have first Ambassador Belt. With all his defects, he is a decent man, perhaps not without affection for our country, ordinarily cheery and chatty; and one cannot say, bearing in mind his love of publicity and expression, that he won't put the cards on the table so we can at least examine our differences of opinion.

This leaves the Minister of State. Here one begins to deal with the essence of the problem. The entire Ministry, including the Subsecretary, lacks authority. Divisional heads have remarked to Embassy representatives that they are "mere office boys", or, in imparting a piece of information, that their doing so is strictly forbidden, wherefore the Embassy is desired to respect the confidence. Instances of dead ends and impasses, without explanation, in the Ministry of State could be multiplied. The Minister's principle seems to be that his subordinates shall

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handle nothing, and that the Ministry shall never reply to any inquiry or representation unless driven to the very last ditch, and then only with the President's express authorization.

It seems that President Grau has at last found a Minister of State who suits him. The first one, Dr. Cuervo Rubio, was a complete King Leg; he had no entrée, he took no action, but one knew it, and one knew why. The second, Inocente Alvarez, increasingly lost ground, but he worked, he discussed, and he ended up in a burst of quite typical Cuban communicativeness. Dr. González Muñoz is the reverse. He evidently enjoys the complete confidence of the President, and one of the conditions of this confidence is that he reveal nothing save with express instructions. Through inborn secretiveness, natural timidity, and the circumstances that with so many American concerns passing direct between Belt and the President he is actually ignorant in many cases, he follows this line ideally.

This brings one, finally, to the President, where for lack of a point of support anywhere along the line one must, by omission, place the responsibility. In spite of his well-known and much-parodied verbosity, speech with him is merely a form of shadow-boxing used to conceal rather than to reveal thought. He shows the reverse of the generally characteristic Cuban communicativeness. He does not like to place himself on record with regard to the merits of a controversy within his administration; with regard to his own further Presidential aspirations, or the aspirations of possible successors from among his own party; or with regard to the dispute between rival factions in the central labor organization. This is widely known and publicized in Cuba. Thus if the decision in all matters the Embassy must handle requires almost inevitably to be referred to him, and if the Embassy suffers occasionally from a frustrating consciousness of not even knowing what the Cuban differences from our point of view actually are, it is not unfair to regard him as the person responsible for their not being revealed.

This adds up to a concealed but almost certainly entertained rancor against the State Department and against the Embassy, and perhaps even against the American nation and people as well.

What gives rise to such an outlook?

Appearing as it does in the personality of one who for years has been regarded by many and sophisticated Cubans, almost unanimously, as an eccentric and a Messianic visionary to say the very least, a full analysis

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must certainly await the study of a trained psychiatrist with access to the facts of what one hears only in the form of rumors. But one historical fact is clear, that Grau blamed the United States Government for the collapse of his first administration. It is doubtful whether he forgets such things.

Another, and earlier, possible cause may be suggested. Grau's family were wealthy Spaniards. He speaks Spanish with markedly Castilian peculiarities. He was young in 1898 (born 1882), but younger men were insurrectionaries where he was not. Despite his party's vigorously anti-Franco attitude, he was a Franco sympathizer during the revolt in Spain. He uses no English. Is there perhaps here a sufficient leaven of Spanish traditionalism to outweigh the balance in a mind already cranky and secretive? An hypothesis only; but not one to be ruled out of court flatly and at once on the basis of known contrary facts already at hand.

Power (and "all power corrupts"), in inept and visionary hands, under a system of governmental machinery insufficiently firm to canalize and mitigate the strong temperamental bias of the leader, has placed Grau's hostility or negativism in a position where, whatever be its cause, it hobbles the conduct of business between the United States and Cuba. Though one of the most important obstacles we encounter, it is likely to prove one of the most ephemeral. The President has lost in prestige and popularity, since 1944, by gigantic swoops and slumps. He will not endeavor to succeed himself. The 1948 elections will introduce to us a new personality, and hardly one altogether so quaint.

#### Attack and Defence in Cuban-American International Practice

The accepted tenets of standard practices in the relations between states, even where they have not been severely wrenched as a cumulative consequence of the first and second world wars and the establishment of a new despotic state, are under incessant and perhaps systematic attack. Offhand one tends to view the history of diplomatic customs as divided into a period when everything was orderly, prescribed, and accepted, lasting until 1914; and a subsequent period of gradual disintegration and increasing nonconformity, much accentuated as a consequence of the second world war. But on further examination it seems there probably never was any real golden age before the first world war. The diplomats of those days had their troubles too; they may have brought their system to a peak of satisfaction to themselves during the last years of the nineteenth and the first years of the twentieth centuries, but

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prior to and even during that period they were hard at work formulating their practices through a series of knotty negotiations. We and Great Britain, for instance, were never fully in accord, from the Revolution to 1917, regarding the rights of neutral trade in time of war, and it may prove we still are not entirely agreed. When after a severe struggle we established the Alabama claims in the early seventies, we were actually manufacturing a principle which was new.

In any event, however, some practices which seemed to be generally accepted in the pre-world war period made life a lot more comfortable for the individual diplomat. When we look back on those fortunate days, and defend their proprieties as standard diplomatic practice, it is necessary to recall that that practice was made by the great powers of the time - the British, the French, the Austrians, and other European powers in declining degree. The United States acquiesced in them for the most part as being convenient to its interests, but held out strongly for its own point of view when it thought best. Other countries, however - and particularly smaller ones which had at first few and simple foreign relations - seem never to have assented in these practices and principles to the full, on the ground that they did not have a hand in molding them and that the end product was not necessarily satisfactory to their interests, but rather to those of the big powers.

Whether deliberately or accidentally, small states - which for the moment may be narrowed down to those of Latin America, or even merely to Cuba as a case in point - seem to be subjecting what we regard as proper practice to an unrelenting barrage. They are like a woodpecker on a dead spruce tree, hammering here and there till they find a spot that has a worm under it. They see what they can get away with. And if we do not react, what they can get away with will be the standard international practice of the future.

They are evidently not deeply stirred by the principle of prompt trial for individuals accused of crime. A Canadian was in jail for several years in Oriente without being tried, and an American soldier, here on an official mission which was the subject of an agreement between both governments, has now been awaiting trial since February 1947.

Nor do reciprocal rights for the vessels of both nations engaged in the trade between them move the Cubans much; they have so clear an intention to discriminate against American vessels trading into Cuban ports that we were long resolved to sell them no vessels which might facilitate the discrimination.

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Nor do they give more than lip-service to the theory of the impartial examination and settlement of claims; nor to judicial examination of the state's right to expropriate through purchase with prompt and effective compensation; nor to full compliance with established treaty, such as the Reciprocal Trade Agreement.

They will not have the Treaty of Friendship, Commerce, and Navigation because it would establish certain rights for Americans doing business in Cuba; but the principle of freedom of residence and occupation of nationals of one state within the territory of another is one which, if it was ever really reflected in practice, is now vestigial. We are perhaps the most liberal country in the world in this respect; and Cuba is not much more severe than many others.

If "accepted practice is not enough; we were not asked to assist in formulating accepted practice", what is the answer? Probably it will be necessary to go back to an examination of reciprocal advantage. The international law of the period prior to the world wars was built up in that way: through a long bargaining on individual matters, with balancing concessions on either side. But where once we could agree: Grant my ambassadors immunities and precedences, and I will do the same with yours - we now find it hard to put over the exchange: Admit my ships to your ports on a basis of equality with your own, and I will do the same with yours. The reply to the suggestion is, of course: What good's that to me? You have a merchant marine, and I don't.

So an exactly level balance between privilege and concession is hard to find: Cuba and the United States are too dissimilar in size and in economic structure. A more general approach, acceptable to both countries, must be sought. Probably a suitable one would be: Assist in my economic development, and I will assist in yours. The common goal of increased economic well-being for both parties is attractive, and reprisals, if ever necessary, could be applied all along the line. We could seek out the worms in their spruce tree, as they do in ours.

This is just what we tried to do in Section 202 (F) of the Sugar Bill. Should we ever have occasion to invoke the Section, however, we would find there is one uneasy feature to it: before it can be used as an instrument, the Secretary of State must find that discrimination exists, and must notify the Secretary of Agriculture, who shall have authority to withhold or withdraw a portion of the offending country's sugar quota. At some point along the line one or the other of the Secretaries must take a

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positive and public step, stigmatizing a foreign country as an offender. This is going to be a difficult step to take, as we know already from the uproar which the mere appearance of the Bill in the Congress created: Cuba is a small country, and neither she nor the other independent nations of the hemisphere are going to let us forget it.

Might the Section not have been phrased in the reverse fashion: i.e., might the Secretary of Agriculture not have refrained from enacting the new quotas until the Secretary of State should have informed him that discrimination did not exist? But this would have brought the discussion to the point at which it stood before the drafting of Section 202 (E): Cuba contending that the quota must precede the treaty, and we that the treaty must precede the quota. In spite of this fact, the principle of inaction rather than action seems a good one to keep in mind for future cases. Opportunities promise to offer themselves: Cuba's economic prospects are sufficiently dim to lead one to believe the time is at hand when this country will be the petitioner once more, rather than the United States as was the case during the stress of the war years.

To sum up: we can re-examine international practices too; we can, by broadening the front and not seeking a balance in too narrow a field, find again the elemental quid-pro-quo's; we can likewise invoke inaction rather than action in appropriate cases; and the day when these cases will arise seems to be approaching fast.

Cuba's

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### Cuba's Position with respect to Inter-American Cooperation

Dr. González Muñoz, the present Minister of State, has said that inter-American cooperation should always be the cornerstone of United States foreign policy. Leaving aside for the purposes of the present study the question of whether it is a cornerstone or a millstone, why should the Cuban Minister of State stress this theme?

Cuba realizes as well as we do that she stands in a unique position - geographical and historic and economic - with respect to the United States. The policy report prepared in the Department of State with respect to Cuba, and dated February 5, 1947, has this to say:

"Although the Platt Amendment was abrogated .....the other American Republics continue to give close and sometimes critical attention to Cuban-US relations. An economically prostrate Cuba would have the sympathy of the other American Republics, to the impairment of our hemisphere relations in general - a factor which has not escaped the Cubans in their dealings with us."

In the Embassy's despatch No. 2471 of November 22, 1946, the classification of Habana as a Class One post was urged on grounds which included the following:

".....(10) The Department of State has long recognized that Cuba is unique in its manifestation of a combination of Latin and United States influences; that this, along with the unusual number and freedom of publicity organs, makes Cuba a very important weather-vane of public opinion in the American Republics. Moreover, it can safely be affirmed that Cuba is, likewise in the eyes of the other American Republics, a sort of show-window in which the results of our policies toward our Latin American neighbors are on display."

There is a certain element of moral blackmail in Dr. González Muñoz's attitude. The course of action which he envisages has already been used, with success, in connection with the Cuban attack on Section 202 (E) of the Sugar Act. Immediately on finding oneself in any straits, raise the squawk of imperialism without giving the neutral hearers either time or opportunity to consider the circumstances of the case. The very revolutionaries who led the Cuban movement against Spain were regarded by Walter Millis as being the first political organization which fully realized the potentialities of modern publicity; and this is a faculty which the Cubans have improved upon rather than neglected during the intervening years.

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Since the Cubans feel that they are a testing-ground for inter-Americanism, the results by extension being applicable to or interesting to the rest of the continent, they seem to regard themselves as especially privileged or especially free to invoke the charge of oppression.

This edged tool could perhaps be made to cut the other way as well. Cuba has a uniquely favored position with respect to the United States - with no other country, for instance, do we deviate from our unconditional most-favored-nation policy. Such a status implies not only special privilege but special obligation. May not the Cuban subjectivity, which takes what we want as all wrong and what they want as the most natural thing in the world, serve to place them in a rather ridiculous position in the eyes of other Latin American nations? The remarks of Ambassador Blanco of Uruguay to Assistant Secretary Armour on August 8, criticizing Ambassador Belt's position on American sugar legislation, may foreshadow faintly an incipient attitude of this sort, though it must be acknowledged that Uruguay is the least unlikely country to be offering us this sort of sympathy.

What other Latin American country has in recent times evaded the discussion of debts on the part of the government of one party to the nationals of the other, particularly on the absurd grounds that the present administration does not consider itself to be obligated by the undertakings of its predecessor? What would be the reaction to this of the Mexicans, who did assent to a joint claims commission which satisfactorily resolved the problem of claims between the two states? Why should Cuba be privileged to refrain even from talking about the matter? Is it not enough to make another Latin American country rather jealous?

Cuba is a spoiled child among Latin American nations. This makes necessary a special treatment, and perhaps the appeal to standard practice is less generally successful here than in other countries within the hemisphere. But on the other hand tantrums are not a very pretty spectacle in the eyes of the rest of the crowd, and the remaining nations may well perceive that Cuba should exhibit a certain amount of conformity with the processes they find satisfactory in their relations with the United States and among themselves.

The Cubans, although conspicuously favored, are the more vulnerable in case the United States should bear down on the principle of the "quid-pro-quo" with affable and discreet revelation of the points at issue to the governments of the other states interested. They are apparently not aware of this fact, as we have not yet

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taken full advantage of the procedure. Admittedly it is a delicate one, but if where economic conditions facilitate such a course and bring the Cubans to our doorstep we practice the policy of inaction, we may have occasion to remind ourselves and perhaps the Cubans as well that they are a special, not a typical, case of inter-Americanism, and thus be in a position to refute more conclusively the gleeful cry of "bully" which is raised every time we seem to have in mind something they might possibly not like.

Would this bring about a situation where "an economically prostrate Cuba would have the sympathy of the other American Republics?" It is believed that this need not be the case; should Cuba show signs of economic prostration through the withholding of aid as a consequence of her own failing to meet obligations or to enter into undertakings which any of her sister states regards as right and proper, the symptoms would be her own fault, readily curable once she sees the light. The spectator states would have to be convinced, of course, that we were not exercising special pressure for an egregious purpose. This could best be done by citing from their own histories the instances in which they have engaged in similar conventions either with the United States, or with one another.

#### A Summary of Suggested Approaches.

In the discussion of each one of the foregoing eight facets of Cuban national personality and their effect on the country's relations with the United States, some suggestion of an approach to the immediate problem has been made. Is there any indication of a common factor among them?

Hispanic sentiment was regarded as not constituting an immediate problem. The peculiarities of Cuban discipline and of the personality of President Grau were considered to be incurable through anything we might do. The remaining suggested approaches cannot be boiled down to any one main principle. But they can be summarized in a brief corpus of principles compatible one with another.

The first of these is to exploit to the fullest extent the almost complete community of our outlook on the field of world politics, relating to this general interest, insofar as possible, our advocacy of the settlement of differences which may arise between us.

The second is to seek bases, new ones if need be, for a reciprocal exchange of privilege in return for concession. This is the quid-pro-quo, applied over a broad field by reason of the marked differences in the economic organization of the two nations.

The third

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The third is the appeal to standard practice, particularly to standard practice between the United States and the other Latin American nations. This appeal may be made not only to the Cubans, urging them to conform in what their sister nations have found acceptable, but to the sister nations as well, allowing them to perceive the egregious and selfish character of Cuba's special claims.

The fourth is the preference, where possible, of a course permitting inaction, or rather action through omission, over one calling for positive deeds, statements, and requests. For the immediately approaching future it seems Cuba will want more of us than we do of her; let her do the asking, and let our non-response serve, where necessary, as a lever to pry out offers of concessions in return.

For a fifth point, we might give consideration to the great importance of manner in dealing both with the Cubans locally, and with the Latin-American world generally, in connection with Cuban-American affairs. Certainly the Cuban communicativeness and affability should be exploited to the full by the Embassy in its quest for information and for agreement. Good personal relations are recognized as a means to this end, and have long been sought and maintained, not without success. Now, and to what extent, the Department of State may choose to reveal privately to representatives in Washington of other Latin-American states the peculiarities of the Cuban position is not a matter for determination here; but it does not seem that the formal and reserved official statement and the blast on the floor of Congress, our only two apparent alternatives to date, are getting us what we want.

Approved:

(Mr. Wells approved draft but  
left Habana before final typing)

R. Henry Norweb

H. Bartlett Wells  
Second Secretary of Embassy

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