

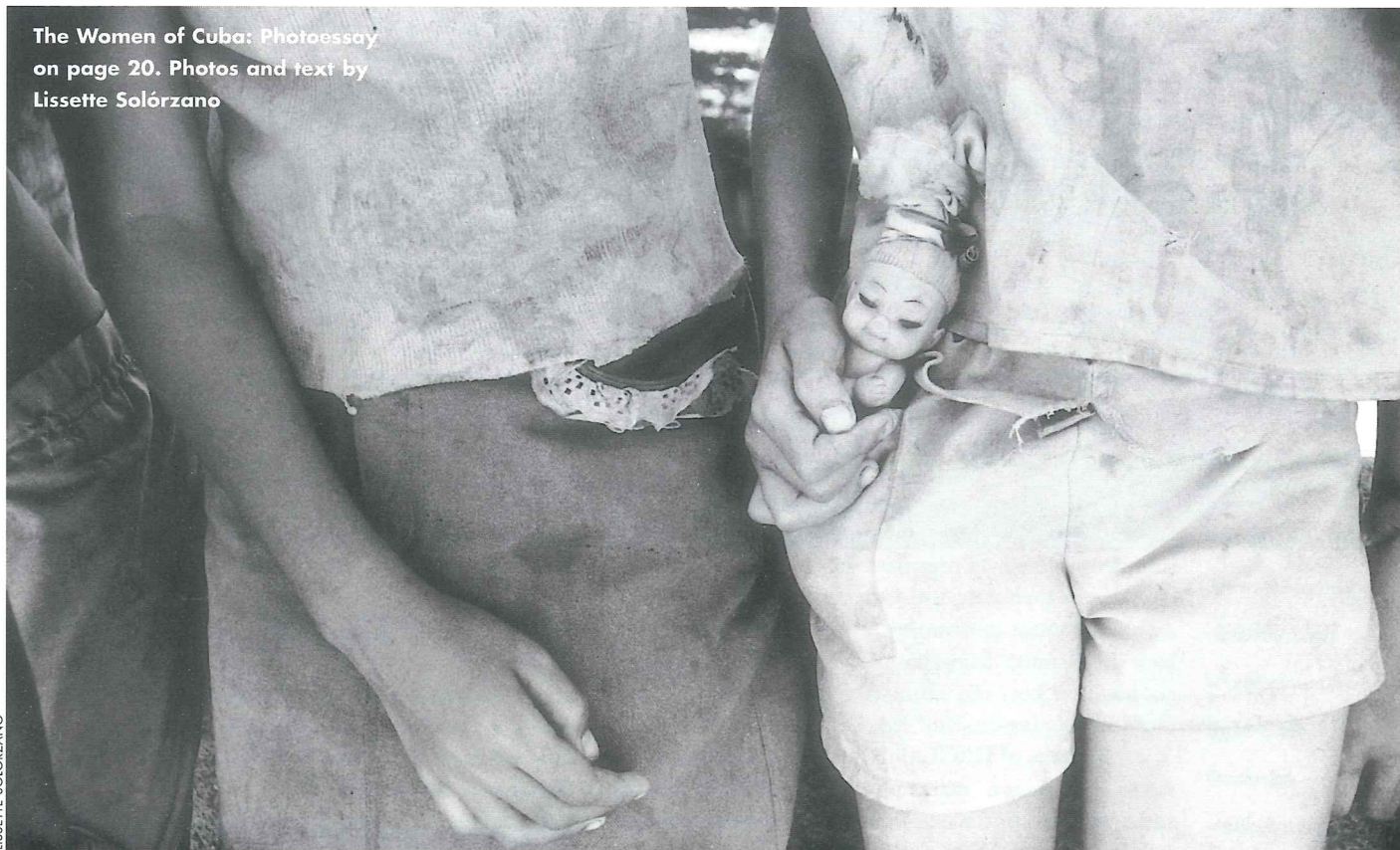
DAVID ROCKEFELLER CENTER FOR LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES

DRCLAS NEWS

HARVARD UNIVERSITY • WINTER 2000 NEWSLETTER



The Women of Cuba: Photoessay
on page 20. Photos and text by
Lisette Solórzano



LISSETTE SOLÓRZANO

Cuba Today

Linking the Island

BY LOUIS A. PÉREZ, JR.

CUBA IS *IN*. THINGS CUBAN ARE FASHIONABLE AND IN VOGUE—WHAT BONNIE RAITT SUGGESTED IN HER lyric “Cuba is Way Too Cool.” Cuban recorded music has once more claimed its place as a dominant presence in the U.S. market. Irakere, Los Van Van, Cubanísimo, and Los Muñequitos de Matanzas, among many other bands, have played to sold out venues across the United States. The success of the Grammy-winning album *Buena Vista Social Club* (Nonesuch) has been nothing short of remarkable. In mid-November 1999, *Billboard* magazine placed *Buena Vista Social Club* at the top of the pop catalog album sales, while amazon.com ranked *Buena Vista Social Club* at number 13 for sales at Harvard University.

Awareness of Cuba as a site of cultural innovation is at an all-time high. Art shows throughout the



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United States have exhibited the works of Carlos Estévez, Fernando Rodríguez, Manuel Mendive, and Salvador González. Cuba has become the stock in trade of mainstream media, not just as a topic of political reporting but as the subject of cultural news: *Art News* published a feature piece on Cuban plastic arts; *National Geographic* marveled at the restoration of colonial architecture; a *Time* magazine feature was euphoric about the innovations of Cuban jazz.

Interest in travel to Cuba has soared. The Travel Cable Channel dedicated one program to the charms of Cuba as a tourist destination. A 1998 issue of *Motor Boat and Sailing* extolled the delights of sailing and fishing in Cuban waters. In August 1999, the Sunday *New York Times* travel section published a front-page feature article on Cuba. The publication of Cuba travel guides and tour books has developed fully into a growth industry, while Cuba travel websites proliferate at a bewildering rate. What makes these developments all the more remarkable, of course, is that for most Americans travel to Cuba is illegal. It does not seem to matter. This is Prohibition all over again, where the law is routinely disregarded and defied. According to U.S. Interests Section sources in Havana, an estimated 100,000 Americans are traveling to Cuba annually, and many of them are doing it illegally.

Colleges and universities across the United States, largely in response to undergraduate curiosities, have established exchange programs with Cuban counterpart institutions. Study-abroad programs in Cuba, including summer projects and organized group tours dedicated to such diverse themes as Afro-Cuban religion, Spanish colonial architecture, performing arts, and rural health care, have proliferated. Scientific collaboration and academic cooperation between scholars of both countries have increased in numbers and types.

As this issue of DRCLAS NEWS, dedicated to Cuba, shows, Harvard is no exception. Its ties with Cuba are long and deep, and continue to expand. A hundred years ago, 1,300 Cuban teachers traveled to Harvard, becoming the news of the day, as Cuban writer Luisa Campuzano describes on page 23. More recently, until 1961, Harvard ran the lush Botanical Garden at Cienfuegos (pages 35-38). Projects, trips, and academic exchanges are planned in most every corner of the university from the Medical School (p. 39) to the Graduate School of Design (p. 29) to Romance Languages and Literatures.

The links are not only through specific trips and exchanges, but through the intellectual effort of trying to understand a complicated society in transition. Jorge Domínguez, Harvard's Clarence Dillon Professor of International Affairs, takes a hard look at last year in Cuba (p. 3), while Abraham Lowenthal, a recent Weatherhead Center for International Affairs Visiting Scholar, puts Cuba into the larger context of Latin America (p. 17). Susan Eckstein, Past President of the Latin American Studies Association and DRCLAS Research Associate, looks at issues of reform and resistance (p. 9), while Cuba's Soraya Cas-

tro, expected as a short-term DRCLAS Visiting Fellow this semester, examines U.S.-Cuba relations (p. 6). Harvard and Cuba are also linked through thesis work on Cuba in transition, such as that of Emma Phillips, an undergraduate in Social Anthropology (p. 15) and Ariana Hernández, a University of Chicago doctoral candidate who is also a teaching fellow in Harvard's History Department (p. 12).

The larger implications of these links—at Harvard and throughout the United States—are not altogether difficult to decipher. As the governments of both countries remain hopelessly stalled on the issue of "normalization" of relations, people on both sides of the Florida straits have taken matters into their own hands. They will not be denied "normal" relations with each other or be deprived of the opportunity to pursue matters of common interest and mutual concern.

These exchanges constitute powerful forces, and in the aggregate work—often imperceptibly—to fashion the larger cultural context in which both the politics and policies of both governments must perform function. Engagement cannot but foster the kinds of familiarities conducive to an appreciation of the benefits of "normal" relations. The ties between Cuba and Harvard—as well as Cuban ties with many other U.S. colleges and universities—contribute in important ways to hastening the arrival of the time when relations between both peoples will be "normal." The trend is irreversible, for anything less is abnormal. The issue is not if but when: there is too much history for it to be any other way. The sooner the better, for everyone.

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Cuba's Many Faces

Not Quite the New Millennium

BY JORGE I. DOMÍNGUEZ

Children, Cienaga de Zapata, Cuba

CUBA SHOWED MANY FACES AS 1999 came to a close. Each of these faces exhibited one of the various dimensions of its increasingly complex reality.

Surely Elián González was Cuba's most public face as the decade reached its end. The little boy's mother took Elián aboard a boat that capsized in the Straits of Florida; the mother drowned. Just shy of six years of age at the time of his rescue in the high seas, the boy's extended-family relatives in Miami sought to keep him. The boy's father in Cuba reclaimed him. The U.S. government dithered for weeks before making the decision that the boy should be returned to his father. In the meantime, President Fidel Castro launched a massive cam-

paign throughout Cuba to seek public support for Elián's return. No doubt President Castro believed that this little boy should be in Cuba. No doubt, too, this unexpected crisis was a win-win situation for him, no matter how the crisis would end. If the boy were to be returned, it would be a success for him; and if the United States were to prevent the boy's return, it would reveal the U.S. government as an accomplice to a kidnapping. More than two million people marched in the streets in various parts of Cuba; every public meeting, no matter how local or how lowly, was also expected to endorse Elián's return.

Other public faces of Cuba were those of its chief economic ministers, José Luis Rodríguez, Minister of the

Economy, and Manuel Millares, Finance Minister. In December 1999, they reported that Cuba's gross domestic product would grow by 6.2 percent that year, the second highest growth rate for any year in the 1990s, and only the second year of the decade with significant growth. They beamed with pride on national television. The economic results allowed them to declare victory over the U.S. Helms-Burton Act, enacted in 1996 to toughen the U.S. embargo and related economic sanctions on Cuba. Cuba's economy had suffered, they made clear, but Cuban leaders and workers had joined hands in yet another successful instance of resistance to yet one more attempt by the United States to overturn the politi-

cal regime founded in 1959.

Ministers Rodríguez and Millares, as is their custom, emphasized the statistical aspects of this impressive accomplishment. Their numbers reveal the dimensions of an economic recovery in 1999, even if it falls still far short of returning to Cuba's level of gross domestic product in 1989. Cuba's workers had become appreciably more efficient, albeit from a very low starting point. Cuba hosted more than 1.6 million tourists from many countries throughout the world, confirming the tourist industry as the engine of economic recovery. Cuba's budget deficit as a percentage of gross domestic product held at 2.4 percent (it had been about 33 percent in 1993), fairly consistent with its level for the second half of the 1990s. Cuba's sugar economy recovered a bit in 1999 from the disastrous production levels to which it had fallen.



Reading *Granma* to workers in a tobacco factory

en. At not quite 3.8 million metric tons, however, the 1999 sugar harvest accomplishment was still below the 1963 harvest, the worst sugar harvest since revolutionary victory in 1959 until the collapse of sugar output in 1998. Cuban output of petroleum, manufacturing, and various non-sugar agricultural products improved substantially in 1999. Cuban enterprises were also performing much better; many fewer state firms were money-losers. And yet, even at the end of the happy year of 1999, about one quarter of Cuba's state enterprises still ran deficits. Finally, over one million Cuban workers were paid to some extent in hard currencies (U.S. dollars or equivalent currencies); nearly two-thirds of all Cubans had access to hard currencies, although most had

only modest amounts. Nonetheless, life was austere for the significant minority of Cubans without access to hard currency. Cuba's median salary rose in 1999 to 223 pesos per month, which amounted to about \$11 dollars at the prevailing exchange rate.

Cuba displayed as well the successful faces of its new internationally competitive business enterprises. Habalear S.A., a joint venture between Canada's International Clothing Inc. and a state enterprise owned by the Cuban Ministry of Light Industry, began to produce high-fashion shoes for the international market, including tourist dollar-currency stores in Cuba. Its 40 workers were expected to produce about 120 of these pairs of shoes per hour. Ordinary Cubans would not be its most likely customers, however. Cubacel, another joint venture, offers cellular telephone services in Cuba. For four consecutive years, its 104 workers have won the "Vanguardia Nacional" recognition for best overall efficient production. In 1999, the firm's profit rate exceeded 35 percent. The firm was not well known to ordinary Cubans, however, because it sells only to business firms, not to individuals. The faces of successful entrepreneurship in Cuba, therefore, reveal as well the faces of the nation's new inequality.

Equally visible as the 1990s closed were Cuba's internationalist health-care workers, the Cuban government's sole far-reaching internationalist program as the century approached its end. They were the face of Cuba's success at home in constructing an impressive health-care system for its people; they were also the face of Cuba's once far-flung attempt to project its influence worldwide. Cuba's special niche was the rapid deployment of health personnel to assist with natural disasters. Cubans were thus sent to Central America to assist with the care of the sick and wounded in the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch; in late 1999, for that and related purposes there were still 434 Cuban medical doctors in Guatemala, 87 in Nicaragua, 53 in Belize, and 31 in Honduras. In December 1999, terri-

ble flooding and mud slides devastated a large area of Venezuela, displacing a great many people. Cuba immediately mobilized more than 400 health-care personnel to assist with the recovery from the catastrophe. However, the Cuban internationalist health-care program went beyond emergency relief. As 1999 closed, 467 Cubans were serving in nearby Haiti and 154 in far-away Gambia. Cuba's export of its medical doctors, nurses, and health technicians were mostly the result of bilateral agreements, but Cuba had also deployed 11 health-care personnel under United Nations auspices to Kosovo.

As the decade closed, Cuban leaders worried considerably about the prospects of U.S. military actions in Cuba, especially after Fidel Castro's passing. To make the U.S. government think twice before committing its troops, Cuban leaders sought to re-establish some kind of relationship with the Russian military, even if only at the symbolic level. Cuba's Generals, therefore, were thrilled to welcome Col. General Valentin Karabelnikov, of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, during his visit to Havana in December 1999. He was greeted by his Cuban counterparts, Division Generals Julio Casas Regueiro and Jesus Bermúdez Cutiño. Of course, Russian military officers were commonplace in Havana from the 1960s through the 1980s but much less common in the 1990s. This visit helped the Cuban government make the point to the U.S. government that the Russian military still cared about Cuba.

Cuba's political leaders characteristically become quite visible in end-of-year rounds of meetings, and 1999 was no exception. National Assembly President Ricardo Alarcón emphasized his double role. He was still the manager of Cuba's relations with the United States, then in the midst of a migration crisis over Elián González's fate, and he was also the guardian of Cuba's formal institutionalism, seeking at the same time to improve the performance of Cuba's justice system and environmental protection.

Party Political Bureau members José Ramón Machado and José Ramón Balaguer sought to strengthen the provincial and local organizations of the Communist party of Cuba. They toured Cienfuegos province in December 1999 to praise its accomplishments but also to note many deficiencies. Party cadres behave as bureaucrats, not as political leaders, they observed. Party resolutions are formulaic and ineffective. Discussion at meetings is stiff and ritualistic. The party's relations with workers or with young people left much room for improvement. Machado and Balaguer knew that the Communist party still has to reinvent itself.

And Women's Federation President Vilma Espín publicly pondered why women's roles in Cuban electoral politics had changed so little. Cubans have been electing municipal assembly members in multi-candidate (albeit single-party) elections since the mid-1970s. As the 1990s closed, a good Marxist-Leninist might believe that the objective conditions had ripened for more extensive participation by women in electoral politics. Consider Pinar del Río province, which Espín visited in December 1999 for a meeting of the provincial branch of the Women's Federation. Women accounted for nearly 45 percent of the civilian work force in the state sector, including nearly two-thirds of the technical and over four-fifths of the administrative personnel; the party's first secretary in the province (an appointive post) was a woman. Yet only 14.3 percent of the elected municipal assembly members were women. Why were Cuban voters so reluctant to elect more women to local city councils, given that so many women were clearly well-trained?

There were also the more anonymous faces of ordinary Cubans who remind us that, notwithstanding the good things that happened in Cuba in 1999, much is still woefully wrong in the country. Consider three examples. Cuba's political and economic leaders were rightly proud that unscheduled electric power blackouts,

common in the early 1990s, had become much less frequent as the decade ended. Nonetheless, massive electric power failures still recurred. On December 21, the electric power supply to the city of Pinar del Río and six other municipalities in Pinar del Río province failed. It took 22 hours to restore electric power – a period of time that the paragon of perpetual optimism, the daily official newspaper *Granma*, celebrated for its short duration.

A second example speaks to the question of efficiency and quality control, no doubt much improved in Cuba in 1999 but still quite unsatisfactory. On July 7, Osvaldo Milián, from Cienfuegos, found a box abandoned on the highway. It contained imported electrical equipment worth about \$2000-3000, the equivalent of not less than fifteen years of wages at the equivalent level of Cuba's current median salary. Milián contacted the local newspaper and radio to advertise the fact of his finding in order to locate the enterprise to which the equipment belonged. Several enterprises called to claim the box, but none could describe its actual contents. In December 1999, the rightful owner had not been found. Inventory control remains a goal yet to be achieved more fully.

The third example indirectly relates to Cuba's readiness to cope with international tourism, the nation's best hope for accelerating its economic recovery in the years to come. Alejandro Moreaux had been serving in Namibia in an international mission on Cuba's behalf. To prepare for his return to Cuba, he shipped his belongings from Namibia to Santiago de Cuba on June 28, 1999. They reached the Varadero international airport on July 17, where the cargo sat for four days. It was then shipped to the Havana international airport, where it then remained for 37 days. It finally reached Moreaux in Santiago on August 27. While Moreaux was not a tourist, such miserably poor handling of luggage reflects badly on Cuba's tourist capacity. The decade also closed on an unhappy note for

Cuba's civil aviation, with major disasters (and many casualties) aboard Cuban airplanes in Guatemala and Venezuela.

Another public and private face of Cuba was evident as well at Christmas time. For the third consecutive year, the government declared Christmas day a holiday. Jaime Cardinal Ortega, Archbishop of Havana, led perhaps the largest outdoor procession since the Pope's visit in January 1998. It was certainly the largest public march of the year that had not been sponsored by the Cuban government, Communist party, or official organizations.

Finally, the capacity of the Cuban government for authoritative nonsense was on full display as 1999 ended. Rosa Elena Simeón, ordinarily a competent and sensible government official, issued a signed press release on behalf of the Ministry of Science, Technology, and the Environment. The Minister explained that the millennium ended at the end of the year 2000, not at the end of 1999. Consequently, the Cuban government did not celebrate the end of the millennium on 31 December 1999; it would forego tourist riches and it would behave as a know-it-all grouch. Perhaps, as in instances past, the political leadership would turn this minor fiasco into a new "victory" by celebrating the noisiest and most fun New Year's Eve party on December 31, 2000, proving yet again the superior wisdom of its leadership!

Jorge I. Domínguez is the Director of the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs at Harvard University and a member of the DRCLAS Executive Committee. The Clarence Dillon Professor of International Affairs at Harvard, he is the author and editor of dozens of books on Latin America, including Cuba, Order, and Revolution (Harvard University Press, 1978), To Make a World Safe for Revolution: Cuba's Foreign Policy (Harvard University Press, 1989), and Democratic Politics in Latin America and the Caribbean (Johns Hopkins, 1998).

There were also the more anonymous faces of ordinary Cubans who remind us that, notwithstanding the good things that happened in Cuba in 1999, much is still woefully wrong in the country.

Cuba-U.S. Relations

Détente Before the Third Millennium?

BY SORAYA M. CASTRO MARIÑO

UNITED STATES' POLICY TOWARDS CUBA OFTEN APPEARS irrational. Its ups-and-downs reflect the extreme ideological and confrontational relations prevailing between the two countries for more than 40 years. Nevertheless, the balance of power in U.S. politics appears to be shifting away from Cuban American hard-liners with the erosion of conservative support for traditional U.S.-Cuban policy.

A whole new range of players and interest groups have come to influence U.S. policy toward the island. These new players in favor of improved economic and diplomatic relations include non-governmental organizations, humanitarian groups, think tanks, business groups, public health and environmental groups, and a more diverse

representation of Cuban Americans.

During non-crisis interludes, these groups often appear to have the upper hand. But when a crisis comes, Cuban foreign policy becomes linked in an artificial manner to domestic electoral politics in Florida and New Jersey, and the political influence of the most fierce lobby. The Cuban American National Foundation has caused a relative alienation of the Cuban issue from U.S. foreign policy objectives, as the recent plight of six-year-old Elián Gonzalez so dramatically illustrates. The case, which seems to be a clear-cut one of migratory policy and parental rights, swiftly became popular fodder for U.S. politicians, both in Congress and on the presidential campaign trail. Yet the debate also underlines that the Cuban American National Foundation is no longer an unchallenged power, as other voices such as the National Council of Churches, opinion polls, much of the U.S. press, and even more moderate Cubans have begun to resonate.

Cutting the Gordian knot with the Miami-based Cuban conservatives requires a new, realistic framework in which to achieve improved relations, as well as political courage. U.S.-Cuba policy remains an anachronistic remnant of the Cold War. The present administration seems to lack the vision and courage to act, and the Cuban American right-wing uses all its political capital to hold the policy of hostility in place.

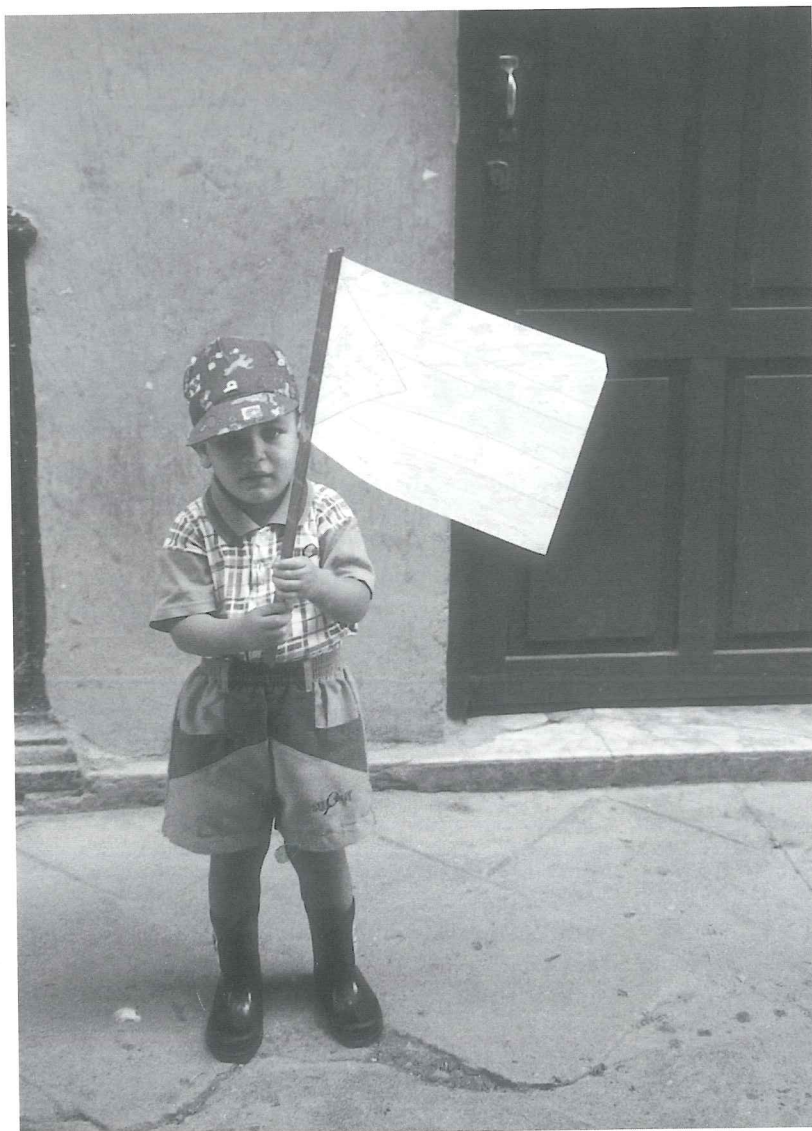
There is an interesting twist as far as U.S. policy making with respect to Cuba is concerned. It shows an asymmetry in the relevance that each country attaches to the other. While policy-making in Cuba has always taken U.S. politics into serious consideration, the island has not been, in the short or medium term, a political priority for the United States.

For more than 40 years, this fact constrains the debate on U.S. policy towards the island and consequently, a group of hard-liners in Miami with very specific interests in the Cuban issue have traditionally monopolized the discussion, forcing the U.S. policy toward Cuba to be held hostage by domestic factors. Although after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, it was recognized that Cuba was not a threat to U.S. national security, domestic concerns still overshadowed foreign policy.

Two administrations, the former Republican and the current Democratic, have pursued the Cold War of embargo and enmity. However, under the Bush administration, there was a relatively low level of conflict. The U.S. and Cuban governments even managed to sit down at the bargaining table to schedule the withdrawal of South African troops from Namibia and Cuban troops from Angola.

The new context in the 90's offered an excellent oppor-

Will this child see normalization of relations in his lifetime?



JUNE CAROLYN ERICK

tunity for a reassessment of U.S. policy towards Cuba. Seemingly, the most controversial aspects in the bilateral relations had been cleared by history, particularly with respect to Central America and Africa.

However, a climate of crisis permeates the decision-making process in the Clinton administration. Policymaking around Cuba was marked by a preference for the "status quo", a proposed convenience for keeping policy unchanged and acting upon certain circumstances (of crisis?) to ensure the political, economic, and diplomatic isolation of Cuba.

The period's three major crisis—namely, the 1994 Rafters' Crisis, the 1996 shoot down of two "Brothers to the Rescue" aircraft by the Cuban government, and the 1999 crisis around the boy Elián González Brotón—are characterized by power vacuums at the highest level of decision making in the U.S., particularly in the National Security Council.

In all three instances, the fragility of the structure of the bilateral relations becomes quite evident. However, other U.S. players are making their voices heard. The National Council of Churches, for instance, played an important role in the Elián González case.

Another example is "USA Engage," a group of nearly 700 companies, trade associations, and farm organizations, a new movement aimed at eliminating unilateral U.S. economic sanctions against Cuba and elsewhere. Members and supporters include the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Manufacturers, Eastman Kodak, General Motors, Goodyear, and Honeywell. Some economists estimate that U.S. trade with the island would jump to \$3 billion per year and then soar to \$7 billion within a few years if the ban were lifted, according to the study by Kirby Jones and Donna Rich for the Cuban Studies Program of the John Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies.

Speculation about major changes in U.S.-Cuba relations had been sweeping Washington since September 1998 when former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and Larry Eagleburger supported an initiative led by Republican Senator John W. Warner to create a bipartisan commission to examine U.S. policies toward the island.

The three Cuban American representatives, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Lincoln Díaz Balart, and Roberto Menéndez, as well as Senators Robert Torricelli and Bob Graham, immediately began to lobby against the proposed bipartisan Committee. Ros-Lehtinen and Díaz Balart branded it as the "Gore Commission" in an attempt to pressure the possible 2000 presidential candidate.

On January 5, 1999, in a politically cautious move, President Clinton announced "the relaxation of some U.S. restrictions" on Havana, while at the same time rejecting the proposal for a bipartisan commission to review all aspects of U.S. policy toward Cuba.

Most of the announced changes come under Track Two of the 1992 Torricelli Law that allows "people-to-people contacts" as a way of promoting the growth of civil society in Cuba. The basis of "the policy of perpetual hostility", as phrased by Henry Kissinger, designed to isolate the Cuban government, and the use of the embargo as a key policy element, were combined in a proposal to influence the Cuban society internally to bring about change from inside.

The measures included a study by the United States Information Service of alternative broadcast sites to improve reception of Radio Martí and TV Martí in Cuba and an increase in public diplomacy programs to inform Latin America and the European Community on the reality in Cuba today. Clinton also announced the reestablishment of direct mail service between the United States and Cuba.

Other changes aimed at "facilitating people-to-people contact" were the authorization of the transfer of \$300 quarterly by any U.S. citizen to any Cuban family (except for senior-level Cuban government and Communist party officials), in addition to the ongoing remittances from Cuban Americans. Direct flights from New York and Los Angeles for licensed travelers have been added to the existing Miami flights. Food sales to entities independent of the Cuban government by groups such as religious organizations or private restaurants could apply for approval on a case-by-case basis.

Overall, the Clinton administration moves were geared toward encouraging expanded educational, cultural, humanitarian, religious, journalistic, and athletic exchange.

This year, the United States will hold presidential elections. Election years have proved that a strengthening of the embargo against Cuba is used to calm down the Cuban American right-wing in the swing state of Florida. The political muscles of the new actors advocating for a change of policy are yet to be tried in the policymaking process towards Cuba, and this election year will give us a good idea of their strength.

It is important to bear in mind that the two most significant laws which constitute the cornerstone of U.S. policy toward Cuba were passed during the last two presidential election years: the 1992 Torricelli Act and the 1996 Helms Burton Act.

The Helms-Burton Act labels and defines U.S. policy toward Cuba. It is strict enough to leave very little room for the Administration to apply other policy instruments for the short term.

In early February 1996, several U.S. policy makers involved in Cuban affairs had left their jobs, including Alexander Watson, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs. This unquestionably created an institutional void right before the February 24, 1996, shooting down of two Brothers to the Rescue Cuban exile aircraft for violation of Cuba's air space. The incident was the

A whole new range of players and interest groups have come to influence U.S. policy toward the island.

pretext to let the political trend of reinforced hostility prevail. Clinton, not wanting to be perceived as "weak," signed the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act, better known as the Helms-Burton Act, on March 12, 1996, the same day Republican primaries were held in Florida.

Unlike the 1992 Cuban Democracy Act (Torricelli Law) with its focus on trade, the 1996 legislation targets the financial area to limit Cuba's necessary re-insertion into the world market. The Act has three major objectives: to tighten the economic siege and hamper the process of economic transformation in Cuba; to render impossible any prospects of improved relations between Cuba and the United States by creating practically insurmountable obstacles to the solution of mutual problems; and to bring Cuba back to the status it had in the early 20th century, when the United States dictated the destiny of the Cuban nation. The essential conflict is sovereignty versus domination.

Paradoxically, U.S. allies reactions to the extraterritorial character of the Helms-Burton Act create favorable conditions for returning Cuba to the U.S. foreign policy agenda instead of relegating it to the domestic agenda. Trade is a top priority in the U.S. foreign policy agenda. There is a pressing lack of consensus in Congress, even among Republicans, on whether international trade should be an instrument of foreign policy. The debate flows mainly between Helms-style isolationists and free trade-oriented conservative Republicans.

After the January 5, 1999 measures were announced by President Clinton, a fresh debate about the President's licensing powers arose. Former Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Inter-American Affairs at the National Security Council, James Dobbins, asserted that "Helms-Burton codified the embargo and at the same time,

it codified the President's licensing power. That is, it codified a process by which there was an embargo to which exceptions could be granted on a case-by-case basis by the President." According to Professor Phil Brenner in *Getting Off the Dime: U.S. Policy Toward Cuba*, "If this interpretation stands, it opens the door virtually for any license for trade with Cuba that a President would wish to make."

Almost immediately, the three Cuban American representatives said that they would sue to prevent the President from implementing these changes because they violated the Helms-Burton law.

In Congress, with the rightist conservative movement in major committees and subcommittees, discussion of the Cuban issue has leaned toward enforcing strong measures against the island. In both the Executive and the Congress, a perception prevails that Cuba cannot continue to make its process viable and that, in the short run, changes made on the island will be more in line with foreign policy aims.

Another element further complicating bilateral relations is the existence of an articulate, anti-Cuban lobby with some

financial power: The Cuban American National Foundation (CAN-F). Despite the 1997 death of its leader Jorge Mas Canosa, the CAN-F still has the ability to sustain pressure within American political circles. Nevertheless, the growing debate over Washington's policy towards Cuba has now extended beyond the right wing of the Cuban American community. Congressional representatives, business associations, churches, humanitarian groups, academicians and even the Republican Governor of Illinois George Ryan have all underscored the irrational persistence of maintaining a policy that has not brought the expected results, and the imperative need to shift the course prevailing in the non-existing Cuba-U.S. relations for the sake of America's own political interests.

However, this political craftiness may not be enough to counter the shift in U.S. public opinion, especially within the business community, the Catholic Church, and humanitarian groups. The deep process of transformation of the international system, the new actors advocating for a change of policy towards the island, a more weakened leadership within the CAN-F and demographic changes in the Cuban community in Miami suggest that time may be right for this shift in U.S. public opinion to be translated into a change in policy.

Soraya M. Castro Mariño is a researcher and professor at the University of Havana's Center of Studies on the United States. This article is based on research supported by the Smithsonian Institution by a short-term visitor's grant in September 1999. She is expected to be a short-term Visiting Fellow at the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies this semester, through the support of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

Many groups have underscored the irrational persistence of maintaining a policy that has not brought the expected results.

Under the Bush administration, Cuba withdrew its troops from Angola



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Resistance and Reform

Power to the People?

BY SUSAN ECKSTEIN

A UNIVERSITY CHEMISTRY PROFESSOR in Havana quietly mixes chemicals—paid for by the state—for a local photographer. The photographer in turn sells some of his pictures to a Spanish tourist agency, but bills his client through a friend, who has a licensed publicity firm. His friend, who does some travel on work-related business, in turn uses money left from his last trip's per diem to fix his kitchen floor with tiles purchased in the black market.

These kind of small—and almost routine—activities in Cuba reflect sometimes ineffective government efforts at control. But they also underline how islanders evade official rules and regulations quietly and often illicitly, in ways that have the effect—although not necessarily the intent—of remaking island socialism.

When the Soviet bloc collapsed

nearly ten years ago, many expected Cubans to take to the streets and bring the government down. The economy had shrunk almost overnight by some 40 percent, because the island had depended on the Communist countries for some 85 percent of its trade and most aid. Furthermore, Communism had been delegitimated in the countries that had been the country's allies for nearly thirty years. Critics say the rebellion did not take place because of government repression, while sympathizers point to the democratic, distributive, and egalitarian nature of Castro's regime.

Both interpretations contain elements of truth (and non-truth) but neither adequately accounts for why Castro weathered the storm. The answer may lie elsewhere. Islanders disobey aspects of socialism they dislike, not in the abstract but as experienced concretely, and the government has responded with reform.

How have people shaped the new Cuba, and what limits are there to government willingness to modify socialism as islanders knew it?

SOCIETY AND ITS DISCONTENTS

Experiencing deep cuts in living standards, islanders defied the law and official exhortations. They did so mainly covertly, without attacking state socialism head on.

They did so, for one, in the world of work. They refused state calls to do full-time or seasonal farmwork, even though urban employment opportunities plummeted with the economic recession. A food crisis arose when the government no longer could afford oil, pesticides, and food imports. Since Castro had massively educated the population, islanders no

Science fiction writer José Miguel Sánchez "Yoss" is the founder of "María's Patio," an alternative lifestyle space

longer wanted to do back breaking manual labor, even if it offered them work and increased the food supply.

Cubans, whether formally employed or not, instead gravitated to illegal private economic activity, on a full or part-time basis. Despite state regulations, the self-employed sector came to involve an estimated third of the civilian labor force. Even people with secure jobs left to scheme on their own. Some of the independently employed even hired their own staff, also against the law. Under these circumstances, authorities in some provinces found they no longer had enough doctors and nurses, teachers and professors, to keep up the health care and education so fundamental to the revolution and its legitimacy.

People were not calling for an end to socialism and a capitalist revolution. They were trying to make the best of a bad situation. They turned to private activity because the value of their official salaries plunged with the economic crisis and because they could charge in dollars for their work. The dollar dramatically increased in value as the value of the peso col-

lapsed. Although dollar possession and transactions were illegal, the black market peso/dollar exchange rate rose to over 120:1. The official exchange rate stood at 1:1. The government essentially lost control over an emergent informal dollarized economy.

Cubans similarly sabotaged the distributive system. Because the new scarcities would have priced goods in an open market beyond most Cubans' means, the government rationed most consumer goods to "equalize sacrifice." However, a runaway black market in goods also evolved, because scarcities drove up the "real" market value of goods. Nearly everyone came to participate in the black market, often both as buyer and seller. Paradoxically, government control over the distributive system caved just when it officially increased. By 1993, the value of the black market purportedly exceeded the value of official retail trade. Off-the-books sales of foodstuff became the most widespread black market activity, but theft and pilfering of other goods, as well as bribery and corruption, reached record levels as well. With most of the economy state owned, the illegal activity entailed crimes against the state and the appropriation of state resources for private ends.

The formal political system managed to only partially channel grievances. Yet, even in this domain islander disobedience picked up. For example, islander involvement in the official mass organizations tapered off. Older Cubans withdrew their support both because subsistence became more time-consuming and because the groups did not adapt to their changing needs and concerns. The younger generation did not participate to begin with. They had never participated in movements smashing the Old Order and mainly knew only New Regime hardships. The organizations had little appeal to them. Islanders did not overtly challenge the groups (although there was discussion of merging the women's and block organizations). However, in withdrawing their support they undermined organizational effectiveness. Since local block organizations ceased to function as adequate informal social

control mechanisms, authorities had to form Rapid Response Brigades—government-sanctioned mobs—to quell neighborhood dissidence.

Covert electoral dissidence also increased. Although Castro turned national elections into patriotic plebiscites, into "a yes for Cuba" and a "rejection of the Helms Bill," about 20 percent of the electorate refused to comply with this call for a "show of unity." According to available evidence, one in five islanders either refused to vote for the entire official slate of candidates or spoiled or cast blank ballots. Occasionally, the protest went from covert to overt. On August 5, 1994, Central Havana became the scene of the first mass protest in Castro's Cuba. One to two thousand angry citydwellers, young men above all, took the risk of publicly challenging the state. Protesters chanted anti-government slogans and looted stores. The protest occurred when the food supply reached rock-bottom.

Nonetheless, islanders turned more to religion than to politics. The new religiosity entailed cultural resistance, since the regime had become professedly atheistic since the early years of the revolution. The resistance was all the more marked in that islanders turned to syncretic Afro-Cuban religions and, secondarily, to evangelical Protestantism, more than to orthodox Catholicism favored by the Hierarchy. One in five respondents in a 1994 Gallup poll admitted to attending church the preceding month. Hundreds of thousands of islanders also began to turn out for once-small church celebrations, often with santería amulets. Santería, which has a truncated religious hierarchy, is indigenous and national in focus, even if its roots lie in Africa. Evangelical Protestantism, although foreign in origin, also appeals because of its sect-like structure based on strong interpersonal ties. In turning to religion, the populace is contributing to a remaking of the socio-cultural order, more than they typically envisioned.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSES

In response to the mounting covert

Saints on the Street



ALEJANDRO GONZÁLEZ



RENÉ PEÑA

disobedience that sabotaged state control over production and distribution, that eroded the moral and socio-cultural order, and that challenged regime legitimacy as never before, the government initiated a series of reforms. Many reforms legalized what islanders had taken to doing illegally or without official sanction.

Following the 1994 protest, Castro immediately opened up the possibility to emigrate. Some 33,000 islanders took advantage of the opportunity and left in make-shift boats. If the U.S. and Cuban governments had not agreed within a month to establish procedures and quotas, the number would have been even greater.

Authorities also modified economic policies. They stepped up material incentives to attract labor to agriculture, legalized certain types of self-employment (and gradually expanded the permissible types), decriminalized dollar possession, and set up peso-dollar exchange booths and dollar-only stores. They also transformed most state farms into cooperatives and began to pay a portion of salaries in a new currency that could be spent at new hard currency stores. They also opened private markets. While Castro continued to claim that he found capitalism repugnant, and that the reforms were "born of special needs," not desire, socialism was broadened in words and deeds to include features of a market economy. He argued that the reforms were designed to defend and save, not transform, socialism.

Political changes took place as well, but they had less structural significance and were less tied to citizen defiance. The government introduced direct elections for provincial and national as well as municipal levels of governance. It brought together large groups of people to debate proposed policies and air grievances. It also oversaw a major shakeup in the commanding heights of key political institutions. Castro replaced old with young cadre to appeal to increasingly apathetic and disaffected youth. Whatever deepening of democracy these measures entailed, they were all within the contours of a Leninist party-state.

Moreover, Castro quite remarkably sought to coopt symbolically the August 5 protest. On the one year anniversary he claimed August 5 a "great revolutionary victory." To further appropriate and redefine the symbolism of the protest, and transform it into a patriotic cause, he had the government organize a "Cuba Vive" manifestation, involving half a million islanders.

Dissidents overtly opposing the government, in general, met with less success. Their defiance crossed the boundaries of what officials considered permissible. Dissidents faced arrests, imprisonment, and house confinement, though typically for shorter periods than in the early years of the revolution. With no access to the officially controlled media, the dissident movement remains small and fragmented and without a mass base. Though Concilio Cubano dissident groups

banned together, authorities prevented them from meeting publicly. Official constraints aside, scores of small illegal groups managed to continue to engage in a flurry of activity, and to meet with visiting dignitaries during the November 1999 Ibero-American Summit in Havana. In this more internationally exposed context, the government responded with discreet but stepped-up low intensity repression, and then craftily diverted the popular imagination with a Cuban-Venezuelan baseball game led by the respective heads of state.

Meanwhile, authorities became increasingly tolerant of the new religiosity. They themselves, in growing numbers, sought meaning in sacred beliefs and practices. Government tolerance picked up quite possibly because Castro recognized that Marx's dictum that "religion is the opiate of the people" did not seem so bad at a time of severe duress.

Government responses followed no blueprint. Authorities responded at times with reform, but on other occasions with cooptation and repression. Indeed, as the pace of economic recovery slowed down at the millennium's end, repression picked up.

Covert forms of institutional non-compliance may be difficult to discern, but if they are not taken into account, the state appears much more powerful and society more passive than history has demonstrated. Islanders who have tried to make the best of the current crisis have contributed to a remaking of island socialism, intentionally and not. But their impact remains more tied to the economic and religious than political realm. Castro views market reforms as tolerable and under current conditions essential, but meaningful political reforms undoubtedly as threatening.

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**Covert disobedience
challenged regime
legitimacy as never
before.**



LOUIS HEAD

Billboards in Havana

Socialism with Commercials

Consuming Advertising in Today's Cuba

BY ARIANA HERNANDEZ-REGUANT

CACOPHONY OF SOUNDS AND COLORS WELCOMED the visitor to the annual Havana Commercial Fair at ExpoCuba on the outskirts of Havana. Displays of rum, mattresses, shampoos, cab services, travel agencies, beer, tractors, bathing suits, cigarettes, jewelry reflected a whole world of capitalist plenty and economic optimism. Both Cuban state companies and foreign corporations exhibited their products and services.

The most popular booth at the 1998 fair, the biggest to date, was that of *Cristal* beer. Drawn by a gigantic sculpture of an old drunk man, and by a wall of video screens, crowds congregated to watch footage of Paulito F.G., one the most popular salsa singers in Cuba and the author of *Cristal's* commercial jingle. Another audiovisual featured the history of the beer. Nostalgic images of *Cristal* TV ads, Havana cabarets and nightlife from the 1950s were immediately followed by contemporary street scenes of *Cristal*-drinking Habaneros.

The *Cristal* display was the main contender for the first prize of the Association of Propaganda and Advertising Professionals – an association that, since 1992, has given annual awards at the Fair to the best display and promotional materials. After much debate, however, *Cristal* was eliminated. Why? *Cristal's* Canadian marketing director blamed the Communist Party, not yet ready to accept aggressive advertising. To the Association's chief juror, a Communist Party official and advertising consultant for a competing firm who ended up getting the first prize, *Cristal's* infomercial was an insult to the Revolution. It

glorified the 1950s, and totally ignored the Revolutionary period. Like Wim Wenders' *Buena Vista Social Club*, the video seemed to trace a continuity between the 1950s and present times, suggesting that economic development stagnated during what was just an interim. This juror also critiqued the use of the uninspiring figure of a drunk to attract the attention of fair attendees.

In 1997, *Cristal* entered into a joint venture with *Labatt Beer* of Canada. Canadian management and marketing expertise had an immediate impact in *Cristal's* image and sales. *Premium Publicity*, a new Spanish-Cuban advertising agency, designed an advertising campaign. Together they devised one of the most successful and bold advertising campaigns since commercial advertisements were first allowed in 1994. They carefully packaged the beer as the drink of the new generation, and enlisted teen-idol Paulito to tour the island with a stage wrapped in *Cristal* logos. Radio commercials were played ten times a day, and posters of *Cristal* were prominently displayed in stores and bars. *Cristal* sales sky-rocketed. The Communist Party was confronted with a dilemma; the reintroduction of advertising was plagued with hesitation, reflecting the latent conflicts between socialist morality and financial needs. The Communist Party Central Committee cancelled Paulito's tour after only two concerts, despite the fact that local officials in the provinces were extremely eager to have a big star performing in their sleepy towns. Party leaders saw these trends as moves that could subvert socialist consumption ethic and aesthetics.

In the early 1990s after the collapse of most of Cuba's

socialist trading partners, Cuba entered a deep economic slump. Economic reforms, designed to increase foreign currency reserves, included expansion of the tourist industry, pursuit of foreign investment, the legalization of limited forms of private enterprise, and free circulation of the U.S. dollar. The reintroduction of commercial advertisements followed as a way to attract hard currency from newly-arriving foreign companies eager to promote themselves. One radio station was revamped with a commercial format, and advertising was introduced in January, 1994 under the direct supervision of the Department of Ideology of the Cuban Communist Party.

To the surprise of Habaneros, the new commercial-like Radio Taino, FM, was the soundtrack of the worst economic crisis of post-revolutionary Cuba. 1994 was a year of hunger, of the *balsero* crisis, when tens of thousands of people fled on rafts to the United States, and a year of long electricity blackouts and severe gas and water shortages. The first commercials appeared during the same time, suggesting instead the possibility of capitalist consumption and a world characterized by leisure and abundance rather than labor and shortages.

However, some unintended consequences quickly appeared. For example, the campaign of the Spanish beer *San Miguel* was so successful that it became the beer of choice in the city, nearly driving local beers out of the market. Shortly after that a beauty product campaign generated complaints from offended listeners who questioned the government for promoting such products while failing to provide enough running water to the majority of the population and for discontinuing the distribution of soap through the rationing system.

The government, beginning to understand the power of advertising, issued regulations. It realized that advertising revenues should be higher than the losses that state companies endured as a result of foreign competition. As a result, Radio Taino raised its advertising fees by 700 per cent. Multiple and recorded spots replaced individual sponsorship to avoid over-promotion of any one company or brand. Meanwhile, Cuban state companies were given the opportunity to advertise for free or at very low rates in order to boost their sales and survive foreign competition. Along these lines, the promotion of foreign firms was substituted by that of their state-run Cuban subsidiaries. Advertising of independent entrepreneurs was banned outright. So was the advertising of basic products, as well as the promotion of certain luxury

items that reflected the population's increasing economic disparities. Finally, Radio Taino advertising designers were instructed that ads should be informative but not lure people to consumption; they could contain persuasive slogans with informative statements. At this point it became apparent that advertising was a highly visible aspect of new economic relations at work.

The Communist Party's Department of Ideology has issued internal advertising regulations periodically to all ministries and state institutions since 1993, revealing the philosophical confrontation between political and commercial propaganda under socialism. 1998 regulations establish that the Communist Party will monitor advertising, which must always comply "with the moral and political principles of the Revolution." Advertising should neither "subvert socialist ideology nor the cultural identity of the Cuban nation" nor utilize national symbols or public government figures. Advertising should not harm the country's economic interests in any way and should not "appeal to the consumption of products and services," although it can disseminate and promote company and brand names. Promotion toward commercial ends—at least for the time being—will be limited to billboards with locations approved by the Communist Party, audiovisual media and printed material directed at foreign nationals (including Radio Taino), and the interior of businesses that sell products in hard currency.

Radio Taino is currently the only electronic mass media on the island to include commercials, although state television is currently considering their introduction. Newspapers, however, use advertising to survive. The Communist Party paper, *Granma*, includes printed ads in its international version, and the Union of Communist Youth edits a business paper, *Opciones*, whose ads help to subsidize its official newspaper, *Juventud Rebelde*. Increasingly, international events such as the Havana Latin American Film Festival and the International Jazz Festival rely on sponsorships and advertising for funds.

Advertising, initially intended as a mere income-generating strategy, has unleashed an unexpected, wider cultural transformation. For instance, the media is no longer simply an instrument of socialist ideological education, but also of marketing products, services, and popular culture—a realm characteristic of capitalist socialization. Programming at Radio Taino is now designed with the goal of attracting an audience, which becomes a commodity to be sold to advertisers. Research centers associated with the socialist economy, like the National Center for Statistical Research, and the Institute

Advertising has unleashed an unexpected wider cultural transformation.



PHOTO (AND SCULPTURE) BY MIGUEL ANGUEL LEIVA

The "drunk" that caused the controversy

for the Study of Domestic Demand closed their doors a few years ago as their goals were deemed obsolete. Their researchers have been recycled to conduct audience and market research, applying new techniques to identify a market segmented along consumption patterns, income and professional lines. Socialist institutions in charge of promoting new products have been reconverted into marketing and public relations consultants. The 1999 Cuban National Directory of the Communications Industry lists nineteen advertising agencies, although only four manage standard advertising accounts and design entire campaigns. An Association of Propaganda and Advertising Professionals, formed in 1991, now has more than 1,500 members.

This association seeks to include all professionals in the communications field who are not journalists. Its founding members, now on the association's executive committee, were mainly Communist Party members with long experience in propaganda. Most of them had also been in the field of commercial advertising prior to the Revolution as accounts executives, graphic designers, photographers, writers and draftsmen. As the mass media and all private enterprises were nationalized by 1962, most advertising professionals left the country in search of better employment prospects. With the exception of the promotion of specific export products abroad, commercial advertising slowly dwindled and disappeared. Those professionals who stayed in Cuba either worked on international advertising or, for the most part, have worked over the years designing both political propaganda and public education campaigns. The 1961 Literacy Campaign, for instance, was conceived by former advertising executives and led, of all people, by the juror that vetoed the 1998 award to Cristal (a former accounts manager with McCann-Erickson and later a close collaborator to Ernesto Che Guevara at the Ministry of Industry). In the late 1980s, these professionals began to call for the rehabilitation of marketing and its use to increase economic efficiency and introduce new managerial styles at Cuban state companies. Today, the expertise accumulated in political/ideological campaigns is being transferred to the design and production of commercial advertisements, as in the early 1960s the exact opposite process took place.



PHOTO AND BILLBOARD BY MIGUEL ANGUEL LEYVA

1994 San Miguel billboard

to both labor and leisure. Individual worth is no longer linked to his or her position in the production process, but is increasingly defined in terms of consumption habits, in turn associated with leisure patterns. Advertising also is one aspect — and one of the most visible ones — of the principles of marketing and economic efficiency linked to capitalist economic relations. It has also opened new employment opportunities for artists, writers, photographers and others who, according to new laws regulating self-employment — can freelance without being linked to a state enterprise. The advertising field thus presents one of the most important changes in Cuban labor relations. Salaried employees at advertising agencies often leave their jobs to become “independent creative workers” and work on a free-lance basis. Since advertising takes place in the hard currency economy, these professionals value their work in hard currency. They exchange the security of a fixed salary of about 20 to 40 dollars a month for the uncertainty of contract work. However, because there is still little competition in the field, agencies have no choice other than to contract them at international market fees, making their earnings comparable in many cases to those of their peers in other parts of Latin America.

In today's Cuba, beyond billboard ads and corporate sponsorships, beyond the highly visible economic reforms, there is a tremendous cultural transformation that affects not only the audiences that advertising seeks to reach, but also those involved in its design, production and mass media dissemination.

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Billboards in Havana's Miramar neighborhood



LOUIS HEAD

Transforming Identities

An Ethnography of Change in a Cuban Market

BY EMMA PHILLIPS

TELL TONY THAT BETWEEN THE two of us he is by far the more experienced anthropologist. From behind his small, crowded table in the Malecón tourist crafts market in Havana, Tony has developed an effective radar for his customers' national idiosyncrasies. The Spanish, he says, are his biggest buyers. Attracted by bright colors and cheap prices, they are savvy shoppers – far more so than the growing number of visiting Americans who are eager to buy at any price. Then there are the Italians who gesticulate wildly and love a bargain, even when they know Tony is just playing along. The Russians, according to Tony, have no such sense of humor, but are known to bargain hard for the ugliest products. The pink-faced Northern Europeans and Canadian retirees, on the other hand, share the habit of peering quietly at the table, humming and hawing, often circulating through the rest of the market before coming to a decision – and then buying one or two small souvenirs.

Originally a high-school gym teacher, Tony is one of a new group of *trabajadores por cuentapropia*, self-employed workers, or literally, “workers for private profit.” We met in 1998 while I was studying at the University of Havana. I chose to look at *cuentapropismo* as a lens onto how Cubans are negotiating the profound economic and political changes sparked by the fall of the Soviet Union and the subsequent near-collapse of the Cuban economy. *Trabajo por cuentapropia* was authorized by the Cuban government in 1993 in such limited areas as taxi driving, car repair, street-food vendors and craftsmanship. Although they number fewer than 200,000, *cuentapropistas* are the first Cubans to shift from state-salaried employment in Cuban pesos to self-employment in dollars. For this reason, some have seen



Tony with tourists,
Malecón crafts market

cuentapropistas as a kind of capitalist vanguard, a focal point of discussion surrounding Cuba's transition to a market economy.

In 1990, at the beginning of the “special period in time of peace” when Cuba suffered from an almost complete lack of consumer goods, Tony and his brother made leather shoes and belts to be sold *por la calle* (in the black market). This lasted until shoes returned to the stores and the need for homemade shoes diminished. Tony's brother eventually emigrated to the United States; Tony shifted his energies to establishing himself as a self-employed artisan. Tony's ability to respond quickly and with ingenuity to changing economic circumstances is, Cubans boast, something of a national characteristic. *Resolver* is the operative verb, describing the combination of ingenuity, creativity and energy required to “resolve” or supply daily necessities such as meat, medicine, car parts, train tickets and children's shoes. What Tony and other *cuentapropistas* (not to mention black market wheelers and dealers) have learned, however, is how to make a substantial living by resolving other peoples needs, whether it be by supplying shoes or tourist knick-knacks.

Despite the obvious skill and business acumen that go into being a successful *cuentapropista*, Tony rejected my attempts to construct some general profile of the *cuentapropista*. “There's no defined type,” he insisted. “There are university graduates, professionals, workers, housewives, those who have never worked.... There are all kinds, all kinds.” Tony rejected the term “businessman” as descriptive of *cuentapropistas*, but rather described *cuentapropistas* either according to their past profession – teacher, doctor, engineer – or to their current status as, for example, artisan. Tony calls himself an artisan rather than a businessman in spite of the fact that he is constantly dreaming up future schemes involving self-employment in the private sector such as opening up a private health club. Thus, while displaying interest and enthusiasm for entrepreneurial ventures, Tony resists identifying such activities as part of his profession, and therefore as part of his self-image.

Indeed, the whole notion of a business transaction as legitimate work seems unformed for Tony. He carefully emphasizes the difference between *cuentapropistas* who produce their own merchandise and those who

Even if they do
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are solely vendors. Asked about a *cuentapropista's* essential qualities, Tony responded, "There are two types of *cuentapropistas*, you know. In the case of the artisan he should also be the one who produces what he sells, because there shouldn't be an intermediary. There is also the kind who only sells, who doesn't produce. But this type doesn't do anything, the only thing he does is sell and that's it. The two types are different."

TONY'S EMPHASIS ON PRODUCTION can be attributed to a variety of factors, the most obvious of which is that is illegal for *cuentapropistas* to sell products which are not their own. It is therefore clearly in Tony's legal interests to identify himself with the production side of *cuentapropia*. Beyond these more practical concerns, however, Tony's distinction becomes even more significant when one understands that in Spanish, Tony uses the verb "to work" rather than "to produce." A more literal translation of his statement would therefore be "In the case of the artisan he should also be the one *who works* what he sells... There is also the kind who only sells, *who doesn't work it*" (emphasis added). The vendor, then, is not "working" but is rather a parasitic figure exploiting the work of others. This resonates with the stereotype of the sinister and exploitative capitalist intermediary who makes a profit through the alienation of the worker from his product. In this sense the occupation of "artisan" is far more positive and even romantic than *cuentapropista* since it entails working with one's hands to produce something of beauty and utility. Clearly while Tony may engage daily in mercantile activities, socialist concepts of legitimate work remain significant for him and he seeks to distance himself from negative associations with capitalist work methods.

In fact Tony forcefully rejects the label of "capitalist," citing Cuban cultural idiosyncrasies such as sociability and spontaneity which, he argues, are incompatible with capitalist work habits and social relations. Other mar-

ket vendors also repeatedly emphasized these differences; capitalism signified materialistic, competitive, self-absorbed workaholics who had little time for family or friends. Indeed, Tony sees his relaxed attitude towards work and turning a profit as clear proof of his non-capitalist tendencies. I eventually got into the habit of dropping by Tony's house to confirm that he had indeed gone to work before I made the long walk to meet him at the marketplace. On the many occasions when I found him comfortably ensconced on the sofa watching television or playing with his young son, Tony would joke – perhaps ironically turning my own words back on me – "Maybe tomorrow I'll turn capitalist; today I'm staying home!"

Yet on several occasions, Tony referred to the formation of a *cuentapropista* "class," intriguing me with his open discussion of class formation. "Yes, I believe it's a class," said Tony. "Although it's not fully formed as it is, but it's a class that has money, that has power, that has things other people don't have." However, while the economic status and business practices of *trabajadores por cuentapropia* do indeed resemble a kind of vanguard of a petit bourgeoisie, the resemblance is far from complete. First, as Tony's emphasis on being an active producer demonstrates, a fundamental difference remains between the way legitimate "work" is conceived of by many *cuentapropistas* from a more capitalist conception, and this does not include purely financial business transactions. Second, *cuentapropistas* may enjoy increased economic status and consumer power, but they are indistinguishable in this sense from the growing number of black and gray marketers, as well as from those who receive remittances from family members abroad, who are able to maintain the same living standard as *cuentapropistas*. Tony commented, "[My daughter] Daniella is the only girl in her class whose parents are *cuentapropistas*, and yet every child in her class has brand new sneakers and back-packs. And not cheap sneakers – the kind you buy in

the (shopping center)." Income alone cannot define *cuentapropistas*. Furthermore, when questioned on the subject of professionalism and secondary education, the vendors almost universally agreed that their children would be better off pursuing post-secondary education and professional careers. *Cuentapropistas* are not, then, a social group that is likely to reproduce itself.

Even if they do not represent the frontlines of capitalism in Cuba, *cuentapropistas* are beginning to define a new kind of work culture on the island, characterized principally by a qualitatively different kind of relationship between the individual and the state. State regulation of *trabajo por cuentapropia* remains, of course, a strongly felt presence, from one's initial attempt to obtain a permit to the monthly licensing fees and frequent inspections. However, fundamental to *cuentapropismo* is the relative independence enjoyed by individuals from the official state system. It is both a source of pride and of bitterness as *cuentapropistas* reconcile themselves to a higher than average income, but little social security.

As Mariela, another market vendor, commented, "Before, the state provided you with the necessities of life. Now, the *trabajador por cuentapropia* can acquire things, and we control ourselves. The state doesn't interest us, because it doesn't do anything for us. We even have to pay to do our work. [The government] realizes that they are losing control of *trabajo por cuentapropia*. And so it seems to me that that's what the government fears, not that we have a capitalist mentality, but that we don't depend on the state for anything, nothing more than to pay our \$163 a month."

Emma Phillips ('00) spent a semester in Havana in 1998-99 and has since returned three times. She is writing her senior thesis in Social Anthropology on the effect of Cuba's economic transition on changing notions of personhood amongst self-employed workers.

Latin America at the Century's Turn

Putting Cuba 2000 in Regional Perspective

BY ABRAHAM F. LOWENTHAL

IT IS HARD TO BE UPBEAT ABOUT LATIN AMERICA at the present moment. Although only two or three years ago, many observers maintained that sustained economic development and stable democratic governance were within reach there, hopes for achieving these goals any time soon have been receding. A cautious, skeptical, even pessimistic mood has been growing in and about the region.

This discouraged mood about Latin America no doubt reflects the past year's bleak economic indicators. After achieving 5.2 percent expansion in 1997, the second highest rate of annual growth in 20 years, Latin America's economies had fallen to 2.3 percent growth in 1998 — only half a percent above the rate of population increase — but 1999 was considerably worse for most countries. Taken as a whole, Latin America and the Caribbean registered no growth for 1999, equivalent to a 1 percent reduction

in Gross Domestic Product per capita.

But even if Latin America does rebound, the region's overall economic performance is lackluster, as compared with the expectations aroused early in the 1990s. Despite the much-touted economic reforms in Latin America and the Caribbean during the decade just past, the average rate of annual economic growth for the region as a whole during the 1990s was less than 3 percent. That is about half what it was in the 1960s and 70s, and well below the 5-6 percent rate needed to reduce poverty. Although the share of Latin Americans who are officially regarded (according to United Nations statistics) as at poverty levels declined from 41 percent in 1990 to 36 percent in 1997, even that percentage is as high as it was in 1980. Some 200 million Latin Americans are still living in poverty.

Income distribution, long more unequal in Latin Amer-

Cuba in Regional Perspective

Cuba's situation at the century's turn is both remarkably similar to and profoundly different from that of the rest of Latin American and the Caribbean.

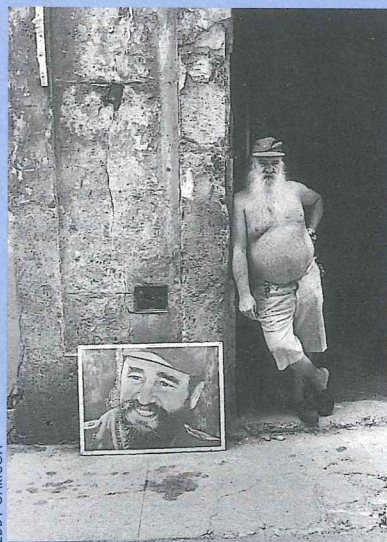
It is similar primarily because Cuba's economic performance in recent years has been so disappointing and because Cuba —after forty years of vigorously asserting its national autonomy and sovereignty — still remains so vulnerable to international factors and natural disasters. It is also similar because Cuba, coming from such a different background and direction, is struggling like the region's other countries to balance the requirements of capital, including foreign investment, with those of social programs and equity considerations. Throughout the Americas, including Cuba, countries are groping to fashion a way to use market instruments of capital accumulation and investment while being attentive to social problems and goals in ways that markets do not by themselves assure.

But while most Latin America and Caribbean nations face the challenges of equity, education, and governance as the hitherto insufficiently addressed agenda for the coming years, Cuba has done relatively well during the Fidel Castro period at confronting the challenges of education and equity. Cuba today has greater social and economic equality and a better-educated population than most other countries of the region.

Cuba's critical challenge for the early 21st century is the issue of governance. Whatever his flaws and merits, Fidel Castro is certainly an authoritarian ruler whose prolonged reign has stifled political and social institutions, repressed political and civil rights, undermined the rule of laws and weakened accountability to any standard but his own approval. More than most countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, Cuba faces the need to construct viable political institutions.

An interesting question for the early 21st century is whether Cuba will continue to be an exception to the general trend of Caribbean Basin nations to become ever more integrated — economically, socially, demographically, culturally, and politically — with the United States. My own guess, for what it is worth, is that Cuba after Castro will return to a close association with the United States. I expect, or at least I hope, to attend major league baseball games in Havana before too long.

—ABRAHAM F. LOWENTHAL



Other faces of Cuba

ica than in any other world region, has become even more skewed. 10 percent of Latin America's population receive 40 percent of income; the poorest 30 percent receive but 7.5 percent. The gap has grown between the fast caste — with their cellular phones, Internet connections, walled homes, and private security guards — and those mired in deprivation.

Although popularly-elected presidents rule in every Latin American country except Cuba, Ecuador, and Paraguay, effective democratic governance is unambiguously strong only in Costa Rica and Uruguay — where it was well established forty years ago. Personal insecurity, pervasive corruption and endemic impunity are grim realities in much of the region.

Latin America's immense challenges were often downplayed in the glow of satisfaction about the region's turns toward economic reform and democracy. The U.S. government, in both Republican and Democratic administrations, talked of "the world's first democratic hemisphere" (except for Fidel Castro's Cuba, as Washington always emphasizes). Other observers trumpeted the supposed regional wave of democratization that would arguably create a more uniform and congenial hemispheric environment.

These flattering portrayals of Latin America oversold what was actually happening in the region, however, by glossing over major difficulties and differences.

There is today an opposite danger, that Latin America's immediate problems may be exacerbated by broad-brush negative assessments. Latin America's bad press could accelerate a withdrawal of international capital or make it prohibitively expensive, thus reinforcing financial instability. Financial turbulence, in turn, could drive parts of Latin America into depression, with negative consequences not only for Latin Americans but for the United States. Self-fulfilling prophecies of declining economies and growing instability could occur.

THE DISCONCERTING GAP BETWEEN YESTERDAY'S ROSY projections and today's gloomy appraisals of Latin America in general derives primarily from four sources: exaggerating the pace of economic reform and democratization; underestimating the impact of exogenous pressures that have thrown Latin America off track; insufficiently disaggregating a vast region with internal distinctions as great as those within Europe and Asia; and inadequately recognizing the central roles of equity, education, and governance in shaping Latin America's present and future.

Latin America's moves toward free market economics and integration into the world economy were indeed important paradigm shifts, but they were not panaceas. After two generations of import-substitution industrialization and an ever larger state role in economic production — in many ways quite successful in promoting the region's growth until the late 1970s — most Latin American economic policy-makers came to share the view by the middle to late 1980s that to grow further Latin America would need to prune the state's economic activities,

privatize production and distribution, attract foreign investment, emphasize exports, and open itself to international competition. These were major conceptual changes, with considerable practical implications, but they could not and did not all have immediate positive impact.

Governments find it nearly impossible to sustain popular backing for programs that may only slowly strengthen the aggregate economy, and that seem at first to enrich only a privileged few, without providing a credible promise of broad prosperity. Millions of Latin Americans who thought they had entered the middle class have found their real incomes ground down by recession and austerity measures, thus eroding support for reform programs. Strong social safety nets and improved public services might make the first-generation structural reforms more broadly palatable, yet these are hard to achieve because the reforms themselves and years of low growth and fiscal crisis, cut back the state's capacity to deliver social services. Measures to restore fiscal balance in the late 1980s and early 1990s required cuts in social programs that are only now being rebuilt.

What its critics call "savage capitalism" is under attack in many countries throughout Latin America, but no broad agreement has been reached on an alternative policy framework. A full-court reversion to statist approaches, demagogic populism, and fiscal irresponsibility is unlikely, but so is unrelieved application of neo-liberal orthodoxy. Instead new approaches are beginning to emerge, rooted in market economics but including a stronger state role in improving and extending education, public health, and social services — and in alleviating poverty and reducing inequality.

It remains to be seen, however, whether detailed and coherent "third way" programs that foster economic expansion together with improved equity can actually be designed and successfully implemented, and where the resources will come from to undertake what is promised. Populist appeals and programs may yet emerge, probably with negative consequences for both foreign and domestic investment.

Because of major differences among the region's countries, business and public policy decisions must be much more specifically calibrated than the usual type of generalization. The nations of Latin America and the Caribbean always have varied a lot, and this divergence has been increasing, not narrowing, along three important dimensions: the degree of economic and demographic interdependence with the United States, the extent to which countries have committed themselves to international economic competition, and the strength of the state, especially in relation to organized crime and guerrilla violence.

The long-existing differences between the Caribbean Basin region on the one hand and South America on the other have been very strongly reinforced in recent years. The Caribbean Basin Initiative of the Reagan Administration and then the ongoing "silent integration" between Mexico and the United States spurred by NAFTA have been partly responsible for this reinforced bifurcation. However, these measures are more consequences than causes.

What its critics call "savage capitalism" is under attack in many countries throughout Latin America, but no broad agreement has been reached on an alternative policy framework.

es of an ongoing, long-term process of functional integration – economic, demographic, social, cultural, and to some extent even political – between the United States and its nearest neighbors.

The functional integration of the Caribbean and Central American nations with the United States is less widely noted than that of Mexico, but equally dramatic. U.S. exports to the Caribbean Basin Initiative countries rose by more than 200 percent from 1983 to 1997, reaching \$19 billion, almost \$6 billion more than exports to China. That figure is also higher than U.S. exports to Argentina, Russia, or all of Eastern Europe – and this is all before NAFTA parity legislation, which would significantly further expand Caribbean Basin trade.

The demographic reality of Caribbean Basin interdependence is also striking. It is well known that some 10 percent of Cuba's population has come to the United States since Fidel Castro took over, but immigration from the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Jamaica account for 12, 14, and 15 percent of those countries' populations, respectively. Los Angeles has become as linked to Central America as is Miami, in many ways the capital of the whole Caribbean Basin region. Central American and Caribbean immigrants in the United States provide the largest source of foreign exchange to their home countries through remittances, but they also bring home crime and gang warfare. Politics and culture between the home countries and the U.S. mainland are increasingly intertwined.

DESPITE LATIN AMERICA'S VAST DIVERSITY, THE REGION as a whole faces broadly shared challenges and dilemmas.

First is the central problem of equity – the vast imbalances of wealth, income and power that have long characterized most of Latin America and the Caribbean, and that at least for the time being have been exacerbated, not alleviated, by the market reforms of the 1990s. The divisions in Latin America have widened, although it has become unfashionable to talk about class struggle. Even if the most optimistic international agency projections about Latin America's growth in the next decade turn out to be correct, income distribution may worsen. Unaddressed, that polarization could spell eventual social and political dynamite, especially where resentment about gross inequalities is heightened by rampant corruption, crime, personal insecurity, and evident impunity. Programs to alleviate extreme poverty, improve tax collection, facilitate credit for micro-enterprises, and provide broader access to social services are all crucial for Latin America's future.

Second, closely linked with the problem of equity, is achieving improved accountability and the more consistently implemented rule of law. Neither political democracy nor market capitalism can develop well without independent judiciaries, civil control of the armed forces and police, broad access to information, autonomous and effective regulatory agencies, and other institutional constraints on power. More than economic policies, investment, and physical infrastructure, the "software" of effective governance is key.



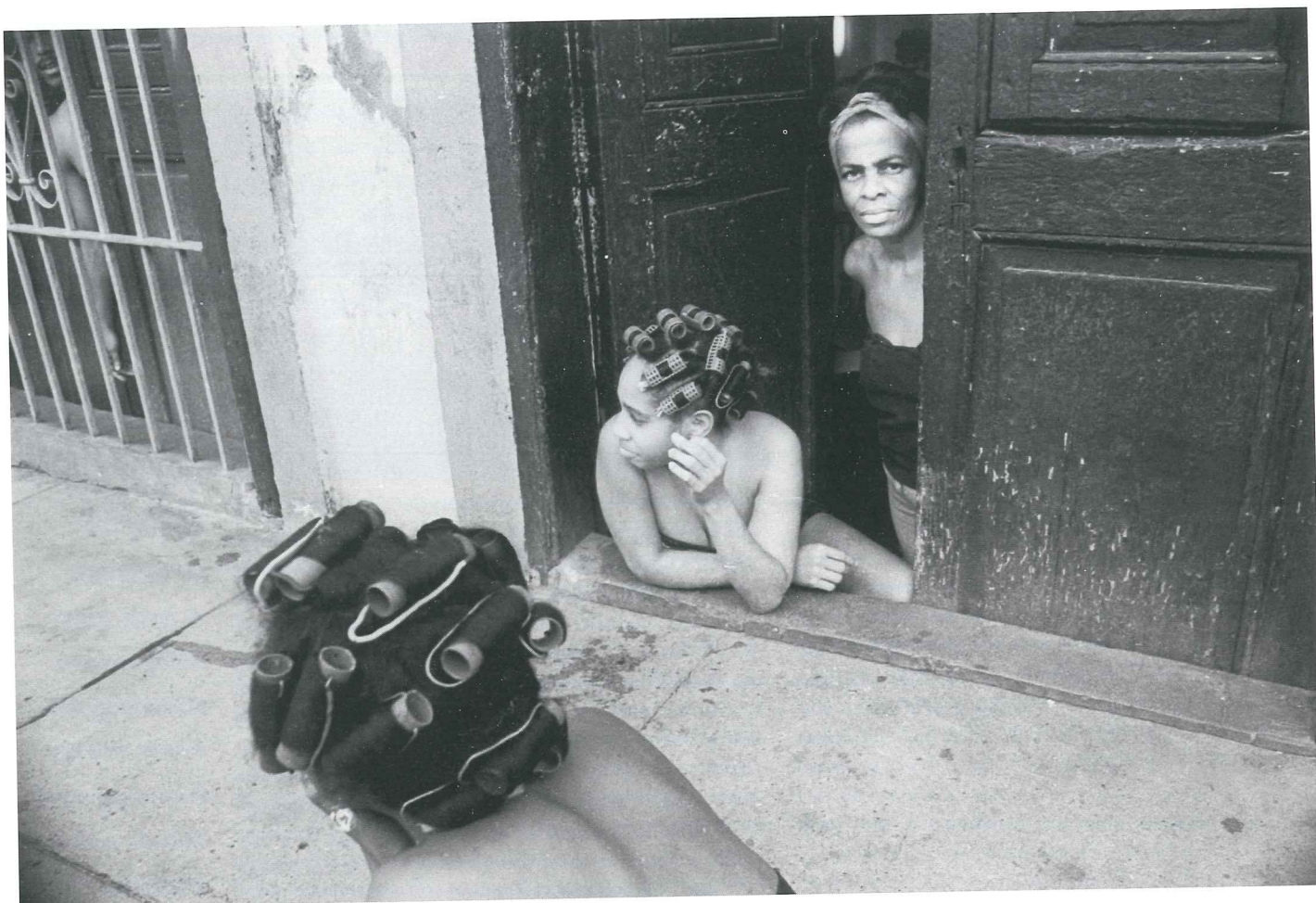
LEE COIT

Havana scenes

Third, there is a growing consensus in Latin America that expanded political participation, stronger growth, and improved equity all depend on major improvements in education. Substantially increased and well-targeted investments are needed to assure that the changing technologies of the world economy do not leave further and further behind an underclass of the uneducated. It is crucial to improve basic education; upgrade teaching and standards; make secondary education more widely available, especially for girls; train and retrain workers for a more technological economy; and redirect resources from upper-class entitlement programs to those with broad benefits.

The region also faces thorny trade offs. It is not easy to balance the gains from interdependence with the costs to autonomy and sovereignty. It is hard to reconcile the advantages of global economic and political integration and the risks of vulnerability. The requirements of capital accumulation (and investment) and those of equity sometimes conflict. So do the imperatives of political and economic liberalization, for the demands of economic elites and the claims of an impatient populace are contradictory, at least in the short and medium term. It will take superb political craftsmanship to build and maintain the coalitions necessary to manage all these tensions successfully, and that skill remains in short supply everywhere.

Abraham F. Lowenthal is the founding president of the Pacific Council on International Policy, an independent and nonpartisan international leadership forum, headquartered at the University of Southern California (USC) in Los Angeles. A professor of international relations at USC and also a vice president of the Council on Foreign Relations (New York), Lowenthal was the founding director of the Inter-American Dialogue, the premier think tank on Western Hemisphere issues, and before that of the Latin American Program at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington. He prepared this essay as a Visiting Scholar at the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard.



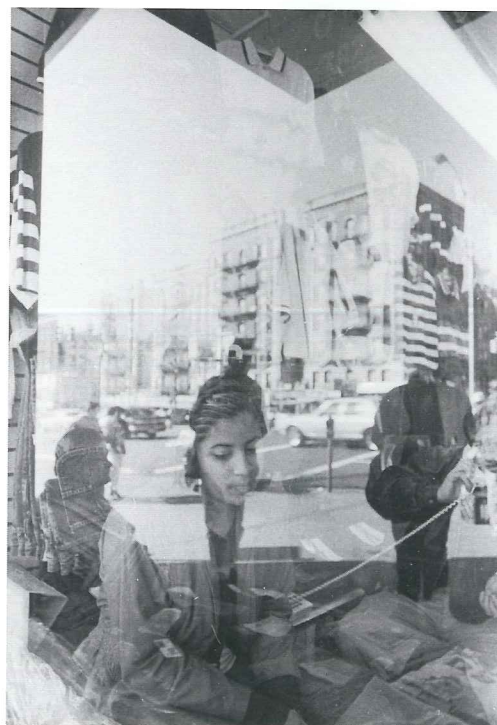
Cuban Women

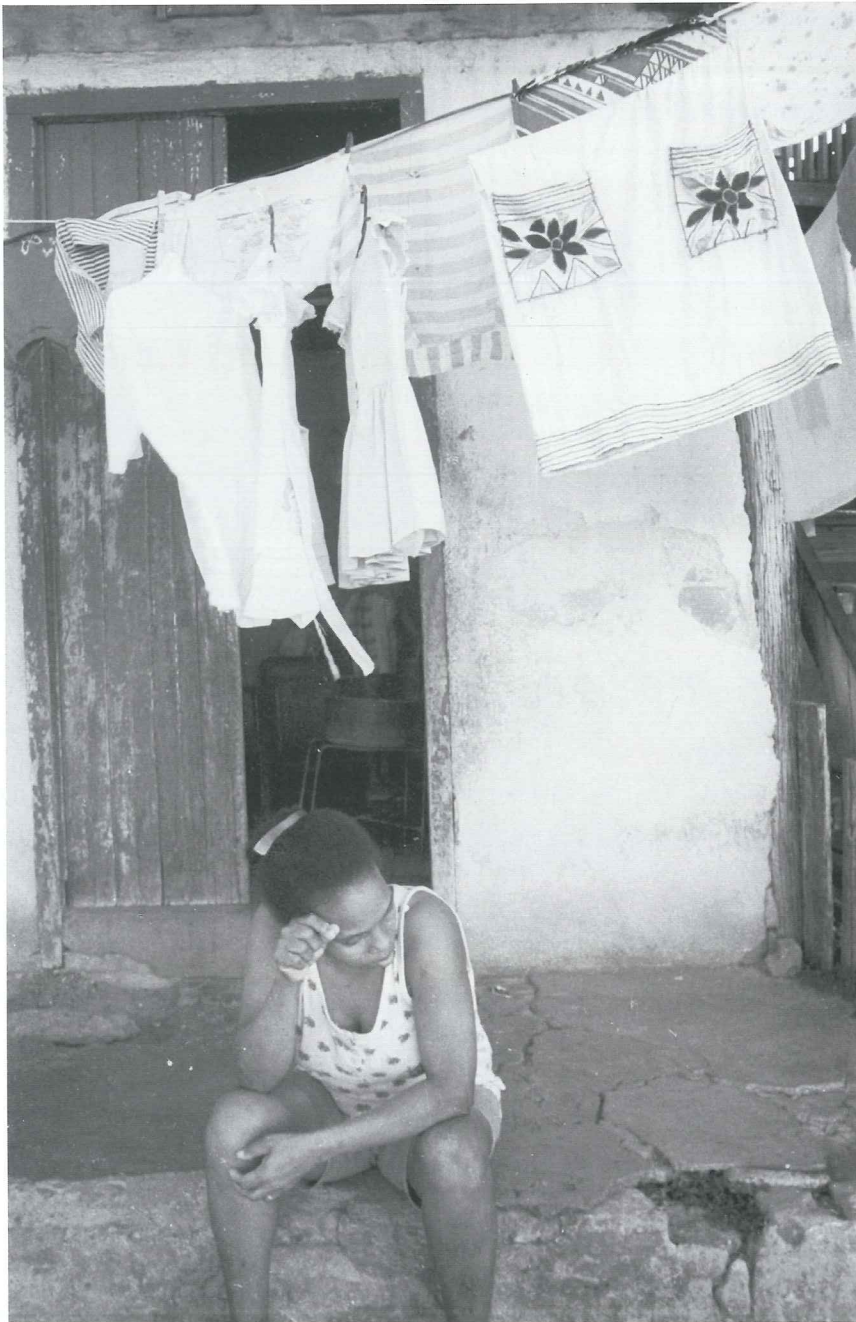
Photoessay

PHOTOS AND TEXT BY LISSETTE SOLÓRZANO

IN THE DAY-TO-DAY STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL DURING THIS "SPECIAL PERIOD," Cuban women have endured the most difficulties. They have also worked with boundless creativity. Cuban women are the backbone of the family, and often the glue that holds together the sometimes fragile social environment. I took these photographs of Cuban women, young and old, workers and professionals, to reflect their testimonies for future generations. I hope through the lens of my camera to freeze these images in time, to transmit all the possible images in their full eloquence to create a historic frame of reference. The click of the camera, the instantaneous capturing of these moments in black-and-white, are my form of seizing these moments of a special present through these portraits of Cuban women. I feel the need to immerse myself in this Cuban sea of humanity so I can capture the essence of these women's existence—and my own. That is my utopia.

Lisette Solórzano, a member of the Cuban Writers and Artists Union (UNEAC), is both a photographer and a graphic designer. Born in Santiago de Cuba in 1969, she won the Casa de las Américas Photographic Essay Prize in both 1994 and 1996. Her work has been exhibited in Havana, Mexico, Caracas, and Milan, as well as in the United States.





The Summer School for Cuban Teachers

A Harvard Centennial

BY LUISA CAMPUZANO

AHUNDRED YEARS AGO, 1,300 Cuban teachers traveled to Harvard to get the training they needed to cope with the new American-style educational system imposed on Cuba by the interventionist U.S. government. They were women—and a smattering of men—of all ages. Harvard President Charles William Eliot called the visit “a unique occurrence in the history of education.”

Last fall I had the opportunity to research documents about the trip at Harvard's Pusey Library. With a fellowship from the University of Houston's Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage Project and the hospitality of my friend Doris Sommer, a Harvard Romance Languages and Literatures professor, who generously offered me her home.

I came across an almost forgotten book, *La escuela de verano para los maestros cubanos*. (Edward W. Wheeler, Cambridge Press, 1900). I believe this book reflects more eloquently than well-known canonical documents the fears, tensions and uncertainties of the times when the island's rulers were proving unable to define its future.

The book was planned by a group of 18 teachers, two of them women, and finished and hurriedly published in Cambridge, Mass. that same summer. The book was rushed into print in a few days because one of their group was proposing to publish his own text independently. All of this is related in a “Warning” in which the teachers request tolerance for possible errors in “this sketchy account.” The little book, hardly more than a hundred pages long, is largely made up of factual listings of projects, study plans, schedules and

even guides of the U.S. and Boston, as well as words by their North American hosts. However, underlying this apparent neutrality, the book also offers direct evidence, however timidly phrased, of the experiences—more collective than personal—of the Cuban teachers who participated in this unprecedented enterprise. Even more surprisingly, it clearly states their ideas about the future status of Cuba.

The journey was also intended to allow the teachers to get to know their hosts, and, above all, to make sure that the host country would become informed about its guests. U.S. interest in the Cuban visitors is conspicuous in extensive press coverage of their stay, not only in Cambridge and Boston newspapers, but in many other East Coast publications. This strange condition of “visited visitors” is evident in passages

like the one titled “Photographs of Cubans”:

Whoever can count the stars in the sky can estimate the number of photographs that circulate, found in every store, passed from hand to hand, that illustrate newspaper and magazine articles and every notice that is published [...] Finally, in each and every one of the places visited by the Cubans, there is an active and practical industry that focuses on them and prints their images....

Photographs ... taken in Cuba before we left have been reproduced here, in all sizes and in all forms, and they have been made into pictures to decorate large rooms [and] into posters to send to other countries [...] (45-46)

But when it came to getting better acquainted with their hosts, the teachers expressed their familiarity with the images and topics about the United

Program of Scientific and Scholarly Collaboration between Harvard University and Cuba

Through a two-year grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, DRCLAS has begun a systematic program of exchange with Cuba. The program seeks to assist Cuban scholars and scientists to advance their research and develop professional contacts. It also works to strengthen institutional ties of cooperation and exchange between Harvard and Cuban academic, scientific and research institutions through exchanges of faculty and researchers. Jointly organized workshops and conferences, as well as the development of academic contacts in Cuba by Harvard faculty and students, are other key aspects of the program.

Many of the Cuban visitors to Harvard have come as part of exchanges with key Cuban research institutions, including the Juan Marinello Center for Research and Development of Cuban Culture; the Cienfuegos Botanical Garden; the Pedro Kouri Institute of Tropical Medicine; as well as with a number of the social science research centers at the University of Havana.



A group of Cuban teachers with Superintendent Fry in 1900

COURTESY OF AMERICAS MAGAZINE, OAS

States described in earlier Cuban travel accounts. Their new experiences reinforced these impressions, but also caused them to be reformulated. For example, the case of "the North American woman" with her habits and independence had evoked contradictory opinions in other travelers. However, the Cuban teachers unanimously considered these role models as positive. Thus the sight of men and women bathing together on the beach, which "startled the Cuban visitors, causing the cheeks of our ladies to flush in modest astonishment," came to be considered a "natural" act (37-38); Cuban women teachers took up riding bicycles, peddling them with a flourish through the streets and byways. They were eager to teach the North Americans how to dance "danzones, habaneras, the zapateo, tropical waltzes and other steps" (39); and they were also enthusiastic about establishing women's clubs in their future republic.

There are many other details that flesh out the portrait of Cuban emigrants described by other chroniclers,

Hispanic American 19th century writers who have described the consumer-eagerness of travelers, similar to that of contemporary Cubans who travel to the United States. According to these descriptions, the day after "expedition members" received their salary payments, they caused a crisis in the Cambridge post office. Only one clerk was on duty to handle money orders, when "almost every one of the teach-

ers went there to send money to their families." After lunch, they caused crunches in local stores where they rushed "to stock up on those items they found indispensable." (98-99) Similarly, the authors stress that customs such as baseball adopted from North Americans had taken hold in Cuba way before their trip. Cubans enjoyed baseball and other North American customs "as actors and as

Public Health in Cuba A Field Study

A Harvard School of Public Health will conduct an interactive public health field study course to Cuba this spring. Fifteen HSPH students will visit to Cuban agencies and departments addressing public health issues, including the Pedro Kouri Institute, the Ministry of Public Health, the AIDS Sanatorium, the Ministry of Science, Technology, and the Environment, and the University of Havana.

Visits will also include a local clinic, meetings with community doctors, and tertiary care hospitals. Topics are expected to include use of natural and alternative medicines, development and provisions of vaccines, the impact of the embargo on health delivery systems, and training of other Latin American health care workers to address humanitarian needs.

spectators" (39). These imports, which affected the construction of Cuban popular culture, have been analyzed recently by scholars such as Roberto González Echevarría's *The Pride of Havana: A History of Cuban Baseball* (Oxford University Press, 1999).

In addition to the abundance of details relating to the journey's explicit goal, as evidenced in the number of pages intended to certify with "official documents"—as we just mentioned—that they dedicated all their time to serious study, the book also provides evidence that for its authors, the journey also had a more important basic goal. They wanted to reinforce the importance of independence for Cuba and to publicize the need for that independence.

With that goal in mind, the teachers reproduced official statements by the trip's organizers, like Mr. Alexander Everett Frye, who concluded a speech by assuring them that "All Cubans want independence for Cuba, and I have reason to believe that they will soon have it", (52) and the Mayor of Cambridge who "stated in an almost official way that Cuba would very soon be independent," (96) or President Eliot of Harvard who urged the formation of women's clubs similar to those in the United States in those parts of Cuba where they were appropriate, since they would contribute to prepare Cuban women "for civil life in a soon to be established era." (57)

These statements contrasted with the fact that the pages taken from the guide to the United States described the country as including "various groups of islands, the most important of these being the Philippines, Hawaii and Puerto Rico." (67) The teacher-chroniclers text exclaims near the beginning of the book, "May God grant that Cuba may soon be elevated to the status of sovereign nation." (18) The last chapter concludes emphatically, "Long live the Cuban Republic!" (100)

Both formulations of the future independence of Cuba seem to find their most eloquent expression in the paragraphs of *La escuela de verano para los maestros cubanos* that I transcribe

below, and in the words of a Harvard professor recalled in a chapter of *Fundación del sistema de escuelas públicas de Cuba: 1900-1901* (Havana, 1954) by the most famous of those Cuban teachers, Ramiro Guerra.

With these words, I conclude this

The teachers wanted to reinforce the importance of independence for Cuba and to publicize the need for that independence.

anticipation of a commemoration and—surely—a related debate, which I am confident will contribute to a better understanding of the complex relations between Cuba and the United States.

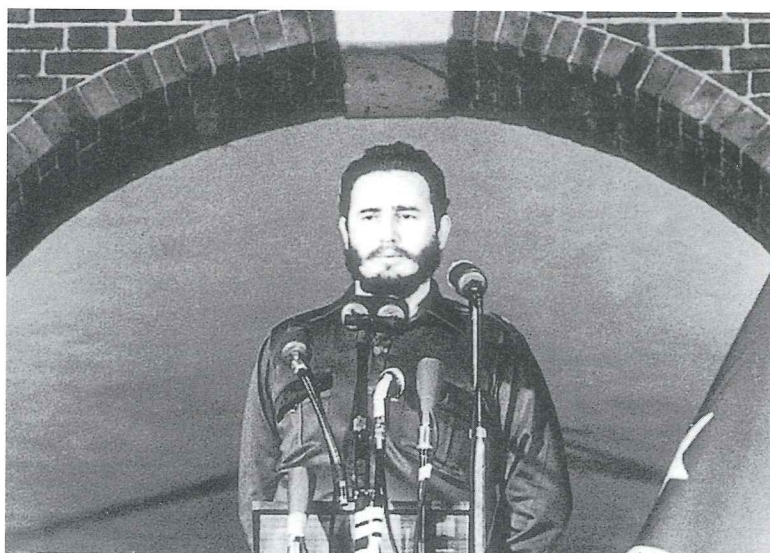
"When we arrived in Cambridge and went to our assigned housing, our delegation encountered something that so moved and electrified us, that we were unable to contain our feelings of joy and gratitude: there was our beautiful and beloved tri-colored flag. What we felt will be understood by anyone who has been in an analogous situation; it will be understood

by our valiant brothers, the liberators, when they recall the moment when, wandering through the fields of Cuba, they came across a camp with that flag.

"Day after day, during the school sessions, the flag has remained in place. It was also been hung in many stores and homes.... More than 3000 little Cuban flags were distributed among public school children gathering at the Boston Common to celebrate the Fourth of July...who waved their flags with enthusiasm for the Cuban teachers visiting Harvard." (8-9)

Ramiro Guerra recounts the equally passionate words of a Harvard professor specializing in the history of the Spanish colonies. He told the teachers, "You, men and women teachers of Cuba, can admire the greatness of this country, endowed with liberty and democracy; but you should not allow yourselves to be dazzled by this because each nation (*pueblo*) conscious of its obligations and rights should be able to construct its own destiny."

Luisa Campuzano, a professor at the University of Havana, directs the Women's Studies Program at the Casa de las Américas and the Revolución y Cultura magazine. Campuzano is writing a book on Cuban travelers to the United States in the 19th century. She also lectured to Harvard students in the "Havana in Literature" Cuban Study Tour last month and led them on a walking tour of Havana.



Fidel Castro speaking at Harvard, 1959, during a visit to the United States

Havana in Literature

A Student Study Tour

BY ESTHER WHITFIELD

**This year's Casa
de las Américas
jury includes
Luisa Valenzuela
(Argentina),
Ana Lydia Vega
(Puerto Rico) and
Raphael Confiant
(Martinique).**

WHILE MOST HARVARD STUDENTS ARE BRACING themselves for more Boston frosts this January intercession, 15 students and three faculty members will have found themselves in much warmer climes, exploring Havana by foot; on a break of sorts, but one involving large amounts of energy, application and initiative. As part of the first DRCLAS-sponsored "Havana in Literature" course Luisa Campuzano, a professor at the University of Havana, and the Cuban poet Reina María Rodríguez offered to guide them through the past two centuries of poetry and narrative as these intertwine with Havana's streets and historical events. Such a course would not be complete without the walking tours led by Campuzano, an enthusiastic expert on Havana's urban landscape; or an invitation to Reina María's rooftop in Old Havana, where young writers and poets gather in the evenings to read their work.

The Cuba Study Tour is hosted by Casa de las Américas, Cuba's principal cultural institution founded by Haydee Santamaría in 1959 and ever since then - albeit with varying degrees of international support - a beacon for literature, art and culture throughout Latin America. The tour was planned to coincide with this year's Casa de las Américas awards for Latin American literature, which have been in place since Casa's inception and for which writers and critics from around the continent congregate annually.

The idea for a "winter institute" was conceived of by Doris Sommer, a professor in Harvard's Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, together with Luisa Campuzano and Jorge Fornet, of Casa de las Américas, during a DRCLAS-sponsored conference on US-Cuban cultural relations held in Havana in January 1999 with the support of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. Sommer was keen then that the deepening relations between Harvard and Cuba should involve undergraduates and be an intellectual exchange rather than a one-sided learning process. With this in mind, the study tour program included open lectures by Doris Sommer and two other Romance Languages faculty members, Brad Epps and José Antonio Mazzotti; on "rhetorics of particularism," Cuba and Catalonia, and postcolonial theory and colonial studies in Latin America, respectively. The diffusion in Cuba of recent research from the United States has been restricted by many factors, material as much as political, and this tour aimed to take a small step towards rectifying this.

The study tour comes at an interesting moment in broader US-Cuban cultural relations: the US Treasury Department has recently created an "institutional license" which facilitates educational travel to Cuba for affiliates of

US universities, to which Cuban cultural institutions have responded by hosting increasing numbers of international conferences and workshops - a way of stimulating contact with the outside, as well as their financial revenues.

Thirteen undergraduates and two students from Harvard Law School were selected for the DRCLAS study tour, each proficient in Spanish and with a strong interest in contemporary Cuba. They are from different backgrounds and were motivated to visit Cuba for many academic and personal reasons.

Annie Lord, a junior in History and Literature of Latin America, wanted to see her mother's birthplace for the first time, and make her own judgments. She says, "Living in Miami, I was literally smothered in messages from, opinions about, and representations of Cuba. My mother's homeland was practically in my backyard, and yet I had no personal experiences of my own at the source. It is an incredibly frustrating experience being a Cuban-American, having almost no opportunities to visit the island. I am very fortunate to be part of this tour."

Wells Wulsin '01 sees the tour as a broadening of horizons from his concentration in Physics and Philosophy, and an interesting sequel to his experience as a "Let's Go" researcher in Nicaragua last summer. He comments, "Cuba has an exciting, vibrant culture, but it remains shrouded in mystery to Americans like me who wouldn't normally be able to visit. I am interested in learning about how Castro's revolution and the U.S. trade embargo have affected everyday people's lives, so when I heard about the opportunity to travel and study in Cuba, I couldn't pass it up." The students paid their own tuition and travel expenses.

For each student this was a welcome and timely opportunity to learn alongside Cubans at an important moment in their history and that of the Cuban Revolution; it is an experience which the students anticipated with excitement, although not without some apprehension. Just how many and varied the experiences to come out of this first DRCLAS study tour to Cuba remains to be seen; watch for a report in the Updates section next edition of this Newsletter!

Esther Whitfield, a graduate student in Romance Languages and Literatures at Harvard, is coordinating the Havana in Literature Cuba Study Tour. She spent a semester in Santiago de Cuba as an undergraduate in 1992 and has returned to Cuba several times since. She is writing her dissertation on language and economics in contemporary Cuban narrative published in Cuba, Spain and the United States.



Havana Always

Preserving the Soul of a City

BY MARIO COYULA

HAVANA HAS ENDURED MANY difficult tests in its long history, some apparently terminal, and yet it has emerged bruised but graceful. Because, in the end, the imposition of time layer after time layer on this waterfront city has woven a thick mesh of relations and meanings. These transcend the city's facades to include the people that mill along the streets without ever needing to look up to know that their lifelong companion of dreams remains stubbornly in place. Havana is peeling, decayed, eroded by salt and water, marvelous and incredibly alive, still useful. A city that no longer is, but continues being.

The Group for the Integral Development of Havana, which I direct, seeks to put people back into planning, to give a voice to the soul of these city streets. The Group, created in 1987, is an interdisciplinary team of experts advising the city government on urban policies. The Group tries to create awareness in authorities, state agencies, and the general population about the threats and challenges to the city's architecture, as well as to identify the strengths and opportunities that it may offer for its own preservation and development.

We are trying to look at architec-

ture in a different way, to make the environment we build more decentralized and participatory, ecologically sound and economically feasible—in short, holistically sustainable.

Havana has much to work with. More than 200 years ago, Havana was already the most important and attractive city in the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Basin. The tropical city opens onto some 20 miles of coastline. The Bay, stretching for more than two miles, has a narrow neck and then opens wide like a bag, protected from hurricanes and pirates over the centuries. The port became the final meeting point of Spanish ships already filled with riches from the Americas, and supplied food, ropes, sails, wood, hides, honey, rum, and first-rate ship repair. The city developed an impressive defensive system that could seem oversized for the city alone, but needed to protect the goods and ships inside.

The old core grew over the years and now combines many different architectural styles ranging from colonial architecture to fine Art Nouveau buildings. In 1982, the old walled precinct was designated as a World Heritage site by UNESCO. Before the 1959 Revolution, much of the upper class was moving out of the

inner city, allowing housing stock to deteriorate, but at the same time building some high-rise condominiums along the waterfront. After 1959, Cuba's national development priority shifted from Havana to rural areas and medium-sized cities. That policy stopped a flow of internal migration to the capital city—a recurrent curse in most Latin American countries. The inner city was spared from traumatic urban renewal programs, as well as from a gentrification process.

One of the proposed renewal programs involved a 1956-1958 master plan by a Harvard team led by José Luís Sert. The plan would have lined the waterfront promenade with a continuous wall of high rises, blocking the views and the sea breeze that cools and cleans the air. The plan involved an artificially rectangular island in front of the waterfront promenade known as the Malecón, to be built up with casinos and hotels, while much of the compact city center was slated to be converted into parking space. Havana was spared from Sert's plan, but also from ourselves. In the early 60s, most Cuban architects and the few self-taught planners would have done just the same thing, creating new housing tracts of endless walk-up blocks stretching into a shapeless

Plaza Vieja:
Before and after



Havana scenes: The sign says, "Long Live the Revolutionary Defense Committees"

landscape.

Deterioration of the inner city, a process begun in the late 1800s, now needs to be faced head on in a thoughtful, systematic, and participatory way. Recent investments by Cuban-foreign joint ventures pose a new problem, with some banal, disruptive new buildings that neither fit the city's valuable urban context nor incorporate good contemporary architecture. Even if these "bad examples" are still quite limited, there are undoubtedly more to come of the

same sort, threatening Havana's uniqueness. The worst part is that some Cubans seem to view this type of architecture as a sign of economic recovery.

The eyesore colors of our own tropical version of McDonald's mock the venerable Neo-Classical or Eclectic architecture among the main streets of the city. We must be aware of the danger of losing national and local cultural identity by importing banal international architecture. Havana runs the danger of becoming a fake stage for a theme park if development is not combined with comprehensive social development and ecological viability. Top decision-makers now realize that architecture must return to the realm of Cuban contemporary culture.

We are experimenting with several types of involvement. First of all, we've created Neighborhood Transformation Workshops for the improvement of living conditions in historically dilapidated districts. Big metropolitan problems will be broken down into smaller ones that would be easier to identify and manage. Three initial workshops in 1988 escalated to 19 by mid-1999. These workshops deal with the rehabilitation of substandard housing, health and environmental campaigns, cultural expressions, assessments of needs, and leadership training. The workshops have proved to be an invaluable tool for the Neighborhood

Popular Councils created in 1990 in Havana.

In turn, these Popular Councils, along with mass organizations and municipalities, have become involved in a flexible and participatory process accompanying the 1994 Master Plan for Havana. The creation of a technical center and coordinating office for the Economic and Social Development Strategy of Havana has involved more than 240 groups to set strategic goals and scenarios for the city. The city government uses the Strategic Plan as a practical tool to coordinate actions among different city agencies.

A large scale model of the city has been constructed on a scale of 1 to 1000, marking the different dates of construction of Havana buildings through the use of color. The model provides Cubans and foreign visitors with a sense of the city's architectural rich architectural history, and admission fee helps enable the Group to cover part of its expenses. We use the model to test the impact of relevant projects, creating in effect case studies that promote good architecture, match development with preservation, and encourage participation by the local population.

Mario Coyula is the director of the Group for the Integrated Development of Havana. He is former director of the School of Architecture of Havana and the first president of Havana's Landmarks Commission. He is a frequent speaker at Harvard's Graduate School of Design and the Kennedy School of Government, as well as the Lincoln Institute of Land Policies at MIT. He spoke on "Havana by the Water: Revitalization of Ports, Coastlines, and Riverfronts" at the October 7-9, 1999, Harvard Graduate School of Design conference on Waterfronts in Post-Industrial Cities, and delivered a paper on Cuba-U.S. architectural influences at a conference co-sponsored by the Centro Juan Marienello and the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies last January in Havana.

International Meeting

The Group for the Integral Development of Havana City, the National Housing Institute and the Cuban Union of Architects & Engineers are organizing an international meeting: "Toward a Sustainable Habitat: Challenges of the New Millennium" May 22-24, 2000, in Havana City. They invite professionals who work in urban fields to talk about international experiences in habitat issues, sharing and learning from successes and failures. The meeting also intends to find possible alternatives to face the future. There will also be round tables which will aimed at debates on concepts, methods, and exchange of practical experience on: the environment, building heritage, community development and local economy. Spanish is the official language but English may be included according to group demands. Papers on the topics of the event are encouraged. The most outstanding papers will be selected to make up panels for the round tables that will serve as a motivation for debates. Deadline for papers: April 15. Registration fee is US\$150. Contact: Grupo para el Desarrollo Integral de la Capital Calle 28 No. 113 e/lra y 3ra, Miramar, Playa, Ciudad de La Habana, phone: (537)227303 or (537)227322, fax: (537)242661, e-mail: <gdic@cenai.inf.cu>.

Housing, Historic Preservation, and Community

A Design Workshop

BY LEE COTT

BACK IN 1977, MASSACHUSETTS Lt. Governor Thomas P. O'Neill III and a group of business people, including myself, went to Cuba to explore the possibility of future business there, which seemed imminent at the time. As a 1966-68 Peace Corps volunteer in rural Colombia, I was the only American fluent (or relatively fluent) in Spanish. That gave me a certain advantage, for when our group met one evening with Fidel Castro, I ended up chatting with him one-on-one about animal husbandry, cigars, and architecture.

After a while, El Comandante—unable to contain his curiosity—put

his hand on my shoulder and asked me, "Where did you learn your Spanish?" I told him, and he chuckled, explaining, "You speak like a peasant." He had set the tone, so I put my hand on his shoulder, "Do you mind if I ask you where I can get those Cohiba cigars everyone was talking about?" He gave me one out of his own pocket! We kept chatting for a while and after learning I was an architect, he suggested that I might like to return to Cuba to help out with Havana's reconstruction.

Two days later, a plainclothesman showed up with a box of Cohibas with Fidel Castro's personal calling card taped to its lid. In the light of this unusual person-to-person encounter, perhaps it's fitting that my

current design studio project at the Harvard Graduate School of Design involves Cuba, with a heavy dose of person-to-person contact with Cuban architects and community leaders.

The design studio project, entitled *Housing, Historic Preservation, and Community Development*, is exploring design strategies for combining the preservation of existing urban fabric and architecture in Havana with the need for an expanded supply of well-designed housing. Havana as a whole is crumbling; its infrastructure is nearly dysfunctional, and its very fabric is in an advanced state of decay. As one could imagine, a drastic shortage of housing exists throughout the city. Small apartment buildings, original-

A street in Havana



LEE COTT

ly constructed to house four families, are now home to as many as 20.

With support from DRCLAS, I spent five days in Havana last June with Mario Coyula, director of the Center for the Integral Development of Havana, the group with which we will be most closely working on the studio project. At Mario's suggestion, we agreed upon the studio site as La Fragua Martiana, an important area of transition between central Havana and the district known as Vedado. This district begins at a large waterfront park on the Malecón promenade and extends to the interior blocks around the University of Havana. It includes elegant, fairly well kept up buildings and those that are crumbling, overused space and vacant lots. Throughout is a rich mixture of Caribbean architectural styles along with some fine examples of modern design. As in all of Havana, there is a need for good, low-rise, high-density housing, as well as the challenge of how to efficiently design underutilized lots and preserve crumbling interiors.

During this past month, the studio has intensively studied Cuba and its history, as well as its architectural, planning, and urban design heritage. We researched the 1955 unexecuted Pilot Plan for Havana by Harvard Graduate School of Design former Dean José Luís Sert and the current preservation plan for the same district. We examined the new challenges to Cuba with the development of its economy as a tourist mecca. The dollar is now acceptable currency, accompanied by the seemingly inevitable shopping malls,

tourist restaurants, and hotels. With this new rush toward economic development, the Castro government runs the risk of selling off key pieces of real estate to the highest bidder.

After studying these old and new Havana challenges, we will now travel (February 17-21) for an intensive three-day site reconnaissance, public agency meetings, and personal introductions. Learning will become person-to-person exchange. We will sketch, discuss, visit, live, eat, drink, and sleep Havana during those days, and come back prepared to have those experiences inform possible urban design solutions. By the end of the semester, we intend to continue our work to include urban design guidelines as well as design proposals for individual sites. We will return to Havana during Spring Break to present our work to our Cuban counterparts and hopefully with high government officials.

This is not the first Cuba studio taught at the Graduate School of Design. A team of architects who were visiting critics led a studio to Cuba five years ago. This studio is different in its emphasis on community development and housing along with the close coordination with Cubans. The studio is being taught in collaboration with the Cuban architectural community and the Center for the Integral Development of Havana. GSD students will work side-by-side with their Cuban counterparts during our trips to Havana. We will make presentations of our work to the com-

munity and to the Cuban government and publish the results of our findings.

And since this studio course is a sponsored one—like many GSD studio courses—we hope that some of the donors can accompany us on our trips. Throughout the studio course, we will also be holding evening seminars on Cuba that will be open to the University community, a way of extending our own person-to-person contact.

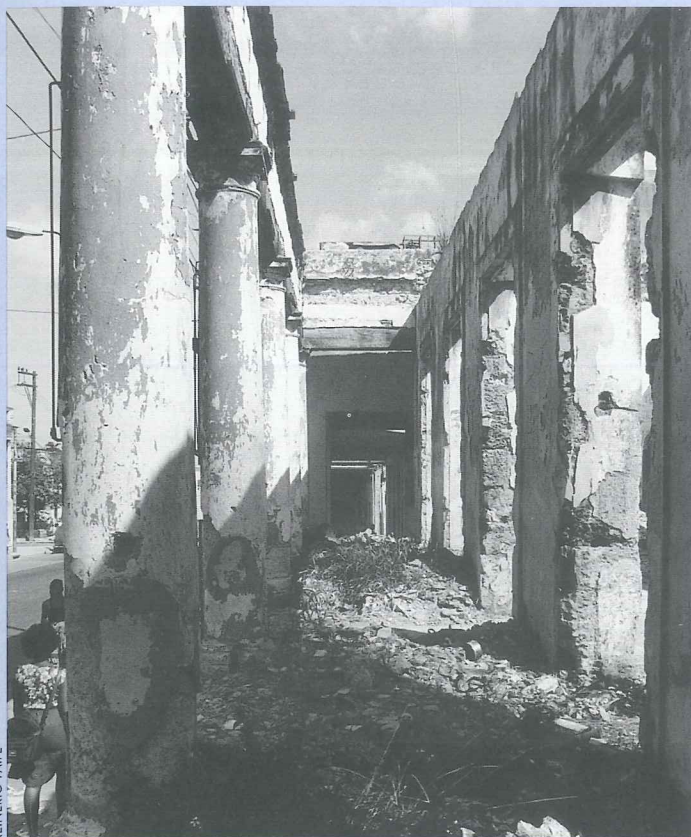
The Graduate School of Design has a long relationship with Cuba, back to the days of José Luís Sert. Boston has another relationship as a kindred waterfront city that I would like to see thought of as a sister-city collaboration. After all, the two cities—once linked by the sugar trade—are two very old cities with a rich historic fabric and the pressure of developers who wish to drastically alter the cityscape. There are some who say that Boston will crack under this pressure, as Havana shows signs of doing. So there are some things we can learn—and teach—from our unique Boston perspective.

I believe that design studios - can make a difference in the "real world." I've taught them in the Chicago inner city, Denver, Boston, and Texas, among other venues. In Chicago, I've seen the South Side neighborhood use many of our recommended guidelines about design aesthetics and planning. So, after this studio in Havana, we intend to return in the fall semester for a Waterfront Studio in order to continue the Graduate School of Design's commitment to Havana.



LEE COTT

Lee Cott, a design critic in Urban Planning and Design, teaches advanced design studio options at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. Cott is president and founding principal of Bruner/Cott & Associates, a Cambridge architecture firm, whose designs for affordable housing and other large-scale community development-related rehabilitation, adaptive reuse, and preservation projects have received local and national awards. He is a Fellow of the AIA and former president of the Boston Society of Architects.



Havana Homeland

Havana Always

REINERIO P. FAIFE

LIKE THOUSANDS OF CUBANS, at the age of fourteen, I crossed the Caribbean Sea in a small boat with more than 20 people on board in search of a better future, the Promised Land. The journey that took me back to my Cuban homeland had been unconsciously planned since my departure from Havana on May 20, 1980. The opportunity to reconnect with that once forgotten, a vague and elusive part of my life, came when I decided to base my graduate thesis at the Harvard Graduate School of Design on the historical evolution of the architecture and urbanism of Havana. In August 1998 and February 1999, I was able to once again step foot on that amazing island, this time in search of my past. My trip became the primary and most important connection to my past and future work, a moment of personal recon-

ciliation and professional growth. Once there I also realized that Havana lives, like its people, persisting through each tropical breath in its everyday struggle for survival. Havana is arguably a city frozen in time, hopelessly waiting for a kind of resurrection, a chance to once again become the vital capital city it once was. Its built and social infrastructure has dilapidated to a state of great despair, but like my fellow Cubans, it sits there waiting for that day when the sociopolitical tensions that have clouded its existence for the past 40 years can cease to exist.

The image above and other of my photos scattered through this issue of DRCLAS NEWS are a humble tribute to the city, a monument of Cuban culture located by that beautiful bay in the Caribbean Sea that once connected the Eastern and West-

ern Hemisphere, my homeland, my roots, my Havana. Havana remains hostage to its children, emotionally governed by a sense of political rancor, cultural betrayal and personal loss. These photos are an attempt at a kind of disengagement and reconnection with the portrayal of a vision still present in the eyes of many Cubans, a sense of hope and optimism that I hope someday will bring its children together again.

Through my thesis work I was able to bridge the gap that for so many years had darkened my perception of Havana, and in return was able to provide a clear vision of hope. I proceeded to graduate from the GSD in June 1999, and I am now working with a real estate development firm in the Boston area, hoping to expand the knowledge that will someday allow me to participate in Havana's recovery.

Havana: The ruined and the restored

Cuba's Environmental Strategy

Ecologists-by-Necessity

BY RICHARD LEVINS

BOTH IN SPITE OF AND BECAUSE of the economic crisis following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Cuba has adopted an ecological perspective on development. Agriculture and other fields experienced major changes in direction. Already existing programs were incorporated into an integral national program that includes agriculture, public health, preservations of biodiversity, alternative energy, environmental education, management of water resources, urban planning, and population growth and movement.

More than any other country, Cuba has taken seriously the resolutions of the 1992 United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development in Rio. The various elements of that program were not new. They were the outcome of more than 30 years of experimentation, innovation, and debate. Their integration represents the final recognition that despite society's commitment to a rising standard of living, natural limitations will not allow a world-wide consumer society with consumption of energy and materials at Euro-North American levels. Therefore, the improvement of life must emphasize quality of life, cultural development, education, and people taking care of people.

It would be wrong to attribute Cuba's changes only to the "special period" of pervasive shortages and economic crisis that arose with the disbanding of the COMECON trading block (the Soviet Union, eastern Europe, Cuba, and Vietnam). Despite the popular adage, necessity is not a sufficient mother of invention. Necessity can and often does lead to disaster. There must also be the capacity to respond to necessity, the intellectual and material resources and the flexibility to use those resources. Rather, the emergency of 1989-93 allowed ecological thinking to come to the fore

against developmentalist and narrowly economic thinking. The fascination with high tech "modernization" that dominates much of the approach to development in the third world and in international institutions, was to some extent, influential within Cuba itself. The crisis made it possible for the ecologists-by-conviction to recruit ecologists-by-necessity. But the process began long before that.

I have had the privilege of being a participant/observer in this process since 1964, mostly in the development of ecology and ecological agriculture. I watched as botanists and zoologists began to think of themselves as ecologists and to examine the ecological consequences of development. Many a time we sat on the sopping leaf litter of the montane rainforest under the rain discussing the role of plant-animal interactions in forest's formation or debating strategy: should our disputes with the forestry service be raised through the Institute meetings, local government or the Party?

By 1980, we had held the first national ecological conference in Cuba and passed a resolution urging the environment-monitoring agency, the National Commission for the Protection of the Environment and the Preservation of Natural Resources, also to have regulatory powers. I recall heated arguments about pesticide use at that meeting. Shortly thereafter, the Commission was raised to cabinet rank and is now part of the Ministry of Science, Technology, and the Environment. In 1988, a conference entitled "Integrated Technology in the Defense of Nature" placed the issues on a national agenda. In the conference's keynote presentation, I stressed the notion of "modern ecology" to emphasize that modern biology is not only the biology of the very small.

During this initial period, ecology began to gain ground in agriculture, especially in the area of pest control and polyculture. A regular nature program on Cuban television (Entorno, moderated by former student Jorge Ramón Cuevas) presented information about the natural world to a population of rural origin trying to escape from rural poverty, as well as advocating biodiversity and conservation. Camping became popular in the 1980s, and schools began to teach about nature. The field station in the Sierra del Rosario that had originally been our base for studying the montane forest as Cuba's contribution to the UNESCO program "Man and the Biosphere" became an environmental education center working with the people, particularly the children, of the Sierra.

But there was still opposition: people who believed that there was only one way to development and that the only questions were, how fast and on whose behalf? The managers of large state farms thought mainly about production and were influenced by the models of agribusiness. Even the increasing use of pesticides since 1959 was still listed in the mid-1980s as one of the achievements of the Cuban revolution. And there was still a current that saw agro-ecology as driven by the sentimental nostalgia of urban intellectuals for a picturesque past that they had never been burdened with. Ecology was criticized as "idealist," setting goals that were not rooted in socio-technical reality.

This viewpoint was popular but contested. Despite the attractiveness of developmentalist thinking, Marxism also provided a counter-influence. Dialectical materialism emphasizes historicity, context and process, interconnection, the inseparability of the social and the biological and other themes that made an ecological per-



PHOTO BY RAÚL CAÑIBANO ERCILLA <sisitema@comodocor.dto.cyl.cu>

spective attractive. I was present when one local Communist Party *nucleo* prepared itself for the debates by honing the argument that far from ecology being "idealist," it was the height of idealism to suppose that we could pass resolutions and have nature obey.

The debates were often heated, and we didn't always win. But they had a different flavor from similar debates in this country where scientific issues are so often surrogates for conflicting economic interests. In Cuba, the debates were most simply debates between different points of views rather than interests, so that good argument could win. (This is not completely true: enterprises charged with production and overwhelmed with meeting the population's needs were often impatient with ecology. A later Cuban document criticizes the assignment of environmental monitoring to the same enterprises that do the polluting. But there was also an agreed-upon national agenda beyond that of the enterprise that

allowed the discussion to reach resolution more readily).

In agriculture, the use of biological control of pests became widespread and centers for the culturing of the natural enemies of pests were set up on the state farms and some cooperatives. Research on biofertilizers led to the spread of nitrogen-fixing bacteria, composting, use of earthworms, mycorrhizae (fungi that serve as extensions of a plant's root system in the mobilization of minerals), and recycling strategies. At one point, we had to argue for slowing down the adoption of organic methods to a rate we could guide because misuse could discredit the whole program.

The trajectory in pest management has been from pesticides to the application of natural enemies to the creation of conditions that favor natural enemies and towards a multi-tiered defense system. This sort of defense system starts with the planting pattern (several crops with different vul-

nerabilities in the same field or adjacent plots that mutually benefit each other, plants that repel or trap pests), an environment friendly to predators and parasites of pests (straw for spiders, nectar sources for wasps, safe nesting sites for ants, protection from pesticides for all of them, as well as birds); the use of insect diseases, and fungi that attack the pests.

With DRCLAS support, my collaborator Tamara Awerbuch and I are currently working with the Cuban Citrus Institute on the ecological and mathematical analysis of population dynamics of one relatively immobile and one mobile herbivore and their natural enemies on orange trees.

In 1992, after the fall of the eastern bloc, Cuba adopted article 27 of its constitution:

"The State protects the Environment and natural resources of the country. It recognizes its close relation with economic and social sustainable development to make human

"a population of rural origins trying to escape from rural poverty"
Tierra Guajira
(peasant land)

life more rational and to ensure the survival, well-being and security of today and future generations. It is the duty of the appropriate bodies to implement this policy. It is the citizen's duty to contribute to the protection of water, atmosphere, conservation of the soil, flora, fauna, and all the use of nature's potential."

Thereafter, all agencies were required to consider environmental impacts in their planning. This does not mean that they always do so. Especially when there is economic urgency, developers do not always listen to the ecologists. In one case, a stone causeway was built to an offshore cay to stimulate tourism. Ecologists had warned that this would interfere with water circulation and kill the mangroves. When this prediction bore fruit, sections of the causeway had to be removed and replaced by more expensive bridge spans.

When the "special period" struck, there was already an intellectual and institutional base for an ecological strategy. The loss of some 70-80 percent of all foreign trade in 1989-90 and the tightening of the U.S. economic blockade made simple survival the top priority. Without imported feed, chickens

shrank to the size of pigeons; their eggs were like golf balls. Native breeds that could gather their own food and resist climatic stress became the obvious way to go. High-quality cattle, mostly Holstein bred with a component of native Cebú, could not live on forage alone, and much of the herds were lost. Milk

When the "special period" struck, there was already an intellectual and institutional base for an ecological strategy.

production collapsed. However, by 1995, a modest recovery had begun. It became possible to look critically at all offers of investment and reject the most harmful ones to ecology.

The National Environmental Strategy, formulated in 1997, tries to develop criteria for those decisions. It legally requires all agencies to take environmental issues into account. It

encourages grassroots participation through such ventures as organic vegetarian restaurants and seeks to promote environmental awareness. The strategy gives priority to environmentally sound technological research and stresses an active international environmental policy. It seeks to integrate issues of public health, clean production, recycling of urban waste, alternative energy, biodiversity, and education into a comprehensive vision. The more deprived areas of Cuba are to receive the first benefits of eco-friendly technology; the four percent of households not on the national electric grid are prioritized recipients of solar collectors, for instance. Special programs such as an anti-desertification program are being developed for vulnerable regions.

The environmental commitments in Cuba are carried out unevenly. Controversy continues. Recently, at a neighborhood meeting, one fellow insisted on the need to cut down trees interfering with electrical service. Another responded, "Trees are the lungs of the city; they can be pruned if necessary. Don't cut them down!" The debate continues. However, the whole radical concept of directing the whole development of society toward a non-consumerist, sustainable relation with nature is a departure that warrants close watching.

Richard Levins, John Rock Professor of Population Sciences at the Harvard School of Public Health, was honored by the University of Havana last year with an honorary doctorate degree. Levins, an internationally recognized U.S. ecologist and biomathematician, is considered one of the most prominent authors of mathematical patterns in biological processes. Levins has worked for 33 years as an advisor to the Cuban government on scientific projects in ecology, agriculture, and public health. Most recently, he has started a collaborative relationship between the Human Ecology Group at the Harvard School of Public Health and Cuban institutions.



PHOTO BY RAUL CANIBANO EBCILLA <sisitema@comedor.cha.cyl.cu>



DAVID MURBACH

Left: Palms at entrance of Cienfuegos Botanical Gardens

Below: the Harvard tree

The Cienfuegos Botanical Garden

Harvard's Legacy, Cuba's Challenge

BY DAN HAZEN

THE CIENFUEGOS BOTANICAL GARDEN, ABOUT three-quarters of an hour outside the Cuban city of Cienfuegos at the "Pepito Tey" sugar complex, welcomes visitors to a park-like setting of palms, orchids, bamboos, and myriad other tropical plants. The exotic vegetation; the shade, stream, and entry lane of royal palms; the reciprocally appreciative toasts of cane juice provoked by "official" visits—all stand in inviting contrast to the sugar mill's neighboring clangor and sweat.

The enticements of this neotropical Garden of Eden, however, suggest questions as well as contentments. Why so splendid a facility, so far from the beaten track? How did the Garden come by its more than two thousand tropical species? What purpose does it serve? From whence the now-faded markers of a Harvard connection?

Our story finds its start in Boston and in Cienfuegos itself. Cuba was one of Spain's first New World conquests. Cienfuegos, however, was only founded in 1819, after a lag of some 300 years. Sugar was by then the dominant cash crop and Yankee merchant firms, among them Boston's "E. Atkins & Company," were active in its exchange. Thus Edwin F. Atkins, the founder's son, first visited the island in the 1860s in order to master the fam-

ily trade and the connections upon which it was based. The exposure took, and Edwin gradually assumed complete control over the Cuban operation.

Atkins began his business life in a commercial world based on consignments and commissions. Sugar production, however, was already in flux. Mechanized refineries required heavy investments. Shifting tariffs, population movements and industrialization in the Northern hemisphere, and emerging product competition from both European beet sugar and Pacific sugarcane created an ever-changing structure of sources, prices, and markets.

Cuban planters also had to adjust to endemic civil unrest and the abolition of slavery. Many were unsuccessful. Atkins, despite strong misgivings, thus settled an intractable debt by taking over the "Soledad" sugar estate around 1880. The plunge once taken, he invested heavily in additional land and technological improvements. He wintered on the estate, often without his family, and forged one of the island's most productive sugar complexes. The process was not without risk: banditry, brushes with armed bands allied to every possible faction, and repeated seasons of arson-damaged cane became almost commonplace as the island chafed under Spanish rule.



The Cienfuegos Botanical Garden

Renewing History

BY JUNE CAROLYN ERLICK



In the garden



DAVID MURACH

Atkins, who hoped that greater Cuban autonomy within the Spanish Empire would end the unrest, championed this outcome through his high-level connections in both Washington and Havana. He later on quickly accepted North American occupation as a portent of peace and stability. His thoughts almost as quickly turned to intensifying Soledad's sugar production, with Harvard as one of the vehicles. In 1899, Atkins donated \$2,500 to the University to compile a comprehensive bibliography on sugarcane and to fund a "travelling fellowship in economic botany," whose recipient was expected to conduct research that would improve the island's cane production.

During the decades following Atkins's death, civil unrest remained endemic, though several decades of relative calm followed the revolutionary movement of 1933. Increasingly stringent labor laws mandated higher minimum wages, limitations on non-Cuban workers, and a 1933 reduction in the work week to but forty-eight hours. Ever-increasing costs became the norm. The Garden's vulnerability to flood, drought, and hurricane reinforced the sense of contingency.

By the mid-1930s, the Garden routinely overspent the income from the Atkins endowment, despite repeated additional gifts from Mrs. Atkins and from the Claffins, her son-in-law's family. Programmatic fuzziness exacerbated the financial tensions between Garden and gown. Was the Garden's destiny to become a first-rate tropical arboretum? Or was its purpose to conduct original research?

Harvard and the Botanical Garden but more generally between Cuba and the United States."

Harvard is an important part of the Garden's history, and the Garden forms part of Harvard's history. Harvard's name is still visibly carved into a palm tree at the entrance of what used to be called Harvard House, where the November 12-13 meetings took place.

In a surprise finale to the conference, the Cuban delegation planted two new palm trees in honor of Richard Howard, director of the Arnold Arboretum and professor of dendrology, Emeritus (see related story). The two

Dan Hazen, Widener Library's Librarian for Latin America, Spain, and Portugal, visited Cienfuegos for an international conference of historians and archivists in March, 1998. This article has been condensed from a longer version, which appeared in the Fall 1998 issue of DRCLAS NEWS, which focused on the environment in Latin America.

Cienfuegos, Cuba - Cuban botanists and historians avidly exchanged information with their U.S. academic counterparts in a two-day conference in November organized by DRCLAS and the Cienfuegos Botanical Garden (until 1961, the Harvard Botanical Garden, once the Atkins Garden).

"This is the first meeting sponsored by our institutions since 1961," said John Coatsworth, DRCLAS director (on leave calendar year 2000). "It symbolizes the importance we attach to the renewal and strengthening of academic and scientific contacts not only between

Harvard and the Botanical Garden but more generally between Cuba and the United States."

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new palm trees, *Washingtonia filifera*, native to the United States, are now flanked by older royal palms – a fitting tribute to Howard, who first came to the Cienfuegos Botanical Garden as a student in 1940.

Fourteen members of the Atkins family, including former Congressman Chester Atkins, accompanied the academics on the trip to Cienfuegos.

"It was really moving to be here and to see the way in which the Cubans have tended to this garden," said Chester Atkins between a conference session and a short visit to the former sugar mill property.

Sessions were split between history and botany, with themes ranging from orchids to palms, from Cuban dietary patterns to the Spanish-American War, and from the history of the Garden to reflections on tropical ecology.

Harvard delegates included John H. Coatsworth, Monroe Gutman Professor of Latin American Affairs; Otto



DAVID MURBACH

T. Solbrig, Bussey Professor of Biology (acting DRCLAS director 2000-2001); Richard Howard; Gustavo Romero, keeper of the Orchid Herbarium; Noel Holbrook, Thomas D. Cabot Associate Professor of Organismic and Evolutionary Biology; and Timothy Stumph, the Center's Cuba Program coordinator.

Other academic institutions represented in the Harvard-sponsored encounter were the University of Michigan, the University of North Carolina, the College of New Jersey, and the University of Cologne (Germany).

Cuban delegates came from a wide range of institutions, including the Garden, the Provincial Archive of Cienfuegos, the Academy of Science, and the National Botanical Garden in

Havana.

"This is like a dream come true to have this exchange become a reality," said Orlando Garcia, director of the Provincial Archive of Cienfuegos.

Reminiscences of the Botanical Garden at Central Soledad

1940-1950

BY RICHARD A. HOWARD

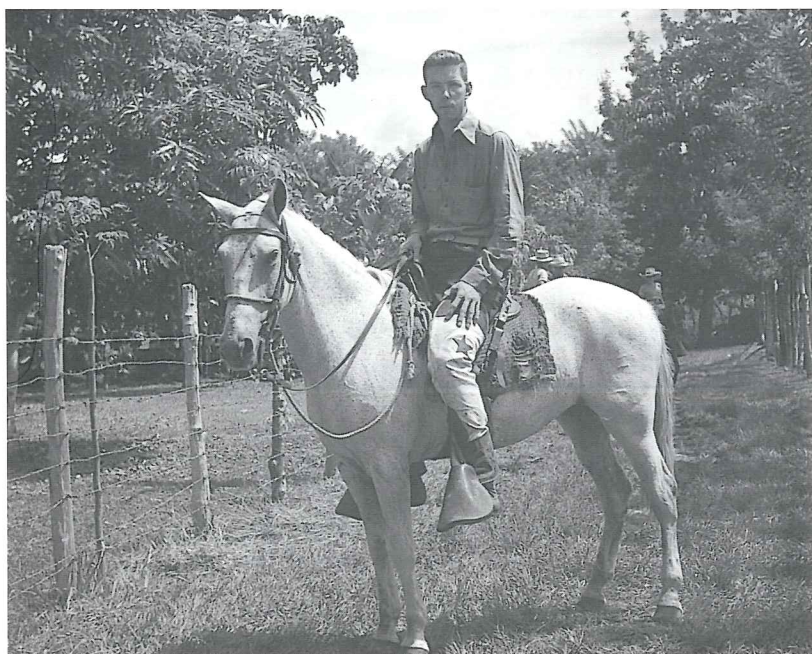
THE BUS—IT WAS GREYHOUND, I believe—took us all the way from Boston to Key West that summer in 1940. Then we boarded the ferry to Havana and finally the night train to Cienfuegos in the middle of the Cuban island. If we were not met, a *guaguaita* or local passenger car/bus took us to the botanical garden, our final destination. Back then, graduate students at Harvard were expected to gain some experience in tropical biology by visiting the Cuban garden, known variously as the Harvard Garden in Cuba, the Soledad Garden, and finally the Atkins Institute of the Arnold Arboretum. We had a stipend of \$300 for the summer's room and board and all our transportation expenses.

The botanical collections near the former Central Soledad, in Cuba, developed from the collections of sugar cane clones assembled by Edwin Atkins in 1899. The first superintendent, Robert Grey, was also a plant breeder of sugar cane, and his successor, David Sturrock, expanded the goal of the collection with the addition of fruit trees and timber trees. Sturrock thought the short

labor season of the cane harvest could be countered by a market in fresh fruit or the cottage industry of jams and jellies.

Fast-growing timber trees could also supply the needs of local industry for fuel, construction or railroad ties, then met by introduced lumber. Harvard economic botanists Oakes Ames and George Goodale became advisors to Atkins and offered services in the operation and development of the garden. Various Harvard professors visited the garden, avoiding the winter months in Cambridge. Superintendent David Sturrock and his assistant, Frank Walsingham offered instruction or guidance in tropical plants and horticultural practices. The financing and administration of the Garden in Cambridge fell to Elmer D. Merrill, director of the Arnold Arboretum, for botany and Thomas Barbour, director of the Museum of Comparative Zoology, for zoology. Merrill arranged for Harvard research appointments to the Garden and to the Arnold Arboretum for Hermano León and other Jesuits residing in Cuba.





Richard Howard on horseback (1940); Richard Howard at the tree planting ceremony in November, 1999

Merrill was good to students too. Organized classes in Harvard Summer School were developed after World War II, and Merrill arranged for travel from Cuba to Honduras on the "Great White Fleet," courtesy of the United Fruit Company.

Harvard House served as headquarters for visitors to the garden. A small library was maintained along with an herbarium in three standard cases. A spacious laboratory permitted processing of collections as well as some microscope work or chemical procedures. A small dark-room was in an attached building. Two large bedrooms occupied the interior of the building, an office and dining area continued the floor plan. A central screened porch with rocking-chairs held the nightly pre-dinner gathering for a "Sturrock's special" — a rum punch. A separate building to the rear was the kitchen and living quarters for Teodoro, the Spanish cook, and Manuelo, the Cuban houseboy. The Sturrocks lived in the newly constructed Casa Catalina on the ridge overlooking the Garden.

I visited the garden as a student in 1940 and 1941, again in 1944 while I was in the U.S. Air Force, and in 1950 and 1951 as the instructor in a Harvard course in tropical botany. On most visits I collected botanical specimens, including 38 sets of *Plantae Exsiccatae Grayanae* which became highly prized distributions of the Gray Herbarium. I also prepared a students' manual to the flora of the areas commonly visited by collectors and classes. Brother León learned of my manuscript and objected to its publication. It seems that Nathaniel Lord Britton, direc-

tor of the New York Botanical Garden and long-term scholar of the Antilles, had prepared a *Flora of Cuba* guide before his death, and Brother León was committed to translate the book into Spanish for simultaneous publication in the two languages. Years later, I found Britton's unpublished manuscript in the New York Botanical Garden archives. The Spanish version was published in parts by León (1948), León & Alain (1951, 1953, 1957) and Alain (1962).

John George Jack of the Arnold Arboretum staff collected botanical specimens in Cuba between 1926 and 1936. Jack's collecting localities were given in English as Copper Mine, Glen Ames, Belmonte and Mt. Harvard. These names or localities were not known to Cubans then or now. Finding Jack's localities was a particular goal of mine. Travel around the Garden was on foot or, rarely, in a Model T Ford which belonged to Dr. Barbour. I had the requisite long legs needed to occupy the seat placed to accommodate Barbour's stately girth. Horses were used for travel into the Trinidad-San Blas mountain areas. Priscilla, Dr. Jack's horse, had been trained to push into



JUNE CAROLYN ERICK

the brush and/or remain still while Jack stood in the saddle to collect specimens. Priscilla, and I spent many hours collecting plants. In post-World War II years a surplus jeep was available for collecting on serpentine soils or following rough coastal trails. Horses available for classes were used in the winter cane harvest and then turned to pasture. These animals commonly objected to a summertime roundup and transport of visiting students.

Following the Cuban revolution, complicated labor rules and fiscal regulation caused Harvard to withdraw from the Cuban Garden. Cuban authorities assumed direction of the

garden, which was renamed Jardín Botánico de Cienfuegos. The sugar mill was renamed Central Pepita Tey.

With the travel restrictions imposed as part of an embargo against Cuba, Harvard students no longer had access to the Garden. The development of the research area, gardens and programs in Costa Rica as the cooperative Organization for Tropical Studies, of which Harvard is a member, perhaps serves as a partial or inadequate alternative to the Cuban operation. The Soledad years were formative to my career, and I acknowledge my gratitude for all I derived from that experience.

Richard A. Howard is director of the Arnold Arboretum and professor of dendrology emeritus. He recently traveled to the Cienfuegos Botanical Garden to participate in a two-day conference (see accompanying story); the Cuban delegation honored him by planting two new palm trees.

A Medical Student Looks at Cuba

A Country of Contradictions

BY FLORENCIA HALPERIN

FRESH OFF THE PLANE, AND already my interest was piqued as we drove out of the airport in Havana. I had just finished my first year at Harvard Medical School, and was in Cuba with a group of students on a medical education program. I was intrigued by the Cubans who drove us that night to our destination in the western province of Pinar del Rio. To begin with, they all had names I had never heard of, as Spanish names: Ivan, Mariushka, Marleni (short for Marx Lenin)—they were all Russian names! Furthermore, both the van driver and his wife, who was along for the ride, spoke not only Spanish but also relatively good English, and they told me they had both been trained as engineers. I remember feeling puzzled to meet an engineer working as a hired driver, and this was only the first of many paradoxes I would find on this beautiful island. Indeed, if I can say one thing about Cuba after my month-long stay, it is that Cuba is a country of contradictions.

One of the most moving experiences of my life came a few days into my work with Sofia, the community doctor with whom I saw patients. Sofia and her husband, who have two small children, are both physicians. Sofia's *consultorio* (medical office) occupies the first floor of her family home (all community doctors live in a similar setting). After six years of medical school and three years of service to the government as community physicians, Sofia and her husband each earn twenty dollars per month. Their house belongs to the government, their education and their children's (including their textbooks!), as well as their health care, are absolutely free, and they get food rations from the government. As a family, they receive six pounds of sugar, eggs, rice, beans, milk, and one

small bar of soap per month. They say that they are happy with their home, proud of their education and their health care system, but what they get to eat is not enough. If they want meat (or laundry detergent, or clothes) they have to purchase them at import prices similar to those we pay here in the United States. Forty dollars a month does not stretch very far for all of these things. As well educated as they are, this family cannot afford the luxury of toilet paper, and uses the day-old newspaper instead.

A few days after my arrival, Sofia invited me over for lunch, and although I was practically a stranger in their modest home, they treated me to a royal feast. They made a delicious stew, with beef; they bought pizza, and made *batidos de mango* (mango shakes) with fresh milk. I was overwhelmed by their generosity, and at the same time plagued with guilt as I sat consuming what was at least half their monthly salaries. This was my first heart-warming encounter with the Cuban spirit of brotherhood, and there would be many more: I discovered that Cubans have a gift for making people feel welcome and included. It still brings tears to my eyes to think that with so little, they offered me so much.

Cuban nature is open and inviting, generous and warm. And yet these very people have laws that prohibit them from visiting the establishments of their compatriots. When a group of us wanted to travel for a weekend to the lush park of Viñales with a Cuban medical student we befriended, we were stunned by the obstacles we encountered. Our driver, with his baby blue 1961 Chevy, and in desperate need of the few dollars we offered, could not bring our friend Miguel, because if he were stopped by the police with Cubans and Americans in his car, he would be fined a large sum. So Miguel rode the 20

miles on his old Russian bike. Moreover, most Cubans cannot eat out in restaurants or rent accommodations when they travel in part because they cannot afford it. But even if we wanted to pay for our friend, *by law* he is not allowed to eat, or even sit at the table, with tourists, and he is not allowed to sleep in the Cuban homes where we rented rooms. I could see in the eyes of the proprietors how deeply they regretted having to turn a fellow Cuban away, but if "el Inspector" (a neighborhood Party represen-

Mother and child in clinic



tative) discovered Miguel at a restaurant or in a rented room, they would be subject to hundreds of dollars in fines. Although the laws have been made under the pretext of preventing hustling and prostitution, I wondered if the hidden agenda was to prevent the exchange of ideas...

I am originally from Argentina, and in Argentina we know about political repression and persecution. We had totalitarian regimes, military coups, and even concentration camps until the 1980's. My family fled when I was two because as Jewish doctors my parents were under threat. But in my simple scheme of right and wrong, it is easy to categorize what happened there. Universities and schools fell to pieces. People were tortured and murdered for their beliefs, or even for the sin of being listed in the address book of someone suspected of anti-government activism.

In contrast, I struggle with an image of Cuba where people are not free to tell their friends what they think, where people go hungry, where well educated, honest folk turn to illegal tourist activities because it is the only way to earn enough to clothe their children, and yet where every person has a home, every person is taught to read, is given *some* food, and has their medical needs met. Indeed, in Cuba, *everyone* has access to health care and there is one

Cuba, for all its contradictions, has valuable lessons to teach even a rich and democratic country like our own.

doctor in every neighborhood. Physicians are trained to emphasize prevention; their job includes visiting patients at home, and ensuring public health standards are met. For example, they verify that if animals are kept they are clean and separate, or that electrical outlets are covered if there are young children in the home. The infant mortality rate is one of the lowest in the world; Cuban children are vaccinated, and all women have access to regular Pap smears and mammograms.

My trip to Cuba made me appre-

ciate the luxuries available to me in my daily life. It gave me a taste of what it was like for my parents to live under a totalitarian regime. In many ways I came to understand those who risk their lives every day to flee Cuba. Yet at the same time I was left in awe of their warm generosity, revolutionary idealism, and contagious cultural rhythm. I was moved by their commitment to provide housing and health care for all of its citizens, a principle that has not been adequately embraced in the United States, where homelessness is pervasive and there are more than 40 million people without health insurance. Cuba, for all its contradictions, has valuable lessons to teach even a rich and democratic country like our own.

Florencia Halperin grew up in Argentina, Venezuela and Brookline, MA. She is currently a second year student at Harvard Medical School with a particular interest in issues of health in immigrant communities.

Instituto de Medicina Tropical "Pedro Kouri"

Instituto de Medicina Tropical "Pedro Kouri" (IPK), Cuba's leading research institute and treatment center in the field of tropical medicine and infectious diseases is well known as one of the foremost institutions in its field in the Americas. In the pre-Revolutionary era, it developed close links to the Harvard Medical School, and those links are being carried on today, as part of the institutional exchanges established by DRCLAS with the support of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

"The Kouri Institute is one of the finest infectious disease and parasitology programs in Latin America, and it's a shame that they've been isolated by the embargo," noted Dr. Paul Farmer, Associate Professor of Social Medicine and a member of the DRCLAS Policy Committee. Farmer also noted that Dr. Jorge Perez, who visited Harvard last year under the Harvard-IPK exchange program, is on the board of Harvard Medical School's Program in Infectious Disease and Social Change.

Dr. John David, Richard Pearson Strong Professor of Tropical Health at the Harvard School of Public Health, has been an actively promoting faculty and student exchanges with IPK. David said that he was impressed that Cuba appears to be the only country in the world said to have truly controlled dengue.

According to Dr. Gustavo Kouri, director of the IPK, the Harvard exchanges were stimulated by a chance encounter with David in Geneva at a conference six or seven years ago. Although David expressed enthusiasm for exchanges-according to Kouri-"the political situation at the time didn't facilitate such

visits." In 1998, Kouri invited David to Cuba for a conference; David told him that he had a letter prepared to send Kouri even before the invitation.

Kouri said that both David and Farmer had been invited to the Fourth International Conference on HIV/AIDS in Cuba, Central America, and the Caribbean, scheduled to take place in Havana in January, 2000.

The Harvard exchange program with IPK now involves short term visits to Harvard by senior IPK research staff. In addition, the Harvard Medical School has agreed to waive tuition for two advanced or post-doctoral students per semester to participate in training and research programs, including the one-year Masters in Public Health. On the Cuban side, the IPK has agreed to incorporate medical students from Harvard into ongoing clinical and research projects on a case by case basis. The IPK is a UNESCO-approved training institute, which trains more than 1000 people each year from 69 countries.

Kouri indicated that the IPK needed help with its library and with receiving scientific and academic journals. He said that Cuba currently does not have the hard currency to purchase many of these scientific materials. He sees the student and faculty exchanges with the United States as a priority.

"We would like to step up our scientific-academic exchanges," said Kouri, whose father founded the IPK in 1937. "We need to know more about each other."

—June Carolyn Erlick

The “Worldly” Classroom

A Student Trip and Its Legacy

BY XAVIER DE SOUZA BRIGGS

NEARLY TWO YEARS AGO, I TOOK 17 GRADUATE public policy students from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, ages 23 to 40, to Cuba as part of a short course called “Comparative Urban Policy.” Beyond wanting us all to learn about a fascinating country undergoing cataclysmic change, my aim was to teach some skills in “detective work” as part of an overseas visit - of the kind one would do for an international company, non-governmental organization (NGO), or multi-lateral aid agency. As an urbanist, I also wanted to remind students that macro-trends in politics and the economy wash ashore in particular places — important cities, for example — and must be understood for their effects on everyday people living in those contexts.

Our trip became a “global” classroom not only because it involved another country, because it extended their experiences through an ongoing website <<http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/people/xbriggs/index.htm>> with a student photo-essay. To my delight and surprise, visitor traffic to the site has been high ever since it opened in mid-August 1997. I expected some to think that I had not been critical enough of the Castro regime, and some — a very small number, actually — thought that. But the vast majority of the hundreds of messages I have read use words like “balance,” “sensitivity,” and “thought-provoking” to describe the site. I did not expect, but am gratified by, all the queries by folks doing research on Cuba or planning trips of their own.

Reflecting the incongruities that seem par for the course for a week's trip to Cuba, Lorena Barberia observed, “I went with a strong sense that I understood what was happening in Cuba . . . but left with deep conflicts and questions. The issues had become more personal.”

On some level, all of the students wanted visible proof of what the revolution had accomplished — and, more modestly, of what remains of it. While acknowledging uncanny progress in the social sector (now tainted by the pervasive scarcity of basic supplies), Cuba's primitive physical infrastructure was a shock to some of the students, and so was the tourist-oriented commercialism to which Cuba has turned to earn hard currency. Cristina Rueda noted, “I see Cuba becoming again what it did not want to be, and I left wondering whether there is any one ‘right’ system for any society to follow.”

My teaching objective was certainly not to lead students to easy answers — rather to focus on creative “problem-posing,” as the late Brazilian educator Paulo Freire called it. Stereotypes undone and assumptions exposed work best with a week in Cuba. Whatever the format or site, one thing is certain: we cannot “globalize” our curriculum and expect to stay at home.

I would say now that the best epilogue is that KSG students have self-organized a study tour to Cuba each year since my maiden voyage. I'm pretty proud of that fact and of the students themselves. I run into more and more students hungry for the in-country learning experiences we need to offer more of. Rarely is the American university classroom “global” — transported abroad to deal face-to-face with the world in all its complexity, emotion, and paradox.

Xavier de Souza Briggs (“Xav”) is Assistant Professor of Public Policy at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government. He recently returned from leave, during which he served as the Assistant Secretary for Policy and Research at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Cuba and African Diaspora Religion

BY J. LORAND MATORY

SOME OF THE MOST IMPORTANT religions of the African diaspora developed in Cuba and Brazil, where millions of captives from the West African Bight of Benin were forcibly resettled in the 19th century. In turn, since the 1959 Cuban Revolution, thousands of Cubans have fanned across the Americas, turning San Juan, Bogotá, Miami and

New York City into international capitals of *oricha*-worship.

In the United States in particular, this Afro-Cuban religion has not simply endured. It has attracted enormous classes of Cubans who would have avoided it in pre-revolutionary Cuba, as well as non-Cuban Latino immigrants who had known nothing of it in their homelands and African

Americans who regard it as a way to “recover” their own ancestral African culture. Moreover, here in the U.S., the unique challenges of racial binarism have created revolutionary conflicts, and changes, in the practice of Afro-Cuban religion.

I've studied, taught, and written about the Yoruba religion and its New-World counterparts—such as

Caribbean Latinos,
Latinos in general,
and native African
Americans, are
now reformulating
Yoruba and
Yoruba-related
cultural repertoires.

Lucumí in Cuba and Candomblé Nagô in Brazil—since 1980. Lucumí is by far the most prestigious of the Afro-Cuban religions, just as Candomblé Nagô is the most prestigious of the Afro-Brazilian religions. It was the need to explain this “Yoruba” pre-eminence that inspired my paper “The New Yoruba Empire: Texts, Migration, and the Trans-Atlantic Rise of the Lucumí Nation” presented in January 1999, at a conference co-sponsored by the Juan Marinello Center in Havana with Harvard’s David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies.

Because I traveled to Cuba before the conference began, I spent ten days with some wonderful Cuban *santeros* and *babalaos* (as the Lucumí priests are known). My new friends introduced me to a distinctively Cuban experience of this religion of song, dance, divination, animal sacrifice, and spirit possession. I learned from these priests how the transcendent understandings cultivated in this religion empower them in present-day Cuba. I offered in exchange, songs, tales, and photographs from my field research among their coreligionists in other countries.

I continue to study the religion not only in West Africa, Brazil, and the Caribbean but also among Cuban exiles, Latinos generally, African Americans, and Euro-Americans who have adapted Lucumí religion to U.S. circumstances. Moreover, I take these diverse regional adaptations to illustrate some general principles about cultural reproduction across space and time.

Specifically, I have attempted to relate the success of Yoruba religion not simply to its “survival” and recollection by generation of captives and their descendants but to an ongoing African history that distinguishes Yoruba culture from other African cultures that also appear to have “survived” in the Americas. I argue that it was the Lagosian Renaissance of the 1890s—an Afro-British-inspired literary and cultural movement in Lagos, West Africa—that reified Yoruba culture and argued for

its unique dignity.

These developments took place at the hands of highly westernized Africans and returnees from the diaspora who had enjoyed a highly cooperative relationship with British colonialists in West Africa during the mid-19th century. However, a late-19th-century economic turndown and a crescendo in British colonial racism prompted these westernized black people to Africanize their names, adopt African modes of dress, endorse African marital practices, and pen an unprecedented documentary literature demonstrating the dignity of an African religion.

In the same way, the Lagosian Renaissance also established the particular utility of the emergent Yoruba culture, and its religion, in the project of racial nationalism around the Atlantic perimeter. The books produced during this Renaissance and the travelers who bore them to Latin America in turn transformed American elites’ thinking about at least this one African-diaspora religion. They gave it a public prestige and recognition unavailable to other diasporic religions such as *Palo Mayombe*, *Abakwa*, *Macumba*, and *Candomblé Angola*.

With this kind of historical revision, we begin to understand that diasporas do not simply inherit primordial traditions and transmit them by memory, survival and retelling. Rather, they reformulate available cultural repertoires and adapt them to new purposes, often through literary and political movements.

Caribbean Latinos, Latinos in general, and native African Americans, are now reformulating Yoruba and Yoruba-related cultural repertoires, adapting them to new political projects and literary media in the United States. For example, formerly Protestant African Americans have sought to purify Lucumí of its Catholic influences, and, given their linguistic and racial exclusion from Latino religious circles, African Americans have generated a catechistical literature of unprecedented size and vernacular clarity. Moreover, reacting against the privileges associated with

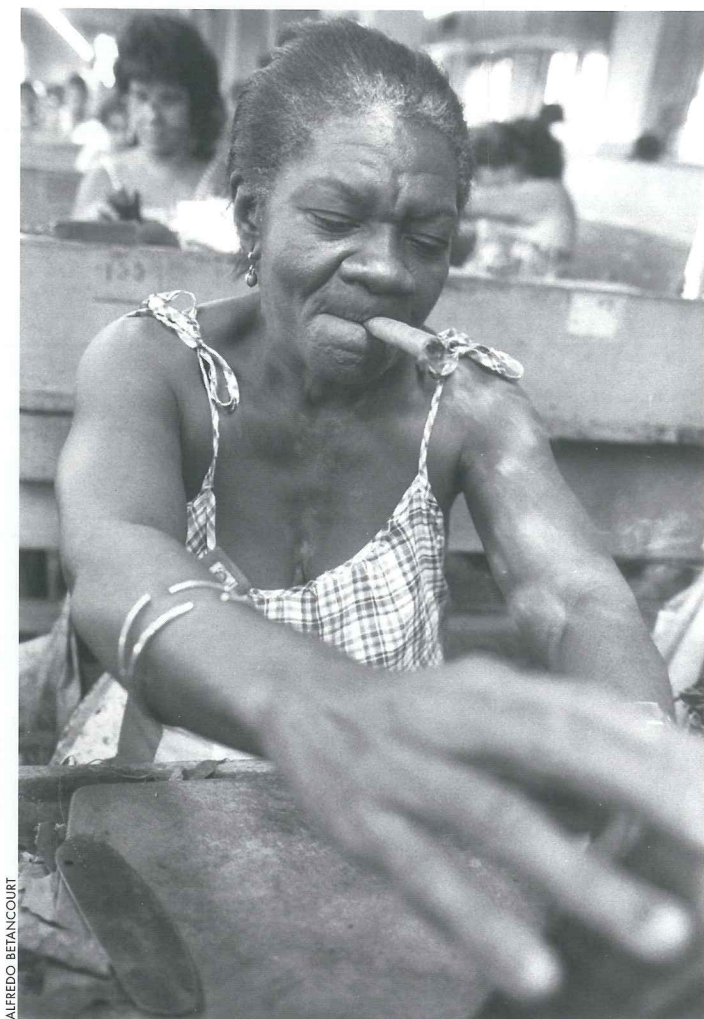
whiteness in the United States, African Americans and Afro-Cubans in the U.S. have begun to question the authority of “white” Cubans who have also propagated and defended Lucumí practices. Thus, the Lucumí religion is being shaped yet again, this time in response to U.S. racial ideology and African-American culture.

The *santeros* I met last year in Cuba not only helped me to understand the religious traditions of the island, but also introduced me to Colombian, Panamanian, Puerto Rican, and other U.S. *santeros* who come to Cuba on pilgrimage and for initiation, creating new webs in intellectual and material exchange.

Perhaps even more than the remittances of funds by Cuban families abroad, these pan-American webs of spiritual kinship have revitalized Cuban culture—in this case, by giving new legitimacy to a religion once condemned by the socialist state. The Cuban state now recognizes Lucumí religion as it recognizes no other Afro-Cuban or Euro-Cuban religion, as a fully legitimate conduit of foreign exchange, an approved form of sociopolitical organization, and a core element of national folklore.

With the Cuban *santeros* and *babalaos*, I shared much that I had learned of their religious brothers and sisters during my field work in Brazil, Nigeria, Benin Republic, and the United States. I cannot say, however, that I did as much for them as they did for me. They nourished my mind and my body with a uniquely Cuban warmth and generosity. They were generous and taught me so much. I trust that our new friendship will endure for many decades to come.

J. Lorand Matory, a member of the DRCLAS Policy Committee, is Professor of Anthropology and of Afro-American Studies at Harvard University. A longer version of this article was presented at a January 1999 conference co-sponsored by the Juan Marinello Center in Havana and DRCLAS, with the support of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.



ALFREDO BETANCOURT



Tobacco and Sugar

Creative Struggles in Caribbean Literature

BY DORIS SOMMER

“**T**OBACCO AND SUGAR” IS THE COURSE THAT FOCUSES AMERICAN literatures on the Caribbean, and that acknowledges the unavoidable importance of monocultures for cultural studies. Much of the political, historical and creative activity in the Caribbean develops in the tensions between tobacco and sugar.

It is the seductive, productive and also destructive, tension that Fernando Ortiz locates at the core of Caribbean experience, in his monumental *Cuban Counterpoint of Tobacco and Sugar* (1940), where feminine, frilly sugar and masculine smokes invent challenges for each other. The difference between tobacco and sugar is also the strain between political options on other Hispanophone Islands, as Dominican Pedro Francisco Bonó had theorized them in the 1860s: sugar enslaves people, in its mindless, brutal labor on vast tracts of land; while tobacco democratizes, with small holders, highly skilled labor, and quiet collective spaces for rolling cigars, where hired readers educated even illiterate workers.

Do North Americans wonder why their own organized labor his-

tory begins among cigar workers? Some reading between Cuban and Puerto Rican immigration and Samuel Gompers' immigrant New York makes the connections clear.

Do Latin Americanists ask themselves why Carpentier's *The Kingdom of This World*, or Juan Bosch's *La Mañosa* feature details about sugar and tobacco production? One way of reading classic Caribbean narrative is to notice that production as a protagonist in these stories. Nature is not a background or an irrational force here, as it used to be considered in literary criticism, but —converted through markets— it becomes a very active agent. The course is an effort to take account of that agency and to appreciate the creative struggles in Caribbean literature, with tobacco and sugar.

Doris Sommer, Harvard Professor of Romance Languages and Literatures hopes to teach “Tobacco and Sugar” (Spanish 186) again in the fall 2000-2001 semester. She also led the “Havana in Literature” Study Tour to Cuba in January.

Latin Americanists at Harvard

Recent Awards

THREE LATIN AMERICANISTS closely associated with DRCLAS have recently won prestigious awards.

Maria Cristina Caballero, a Research Fellow at the Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy at the Kennedy School of Government and a former Nieman Fellow, received the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists' World Press Freedom Award.

At the award ceremony in New York in November, Caballero told the more than 1000 guests, "As a journalist,



SEMANA MAGAZINE, BOGOTÁ, COLOMBIA

I have seen the many faces of desperation in my country. Colombia is confronting a huge humanitarian crisis. Many of my colleagues have died in the line of duty. Almost 50 in the past ten years....I'm honored to receive CPJ's International Press Freedom Award, but as a journalist I feel that my role in Colombia is to give voice to the voiceless."

Caballero has also been selected by the Kennedy School's "Women and Public Policy Program" as a member of the Women Waging Peace (WWP) project. One of the goals is to create a world-wide network of women leaders working toward peace in countries confronting conflicts, such as Colombia.

Through this program Caballero has already had the opportunity to talk at the White House, the U.S. Congress and the U.S. State Department about some of her country's many problems.

Caballero, editor of investigation on leave from Bogotá's *Semana* Magazine to write a book on the armed conflict and her country's struggle toward peace, maintains that the press has an important role to play in the search for peace in Colombia. She was instrumental in organizing the 1997 Harvard conference "Law and Democracy in Colombia" with the support of DRCLAS. The other journalists honored with Caballero by CPJ were Jesús Joel Díaz-Hernández (Cuba), Baton Haxhiu (Kosovo), and Jugno Moshin and Jajam Sethi (Pakistan).

Edelberto Torres-Rivas, the Spring 2000 DRCLAS Central American Visiting Scholar, has been honored as a Grand Official in the Order of Five Volcanoes by the Guatemalan Foreign Ministry.

Torres-Rivas, author and co-author of 25 books, is currently writing "Central America: A Balance of the Transitions." The study will make a comparative analysis of the transitions and the reconstitution of the political systems in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala. Among his many publications, Torres-Rivas published *Del Conflicto al Diálogo: el WSP en Guatemala* in 1999. He received a Law degree from the Universidad de San Carlos in Guatemala, an M.A. in Social Sciences



from Facultad Latinoamericana in Santiago, Chile, and a Ph.D. from Essex University in England in Sociology.

In the awards ceremony in Guatemala City, presenter Byron Barrera Ortíz declared, "Having lived for many years in Costa Rica, dedicating his entire life to research and returning to Guatemala during this period of democratic transition, Edelberto's clarity as a sociologist and the transparency and purity of his democratic thought are outstanding."

"One of the challenges of Guatemalan society is to demystify open political participation, making it plural, transparent, and above all, tolerant," Barrera, a former journalist who suffered an assassination attempt under the military regime, continued. "Edelberto has made an enormous contribution to the culture and political development not only of Guatemala, but of all Central America."

Jennifer Schirmer, Lecturer in Social Studies/Anthropology and associate of the Program on Non-Violent Sanctions and Cultural Survival at the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, won the Netherlands-based PIOOM Award for her book, "The Guatemalan Military Project: A Violence Called Democracy" (University of

Pennsylvania Press, 1998; Spanish edition, FLACSO-Guatemala, 1999).

PIOOM, whose acronym in Dutch stands for Interdisciplinary Research Program on Root Causes of Human Rights Violations, chose the book as "the most praise- and prize-worthy." PIOOM Report says of the Schirmer book: "The study brings out clearly what so many suspected but could not prove: that the Guatemalan military engaged in a quasi-genocidal project. Schirmer provides the proverbial 'smoking gun': that it was done, how it was done, and who did it. It was as if the leaders of Nazi Germany would explain how they came to the 'Final Solution', how and why it was planned and who was responsible...."

"Dr. Schirmer," explained PIOOM about the choice of her book "has allowed us to look into the Guatemalan military's mind by listening for us to many of the worst human rights offenders and rendering us their deeds in their own words. We understand them better than ever. Not often have the powerful been so frank as with her. For this she deserves the PIOOM Award."

Schirmer's book was reviewed by *New York Times* reporter Larry Rohter in the Winter 1999 issue of DRCLAS NEWS. PIOOM awarded her the prize at a gala ceremony in Amsterdam in December.

left: María Cristina Caballero receives the prestigious journalists' award in New York

right: Jennifer Schirmer (right) is congratulated by former Dutch parliament member Andrée Van Es

RFK Professor Roberto Schwarz

The "Misplaced" Intellectual

BY CARMEN OQUENDO-VILLAR

ROBERTO SCHWARZ, ROBERT F. Kennedy Professor of Latin American Studies this past semester, is one of the foremost Latin American intellectuals whose critical work spans 25 years. Students who took his Romance Languages and Literatures graduate seminar on 19th century writer Machado de Assis, a preeminent Brazilian novelist, found the setting challenging but comfortable, and they described Schwarz as "extremely knowledgeable, intellectually honest and accessible."

Schwarz was born to a leftist Jewish family who remained in Austria "longer than it should have" —Germany annexed Austria in March 1938, forcing Professor Schwarz's family to flee in August. Many factors made Brazil the destination point of this Austrian family, the decisive one being the fact that most other countries had quotas or placed other obstacles in the way of Jewish families. This exile would have an impact on Schwarz's relation to Austrian culture. He says he considers himself an Austrian of the 20s and 30s, despite having been born in Vienna in 1938, pointing out "the only contact I had with Austrian culture (German was spoken at home) was through my parents, who belonged to that generation."

In 1969 he would face exile once again, although this time it would not be permanent. A 1964 military coup began to have repercussions in Brazil's intellectual life of the country in 1968. Prior to that period, the university itself had been able to co-exist with military

rule, according to Schwarz, who observed "despite the existence of a right-wing dictatorship, the cultural hegemony of the left [was] virtually complete" (*Culture and Politics in Brazil: 1964-1969*). As long as they did not organize meetings with workers, farm laborers or seamen, the Castelo Branco government made no attempt

to persecute socialist intellectuals or prevent the circulation of their artistic (or even doctrinal) material. However, after students emerged as a powerful group desiring to re-establish links between cultural production and the masses, the regime responded with repression in December 1968. After this so-called "coup within the coup,"

many intellectuals were forced to emigrate.

Schwarz went to Paris in 1969, where he taught Brazilian literature and continued his graduate studies. He had pursued studies in literature before (1961-1963), obtaining a masters degree from the Department of Comparative Literature at Yale University, which was then directed by the famous comparatist René Wellek. His prior training had been in the social sciences (University of São Paulo, 1957-60) —training that influenced what later became his materialist approach to literature. With a French government scholarship, he completed his studies in literature at the Sorbonne with a dissertation on Machado de Assis.

Schwarz reflects on exile as an idea, as well as an experience, noting that the intellectual in exile often has to face a cruel paradox. "While the socio-political [and thus collective] circumstances that lead a person to leave a country might be terrible in themselves, being exiled can sometimes be productive at an individual level," he observed. "In terms of my intellectual experience, the years in Paris were extremely productive. In Paris, for example, we could discuss Brazil's situation, something which could not have happened in Brazil after '68. The Brazilian community there was very active. My friendships with many people date back to those years. Actually, since the community was composed of people from so many different Brazilian states, being together in Paris gave us a sense of unity. It was, in a

Robert F. Kennedy Visiting Professorship in Latin American Studies

Harvard invites eminent Latin Americans—a composer one year, a historian the next, an architect, physiologist, legal scholar, banker, novelist, poet, economist, sociologist, anthropologist—to serve as Robert F. Kennedy Visiting Professors in Latin American Studies each semester.

These distinguished Latin Americans come to Harvard to take advantage of university resources for their own work and also to bring the Latin American perspective and experience to the Harvard community. The Professorship has been established with the support of Edmond Safra and The Republic New York Corporation.

These are the Spring semester RFK Professors:

MARIANO TOMMASI, a leader in the economics of development and political economy, is the Robert F. Kennedy Visiting Professor in the Economics Department for the spring semester. Presently an Associate Professor of Economics at the Universidad de San Andres, Buenos Aires, and the Director of the Center for the Study of Institutional Development in Argentina, Tommasi's research and publications focus on the problems of making macroeconomic policy in developing countries, including inflation, stabilization, economic reform, fiscal policy, and exchange rate management.

MONICA HIRST, a leading scholar of contemporary Brazilian foreign policy as well as of comparative foreign policy in southern South America, is the Robert F. Kennedy Visiting Professor in the Government Department for the spring semester. Currently the Executive Director of the Fundação Centro de Estudos Brasileiros in Buenos Aires and a professor at FLACSO, Hirst has written extensively on evolving Brazilian-U.S. relations, as well as Brazil's relationship to neighboring countries and the broader region of South America.

way, the space in which I started to develop my own sense of being a Latin American intellectual."

Upon his return to Brazil in 1978, Professor Schwarz became a Professor of Literary Theory at the University of Campinas, São Paulo. His preference for a materialist interpretation of cultural history—"an attempt to approach aesthetics from a leftist point of view"—has resulted in many sophisticated works of critical theory. His books include *A Sereia e o Desconfiado*, *Ao Vencedor as Batatas: Forma Literária e Processo Social Nos Inícios do Romance* (1977), *O Pai de Família* (1978), *Que Horas São?* (1987), *Um Mestre Na Periferia do Capitalismo: Machado de Assis* (1990) and *Misplaced Ideas: Essays on Brazilian Culture* (1992).

Schwarz concerned himself

in his studies of Machado de Assis with the narrative consequences of the persistent gap in Brazilian society between liberal ideology (based on free market) and its local "degradation" by the reality of forced labor (slavery). However, the central point is not that incompatibility in itself. According to Schwarz the crucial element was patronage or favor (clientismo), the socio-economic relationship between landowners of the latifundiums and the *agregados*. Although considered free, *agregados* were actually dependent, neither proprietors, nor proletarians; people whose access to social life and its benefits depended on the favor of a wealthy and powerful family. Whereas slavery blatantly contradicts liberal ideas and fixes social roles, patronage uses them for its own purposes.

Both proprietor and *agregado*

identify through their not being slaves. Through this identification, they re-assert a stifled social relation, while giving the appearance of social mobility. In these circumstances, both slavery and liberalism receive a relative sort of validation.

This situation has a curious repercussion in Machado's novels, which often exhibit a dialectic relationship between content and form. For example, Schwarz explores the relationship between some of his narrators capricious narrative scheme and the contradictory desire of the 19th century slave-owning society to enter the modern world, while incongruously keeping in place a social system that could be seen incompatible with modernization. Schwarz observes that Brazil often gives an impression of "ill assortedness," what he defines else-

where as "unmanageable contrasts, disproportions, nonsense, anachronisms and outrageous compromises." This "ill assortedness"—elegantly displayed in Machado's texts—partially corresponds (though not ideologically) to the combinations which the art of Brazilian Modernism, and later on, Tropicalism, have taught us to appreciate. Schwarz is now tracing some of the topics already examined in Machado's novels in the work of other Brazilian authors. He believes that those issues have not died out, but rather they have changed in what he calls Brazil's heterodox modernization.

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Librarian Turned Detective

Harvard in the Literary Limelight

BY JUNE CAROLYN ERICK

A LIBRARIAN'S MUNDANE afternoon in the Widener Library stacks and a subsequent sleepless night have thrust Harvard into the limelight throughout the Spanish-speaking literary world.

The discovery of two unpublished poems by Nicaraguan modernist Rubén Darío in his own handwriting, as well as dozens of books from his private collection, have sparked headlines in Mexico, Spain, Nicaragua, Argentina, and Miami. Mexican poet and literary critic Carmen Boullosa traveled to Cambridge to see the resulting exhibit "Rubén Darío at Har-

vard: Books and Manuscripts from the Poet's Library" at Houghton Library and told her readers in the prestigious *Reforma* newspaper of Mexico City, "The very trees of Cambridge with their ebullient yet melancholy beauty seemed to applaud the return of our poet to the news."

Weatherhead Center for International Affairs Harvard University Fellow (1998-1989) Roger Cerda emotionally e-mailed Harvard's David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, "Here in Nicaragua, this story is all an event. Harvard prestige is being mentioned again and

again, because now it is related to our main national glory. For us, Darío is a mix of Faulkner, Twain, etc. all together!" Professor José Antonio Mazzotti, a Darío enthusiast from the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, invited Nicaraguan poet Julio Valle Castillo, author of a screenplay about Rubén Darío slated to star Antonio Banderas, to lecture on Darío in December with the support of the Gustavo Brillembourg Memorial Fund.

All this international buzz began on a quiet day two years ago when David Whitesell, Houghton library rare book

cataloguer, decided to wander over to Widener to check out a minor cataloguing problem.

After completing his task, Whitesell, a former bookseller, began to browse and noticed an attractive old book with a red binding. He discovered that the poetry book, *Eglantinas* by an obscure Argentine poet named Pedro J. Naón, had a handwritten dedication to Rubén Darío, generally considered the father of Spanish Modernist poetry and one of the greatest poets ever to write in Spanish. As he returned the book to the shelf, the back side of the book caught his attention. The block-stamped pub-



JUNE CAROLYN ERLICK

Student looks at *La Prensa*

lisher's device on the back cover had carefully been converted into a drawing of a seashell and the words "El Caracol, (Spanish for seashell), Rubén Darío, 1901" were written in eloquent black ink. He opened the book and saw several handwritten pages, thought "this isn't possible," and returned the book to its shelf.

Whitesell confesses it was his longest sleepless night. He returned the next day to compare the handwriting inside the book with known examples of Darío's handwriting. It matched. The book contained two unknown poems, one a fragment of six lines beginning with the words "tristeza, tristeza" (Spanish for sadness, sadness), the other "Epistolas" dedicated to his Paris roommate Amado Nervo, as well as earlier versions of two of Darío's most famous poems from "Cantos de vida y esperanza" (1905).

Darío had apparently decided to use the gift from the Argentine poet as his own poetry notebook, taking

advantage of the fact that the handsome bound edition was printed on only one side of the page.

"It was a very exciting experience for me," confessed Whitesell, who had studied Darío's poetry in high school. "I never imagined that I would be the one to first see these poems in his own handwriting."

Whitesell reasoned there might be more books, and perhaps more manuscripts. Armed

with the date of purchase, September 11, 1916, he searched through the Harvard archives until he found the bill, together with a list of 180 books in Spanish offered by a Madrid bookseller to Harvard. Several of the books on the list were clearly marked, "dedicated to Rubén Darío" or "with notes by Rubén Darío." Harvard Professor J. D. M. Ford, in charge of the acquisition of Spanish and French books at the time, purchased only those books of which the Harvard College Library did not have a copy.

One by one, Whitesell tracked down each book among the five million volumes at Widener. Some carried dedications to Darío; others were bound in the distinctive

half red sheep and marble board binding in which Darío dressed many of his books. Of the 180 titles on the list by the Spanish bookseller Joaquín Medinilla, 45 definitely belonged to Darío and another 21 almost certainly did. The Harvard College Library evidently acquired 43 of the 66 Darío volumes, according to Whitesell. It paid the equivalent of \$575 in 1999 dollars for them.

Forty of the 43 volumes have been plucked from the Widener stacks and transferred to rare books at Houghton Library. One book became too brittle for use and was replaced

Whitesell reasoned there might be more books, and perhaps more manuscripts.

by a photocopy, preserving the presentation inscription, and two books are still missing. A few of the other books acquired by Harvard from these lists may possibly be Darío's, but there is as yet sufficient evidence.

Many of the books had notes by Darío in the margins. Others contain dedications by friends and colleagues such as Delmira Agustini, Alberto Ghirardo, Ricardo Jaimes Freyre, Leopoldo Lugones,

Rufino Blanco-Fombona y Ricardo Rojas. In 1914, Darío's old friend, the Argentine poet Ricardo Jaimes Freyre, gave him a copy of his classic study of Spanish versification "Leyes de la versificación castellana" (1912). Generations of Harvard students have checked out the book from Widener, perhaps without realizing that the "Rubén" of the dedication was the famous poet.

Yet, the first book discovered was the best; no further manuscripts of Darío's were found. Whitesell, who tracked down the books in his free time, says the discovery of books owned by Darío at the time of his death in itself is an important contribution to literary scholarship.

"What is clear—and what makes the Harvard find so important—is that nearly all of the 40 Harvard books were ones that Darío chose to keep, and did keep as he moved repeatedly," Whitesell observed. "Hence we need to view each book, as far as we can, through Darío's eyes: why did he value it sufficiently to keep it, when others were apparently discarded?"

June Carolyn Erlick is publications director of the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies. She lived in Nicaragua between 1984 and 1988, and is a self-confessed fan of both Rubén Darío and Antonio Banderas.



Coatsworth on Sabbatical Solbrig Acting Director

DRCLAS Director John H. Coatsworth, Monroe Gutman Professor of Latin American Affairs, is on sabbatical leave during calendar year 2000. Otto T. Solbrig, Bussey Professor of Biology, will serve as Acting Director during Coatsworth's leave.

What's Inside



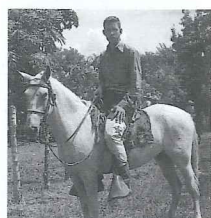
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