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Peace in Our Time? *Louis J. Halle*

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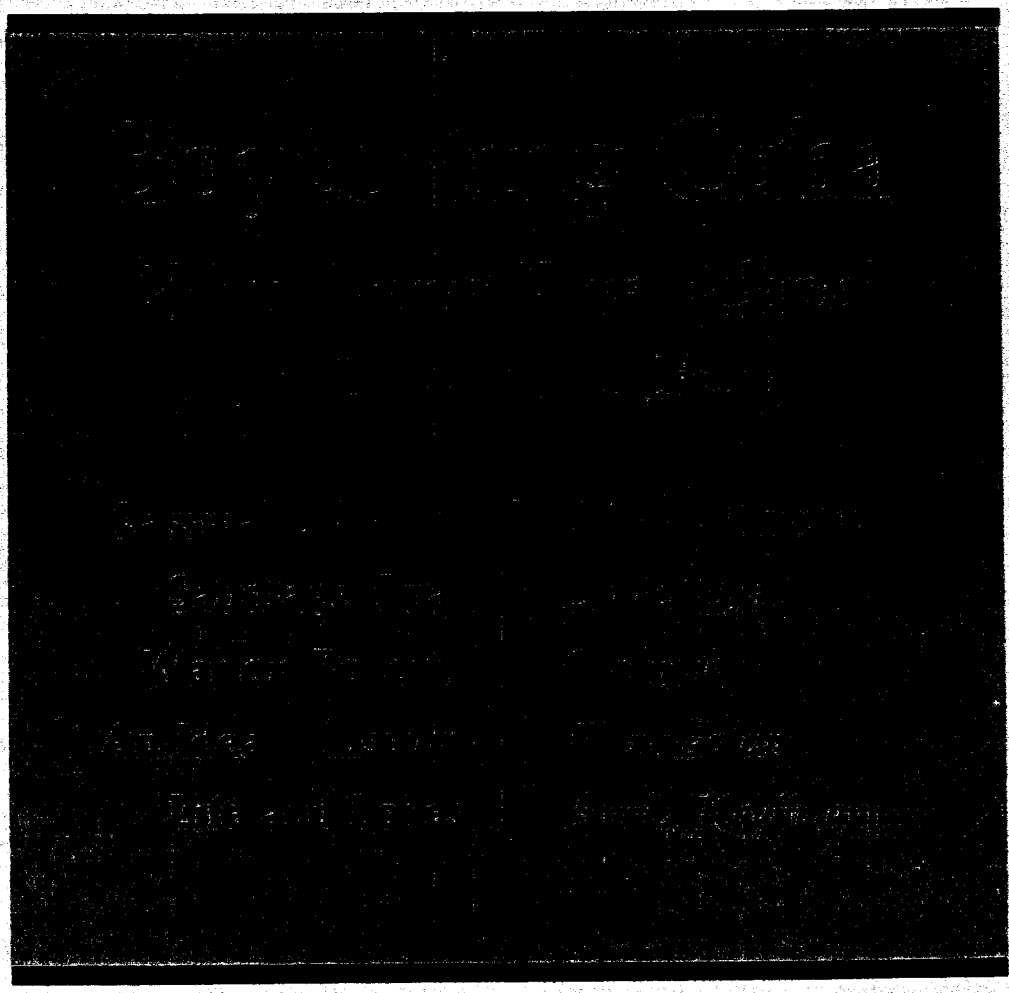

under no circumstances would it ever fire its nuclear warheads, its survival and the survival of its allies would still depend on the belief of any powerful rival in the possibility that it would fire them. It is not easy to get out of this dilemma without resort to wishful thinking.

If the military use of the great strategic panoplies is not to be rationally justified in any circumstances, it follows that any strategic plans involving such use must be less than rational. This should be kept in mind when we read criticisms of the alternative plans that are made. Critics pointed out that the strategy of "massive retaliation," set forth by Secretary of State Dulles on January 22, 1954, was irrational, as it surely was. When a contrary strategy was set forth by Secretary of Defense McNamara, in an address at Ann Arbor, Michigan, on June 16, 1962, some of the same critics again noted that it was irrational – and, again, it surely was. The point these critics may have missed, however, is the one made here: that any strategy which they or anyone else could devise for actually firing the great nuclear weapons in combat must in some measure, at least, be irrational. And yet, such a strategy has to be devised because it is not now possible to dispense with the contingent threat of actually firing such dread nuclear weapons.

If the United States destroyed its nuclear panoply today the world would, I think, quickly become unstabilized; there would be spreading chaos leading to far-flung warfare and, in all likelihood, the use of nuclear weapons by some nation that, unlike the United States, had not thrown them away. Perhaps the destruction by the Soviet Union of its military panoply would not have a like effect, but I think it would be hard to convince Moscow of this.

A more precise word for peace, in terms of the practical world, is stability – not the stability of an eternally frozen *status quo* but the maintenance of stability in the inevitable process of secular change. Today the great nuclear panoplies are essential elements in such stability as exists. Our present purpose must be to continue the process of learning how to live with them.

Boycotting Cuba

Whose Interest Does It Serve?

by Jean Daniel

The day of my arrival in Santiago de Cuba marked the beginning of a week-long demonstration of Cuban solidarity with the Venezuelan insurgents. It was Sunday. From the high portico of the Spanish cathedral a large number of young women – waiting for mass to begin and dressed for the beach except for their mantilla-draped hair – gazed at huge banners on the other side of the little square, describing the "martyrdom" of the Venezuelan people. These banners were displayed above an information office of the United Party of the Socialist Revolution – Fidel Castro's party.

People sauntering in the street would stop to stare at photographs depicting – according to the inscriptions – atrocities committed "by Betancourt's legions against Venezuelan patriots"; then they would shake their heads and pass on, finally settling down in the rocking chairs on the terrace of the hurricane-ravaged Grand Hotel, where they would get a shoeshine while perusing the paper and sipping guava, mango or papaya juice. (On this particular morning the coffee had not yet been distributed.)

The "solidarity of the Cuban and the Venezuelan people" was the subject of proclamations over the radio, on television and in newsreels. Allusions were made to Guatemala, where the 1954 uprising had been crushed in a few days; then to the Cuban Revolution, which was preparing to celebrate its fifth anniversary – all in an effort to believe that this time the Venezuelans' struggle might end in victory.

The reception accorded this campaign was varied, depending on the part of the island. In Oriente Province, where the impact of the hurricane was especially disastrous and the thousand-and-one problems of daily existence had become so pressing, it cannot be said

that interest amounted to more than casual sympathy.

Nevertheless, an old Bayamo peasant with a lined face who was the superintendent of a "people's farm" and who later offered me coffee in the one room where he lived with his pregnant wife, seemed much concerned. "If the United States [the 'Yankees'] should intervene in Venezuela," he said, "they won't stop there." On wooden shelves there were yellowed fragments of old issues of the *Reader's Digest*, and a book which he handed to me: *Fundamental Principles of the Marxist Philosophy*, a 900-page work by Constantinov. I smiled, and he reacted immediately: "Of course, I can't understand this book. You see, I only learned to read a short time ago. A young 'comrade' from the city taught me to read last year during the literacy campaign. But every now and then I read a sentence or two. . . ."

I answered that something else had caused me to smile: I had arrived in Santiago from Havana in an Ilyushin-14 airplane; I had taken a Czech bus from Santiago to Bayamo; except for Melville's *Moby Dick*, I had seen nothing but translations of Russian works in the windows of bookstores and on the counters of newsstands in Bayamo. And now, here, in this remote valley farm, I find a manual of Marxist philosophy.

My peasant friend was not in the least embarrassed. He asked me if the Ilyushin plane had flown well and if the Czech bus had taken me where I wanted to go. Twirling his mustache in a roguish gesture, he said: "That's not all, either. During the hurricane, I don't know what would have become of us without the Soviet helicopters. And take note, please: they were piloted by 20-year-old Cubans. Furthermore, if you go into a drugstore, you will find medicine and drugs from the Socialist countries on sale there. In time of illness it is most helpful to have these things. And let me tell you something: if other countries would like to send us planes, buses, books, medical supplies, I quote Fidel, we are prepared to gratefully welcome everything. We aren't the ones who are creating the blockade."

I asked this stolid farmer whether he was a Communist; humbly he replied that he was not yet educated enough for that, but perhaps if the farm for which he was responsible did well, then the "comrades" might admit him into their midst. I asked him what Communism meant to him; he told me that it consisted of jointly sharing all the island's problems, and of not letting the North Americans make Cuba's laws. He added that this was what the Venezuelans were fighting for. I then tried to tell him that the United States was engaged in a test of strength with the Russians; that it feared the expansion of Russian influence and according to the Americans the issue was no longer simply Cuba or Venezuela, but of world war. At this the peasant smiled and remarked calmly: "Those Americans always have a good excuse to hold onto sugar or oil."

"They Don't Have a Fidel"

Later, we went into the dining hall of the collective farm and shared a meal with some 60 workers. The dinner consisted of an abundant serving of greasy rice dished up with black beans and two pieces of meat floating in the mixture. When we were through eating, the workers gathered around us. As they stood there listening to their superintendent explain about our interview, these Cubans with their straw hats and intermixture of Haitian blood, reminded me of one of Diego Rivera's Mexican murals. Then they answered my questions. How much did they earn? Between one and two and a half dollars a day. This was a lot more than before, but since the cost of living had risen so much, was their purchasing power really greater? Yes, because before they only worked during the sugar-cane harvest season, whereas now they worked the year around. Are living conditions fairly difficult? Smiling, they replied: somewhat. Are they afraid of an American invasion? No, because the Russians are standing guard. Do they hate the Americans? No. The 3,000 workers still employed at the American naval base in Guantanamo—not so far from here, after all—have no complaints. Are they content to be working on a government-owned farm? Yes and no, that depends. Most of them had hoped that agrarian reform would distribute small farm holdings; it took a little time before they would admit that the collective cultivation of the land was more profitable. What does Venezuela mean to them? Nothing to some. To others it is a country whose situation is a little like Cuba's, but where the United States is stronger, "because down there they don't have a Fidel."

There were about 10 Negroes in the group around us. I asked the superintendent if racism still continued to be a source of conflict in any way. He replied that the Negroes (about a third of the population) are those who have benefited most from the Revolution. A few years ago, in the little town of Santa Clara which lies between Camaguey and Santiago, the city park had one walkway for the whites, one for the mulattoes, and one for the Negroes. There was absolute racial discrimination. Today, Negroes hold posts of responsibility in all collective aspects of social life. The head of the Army, Commander Almeida, is a Negro (incidentally, he is also the author of several novels which are enjoying a current vogue in Cuba). Of course, in certain regions, there are outbreaks of the former racism because, according to the superintendent, "all the Negroes wanted to marry mulatto women, and all the mulattoes wanted to marry whites." When I left the farm to return to

Bayamo, I shared a taxi with a Negro scholarship student who was on his way back from the Soviet Union. "It's really extraordinary, " he said. "I don't know what the United States is like, and it is so close to us; I don't even know what Haiti is like, and it practically touches our island. Yet I have spent a year in the USSR, which is thousands and thousands of miles away from Cuba." He spoke fluent Russian. He had returned from the Soviet Republic of Uzbekistan with a diploma of cotton textile engineer. He was delighted with his stay in Russia, but still he said over and over: "It's absurd, the world has gone mad, everything is topsy-turvy. Why must we go so far afield?"

From my innumerable experiences in Cuba, I have chosen to tell about my visit to this farm because on the basis of observations there I was able to see that there really is a community of ideas between the revolutionary leaders and the masses there. Despite the difficulties (which no one in the island underestimates), despite a degree of discontent, this community of ideas exists.

It is necessary to understand, for example, that the blockade has in no way succeeded in strangling Cuba economically. There is poverty, but never misery; there are food restrictions everywhere, but never famine. The blockade has simply caused the Cubans to concentrate with greater zeal on farming their own land, which is rich, and to equate the Soviet Union with the concepts of generosity, sacrifice and power. Often the Cubans may "ignore" the Russians in Cuba; but they venerate Russia. This is a fact which cannot be denied and which has emerged triumphant from the missiles affair, no matter what the outside world may say

In concentrating on the cultivation of their own soil, the Cubans have doubtless made plenty of blunders; in fact, these are spelled out in full, almost with complacency, in official speeches: self-criticism is the order of the day at Havana and is relentless. Doubtless too, the Cubans realize obscurely that without the Russians, who saved them, they would not be in danger! But in a general way, the blockade has provoked two reactions: the first is one of adaptation to it; the second is one of defiance and bravado.

The adaptative process is breathtaking. To the great dismay of the Soviet and Czech technicians (who observe the Cuban revolution like missionaries observing the way their Catholicism "takes" among the Africans), socialism in Cuba has preserved religion, dancing, feminine coquetry, abstract art, vaudeville, nightclubs and freedom for writers if not freedom of the press. Fidel doesn't want anything to impair that decidedly irrepressible gaiety of the Cuban people: it is a real counteragent to the difficult living conditions on the island. And since there has been nothing to teach the Cubans what the Stalinist phase of collectivism might be like, they are discovering that socialism is singularly different from what Americans say it is. They don't realize that they are creating a new look with their style of socialism.

Cuban defiance of the blockade manifests itself in all kinds of ways. Whenever Soviet oil tankers arrive in the ports of Havana and Santiago, it represents a fresh victory for the Cubans. They know that if the tanker doesn't arrive, electricity can vanish within 48 hours, since there is no other source of energy in Cuba. But the tanker *does* arrive. Actually, the Cubans themselves can't quite get over the fact that they have defied the United States and lived to tell the tale. It is somehow as though they had committed a great folly, and got away with it. This is why they feel free to complain about everything: the high cost of living, their inability to buy anything with what they earn, the local bureaucracy or the military service. They bitterly regret their hostile relatives or friends in exile. But the moment there is even the slightest aspersion cast, they unite in defiance. Filled with a pride which is its legacy from Spain, this nation feels that the gods have been on its side in a victory over the geographic determinism which the Communists themselves, in fact especially the Communists, have described as insurmountable.

A Feeling of Mingled Sympathy and Fear

At the same time, however, like the Negro engineer, the Cubans find this all "absurd"; and like the superintendent at the people's farm, the Venezuelan situation in particular inspires them with mingled sympathy and fear. The same can be said of the reactions of various members of the Cuban government with whom I had interviews during my tour. Here is how they see the immediate future.

We have arrived, they say, at a sort of truce with the United States. From time to time, this truce is interrupted by the aid which CIA lends to counter-revolutionary expeditions, but these interruptions do not worry us unduly. The Russians are helping us and can no longer abandon us (nor do they want to abandon us, if they really did want to). We don't know what the intentions of the new President of the United States are, but intentions count for less than facts, and one fact is that to attack us henceforth means the same as attacking the Soviet Union. Assuming this, we are nonetheless aware of our economic dependence on the USSR and of the burden we represent for them. In four years, if the possibility is left open to us (in other words, if we are not forced to devote all our efforts to military security), we will enjoy a certain degree of economic independence. You ask how far our solidarity with the Venezuelans goes. We could reply by asking how far the solidarity of the United States goes with the counter-revolutionaries of Miami. The situation

down there doesn't depend on us; to say so flatters us too much. It is the result of the inability of the United States and her Venezuelan allies to meet the aspirations of the Venezuelan people.

This is what some leaders say. There are other Cuban leaders who, to tell the truth, are far from angry when American propaganda denounces the subversive activity of Castroism throughout Latin America. It increases tenfold the radius of influence of the Cuban revolution and gives Fidel a bargaining position. Some day, they reason, it will surely be necessary for the US to make a deal: why not trade the abandonment of "subversion" by Cuba for renunciation by the US of "aid to the counter-revolution"?

In fact, there *are* contraband shipments from Cuba. That is known. There are shipments going to Central America, to Venezuela and elsewhere. These shipments bring food, men, sometimes arms – all in small quantities – as US authorities are aware. But as always in history, where there is a blockade, there are those who attempt to break it; one is not always able to distinguish between political contraband and plain piracy. The mercenaries may pretend to be Castroites and the politicians may pretend to be mercenaries. Breaking a blockade may, after all, be good business.

"We Have a Chain Reaction Here"

Making all due allowances, the Venezuelan insurgents pose to Cuba the same problem as Cuba posed to the Russians: there is complete ideological sympathy, and during the early stages there was a considerable common strategic interest. But as soon as matters develop to the point where the aiding country is forced into a negotiating position, the people aided become a dangerous liability. Peaceful coexistence between the Russians and the Americans barely escaped being compromised by the Cubans, and in the same way the truce between the Americans and the Cubans is now in danger of being compromised by Venezuela. We have a chain reaction here, and in Latin America there is a danger that it will not be arrested; for the consensus is that the Venezuelan political situation is so immensely complex as to be insoluble.

At the same time, certain Cuban leaders – not all, but not the least important of them – believe that a dialogue (indirect or otherwise) may be possible with the Americans; that such a dialogue might transform the present, strained truce into peaceful coexistence; and that Venezuela could wreck the possibility of such a dialogue with Washington. Thus, for the first time, there is in Cuba something like Titoism (or perhaps we should call it "Khrushchevism") – opposed to the "permanent revolution" in Latin America. In other words, the Venezuelan situation does not inspire an optimism that is untinged with anxiety. The Cubans passionately admire the courage of the insurgents, but they are nervous about the political consequences of what may happen in Venezuela.

What choices has the US now? What are the alternatives in regard to Cuba?

An attempt at direct invasion might well touch off a world conflict. Indirect aid to such a project (needling raids by exiles) has achieved no positive results. The hope that the blockade would cause Castro to collapse, or prove an unacceptable economic burden to the USSR, has proved vain. To reasonable observers, viewing the situation dispassionately, the only realistic recourse left is the development of Cuban collectivism along lines which, so far as Cuban foreign policy is concerned, would not be bound to the USSR. Despite my reluctance to interpret the thinking of a statesman no longer able to reject or confirm my version I am of the firm opinion that President Kennedy had modified his view that if Khrushchev "let go" of Cuba, he would suffer an irreparable loss of prestige in the Socialist world. The President was, I believe, prepared to begin considering conversations with Castro.

In other words, from America's standpoint one could wish nothing better for Cuba than to adopt the same position as Algeria (I say Algeria's position to avoid saying Yugoslavia's), or better yet, the relationship of Finland with Russia. Mr. Lyndon Johnson was apparently much impressed, on the occasion of his last trip abroad, by Russo-Finnish coexistence; it does not encroach upon Finnish autonomy and constitutes no danger whatever to Denmark, Sweden and Norway.

Is this too Utopian a solution, considering American public opinion in the wake of Kennedy's tragic death? No. Indeed, a means for relieving the situation is ready at hand – *one that at this precise moment coincides with the wishes of the Cubans, the Russians and certain Western nations.* I am absolutely convinced that we can expect very real changes in Cuba as soon as oil, foodstuffs, medical supplies and books begin flowing into Havana – from elsewhere than the Soviet bloc. To bring this about, the United States would have to cease threatening retaliatory measures against West European companies which choose to do business with Cuba. For example, the US auto industry would have to stop – and for the long-run prestige of the West – its punitive gestures toward French diplomats when French firms seek to establish plants in Havana.

There is little time left before the Cuban people adapt completely to a life based on Soviet economic aid (and to Eastern civilization); before the Cuban example becomes a precedent for Latin America to create further Cold War situations; in short, before more people in that part of the world come to look upon the Soviet Union as their sole and supreme recourse and salvation.