CHAPTER I

Evolution and Consolidation of Cuba's Communist Party

The history of the evolution of the Communist Party of Cuba (Partido Communista de Cuba, PCC) is stretched over nearly the span of the 20th Century. Although officially launched in August 1925, the antecedents to the formation of the party, according to most historians, go back to the beginning of the present century. Most Cuban historians are of the view that the party owes its birth to the socialist workers party formed as far back as 1905 which for various reasons had become splintered since and, eventually under the influence of Bolshevik ideas forged into a single, unified Communist Party. An attempt is made in this introductory Chapter to sketch briefly the consolidation of the party and its evolutionary trajectory against the backdrop of the tortuous political history of Cuba punctuated by the dictatorial regimes of Gerardo Machado, Fulgencio Batista, and distorted by the machinations of the United States.

Antecedents of the Communist Party of Cuba

On 16 August 1925 the Communist Party of Cuba was established. Two years before, Carlos Balino, a follower of Jose Marti and co-founder of the socialist workers' party, labour leaders Alejandro Barreiro, Jose Pena Vilabo, Jose Rego, and Joaquin Valdes, and Jose Miguel Perez joined in forming the Agrupacion Comunista de la Habana. A year after, 21 years old student leader, Julio Antonio Mella known in intellectual circles as an active anti-imperialist and revolutionary, joined the
The Agrupacion Comunista established contact with the Communist Party of Mexico, when Enrique Flores Magon, Mexican communist leader came to Cuba to assist and weld the various small communist groups into a single party.

With these initial efforts, the founding party congress was convened in mid-August of 1925 in Havana. Against the announcement at the congress which claimed that the party had some eighty members, only a fraction of these were present. One of the founders, a Polish-born communist, Yunger Semchowitz wrote fifteen years later of this meeting:

How small and insignificant that Party Congress appeared....The largest of the amalgamated organizations, the Agrupacion comunista, had a total of 27 members.... Just ten comrades took part in the Congress.

At the congress delegates expressed special thanks to -- the Mexican Communist Party, three-member delegation of the "Hebrew section" of the Havana communist group and its "youth section", of whom Semchowitz (Fabio Grobart) was

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1. Antonio Mella was chairman of a student congress in Havana which had called for university reforms, struggle against imperialism, and the founding of a people's university to be named after Jose Marti.

2. Later on named Fabio Grobart.

3. Fabio Grobart, 15 años de lucha,1940,p.3. Other sources claimed that thirteen delegates and five others attended the proceedings. See, Pedro Serviat,40 Aniversario de la Fundacion del Partido Comunista (Havana,1963),p.168. For more details also see Hugh Thomas, Cuba:The Pursuit of Freedom (London:Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1971),p.577

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The collaboration of the "Hebrew Comrades" in the new-born Cuban party was acknowledged as important not only because of their knowledge of the German and Russian languages, but also for their familiarity with the works of Karl Marx and Engels, in contrast to most of the Cuban members who were "communists of the heart" with only the vaguest notions of Marxist theory.

During the founding party congress, a nine-member Central Committee, with Jose Miguel Perez as secretary-general was elected. His leadership was however short-lived because of the repressive policies unleashed by the then Machado government. Perez was arrested and deported because of his Spanish nationality only a few days after his election. The potential second in command, Mella also was arrested and was forced into exile when, in Mexico he was murdered in 1929. A third leading member of the founding congress, Carlos Balino died a natural death in early 1926. In these trying tragic circumstances next secretary-general, Pena


5. That the delegates of the communist party attending the congress were ignorant about the communist ideology in principle and practice of the Comintern, according to some writers, is uncontested. The leading member, Antonio Mella, it appears raised certain rudimentary questions regarding the nature of party cell and democratic centralism as well as his refusal to contest in the parliamentary elections. So radical was his view which ran counter tangential to the communist ideology, it is being claimed that it was thanks to the efforts of the known Cuban delegates -- Flores Magon from Mexico and "Hebrew Comrades", Mella could be influenced to toe the party line. Mella, often described as a young caudillo, (a misnomer in the Party) not in the habit of submitting to the collective discipline of the party hierarchy. When arrested in November 1925 resorted to a hunger strike on his own initiative without any directive from the party. Because of his intransigence he was expelled from the party and it was only subsequent to his expulsion the communist party formally accepted the leadership of Comintern in Moscow.
Vilaboá, unable to perform his duties because of his frequent illness was succeeded by Joaquin Valdes, who in turn was forced into exile shortly thereafter. The remaining founding members were forced into oblivion. Consequently, the party reached to a point, as Fabio Grobart states, "in effect, without leadership and organization. It had to start all over again". 

In these rather critical circumstances, it was the advent of Ruben Martinez Villena and his consistent and sustained efforts that gave a new impetus to the still-born Communist Party. Villena—an intellectual, poet and lawyer, influenced by Mella and Grobart—embraced Marxism-Leninism and joined the party in 1927. Though suffering from tuberculosis, he infused new life in the party organisation as well as took measures to infiltrate into the Cuban National Confederation of Labour (CNOC), initially dominated by anarcho-syndicalists. He "expanded and strengthened the Party's organization, and, above all, succeeded in creating a determined and dedicated leadership, for the most part made up of young intellectuals". Machado regime engineered the assassination of anarcho-syndicalist leaders and Villena's efforts to appease them led several anarcho-syndicalists to convert to communism. As a result, a number of Communist Party members moved into leading union positions. Nevertheless, the communists’ call for indefinite general strike in 1930 along with CNOC’s 200,000 workers proved a fiasco largely on account of the governments' 


8. Communists like Cesar Vilar, Alejandro Barreiro and Sandalio Junco assumed important positions in labour union.
repressive measures. Under pressure, Martínez Villena hid out successfully in Havana and finally managed to flee to the Soviet Union. But he returned to Cuba at the end of 1932 in order to lead the Communist Party during the decisive phase of the anti-Machado revolution. Thus, he was the main leader of the Party from 1927 to 1930 and, again in 1933 until his death in January 1934. He worked for the party without assuming the post of secretary-general. After Valdes, leadership of the party appears to have been held successively by Dr. Jorge Vivo (who then emigrated to Mexico), by Jose Antonio Guerra and by the black physician and apostle of "negro nationalism", Dr. Martin Castellanos. Finally, in 1934, a former shoe-maker, by name, Francisco Calderio (Blas Roca) assumed office of secretary-general and led the party until its dissolution.

Mella, Martínez Villena, and their closest Cuba-born comrades-in-arms were certainly revolutionaries, but just as certainly they were not Bolsheviks. Rather they were "communists of the heart", idealists, individualists, radical democrats, nationalists, anti-imperialists and taking themselves as the most radical participants in the movement against Machado. At the same time, most of their proletarian fellow-combatants followed anarcho-syndicalism. They followed individual loyalty rather than institutional commitment and also lacked theoretical knowledge. So, there was little in common between the Cuban communists and Comintern's advocacy of class struggle. Cuban communists were more concerned with achieving freedom and
democracy instead of "immediate material demands of the workers".\textsuperscript{9} No "illegal apparatus" existed any more than did factory cells; membership fluctuated, and dues were paid meagrely. Therefore, it was essential, in the eyes of the Comintern that the party be "bolshevized."

The Executive Committee of the Comintern in preparation for the Seventh World Congress was of the opinion that the Communist Party of Cuba before 1930 was "a small sectarian group of no more than 250 to 300 members and having little connection with the masses".\textsuperscript{10} The Comintern's view was conveyed by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the United States (CPUSA) to the Cuban party in a long letter which read:

The Cuban Party was far removed from bolshevism, was lagging behind developments and therefore incapable of leading the growing revolutionary movement. Its main weakness lay in proclaiming abstract political slogans instead of concrete, everyday proletarian demands. This tendency had been evidenced during the strike of March 1930, which the Cuban Party had conducted under the slogans of legalization of the labor unions, restoration of democratic liberties, and the overthrow of the Machado dictatorship—a line which blurred the distinction between the Communists and the bourgeois opponents of Machado.\textsuperscript{11}


\textsuperscript{10} The Communist International before the Seventh World Congress (Moscow: Leningard, 1935), p. 494.

\textsuperscript{11} The Communist (Washington, DC), vol. 10, no. 2, January 1931.
In addition to such "rightist" deviations, the letter charged the Cuban party with deviations to the "left". Specifically, its attempt to proclaim an "unlimited general strike" was dismissed as meaningless and even dangerous because it amounted to a *de facto* call for revolution in the absence of prior preparations. Such leftist blunders, said the letter, had tended to isolate the communists from the masses and to strengthen "the position of the social-fascist [sic] union leaders".\(^\text{12}\)

The letter had a far-reaching impact on the Cuban party. By November 1930 some drastic measures were taken--several prominent members, including Sandalio Junco, were expelled to purge the party.\(^\text{13}\) As a result, the party membership increased from 300 to 500. Even with these pre-emptive measures, the party was "still seriously hampered by strong remnants of petty-bourgeois reformism and of radicalism, as well as by organizational shortcomings".\(^\text{14}\) Also, the party took note of the limitations like--small percentage of the native-born citizens, a small number of negro members, lack of the party cells in the factories, absence of a fully-developed programme of action, and no control over press organs. Due to these major weaknesses, the bourgeois opponents of Machado who were leading the masses seemed to be the only force fighting the dictatorship.

\(^{\text{12}}\) Goldenberg, n.9, p.66.

\(^{\text{13}}\) Junco was a labour activist, joined the Cuban Communist Party in 1926 or 1927. Soon thereafter he had to leave Cuba and went to Mexico, where he assisted Mella in organising the Cuban immigrants group. After a brief visit to Soviet Union, he returned to Cuba in 1929, rebelled against the Comintern's ultra-leftist line, and organised his own party faction, which led to his expulsion.

1933 Revolution and the Communists

After returning from the Soviet union, Martinez Villena assessed his party's achievements as:

A sugar worker's union affiliated with the CNOC had at last been organized at the end of 1932. The Communist Party had won *de facto* 'semi-legal' status because of the authorities' inability to suppress its activity. Strikes and revolts had already taken place in rural areas. Armed workers' militia units had been organized in Central Cuba, and Party membership in the province of Santa Clara had multiplied sixfold within a few months. The red hammer-and-sickle flag had been hoisted over several sugar mills. The morale of the government was crumbling, and in many places its soldiers were refusing to resist the workers. The revolution was fast ripening. 15

Also, unrest was growing in both urban and rural areas, ABC organisation's terrorist activities were on the rise, bourgeois and petty-bourgeois were openly opposing Machado's dictatorship. At the same time, US president Franklin D. Roosevelt designated Sumner Welles as ambassador to Cuba apparently to mediate between the Machado government and the opposition and, if necessary, even direct Machado to resign. So, it was prime time for the communists to prove their worth. Fortuitously, with a strike call given by CNOC following the bus company workers striking work opposition to Machado's regime mounted in all other sectors demanding his deposition.

On 3 August, the Communist Party issued a manifesto, with emphasis on--an eight-hour work day in the industrial sector; payment of all back wages; measures to relieve unemployment; cancellation of debt of farmers and small entrepreneurs; and suspension of debt payments to US banks; equality for all Cubans regardless of race; full rights of self-determination for Negroes in their majority area; and to cap it all the "overthrow of the blood-stained Machado regime"; the "liberation of political prisoners"; and the "restoration of democratic liberties".\textsuperscript{16}

Soon rumours spread that Machado had resigned, and the masses came out on the roads to celebrate the event. The government reacted by directing the police to meet the resultant violence. The evolving situation, posed two options to Machado--either to step down or enter into agreement with communists. He opted for the latter and on 8 August called in the communist leaders of the CNOC and promised to meet their major demands including legalisation of the union movement. Communists availed the offer by seeking a compromise with Machado. Factors responsible for this compromise were--Comintern's Caribbean Bureau through its directive had desired that the working-class demands for concrete concessions must be met first and at the same time draw a sharp dividing line between Cuban communists and the bourgeois-democratic forces. Further, fear of US intervention if disorders continued also seemed to have facilitated the compromise option. After entering into compromise, Villena publicly appealed to the workers "not to join the other, 'bourgeois' opposition groups in insisting that the strike go on until the

\textsuperscript{16} Goldenberg, n.9, p.67.
dictatorship was overthrown", and urged the workers to return to work.\textsuperscript{17}

The appeal to call off the strike went unheeded by the masses who regarded it as all the more a betrayal because it came just one day after the police firing. This decision proved dangerous for the communists, as on 11 August the army leadership after conferring with Sumner Welles asked for the resignation of Machado. The very next day Machado fled the country. Carlos Manuel de Cespedes, acceptable to the US, as well as to the army leaders and bourgeois-democrats, was installed as provisional president of Cuba. Thus, the communists were stifled to isolation in the emerging political scenario of Cuba.

**Communists and the Nationalists**

Cespedes's leadership was, however, shortlived. On 4 September 1933 sergeant Fulgencio Batista dismissed the commissioned army officers and assumed command of the armed forces with the help of non-commissioned officers, and appointed Ramon Grau San Martin as provisional president after removing Carlos Manuel de Cespedes \textsuperscript{18} The Grau government lasted only four months. In this short period it issued far-reaching revolutionary decrees, manifestos and laws to successfully implement--eight hour work-day, minimum-wage regulations, legalisation of all parties and labour unions, the right to strike, freedom of the press, and measures benefitting the rural population. Along with it, certain popular measures

\textsuperscript{17} Suarez,n.7,p.2

\textsuperscript{18} Grau San Martin was a politically unknown professor of medicine, but was acceptable to intellectuals, national revolutionaries, and democrats.
like government takeover of the electric-power company, reduction of power rates, unilateral moratorium on all foreign debt payments, and Cubanisation of labour i.e. at least half the employees of all enterprises in Cuba must be native-born Cubans, and the rest must be naturalized.

These initiatives doubtless affected adversely US interests. No wonder, therefore US withheld its recognition of the Grau regime and appointed special envoy Jefferson Coffery to bring an end to what it felt as the chaotic, revolutionary and anti-imperialistic Grau government by political means. At home, Grau was confronted by--dismissed army officers, the landowners, capitalists, industrialists and businessmen fearing the loss of their property holdings and profits. Also, ABC's violent activities cost many lives. There were the tens of thousands of Spaniards who feared losing their jobs as a result of the Grau government's Cubanisation of labour.

Commenting on this situation, German communist historian Jurgen Hell, appreciated Grau as "the stout and incorruptible anti-imperialist and patriot--[who] embodied the national revolution.... The revolution could have been saved if there had been a national block with a single anti-imperialistic program and a single candidate-Grau San Martin".19 But the communists, instead of supporting Grau government, stridently attacked him as the representative of the big landowners and the bourgeoisie. Also, they criticized the decree "nationalizing" labour as narrowly nationalist. Communists supported the slogan: "All power to the Soviets!". They

19. Quoted in Goldenberg, p.9, p.68.
were not able to take advantage of the growing rift within the government particularly between the army leader Batista and the minister of interior, Dr. Antonio Guiteras. The communists criticized the revolutionary-democratic principles of Guiteras as "left social-fascist" and Batista as "fascist, US puppet". Communists during the second congress of the Communist Party, held in April 1934, justified their stand by claiming that the growing influence of Grau and Guiteras among the workers presented "a special danger" which made it "urgently necessary to unmask them". The resolution adopted by the congress declared

...the fundamental danger lies in the influence of the bourgeois-landlord parties of the "left" and their reformist, anarchist, trotskyite agents.... It is ... necessary to lay down as a specific task the unmasking of these elements and their campaigns of demagogy by exposing the role of the Autenticos [the Party founded by Grau] and Guiteras after coming to power, and their policy in favor of bourgeois-landlord-imperialist domination.

The Cuban communists were perhaps influenced by Comintern, which feared that the Cuban communists might go too far in their 'anti-imperialism' campaign. It was clear from then Comintern's Russian expert for Latin American affairs, G.


21. "The Present Situation: Perspectives and Tasks in Cuba, Resolutions of the Second Congress of the CP of Cuba", The Communist, vol. 13, no. 11, 11 November 1934. Also quoted in John Lister, Cuba: Radical Face of Stalinism (London: Left view Books, 1985), p. 24. In a similar vein, one of the Cuban Communist Party's top officials, Julian Ordoqui, in an article expressed "Guiteras... calls upon the masses to trust that he, with his 'revolution', will solve the situation. [But] as the Communist Party of Cuba has correctly stated, what Guiteras, with his 'left' demagogy, is preparing is a coup d'état in which certain elements of the army are antagonistic to Batista will take part". Quoted in J. Ordoqui, "The Rise of the Revolutionary Movement in Cuba", The Communist, vol. 13, no. 12, December 1934.
Sinani's, advise that the Cuban communists should do everything necessary, through concessions in order to thwart US intervention. He expressed:

The Communist Party of Cuba considers it inadvisable for the workers to seize American enterprises and [instead] puts forward the slogan of worker's control.... The Communist Party of Cuba considers it inadvisable to force the seizure of plantations belonging the American capital and fights above all for considerable reductions in the rent for this land, for the annulment of all the old debts of the peasants, and for improvement of the situation of agricultural workers.... The Communist Party of Cuba considers it advisable for a worker's and peasants' government, if it should be formed, to enter into negotiations with the government of the USA on the conditions for nationalization of big foreign properties while not abandoning this nationalization: i.e., it allows the possibility of buying out these properties. With the same aim, the Communist Party of Cuba allows the possibility of retaining American ownership to some extent in the form of concessions.22

The Cuban communists, in effect, seemed to have joined hands with the reactionaries in a united front against the representatives of the "national bourgeoisie" and turned against nationalism as well as against any extreme form of anti-imperialism. The upshot was that while the party grew both in size (reportedly reaching a membership of 6,000 in 1933) and in influence, it alienated itself from the "national bourgeoisie" and the anti-imperialist and democratic forces in the country. It also failed either to consolidate its influence among labour or to provide any real guidance to the revolutionary peasant groups which took up arms in some parts of the country.

The party congress held in April 1934 critically endorsed that the party was neither a "mass party" nor "bolshevized". Further, the limitations underlined were that the party influenced by opportunistic and anarchist ideas, lacking in discipline, less ideological with no foothold in the armed forces was not able to consolidate its influence in labour and peasant movements. In addition, it was felt that communists wrongly assessed the revolutionary situation in Cuba. Even after the revolutionary movement had already passed its zenith, the party leadership continued to act on the assumption that the revolution was still in an ascending phase. Uptil the end of 1934, the communists had not yet undertaken any meaningful revision of their tactics or made any attempt to forge a united front with the defeated but still militant democratic revolutionary forces.

At the Conference of Latin American Communists in Montevideo in October 1934, the Cuban delegate, nicknamed "Bueno", criticized the call for strike given by communists in March 1934 which in his view was a big flop, and also asserted that the party membership has declined to a mere 4000. Highlighting the difficulty in adhering to an anti-imperialist stance in view of Cuba's economic dependence on the United States, he mentioned the instances in which communist speakers who attacked the US too vehemently were shouted down or prevented from speaking by workers. Further, he added that the communists' efforts of collectivization had been very damaging to them among the rural population.

In a mass strike in March 1935, the communists were incapable of taking any initiative. The leadership of the strike "was in the hands of the national reformists of
the Cuban Revolutionary Party (the *Autenticos*) and the Young Cuba Organization led by Guiteras". The call for strike given by Havana University's radical students quickly spread over the country and caused chaos and as a result law and order situation, electric power, and transportation sectors were paralysed. Even journalists and government employees joined the strike. Havana was rocked by violence and bomb explosions to which president Colonel Cardos Mendieta responded by suspending the constitution and placing the country under martial law.

Thus, the communists, unaware of ground realities in Cuba, preferred to negotiate with the national bourgeois rather than supporting peasants and workers cause. At the Seventh World Congress of the Comintern in the summer of 1935, Cuban delegate Marin stated that his party's "principal mistake" had been "to mechanically place the class interests of the proletariat in opposition to the interests of the national liberation struggle and the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution." 

**Attempts to Forge Alliance**

With the formal blessings of the Comintern World Congress, the era of the popular front was about to begin for communists everywhere, including Cuba. As a result, the Cuban Communist Party "accordingly began to abandon its extremism and to adopt an increasingly moderate position in order to create the popular front


24. Goldenberg, n.9, p. 70.
alliance" recommended by the congress.\textsuperscript{25} To bring it in practice, the Central Committee of the Cuban Party, after its fourth plenum in February 1935, appealed to Guiteras’ Young Cuba Organization for a united front without Grau’s \textit{Autenticos}. But it did not materialize which in fact led to the failure of 1935 general strike. Even the \textit{Autenticos}, if asked to extend their support, would not have accepted it.\textsuperscript{26}

Nevertheless, the party’s Central Committee reiterated the need for the united front by stating:

The Cuban revolution is at present passing through its national phase; and in this phase the revolutionary role played by other strata of the population besides the proletariat and the peasants must not be underestimated, ... all strata of the population ranging from the proletariat to the national bourgeoisie, fraternally linked by a common interest in the liberation of our country, can and must build a broad popular front against the foreign oppressors....\textsuperscript{27}

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{25}.] Suarez, n.7,p.3
\item[\textsuperscript{26}.] Chibas, who always remained a determined anti-communist, split with Grau’s \textit{Autenticos} in the mid-1940s to form his own party: the Party of the Cuban People (Commonly known as the \textit{Ortodoxos}), which in 1952 put up as a candidate for parliament one of its adherents-Fidel Castro. Eduardo Chibas, one of Grau’s closest associates, expressed: "Those so-called revolutionary leaders who, after the massacre of August 7, 1933, ordered the proletariat to go back to work are today claiming they are employing their same old tactic of attacking revolutionaries more violently than they do reactionaries. The more revolutionary a person is, the more strongly the communists attack him. They attack the ABC more strongly than they do the conservatives, and the \textit{Autenticos} more strongly than the ABC-and as for Guiteras, I am so much attacked by these little leaders of tropical communism, I am sure that I am a good revolutionary". Quoted in Goldenberg, n.9, p.70.
\item[\textsuperscript{27}.] Goldenberg, n.9,p.71. Also quoted in Lister, n.21, p.24
\end{itemize}
In the presidential election of January 1936 Miguel Mariano Gomez, favoured by Batista, was elected. In this election the communists could not play even a marginal role because neither they nor the Autenticos were legally allowed to participate. They were not able to recognise Gomez's "progressive" character, even if they had recognized the formation of a popular front with the forces supporting him would have been beyond the realm of possibility. In fact, the communists in their effort for a united front had little success because it included their own representatives, the Cuban Apristas, some members of the Young Cuba Organisation, and representatives of several other small groups formed by Cuban political exiles in the United States. But the coalition was short-lived because Grau San Martin's Autenticos shunned collaboration with the communists, and so did the rest of the Young Cuba members, who shortly afterwards merged with the Autenticos.

Even at this stage, the communists were in an enigma because they were still criticizing their "petty-bourgeois" allies for their putschist ideas. Against it, they were censured by the national revolutionaries as being too peaceful and moderate. Thus, a leading communist, Cesar Vilar, accused, in late 1937, both the Autenticos and the Young Cuba Organisation for their putschist tactics which facilitated "the realization

28. Fulgencio Batista had come up out of the "Sergeants' Revolt" of 4 September 1933 and by 15 January 1934 had become sufficiently powerful to replace Grau with Carlos Mendieta; and from this time until 1940 Batista, as head of the army, was strong enough to appoint and dismiss presidents.

29. Aprista was a small group which had embraced the ideas of the Peruvian leader Victor Haya de la Torre.
of Batista's reactionary dictatorship".\textsuperscript{30}

In December 1936, Gomez was impeached and was replaced by vice-president Federico Laredo Bru with the staunch support of Batista. Communists criticised Batista as a fascist dictator and "an imitator of Mussolini and Hitler". In a statement, the Central Committee of LISA declared:

... the issue of democracy vs fascist dictatorship has been sharply raised by the putsch of colonel Batista. After vainly trying to create a mass base for his dictatorship by demagogic methods, he has carried out--with the help of Wall Street bankers, and the sugar trust--an attack on the lawful Gomez government in order to destroy it and, with it, every movement for real democracy in Cuba.\textsuperscript{31}

Cesar Vilar too compared Batista with Spanish dictator Franco, a man who committed daily provocations against the people. Further, he added that "the opposition parties are against any future government under Batista, because such a government would be even more reactionary than the present one".\textsuperscript{32}

\textbf{Rapprochement with Batista}

Fulgencio Batista, a mulatto from the lower class, was ambitious in enriching himself and his friends, and yet at the same time anxious to appear as a "democrat" and champion of social reform. From 1936 on, he aimed at winning presidency in a

\textsuperscript{30} Cesar Vilar, "The Military Dictatorship in Cuba and the struggle for Democracy". \textit{Communist International} (Moscow), January 1938.

\textsuperscript{31} Quoted in Goldenberg, n.9,p.71. Also see, Lister, n.21,p.24

\textsuperscript{32} Vilar, n.30.
free election, but the big landowners and upper bourgeoisie feared him of a military dictator while the "national revolutionaries" regarded him as a fascist and reactionary. Remained were the communists with a mass base whom Batista tried to tame.

Not satisfied with their past record, "under Moscow orders, [communist] offered Batista its support". It was followed by "protracted negotiations" in which representatives of the Soviet government met with Batista. In late 1937, Batista gave legal recognition to the party which was virtually outlawed since its birth in 1925. Renamed as Partido Union Revolucionaria (Party of Revolutionary Union), Batista announced that "the Party [communist] would be allowed to operate freely from now on since it had forewarned its violent road to socialism and had decided on peaceful and constitutional methods." A proclamation of general political amnesty was also simultaneously made, following which permission to launch a daily newspaper called Noticias de Hoy was given on 1 May 1938 under the editorship of Aníbal Escalante, one of the top communist leaders. Enthused by these concessions, the party's Central Committee at its tenth plenum, which took place openly and without interference, adopted its first, rather restrained pro-Batista resolution. As a result, the party was fully legalized on 23 September 1938. Subsequently, it merged with the Partido Union Revolucionaria to form the Union Revolucionaria Comunista

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34. ibid.
(Communist Revolutionary Union) which held its first congress in January 1939. This "popular front" of the communists with Batista created a great confusion in Cuban national-revolutionary and democratic circles. As Raul Roa (who became foreign minister in Fidel Castro's government) wrote:

The Communists' offer of support to Batista in return for their own legalization caused indescribable confusion and contributed to the intensification of the crisis in which the revolutionary movement found itself. From then on, the labor movement was subordinated to the requirements of coexistence with the government and the electoral interests of the Communist Party. 36

Comintern while defending this alliance expressed:

Cuba has made important strides towards the restoration of democracy. Under the slogan 'Unity of all anti-Batista forces', the Cuban people have found the basis for a minimal united action which has forced the dictator Batista to restore a number of democratic liberties.... All attempts to manipulate the press have proven futile, and today the Cuban people have the daily people's [sic] newspaper Hoy and the weekly review Mediodia, which courageously stand up for the rights of the people. 37

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36. Goldenberg, n.9, p.72.

37. ibid. Against the reality, however, these claims made by the Cuban communists were, no doubt, highly exaggerated. At the beginning of 1939, the Russian edition of Communist International boasted that "the workers (of Cuba) have been successful in obtaining the legalization of the Communist Party. The entire working class took part in this struggle". The Comintern's journal World News and Views happily commented: "Batista...no longer represents the centre of reaction, the people who are working for the overthrow of Batista are no longer acting in the interests of the Cuban people." In a similar vein, an article expressed that the tenth plenum of the Cuban party's Central Committee had come to the conclusion that Batista was "no longer the focal point of the forces of reaction", but it hastened to add: The Communists stress that they do not thereby recognize and support Colonel Batista [sic] as a democrat. The Party takes note that Colonel Batista has taken only some first steps along the path of respect for the democratic demands of the people. "The Struggle for Democracy in Cuba", Communist International (Paris), 20 January 1939.
Nonetheless, thanks to these exaggerated claims the party membership soared from 5000 in 1937 to 23,000 in 1939. Communists (among them Lazaro Pena) assumed the leadership of the newly established Confederacion de Trabajadores de Cuba (CTC). Also, CTC entered into close collaboration with the labour ministry. Above all, the biggest achievement of the communists was the permission granted for their own radio station ("Mil Diez").

In early 1939, Comintern had called for an international united front against fascism, but with the signing of Hitler-Stalin pact and the start of the Second World War, communists everywhere were called upon to oppose involvement in an "imperialistic" conflict. This, the Cuban communists could do without compromising their collaboration with Batista. Even so, the Nazi-Soviet pact caused a minor crisis in the Cuban party's ranks. A socialist group led by Juan Arevalo which had joined with the communists in organizing the Union Revolucionaria Comunista (URC) turned against the new political course taken by the Soviet Union, as did many democrats. As a consequence, communist party membership began to slump, dropping to a reported 14,800 by 1941.

In November 1939, election took place for a 76-member constituent assembly to frame a new constitution for Cuba. The majority of seats (41) went to anti-Batista coalition (18 seats to Autenticos, 15 to conservatives, 4 to ABC and the rest to other groups), while the communists received 6 and Batista 29.

In drafting the constitution, promulgated in the following year the communists
and Autenticos made continuous and sustained efforts to give it as much "progressive" substance as possible to turn Cuba into a welfare state. In the new Constitution, provision was made for--democratic freedoms, right to work, working hours limited to a maximum of 44 per week and four weeks paid vacation annually; restrictions on the right of employers to dismiss workers; and establishment of arbitration boards and labour courts with unions having a decisive voice. Article 90 proscribed large landholdings. Salary of every primary-school teacher was fixed at one-millionth of the state budget. The communists boastfully expressed that "the Cuban people can thank our cooperation with president Batista for the fabulous constitution of 1940". 

With the promulgation of the new Constitution, the trade union movement was fused into the government. The status of wage earners now depended less on their own efforts than on the paternalistic intervention of the labour ministry, the new labour courts, and the president of the republic. The labour movement and the communist party became integral elements of the state. As a result, communists were marginalized in strength and influence. They fully supported Batista's candidacy for the presidency in the July 1940 election. But it was not sufficient for Batista, he also included conservative party, against the wishes of the communists, in the coalition. Communists feared that such broad-based coalition might hamper the "progressive" character of the constitution.

38. A provision which, if it could have been implemented, would have placed Cuba's primary-school teachers among the highest-paid in all of Latin America.

Cuban Communists at the Service of Comintern

With the attack of Hitler on the Soviet Union, there was a drastic change in international communist line. It switched from condemnation of the European war as an "imperialist" struggle to its exaltation as a "peoples' war" against Nazism and Fascism. It was easier for Cuban communists. They supported democracy and war against the Axis, and supported Batista and his foreign policy which was by now closely attuned to that of the US. Also, in December 1941, Cuban communists supported US in declaring war on Japan and the Axis powers.

The CTC, controlled by communists, in its congress in 1942 voted for a moratorium on strike for the duration of the war. US was no more taken as imperialistic oppressor. Blas Roca asserted:

The Cuban people need and desire close and cordial relations with the United States because of the countless advantages such relations bring to them. This relationship must be continued after the conclusion of the war because it is absolutely essential to the fruitful development of the Cuban economy, on which the nation's progress depends.40

With these positive signals, Batista rewarded two communist leaders, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez and Juan Marinello by including them in his cabinet as ministers without portfolio in March 1943. Blas Roca, in a report to the National Executive Committee of the URC, hailed the formation of "a government of national unity [including] our chairman, Juan Marinello [as] the greatest of all the triumphs of the

40. Blas Roca, Los Fundamentos del Socialismo en Cuba (Havana, 1943), p.111.
During the wartime, the US communist party leader, Earl Browder, preached--practical end of revolutionary class struggle, the peaceful transformation of capitalism, the disappearance of imperialism, and lasting peaceful co-existence between the Soviet Union and the democratic-capitalist world. In May 1944, after the dissolution of the Comintern, he even asked for the dissolution of the CPUSA to replace it by a communist political association to shelve the issue of socialism for the sake of national unity. In Cuba also the party's name was changed to Partido Socialista Popular (PSP) in 1944.

The Second National Conference of the PSP, held in September 1944, reaffirmed its allegiance to the principles of Browder, Batista and Marxism. Blas Roca while commenting on class collaboration said that it was "no momentary and ephemeral policy, but a long-range and enduring one on the progressive road toward the conquest of all rights of the working class".42 There now arose regular cooperation between the communists and Batista whom they praised as a "great democrat", "the great man of our national politics who embodies Cuba's sacred ideals", and "the man who is leading the fatherland along the road of dignity and progress".43 Responding to Blas Roca, Batista wrote:

41. Goldenberg, n.9,p.74.

42. Quoted in ibid, n.9,p.75.

My dear Blas! with reference to your letter transmitted to me by our mutual friend, Minister Without Portfolio Dr. Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, I am happy to acknowledge that my government has received and today continues to receive effective and loyal support from the Partido Socialista Popular, its leadership and its masses.\footnote{Hoy, 13 June 1944.}

In this healthy alliance, the communists raised their strength to 120,000 in 1944 as compared with the 80,000 votes polled by them in the 1942 parliamentary elections. But one thing was clear that the communists hardly followed the Bolsheviks either in ideology or organisation.

In the 1944 presidential elections, communists supported, Batista backed, Dr. Carlos Saladrigas against former president Grau San Martin. They were of the opinion that "Saladrigas symbolizes, for a thousand reasons, the continuation of the progressive, democratic and populist course of Fulgencio Batista".\footnote{Hoy, 13 May 1944.} In the election, the communists secured 130,000 or about 8 percent of the total votes cast. But against their wishes Grau emerged the winner. Grau did not have enough majority in the parliament to be able to form the government. So, in such a situation of increasing votes of communists, it was of utmost importance for Grau to form the government. Blas Roca's statement "triumph of the people" in the election, confirmed it.

\footnote{Hoy, 13 June 1944.}

\footnote{Hoy, 13 May 1944.}

25
Alliance with the Autenticos

Communists' concern to maintain their monopoly leadership in labour commissions, and Grau's need of communist support led to rapproachment between the two. Also, communists demand for the progressive character of the government and appointment of Juan Marinello as vice-president of the senate was accepted by Grau. In 1945, Blas Roca in an introduction to the pamphlet entitled "Collaboration between Workers and Employers" declared

...at present, the working class' patriotic policy of national unity is at its own initiative; workers are not prohibited from striking rather they are rising above their petty interests (!) and demanding a policy of no strikes, a policy of maintaining production, and a policy of national unity, thus showing that they are the most patriotic, most responsible and most capable class in society today.46

With the end of Second World War and the beginning of the Cold War, PSP, as early as in July 1945, accepted that "all of our more recent documents stand in need of revision because they reveal dangerous errors". Further, Blas Roca admitted that it had not been "realized with sufficient clarity that capitalism would prove incapable of overcoming its inner contradictions" and the assumption that "imperialism and colonialism would vanish".47 A month later, Juan Marinello wrote: "We went astray because, without sufficient reflection and deeper analysis...we adopted criteria and methods... based on an authority and information not accessible to us". Finally, by February 1946, Roca held responsibility of Cuban Party's

46. Quoted in Lister, n.21, p.25.
47. Blas Roca, En Defensa del Rielbo ( Havana, 1945).
mistakes on "the corrupt anti-Marxist theories of Earl Browder". 48

During the Third National Conference of the PSP in January 1946, William Z. Foster, US communist leader who had replaced Browder, attacked Roca. But it was only due to the efforts of Carlos Rafael Rodriguez by interpreting into Spanish, he softened and sometimes even omitted criticism against Roca. Finally, against the wishes of Foster, Roca was reappointed as Secretary-General of the PSP. In the parliamentary elections of June 1946, the communists got 176,000 votes i.e. 10 percent of the total votes polled. It was a remarkable achievement of PSP. Blas Roca proudly asserted that "the outcome of the elections constitutes a grand confirmation of the popular and progressive policy of Dr. Grau.... The triumph achieved by the Popular Socialists together with the Autenticos cannot but consolidate, broaden, and deepen their alliance." 49 Certainly, PSP gained in this election but comparatively Autenticos gained more and strengthened their position in the parliament. As a result, Grau no longer needed the support of the PSP and with it, came the challenge to the communists' leadership of organised labour. After the appointment of Carlos Prio Socarras as labour minister in 1947, the Autenticos took it appropriate to capture the leadership of unions. By summer of 1947 Autenticos controlled the CTC leadership even by using violent methods. The "Popular Socialists" split away to establish their own CTC, but labour minister refused recognition and as a consequence, its rights to appear before arbitration boards, call legal strikes and to conclude valid collective contracts was denied.


agreements were curtailed. After a short period, communist-supported CTC vanished, and the party, too, began to loose members and influence. Also, they lost their basic instrument for the collection of funds. In short, their ability to create the impression that the communist movement in Cuba constituted an important power, came to an abrupt end. The communist party remained legal until the summer of 1953 and it continued holding meetings, propaganda, participation in elections without government interference. But their right to run the radio station was banned and prominent communist Jesus Menendez was shot dead by an army officer in January 1948.  

In June 1948 presidential election, Autenticos put forward Prio Socarras, Liberals put Dr. Nunez Portuondo, Ortodoxos put Eduardo Chibas, and communists (after being refused by other parties to enter into electoral alliance) put Juan Marinello. Prio Socarras won the election. PSP received 140,000 votes i.e. 7.5 percent of the total valid votes cast. PSP membership dropped to 10,000 in 1948 but by 1950 it increased which, Roca put at 19,241. By 1948 communists were aware of their past ideological and organisational limitations. Jurgen Hell quoted Blas Roca asserting: "A Party cannot be good if its members are bad. A Party cannot be an advance guard if it is full of laggards. We forgot that simple truth".  

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50. He was a member of parliament and leader of the sugar workers.

51. Quoted in Goldenberg, n.9,p.77.
The Communists in Transition

For 1952 presidential election, there were three parties in fray namely--Autentico with Carlos Hevia, Ortodoxos with Roberto Agromonte and Unitary Action Party with Batista as their candidate. Communists were still in the position of isolation four years later in February 1952, when their seventh party congress passed the following resolution on the forthcoming election "to vote for the candidate of the Ortodoxo Party... even in the absence of an electoral agreement". Pre-poll opinions went in favour of Carlos Hevia. To avoid the risk of defeat, Batista in the morning of 10 March 1952, with army backing, captured power through a bloodless coup d'etat. Immediately after assuming of power, he assured all democratic freedoms and extension of social and economic progress of the country. He raised the wages of labour, soldiers and policemen. The business, industrial class and big landlords supported his pro-US policies. The Autentico leaders, charged for corruption and putschist activities, went underground and took asylum in foreign embassies. The Ortodoxo leader, Eduardo Chibas, committed suicide. So there were no immediate indications of significant political opposition.

Notwithstanding these developments, in certain circles particularly in the youth there was emerging some discontentment. The students of Havana University launched a terror campaign. Batista government countered it with repressive measures. More motivated against it was a law faculty student, Fidel Castro. He,

with his few friends, staged an attack on the Moncada Barracks in Santiago de Cuba on 26 July 1953. But the attack was a failure and Castro along with his group was put in prison. There, Castro wrote the historic monograph "History Will Absolve Me". With it, the opposition to Batista sprang almost exclusively from among the middle-class intellectuals, especially the students. The University of Havana became the centre of "anti-Batistianos" with loudspeakers all over the campus calling for a war against the Batista regime. This situation led Batista to promise for holding elections in November 1953 and finally, proclamation of a general political amnesty. And Castro was released from the prison.

Against the fast changing political scenario, PSP was optimistic however of some type of collaboration with Batista. Taking a lesson from the past experience, Batista adopted a policy of "divide and rule" towards the communists, and was successful in wooing Sotolonge, PSP leader in Camaguey Province; Galan, Chirino, and Alonso, these were middle level functionaries; Perez Lamy and Arsenio Gonzalez, these lawyers were the think-tank of PSP. The PSP leaders, even after all this, maintained a low profile. On 23 May 1952, Blas Roca wrote in Hoy "that the new government...does not differ in character from the Prio [Socarras] government", and the communists were as free as earlier without the fear of prosecution."

In April 1952, the relations between the two took a new turn with the disruption of relations between Cuba and Soviet Union.53 With it, the Batista

53. The reason for Soviet Union's breaking off relations with Cuba was that a Cuban security officer attempted to search the luggage of two Soviet official couriers arriving in Cuba. The Soviet government charged a violation of diplomatic immunity.
regime's attitude towards Cuban communists began to stiffen. Finally, in 1953, the communist party was banned and a special police was created to combat the activities of the communists. They were subjected to imprisonment and torture. But it was done only at the lower levels. PSP senior leaders like Blas Roca, Juan Marinello and Carlos Rafael Rodriguez were living in Havana undisturbed. Batista's tacit plan was to keep the communists in reserve in case one needed them to blackmail the US. The PSP was a strictly Stalinist and monolithic party under the undisputed direction of Blas Roca who had been secretary-general since 1934. Theoretically, it had very poor background as there was not even a single mention in any Marxist bibliography. Also, it lost its revolutionary fervour since 1933 which the leadership itself had admitted. Carlos Rafael Rodriguez himself wrote that "the rank and file of the Party was penetrated by 'electoralism' ...(and) it lost part of its 'bite'." 54

Within the working class, of the 4,500 delegates attending the CTC congress before the coup of 10 March 1952, only eleven were communists. 55 In student circles also, the communists had no stronghold. In 1949 and 1950, only two members of the PSP were elected presidents and they too by concealing their membership. It was only in 1955 that a communist woman was elected openly as communist. But it was possible due to her personal links and influence. By 1957, there were seven PSP cells in the Havana University, but its total membership was only 26. In the intellectual circles too, according to one writer: "As a result of the Stalinization of the

55. Alexander, n.22, p.292,
Party in 1934, the agreement with Batista, and the general disappearance of ideological content from Cuban politics, the influence of Marxist ideas dwindled as rapidly as it had begun to spread in 1925."\(^{56}\) After 1940, there was no work written on Marxism or even commented on Marxist ideology. Among the peasants there was some communist influence from 1933 to 1935 in rural centres of Oriente Province. But there is hardly any indication that this influence had been maintained in the 1950s. Communists had thus become a very minor factor in Cuban politics by the time Fidel Castro entered into the political horizon of Cuba.

Moreover, the PSP was against the violent activities of Castro. While commenting on Castro's attack on the Moncada Barracks, it declared: "We condemn the putschist methods-characteristic of bourgeois groups-which were evident in the adventurist attempt to capture the barracks at Santiago. The heroism displayed by the participants was misdirected and sterile". \(^{57}\) In a more sharply worded statement, the PSP declared:

The line of the PSP and of the mass movement has been to combat the Batista tyranny and to unmask the putschists and adventurist activities of the bourgeois opposition as being against the interests of the people. The PSP bases its fight on the action of the masses, on the struggle of the masses, and opposes adventurist putschism as contrary to the fight of the masses and contrary to the democratic solution which the people

\(^{56}\) Suarez, n.7,p.7.

desire. 58

Further, the alternative suggested by PSP, what it described Castro's activities as terrorist, sabotage and putschist, was "the peaceful road and would do everything in its power to achieve it". 59 The PSP continued to maintain this attitude even when Castro and his 26 followers landed by boat from Mexico on the coast of Cuba's Oriente province to launch what came to be known as Sierra Maestra revolution. In a letter addressed to Castro's "July 26 Movement" the communist leadership wrote:

Our Party has already informed you and Fidel Castro ... that we definitively reject the tactics and plans you have developed. We told you in all frankness at that time that the correct course is not the course of isolated actions and expeditions, which is not appropriate to existing subjective and objective conditions, and that we condemn actions by individuals or small groups undertaken without the collaboration of the masses... We further stated that the correct approach... lies in the unity and common action of all opposition forces... in a struggle to eliminate tyranny and achieve the victory of democratic forces. 60

Further, the letter highlighting the tactics of Castro's guerrillas of resorting to terrorist activities, burning of sugarcane fields, and other acts of sabotage, stated:

In general individual acts of terror merely provide the tyranny with new pretexts for its crimes.... The workers and people cannot be drawn into the struggle by terroristic acts, and even less can be accomplished by

| 60. | Carta Semanal, 27 June 1957. For more details see, Enzensberger, n.35, p.111. |
threats and sabotage against enterprises.\textsuperscript{61}

Carlos Rafael Rodriguez himself told a French journalist that "he hoped these futile actions would teach Castro a lesson: he would realize now that he didn't have a chance by himself; he would have to enter into a broad coalition with the liberals too and tone down his anti-American propaganda."\textsuperscript{62}

Invisible tragically to the PSP was, "Castro's strategy [which] also looked towards the cultivation of a broad, cross-class alliance against the dictatorship, his willingness to resort to armed struggle to lend a sharp edge to demands for democratic rights and reforms flew in the face of the Stalinist methods of passive class collaboration".\textsuperscript{63}

By about February 1958, following considerable internal debate, the communist leadership apparently had reached an initial decision to try to come to some sort of an understanding with Castro. Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, while comparing the ideology of PSP with Castro's revolutionary movement asserted that the PSP was more radical in its demands for structural reform than Castro and he termed PSP as "the left wing" of Castro's July 26 Movement.\textsuperscript{64} But communists were not confident that the Batista government could be replaced without opposition

\textsuperscript{61} Carta Semanal, 27 June 1957.
\textsuperscript{62} Enzensberger, n.35, p.112.
\textsuperscript{63} Lister, n.21, p.35
\textsuperscript{64} These demands included---the immediate nationalisation of foreign-controlled public-service enterprises, agrarian reform which would abolish large landholdings and distribution\textsuperscript{6} the land free to the poor peasants and farm workers.
unity. As Rodriguez argued:

The tyrant can rely on the support of imperialism, still controls the armed forces... and has the support of the big sugar producers and import traders.... To overthrow Batista, it is necessary to form coalition reaching beyond the ranks of the anti-imperialists to include forces which are not committed to anti-imperialism.... Therefore, the present strategy of the PSP is based on the necessity of achieving the unity of all political parties and groups that are opposed to the government.... This unity must be such as to enable men like Prio Socarras and Grau San Martin to take part in the coalition.65

Stated thus, what became apparent was that the PSP was against Batista government as much as it was against Castro's "putschist adventurism". What however was implied in the statement was that the PSP supported unity of all opposition forces including Castro's if only, the latter would eschew its "putschist adventurism". But at that juncture the question was how to achieve the unity of opposition at the behest of PSP. For, the anti-Batista groups and parties had more sympathy for Castro than they had for the PSP.66

By November 1958, once it became clear to the communists that Castro's movement has gained uncontroledable momentum, Rodriguez visited Sierra Maestra and entered into an understanding with Castro. This understanding was explicit in a letter, signed by Blas Roca and Juan Marinello, sent to the eleventh congress of the Communist Party of Chile. It read in part:

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65. Quoted in Lister, n.21,p.27

66. It is important to note that a part of the money used by Castro to buy the Yacht Granma, which carried him and his fellow revolutionaries from Mexico to Cuba, was contributed by Prio Socarras.
The tyranny has shown itself incapable of breaking the resistance and struggle of the masses[ sic ]. Yet it would be a mistake to conclude that this in itself signifies the possibility of an immediate defeat [ of the tyranny] since it draws its principal strength from the disunity of the opposition forces. Hence our efforts to achieve a national unity which will put an end to the tyranny and bring to power a democratic coalition government as the first step toward a united-front government of national liberation.67

But the PSP leadership was neither aware of the existing realities nor the vision and ideological clarity. Moreover, government became an instrument at the hands of other parties which used PSP to form their governments. The Cuban communists role was rightly expressed by Che Guevara:

67. Communist Party of Chile, Documents del XI Congreso Nacional realizado en Noviembre de 1958 (Santiago, 1959), p. 29. Also see, Ernst Halperin, Nationalism and communism in Chile (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 1965), p.64. According to another source, on 20 July 1958 an opposition front including Castro, was set up in Caracas without communist participation. The front exhorted "all the revolutionary forces of the country, both civic and political", to subscribe to its declaration of 13 July 1957, promising to hold a meeting later "to discuss and approve the bases of unity". Suarez, n.7, p.28. Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, as a representative of the PSP, went to the Sierra headquarters in response to Castro's invitation. Rodriguez himself expressed, the invitation was "accepted only by our Party and the Revolutionary Student Directorate". Bohemia, 3 April 1964; also quoted in Suarez, n.7, p.28. Yet, according to another source: "The first negotiations between Fidel Castro and the PSP, in the Sierra, did not occur until late in the summer of 1958 after the defeat of Batista's counter offensive, during the height of the guerrilla.... However, according to the testimony of the communists themselves, no binding arrangement was reached before Castro's victory". Enzensberger, n.35, p.113. Another source mentioned that due to decline in members and prestige, Rodriguez and Osvaldo Sanchez visited Castro on behalf of the PSP. But at the same time "nor did the PSP drop its gradualist, collaborationist line even after Batista's flight". Lister, n.21, p.28. A source goes to such a vague statements that "a man who was close to Fidel, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, ...arrived with a dozen men loaded with money. It came to $800,000 and Fidel hugged him and shouted, 'Now we are ready to win the war[....]!' Fidel Castro's forces won primarily because they had almost unlimited supplies of money". Theodore Draper, "Castro's Cuba : A Revolution Betrayed", The New Leader (New York, N.Y.), vol.45, no.13, 27 March 1961, p.19.
In Cuba, the Communist Party did not lead the revolution. It was unable to discern the correct methods of struggle and erred in its estimation of the chances of success. This extremely serious mistake was not fatal here, because we had Fidel and a group of real revolutionaries. In other countries, however, such a mistake might prove very costly and cause the revolution to go astray. 68