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4 Party and State in Post-1970 Cuba

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INTRODUCTION

Profound changes have taken place in the Cuban Communist Party, in the Cuban state system and in the relationship between them since 1970.¹ The crisis which followed the failure to achieve the ten million ton sugar harvest in that year spurred Cuba to embark on an accelerated process of institutionalization.²

This process has been characterized by the development of new institutions, in particular the Organs of Popular Power (OPP), the elected representative institutions of the Cuban state; the strengthening of basic structures and internal processes in the Cuban Communist Party (CCP) and a membership drive; the reorganization of mass organizations, particularly the trade unions (CTC) and the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR); a conceptualization of mass organizations as special interest organizations; an effort to differentiate the party from the state system and to regulate their roles and relationship; a restructuring of the state's legal foundations and of the judicial system (new constitution in 1976, a new system of court organization in 1977 and a new penal code in 1979); an emphasis on 'socialist legality', and the rule of law; and the development of a new economic and management system.

Before 1970, the Council of Ministers was the crucial structure in the Cuban political system. According to the then existing constitution,³ executive, legislative and juridical functions were concentrated in this council.

Although a constitutional and juridical affairs commission had existed in the party's Central Committee since 1965, the differentiation and decentralization of functions within the political system started in 1972 with the creation of the executive committee of the Council of Ministers. The nine deputy prime ministers began to share the coordination of the ministries with the prime minister.

But the most far reaching changes in the state system began with the Matanzas experiment in 1974. This was the first attempt to develop representative state organs, the Cuban version of the soviets.⁴ After the evaluation, the Matanzas experiment was expanded to a fully-fledged national system in 1976 when national elections were held (10 and 17 October 1976). In those elections, 10,725 deputies to the municipal assemblies were elected who in turn elected the deputies to the provincial assemblies and the 481 deputies to the National Assembly.⁵ The latter held its first meeting in December 1976.

Raúl Castro has summarized the leadership's explanation for the delay in developing representative institutions: in its first stage of fast, violent changes and internal and external aggression, the revolution needed a 'fast, operative state apparatus' to exercise the dictatorship in the name of the working masses. Furthermore, a lack of material resources, the limited development of the mass organizations, the absence of a strong party and a certain lack of understanding of the role of representative institutions among some leaders made the development of these institutions impossible until the 1970s.⁶ An earlier attempt to establish 'poder local' (local power) in 1967 had failed because material and political conditions did not exist.

During the first stage of the transition period, the main tasks are those of dismantling the basic structures of the bourgeois state and of consolidating the revolutionary forces' hold on power. In Cuba, these tasks had to be performed in conditions of sharpened class struggle; a powerful internal counterrevolution was abetted by the United States which also carried out its own acts of aggression. Furthermore, the Cuban Revolution had not been led to power by an organized proletarian party but by the 26th of July Movement, an anti-imperialist, petit-bourgeois movement embodied primarily in the Rebel Army (*sierra*) and secondarily in its urban underground (*llano*). Thus the vanguard role had corresponded to the Rebel Army under Fidel's leadership. But there was no strong, unified, well-developed party.

During the first stage of the revolution, the Cuban Communist Party had to be forged from rather disparate forces: the 26th of July Movement, the DRE (Revolutionary Student Directorate) and the PSP (Popular Socialist Party, the former communist party). The process was complex and lengthy. In 1962, the ORI (Integrated Revolutionary Organizations) were created. They were followed by the PURS (United Party of the Socialist Revolution) and finally, in 1965, by the Cuban Communist Party.⁷ The party, however, did not structure itself according to the model of most ruling communist parties until 1973. Its first congress was not held until 1975. Numerically, it was also rather weak before 1970. (See Table 1)

In the aftermath of the 1970 harvest failure, the Cuban leadership decided to revamp the party, to give the Cuban state a more elaborate institutional form, to reassess the party's role and party-state relations, to reconceptualize the role of unions during the transition period, to decentralize some administrative functions and to develop formal ways for popular participation in the decision-making process.

THE PARTY: CHANGES SINCE 1970

In 1970, the Cuban Communist Party was numerically and structurally weak (less than 100,000 members in a population of eight and a half million). Although, since 1965, the party had been organized with a one-hundred member Central Committee, an eight-member Political Bureau, a six-member Secretariat and the subsequent provincial, regional and local structures, its institutions, particularly at the top, did not function regularly. Fidel Castro pointed out that 'the political bureau considered the most important political questions, but did no strictly systematic work . . . in the direction of party and state' and while most of the party's energies were devoted to structuring and developing the base, 'the apparatus of the central committee virtually did not exist.'⁸

Since 1970, there have been major changes. In order to lead the institutionalization process, the party had to solve the many problems which had affected its functioning during the preceding period. It had to increase its membership so that there would be

enough militants to perform its various political tasks and improve its membership composition by increasing female and worker participation. The general educational and politico-ideological level of the membership had to be raised. Functional internal institutions were needed to strengthen democratic processes within the party. Finally, the party had to emphasize its proper guiding role by extricating itself from overinvolvement with administrative tasks.⁹

Numerical Growth

The party had grown from 50,000 members in 1965 to 202,807 on the eve of its first congress in 1975. Compared to other ruling communist parties, the Cuban party remains relatively small, encompassing roughly 2.5 per cent of the population in 1979 (total population nearly ten million). However, the party has grown five-fold in the fourteen years since its first Central Committee was announced.

TABLE 1
Communist Party of Cuba: Numerical Growth

Year	Members and candidates
1965	50,000
1970	100,000
1971	101,000
1972	122,000
1973	153,000
1974	186,995
1975	202,807
1979 (estimate)	250,000

Sources: Fidel Castro, *Informe Central al Primer Congreso del Partido Comunista de Cuba* (Havana: Departamento de Orientación Revolucionaria, 1975), 205; Carmelo Mesa-Lago, *Cuba in the 1970s* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1978), 71.

Since its foundation, the Cuban Communist Party has used a rather rigorous and unique method for selection of members.¹⁰ Most members are selected from amongst the vanguard workers elected by workers' assemblies. Party candidates thus have to be chosen from those elected by their fellow workers. This method ensures party members' high quality and prestige among fellow workers. It also promotes their working class origins, although it has probably contributed to the low representation of women in the party (see below).

The statutes of the Cuban Communist Party, approved in 1975, establish the method of selecting candidates for party membership from among vanguard workers in article 6. Young candidates can have access to the party through the UJC (Union of Young Communists) according to article 4.

The 1975 statutes also establish the possibility of individual applications between workers' assemblies (article 6b) and of direct selection to membership by the Central Committee, the Secretariat and the Political Bureau in cases of 'extraordinary merits' where security considerations prevent following normal procedures. Except in this last instance, candidates must always be subjected to 'consultation with the masses' (article 3c) and to the approval of the corresponding party cell and of the next highest party level (articles 3c and 3d).

Domínguez¹¹ has interpreted these provisions in the statutes as suggesting that the vanguard worker path to party membership is being de-emphasized and that the 'autonomy of the party from the population has been increased and the adaptability and responsiveness of the exemplary worker method are lost.'¹² However, there is no independent evidence that the vanguard worker method is being de-emphasized. The 1975 statutes do not contain profound innovations in party practices. They are rather a systematization and formalization of previous experience and of common practices in other ruling communist parties. The newly formalized procedures may, as Domínguez points out,¹³ help to improve female representation in the party since admission can be obtained through activities in mass organizations and not just workers' assemblies. In fact, interviews conducted by Lourdes Casal during 1977 and 1978 suggest an increased effort in recruiting party members in work centres due to the drive to improve the party's working class composition (see below).

Composition of the Party

The strategy of increasing party membership (without transforming it into a mass party) responded to the need to separate the party from the state and to the emphasis on its re-proletarianization. Given its membership selection method, there was no question of the working class or peasant origins of the majority of its militants. However, precisely because the party was numerically small, many members tended to be drafted into positions of political leadership or administrative responsibility. In the central report to the first congress, Fidel outlined the problem:

On many occasions, concern has been expressed over the fact that because the party is formed by workers with the highest prestige among the masses, with great authority and most outstanding achievements in labor, they are always the first to be chosen to hold any administrative post . . . But it is obvious that as a result of these constant extractions, the relatively low cultural level of our masses and a certain lack of development, the party is not numerically strong enough in important sectors like the sugar industry and other fundamental industries, the farms and agricultural stations, construction, transportation, education . . .

The party must grow without detriment to the permanent effort to assure the quality of its ranks, preferably in these sectors, and also and above all, among the workers directly engaged in industrial and agricultural production, construction and services, to be able to complement in the party composition the necessary and active presence of thousands of communists . . . who hold leading state or political posts, with the entrance into the party of a sufficiently high number of workers who guarantee their active presence within the fundamental working class centers.¹⁴

Although there has been an effort to increase workers' representation in the party since 1970, progress has been limited and the leadership is pushing for further improvements. Table 2 summarizes the relevant information.

Although the proportion of industrial, construction and service workers has increased somewhat in the last five years, the end result is still not satisfactory. The transfer of party members to administrative positions is still being reflected.

Another problem in party composition frequently discussed by the leadership is female representation. Although female percentage among party members increased from 10 per cent in 1967 to 15 per cent in 1975 and to 17.5 per cent in 1979,¹⁵ it is still small when compared to the proportion of women in the population at large (49 per cent) or even in the labour force (18 per cent in 1975 and 31 per cent in 1980). The 1975 party congress established that the pro-

TABLE 2
Comparative Analysis of the Composition of Party Membership
and of New Members, December 1974-June 1975 and of
Party Membership in 1979 (figures given in percentages)

	Total Membership December 1974	New Members January- June 1975	Total Membership June 1975	Total Membership 1979
Workers in industry, agriculture, construction and services	36.5	38.7	35.9	44.9
Professional and technical workers	9.2	19.8	9.2	13.5
Administrative cadres	33.5	24.0	33.4	26.2
Political cadres	9.1	4.6	8.7	4.8
Workers in administrative functions	4.0	6.8	4.1	4.8
Peasants	1.9	1.3	1.8	1.3
Others	5.8	4.8	6.9	4.8

Sources: Departamento de Orientación Revolucionaria, *Tesis y resoluciones: primer congreso del Partido Comunista de Cuba*, (Havana, 1976), 23 and Isidro Gómez, 'El Partido Comunista de Cuba,' paper presented at the seminar on Cuba sponsored by the Institute for Cuban Studies at the American University, Washington, D.C., 13-17 August 1979, 28.

Note: The categories are taken from Cuban sources which do not distinguish in the first groupings among service and production workers. 'Administrative cadres' means persons in managerial positions. 'Workers in administrative functions' are office and clerical staff.

portion of female party members should approach their labour force participation by 1980.¹⁶

Female representation in the party national and provincial leadership is even lower. Although the number of female full members of the Central Committee did not show any gains at the 1975 congress, almost half of its new alternate members (5 out of 12) were women. The leadership's commitment to increasing

female representation in the decision-making process is also evident in the drive to elect more women to the different levels of Popular Power.

Given the social origins of its members and cadres, the Cuban party has had to struggle with improving their educational levels. Table 3 summarizes the information concerning changes in these levels for the period 1967-79.

Although there have been marked improvements in the educational levels of party militants, the majority could only boast a sixth grade education on the eve of the party congress. The congress in fact established the goal of achieving an eighth grade education for a majority of the membership by 1980.¹⁷

In sum, we have a party whose militants are clearly working class or peasant in origin and it is thus affected by educational handicaps which make it difficult to exercise the complex role of a ruling communist party.

It is hard to say that there has been a re-proletarianization of the Central Committee since differences in the composition of the first (1965) and the second (1975) are minimal. Ten of the one hundred members of the 1965 Central Committee had either died or been expelled before the 1975 congress. Of the remaining 90 members, 13 were removed in 1975 and 35 were added for a new total of 112 full members. Twelve alternate members were also selected.

In an attempt to assess continuity and change in the Cuban political elite, Leogrande¹⁸ compared the composition of the ORI national directorate (1962) and the CCPs first and second Central Committees. He emphasizes the military's weight in the 1965 Central Committee (57 per cent) and its reduction (to 29.8 per cent) in 1975. However, as Leogrande himself points out, the reduction is due primarily to the transfer of military members to civilian positions, not to an actual change in composition.

If we consider the history of the Cuban Revolution and the fact that the Rebel Army played the role of the vanguard party during the struggle, the military's weight in the 1965 Central Committee is not surprising. During the first years of the revolution, the small group of guerrilla leaders which headed the military and political fight against Batista became the political and military leaders of the revolution. These men changed from military to civilian positions (and vice versa) as needed. Hence, Dominguez's concept of the 'civic soldier.'¹⁹ Furthermore, the weight of the military was also

TABLE 3
Educational Composition of CCP Membership (in percentages)

	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1979
Less than 6th grade	44.2	38.4	34.9	33.6	31.0	28.9	25.9	19.5	18.1	11.4
6th grade	36.2	42.2	44.0	44.6	46.0	46.7	47.6	44.7	42.2	40.5
Total Elementary Education	80.4	80.8	78.9	78.2	77.0	75.8	73.5	64.2	60.3	51.9
Junior High School	11.9	10.1	11.9	12.1	13.0	14.0	15.0	22.4	25.7	29.0
High School	4.8	5.7	6.3	6.9	7.0	7.5	8.4	9.9	10.2	12.9
Higher Education	2.9	3.8	2.9	2.8	3.0	2.9	3.1	3.5	3.8	6.2
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Sources: Departamento de Orientación Revolucionaria, *Tesis y Resoluciones: Primer Congreso del PCC*, (Havana, 1976), 34-35 and Isidro Gómez, 'El Partido Comunista de Cuba', paper presented at the seminar on Cuba sponsored by the Institute for Cuban Studies at the American University, Washington, D.C., 13-17 August 1979, 29.

enhanced by the fact that in 1965 Cuba was still the target of foreign-supported attacks. Counterrevolutionary bands in the Escambray mountains and other areas of the country were still active.

Leogrande²⁰ also notes the increased participation of the party apparatus in the 1975 Central Committee as a reflection of its growing organization and institutionalization. He criticizes factional models for analyzing Cuban political elites and finds no evidence to support the existence of a 'fidelista-raulista' cleavage (i.e. factions consisting of those who fought with Fidel and Raúl respectively during the revolutionary war).²¹ Moreover, Leogrande finds evidence (removal of old PSP members most opposed to the 26th of July, a reduction of policy differences between the two groups and the passage of time) that by 1975 the 'cleavage' between the 'old communists' and the 'new communists' had subsided. The party, therefore, seemed reasonably free of factional struggle and hostility. Leogrande nevertheless neglects to mention the most important factor contributing to the present unity: the unity-building action of Fidel Castro himself.

There are no indications that the new members of the 1975 Central Committee are different in social class origins from the 1965 members. In his closing speech at the 1975 congress, Fidel emphasized that election to the Central Committee could be attained several ways. Among the new members were an internationalist fighter, a scientist, a writer and four workers.²² He seemed to be emphasizing new members of working class background who had not participated in the revolutionary war.

The relationship of party membership and cadre composition (and particularly of Central Committee composition) to the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' is a serious theoretical and practical question which can only briefly be touched upon. The fundamental questions about the transition to socialism are political in nature. The central question is who wields state power.²³ But, it is not easy to answer the inquiry 'how do we know that the proletariat is in power?' The party, the state system and the mass organizations must be examined. But the answer lies in an exhaustive analysis of how the entire system, including the economy, functions. The dominating class is ultimately that which determines how the societal surplus is allocated and/or the class to whom this surplus goes.²⁴ This analysis must also encompass a discussion of society's class structure, an analysis of party ideology and programme and

an understanding of the mechanisms of political direction of the party, the state, the government, the unions and the other mass organizations. Thus, although the social origins of party members and cadres and their present function and position (i.e. the jobs they do) are important indicators, they are not the only parameters which must be looked at in the global analysis of how working class ideology and interests are promoted in the transition to socialism.

Changes in the Theory of the Party's Role²⁵

During the late 1960s, the party's role was not clearly delineated. The basic political decisions were made by the Council of Ministers, since, as has been pointed out before, party structures, particularly at the national level, were not activated. Furthermore, the party's guidance and supervisory functions were obstructed by its limited membership, an undeveloped state system and an overlap in political and administrative cadres.

Since 1970 a concerted effort has been made to clarify the party's role. The 1975 constitution establishes (article 5) that the Communist Party is the 'highest leading force of the society and the state, which organizes the common effort toward the goals of the construction of socialism and the progress towards a communist future.'

The party, then, establishes policy directions in the economy and for the state and mass organizations, but is not directly involved in their implementation. Domínguez²⁶ has argued that, given the number of overlaps at the top and the responsibility political cadres have for production, confusion between party and administrative functions is inevitable. He suggests that this confusion will persist until party responsibility for production and the politicization of promotion policies ends. But the party cannot relinquish responsibility for production, since one of its major roles during the transition period is to lead the construction of the technical and material base of communist society (preamble to the 1975 party statutes).

Although party-state relations are still more clearly defined in theory than in practice, progress has been made in delineating their respective roles and responsibilities. In 1965, virtually all ministers were Central Committee members. In 1975, only 27 of the 45 members of the Council of Ministers were Central Committee

members. This is an indicator of the increased differentiation between party and government. In keeping with the intra-elite conflict suggested by Kautsky,²⁷ Leogrande points out an emerging division between revolutionary and managerial modernizers.²⁸

Leogrande, however, mentions the crucial factor without expanding on its implications and significance: the party's Central Committee still reflects the leadership of the revolutionary struggle against Batista. As the regime has institutionalized new structures and processes, the revolutionary generation has retained control of the party's political leadership. Nevertheless, the regime has also recruited new elites through the regular party mechanisms, promotion in mass organizations, the administrative bureaucracy or the army and by election to Organs of Popular Power.

Many 1976 ministers were recruited into the elite through the above-mentioned routes. Their absence from the Central Committee reflects the increased differentiation of party-state structures, the recruitment of new leaders for state and government positions and the conceptualization of the party's primary role as political. It is clear that the ultimate political authorities, however, are still the leaders of the revolutionary war and their associates. Mechanisms to incorporate new members to this 'elite of elites' are not yet developed.

Cuba will soon have to face other problems in the circulation of elites: remotion of members (unless the Central Committee keeps expanding) and incorporation of second generation cadres (persons who did not participate in the revolutionary war) to the top of the elite. Power transition problems have plagued both the Soviet Union and China. The Cuban leadership may well have a better chance to solve these problems successfully. They may take heed of the experience of other socialist revolutions. Also, their revolutionary generation was younger when it came to power, giving them significant lead time to develop differentiated institutional structures and mechanisms for elite recruitment and promotion.

In Cuba, Raúl Castro has made the major theoretical contributions on the party's role, the state's functions and their differentiations.²⁹ Adhering to Leninist principles, Raúl points out that the dictatorship of the proletariat is exercised by the vanguard organized in the party. But the dictatorship of the proletariat cannot be constrained to the party. 'The dictatorship of the proletariat is not the dictatorship of the communist party,' states Raúl.³⁰ The party is the leading force within that dictatorship, but the state is its most

direct instrument. While state laws are binding for all citizens, party rules and statutes lack this juridical character. They must be followed only by the party membership. The party does not have a coercive apparatus. Its power rests on its moral authority while that of the state stems from its material authority and its coercive apparatus.

Raúl further states that harmful consequences follow confusion between party and state. 'In the first place, damage to the tasks of ideological and political persuasion of the masses, tasks which must be performed by the party and which only the party can fulfill and furthermore, harm to the activities of the state because its functionaries cease to be responsible for their decisions and activities.'³¹ The party must fulfill its guiding function with respect to the state and the mass organizations without substituting for them or becoming confused with them. It must rely on persuasion, not coercion, for the political education of the masses.

The party guides the state through the elaboration and supervision of the general party programme for the economic, social, political and cultural development of the country, its role in the selection of the state's top leadership (some of whom have dual roles in party and state) and the activities of party militants in state structures.

Besides Raúl's speeches, other key documents on party-state relations are the Political Bureau's *Document on the Structure, Mechanisms of Functioning and Tools which the Party has to Exercise the Direction and Control of the State and Society* and the *Communique of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CCP about the Relationships between the Central Committee Apparatus and the Central Organisms of the State*.³² The latter document states that the Council of Ministers is primarily an executive and administrative institution. It is, therefore, charged with 'the tasks of planning the implementation, implementing and administering the policies and general directives approved by the superior organs of the party with respect to the different sectors of economic and social activity.' On the other hand, the Secretariat's communique emphasizes that the Central Committee departments 'must help in the formulation of such policies and general directives and later supervise and aid in their implementation.'³³

Changes in Party Structure

Major changes have taken place in party structure since 1970. The Secretariat was reorganized and expanded (1973). Existing departments were revamped and new ones created in the Central Committee apparatus (1973).³⁴ At the first party congress in 1975, the Political Bureau and the Central Committee were expanded. The national control and revision commission of the party was organized in 1979. The leadership currently emphasizes the importance of collective decision making and the adequate internal functioning of the party so as to prevent costly mistakes.

Again, Raúl Castro provides the most elaborate descriptions of party structures and functions outside the statutes (see footnote 28),

The party congress is its supreme organ. . . It is followed by the central committee and its plenary meetings, whose directives are valid for all other organisms, but which must follow the congress' directives. . . After this, we find the political bureau which guides the activities of the party, state and mass organizations but must do so within the framework established by the congress and the plenary meetings of the central committee. . . The specific activities of the party apparatus are directed; at a national level, by the secretariat of the central committee.³⁵

The first step in preparation for the party congress was the strengthening of the Secretariat and the party apparatus. The expanded apparatus was organized by departments. A labour affairs department was revamped; the department of foreign affairs was divided into a general department and area departments; a general affairs department was organized; the economic commission was superseded by several specialized departments; the departments of revolutionary orientation, of science, culture and educational institutions, of party affairs, of mass organizations and of the Organs of Popular Power were also added. Institutes under Central Committee supervision, such as the Institute for the History of the Communist Movement and the Socialist Revolution in Cuba, were likewise created.

In sum, the party is both expanding and restricting its activities. The increased differentiation in the organization of the state, the effort to separate state and party are minimizing party-administration confusion and overlap. There is a concomitant emphasis on the party's political role, in its guiding and controlling

(supervisory) functions. The party is, in sum, undergoing significant organizational growth in the development of new structures, institutionalized operational mechanisms and increased internal differentiation.

THE STATE: CHANGES SINCE 1970

After the 1974 Matanzas experiment, the Organs of Popular Power were structured nationally in 1976. A number of modifications resulted from the Matanzas experience, the most significant one being the elimination of the regional level to streamline functioning and reduce the bureaucracy. A new political-administrative division of the country was adopted: six provinces were broken up into fourteen and the special municipal district of the Isle of Youth. Furthermore, the previous 407 municipalities were reduced to 169. Each municipality was divided into various 'circunscripciones', the basic electoral units. In 1976, 10,725 municipal deputies were elected who in turn elected the 1,084 to the provincial level and the 481 deputies to the National Assembly. The functions of the Organs of Popular Power are regulated in the 1975 constitution (articles 66-120). Municipal OPP elect their executive committees and appoint administrative departments as needed. The provincial OPP are structured similarly.

At each level, the administration of productive and service units serving the community is under the aegis of the OPP. Thus, the administration of schools, polyclinics, grocery stores, garbage collection, maintenance shops, movie theatres and small local industries, for example, has been transferred to the corresponding OPP levels. There are, however, cases of double subordination. A movie theatre is a case in point. On the one hand, it is dependent on the OPP for programme fulfillment, the appointment of its administrator and general maintenance. But, on the other, its film programme comes from the National Film Institute.

The National Assembly of Popular Power, the supreme organ of state power, is invested with constituent and legislative authority. It elects (from its ranks) the Council of State whose president is also the head of government. The National Assembly appoints the members of the Council of Ministers at the initiative of the president of the Council of State. It also exercises general supervision

over the Council of Ministers and the local organs of popular power. Thus, although not directly vested with executive authority, the National Assembly is the organ to which the executive units respond since it also appoints executive personnel.

Domínguez³⁶ takes a rather dim view of the significance of the National Assembly and the structure of popular power. They do not even rank a separate chapter in his otherwise encyclopaedic book. He distinguishes between formalization and institutionalization of the state and argues that although the former has advanced considerably, judgement must be reserved about the latter. He sees the National Assembly as a pro forma affair, although he concedes that it makes some contributions to policy making such as responding to constituents on special issues, improving the technical quality of legislation, passing a few amendments and strengthening links among local leaders.

A study currently in progress by Lourdes Casal on the proceedings of five meetings of the National Assembly (December 1976, June and December 1977, and June and December 1978) demands considerable correction of Domínguez' views. Domínguez simply transposes to Cuba what mainstream North American political scientists believe about assemblies and parliaments in socialist countries. It is true that deputies to the National Assembly serve only part time, and that its meetings are held twice a year for three days each time. But, an analysis of the activities of the Assembly must be placed in the context of the Cuban legislative system — the work of the standing commissions of the National Assembly and the method whereby draft laws are discussed by the party, the mass organizations and the people before the laws come up in the Assembly. An analysis of the trends in the five meetings under study suggests an increasing participation in the debates by the deputies, particularly those who are not members of the Council of State, an increased amount of spontaneous participation from the floor (more than ninety per cent of all interventions are spontaneous), and a discussion of substantive issues, not only modifications of draft laws. Although a majority of decisions are taken by unanimous vote, by no means all are. In the December 1978 session, for example, there were 70 decisions requiring a vote; 62 were unanimous, eight were decided by a plurality. Of these 70 decisions, ten represented *rejections* of proposed amendments.

The National Assembly meetings are not rubber stamp or cosmetic affairs. They also function as the last resort whereby a

deputy may try to introduce a modification (which may be a mandate from his constituency) not included by the corresponding commission in the draft law.

Composition of the OPP: Local and National

Of the 10,725 deputies to municipal assemblies, 856 are women (8 per cent), 6,310 are party members (58.8 per cent), 1,760 belong to the Communist Youth Organization (16.4 per cent) and 3,042 were black or mulatto (28.4 per cent). The largest age category among deputies is 31-40 years (39.1 per cent) and the majority had no less than a junior high school educational level (nearly 69 per cent). Thus, municipal assemblies are a predominantly male, middle-aged group of above-average education composed largely of party or communist youth members (although a quarter do not belong to either the party or the young communists).³⁷ 267 deputies (55.5 per cent) to the National Assembly were elected in their municipalities. Table 4 summarizes the available information on the deputies.

Thus, in comparison with the municipal deputies, national deputies are older, better educated, more homogeneous in party militancy and more representative of national and local leaders. Female representation increased markedly from the municipal (8 per cent) to the national (22 per cent) level. This increase is against the common trend in Western and most Eastern European societies where female representation decreases as we move up the hierarchical scale in elected bodies. It responds to an explicit policy decision by the Cuban leadership. Black representation is also more significant at the national level (38 per cent) than at the municipal (28.4 per cent).³⁸ However, the leadership has not addressed itself to redressing mechanisms for blacks as it has for women. It could be that, even in the absence of an explicit reference, such a policy does in fact exist.

Changes in the Theory of the Role of the State

The main outlines of the theory of the role of the state have been presented earlier. The state has undergone major changes in programmatic statements and in actual practices since 1974. From a relatively simple, highly centralized system which vested legislative,

TABLE 4
Cuban National Assembly — 1976 Composition
(N = 481)

	Number	Percentage
Sex:		
Male	376	78.0
Female	105	22.0
Age Distribution:		
18-30	51	10.6
31-40	196	40.8
41-50	158	32.8
51 or more	76	15.8
Occupational Distribution:		
Workers in production, services & education	144	29.9
Peasants	7	1.5
Technicians	38	7.9
National Leaders	59	12.3
Other leadership positions	140	29.1
Defense	35	7.3
Others	58	12.0
Militancy:		
CCP members & candidates	441	91.7
Young communists	24	5.0
Non-militants	16	3.3
Educational level:		
Basic	57	11.8
Intermediate	287	59.7
Higher	137	28.5

Sources: *Granma Weekly Review*, 12 December 1976 and interview with José Arañaburu, secretary of the National Assembly, in December 1978.

judicial and executive powers in the Council of Ministers, the Cuban state is evolving to a highly complex and differentiated structure with elected representative bodies, a National Assembly and a Council of State.

Once again, Raúl Castro has elaborated in most detail the relationship between the party and the elected state organs.³⁹ The party can (and has to) attempt to influence (primarily through the activities of its militants) the decisions of the state, but it must do so within clearly specified limits. If the party fails to influence the state at the municipal level, for instance, it must refer the matter in question to the party's provincial level so that it can be discussed with the corresponding Popular Power level. In the most complex cases, the disagreement may reach the Political Bureau and the Council of Ministers, but it is very unlikely that this would happen because, as was pointed out earlier, as we move up the elected state structures, the proportion of party members increases significantly. But the basic principle is that if persuasion does not work, the party cannot force a decision upon a Popular Power organ at the same level, but rather it must argue the case at superior levels and wait until the orientation reaches the local popular power organ through its own hierarchy.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

No description of the Cuban political system is complete without a discussion of the mass organizations. However, it would carry us too far from the central concerns of this paper. Suffice it to say that the role of mass organizations within the Cuban system is one of its most interesting and innovative aspects. Article 7 of the constitution establishes that mass organizations 'gather in their midst the various sectors of the population, represent specific interests of the same and incorporate them to the tasks of edification, consolidation and defence of the socialist society.' Mass organizations are thus recognized as representatives of specific popular interests.

The Federation of Cuban Women (FMC) is a case in point. In 1976, the ministry of labour passed a resolution banning women from certain jobs on alleged safety grounds. That resolution was in sharp conflict with the party thesis on the equality of women and the activist stance the Federation had taken in incorporating

women into the labour force. Although the resolution has not been repealed, it has not been strictly enforced. The Federation 'lobbied' against it and at its third congress, in March 1980, Fidel Castro noted the commitment to maintain the current (31 per cent) proportion of female participation in the labour force.⁴⁰

Conflict of interests, albeit non-antagonistic, are therefore present in societies undergoing the transition to socialism. An analysis of how these conflicts are expressed, resolved or stunted is also essential for understanding the dynamics of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

It is still too early to determine whether the Cuban state is in fact 'withering away.' Since 1970, relations between party and state have been delineated and differentiated. The party has simultaneously expanded its apparatus and restricted its direct involvement in administrative affairs. The establishment of the Organs of Popular Power has been the most significant development in the Cuban state system in the past decade. Mass participation and internal party democracy are two of the key elements in socialist democracy. The Cuban state will begin to 'wither away' to the extent that both are further institutionalized and consolidated in the 1980s.

NOTES

1. The literature on the changes in the Cuban political system is neither abundant nor satisfactory. See for instance: Carmelo Mesa-Lago, *Cuba in the 1970s: Pragmatism and Institutionalization* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1978); Jorge I. Domínguez, *Cuba: Order and Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1978); Ronald Radosh, *The New Cuba: Paradoxes and Potentials* (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1976).

2. Several leftist critics of the revolutions had pointed out the need to develop a more responsive political system in which the masses could systematically participate in the decision-making processes. See Leo Huberman and Paul Sweezy, *Socialism in Cuba* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1969); Rene Dumont, *Cuba: est-il Socialiste?* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1970); K. S. Karol, *Guerrillas in Power: The Course of the Cuban Revolution* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1970).

3. The *Ley Fundamental de la República de Cuba*, promulgated 7 February 1959, was a modified version of the 1940 constitution. See Leonel de la Cuesta (ed.), *Constituciones Cubanas* (New York: Ediciones Exilio, 1974), 400-464.

4. Carollee Bengelsdorf, 'A Large School of Government', *Cuba Review*, Vol. 6, No. 3, 3-18; Lourdes Casal, 'On Popular Power: The Organization of the Cuban State during the Period of Transition', *Latin American Perspectives*, Vol. 2, No. 4, 78-88.

5. Comité Central del Partido Comunista de Cuba, *Informe sobre el desarrollo*

del trabajo de constitución de los órganos del poder popular (Havana: Talleres del Comité Central, 1976).

6. Raúl Castro, 'Discurso en la clausura del seminario a los delegados del poder popular en Matanzas', *Granma Resumen Semanal*, 9 September 1974. Quotes are from Fidel Castro and Raúl Castro, *Selección de discursos acerca del Partido* (Havana: Editorial Ciencias Sociales, 1975), 193-242.

7. Literature about the Cuban party and its history is scarce. There is no adequate history of the present party or of the first communist party founded in 1925. See Fidel Castro, *Informe central al primer congreso del Partido Comunista de Cuba* (Havana: Departamento de Orientación Revolucionaria, 1975); Fidel Castro and Raúl Castro, op. cit. For contrasting views on the present party in US literature, see Lourdes Casal, 'Cuban Communist Party: The Best among the Good', *Cuba Review*, Vol. 6, No. 3, 23-30; Domínguez, op. cit., 306-340; Hanz Magnus Enzensberger, 'Portrait of a Party: Prehistory, Structure and Ideology of the CCP', in Radosh, op. cit., 102-137, which was originally published in German in *Kursbuch* in 1969, is a scathing attack on the pre-1970 party. It includes a somewhat cavalier, careless history of the PSP and of PSP-26th of July relations. The latter is the central topic of Andrés Suárez, *Cuba: Castroism and Communism, 1959-1966* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1967). Suárez' ideological perspective introduces serious distortions in his analysis: over-emphasis of the Castroism-Communism rift, underplay of the PSP's role in the revolutionary struggle and minimizing the masses' role in the revolution which he characterizes as an 'administrative' revolution. A history of the PSP by two exiled authors is: Jorge García Montes and Aurelio Alvarez, *Historia del Partido Comunista de Cuba* (Miami: Ediciones Universal, 1970). Several articles in Cuban publications are the best sources for the early history of the PSP—Fabio Grobart, 'El cincuentenario de la fundación del primer Partido Comunista de Cuba', *El Militante Comunista* (August 1975), 9-44 and Fabio Grobart, 'Preguntas y respuestas sobre los años 30', *Universidad de La Habana*, 200, 1973, 128-157.

8. F. Castro, op. cit., 108.

9. For a discussion of these problems, refer to F. Castro, *ibid*; 'Tesis y resolución sobre la vida interna del Partido', in *Tesis y Resoluciones: Primer Congreso del Partido Comunista de Cuba* (Havana: Departamento de Orientación Revolucionaria, 1976), 15-54; R. Castro, op. cit., 228 and ff.

10. The system had been instituted in the PURS in 1963.

11. Domínguez, op. cit., 315-316.

12. *Ibid.*, 315.

13. *Ibid.*, 316.

14. F. Castro, op. cit., 207.

15. *Tesis y Resoluciones*, op. cit., 28. The 1979 female party militancy will be found in Isidro Gómez, 'El Partido Comunista de Cuba', paper presented at the seminar on Cuba sponsored by the Institute for Cuban Studies at the American University, Washington, D. C., 13-17 August 1979, 28.

16. *Tesis y Resoluciones*, op. cit., 29.

17. *Ibid.*, 36.

18. William Leogrande, 'Continuity and Change in the Cuban Political Elite', *Cuban Studies/Estudios Cubanos*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (July 1978), 1-31.

19. Domínguez, op. cit., Chapter 9.

20. Leogrande, op. cit., 14.

21. The alleged 'Fidelista-Raulista' cleavage has been a favourite of factional model analysts such as Andrés Suárez and Edward González.

22. Fidel Castro's closing speech at the first party congress in *Unity Gave Us Victory* (Havana: Department of Revolutionary Orientation, 1977), 392.

23. Refer particularly to V. I. Lenin, 'The State and Revolution' in *Collected Works*, Vol. 25 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964), 385-497. For a contemporary controversy about the transition period, see Paul Sweezy and Charles Bettelheim, *On the Transition to Socialism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971).

24. 'Control' and 'for the benefit of' are not the same. Under capitalism although office holders may come from classes other than the bourgeoisie, there is no question that the latter reaps most of the benefits from the extracted surplus. In the transition to socialism, particularly in the early stages, power may be exercised by a small vanguard group in the name of the proletarian masses. Such a regime can be profoundly democratic in allocating surplus to the large masses without the latter actually exercising direct control of the state. However, transitional regimes must also develop effective forms for mass participation and mechanisms for internal party democracy which ensure workers' interests and ideology. Advanced socialism will probably evolve a variety of political instructions, but it will still have to pursue mass participation and internal party democracy.

25. The bourgeois state is institutionalized upon the conceptions of 'separation of powers' (executive, legislative, judicial) and 'checks and balances'. The transitional state, on the other hand, refines and differentiates the functions and interrelations of the vanguard party, the state (in Cuba's case, Organs of Popular Power) and its government (the ministries).

26. Domínguez, op. cit., 326-328.

27. J. H. Kautsky, 'Revolutionary and Managerial Elites in Modernizing Regions', *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 1 (July 1969), 441-467.

28. Leogrande, op. cit., 23.

29. There are two key speeches by Raúl Castro: to the central committee cadre on 4 May 1973 and to the seminar on the Matanzas experiment on 22 August 1974. Both are published in *Organos del Poder Popular* (Havana: Editorial Orbe, 1974), 127-143 and 145-168.

30. Ibid., 130.

31. Ibid., 130.

32. Ibid., 146-160.

33. Ibid., 153.

34. In the 1965 structure, there were five commissions: revolutionary armed forces and state security, economy, constitutional studies, education and foreign affairs. See *Cuba Socialista*, Vol. 5, No. 51, 11-12.

35. R. Castro, 4 May 1973 speech in *Organos de Poder Popular*, 141.

36. Domínguez, op. cit., 243-249.

37. *Informe sobre el trabajo del desarrollo de la constitución del poder popular*, op. cit.

38. Lourdes Casal, 'Ethnic Composition of the Cuban Elected Popular Power Organs: A Mini-Report', forthcoming in *Latin American Research Review*.

39. R. Castro, 22 August 1974 speech in *Organos del Poder Popular*, 45-68.

40. The issue is complex because it is largely related to the rationalization of the labour force in the reforms under the new economic and management system. In the 1960s, Cuba eliminated unemployment through underemployment throughout the

economy. Labour productivity consequently suffered. In the 1970s and into the eighties, economic rationality and improved labour productivity are top priorities. Cuba is therefore experiencing low levels of unemployment. The 1976 resolution valued male employment more highly than that of females. The female proportion of the labour force continued to increase nevertheless to 31 percent in 1980. Female employment moreover requires investments in daycare centres and other services supportive of child and house care. For Fidel's 8 March 1980 speech see *Granma Weekly Review*, 16 March 1980. For mass organizations in Cuba, see Max Azicri, 'The Governing Strategies of Mass Mobilization: The Foundations of Cuban Revolutionary Politics', *Latin American Monograph Series*, No. 2 (Erie, Pa.: Northwestern Pennsylvania Institute for Latin American Studies, 1977).