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## The crime against Cuba

Corliss Lamont

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**The  
Crime  
Against  
Cuba**

by

**Corliss Lamont**

10¢

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Corliss Lamont has long been known as a vigorous advocate of international cooperation and world peace. Ever since college days—he was graduated from Harvard in 1924 and took his Ph.D. at Columbia in 1932—he has worked devotedly for such causes as civil liberties, the rights of racial minorities, international understanding and the abolition of war.*

*Humanist philosopher, writer and teacher, Dr. Lamont was a staunch supporter of the League of Nations while it was in existence, and is presently a member of the American Association for the United Nations and the Foreign Policy Association. He is also Vice-Chairman of the Emergency Civil Liberties Committee and Chairman of the Bill of Rights Fund. He has traveled widely and has published books on philosophy, civil liberties and Soviet affairs. He has taught at Columbia University, Cornell, Harvard and the New School for Social Research, and is now lecturing and writing extensively about the causes in which he believes.*

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# THE CRIME AGAINST CUBA

by CORLISS LAMONT

## I

Walter Lippmann, dean of American columnists, has referred to the Kennedy Administration's support of the anti-Castro military venture in Cuba as an appalling and colossal mistake. But the abortive April invasion was worse than that. It was an outright crime against the Cuban people; and it was also a crime against the American people, against the United Nations and against world peace.

President Eisenhower must share the responsibility with President Kennedy for this enterprise in international immorality. As columnist William V. Shannon said in the *New York Post* of April 9, 1961: "Back in late 1959, the Eisenhower Administration decided to apply to Cuba 'the Guatemala treatment.' That is, the National Security Council gave C.I.A. Director Dulles the go-ahead to organize the Cuban exiles, train a military force and plan an invasion of Cuba."\*

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\* In 1954 Eisenhower's team of the brothers Allen W. and John Foster Dulles, Secretary of State, engineered the downfall of the progressive Guatemalan Government headed by President Arbenz. This was accomplished through covert U. S. military and other aid to the anti-government forces.

On January 3, 1961, Eisenhower, partly in furtherance of this plan, severed diplomatic relations with Premier Fidel Castro's government.

In his 1960 election campaign, President Kennedy, on October 20, issued a special statement about Cuba, claiming that the Russians had established "a new satellite" there, and suggesting that the United States Government should help to strengthen the "democratic anti-Castro forces in exile, and in Cuba itself, who offer eventual hope of overthrowing Castro."

This statement by Kennedy aroused considerable misgivings among liberals and progressives, including myself, who had come out in support of his candidacy. But most of us felt that his tough attitude towards the Castro regime was political eyewash designed to catch right-wing votes. Subsequent events made it clear that we were guilty of wishful thinking.

## II

In the early, pre-dawn hours of April 17, 1961, some 1,500 Cuban exiles and refugees—recruited, organized, subsidized and armed by the Central Intelligence Agency, a subdivision of the American Government—invaded Cuba. This army came in boats supplied by the C.I.A., with guns and tanks supplied by the C.I.A., and with fighting planes supplied by the C.I.A. The aim was to

secure a beachhead in Cuba, to trigger a mass rebellion against Castro, and to set up a Provisional Government which would then get official American recognition and aid. The U. S. Joint Chiefs of Staff approved the military aspects of the blueprint for invasion, which was given the code name of Operation Pluto by the C.I.A.-Pentagon strategists.

The April 28th issue of *Time*, a magazine distinctly hostile to Castro, stated: "The invaders—all Cubans—were trained by the U. S., supplied by the U. S., and dispatched by the U. S. to carry out a plan written by U. S. military experts. President Kennedy knew D-day in advance and approved." To handle the anti-Castro forces, there were "six main training bases in Guatemala" and "two staging bases at Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua, and tiny Swan Island off the Honduran coast.

"In recent weeks, the equivalent of fifty freight carloads of aerial bombs, rockets, ammunition and firearms was airlifted into Puerto Cabezas by unmarked U. S. C-54s and C-47s, in such quantities that on some days last month planes required momentary stacking. During Easter week, twenty-seven U. S. C-124 Globemasters roared in three or four at a time to off-load full cargoes of rations, blankets, ammunition and medical supplies at the U. S.-built airstrip at Retalhuleu, at

Guatemala City and at Guatemala's San José airbase."

The U. S. Navy, at least, rendered direct aid to the expedition against Cuba. One of the Cuban invaders who later escaped to Miami writes in his diary, published in the *New York Herald Tribune* of May 5: "April 14—The flotilla is steaming toward our date with destiny. Two destroyers—I think they are North American—flank us." This information was confirmed from other rebel sources.

*U. S. News and World Report* (May 15) gave further details: "U. S. destroyers escorted the ships to within six miles of shore. A U. S. aircraft carrier was in escort, as well, but remained about thirty miles offshore. . . . The B-26s of the anti-Castro forces flew from bases 600 miles away. They were escorted by U. S. Navy jets which peeled off about five miles from the beach, and left the B-26s on their own."

As history will permanently record, the Cuban Army and civilian militia smashed and smothered the invasion within three days, capturing more than 1,000 prisoners. Castro's tiny air force drove off or downed the enemy bombers, and sank most of the ships that had brought the invaders to the shores of Cuba. The entire Cuban people rallied to the support of the Government, and no sign of an uprising could be detected. Thus the

long-heralded invasion to "liberate" Cuba ended in complete fiasco, with the Kennedy Administration that had backed this madcap venture discredited throughout the entire world.

The extent to which the U. S. Government was in charge of the invasion is further shown by the fact that just before it began, the C.I.A. hustled off José Miró Cardona, President of the Cuban Revolutionary Council, and the other leaders of this principal anti-Castro organization, to an isolated and abandoned airbase in Florida where they were held incommunicado. The C.I.A. then issued news releases in the Council's name, but without its knowledge.

According to *The New York Times* of April 26, these Cuban leaders "were kept from using the phone or from communicating with anyone on the outside. . . . Enraged, several of the Council members announced that they were leaving even if it meant being shot by the armed guards." Finally, Adolf A. Berle, Jr., President Kennedy's coordinator of Latin-American policies, and Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., another close adviser to the President, flew to Miami to calm down the Revolutionary Council. Apparently the C.I.A. thought that the Council leaders could not be trusted to be discreet.

Earlier the C.I.A. had also kidnapped seventeen anti-Castro volunteers, because it consid-

ered them too Left politically, and held them in a remote jungle camp in Guatemala for eleven weeks before and during the invasion (*New York Times*, May 7). This episode reinforces our general knowledge that the C.I.A., in lining up recruits for and organizing the Cuban expedition, was partial to right-wing elements, including former supporters of Batista. And the two "kidnapping" incidents together prove up to the hilt that the assault on Cuba was master-minded by the C.I.A., and that the Cubans involved, whether leaders or rank-and-file, were essentially captives of U. S. imperialism.

On the very day of the invasion, Dr. Raul Roa, Cuba's Foreign Minister, charged before the Political Committee of the United Nations that his country had been invaded "by a mercenary force which came from Guatemala and Florida and which was organized, financed and armed by the Government of the United States of America." Ambassador Adlai E. Stevenson categorically denied these accusations and declared: "The United States has committed no aggression against Cuba. \* \* \* I wish to make clear also that we would be opposed to the use of our territory for mounting an offensive against any foreign government."

Thus, as in the incident of the U-2 spy plane flight over the Soviet Union on May 1, 1960, the

U. S. Government was caught red-handed in the Big Lie. Everyone who heard Mr. Stevenson speak in the U. N. knew that he was telling a diplomatic falsehood; and it was one that turned out to be most undiplomatic. For only a week later the White House gave out an official release on the Cuban affair, saying that "President Kennedy has stated from the beginning that as President he bears sole responsibility for the events of past days."

The participation by the United States in a military assault on a country with which it was officially at peace was a dishonorable action totally opposed to the best in our traditions as a democracy. It constituted a cynical violation not only of America's ideals of international peace, but also of our laws, our Constitution and at least six international treaties, including our solemn agreements under the United Nations and the Organization of American States.

One of the neutrality laws violated went into effect on June 25, 1948, under Title 18, Section 960 of the U. S. Code, Annotated: "Whoever, within the United States, knowingly begins or sets on foot or furnishes the money for, or takes part in, any military or naval expedition or enterprise to be carried on from thence against the territory or dominion of any foreign prince or state, or of any colony, district or people with

whom the United States is at peace, shall be fined not more than \$3,000, or imprisoned not more than three years, or both." Sections 956 and 959 of Title 18 are also most relevant.

With President Kennedy's assent, the C.I.A. took such complete command of the Cuban invasion that it became in reality a U. S. act of war, if not *de jure*, at least *de facto*. However, under the Constitution (Article I, Section 8, Item 11) Congress alone has the right to declare war. Thus in the Cuban situation the Kennedy Administration—the Executive Branch of our Government—usurped the power of the Legislative Branch and went ahead on its own to involve the United States in military hostilities that conceivably could have led to a world-wide nuclear conflict.

The aggression against Cuba also was contrary to the United Nations Charter, Chapter I, Article 2, Sections 3 and 4. Section 3 states: "All Members shall settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security, and justice, are not endangered." Section 4 requires: "All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations."

Likewise the Cuban venture violated Article 15 of the Charter of the Organization of American States, signed at Bogotá in 1948 by both the United States and Cuba: "No state or group of states has the right to intervene, directly or indirectly, for any reason whatsoever, in the internal or external affairs of any other state. The foregoing principle prohibits not only armed force but also any other form of interference or attempted threat, against the personality of the state or against its political, economic and cultural elements."

The American Government's disregard of the U.N., O.A.S. and other international obligations of the United States is in itself a violation of our Constitution, under Article VI, Section 2: "This Constitution and the laws of the United States which shall be made in pursuance thereof and *all treaties made, or which shall be made, under the authority of the United States, shall be the supreme law of the land*, and the judges in every State shall be bound thereby, anything in the Constitution or laws of any state to the contrary notwithstanding." [Italics mine.—C.L.]

It was ironic that just two weeks after the landing in Cuba President Kennedy, signing a resolution that proclaimed May 1 as Law Day throughout the United States, said in part: "Law is the strongest link between man and freedom,

and by strengthening the rule of law we strengthen freedom and justice in our own country and contribute by example to the goal of justice under law for all mankind.”

### III

The official reasons that the U. S. Government gave for its disregard of legal commitments, domestic and international, in the Cuban situation were that Premier Castro had created a Communist dictatorship in Cuba; that international communism had set up a base of operations in that country and was thereby violating the Monroe Doctrine; that Cuba—only ninety miles from American shores—had become a Soviet satellite; and that all this gravely threatened the national security of the United States.

An objective examination of the facts demonstrates that these charges against the Cuban Government are specious and mere pretexts for foreign intervention by means of force and violence. Nobody in his right mind can believe that the Castro regime, governing a little country with a total population of about 6,500,000—less than that of New York City—aims at military aggression against the United States. And Castro has repeatedly declared that he will work out the problem of the U. S. Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay through peaceful negotiations.

Since, therefore, Cuba does not represent any real menace to the security of the U.S.A., the American enemies of the Castro Administration are compelled to manufacture excuses for the most drastic action, including military invasion, against the Castro regime. These excuses must sound sufficiently plausible to delude the American people and world opinion. This explains the tremendous efforts—on the part of newspapers, magazines, radio, TV and the American Government itself—to whip up hysteria in the United States over the subject of Cuba. In this age, *nations as well as individuals can be victims of a frame-up.*

The revolutionary Government of Cuba came into power in January of 1959 as the result of an indigenous, non-Communist movement led by Fidel Castro to overthrow the reactionary and bloody dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista. The small Cuban Communist Party had long looked upon Castro as a well-meaning but blundering adventurer, and gave support to his 26th of July Movement only as it was nearing its final triumph. Throughout the Castro regime's brief existence of two-and-a-half years it has remained independent, while going steadily to the Left and experimenting with a socialist economy especially adapted to Cuban conditions and the Cuban people.

In this leftward trend Premier Castro's Administration was stimulated to a considerable degree by the hostile actions of the American Government and American business interests. Furthermore, when the Eisenhower Administration treated the Castro regime as a pariah and finally ruled out all American-Cuban trade, except in food and drugs, the Cuban leaders decided—with the very survival of their nation at stake—to fill in the void, especially in the absolutely essential trade in oil and sugar, by large-scale commercial agreements with Soviet Russia and Communist China. It was at this point that American Government officials, and most organs of public opinion in the United States, started to label the Castro government as "Communist" and to talk wildly of "the Communist bridgehead in Cuba" and "Soviet domination."

But it is important to remember that in our era former colonial or semi-colonial peoples throughout the world, from Indonesia in the Far East to Ghana and Guinea in Africa to Cuba in the Caribbean, have been winning national independence and at the same time setting up dynamically led republics that institute socialist programs in order to bring about rapid economic, social and cultural progress. It is essential to understand that when such regimes put into effect radical measures, as well as establishing

close diplomatic and economic relations with the Communist bloc, this does not mean that they necessarily are Communist-controlled or are becoming Communist.

As Mr. Bella Doumboya, the representative of Guinea at the recently concluded session of the United Nations, said in a speech on Cuba before this body on April 17: "States engaged in the decolonization of their structure always discover, and are appalled by the fact that their economy is not adapted to the needs of their national life owing to foreign exploitation. Single crop economies are an essential characteristic of under-developed countries. A revolutionary government, in order to foster comprehensive economic development, is bound to alter the colonial shape of the productive system if it wishes to foster national output and the industrialization of the country.

"Contrary to accusations of Communist infiltration which circulate everywhere as soon as an under-developed country engages in bold reforms, it should be known that the acts which succeed the assumption of power are the ineluctable consequences of a life of dependence and frustration and derive mainly from the paramount claim of people hitherto subjected to a feudal regime. In countries where the national economy is under the control of foreign interests,

misery and wretchedness is the lot of the indigenous population, all of whose labor power is occupied in the production of raw materials required for the continued expansion of the trusts.

“In the field of production, in order to facilitate new crops in line with the needs of the people, and to put an end to the exploitation of the peasantry, in order to call a halt to the inevitably catastrophic repercussions of this general situation on national output—in a word, in order to remedy the irrational utilization of land and bring to an end social injustice and misery, fledgling governments must always engage in historic acts which sometimes become the cause of ill repute for them.”

Every word of Mr. Doumboya's address applies to what the Castro regime has been trying to do. If the American people and the American Government persist in misunderstanding the situation in Cuba and in other nations that have recently emerged into freedom, the effects on United States foreign policy and international peace will continue to be disastrous. For to ascribe home-grown movements toward national independence and socialism to some sort of Communist conspiracy directed from Moscow or Peiping not only vastly exaggerates the power of the Communist bloc, but also leads to pro-

vocative claims of Communist intervention or aggression when it does not exist.

As for international communism having achieved a base in Cuba, this is pure nonsense, notwithstanding the constant propaganda to the contrary in the U.S.A. In the pre-invasion months a rumor was frequently printed that the Soviet Government had already constructed missile bases in Cuba. Of course this was wholly false; and in any case the Soviet Union has no need for such bases, since through its advanced technology it could from its own territory extensively bombard the United States with inter-continental missiles. As Premier Khrushchev declared in his conciliatory message to President Kennedy of April 22, "Our Government does not seek any advantages or privileges in Cuba. We do not have any bases in Cuba, and we do not intend to establish any. And this is well known to you, to your generals and admirals."

On the other hand, the United States has its big Guantanamo base, and maintains scores of other military bases fairly close to Soviet Russia and China, often in countries bordering upon them. As James Reston wrote in *The New York Times* of April 23: "Turkey, for example, has been getting from the United States far more power than Castro ever dreamed of getting from the Russians. The United States power, including

even rockets with nuclear warheads, has been situated in Turkey for a long time, but the Russians, while annoyed by this fact, have not felt obliged to use their power to invade Turkey."

A flagrant attempt to inflame American public opinion against Castro is shown in the many reports published about the Cuban Air Force utilizing Soviet MIG jets against the invaders. *Time* even stated that some of them were flown by Czech pilots. That these stories were untrue is indicated by the United States Navy itself. A dispatch from the U. S. base at Guantanamo in *The New York Times* of April 20 states: "The sensitive radar on Navy ships here has picked up no trace of high-speed Cuban or Communist aircraft. Officials, therefore, are confident that there have been no MIG fighters in this area of Cuba at least. Nor has the Navy sighted any foreign submarines." This paragraph was omitted in a later edition of the *Times*.

During May, Senator Wayne Morse (D.) of Oregon, Chairman of a special Senate subcommittee on Latin American Affairs, reported that this body had heard "not a bit of evidence" that there was a single MIG plane in Cuba. According to Senator Morse, the Cuban planes that proved so effective in thwarting the rebel landing were of U. S. manufacture and had been sold to the old Batista government.

Castro's own comment on the make-up of his air force during the invasion crisis was, "Would that we had had a few MIGs in those days!" In any event the Castro regime has a right to purchase for its own self-defense MIG planes, or any other kind, from a foreign government.

Much of the American propaganda barrage against Castro has centered around Cuba's admitted lack of civil liberties and political democracy. This propaganda, in the first place, naturally fails to mention that the Cuban Revolutionary Government has rapidly developed full racial democracy, complete equality between the whites and the Negroes, who make up one-third of the population. Economic, social and political discrimination against colored people, a pervasive evil under the Batista and earlier tyrannies, has disappeared. As Joseph Newman reported in the *New York Herald Tribune* (March 23): "Castro and Guevara are literally adored by the large number of poor and humiliated Cubans, especially the Negroes. They see these two leaders as saintly and honorable men, dedicated to removing injustices and discrimination."

In two and one-half years the Castro regime has made far more progress towards unqualified civil rights than the United States, particularly in the South, during the entire 100 years since the Civil War began. Actually, many of the

Americans who cry out against "the Castro dictatorship" hate and fear racial democracy, and are scared stiff that it might spread from Cuba to the continents of North and South America.

In the second place, our American propagandists do not point out that the Cuban Government has a democratic mandate in the sense that it is supported by the overwhelming majority of the people. This support stems from the fact that the Government has brought to the workers and peasants—the massive legion of the underprivileged—a higher standard of living, release from economic exploitation, vastly increased educational and cultural opportunities, the promise of continued progress, and a feeling of dignity and freedom at no longer being in bondage to U. S. imperialism. Had the C.I.A., the American State Department and President Kennedy known these things, they would not have made the miscalculation that the recent invasion would set off a popular uprising.

U. S. propaganda, in the third place, leaves out of the picture any reference to the relentless political and international pressures that have driven the Castro regime to certain dictatorial actions and policies. The outstanding foreign factor here has been the hostility of the United States, including its far-reaching economic embargo and culminating in April's military assault.

That aggression was hardly the sort of episode that could be expected to encourage democracy in Cuba, or in any other country confronted by similar circumstances. And the Cuban Government was certainly justified in putting into effect throughout the island far-reaching measures on behalf of public safety. It is well to recall that the National Emergency proclaimed by President Truman in 1950 during the Korean War is still in effect in the United States and has been utilized constantly for the curtailment of civil liberties.

There is, in truth, a large element of both inconsistency and hypocrisy in the American Government's call for "free elections" and political democracy in Cuba. It never made any such demands on Batista when he was in the saddle; nor on a number of other Latin American dictatorships that have been classified as part of "the free world"; nor on various other dictatorships allied to the U. S., such as those of Pakistan, Thailand, Saudi Arabia, Franco's Spain, Salazar's Portugal, and Chiang Kai-shek's Taiwan.

The real reason for the bitter opposition of the United States to the Castro regime is that it has put through radical social and economic reforms, nationalized the huge American property holdings in Cuba, freed the country from U. S. imperialist exploitation, established racial

democracy and instituted a planned socialist economy that is successfully functioning. Above all, the Eisenhower and Kennedy Administrations have been afraid that revolutionary Cuba would serve as an example for other Latin American peoples to follow, and that it would inspire dangerous ideas even among the population of the United States.

In any case, so far as democracy is concerned, history has demonstrated that a basic law or principle of drastic economic and social change is that when a progressively oriented revolution takes place in *any* country, the new regime coming into power may feel obliged to put into effect draconian legislation and procedures in order to ensure its survival and the success of its program. This holds especially when the nation in question—like Cuba—has had little or no functioning democracy in the past, is throwing off a reactionary bureaucracy or tyranny, or is threatened by internal counter-revolution and military incursions from abroad.

The principle I have just enunciated clearly applies to the non-Communist Castro government and its efforts to build an indigenous form of socialism geared to the welfare of the Cuban people as a whole; it applies to the various revolutions towards socialism that have occurred elsewhere in the twentieth century; and it applies

to our own American Revolution of 1776 against colonialism, when we were very hard on the Tories, some 100,000 of whom fled the country and suffered the confiscation of their property. In the chaotic and difficult conditions that faced the new American Republic subsequent to victory in 1781, we were quite weak on democracy and civil liberties, even after the adoption of the Bill of Rights in 1791.

It would be well for Professor of History Schlesinger to remind President Kennedy that no presidential elections were held in the United States until 1789, more than seven years after the end of the Revolution; that even then George Washington was unopposed for President, as he was again in 1792; that the theory of our Founding Fathers, as written into the Constitution, made no place for political parties; and that two distinct parties did not come into existence until a good twelve years after the close of the Revolutionary War.

The eminent philosopher, William Ernest Hocking, Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at Harvard, in his book *Strength of Men and Nations*, stresses a consideration that is most pertinent to the Cuban situation: "In the world-wide effort to meet the needs of under-developed regions, it must be realized that a degree of dictatorship is inescapable for the first steps. . . .

A people uneducated and uninformed, devoid of the habit of thinking out their own destiny, must proceed toward self-government under responsible guidance." And in such circumstances the people in general may well want "no gentle looseness of rein but a strict and determined command," just as midshipmen prefer a captain who "keeps a taut ship."

This discussion brings us back to the statement by Mr. Doumboya of Guinea that "fledgling governments must always engage in historic acts which sometimes become the cause of ill repute for them." As to such acts on the part of the Castro regime, as well as its obvious errors and excesses, the words of Lord Macaulay in his *Essay on Milton* (1825) are remarkably relevant:

"We deplore the outrages that accompany revolutions. But \* \* \* the final and permanent fruits of liberty are wisdom, moderation and mercy. Its immediate effects are often atrocious crimes, conflicting errors, skepticism on points the most clear, dogmatism on points the most mysterious. It is just at this crisis that its enemies love to exhibit it. They pull down the scaffolding from the half-finished edifice: they point to the flying dust, the falling bricks, the comfortless rooms, the frightful irregularity of the whole appearance; and then ask in scorn where the promised splendor and comfort are to be found.

If such miserable sophisms were to prevail, there would never be a good house or a good government in the world."

#### IV

I said at the start of this essay that the U. S.-backed invasion of Cuba was a crime against the American people. This is true not only because it greatly increased international tensions and the danger of a horrible nuclear war, but also because it set at naught long recognized democratic principles and Constitutional safeguards in the United States.

In relation to Cuba, President Kennedy and his close associates acted as a tight little group of conspiratorial bureaucrats in violation of parliamentary procedures and the fundamental principle of the Constitutional separation of powers among the three branches of the U. S. Government. Prior to the invasion, Congress was not given the slightest opportunity to debate the Cuban issue; nor was it submitted to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, of which J. William Fulbright (D.) of Arkansas is Chairman, nor to that Committee's subcommittee on Latin American Affairs. However, Senator Fulbright, knowing about Operation Pluto in advance, almost alone among Administration leaders opposed it in a memorandum to the President.

Of course the American people as a whole had no chance to express their opinion on the question of Kennedy's plunging them into the Cuban maelstrom. As Senator Morse put it in a speech on the Senate floor: "There is grave doubt as to the legality of the course of action our country followed last week in regard to Cuba. . . . Freedom is worth too much as a human system of government for us to surrender any of our freedom to *a police state system in the field of foreign policy*, dictated by denying to the people the knowledge of the facts of their own foreign policy." [Italics mine.—C. L.]

Kennedy's Cuban adventure constituted an Executive action running directly counter to the pronouncement in the Declaration of Independence about governments "deriving their just powers from *the consent of the governed*." [Italics mine—C. L.] As Mr. David Wise, White House correspondent of the *New York Herald Tribune*, wrote on May 2: "If a major foreign policy action—carrying with it the risk of war—must be prepared in secret, then should it be undertaken at all? And a corollary question being asked is how far down the road a democracy can go in emulating the tactics of its enemies before it wakes up one morning and finds it is no longer very different from its foes?"

After the invasion as well as before it, the

Kennedy Administration pursued its policy of undemocracy, endeavoring to stifle a free and full debate on the crime against Cuba in Congress and in American organs of public opinion. The President arranged interviews with the highest ranking Republican leaders such as ex-President Eisenhower, former Vice President Nixon, ex-President Hoover, Governor Rockefeller and Senator Barry Goldwater. The aim was to secure Republican acquiescence in the Cuban assault and a bipartisan blackout on the whole business. In fact, during the first weeks after the invasion it was only Senator Morse who spoke out in the halls of Congress against Kennedy's reversion to "the law of the jungle," as he called it. In the press there was plenty of criticism about how inefficiently the Cuban attack was handled, but precious little about its unethical and hypocritical character.

In a talk April 20 before the American Society of Newspaper Editors, President Kennedy compounded his mistakes of the past by indicating that there would be new ones in the future. "Let the record show," he declared, "that our restraint is not inexhaustible. Should it ever appear that the inter-American doctrine of non-interference merely conceals or excuses a policy of non-action; if the nations of this hemisphere should fail to meet their commitments against

outside Communist penetration, then I want it clearly understood that this Government will not hesitate in meeting its primary obligations, which are the security of our nation. Should that time ever come, we do not intend to be lectured on intervention by those whose character was stamped for all time on the bloody streets of Budapest."

These fighting words seemed to contradict the President's pledge of April 12 that "there will not under any conditions be an intervention in Cuba by United States armed forces"; and they were everywhere interpreted as not only a threat to the Latin American allies of the United States, but also as a warning that Kennedy might set in motion unilateral military intervention to encompass the destruction of the Castro Government. It is no wonder that *The Nation* condemned this speech as "one of the most belligerent and reckless . . . ever made by an American President."

Developing further his undemocratic techniques, President Kennedy, in an address to the American Newspaper Publishers Association on April 27, urged the press to censor itself on behalf of national security. Angry at newspaper exposures of the C.I.A.'s cloak-and-dagger plot against Cuba, Kennedy asserted: "Every newspaper now asks itself, with respect to every

story: 'Is it news?' All I suggest is that you add the question: 'Is it in the interest of national security?' And I hope that every group in America—unions and businessmen and public officials at every level—will ask the same question of their endeavors, and subject their actions to the same exacting test." To buttress his position, the President referred approvingly to the fact that in these "times of clear and present danger the courts have held that even the privileged rights of the First Amendment must yield to the public's need for national security."

In this manner President Kennedy expressed himself as favoring the current tendency in Supreme Court decisions to weaken civil liberties by making sweeping exceptions to freedom of speech as guaranteed in the Bill of Rights. I must add that the goal of every tyrant down the ages has been precisely to pressure and frighten the individual into *self-censorship*, so that he will not dare to speak up and protest publicly on controversial issues. When this happens a spirit of conformity and fear engulfs the nation, as in the United States at the height of McCarthyism. And if America's organs of public opinion now adopt the President's recommendations, this country will indeed be in a bad way.

In criticizing the President's speech, the *New York Post* (April 30) stated in an editorial: "Mr.

Kennedy said 'no war ever posed a greater threat to our security' than the present crisis and that 'the danger has never been more clear and its presence has never been more imminent.' Such language usually foreshadows the suspension of civil liberties. That, of course, is not now the case; Mr. Kennedy explicitly asserted that he has no desire to establish the 'wartime discipline' under which the Communists continuously operate. Yet the surface impact and logic of his words is to encourage those who would create such a climate here." *The Post* was right.

President Kennedy's suggestion about newspapers censoring themselves aroused other strong comments in the press. Under the heading, "When the Government Lies, Must the Press Fib?" *I. F. Stone's Weekly* (May 8) stated: "The national interest in a free society is supposed to lie in the fullest dissemination of the facts so that popular judgment may be truly informed. It is the mark of a closed or closing society to assume that the rulers decide how much the vulgar herd shall be told."

In an editorial of similar purport entitled "The Right Not To Be Lied To," *The New York Times* (May 11) said: "A dictatorship can get along without an informed public opinion. A democracy cannot. Not only is it unethical to deceive one's own people as part of a system of deceiving

an adversary government; it is also foolish." *The Christian Century*, a non-denominational and liberal religious weekly, assailed Mr. Kennedy's proposals to the press and claimed that they "carried an overtone of panic."

To summarize this part of my analysis, the Kennedy Administration has dealt a heavy blow to civil liberties through its intimate involvement in the invasion of Cuba, its brink-of-war policy towards the Castro regime and the President's two unfortunate speeches of April 20 and 27. At the same time our Government has given new heart and hope to every right-wing chauvinist in the U. S. A., and to every frenetic, anti-free-dom group in the land, from the American Legion to the John Birch Society.

Plainly, the attack on Cuba was not only contrary to American ideals of fair play and the abolition of war, but also to our basic self-interest as a people and a nation. For the Cuban debacle seriously set back President Kennedy's genuine endeavors towards international peace; and lost the United States an enormous amount of prestige in every corner and continent of the earth, including Canada and Latin America, and among our allies as well as among our acknowledged foes.

Joseph Barry well summed up the matter in the *New York Post* of April 23: "Whoever wins

in Cuba, we have lost. The Cuban catastrophe has become an American tragedy. In its first 100 days the Kennedy Administration has virtually drained its initial favorable balance in the world's books. . . .

"Everywhere our principle of self-determination has been compromised by Kennedy's defense of intervention, however limited, in Cuba's destiny, and the promise—which to the world is a threat—to intervene heavily should its destiny not be the one we prefer. . . . The neutrals of the world, from Nehru to Tito, have been shocked. The new nations of Africa are fearful of what some already refer to as 'American neo-colonialism.' From Delhi is heard the dismaying doubt that 'the New Frontier may after all be just the old familiar brink.'"

In a letter to *The New York Times* printed on May 13, Cyrus Eaton, well-known Cleveland industrialist, pointed out the international implications of the American Government's failure to obtain dependable factual information concerning Cuba: "If our intelligence on Cuba, only ninety miles away, could be so erroneous and misleading, how much better is it likely to be on Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria and the Soviet Union?"

"From first-hand observation in Eastern

Europe, I know that our diplomatic personnel deliberately maintain the most limited contact with government officials and practically none with the common man. . . . By seeking out the most extreme anti-Communist elements wherever it operates, the C.I.A. has largely cut itself off from reliable and useful intelligence."

Meanwhile, the Soviet Government had taken a firm and consistent stand on the Cuban situation. Premier Khrushchev in his note of April 22 presented to President Kennedy a series of reasoned arguments opposing the American attitude: "You simply claim," Mr. Khrushchev said, "some right of yours to employ military force when you find it necessary, and to suppress other peoples each time you decide that their expression of will constitutes 'communism.' But what right have you, what right has anyone in general, to deprive a people of the possibility of choosing their social and political system of their own free will?" Khrushchev concluded his message by urging once more that the Soviet Union and the United States work through to peaceful coexistence, with stable agreements on disarmament and other international problems.

In the United Nations on April 26, Valerian A. Zorin, head of the Soviet delegation, repeated his Government's pledge to come to the aid of Cuba in case it was subject to military intervention;

and asserted that this promise “was given seriously, more seriously than the British pledge of help to Poland that helped to draw the Western allies into World War II” (*New York Times*, April 27).

As for open U. S. military intervention in the future to get rid of Castro, Senator Morse was correct when he asserted on April 24: “I say to the Senators today that it is my judgment that if the United States seeks to settle its differences with Cuba through the use of military might, either direct or indirect, we shall be at least half a century recovering, if we ever recover, the prestige, the understanding and the confidence of one Latin American neighbor after another. . . . Cuba is not a dagger pointed at the heart of the United States, but is instead a thorn in our flesh.”

However, Cuba need not even have become “a thorn in our flesh” had the Eisenhower Administration offered economic cooperation and assistance to the Castro regime when it took over early in 1959. America should have been glad at that time that here was a non-Communist revolution in the Western Hemisphere with far-reaching social goals and with intelligent idealists leading it. Here was a chance for the American Revolution to catch up with and participate in the great social revolution that has been sweep-

ing the world during the twentieth century, a chance for the United States to befriend a struggling new regime and give guidance to a democratic reconstruction of the Cuban economy and political system.

Instead of grasping this unique opportunity, the American Government followed its usual policy of hostility towards a new order dedicated to radical social and economic reform, and did everything possible to weaken and undermine it. For the United States this was an extension of the attitude Walter Lippmann describes when he says: "We have used money and arms in a long losing attempt to stabilize native governments which, in the name of anti-Communism, are opposed to all important social change."

But it is not too late to retrieve the situation in regard to Cuba. Despite the American-supported invasion, only a week after it had been repulsed Premier Castro and President Dorticós said in a statement about Cuba and the United States: "We are willing to hold whatever discussions may be necessary to find a solution for the tension existing between the two countries and to arrive at a formula of peaceful coexistence, diplomatic relations and even friendly relations, if the Government of the United States so desires."

The U. S. State Department brusquely, fool-

ishly and childishly dismissed this conciliatory gesture with the rejoinder, "Communism in this hemisphere is not negotiable."

## V

However, there is no necessity for this being the final word if the Kennedy Administration will reconsider the whole matter in a spirit of reason and in the light of what is to the greatest advantage of the American people and lasting peace. In my opinion, President Kennedy should take the following steps:

1. Issue an unqualified pledge that the United States Government will not at any time in the future undertake military intervention against Cuba, either directly or indirectly.

2. Cease all further support to those Cuban exiles and refugees, on American soil or anywhere else, who are planning another invasion attempt to overthrow the Castro regime.

3. Announce that henceforth the United States Government will respect in full all international treaty obligations regarding Cuba.

4. Arrange the speedy resignation from the Central Intelligence Agency of those top officials who had primary responsibility for the C.I.A.'s ignominious role in the Cuban fiasco. Also replace Adolf A. Berle, Jr., the Administration's coordinator of Latin American policies, who has

displayed an abysmal ignorance concerning Cuba.

5. Accept the Cuban Government's proposal for the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba.

6. Agree to negotiate the chief political and other problems that exist today between the two countries, including the questions of normal trade relations and of proper financial compensation for the American property nationalized by the Castro regime. [Congressman Frank Kowalski (D.) of Connecticut made proposals along these lines in a speech in the House of Representatives on April 27.]

7. Agree to submit disputes on which agreement cannot at present be reached to the United Nations or the World Court.

8. Lift the ban against American citizens going to Cuba, re-establishing in this sector the precious right to travel.

9. Send to Cuba a special fact-finding commission of distinguished Americans to make a complete, impartial study of the situation there, so that the U. S. Government will have reliable information on the developments that have taken place under the Castro regime.

## SUGGESTED REFERENCES

In this pamphlet I have not endeavored to describe in any detail the immense progress that Cuba has made under the Castro regime. For information about this aspect of the Cuban Revolution I refer the reader to the following:

### *Books and pamphlets*

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*Petition to the President of the United States and the Attorney General, by American Lawyers, and supporting Memorandum of Law concerning the Policy of the American Government relating to Cuba under the Neutrality Laws, Treaties with Cuba, and International Law*, New York, 1961. (Copies may be obtained from Mr. Jesse Gordon, 333 Sixth Avenue, New York 14, N. Y. Price \$1.00 to cover cost of printing and mailing.)

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