

Cuba's Angry Young Man

The Cuban revolutionary movement was struck by the equivalent of an atomic bomb when a long, impassioned letter from Fidel Castro reached Miami. Fidel, as everyone calls him, was writing from his embattled quarters in the Sierra Maestra at the eastern end of the island. There for well over a year he has withstood the most determined efforts of the best troops and army officers that the military dictator, General Batista, has sent against him.

However, this is not what concerns him in the extraordinary letter that has reached the United States. Fidel Castro is thinking of the future when the Batista regime has been overthrown. He is bitterly disappointed and angry with the opposition leaders, including his own followers in the 26th of July Movement. Early in November all the opposition groups met in Miami and agreed on a "Pact of Unification." This, among other things, meant making a deal with ex-President Prio Socarras and his followers in the Autentico party. A Provisional President of the future Government was to be chosen and all the members and organizations of the opposition were to get together to help Fidel Castro and overthrow General Batista.

What Fidel's letter makes clear is that he has had no help in recent months from ex-President Prio and he and his followers want to have nothing to do with the old political leaders who led Cuba to the present abyss. He chooses a noble but little-known figure in Cuban public life as his candidate for Provisional President, Justice Manuel Urrutia. And he dedicates himself and his 26th of July Movement to the cause of Cuban freedom and democracy in words that would have done justice to José Martí, Cuba's national hero.

Of the many comments that could be made on this remarkable document the first and most practical is that it destroys the claim of the Batista regime that Fidel Castro is or has been a tool or even a partner of ex-President Prio. Another obvious comment is that the opposition to General Batista is now more divided than ever, and it has been such division which alone permitted General Batista to remain in power. However, Fidel Castro has now cleared the air, and that may strengthen his movement in the long run.

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