

THE CUBAN REVOLUTION IN 1978 — AT HOME AND IN AFRICA

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Foreword: Cuba — an actor in world politics

How does it happen that an isolated and underdeveloped island-nation with a little less than 10 million inhabitants has suddenly become a political power-factor in another part of the world? For a large part of the Western World and its clients a communist ghost wanders through Africa in the form of Cuban advisers and troupes in collusion with, if not directly manipulated by, Moscow. We can read about it daily in the Western press. For others, especially in the Third World, Cuba's presence in Africa is a welcomed help or a necessary evil in the struggle against colonialism and racism.

However, regardless of which position one takes on Cuba's actions, all agree that world politics has got a new and different sort of actor: a little underdeveloped country which plays an active, and in several important cases, a decisive role in other countries' political development. Up to now it is a role which rich states and colonial powers have had a monopoly on, almost always with negative connotations and for their own gain.

Fidel Castro's Christmas speech

Much has been written on and speculated about the Cuban's motives for their African commitment. But few analyses have been made starting from the Cubans' own declarations and stated motives. Not that going about it that way one will

necessarily get at the whole truth. But it is worth noting that no one within the Swedish debate, and very few within the international one, have studied Fidel Castro's major program speech to the Cuban parliament on December 24 last year. That was probably one of Castro's most important and most interesting speeches during the 70's, delivered with all the virtuosity and power which characterize one of the greatest contemporary political orators. The two-hour speech contained a detailed analysis of the country's internal development, and an impassioned defense of Cuba's international commitment, and a long, subtle coming to terms with the USA.

In his speech the Cuban Prime Minister gave the key to several of the questions which are asked about the African commitment. Let us look at what was said and make a few comments on it.

The first impression is that Cuba's political leaders feel relatively satisfied with the process of internal development. It has laid a good and promising foundation for the future. From this feeling of growing self-reliance, they take inspiration for a more open political climate and for a more active foreign policy.

The cultural climate has improved. A sign of that is that a Ministry of Culture has been set up, among other things, to stimulate creativity. Its head, Armando Hart, is close to Fidel and dares to break down barriers and prejudices. In a much-commented speech he, among other things, said in addressing himself to those who thought that the revolution could not afford major cultural experiments: "Now we've created justice; let us now put our efforts into the arts."

Self-reliance and political prisoners

With that situation shouldn't the Cuban leaders feel secure and generous enough to give amnesty to the political prisoners?, I asked my hosts.

This is what a very high-placed Cuban answered: "We've let most of the political prisoners go. Of the original 15,000 there are 3,200 left to-day. Of these we shall most likely free the majority in the next few years. We would have begun that process probably already last year. But the sabotage of a Cuban passenger plane in which 80 died eliminated the conditions for such a policy at that time." (Another reason that this process was delayed is that they are unwilling to give the appearance of giving in to Carter's offensive on human rights.)

We have 85 difficult prisoners. They will most likely serve their whole sentences, since they are in constant rebellion against all internationally-established prison norms. Several of them have been mixed-up in assassination attempts against Fidel and others.

I asked about Hubert Matos — Cuba's best-known prisoner. His wife complains

that her husband's physical and mental state has become worse because of the miserable prison conditions. The spokesman answered: "I can give my revolutionary word of honour that neither Matos nor any other prisoner suffers from physical needs to-day. Their conditions have been improved greatly. No one is tortured in Cuban prisons. No one suffers because of bad cells or food. We have recently built a new, modern prison — Combinado del Este — where we shall take the majority of the political prisoners. It cost 14 million pesos, as much as it would cost to build 14 new schools. I can reveal a piece of news: ask Amnesty International's chairman, Thomas Hammarberg, about the conditions in our prisons. He was here for a nine days' visit at the end of November/beginning of December on behalf of Amnesty. It was the first time that a representative from Amnesty International was given permission to visit Cuba."

Self-reliance and foreign policy

Castro states in his introduction that Cuba's parliament (National Assembly) had finished its first work year by approving the country's first public budget which ran to over 9 billion pesos (1 peso = a little over 6 Swedish crowns). He also pointed out two other minor, but for Cuba, important decisions: an end to creating new so-called "historical salaries" — qualified professionals were allowed to keep the salaries they had before the revolution,* — as well as the approval of a new job-safety code.

A strong contributing factor in Cuba's new self-reliance is the support from the USSR and the other COMECON countries. Fidel uses a simple and powerful argument to illustrate the country's situation, their dependency on the price of raw materials on the world market, and the value of Cuba's special relationship to the USSR:

If we were living in prerevolutionary times and the price of oil on the world market were what it is now, all of Cuba's sugar, given its present market price, would barely be enough to pay only for the oil our country uses. I've heard some people ask when the Revolution in Cuba would have taken place if it hadn't occurred in 1959. One is tempted to say that if it hadn't taken place in 1959, it would take place now, because I don't know how our country could have coped with the present situation.

Castro emphasized that not all countries were able to enjoy the same advantageous connections with the Eastern block as Cuba was. He continues:

Suffice it to say that we are using nearly nine million tons of oil ... and by 1978 we'll consume about 9,500,000 tons of oil. At present world prices,

* My Cuban companion told the story that an older fellow-worker with his "historical salary" received four times as much as he did for the same job.

the bill for this would come to 800 million or 900 million dollars. By exporting sugar to the capitalist world at the present prices ... five million tons would bring in just over 800 million dollars. It would barely be enough to pay for the oil, let alone all the food, raw materials, equipment and other products the country must import. What would have become of the country without the Revolution and without the excellent trade relations we have with the socialist camp and especially with the USSR?

Cuba and the USSR

Castro alludes to the extremely favourable trade agreement with the USSR which among other things guarantees Cuba a fixed, high sugar price and a uniform, relatively cheap Russian petroleum supply. Fidel gave further examples of Cuba's risky situation: the price of sugar sank drastically 6—7 times from over 50 cents per ton to under 5 cents within a short time. That is a hard blow for a country which must sell a large part of its sugar in order to get necessary Western products. Imported spare parts tripled in price at the same time, while other raw materials and imported products also had experienced large price increases. At the same time the international crisis led to a decrease in the demand for nickel, and Cuba has an unsold stock for the first time.

Such situations, according to Castro, have led in many underdeveloped countries, and particularly in Latin America, to deep political crises and to military dictatorships. But in spite of these difficulties, it has been possible to maintain in Cuba an unchanged level of consumption for teaching materials, clothing, education, health care and work. What other country in similar circumstances has been able to do anything similar, asks the Cuban leader rhetorically.

Cuba has continued to clear up its international economic obligations. Not a single debt is unpaid, while underdeveloped countries in general sink under the burden of debts. At the same time our growth rate has developed in a positive direction. From 3.8 % in 1976 to a little over 4 % in 1977 and to a calculated increase of 7.4 % in 1978. Which other comparable country has been able — in the middle of a deep international economic crisis — to increase the number of intermediate-school students from 590,000 in 1975 to over a million in 1978? Furthermore, we shall build 31,000 new dwellings and create 120,000 new jobs during 1978.

The lean cow's mentality

But in spite of the fact that the thin years seem to be coming to an end, Fidel states that the Cubans must keep "the lean cow's mentality". They can count on keeping their standard during the next seven years, while working to con-

solidate the economy and lessen foreign dependency. Not to increase even more private consumption.

The truth is, according to Fidel, that "our generation of revolutionaries must resignedly realize that they get the worst part of the revolution. Perhaps the most honour but also the greatest privations. One must sacrifice oneself for the sake of future generations".

Cuba's budget shows that of the little over 9 billion pesos, 1.5 billion go to health care and education, with 600 million for social purposes. Compare that with the 784 million pesos we designate for defense and inner security. That means we put twice as much on health care and education as on the army and security, which constitutes only about 8 % of the budget, Castro exclaims directed to the West.

We have come far from where we started from, he states.

"The Revolution is nineteen years old, but is still at the kindergarten stage", he sums up the internal political development.

Five different US presidents have gone against Cuba's revolution — Eisenhower, Kennedy, LBJ, Nixon and Ford. "These have disappeared but the revolution is still here", Castro bursts out while speaking about the USA.

Cuba and the USA

Both the US and Cuba have made gestures to a rapprochement. "But the most important obstacle is still there: the blockade."

We are in favor of peace and détente — in favor of good relations with the US. For the sake of future generations. They need peace in order to be able to deal with the major problems of the future: food, uncontrolled populations growth, pollution, power shortages, lack of natural resources, development problems.

That's why we're willing to work for improved relations, however not at the cost of our relations with the USSR. Such would also benefit us materially and economically.

How can the US say that our presence in Angola can influence our bilateral relations? They speak of advisers in different African countries — they have a list which in several cases is false.*

What moral basis can the United States have to speak about Cuban troops in Africa? What moral basis can a country have whose troops are on every

* In my conversations with the Cuban leaders, it was emphasized that there isn't a single Cuban soldier in Uganda. In Sierra Leone and Libya, according to the US, there should be over 200 Cubans. In fact it is a matter of a dozen diplomats. Also the collaboration with Equatorial Guinea was being terminated.

continent, that has, for instance, over 20 military bases in the Philippines, dozens of bases on Okinawa, in Japan, in Asia, in Turkey, in Greece, in West Germany, in Europe, in Spain, in Italy and everywhere else? When their own troops are stationed here on our own national territory?

If we're going to talk about troops stationed where they shouldn't be and that has indeed a lot to do with the bilateral relations between Cuba and the United States, the only troops that should be talked about are those now stationed at the Guantánamo naval base. Cuba hasn't occupied any area in Florida, but the US has occupied a bit here.

It would be ridiculous for us to demand as a condition for better relations that the US withdraw its troops from these countries I named. Think if we said: we are disgusted that you have soldiers in West Germany — for that reason we can't have diplomatic relations with you. Then they would say, those guys are crazy. Therefore, how come they have the right to say it? It's all right for the imperialists to have troops and advisers everywhere, but we can't have them anywhere. Where's the logic?

Solidarity with Africa

We're supporting African governments that have requested our cooperation: they are duly constituted governments, and revolutionary and progressive governments at that.

We have no military advisers in countries like Chile. The United States has military instructors and advisers in dozens of countries — in Iran, Saudi Arabia, and such countries. The United States have military advisers in nearly all the Latin American countries: the United States has sent military advisers to and have trained the armies of the most repressive, reactionary and bloodthirsty governments of this hemisphere.

The fundamental difference between the advice given by the United States and Cuba is that the United States will never advise a revolutionary or progressive people and it will, generally speaking, always advise reactionary and fascist governments.

We have a large army, yes. But it is US imperialism which forces us with its sanctions and aggressions to take these elementary precautions in order to survive.

We're now helping — and we'll go on helping Angola, Mozambique, the Ethiopian Revolution. If that's why the United States is blockading us, let them go on blockading us. Our solidarity with the people of Africa is not negotiable.

Why doesn't the United States blockade South Africa, a racist, fascist country whose minority is oppressing 20 million blacks? Why doesn't it blockade Rhodesia, where 300,000 white fascists are oppressing six million Africans, a country whose troops are perpetrating indescribable massacres of men,

women and children in Mozambique? Why don't the Yankee imperialists blockade Pinochet? They blockade Cuba instead.

What is understood by the peoples, what is understood by the African peoples is that while the Yankee imperialists have sided with South Africa, Rhodesia, the repressive and reactionary African governments, we've sided with the revolutionary and progressive peoples of Africa.

I repeat: we are prepared to improve relations with all countries, but with just conditions. But if the US believes that Cuba shall give up her principles, if they attempt to blackmail us, then in the same manner that in the past we fought against five US presidents, we will now fight against the sixth.

Human Rights

The US has contributed to creating counterrevolutionaries; now it wants them out of prison.

We have freed thousands and thousands of counterrevolutionaries. Not even 20 % of those 15,000 we had twelve years ago are left. We have never tortured, we have never made anyone "disappear", we don't have the military beating down the workers. The US allied regimes here in Latin America make thousands of human beings disappear, they torture and murder. That doesn't prevent the US from having trade with them, selling them weapons and giving them military advisers.

With what right can the US, who has killed millions of Vietnamese, speak of human rights. At the same time we say: if the US frees an equal number of North American blacks who because of exploitation, hunger, necessity, discrimination and unemployment are forced into prison, then we are prepared to free all of the remaining counterrevolutionary prisoners in Cuba. The US has a government of the few, for the few. Cuba has a government of the people, for the people.

So Fidel finishes his coming to terms with the USA.

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Welfare and Ideology

He still speaks a long time and in detail. But he is fascinating and inspiring. It is likely that his arguments hit home far beyond Cuba's borders, among progressive people and governments, particularly in the Third World.

In Cuba he captures the masses, now as before. He is the revolution's uncontested leader. He knows he speaks to people who are aware that the material conditions for the broad masses have never been better. They do not question

the statistically accounted for successes. If one has visited Cuba during different periods, one notes oneself that the material standard has improved little by little. The lines in front of the stores and restaurants have decreased markedly.

All over the island schools, housing, hospitals, all kinds of institutions mushroom up. The possibilities of buying "por la libre", without a ration card, have increased. Possibly this development has contributed to the fact that thousands of Cuban exiles wait in line in Spain and the US to be able to return to their homeland.

That the support from the USSR and the other Eastern countries contributes significantly to Cuba's material welfare is indiscutible. But without the Cubans' mobilization of their own material and human resources, without the strict work discipline and the sacrifices, the wheel of development would never have gotten rolling sufficiently.

We can never get away from the fact that Cuba is the Latin American country which so far has succeeded best in satisfying the majority of the people's needs. The Cuba of the 1970's is an example for its continent on the civil plane. That has happened against the US's will. And with the USSR's support, without which the revolution would have been crushed. The Cubans are reminded of that constantly. That is why gratitude to the USSR is widespread and sincere. That is also why the Cuban Communist Party meets little ideological opposition in its attempts to implant, especially in the new generation, the Marxist-Leninist theses. Marxist-Leninist propaganda is spread out on a broad base. Now after the creation of the new institutions: the party congress, parliament, the central workers union congress later this year — it has greater possibilities to take root in the population. But it is not a matter of a slavish copying of the Eastern models, but rather a sort of idealistic version of the doctrine.

A New Internationalism

"Enthusiasm for the revolution still exists in Cuba, but is now strengthened by a political consciousness", says Cuba's Foreign Minister. "The young generation is more radical than ours. They are also different. They have only experienced the revolutionary society; they aren't weighted down with any legacy from the old order."

The Cuban leaders think that the young people's revolutionary spirit is one of the reasons that Cuba could so powerfully and without major recruiting problems engage in solidarity actions abroad.

When I asked how one could maintain the revolutionary enthusiasm over longer periods of time, say 44 years, most people pointed to internationalism. An example: Cuba now trains approximately 1000 doctors per year. Within a

couple of years that number will have increased to 3000. That more than covers the country's needs. Cuba then will have the possibility of sending out hundreds of doctors to underdeveloped countries. It is the same case for engineers, instructors of various types. It is a kind of peace corps activity. That the military aspect has come to dominate is only a result of the necessities which imperialism has created, it is said. International solidarity gives the young people the possibility of playing a heroic role. They see Fidel and the other guerrilla heroes but are unable to play a similar role at home. The desire for adventure and heroism have instead an outlet in other countries. "This is an important and constant part of the Cuban revolution", a very highplaced Cuban explained to me. "We ran the risk of becoming bureaucratic during that period when the local leaders were hand-picked by the party. Now we have 'poder popular' where the grass roots can exercise their influence. In this way we have begun an irreversible process of decentralization and avoided a situation which paralyses the societies in many Eastern countries. It cannot become as it has there, that one is more preoccupied with consumerism than communism and has completely lost the revolutionary fervour. That is why we encourage the young people to become involved internationally, and countries willing to receive this solidarity are not lacking, as is well-known."

Why is Cuba in Africa?

Besides the new-won self-reliance and the reputed desire for heroism among the young people, the Cubans also give a series of other reasons for their African commitment.

The Cubans return constantly to *the historical link*, the relationship that comes from the fact that a large part of the black slaves that the Spanish conquerors took to Cuba came precisely from Angola. Participation in the struggle against colonialism there now is a sort of retroactive revenge by the slaves' descendants.

Cuba has, one continues, a long tradition of revolutionary internationalism

Already during the struggle against the Spanish in the last century, José Martí wrote into the Cuban constitution that liberation should also apply to Puerto Rico. The principle of international solidarity is written into the present constitution. Later during the 1960's the tradition was taken up again by Che Guevara and the support of guerrilla struggles in different Latin American countries. During the Tricontinental Conference in Havana, liberation movements

from all over the world met and promised each other support. Then it was a question of *overthrowing* governments. Or fighting colonialism. Che and 200 Cubans were in Africa in the struggle against Tshombe in the Congo. Cubans took part on the side of the FLN in the Algerian war. Cuban solidarity in the 1970's consists of *supporting* governments against aggression, as in Vietnam and Angola, or against colonialism, as in Southern Africa. Collaboration is based in official government agreements, it is emphasized.

Cuba itself has had bitter experience with aggression, sabotage and attempts to destabilize

The unsuccessful invasion in 1961 of the Bay of Pigs, the blockade since 1962, a series of sabotages which culminated in the exploding of a Cuban civil plane in 1976 which cost 80 lives. "During those difficult years we received support from other revolutionary movements such as MPLA and FRELIMO. We are returning that solidarity now." That is also the reason for the active support of, for example, SWAPO and Patriotic Front.

The overthrow of Allende's government in Chile and the participation of the CIA showed how dangerously progressive regimes live

The world has become a stage for the struggle between imperialism and revolution. It is a matter of whole-heartedly helping governments who think similarly, to stick together. One could add that the majority of the attempts to attack the independent African states have been made by Western mercenaries.

So far the Cuban reasoning and arguments. They are to a large extent easy to understand and to accept, in some cases dubious, and in the case of Ethiopia very debatable. But in any case Cuba's spectacular presence in Africa calls forth a series of questions.

Is Cuba running the USSR's errands?

The first question: Is Cuba in the Soviet Union's leash and carrying out Moscow's foreign policy where Moscow itself must act more discreetly?

Few serious observers believe in such a one-sided role for Cuba. In a long and interesting article in the American government's magazine *Problems of Communism* at the end of 1977, US professor Edward Gonzalez dismisses that idea. *The New York Times* wrote in a much commented article last fall — "The

Cubans are Coming" — that the Cuban commitment in Africa — with the exception of Angola and Ethiopia — is mainly a conventional aid program, — low capital intensive, abundant in technical aid — and with striking parallels to Israel's aid to Africa during the 1960's.

But it is obvious that the Soviet and Cuban foreign political ambitions coincide in certain regions, for example, in Africa. It is also clear that Cuba would not have been able to engage itself so quickly and deeply in Ethiopia without significant logistical support from the USSR. The military part of the budget which Castro pointed out shows also that the country's commitment in Africa must be paid for in large part by the USSR. But it is also quite clear that even without Soviet support Cuba would have aided MPLA in Angola, even if to a lesser extent materially. Solidarity between Havana and Luanda is stronger than Luanda's or Havana's respective connections with Moscow. It is also interesting in this context to remember the strong contradictions which existed between Moscow and Havana during the 1960's when Che Guevara and his guerrillas were viewed as petty-bourgeois adventurers by the Soviets. Also in 1962 the Cuban leaders experienced how the pro-Moscow so-called "Escalante Group" tried to take power in Cuba.

Cuba — Ally or Outcast?

Second question: How can Cuba send troops and advisers to a continent with such bitter experiences of foreign military expeditions?

I think one can dismiss the assertion that a united Africa distrusts Cuba in Africa. There are probably few who really believe that the Cubans are out after economic advantages from their involvement or any territorial advantages or bases. The day that the Cubans consider they have completed their task, their military units shall most likely return home.

But it is clear that the Africans in general would like to be able to deal with their problems without intercontinental help. And right-wing dictatorships and conservative states most likely look upon the Cuban presence in the area as a danger. But there are also those who see Cuba as a welcome ally. Fidel's month long tour of Africa last year was something of a triumphal march through eight Arab and African states. And the leading article in that otherwise less-than-revolutionary magazine *Jeune Afrique* of February 22 this year expresses what probably many conscious Africans think:

Africa's interest, in a situation where all foreign intervention and domination, French among others, has not been eliminated, lies in the presence of the USSR and Cuba...

Without them Portuguese colonialism, and before that French, would have stayed on much longer. Without them the West's two renegades — Smith's Rhodesia and Vorster's South Africa — would have been stronger. Without them the Belgian-English delayed-action bombs consisting of Katanga and Biafra would have caused greater damages. Viewed generally, without them Western domination and exploitation would have been even heavier to bear. On the level of principles, be it in the Middle East or in Africa, the Soviet Union and Cuba have up to now taken an irreproachable attitude.

Afro-Communism

Jeune Afrique's chief editor has put his finger on the heart of the matter: it is colonial Europe's and the Western Powers' sins of omission which has created the need for external help in Africa. If Cuba had not hurried to MPLA's aid in Angola, there would to-day be a South African puppet in Luanda's presidential palace. And as long as South Africa continues to support UNITA in the south, Cuba's presence in Angola will also be accepted. The Western Powers have not moved a finger to prevent it, on the contrary, many in the West had wished for a UNITA victory. In Ethiopia, the Western Powers have created a Frankenstein's monster through decades of support and rearmament of a feudal dictatorship. When the people rise up one day, it is no surprise that they not only revolt against the national oppressors but also against those people and the system which supported that regime. Is it so strange that Mengistu and his comrades have become militant revolutionaries with Marxist-Leninist Cuba as a model? Is it on the whole anything to wonder at that a sort of Afro-communism has taken root in countries like Angola and Mozambique? A leader in the South African resistance expressed this tendency in this way: for South Africa the process leads inexorably in the direction of socialism. In the first place, the racists themselves drive the oppressed population to take a position in favor of socialism. When Vorster and his likes say that "the communists are our enemies", just as the Portuguese did in their colonies, the Black South Africans must quite simply draw the conclusion that the communists are the oppressed's friends.

Secondly, the system forces into existence a polarization in which the whites take a more hard-line position and seek support for it in the West.

Thirdly, the Soweto massacres created a need on the part of the young people for a well-thought-out political alternative to the racist, fascist regime. The logical answer is Marxist. There must be radical and immediate answers — and absolutely not capitalism.

Fourthly, developments have shown that the capitalist Western Powers are not to be trusted when it comes to stopping support to the Vorster regime. On the other hand one can count on the support of the communist states.

In the fifth place, developments in Angola and Mozambique have shown that socialistic liberation movements could defeat colonialists and oppressors. And their road was Marxist-Leninist. Why should not that way do for South Africa too? What alternative ways do the ANC's leaders really have to offer their members in this situation? "How shall we answer our young radicals?" asks the ANC leader.

Cuba in Ethiopia

Third question: What is the significance of the Cuban involvement in Ethiopia?

How can veteran guerrilla soldiers support a regime which fights against a genuine guerrilla movement in Eritrea? Why do they support a regime, which fights as well against different Marxist groups?

The Cuban's argument is as follows: there a genuine, popular revolution which has won the support of the broad masses is going on. It is more radical than the Chinese, Russian or Cuban revolutions ever were. It is bloody, primitive and brutal because it is a question of breaking with feudalism. It is a slaves' uprising, and exploited people who demand revenge. It is, according to Fidel, at the same time France of 1789 and Russia of 1917. It is first in Mengistu, himself the son of a slave and exposed to racial discrimination during his military training in the USA, that the revolution gets a real popular leader. Those who preceded him were all Spinola-types. Now the Derg is dominated by former sergeants, sprung from the lower classes. During its short existence the revolution has brought about more for the people than former regimes during 3000 years. Now Ethiopia must be supported against territorial dissolution, as in the case of Eritrea where the guerrilla gets help from reactionary Arab regimes, and against external aggression in the form of Somalia's ambitions in the Ogaden province.

The Cubans also emphasize in this context that Fidel personally tried to play the role of negotiator between Ethiopia and Somalia. At a meeting arranged by the Cubans in Aden in the spring of 1977 between Barre, Fidel and Mengistu, the Cubans strove for a federation between the two sides. Within that there could also be a federative position for Ogaden and Eritrea. According to the Cubans, it was Barre's opposition which broke off the discussion. The Cubans' — and most likely the Russians' — dream of a socialist federation around the Horn of Somalia, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Eritrea and South Yemen was dispelled. They underestimated nationalism, Africa's central ideology. At the meetings in Aden Barre promised not to resort to military means to resolve the problem of Ogaden. The Cubans say they blame themselves for not satisfying already at that stage Mengistu's request for a relatively extensive help with instructors.

"If we had sent the number he asked for then, the Ogaden war would not have become a long, drawn-out affair."

Eritrea is the difficult knot. Cuba itself has good connections with many Eritreans. Many have studied or have been trained in Cuba. That is why no Cuban is allowed to be stationed in Eritrea. They are opposed to a separatist solution but support efforts for a federation. They state that Mengistu is also in favor of such a solution, but he must first clear up the problem of Ogaden so as not to negotiate with the Eritreans from a weak position. But once that problem is resolved, a negotiated settlement in Eritrea will come within a couple of weeks, it is said.

The Cuban arguments in the question of Ethiopia are not objectionless. It is probable that the victory in Ogaden, where the Cubans have contributed to expelling an army which all of Africa views as an aggressor, has increased the Cubans' prestige. If the Cubans' military presence in Ethiopia should then be scaled down, eventually to be replaced completely by civil aid, then surely the Cuban contribution will be viewed by many in a historical perspective to be wholly positive. But one overlooks still some fundamental objections which must be made. The Cuban commitment to Mengistu came at an early stage. Even though not militarily until the invasion of Ogaden, so Cuba supported a regime that all the while was involved in a bloody internal struggle and which waged a half-colonial war in Eritrea. With such an attitude Cuba contributes to maintaining alive a principle which, not least of all, the non-aligned and small nations must oppose, namely, that a foreign power has the right to intervene in support of whatever type of regime as long as one likes their ideology. We have all too many such examples and almost all have affected progressive regimes.

What is more, the commitment to Ethiopia cannot be put on the same footing with the support of Angola. Mengistu did not truly represent a nationally and internationally established liberation movement as MPLA did. Neither did Somalia's aggression in Ogaden threaten the regime in Addis in the same decisive way that South Africa's intervention did in Angola. It is also very probable that the regime in Addis would even ultimately have been able to survive Somalia's aggression by itself or with cooperation from the African states. Ethiopia is still a nation with ten times as many inhabitants as Somalia.

After Somalia's retreat in Ogaden, it remains to be seen which road Cuba will choose. But it must be clearly said that if Cuba militarily aids Mengistu to crush the guerrilla war in Eritrea, Cuba risks losing its prestige also within the European Left.

But the most serious misgivings about Cuba's intervention in Ethiopia is the violent, indiscriminate and anti-communist feelings it awakes in the US. There is the risk that those powers will come to dominate within the US which seek to intervene directly — "send the Marines" — or indirectly by increased armament

of states such as Iran and Saudi Arabia. The contradictions between the super-powers can become more acute and in that way endanger the continued essential efforts for disarmament and détente in the world.

For this reason one can hope that in the future Cuba will concentrate its revolutionary energy less on military aid and more in the civil area where they have been so successful in their own hemisphere and won respect. But the conditions so that such a demand can be made with force and taken to be believable are that the basic causes for the Cuban military presence in Africa be removed, namely, the West's passivity to and in certain cases direct support of colonialism and racism, as in South Africa, as well as the plots and attempts at destabilizing African progressive movements and governments such as the MPLA in Angola.

(Translated from Swedish into English by J. A. Oberdorfer.)