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# CUBA CUBA

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## CAW! and the Guardian

collaborated to create this supplement on Cuban culture in honor of the 10th anniversary of the Cuban revolution. The supplement replaces the fourth issue of CAW!, the SDS arts magazine.



Painting by Mendive,  
Havana

Culture in Cuba after 10 years of revolutionary change and growth is impossible to document in a few pages. We have tried to offer at least a sampling from as many areas as space and available material allow. The plastic arts and poster design deserve much fuller analysis and could only be hinted at because of the technical limitations of black-and-white newsprint. They are among the most important developments in Cuban art—from billboards, posters and design in periodicals to paintings and total-environment exhibitions. The music, of course, must be heard and felt, not only seen.

Where possible, we have let Cubans speak for themselves because we feel that they are best able to communicate the Cuban reality.

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# The New Man

*Excerpts from a speech at Santa Clara, July 26, 1968, the 15th anniversary of the attack on the Moncada barracks which marked the beginning of the armed struggle in Cuba.*

Every people, every nation, has its way of making its revolution; every people, every nation, has its way of interpreting revolutionary ideas. We do not pretend to be the most perfect revolutionaries. We do not pretend to be the most perfect interpreters of Marxist-Leninist ideas, but we do have our way of interpreting these ideas; we do have our way of interpreting socialism, our way of interpreting Marxism-Leninism, our way of interpreting communism.

No human society has yet reached communism... A communist society means that man has reached the highest degree of social awareness ever achieved; a communist society means that human beings are able to achieve the degree of understanding and brotherhood which man has sometimes achieved within the closed circle of his family. To live in a communist society is to live in a real society of brothers; to live in a communist society is to live without selfishness, to live among the people and with the people, as if every one of our fellow citizens were really our brother...

The students here expressed the idea that communism and socialism will be built simultaneously. The expression of that idea has led to a situation in which Cuban revolutionaries have been described as wishful thinkers, has led some people to say that these are petty bourgeois ideas, has led some people to say that this is an erroneous interpretation of Marxist-Leninist ideas, that it is not possible to build communism if socialism is not achieved first and that in order to build socialism it is necessary to develop the material base of socialism. We do not deny this last point...

... A people aspiring to live under communism must do what we are doing. They must emerge from underdevelopment. They must develop their productive forces. They must have a command of technology in order to be able to turn man's efforts and man's sweat into the miracle of producing practically unlimited quantities of material goods...

The question, from our point of view, is that communist awareness must be developed at the same rate as the productive forces. An advance in the consciousness of revolutionaries, in the consciousness of the people, must accompany every step forward in the development of the productive forces...

We aspire to achieve a communist society in absolutely all ways. Our aspiration is that, just as books are now distributed to those who need them, just

as medicines and medical services are distributed to those who need them, education to those who need it, so we shall progressively reach the day when food will be distributed in the necessary amounts to those who need it, clothing and shoes will be distributed in the necessary amounts to those who need them. We aspire to a way of life—apparently utopian to many—in which man will not need money to satisfy his need for food, clothing, and recreation, just as today no one needs money for medical care or for education.

As we said before, communism certainly cannot be established if we do not create abundant wealth. But the way to do this, in our opinion, is not by

creating political awareness with money or with wealth, but by creating wealth with political awareness, and more and more collective wealth with more collective political awareness.

The road is not easy. The task is difficult, and many will criticize us. They will call us petty bourgeois idealists; they will say we are dreamers; they will say we are bound to fail. And yet, facts will speak for us and our people will speak and act for us, because we know our people have the capacity to comprehend and to follow this road...

Fidel Castro



Fidel in a prison mug shot after the attack on Moncada.



Children in a Cuban nursery.

Photo by Robert Shapiro

Excerpts from  
**MAN AND SOCIALISM  
IN CUBA**

Under capitalism... the alienated human individual is bound to society by an invisible umbilical cord: the law of value. It acts upon all facets of his life, shaping his path and his destiny.

The laws of capitalism, invisible and blind to most people, act on the individual without his awareness. He sees only a broad horizon that appears infinite. Capitalist propaganda presents it in just this way, and attempts to use the Rockefeller example (true or not) as a lesson in the prospects for success. The misery that must be accumulated for such an example to arise and the sum total of baseness contributing to the formation of a fortune of such magnitude do not appear in the picture. . . .

**Competition with the past**

The new society in process of formation has to compete very hard with the past. This is evident not only in the individual's consciousness, weighed down by the residues of an education and an upbringing systematically oriented toward the isolation of the individual, but also in the very nature of the transition period, with the persistence of commodity relations. The commodity is the economic cell of capitalist society; as

long as it exists, its effects will make themselves felt in the organization of production and therefore in man's consciousness. . . .

**Blind alley**

Pursuing the chimera of achieving socialism with the aid of the blunted weapons left to us by capitalism (the commodity as the economic cell, profitability and individual material interest as levers, etc.), it is only possible to come to a blind alley. . . . Meanwhile, the adapted economic base has undermined the development of consciousness. To build communism, a new man must be created simultaneously with the material base. That is why it is so important to choose the correct instrument of mass mobilization. That instrument must be of a fundamentally moral character without forgetting the correct use of material incentives, especially those of a social nature. . . .

In order for [man's full awareness and realization of his social being] to develop in a culture, work must acquire a new value. Man as a commodity must cease to exist and a system must be established which grants a quota for the fulfillment of social duty. The means of production

belong to society and the machine is only the front line where duty is performed. Man will begin to free his thought from the bothersome fact that he needs to satisfy his animal needs by working. He will begin to see himself portrayed in his work and begin to understand its human magnitude through the created object, through the work carried out. This no longer involves leaving a part of his being in the form of the labor power sold, which no longer belongs to him; rather, it signifies an emanation from himself, a contribution to the life of the society in which he is reflected, the fulfillment of his social duty.

**Social duty**

We are doing everything possible to give work this new category of social duty; to join it, on the one hand, to the development of a technology which will provide the material conditions for greater freedom, and, on the other hand, to voluntary work based on the Marxist concept that man truly achieves his full human condition when he produces without being compelled by the physical necessity of selling himself as a commodity.

**Che Guevara**



**E=Mc<sup>2</sup>**

Princeton, N.J.: Tonight Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer, pioneer in the development of the first North American atomic bomb, died here at his home.

—Daily News

Your sad hands are quiet now,  
Your astonished bones of an immigrant's son,  
not grasping your pipe now.  
You don't speak any more  
in your soft voice,  
Of things every day more terrible,  
Nor are you timid,  
Nor anything.  
War and peace are all the same for you now.  
One could say that all that energy  
has been lost.  
Between you and life  
a wall has been raised.  
In the indivisible world of death  
you disintegrate forever.

**Orlando Aloma**  
translated by Rafael Rodriguez

**Epitaph**

To you, my grandfather,  
with your dirty words  
and your stomach cramps  
and your celebrated selfish Christmas Eve grapes  
To your hard bed  
with Japanese embroideries  
to you so kind  
who I remember so well  
and thank for the stamps (and the blasphemy)  
That you may rest in peace  
with the earth and  
with my grandmother  
I dedicate this sacred inscription:

**PATRIA O MUERTE  
AMEN**

**Miguel Barnet**  
translated by Rafael Rodriguez

**The page**

To Heberto Padilla

That man lived all his years  
to write a page. One only,  
if only one. Every morning he arose,  
and he wrote, like a god or like a demon,  
mountains of pages worth nothing,  
but which allowed him to light a fire  
to keep on writing during the night.  
At last, as evening fell,  
appeared a page.  
Then our man sat down on a rock,  
And died a sweet death,  
sure that he had not lived in vain.

**Rafael Alcides**  
translated by Angela Boyer\*

\*From "Cuban Poetry, 1959-1966" (Instituto del Libro, Havana);  
translation revised by Barbara Dane.

# 'We want a nation of poets'

In a revolution, change is dynamic and swift. In Cuba the changes have extended from the seat of power to the ownership of land, resources, and means of production over these 10 years, down into the seeds of creation within the dreams and thoughts of its people. The speed and depth of the changes are dazzling. I could have told you about the attempts to reorient and revamp the seedy nightclub routines left over from the George White Scandals, except that meanwhile the nightclubs and bars have been closed and the performers have mounted trucks, going out to entertain and learn from the people working in agriculture. I could have mentioned that the music on radio and TV is heavy, still, with European pop and Glenn Miller, except that already los Memes (the Cuban Beatles) fill the air.

They closed the bars in Havana, so where do people go for fun? To the parks, where electric music is played regularly for dancing or listening; to the concert halls, where, by presenting a card from your school or work center on the right night, you can see a tremendous variety of artists and groups for nothing.

If you don't go for music you can go to any sports event free, including the most important championship games. Or just walk in the balmy air, or meet your friends at Copelia, the beautiful new ice cream parlor. (Before the revolution, only 11% of the people had ever drunk milk, and now they can eat Copelia in 57 delicious tropical fruit-flavored varieties. Yes, the supply is limited now, but the new dairy herds are working on it.)

You can wander into the exhibition hall on La Rampa, downtown Havana, for a total-environment experience like the "Tercer Mundo" (third world) created especially for the Cultural Congress of Havana last January by the team that designed the Cuban Pavilion at Expo '67 in Montreal.

In July 1967 you would have seen a very different exhibition in the same hall, designed to interest and involve a new and broader public in the plastic arts. Cuba's best-known painter, Wilfredo Lam, with the help of Ivon and Jaqueline Taillandier, organized a contingent of painters and sculptors who came to Cuba early in the summer to create new works which would be part of the exhibition and become gifts to the Cuban people.

In addition, a special group mural was created. The work on this mural went on night and day, a giant happening involving every passerby through music, food, and the natural impulse to kibbitz. Special guides, trained to introduce people to the mysteries of looking at unfamiliar shapes and conceptions (with explanations that proved they were not such mysteries after all), gently led through the hall people who had never looked a painting "in the face" before.

## End to barrenness

Probably the most rewarding recreation in Cuba these days is learning to do something new. It's hard to imagine the excitement and novelty of this unless you see it against the background of the barrenness of pre-revolutionary Cuba. There was not one theater group composed solely of Cubans, no real orchestra except for folkloric and dance bands, only the coldly commercial stuff sent over by the U.S.—and that mainly to Havana.

Now the Cultural Council sees to it that music, theater, dance, puppet shows, film—every possible medium—is taken into the provinces, the fields and mountains, where the huge majority of Cubans work and live, and where even city dwellers spend more and more time. The idea is to entertain and to educate, yes; but more than that, to stimulate people to want to create. "We don't want only to find and develop a million and a half painters and musicians, we want everyone to be cultured, to develop their aptitudes in

whatever way they want. We want a nation of poets and artists," an official of the Cultural Council said recently.

Take, for example, Las Villas province, where six regional councils and many municipal councils coordinate cultural activities. Las Villas has one professional theater and 10 amateur groups, there are 25 orchestras including dance combos and folkloric groups; a puppet theater and 15 professional solo performers. There is a conservatory of music, with six subsidiaries in outlying areas.

A bus driver or a school kid messing around for relaxation in the plastic art center might decide he is really interested in becoming a designer or a painter. He can sign up for a four-year evening course—all materials and tuition free—and when he reaches the second year (if he has completed junior high) he can try out for the National School of Art (Cubanacán) in Havana. If he makes it, he will receive a full scholarship plus a stipend so that he can study with the best teachers available. If he wants to finish in his own province, he can graduate as an art teacher and work in a high school; he can later try out again for Cubanacán. A job is guaranteed to anyone who finishes the course.

## Legacy of hustlers

Organizing and providing all these things is a large part of the work of the National Council of Culture. It has to deal with subtle problems. The arts have been plagued by opportunists of one kind or another, and capitalism's legacy of hustlers has not yet been totally transformed. The attack is two-pronged. First, stimulate and train new artists in every field as quickly as possible. Second, help the artists already formed (not to mention those *de-formed*) by the old mentality to see themselves as simply another type of worker, reversing the trend of alienation of artist from audience which seems inherent in the old market-place atmosphere, and replacing the remoteness of the "star" with the joy of community. Just the change of working place and time is helpful. Late-night hours, the smoky club and pretentious theater are replaced by clean sunny air and the back of a truck, where the rest of the world lives.

An experimental theater group left Havana last month to live and work in the Escambray mountains to study the customs of the people, to find out how they express themselves, and to learn their problems. The group hopes to discover what the spirit of a genuinely rural theater could be. And there is an obligation for graduates of the theater as well as of other departments of the National School of Art, to spend at least two years working and teaching in the countryside. They are dedicated to this project even at personal sacrifice, because so many of them come from communities which have never had the remotest exposure to the arts.

Literary circles have sprung up everywhere, and at least one expresses its criterion this way: "It is more important that we create than that we discuss the role of the artist." The discussion goes on: "In the old days people sat around discussing whether the concept of a tree growing was more beautiful than a tree flourishing, examining their navels, you know. Now it's never like that. We begin with the situation and then go to work on our art."

We asked this group, as we asked many others, whether there is such a thing as a Cuban hippie. "Well, some like to dress far out, but the next week they go cutting cane. On vacation weeks they like to 'go hippie,' but we have no reason to protest our society, so this can never have the same meaning it has in the U.S. We like to play at it, but really we want to study, to work, to build our country." What about the



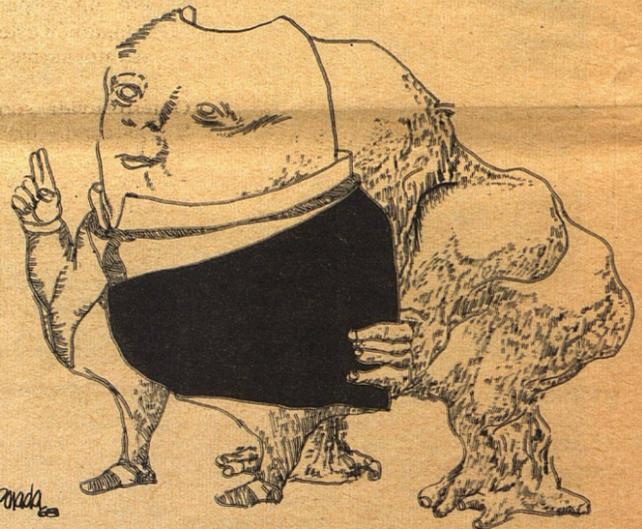
rumors of a crackdown on long hair and strange dress. "There was a problem here—some counterrevolutionaries just waiting to leave the country tried to use dress and music as a form of cultural subversion. Some people overreacted, with too much control. Now the word from the party itself is 'leave it alone.' We ask what does the person do, not how does he dress or wear his hair. We know that young people can analyze it for themselves, and we don't worry. More important is the attitude toward work."

## A revolution that won't quit

A group of young poets told us the three themes they find most important: 1. the poet's own life, family problems, etc.; 2. the revolution, because everyone has felt the touch of it; and 3. the poet as a human being integrated with his work. "The revolution creates a great commotion inside the artist. The process is so rapid we can't express it all. A poet needs a kind of peace in order to create, and this rapid motion makes it very difficult. All art forms feel it. Gorky said, 'Inside the soup it's hard to see the casserole,' and that's how we often feel. . . . We want to use words in a Cuban sense. We are hung up with Spanish from Spain and we don't yet have a Cuban tongue. But we are influenced by universal literature. The forms could come from Spain, Europe, Latin America, the U.S., anywhere, but the content we want to make truly Cuban."

The hunger for literature among this newly literate people is tremendous. Bookstore shelves are swept clean whenever a new item comes out. People even buy without leafing through, on the theory that "It's new, it must be important." There's something to that, because the paper shortage has made competition for publishing fierce. In spite of the shortage the goal of publishing 10 million books in 1968 was met in November and the Instituto del Libro went on to try for another million or two by the end of the year.

A group of young musicians in Havana is creating "Cancion Protesta." Literally, this means protest song, but more to the point it is song about contemporary reality. In this sense it is the younger cousin of the



traditional decima, a 10-line verse form brought to Cuba from Spain generations ago, used to comment on current events. The sound is lyrical, even baroque, the manner of using the voice is light and a little sentimental, and the guitar work is closer to Segovia than to Woody Guthrie.

One of the strongest song writers is Silvio Rodriguez, who lives on a regular salary from the Cultural Council and works at his music daily. Another fine singer is Pablo Milanés, who is in the army but still finds time to write and perform often. They and others perform on a monthly television program called "Cancion Protesta." The studio audience has several times damaged shrubbery and almost broken windows trying to get in.

The closing of the bars and nightclubs, and the opening of more and more rural centers of instruction and performance, make it very clear that revolutionary Cuban is transforming itself into a doing, rather than a consuming, culture. I asked a friend at the Cultural Council if there were any limitations. "Yes, we have two: one is that the work must be within the revolution—that is to say, something which helps what the Cuban people are trying to build together—and the other is that an artist must finish the work he starts."

The revolution itself has no end. If nothing unnatural or inhuman comes between the Cuban people and their goals, they will reach them . . . only to set new ones and keep on struggling. That daily joy of struggle is the real culture of Cuba today.

Barbara Dane

Jose Luis Posada

# Music

## SOY DEL PUEBLO

(I am of the people)

Carlos Puebla

Como cantar es mi oficio,  
yo canto el esfuerzo duro  
de construir el futuro  
con alegre sacrificio.

Por el pueblo voy pasando  
y oyendo su sentimiento;  
lo recojo, y al momento  
se lo devuelvo cantando.

Lo poco que doy lo ofrezco  
con alegría y encanto  
Al pueblo le doy mi canto  
porque al pueblo pertenezco.

Con alegría serena  
canto lo que el pueblo siente,  
Y canto porque el presente  
no es de llanto ni es de pena.

Verse:

Yo can - to por-qu'el pre-sen - te no es de pe - na  
nias de llan - to por es - oes que cuan - do can - to

Chorus:

can - to lo que el pue - blo sien - te. Soy del pue - blo,  
pue - blo soy, Y'a don - de me lle - ve el pue - blo voy.

## BAJO EL ARCO DEL SOL

La lucha armada

(Under the arc of the sun)

Silvio Rodriguez

Hoy dividí mi llanto por colores,  
dimensiones, y distancias y fue  
Como el Mekong y yo, tan separados . . .  
Que estoy muriendo de vivir sentado  
en la distancia irrecorrible quizás.  
Quiero olvidar mi voz, colgar guitarras  
en el sol

Quiero un disparo y vestirme de  
humano en esta suerte,  
Y acompañarme con un hueso de  
flor.

Quiero la vida, si no la muerte,  
Serenateando bajo el arco del sol.

Quiero una bala, y vestirme de  
humano en esta suerte,  
Y acompañarme con un hueso de  
flor,

Quiero la vida, si no la muerte,  
Serenateando bajo el arco del sol!

Bm G#dim  
Hoy ca - mi - né en el la - do de ot - ro  
que por mi he - re - da no san -

Am D#dim D7  
o - dio Don - de ron - da el mun - do y  
gra - ban O - tros gol - pes yo - tras

G E7  
yo cuan - do es - toy Y vi la real - i - dad  
fu - rias tam - bién Y vi la real - i - dad

Eb7 D7 Bm  
ba - jo un - o tem - pes - tal Su - pe  
ar - ro - di -

2. D7 G  
lla - da fren - te el mar Mi - ra mi he -

D A  
ri - da en la ma - no que pul - sa con la

E G  
muer - te, Y ó - ye - me el

A E A  
fue - go des - cu - bier - to en la voz!

G D  
Mi - ra mi he - ri - da de

o - tras re - gion - es, Co - mo la co -

chi - na, ba - jo el ar - co del Sol

## Under the arc of the sun

The armed struggle

Today I walk beside another hate  
that surrounds the world and me  
when I am

And I see reality under a tempest.  
I feel those other blows, other furies  
don't bleed through my kind of  
wound,

And I see reality on its knees before the  
sea.

Look at my wounded hand, that  
pulses with death,  
and listen to the fire discovered in  
my voice.

Look at my wounds in other  
regions, like Indochina,  
under the arc of the sun.

Today I divided my tears by colors,  
dimensions and distances,  
and they were like the Mekong. And I,  
even more separated,  
Because I am dying to live, sitting,  
maybe, in the unbridgeable distance.  
I want to forget my voice, to hang my  
guitar in the sun.

I want to see action, and to clothe  
myself like a man with this fate  
And to take with me a bone made  
of a flower.

I want life, if not death,  
Serenading under the arc of the  
sun.

I want a bullet, and to clothe myself  
like a man with this fate,  
and to take with me a bone made of  
a flower.

I want life, if not death,  
Serenading under the arc of the  
sun.

## I am of the people

(Chorus)

I am of the people,  
the people I am.  
And where the people lead me,  
I go.

I sing because the present  
is not of grief, not of tears,  
and for this, when I sing,  
I sing what the people feel.

Singing is my trade,  
and so I sing with all my strength  
to help construct the future  
with joyful sacrifice.

I go passing among the people,  
listening to their feelings;  
I collect their thoughts,  
and give them back, singing.

The little I can give, I offer  
with happiness and pleasure.  
To the people I give my songs,  
because it's to the people they belong.

With serenity and joy  
I sing the way the people feel,  
and I sing because the present  
is not of grief and tears.

translated by Barbara Dane

# Film



A Cuban child watches her first film, "Modern Times."

Filmmaking in Cuba is real, in spite of the American economic and cultural blockade. The blockade means scarcity of equipment and raw stock. It also works in a more devious way. If an American film distributor buys the world rights for a film, Cuba cannot buy the rights. If MGM is the major investor in Antonioni's "Blow Up," Cuba cannot see it. If United Artists buys the Western hemisphere rights for Bergman's "Persona," Cuba cannot see it. This has gone on since 1961.

Some Cuban filmmakers feel uncertain about their work—the direction they are taking—because of lack of communication with other filmmakers. But most feel that the blockade has forced them to experiment with new forms, and that they have had to consider how to combine all the elements of the revolution into a new cinema.

## ICAIC

In 1958, ICAIC (Instituto Cubano de Arte e Industria Cinematograficas, the Cuban Institute of Cinema Art and Industry) was established to teach about, make and distribute films. In order to develop filmmakers (there was no Cuban cinema before the revolution) a kind of apprenticeship evolved: the filmmaker makes a short documentary, then a short fiction film, then a long documentary, and finally, if he or she wants to and if it is approved, a feature fiction film.

But in an underdeveloped country like Cuba, there are constant problems—not enough of anything available to plan a production when one wants to. And so it is necessary to wait until equipment is available, or money for costumes, or any number of things. What has developed is that technicians, instead of sitting idle, have become interested in exploring other areas of filmmaking. One often finds a sound man doing historical research for a film he is waiting to work on, or learning how to edit. Not only does this add to the general abilities and knowledge of the filmmaker, it increases the collective atmosphere and reduces possible elitism and feelings of arrogant expertise.

## To make a film

A filmmaker submits a script to ICAIC. It is then discussed with him in terms of content, aesthetics, cost, etc. Once a film is approved, the filmmaker has complete autonomy. He selects his crew, actors, music, everything. When the film is almost completed, he shows it to the directors and other filmmakers at ICAIC and it is discussed and criticized. Scripts are rejected for the usual reasons—exorbitant budget, incomplete themes, inadequacy of facilities.

## The films

Many Cuban filmmakers tend toward films which examine the particular problems of a new society—the establishment of a new town, the opening

of nursery schools in rural areas—and films with themes like injustices in capitalist countries and involvement with other revolutionary struggles, trying to show their people that they are not alone.

Many of the films of Santiago Alvarez are internationally known because of his powerful treatment of the black movement in the U.S.—"Now," (1965)—and the war in Vietnam—"Hanoi, Martes 13," (1967). Alvarez' "La Guerra Olvidada" (1967), about the liberation struggle in Laos, is an attempt to destroy the ignorance which surrounds this war.

## Long films

"The Death of a Bureaucrat" (1966), by Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, is a slapstick comedy which laughs at some aspects of Cuban bureaucracy. Great take-offs on Laurel and Hardy, Chaplin, Bunuel, Jerry Lewis, "8½," Harold Lloyd and others.

"Memorias del Subdesarrollo" (1968), also by Gutiérrez Alea, is based on the novel "Inconsolable Memories," by Edmundo Desnoes. The film's theme is the bourgeois intellectual trying to adjust to an underdeveloped revolutionary society.

"Lucia" (1968), by Humberto Solás, is a beautiful three-episode film. Each story is from a different period of revolutionary struggle in Cuba. The first part, 1895, is rich in the tone and historic background of the period. It is sharply black and white, beautifully costumed, with shots reminiscent of Eisenstein. The second part, 1932, has the quality and texture and the grays of the thirties. Solás must have seen many Von Sternberg films. And the last part, which takes place in the early sixties, incorporates some documentary-style shooting, some verité, flat modern lighting, and contains the joy and humor and self-criticism so prevalent in Cuba today.

## Distribution

ICAIC has solved the problem of what to do with films once they are made. Their solution is contrary to everything that is done in capitalist countries. Films play in theaters for an extended period of time if they are considered important—aesthetically, politically or historically. ICAIC programs Cuba's hundreds of movie theaters with these criteria in mind, and not the criterion of whether the film draws thousands of people. All films play in the small towns as well as the large cities. There is no film advertising, just a daily newspaper listing of all films playing. There are no real critics. There is a film reviewer, but he basically reports on a film's content.

One of the most important aspects of distribution is the more than 150 Cine Mobiles which constantly travel around the country—to nursery schools, hospitals, youth camps, sugar-cane fields, vacation resorts, everywhere—showing Chaplin, Eisenstein, Cuban documentaries. The Cubans know the value of film—for teaching, for entertainment, for art. Film is a part of

their way of life. There is probably not a single Cuban who has never seen a film (and there were hundreds of thousands who never knew what a movie was before the revolution).

"Por Primera Vez" ("For the First Time"), by Octavio Cortazar, is a short documentary showing how a Cine Mobile visits a rural town in Oriente province, up in the mountains. The peasants and some of the children are asked what they think a movie is. There are answers like: "It must be something very special if the government sent it; no one ever came here before." And from the children come fantasies of magic, fairies, strange and wonderful things. Then they see a Chaplin film and you see all the strange

and wonderful things in the eyes of the audience.

## The Cinemateca

The Cinemateca is a division of ICAIC, organized much like the French and Belgian cinemateques. There are film archives, a library, memorabilia, posters, discussions—everything that has to do with film. Unfortunately, the Cinemateca does not have all the films it needs to show complete retrospectives on filmmakers like Godard and Griffith. It is difficult to develop and build a body of criticism when such large gaps exist. But the Cinemateca makes its films accessible to the public on a regular basis, and has created an enormous audience for studying film.

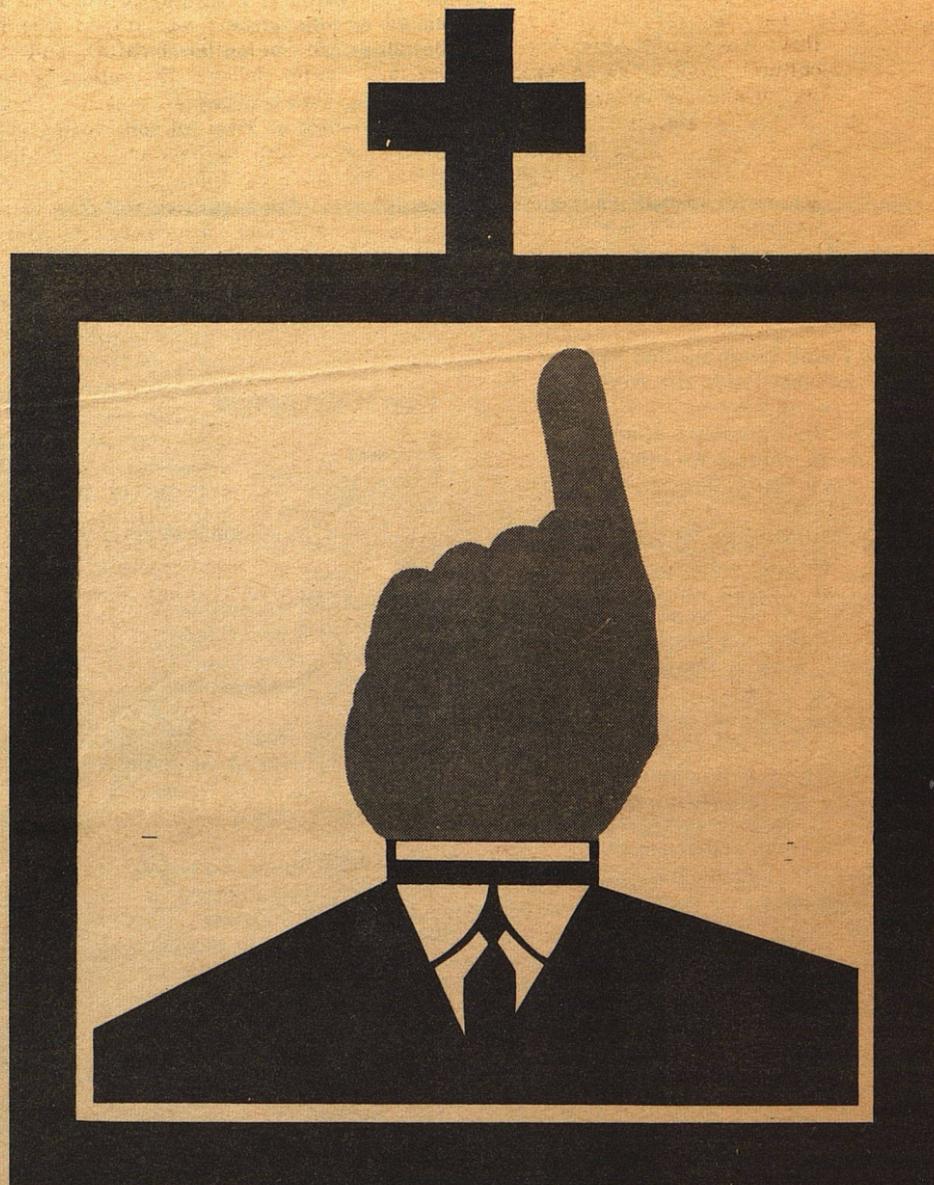
## And what is revolutionary cinema?

Is it the American underground, experimental, avant-garde, poetic film? Maybe. But for a Cuban this would be a step backward. How can he get into a bag of personal cinema? We have to. Society has shoved us into a corner and said we don't want any part of you, so the filmmaker crawls into his alienated loft and films his fantasies. But in Cuba there is not that separation between the artist and society.

Judging from the large number of Cuban films I saw, experimentation exists in every area, from poetic cinema to narrative cinema to cinema verité. Cuban filmmakers are searching for a form which is the revolution, because this is what is essential to everyone, consciously. They feel the constant urge to experiment, to change, to find new forms. And they are truly able to do this: that is what is so revolutionary about Cuban cinema.

Barbara Stone

Barbara Stone works with the Newsreel, and spent a month in Cuba last summer.



## LA MUERTE DE UN BUROCRATA

Film poster, "Death of a Bureaucrat"

**'Our country is  
an experimental laboratory'**

Following are excerpts from a recent interview with Alfredo Guevara, director of ICAIC (Instituto Cubano de Arte e Industria Cinematograficas—the Cuban Institute of Cinema Art and Industry).

*What was Cuban cinema like before the revolution?*

It practically didn't exist. What was produced was not in any way a part of Cuban culture. So-called Cuban films were usually American or Mexican, with a few exotic scenes filmed in Cuba—usually scenes of prostitution.

Since a large percentage of Cubans were illiterate, they were unable to read subtitled American films and therefore could see only Mexican films. So the large city theaters were dominated by Paramount, Columbia, etc., and the rural theaters by Spanish-language films of very low quality.

We have been particularly sensitive to the thousands of traditional Westerns that were shown in our theaters. In these movies the white man—white civilization—always civilized the Indians by force and regarded any act of resistance as intolerable. Since many millions of Latin Americans are also Indians, this myth of superiority has been one component in their character formation and miseducation.

*Would you say that Hollywood perpetuates domination and oppression through its cultural stereotypes?*

The cinema is credited with much more power than it really has. It is easy to come to simplistic conclusions—one could say, for example, that the cinema is responsible for everything. But cultural models are transmitted in infinite ways, and imperialism imposes its models much more directly and inflexibly. Besides, the cultural pressure of American imperialist domination was built on the work already done by the Spanish colonizers.

The mass media merely provide one of the ways of observing established cultural models. These models exist in reality and are maintained by the power of the bourgeoisie. Traditionally, the bourgeoisie acts to protect its national culture. But in Cuba the bourgeoisie did not act as a national bourgeoisie. Rather, it was a group of functionaries of a foreign power. Thus the Cuban ruling class served as a middleman between the American imperialists and the Cuban people, and so spared the imperialist power from direct indictment for the bloodshed and exploitation it committed.

*How has Cuban cinema been developed to overcome the problems of the colonial past and to emerge from cultural domination?*

Our country is an experimental laboratory. We have no models. Neither good models nor bad models—no models at all. In our experimenting, in our

need to search out new roads, one of our most important aims is to offer the possibility that cultural formation can be carried out in a climate of diversity.

Fidel often says that we trust our people. In our desire to develop a new man, we should offer—not only to the new man, but to the men we are right now—the opportunity to know everything, to deepen in all ways, to appreciate all things. I am not only speaking of filmmaking, for ICAIC is involved in all areas related to film—for example, in construction of movie theaters. Say we are planning to build a theater in a medium-sized town. If we calculate a possible attendance to justify a theater of 1,200 seats, we always try to build two theaters of 600 seats so that every person will have the opportunity to choose one film or another. These are small things, I know. I don't want to say that liberty, or the construction of socialism or the essence of communism depends on choosing one film over another.

Our movie programs are planned open-mindedly. In Cuba you can see films from different countries, directors and styles, from the most common to the most sophisticated and experimental. This is a clear objective of our work and we think of this as an integral part of the task of decolonization.

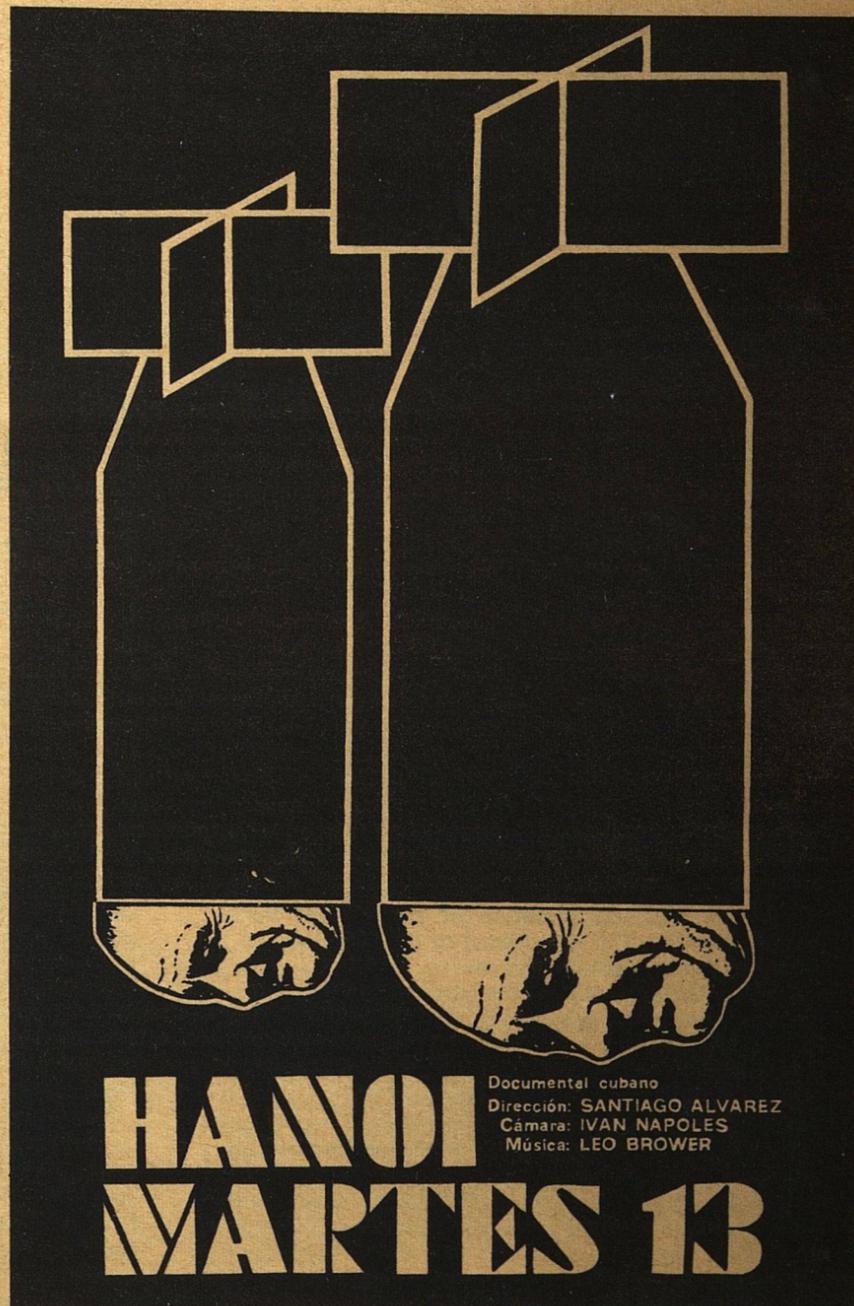
The process of decolonization cannot go from one extreme to another, i.e., from the imposed culture of the mother country to the more primitive national forms, stifled since the beginning of colonization. Decolonization presupposes the rediscovery of lost centuries, but by walking forward, not backward. It requires an evaluation of the native culture, and a revitalization of it when possible. The situation is especially grave in the cinema since we have no points of reference from the past. We must build a cinematic movement capable of joining our cultural past and also going beyond it.

*Could you be more specific about how you go about building a cinematic movement?*

After the success of the revolution, the cinema was turned over to a group of potential creators and technicians who had a theoretical knowledge of cinema, but no practice. This forced us to a level of improvisation that was sometimes beyond us. We have had to learn by doing.

We have tried to take advantage of all available influences without adopting any particular one. We have constantly invited filmmakers from different countries to visit, so that our filmmakers can have contact with all the currents, experiences, styles and technical possibilities.

We have had enormous difficulties, but that is natural. We don't think that creating a cinematic movement can be an act of magic or the product of a political decree. However, a just political policy could be helpful. I say political rather than cultural policy, because, frankly, I don't have much faith in



Poster for Santiago Alvarez's "Hanoi Martes 13"

cultural policies—if by cultural policy we mean the establishment of rules or limits within which a cultural movement can be produced. However, I do feel we have been correct in taking, as our point of departure, the idea that our single duty is to create the material conditions (technical and industrial) and a spiritual atmosphere of openness and seriousness that will be favorable to the development of talent. I am convinced that the revolutionary government has been correct in not imposing a conception of art on the artist, and in accepting the limitations of the artist's function.

*What goals do you set for yourselves?*

Because we are an underdeveloped country struggling to raise our level of development, we emphasize the production of didactic documentaries that can help increase production and technological development, simplified

scientific documentaries, and newsreels that we make in conjunction with the various activities of the revolution and the specific plans for development. We also create conditions which allow us to refuse the imposition of a pedagogical character on artistic productions. Feature films and documentaries are not simply the product of pedagogic goals, and owe their success precisely to the fact that they are not limited by these goals. That is, a feature film, if it is produced with sufficient seriousness, if it delves into the language and the theme that it hopes to deal with, if it discovers a way of being relevant, will accomplish its pedagogic or clarifying function without specifically having this purpose. I believe that this is the characteristic of all art.

**Richard Epstein  
and Lucy Liben**

**End of the comics**

Little Orphan Annie, finally arriving at an interesting age,  
Winds up a whore in a Detroit slum.  
Defying all possible logic, Skee-zix  
(after much feeble wrangling with his family)  
Tears up his draft card under the nose of his cartoonist.  
Tarzan of the Apes is proclaimed President of an African republic recently shaken by a coup d'etat directed from outside.  
Dagwood and Blondie (before their weeping dogs) agree on a divorce, after long discussions sustained outside the pages of the Sunday paper.  
Steve Canyon and Terry (last of the Flying Tigers) fell leaving a wake of smoke and flames and scorched steel over the province of Quang Binh.

**Victor Casaus**  
translated by Rafael Rodriguez

Your tits your breasts as you prefer to call that important part of the female body were slices of orange for him to look at after day and night have both passed and time hangs suspended once again in the small bamboo bed

or more precisely in the nude torso of his wife where her two sweet little oranges stand out as if captured in a snapshot.

I say were because yesterday they were sheared off at the roots

severed from the original trunk in a predictable ceremony of beasts—thus fulfilling all the laws of symmetry—with one of the Indispensable Commando Knives especially designed by the U.S. Army to slice oranges

or breasts of Vietnamese girls.

**Denia Garcia**  
translated by Marty Glass

# Theater

## Adapting revolutionary reality

In ten years of revolution, Cuba has moved from a theater of mediocre imitation of Europe and North America (with a few exceptions) to the beginnings of a uniquely Cuban revolutionary theater.

Adolfo Gutkin, a theater director in Santiago, Oriente province, identifies three types of theater prior to the revolution. The first is a popular theater ("buffoon" or "vernacular"), which he describes as a "picturesque degeneration of the minor Spanish genre and the one-act farce." It was characterized by speech and movement with a national flavor, stereotyped characters "without humanity or transcendence," "contagious" music that was picked up in popular dances and the frequent use of coarse jokes to comment on social phenomena.

Gutkin sees rural theater—the second type that antedates the revolution—as the most important contribution of the three types of theater to the development of a national theater. This theater is "... unwritten, on the level of rituals and ancestral rhythms which still saturate the collective unconscious and give the Cuban personality its special color. I am referring to the Negro contribution, which constitutes a richer and more legitimate source than the vernacular and which is still far from being totally explored."

The third type of pre-revolutionary theater is formal, with Cuban playwrights depending on the style and content of European plays. Playwright Virgilio Pinera describes the condition of the formal theater prior to the revolution as a period when five, seven or nine years might pass between the time a play was written and produced, and it would then be presented for only one or two nights. These presentations did not have a large public, or even one which represented the intelligentsia.

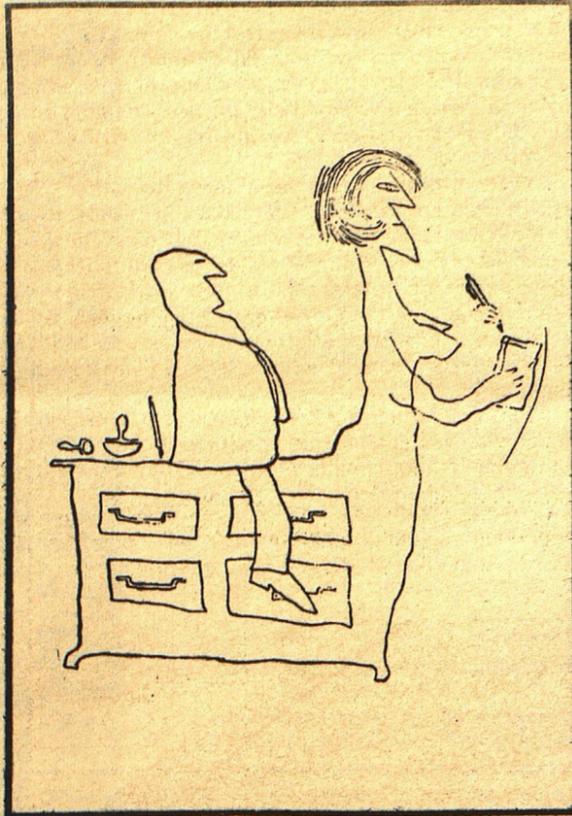
After the triumph of the revolution, Pinera writes, "From meagre little rooms, the theater came to occupy large theaters; from one-night stands it went to a profusion of performances, remaining in the theater for weeks; from the precarious productions it passed to large-scale productions; from a situation where the author could never publish even one of his plays, things changed so he was now paid by the state."

Adolfo Gutkin divides the ten years following the revolution into two periods. He describes the first as the period of "sectarianism," marked by an uncritical and unspecific enthusiasm for the revolution. It was the period of "Brecht fever," for the Cuban theater had once again to look to foreign authors to fill the holes created by years of political dictatorship and artistic void. "But," Gutkin says, "the Brecht who was shown was a tendentious and discredited Brecht, hastily set up by political necessity," and of course he did not express the Cuban situation.

"The second change of direction," says Gutkin, was "from sectarianism to the liberal vanguard" [and] also took place in social life before it happened on the stage. The Cuban revolution, once its power was strongly established, condemned sectarianism as a manifestation of socialist deformities and opened the possibility of deciding how socialism will be built in Cuba in ways peculiar to the Cubans." The period went "from exaltation to analysis, from improvisation which is more or less tolerated to the search for a stage perfection."

"Authors are now concerning themselves with the new human relations which arose as a consequence of the new economic relations," says Gutkin. The predominant theme is the family. For, as Gutkin says, "There is an inadequate individual development in relation to the dizzying social development. This imbalance is more evident in the bosom of the family than anywhere else. The self-tending because of disparate ideologies, the distancing and separations, the excess of affection weighing on the consciences, are genuine preoccupations present within the society."

"In general terms, man-woman relations are strongly marked by the predominance of masculine authority



Cartoon by Nuez

which is reversed after marriage, since the woman takes charge of the major responsibilities within the home and relegates the husband to an economic function. These relationships take on a castrating quality when the progenitors are relating to their children: the tyrannical or nonexistent father, the possessive or overprotective mother; or both scenes at once, resulting in frustrated children in whom liberating action is again and again replaced by rationalization."

This is part of the theme of the international prize-winning "Night of the Assassins," by José Triana, which traveled in England and through Europe. It is the enactment by two sisters and their brother of the ritual murder of their parents, the children becoming the parents, and then each other and people outside the family. The play draws on elements of African ritual and has many levels of interpretation, one of them dealing with the theme of the transition from the old to the new Cuba, as well as family relationships.

Vincente Revuelta, director of the Teatro Estudio—which only last summer closed down after 15 years as Cuba's most advanced theater group—considers "Night of the Assassins" a transition from a more or less naturalistic theater to one that delves into the deepest part of the human consciousness, relating this to political and social realities.

By the time I left Cuba, this transition had actually begun to take place. I had arrived in Cuba with a few names of people who were doing "the most interesting theater in Cuba" or had some ideas about new theater, but the scene in general did not sound very exciting. However, my first conversation with director Vicente Revuelta indicated that something was about to happen. Revuelta had been director of the Teatro Estudio since it began. Even during Batista's time, he had considered himself a Marxist and was producing most of the serious theater of that period. After the revolution the Teatro Estudio retained its reputation as one of the most important theaters in Cuba. But now Revuelta was talking about the need for a new kind of theater. He was interested in the work of the Living Theater.

About two months after our conversation, the Teatro Estudio closed its doors and Revuelta went to work for ICAIC, Cuba's film institute. At least two groups were formed by members of the Teatro Estudio and one of them may be an example of the new revolutionary vanguard that Gutkin was referring to. They had just begun workshops before I left Cuba, and I had the opportunity to sit in on one of them. Exercises from the Living Theater and the Polish Lab Theater were being tried out, and Tomás Gonzales, a young poet-playwright-director, was working on exercises based on movements that are part of the African culture that was brought to Cuba by slaves and is now an important ingredient in Cuban culture. (Part of a conversation with members of the group appears on page 9.)

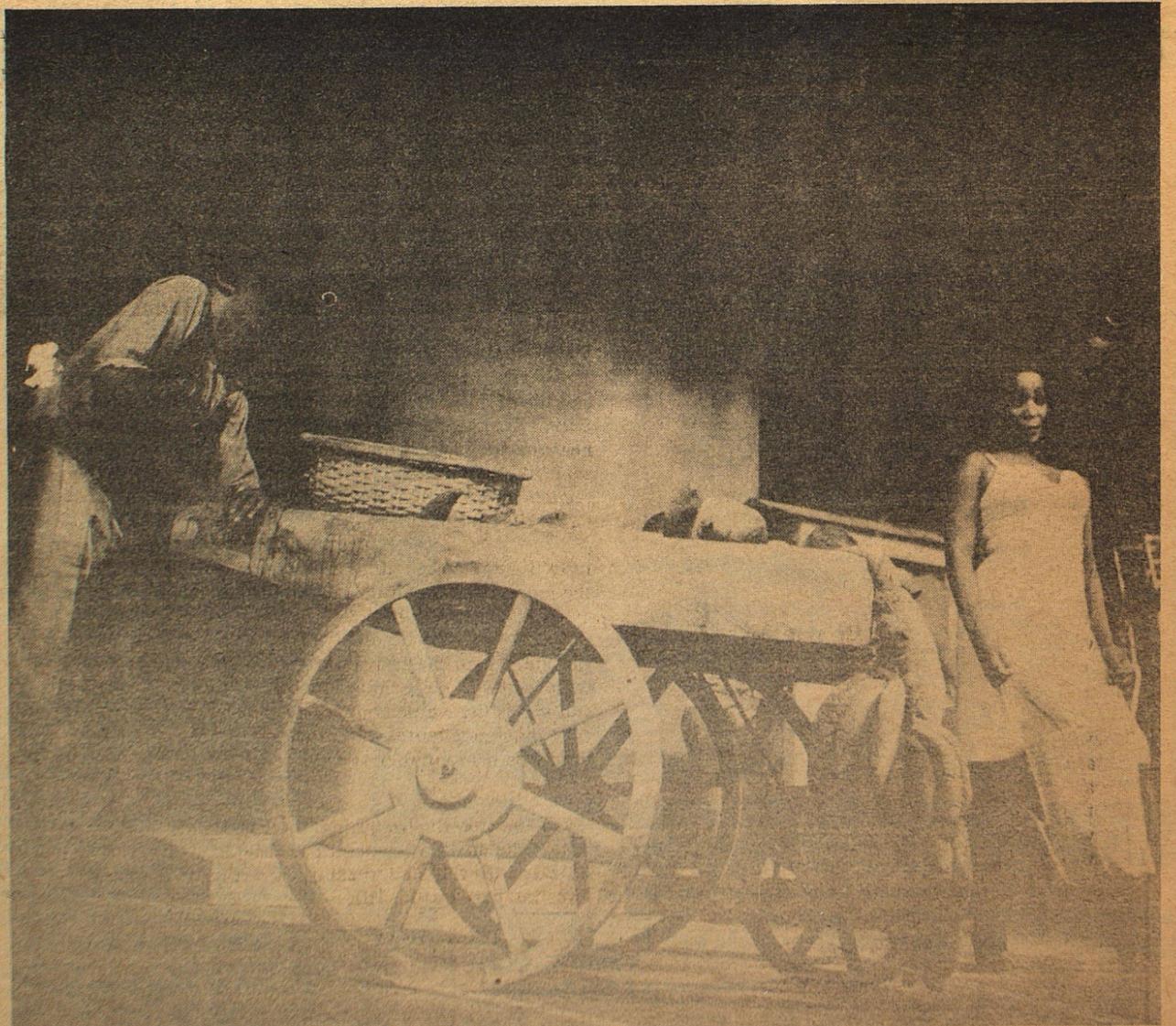
This was not the only group that had begun a search for a revolutionary Cuban theater. A group of theater and film actors had just left for the Escambray mountains to spend time with the peasants and work on a theater that would communicate to a people whose reality, until only recently, had been the land that they were able to cover by foot in a few hours or a day and the people who had lived on that land.

When I left Cuba, the names of foreign playwrights—Brecht and LeRoi Jones among them—were still familiar sights on theater calendars and plays were being presented that Gutkin might describe as "liberal vanguard," but even these dealt with Cuban problems in an immediate and powerful way. "Maria Antonia," by Eugenio Hernandez, for example, deals with the theme of the death of the old concept of machismo and the Cuban woman as a sexual object. The director, Roberto Blanco, is searching for an authentic Cuban theater and sees the problem as one of developing a theater for a country that is growing and affirming its existence, rather than an art that is reacting to a negation of life.

By October the new theater had begun to make a place for itself among the more traditional theater groups. If the development of the new Cuban theater is as rapid as the change that brought it into existence, we may be looking to Cuba to see the possibilities for revolutionary theater rather than vice versa.

**Carol Grosberg**

*Carol Grosberg was in Cuba from July through October, and spent much of her time talking with artists of all kinds.*



Scene from "Maria Antonia," by Eugenio Hernandez.

## Planting the seed of the new man

Last August, Cuba's famed Teatro Estudio closed its doors. Members of the theater broke up into small experimental groups to search for ways to integrate Cuban theater into the revolutionary experience. Following are excerpts from interviews with Oscar Alvarez and Julio Gomez, members of the new workshops.

### I have

When I see and touch myself,  
I, Juan with Nothing only yesterday,  
and today Juan with All,  
today with everything,  
I turn my eyes, look around,  
I see myself and I touch myself,  
and I ask myself, how is this possible?

I have, let's take a look:  
I have the pleasure of walking in my country,  
master of all there is in it,  
taking a good look at what  
I didn't have, couldn't have, before:  
the sugar cane harvest, I can say  
the countryside, I can say  
the city, I can say  
the army, too,  
are mine forever, yours, ours,  
and a broad brightness  
of lightning, star, flower.

I have, let's take a look:  
I have the pleasure of going,  
I, farmer, worker, simple man,  
I have the pleasure to go  
(just for example)  
to a bank, and to speak with the  
administrator  
not in English,  
not with mister,  
but to call him "companero" like we say  
in Spanish.

I have, let's take a look:  
that even though I'm a black man  
no one can stop me  
at the door of a dance hall or a bar  
or, O.K., in the lobby of a hotel  
screaming that they haven't got a room  
a dinky room, or even a big suite  
a little old room where I can take a rest.

I have, let's take a look:  
that there is no country hick sheriff  
who can grab me and drag me off to jail,  
or uproot me and throw me off my land  
out into the middle of the highway.

I have, like I have the land, I have the sea.  
not the "country club"  
not the "highlife"  
not "tennis club" and no yacht,  
but just beach to beach, wave to wave  
huge blue open democratic:  
well, just the sea.

I have, let's take a look:  
that I already have learned to read,  
and to count,  
I have that I've already learned to write,  
and to think,  
and to laugh.

I have what I need,  
a place to work,  
to earn a little something,  
I got myself something to eat,  
I have, let's take a look:  
I have what I had to have.

Nicolas Guillen  
translated by Barbara Dane

"Our reality is a very complex and a very new one. The Cuban revolution is a complete and free experiment. We are probably one of the most politically advanced countries in the world. If that's so in the political sphere, then why can't it be so in art? Forms of expression that were used in the past century, such as realism and psychological naturalism—forms that are 60 to 80 years old in many cases—cannot express the complexity of our reality. So when we step into this problem, we do it not by a scientific but by an emotive approach, a sensorial approach, because we have daily practice stepping onto a stage before an audience. We are fed up with what we are doing at the present time.

"These problems have been faced by other Cuban artists: painters, writers, filmmakers, but not theater people. One reason is that we are the most blockaded people in the arts. Filmmakers see a good selection of films; poets and writers read a great deal of literature from outside the country—one of the policies of the revolution is to print everything it can get its hands on. But in theater there is no money to invite foreign companies.

"We have been forced to change in part because of our public. The audience is a politicized people thinking continuously about many problems. They are occupied

not only with thinking if they can pay the payments on the TV set or the car. They have to think about the atom bomb, the war in Vietnam, Soviet-Cuban relations, and many other things in addition to what they are going to eat tomorrow. This active audience is bored with the theater we have had until now.

"We now face a deep search into our culture. Most of our playwrights have been trapped by the classical forms of theater, some by Ibsen and Strindberg, others by Genet or Beckett. We have had good plays, but they have been incomplete. Many have been too populist, and others too intellectual.

"We have a rich culture which is the synthesis of one of the most advanced African cultures (Yoruba, found on the west coast of Africa) and a current of European culture. The Africans who were brought to Cuba as slaves brought a culture that in many ways assimilated the Spanish culture instead of them being assimilated by it.

"We've got to do something that stirs people and makes something come from them. We don't consider theater to be an intellectual art. We shall try to plant the seed of the possibility of the new man, the total man, so that people can touch it."



### Rifle number 5767

This is the story of Felix Faustino Ferran and the record of a rifle and militia man of our country. Felix Faustino Ferran, on the cold night of January 19, near the trenches of the Revolution, somewhere in Cuba, recited for me the brief and enormous poem of his rifle, number 5767.

I say it is the most illuminating, the deepest, the most musical and flashing of all the poems of the Revolution.

He said it with the grave, warm voice of a black Cuban, with the large, clear smile of a black Cuban, and it was the whole country he spoke, with his simple words like flowers of steel, of militia man number 1061.

I've forgotten the beginning, the first word, I hear the husky voice, and I see his hand closing with the tenderness of an invincible diamond over the barrel of his rifle.

Caught by surprise, I hear:

Antonio, the barrel  
Viviana, the trigger guard  
Caruca, the bolt  
Irene, the chamber  
Lucia, the trigger  
Fabian, the safety  
and the butt, me.

In every part of the rifle, a child of his,  
in every part a flower of his blood,  
a face of love, to be defended with fury,  
By them, for them.

For all! For all those whose names  
are on every piece of the militia man's rifle,  
the husky voice of militia man Felix Faustino Ferran,  
black Cuban, worker for the nation and for its glory,  
in the cold, unforgettable night of the 19th of January,  
near the trenches of the Revolution,  
where I read them the poems in this book,  
and he taught me the heart of all poetry.

Felix Pita Rodriguez  
translated by Barbara Dane

# The Cultural Congress

One year ago some 500 revolutionary intellectuals and artists from all over the world met at the Cultural Congress of Havana. The focus of this historic conference was the third world—the world of colonial oppression and neocolonial exploitation.

Despite the vast differences in their style and background, participants in the Congress revealed a profound unity of commitment. Inspired particularly by the militant spirit of the Vietnamese and the revolutionary ardor of the Cubans, the Congress helped to develop an overall sense of purpose in relation to the national liberation struggles of the third world.

Following are excerpts from three of the most important Cuban papers delivered at the Congress, taken from a forthcoming book on the Cultural Congress edited by Irwin Silber.

## The responsibility of the intellectual

The real dichotomy between the third and first worlds is not "underdeveloped countries/developed countries," but "underdeveloped countries/underdeveloped countries." The latter are the countries that have been developed as a whole thanks to the exploitation of our countries. The intellectual in the latter countries, therefore, achieves his knowledge mostly through the exploitation of the third world. That which our people have the right to demand from us, we, the intellectuals of the underdeveloped countries, have the right to demand, with even better reason, from the intellectuals of the underdeveloped countries—that knowledge be returned to those who have made it possible.

In those countries of strongly established capitalism, in those sickened consumer-oriented societies, leftism is fashionable. It is a new luxury, as liberty is a more ancient luxury. But in those countries, what does being a leftist really mean? To travel like an enthusiastic tourist to meetings such as this? To quote Marx?

Let us say no: from our point of view—I mean the point of view of Vietnam, Cuba, the Congo—none of the subterfuges that our colleagues from the underdeveloped countries may find in order to justify themselves—something that our people do not allow us to do—none of these subterfuges is valid. To be a leftist in those countries may mean nothing but to be the first to acquire the consciousness of one's responsibility as a man who masters technique, science, and knowledge, thanks to the exploitation that his society has exercised or exercises upon ours.

Our people have supported and are still supporting, in Europe and the U.S. universities, academies and also anti-academies, vanguards, isms, conversions, commitments, audacities. The intellectuals in those countries who are aware of this are not few. It is enough to keep in mind some pages of Jean-Paul Sartre in France, of Peter Weiss in Sweden, of Noam Chomsky in the U.S.

But perhaps there are more (among the so-called leftists: why mention those professionally irresponsible?) who refuse to accept the fact that there is an indestructible relationship between the misery of the third world, on the one hand—misery that goes from starvation and ignorance to war—and the findings of Western art and science on the other hand. A sacred division of work makes some colonialists henchmen, foremen, merchants and bankers—and others teachers, scientists and artists. But it makes all of them, with no exception, beneficiaries of that situation—although the latter group may ignore their responsibility. They may



"I must see what's happening in the third world. This is a job for Superman."

even believe that they have extraordinary aptitudes which must be fulfilled under any circumstances, not knowing that aptitudes are nothing but the social configurations of vague inclinations, and that, therefore, they are the product of a society, the same as any other product. To defend an aptitude is to defend a society.

Once this responsibility is recognized (or rather, assumed) we can begin a new dialogue with the intellectuals of the underdeveloped world. Until now, this dialogue has oscillated between two annihilating extremes: the repeated hypocrisy that a dialogue was more than the overseas echo of a boastful monologue; and the resented rejection that was, likewise, less a dialogue than the abrupt cessation of a conversation, in which we were also humiliated.

The situation changes when we all understand and accept that science and art in the exploiting countries also belong to the exploited countries upon which they have been built, and that, therefore, we all have had the right to demand that the knowledge of the planet be turned over to our impoverished lands. This is not a form of paternalism but a way of returning to us what we have been robbed of. And this is really important, because while we can surely use the help of playwrights and painters from abroad, we are in great need of economists, physicists, and cyberneticists.

For us, this will be the measuring tape: intellectuals of the left, intellectuals conscious of their responsibility, will be the ones, in underdeveloped countries, who will carry out that restitution in a practical manner: as scientists and technicians who soothe the evils left in our countries by the colonialism that made them learned sages; as linguists who help to spread the native languages, men without whose knowledge the struggle for national liberation will never succeed.

## Roberto Retamar

Roberto Retamar is a poet, a professor at the University of Havana, and edits the Casa de las Americas magazine.

## The secret weapons

We are and we are not. We add up to two billion men who cover the earth—in spite of the fact that they have tried to convince us that it is really Sherwin Williams paints and Coca Cola which cover the surface of the planet. We are a majority of mankind and we scarcely have voice or vote. Weapons of iron and fire have kept us working as slaves without pay or profit. They have kept us in backwardness, ignorance and famine. In addition to the obvious pillage of our natural and material resources, they also want to destroy our souls with secret weapons: mass communications media have spread a series of myths and values that in most cases clash with the authentic interests of the underdeveloped world. The preponderance of certain Greco-Roman ancestors has already been denounced by Martí: "Our Greece is preferable to the one which is not ours . . . let the world be grafted onto our republics, but the core must be that of our own republics."

Even blonde and white beauty sharpens the inferiority complex of the colonized Negroes, orientals and mestizos. Perhaps the dark Bolivian who threw a stone at the Gioconda in the Louvre was rebelling against that injustice which smiles ironically from the Mona Lisa throughout time. The press published the news everywhere: a lunatic, a barbarian, dared to attack a masterpiece of the Italian Renaissance. He left a scratch on her arm. I would like to consider it as a quiet and unconscious protest of the so-called third world against a first world which pretends that same eternity feigned by the hard rocks which back up the stupid smile of the Florentine lady. . . .

## Edmundo Desnoes

Edmundo Desnoes, a novelist, used to live in New York, and returned to Cuba after the revolution. His "Inconsolable Memories" was just published in England. He is now working on a book about the mass media and the third world.

## The intellectual in the revolution

We are well acquainted with that feeling of frustration, uselessness, and rootlessness experienced by the artists and writers of an underdeveloped and colonized country. We are well acquainted with their defense mechanisms, their alibis. When a man has read "Ulysses," mastered a foreign language, and is able to discuss surrealism or Guernica for hours, he knows he belongs to a select international community. In turn this reassures him of his privileged condition.

Although neglected by the bourgeoisie, the intellectual to some extent shares its domination of the world. At the same time he can allow himself the luxury of scorning it. Pretexts are abundant. The correct pronunciation of "Goethe" or "Baudelaire," for instance, becomes a sign of superiority.

Because we have assumed our responsibilities and are ready to answer for our deeds, we intellectuals of a country in revolution demand concrete responsibilities of others. I am not referring only to our civic responsibilities. To teach how to read and write, to learn how to handle a gun, to cut cane, are part of our essential duties as intellectuals in an underdeveloped country in revolution. Since we lack intermediate cadres we are also obliged to serve as links between our work and our public. The poet understands that he must be a master, a communicator, and a public official, so that the exotic and beautiful poem he writes in silence will be repeated by the public in the streets tomorrow.

But there is more to it. We consider man's effort to interpret reality and create a world—in his own image—a revolutionary effort. From the Altamira bisons to Vasarely, from Homer and the African legends to Kafka, they constitute our inalienable heritage.

Our colleagues usually slap us on the back when they visit us, perhaps because they did not expect to find abstract and pop art paintings in our art galleries, editions of Proust and Joyce in our bookstores, and Robbe-Grillet's films in our movie theaters. Perhaps they did not expect to hear the serial music of our young composers and passionate discussions about aesthetics at art seminars and coffee tables. "Remarkable revolution," they say. "Do not let anything spoil it."

I confess that this remark, which used to flatter our pride, has lately become rather irritating. There is a mixture of paternalism and distrust in the eagerness to preserve the image of an immaculate revolution—the revolution is neither a virgin nor is it made by archangels. This remark also transforms us into mere vestals, guardians of an already burning fire, when we should actually be incendiaries, creators of a new fire.

Cuba has achieved the reconciliation of supposed opposites—social justice and freedom of creation, underdevelopment and vanguard art—doing so at a distance of only 90 miles from this century's most inexorable world imperialist power. This fact only reveals that this is an authentic revolution willing to forge, within the tensions of the modern world, a man finally liberated from his specters.

Ambrosio Fornet

### Cuban poets don't dream any more

Cuban poets don't dream any more  
(not even in the night).  
They go to close the door,  
To write in privacy,  
When suddenly the wind  
Crosses the boards and shakes them,  
Hands grasp their shoulders and  
Turn them, putting them  
Face to face with others' faces  
(sinking in swamps, flaming with napalm)  
And the world flows over their mouths  
And their eyes are forced to  
Look, and look, and look.

Heberto Padilla

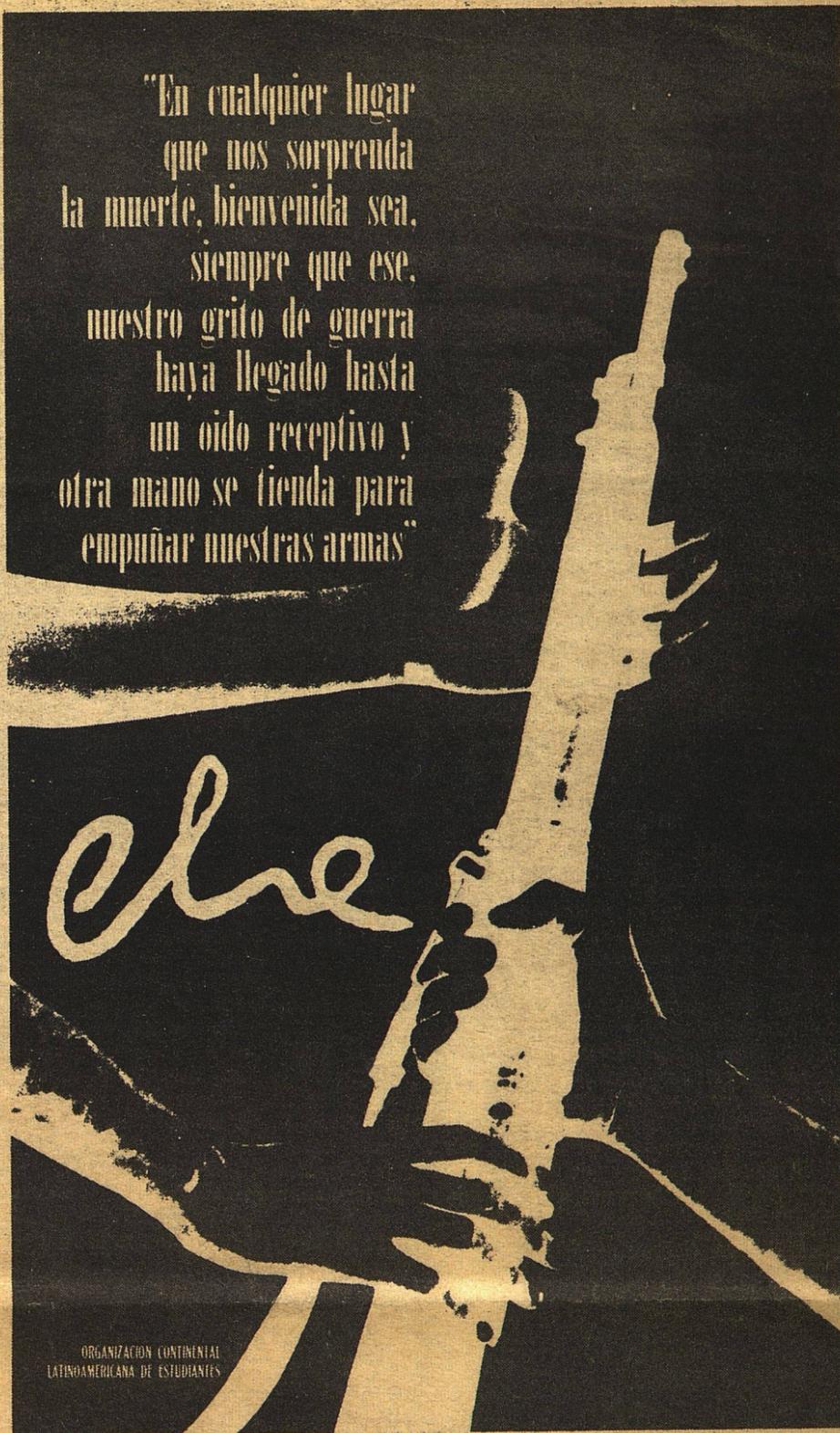
translated by Claudia Beck\*

### The bombing of a village: Hanoi 23 May

The town was by a river,  
and afterward, there was no town, no  
river, nothing.  
Only some stains on the earth  
As of whitewash, only blue.

Luis Rogelio Noguerras

translated by Ron Sabaroff  
and Rafael Rodriguez



"Wherever death may surprise us, it will be welcome, provided that our battle cry reach some receptive ear, and another hand stretch out to take up our weapons."

### In the Pentagon

What are they talking about?  
I hear them  
Moving their black dice  
Screaming in rage  
Burning death on the table  
Mixing  
Oil with blood  
Spitting bread  
Cursing  
The prophets of crime  
I hear them behind the walls  
Of crystal  
And cold air  
And they breathe an air  
Of gun powder and gangrene  
Speaking of you  
And of me  
Measuring our steps  
Calculating our weight  
And filling us with  
A number  
A description  
Labeling us Hiroshima  
Or handing us over  
To clouds of gasoline and debris  
But  
We are beyond their calculations  
Although they can't hear  
Our open voices  
There inside  
They have no rule for measuring us  
No map to locate us  
No bomb to exterminate us  
I hear them talk about us  
And here we are, working  
From daybreak to daybreak,  
Always daybreak  
Our great heart throbbing  
Without permission  
In the night, as in the summer  
With the people advancing.

José Alvarez Baragano

translated by Claudia Beck\*

\*From "Cuban Poetry, 1959-1966" (Instituto del libro, Havana); translations revised by Barbara Dane.

# Dance

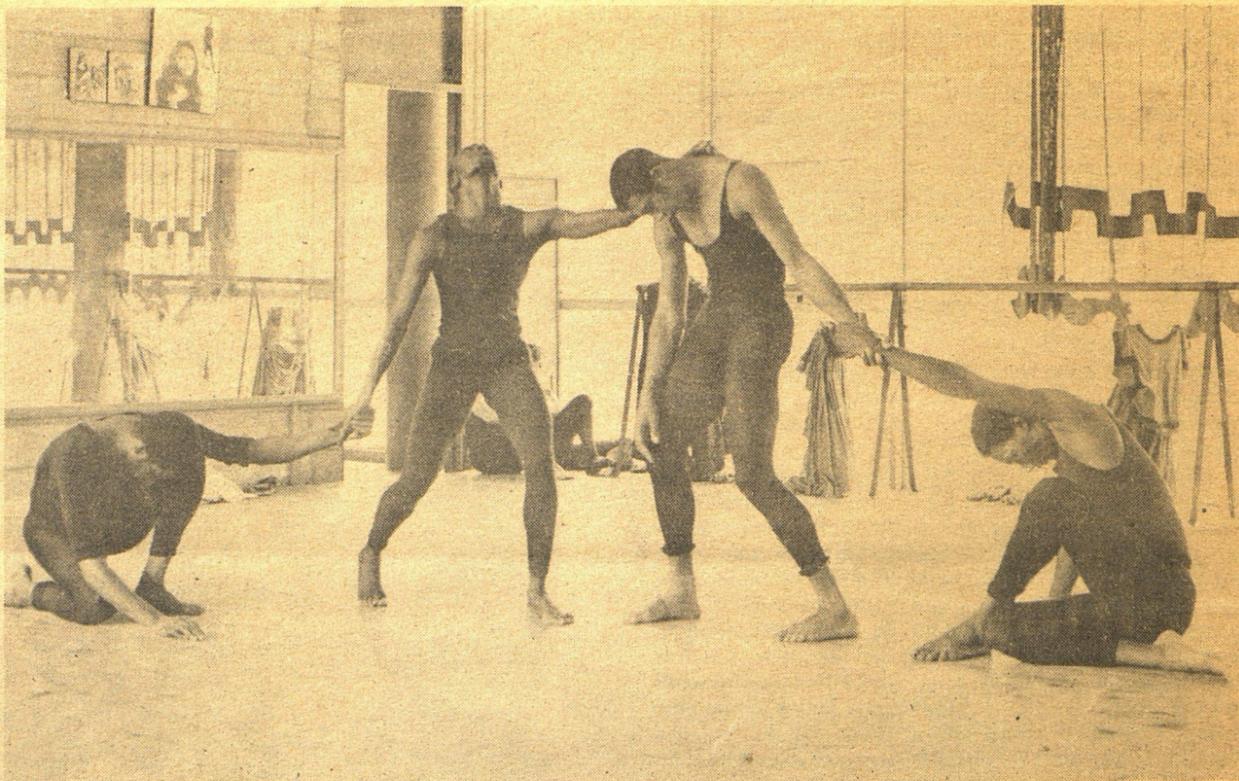


Photo by Robert Shapiro

Rehearsal for "Medea and the Blacks."

## To assimilate a new energy

The movements of the agricultural worker, the pride and dignity of the militia man and woman, the hope and energy that expresses itself in all activities within the revolution—these are the elements being assimilated into Cuban dance. Through the experimentation now going on in Cuba's African, folk and modern dance, and ballet runs a single theme—dance comes from and belongs to the people.

For six months in 1968 I taught modern dance in Cuba at the Modern Dance School of the National School of Art, the National Modern Dance Company and in the Folklore Ballet Company. Students and company members study tuition free, and teachers' salaries are paid by the government. The teachers, directors, and choreographers share their talents and are beginning to develop a common concept of dance throughout Cuba.

The national dance troupes tour the provinces, bringing their art to the people. Those who show interest in teaching go to Havana to study, and return home to teach in their towns and villages. The process is slow, for the majority of Cubans had never seen a dance program or any theater before the revolution. Afro-Cuban folk dances have been introduced in the Modern Dance School. Until recently, it was believed that the folk dances and their music—which is religious—could never be learned by non-members of the religion. Now even the musicians, until recently the sacred keepers of the cult, want to teach their music, to see it preserved as an art form. Students learn the native African dances and their histories. Movements never before utilized in Western dance are becoming as natural as the movements already an organic part of the dancers' training. Choreographers are beginning to use the folk material in their work. The musicians who play for the folk dance classes are folk musicians who are also dock workers—or dock workers who are also musicians. Thus the folk dance program preserves a cultural heritage for the sake of its artistic values, until now neglected, and also gives roots to Cuban modern dance.

The search for what Cuban modern dance is, and how a choreographer is to develop it under socialism, has produced magnificent works by Ramiro Guerra. His work ranges from folk themes in his "Suite Yoruba," to "Medea and the Blacks," the Medea myth translated into a story of the conflict between races and cultures in colonial Cuba.

Anything that aids the development of the arts among the people will be encouraged and completely supported. Working with eager fellow artists and students, I was able to put into practice ideas which for the past 10 years or more I have worked on in the U.S. in complete isolation. Once my work was found to be good, we went full steam ahead with ideas which did not correspond to those previously taught at the school or in the company, or anywhere else in the world.

Dissatisfied with modern dance as an expression by white middle-class artists of white middle class values, I had worked for years at home on a vocabulary of movement gathered by studying the movements of people in the street, mostly black people. In the U.S. this idea didn't take hold. But in Cuba, where the artists and students of dance participate in agriculture and politics, in the daily life of the people, the idea of finding new values and an ideal of beauty in working men and women was readily and enthusiastically accepted.

**Miriam Pandor**



PERFORMANCE OF THE CONJUNCTO BALLETT FOLKLORICO. "The dances and music came from Africa. The influences of the Yoruba culture from Nigeria, the Arara from Dahomey and the Abakua from Kalaba came to Cuba when the Spaniards brought the slaves here three or four centuries ago. The rumba, the guaguanco, the yango are mixtures. By presenting these dances we investigate our cultural roots. The African cultures were brought by slaves who practiced them as religion. Now we have taken from their religion the folklore part, the music, dances and things that are artistically good." (Santiago Alfonso, artistic director of the Conjunto Ballet Folklórico.)



ALICIA ALONSO AND ROBERTO RODRIGUEZ IN "CARMEN," one of the most popular productions of the Cuban National Ballet. The style of the National Ballet is a fusion of Italian, Soviet, English and American styles, heightened by national elements such as particularly Cuban hip movements. Alberto Alonso, Alicia Alonso's brother-in-law and principal choreographer for the National Ballet, has incorporated folk and modern dance movements into both traditional ballets and those created in Cuba. Ballet is no longer for the wealthy. "When we have a little time, once a week, once a month, we go to the factories and talk with the workers. We demonstrate ballet steps and teach them all the conditions a child must meet to study ballet. And the workers show us around the factory. Then we give out free tickets to one of our performances." (Maria Llorente, 21-year-old ballerina with the National Ballet)

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